

## **Comprehensive Model for the Fight against Terrorism: A Political Sociology Approach**

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### **Abstract**

*The increase of terrorist acts and the essential, methodological and instrumental evolution of terrorism have led to the emergence of various forms of terrorist acts that cannot be combated with conventional and existing patterns. In this study, the researcher has addressed the comprehensive model for the fight against terrorism in order to enhance the domestic knowledge of this phenomenon and to pay attention to the practical needs existed in this field. The researcher by using descriptive-analytical method aims to identify both positive and negative aspects of comprehensive model for fighting terrorism. This model is based on six strategic policies as follows:*

*A) Policies designed and implemented for the purpose of physical confrontation, weakening and/or elimination of terrorist unit, such as information dominance, organizational empowerment and operational dominance.*

*B) Policies designed to socialize counter-terrorism and are meant to create a powerfully integrated society which has a high degree of impenetrability and certitude in potential terrorist acts. From this perspective, the priority is given to strengthen internal consistency, to heighten public awareness, and to increase the threshold of social tolerance and insight.*

### **Keywords**

*Terror; Terrorism; Positive Aspect; Negative Aspect; Information Dominance; Operational Dominance; Social Participation; Organizational Empowerment; Internal Consistency; Threshold of Social Tolerance; Insight; Public Awareness*

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## **Introduction**

Statement of the Problem: Terror and terrorism are security phenomena which have long been addressed in human societies, and for this reason to raise question about model for fighting against is regarded significant with a long historical background. This has led to the production and promotion of various views and ideas in this respect, which today is addressed as a strategic knowledge of the fight against terrorism (See Hoffman, 2017: Introduction). However, it should be acknowledged that meaningful and profound changes in goals, methods, instruments and types of terrorism have prevented the effectiveness of existing and common models for the fight with terrorism as the new types of terrorism has been lately shaped.

**Objective:** In this regard, this study aims to present a (fairly) comprehensive and practical model for fighting this phenomenon in line with the conditions of contemporary societies and new features of terrorism.

**Research Questions:** The main question of this study is that what is the comprehensive model for fighting terrorism regarding the new conditions of the international community and the emergence of new types of terrorism? In this connection, it is necessary to articulate and investigate the nature and characteristics of new types of terrorism as secondary questions.

**Significance of the Study:** Addressing this issue very important in a way that it helps to reform and strengthen the Government policies and measures for fighting terrorism, and makes it less costly and more successful to prevent the occurrence of this security phenomenon.

**Necessity of the Study:** With respect to the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran in a region which, due to the excessive intervention of foreign powers and the fallibility of some of the political systems, are extremely “chaos-stricken”, and thus witnessing the development and activity of various types of Terrorist groups under the support of foreign forces. It is essential that the fight against terrorism to be studied independently and systematically as a strategic objective.

**Approach:** In connection with fighting terrorism various approaches have been outlined and discussed. Notable among them are:

- A security approach belongs solely to identifying terrorists and taking action against them from the best moment of their development process to their actions.
- A political approach is adopted to identify the aims and dealings of power by highlighting the place of terrorism in them. In this regard, the way in which terrorists are being managed is of significance.
- A psychological approach appertains to analyzing and studying the collective and personal motives of terrorists for committing terrorist actions.
- A sociological approach focuses on identifying the social factors in shaping terrorism in order to influence the social roots of those factors.
- An economic approach by placing emphasis on identification of the financial resources and purposes aims to limit and deny such acts.
- A political sociology approach analyzes terrorism in the context of interaction with social and political power, and takes that fight against terrorism without the joint work of these two forms of power would seem ineffective. With regard to the comprehensiveness of this approach, it is the basis of the critical analysis of this article.

**Methodology:** the nature of this study is the basic-practical to construct and present a comprehensive model for combating terrorism from the perspective of political sociology. Research methodology is descriptive-analytical and the relevant data gathering is done by archival research. To carry out analysis, the researcher uses the theory of basis-analysis-context.

**Literature Review:** there are two categories of studies on terrorism:

1) The descriptive-analytical studies that the objectives of the why-ness, explanation of the essence of terrorism and its different types are varied. For this reason, in such studies, the centrality is given to the evolutionary process of terrorism together with various generations (Mobaleghi, 2010; Law, 2016; Gus, 2015). As it seems, this body of research is appropriate for the case of subjectology, and it does not engage in the question of “counter-terrorism model.”

2) There are experimental researches aimed at explication of necessities, goals and policies of fighting terrorism. Such studies relate to this study, and the difference lies in the fact that the basis of those studies is to explain the experiences and histories of the players in the field of fighting terrorism; however, formulation

and promotion of a practical model is the prime objective of this study (Jomezadeh, 2011; Riyazi, 2011; Giora, 2011; Kilcullen, 2016). Although, acquaintance with experiences and understanding the history of counter-terrorism in Iran is quite important, it needs to be considered that societies should develop their domestic models based on their theoretical principles, conditions and geographical positions, as well as goals and facilities. On this account, this study is viewed as supplementary writing to such kind of studies.

## **1. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

To engage in fields of study and design a practical model for each of them is reliant upon narrowing down and explaining the theoretical boundaries, so that it is to be in accordance with the thinking of the researcher and the readers. Accordingly, in the following section, the important concepts and the theory of basis are briefly introduced.

### **1.1. Concepts**

#### **A) Terrorism**

Terrorism is defined as a series of plans and organized policies and actions that are violently and illegally designed and aimed at striking fear or weakness in the target subject (Eftekhari and Shabestani, 2011: 6-7).

#### **B) The Plan to Fight Terrorism**

This is described as the formulation and implementation of a series of comprehensive policies and plans aiming at fighting terrorism. This kind of planning has two main parts: 1) Reactional plans which are being designed to confront the terrorist incident. 2) Performative plans which are devised to managing the internal damage and consequences of preventing the occurrence of terrorist act or being influenced by the terror (Safari and Esmaili, 2013; Nacos 2008: 169-218).

#### **C) Counter-Terrorism**

Counter-terrorism is the specific stage of planning to fight terrorism, and it clearly signals the preventive and retaliative action against terrorism. Put differently, it is performatively constituent part of fight against terrorism (Eftekhari and Shabestani, 2011: 10-11; Caro, 1386: 10-15).

## **D) The Model**

The model is conceptual and theoretical system, which by stressing the constituent elements of a phenomenon and the way in which they are connected, attempts to outline an overall outlook to make possible the systematic transference of the idea to the audience. Therefore, there is a general conception of the model in this paper in which expression of the quantitative intensity of communications is not primary.

### **1.2. Theories and Models for Fighting Terrorism**

Given the complexity and diversity of the types of terrorism, we are witnessing a diverse range of theories of the fight against terrorism (Caro, 2007; Bunkerset, 2015; Maras, 2012), the researcher has thematically classified them into two major models:

#### **1) Model for Fighting the Terrorists**

According to this model, terrorism is evaluated as a “political-security phenomenon” which by using its facilities and accesses, it aims to physical removal of its targets. The phenomenological perception of terrorism would lead its followers to take on the view that “terrorism” is to be reduced to the “terrorist.” As a consequence, the model for fighting terrorism would focus on identifying, arresting and suppressing the terrorists, and controlling or removing the “agent” would eventually prevent an act of terrorism (Maras, 2012: 61-84).

#### **2) Model for Fighting Terrorism**

On the contrary, there is this approach that the reduction of “terrorism” to “terrorist” and confronting the “terrorist”, though is necessary but not sufficient. The reason for this can be cited as the immunity of the “source of the “idea of terrorism” in the model of “suppression”. Accordingly, terrorism takes on two aspects: firstly, it is the phenomenological aspect which includes the visual presentation of terrorism, and the theory of suppression has stressed this aspect. Secondly, there is the essentialist aspect of terrorism which has the genius of an “idea” which has no objectivity, yet it is regarded as the ulterior motive for terrorist acts.

In fact, the “source of terrorism” is shaped by the “idea of terror” itself. This idea might manifest itself in different forms such as belief, faith, interest, emotion,

and so forth, and justifies individuals and groups to commit terrorist acts (Tabibi and Shokrbeigi, 2011: 191-74; Petros Ghali, 2001: 115-46). Considering this, the fight against “terrorism” should not be confined to “eliminating the phenomenon of terror”, and it is necessary to go beyond simple suppression and “the root of terrorism” to be cut off. Such important measure cannot be feasible without inactivation and destruction of the sources of the idea of terrorism.

## **2. Criticism and Review of the Models**

Although, the combination of the above theories can draw up a certain, strategic model in the fight against terrorism, in the case of reviewing these theories and the models emanated from them, it can be noted that they come under criticism from several aspects, and thus cannot be adequately performed.

### **2.1. Passiveness**

As can be seen, each theory presents a passive model in fighting terrorism, in a sense that regarding the formation of terrorist movements, it is necessary to confront them. Of course, the second model looks at the depth of the collision, which makes it distinct from the former, and yet their nature remains similar (Simbar, 2006: 147-71; Gus, 2015: 265-372). In this respect, it is not sufficiently evaluated for the players who, according to their circumstances and places, need have to actively involve in the matter.

### **2.2. Negative Thinking**

The violent nature of the “counter-security” of terrorism has led that the most theories relate to “eradicate terrorism,” and therefore suppression or “total eradication” to be an objective. However, sociological studies indicate that in the field of politics and society “complete destruction” of phenomena cannot be the case. In other words, the quality of contextualization of phenomena causes them, though hidden or dormant, to have root in social layers and cultural construction of society, to restore and re-activate in favorable conditions (Spindlove, 2016: chp. 4; Combs, 2013: 218-300). As a result, no social-political phenomenon can be utterly destroyed. By this definition, negative approach (destruction of terrorism) can be seen in both theories which results in weakening the proposed models and solutions. This criticism shows that fighting terrorism should be done through

negative thinking and affirmative actions in epistemic and intellectual spaces, and accordingly the reasoning and emotional principles of terrorism being rendered meaningless.

### **2.3. Unilateralism**

The common models of fighting terrorism, generally speaking, focuses on one side or aspect of terrorist acts, i.e., “terrorist system.” Notwithstanding, the terrorist acts, at least, include two dimensions.

The first dimension is the terrorist system. The researcher states that this system is combinatory and has the following sections:

- a) The source of terror aiming to produce an idea of terror.
- b) The process of changing terror from something abstract to a human factor requires that there should be justification and necessity of striking terror among individuals and groups. This will be done by official or unofficial education and training.
- c) There is institutionalization which gathers its believers under the flag of a definite organization with essential facilities.
- d) The commandment, which manages the complex process of terror, provides the ground for action through designing and acquiring the required facilities.
- e) Taking action is the most objective aspect of terrorism (terror), and places the network of terrorists in different layers and ranks.
- f) A network of supporters who by using hardware or software policies provide the favorable circumstance and environment for the survival of terrorism, though in a limited scope.

The second dimension is the target of terrorism, and has been paid less attention; its contribution in counter-terrorism programs has not been taken into account as is necessary. The main focus of this dimension is that the organization of the target community is set up in a way that it is “counter-terrorism”; that is to say, its conditions and traits stop the infiltration and impact of terrorism, or the impact of terror itself in it.

Here, by this explanation, it is evident that the two above models are primarily directed at the player of the “agent” and the “target player” has been neglected (Garaudy, 2015). This indicates that the “fight against terrorism” needs to be promoted and by using the critique of unilateralism (which has solely focused

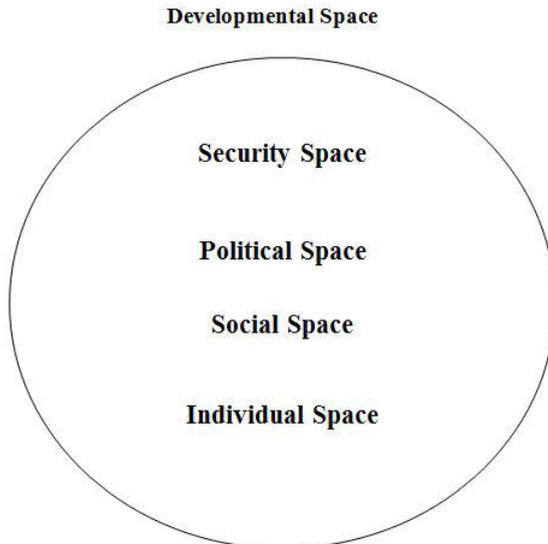
on player agent), it transforms into a kind of two-dimensional strategic view in which “self-empowerment” becomes the favorable, active and positive policy in fighting terrorism. This consideration is highlighted in the researcher’s proposed model argued later in this study.

### **3. Space-Based Analytical Theory**

In order to overcome the mentioned shortcomings, the researcher, based on Islamic principles and foundations, proposes a space-based theory for public analysis of security phenomena including terrorism, which is highly capable of designing a model for fighting terrorism (Eftekhari, 2013: 426-530).

#### **3.1. Definition of the Theory**

The basis of this theory is simple and practical, provided that all phenomena in personal and social life of humankind to be the products of five major spaces (Eftekhari, 2013: chp. 2). These spaces are illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Space-Based Analytical Theory**

### **1. Individual Space**

This area is in the logical sense of the “person of the foundation” and encompasses the range of activities and behaviors that make sense in terms of the interest and taste of each individual. In other words, the genetic code of individuals marks the realm of their personal space. Individual space is influenced by “individual education.” Therefore, the factors such as knowledge, rationality, emotion and instincts play a central role in this space.

### **2. Collective Space**

This field is based on the network of collective relations, and speaks of “interpersonal” relations and/or “relations between individuals and institutions.” As it seems, collective space is associated with the interests and relations between them. On this account, it is governed and controlled by social rules and regulations which, of course, social rules have of much greater influence in that their foundation rests on social power, whereas laws are introduced by political power.

### **3. Political Space**

Political space is part of the collective space, and its indicator shows a phenomenon’s position in the network of power relations. Stated differently, establishing a concordant, oppositional, critical, and impartial relationship with the ruling power signals the politicization of the phenomenon. Naturally, in this space the level and quality of power is exercised by governments, and the way of its management determines it.

### **4. Security Space**

The security environment is a limited and specific scope of political space in which the player defines a relationship based on the conflict with the dominant power. Although, the kind of this scope and the intensity the conflict, and consequently their aspects, are all different with each other, the security viewpoint in such a context can be defined in continuum with two spectra of minimum security and maximum security.

### **5. Developmental Space**

The index of defining and recognizing the developmental space is the “belief” that establishes a particular connection between the player and the holy religious lawgiver. By this definition, the developmental space implies religious dos and

dons which obedience or disobedience to them can affect mankind's destiny and status in the aforementioned four fields. For instance, the Exalted Real speaks of "defending the believers" in the Holy Quran ; or when He urges believers to enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong , in fact, the effect of faith in stopping enemies and/or the positive role of having collective responsibility in fortification of social security which is also influential in security and social spaces. The same is true to the principle of Divine Wilaya that has effect on political space.

With reference to this explanation, it will be clear to identify, analyze and manage the phenomena (including terrorism and the fight against terrorism) by looking at the considerations of the above five spaces. Otherwise, the definition and the presented management model would be partially and incompletely evaluated. By reflecting on the nature of the five spaces, it is evident that, in terms of the operation of the spaces, two main dimensions in the fight against terrorism will be highlighted: the first is the negative dimension which targets "the rise of terrorism." The second is affirmative dimension which focuses on the grounds and factors involving in the formation of terrorism. These dimensions will be discussed later.

#### **4. Comprehensive Model**

Concerning the theory proposed here, it can be noted that the model for fighting terrorism needs to acquire both negative and affirmative dimensions. The definitions of these dimensions are as follows.

##### **4.1. Negative Dimension**

This dimension of the fight with terrorism is performative; it aims to devise and implement a series of policies by which the control or suppression of the terrorist is the main goal. In this way, the terror will face dire consequences and the possibility of occurrence of terrorism to be ruled out. The most important counter-terrorist policies are as follows:

##### **Policy 1: Information Dominance**

The effort to properly identify individuals, groups and institutions that are prone to engage in terrorist activities is the central principle of information dominance. The proper and effective implementation of this policy allows monitoring and

control of the perpetrators of terrorist acts, which is regarded as essential elements of the fight against terrorism (Nacos, 2016: 135-206). It should be noted that the efficient and effective information dominance is required having a comprehensive approach and not confining oneself to national borders. Only in this way can full-scale confrontation with terrorist acts be addressed beforehand – a strategy that prevents being in a passive position (Shahidi, 2016).

### **Policy 2: Organizational Empowerment**

Given that the terrorist activities are constantly changing in terms of their nature, methods and goals, it is crucial for the relevant counter-terrorism organizations to be increasingly capable and powerful in the execution of their missions. A significant part of this policy is shaped by planning to promote facilities and technologies which are required. The result of the proper implementation of this policy is the formation of powerful institutions in the fight against terrorism (Shahidi, 2016).

### **Policy 3: Operational Dominance**

Information dominance and organizational empowerment should be carried out in emergency situations so that the following goals to be achieved:

- Declaration of readiness by counter-terrorist institutions to perform operation in different conditions and situations
- Outright confrontation with the terrorists at the shortest possible time
- Bolstering the society's confidence in capacity, skill and capability of the established institutions aiming at fighting terrorism

The above considerations can be summarized in the concept of “operational dominance” which signifies “outright confrontation” with terrorism in due time. Increasing the level of operational dominance, in turn, helps to prevent the design and implementation of new terrorist acts, which is among the affirmative functions of fighting terrorism policies (Kilcullen, 2016; Burton, 2009).

## **4.2. Affirmative Dimension**

The affirmative dimension of fighting terrorism relates to the target player, and seeks to prevent the terrorist act or to reduce its impacts by empowering and promoting the “objective.” In this regard, the most important counter-terrorism policies are:

#### **Policy 4: Internal Consistency**

Each terrorist act is dependent on two forms of “infiltration” – software and hardware. In the case of hardware, the terrorist is required to target the information and security networks to set the scene for his terrorist act. In software infiltration, the terrorist targets “thought” and “imagination” of the subjects of terror, and attempts to destroy and distort them in his interest (Garaudy, 2015: chp. 2 & 4). In both cases, the existence and practice of “internal consistency” in society can prevent the influence of terrorists or at least increase the costs and consequences of their acts. Considering this, it seems evident that an effort to strengthen internal consistency is a strategic imperative to confront terrorism. Accordingly, indications of “internal consistency” to strengthen the model for fighting terrorism are as follows:

- An increase in inner governmental interactions
- An increase in interactions and dealings among ruling institutions, people and social institutions
- An increase in people’s interactions and relations (public unity)
- An increase in public awareness and skills in the form of social duties

It is in this way that the formation of a “stable society” will be possible; a society that is “impenetrable,” and thus the psychological operations or executive plans of the terrorists cannot affect such society. The greater the internal consistency is in a society, the lesser is the activity of the terrorist groups, and the effects in their social activities will be accordingly decreased.

#### **Policy 5: An increase in Social Tolerance**

The terrorist acts are designed and implemented with the purpose of surprising and sudden blows to confuse and terrorize their targets, and thereby opening up opportunities for further actions and political exploitation (White, 2016: 2-45). Although, the first policy (i.e. internal consistency) reduces the likely occurrence of terrorist acts, they might not be ruled out totally. In such events that a terrorist group succeeds to commit terrorism, the most significant policy that can save the society and stop terrorists is the successful practice of the policy of “tolerance.” According to this policy, a given society must exercise the physical and psychological power necessary to face the consequences of terrorist acts. In this case, the public management of the society will not be violated by terrorist acts, and the

psychological and national security of the public will not be jeopardized. In strategic studies, this capability is referred to the power of tolerating the first strike in order to mobilize the equipment to retaliate (react) (Gus, 2015: 264-372). For example, the strategic capacity like “martyrdom” is an attempt to prevent a terrorist act such as the terrorist event of 7 Tir of 1981 to collapse of the State – that event was really powerful enough to violate the foundations of the Islamic Republic and plunge the Islamic State into chaos. In this regard, “tolerance” can be defined as a unique capability which has both concrete components (geographical scope, number, population, environmental qualities) and abstract components (including religious teachings, cultural-civilized principles), and by having a proper cultural management, it might play a central role in strengthening counter-terrorism strategy for a State and society.

#### **Policy 6: Bolstering Public Awareness and Social Insight**

“Ignorance” is what the terrorists always try to recognize and make use in their terrorist acts. In fact, ignorance makes possible the “potentiality” and “capability” of executing terrorist plans constantly. In other words, ignorance is not simply viewed as a theoretical notion; rather, it is a “source of power” for the terrorists. Seen as such, the functions of terrorist acts describe ignorance as follows:

- The revelation of ignorance in the public realm would lead to opening up a rift between people and the government, and thereby the internal consistency will be violated; the opportunity to occur terrorist events will rise, and national power to confront terrorism will be undermined as well.
- Ignorance paves the way to the revelation of “reverse in analysis;” as a result, the tendency to join terrorist groups and organization in a society will increase. That is why the policies regarding observing, reforming and boosting public awareness and insight in the fight against terrorism are very essential. These policies, overall, contain two major elements. The first element is the effort to enlighten based on accurate and proper information at the shortest time, so that social strata and groups to acquire information properly; in this way, they will not need to seek news-intelligence agencies to obtain information whose data credibility is not certain (Combs, 2013: 218-300). Another element is the attempt to boost social culture in order to understand, analyze and decide wisely different kinds of information that the public gain. In reality, “insight” is a notion superior

to “awareness” which indicates that the audience at the moment of encountering conflicting accounts, ambiguity in operational scenes, and loads of information to be not bewildered and diverged, as well as recognizing the right decision and knowing the right and wrong of something (Taghizadeh, 2009).

As can be seen, “awareness” and “insight” influence different aspects and levels of the fight against terrorism by highlighting the affirmative dimension of such confrontation. Hence, it can be claimed that the fundamental element of a positive model for fighting terrorism is to reform and enhance the public awareness and insight.

### **Conclusion**

“The fight against terrorism” has recently paid attention as a “discipline” and an “operational skill” due to the profound changes occurred in the field of “terrorist acts.” For that reason, the effort to analyze data, theorization of “fighting terrorism” and modelling of how to design and execute “counter-terrorism” plans is come into scene as scientific-strategic subjects, and offering their answers is reliant upon developing a new definition and launching new disciplines in this respect. As a consequence, “studies of terrorism fighting” is viewed as an interdisciplinary branch of knowledge in which a broad range of security, political, psychological, management, and economic experts, as well as strategic studies should have participation in its extension and development. This study by providing explanation for various dimensions of an effective model for fighting terrorism and identifying its six policies, aims to expound and promote the practical and analytical necessity of the matter. What attracts attention is that the affirmative dimension of the fight against terrorism has come to prominence, highlighting the idea of “socialization of such fight.” It also articulates that outright confrontation with terrorism needs the public awareness, insight and participation alongside of active, updated and powerful institutions.

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اصغر افتخاری<sup>۱</sup>

### چکیده

توسعه اقدامات تروریستی و تحول ماهوی، روشی و ابزاری این پدیده، منجر به ظهور گونه‌های متنوعی از تروریسم شده که مبارزه با آنها با الگوهای سنتی و متعارف ممکن نمی‌باشد. در مقاله حاضر محقق از الگوی جامع مبارزه با تروریسم سوال نموده؛ تا از این طریق ضمن تقویت دانش بومی در این زمینه، به نیازهای کاربردی در این حوزه عطف توجه شده و پاسخ داده شود. محقق با استفاده از روش توصیفی-تحلیلی اقدام به شناسایی دو بعد سلبی و ایجابی برای الگوی جامع مبارزه با تروریسم نموده است. این الگو بر شش سیاست راهبردی استوار است که عبارتند از: الف. سیاست‌هایی که با هدف مبارزه فیزیکی و تضعیف و یا حذف عامل تروریستی طراحی و اجراء می‌شوند. مانند اشراف اطلاعاتی، توان‌مندسازی سازمانی و اقتدار عملیاتی. ب. سیاست‌هایی که با هدف اجتماعی نمودن مبارزه با تروریسم طراحی شده و هدف از آن ایجاد جامعه‌ای مستحکم است که نسبت به اقدامات تروریستی احتمالی، از ضریب اطمینان و نفوذناپذیری بالایی برخوردار باشند. از این منظر تقویت انسجام درونی، افزایش آگاهی و بصیرت عمومی و افزایش آستانه تحمل اجتماعی در اولویت است.

### واژگان کلیدی

ترور، تروریسم، بعد ایجابی، بعد سلبی، اشراف اطلاعاتی، اقتدار عملیاتی، مشارکت اجتماعی، توان‌مندسازی سازمانی، انسجام درونی، آستانه تحمل اجتماعی، بصیرت، آگاهی اجتماعی

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