

Analysis of the Role of Collective Memory in the School of Razavi Art on the Path to Exalted Governance

(With an Emphasis on the Thought of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution in the Second Phase of the Revolution Statement)

Yoones Yoonesian¹ | MohammadReza Vasefi² | Faramarz Abedini³

1. PhD Candidate, Information Science and Knowledge Studies, Faculty of Management, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran, (Corresponding Author)
Email :yoonesian.yoones@ut.ac.ir
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Information Science and Knowledge Studies, Faculty of Management, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.
3. Assistant Professor, Governance Department, National Defense University, Shahid Beheshti School of Governance, Tehran, Iran.

Article info

Abstract

Article type:
Research Article

Received:
26 December 2024

In Revised form:
15 February 2025

Accepted:
13 March 2025

Published:
29 May 2025



methodology (Grounded Theory strategy), analyzes the role of “collective memory” and “nostalgia” within the framework of the “School of Razavi Art” as foundations for “exalted governance.” The theoretical framework of the study is based on three key concepts: collective memory (Halbwachs), nostalgia (Boym, Davis), and representation. The central research problem is the theoretical gap in converting the latent symbolic capital embedded in cultural-religious heritage-with an emphasis on the Holy Razavi Shrine as the “pinnacle of Iran’s spiritual grandeur” in the thought of the Supreme Leader-into operational mechanisms of governance in the digital age. In this context, the School of Razavi Art is considered not merely as an aesthetic heritage, but as a living and active “civilizational capital” that shapes Iranian-Islamic identity through the creation of “spatial memory” within the Holy Razavi Shrine. The findings indicate that nostalgia, having moved beyond its initial medical and psychological definitions, has become a cultural-political construct capable of playing a role in redefining collective identity and strengthening national cohesion. In the contemporary era, the phenomenon of “digital nostalgia” (Niemeyer) presents both opportunities (such as facilitating the reproduction and distribution of collective memory) and threats (such as distortion, commercialization, and the emergence of dangerous forms of restorative nostalgia). The study’s final conclusion emphasizes that the intelligent integration of the collective wisdom inherent in the religious memory formed within the School of Razavi Art, with the requirements of modern governance and the exigencies of the digital world, is essential and inevitable for realizing the Iranian-Islamic model of progress and the ideal of the new Islamic civilization outlined in the “Second Phase of the Revolution” Statement. This necessitates formulating strategies for transmitting authentic, identity-forming narratives on one hand, and creating a critical counter-discourse against ideological manipulations of the past on the other.

Keywords: Collective Memory, Nostalgia, Holy Razavi Shrine, Governance, Islamic Revolution, The Supreme Leader.

Reference: Yoonesian, Yoones; Wasfi, MohammadReza; Abedini, Faramarz. (2025). Analysis of the Role of Collective Memory in the School of Razavi Art on the Path to Exalted Governance (With an Emphasis on the Thought of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution in the Second Phase of the Revolution Statement). *Imam Reza (A.S.) and Contemporary Sciences*. 2(7). 70-101.

Publisher: Imam Reza (A.S.) International University
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22034/ijs.2025.426121.1035>



1. Introduction

This research elucidates the constructive and multidimensional role of “collective memory” and “nostalgia” within the framework of the “School of Razavi Art” as the theoretical and practical foundation for “transcendent governance” in the philosophical thought of the Supreme Leader and the “Second Step” Statement of the Islamic Revolution. In the contemporary era, governance systems face the complex challenge of integrating historical identity-forming factors with the increasing demands of the digital world. In Islamic Iran, this issue has acquired particular and essential dimensions due to the repeated strategic emphasis of the Leadership on the “past as a staircase for progress,” rather than a static museum. The School of Razavi Art, by creating a unique “spatial memory” within the holy precinct of the Razavi Shrine over many centuries, has played an unparalleled role in shaping, preserving, and strengthening Iranian-Islamic identity. However, a significant theoretical gap exists regarding how to convert the symbolic and spiritual capital of this rich heritage into operational and effective mechanisms for transcendent governance, especially when confronting the emerging phenomenon of “digital nostalgia” and the complex environment of new media. This research seeks to fill this gap.

2. Research Objectives

The primary and central objective of this research is to formulate and present a coherent, indigenous theoretical framework for transforming nostalgia from a merely emotional and psychological concept into an effective and efficient mechanism in transcendent governance. This framework relies on the unique capacities of the School of Razavi Art and is tailored to the requirements and challenges of the digital world. The specific secondary objectives of this research include:

Investigating and explaining the mechanisms and processes of converting nostalgia into a cultural-political construct serving the reproduction and strengthening of religious identity.

-Analyzing and elaborating the pivotal role of collective memory and various forms of nostalgia in reinforcing the theoretical and practical foundations of transcendent governance.

-Examining and analyzing the dual and complex role of the digital space in recreating, exchanging, and strengthening collective memory, while also identifying threats arising from it, such as distortion, homogenization, and commercialization.

-Presenting and designing an innovative model termed “Future-Oriented Nostalgia” for the tangible and operational realization of the new Islamic civilization within the framework of the Second Step of the Revolution.

3. Methodology

This research adopts a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach and utilizes the “Grounded Theory strategy” as its primary method for deep qualitative analysis of relevant texts and data. The theoretical framework of the research is based on three key, interconnected concepts:

Collective Memory (relying on the ideas of Maurice Halbwachs): With special emphasis on the structural dependence of memories on social frameworks and the role of groups in shaping a shared past.

Nostalgia (focusing on Svetlana Boym’s conceptual distinction between reflective nostalgia and restorative nostalgia): Understood as a dynamic and multidimensional phenomenon.

Social Representation (based on the theory of Serge Moscovici): Used to analyze discursive dynamics and meaning-making processes in the social space.

The statistical population of the research includes a wide range of texts, such as the “Second Step” Statement, the statements and thoughts of the Supreme Leader, content produced on social media related to the Razavi Shrine, as well as rich written and oral resources about the history, architecture, arts, and decorations of the holy Razavi Shrine. The data analysis process was systematically conducted in three stages—open coding (to identify primary concepts), axial coding (to establish relationships between concepts), and selective coding (to formulate the final theory)—ultimately extracting the main patterns, categories, and mechanisms.

4. Findings

The School of Razavi Art, particularly within the physical and spiritual context of the holy Razavi Shrine, has been shaped into a positive, constructive, and forward-looking nostalgia through the creation of a unique, foundational “spatial memory.” This nostalgia does not merely involve a simple rereading of the past; rather, by transforming the pilgrimage into a comprehensive and profound “civilizational experience,” it creates a sturdy, dynamic, and meaning-generating bridge between yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

In direct contrast to the dominant postmodernist reading in the West (particularly

according to Fredric Jameson), which reduces the past to a set of rootless, superficial, and consumable signs, the discourse of the Islamic Revolution and the progressive thought of the Supreme Leader conceptualize the past as the “precious reserve of the nation” and the “firm staircase of progress,” emphasizing a critical and constructive reading of it.

The phenomenon of “Digital Nostalgia” (based on Kim Niemeyer’s theory) plays a dual, complex, and paradoxical role in the contemporary space: On one hand, by creating new discourses, interactive spaces, and communication platforms on social media, it provides an unprecedented and extensive possibility for the recreation, exchange, sharing, and strengthening of collective memory. On the other hand, this new space has brought serious and novel threats such as semantic distortion, cultural homogenization, superficiality, and the commercialization of collective memory. The conscious, intelligent, and systematic integration of the transcendent wisdom inherent in Razavi art with the extensive, rapid, and interactive capabilities of digital technologies-in the form of an innovative model termed “Future-Oriented Nostalgia”-is the essential and unavoidable path for realizing the ideal of the new Islamic civilization in the Second Step of the Revolution and for actively and intelligently confronting the unique challenges and opportunities of the present era. This model, by converting symbolic and spiritual capital into operational and effective mechanisms, can strengthen the foundations of transcendent governance.

5. Conclusion

This research clearly demonstrates that nostalgia, having moved beyond its initial purely medical and psychological definitions, functions as a complex, dynamic socio-cultural construct and an effective tool for redefining, reconstructing, and strengthening collective identity and national cohesion. The School of Razavi Art, drawing upon a unique and rich treasury of pure Islamic arts, is a tangible and living example of the manifestation of collective memory and constructive, progressive nostalgia. In the current digital age, the emergence of “digital nostalgia” and the extensive capabilities of social networks in recreating and redistributing collective memories simultaneously present an exceptional and unprecedented opportunity for promoting, institutionalizing, and further deepening these concepts, while also introducing serious new threats such as the distortion of the past, commercialization of memory, and the domination of hegemonic discourses.

Suggestions:

Formulate comprehensive macro and operational strategies for the intelligent, creative, and responsible use of digital technologies and new platforms to authentically, attractively, and effectively transmit the identity-forming and civilizational narratives of the Razavi School to the new generation and the global community. Establish, strengthen, and institutionalize a “critical, active, and aware counter-discourse” in the public sphere to effectively combat ideological manipulations, historical distortions, and discursive abuses in the digital space.

Integrate the collective wisdom, spirituality, and inherent wisdom of religious memory with the requirements of modern governance, contemporary knowledge, and the exigencies of the digital world as the necessary, unavoidable, and progressive path for transitioning from mere historicity to the arena of civilization-building and realizing the transcendent ideals of the Second Step of the Revolution on the horizon of the 1404 Vision.

Keywords: Collective Memory, Nostalgia, Governance, Islamic Revolution, The Supreme Leader, The Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.).