RESEARCH ARTICLE

AMBIVALENCE OF HOSTILITY AND MODIFICATION: PATRIARCHY'S IDEOLOGICAL NEGOTIATION WITH WOMEN, MODERNITY AND CINEMA IN IRAN

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Abstract

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Iranian cinema as a modern art has always been influenced by political, cultural and social changes. While in the Pahlavi era, Iranian cinema was encouraged to turn into an ideological tool to promote modernity and westernization, the post-revolutionary Iranian cinema through the project of Islamisation was inscribed to function as the religious ideological tool to promote Islamic values and life style, which were defined in contrast to its Western counterparts. Through these ideological changes, however, the Iranian women's sexuality and body has been constantly the site of struggle. Being rooted in chronic surveillance over female sexuality within normative patriarchal values and desire, the image of women has been centralized to the national identity in modern Iran. Despite this centrality, however, women have ambivalently encountered hostility through the mechanism of modification; while in Pahlavi era unveiling of women was one of the most controversial manifestation of modernity, under the Islamic regime the Iranian women's veiled images turn into the/a battle against the westernization and modernity. This research addresses the persistence of ideological negotiation between women, modernity and cinema in modern Iran. Therefore, chronological accounts of the way women, modernity and cinema have been through the ideological negotiation in Iranian society is discussed from pre to post-revolutionary eras.

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Introduction:-
Despite the fundamentally patriarchal society of Iran, women are struggling for gender equality. Cinema industry in Iran, as one of the most influential mass medium, although surviving under the limitations of censorship tries to depict women's struggle toward subjectivity within the society. Although the presence of women in the cinema had faced difficulties and religious panic, cinema had a significant role in breaking the confinement of women in the private sphere and in their admittance into the public sphere as spectators, citizens, and consumers (Naficy, 2011, p. 132).

The key concepts one should constantly take into consideration while studying Iranian pre/post-revolutionary cinema from different aspects are westernization and modernity; the two concepts which have been inevitably connected to and have affected the status of women within the Iranian society and Iranian cinema. Westernization as a path to modernity is intensified in Iran during the nineteenth century with the increasing interaction of Iranian society with the West. Modernization started to change Iranian life "in terms of politics, education, law, custom, and

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culture, and including some leeway for women to participate in the society" (Afkhami, 1994, p. 9). That is how the Iranian national cinema through the power-relations of state and classic Hollywood cinema has been constantly defined and redefined with its relation to modernity.

Iranian cinema as a modern art has been always influenced by political, cultural and social changes. While in the Pahlavi era, Iranian cinema was encouraged to turn into an ideological tool to promote modernity and westernization, the post-revolutionary Iranian cinema through the project of Islamisation was inscribed to function as the religious ideological tool to promote Islamic values and life style which were defined in contrast to its western counterparts.

The Iranian filmmakers' responses to the two sets of state-imposed policies have been constantly vacillated between submissive complicity and adept dodging; the dodging that leads to a new language of Iranian cinema which was born out of struggle of Iranian filmmakers to survive. This struggle leads to the formation of what Naficy calls "other moments of partial hegemony" (2011, p. 2).

Through these ideological changes, however, the Iranian women's sexuality and body have been constantly the site of struggle. Being rooted in chronic surveillance over female sexuality, the image of women has been centralized to the national identity in modern Iran. The more women's sexuality and body are being regulated, the more women turn into sites of political struggle and controversy. Despite the above-mentioned centrality, however, women have encountered hostility in Iranian society through the mechanism of ambivalence modification; while in Pahlavi era unveiling of women was one of the most controversial manifest of modernity, under the Islamic regime the Iranian women were pulled into the first line of the battle against the westernization and modernity through the obligatory "re-veiling". The representation of women in Iranian cinema has been persistently constructed through the ideological negotiation of women, modernity and cinema in Iranian society.

Once Upon a Time, Cinema:
The very early presence of cinema in Iran was in 1900, five years after the Lumiere brothers' invention of the cinematographmachine, with the first Iranian documentary film concurred with Qajar dynasty. The first public theater was opened in 1904, and the first Iranian feature film was screened in 1930 (Jahid, 2012, p. 55) in the early years of Pahlavi dynasty. Like any other film industry, Iranian cinema has been always interacting with socio-political changes of the society since the very beginning of it.

The cinema in the Qajar era was limited to the exhibition of foreign actualities and narratives and the rare production of domestic actualities and comic skits (Naficy, 2011). Since the very beginning of cinema, the presence of Iranian women in cinema has been a controversial issue. "Women's routine presence in public places such as parks, streets, and cinemas would be interpreted as always already sexual and immoral, let alone their presence onstage as entertainers performing for strangers."(Naficy, 2011, p. 134).

Being rooted in pre-existing religious creeds according to which women were excluded from previously male-dominated forms of visual arts including Persian literature and visual art performances (Najmabadi, 1998), the presence of Iranian women both as film spectator and performer encountered hostility and opposition. It took many years for women to become accepted into the public space and as members of the category called "audience". Despite all the constraints, Iranian women, have gradually found their way to cinema as spectator and performer on the base of previously launched and continuously progressive social changes.

In the first volume of his important book, A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Hamid Naficy(2011) argues that the engagement of women in the Constitutional Revolution improved their social roles (p. 132). Despite frequent references to Constitutional Revolution, and Reza Shah's modernization as two main sources of the roots of the social changes that profoundly altered the status of Iranian women in the society, the Babi and Baha'i religions and their impact on all aspects of Iranian society should not be neglected. These two religions not only predated the Constitutional Revolution but also "had led the way with many of the social reforms being advocated by the Constitutionalists" (Momen, 2008, p. 352). In the analysis of nineteenth and twentieth century Iran, most of the Iranian and non-Iranian historians and scholars within different disciplines tend to neglect the role of Babi and Baha'i community in introducing ideas such as "participatory democracy, the setting up of modern schools, and the advancement of the social role of women" (Momen, 2008, p. 362).

As Maneck(1994) argues "no other world religion has been quite as explicit as the Baha'i faith in its support of the principle of the equality of men and women" (p. 211). In contrast to other religions, Tahereh, as the "Baha'i Paradigm of Womanhood" (in Maneck's word), is not symbolized as an ideal mother, daughter or wife but she was a gifted poet of nineteenth century who converted to Babi religion in contrast to the wish of his father, MullaSalih, a prominent Muslim cleric of Qazvin, and also left her husband and children. "At a time when women were not allowed to set foot outside their homes without their husbands' permission, she left her husband and two sons to become one of the Babis' most effective and outspoken leaders" (Nafisi, 2003). Her most courageous act was unveiling her face in the gathering of Bab's followers as a symbol of arrival of a new faith, which opens "the private into the public domain and turns the injustice of women's personal life into a public injustice" (Nafisi, 2003).The movement of Babi and Baha'i is one of the major forces behind the Constitutional Revolution paved the way for the presence of women in public sphere.

In the Qajar era, women found the way to public cinema as spectators, although attending gender segregated movie houses. The presence of women on the stage and on the screen was more controversial than their presence as spectators. Prior to cinema, there was the long tradition of employing young boys playing the women's roles. Also, non-Muslim women appeared as Muslim women on the stage. On screen, however, it took longer years to employ this latter strategy for the presence of women on screen, and the first adult female actor who appeared on screen without a full veil was Asia Qestanian, a Christian Armenian, and also Zoma, another young Armenian girl who was the daughter of an Iranian-Armenian director, OvanesOhanians, played the role of a dentist's assistant in a film.

Modernization Launched:
At the same time with socio-political changes in Iranian society, women presence in cinema, both as spectators and actors, went under profound changes in Pahlavi era. With the replacement of Qajar with Pahlavi Dynasty in 1925, the modernization of Iran was reinforced by Reza Shah, the first Pahlavi king of Iran. Reza Shah's centralized state policy is what Naficy called "syncretic westernization" with its key components of revival and reinforcement of "certain ancient Persian, pre-Islamic, and Zoroastrian cultural features while simultaneously instituting various formations of modernity—sociopolitical, technological, cultural, ideological, spectatorial, and authorial—under the authoritarian guidance of the Shah" (2011, pp. 141-142).

Following the reformist changes by the first Pahlavi king, the newly-emerged nation-state kingdom of Pahlavi brought drastic changes in Iranian society through its project of westernization and modernization. The one with the most effects on women's life was the ban of any form of hejab. Under the severe western scrutiny of hejab in the twentieth century, hejab is associated more and more with backwardness, and therefore, its urgent restriction and/or abolishment became the indispensable step in the projects of modernization in countries such as Turkey and Iran.

In 1920s and 1930s, women's participation and active presence in public sphere was considered incompatible with wearing hejab(Chehabi, 2003). Therefore, on the 8th of January 1936, forced unveiling was implemented as "the beginning of the state-sponsored so-called women's awakening movement", which was accomplished "by a combination of state prevention, coercion, encouragement, violence, propaganda, and the publicizing of unveiled women"(Naficy, 2011, p. 147), and "mandated Iranian women to unveil their hejab in public spaces and tried to impose upon them European female dress codes of that time such as European hats and skirts"(Moradiyan Rizi, 2015, p. 22).

Prior to the ban of hejab, there were a number of reforms in regard to the position of women; educational reforms such as providing public schooling for girls; and marital reforms in order to modernize marriage and divorce practices through legislation(Mahdavi, 2003). This is the time when the first Iranian woman appeared on the first Iranian talkie, The Lor Girl (AbdolHosseinSepanta, ArdeshirIrani, 1933), and the deeply-rooted taboo of depicting women and love was broken. The film depicts the love story between Jafar, a government officer (played by Sepanta himself), and Golnar (played by SediqehSaminejad, the wife of Irani's driver). Although the film was received well by the audiences, and Sepanta, the male actor became a star, the female actor, SediqehSaminejad and her family encountered social harassment and physical abuse (Naficy, 2011; Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010; Mir-Hosseini, 2007). It was Saminejad's first and last acting experience as it had affected her life traumatically. According to Mir-Hosseini, the reason of this rejection of Saminejad as the first Muslim cinema actress is that "Golnar breaks deeply engrained Irano-Muslim gender taboos, and she is far removed from an idealized and passive object of love"(2007, p. 675). For years, acting women in films remained a problematic issue associated with corruption and unchastity. Consequently, the first acting school in Tehran failed to attract any female students(Baharlu, 2002, p. 25).

Reza Shah's "women-awakening movement" succeed to improve the position of women in the society. However, the harsh and tactless means of unveiling through police harassment led to exclusion of traditional women- who were unwilling to toss their hejab- from attending public spheres such as shops, public bathhouses, and maktabs (traditional schools) which had been previously accessible to them(Chehabi, 2003).

What the mentioned policy of modernization had in common with the policy of Islamic government of post-revolutionary Iran is the denial of the right of women to choose, and the disability/undesirability to imagine a more participatory society with the presence of citizens, males or females, who can freely choose what to wear as the first step toward freedom. In the first volume of The History of Sexuality(1990), Michel Foucault asserts "where there is power, there is resistance"(p. 95). The coerced unveiling of Reza Shah's modernization policy and the compulsory veiling of Islamisation policy, although occurring within half of the century, have both encountered the resistance and opposition by Iranian women.

While before the unveiling edict, the male westernized dandies (fokoli) were the signifier of modernity, the new image of unveiled woman both in public spheres and on the screen turned into a figure to represent modernity. This persistent image with its continuation during the second Pahlavi cinema was being associated with modernity's excesses and moral corruption, and became the root of hostility toward westernization, modernity and cinema after the revolution.

For years after the forced unveiling embarked by Reza Shah, hejab had remained a site of struggle between tradition and modernity, and women's body and sexuality have signified this struggle constantly. Although under the reign of Reza Shah's son, Mohammad Reza Shah (the second Pahlavi: 1941-79), hejab was not banned in public anymore and women could choose to wear or not to wear hejab, hejab was still associated with backwardness and was discouraged in public in contrast to the western life style which was promoted and encouraged.

During the second Pahlavi era while the country was experiencing a rapid transition into modernity, capitalism and industrialization, "an advertising-driven star system developed and popular movies became commodities"(Naficy, 2011, p. 12). Women who were hitherto merely a "spectating subjects", became "diegetic subjects" who were central to the cinema, it would take years, however, before women became "producing subjects", making their own films (Naficy, 2011, p. 151).

Despite the increasing presence of women on screen in 1940s, most of the films "shared a simple-minded kind of romanticism, mixed with a strong tendency to moralize. In most of them, women were at the center stage as victims of male immorality. These women were not presented as examples of moral superiority, though they were the advocates of a type of simple and easily accessible morality"(Lahiji, n.d.).

Commercial Cinema; Women as Unchaste Dolls:
With the increasing number of imported foreign movies in the late 1950s, the Iranian producers shifted to a new strategy of utilizing physical attraction of actors and actresses in order to be able to compete and attract the audiences into cinema(Lahiji, 2002), bearing in mind that the cinema-goers at that time was mostly young and male(Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994, p. 35). This new strategy led into formation of a new melodramatic genre known as film farsi in Iranian cinema. The financial success of this new genre of Iranian cinema encouraged further production of these movies in 1960s.

The most important subject of Iranian melodramas was the issue of morality and sentimental stories such as "sacrifice in the realm of the family, domestic crises, faithless husbands or wives, lost children, crimes of passion"(Sadr, 2006, p. 74). Lahiji(n.d.) addresses this genre as "velvet hat-meat broth-cabaret genre"; "velvet hat" refers to typical male heroes who appeared in these films. They were strong-arm, well-proportioned fist fighters "who mixed a kind of benevolent violence with a life of both piety -as regards for instance to respecting the honour of women- and lack of it, for they spent much of their evenings drinking in rather shabby cabaret-joints"; and "meat broth" is a traditional Iranian food associated with the lower class of the society. For, these films were usually dealing with the sentimental class differences.

With the popularity of film farsi, however, in the 1960s and 1970s, the presence of women on the screen increased profoundly. Despite the quantitatively significant presence of women on the screen, the image was not improved much and still women were excluded from production as meaning-creating subjects.

Following the pattern of Indian, Egyptian and Turkish cinema, the new melodramatic genre of Iranian cinema was predominated with women singing and dancing in cafes and cabarets. Hamid Naficy in the second volume of A Social History of Iranian Cinema states that in film farsi, "a leering, voyeuristic, male-driven camera gaze filmed [women's] performances, which either isolated their legs, breasts, and faces into fragmented fetish objects" (2011, p. 208). Therefore, the cinema "turned into the place for the regurgitation of suppressed sexual drives" (Lahiji, n.d., para.19-20).

The 'woman as victim' was a central theme in these melodramatic genre (Sadr, 2006). In reference to the thematically stereotypical representation of women, Lahiji writes,

The pervert woman who was easily deceived, became a cabaret dancer and a prostitute until the day when the saving angel arrived in the shape of an attractive strong arm, velvet-hat wearing man, or a roving fist-fighter who would then wake the woman from her sinful ways with a slap of the face, take her and pour the water of repentance on her head and finally, save her (n.d., para. 21).

Women's objectified images not only appealed to the male gaze but also satisfied young male audiences' narcissistic ego through getting control over the women's life as the hero who saved them. This sole cinematic representation of women as object of desire led into formation of what Lahiji called "unchaste dolls". Derayeh(2010)re-conceptualizes Lahiji's formulation of the representation of women in film farsithrough the "protégé identity of Iranian women" as "paradoxical paradigm of a masum (naive/innocent) protégé (mother, sister, and wife) vis-à-vis the fasid or gumrah (corrupt/misguided hence promiscuous) protégé (p. 151). Emergence of this representation of women as object of desire creates anti-cinema feeling before the revolution. That is why the clerics rejected cinema as Haram (religiously forbidden). The idea of purifying cinema after the revolution stems from this perspective on cinema.

It should be noted that during the 1970s the status of women in Iranian society profoundly changed. The1967 Family Protection Law was one of these drastic changes in Iranian society according to which men's right to divorce and polygamy was curtailed. Under this law men and women got equal access to divorce and child custody(Mir-Hosseini, 2010). However, despite the relative social empowerment of women in the society, "the life, suffering and joys of normal women, the housewives, women working on the farm, in factories, at school and offices, physicians, nurses, poets, authors, lawyers, and university teachers engaged in living normal lives had no place in the Iranian movies" (Lahiji, n.d., para. 22). As Talattof(2011) asserts "women gained 'power' in society but lost it in the film farsi movies. The more men lost control over women's bodies in real life and the more the law limited them in the courts, the more they gained control over female body in cinema" (p. 125).

Art Cinema; Women as Chaste Dolls:
In the late 1960 and 1970, the flourishing era of Iranian cinema under the Pahlavi Dynasty began with the emergence of Iranian New Cinema, also known as 'New Wave' cinema. However, as Gow(2011) arguesthe label of "Iranian New Cinema" -with its exclusive reference to Iranian post-revolutionary cinema- ignores this rich pre-revolutionary tradition of Art Cinema. Avant-garde intellectual film making of New Wave art cinema were developed in terms of techniques and themes, and succeeded to receive international recognition with the initial films of 1969, The Cow (Gav) by DaryushMehrju'i, and Qeysar by MassoudKimia'i.

Although Iranian New Wave films were socially conscious, and developed "more realistic story lines, superior filmmaking techniques and included little or no voyeuristic exploitation of the female image" (Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010, p. 108), there were no or exceptional development in regard to the representation of women.

In order to show opposition toward western-oriented policy of the ruling regime, the intellectual filmmakers addressed indigenous Iranian cultural attributes through representing image of a good woman who became "a faceless, unexciting figure who wore traditional costume and stayed in the background as an obedient housewife, or a virgin in training for the role, whose only concern in life was to make the home comfortable for male masters who wielded knives and got into fights in order to defend the honor and virginity of their female flock (Lahiji, 2002, p. 221).

In compare to the previously "unchaste dolls" of Film Farsi, the alternative image of women in this new supposedly intellectual Art Cinema is saturated with "chaste dolls". Mentioning this derogating representation from unchaste to

chaste dolls, Lahiji (2002) argues that the idea of the chaste dolls has continued to survive in post-revolutionary Iranian cinema as "the lackluster yet predominant image of women" (p. 222).

Islamization Launched:
The Islamic revolution of 1979 has profound influence on different aspects of Iranian society through the inscription of new rules and values. The overthrow of Pahlavi dynasty and its replacement by the Islamic government in 1979 was followed by a series of political crisis among which the eight-year Iran-Iraq war was the most influential event with "1 million dead, thousands of innocent chemical victims, millions of displaced Iranian civilians, and almost $1 trillion in damage"(Fair, 2010). Under the influence of the Islamic revolution and the Iran-Iraq war, the situation of women has been transformed dramatically within the Iranian society, and subsequently within the Iranian cinema. Despite their profound participations in the revolution, Iranian women have faced marginalization and exclusion under the new revolutionary government. For, there were significant transformation of gender and sexuality including but not limited to obligatory hejab in public and the abolition of Family Protection Law (1967, modified in 1977) which supported women's rights.

Extraordinarily, despite the new restrictions and limitations, women's presence and participation in Iranian society and Iranian cinema have gradually increased. However, women's success to survive and flourish is not a one-night achievement but it is indebted to decades of inexhaustible and arduous struggles.

Islamisation as a New Policy:
Iranian filmmakers have faced censorship both before and after the revolution. However, since the revolution, the restriction codes have become more strict and pervasive. The first occurrence of film censorship was in 1904 by a leading cleric, ShaikhFazlollahNuri, over the screening of unveiled western women in films (Naficy, 2011, p. 15). Anti-cinema feeling among clerics and the condemnation of cinema as "the satanic work of 'polluted foreigners'" (Naficy, 2011, p. 5) was rooted in the rejection of the modernity and colonialism that cinema symbolized "to 'stupefy' Iranians and undermine the authority of Shiite tradition and Muslim clerics"(Naficy, 2011, p. 90). This magic-bullet-like understanding of the effect of cinema fueled with the rejection and hostility toward modernity/westernization, and consequently toward cinema was the root of the urge for reformulating the cinema under the new revolutionary regime.

One of the most important points of departure of the revolution which has directly influenced cinema was the rejection of pro-western policies of Pahlavi era. Rejection of the western policies was not limited to the realm of politics and international relations, and soon turned into the main axis in redefining the cultural codes and values. For, the new ideology of Islamisation which has been defined in contrast to the ideology of Pahlavi era, has been tried to be embedded in the society through "state apparatuses" (Althusser, 1971), conglomerating the elements of repressive and ideological apparatuses.

The project of "Islamisation", hand in hand with the rejection of westernization and modernity, was launched as the main policy of the new regime, which entails the immediate reformulations in the realm of religion, education, family, law, politics, communication and culture including cinema.It should be mentioned, however, that as Gramsci argues the "intellectual and moral reform" does not remove the elements of the previous world-view and ideology thoroughly but the elements of the subordinate one continue to exist (Gramsci, 1971). The Islamic regime has not rejected the modernity thoroughly but tried to redefine it through Islamic version of modernity. The new state resumed the previously launched literacy and health campaign of Pahlavi era, and formed its own army, police force and parallel paramilitary forces(Afary, 2009, p. 265). The same ambivalent strategy of hostility and modification toward modernity was utilized in regard to cinema.

Despite the initial rejection of cinema –with revocation of the screening permission of domestic and foreign films and stagnation of film industry- clerics who had hitherto showed hostility toward cinema, recognized its power and instead of forbidding it, they have tried to control it through the process of Islamisation(Tapper, 2002). In his early speech after his return to Iran form exile, Ayatollah Khomeini, the religious leader of the revolution, addressed the issue of cinema and its position in the Islamic regime:

We are not opposed to cinema, to radio, to television.... The cinema is a modern invention that ought to be used for the sake of educating the people, but as you know, it was used instead to corrupt our youth. It is the misuse of

cinema that we are opposed to, a misuse caused by the treacherous policies of our rulers (Cited in Mottahedeh, 2006, p. 176).

As Sadr (2006) mentions, the transition from pre to post-revolutionary Iranian cinema, between 1978 to 1982 was "the vaguest age of Iranian cinema history"(p. 169) due to the ambiguity of the criteria to define national Islamic values and codes. Therefore, the Ministry of Culture and Art was replaced by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, with the main mission of Islamizing all kinds of art and cultural activities (Mir-Hosseini, 2003).

As it has been discussed, the first criterion of this new cinema was a political-ideological stand of anti-western, anti-Shah and anti-imperialism which was in line with "neither West nor East" doctrine of new foreign affairs(Naficy, 1987, p. 455). "This kind of filmmaking excluded profit, the star system and competition. Communication with the people was the objective in film, just as it was the aim of the struggle" (Sadr, 2006, p. 173). The strict codes of censorship, however, were not limited to these and were taken further to cover Islamic codes of modesty and heterosexual relationship.

As Naficy thoughtfully argues "in modern Iran, any time that national identity is at stake, women, their social roles, and their representation on screens become central to the national debate"(Naficy, 2011, p. 133). This centrality of women to national identity is rooted in chronic surveillance over female sexuality within normative patriarchal values and desire. As Butler (1990) asserts "persons only become intelligible through becoming gendered in conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility"(p. 16). While during Pahlavi era unveiling of women was one of the most controversial manifestation of modernity, under the Islamic regime the Iranian women were pulled into the first line of the battle against the westernization and modernity through the obligatory "re-veiling".

Right after the revolution, women and the issue of hejab turned into a sign of resistance to westernization. In accordance to the mentioned policy about hejab, after the 1979 revolution of Iran, the division of ideas appeared among women when the arguments about enforcement of hejab were launched by the government. Some women who considered hejab as a sign of resistance against western-oriented policies welcomed it eagerly, while many others took stand against it. However, finally, in the summer of 1981, despite resistance of many Iranian women, the obligatory practice of hejab was imposed on Iranian women as the sign of Islamism, modesty and virtue, which has changed the represented images of women both in the society and in different forms of art, including cinema. In line with the Islamisation policy of the government, in order to define the new ideal Muslim women,

Suddenly images of veiled women sprang up everywhere, seemingly infinite variations on a theme. In every Iranian city, on every building, inside all businesses, outside and inside public transportation facilities, and in every educational institution, the private and 'sacred' woman of Iranian culture was transformed into a public image for all to view…. during this era, the Hejabbecame a universal symbol of the chaste and pious Iranian daughter, sister, wife, and/or mother(Shirazi, 2010, pp. 112-113).

From Invisible to Politically Active:
After the revolution, in order to comply with the Islamist values -based on clerics' limited interpretation of Islam through Fegh (religious jurisprudence)- women's presence in cinema needed to be desexualized, and any manifest objectification of women's body was banned. Modesty in appearance and behavior was the first principle of Islamisation of cinema, which has been mostly associated with the presence of women in cinema, and imposed by codes of dressing and behavior.

According to the 'dressing codes' of modesty, women have to cover their body with head scarf and loose cloths in order not to show their bodies; even in the home and in bed, women must have body and hair hejab, and only women's faces and hands are allowed to be without hejab (MoradiyanRizi, 2015; Recknagel, 2014; Naficy, 2012). The 'behavioral codes' of modesty prohibit physical contacts between men and women, and "forbid almost all physical gestures of romantic love, limit the kinds of issues that can be discussed, and bar women from singing or dancing on screen" (Recknagel, 2014). In addition to dressing and behavioral codes, cinematic techniques such as close-ups of a woman's face or body, and point-of-view shots in a male-female scene have to be modified in order to hinder a mutual, sexual look between man and woman(Moradiyan Rizi, 2015).

The restrictive initial codes resulted in sudden elimination of women from the filmic representation in the early 1980s, in the first phase of the presence of women in Iranian post-revolutionary cinema, which Hamid Naficy(2012) titles as "Women's Structured Absence". The second Phase, "Women's Background Presence", soon started with the reappearance of women on the screen in mid 1980s, although in a more restrictive marginal roles within the limited sphere of family as self-devoted mother and modest wife and sisters. Lahiji describes this marginal presence as follows,

The faint shadow of women in the new films was cast in neutral roles, sitting next to the samovar to pour tea for the men of the family, to obey the father, husband and even young sons. When given key roles, women played the part of upper class grumbling women with illogical, demanding characters without accepting responsibility (n.d., para.40).

By the termination of war in 1988 and the newly-emerged era known as "Construction Era" with the presidency of Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-97), "women who had endured economic pressure and shortages, life under bombs and rockets and the martyrdom of their dear ones, while many of them had had to assume the role of the breadwinner in the absence of their men" (Lahiji, 2002, p. 224) raise their malcontent voices against structural discrimination in the society, and cinema found the opportunity to function as the social critique.

Under the new liberal policy in the third phase, "Women's Foreground Presence", women appeared more actively in cinema and women's images on screen have profoundly changed by the emergence of powerful female characters. Filmmakers such as RakhshanBani-Etemad, TahminehMilani, PuranDerakhshandeh are regarded as the influential women filmmakers who emerged in post revolutionary Iranian cinema. By the films such as *Time of Love*by Mohsen Makhmalbaf (1991) and Bani-Etemad'sNarges(1992), the taboo subject of romantic love was broken.

Under the social transformation of Iranian society with the increase in women education, the emergence of new generation who questioned the previously set norms and values, and the reformist era of President Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005), new themes have emerged in Iranian cinema including but not limited to "critical perspectives on traditional, arranged marriage, patriarchal family, male prerogative laws,…portrayals of female self-expression and independency, heterosexual and homosexual relations, and transgender problems"(Moradiyan Rizi, 2015, p. 12).

In this forth phase of "Veiling and Modesty as Political Criticism", the representation of women was fostered both behind and in front of the camera; women have more freedom to show their hair partly; many previously banned films have received screening permission; the topic of women and love, which was hitherto suppressed within the filmic representation, fid a path to be demonstrated; the presence of female filmmakers who exclusively started dealing with female characters, and criticize patriarchal demands against women increased; and the image of womanhood has been advanced, "from a passive cipher to a more fully formed, moulded character with clear convictions"(Sadr, 2006, p. 266), and "the main tasks of these new heroines were not just to suffer from male jealousy or unfair laws but to rebel – if need be– against the very heart of the family" (p. 264).

Conclusive Remarks
There is a repeated claim that the inscription of hejab and the project of "purification" of cinema open the way for the profound presence of women in front and behind the camera. It is being discussed that the inscription of hijab and rules of modesty "lustrated" cinema from previous stigmatic attributions, and paved the way for the gradual transformation of cinema into a "reliable" and "safe" public sphere for women. In addition although women were active in cinema industry as spectator and actor "they ironically only came to their own as film directors during the Islamic Republic period, when women faced the suppression of their rights and the imposition of the veil"(Naficy, 2011, p. 15).

Despite the mentioned arguments, it would be unjust to neglect the ambivalent attitude toward women in the Iranian society which is the source of ambivalent representation of women in Iranian cinema; the ambivalence which is rooted in what Zeiny(2013) insightfully called "neopatriarchal Iranian cinema".

Although originally being developed in the context of Arab society by Sharabi(1988), the concept of neopatriarchy seems to be relevant to the new situation of ambiguity in regard to the presence of empowered women both in the Iranian society and on the screen. To describe neopatriarchy in Arab countries, Sharabi(1988) writes;

The Arab Awakening or renaissance (nahda) of the nineteenth century not only failed to break down the inner relations and forms of patriarchalism but, by initiating what it called the modern awakening, also provided the ground for producing a new, hybrid sort of society/culture—the neopatriarchal society/culture we see before us today"(p. 4).

Neopatriarchy shapes in Iran within the ambivalent interaction of tradition and modernity, and has been reinforced with the emergence of new generation of youth in Iranian society. This is what Talattof calls modernoid, "a society that resembles a modern one in some areas but lacks other essential modern structures" (2011, p. 21); the situation which seems to be inevitably hybridized through intertwining modern and traditional elements.

Janet Afary argues that, "The 1979 Islamic Revolution was not a wholesale return to the past; rather, the new state reinvented and expanded certain retrogressive gender and cultural practices and presented them as what Foucault has called a 'regime of truth' through modern technologies of power"(Afary, 2009, p. 265). The approach toward women under the Islamic Republic is the outcome of this newly emerged "regime of truth"; the approach which has been as ambivalent toward women as it has been toward modernity(Moradiyan Rizi, 2015, p. 6) and cinema; all the three are accused of being the source of corruption unless they are confined, controlled, and manipulated through patriarchal version of Islamic values. This is the underlying assumption of neopatriarchal unconscious in Iran.

Here are some examples of the mentioned neopatriarchal ambivalent approach toward women in Iranian society; while "the state defines women as mothers and considers motherhood the basis of their dignity and value in Islamic society… it refuses to grant them the right to keep and raise their children in the absence of the father"(Sadr, 2006, p. 264); while after the revolution, the education of women continued to be encouraged and in 2001, for the first time, female students outnumbered male student, new rules in more than 30 universities banned female students from almost 80 different degree courses in 2011(Sahraei, 2012); and Morality Police is still patrolling the streets to repressively impose dressing codes of modesty, arresting women for violating the Islamic attire. On 15 June 2015, the 195 members of the Iranian parliament formally warned president Rouhani for more serious confrontation with "women failing to properly observe modest Islamic covering" and they showed their worries about "irreversible consequences from a western cultural onslaught seeking to 'change the Iranian people's way of life vis-à-vis hejab and chastity"(Elmjouie, 2014);

The easing of the restrictions by the government was part of the mentioned neopatriarchal project in Iranian society. So, there is nothing to celebrate about this version of neopatriarchy even if it eases the restrictions. The mandatory veiling although paving the path for the presence of women in cinema, still keeps its function as a tool to control women's body and male domination over women's sexuality. This neopatriarchal uncontious has been introduced and theorized by Nasehi and Kara (2018) as "buttressing" perspective on femininity, which also finds its way to the silver screen and construct ambivalent representation of empowered female characters.

There are the progressive themes and new image of non-traditional Iranian women in Iranian newly emerged cinema. However, still the neopatriarchy is what shapes the representation of women in cinema. Despite the mentioned progressive themes and images, the standard female characters still reflected the official mood, and were developed in response to the perceived "economic and sexual threat" pose by "educated non-traditional women"(Sadr, 2006, p. 261). Sadr called this representation of women as "a mixture of idealism and misogyny"(p. 266). He argues that women's problems on the screen are too deep to be resolved. Whenever women have counter-attack on patriarchal structures, they are finally punished in the films for finding their voice, getting empowered and seeking independence. Filmmakers are mostly unable to break the patriarchal restrictions because not only their female and male characters but also the filmmakers, themselves "live in a world with many unanswered questions regarding women's autonomy" (p.266).

Recognizing neopatriarchal practices of Iranian cinema does not deny the Iranian cinema's significant steps toward transcending the binary of sexes but it aims to acknowledge the long way ahead of it toward gender parity. This is a vital issue considering the volatile nature of state policies in regard to women, modernity and cinema.

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