

Governmental Discourses in Advertising on Iran's State

Azra Ghandeharion

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad

Morteza Yazdanjoo

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb>

Dedicated to the dissemination of scholarly and professional information, **Purdue University Press** selects, develops, and distributes quality resources in several key subject areas for which its parent university is famous, including business, technology, health, veterinary medicine, and other selected disciplines in the humanities and sciences.

CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture, the peer-reviewed, full-text, and open-access learned journal in the humanities and social sciences, publishes new scholarship following tenets of the discipline of comparative literature and the field of cultural studies designated as "comparative cultural studies." Publications in the journal are indexed in the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature (Chadwyck-Healey), the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (Thomson Reuters ISI), the Humanities Index (Wilson), Humanities International Complete (EBSCO), the International Bibliography of the Modern Language Association of America, and Scopus (Elsevier). The journal is affiliated with the Purdue University Press monograph series of Books in Comparative Cultural Studies. Contact: <clcweb@purdue.edu>

Recommended Citation

Ghandeharion, Azra; and Yazdanjoo, Morteza. "Governmental Discourses in Advertising on Iran's State." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 19.3 (2017): <<https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2873>>

This text has been double-blind peer reviewed by 2+1 experts in the field.

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

This is an Open Access journal. This means that it uses a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access. Readers may freely read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of articles. This journal is covered under the [CC BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture, the peer-reviewed, full-text, and open-access learned journal in the humanities and social sciences, publishes new scholarship following tenets of the discipline of comparative literature and the field of cultural studies designated as "comparative cultural studies." In addition to the publication of articles, the journal publishes review articles of scholarly books and publishes research material in its *Library Series*. Publications in the journal are indexed in the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature (Chadwyck-Healey), the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (Thomson Reuters ISI), the Humanities Index (Wilson), Humanities International Complete (EBSCO), the International Bibliography of the Modern Language Association of America, and Scopus (Elsevier). The journal is affiliated with the Purdue University Press monograph series of Books in Comparative Cultural Studies. Contact: <clcweb@purdue.edu>

Volume 19 Issue 3 (September 2017) Article 2
Azra Ghandeharion and Morteza Yazdanjoo,
"Governmental Discourses in Advertising on Iran's State Television"
<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol19/iss3/2>>

Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 19.3 (2017)**
<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol19/iss3/>>

Abstract: In their article "Governmental Discourses in Advertising on Iran's State Television" Azra Ghandeharion and Morteza Yazdanjoo apply a comparative cultural studies approach to examining Iran's State television (IRIB) advertising directions under two distinct political eras: Conservative era (2011-2013) and Moderate Reformist era (2013-2015). The transition from the former to the latter is reflected in Iran's national and international diplomacies, where the influence of this shift can be traced both at macro and micro levels. Ghandeharion and Yazdanjoo analyze this shift at the micro level by comparing IRIB's beauty-product advertisements broadcasted during the two political eras. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) enables the identification of two political parties' approaches toward crucial issues which determine IRIB's mode of advertising. Focusing on the discursive categories of characterization and brand, the authors find that IRIB employs quite different strategies to reflect Conservative and Moderate Reformist approaches to gender issues, national identity and political independence in Iran.

Azra GHANDEHARION and Morteza YAZDANJOO

Governmental Discourses in Advertising on Iran's State Television

Steven Tötösy defines comparative cultural studies as encompassing "the study of culture and culture products—including, but not restricted to literature, communication, media, art, etc.— [...] performed in a contextual and relational construction" (qtd. in "From Comparative" 16). Benefiting from this cross-disciplinary field of study, we examine how Iran's State TV, known as Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), reflects changes in the country's political environment. The study is comparative in its analysis of IRIB's advertisements under two political epochs rather than in isolation, and cultural in its concern with mass production and context rather than canonical or elite writings. The focus of the study is the emergence of new advertising patterns in IRIB programming after the Conservative era's ending in the wake of Hasan Rouhani's victory in the 2013 presidential election.

A complicated entanglement of culture, politics, religion, and media underlies social life in Iran, wherein modern imperatives undermine indoctrinated national-Islamic mores. While older generations of Iranians are proud of Cyrus the Great and Hafiz, historical exemplars of Iran's remarkable culture, youths are more preoccupied with Facebook and nose jobs. The tension between preserving an innate tonality and assimilating western iconicity lies at the heart of the generation gap in Iran, and is neglected neither by politicians nor by social groups. Such concerns are evident, for instance, in the 2011 shift from "Sport Organization" to "The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport." Similarly, this dilemma defines the political difference between the "Conservative" and "Reformist" parties, the two dominant parties in Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The former, adherent of pure Islamic-national doctrines, advocates resisting western modes of thinking as a way to preserve the country's independence and to foil cultural invasion. The Reformist party, on the contrary, is more inclined toward attenuating political tension with the West on the one hand, and to encouraging plurality of thought within Iran on the other hand. Conservatives are "affiliated with a politicized version of traditional Islam, whereas reformists opt for a pluralist Islam, one more compatible to modern culture and postmodern epistemology" (Seifzadeh, "The Landscape" 58). As a result, political transitions from the dialogic to the monologic discourse in 2005, or vice versa in 2013, has been a source of change in domestic and foreign affairs in Iran.

With minor exceptions, the government in Islamic Republic of Iran has been administered by reformists (Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, and Hasan Rouhani) while the parliament has been supervised by conservatives (Ali-Akbar Nateq-Nouri, Gholam-Ali Hadad Adel and Ali Larijani). One of the exceptions is the 2005-2013 presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad a Conservative politician, whose victory marked a new chapter in Iran's political history. His ascension to the highest political position before the Supreme Leader not only challenged the supremacy of reformists but also redirected the country's national and international strategies: Khatami's "Dialogue among Civilizations" and "Coalition for Peace" were replaced with the "Revolutionary Discourse," and Iran's nuclear program was developed despite IAEA and Western sanctions. Under Ahmadinejad's administration, with the mission of reviving "Iran's Islamic civilization" (Jafari and Goulding, "Globalization, Reflexivity" 68), moral codes and social controls were strengthened. Nevertheless, in the 2013 presidential election Iranians preferred to elect a reformist president—Hasan Rouhani—whose "Government of Prudence and Hope" aims to recuperate Iran's international avenues. The divergent political narratives between these administrations can be addressed from infra-ultra-political angles, through analyses of foreign policy, nuclear negotiation, women participation in social activities, and media. This paper, by contrast, offers an infra-political investigation into how such differences are reflected in IRIB's beauty product advertisements.

Iran's State TV, known as IRIB (*Sedā va Sima-ye Jomhūrī-ye Eslāmī-ye Iran*), is literally translated as Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It broadcasts eight national and four international news channels, six satellite channels for international audiences in English, Arabic and Turkish, and 31 local channels (for more information, see <<http://www.irib.ir>>). Since foreign broadcasting organizations do not officially air programmes on Iran's TV channels, IRIB plays an influential role in moulding national identity, opinions, values and gender stereotypes. It functions, in Iran's Supreme Leader's words, as a "university for teaching the principles of [...] Islam. This is our approach to the IRIB. [Hence when there is] propagation against us, we are left with IRIB" (Khiabany, *Iranian Media* 159). Watched by more than 62% of Iranians (Wojcieszak and Smith, "Will Politics" 98), IRIB operates as "The Ministry of Communication" in Iran, contributing to the dissemination of sociocultural patterns and perspectives as well as to the achievement of strategic objectives.

While Jafari (2007), Amouzadeh and Tavangar (2008), and Khiabany (2009) pinpoint IRIB's general advertising characteristics, this study examines IRIB'S advertisements in two comparative political epochs: the Conservative era (2011–2013) and the Moderate Reformist era (2013–2015). Such a comparative investigation paves the way for addressing a nuanced shift in IRIB's advertising discourse which is precipitated by the political transition. The first period (2011–2013) is associated with the Conservative faction and President Ahmadinejad, the second (2013–2015) with the moderate reformist and president Rouhani who took the presidential oath in August 2013. To substantiate our hypothesis, we draw on Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* which substantially theorizes the notion of 'discourse' and has shared boundaries with "political studies" and "media studies."

Laclau and Mouffe define discourse as "a relational ensemble of signifying practices creating meaning, which extends to the whole social space, both linguistic and extra-linguistic" (Müller, "Doing Discourse" 13). Meaning, in their account, arises from elements a given discourse associates itself with or separates from. The latter is called "the field of discursivity": it is a "reservoir for the 'surplus of meaning' produced by the articulatory practice – that is, the meanings that each sign has, or has had, in other discourses, but which are excluded by the specific discourse in order to create a unity of meaning" (Jørgensen and Phillips, *Discourse Analysis* 27). In contrast, the elements with which a discourse is identified form its "nodal points" or what Lacan calls the *point de capiton*: nodal points are the sedimented and "privileged signifiers that fix the meaning of a signifying chain" (Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and* 112). Such evanescent constancy, in Laclau and Mouffe's terminology, culminates in the *closure* of elements' fluctuation. Table 1 illustrates central items associated with Laclau and Mouffe's characterization of discourse.

TERM	CONCEPT
<i>Element</i>	<i>Signifiers having multiple non-established meanings</i>
<i>Moment</i>	<i>Elements with partial fixed meaning</i>
<i>Field of discursivity</i>	<i>The surplus of meaning outside discourse</i>
<i>Floating signifier</i>	<i>Elements open to myriad of interpretations</i>
<i>Nodal Points</i>	<i>Privileged signifiers that fix the meaning of a signifying chain</i>

Table 1. Laclau and Mouffe's glossary of discourse

Regarding the material thus far, we can put forward some premises related to the nodal points of conservative and reformist discourses. The two discourses, despite sharing common elements, prioritize different or even contrasting nodal points. Elemental notions, including 'political independence', 'social activism', 'foreign policy', 'nuclear negotiations', 'Women's dress code' etc., are floating signifiers which are articulated and therefore, distinctly valorised within the two discourses. The study summarized the nodal points in Table 2. In the following sections, that enumerate the characteristic elements of each of the discourses of interest, we endeavor to explore how the aforementioned political transition (macro level) is displayed in IRIB beauty-product advertisements (micro level).

POLITICAL PARTY	NODAL POINTS
1. Conservative Party	1. <i>Zestful adherence to National-Islamic values (independence)</i>
	2. <i>Reliance on national sources rather than Western technology</i>
	3. <i>Moralizing media and social organizations</i>
	4. <i>Reinforcing the behavioral codes traditionally associated with gender</i>
2. Moderate Reformist Party	1. <i>Cultural negotiation</i>
	2. <i>Economic & technological interdependence</i>
	3. <i>Flexibility toward behavioral codes associated with gender</i>
	4. <i>Mitigation of strict moral codes</i>

Table 2. Nodal points articulated by Conservative and Moderate Reformist parties, introduced by the authors

As for quantitative data collection, the research focuses on beauty-product advertisements broadcast from 2011 to 2015 during Esfand, 20 February until 20 March, which, according to Iran's calendar, is the last month of the year. Selecting Esfand is justified for two main reasons. First, Esfand is the last month of the year in Iran, after which comes New Year (*Nowruz*). Thus, the spirit of spring and the revival of nature are of great importance culturally, traditionally and even literally. Not only must everywhere be cleaned, redecorated and beautified, but also everybody, especially women,

spend a lot of time to achieve a 'new look'. Predictably, during Esfand, the media do their best to sell. Besides, there is a one-year time lag, from February 2012 to February 2013, during which the societal changes caused by the political transition take place. This lag allows us to establish a precise correspondence between political and cultural changes.

The common general features of beauty-product advertisements from 2011 to June 2013 are as follows: role reversal; adhering to the national identity; the objectification and infantilization of women, all of which comply with conservative-discourse nodal points. In the course of role reversal, men rather than women are the main characters of the advertisements, despite the target audience being women. The stereotypical depiction of women as the object of male gaze and mentally unfit to decide their own lifestyle or beauty ideal, is also traced as the objectification and infantilization of women. Such manipulations are practised to shun seduction, controversy and moral perversion. To emphasize national identity, IRIB runs adverts from Iranian companies despite the presence of many Western beauty products in Iranian pharmacies and beauty-and-hygiene shops. Furthermore, these advertisements consciously avoid using English words. In what follows, we conduct a content-form analysis of the advertisements of three companies (Sehat, Rezhoderm and Word), regarding personages, language and signs, due to their frequency and crystallization of dominant discourse of the Conservative era.

Hand-washing liquid and shampoo, rather than beauty products, constitute the bulk of advertisements in the two years that come under the scrutiny of this article (2011–2013). Thus, there are no "beauty product" advertisements in the strict sense. In the same vein, national companies such as *Sehat* and *Parzhak* have the most eloquent advertisements (signs of nationalism: 'reliance on national sources rather than Western technologies'). The form and content of *Sehat's* and *Parzhak's* advertisements, whose commercial names denote, respectively, 'health' and 'hair' are more or less alike. They mostly use folk melodies, rural settings and local people, such as female villagers during the cropping season (national sources: 'zestful adherence to National-Islamic values', 'reliance on national sources rather than Western technologies'). By employing some specific elements, such as a green landscape or a riverside, they construct traditional intimate atmospheres. Also, a general overview of the advertisements reveals little trace of women in IRIB advertisements during the Conservative era, and advertisements that depict women only present them as happy homemakers taking care of children and preparing food (gender issues). In IRIB's representation, a good woman is obedient, caretaking and not demanding. Crucially, this is how women are conditioned: they must know what to be and how to behave.

Objectification and infantilization of women are consequential features of women's media image during the reign of Conservatives (nodal point: 'reinforcing the behavioral codes traditionally associated with genders'). Objectification is cultural "conditioning using [an] observer's perspective that sexualizes the human body, especially females, through gaze or 'checking out'" (Cortese, *Provocateur* 160). In order to objectify someone, particular objects are employed to represent part of a body to deliver sexual massages. For instance, hair-color advertisements portray a very young girl whose dolls use the product. The image of adult women associated with dolls delivers a message of infantilization as well as objectification. Similarly, women may be objectified as a natural landscape, a specific type of garment, a flower or a butterfly. A flower or a butterfly may appear neutral and naive, yet they still deliver sexual massages. The image of Iranian woman without scarf or in skintight clothing is absent in IRIB. Since scantily-dressed women or their nude presentation are not culturally accepted, a woman's body is replaced by a flower or a butterfly. Two advertisements are analysed in detail to shed more light on this claim.

At the very beginning of the Rezhoderm advertisement, a sentimental young man is worried about his skin. Nervously, he runs to his car to find some sunscreen. His immediate reaction proves that having this product in his car cannot be accidental. He anxiously looks into a mirror and blames himself for having skin that is not fair and soft. After using the product, at the end of the advertisement he feels quite delighted and confident.

Such an effeminate undertaking is, nevertheless, far from the real character of men in Iran who, as the breadwinners of families, must "emphasize their material resources and social status" (Dill, *How Fantasy* 17). In the traditional structure of Iran's society, it seems odd to see a man obsessed with his appearance. What is more, sunscreen lotion for a Westerner cannot be regarded as beauty product; however, according to Conservative discourse, sunscreen is definitely a beauty product.

Word Company's hair-color advertisement also serves the goal of this study because it focuses on the objectification and infantilization of women. Though the name of the product seems English, it has a Persian equivalent as well. *Dehkhoda Dictionary*, the most comprehensive Persian dictionary, defines "Word" as 'disciple and follower' (for more information, see <<http://www.vajehyab.com/>>). The com-

pany also emphasizes the national origin of the product with its recurrent made-in-Iran tag. Rather than advertising the product, the advertisement highlights women's role in the unification of the family (nodal point: 'reinforcing the behavioral codes traditionally associated with gender'). Instead of beautifying a woman, the product reunifies a family, which is considered as 'integrity' in Conservative discourse. At the beginning, a woman is shown in a kitchen washing dishes while her young daughter witnesses her father leaving home resentfully. Everything looks clean and perfect but the woman's face indicates that she is quite nervous about losing her husband. Besides her facial expression, the gloomy setting and dark clothes reveal her desperate situation. Later, the depressed mother goes to a luxurious bathroom with her beautiful, dark-blond-haired daughter to find the proper color for her hair.

In the next scene, the homemaker image is amended to show a perfect wife. There is a romantic happy garden with butterflies, where sunflowers are excited to embrace the husband coming from work. Sunflowers, not the wife, kiss the husband and say hello. Here, the mother's dark dress and scarf become white and light ochre. Actually, the woman's dark dress and scarf can represent her dark skin and black hair. Thus, in her white dress and light-ochre scarf, she is a fair, blond, brand-new wife. In a new location, a remaking of the disappointed housewife into a blond, happy one occurs and the members of the family are reunited. The advertisement portrays a woman's disciplined identity: her integrity requires family unification achieved by the new look of a cheerful housewife – using hair color (nodal point 'reinforcing the behavioral codes traditionally associated with gender'). The unification is further highlighted by the matching clothes of the wife and husband. The suggestion is that there is no autonomy for women, that a woman gains a respectable stance in the family only if she is a beautiful wife and dutiful mother. In the nodal points articulated by the Conservative Party, a woman functions as an angel in the house as well as an angel of beauty, the latter reinforcing the former.

Of the eight qualified candidates for the 2013 presidential election, Hasan Rouhani, the only Reformist, was victorious in the poll. Under the auspices of Hashemi and Khatami, Rouhani promised to revive Iranians' national pride and confidence. The nodal points of the Moderate era, in contrast with those of the Conservative era, can be summarized as follows: "political entente and détente respectively with Europe and the United States," "cultural hybridity," "technological interdependence," "granting more liberty to women and ethnics." Evidence of these claims can be seen at the macro level: appointing Javad Zarif as the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to handle the nuclear negotiations (the government calls it Constructive engagement), appointing Marzieh Afkham as the first female ambassador after the Islamic Revolution, reopening the UK embassy and the House of Cinema in Tehran, inviting many European politicians to Iran (including Catherine Ashton, Federica Mogherini, Philip Hammond and Laurent Fabius), inauguration of KFC activity in Iran, and closing Iran's nuclear deal (United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231).

In this section, noticeable changes are found in the course of IRIB advertisements after the emergence of a moderate government mostly associated with Rouhani's presidency (2013– 2015). The common features of beauty products in the Moderate Reformist era are as follows: massive participation of women and the involvement of Western companies. In this era, as opposed to the role-reversal of the Conservative era, women's voices and bodies take dynamic action in advertisements. It seems that a new identity is introduced: a woman's role as a happy housewife is changed to an angel of beauty and youth. Such modification in the presentation of women as independent rather than submissive agents gives rise to what Okazaki and Taylor (2013) term 'personal extensibility', which enables Iranian women, as a marginalized minority, to reduce their social, cultural and epistemological distance in relation to their female and male counterparts in other countries (57-58). Correspondingly, the focus on national companies shifts to the active involvement of Western companies.

Even when companies are not Western, one can observe English names and the logos of famous Western brands. Hence, master signifiers like nationalism and femininity, due to the emergence of a new political discourse, find their signifieds redefined.

Though our research does not focus on quantitative data, some meticulous counting of advertisements is done to shed light on our comparative approach and to clarify the discursive shift. The total number of beauty-product advertisements in the Conservative era is 525, all of which are for products of Iranian companies (see Table 3). Surprisingly, this number rises to 980 in the Moderate Reformist era (an 87% increase) as the Conservative era runs its course. Turkish and French beauty-product advertisements replace those from national companies to such an extent that *Sehat* and *Parzhak*, respectively, have just 4 (4.7 %) and 5 (5.8%) advertisements out of the 84 in this category. In the first year (2013), the number of beauty-product advertisements is 429. As anticipated, the next year, the number of advertisements increases to 551. The significant 28% increase in two years (2013-2015) shows a promising market for beauty products in Iran. We expected that the increase would be

more apparent during Esfand, as seen in the Conservative era (a 78% rise). Interestingly, that was not the case. During Esfand 2013, in the category of beauty products, 45 advertisements are identifiable, whereas in Esfand 2014 this number decreases to 32, which means a 40% reduction. The message that the advertisements deliver is almost the same, yet this meaningful reduction has an ideological base. It should be noted that this specific *Nowruz* coincides with twenty days of mourning for the death of Fatima, who was the Prophet Mohammad's daughter and wife of Imam Ali, the First Shi'ite Imam. A crucial event in Shi'itic Iran, Fatima's lamentation is not a time for beautification. That is IRIB's message to beauty-product consumers, companies and marketers. Though advertising is a very profitable business for IRIB, the voice of marketing and consumption is silenced by ideological lamentation. This reduction in advertisements is because they can only be broadcast during one-third of the month of Esfand. Focusing on Esfand, a content form of scrutiny of three IRIB advertisements is conducted. The emphasis is on personages, language and signs. One national (Insee) and two foreign companies (Ecco and Renuzit) are discussed in detail due to their frequency and depiction of Moderate Reformist discourse.

POLITICAL ERA	YEAR	NO. of BEAUTY ADS	TOTAL NO. of BEAUTY ADS	SIGNIFICANCE
<i>Conservative</i>	<i>2011-2012</i>	<i>239</i>	<i>523</i>	<i>87% increase in total the total number of ads is observed</i>
	<i>2012-2013 (June)</i>	<i>284</i>		
<i>Moderate Reformist</i>	<i>2013(July)-2014</i>	<i>429</i>	<i>980</i>	
	<i>2014-2015</i>	<i>551</i>		

Table 3. Quantitative presentation of IRIB's beauty-product ads during 2011-2015

In this era, beauty-product companies are mostly Western to the exclusion of Persian and Islamic ones. For instance, scores of foreign brands such as Crystal, Ecco, Face to Face, Season, KD, Delina, Crystal, Highless, Simon, Renuzit, Babyfino, Clear, Dorco, Merident and Nexcare are observed. Thirty Western or Western-licensed advertisements were broadcast in just the first six months after President Rouhani's election. Since the previous IRIB director-general, Ezzatollah Zarghami, was a Conservative, during his eighteen-month supervision in the Moderate Reformist era only unknown Western companies won IRIB's approval to advertise so that he could avoid the criticism of radical Conservatives who disdain the West. As a non-partisan, Mohammad Sarafraz, the next IRIB director-general, allows the advertising of nationally and internationally known 'Western' companies (nodal point: 'cultural negotiation', 'economic & technological interdependence'). Those brands are sold in the Iranian market but have never had chance to advertise on state TV. German "Nivea", American "Clean and Clear" and the British- Dutch Corporation's "Dove", whose products are manufactured in the United States, Germany and Canada, are widely advertised on IRIB. In this section, the article scrutinizes the advertisements of one company, Ecco, associated with beauty corporations in Turkey producing perfumes and body-sprays. Though the companies are non-Western, the Iranian audience understands the close affinity between Turkey and the West because Turkey's attempt to join the European Union receives full media coverage in Iran and many political analysts constantly comment on the dual oriental-occidental nature of Turkey.

Ecco-Amore Company, which can take advantage of many Islamic and Turkish symbols shared by the Iranian audience, prefers to use Western words. The audience is generally unaware of the Greek mythological interpretation of Ecco as a pun for Echo and the romantic story; yet, s/he is familiar with ECCO, the Danish shoe manufacturer. The Turkish company even uses the same typography and logo so that the product can be decoded as Western.

On the other hand, the word 'Amore' sounds more familiar to the Iranian audience since they have seen pictures and statues of Cupid on the walls of many palaces belonging to Qājār and the Pahlavi dynasties. Many Qājār palaces were open to the public during Pahlavi (1919-1979) and Pahlavi palaces have been visited by the public since the Islamic Revolution (1979). A mythological interpretation of 'Amore' can show the significance of a company or product's name. As an equivalent to Eros, Cupid in Greek mythology denotes "Love". "The Latin word Amor means infatuation or passion. Cupid's gold-capped arrows invoke desire and irresistible attraction" (Lynch, *Seduction* 29). 'Amor' is not merely a foreign word, it reinforces sentimentalism and sensuality. It seems that both Turks and Iranians are riveted by the prestigious aura of classical Western words. The articulation of nodal points like 'Cultur-

al negotiation', 'technological interdependence' and 'mitigation of strict moral codes' by the Reformist party justifies the coalescing of Western mythological elements and sensationalism.

According to our findings, we argue that in Moderate Reformist discourse the notion of 'womanhood' is characterized differently when compared with that of Conservative discourse. We discuss and analyse this new presentation and definition of women in Renuzit's advertisements. Initially, it should be mentioned that in none of the Renuzit advertisements do men or women appear physically. The audience only hears the overtly seductive and sensual voices of women, which were totally absent in advertisements aired during Ahmadinejad's presidency (2011 – June 2013). In all the advertisements, the audience hears a conversation between two young women praising each other's beauty due to using different products made by the company, e.g. body splash, moisturizing cream, deodorant and perfume. Besides, the advertisements are set in front of a makeup table, not in a kitchen, with a big mirror in which we see many beauty creams and anti-perspirant sprays that can be decoded as different makeup products.

We can infer that two young women are going to participate in a lavish party, regardless of being homogeneous or heterogeneous. The independent presence of a woman as an outgoing human who wears makeup and enjoys a party without the guardianship of a man is a fairly new identity in advertisements. Such a fundamental revision, representing women as independent and initiative individuals in Iranian media, owes its emergence to the Moderate government and its two main nodal points: 'flexibility of behavioural codes traditionally associated with gender' and 'mitigation of strict moral codes'.

The objectification of women as beautiful, never-aging creatures is still predominant: that is why the Conservative era's beauty mottos, such as "Rezhoderm, the rebirth of skin", are replaced by, for example, "Renuzit, the recommended youth package". The specific choice and arrangement of words play an important role in the comparative analysis of advertisements. Linguistically, the word "package" accentuates plurality as opposed to the definite or indefinite articles. Therefore, consumers are persuaded to use a package of cosmetics to achieve beauty. Furthermore, "youth" is another significant word in the advertisement. Indeed, it celebrates youth and beauty, which is quite harmonious with its personages. Sutton's idea about the role of the media in representing a new picture of 'femininity' and hence a disciplined identity can be helpful (6). In her opinion, the media have proposed a new image of women in recent decades: women are no longer portrayed as homemakers and mothers. Rather, the media represent women as angels of beauty.

Sutton's image of new femininity, represented in women's disciplined identity, is shown fully in another advertisement where the generation gap can be closed only by the use of beauty products (149). The setting is still a makeup table. Women are physically absent though eloquent and tempting in their voices. A young voice asks for her red scarf as the final touch when getting ready for a party. The answer still sounds young and seductive though she is called 'mother'. By wearing a fragrant cream, the mother wins a beauty contest over her young daughter who later asks her permission to use the same cream as the last touch. 'Generation' is a very important word since the product invites both young and middle-aged women to use cosmetics. The product is not limited to young women; instead, beauty and attraction conquer age. The voice of the unseen mother can be taken as a metonymy for her young face and body. It is a continuation of the company's "package" strategy which is neatly wrapped up like a gift on which the motto is printed in bold type.

'Insee' Company goes even further: not only the voice but also the body of a woman is present. Though the product has a Persian title, the word must be transliterated as "Ensi" rather than Insee. Thus, the company aims to attract the attention of English speakers as well as a sophisticated, Iranian audience who are familiar with English. Insee is a common and popular substitution for Ensiyeh, a female name. According to *Dehkhoda Dictionary*, it is one of the nicknames of Fatima's, the Prophet Mohammed's daughter, derived from *owns* denoting 'companionship' or 'from whom one can get consolation' (for more information, see <<http://www.vajehyab.com>>). This connotation of the product's commercial name builds a bridge between religious and consumerist ideology: an Iranian Shi'ite background embedded in the companionship of Ensiyeh; approval of the modern West in the Anglicization of Ensi to Insee. The camera shows a young woman walking in a sensual narcissistic manner. The camera zooms in on her body, her delicate hands caressing a white virginal curtain of gauze and her face while she smells the perfume spray. Her smile of gratification and the facial close-up reveal the irresistible scent of perfume. Actually, the woman's sensuality overpowers the religious implication of the product.

In Conservative discourse, women's disciplined identity asks them to be emotionally impenetrable and thus refrain from sensuality or any extreme emotion. This discipline is less strict in the Moderate Reformist era, as the Insee advertisement bears witness: she is openly flaunting the fragrance. Thus,

the Iranian audience can witness the shift from the conservative nodal point of 'moralizing media and social organizations' to the 'mitigation of strict moral codes', and from 'reinforcing the behavioral codes traditionally associated with gender' to 'flexibility' in those codes. The dominant color in the advertisement is purple. Since Insee is a national company and fully aware of the popularity of president Rouhani, it utilizes his campaign color, purple. In this way, Insee's choice of color adds to the attractiveness of the product as well as paying homage to Moderate Reformists.

Observable as it is, IRIB advertising discourse has undergone quite a shift in the wake of Rouhani's Moderate Reformist administration. Not only do we observe the predominance of international companies over national ones, but also we find women being active agents in beauty-oriented advertisements. Such shifts substantiate our proposal concerning IRIB's inclination towards moderate openness, to 'foreign stimuli', and standardization in its mode of advertising. Further, it turns out that IRIB is allowing more relevant beauty-oriented advertisements than before, since it has come to know that 'relevance' constitutes one of the six main principles of digital advertising. Table 4 shows a general map of IRIB's advertising patterns during (2011-2015) with regard to Conservative and Reformist factions' nodal points.

POLITICAL ERA	BEAUTY-PRODUCT Ads, NO. DURING ESFAND (YEAR)	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	PATTERNS
Conservative	23 (2011)	1. Predominance of national companies	1. Sehat and Parzhak
	41 (2012)	2. Absence of women	2. Objectification, infantilization, role reversal
Moderate Reformist	45 (2013)	1. Predominance of foreign companies	1. Crystal, Ecco, Face to Face, Season, KD, Delina, Crystal, Highless, Simon, Renuzit, Babyfino, Clear, Dorco, Merident, and Nexcare (or 68% of all ads)
	40 (2014)	2. Participation of women	2. Angel of beauty

Table 4. General map of IRIB's advertising strategies from 2011 to 2015, emphasizing the month of Esfand

In conclusion, IRIB in general and its advertisements in particular represent crucial social, cultural, and political themes in Iran. Notwithstanding its non-political constitution, IRIB has turned to a ground for political manoeuvres and exercise of power. While IRIB is rumored to take sides with Conservatives, Reformists also find it advantageous to propagate their pro-liberal axioms through the lever of national TV. In our research, we find that the victory of Reformist faction not only redirects strategic national-international perspectives but also results in emergence of subtle advertising patterns in IRIB which substantially differ from those aired during the reign of Conservatives. Such compatibility with political factions lies at the fraternity-oriented function of IRIB.

Works Cited

Amouzadeh, Mohammad, and Manoochehr Tavangar. "Sociolinguistic aspects of Persian advertising in post-revolutionary Iran." *Media, Culture and Society in Iran: Living with Globalization and the Islamic State*, Eds. Semati, Mehdi, London: Routledge, 2008. 130-151.

Cortese, Anthony J. *Provocateur: Images of Women and Minorities in Advertising*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.

Dill, Karen E. *How Fantasy Becomes Reality: Seeing through Media Influence*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009.

Jafari, Aliakbar, and Christina Goulding. "Globalization, Reflexivity, and the Project of the Self: a Virtual Intercultural Learning Process." *Consumption Markets & Culture* 16.1 (2013): 65-90.

Jafari, Aliakbar. "Two Tales of a City: An Exploratory Study of Cultural Consumption among Iranian Youth." *Iranian Studies* 40.3 (2007): 367-383.

Jørgensen, Marianne W., and Louise J. Phillips. *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London: Sage, 2002.

Khiabany, Gholam. *Iranian Media: The Paradox of Modernity*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso, 2001.

Lynch, Lonnie. *Seduction and Romantic Dinner - Your Mystic Epicurean Quest*. Bloomington: Authorhouse, 2010.

Müller, Martin. "Doing Discourse Analysis in Critical Geopolitics." *L'Espace Politique* 12, 3 (2010): 1-18.

Okazaki, Shintaro, and Charles R. Taylor. "Social Media and International Advertising: Theoretical Challenges and Future Directions." *International Marketing Review* 30.1 (2013): 56-71

Seifzadeh, Hossein S. "The Landscape of Factional Politics and its Future in Iran." *The Middle East Journal* 57. 1 (2003): 57-75.

Semati, Mehdi, ed. *Media, Culture and Society in Iran: Living with Globalization and the Islamic State*. London: Routledge, 2007.

Sutton, Denise H. *Globalizing Ideal Beauty: Women, Advertising, and the Power of Marketing*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
Tötösy de Zepetnek, Steven. "From Comparative Literature Today Toward Comparative Cultural Studies." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 1.3 (1999): <<https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.1041>>.
Wojcieszak, Magdalena, and Briar Smith. "Will Politics be Tweeted? New Media Use by Iranian Youth in 2011." *New media & society* 16.1 (2014): 91-109.

Author's profile: Azra Ghandeharion teaches English literature and cultural studies at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. Her research interests include contemporary Middle Eastern art and culture, with an emphasis on 'Otherness' issues, adaptation, appropriation, body politics, and literature of diaspora. Ghandeharion's recent publications include "A Comparative Study of Iranian and American Media in Authenticating and Popularizing *12 Years A Slave*," *Jahani Resane (Global Media Journal)* (2016), "Ideology behind the Bestselling Book Covers in Iran: Female Narrators of War Literature," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* (2017), and "Shakespeare's Tragedies Recontextualized as Comedies in Iran's State TV Sitcom," *Forum for World Literature Studies*, (2016). Email: <gandeharion@um.ac.ir>

Author's profile: Morteza Yazdanjoo is currently a PhD Candidate in English Literature at Kharazmi University, Iran. His research interests include interdisciplinary studies including cultural studies and cinematic adaptations that in particular contribute to reflect modern outlooks on Iran and Iranian Studies. His most recent articles are "A Comparative Study of Iranian and American Media in Authenticating and Popularizing *12 Years A Slave*," *Jahani Resane (Global Media Journal)* (2016) and "Stylistic features of Holden Caulfield's language in JD Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*: a corpus-based study" *English Studies*, (2016). Email: <std_morteza.yazdanjo@khu.ac.ir>