

COLOR, CLASS, AND GENDER: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF WOMEN AND BEYOND IN ASGHAR FARHADI CINEMA

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ABSTRACT

This study interrogates the films of Asghar Farhadi, who contributed to the international prominence of Iranian cinema, with a mixed-method approach in terms of women's representation. Quantitative data based on content analysis were deepened by textual analysis to negotiate the positive and negative meanings attributed to femininity in Asghar Farhadi's films. The research disclosed that all the female lead characters in the films are portrayed as passive characters who spends her days doing chores within the framework of the power relations determined by the patriarchal social structure. The social position of Iranian women in the patriarchal order was questioned by representing the female characters as economically and emotionally dependent on the males. It is discovered that the female lead characters wearing light-colored costumes are depicted as "honorable women", whereas the female lead characters wearing dark-colored costumes are depicted as "immoral women". These results demonstrated that the roles traditionally attributed to women in Iranian society were reinforced through the color tones.

Keywords: Color, Representation, Woman, Iranian cinema, Asghar Farhadi

Research Article

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RENK, SINIF VE CİNSİYET: ASGHAR FARHADİ SİNEMASINDA KADININ TOPLUMSAL İNŞASI VE ÖTESİ

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, İran sinemasının uluslararası alanda bilinirlik kazanmasında payı olan Asghar Farhadi'nin filmlerini, kadın temsili açısından karma yöntem yaklaşımı ile incelemiştir. İçerik analizine dayalı nicel veriler, metin analiziyle derinleştirilerek Asghar Farhadi filmlerinde kadınlığa yüklenen olumlu ve olumsuz anlamlar tartışılmıştır. Araştırma, filmlerdeki tüm başrol kadın karakterlerin ataerkil toplum yapısı içinde belirlenen iktidar ilişkileri çerçevesinde, ev işlerinden ibaret bir hayat sürdüren, pasif karakterler olarak tasvir edildiğini ortaya koymuştur. Kadın karakterler, ekonomik ve duygusal olarak erkeklere bağımlı bireyler olarak temsil edilerek, İranlı kadınların ataerkil düzendeki toplumsal konumu sorgulanmıştır. Filmlerde açık renkli kostüm giyen başrol kadın karakterlerin “namuslu kadınlar” olarak, koyu renkli kostüm giyen kadın karakterlerin “ahlaksız kadınlar” olarak temsil edildiği görülmüştür. Bu bulgular, İran toplumunda geleneksel olarak kadınlara atfedilen rollerin renk tonları üzerinden pekiştirildiğini göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Renk, Temsil, Kadın, İran sineması, Asghar Farhadi.

INTRODUCTION

Iran has a long history of cinema influenced by the Iranian regime, politics, and religion. Women's representation in the cinema has been an efficacious instrument for the Iranian regimes to mirror their ideological orientations and reproduce a new culture (Tragesser, 2021: 24). Under the Pahlavi dynasty (1926-79), veiling was prohibited for “Westernization” and made women more visible (Baneinia and Dersan Orhan, 2021: 1907). Women were represented in the pre-revolutionary Iranian films as sexual objects, dancers, wives of wealthy men, or frail characters (Habibian, 1999: 296). However, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 has brought some radical changes for women like the compulsory hijab (Naficy, 2000: 564). In the prior years of the revolution, women infrequently appeared on the screen or were censored. The government has inspected the characters' dresses, postures, behaviors, voices, and gazes in the films (Moradiyen Rizi, 2015: 6; Özkan, 2021: 106).

In the years that followed, women have been more powerful and equalized with their male counterparts. Rakhshān Banietemad, Tahmineh Milani, Poursan Derakhshandeh, and Samira Makhmalbaf were considered famous women directors attempting to showcase realistic struggles, the daily lives of Iranian women, and love stories (Lahiji, 2002: 224). The increasing visibility of women in cinema has also

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affected male directors Jafar Panahi, Abbas Kiarostami, and Asghar Farhadi. Asghar Farhadi, who has been recognized with many awards in national and international film festivals, criticized the country's patriarchal system and its contradictions by including the problems of Iranian women in their daily lives in his films (Ahmadgoli and Yazdanjoo, 2019: 4; Mincheva and Hooman, 2020: 29).

This study intends to analyze in-depth the portrayal of women in Asghar Farhadi's films that were shot in Iran. *Dancing in the Dust* (2003), *The Beautiful City* (2004), *Fireworks Wednesday* (2006), *About Elly* (2009), *A Separation* (2011), and *The Salesman* (2016) are films that were shot in Iran. This study seeks to investigate these films in depth by using a mixed-method approach that enables us to gather complementary data about women's representation in Iranian cinema. Content analysis and textual analysis were applied with the sequential explanatory design model to gather comprehensive overview about women's representation in Asghar Farhadi's films. Quantitative findings related to women's representation were acquired with content analysis. Then the quantitative findings were supported by qualitative comments with textual analysis to analyze the relationship between color, class, and gender. Textual analysis helps us to understand the discourse forms and ideological stance towards women in Asghar Farhadi's films. The study has been structured in the following way. The first section provides fundamental background to the representation of women in pre-revolutionary Iranian cinema and post-revolutionary Iranian cinema. The second section provides elaborate data regarding Asghar Farhadi's cinema and women's representation in the Asghar Farhadi cinema. The third section then provides the research methodology, description of samples, and limitations of the research. In the fourth section, the content analysis is supported by textual analysis to present detailed data. Then it is followed by a conclusion.

1. Female Characters in Iranian Cinema

Cinema has been a medium of expression of social, political, and cultural transformations in Iran (Karpuzlu, 2021: 38). Cinema has a history full of conflicts in Iran concerning the representation of women since it has been acknowledged as "men's entertainment" for a long time (Çınar, 2019: 111; Ghojehbaglou, 2020: 43). The presence and roles of women in cinema were shaped by the Iranian regime,

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politics, and religion (Tragesser, 2021: 24). According to Ghorbankarimi (2015: 2), analyzing the changes in the representation of women in Iranian cinema is like understanding the self-realization journey of Iranian women. The journey of women's representation is divided into four stages: from good versus evil women in pre-revolution films to the more one-dimensional women in the 1980s to the women who afford to make mistakes and have adversity like men, and the women who try to reach self-determination and freedom from 1990s onwards.

In Iran's pre-revolutionary cinema, films were formed by a westernized cultural atmosphere as supported by the second Pahlavi Shah (Moruzzi, 2015: 115). In these films, women were delineated as good and evil, rich women with poor boyfriends, women who have relationships with nonnatives, shameless sex workers, and greedy or gracious dancers (Seyed-Gohrab and Talattof, 2013: 33). Filmfarsi, known as commercial Iranian cinema, had distinct features in the portrayals of women in terms of gender roles. In this film industry, "good women" are portrayed as housewives that are non-functional out of the home. Contrastingly, "bad women" are represented as people who dressed "provocatively", dancing, drinking, and smoking (Lahiji, 2002; Rezai-Rashti, 2007; Sadeghian, 2020).

In her book *Women, Islam and Cinema*, Gönül Dönmez-Colin (2004: 37-38) emphasize that the female body and sexuality were used abundantly in the scenes in Filmfarsi like Hollywood films to catch the attention of the sexually deprived man. Women are portrayed as doomed to be weak characters, sex workers, or cabaret dancers unless saved by men (Al-Sharji, 2016: 44; Habibian, 1994: 296). For example, the film, *Qaisar* directed by Masoud Kimiai portrays women as singers/dancers for a predominantly male audience. The film character named Sohaila Ferdows wears no veils, dresses boldly in a miniskirt, and performs sexual dances for Qaisar in the public sphere while she undresses *Qaisar* in her room to fulfill men's sexual impulses (Naficy, 2011: 299). These kinds of characters in pre-revolutionary Iranian cinema can be evaluated as the perfect summary of Mulvey's "male gaze" theory. According to male gaze theory, women in cinema are looked at and displayed from the point of view of heterosexual men with an appearance that arouses visual and erotic impact (Mulvey, 1975:11). In pre-revolutionary Iranian

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cinema, female bodies were also represented in films as passive objects of male desire (Karami, 2020: 370).

The sexualized women as an object of male desire, known critically as “painted dolls” in the pre-revolutionary period, were rejected in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Women were regarded as “victims” of the commercial film industry. There has been a new construction of female character type in post-revolutionary Iranian cinema based on Islamic principles (Chan, 2016; Habibian, 1999; Naficy, 1995). According to Naficy (2000: 564), the presence of women in Iranian post-revolutionary cinema can be examined in three phases named as the absence, the pale presence, and the powerful presence of women. In the early 1980s, women were eliminated from the screen and the images of unveiled women were censored from Iranian and foreign films. In the mid-1980s, women's presence was portrayed as ghostly on the screen or confined to the home. In the films, the portrayals of women were governed in terms of Islamic codes including aesthetics and grammar of vision and veiling. The characters’ dresses, postures, behaviors, voices, and gazes were controlled in Iranian films. Female characters were forced to wear headscarves, chadors or veils, and long tunics to desexualize both women and men (Moradiyen Rizi, 2015: 6; Özkan, 2021: 106). This means that women were used as subjects of ideological control because even the eye contact of women was regulated by their relations with men (Seyed-Gohrab and Talattof, 2013: 42).

Since the late 1980s, women both started to have leading roles in films and became filmmakers in post-revolutionary Iranian cinema. Rakhshān Banietemad, Tahmineh Milani, Pouran Derakhshandeh, and Samira Makhmalbaf were considered famous women directors attempting to showcase realistic struggles, the daily lives of Iranian women, and love stories (Lahiji, 2002: 224). As an illustration, the love affairs of married women were presented in Makhmalbaf’s *Time of Love* (1991) whereas Banietemad’s *Narges* (1992) was showing the love between two women and a man (Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010: 109). The transition from the elimination of women on screen to the presence of women within Iranian society and cinema has also had an impact on Iranian male filmmakers such as Jafar Panahi, Abbas Kiarostami, and Asghar Farhadi. These filmmakers believed that society could prosper if men and

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women were described as having "equal rights" in the films, and thus showed contradictions and impasses of the patriarchal system in their films (Moradiyen Rizi, 2015: 11).

2. Female Characters in Asghar Farhadi's Cinema

Asghar Farhadi is one of the globally acclaimed directors of Iranian cinema. His films were awarded at both national and international film festivals. He, a realistic director, presents the people we can meet in daily life and their ordinary stories in his films. Furthermore, culturally sensitive issues in Iranian society such as class conflicts and gender roles were constantly depicted in his films (Amiri and Bolkhari Qahi, 2013: 428; Moruzzi, 2015: 133). He particularly reflected Iranian middle-class families' desires, frustrations, and hopes in his cinema. The members of the middle class were usually presented as having a "comfortable" life and seeking better futures overseas in his films. However, the lower classes suffered from poverty, and their behaviors were shaped by religion and tradition (Ahmadgoli and Yazdanjoo, 2019: 3).

Another important aspect of Farhadi's films is to give substantial screen time to women's issues. He gives visibility to the women by criticizing patriarchal authority while the domestic films represent women usually as passive women or angels in the house (Ahmadgoli and Yazdanjoo, 2019: 4; Mincheva and Hooman, 2020: 29). Female characters often want to achieve independence and dream of a better life by giving up traditional responsibilities that were assigned to them by the patriarchy in his films. However, they are exposed to stigmatization and violence in the end (Babuçcu, 2018: 107). In other words, they cannot be released from the system despite all their efforts. Before going over the methodology of this paper, the plot synopsis of selected films such as *Dancing in the Dust* (2003), *The Beautiful City* (2004), *Fireworks Wednesday* (2006), *About Elly* (2009), *A Separation* (2011), and *The Salesman* (2016) should be explained and discussed.

Dancing in the Dust (2003) and *The Beautiful City* (2004) were Asghar Farhadi's first two films that brought him recognition and were awarded in national and international film festivals. Both films present urban gender relations in

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working-class contexts (Abedinifard, 2019: 110). *Dancing in the Dust* is about the story of a newly married couple named Rayhaneh and Nazar and their divorce since Rayhaneh's mother is labeled as a sex worker. Abedinifard's study (2019: 113) demonstrated that Rayhaneh's mother is represented as a woman who is stigmatized as lewd and excluded from society because she does not have a life following gender roles. *The Beautiful City* is another film by Asghar Farhadi which is about the efforts of his older sister Firoozeh and his friend A'la to prevent Akbar, who committed a murder at the age of 16, from being executed when he turned 18. In *The Beautiful City*, it was seen that Firoozeh was represented as in need of male authority (Sehat and Jahantigh, 2019: 1003).

The films, *Fireworks Wednesday* (2006) and *About Elly* (2009) are awarded in national and international film festivals as well. Both films narrate the story of middle-class couples. *The Fireworks Wednesday* (2006) describes the story of Roohi who is a newly engaged young servant at an upper-middle-class apartment. In this apartment, she witnesses domestic abuse, adultery, and moral depravity with the circulations of events between the couple Mojdeh and Morteza (Sehat and Javantigh, 2019:1002). Likewise, *About Elly* (2009) is about the vacation story of married friends' group and Elly who is a teacher. Sepideh invites her daughter's teacher, Elly, to vacation near the Caspian Sea to introduce her to her nearly divorced friend, Ahmad. On the vacation, Elly goes to the sea and disappears. In the film, Elly was portrayed as a shy and quiet woman, but she forces the borders of her engagement by following her desires and she joins the vacation (Sarani Azar, 2018: 116).

A Separation (2011) and *The Salesman* (2016) are other well-known films of Asghar Farhadi. *A Separation* is the story of Nader and Simin, a couple who are about to get divorced and have a dilemma about the custody of their children. Simin wants to leave Iran, but Nader disagrees because of his father who suffers from Alzheimer's disease. Simin, who is a middle-class character and has a profession, and Nader cannot divorce after trial and Simin moves to her parent's house (Nasehi and Kara, 2018: 170). Likewise, *The Salesman* explains the story of a married couple, Rana, and Emad. Amateur-theatre actors Rana and Emad move into a new apartment that a sex worker previously occupied. Rana has been attacked in the

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apartment by the client of the sex worker. The film showcases Rana's process of coping with the trauma after she was attacked (Mincheva and Hooman, 2020: 26). In the film, Rana was represented as a victim of abuse and violence (Günhan, 2019: 187).

3. Aim and Methodology

3.1. Aim

The purpose of the research is twofold: firstly, to try to illustrate the portrayals of female lead characters in Asghar Farhadi's films in terms of their traits, the approaches of other characters towards them, and their presence in public and private spheres; and secondly, to propound a new approach to the analysis of women's representation based on a relationship between themes of scenes, costumes of female characters, color tones of the costumes, the status of female characters, and the presence of them in public and private spheres. The significance of this research is that it uses a mixed-method approach that can offer exhaustive data regarding the representation of female lead characters in Asghar Farhadi's films. Based on these purposes, the research questions of this paper were determined as follows:

RQ1: What are the characteristics of the female lead characters in Asghar Farhadi's films shot in Iran?

RQ2: What is the attitude and behavior of the other characters towards the female lead characters?

RQ3: How often do the female lead characters appear in public and private spheres?

RQ4: What is the relationship between the themes of the scenes, the costumes of the female lead characters, the color tones of the costumes, the status of the characters, and their presence in the public and private spheres?

3.2. Methodology

This study benefited from a mixed-method research design that included content analysis and textual analysis to find out the answers to these questions. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2017: 67), a mixed-method is a research

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approach in which data is collected, analyzed, and the findings are integrated with the research program using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The reason for using a mixed-method approach in this research is to acquire complementary data on the representation of the female lead characters. In this study, the sequential explanatory design model which consists of quantitative followed by qualitative will be used as a mixed-method approach (Baki and Gökçek, 2012: 10). In this design, analysis was carried out in two stages consisting of content analysis and textual analysis.

Firstly, the content analysis which entails a systematic reading of textual, visual, or aural material was used in this research by benefitting from the coding scheme of Inceoğlu and Akçalı's study (2018) that contains representational codes to analyze the way gender roles take place in Turkish TV series. The content analysis was made in two stages. Firstly, the total number of scenes with female lead characters in Asghar Farhadi's films that were shot in Iran was examined. The traits of the characters were coded as timid, amiable, extrovert, competitive, courteous, rude, funny, problem solver, emotional, intelligent, and aggressive. The attitudes and behaviors of the other characters in the film towards the female lead characters were coded. Attitudes and behaviors are coded as shouting, humiliation, violence/threat, gossip, commiseration, jealousy, praise/felicitation, compassion, encouragement, trust, and distrust. Then, the appearances of the characters in the public and private spheres were coded. Secondly, the films were rewatched and scenes with the female lead characters were coded again to examine the relationship between themes of scenes, costumes of female characters, color tones of the costumes, status of female characters, and appearances of them in the spheres by researchers.

In the final stage of the research, textual analysis that is used to analyze the discourse forms, ideological positions, narrative strategies, image-making, and effects of media contents was used to analyze the representation of the female characters within a context in a detailed way. For this reason, 3 scenes of female lead characters were chosen from films with random sampling. The quantitative data collected and analyzed in the first stage of research are supported by qualitative comments and the representation of female lead characters in Asghar Farhadi's films

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was discussed. Finally, yet importantly, using the coding scheme of Inceoğlu and Akçalı's study (2018) shows the validity of the research. Two researchers coded films separately and checked each other's codes. The disagreement on some codes was discussed before the agreement on the codes.

3.3. Universe and Sampling

The phenomenon of "universe" refers to all the units to which the findings of a particular study might be generalized. Examination of the entire universe in scientific research is arduous in terms of time, space, and cost. Hence, data is tried to be obtained from a segment that is thought to represent the universe (Baltacı, 2018: 234). This segment that represents the universe is the sample. A sample can be defined as a collection of people, things, or stuff that is selected for measurement from a larger population. The universe of this research is the female characters in post-revolutionary Iranian cinema. As stated in the literature, Asghar Farhadi is one of the directors of post-revolutionary Iranian cinema, and the female characters in his films reflect the social, economic, and political situation of post-revolutionary Iran. For this reason, the female lead characters in Asghar Farhadi's films that were shot in Iran constituted the sample of the research.

Table 1. The Sample of the Research

Title	Year	Writer	Director	Actress	Role	Running Time	Language
Dancing in the Dust	2003	Asghar Farhadi + Farhadi	Asghar Farhadi	Baran Kosari	Rayhaneh	95 Minutes	Persian
The Beautiful City	2004	Asghar Farhadi	Asghar Farhadi	Taraneh Alidoosti	Firoozeh	101 Minutes	Persian
Fireworks Wednesday	2006	Asghar Farhadi + Farhadi	Asghar Farhadi	Taraneh Alidoosti	Roohi	102 Minutes	Persian
About Elly	2009	Asghar Farhadi + Farhadi	Asghar Farhadi	Taraneh Alidoosti	Elly	119 Minutes	Persian
A Separation	2011	Asghar Farhadi	Asghar Farhadi	Leila Hatami	Simin	123 Minutes	Persian
The Salesman	2016	Asghar Farhadi	Asghar Farhadi	Taraneh Alidoosti	Rana	125 Minutes	Persian

3.4. Limitations

The reason for limiting the sample to these characters is to examine the relationship between Iranian women's representation in post-revolutionary cinema and the political, sociological, and economic situation of Iran, as stated in the

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literature. Hence Asghar Farhadi's films *The Past* (2013), and *Everybody Knows* (2018), which were not shot in Iran, were not included in the research. It must be stressed that this limitation prevents comparison between the female lead characters in the films that were shot in Iran and the female lead characters in the films that were shot outside Iran. The second limitation of the research is about Asghar Farhadi's last film, *A Hero* (2021). Even though the film, written and directed by Asghar Farhadi, was shot in Iran, it was not included in the research since it was not released at the time the research started.

4. Findings

4.1. Findings From Research 1

Chart 1. Number of Scenes with Female Lead Characters

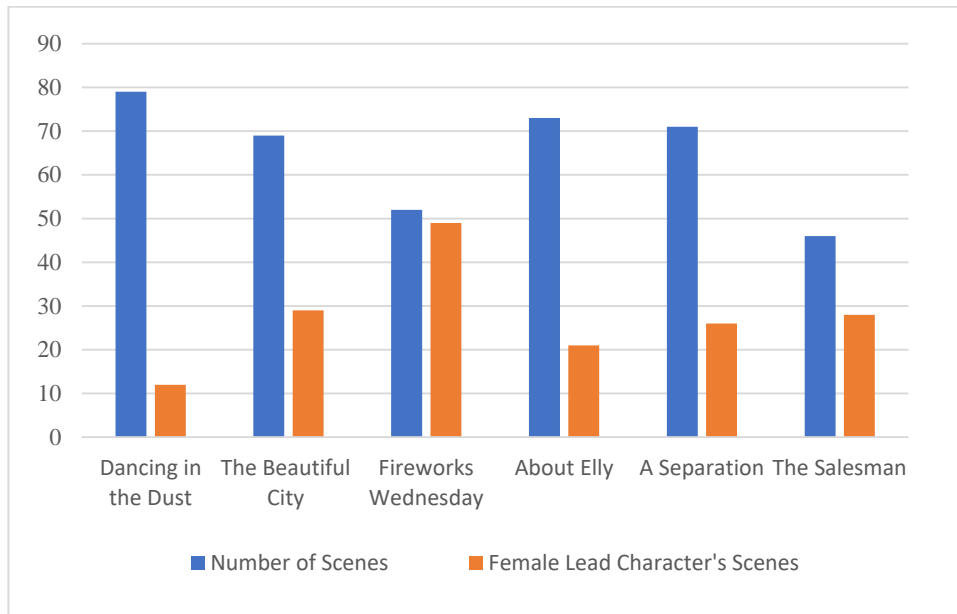
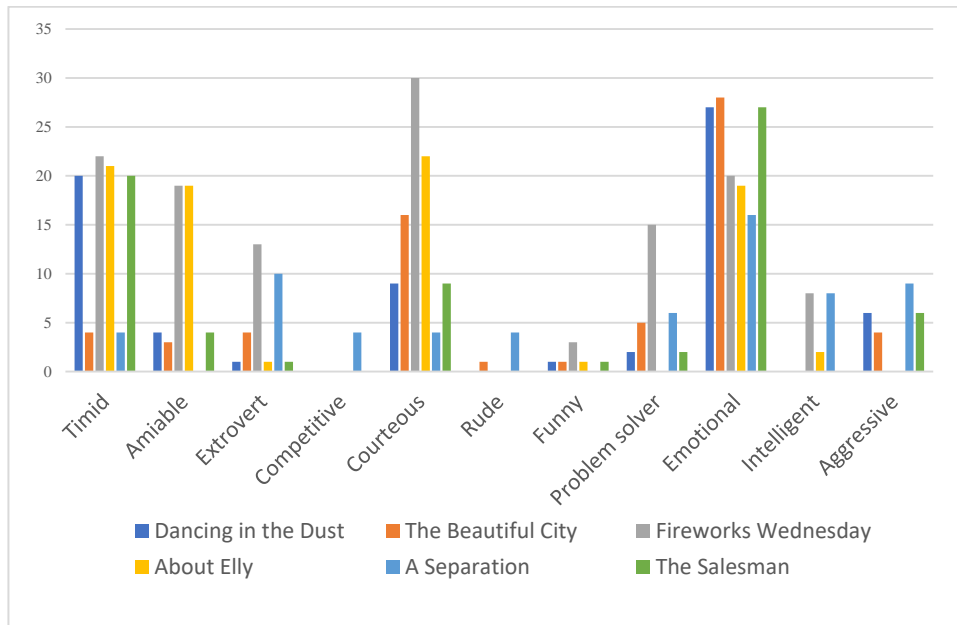
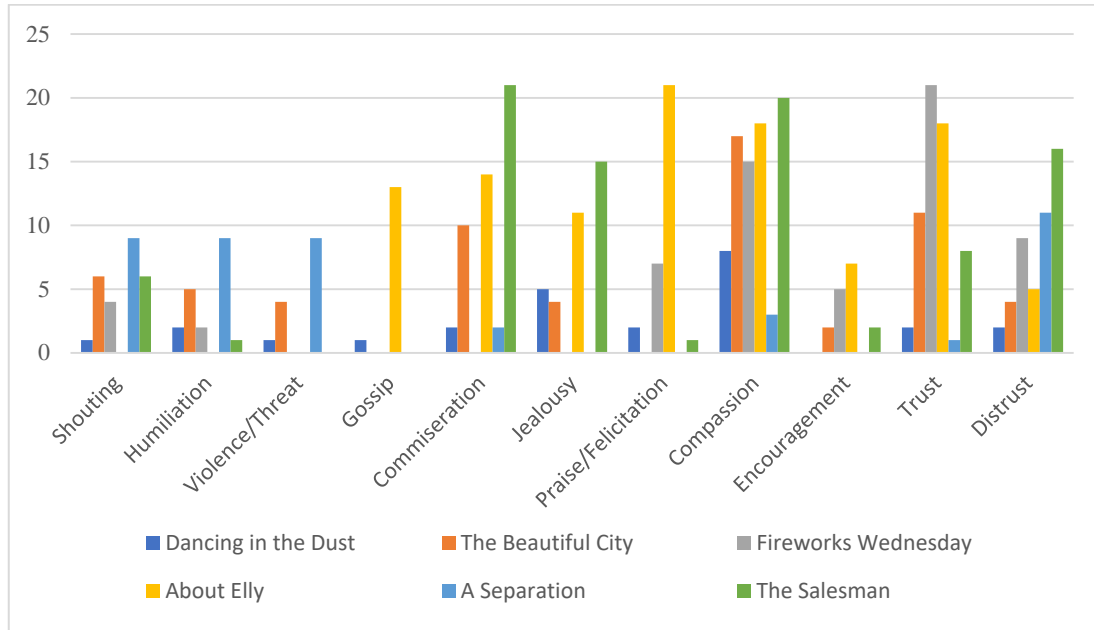


Chart 2. Character Traits of Female Lead Characters



Initially, numerical data on the total number of scenes in which the female lead characters took place was obtained in the research. Chart 1 indicates that all the characters—aside from Rayhaneh and Elly—appeared in at least one-third of the total number of scenes. The number of scenes involving the female lead characters in the films has been found to be influenced by the plot of the films. Chart 2 displays the data on the prominent characteristics of the female lead characters in the scenes. Accordingly, all the characters were typically portrayed as emotional and timid. However, Simin was represented as more aggressive and extroverted than other characters. Finally, yet importantly, it turns out that the characters, except for Simin, are rarely depicted as intelligent.

Chart 3. Attitudes and Behaviors Towards Female Lead Characters

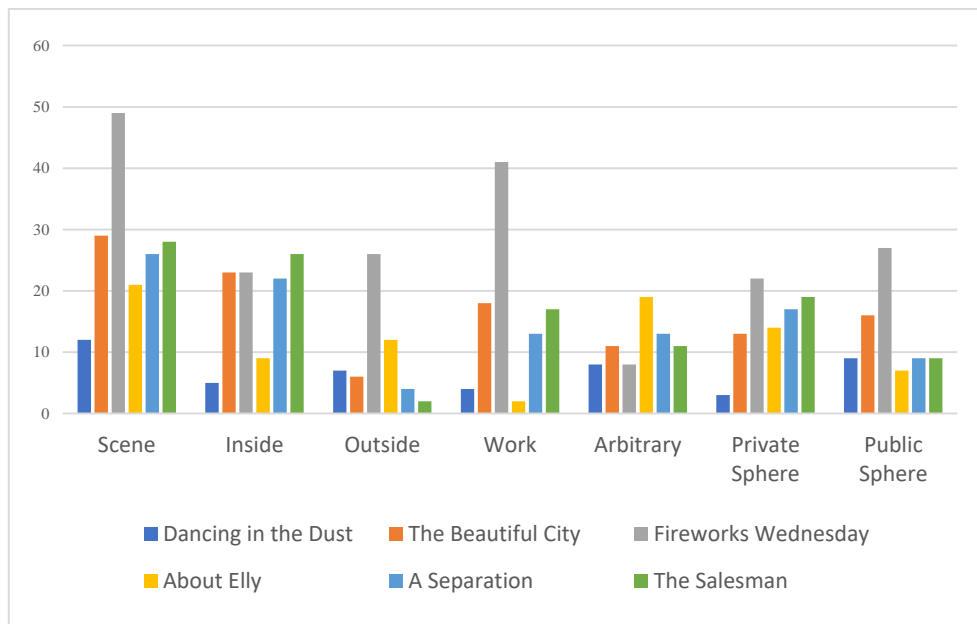


In Chart 3, it is found that the characters in *Dancing in the Dust* (2003), mostly have attitudes and behaviors such as "compassion and commiserate" towards Rayhaneh. The reason is that Rayhaneh had to divorce her husband due to negative rumors about her mother. In addition, "jealousy" stands out in Chart 3 because Nazar, Rayhaneh's husband, was jealous of her. The characters in *The Beautiful City* (2004), mostly have attitudes and behaviors such as "compassion, trust and commiserate" towards Firoozeh. The reason can be expressed as the possibility of the execution of the character's sibling, the fact that the character is financially weak, and having a husband who does not take care of her and her baby. The characters in *Fireworks Wednesday* (2006), mostly have attitudes and behaviors such as "trust, compassion, and distrust" towards Roohi. In the first scenes of the film, it is observed that the neighbors and the homeowner do not trust her because they do not know her. In the following scenes, the character began to be trusted more. As can be seen in Chart 2, the reason for the attitudes and behaviors such as "compassion and trust" towards the character can be associated with her characteristic feature. The characters in *About Elly* (2009), mostly have attitudes and behaviors such as "praise/felicitation, compassion, and trust" towards Elly. The primary reason is that the characters desire Elly and Ahmad to get married. In addition, as can be seen in

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Chart 3, with Elly's disappearance, the characters consider the possibility that she is dead, and thus the feeling of "commiserate" stands out. The characters in *A Separation* (2011), mostly have attitudes and behaviors such as "distrust, violence/threat, shouting and humiliation" towards Simin. The reason is that the character wants to leave Iran, get a divorce, and get custody of her child. The characters in *The Salesman* (2016), mostly have attitudes and behaviors such as "commiserate, compassion, distrust and jealousy" towards Rana. The characters show commiseration and compassion for Rana as she is attacked. On the other hand, the reason for attitudes and behaviors such as distrust and jealousy can be associated with the possibility of the character being sexually assaulted.

Chart 4. Female Lead Characters in the Public and Private Sphere



In the research, numerical data were obtained by coding the appearances of the female lead characters in the public and private spheres on a scene-by-scene basis. Chart 4 displays that the lower-class characters Rayhaneh, Firoozeh, and Roohi are depicted in the public sphere in more than half of their total scenes. On the contrary, the middle-class characters Elly, Simin, and Rana are depicted in the public sphere in less than half of their total scenes. According to the chart, the lower-class characters, Rayhaneh, Firoozeh, and Roohi, take place more in the public sphere than the middle-class characters. These results show that, given the plots of all films and

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the character characteristics, there is no accurate association between the presence in the public and private spheres and social class. Likewise, it has been discovered that there is no interrelation between gender roles and presence in the public and private spheres in films. It could be declared that the plot of the films directly affects the frequency of appearances of female lead characters in both the public and private spheres.

4.2. Research 2

Table 2. Representation of Rayhaneh's Character in Dancing in the Dust (2003)

Scene	Theme	Costume	Color Tones	Status	Sphere
1	Introduction	Abaya, Hijab	Dark	Daughter	Public
2	Introduction	Abaya, Hijab	Dark	Daughter	Public
3	Love	Hijab, Sweater, Trousers and Tunic	Light	Girlfriend	Public
4	Marriage	Hijab, Sweater, Trousers and Tunic	Light	Wife	Private
5	Divorce	Hijab, Overcoat and Trousers	Dark	Wife	Public
6	Divorce	Hijab, Overcoat and Trousers	Dark	Wife	Public
7	Divorce	Hijab, Overcoat and Trousers	Dark	Wife	Public
8	Divorce	Hijab, Overcoat and Trousers	Dark	Wife	Public
9	Divorce	Hijab, Overcoat and Trousers	Dark	Wife	Public
10	Love	Hijab, Sweater and Trousers	Light	Girlfriend	Private
11	Love	Hijab, Overcoat and Trousers	Light	Girlfriend	Public
12	Mahr	Abaya, Hijab	Light	Girlfriend	Private

Image 1. Dancing in the Dust Image 2. Dancing in the Dust Image 3. Dancing in the Dust



Rayhaneh is a lower-class young adult woman. She took place in scenes with the theme of love, marriage, introduction, divorce, and mahr, with statuses such as daughter, girlfriend, and wife. The character is generally represented as someone who is emotionally and financially dependent on the man. In Table 2 and Image 1, it is seen that the character is usually represented with light-colored costumes in scenes with love and marriage themes, except for the first meeting scenes. This finding

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displays that there might be a correlation between the love theme and light-colored costumes in the film. In Table 2 and Image 2, it is observed that the character always wears dark-colored costumes in the theme of divorce. The association between divorce and dark-colored costumes might imply that divorce is a negative phenomenon, and the finding might be connected with the Islamic perspective, which views divorce as a negative phenomenon. In Table 2 and Image 3, the character wears a white-colored costume only in the last scene with the theme of mahr. The reason why the character wears a white abaya in this scene may be related to the message that the character is not an "immoral woman" like her mother. In other words, the white abaya that the character wears in the last scene is possibly associated with the "honorable woman". Moreover, it is seen that the lower-class characters are wearing an abaya, but Rayhaneh, a young woman, wears trousers as well as an abaya in the film. Finally, yet importantly, when the relationship between the appearance of the character in the public and private spheres, and the color tones of her costumes is examined, it is indicated that the character usually wears dark-colored costumes in the public sphere and light-colored costumes in the private sphere. The analysis of the all-female lead characters in Asghar Farhadi's films put forward that the finding is related to a social class more willingly than to Islamic principles or the political climate in Iran.

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Table 3. Representation of Firoozeh's Character in The Beautiful City (2004)

Scene	Theme	Costume	Color Tones	Status	Sphere
1	Childcare	Shirts, Skirts and Hijab	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Public
2	Childcare	Shirts, Skirts and Hijab	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private
3	Childcare	Shirts, Skirts and Hijab	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private
4	Journey	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Public
5	Lawsuit	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Private
6	Lawsuit	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Private
7	Journey	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Public
8	Journey	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Public
9	Lawsuit	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Public
10	Lawsuit	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Public
11	Work	Overalls and Hijab	Light	Worker	Public
12	Work	Overalls and Hijab	Light	Worker	Public
13	Lawsuit	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Public
14	Lawsuit	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Public
15	Lawsuit	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Public
16	Lawsuit	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Private
17	Journey	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Public
18	Love	Dress and Hijab	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private
19	Love	Dress and Hijab	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private
20	Love	Dress and Hijab	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private
21	Love	Dress and Hijab	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Public
22	Love	Dress and Hijab	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private
23	Lawsuit	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Private
24	Lawsuit	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Public
25	Love	Dress and Hijab	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private
26	Love	Dress and Hijab	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private
27	Separation	Chador	Dark	Mother and Wife	Public
28	Work	Overalls and Hijab	Light	Worker	Public
29	Love	Dress and Hijab	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private

Image 4. The Beautiful City Image 5. The Beautiful City Image 6. The Beautiful City



Firoozeh is a lower-class young adult woman. She took place in scenes with the theme of childcare, lawsuit, journey, work, love, and separation, with statuses such as mother, wife, and worker. Although the character is a “blue-collar” worker, she is only represented as a worker in 3 of the 29 scenes. Additionally, the character is represented as someone who is emotionally dependent on the man, just like Rayhaneh. In Table 3 and Image 4, it is seen that the character usually wears a dark-colored chador in scenes with the theme of a lawsuit or journey, except for themes

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such as work, childcare, and love. It is observed that the character generally wears the dark-colored chador in public spheres or private spheres outside of her own home. This finding, which also emerged in the analysis of the character of Rayhaneh, supports that the social classes of the characters are effective in wearing dark-colored costumes outside the home. Rayhaneh and Firoozeh are female characters who belong to the same social class. In Table 3, the character wears overalls in work scenes, and generally shirts, skirts, and hijab in childcare scenes. These costumes are either light or consist of light and dark color tones. In Table 3 and Image 5, the character wears a dress and hijab that consists of light and dark color tones in all love-themed scenes. This finding, which also emerged in the analysis of Rayhaneh's character, supports the connection between love themes and light-colored costumes in the films. Moreover, in Table 3 and Image 6, the character wears a dark-colored costume in the separation scene. This finding also supports the connection between love themes and light-colored costumes in the films. In the final analysis, when all characters are examined, it can be stated that trousers are generally associated with marital status or social class. To illustrate, Firoozeh, a lower-class character, is a married woman and does not wear trousers in any of the scenes. Although Rayhaneh and Roohi are lower-class characters, it was revealed that they wore trousers in the scenes where they were fiancés. Additionally, Elly, Simin, and Rana are middle-class characters, and it is figured out that they all wear trousers, regardless of their marital status.

Table 4. Representation of Roohi's Character in Fireworks Wednesday (2006)

Scene	Theme	Costume	Color Tones	Status	Sphere
1	Journey	Chador	Dark	Fiancé	Public
2	Job Application	Chador	Dark	Worker	Public
3	Job Application	Chador	Dark	Worker	Public
4	Job Application	Chador	Dark	Worker	Private
5	Marriage Preparation	Hijab, Sweater and Wedding Dress	Dark and Light	Fiancé	Public
6	Job Application	Chador	Dark	Worker	Private
7	Journey	Chador	Dark	Worker	Public
8	Journey	Chador	Dark	Worker	Public
9	Journey	Chador	Dark	Worker	Public
10	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
11	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
12	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
13	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
14	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
15	Journey	Chador	Dark	Worker	Public
16	Journey	Chador	Dark	Worker	Public
17	Journey	Chador	Dark	Worker	Public
18	Journey	Chador	Dark	Worker	Public
19	Journey	Chador	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
20	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
21	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
22	Personal Care	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Customer	Private
23	Personal Care	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Customer	Private
24	Personal Care	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Customer	Private
25	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
26	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
27	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
28	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
29	Childcare	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
30	Childcare	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
31	Childcare	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
32	Childcare	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
33	Childcare	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
34	Childcare	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
35	Childcare	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
36	Childcare	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
37	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
38	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
39	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
40	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
41	Household Chores	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
42	Childcare	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
43	Childcare	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
44	Childcare	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
45	Journey	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
46	Journey	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Public
47	Journey	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
48	Journey	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Worker	Private
49	Journey	Hijab, Sweater, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Fiancé	Private

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Image 7. Fireworks Wednesday **Image 8. Fireworks Wednesday** **Image 9. Fireworks Wednesday**



Roohi is a lower-class young adult woman. She took place in scenes with the theme of a journey, job application, marriage preparation, household chores, personal care, and childcare, with statuses such as fiancé, worker, and customer. Roohi is a “blue-collar” worker, and she is represented as a worker in 43 of the 49 scenes. In general, it is seen that women are frequently represented as housewives, cleaners, or individuals who do jobs that do not require skills in the media (Barokas, 1994: 127). Although there are many scenes showing Roohi as a worker, it is seen that both Roohi and Firoozeh work as cleaners or in “jobs that do not require skills”. Additionally, the character is represented as someone who is emotionally dependent on the man, just like Rayhaneh and Firoozeh. In Table 4, Image 7, and Image 8, it is observed that the Roohi generally wears dark-colored costumes, like the chador, in the public sphere, and wears the hijab, sweater, tunic, and trousers in the private sphere. The costumes that Roohi wears in the public sphere are generally dark-colored, but the costumes she wears in the private sphere are both light and dark-colored. Thus, it is found that all lower-class female lead characters in Asghar Farhadi's films that were shot in Iran wear dark-colored costumes in the public sphere due to their social class. In the film, Roohi works in the house of Mojdeh. Mojdeh thinks that her husband is cheating on her. Therefore, she wants to spy on her husband and takes Roohi's chador in disguise. Roohi is unaware that her chador has been taken by Mojdeh. As can be seen in Table 4 and Image 9, Roohi stands in the public sphere without her chador because Mojdeh took her chador. It is seen that the character constantly feels uneasy because she does not wear a dark-colored chador in the public sphere. Lastly, there is no direct finding of the relationship between the theme of love and the light-colored costumes in the film because Roohi's

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fiancé is not one of the main characters and they only have two short scenes together in the public sphere.

Table 5. Representation of Elly's Character in About Elly (2009)

Scene	Theme	Costume	Color Tones	Status	Sphere
1	Journey	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Visitor	Private
2	Picnic	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Visitor	Public
3	Picnic	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Visitor	Public
4	Picnic	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Visitor	Public
5	Vacation	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Visitor	Public
6	Vacation	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Visitor	Public
7	Vacation	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Visitor	Private
8	Vacation	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Visitor	Private
9	Vacation	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Light	Visitor	Private
10	Vacation	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Light	Visitor	Private
11	Love	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Light	Visitor	Public
12	Love	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Light	Visitor	Public
13	Love	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Light	Visitor	Private
14	Love	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Light	Visitor	Private
15	Love	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Light	Visitor	Private
16	Love	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Light	Visitor	Private
17	Love	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Light	Visitor	Private
18	Vacation	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Visitor	Private
19	Vacation	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Visitor	Private
20	Vacation	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Visitor	Private
21	Vacation	Shawl, Tunic and Trousers	Dark and Light	Visitor	Private

Image 10. About Elly



Image 11. About Elly



Image 12. About Elly



Elly is the first middle-class female lead character in the Asghar Farhadi films. Elly, who is a young adult woman, took place in scenes with the theme of journey, picnic, vacation, and love, with guest status. Although Elly is a teacher, she is not represented while she is working in the film. Also, the character is represented as someone who is emotionally dependent on the man, just like Roohi, Rayhaneh, and Firoozeh. In Table 5, it is seen that the character always wears shawls, tunics,

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and trousers, regardless of the public or private sphere. In Table 5, Image 10, Image 11, and Image 12, it is observed that the character does not wear only dark-colored costumes in any scene of the film. This finding supports the inference that lower-class characters usually wear dark-colored costumes, such as chadors, in public or private spheres outside their own homes. Moreover, it is seen that Elly usually wears light-colored costumes in all love-themed scenes, while she wears both light and dark-colored costumes in other themes. This finding also supports the connection between love themes and light-colored costumes in the films.

Table 6. Representation of Simin's Character in A Separation (2011)

Scene	Theme	Costume	Color Tones	Status	Sphere
1	Divorce	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Public
2	Move in	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private
3	Move in	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private
4	Move in	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private
5	Move in	Shawl, Shirt, Trousers and Overcoat	Dark and Light	Daughter-in-law	Private
6	Move in	Shawl, Shirt, Trousers and Overcoat	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private
7	Journey	Shawl, Shirt, Trousers and Overcoat	Dark and Light	Homeowner	Private
8	Family Issues	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark and Light	Teacher	Public
9	Family Issues	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark and Light	Wife	Private
10	Family Issues	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark and Light	Wife	Private
11	Family Issues	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark and Light	Wife	Public
12	Family Issues	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark and Light	Wife	Public
13	Family Issues	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark and Light	Wife	Private
14	Family Issues	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private
15	Family Issues	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark and Light	Mother and Wife	Private
16	Lawsuit	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark	Wife	Public
17	Family Issues	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark	Mother and Wife	Private
18	Family Issues	Shawl, Shirt and Trousers	Dark	Mother and Wife	Public
19	Lawsuit	Shawl, Shirt, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Wife	Private
20	Family Issues	Shawl, Shirt, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Mother and Wife	Private
21	Family Issues	Shawl, Shirt, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Mother and Wife	Private
22	Lawsuit	Shawl, Shirt, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Mother and Wife	Public
23	Lawsuit	Shawl, Shirt, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Mother and Wife	Private
24	Lawsuit	Shawl, Shirt, Trousers and Cardigan	Light	Mother and Wife	Private
25	Lawsuit	Shawl, Shirt, Trousers and Cardigan	Light	Mother and Wife	Public
26	Divorce	Shawl, Shirt, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Mother and Wife	Public

Image 13. A Separation



Image 14. A Separation



Image 15. A Separation



Simin is a middle-class adult woman. She took place in scenes with the theme of divorce, move-in, journey, family issues, and a lawsuit, with statuses such as mother, wife, daughter-in-law, homeowner, and teacher. Although Simin is a teacher, she is only represented as a worker in 1 of the 26 scenes. In the film, Simin, unlike other female lead characters, is not directly represented as someone who is emotionally and financially dependent on the man. In Table 6, Image 13, Image 14, and Image 15, it is seen that the character does not wear a hijab, chador, or abaya in any scene. In the first scenes, she generally wears dark and light-colored shawls, shirts, trousers, and overcoats, regardless of public or private spheres. In the film, it is claimed that Nadir, Simin's husband, caused the caregiver to miscarry her baby. Due to this claim, a lawsuit is filed against Nadir. Nadir blames Simin for all these problems. As can be seen in Table 6 and Image 14, Simin, who was characterized as guilty by Nadir, wears dark-colored costumes throughout these scenes. In Table 6 and Image 15, Simin is wearing a dark-colored costume in the last scene in which she formally gets divorced from her husband, just like Rayhaneh. This finding partially reveals a relationship between themes of divorce and dark-colored costumes. Simin, unlike lower-class characters, wears dark-colored costumes only on themes that can be described as "negative". As can be seen in Table 6, the character wears light and dark-colored costumes in the public sphere. In the final analysis, there is no direct finding of the relationship between the theme of love and the light-colored costumes in the film because there is no scene in the film that can be directly or indirectly coded with the theme of love.

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Table 7. Representation of Rana's Character in The Salesman (2016)

Scene	Theme	Costume	Color Tones	Status	Sphere
1	Turmoil	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers, Tunic and Coat	Light	Housewife	Private
2	Household Chores	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers, Tunic and Coat	Dark and Light	Housewife	Private
3	Work	Hijab, Skirt and Sweater	Dark and Light	Actress	Public
4	Household Chores	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Tunic	Dark and Light	Housewife	Private
5	Household Chores	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Cardigan	Light	Housewife	Private
6	Work	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Tunic	Dark and Light	Actress	Public
7	Work	Hijab, Skirt and Sweater	Light	Actress	Public
8	Household Chores	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Tunic	Dark	Housewife	Private
9	Violence	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Tunic	Dark	Patient and Wife	Public
10	Violence	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Tunic	Dark	Housewife	Private
11	Violence	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Tunic	Dark	Housewife	Private
12	Jealousy	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Tunic	Dark	Housewife	Private
13	Jealousy	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Tunic	Dark	Housewife	Private
14	Jealousy	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Tunic	Dark	Housewife	Private
15	Work	Shawl, Sweater, Skirt and Cardigan	Dark	Actress	Public
16	Work	Shawl, Sweater, Skirt and Cardigan	Dark	Actress	Public
17	Jealousy	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Housewife and Wife	Private
18	Household Chores	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Housewife and Wife	Public
19	Work	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Wife	Private
20	Work	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Wife	Private
21	Dinner	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Housewife and Wife	Private
22	Jealousy	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Wife	Private
23	Stroll	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Wife	Public
24	Household Chores	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Housewife and Wife	Private
25	Household Chores	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Housewife and Wife	Private
26	Work	Shawl and Dress	Dark	Actress	Public
27	Revenge	Shawl, Sweater, Trousers and Cardigan	Dark	Wife	Private
28	Work	Dress and Cardigan	Dark and Light	Actress	Private

Image 16. The Salesman

Image 17. The Salesman

Image 18. The Salesman



Rana is a middle-class adult woman. She took place in scenes with the theme of turmoil, household chores, work, violence, jealousy, dinner, stroll, and revenge, with statuses such as wife, housewife, actress, and patient. Rana is an actress, and she is represented as an actress in 7 of the 28 scenes. Although Rana has a profession, she is generally represented as someone who is emotionally and financially dependent on the man. In Table 7, Image 16, Image 17, and Image 18, it is seen that the character only wears a hijab for the role in the work-themed scene and does not wear a chador or abaya in any scene, just like Elly and Simin. Rana usually wears

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either light or dark and light-colored costumes in the first scenes, regardless of the public or private sphere, just like Elly and Simin. Thus, it is revealed that just lower-class female lead characters in Asghar Farhadi's films that were shot in Iran wear dark-colored costumes in the public sphere. On the other hand, in Table 7, Image 17, and Image 18, it is observed that Rana is wearing only dark-colored costumes after being attacked by the old man except for the last scene. After Rana is attacked by the old man, her husband Emad wants to go to the police and tell the case, but Rana does not want it. Because of Rana's attitude, Emad begins to think more about whether his wife was sexually assaulted. The fact that Rana only wears dark-colored costumes in these scenes can be associated with this "dilemma". A similar inference was made in the analysis of Rayhaneh. Accordingly, dark-colored costumes might be associated with "immoral women" and light-colored costumes might be associated with "honorable women" in Asghar Farhadi films. As a matter of fact, after it was revealed that Rana had not been sexually assaulted, she wears light and dark-colored costumes again.

CONCLUSION

Patriarchal societies have formed all descriptions of "masculinity" and "femininity" in antagonism. This is a hierarchical antagonism in which one side is superior and dominant over the other. It has been suggested that the woman typifies the body, emotions, and nature, whereas the man has been assumed to be indisputably superior since he represents wisdom, civilization, and culture. Within this assumption, women have been demoted to the body, emotions, and nature. This discrimination seen throughout the history has been also constituted by the policies of Iranian government after the Iranian Revolution of 1979 by creating an image of the "ideal Muslim woman". Meanwhile, Iran's Family Protection Law, which prohibited polygamy and granted women the right to divorce, was repealed; women who did not comply with the Islamic dress code were discharged; abortion was proscribed; and it became mandatory for women to obtain permission from their male relatives to travel and pursue higher education (Moghadan, 2002: 1138). In the post-revolutionary Iranian cinema, women were also represented as characters who were bullied, took care of household chores and children, had no right to interfere in

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a man's work, and suffered all kinds of verbal and physical abuse. The female characters, who have encountered a negative situation, faced reactions if they have attempted to protect and defend themselves or other female characters. These representations have reinforced stereotypical representation of female characters in the post-revolutionary Iranian films. In this study, the portrayal of women in Asghar Farhadi's films that were shot in Iran is examined with mixed method approach by applying content analysis and textual analysis. Content analysis provides us numerical data about the portrayal of women in Asghar Farhadi's films. Then textual analysis enables us to analyze the discourse forms and the ideological positions in different contexts in Asghar Farhadi's films.

Asghar Farhadi's films have revealed the social challenges of women in Iran by addressing the roles and responsibilities imposed to woman in the context of gender. In Farhadi's films, female characters were also bullied, took care of household chores and children, had no right to interfere in a man's work, and suffered all kinds of verbal or physical abuse. However, with these portrayals, Farhadi aimed to reflect the responsibilities imposed on women by the patriarchy in Iran and interrogate the patriarchal narratives. The quantitative findings of this study revealed that, apart from Simin, the female lead characters in Farhadi's films were typically portrayed as timid and emotional. Although Simin is numerically more dominant and intelligent, all the characters are ultimately portrayed as emotionally and economically dependent on men. Farhadi attempted to demonstrate that, despite their efforts, Iranian women could not escape the system, particularly through the character of Simin. Besides, although Elly, Simin, and Rana were middle-class characters with professions, they are represented as characters who must do housework and are subjected to all kinds of verbal or physical abuse like Rayhaneh, Firoozeh, and Roohi. Thus, the message is given that economic independence is not a stand-alone remedy to liberation from the patriarchy.

Asghar Farhadi has attempted to explain this predicament of the female lead characters through color tones in his films. According to the study's qualitative and quantitative findings, the light-colored costumes in films are largely associated with "honorable women," regardless of class. Although dark-colored costumes have a

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variety of connotations, it has been observed that those ones are associated with "immoral women." The dark-colored costumes that Rana wears after the attack are an example of the inference. Furthermore, the female characters in the entire divorce theme, including the Simin, have been shown to dress in dark-colored costumes. The relationship between divorce and dark-colored costumes may give the message that divorce is a negative phenomenon. This phenomenon might stem from the negative views about divorce in Islam. This implies that the director both interrogated the patriarchy and the Iranian religious structure through the color tones. In essence, these findings quantitatively and qualitatively portray Asghar Farhadi's stated goals and the representation of women in post-revolutionary Iranian cinema. These findings, however, may not be sufficient to make broad generalizations. Therefore, future studies can contribute to the literature by examining larger samples with mixed methods.

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