

**A Discourse Analysis of the Conflict Coverage in the
Mainstream Media: A Case Study of Iran's Nuclear
Deal**

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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to examine the possibility of a constructive communication with a country like Iran, the intention of this thesis is to acquire a diverse perspective toward the current political and cultural struggles in the relationship between the country and the wider world. Studying the very recent Iranian nuclear deal, I am hoping that this study will provide creative alternative perspectives for more constructive conflict coverage in the future. Very often the conflict between Iran and the rest of the world has been reduced to simple binary oppositions such as dictatorship vs. democracy, or new vs. traditional, or secular vs. religious. By examining discourses of the news media, we may realize possible alternative ways of shaping communication with regards to a peaceful and hospitable act that will honor the voices of the other.

Through a discourse theory approach, this study reviews the coverage of the Iran's nuclear deal in the mainstream news media; the selected media outlets are *New York Times*, Fox News Online Website, *Kayhan* and IRNA; these well-received study cases are chosen from the United States and Iran. I have tried to present the more conservative and liberal voices in addition to the more leftist ones.

In this thesis, I have benefited from Derrida's notion of deconstruction, as well as Foucault's critical view of discourse. This thesis challenges and questions the realities that are being constructed and their relationship with knowledge and power. I argue that the coverage of the mentioned newspapers had a specific way of fixing meaning that can result in creating more tension, and ultimately violence. The aim here is to problematize the dominant discourses and to challenge any attempt of normalization.

By exposing the selected texts to the social and historical context of their claims, one may be able to uncover their binary oppositional perspective, and to problematize them with foregrounding what has been backgrounded.

Keywords: Iran nuclear deal, discourse analysis, *New York Times*, *Kayhan*, IRNA, Fox News, constructive conflict coverage, Peace journalism.

ÖZ

Bu tezin amacı İran gibi bir ülke ile yapıcı bir iletişim kurma imkanını inceleyerek, İran'ın mevcut siyasi ve kültürel mücadelelerine ve dünyanın geriye kalanıyla ilişkisine çok yönlü bir bakış açısı kazandırmaktır. Yakın geçmişte yapılan İran nükleer anlaşmasını inceleyerek, çatışmalar üzerine ileriye dönük yaratıcı, yapıcı ve çok yönlü bir haber yapımı sağlamayı umuyorum. Sıklıkla İran'la dünyanın geriye kalanıyla arasındaki fikir ayrılıkları ikili karşıtlıklar şeklinde basite indirgenmektedir, mesela, diktatörlüğe karşı demokrasi, ya da yeniye karşı geleneksel veya sekülere karşı dindar gibi. Bir çok kişi tarafından tarafsız ve açık olarak görülen *New York Times*'in bile bu basite indirgeme tuzağına düştüğü gözlemlenmiştir. Haber medyasının söylemlerini inceleyerek daha barışçıl, ılımlı ve diğerlerinin seslerini de onurlandıran bir iletişimin şekillenmesinde olası alternatiflerin de farkına varılabilir. Bu tez söylem teorisi yaklaşımı ile, İran'ın nükleer anlaşmasının ana akım medyada nasıl haberleştirildiğini gözden geçirmektedir. Bu bağlamda ABD'den ve İran'dan ana akım medya kanalları olan *New York Times*, Fox News Online website, *Kayhan* ve IRNA örnek olarak seçilerek hem muhafazakâr, hem liberal, hem de solcu görüşleri sunmayı amaçlıyorum.

Bu tezde Derrida'nın yapı sökümü kavramından ve Foucault'un söyleme eleştirel bakış açısından faydalanılmıştır. İnşa edilmiş gerçeklikleri ve bu inşa edilmiş gerçekliklerin güç ve bilgi arasındaki ilişkisini sorgulayan bir tezdur. Yukarıda belirtilen gazetelerin, belirli bir şekilde anlamlandırdığı haberlerin, daha fazla gerginlik ve hatta şiddet yaratarak sonuçlanacağını savunuyorum. Buradaki amaç, baskın söylemi problematize ederek herhangi bir normalleştirme çabasını reddetmektir. Ancak seçilmiş yazıların

sosyal ve tarihsel bağlamdaki iddialarına ışık tutulursa barındırdıkları ikili karşıtlıklar ortaya çıkacak ve geri plana itilmiş olan açığa çıkacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İran'ın Nükleer Programı, Söylem Analizi, *New York Times*, *Kayhan*, IRNA, Fox News, Barış Gazeteciliği

To Ela

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I would like to thank my parents, my wife and my friends for their support, kindness and help. I'd also like to thank my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tuğrul İlter for his patience, understanding and insight.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem Statement and Relevance of the Study

The Greater Middle East (the term “Middle East” is argued by Hassan Hanafi to be an “old British label based on a British Western perception of the East divided into middle or near and far” [Hanafi, 2015, para. 1] and the term “Greater Middle East” is coined by the second Bush administration [Shakdam, 2014]) has been a bitter conflict zone for the most part of the last century. Iraq is still recovering from the wounds of a full-scale invasion and has disintegrated; Syria’s brutal civil war has left many lives destroyed without hope for an immediate resolution. After decades of suffering from the foreign interference of the Soviets and Western powers, Afghanistan is still struggling to maintain its security; Egypt might be returning to a de facto military state, and Kurdish independence is a grave possibility (Pillalamarri, 2015, para. 1). Meanwhile the inability of the international community to speak of a vital peace is clear to many in the world who are suffering as the result of these harsh power struggles.

In a world where states are getting further capitalized and militarized, many discourses reproduced by the mainstream media, simply reduce countries and their diverse populations into zones of never-ending conflicts that need to be left alone completely, or rescued by some kind of Western intervention. The invasions of Iraq and Libya and the creation of failed states in those countries are results of such reduction of the other.

I argue that such discourses are not considering the many causes of the conflicts that are outside the conflict zone; that any kind of “reconciliation before violence” as Derrida mentioned, in the Middle East, cannot happen without a fuller picture of the conflicts (Derrida, 2001).

We cannot expect to engage in a mutual dialogue with the “Middle East” without at least trying to understand it better; and I think that a more proper understanding of the region cannot happen if we insist on continuously defining the region with reference to our own values, that is to say, by reducing it to what we expect of it. Perhaps one of the very important steps in understanding the social and historical context of the region better is to listen to the diverse voices of its nations as much as possible; their voices, I believe are marginalized in the mainstream discussions about the conflicts in the region. For this thesis, I intend to focus on the country of my birth “Iran.” This study will be a partial exploration of the conflicts between Iran and the west using the very recent incident of “Iran’s nuclear deal.” I’m hoping to demonstrate that there are indeed non-violent alternatives as well as structural and cultural causes of such conflicts that cannot be ignored; however I’m not willing to propose an ultimate solution but to test the notions that are being created about Iran and the deal. I believe that the discourses that are being reproduced through the mainstream media about Iran and the west can highly affect the ways Iranians and the rest of the world perceive each other or communicate; and a good number of such discourses can be found about Iran’s controversial nuclear deal which are being reproduced by different parties of power.

It can be argued that Iran has been a land of many conflicts in the recent years; specifically since the 1953 Iranian coup d’état followed by the 1979 Revolution (Dehghan & Norton-Taylor, 2013). I argue that the lack of mutual understanding and

constructive communication between different political parties, ethnicities, and cultures, in one the most diverse countries in the world (Fisher, 2015), has been a main cause of the recent clashes. By “constructive” I’m referring to a kind of communication that will reach for resolving the conflict by flexible agreements for the sake of a more diverse society, with the will to strengthen relationships rather than eliminating the so-called other.

In this research, the role of selected mainstream popular mass-media in reproducing conflict discourses are studied. This thesis aims to illuminate that indeed there were some existing patterns of omission and distortion in the way the events were covered by selected popular news channels and newspapers, describing how biases and shortcomings articulate with each other to create a manipulated version of events presented as the so-called “reality” (Greenslade, 2007, p. 1). This study explores how selected mainstream newspapers and news websites had ways of glorifying the conflicts along with marginalizing more peaceful voices. In order to critically examine the complex tensions that are present in the Nuclear Deal, this thesis has to get involved with many incidents that are all connected with each other. The tensions can be traced back to many years before the Islamic Revolution and even to different nations and power struggles around the globe. I have also conducted some interviews in Iran and the United States to get a more practical sense of the conflict in question. These interviews cannot be seen as samples of societies for those societies are far more complex, but they helped me to observe the relationship between the media usage and ideologies in action.

Proponents of peace journalism argue that in such conflicts news media broadcasters and newspapers mainly report events in a way which imposes an artificially confined

closed space, and closed time; in this popular approach less importance is given to the causes of the conflict along with the groups or individuals who have a stake in it (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). Regarding the reality of media reshaping public perception, one may refer to the very recent interview with Ben Rhodes that was published in *New York Times*. Rhodes is an Advisor on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications for U.S. President Barack Obama (Samuels, 2016). He talks about how, by using an “echo chamber”, he managed to sell the deal to the public the way White House wanted (Samuels, 2016, p.3). Rhodes states that “Through a cascade of tweets, quotes, and other social-media posts, a story was being told, with the purpose of motivating people to feel a certain way, in order to achieve a specific foreign-policy aim” (Samuels, 2016, p.1). He is confident that due to “the fracturing of the 20th-century mass audience and the decline of the American press” and a “brutal partisan climate” there is no hope for an “open [and] rational public debate” (Samuels, 2016, p.3). Because of those reasons, he claims that manipulating people to comprehend the news in a certain way is “a necessary evil” for the national interest (Samuels, 2016, p.3).

There is no doubt that being an Iranian can potentially make me biased in this study; however it also has helped me to be able to observe and experience some parts which are being marginalized or forgotten in many texts about Iran. I didn't choose Iran simply because as an Iranian, I may have a different kind of knowledge about the subject; but since it is believed by many, that Iran can play an important role in the outcome of peace in the region. Its extensive ground-level contacts with many of the Arab states cannot be overlooked; it has a big population, structured institutions and is

not wholly dependent on oil (Pillalamarri, 2015). “Iran is not only a political, strategic or religious regional power, but also a considerable actor in international and regional relations with the Iraqi government, Syria, and Lebanon” (Charountaki, 2013, para. 4). However this importance has been buried under a lot of media rhetoric that simply reduces Iran to a dangerous “terrorist state” (U.S. Department of State, n.d., para. 2); many of such discourses that are produced about Iran’s regime and people, unfortunately, are based on strong misconceptions tainted by political tensions. According to a global poll done by BBC most of the world population have mainly negative views of Iran; in fact, the poll shows Iran as one of the most unpopular countries in the public mind (“BBC Poll: Attitudes towards Countries”, 2016). The polls, of course, have their limitations and do not necessarily reflect the complexity of human societies; however, having the experience of countries such as Iraq and Libya that were greatly dehumanized before their invasion, these negative global perspectives presented in the polls are alarming. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to re-evaluate the conceptions that result in devaluing the other that are present in the discourses produced by both the western mainstream media and the Iranian state media.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is denounced on many levels. After the revolution, Iran has mostly been introduced by the United States, Israel and many voices in the west as an ultimate threat; an enemy to the freedom of the world, an enemy that supports radical terrorist groups around the globe. Iran is accused of delivering weapons to Hezbollah and Palestinian territories (Melman, 2013, para. 2). Hezbollah's core beliefs are reflected in an open letter published on February 16, 1985, in a Lebanese newspaper named al-Safir. There, Israel, France, and the United States, as well as the

Phalange party of Lebanon, are described as enemies of Hezbollah (Rabinovich & Reinharz, 2008). Their manifesto is defined with the fight for the independence of Lebanon; and to expel the presence of the “colonialist entity” of the Americans and the French (Rabinovich & Reinharz, 2008, p. 425). They claim to be fighting for the liberty of Lebanon and a government that is free from foreign intervention (Rabinovich & Reinharz, 2008). Their ideal scenario is an Islamic government that is free from foreign influence; however they claim to respect any government that all the Lebanese support including Christians and Muslims as long as it is independent (Rabinovich & Reinharz, 2008). Iran is also occasionally accused of supporting senior members of Al-Qaeda (Batley, 2015, para. 10), an accusation that apparently takes the complicated relationship with some Al-Qaeda members in a specific time as an act of support. On the other hand, some argue that while Iran may have had a relationship with Al-Qaeda in specific circumstances, their relationship is “full of distrust” due to their radical ideological differences and their historical quarrels (Karam, 2014, para. 6).

Iran is also condemned for anti-Israel and anti-western attacks such as the 2012 Burgas bus bombing that killed 4 Israelis; and the 2012 attacks on Israeli diplomats (Ravid, Blumenkrantz & Mozgovaya, 2015). Iran’s regime condemned the attacks and denied responsibility for these events (“Iran denies link to Burgas attack”, 2015). Whether Iran was really involved in those allegations or not, does not change the fact that the image which has been reproduced of Iran and Iranians in the mainstream media lacks many other sides of the story of Iran. In the picture of Iran as a rogue nation in the Western mainstream media, many elements are missing. For instance, scant attention is given to the Iranian scientists who have been assassinated by Mossad of Israel inside

Iran (Raviv, 2015); or the Stuxnet industrial worm attack on Iran's nuclear facilities (Halliday, 2010); or the historical abuse of Iran's political and sovereignty rights.

There is no doubt that Iran's regime have taunted and threatened its so-called "enemies" occasionally; and that many Iranians after the revolution were very pessimistic about the foreign powers; specifically the Western ones. But we often tend to forget that behind the aggressive dialogue of a totalitarian republic is a history of reasons. Perhaps a brief glance from another perspective at the contemporary history of Iran can offer a more convincing demonstration of why this country is considered to be an important target geopolitically, and why it has been a recurring victim of regional power struggles in the past.

I have to point out that retelling of historical events—even the contemporary ones—is very challenging due to the constant manipulations of history in the power struggles and the various power-backed discourses that are present in each reference. In this thesis I did my very best to get my information from a diverse pool of historical references; however, it must be mentioned that the intention is not to provide a discourse analysis of the historical discourses but to provide a fuller understanding of Iran's current state of affairs and its roots. With this in mind, I intended to shortly review the recent history from other perspectives rather than the ones which aim to reduce a nation simply to a rogue, and dangerous, state. I need to point out here that my intention of doing so is not simply to victimize Iranians or the Islamic Republic of Iran, but to remind ourselves of the possible reasons behind the rise of a conservative state with an aggressive literature in the name of self-defense against Western imperialism.

Iran has always been a noticeable target in the power games of the nineteenth and twentieth century; it is considered by some like Sniegoski, as one of the gravest victims of regional power struggles (Sniegoski, 2013, para. 1). For instance, Iranians suffered considerably because of the actions of Russia and Britain in World War I. About 10 million Iranians died from famine and disease which is said to be largely Britain's fault; such tragedies happened at a time when the central government in Tehran including the elected parliament, could not even appoint its own ministers without the agreement of the Russian and British and consulates (Sniegoski, 2013, para. 5). At the time, based on the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, Iran was divided into a Russian zone in the North, British zone in the Southeast and a neutral "buffer" zone which was shared by Russia and Britain (Sniegoski, 2013, para. 3).

During World War I Iran declared its neutrality two months after the beginning of the war. However, this did not really help Iran to avoid entanglement in the war. The country became a battleground between the Allies and the Ottoman Empire. The historian, Mohammed Gholi Majd, explains that Iran lost about 40% of its population during the war. He firmly states that Persia was the gravest victim of World War I. (as cited in Sniegoski, 2013). Sniegoski then also points out the suffering of the Iranians at the hands of Russians and British; he explains that British confiscated and purchased great portions of food supplies from farmers in Iran for their troops, while prohibiting Iranians from importing food from other countries. He insists that these forceful measures that were taken by the British resulted in famine in Iran (Sniegoski, 2013, para. 13).

Stephen Sniegoski explains why almost no one in the West has adequate knowledge of the fatal famine in Iran. He argues that, at the time, Britain and American Anglophile

elites controlled the news about the war, attributing atrocities only to the Central Powers such as Germans and Turks; hence foregrounding the crimes of Germans in the occupation of Belgium and backgrounding the disasters that happened in Persia, for instance (Sniegoski, 2013). The image of a victimized Iran has been rarely reproduced in the mainstream western media and specifically the American ones, because it would hurt the U.S. war policy toward countries like Iran which is defined as a good versus evil scenario (Sniegoski, 2013).

Things were not that different in relations with Russia. Iran was temporarily relieved of Russian Imperialism after the Russian revolution in March 1917, to find itself targeted by the Soviet's intention of revolutionizing the world (Munck, 2006). Iran was considered as an important state to the new Bolshevik government of the Soviets due to its closeness to the Indian subcontinent (Sniegoski, 2013, para. 25).

The Soviets, especially during Stalin's rule, actively supported the communist rebels using the grudge Iranians hold against the British and its influence in Iran; they provided arms and soldiers to help revolutionaries such as Kouchak Khan who led the "anti-Western, pan-Islamic, socially radical" movement that used to fight against the foreign occupiers and the central government in Tehran; the British reacted with supporting a coup by Reza Khan, a military officer who made sure that no revolution will take place in Iran and destroyed all the revolts around Iran (Sniegoski, 2013, para. 30).

Ultimately with Russo-Persian Treaty of Friendship, the Soviets withdrew their armies from Gilan and canceled the Iranian debt (Cohn & Russel, 2012). However this treaty would still allow the Soviet to intervene in Iran if it seemed to be necessary for the

national security of the Soviet Russia; a right which was used later in the World War II for a Soviet occupation in 1941 (Sniegoski, 2013, para. 35).

Despite the fact that Iran declared its neutrality in the World War II; on August 25, 1941, British and Soviet troops invaded Iran stating that Iran was protecting German agents (Sniegoski, 2013, para. 42). They pressured Reza Shah to step down, and replaced him by his son Mohammad with the following message: “Would His Highness kindly abdicate in favour of his son, the heir to the throne? We have a high opinion of him and will ensure his position. But His Highness should not think there is any other solution” (Kapuściński, 1985).

The allies were not satisfied with Iran’s state of neutrality as well as Reza Shah’s refusal to allow Iran to be used for shipping arms to Russia for the war against Germany (Majd, 2001; Sniegoski, 2013). Although elections for the government and parliament took place at the time, Iranian bureaucrats were not permitted to restrict the influence of the occupying powers; almost all of the political institutions and important economic activities were under their utmost influence (Sniegoski, 2013, para. 43).

Stephen Sniegoski explains that the Soviet Union and Britain occupied Iran because of its significant oil resources as well as its critical geopolitical position which was vital for sending war supplies to other allies. (Sniegoski, 2013, para. 44).

In the Tehran Conference (28 November to 1 December 1943) the allies finally agreed to maintain the “independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Iran” (Sniegoski, 2013, para . 49). However, when the war ended, Stalin’s Soviet troops remained in Iran, and they organized several separatist revolts in its northern zone for

declaring independence and joining the Azerbaijan SSR (Sniegoski, 2013, para . 51). The Soviet Union began to pull out its army from Iran on May 9, 1946, after lengthy negotiations and the interference of the United States that was fearful of Soviet control over Iran (Sniegoski, 2013). Iran's history in the twentieth century, for the most part, is filled with memories of war, hunger and suffering. Persia had no sovereign right of its own; it would be conquered as deemed necessary time after time. Therefore, it is not very hard to understand why many Iranians today distrust the world powers and demand the same rights as those who are in position of power (Sniegoski, 2013, para 63).

The powerful political leaders of our time are basically silent about at least 80 nuclear warheads of Israel in the "Middle East"; while Iran is under pressure for its nuclear facilities despite the fact that unlike Israel, Iran has signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) ("Signatories and Parties to The Treaty on The Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons", n.d.); not to mention that "both U.S. and Israeli intelligence reports suggest that [Iran] never intended to build a nuclear weapon" (O'Connell, 2015, para. 1). With this in mind, perhaps we can better realize Sniegoski's comparison between the historical sufferings of the Iranians with the suffering of the Jews and how they are mostly perceived by the international mainstream media. Sniegoski argues that the historical suffering of Iranians is being ignored while the suffering of the Jewish community is much emphasized to validate many privileges for Israel. An example of such privileges could be the silence of the United States and NATO toward Israel's nuclear weapons in contrast with their extraordinary sensitivity toward even the nuclear energy programs on the Iranian side (Sniegoski, 2013, para 64).

Up until 1951 Iran's oil industry was under the control of the British through the Anglo-Persian oil company. Iran's oil was "a major source of British enrichment"; AIOC (Anglo-Iranian Oil Company) was a British company that extracted petroleum from Iran until the nationalization of the oil industry in 1951 which happened due to the continuous efforts of Hossein Fatemi, Mohammad Mosaddegh and the many Iranians who were very skeptical of the British and their policies in Iran (Elm, 1994). The democratically elected prime minister of Iran was ultimately toppled with the coup d'état of 1953 (Risen, 2015); a coup that was orchestrated by CIA -under the name of 'Operation AJAX'- and by United Kingdom -under the name of 'Operation Boot'- (Louis, 2006). Hossein Fatemi was tortured and executed ("Ex-Foreign Chief of Iran Executed", 2015); Mosaddegh and many of his followers were imprisoned; he spent the rest of his life in house arrest (Abrahamian, 1982). The monarch appreciated the coup; Shah of Iran who returned to the country after Mosaddegh's government fell said to Kermit Roosevelt "I owe my throne to God, my people, my army and to you!" By 'you' he [the shah] meant me and the two countries—Great Britain and the United States" (Roosevelt, 1979).

Shah then continued his strong project of modernization and secularization in Iran with the political and financial support of United States (Alvandi, 2014). Shah's monarchy was under constant threat from the leftist parties such as Tudeh and the Islamic clergy in Iran. Some argue that the Shah was trying to "preempt a red revolution" by the left, and launched a "white revolution" as a step toward westernization that gave 1.5 million peasants lands of their own and provided women with the right to vote; it also introduced free and compulsory education, social security and national Insurance for Iranians, as well as workers' right to own shares in the industrial complexes

(Abrahamian, 2008). The reform program aimed to strengthen Iran's peasantry and classes that supported the monarchy. However the White revolution seems to have paved the way for an Islamic Revolution; since there were still many peasants who did not receive land and had difficulty surviving; moreover the clergy were angry with the reforms that limited their control, and the land reform produced large numbers of independent farmers and landless laborers which resulted in a different kind of class gap (Abrahamian, 2008).

Under the leadership of the religious leader Khomeini and many leftist organizations such as the Tudeh party and Islamist left ones such as the Mojahedin-e-Khalq (MEK), the 1979 Iranian revolution ultimately overthrew the Pahlavi dynasty (Emery, 2013). After the Islamic Republic revolution Khomeini and his followers distrusted both the Soviet Union and the United States, citing their involvement in the recent history of Iran ("Concept of Neither East nor West", n.d.). This approach resulted in the popular "Neither East nor West" policy that I believe acquired a kind of soft power for the new government due to its historical justification and popularity among Iranians ("Concept of Neither East nor West", n.d.). Obviously, most of the world felt threatened by a young revolution in the Middle East that was determined to be independent, and which was chanting death mottoes against the greater powers and specifically the western ones and Israel; therefore many forces in the political world decided that the Islamic Republic should be weakened or defeated.

Taunted by the rumors of another US-backed coup in support of Shah and filled with feelings of anti-Americanism a group of Iranian students who were supportive of the Iranian Revolution, occupied the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and seized fifty-two Americans as hostages for 444 days; the crisis ended with a deal in Algeria named

Algiers Accords in 1981 (Tabarani, 2008). The incident harshly damaged the economic and diplomatic relations between the two countries. On April 7, 1980, the United States ended diplomatic relations with Iran (Tabarani, 2008).

After the Iranian revolution, Iraq's regime was angered by the revolutionaries in Iran who urged Iraqis to rise against their rulers; there were assassination attempts that were said to be linked to Shia militants and Iranians. It is believed that Saddam, who was already hurt by the 1975 Algiers Agreement during Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's regime that gave Iran the higher ground in border disputes (Abdulghani, 1984), decided to remove the threat of a Pan-Islamic Republic and to annex Khuzestan, in order to become a regional power (Farrokh, 2011). Ultimately Saddam's regime invaded Iran via air and land on 23 September 1980; he was under the impression that attacking a country that is disorganized by a revolution will not be much of a challenge, but the invasion resulted in a long "patriotic" war that consolidated Iran's regime more than ever (Jensen & Klunder, 2001).

During the war, Iraq had the support of 150 foreign companies from USA, Germany, Britain, France, China and Soviet Union (Paterson, 2002). "From about 1975 onwards, these companies are shown to have supplied entire complexes, building elements, basic materials and technical know-how for Saddam Hussein's program to develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction" (The Independent, 2002, para. 6). A leaked text from a document named NSDD (National Security Decision Directive) stated that "United states would do whatever was necessary and legal to prevent Iraq from losing the war" (Johnson, 2007). At the beginning of the war, Iran had to rely mostly on its broken army that was the result of military officer purges and executions after the revolution; the skilled soldiers and generals were

exiled, imprisoned or executed (Karsh, 2002). Apparently Iran received most of its arms from China and North Korea; the Islamic Republic eventually also bought warfare equipment and supplies from countries such as Brazil, Pakistan, West Germany and even the United States in one instance of a secret deal called Iran–Contra affair; the United States at the time sought Iran’s help to release hostages in Libya and to make money for helping the Contras rebel group in Nicaragua (Parry, 2015).

On July 3, 1988, when the tensions in the Persian Gulf were high, the Iranian civilian passenger flight was shot by a United States Navy cruiser named USS Vincennes, which resulted in the loss of 290 civilians, 66 of which were children (Ghasemi, 2015). In another incident in 1988, Iraq started using chemical weapons against civilian centers; in an attack on the village of Halabja in the Iraqi Kurdistan that fell to Iranian army thousands were killed; to Iran’s surprise “the massacre of Halabja caused no major international outcry”; Rafsanjani, commander-in-chief of Iran at the time, claimed that Iraq has also used chemical weapons to attack a village called Oshnovieh killing 2,000 people (Hashim, 1994).

Iranian officials were dismayed by the lack of international sympathy for the massacre of thousands in Halabja by Iraq’s chemical attack and the shooting down of Iranian civilian passenger, and started to realize that the United States and Western Europe will not stop supporting Saddam (Hashim, 1994). Iraq apparently was seen by the West and the Soviet Union as a counterbalance to post-revolutionary Iran with its motto of “Neither East nor West” (Bulloch & Morris, 1989). There is no hard proof present to prove that Iran actually used chemical weapons in the war (Potter & Sick, 2004). Iran “stated that its moral and religious beliefs prohibited it from using chemical weapons even though it had the capacity” (Hashim, 1994, p. 211). The eight years of war finally

ended when Iran and Iraq accepted United Nations Security Council resolution 598. The resolution became effective on 8 August 1988, calling for an immediate ceasefire, asking both sides to return to their international borders (Hashim, 1994).

In summary, this very brief history might have helped us understand Iran's mistrust of the world's modern powers to a fuller extent. While Iran's regimes have also taunted the world and the region on many occasions by their aggressive tone and actions, for the most part, it seems that this political aggression against the critical voices was partly reproduced because Iran's sovereign rights were not respected and Iranian's voices and interests were marginalized by the greater world powers repeatedly. However, the discourses that are reproduced about Iran are mainly based on political agendas that lack an understanding of what Iran's diverse population went through within the past decades. Based on the articles in the mainstream publications, I'll argue that they mostly view Iran as a "third-world" "backward" nation that has a western lover middle class which is simply struggling against the mullahs for freedom; or as a rogue nation that is an enemy of the Western values for no good reason. Additionally, many mainstream media broadcasters in the West and the United States, in particular, have strongly misrepresented Iran as an utter threat to peace in the region, reducing it to simply a nation divided between Shia extremists and anti-government liberals. On the other hand, Iran's conservative state media tries to impose a radical imperialist portrayal of the West using censorship and propaganda in the name of stability and protection. I believe that it is necessary to challenge the discourses that are being produced by both the Western mainstream media and the Iranian mainstream state media; many of which do not include the voices of the people who have suffered and are being marginalized. These discourses, I'll argue, in many cases have created strong

misrepresentations that have strengthened the hostility, reducing the “other” to a threatening estranged entity. My argument is that it is possible not to reduce the other, but to respond to the otherness of the other, to be hospitable to the otherness of the other. Therefore I believe re-thinking and evaluating the current media discourses that are produced about Iran’s sophisticated political and social situation can perhaps open our eyes to new possibilities for the sake of a more tolerant and peaceful relationship with Iran which can also affect the stability of the region.

1.2 Importance of the Study

In an attempt to examine the possibility of a constructive communication with a country like Iran, my intention is to acquire a diverse perspective toward the current political and cultural struggles in the relationship between the country and the wider world, studying the very recent Iranian nuclear deal. I’m hoping that the approach of this study will provide creative alternative solutions for more constructive conflict coverage in the future. If we hope to get close to “reconciliation before violence” as Derrida puts it, and if we intend to reach “a reconciliation which would not be simply a compromise in which the other in this or that may lose his or her singularity, identity, desire and so on” (Derrida, 2001, p. 18). Very often the conflict between Iran and the rest of the world has been mostly portrayed in terms of a self-centered Western perspective or in terms of the anti-West conservatives in Iran; it has been reduced to a simple dictatorship vs. democracy, or new vs. traditional, or secular vs. religious binary opposition. I’m hoping that by examining such discourses, we may realize possible alternative ways of shaping communication with regards to a peaceful and hospitable act that will honor the voices of the other. I believe that even newspapers such as *New York Times* that are received as more open and unbiased in the eyes of

many have fallen prey to such simplifications; I've tried to explore and uncover these simplifications in this thesis.

Through a discourse theory approach, I reviewed selected well-received media outlets coverage of the Iran's nuclear deal; these outlets are *New York Times*, Fox News Online Website, *Kayhan* and IRNA; these newspapers are chosen from the United States and Iran. Although Europe played an important role in the deal, I chose to mostly narrow my focus on the American and Iranian press; the roots of the conflict seem to be in the US and Iran controversial relations; therefore I tend to think that they are the major players in the deal.

In this thesis, I benefited from Derrida's notion of deconstruction, as well as Foucauldian discourse analysis I challenge and question the "realities" that are being constructed by the expressions of the mentioned newspapers concerned with the relationship between knowledge and power. I argue that the conflict coverage of the mentioned newspapers had a specific way of fixing meaning that can result in constructing more tension, and ultimately violence. My intention is to problematize the dominant discourses and challenge any attempt of normalization in the discourses. I hope to expose the selected media texts, aiming to uncover the binary oppositions and the contradictions that lie within the text itself.

This study argues why the bipolar perspective in which pure peace is seen against pure conflict is not a suitable approach toward the complicated process of peace. This bipolar perspective will result in not seeing the opportunities for peace in controversial times; and can make us blind toward the abuse of the term "peace" by warmongers,

making it impossible for us to realize that there could be peace in conflict and subsequently conflict in peace (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005).

This thesis attempts to show that the differences that are seen as the main reasons for the so-called "conflicts" are actually a necessity for a vital and creative humane society; that an absolute perception of peace as something that can only happen in a society with no differences or discord is in fact an obstacle in reaching harmony. This thesis explores possible alternatives for perusing a non-bipolar approach in practice when dealing with conflicts such as the Iranian nuclear dilemma. Inspired by Derrida's deconstructive logic, I also attempt to rethink the binary oppositional way of thinking and point out the contradictions and surprises in the discourses used by the mainstream newspapers and broadcasters; I explore a logic of "destabilization that is always already on the move" in their text (Royle, 2000). Criticizing the idealism in these texts, I hope to cast a new light on the existing conflicts, explaining how the "other"s and the "dangerous supplement"s that we so eagerly try to ignore, alienate and reduce in the name of the so-called "truth", "nature" or "reality", are already a part of us intertextually (Derrida, 1976).

I argue that as the mass media can drive the society toward more conflict effectively, it can also drive it toward more peace and tolerance (Greenslade, 2005), by helping the society members realize the significance of the "other". This study demonstrates how the interpretations of selected print and broadcast media reproduced the discourses about the nuclear deal and how these discourses result in diverse groups of people on different sides to be alienated by the mainstream media. The newspapers and news websites are selected based on their importance and influence in the international community. The chosen news articles represent the views on the right and left of

Iranian and American political spaces regarding the Nuclear Deal. This thesis entertains the possibility of a more flexible, dynamic and peaceful approach that can take place in times of conflict. I discuss that such an approach is not only necessary but vital toward any diverse human society. Although I intend to examine several texts with the help of discourse analysis, I'm not willing to become a methodologist meaning that this thesis will not lead to some kind of model, evidence or proof that will define a broader social practice and approach.

In this study the aim is to embolden the other side of the text that has been marginalized, to come to the defense of the other's voice, and to study the reasons behind the marginalization of the so-called different opposition.

1.3 Limitations

The Iran deal is a subject that is limited in terms of complexity in comparison with many other harsh conflicts that we are facing today, therefore my approach regarding this particular case study of Iran's Nuclear Deal has its limitations, and obviously it cannot be a sole representative or model of how we perceive human conflicts in general; for this is a unique case, and many other forms of conflicts around the globe are far more sophisticated ideologically and critically. But perhaps this can be a step in the right direction, and by "right" I mean a direction which leads to a fuller understanding of a human society in its most diverse and tolerant form.

This thesis has chosen to mostly reflect on the issues and conflicts of "nations" around the globe (Zernatto, 1944, p. 1). It has a limited scope when it comes to the diverse groups of people who are reduced to a whole term of "nation" (Zernatto, 1944, p.1). It might have a limited understanding of the complexity of minor communities of our

time such as tribes, small villages and members of small religious groups such as Bahá'í, Mandaism, and Zoroastrianism.

This study cannot claim that it has covered the matter globally. Many discourses are being reproduced about Iran's deal in many publications on paper and online, as well as the ones in the social media. They are intentionally left out of the scope of this thesis, because in this study, I tend to problematize the widely reproduced and disseminated messages, and the focus is on the dominant expressions that are mainstreamed by the mostly western and Iranian media discourses.

It should also be noted that the aim of this thesis is not to get into the technical details of the nuclear agreement and the specifics, but as mentioned before, it is to study the ways in which the agreement has been represented and reproduced in the context of the Iran-United States relations.

1.4 A Summary of the Nuclear Deal

This section is made to provide a short summary of the nuclear deal. This summary does not get into the technical details; its purpose is to provide a basic understanding of what was at stake from all sides in the deal. The **Iran nuclear deal** was an agreement reached between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the P5+1 (which is known as UN Security Council, including France, China, the United Kingdom, Russia and the United States; plus Germany). as well as the European Union in 2015 ("Joint Statement by EU High Representative Federica Mogherini and Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif ", 2016). The parameters of the deal can be summarized as follows;

1.4.1 Actions Required by the P5+1:

- To lift all the energy and banking sanctions of EU against Iran
- To create a mechanism to restore the sanctions, in case Iran fails to comply with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspection and reports.
- The United States to remove sanctions on companies or corporations which do business with Iran.
- United Nations annuls resolutions which sanction Iran as well as all the UN-related sanction.
- And to basically lift all the mentioned sanctions within 4 to 12 months ("Joint Statement by EU High Representative Federica Mogherini and Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif", 2016).

1.4.2 Actions Required by Iran:

- To reduce the number of installed centrifuges from 19,000 to 6,104; in addition, only 5,060 of those centrifuges can contribute to enriching uranium in the next 10 years.
- To not enrich uranium above the purity that is enough for nuclear power generation which is 3.67%
- To reduce the stockpile of enriched uranium from 10,000 to 300 kilograms for 15 years
- Fordow uranium enrichment facility that is located northeast of the Iranian city of Qom will run only 1,000 centrifuges for research. Natanz (hardened Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP) will operate 5,000, and the remaining 13,000 centrifuges will be used as replacements only if needed.
- The heavy-water facility near the town of Arak has to produce a minimal amount of plutonium, but it can remain a heavy-water reactor.

- Iran should permit inspections of all its nuclear facilities and nuclear supply chains with the exception of military sites ("Joint Statement by EU High Representative Federica Mogherini and Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif", 2016).

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY

2.1 About Discourse Analysis

Cultural studies' approach toward the method has provided this thesis, with a fair amount of self-reflectivity. For the sake of that self-reflectivity, this thesis uses a distinct methodology so that it can explore a variety of ways of thinking. In an attempt to reach a fuller understanding of the politics of differences which are presented in the text, this thesis's methodology perhaps can best be described as *bricolage* (Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg, 1992, p. 2). Hence, this study attempts to avoid adopting a certain formalized disciplinary practice of research, since those practices themselves are based on a background context that might radically shape the way the issue is investigated (Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg, 1992).

This study hopes to find "new ways of thinking, strategies for survival and resources for resistance" (Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg, 1992, p. 2). This study is not inclined to observe texts as "self-determined and independent objects" (Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg, 1992, p. 2). This thesis stays open to unexpected possibilities since stereotyping reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes difference and tends to occur when there are eminent inequalities of power (Hobbs & Rice, n.d.).

With the help of Discourse Analysis and its background understanding of deconstruction, this thesis evaluates the discursive realities that are reproduced about Iran's nuclear deal along with the tension between Iran and the West. The concern of this thesis is to explore new perspectives for meditating their differences. There is an ideological attempt to win power struggles, and this study's role is to expose that attempt. However, this thesis does not have a functionary role and therefore, will not issue any ultimate statement to naturalize its own judgment. On the other hand, this

thesis aims to expose that ideological attempt, uncovering the possible dominant expectations and privileges that lie beneath the powerful normalized discourses. This thesis evaluates the political claims of justice that each side relies on, attempting to displace the center in the mediated messages. It is widely believed that the mass media co-constructs our daily social realities (Gamson, 1992); hence, the text subjects are chosen from major newspapers or news websites.

This study draws on the concept that the language problem does exist and that the meaning-making language is an element of the social world that functions to reshape social beliefs and identities within power relations and social context (Chouliaraki, 2008). Based on the approach presented, the purpose of this thesis is not to discover an absolute true meaning, but to realize how meaning is produced. Perhaps the most important aspect of this thesis' methodology is its Foucauldian concept of discourse, which embodies a constitutive relationship between power and meaning in social practice; "meaning and power are always already encountered in complex grids of co-articulation within every social practice" (Chouliaraki, p. 675). This thesis is concerned with the relationship between discourse and power. Michel Foucault reminds us that "discourses are transformed in, through and on the basis of relations of power" (Foucault, 1980, p. 177). To be able to critically evaluate the way meaning is reproduced, this study challenges the truth that has naturalized itself within the text through relations of power and historical context; because as Foucault states:

We are also subjected to truth in the sense in which it is truth that makes the laws, that produces the true discourse which, at least partially, decides, transmits and itself extends upon the effects of power. In the end, we are judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of the specific effects of power (Foucault, 1980, p. 94).

Therefore discourse has direct relations with our social behaviors and our actions. This relationship makes the act of testing and challenging discourse more eminent. In every society there is a “general politics of truth” that marginalizes other un-true voices.

Foucault defines this “general politics of truth” or “regime of truth” as:

the types of discourse which [the society] accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (Foucault, 1980, p. 131).

Hence, this research is concerned with questioning valued statements and does not perceive the world as an objective entity that occurs out there but as a language-mediated course that happens in discourse. There is no promise of any true meaning through analysis here, but an attempt to explore the possibility of better communication between the parties in conflict.

Discourse Analysis can be useful in developing a more historically-sensitive perspective of critical evaluation (Chouliaraki, 2008). Nonetheless, relations of meaning-making are not only systemic in the language structure but also social (Chouliaraki, 2008). They have their “conditions of possibility” in the historical and political relationships in which they are embedded (Chouliaraki, 2008, p. 674). Meaning and power are always already co-articulating with each other in every social practice; Foucault believed that this co-articulation can be “subject to systematic study in terms of their historical conditions of emergence and their effects upon social subjects”(Chouliaraki, 2008, p. 675). In this thesis discourse is not considered as a deterministic structure which destroys agency and engenders the death of the subject; “Foucault thinks of discourse as a productive technology of social practice, which

subjects people to forms of power while, at the same time, providing them with spaces of agency and possibilities for action” (Chouliaraki, 2008, p. 675).

There is a sense of realism, rationalism, and naturalism in many texts of the mainstream news media. With the help of discourse analysis, the intention here is to reveal the hidden power relations that are primarily constructed through language. This thesis will challenge those texts by foregrounding the notions that it marginalized and by reminding the historical and social context of claims it challenges. This thesis problematizes the authority of the text by studying how some voices get heard while others are not; who is empowered as a result of the discourse in question and who is disempowered.

2.2 About Deconstruction

Inspired by Derrida’s deconstruction and through an inventive textual interpretation, my aim in this thesis is to expose the exclusionary operations of the binary oppositional ways of thinking that are embedded in the particular texts that I read. However, it should be noted that deconstruction cannot be transformed into a method set in stone, laying down the unchanging steps of a fixed procedure. According to Beardsworth, the conventional conceptualization of method “carries connotations of a procedural form of judgment” and “a thinker with a method has already decided how to proceed” (as cited in Royle, 2000, p. 4). Therefore, a conventional idea of method suggests something “systematic and closed” (Royle, 2000, p. 5). For Jacques Derrida, being a functionary of a structure is irresponsibility (Royle, 2000). A method fixed once and for all in the form of a procedure is also misleading because deconstruction is about what cannot be formalized or anticipated. It is about the unforeseeable, the incalculable, and the impossible (Royle, 2000). Derrida himself points out: “deconstruction is not a method and cannot be transformed into one” (Derrida, 1983,

para. 9). It is “the experience of the impossible” (Derrida & Caputo, 2008, p. 32), in the sense of opening our perspective to future becoming, to the beyond of what we consider to be possible at the moment.

This thesis resists following a single pre-determined method, and it also resists declaring ultimate solutions, but that does not mean that it is not concerned with justice. On the contrary, this thesis is engaged with having a sense of duty toward justice. That duty is to “give oneself up to the impossible decision, while taking account of rules and law” (Lawlor, 2006, p. 11). This decision in the present is impossible because it carries a resemblance to the past which cancels the singularity of the present “since any event in order to be [an] event worthy of its name must be singular and non-resembling” (Lawlor, 2006, p. 4). However if this impossible decision is meant to be as free as possible, Derrida argues that it should go through an “ordeal of the undecidable” and should not be the result of a “programmable application” (as cited in Lawlor, 2006, p. 11). Moreover, even if the decision goes through such an ordeal, it has again followed a rule and “is no longer presently just” (Lawlor, 2006, p. 11). Hence, justice is always yet to come in the future, and it can never be present. We most probably can never call a decision “presently and fully just” (Lawlor, 2006, p. 11); and this is yet another reason for this thesis to resist rushing into a final solution.

Deconstruction in this thesis is understood as an outlook that is always already at work in the texts under discussion, foregrounding the absence that is already a part of any presence in any notion or any meaning. Deconstruction will always change with every visit, and Derrida reminds us that no one can seal the fate of a word, the meaning or a so-called signifier; that meaning never fully arrives at a destination. Therefore

deconstruction will never be what we think (Royle, 2000). Deconstruction is considered as "a way of criticizing not only both literary and philosophical texts but also political institutions" (Lawlor, 2006, para. 1). Perhaps, the deconstruction that is always already happening in a text can help realize the instability of our system of meaning against others; it can remind us of our crucial responsibility, which is to avoid the "worst violence" from occurring (Lawlor, 2006, para. 1). Derrida describes the "worst violence" as an attempt in which the other to which one is related to, is entirely appropriated and reduced to one's self (Lawlor, 2006, para. 20). This violence happens when a proper destination is defined, and in the way to that proper destination "many more" are excluded; this complete exclusion which can have no limit in being violent is the "worst violence" (Lawlor, 2006, para. 20).

Derrida reminds us that language, whether written or spoken, cannot denote any form of absolute truth (Goodspeed, 2015). Since as mentioned before, the signified cannot be reduced to the signifier and the difference that separates them reduced to no difference. There are always supplements, and these supplements are always already present and signifying, standing in place of the absent signified.

It is important to remember that when it is assumed that we have reached a destination, a state of full presence, we are not aware that our text is constrained by the very other signifiers and systems that we are excluding as untrue. Because "there is nothing outside of the text" (Derrida, 1976). There can be no pure signified; therefore, it is senseless to try and to go beyond the text looking for an origin or full presence.

Deconstruction will never be what we think (Royle, 2000). It is always in process, and will continue to change and surprise us. However, we can now perhaps understand the

kind of thinking in which deconstruction engages. “A kind of thinking that never finds itself at the end” (Lawlor, 2006, p. 12). A logic that can help us get near the impossible justice in many inventive ways. A logic that is always already at work and is reminding us of our ethical responsibility toward the others, of our connection with them. It can help the animal that we are, to realize how and in what ways we have been violent with ourselves and others without being aware of it. Deconstruction is the realization of an impossible experience that perhaps can make a better world possible for us; a better world that is always yet to come and that is not defined by a proper or single origin and destination (Lawlor, 2006), but by divided ones with many possibilities. The notion of Deconstruction is of importance for this thesis since it provides the critical outlook for decentering the discourses in which the other is violently marginalized, harassed or reduced to the same.

In short, while approaching the texts under investigation for analysis, I looked into the social and historical contexts of the news articles. By using diversely valid sources, this thesis studies the background of the institutions(s) involved in the publishing and distribution of those texts; as well as the backgrounds of the individuals who have reproduced the texts in question. I’ll also analyze their language and choice of words. The voices of those whom the text marginalizes will be foregrounded, and the argument of other sides of the conflict will be used to problematize the texts in question.

Chapter 3

ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE OF IRAN'S NUCLEAR DEAL

3.1 Analysis of The New York Times on the Nuclear Deal

The New York Times (NYT) is a product of The *New York Times* Company which is known as an American daily newspaper; it was born and based in New York City since 1835 ("Our History", 2016). According to a report from Bloomberg in 2013, NYT has the second-largest circulation in the United States (Lee, 2016). NYT is rewarded with the title: "newspaper of record" (Zelizer, Park, & Gudelunas, 2002, p. 3). The paper's slogan is "All the News That's Fit to Print" which can be seen in the upper left-hand corner of the front page (Campbell, 2016, para. 1).

New York Times is seen by some like Alan Blake of *Washington Post* as a medium in the United States that aims to be liberal (Blake, 2016). A 2007 survey made by Rasmussen Reports indicates that *The New York Times* leans to the left and that it has a liberal agenda ("*New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and Local Newspapers Seen as Having Liberal Bias", 2007). Seemingly the *New York Times* is perceived as both leftist and liberal in the eyes of many conservative media outlets such as Rasmussen Reports; the key problem with this point of view is that it conflates liberalism with leftism while the two have radical differences; For Sethness, there is a key problem with such conflation;

“leftists — that is, Marxists, anarchists, and all other socialists — have long disagreed very fundamentally with liberals on many deeply important questions, foremost among them being the place of capitalism, the State, imperialism, social domination and hierarchy generally in existing society” (Sethness, 2009, para. 3).

According to Daniel Okrent, a former public editor of *The New York Times*, the newspaper is a product of New York City’s metropolitan and diverse setting which has more flexibility; therefore, partially because of being based in New York City, the newspaper has a liberal point of view (Okrent, 2004). *The New York Times* has been mostly backing Democratic nominees in the United States (Brennan, 2016). In a

Huffington Post article, William K. Black describes *The New York Times* as being far to the right on financial matters in its reporting on Rafael Correa former president of Ecuador harshly; Correa fought World Bank and imposed taxes on banks (Black, 2012).

The Chairman of the *New York Times* Company and Publisher of the newspaper is Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr. ("Arthur O. Sulzberger, Jr. The *New York Times* Company", 2016). His father Arthur Ochs Sulzberger was also the chairman and publisher of Times (Haberman, 2012). The family is known for the great-grandfather of Arthur Jr., Adolph Ochs, who was the former buyer and owner of *The New York Times* (Davis, 1921).

Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr. holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Tufts University in 1974. Arthur is also a graduate of the Harvard Business School's Program for Management Development ("Arthur O. Sulzberger, Jr. The *New York Times* Company", 2016). Apparently, Sulzberger's parents got a divorce when he was five, and he spent most of his childhood living with wealthy relatives. "As an adolescent, he moved in with his father in Manhattan, grew his hair long, became immersed in the 1960s counter-culture, and was twice arrested in anti-Vietnam War demonstrations" ("Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Jr.", 2016, para. 3).

Sulzberger is seemingly eager to expand NYT's power into a global news agency that has several platforms including internet and cable television; "In 2002 Sulzberger struck a deal with the French newspaper *Le Monde* to insert an eight-page English-language Times supplement into each Saturday's edition. He subsequently made similar deals with newspapers in Mexico, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Denmark, and India"; according to Stanley Kurtz, Sulzberger has a long-term plan to

target “the political-cultural elite” aka “the knowledge audience” across the globe (“Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Jr.”, 2016, para. 17).

Sulzberger supposedly has intended to bring gender, racial and cultural diversity to the newspaper's staff, “even as he reduced its diversity of ideas to those predominantly of the left”. “The Executive Editor at the time of Sulzberger's takeover, Max Frankel,” stated “that he had ceased hiring non-blacks”; supposedly, Sulzberger once said “that if older white males were alienated” by the changes in Times then “we're doing something right” (Tift, 1999, para. 3).

For *The New York Times* section, I intend to focus on the articles written by Thomas Erdbrink who is a *New York Times* correspondent and is located in Iran for more than 13 years; he joined *The New York Times* in 2012 and “works as Tehran Bureau Chief for the *New York Times*”; (Erdbrink, 2015). In his twitter account, he describes himself in these words: “Tehran bureau chief for The *New York Times*. I am one of the few Westerners reporting from Iran, and have been based here for the past 10 years” (Erdbrink, 2015).

He originally started writing his reports about Iran in 1999 and has been reporting from Tehran since 2002 (“Thomas Erdbrink”, 2016). Working for The Washington Post in 2008, he covered the protests that happened after the presidential election of 2009 in Iran. “He has carefully tracked Iran’s controversial nuclear program and the impact of international sanctions” (“Thomas Erdbrink”, 2016, para. 2). The two articles from Erdbrink that will be analyzed in this section were published by The *New York Times* on November 3, 2015, and October 5, 2015, concerning Iran’s Nuclear Deal and its consequences for Iranians.

In the article “Cautiously, Iranians Reclaim Public Spaces and Liberties Long Suppressed”, Erdbrink signifies “nuclear agreement” as a glimmer of hope that is urging Iranians to “reclaim public spaces” bringing more freedom to Iran (Erdbrink, 2015b, p. 1). However, I’ll argue that through the use of particular discursive signs this freedom is associated with westernization and modernization. I intend to study how he connects the nuclear agreement with the hope for change; and ultimately by using a particular discursive language, how he associates hope for change with notions of modernization.

The piece was published about three months after the endorsement of the nuclear deal by the U.N (Nikou, 2016). Erdbrink starts with narrating his experience of a classical music concert in “North Tehran”; the article includes a photo of a young Iranian woman in the music concert at the Milad tower, a tower that is known for its fancy and expensive music concerts and restaurants (Erdbrink, 2011). The girl has a controversial loose veil and a hair that is wigged (figure 1.1). She obviously is not a woman that represents Islamic Republic values of veiling; on the contrary, she is a rebel against conformity. He then points out the obligatory headscarves that are “draped” around the neck of several women;

Iranians have always enjoyed rich private lives, some following Western trends and fashions, but behind closed doors. The state tolerated that but insisted that people adhere to the strict laws on appearance and behavior in public spaces that were laid down after the Islamic revolution in 1979 (Erdbrink, 2015b, p. 1).

The phrase connects the idea of a “rich” life with the “Western trends and fashions” that is happening in the “suppressed” Iranian household and “behind closed doors”. This “rich” life is supposed to be in contradiction with some kind of un-rich (probably un-western) life that is happening outside of home under the watch of the Islamic

Republic (Erdbrink, 2015b, p. 1). Then the phrase connects Islamic Republic with the word “strict” through the “strict laws” that occurred with the “Islamic revolution in the 1979” (Erdbrink, 2015b, p. 1). Nevertheless, one may challenge the notion of strict and its definition in Erdbrink’s news article; what kind of reaction is described as strict and by what standard? For instance, regulations on hijab have not been static notions that impose unchangeable limitations onto all Iranians from different class and ethnicities; the so-called “strict” restrictions have a different taste for many in the more religious communities, traditional (bazaar) middle class and working class; many in those communities do not necessarily view west and modernism positively (Bonine & Keddie, 1981). Furthermore, the issue of Hijab and public appearance after the revolution has been subject to change in Iran; those restrictions have been challenged a lot since the election of reformists in the 1990s; hence the strictness of laws on appearance in the 90s were very different from the strictness of such laws in the early years of the revolution (Aman, 2014).



Figure 1.1: A pop concert at the Milad tower in Tehran

In the article, the writer associates the struggle for more freedom that is stronger now due to the nuclear deal and possibility of a relationship with the west, with the fight against “the obligatory headscarves” (Erdbrink, 2015b, p. 1). Considering the Islamic Republic’s forceful mandatory requirements for Hijab, this association is understandable; however one of the limitations of such association is that it ignores that the right to not wear a scarf does not necessarily translate into more freedom. The issue of Hijab has been used a lot by the western media to illustrate a benighted Middle East. For that reason, I briefly intend to study the matter and argue that the perspective of mainstream western publications on issues such as Hijab ignores the historical and social context of veiling and tends to reflect mostly the colonized image of passive eastern women (Hoodfar, n.d.). For Hoodfar (n.d.) the patriarchal difficulties that women in Muslim countries face are eminent; however the veiled woman is also under pressure from the many western thinkers who “simply assume that what is good for western middle-class women should be good for all other women” (Hoodfar, n.d., p. 5). A pressure that is based on a binary oppositional way of thinking; women are defined by either the rejection of their cultural identity or by being silent victims of Islamic patriarchy (Hoodfar, n.d.).

It is also interesting how in different periods of time veiling has been associated with sometimes radically different kinds of literatures due to the power relations of the time. For instance, Dossani (2013) argues that Assyrian elites restricted the practice of veiling only for the upper-class women, believing that only respectable women should wear them; they apparently used to outline punishment for women of other classes and prostitutes who wore veils. As a matter of fact, there is evidence to suggest that veiling was mostly considered as a privilege for the upper classes among Christians in Arabia

and Zoroastrians (Dossani, 2013). Perhaps this can show that a sign like veiling does not necessarily signify the discourse of repression or liberation.

In modern Iran, the issue of Hijab notably came to light by the act of forceful unveiling during the rule of Reza Shah; the decree required policemen to remove veils forcefully from women in public (Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016). Reza Shah in his own words partially described his intention of such measures: “All I am trying to do is for us to look like them [The Europeans] so they would not laugh at us” (Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016, p. 202). Later on during the Islamic revolution, to protest Pahlavi’s dynasty and their will for “modernization” as well as “westernization” in Iran (Mozaffari, 2014), some non-veiled women from the upper and middle-class intentionally used to put on the veil in solidarity with other women who wore hijab (Esfandiari, 1997). Wearing chador and headscarves was fetishized; they became symbols of the revolution against the west, shah and modernization (Lindisfarne & Ingham, 1997). In conclusion, it seems to be absurd to associate simply the sign of “veiling” with repression, oppression and backwardness.

Erdbrink continues to describe the gap between the people and the authorities as a kind of “disconnect”: “this disconnect has led to a perpetual cat and mouse game, with public freedoms virtually disappearing after the government’s brutal repression of protest following the widely disputed presidential election in 2009” (Erdbrink, 2015b, p. 1). Through a binary oppositional perspective, again the writer gives himself the privilege of judging the society of Iran and reducing it into mainly two groups. First group includes the rebellious and modernized youth hanging out in cafes (figure 1.2), organizing events as activists (figure 1.3) and participating in fashion shows that are designed like the western ones (figure 1.4). It also includes individuals like a rich son

of a banker who cares about public spaces. The son is shown chatting with a girl in an office (figure 1.5). The second group includes the officials, the hard liners and the likes of “morality police”. The relationship between this second group of government officials like the “morality police” and the people as told by Erdbrink appears to be repressive and hopeless (Erdbrink, 2015b, p. 2).



Figure 1.2: A café in central Tehran

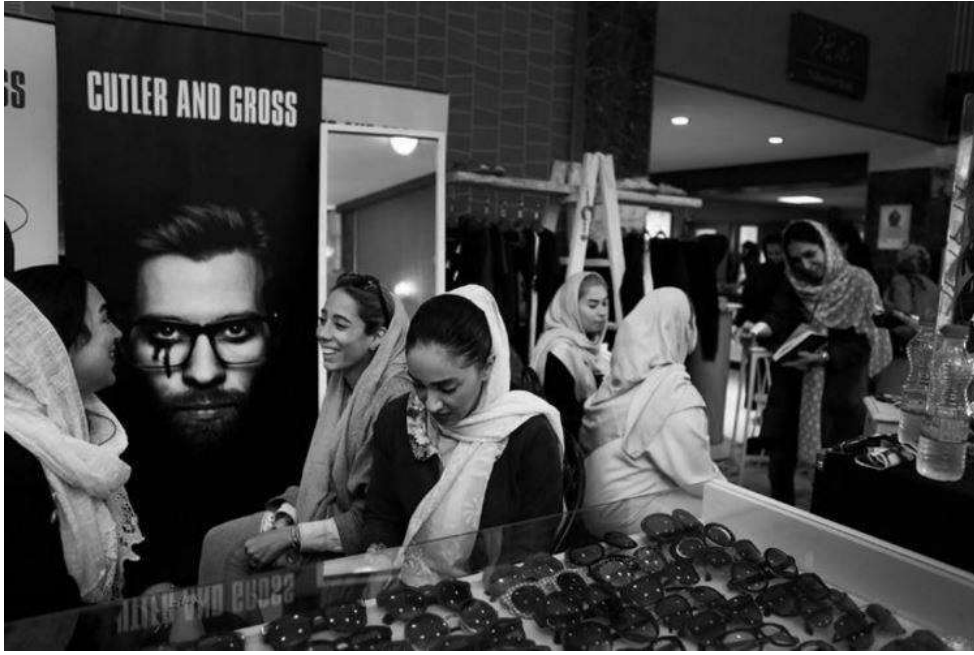


Figure 1.3: Iranian girls selling sunglasses at a charity event



Figure 1.4: A fashion show in Tehran



Figure 1.5: Ehsan Rasoulof is the son of a banker, and is using family money to open up public spaces in Iran.

The division that Erdbrink foregrounds between the “hard-liners” and the “invisible people” can also be found in another article of his, titled “Divide on Iran Nuclear Deal: Hard-Liners vs. Invisible People” (Erdbrink, 2015c, p. 1). In this article however, Erdbrink gets out of the circle of Tehran middle class citizens and pays attention to the voice of a working class individual as well. He refers to the comments of a struggling factory worker who works double shift to make ends meet. Ali, the factory worker, states that “I do not care about nuclear energy. These people do not represent me” (Erdbrink, 2015c, para. 11). Ali is the representative of many Iranians who do not find the nuclear energy important and are only struggling to financially survive. These invisible voices are also referred to by an economist that Erdbrink interviewed. Sayeed Laylaz, an economist and political activist, claims that “There is a sea of invisible people out there who seem voiceless, but they strongly yearn for a deal” (Erdbrink, 2015c, para. 16). In the article, by referring to the “nearly empty park surrounding” of an event curated by “hard-liners” (Erdbrink, 2015c, para. 9), Erdbrink himself constructively addresses the invisible voices of many Iranians who are alienated from

the political process. He also correctly reminds us that there are lots of urban Iranians who are forbidden to hold demonstrations of their own, and that they “want no part of confrontational policies, at home or abroad, asking instead for a more relaxed atmosphere, socially and politically” (Erdbrink, 2015c, para. 13). Nevertheless, Erdbrink still insists on the picture of a radically divided society, forgetting about the many people who do not fit completely in the binary opposition of the stereotypical pictures of a “despotic east” represented by “hard-liners” and Westernized people enjoying liberties represented by his category of “invisible people” (Erdbrink, 2015c, para. 1, 3; Curtis, 2009). *Orientalism and Islam: European Thinkers on Oriental Despotism in the Middle East and India* (No. s 52, p. 17). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.). He carries this sense of division in all the three articles in question that are mentioned in this thesis. His attempt to address the voices of forgotten Iranians is admirable, but by reducing the society into two simple categories of officials and anti-officials, he himself risks alienating many Iranian voices in non-urban or more religious communities. He also does not reflect the reasoning of “hard-liners” through interviews in these three articles; mostly concerned with the alienated Tehran middle class citizens, his focus on the “hard-liners” arguments is limited to their mottos or public messages. His decision to not interview some of the pro-government individuals might be due to overwhelming exposure that the politically conservatives in Iran enjoy through the state media. Nevertheless, if we are hoping for a constructive dialogue among different communities, it would be beneficial to be aware of the counter arguments that functions in the society instead of reducing or ignoring them.

The photo (figure 1.6) that is attached to the article “Divide on Iran Nuclear Deal: Hard-Liners vs. Invisible People” shows two women wearing chador. One is walking

on the writings on the ground that seems to be related to the “hard-liners” event, and the other is writing them accompanied by two children watching; as if their participation is a family tradition. Comparing this photo with other photos that Erdbrink uses, like the one shown in the figure 1.1, one could again easily see the harsh distinction that Erdbrink is drawing by his perspective. One photo shows women representing “hard-liners” wearing black chador (figure 1.6); and others depict girls with loose veils and colored manteaus (specific kind of coat that is common among Iranian women) representing the “invisible people” (Erdbrink, 2015c, para. 1).

There is no doubt that such different voices do exist in Iran, however, Erdbrink comes short of reminding us about the Iranian Identities that fall somewhere in between the two groups, or those who do not fall into any of those categories at all. Examples of such identities could be the religious conservatives who are critical of the government or modernized youth who are supportive. Not to mention the very diverse and different identities of villagers and those of old ethnic groups such as Kurds (Price, 2005). It seems that Erdbrink falls in the trap of binary oppositional simplicity. He forgets about the complexity of Iranian identity that is defined by many diverse factors of religion, race, ethnicity and class. In his article there is not a single photo that represents non-urban Iranians, religious communities and financially poor people who suffer from daily poverty. This lack of diversity in the images is happening because like his writings, the focus is mostly on the secular middle and upper middle class youth.

There are indeed many more communities within or out of the two oppositions that Erdbrink mentions. This lack of attention to other social groups could be less important if Erdbrink would have limited the scope of his analysis to Tehran and its citizens; however, he mostly insists that he is talking about Iran’s society and the people he

interviews represent Iranians (Erdbrink, 2015b). What makes it more problematic is that the mentioned divided groups are portrayed as entities that have an antagonistic relationship with each other; they are almost completely disconnected from each other. If we are to look for chances of peace and reconciliation in times of conflict, depiction of such harsh divisions is not helpful. For Erdbrink, Iranians are mainly living in two different worlds. He draws the picture of innocent pro-western middle-class warriors versus oppressive conservative authoritarians. He makes no attempt to remind us that as a community, on many occasions, all of these members of society function together and find ways to communicate their differences on a daily basis; that “morality police” is also a citizen of the society in daily life (Erdbrink, 2015b, p. 2).



Figure 1.6: A small group of hard-liners gathered to urge a nuclear deal with few compromises

Still one may give credit to Erdbrink for successfully giving voice to the voiceless rebellious youth who are marginalized from many camps inside and outside of Iran. With paying attention to Iranian urban youth and their social spaces, Erdbrink also

fairly challenges the singular picture that many have portrayed from Iran by showing only the religious and conservative side.

Less than a month after the above article, NYT published another piece by Erdbrink which was creating a sense about the social space in Iran that was in complete contradiction with the last article. The next article in question is titled “Backlash Against U.S. in Iran Seems to Gather Force After Nuclear Deal” (Erdbrink, 2015a, p. 1). The text is published a month after the Guardian Council of Iran approved the Nuclear Deal (Bowman, 2015). The article describes some of the events that have happened in Iran in connection with the reaction of the right to the Nuclear Deal. These events include the arrest of several dual national citizens on suspicion of espionage and recent statements of conservatives against the United States policies. It also reflects voices of several people through interviews who are basically again middle-class Iranians living in the city. The interviews include quotations such as “It [the backlash] feels like a witch hunt” or “It’s pretty scary” (mentioned by an Iranian-American businessman) (Erdbrink, 2015a, p. 1). The article also refers to several arrests of reformists and journalists. Erdbrink pays attention to the controversial harsh tone of political hard-liners in Iran. The article then puts the interviews and arrests caused by the so-called “backlash” next to several harsh comments made by hard-liners such as “Death to America” and “Down with America.” (Erdbrink, 2015b, pp. 4-5). He also adds the visual sense of “autumn leaves falling in Tehran” (Erdbrink, 2015a, p. 2). By putting all these signs together, the text reproduces a rigid social space that is oppressed, hopeless and frightened.

Now, as the autumn leaves are falling in Tehran, there are no signs that bolder changes are coming. On the contrary, a backlash appears to be underway, promoted by Mr. Rouhani’s hard-line adversaries in the government who are deeply skeptical of the United States and its allies (Erdbrink, 2015a, p. 2).

The article's focus is on figures such as Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader, and Maj. Gen. Mohammad Ali Jafari and their radical comments about the US policies. The text marginalizes the voices of many other conservative figures in Iran who are critical of the US policies and do not have such harsh rhetoric. Conservatism in Iran has a much more complicated essence. Its members vary from figures like Amir Mohebbian, political editor of Resalat newspaper (Porter, 2008), who is known as a moderate conservative (Macmillan, 2016) to Ali Motahhari, member of the parliament, who has been challenging the authorities continuously for the house arrest of the leaders of the opposition during the post-election conflict ("Iranian Judiciary Defends Continued House Arrest of Green Movement Leaders", 2016). Hence Erdbrink's article is reducing the conservatives in the right to people who are simply aggressive against the pro-western Iranians with a radical tone and for no good reason. This can be partially because of his focus on the affluent middle-class citizens of Tehran who tend to be more pro-American and pro-Capitalism. There is more sympathy toward the regime among the working class, traditional middle class and religious communities ("Islamic revolution of Iran: A sociological study", 2001).

By using terms such as "anti-American" Erdbrink reduces the discourse of conservatives who are critical of USA policies to a kind of hostile "anti-Americanism" (Erdbrink, 2015a, p. 1); as if the mentioned hard-liners do not have political concerns that originate from a historical and social context. In Erdbrink's articles they are portrayed as voices that are simply against anything that is American; they are also supposedly at odds with the Iranians. Erdbrink tends to use the prefix "anti" on several occasions; he mainly uses the word to point out an anti-American backlash concept (Erdbrink, 2015a, p. 1). The word "anti" is defined by online oxford dictionary as

“opposed to; against”; it creates a very distinct distance between them (who are anti-us) and us; it reduces the complicated social space and its power struggles again into a simple one versus one encounter, in which one side should lose for the other to win. The discourse of Iran being opposed to Americans and the West has been repeated a lot since the Islamic Revolution of Iran. However, this is not how all view Iran’s approach. Margolis, an American writer and journalist, believes that it is the United States that has been the antagonist here (2015). He argues that since the Islamic Revolution, there have been more than a dozen of US efforts to overthrow the Islamic Government;

Washington resorted to sabotage and economic warfare, sought to throttle Iran’s primary exports, oil and gas, to derail its banking system, and prevent imports of everything from machinery to vitamins... Like Cuba, another state that long defied Washington, Iran eventually found the price of its independence and self-interest too high to bear. As with Saddam’s Iraq, US-led sanctions caused its military to rust away and its oil exports to fall painfully (Margolis, 2015, para. 4-7)

Nevertheless we rarely see the label of anti-Iranian to describe United States’ actions against Iran; instead, we see a lot of phrases such as anti-American in mainstream publications like *The New York Times*. As if it is the others that are always anti-American and not the other way around. Perhaps, this is also an example of a greater global definition of relations with the United States, in which countries are either with the US or against the US, there is no other alternative. It may remind us of the George W Bush’s comment of “You’re either with us or against us” (“You are either with us or against us”, 2001, para. 4). Obama also made a comment that conveys the same message when he said that “Iran nuclear deal debate is a choice between diplomacy and war” (Lewis & Dehghan, 2015, p.1).



Figure 1.7: Family members enjoyed a paddleboat ride

Overall, it is interesting that those two articles are published within one month of each other; and yet they reproduce two very different discursive social environments. The first one has some elements of hope and change attached to it; it's about Iranians experiencing a "lifestyle movement" through "western trends and fashion" after incidents such as the nuclear agreement (Erdbrink, 2015b, p. 1). It is filled with positive images of families peacefully enjoying their time in a park riding boats (figure 1.6) and young people actively participating in concerts, events or fashion shows. Iranian's identity in the first article is constructed as protagonists who are hopeful for social change, and they are making efforts that are successful; they challenge the "obligatory headscarves"; they intend to "reclaim public spaces"; "students have started wearing bright colors"; and "street musicians line up at busy crossings" (Erdbrink, 2015b, pp. 1-2). The writer even mentions public gatherings of protesters that were successful:

In the spring, more than a thousand animal rights activists gathered at the Ministry of Environment, protesting the killing of stray dogs in the city of Shiraz. The protest was fueled by social media, heavily amplified by the introduction of 3G mobile Internet. The killing stopped (Erdbrink, 2016, p. 3).

By contrast, one month later, the second article describes a social space that is frightened and troubled; it conveys a sense of oppression by focusing on the arrest of five “prominent figures” and the temporary closing of a restaurant that used K.F.C brand for advertisement (Erdbrink, 2015a, pp.2-4). Iranian’s identity is reproduced as hopeless individuals who are disappointed with the “cosmetic steps” of their moderate president Mr.Rouhani ” (Erdbrink, 2015a, p. 2). The article includes only one photo of the K.F.C knockoff that was closed temporarily for its American brand name (figure 1.9). The photo shows a closed building with a veiled girl passing by in front of it. There is also a tiny word written on the sign which reads *Halal*, meaning that the food is served here in accordance with the Islamic laws. He mentions the “new anti-American billboard” and the possibility of an emerging “crackdown, drawing a picture of an oppressed social space that is unaffected by the nuclear deal; a picture that is almost in complete contrast with the one from his last article (Erdbrink, 2015a, pp. 1-4).



Figure 1.8: A K.F.C. knockoff in Tehran

3.2 Analysis of Kayhan on the Nuclear Deal

Kayhan is considered to be one of the influential newspapers in Iran; it is perceived as "the most conservative Iranian newspaper" (Ghasemi, 2006, para 1). Its editor-in-chief is Hossein Shariatmadari who is the representative of the Supreme Leader of Iran; therefore *Kayhan* is seen as a newspaper that reflects the views of the Office of the Supreme Leader (Ghasemi, 2006). The circulation of the newspaper in 2007 was estimated "about 70,000 with about 1,000 employees working in Europe, Asia and the Middle East" (Slackman, 2016, p. 2).

Shariatmadari was sentenced to life in prison during Shah's reign and apparently was tortured (Inskeep, 2009). He notes that the newspaper's aim is to "defend the ideology of the Islamic Revolution" (Inskeep, 2009, para. 4). Mahmoud Shamsolvaezin, a reformist and a former editor of *Kayhan*, contends that "*Kayhan* is an intelligence newspaper" (Slackman, 2016, p. 2). Slackman (2016), a *New York Times* correspondent, points out that the newspaper mostly represents the views of figures such as the Supreme Leader, who are at the center of power in Iran (p. 1). A correspondent of *The Financial Times*, Gareth Smyth (2006), notes that *Kayhan*

expresses the political views of the fundamentalists in Iran. Shariatmadari, on the other hand, is not fond of terms such as "fundamentalist" or "conservative"; he laments that such phrases "make us sound like the Taliban"; he prefers the term "principalists" (Inskeep, 2009, para. 6).

In the article "Lausanne Statement Liable to Change" *Kayhan* portrays the nuclear deal as a conflict that mainly includes two major parties: Iran and the United States;

She reminded the Americans' confession that they had no way out but accepting Iran's nuclear rights, and dismissed US officials' allegations about use of force or repetition of the phrase "all options are on the table" as "hollow claims" used repeatedly against Iran (Kayhan, 2016, p. 1).

The article refers to a statement from the foreign ministry Spokeswoman: "She reminded the Americans' confession that they had no way out but accepting Iran's nuclear rights" (Kayhan, 2016, p. 1). The text creates a sense of winner/loser in the conflict by trying to show the American side as the weak and needy one, and the Iranian side as the stronger winner of the nuclear agreement. Verbs such as "confess" are used to describe American statements to convey a sense of fault on their side. The self in the article is the Iranian side and the other is the American one (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 28). The text omits the reality of the pressure that Iran faced due to sanctions, in order to portray Iran as the stronger side.

Iranian figures such as Ali Akbar Slehi—the former foreign minister—or Ahmad Qalebani—Iran's deputy oil minister—, admitted that the sanctions were damaging Iran. Therefore, Islamic Republic of Iran was also in need of a nuclear deal as much as the Obama administration, if not more. In its binary oppositional perspective of us vs. them, the article also leaves out the voices of many Iranian figures who pushed for

a better relationship with the west; figures such as Ali Akbar Rafsanjani and Mohammad Khatami, former presidents of Iran (Keynoush, 2015). These figures represented the views of many Iranians who are also looking for a peaceful resolution in this conflict. However, it seems that for *Kayhan* the Iranian identity is realized as a whole and timeless notion; and it is mostly defined by individuals who unquestionably approve of Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist in Iran (Khomeini & Algar, 2002). These individuals are mostly loyal followers of the Supreme Leader who are very critical of the United States (Lob & Mahdavi, 2015). A low-angle photo (figure 2.1) is attached to the news article showing Kerry, Moghreni and Zarif before the joint statement. Zarif as usual is smiling with a friendly face while Kerry and Moghreni are debating a matter on stage.



Figure 2.1: Moghreni and Zarif preparing to deliver a joint statement in Lausanne

In another article, “Students rally to support nuclear achievement”, *Kayhan* tries to create a sense of failure for any possible agreement by presenting the voices of people who are opposed to the deal between Iran and the United States (Kayhan, 2016b, p. 1). Firstly, in the article, *Kayhan* focuses on the voices of conservative students who are critical of the deal: “students on Tuesday staged a protest against the framework deal

struck last week between Iran and the six world powers on limits on Tehran’s nuclear program” (Kayhan, 2016b, p. 1). Secondly, the text points out the political force that opposes the nuclear deal in the United States; it reports the efforts of New York Senator Chuck Schumer to back legislation that can help block the deal by the congress (Kayhan, 2016b). Then finally *Kayhan* refers to the full attack of Israel on the deal. The newspaper might have little tolerance for some of the American policies; but when it gets to Israel, it’s a different story; the newspaper complying with the Islamic Republic rules, does not even recognize the country and refer to it as “the occupying regime of Israel” (Kayhan, 2016b, p. 1).

There is also a photo (figure 2.2) showing conservative male students rallying with large signs in their hands. The signs include criticisms of the coming nuclear deal claiming that it is not in Iran’s favor. Their argument is that Iran should not give in to the pressure of the United States and NATO, standing firm by its nuclear rights and independence. The nuclear energy is defined by the right as an ultimate destination that benefits all Iranians; but does it really benefit Iranians?



Figure 2.2: Students holding a rally outside the parliament of Iran

Kayhan, a fierce supporter of the advancement of nuclear energy in Iran, has published many articles in defense of the nuclear energy as a national right and a choice that benefits all. However, it has turned a blind eye to the diversity of voices in Iran with regards to the issue of nuclear energy. For instance, one cannot ignore the complications that come with the environmental concerns of the nuclear energy and facilities. There are indeed voices of Iranians from both inside and outside of the country who are critical of Iran's nuclear endeavor for environmental reasons.

Kayhan and many conservative voices in Iran argue that nuclear energy will be very beneficial for Iran's environment. Their argument is based on the comparison they make between the coal based energy productions and nuclear based ones. They claim that nuclear power will result in a clean-air and carbon-free electricity that produces no greenhouse gases or air pollutants (Cohen, n.d.). However, *Kayhan* tends to ignore the voices of Iranians such as Mohammad Darvish, a persistent environmental activist in Iran who is known as "Iran's green gladiator" (Mostaghim & Sandels, 2012, para. 3). Darvish, working in a state-run botanical reserve, has openly argued against the nuclear energy. He insists that nuclear power is ecologically dangerous for Iran. Darvish emphasizes that the production of nuclear energy is hazardous for environment and is very costly. He also warns of possible attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities in the future which will result in critical nuclear pollutions in the country. Considering the constant threats of military attacks from the United States and Israel (Brumfield & Liebermann, 2016), Darvish has a point.

Research by Sharrad, Harwood and Livens (2011, p. 41) shows that Nuclear Energy can be very hazardous for environment; "Because of their radioactivity, wastes from nuclear energy production are potentially very hazardous over long timescales and

their management is often both politically contentious and technically demanding.”

Jan Pantreath describes the dangers of radiation exposure in details:

In recent years, radioactivity in the environment has come from several sources. These include natural radiation, residues from the Chernobyl accident and from the atmospheric testing of weapons, plus radioactive discharges and emissions from nuclear and non-nuclear sites....Nuclear licensed sites, which are subject to the Nuclear Installations Act may also be authorized to dispose of radioactive waste under the Radioactive Substances Act. These discharges are primarily liquid, and made into rivers, estuaries or coastal waters (Pentreath, 2011, p. 216)

The argument of the right in Iran is only concerned with political and wrongly assumed environmental benefits of nuclear energy. It ignores the fact that nuclear energy is not necessary the better path for Iran's independence. Some countries like Germany have already realized that the costs and dangers of nuclear power can be very critical. In July 2011 Germany vowed to shut down its entire nuclear capabilities within 10 years; with the focus being on solar and wind energy, to replace the coal based and nuclear based ones (Smedley, 2013). Germany aims “to replace [nuclear energy] with renewable energy, cut greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions by 40% by 2020 and 80% by 2050” (Smedley, 2013, para. 2). German government has also vowed to “ensure renewables contribute 80% of Germany's energy by 2050, and ensure energy consumption drops 20% by 2020 and 50% by 2050” (Smedley, 2013, para. 2).

On a different note, it is reported that since the new energy production measures has been implemented in Germany, the cost of energy has risen. And it seems “that ordinary Germans will have to shoulder the bulk of energy price hikes while energy-

intensive industries are not hit at all by special feed-in tariffs to help finance the whole operation” (Graupner, 2013, para. 9). The argument of many who seek nuclear energy is these so called higher costs of renewable energy production that in many cases are imposed upon citizens due to corporate profit-centered policies. Nevertheless, if we take a closer look at the real costs of nuclear energy we might be able to realize that in reality, nuclear energy production is hugely costly as well as dangerous for environment and society. Arjun Makhijani, a nuclear engineer and president of the institute of Energy and Environmental Research, writes that the cost of nuclear accidents which are very possible are so high that no private insurance company or “even consortium of insurance companies” are willing to cover (Makhijani, 2011, para. 11). It is the governments who insure the “unpredictable, existentially dangerous, and far too costly energy source that would have us trade carbon dioxide for plutonium” (Makhijani, 2011, para. 2). And ironically enough it is the governments who are in charge of public health and safety. Makhijani specifies that:

According to a 1997 Brookhaven National Laboratory study done for the NRC , the worst-case spent fuel pool accident in a densely populated area would result in about 140,000 excess cancer deaths and \$540 billion in damages, roughly \$700 billion in 2010 dollars (Makhijani, 2011, para. 10).

The mentioned cost is not even covering the costs of energy production which is “more expensive per kilowatt than several alternatives, including energy efficiency measures, renewable energy sources such as biomass and wind, and new natural gas plants” (“The Cost of Nuclear Power”, n.d.). Add to the costs the “expensive bureaucracy” that the technological operations require (Ramo, 1981, p. 1458); not to mention the expensive costs for security to protect nuclear materials (Koerth-Baker, 2016).

Knowing that major countries like the United States are criticized for reversing the process of nuclear international treaties such as nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

(NPT) “through the development of new nuclear weapons” (Lynch, 2008, pp. 127-128), Iranian conservatives argue that they have no option but to keep up with the world’s powers production capabilities.

However if Islamic Republic of Iran truly seeks a stable and safe country that cares about the well-being of its citizens, it cannot overlook the environmental risks of nuclear energy which can affect the life of Iranians for decades to come. Furthermore, if Islamic Republic of Iran as it states, is in reality a force that tends to fight American aggression, it cannot go after the same strategies that the United States implements. Iran can be a symbol of resistance that is different from its political rivals in such issues if it truly seeks a higher moral ground.

By using terms such as “confess” and “attack” (Kayhan, 2016b, p. 1; Kayhan, 2016a, p. 1), *Kayhan’s* rhetoric strengthens the differences and hostilities. It overvalues “reactive responses to conflict” (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 7); it does not mention the potentials that exist within each society to resolve the nuclear conflict; it is mainly concerned with “our” side. The identity of the Iranian side is created as people who are rightfully and strongly resisting the west and its ambitions. The identity of the American side is constructed as greedy, weak and untrustworthy. In *Kayhan’s* words, one may not be able to find much hope for a resolution in the long conflict between Iran and the west. It is “us” vs. “them”, with no third parties in the middle present.

3.3 Analysis of Fox News on the Nuclear Deal

The Fox Entertainment Group which is a subsidiary of 21st Century Fox owns Fox News Channel; it is a television channel that has about 94 million American households as the audience (Baron, 2015). Fox News was originally founded

by Rupert Murdoch (Mifflin, 1996). Andy Becket, a feature writer of the guardian ("Andy Beckett", n.d.), describes Murdoch as a man who has "faith in free market"; a faith that has "relentlessly spread from his media citadels for 40 years (Beckett, 2016, para. 2). Fox News has been criticized for having a "conservative bias" (Memcott, 2004, para. 9). It is seen by many on the center and left as a broadcaster that promotes the Republican Party. Fox News correspondents deny such criticisms and claim to be neutral (Memcott, 2004, para. 8).

About five months after the Nuclear Deal talks came to conclusion in Lausanne, and one month after the failure of the Republicans in the United States to block the deal in congress, in an article titled "Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu says Iran nuclear deal promotes war," Fox News focused on the comments of Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu ("Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu says Iran nuclear deal promotes war", 2015). The text quotes Netanyahu stating that Iran is a "radical theocracy" that seeks to destroy Israel (Fox News, 2015, para. 3). Then the article refers to Iranian troops that "have arrived in Syria" several hours before (Fox News, 2015, para. 6). Putting Netanyahu's comments together with the Iranian offensive in Syria, the article gives Netanyahu's remarks practical validity. The text does not specify who the Iranians are fighting against along with Russia; it only mentions that the Iranian forces are under the command of "Iranian Revolutionary Guard's international operations, which runs several proxy forces throughout the Middle East, including Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon" (Fox News, 2015, para. 6). I argue that Netanyahu's comments are based on a background assumption that a lot of voices in the west have accepted as the reality of Iranian identity; in the eyes of many in the western world like Fred Fleitz, a former CIA analyst and the author of House

Intelligence Committee Staff report on Iran's Nuclear activities, "Iran is still designated by the United States as a state sponsor of terror" (Fleitz, 2016, para. 2). He finds Iran to have "bad faith and belligerent behavior" (Fleitz, 2016, para. 1); Fleitz reminds us that Iran is a "terrorist state" and that it should be treated as such (Fleitz, 2016, para. 2). He notes that Iran has a "terrorist" proxy that consists of "Syrian President Bashar alAssad and Hezbollah" (Fleitz, 2016, para. 3). Fleitz, without hesitation and question, redefines the Iranians as "terrorists" on the other side fighting against American interest (Fleitz, 2016, para. 13). For him the line seems to be pretty clear; they (Iranians) are the villains and we (Americans) are the heroes; their hostages are "criminals" and our hostages, well, are just "hostages" (Fleitz, 2016, para. 13). For Fleitz Iran is simply a threat to international security (Fleitz, 2016). Of course, his commitment to represent Iran as a dangerous nation is not a new phenomenon. Fleitz and his colleagues have been demonizing Iran since 2006 when he drafted a paper titled "Recognizing Iran as a Strategic Threat" (McGovern, 2016, para. 7). The paper was a staff report to the house permanent select committee on intelligence (McGovern, 2016). It quotes some of the words of the former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in bold text, claiming that Iran seeks the destruction of Israel and the United States (House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, 2006). Fleitz is confident that Iran is seeking Nuclear Weapons; he dehumanizes Iran as a rogue other and a danger that seeks no peace; he marginalizes the fact that about seven months before the publication of Fleitz article, in January 2006, Iran offered to suspend its uranium enrichment for two years to move on to a new round of talks; an offer that was rejected immediately by Europeans and was not reported in the western mainstream media due to "lack of progress" of Iran (Afrasiabi, 2016, para. 2). This was not the first time that Iran conceded for the sake of negotiations; in October 2003

Iran agreed to temporarily suspend enrichment for inspection and negotiation (Kerr, 2004). Noam Chomsky further points out that,

Iran's nuclear programs, as far as is known, fall within its rights under article four of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which grants non-nuclear states the right to produce fuel for nuclear energy (Chomsky, 2006).

A little while after that, in November 11, 2003, IAEA reports that “no evidence” has been found which indicates Iran were pursuing a nuclear weapon (BBC News, 2016, para. 17). Bush administration, however, rejected the report as something that is “impossible to believe” (BBC News, 2016, para. 18). John Kerry, the United States Secretary Of State commented on this:

In 2003, Iran made an offer to the Bush administration that they would, in fact, do major things with respect to their program. They had 164 centrifuges. Nobody took that [deal]—nothing has happened (Kessler, 2013, para. 1)

Chomsky believes that US pressured EU to back off from the bargain and, as a result, the 2003 negotiations failed (Chomsky, 2006). Ray McGovern, a retired CIA officer and political activist ("Ray McGovern", n.d.), points out that the report which Fleitz helped to prepare, “Recognizing Iran as a Strategic Threat,” was supposed to pave the way for a war against Iran the way that NIE (National Intelligence Estimate) reports justified the war against Iraq (McGovern, 2016, para. 7). This time however, the NIE surprised Bush administration with a report that stated “with high confidence that in fall 2003, Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program” (McGovern, 2016, para. 10).

In another article titled “Analysis: If seen as a sign of US weakness, Iran nuclear deal could have regional impact,” which is written by the *Associated Press* for Fox News. Iran is presented once again as a “rogue state” that might interpret the nuclear deal as a weakness of American authority which ultimately “could embolden rogue states and extremists alike” (Fox News, 2016, para. 3). The writer is worried about a “weak

United States” that might change United States’ global hegemony (Fox News, 2015, para. 9). The weakness here is of course associated with the risk of United States seeking negotiations with countries such as Iran instead of implementing more forceful measures. Furthermore, it is interesting how states or groups that are not fighting for NATO and American interest are mostly defined as simply “rogue” nations or “extremists” (Fox News, 2015, para. 3). It seems that simply the type of relationship with the United States is the determining factor in how nations are categorized as threats to international peace. Referring to the comment of Robert Jervis, the president of the American Political Science Association, Noam Chomsky notes that it is the United States that is a “rogue state” (Chomsky, 2015, p. 7). He refers to the campaigns that the United States have had against Iran all around the world for more than 60 years” (Chomsky, 2015). He challenges the notion of Iran being a threat to international peace:

Years ago, U.S. intelligence informed Congress that Iran has very low military expenditures by the standards of the region and that its strategic doctrines are defensive—designed, that is, to deter aggression. The U.S. intelligence community has also reported that it has no evidence Iran is pursuing an actual nuclear weapons program (Chomsky, 2015, p. 3).

Chomsky continues to write about Israel, Pakistan and India having nuclear weapons with the support of the United States while the three countries have not even signed the Nonproliferation Treaty (Chomsky, 2015). The reason for that, of course, is again that Iran is defined as “the world’s leading supporter of terrorism” (The Guardian, 2007, para. 2). That label is mainly because of Iran’s support for Hamas and Hezbollah; Chomsky, however, thinks that Iran’s support for those groups is not a satisfactory reason for considering Iran as the leading supporter of terrorism; he argues that both Hezbollah and Hamas “emerged in resistance to U.S.-backed Israeli violence and aggression” (Chomsky, 2015, p. 4). Chomsky then elaborates on the accusations of

human rights violation in Iran and states that Iranian government is a threat to the Iranian people; but in comparison with the abuse happening in many other countries such as Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the other United States allies, it is not the extraordinary and radical regime that many in the west illustrate (Chomsky, 2015). Ryan Cooper, a national correspondent at TheWeek.com, also agrees that “for all its many, many flaws, Iran is one of the more free and democratic nations in the Middle East — far more so than Saudi Arabia, and arguably more so than Israel, given the millions of Palestinians under Israeli rule who have no political rights” (Cooper, 2016, para. 8).

3.4 Analysis of IRNA (Islamic Republic News Agency) on the Nuclear Deal

The *Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)* is the official news agency of Iran. It is funded by the government; specifically, it is under the control of the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (Radiozamaneh, 2016). Since *IRNA* is under the control of the new “moderate” government of Iran (Azimi, 2016), it can be a suitable study case for reviewing the voices of moderates or even some reformists in Iran who mainly backed the nuclear deal. Regrettably many reformist newspapers such as *Ebtekar* and *Aseman* have been banned due to the pressure of the right and the Judiciary in Iran (Iran bans third reformist paper, ‘*Ebtekar*’, 2014). This has left me with very little choice when it comes to reviewing the papers of reformists. Almost all of the current reformist newspapers have no valid English section or international publication due to their lack of resources. It is no secret that Reformists in Iran have been under excessive pressure since the Green Movement opposition (Ganji, 2014).

In a short article titled “Nuclear deal and national duty” Masoud Pezeshkian, a member of the Iranian parliament, criticizes the so-called “radicals” for opposing the nuclear deal (Pezeshkian, 2015, para. 3). He accuses “certain groups” who oppose the deal as those who “fan the flames of division”; the text accuses the opponents as people who are threatening the unity of the Islamic Republic (Pezeshkian, 2015, para. 1). The discourse of unity which is mainly based on the new religious identity of Iran after the revolution has been used a lot from different political camps to discredit the other side (Vakil, 2011). In this discourse, the other is dangerous because it threatens the new identity of Iran and its unity. Given the diverse population of Iran such emphasis on unity can prove to be quite problematic (Fisher, 2015). There are several charges that are defined based on the concept of unity after the revolution; these charges include: “spreading propaganda against the state,” “disrupting public opinion” and “actions against national security” (“2008 Human Rights Report: Iran”, 2009, p. 13). These terms have been used a lot by security forces and some conservatives in Iran against reformists and dissidents. Many of these dissidents are people like Mir-Hossein Mousavi, Masoud Bastani and Mehdi Karroubi who are in jail today or are under house arrest (“Mothers of Park Laleh: Human Rights Violations Reaching Record High in Iran”, 2010). Some like Sattar Beheshti even lost their lives under torture while arrested (after Sattar Beheshti’s death Iranian Cyber Police chief was fired and the responsible interrogator was charged with manslaughter; he got sentenced to 3 years of imprisonment and 2 years of exile as well as 74 lashes) (McDevitt, 2012; “Sattar Beheshti, Crime: Journalism”, 2016). The point is that using such rhetoric that alienates opponents, will again lead to the “worst violence” that Derrida mentioned. (Lawlor, 2006, para. 20). Pezeshkian, a notable reformist, uses the same language in

his article to discredit his conservative opponents whereas his party was a victim to the very same language before.



Figure 3: Iran's flag

Pezeshkian continues to describe the opponents as individuals “who are mainly from a radical political faction with no remarkable success, [and who] are desperately seeking to highlight problems and downplay achievements”; he uses words such as “radical” and “desperate” to describe the otherness of the opposition (Pezeshkian, 2015, para. 4). He represents the opponents as voices who have failed in the face of the majority. In his article, written through a binary oppositional perspective he categorizes the parliament as basically radicals versus moderates. Ignoring the conservative camp’s reason for opposing the deal, Pezeshkian, presents the opponents as those who only seek more power at the expense of fewer gains by the new moderate government (Pezeshkian, 2015). He argues that the nuclear deal is very crucial for our “national interest “and that it will result in “prosperity of [the] motherland” (Pezeshkian, 2015, para. 7). This emphasis on the national identity is increased visually by the picture of an Iranian flag that is attached to the article (figure 3). For Pezeshkian the identity of conservatives is simply reducible to arrogant and greedy isolationists

who lack reasoning. The identity of the government and reformists, however, is constructed as people who are working in favor of the national interest. Not willing to compromise, he invites the other side to concede, leaving this decision in the hands of the government and the Supreme Leader whom he believes supports the nuclear deal. In short, the deal is represented as an incident that will benefit all due to the lifting of sanctions. However the argument of the conservative camp perhaps can be best understood in the words of Tony Cartalucci, a writer and geopolitical researcher who argues that the Nuclear Deal is a tool “to enhance the illusion that the West sought every means to integrate Iran peacefully back into the “international community” before resorting to armed and direct military aggression” (Cartalucci, 2016, para. 1). Cartalucci writes that “Iran will never exist within Washington, Wall Street, London, and Brussels’ “international order” as an obedient client state” and therefore it will remain in the “regime change formula” of the United States (Cartalucci, 2016, para. 2). He compares the situation with what Libya went through; Cartalucci warns that Libya was also offered a deal before its civil war (Cartalucci, 2016). He is referring to Gaddafi’s efforts to normalize relations with the United States; Libya disarmed its decades-old nuclear program in 2003 (“Libya”, 2015), and released about a thousand prisoners in 2010 (Human Rights Watch, 2010). He argues that “with Libya lured out into the open, the West quickly armed and funded the very prisoners it convinced Tripoli to release, provided them with NATO air cover, and systematically destroyed the nation of Libya” (Cartalucci, 2016, para. 14).

Therefore it is eminent to know that the other side has an argument; their argument cannot be simply reduced to a simple radical entity that aims for destruction. The resistance of the so-called hard-liners like Hossein Shariatmadari in Iran has its roots

and reasons. While efforts of reformists and many liberal voices in Iran for some form of reconciliation with the western world can be deemed valuable as steps toward peace and understanding; the same approach is needed inside Iran for a better understanding among groups of power and for the sake of a diverse unity. A unity that is respectful of the other is very much needed in a country that has been constantly in danger of exploitation through imperialism and globalization.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

In this thesis my intention was to give voice to the other whose message is marginalized in various news discourses. Iran's nuclear deal was a prominent incident that happened after years of conflict and negotiations. It was interesting how each media outlet interpreted the deal; these interpretations sometimes are radically different. By covering certain voices of a particular social class or community, each media outlet globalized that class as the dominant or important one. Every article has its own specific definition of identities of Iranians and Americans.

Through discourse analysis and an understanding of Derrida's deconstruction, I studied discourses that represented themselves as natural. In the articles, I studied how a text can reconstruct the Nuclear Deal in various ways. The Iranian Nuclear Deal like many other political incidents has many sides to it indeed. It has been represented as a necessary step or a dangerous one; as a step toward reconciliation, or toward submission; as an incident that brought changes or one that brought intervention. It was seen as both a bad deal and a good one depending on the side that is reporting it. In this research, I did not plan to provide a specific solution or answer, but to study the ones that are already provided. My intention was to open the closed space that media outlets create; shifting the focus that was on the conflict at hand to the social and

historical context of that conflict. This study made an attempt to understand the otherness of the other and to listen to the other's story. Through discourse analysis I was able to challenge notions that were represented as neutral discourses; by giving voice to all parties, this thesis tended to put emphasis on what has been backgrounded for the sake of foregrounded voices; instead of dehumanizing the other side, I intended to uncover the marginalized voice. This study tried to elaborate how a single incident like Iranian Nuclear Deal can be proven to be quite complicated. I avoided simplifying the deal as something good or bad; I tried to problematize it with foregrounding the stories and reasoning of the other side.

Iranian Nuclear deal is not by itself simply a deal that will necessarily promote peace or war; as a matter of fact, it could promote neither. The purpose of this study was not to draw a firm conclusion based on a binary oppositional perspective of war versus peace. On the contrary, this thesis was determined to emphasize the complexity of the conflicts in question. I intended to problematize the simple antagonism that many articles in news mediums such as *Kayhan*, IRNA and Fox News promote. This analysis also tested the approach of the selected articles in *The New York Times* toward the representation of the Nuclear Deal, questioning the articles' limited perspective of social space in Iran.

Iran's Nuclear Deal can be proven to be a constructive step toward peace if it moves forward with a sense of respect and understanding toward the parties involved, if it is seen as a chance for communication with the dehumanized Iranians who were for so long represented as threats to international peace. I think that only when the great powers intend to treat the countries of less power as valuable decent communities that have the right to exist with their identity, we can hope for a good outcome from these

deals. On the contrary, if deals such as the Iran's Nuclear Deal will be treated with the same attitude of arrogance in the past that views Iran as a benighted radicalized nation that needs to be disciplined; one may not hope to see a real step toward reconciliation.

Even if we selfishly do not feel responsible about the other's marginalization and fracture; with a careful observation, we can see that our own well-being will also be in danger when the so-called other is facing the danger of destruction. We are related to the other; our understanding of ourselves, our identity, our power structure, and discourse are all defined in relations with the other. Perhaps a fine example of this can be the recent rise of isolationism and separatism in the western world. For years the abuse of the Middle Eastern and African countries was happening due to the continuous interference of entities such as the United States, Britain, and NATO. For decades the West treated the so-called Third World nations in the Middle East and Africa as its playground. They were portrayed as people who are troubled and are in need of intervention or as people who are dangerous. Their lands have been represented as hopeless and underdeveloped lands in contrast with the hopeful and developed West. Those many years of abuse and intervention ultimately resulted in two major incidents; one is the huge waves of homeless and fearful immigrants to the so-called hopeful and developed west and the other is the emergence of violent fighters who seek to shake the Western power hegemony with terrorism. These two incidents are argued to be the major forces behind the support of the presidential candidate Donald Trump's idea of Muslim ban and the wall in the United States, as well as the victory of the Leave Campaign in the United Kingdom. The argument of nativists in the west is that their identity is under attack. Ironically, years of threatening the Middle Eastern identities have resulted in segregation and insecurity in the West itself. The

other's destruction and fracture have ultimately resulted in the fracture of the self. Western societies that were once seen inseparable under the flag of the European Union and NATO are now facing the danger of separation with the rise of neo-fascist groups which is not good news; since no one likes to recall the incidents of the last time that Europe was a segregated continent.

Nowadays despite the emergence of social media, the mainstream news media is still effectively reproducing and constructing social discourses. I believe that mainstream journalism can be very effective in moving us toward reconciliation, and respect for the other. However, mainstream news media of our time does not hold themselves responsible for the plurality of voices. Therefore we cannot hope to achieve any form of reconciliation if we do not critically challenge the enormous meaning-making news corporations and agencies of our time. We are facing conflicts that are emerging from unfair redistribution of wealth, corporate exploitations, and capitalist globalization; at the time that many are in dire need of help, and our societies are challenged by global tragedies such as the migrant crisis, we suddenly see a harsh rise in nativism and even racism around the globe. I insist that such bold self-centered narratives are partially emerging because of the lack of plurality of voices in today's mainstream news media; because no real attempt has been made for the realization of the other within its diverse entity. The other is defined as either the oppressor or the oppressed. In this thesis, my purpose was to study how the realization of other has been irresponsibly simplified; for I tend to believe that a lot can change when we responsibly and carefully listen to the other side.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Headlines and Dates of the Articles

(1) Divide on Iran Nuclear Deal: Hard-Liners vs. ‘Invisible People’

By THOMAS ERDBRINK

Published: June 30, 2015

(2) Cautiously, Iranians Reclaim Public Spaces and Liberties Long Suppressed

By THOMAS ERDBRINK

Published: October 5, 2015

(3) Backlash Against U.S. in Iran Seems to Gather Force After Nuclear Deal

By THOMAS ERDBRINK

Published: November 3, 2015

(4) Iran: Lausanne Statement Liable To Change

Published: April 23, 2015

(5) Students Rally to Support Nuclear Achievements

Published: April 8, 2015

(6) Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu says Iran Nuclear Deal Promotes War

Published: October 1, 2015

(7) Nuclear Deal and National Duty

By MASOUD PEZESHKIAN

Published: February 11, 2015

Appendix: B. News Stories

(1) Divide on Iran Nuclear Deal: Hard-Liners vs. ‘Invisible People’

By THOMAS ERDBRINK

Published: June 30, 2015

TEHRAN — In the little shade provided by Tehran’s Freedom Tower, a group of about 200 Iranian hard-liners, some with hats made of folded newspapers to protect them against the sun’s rays, sat in the searing heat Tuesday on blue plastic chairs next to blaring loudspeakers.

Speakers railed against the devil, a.k.a. the United States, and its “oppressive” actions, drawing the usual chants of “Death to America” from the participants. They called for a “good nuclear deal” in the negotiations this week in Vienna, meaning one with few, or preferably no, Iranian compromises.

In the distance traffic rolled by. Even during the fasting month of Ramadan, Tehran and its 12 million inhabitants are constantly on the move, on their way to anywhere it seemed, except to this lonely meeting of the hard-liners.

If the long discussion over Iran’s nuclear program and a potential lifting of sanctions illustrates anything in Iran, it is the growing divide between those seeking desperately to hold on to the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and those with the desire to move on, at least a bit.

For the first group, political life is simple and safe. Iran’s hard-liners control several news media outlets and have supporters in the judiciary, Parliament, security forces and the state television and radio organization.

After several speeches in which their much-revered supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, defended both the negotiations and the negotiators, the hard-liners can no longer openly oppose the nuclear talks. But they are allowed to criticize, and many have no faith whatsoever in a positive outcome.

“Oh lofty Iranians, wake up! Don’t trust the foreigners,” Ali Reza Zakani, a former Revolutionary Guards Corps official, now a member of Parliament, told those present at the Freedom Tower. Many of the attendees nodded in agreement.

They had gathered more than one million signatures to support their cause, one organizer said. But on a list of 5,000 signatories posted online, dozens seemed to have been listed twice.

Iranian and international news organizations eagerly filmed the event, just as the organizers had hoped. “We are the people,” one of the speakers shouted into the nearly empty park surrounding the monument.

In the distance Ali, 35, revved his 250-cc Honda motorcycle, shaking his head. The reality of those demonstrating was completely different from the one he lived in, he said.

A factory worker, he said he had increasing trouble making ends meet, even working a double shift. “I do not care about nuclear energy. These people do not represent me,” he said, pointing at the rally far off across the square. “They are 200 out of 12 million.”

Ali, who asked that his last name be withheld to avoid retribution, said there were many more like him. “I want a normal life,” he said, driving off into the traffic.

Few Iranians are as outspoken. Yet, most urban Iranians, forbidden to organize or hold demonstrations, want no part of confrontational policies, at home or abroad, asking instead for a more relaxed atmosphere, socially and politically.

In the privacy of their own homes, they have kept up with changing times. Statistics show that they divorce more frequently, have fewer children, connect to the Internet, watch satellite television and sometimes even spend a vacation on the beaches of Turkey or Dubai.

They seem to vastly outnumber the hard-liners, though it is hard to know by how much. Since the uprising in 2009, after disputed elections, when millions took to the streets, state television has shown them only when they confirm their love for the country, or when they party on the streets to celebrate a volleyball or soccer victory.

As Iran and world powers including the United States try to reach a deal on nuclear controls in exchange for the lifting of sanctions, Iranians from all walks of life are watching and hoping for a new start.

“There is a sea of invisible people out there who seem voiceless, but they strongly yearn for a deal,” said Saeed Laylaz, an economist and a political activist.

Not that they have grand political ambitions in their support for a deal. “I want a deal because it will mean we will become less isolated,” said Monir Davari, 23, an

interior design student. Others said they wanted jobs, lower prices, easier visas for other countries, more foreign investment; in short, a right turn in their country's history, and they feel a nuclear agreement can facilitate that.

"I just want to be in touch with the world," Ms. Davari said.

That nonpolitical individualism is cultivated by the state and its controlled news media, said Hojjat Kalashi, a sociologist and political scientist, describing how only a select few are allowed to add their voices to the nuclear debate. "People are living completely different lives from those idealized by the state," he said. "They have modest demands because they really don't know their strength and size."

In Iran's news media the debate is stilted, appearing only along the lines of political affiliations, with those in favor of a deal treading far more carefully than the critics.

On Tuesday, the mouthpiece of Iran's hard-liners, the Kayhan newspaper, was blunt: There will be no nuclear deal, the editor in chief, Hussein Shariatmadari, wrote. "Like in the past 12 years of negotiations it will fail again in the final phase," he predicted. "Both parties want a good deal, but have different definitions of what a good deal looks like."

Shargh, a reformist paper, said there would be no signed agreement, but a "stated" agreement. Quoting an unnamed source, it said the deal would be divided into three different phases, in four-to-six-month periods.

As a result of the limited debate, many in Tehran say they feel disconnected from the political process and the nuclear talks. Having lived through multiple deadlines over the past years and having their hopes dashed over and over, most are taking a wait-and-see approach to the Vienna talks.

“We are experiencing deal fatigue,” said Hamid Joni, a greengrocer. “I don’t care about deals. I want a predictable future.”

(2) Cautiously, Iranians Reclaim Public Spaces and Liberties Long Suppressed

By THOMAS ERDBRINK

Published: October 5, 2015

TEHRAN — As the music ended and the crowd rose in a standing ovation, several women in the audience could be seen with heads bared, the obligatory head scarves draped around their necks.

This was no underground concert by an indie band in North Tehran, though. Rather, it was a recital by a classical lute player in Vahdat Hall. As the opera house emptied, the women casually slipped the scarves back on and walked out. No one seemed to care, or even to notice.

Far from a protest or a political gesture, this was a fleeting illustration of a newfound self-confidence, visible across the capital — what Iranians are calling the “lifestyle movement.”

“Nobody batted an eye, because in practice most people are far ahead of the norms set by the government,” said Haleh Anvari, an essayist based in Tehran who was at the

concert. “In cars, cinemas and concerts, ordinary people are increasingly taking their space.”

Young people enjoyed their afternoon in a cafe in central Tehran. Credit Newsha Tavakolian for *The New York Times*

Iranians have always enjoyed rich private lives, some following Western trends and fashions, but behind closed doors. The state tolerated that, but insisted that people adhere to the strict laws on appearance and behavior in public spaces that were laid down after the Islamic revolution in 1979.

This disconnect has led to a perpetual cat-and-mouse game, with public freedoms virtually disappearing after the government’s brutal repression of protest following the widely disputed presidential election in 2009.

But now, following the election of a moderate president, Hassan Rouhani, and the signing of the nuclear agreement this summer, Iranians are increasingly taking to the streets, this time not to challenge the government but to reclaim public spaces. Though there are plenty of skeptics who say the changes are minimal and could be reversed at any time, the lifestyle movement seems to be spreading across the country.

“Few would say it out loud, but we had almost become a police state,” Hamid Reza Jalaeipour, a sociologist at Tehran University, said about the years after 2009, when the morality police were a fixture in every main square, hauling those deemed to be “badly veiled” off in vans. For many, the atmosphere became so suffocating that they started leaving for other countries.

Iranian girls selling sunglasses at a charity event. Activism addressing a range of issues has become more accepted in the country since the election of President Hassan Rouhani in 2013. Credit Newsha Tavakolian for *The New York Times*

Mr. Jalaepour said small changes began after Mr. Rouhani succeeded Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2013, promising a nuclear agreement and an expansion of personal freedoms, but have increased noticeably of late. “Especially after the elections and now the nuclear deal,” he said, “the self-confidence of ordinary people is increasing and that can be seen everywhere.”

But the change is palpable in a country that once posted morality police throughout the city; discouraged dressing in anything but black and most forms of entertainment; and that, in recent years, had begun burying the remains of martyrs of the Iran-Iraq war in the middle of public squares.

In the universities, students have started wearing bright colors. Street musicians line up at busy crossings, even though music is still frequently denounced by conservative clerics as “haram,” or forbidden in Islam. Fashion shows with models and runways, previously banned, are popping up. At night, women can be seen riding in cars without their head scarves, while billboards, long the exclusive domain of political figures, now feature celebrities like the Iranian actor Bahram Radan, who advertises leather coats.

Where previously even joking in public gatherings was considered politically risky, cafes now organize stand-up comedy evenings. Groups of citizens have formed nongovernmental organizations around issues like animal rights and the environment.

Family members enjoyed a paddleboat ride in a newly built artificial lake in west Tehran. Credit Newsha Tavakolian for *The New York Times*

In the spring, more than a thousand animal rights activists gathered at the Ministry of Environment, protesting the killing of stray dogs in the city of Shiraz. The protest was fueled by social media, heavily amplified by the introduction of 3G mobile Internet. The killing stopped.

Many of the initiatives are the natural result of long pent-up demand, but also because the state seems to be retreating from many areas.

Analysts say that is the work of officials appointed by Mr. Rouhani, who have taken up high-level positions in the Culture and Interior Ministries. They cannot rewrite Iran's laws: the Parliament and the judiciary will block any changes. But they have allowed ordinary citizens more space to breathe. Suddenly there are too many concerts to choose from, and public initiatives like campaigns to boycott Iranian carmakers to press them to raise the quality of their offerings or to save stray cats are mushrooming all over town.

The only red line is politics, many here say. Anything with a political tinge will be stopped cold.

Still, that provides a lot of openings for those who, like Ehsan Rasoulof, can see them. The son of a wealthy banker, the 32-year-old looks like a typical aspiring Iranian artist, wearing a checked shirt and ripped jeans and chain-smoking Iranian cigarettes, which

are half the size of Western ones. Instead of driving a Maserati, as other children of the elite in Tehran do, he uses taxis.

He opened the Mohsen Gallery, now one of Tehran's most prominent art spaces, in honor of his brother, a photographer who died in a plane crash. He has used his family money to fund rock, pop and alternative bands, publish books and produce movies. In 2013, he opened a cafe, Nazdik, in downtown Tehran that sponsors a variety of cultural events and attracts people to a part of the city most do not usually frequent at night.

He did it, he said, because “we need bases to hang out.”

Mr. Rasoulof described an unending tug of war with the authorities over permits for concerts and other public performances. He said he had planned to hold a rock concert Thursday under the city's Freedom Tower and had all the permits in place. But the show was canceled after the government announced three days of mourning to commemorate the deaths of Iranian pilgrims in the stampede during the hajj last month in Saudi Arabia.

“We will have the concert later,” he said. “As long as we stay away from politics, many things are possible.”

A fashion show in Tehran. Credit Newsha Tavakolian for *The New York Times*

He said many Iranians were intent on reclaiming freedoms seen after the election of Mohammad Khatami, a moderate who was president from 1997 to 2005 — minus the politics. That was like a dam breaking, flooding Iran's closed society with youthful

ambitions. Newspapers opened up, boys and girls started mixing and, at the height of what some called the “Iranian spring,” students battled with security forces for six days after a newspaper was shut down.

But conservative opposition built up, leading to years under Mr. Ahmadinejad devoted to destroying the civil society that had emerged, including imprisoning and exiling its architects.

Nowadays the moderates are also back, but operate cautiously — as they themselves say, like a car driving through the night with its headlights off.

Sitting in a newly opened party office, Ali Shakorirad, the head of the reformist Islamic Iranian National Union Party, said he had no clear agenda: “For now we are simply trying to survive.”

Ehsan Rasoulof is the son of a banker, and is using family money to open up public spaces in Iran. Credit Newsha Tavakolian for *The New York Times*

Most Iranians do not care much about political change these days. Instead, the focus is on social responsibility.

“During the Ahmadinejad era we saw that if we stood on the sidelines we lost out,” said Sohrab Mahdavi, a member of a group prodding the government to clean up Tehran’s notoriously bad air. “If we want to be good citizens, we must first take responsibility ourselves,” he said.

Mr. Jalaeipour, the sociologist, said that he was not sure where the new activism was heading, or how far it would go. It is in the nature of such movements to migrate into the political realm, he said, “It is definitely a challenge for those in power.”

But the inroads in public space are apparent everywhere, he said, and may not be so easy to suppress. “Nowadays you even see women taking out the trash without their head scarves on,” he said. “It seems difficult to send all these people back into their houses.”

Others were more cautious, citing past outbursts of public expression that were followed by crackdowns, but still saw the changes as enduring.

“Naturally, the state will try to control the pace of these changes,” said Ms. Anvari, the essayist. “But, ultimately, their interest in the private space has waned over the years. This led to families changing; now we are witnessing these changes on the streets.”

Correction: October 16, 2015

Because of an editing error, an article on Oct. 6 about Iranians’ success in reclaiming public spaces following the election of a moderate president, Hassan Rouhani, and the signing of a nuclear agreement with world powers referred incorrectly to the end of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s tenure as president. His second and final term in office ended in 2013; he was not unseated by Mr. Rouhani.

(3) Backlash Against U.S. in Iran Seems to Gather Force After Nuclear Deal

By THOMAS ERDBRINK

Published: November 3, 2015

TEHRAN — Anyone who hoped that Iran’s nuclear agreement with the United States and other powers portended a new era of openness with the West has been jolted with a series of increasingly rude awakenings over the past few weeks.

On Tuesday, the eve of the 36th anniversary of the student takeover of the American Embassy in Tehran, state television announced the arrest of a Lebanese-American missing for weeks — after he had been invited here by the government. He has been accused of spying.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader, said the “Death to America” slogan is eternal. New anti-American billboards in Tehran include a mockery of the Iwo Jima flag-raising photograph that symbolized Marine sacrifice in World War II. And an Iranian knockoff version of K.F.C., the chicken chain widely associated with the United States, was summarily closed after two days.

“It feels like a witch hunt,” said one Iranian-American businessman in Tehran, who dared not speak for attribution over fear for his safety. “It’s pretty scary.”

Ever since the nuclear accord was reached in mid-July and endorsed by Ayatollah Khamenei, he has been insisting it did not signal rapprochement with the United States — although some tacit improvements have emerged.

Military forces of Iran and the United States have avoided each other in fighting Islamic State militants in Iraq. Last week, Iran participated for the first time in international talks aimed at resolving the Syria conflict.

Many proponents of the nuclear accord, in both countries, have suggested that a gradual improvement in relations was inevitable. Some even foresaw a shift in the region, shaped by collaboration between the United States and Iran to bring peace, coupled with an eased enmity that could embolden President Hassan Rouhani to open up the country.

While Mr. Rouhani promised more freedoms when he was elected two years ago, he has taken only a few cosmetic steps.

Now, as the autumn leaves are falling in Tehran, there are no signs that bolder changes are coming. On the contrary, a backlash appears to be underway, promoted by Mr. Rouhani's hard-line adversaries in the government who are deeply skeptical of the United States and its allies.

The backlash comes as Iran is preparing for parliamentary elections in February that constitute a litmus test of Mr. Rouhani's policies. It seems that hard-liners, using the intelligence unit of the Revolutionary Guards Corps, have started rounding up journalists, activists and cultural figures, as a warning that the post nuclear-deal period cannot lead to further relaxation or political demands.

In recent days at least five prominent figures were arrested by the intelligence unit, among them Isa Saharkhiz, a well-known journalist and reformist, who was released

from jail in 2013 after a conviction for his alleged involvement in the 2009 anti-government protests. On Sunday, Ehsan Mazandarani, the top editor of a reformist newspaper, Farhikhtegan, was arrested by the same unit, the semiofficial Tasnim news agency reported. On Tuesday, they arrested the well-known actress and newspaper columnist, Afarin Chitsaz, the Amadnews website reported.

Proponents of the nuclear deal had expected some backlash in Iran. But even they appear to have been blindsided by its intensity.

“All these arrests baffle me,” said Farshad Ghorbanpour, a political analyst who has long said the nuclear deal would lead to positive changes and more freedoms. “I cannot say more.”

State-sanctioned media have been busy producing a litany of American conspiracy theories — Iran’s Press TV website even published an article on Tuesday raising the possibility that the C.I.A. was responsible for downing a Russian jetliner in Egypt over the weekend. Iranian news has also given prominent mention to the “network of American and British spies” rounded up by the Guards’s agents.

Their most prominent targets are dual Iranian and American citizens, but on Tuesday, state television said Nizar Zakka, a Lebanese-American information technology expert who mysteriously disappeared here on Sept. 18, also had been seized.

Heralding the arrest as yet another capture of an “American spy,” state television said Mr. Zakka, the secretary general of the Arab Information and Communications

Technology Organization, was a “treasure trove” because of “connections with intelligence and military bodies in the United States.”

Mr. Zakka had been invited to Iran with his family by the vice president for Women and Family Affairs, Shahindokht Molaverdi, to speak at a conference. Leaving his hotel in Tehran on Sept. 18, Mr. Zakka never arrived at the airport, his organization has said.

There was no immediate reaction from the organization to news of Mr. Zakka’s arrest. And it is unclear whether Vice President Molaverdi had known about the reason behind his disappearance.

The confirmation of Mr. Zakka’s arrest followed the incarceration of an Iranian-American consultant, Siamak Namazi, known for his advocacy of improved ties with the United States. His arrest has not yet been officially confirmed, but his friends said that his passport was taken upon arrival in Iran mid-September, and security officials took him from his mother’s home in mid-October.

Jason Rezaian, The Washington Post’s Tehran correspondent, an Iranian-American held on charges of espionage since July 2014, was convicted recently, state media have said. But his lawyer, Leila Ahsan, says she has not yet received a verdict.

At least two other Americans of Iranian descent, Amir Hekmati and Saeed Abedini, are languishing in prison here as well.

In a sign that the crackdown may just be starting, the head of the Revolutionary Guards Corps, Maj. Gen. Mohammad Ali Jafari, warned on Sunday that a new sedition was underway in which the United States and its “domestic allies” are trying to influence the Islamic Republic. “This sedition will be longer and more complicated than all other seditions,” he said.

Symbols of the United States, a rarity in the Iranian capital, are under even greater scrutiny after Ayatollah Khamenei warned that the United States was attempting to subvert the country through “cultural penetration.”

On Tuesday, a newly opened Tehran restaurant that had advertised itself as a K.F.C. outlet was closed by the municipality. Abbas Pazuki, the restaurant’s manager, told the Tasnim news agency that the closure had been a mistake. “We have no connection with the American K.F.C.,” he said.

Officials at the parent company of K.F.C., Yum Brands of Louisville, Ky., did not immediately return telephone messages. American fast-food chains have been saying, however, that they have no definitive plans to enter the Iranian market, even after the lifting of sanctions.

Other hints of an anti-American backlash have been accruing here. In September, for example, shops and textile producers were told they could no longer sell clothes with labels of the American or British flag.

On Wednesday, Iran will loudly celebrate the Nov. 4, 1979, takeover of the United States Embassy, with a state-sponsored rally in front of the building, commonly known as the den of spies.

To help promote the proper mood, the municipality has erected billboards showing a young man wearing a baseball cap spray-painting the words “down with America.”

Another billboard on Tehran’s central Vali-e Asr Square satirizes the flag-raising at Iwo Jima, where many Marines died, showing it planted atop a pile of bodies symbolizing historic “wrongdoings by the Americans.”

In a speech on Tuesday, Ayatollah Khamenei sought to emphasize why shouting “Death to America,” words that proponents of improved relations call unhelpful at best, will be forever justified. He also suggested they should not be taken literally.

“The slogan ‘Death to America’ is backed by reason and wisdom,” he said in a speech. “It goes without saying that the slogan does not mean death to the American nation; this slogan means death to the United States policies, death to arrogance.”

He also warned against domestic enemies who may have been encouraged by the nuclear pact.

“One of the measures America has taken in the course of the recent years was to make some people cover up Americans’ face with makeup,” he said, “pretending that even if Americans were once our enemy, they are not anymore.”

(4) Iran: Lausanne Statement Liable To Change

Published: April 23, 2015

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iran announced on Wednesday that changes could still be made to the April 2 nuclear statement that was issued by Tehran and the world powers at the end of their several-day-long negotiations in the Swiss city of Lausanne.

"Mr. (Seyed Abbas) Araqchi (the Iranian deputy foreign minister and senior nuclear negotiator) has stated in an interview before that certain paragraphs (of the Lausanne statement) could still change and go under further negotiations," Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Marziyeh Afkham told reporters in Tehran today.

She reminded the Americans' confession that they had no way out but accepting Iran's nuclear rights, and dismissed US officials' allegations about use of force or repetition of the phrase "all options are on the table" as "hollow claims" used repeatedly against Iran.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Marziyeh Afkham

Her remarks came after US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter claimed in an interview with the CNN earlier this month that the current framework for a deal with Iran did not take the military option off the table and that bunker busting bombs, meant to penetrate Iran's underground facilities, are "ready to go", adding that a deal with Iran would not be based on "trust" but on "verification".

Elsewhere, Afkham referred to the new round of nuclear talks between Tehran and the Group 5+1 (the US, Russia, China, Britain and France plus Germany) which is due to start in the Austrian city of Vienna today to touch the details of a possible final nuclear agreement, and said the negotiations focus on removal of sanctions and inspection of Iran's sites.

In relevant remarks on Wednesday, Araqchi said that the fresh round of the nuclear talks between Tehran and the six major world powers, which is to be held on April 22-24 in Vienna, would mainly focus on details of lifting the sanctions on Iran.

Araqchi, who is also a senior member of the Iranian nuclear negotiating team, stressed that removal of multilayer sanctions which Iran has consistently dubbed as 'unlawful and unjust' had been Iran's main demand throughout the negotiations.

"As we return to negotiations this week, we will seek explanation from the US team and greater clarity regarding all detailed aspects of sanction removal," he underlined.

On Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote on his Facebook page that his colleagues are to start the process of drafting the agreement between Iran and the G5+1 on the following day.

After nine days of hard work in Lausanne, Switzerland, Iran and the G5+1 reached an understanding on April 2 which laid the ground for them to start drafting the final nuclear deal over Tehran's nuclear energy program ahead of a July 1 deadline.

Reading out a joint statement at a press conference with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini in Lausanne on April 2, Zarif said according to the agreement, all the US, EU and UN Security Council sanctions against Iran would be lifted under the final deal.

"Our decision today that will be the agreed base for the final text of the Joint Plan of Action (the final deal) is of vital importance," Zarif said, reading the joint statement at the press conference.

"Now we can start drafting the final agreement and its annexations by relying on the solutions achieved in the last few days," he said after eight days of marathon talks with negotiators from the six world powers.

"As Iran continues its peaceful nuclear program, the degree and capacity of its enrichment and the size of its (enriched uranium) stockpile will be limited for specific periods and Natanz will be the only enrichment center in Iran. Nuclear enrichment R&D on centrifuge machines in Iran will be conducted on the basis of an agreed timeline and level."

Zarif said Fordow would turn from a nuclear enrichment plant to a nuclear, physics and technological center, where Iran will receive international cooperation.

The Iranian foreign minister also said the country's Arak Heavy Water Reactor would remain in place after being redesigned and renovated through international cooperation, stressing that the facility would remain a Heavy Water Reactor in

nature, but would produce plutonium which wouldn't have the capability to be used for nuclear weapons production.

He said "there won't be any reprocessing at the Arak facility and its consumed nuclear fuel will be sent" abroad.

"A collection of arrangements have been agreed for supervising the implementation of the contents of the Joint Plan of Action (final deal) which will include Safeguard Code 3.1 and voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol (to the NPT); the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will also use modern inspection technologies and will be given more agreed access to verify past and present issues," Zarif said.

He said Iran would partner in international nuclear projects, "including power plant and research reactor construction as well as nuclear safety and security".

Zarif stressed that all sanctions against Iran will be lifted.

He said all UN Security Council sanctions resolution against Iran would be annulled as they did not help the settlement of the nuclear standoff between Iran and the six world powers.

"The EU will terminate imposition of its nuclear-related economic and financial sanctions and the United States will also stop implementation of its nuclear-related financial and economic sanctions simultaneous with the implementation of Iran's major nuclear undertakings in a way that they are verified by the IAEA," Zarif said.

Zarif said the final deal would be endorsed by a UN Security Council resolution in a move to annul all the previous nuclear-related resolutions against Iran.

He said drafting of the deal would start soon to prepare the Joint Plan of Action by the July 1 deadline.

(5) Students Rally to Support Nuclear Achievements

Published: April 8, 2015

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- About 200 students on Tuesday staged a protest against the framework deal struck last week between Iran and the six world powers on limits on Tehran's nuclear program.

IRNA said the gathering took place in front of the parliament in the Iranian capital without prior permission from authorities.

The rally coincided with a closed session of parliament during which Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif appeared before lawmakers to explain the framework agreement.

In the U.S., a key Senate Democrat is throwing his weight behind a proposal that would allow Congress to reject the Iran nuclear deal, complicating President Barack Obama's efforts to dodge Republican opposition and lock in the pact on his own.

New York Sen. Chuck Schumer said Monday that he is backing legislation introduced by Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker (R-Tenn.)

to give Congress the ability to halt the implementation of the deal once the United States and five other world powers finalize the details in the coming months.

"This is a very serious issue that deserves careful consideration, and I expect to have a classified briefing in the near future. I strongly believe Congress should have the right to disapprove any agreement and I support the Corker bill which would allow that to occur," Schumer told Politico on Monday.

Schumer's endorsement is key, since he's influential within his party and set to take over as the top Senate Democrat once Harry Reid departs at the end of next year.

With other Democrats now likely to follow suit, his position puts majority Republicans on track to gather the 60 votes they'll need to advance Corker's bill -- and potentially a veto-proof majority, limiting Obama's ability to get around that legislation.

The White House has complained that Corker's bill, which would enable Congress to suspend the lifting of sanctions on Iran as part of the deal, could thwart negotiations that the United States, Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia are aiming to complete with Iran by June 30.

Democratic senators are expected to propose changes to the bill, which is set for a committee hearing next week. But it's not clear whether the Obama administration would embrace any of those changes.

Obama told *The New York Times* in an interview published Sunday that "my hope is that we can find something that allows Congress to express itself but does not encroach on traditional presidential prerogatives -- and ensures that, if in fact we get a good deal, that we can go ahead and implement it".

Meanwhile, the occupying regime of Israel will adopt two lines of attack as it tries to thwart the nuclear agreement with Iran in the coming weeks, a senior official said.

Firstly, it will lobby the U.S. Congress to pass legislation that would make it difficult, or even impossible, to approve a comprehensive deal with Iran if one is reached by the June 30 deadline.

At the same time, it will continue pressing the White House for the "improvements" the Zionist regime says must be made in the terms of the agreement, the official said.

Tel Aviv will try to persuade as many congressmen and senators as possible to support the bill sponsored by Sen. Corker.

(6) Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu says Iran Nuclear Deal Promotes War

Published: October 1, 2015

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denounced the Iran nuclear deal in a pointed speech to the United Nations General Assembly Thursday, saying the deal does not promote peace but, in fact, "makes war more likely."

He also criticized other countries for failing to decry vows from Iranian officials to destroy Israel, accusing those nations of engaging in "deafening silence." To illustrate his point, he then stood silent at the podium for nearly 45 seconds.

Speaking on the lifting of sanctions against Iran, Netanyahu asked, "does anyone seriously believe that flooding a radical theocracy with weapons and cash will curb its appetite for aggression?" He added, "when bad behavior is rewarded it only gets worse."

The prime minister urged the UN to stand by Israel against the threat of a nuclear Iran and warned of the international risk Tehran poses.

"Don't think Iran is only a danger to Israel," he said. "Iran is also building intercontinental ballistic missiles whose sole purpose is to carry nuclear warheads. The intercontinental missiles aren't meant for Israel, they're meant for you."

The prime minister's statements come hours after Fox News confirmed more Iranian troops have arrived in Syria for a ground campaign to support Russian airstrikes. The officials could not disclose the size of this new Iranian force due to the sensitivity of the information.

These Iranian forces are under the command of Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani, the Quds Force commander in charge of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard's international operations, which runs several proxy forces throughout the Middle East, including Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon.

Netanyahu's speech also criticized the Syrian regime for helping fuel the European refugee crisis by creating an environment of terror. According to the European Union, nearly 500,000 migrants and refugees have fled to Europe this year.

In addition, the prime minister reiterated his commitment to finding a diplomatic solution with Palestinians, but claims President Mahmoud Abbas declined his most recent offer this week to resume peace negotiations. Tensions between Israelis and Palestinians have flared in recent weeks over Israel's controversial settlements in the West Bank.

(6) Nuclear Deal and National Duty

By MASOUD PEZESHKIAN

Published: February 11, 2015

Tehran, Nov 1, IRNA – While post-nuclear-deal Iran is passing through a critical juncture, internal disputes over what the government of President Hassan Rouhani has done to come in terms with the global powers, remain to be a negative problem.

Member of Parliament Masoud Pezeshkian in an opinion piece published by the English-language paper Iran Daily expresses his criticism toward opponents of the deal and urges them to endorse the government as a national duty.

Division hampers the progress of the Islamic Establishment. Although the Majlis approved the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the Leader endorsed the Supreme National Security Council's ratification on the nuclear deal with the P5+1, certain groups continue to oppose it and fan the flames of division. Some opponents, however, changed their approach to the JCPOA after the Leader threw his

weight behind it and chose to assist the government in the execution of the landmark agreement.

Those who keep opposing the deal were against negotiations from the outset and spared no efforts to prevent the legislature from approving the JCPOA but their efforts became futile due to the vigilance of the majority of lawmakers.

It seems that the opponents will continue to attack the government because they do not like to see it making gains. In fact, they are trying to portray the government measures in all areas as ineffective in order to get the upper hand in the next year's parliamentary elections. These opponents, who are mainly from a radical political faction with no remarkable success, are desperately seeking to highlight problems and downplay achievements.

This is while many political and economic experts believe that most of the problems the country is grappling with are the bitter legacy of president Ahmadinejad's government during whose term employment and inflation skyrocketed to unprecedented levels due to its mismanagement despite earning substantial oil revenues.

The previous administration initiated many economically unjustifiable projects that have now become a liability for its successor and the nation. Now those politicians who turned a blind eye to illegal and uncalculated actions of Ahmadinejad's government are holding the incumbent accountable for the problems it has just inherited.

Anyhow, these radicals will keep on with their wrench-throwing and mudslinging but the government appears determined to further its plans and policies regardless of such attempts. President Rouhani and his cabinet members are strongly urged to inform the people about the realities of the country and their performance so that all will be able to easily compare the two governments.

The country is going through a new era and the time for the implementation of the JCPOA following many ups and downs. Anyone who cares about the prosperity of his/her motherland should come to assist the government to carefully navigate the country through troubled waters at this critical juncture. It should not be forgotten that any effort to stoke the flames of division is a blow to national interests and macro policies set by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

