



Woman in Development and Politics

A Comprehensive Synopsis of a Critical Discourse Analysis of the Second Pahlavi's Construction (Development) Programs' Implications for Women's Identity (A Case Study of the Portrayal of Female Identity in This Era's Cinema)

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article type: Research Article</p> <p>Article history: Received: 12 December 2023 Received in revised form: 3 February 2024 Accepted: 12 March 2024 Published online: 5 July 2024</p> <p>Keywords: <i>representation, second side, development, cinema, female identity.</i></p>	<p>Introduction The evolution and transformation of women's identity has emerged as a paramount concern within Iranian society subsequent to the advent of modern Western civilization. We can comprehend these developments by examining those that attempted to establish social order. During the modern era in Iran, despite the fact that Reza Khan's concept of forced modernization originated in the early 1920s, the social order of Western capitalism has expanded significantly in the country since the construction (development) programs began in 1948 under the reign of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and have reached their zenith in 1962 (third program).</p> <p>Methodology This article endeavors to demonstrate, through an examination of development programs since 1962 in particular, that the social structure of Iranian society has encountered numerous obstacles, and that the identity of women has also undergone transformations in response to these challenges. Moreover, we have applied the critical theory of the Frankfurt school, which originated in Europe concurrently with the execution of capitalist development initiatives in Iran, to examine the social landscape engendered by these programs in Iran. Specifically, we have focused on the cultural milieu concerning the identity of women. However, our application of this theory is limited to the correlation between cultural advancements and the capitalist system, as it occurs in the historical context of Iranian society. When the role of religious forces in Iran is taken into account, the reaction of Iranian society to this identity challenge diverges from the Frankfurt school's reaction to the identical phenomenon in Europe. From this vantage point, we will analyze the identity of women in this article with an emphasis on cultural elements within the context of capitalist development programs' cultural dimension. This scrutiny will enable us to ascertain the extent to which the cultural politics of the second Pahlavi attempted to further the physical and hard politics of Reza Khan Pahlavi with greater success. This is in contrast to the majority of studies on women's identity in modern-day Iran, which have concentrated on Reza Khan's policy of unveiling and neglected Pahlavi II's policies. This article conducted research on the portrayal of women's identity as influenced by cinematographic works within the context of cultural policies. To further the objectives of the article, the approach of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis method was utilized. The rationale for selecting this methodology is twofold: first, it aligns with the critical theory of the Frankfurt School; and second, it illuminates the interconnectedness between the text of the films and the historical context influenced by the emergence of capitalism during this era. The approach of Laclau and Mouffe was also embraced on account of its capacity to analyze social phenomena and its consideration of such phenomena. This approach takes into account all social phenomena within the discourse, not just language. Its constructivist nature and ability to analyze the phenomenon in the historical period in question are attributed to its abstract level. The results of this study were examined in three distinct historical periods: firstly, from the establishment of the initial construction program in 1948 until the second Pahlavi government was formed and Mohammad Reza Pahlavi ascended to power; secondly, from 1948 until Mehrdad Pahlbod assumed the ministry of Culture and Arts in 1964; and finally, from 1964 until the Islami invasion of Iran. Following these cases, we conducted a topic-based analysis of the new era of Iranian cinema. During the initial phase, codified development programs were not yet under discussion. Furthermore, the screening of foreign</p>

films was predominantly restricted in nature as a consequence of the Second World War and the subsequent country conditions. This was done to safeguard the interests of the United States and England, as well as to compete with the Germans. Cinemas proliferated during this period, and advertising programs were utilized to maintain and stabilize the government.

Results

These instances, along with others that merit further discussion, demonstrate the profound influence that Western culture has had on Iranian society via the film industry. Subsequent to this era, development initiatives commenced, and within the framework of these initiatives, cultural advancement was pursued by means of effective media promotion, including that of cinema. Upon conducting an examination of alternative historical epochs, we have discerned that the Iranian government attempted to exploit women and female identity in these films as a tool. This was accomplished through the utilization of physical attractiveness and embodiment, as well as sexual characteristics and attributes. The central discourse sign of "reducing the female identity to body and appearances" and "inducing modernity through the disclosure of sexual appearances" was intended to eradicate the traditional resistance of Iranian society against the regime. Amid the emergence of the new wave of Iranian cinema, which drew inspiration from the new wave of French cinema, stylistic shifts occurred in contrast to the preceding Persian film movement. While Iranian new wave cinema failed to disrupt the prevailing ambiance of Iranian cinema, it attempted to imbue the concept of female identity with a more comprehensive meaning grounded in more compassionate notions, at least in this regard. Thus, "the development of female identity in a new formulation" could potentially serve as a discourse indication for new wave cinema.

Conclusion

Overall, discourse analysis reveals a direct quantitative and qualitative correlation between the expansion of this representation of female identity and the implementation of capitalistic construction (development) initiatives during the Pahlavi era. Put simply, the expansion and establishment of construction and development initiatives during the Pahlavi era led to a notable escalation in the portrayal of Western female figures in Iranian cinema. This trend was characterized by a clear contrast to the elements that represented the Iranian Muslim female identity. Indeed, the execution of capitalistic development initiatives throughout the Pahlavi era coincided with an increase in the prevalence of Western female elements and the eradication of traditional Islamic-Iranian female elements; these developments mutually reinforced one another. Put simply, the portrayal of female identity in cinema during this era, commencing from its inception until the years preceding the Islamic Revolution, exhibited a growing inclination towards oversimplifying women's identities to their physical appearances. However, during the second Pahlavi state, particularly within the Ministry of Culture and Art, this emerging female identity—inspired by the western notion of femininity—became regarded as progressive and congruent with contemporary developments.

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