American Virtual Colonialism and the Islamophobia Politics: Muslim/Iranian Women's "Hijab" at "YouTube"

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Abstract: Virtual Colonialism (Ameli, 2011) is reflecting a new trend of colonialism in the virtual space parallel to the physical space. According to Ameli(2007), with the "Dual Spacization" of life,the imperial powers like the United States of America take the advantage of the synchronization and translocality of the virtual space to expand their realm of imperial power through the "attraction" and "persuasion" strategies with the least costs and losses.

The present paper analyzes the user-based website "YouTube" exploiting the critical discourse analysis method to examine the strategies through which it represents the Muslim/Iranian women whose identity arehighlighted by Hijab. The results indicate that the Americanization by "YouTube" is implemented in auser-based in a pluralist context. This is while the American discourse including the liberal democracy values and its politics ofIslamophobic and Iranophobic images of Muslims are prevalent in the "YouTube".

The paper depicts how the representation of Muslim woman and her hijab is demonized through the "YouTube" result videos.Furthermore, it shows this demonization is duplicated in the case of the Iranian Muslim women particularly because of the formal American politics of Iranophobia and regime change in Iran. Taking into account the high rank of "YouTube" as the third globally-viewed American website and its discursive advantage in the virtual space, the significance of the present study can be considerable.

Key words: Virtual colonialism, Dual spacization, Soft power, YouTube, Islamophobia, Hijab.

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Introduction

From Colonialism into Virtual Colonialism: A Paradigm Shift

Identity is the question of our age. To identify the self or selves havebecome much complicated according to the immigration waves and translocalization that are mainly the result of the imperialistic manipulations and wars. Muslim women construct a major population who face serious challenges in this respect. They are mostly pressured for their hijab even in the most advanced countries with high claims on individual liberty.

The unfair systems of representation aggravate the Muslim women sufferings and their misrepresented images that are frequently regenerated in the western media. This processprevents any historical corrections.

The orientalist representation of the Muslim women has consolidated their image for many centuries as the sexually appealing creatures that are suppressed by the oriental men. The present paper assumes that the Muslim women particularly those with hijab are continued to be demonized and orientalized by the west especially in the virtual media.

This paper is an attempt to identify the current reproduction of the old orientalist narratives on Muslim muhajaba[3] women in the new guise of the user-based American virtual media. To apprehend this shift, a shift of paradigm in regard with the power discourse needs to be examined.

Colonialism is the human historical experience whose traditional form is known with the old world powers such as Portugal, Britain, France, Spain and Netherlands. These old colonialists promoted their material interests and territorial exploitations based on the maximization of hard power, including military structures utilizing the coercive musts.

World War II and the rise of nationalist movements brought social changes that did not give enough room to the colonialist suppressive forces. The new phase of colonialism, then, appeared to occupy the hearts and mindsof people and target the intellects to justify the colonial projects. This shift was accompaniedwith the rise of the new superpowers such as the Soviet Union and the United States of America that is now the most prevalent global power. The rise of neo-colonialism changed the general comprehension of the concepts of "power" and "leadership".

3- Muslim women who cover part of their bodies according to the Islamic instructions.

Traditional interpretations of power became controversial with the emerging faces of "smart power", defined as the "superpowers' ability to combine hard and soft power into a winning strategy" by Joseph Nye and Richard Armitage (Cited by Watanabe, 2008, p. xix).

Neo-colonialism not only did change the conception of power, but it also expanded its realm of influence into the soft zones such as media and virtual space. According to Ameli (2011, p.11), this is the third shift from neo-colonialism to virtual colonialism through which the virtual colonial power employs the virtual space with its exclusive features such as "cohesion, decentralization, digitalization, and easy accessibility" to establish its desired norms and regulations as the globally accepted ones. The present paper argues that the United States of America that owns the most globally interactive portals and websites has taken the advantage to maximize its imperial power in this new age.

Power and World Leadership

"Power" is at the crucial heart of any form of leadership and it has very different meanings in different societies and cultures. Power is generally defined as "the ability to do something… power stands for the ability to achieve what one seeks" (Nye, 2008, p. 38). Thus, to achieve an objective makes the concept of power to hold a transitive sense; Robert A. Dahl defines it as "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (cited by Giddens, 2010, p. 302). Joseph Nye confirms that power is "the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants" (Nye, 2004, p. 2).

Power is not a static phenomenon; it appears in different genera and species. The transmission into the neo-colonialism has made the maximization of soft power as the top priority forgovernments compatible with the proliferation of arms and armies. Hence, the concept of "power" was distinguished from the concept of "force". These two are similar in which both are "getting people or groups do something they don't want to do", but they are different in that force essentially implies the physical act, whereas power is in essencea psychological and political act (Ibid, p. 28).

Soft Power & Virtual Colonialism

Joseph Nye (2004) depicts the power spectrum, which ends in soft power or the "absorptive power", as the proper accomplishment for the hard power as shownbelow:

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Command → Coersion → Economic Inducement → agenda Swtting → Pure Attraction → Persuasion
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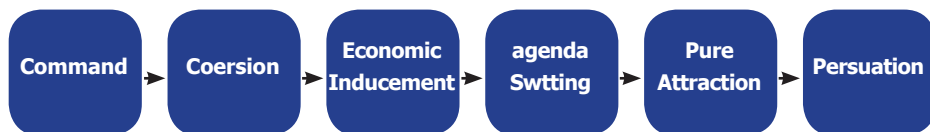
Nye characterizes "soft power" with the attraction and co-optive strategies that make others "want what you want" with the lowest costs (Nye, 1990, p. 181). Nye believes that soft power is the power to change the demands and expectations of a society towards the direction that is desired by the holder of the power;furthermore, legitimizing this change in that direction. In other words, soft power is an influential mechanism on changing the "social preferences" (Nye, 2004, a&b).

The holder of soft power needs to find the communicative channels to project its ideal and acceptable image, asAmeli indicates in "American Virtual Colonialism" (2011) that virtual space is the most appropriate context to apply soft power.

Ameli argues that identity today is determined in both the physical and virtual spacessimultaneously. This "Dual Spacization" through the virtual space - "ever present communication" or "instant communication" along with unauthorized accessibility to "other spaces"— has made time and physical space irrelevant to users (Ameli, 2004a).

In other words, the virtual space provides the users with constant "widespread presence at all times". Thus, every country that is capable to construct the regulations, norms, and values of the virtual space enjoys its values and norms to be globally legitimized and accepted. In such a context, the dualization of the colonial armies, virtual and physical, has created a new possibility to preserve the stretch of the superpowers' hegemony to all places, all times, all individuals and nations, creating"Virtual Empires" (Ameli, 2011).

Virtual Colonialism; Tools and Strategies

The recent statistics reveal that there are more than 206 million active websites through internet network (Netcraft, 2010). This number shows how massive and

extremeinformation and dataexist in the virtual space, andinternet users usually consider its contentas free, decentralized and democratic. The internet users may believe that they are able to find any desiredinformation from any source they wish, but according to Business Insider's December 2009 statistics, the data is mostly obtainedthrough a few websites including, for instance, Google (68%of the worldwide "marketshare" for search), Yahoo (7%), and Microsoft (MSN) (3%) (Business Insider, 2010).

This overflow of information, then, passes the channels called the search engines that give a limited number of websites among millions of available ones, based on certain rankings and "pre-programmed algorithms" which determine the ranking rules. This is the "soft filtering of information" which is an efficient tool for the virtual empires with specific and possibly covert agenda and strategies (Ameli, 2011, p. 20).

Joseph Nye asserts in "The Paradox of American Power" that power is not always devoted to the generator of the information, but it mainly belongs to the resources that edit the gigantic amount of information and are in the position to distinguish between the credible and incredible data (Nye, 2002).

The users apparently choose a search engine based on its "neutrality, speed, efficiency, comprehensiveness, etc." (Ameli, 2011, p. 21), but there is something beyond. In fact, when a search engine is selected as the user's agent in the virtual space, it is privileged with the legitimacy to edit and order the information as it wishes while simultaneously manipulating the users' preferences.

The virtual empires such as Google and Yahoo ensure the most possible expanded territory, so they do not bound themselves into the bilateral relationships between the website and the user. They construct the networks and the social networking websites as their main strategy with accessible technical tools,which billions of users feel friendly and at home connected at a "media circle". Consequently, theybring the maximum compatibility and minimum resistance of the users and make them voluntarily start networking and participating.

According to Joseph Nye, the states with the following three characteristics deserve the highest soft power to guarantee their leadership: 1) states with cultures and ideas that are more compatible with the globally accepted values and norms, 2) states which own higher numbers of communication channels to feed the

external world, and 3) states which are known for higher internal and international participation and performance (Nye, 2002, p. 70). Today, the private enterprises and corporations, beyond the governments, have become virtual superpowers with their own population, territory, politics and laws exactly similar to a state superpower. Despite the mentioned independence; countries with more virtual superpowers enjoy more instruments to maximize their soft power in both the virtual and physical worlds. There are lots of evidence that the major Americansearchengines and websites, particularly the popular social networking websites, promote the Anglo-Saxon culture and values such as white primacy, liberalism, democracy, pluralism, individualism, free market, human rights, etc.

The virtual empires reinforce their discourse both by circling their favorite values and abandoning its antithesis. The present study explores the website YouTube as an American virtual empire and examines how it represents the muhajaba Muslim/Iranian women. The results affirm that the Islamophobic and Iranophobic policies are prevalent at YouTube. It objectifies the Muslim/Iranian women and does not attribute muchhumanitarian and subjective intentions to their hijab. Muslim / Iranian women's hijab is mostly represented to be an oppressive action of the Muslim males or the political repressive demandsimposed on them by the governments. The otherization ofmuhajaba women from the globally accepted version of the capable and professional women is the dominant narrative at YouTube.

Why YouTube?

"YouTube" is the American social media website which is the third globally viewed site after Google[4] and Facebook. YouTube can be considered a virtual empire for its high accessibility and inclusiveness through an easy-to-use technology of the Adobe Flash Player. It is estimated that "YouTube" projects 3 billion videos every day when 2 million videos are uploaded by the global citizens every minute (YouTube hits 3 Billion views per day, 2 DAYS worth of video uploaded every minute, 2011).

The field ground in"YouTube"is apparently open, neutral,de-centered and democratic, allowing everyone to "broadcast himself/herself"[5]freely. Approaching "YouTube", it should be notified that the general search is its minimum service;

4- YouTube had been sold to Google in 2005 and it is now a Google family member.

5- YouTube general search starts with "Broadcast Yourself".

"YouTube" is able to shape many aspects of the everyday life as it provides TV Shows, Film & Animation, Comedy, News & Politics, People & Blogs, Science & Technology, Education, Sports, Music, Entertainment, etc.

According to Nielsen (2011), in May 2011, 145 unique viewers in the United States watched on average 4.3 hours of video on YouTube per day."YouTube" acts as an American market of values with millions of choices for every individual from different national and cultural backgrounds; it is one of the most viewed websites in Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Turkey, Argentina, Egypt, Greece, Colombia, Belgium, Algeria, Peru, Chile, India, Japan, Germany, etc. This expanded territory under the "YouTube" discourse indicates its power to control the information flow and establish the American values as the global ones.

Muslim Women & Hijab; a Self-Narrative

Muslim women population is not a homogeneous and uniform one, and a great deal of this diversity appears in various forms of covering or hijab.Hijab has got different meanings and has become localized in different countries. Muslim women hold multiple motivations to abide by hijab, and it sometimes becomes controversial if hijab has specific functions in the modern world.

There are Muslim women who choose to have hijab in order to articulate their national modern identity with the Islamic esteemed civilization and to represent their religious commitment; Bodman and Tohidi attempt to collect the diverse Muslim women voices on Islamic issues such as hijab and they explicitly record Muslim women who claim that their choice is dedicated by their beliefand they "belong to a great and beautiful civilization and deep roots and a set of norms" (Bodman and Tohidi, 1998, p. 67).

Kamal Salhi presents three functions of hijab as a) a social function "to conceal women from the masculine gaze", b) to work as a gender boundary between women and men, and c) to play an ethical role which is varied according to the historical contexts. According to third meaning, hijab is not specific to Muslims, but for instance, in Korea the very hijab has been the curtain to cover the couple or preserve the private life (Salhi, 2003, p. 36).

The mental security and protection the Islamic hijab provides is also taken into consideration as a significant factor by muhajaba women. Theodore Gabriel argues

the self-narratives of many Muslim women depiction that they feel to bring respect and preservation from the lustful thoughts, "scorpion"-like male glance or aggressive violations (2011, p. 16).

The Muslim women's hijab is perceived differently by different people. Stewart believes that "wearing the hijab, they (Muslim women) externalize their identity as a visible discourse" and produce their independent Muslim female identity (1990, p. 46). Thus, the social function of wearing hijab is the mean through which the Muslim women construct a narrative and make their body depersonalized and desexualized (Cayer, 1996, p. 14).

Identity construction is taken into account as a kind of resistance for some Muslim women, particularly the ones who live in the West; Hoodfar& McDonough argue that Arab, Asian and African Muslim women who live, for instance, in North America believe in hijab as the "affirmation of a woman's dignity" and "a symbol of their identity" (2005, p. 133). Read &Bartkowski affirm that "some Muslim women veil to express their strongly held convictions about gender difference, others are motivated to do so more as a means of criticizing Western colonialism in the Middle East" (Read &Bartkowski, 2000, p. 396).

A large number of muhajaba Muslim women define hijab as a strong expression of dignity, and a rebellion against the capitalist culture or the "commercialization" of the women's bodies that is common in advertisements and the marketing industry (Abdo, 2002, p. 232).

The intention to wear hijab and its manner is perceived, then, is a matter of diversity as well as the forms of hijab,the local issues and controversies are determining as well.In American society, for instance, there is a twofold challenge on hijab; Williams and Vashi argue that many non-Muslims suppose that hijab is an "inherent violation of women's equal rights". It can be considered against the Muslims' criticism on the American materialism and "lax sexual mores" when they put hijab to acknowledge their independence of such a culture (Williams et al., 2007). This challenge is confirmed by Pamela K.Taylor, a Harvard graduate student, in her poem"I Just Want to be Me", that hijab for her is "an ambiguous rejection of the objectification of women by men, by advertisers, by the beauty and fashion industries and Hollywood. … and the oversexualization of our society" (cited by Heath, 2008, p. 121). In another example, Subedi gives records of the Canadian

women who are looked angrily by many Canadians and their hijab is perceived as their fathers and spouses' force and oppression or a symbol of isolation and separation form the mainstream society;however, the self-narrative of hijab for many individuals among these Muslim women is that "hijab is part of my identity, and I wear it of my own choosing" (Subedi, 2009, p. 83).

The motivations of the Muslim women as partially reviewed can be different according to the personal intentions or social stimuli, but resistance and identity construction can be considered the main factors that have developed the new waves of Muslim women's absorption into hijab.Hirschmann indicates that the misrepresentation of Muslim women in mainstream media, in academic writings and other representation systems have stimulated Muslim women to not only "participate voluntarily in veiling (wearing hijab), but defend it as well, indeed claiming it as a mark of agency, cultural membership, and resistance" (1998, p. 346).

Representation of Muslim Women's Hijab at "YouTube"

"YouTube", as an American social media website which has changed into a global reference of information and knowledge, is explored in this paper in regard tothe image it reproduces about Muslim women, particularly ones portrayed by hijab.

"YouTube" is taken in four phases of research inAugust 2011 to see through which strategiestaken torepresent "Muslim Women", "Iranian Women", and then being highlighted by hijab as "Muslim Women's Hijab" and "Iranian Women's Hijab". Subsequently, the relevant key terms are searched on "YouTube" search function and the first page of the results which consistsof 10 result videosbeinganalyzedby discourse."YouTube"is searched with two main terms including "Muslim women" and "Muslim Women Hijab" to explore the pictures it portrays from Muslim woman and her identity. The major upcoming videos and narrative strategies are as follows:

The very narrative the user gets from "YouTube" general search on "Muslim Woman" begins with the videos with Muslim performers. In this regard, the primitive image comes from the cleric sermons in which a colored male including an African American or a Saudi isdiscussing hijab and Muslim woman identity. Such videos mix the information in a way that some values, opposite to Islamic principles are taken as true Islam, and even the diversity in beliefs and practices is not introduced at all.

Thus, it represents a staticmutedness for Muslim women.

The video entitled"Muslim Woman Tells the Truth about Islam", for instance, depicts the Arab cleric who presents his own ideas on the participation of women on TV as illegitimate exposure to men and as a cause for men's lust against women. Nasser Al Huneini's[6]weird description of hijab, that is a Wahabi definition, is put against an Arab woman who abides by women's professional rights and condemns the Islamic clerics whofrighten people from hell and force them to acceptreligion in a parrot-like manner.

Muslim Women's identity is particularly challenged in the YouTube's system of representation when she abides by her religious commitments in appearance and everyday life practices.

For example, her hijabis represented as legitimate, but unnecessary and dispensable in the modern style of life. Covering her, the videos depict, brings incompatibilities and difficulties for her in order to manage her life in the modern world. The battle to resist againstnational and international restrictions in the field of sports, shown in the video "Muslim Women Weightlifter Wins Dress-Code Battle", and social discriminations in fields such asprofessional careers, for instance in the video "Muslim Woman Accuses Air France of Discrimination", all may stimulate a sense of hesitation whetherhijab is an essential component of life, especially for the minorities and immigrants in the West.

The construction of Muslim woman's image can be taken into consideration in a larger frameworkfor the promotion of secular values among Muslims. The separation of Islamic beliefs and normal social life is much emphasized in videos such as Women Rising- "I Speak for Myself".There the muhajaba girls with the ones without hijab are positioned in a dialogue, and the concentration is that true Islam is a private religion and religiosity of the people should be judged based on the inner situation and beliefs rather than their apparent actions like hijab. These secular ideals are circling in the "YouTube" videos to delegitimize religious principles like hijab as useless and unnecessary in long term.

The simple search on Muslim woman depicts that her hijab is one of the most challenging parts of her life, particularly as represented in the West. Thus, when the concept of Muslim woman is added as research terms, this otherization

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6- A Saudi Cleric

becomes more complicated.

On the one hand, hijab is represented as something beautiful and modernized; for instance, in the image of a fashion show in Bosnia. On the other hand, its criticism becomes deeper showing the muhajaba women of self-criticizing their undeveloped situation; in videos such as "Muslim Women in Hijab: Get Involved in Society", the lectures are given by an American Muslim woman, addressing Muslim community, criticizingmuhajaba women who "psychologically hold back at home" remaining "far behind in professionalism". These videos are much more credible particularly for non-Muslim audience fortheir self-narration. They are coming up among the several first results as a confession by amuhajaba woman on her life experience.

Adding the term "hijab", the colored Muslim men again are promoted as representatives to defend this right of Muslim women. Boxer Mohammad Ali [Clay] Defends Muslim Women Hijabis one of the videos covering Clay's interview when he condemns the Europeans and Americans who underestimate any cultural phenomenon different from theirs, including hijab. Despite the fact thatthe video is pro - hijab, the authenticity of his argument for western audience can be the point of hesitation. Muhammad Ali, the black American who had converted to Islam, himself is in question in the white-oriented Western culture for his black skin and conversion.

Last but not the least, the upcoming of some of the result videos at "YouTube"is the point of question; the upload date of these videos, their technical quality and the number of their viewers and people who liked them are not significant enough to justify their exposure as top results.

"Muslim Women in Hijab:Get Involved in Society", for instance, was sent to "YouTube" on November 19, 2006, and it could only attract 32, 409 viewers during its 10 months of exposure, which is very lowcompared to some other videos with hundreds of thousands of viewers which are being explored in further pages. Thus, the paper is to raise the vagueness of the unknown algorithm behind "YouTube"for further research and studies.

To sum up, the image "YouTube" constructs for "Muslim Woman" and "Muslim Woman and Hijab" ranges from the primitive and backward traditional Muslim woman who abides by the practical customs such as hijab, to an acceptable modern figure who is more assimilated into the Western culture. The videos are

set in a way that look neutral and many of them are given by Muslim informants, but the passionate religious sermons or discussions planned by converted people or colored people give the hint to audience, particularly the ones under the Western Euro-centric and secular discourse that the arguments are less serious to be fully believed. Finally, the algorithm which brings up less viewed and old-fashioned videos as the result videos at the first page is a question to be explored.

Iranian Muslim Muhajaba Woman; Double Otherization

The misrepresentation of the Muslim woman and her hijab in "YouTube" has become a two-fold case when the search is extended intothe "Iranian"women with particular emphasis on the concept of "Hijab".

Considering the search term "Iranian woman" at "YouTube", the representation is as follows:

For Iranian woman, the first videos begin with Iranian women as the beauty models with high sexual attractions. The video clips such as Iranian Hot Woman! or Beautiful Iranian (Persian) Woman include music and songs, partially in English and partially in Farsi, and reflects the dancing parties in which the exposure of body is the dominant theme for the viewer who receives his/her first knowledge of these women in YouTube.

Soon among a variety of such videos, the beauty and loveliness of the Iranian woman is faded into her representation as the victim. The Iranian women are portrayed through a political opposition prism recorded by the political and cultural foundations such as "Hamzaban"[7].These videos contain most half of the video results and their narrative is given an air of authenticity in guise of the cultural and academic lecturers.

Some of their major ones are entitledThe Beginning of Women Challenges in Iran, Role of Woman in Iran, Situation of Woman in Iran, Right of Women, etc.

2.1. They indicate the Iranian woman lives in a challenging situation under the systematic dogma, fundamentalism and traditional backwardness.

2.2. They question the Islamic Iranian values in the form of intellectual round

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7- A cultural foundation established by Iranians in the US. It always criticizes the human rights and women>s conditions in Iran and seems to be part of the opposition movement pro the American project of the «regime change» in Iran.

tables; the videos show that taking off the hijab is the very sign of the women movement in Iran, and the mutual respect and obedience of a woman to her husband, on the contrary to Iranian nationalist and religious values, is considered the violation of her rights.

2.3. Many of the upcoming videos are not at the position to deny the great records of the Iranian women post Islamic Revolution;they discuss developmentssuch as "70% of women's attendance in universities" under the Islamic Republic, but at the end of the day,they concentrate on their "lack of voice" in the so-called closed political system rather than low rates of education or social participation.

2.4. The Iranian women are dehumanized and are taken in the mentioned videosas static hollow subjects whose knowledge and vision are absolutely neglected with no reasonable justification The only reason is mentioned to be political censorship and suppression.

3. The narratives on "Iranian woman"is always in the form of monologue, rather than dialogue, which is given by the individuals in personal memoires. The major implication of the monologues can be the inability of Iranian woman to communicate efficiently, especially considering the narrators' depressed and afflicted images.

Isolation is a main theme of several of these videos. Ones such as Iranian Woman Tells the Truth about Islam & the Iranian Regime and Iranian Women Abused for Nothing Following "Islamic Dress Code"are all close-up monologues in which the narrators give a story of their affliction in Iran.

Hijab is targeted by the mentioned videos as the main repressive element of the Iranian woman's life.

Their stories are factually and reasonably flawed, but it seems the narrators feel no need to give a reliable evidence to prove their claims. Hijab, for instance, in Iranian Woman Tells the Truth about Islam & the Iranian Regime is an excuse to promote a darkimage of Islam as "the most horrible thing I have experienced in my life. Islam means failure, it means rape, it means women are not human.They are worth half… . Islam means oppression". This narrative is given by an individual Iranian woman who astonishingly speaks Spanish, not Farsi or English which arelanguages Iranians usually have skills in. She tells explicit historical lies like that Imam Khomeini made it compulsory for women to wear long scarves while there is no historical evidence for that. She claims that when the Islamic guards arrested

her for not wearing that hijab she was a university student in the south of Iran, she was beaten and raped by the revolutionary guards and has serious scars on her leg from the tortures. This video wasuploaded in July, 2011 and the woman looks to be in her 30s. It is while the Islamic Republic has been established in Iran for 34 years and Ayatollah Khomeini past away 22 years ago.Thus, it is absolutely impossible for her to be auniversity student at that time. The narrator attributes "rape" and "oppression" to Islam while there are thousands of verses in the Koran and Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) hadiths (a footnote briefly explaining hadith for the non-Muslim reader can be useful) which assert these two to be unforgivable sins and even both have serious punishments. Finally, one may ask YouTube that how on the contrary to its Community Guidelines including the hate speech law, one'sunfair curses towards Islam is not banned for hurting millions of Muslims religious beliefs.

The dominant image ofIranian womanon YouTube is depicted as highly influencedand oppressed by the Islamic Sharia (a footnote briefly explaining Sharia for the non-Muslim reader can be useful). Her life is depicted in maximum disappointment and her fate is represented to end up in immigration ordeath. For her immigration, the United States is highly recommended as a savior, and even mental immigration or conversion to Christianity is emphasized.

Sharia Law "She's Buried Chest High, for instance, is avideo whose narrator Nassrin reads a poem to distinguish between the original message of God and the abuse done by the "dictators of history" referring to the Iranian government. The entirevideo is full of lashing, stoning and hanging men and women and it even showsscenes from Afghanistan.Interestingly, the video ends in describing the entire religion of Islam as a religion belonging to 1400 years ago that is not properly applicable tothe present world.

The fruit of such version of Islam is represented in Michelle, Iranian Muslim Woman Converts… Michelle, an Iranian immigrant in the United States, explains in English that how superficial her family's teachings on Islam and how strict the Islamic principles had been, and finally she judges the Arabic essence of the Islamic prayers incomprehensible for Iranians. Thus, she has converted into Christianity and whenever she reads the Bible, she is "overjoyed".

As already mentioned, the Iranian woman is represented among YouTube

videosin apassive position against the so-called political despotism and autocracy and oppressing Islamic Sharia.

"Hijab" is given as the most important factor of oppression in Iran and when the term is searched on YouTube with the word "Iranian Woman", her representation is seen a repetition of already-discussed themes in a deeper layer.

7)The videos promote a kind of mandatory hijab regardless of any individual choice or voluntary religious commitment. It is only indicated to be an autocratic rule and regulation enforced post-1979 Revolution. Hijab in Iran is considered as a distinct and separate feature from the normal Islamic identity, and the videos such as Iranian Police Women and Iranian Women in Police with Hijabhighlight its governmental enforcement in the women police force and its maneuvers.

Among the videos given for "Iranian Woman's hijab", there are few videos which discuss hijab as a phenomenon in the Iranian everyday life such as Hijab and Daily Life: Iranian Women Tackle Rugby. These few videos are expected to be evaluated by the audience against the repetition of the videos such asIranian Woman Tells the Truth about Islam & the Iranian Regime, or the videos which draw the conflict between the policemen and Iranian women in the streets over their un-Islamic code of dress, Iranian Woman Clashes with Moral Police in Black, etc. Therefore, the audience's attention is attracted to hijab as a compulsory imposed code of dress which only represents an autocratic government and its oppression on women.

Conclusion

The Post World War II period and globalization brought public awareness with new challenges for the colonial powers. The emerging superpowers like the United States of America, thus, needed to persuade the minds and occupy the hearts to promote their colonial map, and the shift from traditional colonialism to neo-colonialism brought significant changes in the conception of "power" and "leadership".

The growing role of the "smart power" and the "dual spacization" of the world in the virtual space along the physical space did attract the critics to the fact that American digital, indeed, global machine of life in the mathematical environment of Internet constructs the "virtual imperialism" of our age.

The virtual space is considered veryde-centralized and liberal that enables the

power holders to softly fix their favorite values and norms, manipulating the global citizens. YouTube as an efficient American social media is examined here to explore how this user-based website consolidates the American values such as liberal democracy and secularism and promotes the American politics such as Islamophobia and Iranophobia. YouTube is browsed to examine the four concepts including "Muslim Woman", "Iranian Woman", and their identities regarding Islamic "hijab".

The result videos indicate that Muslim women are represented to be different and an "other" who particularly become much more backward, ignorant and isolatedwith Islamic features such as hijab. She is represented to be oppressed and suppressed by Sharia "prejudiced" principles and Muslim males. This image of Iranian Muslim woman is represented on YouTube under the double otherization; she is approached as a passive object and her hijab is only taken as an excuse for harsh criticism on political despotism and autocracy attributed to the Islamic Republic regardless of women's improvements in different respects of their individual and social lives post Islamic Revolution.

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