



A Semiotic Analysis on the Myths in the Election Campaign of Female Politicians: The Case of Local Elections in Iran

Pune Karimi* & Raci Taşcıoğlu**

Abstract

This paper explores gender issues through a mythical lens, studying myths from a semiotic standpoint and their impact on gender roles in politics. The legendary elements included in campaign posters for Iranian female candidates during municipal elections are investigated in this study. It specifically explores the importance, worth, and impact of these visuals in political advertising. The research findings indicate that although women have achieved notable progress in the realm of politics, their advancements and entitlements are frequently obscured by gender biases. Although women have made significant strides in addressing gender inequality in areas such as education, posters still prominently feature aesthetics and femininity. Women with scientific credentials continue to prioritize face appearance, influenced by the societal norms and regulations of a conservative society. Ancient Iranian political propaganda continues to harness the potency of age-old mystical symbols, serving as a testament to the significant value and influence of women in that era. Political myths, such as nationalism, assert that nationalism is not influenced by gender and that gender equality is a central focus in national movements, regardless of whether they are led by radical or liberal parties.

Keywords: Political Communication, Gender Studies, Mythology, Semiology, Women.

* Dr. Lecturer, Erzurum Technical University, Corporate Communications, pune.karimi@erzurum.edu.tr, Erzurum, Turkey, ORCID: 0000-0002-4928-2155

** Prof. Dr. Ataturk University, Communication Faculty, tascio@atauni.edu.tr, Erzurum, Turkey, ORCID: 0000-0003-2917-295



Creative Commons Licer

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 (CC BY NC) International License.

İran Çalışmaları Dergisi bilginin yayılması ve zenginleşmesi için Açık Erişim Politikasına 353 uymaktadır.



Kadın Siyasetçilerin Seçim Kampanyalarındaki Mitler Üzerine Göstergibilimsel Bir İnceleme: İran'daki Yerel Seçimler Örneği

Pune Karimi* & Raci Taşcıoğlu**

Öz

Bu makale toplumsal cinsiyet meselelerini mitsel bir bakış açısıyla araştırmakta, mitleri göstergibilimsel bir bakış açısıyla incelemekte ve bunların siyasetteki toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri üzerindeki etkilerini ele almaktadır. Çalışmada İranlı kadın adayların belediye seçimleri sırasında kullandıkları kampanya posterlerinde yer alan efsanevi unsurlar incelenmiştir. Özellikle bu görsellerin siyasi reklamcılıktaki önemi, değeri ve etkisi araştırılmaktadır. Araştırma bulguları, kadınların siyaset alanında kayda değer ilerlemeler kaydetmesine rağmen ilerlemelerinin ve haklarının sıklıkla cinsiyet önyargıları nedeniyle gölgelendiğini göstermektedir. Her ne kadar kadınlar eğitim gibi alanlarda cinsiyet eşitsizliğine çözüm bulma konusunda önemli ilerlemeler kaydetmiş olsa da posterlerde hala estetik ve kadınlık öne çıkmaktadır. Bilimsel yeterliliğe sahip kadınlar, muhafazakar bir toplumun toplumsal normları ve düzenlemelerinden etkilenen yüz görünümüne öncelik vermeye devam etmektedir. Eski İran siyasi propagandası, asırlık mistik sembollerin gücünden yararlanmaya devam etmekte ve o dönemde kadınların önemli değerinin ve etkisinin bir kanıtı olarak hizmet etmektedir. Milliyetçilik gibi siyasi mitler, milliyetçiliğin cinsiyetten etkilenmediğini ve cinsiyet eşitliğinin, ister radikal ister liberal partiler tarafından yönetilsin, ulusal hareketlerde merkezi bir odak noktası olduğunu ileri sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Siyasal İletişim, Toplumsal Cinsiyet Çalışmaları, Mitoloji, Gösterge Bilim, Kadın.

* Öğr.Gör. Dr , Erzurum Teknik Üniversitesi, Kurumsal İletişim Birimi, pune.karimi@erzurum.edu.tr, Erzurum, Türkiye, ORCID: 0000-0002-4928-2155

** Prof. Dr, Atatürk Üniversitesi, İletişim Fakültesi, tascio@atauni.edu.tr, Erzurum, Türkiye, ORCID: 0000-0003-2917-295X

1. Introduction

Equal distribution of opportunities and the possibility of maximum participation of citizens in their political destiny are among the spaces that will be opened in the elections. Through this participatory approach, citizens show their demands and perhaps their protests to the ruling process. In the meantime, the distribution of representation based on gender is of particular importance because it shows the status and quality of at the center of power relations/practices from a gender perspective (Beauregard, 2014). In other words, the reason for political participation through elections is the involvement of the styles and thoughts of different social groups in large-scale political processes (McClurg, 2003). In this way, the more social classes and groups interfere, the stronger the efficiency and representation of the elections (Wang & Sun, 2017). The issue of gender is also one of the important features in the distribution of power in political fields, especially through elections (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999).

In today's Iranian politics as a Middle Eastern country, the demand for the elimination of discrimination against women's participation has increased due to the growth in women's education and political and social awareness (Abdollahifard, 2020). In this process, the most easily accessible elections are local elections. Since the conditions for participation in local elections are easier and women can use family, relatives, network, or all kinds of recognized opportunities in the cities where they live, more women candidates are encountered in these elections than in the general elections (Bauer, 2020). Women candidates, who are considered novices with only 58 years of political experience in the field of politics during the accession process (it would be 58 years if we count the year that women first stepped into politics in Iran with the voting right approved in 1963), are trying to get support from cultural factors in order to be seen and to have their voices heard (Esmaeili, 2021). Despite trying to religious thought's dominance in Iran, mythology, as the most effective cultural tool for preserving ancient values, is one of the factors widely used in the process of political propaganda. In particular, in propaganda posters, religion and Iranian nationalism are seen in the closest relationship (Farazmand, 1995).

2. Purpose of the Research

The aim of this study is to recognize the myths used in the posters of female candidates in Iranian elections and as a result, to reveal the beliefs on which political advertisements are based in Iran today. Because knowing the myths that are frequently used in Iranian society will enable to understand the belief and thought structure of the public.

Despite the fact that famous theorists have discussed the impact of mythology on politics in various cultures, and myths have traditionally been used in propaganda in Persian culture, the impact of mythological signs in Iran has received little scientific attention. Furthermore, the issue of gender in Iran, which has always been regarded as a sensitive issue, has been ignored in this field, as well as in all other research areas.

By producing information in the political field, this study aims to fill a gap in the literature and help to increase the future success of political women in Iran and similar cultures in the Middle East.

3. The Limitations of the Research

The scope of this study is the 2016 local election period in Iran. In this period, advertisement posters used by female candidates in different metropolitan cities of Iran were obtained and analyzed in terms of semiotics. Election posters of female candidates from different provinces and ethnicities across Iran were determined using a simple random method, which is a probabilistic sample, through web sites with political advertising examples from internet searches. No party or view distinction was made among the candidates, and any party member or independent candidate was impartially examined. However, based on the differences in the posters, it was determined in the conclusion section to which party or point of view the candidate belonged.

4. Research Method

In this paper, advertisement posters using female candidates in the 2016 local elections in Iran were examined in terms of semiotics. In the paper, the symbols used in the posters were scanned to determine which myths

they evoked. Thus, it has been resolute which values are more important in the current Iranian society and which moral factors are effective for women. Advertising posters were selected from the posters used by women in the election campaign.

In article, myths are surveyed and analyzed from a structural point of view. The structuralist method of research deals with the infrastructure of cultural systems and deals with their deep and hidden content. The task of the structuralist researcher is to create their perceptions by analyzing the conceptual structures of different cultures. According to Claude Lévi-Strauss (1978), behind every institution and every action there is an unconscious structure that dominates the world of ideas and minds, and there is a causal relationship between this structure and social events. As said by him, the structures that appear in myths are exactly the same structures that exist in the mind and shape human thought and perception power. Barthes (1977) was interested in myths, which are mental structures that give meaning to life, and went further and dealt with the deep meanings rather than the plain meanings in these structures. According to him, connotation with hidden meanings is an unhealthy indicator and tries to reach its goal by using a false structure. This unhealthy indicator sometimes turns into myths. In this study, with using the structuralism evaluation theory of Barthes (1977), the mythological elements on the posters, the sign, the signifier, and the signified, will be scanned. Thus, it will be determined which political myth is used more and is considered as a social value for female candidates in Iranian culture.

5. Theoretical Framework

Jacobsen (1992) says: “The New World Order is in danger of turning into something dreary and well-known. It now appears to be just as susceptible to manipulative and self-serving myth creation and preservation, tribal ethnocentrism, and politics of fear and exclusion.” According to Ernst Renan (1882, p. 53), “a nation is a large-scale solidarity, composed of the feeling of sacrifices that one had made in the past and of those one has planned to make in the future.” Since it is founded on a spiritual principle, it requires political myths, or “political narratives”, as tactical communication tools in order to validate the past, present, and future.

Thus, a community's longing desire to once again inhabit a live past is a practical response to the community's need to experience a communal rebirth following periods of decline and decay. In fact, ideologies connect the as logically consistent symbolic constructs of widespread mythology (Mullins, 1972, p. 510). Thus, there are different varieties of nationalism and these varieties, in some cases, use similar political myths to legitimize themselves. In fact, even in modern times, people rely on political myths as fundamental elements of nationalist discourses (Kibris, 2019, p. 2).

6. Myths & Political Myths

Myths are associated with beliefs in many cases; is entwined with them. It forms the basis of the philosophical thought of that period, especially in terms of defining morals and social arrangements or problems in archaic societies. Myths not only tell about the origin of humans but also about important events in the development process of humanity. The evaluates it presents on the formation of primitive and traditional communities are at the forefront of the elements that make it significant. In other words, it allows people to live collectively and to struggle against the problems they perceive. In this context, myths turn into a tool designed to find solutions to the problems that people experience (Eliade, 1991, pp. 20-22).

Malinowski (1999, pp. 102-104) tried to define a myth depending on its function in social life. According to him, myth, as it existed in primitive society, is not a story told, but a living reality that constantly affects the destiny of man. That is, the myth is not a symbol but a direct expression of the object; it is not an explanation aimed at satisfying scientific interest but the reliving of a reality in the form of a narrative in the distant past.

Political myths are fantastic tales that imaginatively recount historical events (Ram & Friedman, 1996) or in other words those are great stories that creatively narrate historical events (Smith, 1986). Political myth, on the other hand, can be defined as "a work on a common narrative that gives significance to the political conditions and experiences of a social group" (Bottici & Challand, 2010). A political myth, according to Tudor (1972, p. 16), "is a story, but a story told for a purpose rather than simply to amuse." The goal is to establish links between the government and its subjects, as well as the past, present, and future of a specific group (Bottici & Challand,

2006, p. 317). Through political myths, a group shapes itself into a political community (Bottici, 2007) in relation to a particular past, forms solidarity with others who share that identity, and perhaps more importantly, justifies why those who govern have the right to do so and why the community should obey them (Schöpflin, 1997). Political myths can, at some point, influence what the community considers to be legitimate, and as a result, they can act as “cognitive lenses” through which people perceive global politics (Bennett, 1980, p. 167; Bottici, 2007, p. 253).

Gentile believes that myths endow that national state with saintly qualities and portray it as a sublime ideal for which people are willing to die (Gentile, 2006). As Tudor (1972, p. 26) said, “what has been done in the past is not lost forever because it can repeat itself”. Concerning this also, Smith (1986, pp. 182-183) argues, “Through our return to the glorious past and its heroism, we transcend a formless and worthless present, get rid of our individual lives, cause us to outlive death, eliminate uselessness, and work together in a union.” It enables us to live more meaningfully”. Therefore, this nostalgia for the past is a response to that community’s need for rebirth after experiences of decline and decay (Tudor, 1972, p. 26).

7.1. Key Political Myths According to Welch

According to Welch (1983, p. 35), key political myths can be classified as below (Table 1).

Table 1

1	Blood & Soil Myth	Raising a shared awareness of politics and the nation is used for the purpose.
2	Enemy Myth	It is determined by the person or entity that shows hostility towards land, blood, and race. These myths of hatred towards the enemy are part of all political advertising, in fact, attributing one’s personal, corporate, and/or national failure to another or stranger.
3	The Hero Myth	The hero is presented as a national defender against the enemy. This patron may be the leader in power or the leader of a current, party or movement.

Note. (Welch, 1983, p. 35).

7.2. Key Political Myths According to Nimmo and Combs

According to Nimmo and Combs (1980, P. 72) key political myths can be studied as master myths, the us and them myths, heroic myth and pseudo myth presented in Table 2. Master myths can be classified as foundation myth, sustaining myth and eschatological myth in itself.

Table 2

1	Master Myths	The general and broad myths. Root myths are fundamental, supporting, and eschatological and are divided into three.
1.1		Foundation Myth: Extravagant historical events for use in political propaganda
1.2		Sustaining Myth: Politicians, artists, and leaders help and support a candidate with their praise and friendship.
1.3		Eschatological Myth: Plans a country's future destiny based on its past.
2	The Us and Them Myth	It distinguishes a particular society from other societies.
3	Heroic Myth	It is a myth of a responsible hero with special powers who alone saves the country from evil forces.
4	Pseudo Myth	There are short-lived myths that candidates make to serve as a tool temporarily. They are political narratives designed to achieve short-term political affiliations.

Note. (Nimmo & Combs, 1980, p. 72).

7.3. Key Political Myths According to Johnson-Cartee, and Copeland

According to Johnson-Cartee, and Copeland, key political myths are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Ethnocentrism Myth	It is used in political advertisements on racism on the last day of the elections.
Altruistic Democracy Myth	It tries to show that the politics and administration of the country should be based on the interests of the people.
Responsible Capitalism Myth	It reflects the capitalist society's development and profit without harming the working class.
Small-Town Pastoralism Myth	It emphasizes the value of villages, fields, and farming.
Individualism Myth	It is a myth reflecting strong and successful people.
Order Myth	Emphasizes the survival and security of the country.
American Dream Myth	Based on American culture, it creates the impression that I am one of you and that I have succeeded through my efforts.
Equilibrium Myth	This is the myth that reflects liberalism and supports all parties in the midst of all parties.
Westerner's Myth	Cooperation, tolerance, neighborliness and trust are based on.

Note. (Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1997, p. 62).

7.4. Key Political Myths According to Hinnells

Mythological studies in Iran have always been made on ancient mythology. For example, Hinnells (1973), in his book "Persian Mythology", extensively discussed myths such as gods, heroes, good and evil, creation. Although historical and cultural changes over time have created changes in Iranian mythology, old myths that are compatible with modern culture still continue. According to Hinnells (1973), the main political myths in Iranian mythology are as below (Table 4):

Table 4.

1	Good and Evil Myth	According to the belief of the Ancient Iranians, world history is actually the history of war between good and evil. In these wars, man is instinctively the helper of God and goodness. Wisdom, enlightenment, honesty, purity, good thinking and obedience are considered to be good powers in Iranian thought. In the face of these forces, ignorance, harm, disorder, anger, and lying are considered the characteristics of Ahriman.
2	Order Myth	The disappearance of order and peace, being regarded as the characteristics of the religion of goodness, is an indication of the end of the world. So much so that it can only be taken back with the appearance of a savior.
3	Equilibrium Myth	In Iranian thought, everyone should obey the ideal balance. The motto of this idea is “everything must be balanced”. For this reason, it is recommended to hold ceremonies and feasts, and drunkenness is prohibited.
4	Divine Power and God’s Shadow Myth	Even before Islam, Iranians believed that power belonged to only one god. And they believed that this god gave power to some of his chosen ones. Therefore, Ferreh or Furugi Izedi was a feature that would be gifted by God upon the perfection of the person. The legitimacy of the Shahs depended on their ability to own Ferreh. The most obvious indicator of this feature was having a luminous face. This idea still persists in post-Islamic Iranian religious culture.
4.1 Golden Age Myth		The Golden Age is the period of Jamshid and his brilliant government. Jamshid is a famous and well-known king with a thousand-year reign in Iran. The most well-known feature of this period is peace and abundance. During Jamshid’s government, the demons and their ugliness (lie, hunger, disease and death) could not penetrate society.
4.2 Savior Myth		Zoroastrians are waiting for the coming of savior, with whose arrival the world will be like paradise; Sickness and death and torture disappear.

Note. (Hinnells, 1973, p. 47).

8. Analysis, Results, and Discussion

While investigating the position of women in the historical process and the achievements of today’s women in political life, it is seen that almost

all of their gains and rights in this long and difficult process are still in the shadow of gender. Despite the fact that women could save their problems, such as education, from gender dominance in this process, aesthetics and femininity are still at the forefront in posters. Figures 1 to 20 show twenty different randomly selected advertising posters used in different regions of Iran in local election campaigns. The semiotic analysis of the figures shown in Tables 4 to 24 is explained in detail.

Figure 1

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Tahereh Roudbari's Election Poster

Attention to Branding Behind Faces [Poster]. (21 October 2016). Meysam.org. <https://meysam.org/branding-in-the-face-enchancing/>

Table 5

Description of the Figure No 1

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Candidate's traditional dress	Nation and Folk	The small-town pastoralism Myth, The Us and the Them Myth: It shows the candidate's commitment to the region she belongs to and that she is interested in the problems of the region.
Weapon	Defend and War	The Us and Them Myth, The Heroic Myth: Reveals the candidate's desire to protect her territory, being a strong and successful woman. Heroically trying to protect her territory.
Flower on the Gun	Peace and Compassion	Equilibrium Myth: The candidate's strong yet peaceful
Engineer Title before name of candidate	Wisdom and Education	Good and Evil Myth: Emphasizing the candidate's wisdom and expertise
Green, white, red colours in the ribbon of flowers	Flag	Blood and Soil Myth: An indicator of the candidate's being nationalist and loyal to the homeland

The first thing that stands out in ad poster No. 1 is the weapon. Even if the weapon indicates that the candidate has a warrior spirit, the flowers on it emphasize that the candidate is fighting for peace (reminiscent of the hero myth). The traditional dress of the candidate reminds us of the myth of small-town pastoralism, and the accessories she uses highlight her feminine side. Although the candidate is a warrior, she has not lost her feminine side and is proud of it. Behind the weapon, the flag flies, indicating the root and blood myth. This highlights the pride and respect the candidate has for his country and nationality, as well as his dependence on his race.

The title “engineer” in front of the candidate’s name emphasizes that the candidate cares about wisdom and knowledge, recalling the myth of Good and Evil.

The greenery used in her dress again shows ruralism and village pastoralism. The candidate’s looking away emphasizes that she has plans for the future. The whiteness of the background of the poster tries to show honesty.

Figure 2

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Rozita Ghasemlou’s Election Poster

Different Posters of Women Candidates for City Councils Using Visual Effects [Poster]. (15 may 2017). Gahar.ir. <http://tinyurl.com/2uwtm77j>

Table 6

Description of the Figure No 2

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Slogans written in Talik calligraphy	Art, Aesthetics, Brilliant Past	Golden Age Myth: Candidate cares and values the country’s ancient art
Ancient Iranian motifs used on the back	Aesthetics, Strong History	Golden Age Myth: Candidate’s pride of traditional past, supported by this past, the promise to bring back the same period
Candidate’s clothing and Hijab Style	Modernity	Equilibrium Myth: The candidate loves innovation and modernity even if she has traditional thinking
“Everybody The Same Amount” Slogan	Justice	Equilibrium Myth: Candidate’s faith in justice and equality of the people

In the figure No 2, we first see the importance of aesthetics by the candidate. This shows that the candidate emphasizes femininity.

The flag waving in the background points to the Soil and Blood Myth. The image of the rose and the nightingale emphasizes the Golden Age myth as a reminder of the romantic and emotional days of ancient Iran. The candidate's clothing and hijab style show a modern mind, and the candidate loves innovation and modernity even if she has traditional thinking, and that remained the Equilibrium Myth.

Figure 3

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Niloufar Ardām's Election Poster Various Posters with Visual Effects of Women Candidates for City Council [Poster]. (17 May 2017). Asrkhabar.com. <http://tinyurl.com/2vpjh4bd>

Table 7

Description of the Figure No 3

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Doctor's Title preceded by the candidate's name	Wisdom and Education	Good and Evil Myth: Emphasizing the candidate's wisdom and expertise
Slogan "The Conservatives and Liberals' Choice"	Equilibrium, Independence	Equilibrium Myth: It is that the candidate appeals to both of the two opposition parties and that both will work on their interests and emphasize their independence.
Candidate's dress style (Soldier uniform)	Power, Modernity	Sustaining Myth and Hero Myth: Candidate appearing as savior and protector and endorsed by military forces
Posture of the candidate: Soldier Salute	Respect, Obedience	Sustaining Myth: Candidate supported by the military and her respect for the army, and a sign that she is the people's soldier

In figure No 3 the flag is the first eye-catching image behind the candidate. She demonstrates the candidate's nationalist viewpoint by recalling the myth of blood and roots, whereas the military coat she wears and body language emphasize that the candidate can defend and protect society by displaying her warrior spirit. The doctor's title is preceded by the candidate's name, showing the value that the candidate gives to knowledge and wisdom and highlighting that she is also a wise person. The slogan of the development of social security also tries to introduce the candidate as the hero and the character who saves others as the integrator of the whole depiction.

Figure 4

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Somayye Mahmoodi’s Election Poster

MP Elect Somayye Mahmoodi [Poster]. (15 March 2016). Medium.com. <http://tinyurl.com/48ckm84a>

Table 8

Description of the Figure No 4

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Emphasis on Candidate’s Surname Mahmudi “Praised”	Praised	Good and Evil Myth: Emphasizes that the candidate is trustworthy and good
Photograph of martyr in the background with the same surname as the candidate	Holiness, Innocence, Patronage	Sustaining Myth: Indicative of candidate’s thoughts supported by her martyr brother
Pen and Notebook	Wisdom, Education	Good and Evil Myth: Candidate is shown to be a wise and knowledgeable character
Ancient Iranian motifs used in the background	Aesthetics, Solid History	Golden Age Myth: The candidate’s pride in her traditional past and the promise to renew the same era, supported by that past

Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Candidate dressing style (black sheet)	Conservatism	Sustaining Myth: The candidate belongs to the radical party and supports their thought, and appeals to the radical segment of society
Blue sky and cloud	Freedom, Cleanliness, Innocence	Good and Evil Myth: Shows the candidate's belief in freedom and integrity

In figure No 4 the photograph of the martyr, who bears the same surname as her and possibly her brother, conveys the message that the candidate is supported by extraordinary forces and comes from a family devoted to the country. The ancient Iranian motif that she uses, is an indication of her traditional thought, and the flag that is used in the form of a ribbon, show that she has a modern spirit. The photograph of the candidate among the clouds in the sky implies that she is as pure and clean as a cloud. On the other hand, the slogan “service ambassador” tries to emphasize that the candidate has a humble character.

Figure 5

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Ayda Nimet-i Ilahi's Election Poster

Several Posters featuring graphical effects of Female City Council Candidates [Poster]. (12 July 2017). Sid.ir. https://www.sid.ir/fa/VEWSSID/J_pdf/4015313975303.pdf

Table 9

Description of the Figure No 5

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Sun	Light, Sparkle	(Ferre-i Izedi), Divine Power and God's Shadow Myth: Support by the holy power and auspices
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Emphasis on candidate's last name: Nimet-i İlahi: "Blessings of God"	Holiness	(Ferre-i Izedi), Divine Power and God's Shadow Myth: Support by the holy power and auspices
Doctor's title used before candidate's name	Education and Wisdom	Good and Evil Myth: Having sufficient knowledge and merit for the position
Candidate profile smiling in the sky	Freedom, Happiness,	Savior Myth, Hero Myth: Saving society from problems and bringing peace and happiness to society
Slogan "Rain Again, Songs Again"	The gospel of peace and renewal	Savior Myth, Hero Myth: Promises candidate to bring happiness, innovation and change to society

The first thing that catches your eye on the banner in figure No 5 is the blue sky and the shining sun. This depiction, combined with the candidate's smile, evokes the myth of the hero. The candidate reminds the Savior Myth by comparing herself to the sun. The flag waving at the back is indicative of the Blood and Soil Myth. At the same time, the name of the candidate, "Nimet-i lahi" (Blessing of God), reminds of the myth of God's Shadow (Ferre-i Izdi). The word "doctor" added in front of the candidate's name is known as a symbol of wisdom in Iranian culture and is a symbol of honesty and wisdom in the myth of Good and Evil. The narcissus rose, hidden in the background, evokes the myth of the savior as a symbol of renewal as an autumn flower.

Figure 6

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Sahel Tanghestani’s Election Poster

Different Posters of Women Candidates for City Councils [Poster]. (21 October 2016). Meysam.org. <https://meysam.org/branding-in-the-face-enchanting/>

Table 10

Description of the Figure No 6

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Candidate’s Master Engineer title	Knowledge and Expertise	Good and Evil Myth: Having sufficient knowledge and merit for the position
Candidate body language	Self confidence	Hero Myth: Saving society from problems and bringing peace and happiness to society
Slogan” The first female architect candidate in the history of Borazjan”	Power, Leadership	Savior Myth, Hero Myth: First woman
Ancient Iranian motifs used in the background	Aesthetics, Solid History	Golden Age Myth : The candidate’s pride in her traditional past and the promise to renew the same period and she is supported by that past

In the poster, the candidate's body language tried to show that she was self-confident. In addition, the candidate's being the first female architect candidate tries to highlight his leadership. Her style of clothing shows that she is modern and pro-Liberal, and her name in blue reminds of the myth of the savior of the "Sahil" (seaside). The old Iranian motifs used to express respect and longing for the past. The flag image represents the candidate's nationalism as a symbol of the myth of Blood and Soil.

Figure 7

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Niloufar Ardām's Election Poster

Names of candidates for the Islamic council elections. [Poster]. (20 October 2021). Nody.ir. <http://tinyurl.com/4w5rk2tz>

Table 11

Description of the Figure No 7

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Candidate dressing style	Modernity, Innovation, Dynamics, Youth	The Hero Myth: Emphasizes the Candidate as innovative and powerful
Leaf used in background	Freshness, Happiness	Good and Evil Myth: It shows that the candidate is a cheerful and happy person so can bring happiness to the society
Candidate dress red color	Modernity and Freedom	Individualist Myth: Denotes candidate not wearing black sheets becomes free and independent candidate.

In figure No 7 the sports clothes used by the candidate try to give the message that she has an active, energetic and happy character. Thus, the candidate tried to attract the attention of women by drawing a strong woman image. Leaf images used in the background also emphasize the feeling of freshness and happiness. The candidate thus promises to bring movement and energy to the atmosphere. The flag image, on the other hand, tries to emphasize the nationalism of the candidate by emphasizing that she is Iranian.

Figure 8

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Azita Hekmati-Asl’s Election Poster

On the City Level, Women’s Banners in Very Large Sizes Are Installed in The Squares [Poster]. (18 May 2017). Dana.ir. <http://tinyurl.com/2xy2nrx4>

Table 12

Description of the Figure No 8

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Candidate’s Surname Hekmati “Wisdom”	Wisdom	Good and Evil Myth: The candidate is wise character
Slogans written in Talik calligraphy	Art, Aesthetics, Brilliant Past	Golden Age Myth: Candidate cares and values the country’s ancient brilliant art
Pencil	Wisdom	Good and Evil Myth: Highlights that the candidate is knowledgeable and readable
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland

Candidate dressing style (black sheet)	Conservatism	Sustaining Myth: The candidate belongs to the radical party and supports their thought, and appeals to the radical section of society
Slogan “Let’s be an umbrella against the sun”	Guardianship	Hero Myth: Talks about candidate protecting society from harm
Ancient Iranian motifs used in the background	Aesthetics, Solid History	Golden Age Myth: The candidate’s pride in her traditional past and the promise to renew the same era, supported by that past

In figure No 8 the style of clothing used by the candidate is the paradox that first catches the eye in the poster, and it tries to imply that the candidate has a conservative but modern thought. The second paradox is the slogan, “Let’s be an umbrella against the sun.” Although the sun is sacred and beneficial in mythology, the candidate promises protection from the sun. The pen in the hand of the candidate highlights her wisdom, education, and expertise.

Figure 9

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Somayye Hoseyinvand’s Election Poster

Attention to Branding Behind Faces [Poster]. (21 October 2016). Meysam.org. <https://meysam.org/branding-in-the-face-enchanting/>

Table 13

Description of the Figure No 9

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Purple colour	Liberal Party	Sustaining Myth: Indicates candidate supported by the Liberal Party
Slogan “We Keep Our Promise”	Strength, Stability, Confidence	Individualist Myth: Reveals that the candidate is a strong character and keeps her promises
White Hijab innocence	Purring	Good and Evil Myth: Show that the candidate has a pure character
Candidate’s Hijab style	Modernity, Innovation	Moderation Myth: Indicates that the candidate is a moderate and liberal-minded person
Shining light	Holiness	(Ferre-i Izedi), Divine Power and God’s Shadow Myth: Support by the holy power and extraordinary forces.

In figure No 9 the purple color used in the poster and the style of dressing of the candidate added to it are an indication that she belongs to the Liberal Party. The white headscarf, on the other hand, emphasizes the innocence and honesty of the candidate. The light shining in the corner of the poster expresses the holiness and innocence created by the candidate’s use of white.

Figure 10

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Parvin Alizadeh's Election Poster

Attention to Branding Behind Faces [Poster]. (21 October 2016). Meysam.org. <https://meysam.org/branding-in-the-face-enchancing/>

Table 14

Description of the Figure No 10

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Purple color	Liberal Party	Sustaining Myth: Indicates candidate supported by the Liberal Party
Titles of lawyer and academician	Wisdom and Education	Good and Evil Myth: Emphasizing the candidate's wisdom and expertise
Slogan "Daughter of the Sun"	Heroism, Holiness, Mithraism	(Ferre-i Izedi), Divine Power and God's Shadow Myth: Support by the holy power and extraordinary forces.
The Light on the Candidate's Back	Holiness	(Ferre-i Izedi), Divine Power and God's Shadow Myth: Support by the holy power and extraordinary forces.
Calligraphed Slogans	Art, Aesthetics, Brilliant Past	Golden Age Myth: Candidate cares and values the country's ancient arts
Flag colors waving ribbon	Homeland, Soil, Blood	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Candidate's headscarf and dressing style	Modernity, Creativity	Moderation Myth: The small detail created by the candidate on the routine and traditional headscarf, indicates that she is both traditional and interested in innovation

In figure No 10 the first prominent image of the banner is the sun logo, with the slogan “Daughter of the Sun” below. In addition to this statement, the light reflecting on the shoulder of the candidate reinforces the idea of Mithraism by emphasizing that the candidate is protected and special. The flag waving without a coat of arms, the purple color used, and the style of dress of the candidate clearly indicate that she is affiliated with the Liberal Party. In addition, the introduction of the candidate as a lawyer and academician transforms her wisdom into a divine power with the sun and light, and this situation is supported by the name of the candidate, Parvin, who represents the stars.

Figure 11

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Fatemeh Shirzad’s Election Poster

Election Posters [Poster]. (16 May 2017). Hodaykhabar.ir. <http://tinyurl.com/sdmnx23m>

Table 15

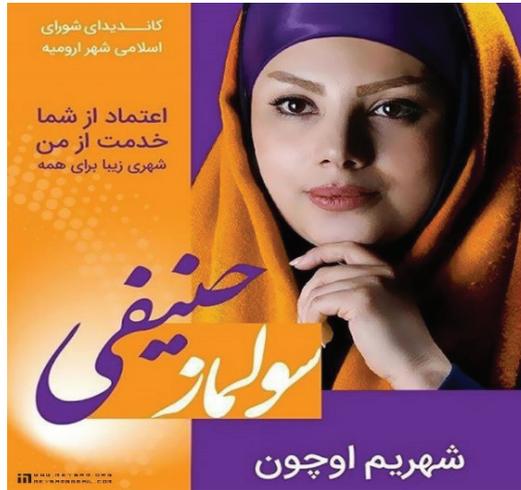
Description of the Figure No 11

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Talik calligraphed slogans	Art, Aesthetics, Brilliant Past	Golden Age Myth: Candidate cares and values the country's ancient art
The candidate's headscarf with the same colors as the flag and similar patterns	Protecting and Belonging	Blood and Soil Myth: The candidate is covered with patriotism and protected with this love
Ancient Iranian motifs used in the background	Aesthetics, Solid History	Golden Age Myth: The candidate's pride in her traditional past and the promise to renew the same era, supported by that past
Candidate's surname Şîrzâd "lion cub"	Courage, Fearlessness	Hero Myth: Implying the candidate's lion heart

In figure No 11 the first thing that catches the eye on the candidate's poster is the flag and the candidate's headscarf in the same colours. The flag is reminiscent of the Blood and Soil myth; at the same time, the candidate's dress in flag colours is considered an indicator of nationalism, and the candidate emphasizes that she is both protected by and will protect the flag, implying that the Blood and Soil myth is used. In midlist thought, the candidate's name, "FatemeH," conjures up images of purity and innocence. The fact that the candidate's surname is "Shirzad" (Lion Child) also means courage and strength, and it's a sign of invincibility. The name written in Talik calligraphy emphasizes that the candidate cares about her aesthetic intelligence and beauty. The candidate's smile, the colorful headscarf, and the sheet she used remind of the Moderation Myth.

Figure 12

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Solmaz Hanifi’s Election Poster

Attention to Branding Behind Faces [Poster]. (21 October 2016). Meysam.org. <https://meysam.org/branding-in-the-face-enchanting/>

Table 16

Description of the Figure No 12

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Purple colour	Liberal Party	Sustaining Myth: Indicates that the candidate is supported by the liberal party
Candidate’s Master Engineer title	Knowledge and Expertise	Good and Evil Myth: Having sufficient knowledge and merit for the position
Slogan “development is your desire, our expertise”	Expertise, Knowledge	Savior Myth: Emphasizes the candidate’s power to fulfil the desires of the people
Slogan “for my city”	Change, Development, Modernization	Hero Myths: Emphasis on candidate’s power to reclaim the region from the ancients and drive innovation

Slogan “trust you, service from us, a city for all”	Trust, Development	Hero Myths: Emphasis on candidate’s power to reclaim the region from the ancients and drive innovation
Candidate dressing style “Black sheet”	Adhering to Religious Beliefs and Traditions	Moderation Myth: While emphasizing the candidate’s relationship with the liberal party, it shows that she is also addressing the radical party.

In figure No 12 the first thing that draws attention on the poster is the slogan “for my city” written in the candidate’s native language and Turkish, and “trust from you, service from me” written in Persian. The juxtaposition of these slogans is an indication of the candidate’s loyalty to her race as well as her love for her country. As the purple color was the symbol of the Liberal Party at that time, it shows that the candidate is pro-Liberal Party and that he has a modern mindset with his headscarf style. It is striking that this candidate also emphasized on aesthetics and her femininity was at the forefront.

Figure 13

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Fatemeh Torkaşvand’s Election Poster

Names of candidates for the Islamic council elections. [Poster]. (20 October 2021). Nody.ir <http://tinyurl.com/4w5rk2tz>

Table 17

Description of the Figure No 13

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Glasses	Wisdom	Good and Evil Myth: Highlighting the candidate's knowledge
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Bridge Crossing	Symbol of the city	Small town pastoralism Myth, Savior Myth: It shows the candidate's commitment to the region she belongs to and that she is interested in the problems of the region. The candidate's relief of the region from the ancients and moving towards modernism, indication of the candidate's commitment to the city and proud of the region
Candidate dress style	Modernity and Freedom	Individualist Myth: Denotes candidate not wearing black sheets becomes free and independent candidate
Slogan "to serve and develop"	Development and Innovation	Savior Myth: The candidate's promise he can modernize the region
Waving flag	Freedom	Savior Myth: Candidate's concern for Freedom and Independence
Talik Calligraphed Slogans	Art, Aesthetics, Brilliant Past	Golden Age Myth: Candidate cares and values the country's ancient brilliant art

In figure No 13 the first thing that catches the eye on the poster is the glasses emphasizing the wisdom of the candidate. While the flag waving at the back represents national freedom and independence, the bridge image highlights regional value and importance. Thus, it is mentioned that the candidate feels responsible to the whole country, despite being tied to her race and city. The word "service" emphasizes the candidate as a humble character. The slogan of "development" shows that the candidate has new and creative ideas. The name of the candidate indicates that she comes from a traditional family, although she has modern-minded.

Figure 14

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Maryam Hashemi’s Election Poster

Attention to Branding Behind Faces [Poster]. (21 October 2016). Meysam.org. <https://meysam.org/branding-in-the-face-enchancing/>

Table 18

Description of the Figure No 14

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Purple color	Liberal Party	Sustaining Myth: Indicates that the candidate is supported by the liberal party
Candidate’s Master Engineer title	Knowledge and Expertise	Good and Evil Myth: Having sufficient knowledge and merit for the position
Candidate’s Name Maryam	Innocence, Nobility	Good and Evil Myth: Emphasizes that the candidate is an innocent and pure person.
Slogan “development is your desire, our expertise”	Expertise, Knowledge	Savior Myth: Emphasizes the candidate’s power to fulfil the desires of the people
Slogan “We came for change”	Change, Development, Modernization	Hero Myths: Emphasis on candidate’s power to reclaim the region from the ancients and drive innovation
Candidate dressing style “Black sheet”	Adhering to Religious Beliefs and Traditions	Moderation Myth: While emphasizing the candidate’s relationship with the liberal party, it shows that she is also addressing the radical party.
Glasses and Pen	Wisdom	Good and Evil Myth: Highlighting the candidate’s knowledge

In figure No 14 the color purple, the color of liberals, is the first thing that draws attention in the poster. In the first stage, the candidate is clearly of the liberal party and employs the Savior myth. At the same time, the color purple evokes the myth of Moderation. The candidate tries to display her wisdom with glasses. The “only female candidate” sentence used in the poster also shows the desire for positive discrimination based on gender. “Maryam,” the candidate’s name, connotes purity and innocence. The advertising text used in the banner is “Development is your desire, our expertise” makes a show of power by emphasizing the wisdom of the candidate. It also reminds of the myth of Good and Evil. The candidate’s emphasis on engineering is also indicative of the wisdom (goodness) myth. The phrase “We have come for change” used in the poster reminds of the myth of the savior and salvation.

Figure 15

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Zohreh Behrouz’s Election Poster

Attention to Branding Behind Faces [Poster]. (21 October 2016e). Meysam.org. <https://meysam.org/branding-in-the-face-enchanted/>

Table 19

Description of the Figure No 15

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Purple color	Liberal Party	Sustaining Myth: Indicates that the candidate is supported by the liberal party
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Candidate's Engineer title	Knowledge and Expertise	Good and Evil Myth: Having sufficient knowledge and merit for the position
Candidate's traditional dress	Nation and Folk	The small-town pastoralism Myth, The Us and the Them Myth: It shows the candidate's commitment to the region she belongs to and that she is interested in the problems of the region.
Ancient Iranian motifs used in the background and candidate dress	Aesthetics, Solid History	Golden Age Myth: The candidate's pride in her traditional past and the promise to renew the same era, supported by that past

In figure No15 the candidate's attire shows that she adheres to tradition, and the image of the flag used in background shows that she is related to her country. The title of engineer used in front of the candidate's name shows the importance she attaches to wisdom and emphasizes that she is an educated person. The fact that the candidate has a child next to her and her body language points far away shows that she cares about the future and emphasizes that she appeals to the younger generation. Iranian motifs appearing in the candidate's attire and in the background show her nostalgia for ancient Iranian glory. The accessories and style used in the dress are indicators of femininity.

Figure 16

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Zahra Saidi’s Election Poster

The First News Debate of the Candidates for the Islamic Council Elections. [Poster]. (19 February 2016). Mobarakehna.ir. <http://tinyurl.com/yf6sfb9w>

Table 20

Description of the Figure No 16

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Ancient Iranian motifs used in the background	Aesthetics, Solid History	Golden Age Myth: The candidate’s pride in her traditional past and the promise to renew the same era, supported by that past
Candidate dressing style (black sheet)	Conservatism	Sustaining Myth: The candidate belongs to the radical party and supports their thought, and appeals to the radical segment of society
Ancient Iranian motifs	Beauty and Tradition	Golden Age Myth: Reminding the country’s traditional art and successful past and emphasizing its strength

Slogans written in Talik calligraphy	Beauty in ancient Iranian art	Golden Age Myth: Candidate care and valuing the country's ancient art
Engineer title before name of candidate	Wisdom and Education	Good and Evil Myth: Emphasizing the candidate's wisdom and expertise
The Slogan "I set out to serve with loyalty"	Honesty and Loyalty	Good and Evil Myth: Emphasizes that the candidate is a good and honest person and a loyal servant to her nation

In figure No 16 it is very clear that the candidate has conservative thinking in all the details of her designs on the poster. With the image of the big flag, it shows that she cares about its nation independence. Also, the ancient Iranian motifs she uses are for the goal "the old glory will return" if I succeed. It reassures by reminding the country's success history and golden age. The title of professional engineer used in front of the noun emphasizes wisdom and the value of education.

Figure 17

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Shadi Tardast's Election Poster

Attention to Branding Behind Faces [Poster]. (21 October 2016). Meysam.org. <https://meysam.org/branding-in-the-face-enchancing/>

Table 21

Description of the Figure No 17

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Slogan “Proud of Boukan”	Confidence, Proud	Individualist Myth: Reveals that the candidate is a strong character. The Us and the Them Myth: It shows the candidate’s commitment to the region she belongs to and that she is interested in the problems of the region.
White Hijab innocence	Purring	Good and Evil Myth: Show that the candidate has a pure character
Candidate’s Hijab style	Modernity, Innovation	Moderation Myth: Indicates that the candidate is a moderate and liberal- minded person
Shining light	Holiness	(Ferre-i Izedi), Divine Power and God’s Shadow Myth: Support by the holy power and extraordinary forces.

In figure No 17 the harmony between the candidate’s profession (nursing) and the white dress she wears is an expression of innocence, cleanliness and honesty. Also, despite the pen in hand of candidate represents wisdom, it is obvious that aesthetics is used and cared for by her. At the same time, we can see that the slogan “For Boukan” is the symbol of the candidate’s city, as well as the priority of her race and city.

Figure 18

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Parvin Arzaghani Birghani’s Election Poster

Attention to Branding Behind Faces [Poster]. (21 October 2016). Meysam.org. <https://meysam.org/branding-in-the-face-enchanted/>

Table 22

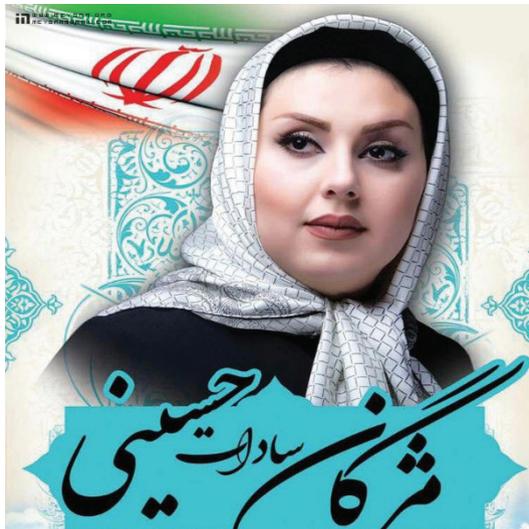
Description of the Figure No 18

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Slogan “A City for Everyone”	Moderation and Balance	Equilibrium Myth: The candidate’s appeal to all sectors and parties
Talikh calligraphed slogans	Art, Aesthetics, Brilliant Past	Golden Age Myth: Candidate cares and values the country’s ancient arts
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Candidate dressing style (black sheet)	Conservatism	Sustaining Myth: The candidate belongs to the radical party and supports their thought, and appeals to the radical segment of society
Glasses and Pen	Wisdom	Good and Evil Myth: Highlighting the candidate’s knowledge

In figure No 18 despite the poster’s purple color, which is reminiscent of the Liberal Party, the candidate’s attire and veiling style are reminiscent of the Conservative Party. This reflects the candidate’s effort to be moderate. The slogan “A city for everyone” reinforces this situation. The use of a pen and notebook tries to express the wisdom of the candidate.

Figure 19

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Mozghan Sadat Hoseyni’s Election Poster

Attention to Branding Behind Faces [Poster]. (21 October 2016). Meysam.org. <https://meysam.org/branding-in-the-face-enchanting/>

Table 23

Description of the Figure No 19

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
White Hijab innocence	Purring	Good and Evil Myth: Show that the candidate has a pure character
Candidate's Hijab style	Modernity, Innovation	Moderation Myth: Indicates that the candidate is a moderate and liberal- minded person
Ancient Iranian motifs	Beauty and Tradition	Golden Age Myth: Reminding the country's traditional art and successful past and emphasizing its strength
Blue Colure	Trust, Peace	Good and Evil Myth: Show that the candidate has a peaceful & reliable character

In figure No 19 the flag image used in the background is indicative of nationalism, and the candidate's clothing style emphasizes her modernity; the colors she uses indicate her independence. The most interesting subject in the poster is the importance given to aesthetics. The Iranian motifs on the poster also depict old Iran and a yearning for a golden age.

Figure 20

An Example of a Female Candidate Poster



Note. Mozghan Sadat Hoseyni’s Election Poster

Attention to Branding Behind Faces [Poster]. (21 October 2016). Meysam.org. <https://meysam.org/branding-in-the-face-enchancing/>

Table 24

Description of the Figure No 20

Sign	Signifier	Signified
Flag	Homeland	Blood and Soil Myth: Nationalism, Being loyal and servant to the homeland, Support by the people of the homeland
Ancient Iranian motifs	Beauty and Tradition	Golden Age Myth: Reminding the country’s traditional art and successful past and emphasizing its strength
Talik calligraphed slogans	Art, Aesthetics, Brilliant Past	Golden Age Myth: Candidate cares and values the country’s ancient arts
Candidate’s Hijab style	Modernity, Innovation	Moderation Myth: Indicates that the candidate is a moderate and liberal-minded person

When looking at the figure No 20 it is interesting that the candidate first cares about aesthetics. Candidate body language tries to show that she is a modern character. Using black as the background color shows mysticism and power. Ancient Iranian motifs indicate a traditional view of her.

Despite the fact that scientific titles are highly valued in the ads, even women with these titles (due to the conditions, culture, and laws of the conservative society) place a high value on facial beauty. The variety in choice of clothes of the candidates shows that the woman wearing the black hijab didn't fit the profile of the ideal woman. The fact that ancient myths and images of ancient history are used by both of conservative and liberal candidates shows that the power and influence of ancient mystical beliefs persists today and this is a sign of the longing for the glamorous life of ancient times and the belief that the women of that period had power and value. The flag image, which is reminiscent of the constantly used "blood and soil" myth, emphasizes the being genderlessness of nationalism. At the same time, the fact that various races, sects, and tribes appear in all female candidates emphasizes that nationalism is genderless throughout the country despite all these differences. The fact that all parties use party images as their sustaining myths shows that gender equality is at the core of both radical and liberal parties in the country.

10. Conclusion

The most prominent indicator is flag that, which reminds of the blood and soil myth on the posters, shows that the candidates emphasized the issues of nationalism, freedom, and independence. Although the candidates belong to different races, sects, and provinces, the differences in race, language, and sect are not reflected on the posters. The heavily used ancient Iranian motifs and Talik calligraphy show that the candidates remember and care about the history of the society, its past, and the golden age of the region and the country. The titles of the candidates (Doctor, Engineer, Lawyer) and the use of images such as pens, notebooks, glasses (based on the myth of good and evil) show that society values education and knowledge. The similarity of the clothing styles of the candidates belonging to different parties, apart from the differences in only minor details, shows that tradition is prevailed over modernity in society. The use of religious motifs and

slogans on the posters of parties and the supporting religious figures in the background on the posters confirm the conclusion that religious heroism is still an influential subject in society. Differences in clothing color are indicative of modern and liberal ideas; the black color, especially the black hijab, is an indication of radical and religious thoughts. The excessive use of light, whiteness, and brilliance (reminding of the Ferrei Izadi, God's Shadow myth), emphasizes society's desire for divine approval. The fact that the candidates bring religious names to the forefront and use the hero or sustaining myth by implication indicates that the issue of religion and sect is purposefully embedded in society's moral consciousness. Flag images are used in almost all of the posters. Although the candidates use myth elements of other ideas from time to time, they generally use myth elements belonging to Persian mythology. Therefore, it is understood that in today's Iranian society, especially in the field of politics, old mystic belief and ancient mythology are so significant. Knowledge, wisdom, morality, and honesty are among the topics that candidates emphasize the most. Although many of the candidates have different opinions, all of them attach importance to the old Iranian history.

Disclosure

The article is exempt from the Ethics Committee Decision. There are no participants. The authors received no financial support from any institution and there's no conflict of interest. No material subject to copyright is included.

Beyan

Bu makale etik kurul kararından muaftır. Çalışmada katılımcı bulunmamaktadır. Çalışma için herhangi bir kurum veya projeden mali destek alınmamıştır. Çalışmada kişiler ve kurumlar arası çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır. Telif hakkına sebep olacak bir materyal kullanılmamıştır.

References

- Abdollahifard, P. (2020). Development of Feminism in Iran. *Journal of Iranian Studies*, 4(2), 351-384. <https://doi.org/10.33201/iranian.826495>
- Asrkhabar.com. (2017, May 17). *Various posters with visual effects of women candidates for city council*. <http://tinyurl.com/2vpjh4bd>
- Barthes, R. (1999). *Elements of Semiology*. (Mehmet Rifat & Sema Rifat, Trans. and Ed.). Kaf Publications. (Original work published at 1964).
- Bauer, N. M. (2020). Running local: Gender stereotyping and female candidates in local elections. *Urban Affairs Review*, 56, 123-96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087418770807>
- Beauregard, K. (2014). Gender, political participation and electoral systems: A cross-national analysis. *European Journal of Political Research*, 53, 617-634. DOI:10.1111/1475-6765.12047
- Bennett, W. L. (1980). Myth, ritual, and political control. *Journal of Communication*, 30(4), 166-179. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1980.tb02028.x>
- Bottici, C. (2007). *A Philosophy of Political Myth*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bottici, C., & Challand, B. (2006). Rethinking political myth: The clash of civilizations as a self-fulfilling prophecy. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9(3), 315-336. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431006065715>
- Bottici, C., & Challand, B. (2010). *The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203848845>
- Cobb, W. W. (1998). *The American foundation myth in Vietnam: Reigning paradigms and raining bombs*. University Press of America.
- Dana.ir. (2017, May 18). *On the city level, women's banners in very large sizes are installed in the squares*. <http://tinyurl.com/2xy2nrx4>
- Dehghan, A., & Nezakati, F. (2013). A Semiotic analysis of outdoor political posters in Iran's eighth parliamentary elections. *Sociological Review*, 20(1), 95-124. <https://doi.org/10.22059/jsr.2013.56210>
- Eliade, M. (1991). *The myth of the eternal return: or, cosmos and history*. Princeton University Press.

- Esmacili, S. (2021). The motives and obstacles in Iranian women's participation in political life of the country. *J. Pol. & L.*, 14, 87. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/jpl.v14n4p87>
- Farazmand, A. (1995). Religion and politics in contemporary Iran. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 3(3), 227-257. https://brill.com/view/journals/ijgr/3/3/article-p227_3.xml?language=en
- Gahar.ir. (2017, May 15). *Different posters of women candidates for city councils using visual effects*. <http://tinyurl.com/2uwtm77j>
- Gentile, E. (2006). *Politics as Religion*. (G. Staunton, Trans). Princeton University Press. (Original work published at 2006).
- Hinnells, J. R. (1973). *Persian Mythology*. Hamlyn.
- Homaykhabar.ir. (2017, May 16). *Election posters*. <http://tinyurl.com/sdmnx23m>
- Jacobsen, C. G. (1993). Myths, politics and the not-so-new world order. *Journal of Peace Research*, 30(3), 241-250. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/424804>
- Johnson-Cartee, K. S., & Copeland, G. A. (1997). *The manipulation of the American voter: Political campaign commercials*. Praeger.
- Kenworthy, L., & Malami, M. (1999). Gender inequality in political representation: A worldwide comparative analysis. *Social Forces*, 78, 235-268. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3005796>
- Kıbrıs, G. (2019). Political myths as tools for nationalist propaganda. *Journal of Abant Cultural Studies*, 4(7), 1-15. <https://dergipark.org.tr/download/article-file/706126>
- Levis-Strauss, C. (1978). *Myth and meaning: Cracking the code of culture*. University of Toronto Press.
- Malinowski, B. (2013). *Myth in primitive psychology*. (H. Portakal, Trans). Oteki Publications. (Original work published at 1926).
- McClurg, S. D. (2003). Social networks and political participation: The role of social interaction in explaining political participation. *Political Research Quarterly*, 56, 449-464. <https://doi.org/10.1177/106591290305600407>

- Medium.com. (2016, March 15). Mp elect Somayye Mahmoodi. <http://tinyurl.com/48ckm84a>
- Meysam.org. (2016 October 21). *Attention to branding behind faces*. <https://meysam.org/branding-in-the-face-enchanting/>
- Mobarakehna.ir. (2016, February 19). *The first news debate of the candidates for the Islamic council elections*. <http://tinyurl.com/yf6sfb9w>
- Mullins, W. A. (1972). On the concept of ideology in political science. *American Political Science Review*, 66(2), 498-510. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1957794>
- Nimmo, D., & Combs, J. (1980). *Subliminal politics: Myth and mythmakers in America*. Englewood Cliffs. Prentice-Hall.
- Nody.ir. (2021, October 20). *Names of candidates for the Islamic council elections*. <http://tinyurl.com/4w5rk2tz>
- Ram, H., & Friedman, G. S. (1996). The political significance of myth: The case of Iran and Kenya in a comparative perspective. *Cultural Dynamics*, 8(1), 51-78. <https://doi.org/10.1177/092137409600800104>
- Renan, E. (1882). *What is A Nation?* http://ucparis.fr/fâiles/9313/6549/9943/What_is_a_Nation.pdf
- Schöpflin, G. (2000). *Nations, Identity, Power, the New Politics of Europe*. Hurst.
- Sid.ir. (2017, July 12). *Several posters featuring graphical effects of female city council candidates*. https://www.sid.ir/fa/VEWSSID/J_pdf/4015313975303.pdf
- Smith, A. D. (1986). *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Blackwell.
- Tudor, H. (1972). *The Political Myth: Key Concepts in Political Science*. London: Red Globe Press, Praeger Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-01048-6>
- Wang, Z., & Sun, L. (2017). Social class and voter turnout in China. *Political Research Quarterly*, 70, 243-256. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912916688109>
- Welch, D. (2005). *Propaganda and the German cinema*. (H. Afshar, Trans). Markaz Publication. (Original work published at 1983).