

**Embodied Ideology: An Inquiry Into Normative Representations of Female Resisters of the
Mojahedin-e Khalq Iran/People's *Mojahedin* Organization of Iran**

Sara Hassani

Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In fulfillment of the requirements
for the Masters in Political Science with a specialization in Political Thought

École d'études politiques, Faculté des sciences sociales
School of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences
Université d'Ottawa/ University of Ottawa

© Sara Hassani, Ottawa, Canada 2013

Abstract:

This thesis analyzes representations of female resisters of the *Mojahedin-e Khalq* or People's *Mojahedin* Organization of Iran within contemporary schools of academia and western/Iranian medias. Theoretically informed by critical discourse analysis and feminist thought this project identifies common stereotypes attributed to women involved in proscribed violence. Furthermore, this dissertation tests for the presence of normative and 'gendered' portrayals of female resisters in popular discourse, evaluates their sufficiency, and presents a more accurate portrait based on interviews and a close analysis of the organization's history and policies. In other words, it critically examines how female resisters of the MEK/PMOI are captured by the common portrait and through the study of experiential authorship and interviews demonstrates the need to re-evaluate the narratives used to misrepresent an organization and its members who have radicalized notions of gender equality and its relationship to revolution and democratization.

Keywords: *Mojahedin-e Khalq Iran*, People's *Mojahedin* Organization of Iran, resistance, Iran, critical discourse analysis, narratives, ideology, feminist thought

Résumé:

Cette thèse analyse les représentations des femmes dans la résistance des Moudjahiddines-e khalq ou l'Organisation des moudjahiddines du peuple iranien dans les écoles contemporaines du monde universitaire et des médias occidentaux / iranienne. Théoriquement informé par l'analyse critique du discours et par la pensée féministe, ce projet identifie les stéréotypes courants attribués aux femmes impliqués dans la violence proscrire. En outre, cette thèse cherche la présence de représentations normatives et «genrées» des femmes dans la résistance de la MEK/OMPI dans le discours populaire, évalue leur suffisance, et présente un portrait plus précis basé sur des entrevues et une analyse approfondie de l'histoire et des politiques de l'organisation. En d'autres termes, il examine de manière critique comment les femmes dans la résistance de la MEK / OMPI sont capturés par le portrait commun et à travers l'étude des textes rédigés à la première personne par ceux qui ont vécu les expériences et des entrevues démontre la nécessité de réévaluer les récits utilisés pour représenter faussement une organisation et ses membres qui ont radicalisés les notions de l'égalité des sexes et sa relation à la révolution et à la démocratisation.

Mots-clés: Moudjahiddines-e khalq iraniens, Organisation des moudjahidine du peuple d'iran, résistance, iran, analyse critique du discours, récits, idéologie, pensée féministe

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>I</i>
0.1 Introduction	1
0.2. Research Question	4
0.3. Historical Context	5
0.3.1. The Iranian Revolutionary Period.....	5
0.3.2. The MEK/PMOI 1965-1989	8
0.4. Literature Review.....	12
0.4.1. Why Women? The Importance of Gender as an Analytical Category in the Study of Social Movements	13
0.4.2. Discourses Surrounding Women’s Involvement In Armed Resistance and Violence .	15
0.4.3. The Historical Lens: Academic Narratives and the MEK/PMOI	18
0.5. Theoretical Framework: CDA and the Critical Feminist Lens.....	20
0.6. Mixed Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Discourse Analysis.....	24
0.5.1. How do the MEK/PMOI approach about gender?	26
0.7. Chapter Outlines	28
 <i>Chapter 1 – The Ideology Behind Narrative</i>	 <i>30</i>
1.1. Caricatures of Their Selves.....	32
1.1.2. Casting Her Person	33
1.1.2.1. Women as Mothers	33
1.1.2.2. Women as Monsters.....	34
1.1.2.3. Women as Whores	35
1.1.2.4. Women as Heretics	36
1.1.3. Casting Her-Story	37
1.1.3.1. Women as Patriarchal Appendages	37
1.1.3.2. Women as Oppressed Veiled Muslims.....	38
1.1.3.3. Women as Victims of Indoctrination.....	39
1.1.4. Casting Her Role	39
1.1.4.1. Women as Figureheads.....	39
1.1.4.2. Women as Subservient	40
1.1.4.3. Women as False Idols.....	40
 <i>Chapter 2- The Common Portrait</i>	 <i>42</i>
2.1. Academic Literature: Abrahamian & Cohen	42
2.1.2. Casting Her Person	43
2.1.3. Casting Her Story.....	45
2.1.4. Casting Her Role.....	53
2.2. Western & Iranian Media:	56
2.2.1. Notable Cases: NYT Magazine & FARS News Expose	56
2.2.2. Figures & Findings	63
	iii

2.2.2.1. Coding for Person	64
2.2.2.2. Coding for Story	69
2.2.2.3. Coding for Role	73
2.2.3. Meta Findings	76
<i>Chapter 3 – My Resistance is Symptomatic of My Enemy’s Monstrosity</i>	78
3.1. (Auto)Biographical Portraits of Political Prisoners: Resilience and Courage	78
3.2. Female Resistors: Leaders of a Revolution	84
<i>Chapter 4 – Re-Writing the Script: The Personal is Not Pathological</i>	91
4.1. Adopting A Life Of Resistance: Recounting Motivations.....	93
4.1.1. Poverty and Class Divisions	94
4.1.2. Political Freedoms, Nationalism and Democracy.....	96
4.1.3. Women’s and Minority Rights	100
4.1.4. Catalysts: Joining the Ranks of the <i>Mojahedin</i>	103
4.2. Gender Equality: The <i>Enghelabeh Ideologique</i> examined	105
4.2.1. Gender Equality Defined	106
4.2.2. Misogyny and Patriarchy as Antithetical to Resistance.....	109
4.2.3. From Theory to Practice On and Off the Battlefields.....	112
4.2.4. Women’s Hegemony and the Iranian Resistance	116
<i>Chapter 5 - Conclusion</i>	119
5.1. The Side Effects of Prescription: Grappling With Disjointed Narratives in Academia	120
5.2. A Familiar Spin: The Analytic Importance of Gender as Seen Through Media	122
5.3. The Rhetorical Function of Narratives	125
5.4. Shifting the Focus: People, Not Characters; Politics, Not Personalities.....	132
<i>Appendices</i>	134
6.1. Search Words and Content Restrictions for Coding Articles	134
6.2. Coding Dictionary	136
6.3. Coding Spreadsheet	138
6.4. Interview Guide	144
<i>Bibliography</i>	147
7.1. Bibliographic References.....	147
7.2. Works Cited in Coding Analysis	150

Le combat pour renverser la dictature religieuse et instaurer la démocratie, qui est un problème immédiat de l'Iran, nous a fait comprendre la nécessité de l'émancipation des femmes et de l'égalité. C'est pour nous une garantie de victoire dans cette lutte pour la liberté et la prospérité dans l'Iran de demain. La paix, le développement et la démocratie ne sont réalisables qu'à la condition de l'émancipation des femmes, de l'égalité des sexes et du rôle dirigeant des femmes.

The struggle to overthrow religious dictatorship and establish democracy, which is an immediate problem in Iran, made us realize the necessity of women's empowerment and equality. It is for us a guarantee of victory in the struggle for freedom and prosperity in the future of Iran. Peace, development and democracy are feasible only through the emancipation of women, gender equality and women's leadership.

~Maryam Rajavi, Former Secretary General of the PMOI, 2013 [*author's translation*]

The protesters pushed back, rushing the militia in teams of hundreds: At least three Basijis were pitched from their motorcycles, which were then set on fire. The protesters included many women, some of whom berated as “cowards” men who fled the Basijis.

~ R.Worth, S.Otterman, A.Cowell; The NYT; 2009

Some may ask why I'm bringing this up now, at a time when the region has risen up, fueled not by the usual hatred of America and Israel but by a common demand for freedom. After all, shouldn't everyone get basic rights first, before women demand special treatment? And what does gender, or for that matter, sex, have to do with the Arab Spring? But I'm not talking about sex hidden away in dark corners and closed bedrooms. An entire political and economic system -- one that treats half of humanity like animals -- must be destroyed along with the other more obvious tyrannies choking off the region from its future. Until the rage shifts from the oppressors in our presidential palaces to the oppressors on our streets and in our homes, our revolution has not even begun.

~Mona Eltahawy, Foreign Policy, 2012

0.1. Introduction

On June 22nd 2013, I attended a convention for democratic change in Iran titled “Onward to Freedom” jointly hosted by the *Mojahedin-e Khalq Iran* (MEK) and the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) organizations in Villepinte, France where over one hundred thousand people were in attendance. A plethora of international delegates and well-known speakers came together espousing support for the movement’s opposition to Tehran, female leadership, and goal of democratic revolution.

Nearly one hundred well know international political delegates attended. Over a dozen current or former politicians from the United States including: (1) Patrick Kennedy (former U.S. Congressional Representative), Congressman Ted Poe (Texas R.), Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (Texas D.), Congressman William Lacy Clay (Missouri D.), Newt Gingrich (former

Republican Speaker), Rudy Giuliani (former NYC mayor), Ambassador John Bolton (25th United States Ambassador to the United Nations), Louis Freeh (5th director of the FBI), Governors Tom Ridge (Pennsylvania), Ed Rendell (Pennsylvania) and Bill Richardson (New Mexico), and Frances Townsend (Bush administration homeland security advisor) were in attendance.

Similarly, a dozen Canadian politicians and activists were also present, including: MP Russ Hiebert (British Columbia), MP Terrence Young (Ontario), MP Lawrence MacAuley (Prince Edward Island), MP Scott Simms (Newfoundland), MP Judy Sgro (Ontario), MP Marc Gagneau (Quebec), the Honourable David Kilgour (former Alberta MP of 27 years), the Honourable Raymonde Falco (former MP Quebec), David Matas (refugee, immigration and human rights lawyer) and Monique Auguste (President of Women Against Fundamentalism and for Equality Canada).

Moreover, a wide variety of representatives from all over Europe, Asia, and South America attended, including: Dr. Alejo Vidal-Quadras (VP European Parliament), Emma Bonino (Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs), Geir Haarde (former Prime Minister of Iceland), Jean-Pierre Michel (Senate of France), José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (former Prime Minister of Spain), Ingrid Betancourt Pulecio (former Colombian Senator and renowned activist), Michele Alliot-Marie (former French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs), MP David Amess (Britain), Rita Süßmuth (former President of the German Bundestag), MP James Bannon (Ireland), Sid Ahmed Ghazali (former member of the Algerian National Liberation Front party), and Najat Boudkhal (member of the Palestinian Legislative Council).

In addition to the surprising presence of key international representatives- many of whom had never before allied on the world stage- the convention also showcased a keynote address delivered by the NCRI's President-Elect Maryam Rajavi who took to the stage following an *homage* to several symbolic monuments that had been erected in memory of fallen resisters. Prior to – as well as throughout – the convention's orchestration, female resisters were highly present managing various aspects of the hall's security, guests, speakers, and the day's agenda. Acting as ambassadors, a number of competent women and men demonstrated great skill and ability in hosting some of the world's biggest politicians.

In a show of solidarity rarely witnessed in global politics, delegates overcame party lines in order to address the pressing issues facing Iranian resisters and their struggle for democracy. Their shared message was simple: The international community must demonstrate valiant efforts

to safeguard the rights of resisters located in Camp Liberty¹, Iraq on the basis that these resisters and their coalition movement represent a legitimate opposition to Iran's ruling clerical governance.

In the sea-like crowd I observed participants from all over the world, Iranians and non-Iranians alike. Seated immediately behind me were supporters of the Kurdish struggle for autonomy and behind them thousands of women and men- young and old- who enthusiastically called for the regime's overthrow. Also in attendance were young Syrian opposition activists and members of the Palestinian, Jordanian, Algerian, Afghan, and Iraqi communities who took the opportunity to display a world social forum-like unity. All in all, the event – which lasted upwards of eight hours – demonstrated a global solidarity movement echoing resisters' calls for democracy and human rights in Iran.

In recent years we have witnessed similar transformations wherein disparate political sentiments and seemingly incoherent grievances have turned into revolutionary mobilizations the world over. As a result, popular uprisings and social movements are more pertinent to the study of power and politics than ever before. The activation of autonomous political cells into coherent social organisms has steadily risen due to a countless number of factors, among them; technological advancements that allow for the live transmission and networking of information across neighborhoods and borders. Across the Middle East and Maghreb in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Iran authoritarian systems of governance have been overthrown and/or severely challenged by impositions of popular will. Increased opportunities for communication have resulted in willful opposition saturating channels previously reserved for the powerful few.

These voices of dissent- among them scores of women- have changed the face of politics in a measurable way. As such, it is increasingly evident that understanding our evolving political landscape requires us to understand social movements and their strategies for change. This thesis is based on two additional contentions as well. First, that understanding resistance movements is particularly important in this historical moment. And second, that examining the role that gender and women play in social and resistant movements is a crucial, but (as I will demonstrate in my literature review) largely under-explored area of scholarly study.

The history and organizational makeup of the MEK/PMOI offers an excellent case study

¹ MEK/PMOI members formally resided in Camp Ashraf, Iraq. Following the American withdrawal they were relocated to Camp Liberty (formerly an American base).

to examine these questions. The MEK/PMOI was founded in 1965 in opposition to the Shah, and would go on to oppose the newly instated theocratic regime headed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Sayyed Ruholla Khomeini following the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Today, the MEK/PMOI are the largest organized opposition to the government in Tehran with some 10,000 members – many of whom are women – abroad.

Unique in their treatment of female membership and participation, the MEK/PMOI present a compelling case of Middle Eastern resistance insofar as they understand the struggle against patriarchy to be synonymous with their struggle against theocratic and authoritarian rule. Armed with female leadership across the board, the MEK/PMOI – formerly a male-led organization – made the strategic decision in 1985 to address an increase in women's participation with a revolution in ideology colloquially referred to as the '*Enghelabeh Ideologique*'.

This period ushered in a new conceptualization of what it meant to resist within the MEK/PMOI and signaled the implementation of formal protocol that sought to undo pre-existing gender hierarchies within the movement. All occupied positions were placed under review and the leaders of the organization and its army would officially abdicate their roles to the women of the movement.

At present, the MEK/PMOI remain a female-run organization and resistance movement currently under the leadership of their Secretary General Zohreh Akhyani, elected in September of 2011 to a two-year term. This is also true of the organization's political affiliate the NCRI, who in 1993 elected a provisional government and Maryam Rajavi as their president-elect. Insofar as women are portrayed as victims and not perpetrators of violence, this example challenges common perceptions of what it means to resist as a woman on both a discursive and practical level. It is for this reason that I have chosen to study the changes adopted by the MEK/PMOI during the *Enghelabeh Ideologique*.

0.2. Research Question

This project seeks to analyze the politics of gender in this organization and its implications for our understanding of the roles that women play in resistance movements generally and the MEK/PMOI specifically. Concretely, this project seeks to answer the following questions: (1) Do existing academic and popular representations of the gender politics in the MEK/PMOI accurately represent the state of gender relations in this organization? (2) And

if not, what does the case of the MEK/PMOI tell us about how we should theorize/conceptualize gender and resistance movements?

0.3. Historical Context

In order to best grasp the primary object of this dissertation, we must first examine the historical context that gave rise to the *Mojahedin-e Khalq* organization as well as the movement's formative goals and ideology. In this section, I briefly investigate the political climate of Iran's revolutionary period including: the issues that led to the Shah's ousting, the role of the clergy and the opposition, as well as the repressive mandate spearheaded by the Islamic Republic's first Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini. Later, I situate the MEK/PMOI's struggle examining their formation and history leading up to the *Enghelabeh Ideologique*.

0.3.1. The Iranian Revolutionary Period

Born out of a widespread dissatisfaction with the policies of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, inheritor of the Pahlavi Dynasty (following his father's forceful removal from office during the 1941 Anglo-Soviet Allied Invasion of Iran), the late 70's in Iran saw massive upheavals wherein protestors took to demonstrations, civil resistance, and paralyzing strikes eventually ousting the monarch on January 16th 1979.

In the eyes of most Iranians, the Shah – an ally to western powers – had a cumbersome past. Most notably, in 1953 the British MI6 and American CIA aided the Shah's regime in the staging of a military coup ousting the people's first democratically elected Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossadegh. The PM was placed under permanent house arrest and citizen's protests were brutally suppressed forming hostility between the people and the nation's leadership.

Officially, Mossadegh had been the first Prime Minister to “publicly criticize the shah for violating the constitution, accuse[d] the court of standing in the way of the national struggle and [had dared to] take the constitutional issue directly to the country” (Abrahamian 1982, 271). What is more, as a result of his overthrow, the Shah's regime went unchallenged and “could now rule without an organized opposition”(ibid, 280). Aware of the growing hostility of the middle class, the Shah sought the quiet appeasement of Iran's peasantry and in 1963 launched a series of social and economic reforms known as the White (or bloodless) Revolution.

The monarch's reforms – which also sought to further ‘westernize’ Iran – tried to establish a base of political support amongst Iran's agricultural class by abolishing feudalism and

selling government-bought lands to peasant families formerly enslaved by their landlords. What is more, water and forestry were nationalized while significant changes were also made extending women the right to vote and guaranteeing social programs that would feed infants and their mothers.

In the years that followed, the *ancien régime* reached a problematic crossroads wherein:

the Shah modernized on the socioeconomic level and thus expanded the ranks of the modern middle class and the industrial working class, but failed to modernize on another level- the political level... this failure inevitably strained the links between the government and the social structure, blocked the channels of communication between the political system and the general population, widened the gap between the ruling circles and the new social forces, and, most serious of all, cut down the few bridges that had in the past connected the political establishment with the traditional social forces, especially with the bazaars and the religious authorities (ibid, 427).

The growing gap between socioeconomic modernization and the political system meant that come time for economic crisis, the whole system was threatened. What is more, popular backlashes against the Shah's western favored policies garnered greater support for conservative elements that favored Iranian interests and 'Iranian values'.

The opposition reached its critical peak following a series of horrific events that incited outrage among dissidents. Most notably, on September 8th 1978² – the day following the Shah's enactment of martial law banning demonstrations (commonly known as Black Friday) – nearly one hundred people were left dead after the Shah's forces violently squelched public demonstrations³. As Abrahamian notes "this had been the first time since 1963 that martial law had been imposed on Tehran" (ibid, 515). This event shattered the disgruntled population's hopes for compromise. The popular revolution soon drew millions to the streets and fastened citizens' resolve to remove the monarch from power.

The Shah left Iran on January 16th of the following year and appointed Prime Minister Dr. Shapour Bakhtiyar to lead the Parliament. In due course, Bakhtiyar did away with the monarchy's intelligence service, allowed for free demonstrations, promised elections, welcomed the return of exiled figures (namely Ayatollah Khomeini), and freed political prisoners (among them key figures of the *Mojahedin-e Khalq* Organization). This period marked the beginnings of revolutionary turmoil, instability, and the governance of regional ad hoc *Komitehs*:

² 17 Shahrivar, 1357 on the Iranian calendar.

³ Protests took place in Tehran's *Jaleh* Square while further clashes with government officials took place in other parts of the capital.

As the state disintegrated power passed into the hands of local ad hoc organizations known as *Komitehs* (Committees). Many of the *Komitehs*, especially in the Shi'i Persian-speaking central provinces, were headed by local clergymen who followed Khomeini (ibid, 526).

Despite the more complex *Komiteh* formations in outer provinces, Khomeini's concerted efforts resulted in a number of changes: (1) PM Bakhtiyar was forced to resign, (2) Bazargan was assigned "the task of forming a provisional government", (3) a central push was made to "coordinate the many local *Komitehs* and to dissolve unreliable ones", and (4) most importantly, "a secret Revolutionary Council" was appointed (ibid, 527-528). Amid the turmoil, various political factions- unified in their opposition to the Shah, yet diverse in their ideological visions for Iran's future- espoused support for the populist leader Ayatollah Khomeini whose movement had gained momentum following his return to Iran. This support, however, was short-lived.

Upon learning of the coercive tactics used by the cleric to obtain power, a boycott was placed on Ayatollah Khomeini's referendum by many groups including the MEK/PMOI. Arguably, this meant that its results were unrepresentative; however, on March 30th 1979 the public agreed to an Islamic Republic whose constitution was ratified in December of the same year. Despite the changes, many viewed Khomeini's swift consolidation of power as arbitrary, and his attempts to control political dissent, criminal. In a speech delivered at Tehran's *Amjadieh* Soccer Stadium on June 12th 1980, Massoud Rajavi (then Secretary General of the *Mojahedin-e Khalq*) denounced Khomeini's policies of repression in front of tens of thousands and asked that they "defend freedoms... freedom of speech, association, and gatherings" (Rajavi, 1980).

For much of the public the struggle to instate democracy had been hoodwinked. Dissidents and ordinary citizens were subjected to unforeseen measures of public oppression as well as an entirely new system of governance based on Khomeini's writings in "Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist"; this new government would be headed by Iran's Supreme Leader and none other than Ayatollah Khomeini himself. The political divisions had never been deeper. While the oppositions called for secular democracy and the rule of secular law, Khomeini's theocratic state of clerical supremacy answered with the following words: "Those intellectuals who say that the clergy should leave politics and go back to the mosque speak on behalf of Satan" (Khomeini in Abrahamian 1982, 530).

Ostensibly, the revolution had not resulted in the modernization of the political system; but rather, its monopolization in the hands of fundamentalist clerics with very narrow interpretations of religious scripture. In the short years that followed, Khomeini's government

would undo many of the social reforms implemented by the Shah as well as regress Iran's political system to one predicated on the knowledge of the *Uluma*, scholars studying religious legal traditions dating back to 7th century Islam.

0.3.2. The MEK/PMOI 1965-1989

Formed in 1965 by graduates of Tehran University, the organization's three founders Mohammad Hanifnejad, Said Mohsen, and Ali Asghar Badizadegan had been inspired by the recent revolutions in Cuba, Algeria, and Vietnam and were motivated by a strong sense of nationalism and desire for democratic revolution. Inclined towards progressive Islamic thought and thinkers like Mahmoud Taleqhani, the founders sought to reconcile their respect for religion and religious practice with the belief that "the ulama should not govern" (Abrahamian 1989, 83). According to the NCRI, the MEK/PMOI's founders "had been politically active in the nationalist movement for democracy since the Mossadeq era and later became members of Mehdi Bazargan's Freedom Movement", an outlawed and religiously progressive movement comprised of theologians and scholars currently led by Ebrahim Yazdi (NCRI Foreign Affairs Committee 1993, 77).

In later years, the graduates brought together trusted friends from their time at University and military service to form the nucleus of an unnamed discussion group wherein ideological matters were discussed at length; this group would later form the *Mojahedin* (Abrahamian 1989, 88). Following three years of dedicated scholarship; the group organized a Central Committee to conceive of revolutionary strategy as well as an Ideological Team tasked with rendering theoretical handbooks (ibid, 89). The Central Committee then expanded to include: "Mahmud, Asgarizadeh, Abdol-Rasul Meshkinfam, Ali Mihandust, Ahmad Rezai, Naser Sadeq, Ali Bakeri, Mohammad Bazargani, Bahman Bazargani, and Masud Rajavi" (ibid).

Perceiving a real threat to the stability of the Monarchy, the Shah's SAVAK forces soon arrested all of the *Mojahedin* leaders as well as many of its Central Committee members. At the outset of the trials, the state's authorities had yet to discover that they were dealing with an altogether new organization; rather, they assumed they were dealing with "the 'armed wing' of the Liberation Movement. However, by May of 1972, all three *Mojahedin* founders as well as two of its Central Committee members had been executed (NCRI FAC 1993, 78). Although this event did not manage to permanently stifle the organization, it had far reaching consequences.

According to the NCRI, an internal coup was attempted by a number of individuals who sought to consolidate power and disrupt the organization's structural apparatus. This resulted in "the murders of several of the remaining leading members" and led to the temporary dissolution of the *Mojahedin* (ibid). With the remaining *Mojahedin* leaders still behind bars, a power vacuum allotted Khomeini the opportunity to exploit calls for leadership from his exile abroad (ibid, 79).

Following an international campaign led by his brother (Professor Kazem Rajavi, Amnesty International, the International Committee of the Red Cross, François Mitterand and others) the Shah spared the execution of central committee member Massoud Rajavi during his torturous imprisonment. His release, and the release of other leading *Mojahedin* members came "one week after the shah fled and 12 days before Khomeini returned to Iran on January 21st 1979" coinciding with the popular anti-shah, anti-imperialist struggle (ibid, 80). While in prison, Massoud Rajavi had taken up leadership of the *Mojahedin* and upon his release the movement was able to reorganize so as to once again play a pivotal role in the political arena. The resistance had been revived, however due to their unwillingness to unconditionally endorse Khomeini and refer to the "anti-monarchic revolution [as] an "Islamic revolution,"" they faced limited support (ibid); that is, until the new government began their offensive attacking the *Mojahedin's* offices and assaulting its members (ibid, 83).

Come time for the presidential elections, Massoud Rajavi was presented as a leading candidate. Astoundingly his run was supported by both affiliated organizations and unaffiliated organizations alike:

Rajavi's candidacy was not only endorsed by the Mojahedin-affiliated organizations...but also by an impressive array of independent organizations including the Feda'iyān, the National Democratic Front, the Kurdish Democratic Party, the Kurdish Toilers Revolutionary Party (Komula), the Society of Iranian Socialists, the Society for the Cultural and Political Rights of the Turkomans, the Society of Young Assyrians, and the Joint Group of Armenian, Zoroastrian, and Jewish Minorities (Abrahamian 1989, 198).

As Abrahamian contends, "The Mojahedin had become the vanguard of the secular opposition to the Islamic Republic" (ibid). Once more, Khomeini's new government took the threat of an opposition very seriously. Declaring a fatwa on the basis that Massoud Rajavi and other *Mojahedin* members had not voted in favor of the *Wilayat-e Faquih* (the MEK/PMOI had boycotted the referendum and denied the Islamic constitution), Khomeini declared that Rajavi – and subsequently all *Mojahedin* member-candidates – were barred from the elections. Votes that

had already been placed in favor of *Mojahedin* candidates were disregarded and the official results tampered to reflect the fatwa.

Continuing their political struggle in face of widespread election fraud and the suspension of their civil rights, Massoud Rajavi (a former student of political science at the Law college of Tehran University) delivered a speech on January 10th at his alma mater outlining the *Mojahedin*'s platform concerning the proper outcomes of the revolution:

No progress and mobilization for the revolution would be conceivable without guaranteeing freedom for all parties, opinions and writings. If by freedom we specifically have in mind free and just relationships domestically, independence speaks to the same meaning in our foreign and international relations. We do not accept anything less in the name of Islam (Rajavi, 1980).

Unfortunately, on account of the widespread support garnered from this and other speeches, the *Mojahedin* were subjected to increasingly harsh persecution by the Islamic government. On June 20th 1981, "Khomeini's Revolutionary Guards opened fire on the peaceful demonstrations, killing or wounding hundreds. Thousands of demonstrators were arrested and hundreds summarily executed that same night" (NCRI FAC 1993, 84). This event marked the beginnings of a hostile period characterized by the cleric's rampant persecution, arrest, torture, and execution of political dissidents. What is more, it forced the Iranian *Mojahedin* resistance movement as well as the then newly formed National Council of Resistance of Iran into exile. The MEK/PMOI relocated to Camp Ashraf, Iraq where their base remained until very recently⁴.

The organization strongly estimates that upwards of 100,000 MEK/PMOI members have lost their lives in their struggle against the theocracy; many of who were imprisoned in the years of political turmoil and later killed during the five-month state-sponsored mass executions of political prisoners ordered by Ayatollah Khomeini on July 19th 1988. At the outset of the purge – discussed in Abrahamian's book "Tortured Confessions" – Khomeini issued a decree targeting political opponents and specifically members of the *Mojahedin*:

Thus began an act of violence unprecedented in Iranian history- unprecedented in form, content, and intensity. It even outdid the 1979 reign of terror. The curtain of secrecy, however, was so effective that no Western journalist heard of it and no Western academic discussed it. They still have not. Just before the executions- we do not know exactly when- Khomeini had issued a secrete but extraordinary order- some suspect a formal fatwa, or religious decree- setting up Special Commissions with instructions to execute Mojaheds as moharebs (those who war against God) and leftists as *mortads* (apostates from Islam) (Abrahamian 1999, 210).

⁴ The MEK/PMOI moved to Camp Liberty, Iraq following the December 2011 U.S. withdrawal from Iraq.

Despite the fact that the intentions of the operation remain puzzling to some scholars, the results are quite striking. A discrete political genocide saw the execution of thousands of political prisoners who had not been formally charged with crimes against the state; but rather, were convicted on the basis that they did not live up to the religious requirements set out by the Islamic Republic:

The Tehran commission began with the Mojahedin and their repenters. It prefaced proceedings by assuring them that this was not a trial but a process for initiating a general amnesty and separating the Muslims from the non-Muslims. It then asked their organizational affiliation. If they replied “Mojahedin,” the questioning ended there. If they replied “monafeqin”(hypocrites), the commission continued with such questions as “Are you willing to denounce former colleagues?”(ibid).

It has been documented by survivors that those who provided ‘acceptable’ answers were shown a door to the right; whereas, those who answered otherwise were immediately separated, blindfolded, and led to their executions.

Once more, women were treated with more severity. Occupying a unique intersection at the crossroads of political and gendered oppression, “Mojahedin women were promptly hanged as “armed enemies of God,” whereas “leftist women- even those raised as practicing Muslims- were given another “opportunity” to reconsider their “apostasy” (ibid, 214). According to the ethical barometer of the state, female resisters affiliated with the *Mojahedin* were deemed permanently ‘unsalvageable’ and their leftist compatriots ‘susceptible to forceful subservience’, beaten for missed prayers and left with only one alternative; suicide. As Abrahamian observes, “In the eyes of the magistrates, women were not fully responsible for their actions, and disobedient women- including apostates- could be given discretionary punishments to mend their ways and obey their male superiors”(ibid, 215). The government’s message was clear: mend, conform, and submit or be sent to the gallows.

Today, while mass graves are still being uncovered and unmarked burial grounds continue to serve as unofficial monuments for resisters and their grieving families, what transpired during the 1988 massacres cannot be fully fathomed, let alone historicized. However, this reality burdens the international community with a responsibility, the least of which is to study the role resistance and resisters play in Iran’s current political landscape.

Notably, the 1988 massacres overlapped with the later transitional years of the MEK/PMOI’s passage to female leadership. What is more, it followed the end of an eight-year war with Iraq and came at a time when female MEK/PMOI resisters had become trained

combatants and readied participants in the NLA⁵'s armed struggle. Arguably, the regime's decision to swiftly and uncompromisingly execute female *Mojaheds* is indicative of the threat they posed to the sovereign threshold and Khomeini's balance of power.

Presently, Iran's leaders continue to deal with the aftermath and instability caused by the 2009 student uprisings that saw its activists' goals and principles echoed and manifested in the 2011 Arab Spring. The Iranian show trials that ensued left the already disillusioned public increasingly frustrated with the state of their social and political rights and saw many more young dissidents imprisoned, tortured, and executed for their involvement in civil disobedience.

Arguably, the radical gender-progressive mandate adopted by the *Mojahedin* in the mid-80's (at a time when female-leadership in armed struggle was still inconceivable) asks us to examine the resistance in light of their gender politics, ideology, and practice. Furthermore, given the turbulence of Iran's neighboring context (Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan) and, most importantly, the public track record of dissatisfaction with the current regime; resisters and resistance movements can be understood as key global actors.

Thus, it is conceivable that the organized resistance espoused by the MEK/PMOI poses a very potent and destabilizing threat to the future of Iran's clerical supremacy rendering it imperative that we question their role in politics. As such, this project aims to decipher the specific role gendered representations of female resisters play in the formation and perpetuation of discourse and its effects on the consolidation of political power.

0.4. Literature Review

Before discussing the specific methodological choices that structure this study, it is important that we first engage the existing literature more broadly concerned with my research question. In light of this task, I have divided prominent texts into 3 thematic sections. First, I will examine literature dedicated to the study of gender as an analytical category in the study of social movements. Second, I will present a summary of the findings observed by theorists studying women's involvement in violence and armed resistance. Third, I will examine the available literature concerned with historical narratives of MEK/PMOI and their treatment of gender.

⁵ The NLA is short for the National Liberation Army of Iran, the now dissolved military component of the MEK/PMOI's resistance movement.

This literature review will demonstrate that while a few studies do address the broader topics listed above, there exists a sizeable gap in the literature as it pertains to the role of women in the MEK/PMOI. More specifically, this literature review will demonstrate the unique nature of my research question and project.

0.4.1 Why Women? The Importance of Gender as an Analytical Category in the Study of Social Movements

Over the last thirty years it has been increasingly accepted that gender is an important analytical category in the fields and study of political theory and sociology. The seminal text expounding this method is widely regarded as Professor Bahati Kuumba's book "*Gender and Social Movements*," wherein the author examines the symbiotic relation between the nuances of gender and its implications for social movements. Writing from a critical sociological perspective, Kuumba defines the formation processes of social movements, examines their implications for the reproduction and transformation of "gender inequalities, structures, and belief systems" as well as highlights through the use of specific case studies "sociohistorical and structural contexts" under which various social movements have arisen (Kuumba 2011, 2). Moreover, she investigates their respective paradigms of emergence and their organizational strategies.

Her research rests on the fundamental assumption "that gender is a basic organizing principle in human society and that gender roles, relations, and inequalities impact social processes in complex ways"(ibid). Her work follows the theoretical frameworks of feminist scholarship and addresses the need for other scholars to look to the role of gender when studying social movements. Incorporating the author's framework as part of my methodology, I adopt Kuumba's approach in my study of the MEK/PMOI, conducting my research through a gender lens.

Kuumba also advocates a uniquely feminist approach through her application of standpoint theory at the micro-level, substantiating her analysis with the contributions of women in social movements. In so doing, Kuumba reaffirms the demand for women's voices in academic research whether through autobiographies, published works, or interviews. Here, I find myself wholeheartedly agreeing with Kuumba's approach. The lack of scholarship on the effects of gender in social movements aside, there exists an even more prominent gap as it pertains to women's voices in the study of resistance movements. As such, extrapolating from Kuumba's

application of standpoint epistemology, I will be incorporating interviews with MEK/PMOI members into my methodology.

Holding that the general invisibility of women in social movements hints at a deeply rooted gender bias stemming from women's subordination on a global scale, Kuumba argues that the field of sociological study aimed at understanding social movements is correct in its trend towards an emerging "gender-conscious discourse"(ibid, 14). In so doing, she outlines the approach's emphasis on the following areas:

1) the salience of gender as an analytical category as opposed to simply a backdrop or an add-on "variable"; 2) transcendence of the "separate spheres" and dichotomous models of gender; 3) rethinking established social movement theories and frameworks, taking gendered critiques into account; 4) the interrelationship of gender with systems of race, ethnicity, class, cultures and sexuality; and 5) the complex and dynamic nature of gendered processes, which, both catalyze and impede social movement processes (ibid).

By studying the organizational structures of a movement, the author is able to theorize on the reproduction or transformation of gender-relations. Nuanced in her method, Kuumba recognizes an unequivocal need to grasp the implications of gender when seeking to understand both the formation and eventual successes or failures of a given movement.

Methodologically, I incorporate her understanding of the salience of gender as an analytical category, the emphasis she places on the importance of studying social movements and the social conditions that give rise to them, as well as the understanding that gender intersects with various systems of subordination including (but not limited to): ethnicity, class, sexuality, and politics.

Despite the crucial nature of the author's research her project is foremost concerned with a broad analysis of gender and its implications. Where she does engage an empirical study of women in resistance is it reserved to a case study of women's involvement in the United State's civil rights movement and therefore does not address the specific object of my research question.

This thesis aims to build on the work accomplished by Kuumba's scholarship primarily through the incorporation of her analytical lens and standpoint methodology. This dissertation strives to combine borrowed elements of the author's approach and focus uniquely on the role of female resistors in the MEK/PMOI through the help of observations made by my feminist scholars studying common representations of women engaged in violence. As such, we must now turn to the following section of this literature review, wherein I examine the academic literature whose

specific object is women and their various involvements in violence, social movements, resistance movements, and armed struggle.

0.4.2. Discourses Surrounding Women's Involvement In Armed Resistance and Violence

In the following section I discuss the similarities between three prominent studies on the topic of women and their involvement in armed violence and/or resistance. These include: "Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics" by Laura Sjoberg and Caron Gentry; "Women, Resistance and Africa: Armed Struggles in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Eritrea" by Mark Israel, Tanya Lyons, and Christine Mason; and "Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War" by Kimberly Jensen.

Focusing primarily on the aspects of their research relevant to my research question, I will approach these works through the archetypes they identify in order to highlight the stereotypes that are often used to understand and portray women's involvement in armed violence and/or resistance by many mainstream academic and popular journalistic approaches. These narratives are applicable to my methodology insofar as they provide the theoretical basis for the archetypes that this thesis will later test.

The archetype most commonly identified by all three authors was that of the 'mother', the nurturer, and the protector. Individually, each author notes the ways in which this stereotype is often used by mainstream perspectives to explain and frame women's agency in relation to violence and/or resistance. Paying attention to the social construction of gender, its mainstreaming, reproduction, and transformation across varying contexts, Sjoberg and Gentry explain how "deviant women are set up in opposition to idealized gender stereotypes" (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007, 7). In the case of the 'mother' these women are portrayed in two separate ways: women who partake in violence are either suspected of not upholding the idealized image of the mother, nurturer, and protector; or, they are represented as incapable of committing an autonomous and legitimate act of violence that does not find recourse in motherhood.

In other words, their actions are presumed as either a result of their role as mother, or as indication of their deviance from the gendered characterizations of 'motherhood' in the most idealized sense. These women are purported to be 'bad' mothers or worse yet, 'bad' women. In this instance, women are presented with a normative lose-lose scenario that strips them of their respective identities and assigns them the sole purpose of motherhood.

In their study, Israel, Lyons, and Mason also underscore this trend. Exploring the

discourse of motherhood applied to the women of the Zimbabwean context, the authors demonstrate from a critical perspective how the women of the new movement represented both tradition and modernity as both nurturers and birthers of the revolution (Israel, Lyons, Mason 2002; 197). Respectively, in her piece on female combatants of WW1, Jensen also observes interesting parallels between the (trans)formation of gender discourses and their implications for women's claims to citizenship.

According to Jensen, there exists a real connection between their portrayals as 'protectors' of the nation, assigning maternity to a traditionally paternal trait, and the political/legal claims that therein followed (Jensen 2008). Ultimately, it was purported that women who no longer adhered to the jobs delegated as 'feminine' were assumed to be doing men's work and thereby participated in the alienation of their 'self'. In other words, their decision to stray from motherhood and take on combat somehow indicated volition to lose of their inherent purpose.

Next, we encounter the archetype of the 'whore', the promiscuous resistor who does not resist by 'resisting' per se but rather by fulfilling another role in the movement. Uniquely classified by Sjoberg and Gentry, the 'whore' archetype is observed primarily in their research through cases of non-state sanctioned violence, and examples of genocidal/criminal, terrorist, and individual acts of violence.

The authors describe how representations of women's participation in violence are often classified along three principle categories: (1) deviance, (2) promiscuity, and (3) slavery. In the first case, narratives concerned with erotomania "describe violent women's sexuality as both extreme and brutal"; while similar narratives underline women's sexual dysfunction in order to emphasize, "desperation wrought from the inability to please men"; and finally, narratives of slavery and subservience classify "women as men's sexual pawns and possessions" (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007, 13).

In the South African context studied by Israel, Lyons, and Mason; it was further purported that "women's liberation would flow from national liberation". Moreover, although women did occupy positions of high rank and fought equally as militants, allegations of sexual aggression underscored the reproduction of traditional and patriarchal gender relations within the movement. In other words, it is demonstrated that manifestations of the whore narrative can work in several ways to denigrate women's participation from varying angles: first, women are treated as sexual objects, sacrificing their bodies for the revolution; while second, glorified

discourses surrounding gender equality may be employed as a rhetorical mask veiling the practical realities of women who are treated as sexualized objects, and worse yet, blamed for their sexuality.

Illustrating such cases of blame, Jensen describes in her book “Mobilizing Minerva” how women of the Battalion of Death were provided with cyanide pills “so that she could end her life rather than be raped on the battlefield... a woman should chose death rather than the “dishonor” of rape that would affect the honour of her community” (Jensen 2008, 66). Jensen documents how journalist William G. Sheperd concluded that “Girl soldiers should have no sex” and that “Those who can not lose their sense of sex can not be good soldiers” (ibid, 69). Arguably, the problem here lies not in the abstention of sexual relations but rather the double standard unjustly placed on women who must burden themselves with the extra measure.

What is more, Jensen articulates how with the advent of Freudian theories and sexologists came the “stigmatized lesbianism as “deviant” and “perverse”” (ibid, 70). Ultimately, the ““mannish lesbian” came to embody sexual and social disorder” and the “The woman soldier as mannish lesbian expressed social and sexual disorder in the strongest possible terms” (ibid). The representation of female combatants as ‘mannish lesbian’ demonstrates an interesting overlap of the second and third archetypes examined in this section of the literature review. In the first place, the inherent sexualization of the female combatant’s body is reliant on the whore narrative, whereas implications of her deviance from social norms, evokes the ‘monster’ narrative characterized by notions of ‘defection’ and ‘deviation’.

The monster narrative is commonly attributed to resisters and female perpetrators of violence as ridicule for their inability to conform to socially acceptable modes of behavior. It is unsurprising, then, that at the root of the word “to *demonstrate*” a ‘monster’ is found. The figurative and normative character that lurks beneath our conceptions of resistance and opposition is already engaged in a project of alterity.

As demonstrated by Sjoberg and Gentry, “The monster narratives eliminate rational behavior, ideological motivation and culpability from women engaged in political violence. Instead, they describe violent women as insane; in denial of their femininity, no longer women or human”(Sjoberg and Gentry 2007, 13). According to Jensen’s account of female combatants in WW1, this is precisely how many were portrayed, simply put, as ‘lesbians’. “Historically inscribed both as ‘not woman’ and as ‘violent’ in the literature, theater, and film,” “the result has been”, Jensen writes, “a historical displacement of violence onto lesbians,” as those responsible

for violence against themselves and others” (Jensen 2008, 71).

These women, described in the same breath as non-woman and predator are drawn an unfortunate portrait that permeates popular imagination. Women who participate in violence or combat can be qualified as anything but the norm; they have to be the ‘other’; they have to be monsters.

The abovementioned literature contributes a great deal to the study of gender, discourse and social/resistance movements, and areas of research that speak directly to my research question. However, neither of these texts studies representations of the female MEK/PMOI resistor and the organization’s treatment of gender in particular. Insofar as this thesis questions the presence of these archetypes in popular discourse, I aim to build on the available scholarship by studying the ways in which these stereotypes have been used by mainstream accounts to frame the role of women and gender in the MEK/PMOI resistor – a project that has yet to be undertaken.

In the following section, before outlining my theoretical framework, I provide a summary of the available academic scholarship that deals directly with the MEK/PMOI to further demonstrate that a gap exists in the academic corpus with reference to my research question.

0.4.3. The Historical Lens: Academic Narratives and the MEK/PMOI

Within the academic literature, there exists two influential texts (both written from a historical perspective) that tackle the subject of the MEK/PMOI. First is, “The Iranian Mojahedin” by Ervand Abrahamian and the second is, “The Rise and Fall of the Mujahedin Khalq 1987-1997” by Ronen Cohen. Although both works present a history of the movement, they do so differently and across varying timelines. Abrahamian’s book examines the group at an earlier stage dating from 1961-1986, while Cohen’s piece follows the movement between the years of 1987-1997.

For the purposes of this thesis, both works are relevant insofar as they overlap in their study of the MEK/PMOI during the ‘*Enghelabeh Ideologique*’ and present conclusions regarding women and the role of gender in the organization. Thus, both projects speak somewhat indirectly to my research question and provide a corpus against which I can test my study’s findings. As I will return to these books and test the accuracy of each of their portraits in detail in the following chapters, here I will only briefly highlight a number of issues their work embodies.

Taking into account that his research only provides the reader with a depiction of the earlier days of the '*Enghelabeh Ideologique*', Abrahamian's work briefly addresses gender equality in the *Mojahedin*. The author proposes three main problems he believes impeded the objective of gender-equality set out by the MEK/PMOI. First, the author argues that, "the Mojahedin, despite contrary claims, did not give women equal representation within their hierarchy" (Abrahamian 1989, 233). Second, he asserts, that "the Mojahedin unconsciously used imagery and terminology that made women appear to be merely the extensions of their male relatives" (ibid, 234). And third, he contends, that "the Mojahedin, despite their claims that the hejab had nothing to do with Islam, encouraged their own women members to use a modified form of head covering known as the *rusari* (headscarf)" (ibid).

Despite the author's stated claims asserting that the purpose of his study is "neither to praise nor to damn the Mojahedin, but rather to piece together the history of the organization and to answer a number of basic questions" (ibid, 3), Abrahamian's historical account of the MEK/PMOI's ideology and social bases appears to be a highly biased normative analysis veiled in numerous appeals to objectivity. In what exposes a major weakness that undercuts many of his findings and conclusions, Abrahamian engages in critical reflection on the implications of the movement's ideology without ever specifying a theoretical framework for his analysis. Nevertheless, the author's book is of central importance in the incredibly small academic corpus dedicated to the study of the MEK/PMOI resistance movement. What is more, his research on the origins of the movement is unmatched in academic literature and despite its many rhetorical drawbacks, offers insightful information about the organization's history.

Given its different time frame, Cohen's book captures the metamorphosis undergone by the MEK/PMOI over the course of the ideological revolution or *E.I.* in greater detail than Abrahamian does. Included in the historical narrative developed by the author are several chapters relating to the ideological revolution, the role of women, and the internal-structural and leadership changes, as well as the development of the MEK/PMOI's new ideology under its then newly elected Secretary General, Maryam Rajavi. It thus offers some valuable historical context and insight.

However, his study is simultaneously riddled with claims that go un-sourced and findings that cannot be independently verified by academic researchers. One such claim is the rhetoric of indoctrination, cult-like behavior, and psychological manipulation repeated throughout the author's entire piece. In instances where his findings are in fact sourced

according to academic standards, they serve as a somewhat constructive timeline of historical dates and events, however, it is noteworthy that much of his academically sourced analysis relies almost entirely on the works of Abrahamian whose books also lack (albeit less severely) in detailed sourcing.

In both cases, the authors present a linear timeline of the changes adopted by the organization and at times make unfounded generalizations and claims to knowledge about the movement's intentions and inner decision-making strategies. In so doing, the author's methodologies do not substantiate their findings. What is more, their works suffer from a lack of critical reflexivity and do not approach the given dates and events with any sort of theoretically guided analysis. As such, I propose the need to further investigate the gender politics of the MEK/PMOI in order to confirm or problematize the conclusions drawn from their findings.

If we return to the big picture and consider the three bodies of literature (on social movements, resistance movements, and the MEK in particular) as a whole, together, I believe there exists a significant gap in the academic corpus relevant to my research question. Overall, I have found that there are major theoretical questions about the role of gender in social movements and especially resistance movements – questions that theoretically informed empirical studies such as my proposed examination of the MEK/PMOI will help address. Moreover, I have found that in the few cases where the MEK/PMOI has been examined, the methodologies adopted by the authors do not satisfy the minimum methodological requirements suitable for the academic study of politics and social movements.

In other words, a review of the literature establishes that there is significant scholarly value in examining, in a methodologically rigorous and theoretically informed manner, whether the stereotypes traditionally used by mainstream approaches accurately capture the role that gender plays in the MEK/PMOI, or whether the MEK/PMOI highlights more complicated and diverse ways that gender relations can play out in resistance movements.

0.5. Theoretical Framework: CDA and the Critical Feminist Lens

Before turning to the specific methods of analysis I employ in this study, a few words on my theoretical approach are necessary. My research is grounded in the school of critical discourse analysis, which maintains that “texts as elements of social events have causal effects...and contribute to changes in, people (beliefs, attitudes, etc.), actions, social relations, and the material world” (Fairclough 2003, 8). In so doing, I seek to identify the ideological

representations and maneuvers in texts as well as their effects on relations of power. As Fairclough maintains, “Ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining, and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation” (ibid, 9). In this sense, the relationship between ideology and discourse is one of symbiosis; what is more, all discourse is impregnated with ideology and we cannot presume to evade either. As such, in my critical analysis of representations of gender in social movements, I pinpoint the use of ideological narratives insofar as they help shed light on the nature of the relationships and subjectivities at play.

For this study, I also employ a critical and feminist lens, which imply several assumptions that guide my research. First, critical theory as explained by James Bohman is ““critical to the extent that it seeks human emancipation, “to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them” (Horkheimer 1982, 244)” (Bohman 2012, 1). These circumstances are varied and thus researchers may chose to employ one or several points of analysis.

Following the advent of Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism, it is impossible for me to undertake the following analysis without discussing its various implications for my work. In his writings, Said observes the intricate ways in which the colonial apparatus appropriates and endlessly re-appropriates knowledge of the colonized state and its citizens. This knowledge, he argues, is directly related to the colonizers reproduction of power and the hierarchy thereby instilled. “Knowledge of the subject races or Orientals”, he writes, “is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and soon an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control” (Said 1979, 36). Thus, by ‘knowing for’ the subject race the colonizer simultaneously ‘creates’ and ‘controls’ them. By extension, the Orient is fixed in the mind of popular discourse "politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively" (ibid, 3).

Historically, Iran is not a former colony; however, its 20th century engagement with Great Britain and the United States still presents us with a perplexing and incredibly complicated case of discursive subjugation and domination. As Said observes, ever since Aeschylus's *The Persians*, "Asia speaks through and by virtue of the European imagination, which is depicted as victorious over Asia, that hostile 'other' world beyond the seas" (ibid, 56). Today, even more contrived are those discourses relating to formal opposition and the MEK/PMOI whose national struggle has sought for roughly five decades to emancipate itself from international meddling in

domestic affairs and the discourse-producing apparatuses of the Iranian state and its allies.

Applying Said's framework, I will be qualitatively testing the process of Western Oriental 'Othering' at stake within western media and academic representations of the MEK/PMOI. In so doing, we can decipher whether "lurking everywhere behind the pacification of the subject race", in this case the MEK/PMOI resistor, "is imperial might, more effective for its refined understanding and infrequent use than for its soldiers, brutal tax gatherers and incontinent force" (ibid). Ostensibly, this will allow me as a researcher to isolate whether or not as Said writes, "the Oriental is *contained* and *represented* by dominating frameworks" (ibid, 40).

Moreover, borrowing from the contemporary school of post-colonial feminist theory and specifically theorists Saba Mahmood, Jacqui Alexander, and Chandra Mohanty, I will analyze narratives offered by the aforementioned sites of discourse in order to investigate their normative prescriptions with an eye to the idealized western liberal-democratic feminist subject. Decolonization, in this study, will therefore refer to a discursive decolonization that nonetheless results in practical consequences. As explained by Alexander and Mohanty, "while feminist collectives struggle against hegemonic power structures at various levels, they are also marked by these very structures- it is these traces of the hegemonic which the practices of decolonization addresses" (Alexander & Mohanty 1997, xxxvi). In this sense, as a researcher, I must isolate that which 'Orientalizes' the MEK/PMOI resistor in the sense first intended by Said, while carefully considering that which attempts to account for their struggle solely from the perspective of a globally homogenized sisterhood relying on the western liberal feminist subject as its prototype.

According to Mahmood, when examining the movement's agency we must first take for granted that it is the practice that informs the theory and not the other way around.

if the ability to effect change in the world and in oneself is historically and culturally specific (both in terms of what constitutes "change" and the means by which it is effected), then the meaning and sense of agency cannot be fixed in advance, but must emerge through an analysis of the particular concepts that enable specific modes of being, responsibility, and effectivity... what may appear to be a case of deplorable passivity and docility from a progressive point of view, may actually be a form of agency- but one that can only be understood from within the discourses and structures of subordination that create the conditions of its enactment (Mahmood 2012, 14-15).

Therefore, we must neither commit ourselves to a project of alterity or one that seeks to colonize the MEK/PMOI's resistance, but rather, confront such impositions and question at the outset that which our theory 'tells' us about the subject at hand. In so doing we problematize the 'double-bind' faced by the female MEK/PMOI resistor who is caught between two worlds of discourse;

that of the government they oppose and that of the western world which often favors an Orientalist narrative.

Second, my application of feminist theory takes for granted that my study will focus almost exclusively on the condition of women and the belief that due to various systems of power, including patriarchy, women live through experiences of subordination. The latter element is an important facet of my thought and methodology insofar as it draws into focus the importance of lived-experience. Borrowing from theorists Patria Hill Collins and Donna Haraway, I choose to loosely incorporate principles of relational-feminist standpoint epistemology, which centers around three principle assertions: “(1) Knowledge is socially situated. (2) Marginalized groups are socially situated in ways that make it more possible for them to be aware of things and ask questions than it is for the non-marginalized. (3) Research, particularly that focused on power relations, should begin with the lives of the marginalized”(Bowell 2011, 1).

Furthermore, my theoretical framework understands the need to take as a starting point the categorical and individual difference of those women resisting within the MEK/PMOI, rather than take for granted the unique circumstances that define their lived realities. Here, it is important that I address the cumbersome tension that exists between my critical/discursive approach and the (at times) positivist framework employed in this thesis. Without any aim to preserving a totalizing analysis, my project seeks to determine whether common discursive representations subject the resistor, in all her multiplicity, to a series of foreseeable consequences further subjugating her to the power relations and hierarchies of her material circumstance?

In this thesis, when ‘testing’ for narratives (further examined in the method section 0.6 of the introduction), I hold that one can engage the implicated discourse of science as well as hegemonic forms of scientific language so as to demonstrate and uncover the need for further inclusion and plurality of discourse. In other words, I reconcile the theory in light of the fact that my ‘findings’ do not purport themselves to be self-evident and all knowing; rather, they are reflective of a ‘different knowledge’ or ‘different way of knowing’ that by way of their inclusion aids in disrupting the current *modus operandi* of this discursive arena.

What is more, I must recognize the theoretical limitations I myself face as a researcher. I do not have access to an entirely objective body of knowledge. Instead, I argue that we can avoid “the ‘god-trick’ of positivist epistemology” by consciously situating our own knowledge so as to seek “partially objective knowledge”(Lykke 2010, 4-5). This approach asks that we reflect upon,

as well as acknowledge, the various ways in which we ‘see’ the subject matter. In other words, to consider how we are “materially discursively located in time, space, body and historical power relations” (ibid). For my own part, I am a woman, Canadian-born, and of Iranian heritage. Insofar as I was raised speaking Farsi, I took great interest in the exiled Iranian community and by its extension, Iranian politics. What is more, I sympathize politically with efforts to bring about human rights, the rule of law, and secular democracy in Iran. My research cannot evade the influence of said principal matters and as such, it does not pretend to do so. Seeking full disclosure of my position at the intersection of such politics, I hold that as a researcher I can purpose sound analysis without claiming an irrefutable authority or lack of implication in the subject matter.

0.6. Mixed Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Discourse Analysis

In terms of its analytic method, my project has several distinct phases and therefore, several different methodologies are appropriate. As outlined, my thesis contends that there is a dominant representation of female resisters in the MEK/PMOI and the main objective of this thesis is to test whether these representations are accurate. The first step in this is to establish whether a dominant representation does, in fact, exist. To establish whether this is the case or not, I employ a mixed method of CDA that combines qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis in order to test whether there are common representations employed across three major sites of discourse (academia, western media, and Iranian media) that together capture the bulk of the scholarly and mainstream portraits of the MEK/PMOI.

These sites were chosen in light of the fact that they are dominant and agenda setting actors in the production of popular discourse. Moreover, academic and journalistic endeavors are often read in light of the assumption that the researcher or journalist in question has access to some type of objective truth regarding their object. As such, I have organized sections of my study according to the three aforementioned sites of discourse.

The first site of discourse is academia. As made evident through my literature review, the two prominent academic books on the subject of the MEK/PMOI are “The Rise and Fall of the Mujahedin Khalq 1987-1997” by Ronen Cohen and “The Iranian Mojahedin” by Ervand Abrahamian. I analyze these books because they are essentially the entire academic corpus dedicated to the study of the MEK/PMOI. My findings in regard to these two works, therefore, are not based on a sample that is generalizable to the academic realm on this subject. My sample

literally is the totality of the academic work on this subject, and therefore entirely representative of that sphere.

The second site of discourse is western media, since this is an important site of creating popular conceptions of political events and movements. I chose to examine coverage of the MEK/PMOI in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, as well as French journals *Le Figaro* and *Agence France Presse*. I have chosen these media outlets because they are relatively dominant and remain agenda-setting newspapers. Using the databases Nexislexis Academic and Factiva, I exhaust the available articles in English and French between the years of 2003 to 2013 on the topic of the MEK/PMOI. Examining these sources allows us to test whether the same tropes are used amongst academic literature and western media coverage- something that will allow us to assess the degree to which common dominant portrait permeates the broader public as well.

Finally, for my third site I have chosen to undertake a similarly exhaustive search of Iranian media in both English and Farsi. Both searches engage the following sources: IRNA's 'Iran Daily' (Islamic Republic News Agency), 'Press TV' (run by Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting), 'ISNA' (Iranian Students News Agency) and 'Fars News Agency'. The first three outlets were chosen because they fall under the constitutional jurisdiction and control of Iran's Supreme Leader and thereby reflect the official discourse of the Iranian government, while the fourth and final outlet, Fars News, serves as an example of 'unofficial' Iranian media coverage. In English, articles found on Nexislexis Academic and Factiva were used in combination with those retrieved via Google 'Site Searches' (i.e. Site:presstv.ir "MKO")⁶ so as to ensure saturation of the available sampling. In Farsi, articles were entirely retrieved via Google 'Site Searches' due to the researcher's inability to access Farsi-language news databases. An analysis of this kind will allow me to test the presence of archetypes in Iranian media coverage as well as uncover any available patterns across all three sites examined.

In terms of my interpretive method, expounding on the archetypes found in "Mothers Monsters and Whores" authored by Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, I analyzed these sites of discourse by testing the degree to which they embodied what Sjoberg and Gentry outline as hegemonic representations of women who participate in violence (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007). I will outline these interpretive categories in detail in the following chapter, but in general I build on Sjoberg and Gentry to elaborate a complete list of dominant archetypes including: Women as

⁶ Appendix 6.1. Highlights Key Search Terms and Content Restrictions.

Heretic, Patriarchal Appendages, Oppressed Veiled Muslims, Victims of Indoctrination, Figureheads, Subservient and False Idols.

Given the different mediums, I use slightly different processes to investigate the prevalence of these representations in different sites. For example, I use primarily a qualitative method to analyze the degree to which these representations are employed in the two academic works - since the method is more appropriate to long and detailed books. I present my qualitative findings focusing more generally on the overall use and presence of archetypes. In this section, I account for the presence of archetypes and briefly demonstrate their reliance on gendered narratives.

When it comes to western and Iranian media, I used a coding dictionary⁷ and a coding spreadsheet⁸ so as to document qualitatively and quantitatively the instances and intensities of specific archetypes wherever they are used. This method was more appropriate because it allows a researcher to rigorously and reliably track the existence and intensity of these representations over a large number of shorter articles. In so doing, I analyze the frequency and severity of the archetypes as well as demonstrate where they are most often found. In all, I widen the scope of Sjoberg and Gentry's initial project and narrow its focus to representations of female resisters of the MEK/PMOI.

0.6.1 How do the MEK/PMOI Approach Gender?

If my first task is to establish whether a dominant representation of gender and the MEK/PMOI exists, my second task is to analyze whether the MEK/PMOI fits these portraits. Since this second task is concerned less with how gender and the MEK/PMOI has been portrayed, and more with the question of how gender within the MEK/PMOI has actually been performed, this second task implies and requires slightly different methods. For this part of the thesis, I therefore employed two methods.

First, I examine how the MEK/PMOI approach gender via their public discourse in order to uncover to what degree their public platform either contrasts or confirms the dominant portrayal of female resisters discussed above. In order to test whether the public self-representations of the MEK/PMOI confirm or challenge the dominant representations of academics, western media and Iranian media, I undertake a detailed qualitative analysis of

⁷ Appendix 6.2. Coding Dictionary.

⁸ Appendix 6.3. Coding Spreadsheet.

MEK/PMOI authored samples pertaining to the topic of women resisters. Here, I select a wide variety of samples including books authored by members and former members of the MEK/PMOI: *Face to Face with the Beast*, *Le Prix de rester humain*, *Les Femmes contre l'intégrisme*; and MEK/PMOI-authored articles published in *Frontline Feminisms*. Moreover, analyzing the discourse available on the organization's affiliate website, I examine their gender platform available at: ncr-iran.org.

The question of the degree to which these public self-representations are actually reflective of the organization's practice is, of course, a fraught one – and I outline the limits that this method embodies in the chapter where I discuss my findings. However, I also employ a second methodology to avoid some of those limitations and render my analysis more robust: that is, I employ interviews and naturalistic observation as a central component of my methodology. Utilizing interviews as a feminist tool to allow for the documentation of discourse proper to female members of the organization, I incorporate their own voices and descriptions in the creation of representations of women's roles within the organization. Not only do interviews account for the subjective importance of experience, but they also reinvigorate a medium for these women to express their own agency as actors, and, more specifically, as resisters. Here, I should underscore the pivotal importance of agency and the ability for actors to maintain hegemony over the representations of their proper-agency.

Ostensibly, the integrity of the 'self' (and by extension the integrity of its representation) is directly related to the biopolitical agency preserved for the individual. As Patricia Hill Collins writes, "Oppressed groups are frequently placed in the situation of being listened to only if we frame our ideas in the language that is familiar to and comfortable for a dominant group. This requirement often changes the meaning of our ideas and works to elevate the ideas of dominant groups" (Collins 2000, Preface xii). Thus, with the help of the interviews outlined below, I share the experience of female resisters in the MEK/PMOI so that I may relay a discourse proper to the subjects whose contributions have been greatly ignored in our academic discussions. Moreover, I hold that "Authors apply intersectional analyses to reveal previously hidden issues and operations of power" (Hankivsky & Lee 2011, 17). In other words, through my analysis I hope to uncover seemingly invisible manifestations of hegemony in popular discourse.

As part of the interview process, I interview seven members of the organization. The seven interviewees include five female and two male members of the MEK/PMOI. This sampling purposefully engages 150% more female participation reflecting 70% female

participation and 30% male participation. Participants are representative of those who bore witness to and participated in the *E.I.* as well as those who consciously involved themselves with the organization following its enactment. Finally, with the help of interviews, I look to the contemporary material conditions present within the MEK/PMOI and analyze the historical changes and ideological principles adopted during the *E.I.* in order to gain a contemporary view of gender relations within the movement⁹.

0.7. Chapter Outlines

The first chapter of this thesis lays the foundation for my greater project. I begin by outlining the common archetypes attributed to women involved in proscribed violence with reference to the theories that inform them. These archetypes are classified into three macro categories: (1) Character, (2) Story, and (3) Role; and are comprised of the following stereotypes: (1) Mothers, Monsters, Whores, and Heretics; (2) Patriarchal Appendage, Oppressed Veiled Muslim, and Victims of Indoctrination; and (3) Figureheads, Subservient, and False Idols. This step is crucial to my project insofar as it serves as an optic through which I can test for the presence of specific narratives in my evaluation of the common portrait in Chapter 2.

In the following Chapter, I test the presence of these macro and micro archetypes as they relate to female resisters of the MEK/PMOI within three areas of discourse production, namely; academic works, western media, and Iranian (state) media publications so that we may discern whether or not there exists a common casting of female resisters within these arenas. Furthermore, this step will set the stage for the comparison of the common portrait with the MEK/PMOI's public discourse concerning the *E.I.*, women's rights, and gender equality in the following chapter.

In Chapter 3, I analyze the discourse espoused by a sample of MEK/PMOI- authored books, memoirs, and articles in order to conclude what disparities, if any, exist between the findings in chapter 2 and the discourse produced by the MEK/PMOI. Furthermore, through a sampling of the discourse available on the MEK/PMOI's affiliate websites, I analyze the organization's representation of female resisters with respect to their platform on women's rights. In so doing, I set the foreground for interviews with members of the MEK/PMOI wherein I explore their thoughts on gender equality and its practical application within the movement.

⁹ Appendix 6.4. Interview Guide.

Chapter 4 uses the interviews conducted with members of the MEK/PMOI at their offices in Auvers-sur-oise, France. Through these interviews, I was able to test the validity of the portraits that took shape in Chapter 2. My findings suggest that the resisters' motivations, political ideologies, and the practice of gender politics in the *Mojahedin* organization is very different and much more complicated than the dominant portrait suggests. These findings are some of the most important of the thesis insofar as they highlight unexplored representations of female MEK/PMOI resisters, their stories, and their experiences not captured by the dominant discourse.

Finally, in Chapter 5, this dissertation will conclude with remarks and reflections that stem from my findings in the aforementioned chapters. Here, I examine the side effects of prescriptive narratives in academia, namely the disjointed message conveyed by the authors examined in Chapter 2, before briefly analyzing the similarities between western and Iranian media portraits of the female MEK/PMOI resistor. In so doing, I highlight my discoveries with reference to their importance in the contemporary struggle for gender equality and, more specifically, to the goals espoused by the organization in question. Next, I offer my critical analysis of the rhetorical functions of the common stereotypes used to portray female resisters of the MEK/PMOI contextualized in an intersectional analysis of their political subjectivity/ies. And finally, I posit the need to disrupt the casting of people as characters.

Chapter 1 “The Ideology Behind Narrative”

Feminists analyse the content which is said in politics to find what is neglected

~Sjoberg and Gentry 2007, 52

(what we experience as) reality is not the ‘thing itself’, it is always-already symbolized, constituted, structured by symbolic mechanisms- and the problem resides in the fact that symbolization ultimately always fails, that it never succeeds in fully ‘covering’ the real, that it always involves some unsettled, unredeemed symbolic debt.

~Slavoj Zizek 1994, 21

In order to subvert, one must first familiarize oneself with the object of one’s subversion. This entails studying its structure, occurrence in time and space and many implications in the ‘real’ world. In so doing, as researchers, we can aim to isolate, influential convergences, strategies and repetitive themes that although may seem innocuous, contribute nonetheless to very serious side effects. Infused with ideology and structurally bound by an endless web of political agendas and hierarchies, discourses contribute to our understandings of the very world we live in, meanwhile, strategically limiting the parameters of our conversation. These limitations are the very thresholds that expose the active and creative power of discourse; how what is said/written is political, how what is repeated is political and how what remains silenced is political. These thresholds also uncover how what is said/written serves an end, how what is repeated serves an end, and how what remains silenced serves an end.

Discourse, then, cannot be taken for granted. My research rests on the belief that discourse and stereotypical representations are steeped in ideology and are thus performative in the naturalization of power relations and subjugations. It is with such a framework in mind, that I approach the questioning of narratives- one of the many forms of discursive representation- and the role they play in maintaining, perpetuating and changing politics. Broadly understood as rhetorical structures that contribute to the symbiotic relationship by which we come to understand our world and experiences, narratives are stories told; stories comprised of other stories and stories informed by the characters that help tell them:

Complex narratives- the kind we find in anyone’s life story, as well as in fairy tales, novels, and dramas- are made up of smaller narratives with very simple structures. Those structures are called “frames” or “scripts”. Frames are among the cognitive structures we think with. For example, when you read a murder mystery, there is a typical frame with various kind of characters: the murderer, the victim or victims, possible accomplices, suspects, a motive, a murder weapon, a detective, clues. And there is a scenario in which the murderer murders the victim and is later caught by

the detective. The neural circuitry needed to create frame structure is relatively simple, and so frames tend to structure a huge amount of our thought. Each frame has roles (like a cast of characters), relations between the roles, and scenarios carried out by those playing the roles (Lakoff, 22).

‘Frames’, as Lakoff puts them, delineate the potential of, as well as claim to know, the characters involved in the telling of the story. Underlying both complex and smaller narratives is a mythical quality that by recounting the subjectivities of characters in an objective way participates in the perpetuation of a socially constructed moral fabric(ation).

Serving as a theoretical casting-call, discourse analysis serves to unmask the prescribed frames to which characters are asked to fit thereby problematizing the colonization of people as characters. Applied to the analysis of discourse relevant to the female resistor in the MEK/PMOI, we can see how rhetoric may serve to function as both an introduction and conclusion to their personhood through characterizations attributed by the storyteller. It is thus left to the researcher to decipher the politics of such discourse and its relationship with the outcomes it produces in order to determine the ideological chess moves at play. Normatively, discourse is reflective of the immaterial; however, if we understand discourse to have real consequences and take as our object discourse that objectifies personalities relegating their complexities to that of a narrative, portrait, or image; we can begin to understand the ways in which the body can be granted the status of the post-material or in a similar sense the way discourse can assume the status of the material. As David Campbell illustrates through his discussion on the importance of the image with reference to the Rwandan genocide, understanding the real and implicative consequences of visual culture (or in our case narrative structures and signifiers) entails grasping the very consequential power dynamics at stake:

Jan Pronk’s call echoed the conclusion of Romeo Dallaire, the UN commander in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide, that a journalistic line to Western audiences was worth a battalion on the ground (Power, 2002: 355). Yet the study of world politics has not properly grasped the significance of visual culture, where it refers to the practices and representations “which circulate in the field of vision establishing visibilities (and policing invisibilities), stereotypes, power relations, the ability to know and to verify.” (Rogoff, 2000: 20) (Campbell 2007, 358).

As such, through my project, I aim to highlight the reconcilable tension that exists between discourse and its effects. In other words, I hold that discourse, as a function of hegemony, is implicated in the perpetuation of very real subjugations that can be experienced across the ‘material/immaterial spectrum’ and finds its root in the corporealized being of individuals. This

understanding further demonstrates the biopolitical task of dominant discourses; that is, to void bodies of their respective biopolitical subjectivities and power.

In order to undertake such a project, I must first specify the analytic framework that guides it. Isolating my object entails distinguishing between what is meant by ‘fabula’, ‘story’, and ‘narrative’:

The fabula is the ‘material or content that is worked into a story’, a ‘series of logically and chronologically related events’. The story is a fabula that is ‘presented in a certain manner’- this involves for instance the arrangement of events in a sequence which can be different from their actual chronological order, providing social agents of actual events with ‘distinct traits’ which transform them into ‘characters’, and ‘focalizing’ the story in terms of a particular ‘point of view’. The same story can appear in a range of narrative texts, texts in which a narrator relates the story in a particular medium- for instance a story in conversation, a radio news story, a television news story, a documentary, or a film. (Normal Fairclough, 83).

Thus, my analysis will center on the story; specifically how narratives of female resisters in the MEK/PMOI are communicated in the news, the characterizations involved in such processes and how such characterizations serve to perpetuate the status quo to public audiences. As Žižek maintains, “there are not two discourses, ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, there is *one* discourse split from within by the sexual antagonism- that is to say, providing the ‘terrain’ on which the battle for hegemony takes place” (Žižek 1994, 23). As such, with the help of the archetypes outlined below, I test for the presence of discursive narratives that perpetuate patriarchal hegemony on the terrain of discourse, which is too often controlled and promulgated by men. In so doing, I seek to disrupt the status quo and establish a more even playing field in light of my object.

1.1. Caricatures of Their Selves

Interrogating the presence of archetypes as our starting point allows for the adoption of a critical lens through which we can then problematize the available discourses shaping dominant western and international perceptions. Building on Sjöberg and Gentry’s classification of archetypes attributed to women involved in proscribed violence, I consider three macro categories of archetypes each with a different focus: (1) Characterizations of her person, (2) Characterizations of story or motive, and (3) Characterizations of her role. For each of the abovementioned categories I consider several frames that shape the readers understanding, these include: (1) Women as Mothers, Monsters, Whores, or Heretics, (2) Women as Patriarchal Appendages, Oppressed Veiled Muslims, or Victims of Indoctrination, and (3) Women as Figureheads, Subservient, or False Idols. Following a brief look at said archetypes, I will trace

their usage across academia as well as western and Iranian media with regards to female resisters of the MEK/PMOI in order to test their presence throughout popular sites of discourse production.

Before building in some detail on the work of Sjöberg and Gentry; it should be noted that their analysis of archetypes is reserved for an analysis of the discourse surrounding women's general participation in proscribed violence; that is, any violence that is deemed illegitimate by the state for its official political rivalry with the interests of a given hegemonic power. That being said, MEK/PMOI resisters, since relinquishing arms in 2003 following a cease-fire agreement with the United States upon the U.S. invasion of Iraq, have not born weapons, yet, have maintained a very real and potent political opposition to the government in Iran thereby implicating them in what can be described as a war of discourse with the Iranian regime.

The archetypes depicted below are classified according to their macro and micro properties and exemplify how women's experiences, stories, and unique perspectives can be narrated in favor of casting women as caricatures of their selves.

1.1.2. Casting Her Person

The following stereotypes lay claim to a woman's personhood. The classifications of Mother, Monster, Whore and Heretic do not simply attribute characteristics to the female resistor; worse yet, they define her as an individual. Once tagged, the female resistor is inextricably linked to such characterizations, so much so that her actions are legitimized only through recourse to the archetypes themselves.

Women as 'Mothers'

Locked into an assumed exchange of 'damned if you do, damned if you don't', women involved in proscribed violence are often characterized by their (in)ability towards motherhood. Tied to a host of justifications and reasons that rely on anything but the possibility for their willful adoption of violence as a means to a political end, women are seen as fulfilling one of two possible destinies: (1) The nurturing mother, who lives only to sacrifice for others, "She is used, like many women are, as sacrifice for the greatness of the men in her life"(ibid, 31), or, (2) the barren, "driven by rage because of her maternal losses, maternal inadequacies or maternal incredulity.

Her decision is not calculated retaliation but emotion-driven rage"(ibid, 34). Ostensibly,

women and their “*raison d’être*” are spoken for *a priori* (ibid, 35). They cannot, in the eyes of popular discourse, escape their innate configurations and/or ‘feminine essence’ so as to conclude rationally their own strategies for resistance. Rather, they regress infinitely to that which makes them women, their reproductive circuitry and the symbolically feminine:

I think that the ultimate example of male logic is precisely this notion of some feminine essence, eternally feminine, excluded outside the symbolic order, beyond. This is the ultimate male fantasy. And when Lacan says, 'Woman does not exist', I think precisely this ineffable, mysterious 'beyond', excluded from the symbolic order, is what does not exist... The presymbolic, eternally feminine is a retroactive, patriarchal fantasy. It is the exception which grounds the reign of the phallus. (Zizek 2006, 1).

Thus, the archetype of the Mother simply elucidates for the masses what is in fact a complex and telling tale composed of a slew of converging agencies and factors. Although a woman may indeed be driven by her experiences as a mother; here, comprised within a totalizing account of femininity, largely determined by male fantasy, it is presented as part in parcel of a motive towards violence.

Women as ‘Monsters’

Whereas the archetype of Mother displaces the integrity of a woman’s will, the archetype of Monster completely eliminates its possibility. Set up in opposition to the idealized image of the Mother, women deemed Monsters are simultaneously stripped of their prescribed femininity and individual will. As Sjoberg and Gentry write, “Because women are ‘supposed to nurture and protect, not kill’, women who do kill are characterized as inhumane monsters” (ibid, 37). These inhumane monsters are no longer women.

In fact, through their acts of violence they have lost all traces of womanhood thus leading to the conclusion that their acts stem from pathology not defiance. As Jane Ussher demonstrates, this representation, which was not reserved for women who participated in violence, dates back to some of the earliest recorded mythologies and the works of political thinkers including Aristotle, "Woman is literally a monster: a failed and botched male who is only born female to an excess of moisture and of coldness during the process of conception. Aristotle [1,p.49] (Quoted in Ussher 2006, 1). This explicit narrative conceives of women as ‘inherently different’ by virtue of their being. Within this discourse, women are often cast as either desirable or dangerous. According to this archetype, women who commit violence pose a threat. As such, they are relegated to the status of a different breed; they are monsters.

Women as ‘Whores’

Familiar to today’s headlines, the third archetype expounded by Sjoberg and Gentry is that of female perpetrators of violence as Whores. The sexual categorization of female perpetrators of violence as whores often occurs on three levels: distraction, danger and property. The first, women’s sexuality as ‘distraction’, can be observed in the media frenzy surrounding the November 2012 lawsuit brought forth by four female soldiers in the United States with the support of the American Civil Liberties Union against the Department of Defense for its restrictions on women in combat (Harris 2013,1). Repealed in January of 2013 by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta with intentions of fully lifting the ban on women’s official service on the front lines by 2016, the removal of a barrier to women’s equal participation in the armed forces garnered some staunch opposition by many. Lieutenant General Boykin was quoted in a Fox News Interview as saying:

mixing the genders in infantry units, armored units and Special Forces units is not positive. There are many distracters there which put a burden on small unit combat leaders and actually creates an environment because of their living conditions that is not conducive to readiness. (Wallace 2013,1).

Former Marine infantryman, Ryan Smith, also stated:

It would be distracting and potentially traumatizing to be forced to be naked in front of the opposite sex, particularly when your body has been ravaged by lack of hygiene...In the reverse, it would be painful to witness a member of the opposite sex in such an uncomfortable and awkward position (McClam 2013, 1).

Thus, not only is a woman’s presence in combat units framed as generally distracting and potentially traumatizing, but as it is captured in a statement by Penny Nance, President of Concerned Women for America, women’s participation would go so far as to distract from the military’s ability to protect the country:

The point of the military is to protect our country...Anything that distracts from that is detrimental. Our military cannot continue to choose social experimentation and political correctness over combat readiness (ibid).

At this first level of categorization, a woman’s sexuality is so inherently amplified that she cannot help but pose a distraction to men in combat.

Second, female perpetrators of violence are cast as sexually deviant and therefore ‘dangerous’. As stated by Sjoberg and Gentry, “when men do bad things, it is because there is something *evil* about them; when women do bad things, their evil is sexualized” (Sjoberg & Gentry 42). By portraying women as highly sexualized, sexually depraved, or sexually defiant,

popular discourse sensationalizes their acts of violence as stemming from three sources: “erotomania, erotic dysfunction and sexual slavery” (ibid, 46). In so doing, women involved in violence are primarily cast as perverse creatures with insatiable drives towards sex.

In instances where anything threatens to interfere with her sexual gratification, this insatiability is often correlated with women’s decisions to take up violence as a means, “erotomania makes violent women *just crazy enough* to be violent”(ibid, 47). If a woman is not plagued with erotomania, her violence is often a result of erotic dysfunction or her “inability to perform [her] basic function in life, providing men with sexual pleasure” (ibid). According to this narrative a woman who strays from the prescribed norms of patriarchal heterosexual relationships is inclined towards violence as a form of compensation.

Finally, popular discourse often castes female perpetrators of violence as sexual slaves or the male-property. Never the source of their own rationalization towards violence, female perpetrators of violence are recounted as being coerced by men who ‘own’ them. As explained by Sjoberg and Gentry, “These women are described as whores in the most literal sense, sold to men to be used as pawns in political violence. In these narratives, the men who have dominion over women’s bodies force them to engage in violence; the women never have a choice.” (ibid, 49). Ultimately, women are represented as intellectually incapable of concluding the same acts as men, thus requiring male instruction and coercion to perform acts of violence. In this narrative, her intellectual capacities are deemed befitting of a slave in the truest sense of the word; stripped of all autonomous or creative faculties and bound by the innocuous phrase “Yes, sir”.

Women as Heretics

Caught between two opposing worlds of subjugation, middle-eastern feminisms continue to face an existential battle on both fronts, at home and abroad. Charged with heresy and branded as ‘hypocrites’ at home for their decision to stray from- and challenge- the proscribed norms of their society, middle-eastern feminisms must also face challenges from the West for their adherence to customary practices, namely belief in religion (in this case, predominantly but not always, Islam) and women’s adoption of the veil. As Geraldine Heng writes:

Historically, almost without exception, feminism has arisen in the Third World in tandem with nationalistic movements- whether in the form of anti-colonial/anti-imperialist struggles, national modernization and reform movements, or in religious-nationalist/cultural-nationalist revivalisms” (Heng 1997, 30-31).

Therefore, social movements and feminisms in particular must delicately balance ideological assertions from either side in order to further their provocative feminist agendas at home all the while maintaining resonance with their national base.

Insofar as they champion women's rights, they must champion Middle-Eastern or in our case Iranian women's rights and not the prototype of ideal Western feminism, which ultimately risks alienating them from their audience. The casting of a woman as Heretic often accompanies challenges to her personal integrity, honesty and labels her a 'misbeliever'.

1.1.3. Casting Her Story

Next, we demonstrate stereotypes that lay claim to a woman's story. The classifications of women as Patriarchal Appendages, Oppressed Veiled Muslims, and Victims of Indoctrination attribute a common quality of passivity to women involved in proscribed violence. As such, a woman's agency is characterized as the vessel for a man's will.

Women as Patriarchal Appendages

Plagued by their relationships with the 'other' sex, women's 'his'tories are often told in light of the men in their lives. Women are thereby showcased as secondary characters when in fact they are the primary subjects in question. Within this narrative, women are described as the 'wives', 'widows', 'sisters', and even 'cousins' of men; men, who for the most part are showcased in the same discourse as individuals whose stories stand in their own right.

This archetype finds its expression in the earliest forms of scripture and foundational texts of modern morality. As analyzed by Mary Wollstonecraft, women in popular discourse have long been indebted to men for their being:

Probably the prevailing opinion, that woman was created for man, may have taken its rise from Moses's poetical story; yet, as very few, it is presumed, who have bestowed any serious thought on the subject, ever supposed that Eve was, literally speaking one of Adam's ribs, the deduction must be allowed to fall to the ground; or, only so far admitted as it proves that, from the remotest antiquity, found it convenient to exert his strength to subjugate his companion, and his invention to show that she ought to have her neck bent under the yoke, because the whole creation was only created for his convenience or pleasure" (Wollstonecraft 1790, 40).

Similarly, women who are described as Patriarchal Appendages are portrayed as personifications or extension of a man's will inextricably linking female resisters to the men in their lives.

Women as Oppressed Veiled Muslims

Perpetuating the common stereotype of the subservient, passive, and alienated Muslim Woman, an archetype expounded by observers of Middle-Eastern social movements is that of the Oppressed- and often veiled - Muslim woman. This particular narrative highlights the ways in which the Other knows not what is best for themselves. Rather, the facts of their own oppression must be brought to light through Western 'emancipatory' thought and domination.

Describing the subtle move from traditional colonialist discourse to its unification with feminist narratives, Leila Ahmed eloquently observes a transition centered on the politics of women's emancipation:

the reorganized narrative, with its new focus on women, appears to have been a compound created out of a coalescence between the old narrative of Islam just referred to (and which Edward Said's *Orientalism* details) and the broad, all-purpose narrative of colonial domination regarding the inferiority, in relation to the European culture, of all Other cultures and societies, a narrative that saw vigorous development over the course of the nineteenth century. And finally and somewhat ironically, combining with these to create the new centrality of the position of women in the colonial discourse of Islam was the language of feminism, which also developed with particular vigor during this period... In this scheme Victorian womanhood and mores with respect to women, along with other aspects of society at the colonial center, were regarded as the ideal and measure of civilization... It was here and in the combining of the languages of colonialism and feminism that the fusion between the issues of women and culture was created. More exactly, what was created was the fusion between the issues of women, their oppression, and the cultures of Other men. The idea that Other men, men in colonized societies or societies beyond the borders of the civilized West, oppressed women was to be used, in the rhetoric of colonialism, to render morally justifiable its project of undermining or eradicating the cultures of colonized peoples (Ahmed 1992, 150-151).

The colonized nation's subjection to foreign control was represented as 'in the interests of eradicating barbarianism,' while a teleology of 'progressive' politics was established that would condemn the customs and/or traditions common to native dwellers to the institutionalized forces of opposition and judgment. As such, the veil - a seemingly innocuous and superficial element of middle-eastern or Islamic tradition - became the central thesis of imperialist calculations:

the thesis of the new colonial discourse of Islam centered on women- was that Islam was innately and immutably oppressive to women, that the veil and segregation epitomized that oppression, and these customs were the fundamental reason for the general and comprehensive backwardness of Islamic societies. Only if these practices "intrinsic" to Islam (and therefore Islam itself) were cast off could Muslim societies begin to move forward on the path of civilization. Veiling- to *Western* eyes, the most visible marker of the differentness and inferiority of Islamic societies- became the symbol now of both the oppression of women (or, in the language of the day, Islam's degradation of women) and the backwardness of Islam, and it became

the open target of colonial attack and the spearhead of the assault on Muslim societies (Ahmed 1992, 151-152).

Thus, the attribution of the veil to Islam, and Islam to male oppression and patriarchy, made it so that the actions of all veiled Muslim women were seen as those of their male counterparts.

Women as Victims of Indoctrination

Presenting an interesting convergence of the Monster and Whore archetypes is the ‘cult’ narrative that is often framed in terms of an indebtedness that is characteristic of sufferers of ‘Stockholm syndrome’ or ‘battered-person syndrome,’ wherein women and their choices are described as ‘psychologically manipulated’ by another person. This narrative depicts women’s involvement in proscribed violence as ‘coerced’ and suggests that through their involvement, female resisters have ‘sided with their captors’. This archetype explicitly communicates the forceful submission of a woman’s will insinuating that she is ‘trapped’. Therefore, it reproduces language such as: ‘brainwashed’, ‘cult member’, and ‘slave’ demonstrating an altered or incoherent state of consciousness on the part of the resistor. In this ‘new’ state of consciousness, the female resistor operates not from her own thoughts but rather those transplanted to her by her captors. Ultimately, this narrative displaces the accountability of a woman’s actions, granting her (male) superiors ownership and responsibility of her actions.

1.1.4. Casting Her Role

The following stereotypes establish dominion over a woman’s role. The classifications of women as Figureheads, Subservient, and False Idols proactively define the extent of a woman’s participation in resistance, relegating her role to one that is established by the author. The use of such narratives allows for the characterization of, and consequently the appropriation and subversion of a woman’s role in proscribed violence. Insofar as a woman’s role is defined, so too is her agency.

Women as Figureheads

The archetype of women as Figureheads appropriates the image of women involved in proscribed violence and portrays them as superficial leaders. This narrative often implies their lack of engagement on a substantive level and/or suggests alternative leadership when a woman is described as being in power. This archetype becomes all the more impactful when discussing

movements espousing progressive gender politics and/or women's leadership insofar as it portrays women as 'tools' utilized for their symbolic advantage. The biopolitical manipulation of women's physical selves portrayed by the archetype reduces women's roles to that of their image and nothing more. Ultimately, women's participation in proscribed violence is cast as puppetry.

Women as Subservient

Reinforced through popular discourses stemming from religion, marriage, education, and even the sciences (namely biology); women are repeatedly represented as Subservient to men. This narrative often assumes women's natural passivity, docility, and obedience challenging the possibility for female leadership and belittling the roles they occupy. As such, women are purportedly bound to a 'dutiful' agency that demonstrates their willingness to follow and serve the interests of men. According to this narrative, women will inevitably concede to a man's instruction and assist them accordingly.

Women as False Idols

Whereas archetypes of this kind generally serve to prescribe a woman's role in resistance, the categorization of women as False Idols altogether denies her role as part of a given organization or her participation in violence. The archetype of women as False Idols comes about in three principal ways all of which center around claims about the dead: In the first instance, female resisters are cast as 'false martyrs' through the assertion that they were granted posthumous membership; second, female resisters are cast as posthumously elevated to positions of leadership thereby suggesting illusions of their grandeur; and third, female resisters are said to have been part of a 'false count' whereby their presence in numbers is said to be exaggerated for reasons of appearance.

The classification of women as False Idols suggests several levels of appropriation, namely that of a woman's life, story, identity, and goals. As Žižek observes, "the ultimate idolatry is not the idolizing of the mask, the image, but the belief that there is some hidden, *positive content beyond the mask*", which in the case of the female resistor, is her principals, values and political message (Žižek 2003,138; *emphasis added*). Therefore, insofar as one idolizes a false idol, one idolizes a false history, a false heroineism and therefore a false prospect of a revolution to come.

In this chapter I have outlined ten common narratives that are used in a wide variety of

literature. Carefully classified along 3 sections and smaller subsections: (1) Character (Mother, Monster, Whore, and Heretic), (2) Story (Patriarchal Appendage, Oppressed Veiled Muslim, and Victims of Indoctrination) and (3) Role (Subservient, Figureheads, and False Idols); these narratives demonstrate the castings often attributed to female resisters or women involved in proscribed violence.

Testing specifically for the presence of these archetypes, I will now turn to an empirical investigation of academia, western, and Iranian (state) medias so as to determine if there exists a common portrait of the female resistor that permeates broader public discourse. In so doing, I question the extent to which these archetypes are present and later whether such representations paint the reader an accurate portrait of the subjects in question.

Chapter 2 “The Common Portrait”

For the consumer there is nothing left to classify, since the classification has already been preempted by the schematism of production...The details become interchangeable...like all the details, ready-made clichés, to be used here and there as desired and always completely defined by the purpose they serve within the schema. To confirm the schema by acting as its constituents is their whole *raison d'être*. In a film, the outcome can invariably be predicted at the start- who will be rewarded, punished, forgotten

~Adorno & Horkheimer 1944, 98-99

Just like in film, the discourse analyzed below functions via a script. In light of the archetypes outline above, I will first uncover the extent to which ‘ready-made clichés’ are employed so that we may later ask the question ‘who will be rewarded, punished, forgotten’?

2.1. Academic Literature: Abrahamian & Cohen

The search for the archetypes examined above here centers on the independent works of Ervand Abrahamian and Ronen Cohen. The author’s respective books “The Iranian Mojahedin” and “The Rise and Fall of the Mujahedin Khalq 1987-1997” serve as the seminal texts in a very small academic corpus dedicated to the study of the MEK/PMOI; for this reason, an analysis of their writing will allow for an investigation of the discourse being produced on the same topic in academia as a whole.

The in-depth analysis entertained by Abrahamian is portrayed by the author as an objective study into the formation, workings, and policies of the Mojahedin over the course of 25 years dating from 1961-1986. His intentions, he writes, are “neither to praise nor to damn the Mojahedin, but rather to piece together the history of the organization and to answer a number of basic questions” (Abrahamian 1989, 3). The same can be said for Cohen’s piece, which is presented to its readers as a “balanced, penetrating and multifaceted account of the workings of the Mojahedin” and is further described as an objective case study aimed at uncovering the group’s formative ideology and structure (Maghen in Cohen 2009, xxi).

It is with such claims to objectivity in mind that I investigate the presence of normative assertions in the authors’ works, specifically as they relate to the archetypes discussed and the representations of women in the MEK/PMOI. Below, my findings are first classified according to the narrative’s object and second according to the specific archetypes identified.

2.1.1.Casting Her Person

Upon examination, Cohen's piece confirms the presence of three of the four archetypes aimed at the overall characterization of female resisters of the MEK/PMOI: Monsters, Whores and Heretics. Meanwhile, Abrahamian's writing affirms the presence of two of the four archetypes more exclusively casting women as either Mothers or Whores.

The characterization of women as Monsters, unique to Cohen's book, lies in his depiction of MEK/PMOI resisters as suicidal:

Many of those who retired from the organization and those who criticized its activities perceived the Mojahedin's executive activities against the Islamic Republic as "suicidal", since those who were sent on missions inside Iran had only a meager chance of survival (Cohen 2009, 25).

Overwhelmingly attributed to reasons stemming from mental disorders to poor psychosocial development, the discourse of suicide and those bearing suicidal thoughts and/or commitments refers to a strong pathology of deviance and/or mental illness. Therefore, the recurrent casting of resisters as suicidal, as exemplified by the following quote, serves only to hint at the prescribed monstrosity of their character:

The extreme interpretation of the Shi'a led the organization to consecrate suicide for the benefit of its goals (as did the Islamic Republic). Suicide was regarded by the organization as "holy" and as a God-given commandment. The organization regarded people who committed suicide as martyrs, and this influenced other members to agree to commit suicide in the future. The young members were carefully chosen according to their economic and social background, because it was easier to convince them of the necessity of suicide (ibid).

At odds with research that suggests followers of Islam to have the lowest suicide rates among people of faith (Lester 2006), Cohen argues that the organization's ideology (and thus, that of its members) is largely driven by the assertion of suicide's 'divine purpose'. In so doing, Cohen cites psychological abnormality as motivation for the war waged by resisters on the Iranian government. Viewed in such a way, the female MEK/PMOI resistor is not a woman who lived through years of violence at the hands of the Iranian government; rather, she is, for all intents and purposes, a "crazed avenger" (Sjoberg & Gentry 2007, 102).

Repeated to an even greater extent in the works of both authors is the casting of women as Whores. In this instance, the authors perpetuate the stereotype of women's violence/resistance as inherently sexualized. Here, the omniscient narrator binds the female resistor to his sexual objectifications and belittles her personhood in favor of showcasing her personal relationships:

Maryam was Rajavi's personal assistant...It was rumored that there was sexual tension between her and the Mojahedin's leader prior to her divorce and remarriage.

Even while she was married to Abrishamchi, she used to spend nights and days away from her home- untypical for an Iranian traditional married woman. Apparently, Rajavi loved not only the emotional bond they shared, but also the fact that she obeyed him blindly and totally. She later proved that she was devoted to the struggle (Cohen 2009, 4-5).

Enmeshed in the telling of a story that places a disproportionate- and arguably politically irrelevant- amount of attention on a woman's personal relationships, Cohen's account serves to delegitimize female members' resistance within both the larger MEK/PMOI and its previously armed faction, the NLA (the National Liberation Army of Iran). He does this by emphasizing women's sexual relationships, notions of 'taboo' and drawing the reader's attention to female resisters' marital statuses (that are here cast in the form of contractual ownership over women's bodies).

Moreover, citing Mehdi Khoshal¹⁰, Cohen writes "Men and women were supposed to feel gratitude towards their leader when he agreed to their marriage and helped solve their loneliness and sexual problems" (ibid, 40). Here, the assertion of 'gratitude' serves to sensationalize women's agency and casts them as sexually depraved and thus insatiably driven towards sex. Women's decisions to enlist in the resistance are therefore portrayed as a result of their concomitant sufferance from erotomania and dangerous sexual deviancy.

Next, claiming that women's roles are analogous to that of 'livestock', Abrahamian's research concludes that female resisters of the MEK/PMOI are Whores in the most literal sense. Citing Homa Nateq Abrahamian writes:

the Mojahedin, despite their rhetoric, treated their women members as no better than 'sheep'(Abrahamian 1989, 235).

Such characterization of women as male-property portrays women as incapable of having dominion over their physical selves, thereby demonstrating that these women are nothing more than pawns of a political nature. Moreover, arguing that Maryam Azodanlu's marriage to Massoud Rajavi exemplifies an on-going trend of prostitution or sale of women's bodies, Abrahamian holds, "the Mojahedin continued the Islamic tradition of dehumanizing women and treating them as cattle to be bought and sold." (ibid, 253). In so doing, the author denigrates the role of women to that of a currency available for transaction and exchange.

Once more, Abrahamian simultaneously engages the archetype of Mother and Whore through his criticisms of Maryam Rajavi's decision to re-marry following her divorce "It

¹⁰ Mehdi Khoshal's testimony is analyzed in Chapter 5.

smacked of wife-swapping...it involved women with young children, and even more unforgivable, the wives of close friends- a taboo in traditional Iranian culture” (ibid, 252).

The author’s concern that a woman with young children should decide to re-marry demonstrates the underlying assertion that women are nurturing mothers characterized only by their attitude toward biological reproduction and the desire to sacrifice themselves for others. At stake within the same quote is the repetition of the aforementioned portrayal of women as male-property and women who are no less than enslaved by their sexual relationships with men in the private sphere.

Finally, Cohen’s writing employs an appeal to hypocrisy in order to substantiate the image of women as Heretic. In the following example, Cohen’s analysis of the roles assumed by female resisters in the MEK/PMOI shifts focus to address the topic of female uniform, specifically the head covering worn by women:

women continued to wear the *Hijab* (head cover). Rajavi’s explanation was that in order to expose Khomeini’s Islam and its differences in comparison to Rajavi’s Islam, one had to act in a similar manner (this, however, ignored the fact that divorce and the separation of children contradict the principles of Islam). The real reason was the organization’s desire to be perceived outwardly as an Islamic organization, and this was expressed by women members being required to wear the *Hijab*. However, there was no requirement to follow the more personal religious commandments about prayer and fasting (Cohen 2009, 38).

Juxtaposing the organization’s reasoning for the adoption of the veil with a criticism of the members’ alleged non-adherence to other religious practices, Cohen’s statement accuses female resisters of simultaneously wearing a faith in Islam whilst not upholding its practice. His argument ultimately serves to delegitimize female resisters on the basis that they are (allegedly) misleading the public to believe in their religiosity while they do not, by the author’s account, follow the more rigid commandments of a prescribed Islam.

In both instances, Abrahamian and Cohen’s normative assertions regarding individuals and their subjectivities, faith-based devotions, and sexual relationships, rely on recourse to the private sphere. Insofar as the authors lay claim to knowledge of the private sphere, they also lay claim to knowledge of the female resistor and her character.

2.1.2. Casting Her-Story

Next, I question the presence of archetypes aimed at casting the female resistor’s story. In this instance, both Abrahamian and Cohen’s writings utilize stereotypes of women as

Patriarchal Appendages, Oppressed Veiled Muslims, and Victims of Indoctrination in order to describe their motivations for joining the *Mojahedin-e Khalq*.

The first archetype, women as Patriarchal Appendages, is most prevalent in Abrahamian's writing in which the author recurrently casts female resisters as extensions of their male relatives. The following example is drawn from his account of Ashraf Rabii's history within the movement:

Ashraf Rabii, the most prominent of the women and later hailed as the 'symbol of revolutionary womanhood', was a 27-year-old *widow* of a prominent Mojahed martyr. She joined the Mojahedin in the early 1970s while studying physics at Arya Mehr University and was imprisoned briefly in 1972 for her campus activities. In 1975 she *married* Ali-Akbar Nabavi-Nuri, a fellow student and veteran mojahed who in the 1972 trials had been given a three-year prison sentence. After the *marriage*, she went underground, and together *with her husband* successfully stemmed the Marxist inroads into the provincial branches. During this period she worked as a seamstress in Mashhad, Tabriz, and Qazvin. And after her *husband's* death in a police shoot-out in 1976, she was caught and sentenced to life imprisonment. Rabii and Rajavi were *married* soon after the revolution. The *marriage* ceremony was conducted by Ayatollah Taleqani. Some claimed that the *marriage* was prompted- at least, in part- by Rajavi's desire to strengthen his position among those who had not been inside his prison commune for Ashraf Rabii, as the *widow* of Nabavi-Nuri, was regarded as one of the most prominent Muslim mojaheds who had managed to continue armed struggle during the dark years of 1972-6 (Abrahamian 1989, 181; *emphasis added*).

This practice is observed again when we consider Abrahamian's account of Azar Rezai's experiences within the movement:

Azar Rezai, another prominent woman mojahed, was the 22-year-old *sister* of the Rezai brothers... She also spent brief spells in prison during the late 1970's for organizing family support groups to help Mojahedin prisoners and for circulating anti-regime petitions at Tehran Teachers College where she was studying. Azar Rezai and Khiabani *married* soon after the revolution (*ibid*, *emphasis added*).

The same rings true of the biography offered of Maryam Azodanlu (later known as Maryam Rajavi, the first female commander of the MEK/PMOI and National Liberation Army and later President-Elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran):

Maryam Azodanlu was another prominent woman mojahed. She was the younger *sister* of Mahmud Azodanlu who had been in the organization since the early 1970's, and of Narges Azodanlu who had sided with the Marxists and died under police torture. Joining the Mojahedin in 1977 while studying Mineralogy at the Arya Mehr University, Maryam Azodanlu helped organize women's groups and campus demonstrations against the Pahlavi regime. Soon after the revolution, she *married* Mehdi Abrishamchi of the Politburo. And six years later, she *married* Rajavi and was declared to be the 'equal leader of the Mojahedin organization' (*ibid*, 182; *emphasis added*).

Here, the author does not simply reference a woman's role as a sister, wife and/or widow; but rather, through a disproportionate representation of such responsibilities, reduces her to her role as sister, wife and/or widow. Insofar as women's stories are captured by the author, the primary contents of his depictions are centered on the men in their lives; therefore, his accounts serve to strip these women of their foremost agency as individuals and portray their roles in the resistance as concomitant with their roles as Patriarchal Appendages.

Moreover, Abrahamian holds that "The Mojahedin families often treated their female relatives, especially eligible daughters, as valuable assets with which they could strengthen their ties with other like-minded households". The assertion made towards the end of his book reflects an opinion earlier 'supported' by his discussion of women's relationships with various men in the movement. In light of this claim, the author lists off as evidence marriages that occurred between female and male members of the organization (ibid, 234):

Masumeh Azodanlu another sister of Maryam Azodanlu, was married to Izadkhah-Kermani from the clandestine network, Mahin Rezai, another Rezai daughter, was married to Zarkesh from the Central committee. Nosrat Ramazani, well known in the Muslim Student Association at the Technical College in Tehran University, was married to Zabeti of the Central Cadre. Nahid Jalalizadeh, the sister of Jalalizadeh in the workers' section, was married to Saadati in the Politburo. Zakiyeh Mohaddes, the assistant editor of *Nasl-e Enqelab*, was married to Jalalizadeh himself. Taji Mahdavi, a leading figure in the Muslim Student Association at the Arya Mehr University, was married to Tadayon of the clandestine network. Parvin Yusefi, active in the Muslim Student Association in Tehran University, was married to Baqerzadeh of the clandestine network. Fereshteh Azhadi, the deputy editor of *Bazu-ye Enqelab*, was married to Khademi, one of the leaders of the workers' branch. Mahshid Farzanehsa, active in the Muslim Student Association at the Medical College in Tehran University, was the sister of a Mojahedin martyr and married to Moqaddam of the clandestine network. Fazaleh Madapur, well known at Tabriz University, was married to Sayfi of the clandestine network (ibid, 182).

Insofar as these women are cast as 'wives' their involvement in resistance is relegated to that of an Appendage.

Furthermore, this quote demonstrates the ideological assumptions foregrounding Cohen's discussion of marriage:

Maryam was...*married* to Mehdi Abrishamchi, who was a member of the Mojahedin's Leadership Committee. Abrishamchi *divorced* Maryam in 1985 and Rajavi *married* her soon afterwards. It was rumored that there was sexual tension between her and the Mojahedin's leader prior to her divorce and remarriage."(Cohen 2009, 4-5 *emphasis added*)

Here, the author presumes a woman's involvement in marriage as 'passive' wherein she is depicted as divorc-*ed* rather than as an equal and active participant in the termination of her

marriage. Likewise, the narrative offered by the author defines Maryam Rajavi's participation in the resistance in light of such relationships - which he uses to explicitly characterize her and women within the movement in general - Patriarchal Appendages. What is more, Cohen asserts that female resisters of the MEK/PMOI were encouraged to marry and were promoted based on their contractual relationships with men:

Since the women within the organization made up no more than 30 percent of all members, those who wished to marry were allowed to marry only the higher ranks. That stipulation also guaranteed that they would not give up their membership. Such marriages also helped women to be promoted (ibid, 40).

Ultimately, through the deployment of said archetype, both authors cast female resisters of the MEK/PMOI in the shadows of the men who define them and their struggle.

Upon further reading, the second archetype that speaks for women's motivations towards resistance- women as Oppressed Veiled Muslims- is also found throughout both author's texts. In Abrahamian's work this archetype is employed in order to problematize the MEK/PMOI's claims to gender equality. Citing his main contentions with the women's adoption of the *rusari* (head-covering) or veil, the author describes in a passage from his book how this uniform detracts from their practical claim to equality between the sexes:

the Mojahedin, despite their claims that the hejab had nothing to do with Islam, encouraged their own women members to use a modified form of head covering known as the *rusari* (headscarf). The *rusari*, together with the long-sleeve shirt and full-length pants, became the unofficial uniform of female mojaheds. They offered a variety of argument against discarding entirely the whole concept of women's headgear: that the Koran stipulated women to dress 'modestly'; that such covering was part of the national culture of Iran; that the vast majority of women, especially peasant women, felt uncomfortable without the hejab; and that raising the topic diverted attention from more important issues such as the struggle against imperialism and the upper class. One of the leading Mojahedin intellectuals argued: since 90 per cent of women are attached to the hejab, it does not make sense for us to denounce it. If we attacked it, we would alienate the masses from the democratic struggle against imperialism...Such arguments may have carried some weight among women from the traditional middle class, but they received no sympathy among their radical counterparts from the fully secularized middle class (Abrahamian 1989, 234-235).

Here, Abrahamian's argument takes for granted that a group of women cannot be considered equal to a group of men if they choose to adopt a *rusari*. Arguably, the author also assumes that female members of the *Mojahedin* were forced to join and embrace the *rusari*; that their decision to wear it could not possibly stem from their own will, and that it is strategically employed to oppress women as a mechanism of patriarchy.

Presenting his readers with a false dichotomy of progressive vs. traditional cultural values based on the adoption of something as innocuous as the *rusari* or as varied as Islam, the author through his argumentation finds himself siding with ‘modern-educated Iranian’ views of Islamic and cultural tradition which draw heavily from Western-feminist schools of thought:

Ever since the late nineteenth century, the vast majority of the modern-educated Iranians- much like the philosophers of the French Enlightenment- had considered religion in general and Islam in particular to be synonymous with superstition, irrationality, passivity, backwardness, theological hair-splitting and obscurantist double-talk; in short, with the bad old days of the ancient regime and the Dark Ages. For them religion meant clerical dogmatism, socioeconomic feudalism, cultural traditionalism, and bazaari closed mindedness. Conversely, science meant secularism, progress, dynamic change, rationality, modernity, irreligiousness, anticlericalism and, of course, intellectual open-mindedness (ibid,153).

Here, the practice of any Islamic or cultural tradition within the MEK/PMOI is presented through the lens of a colonizing teleology of ‘progressive’ values, which essentializes both the group’s respect for Islam as a religion and the women’s adoption of the *rusari* as backwards, passive and irrational. Thus, the female *mojahed*’s adoption of the *rusari* can only serve to cast them- yet again- as Oppressed Veiled Muslims.

Likewise, the narrative espoused in Cohen’s piece questions women’s adoption of the veil insofar as it questions whether female resisters are in fact permitted to remove the headscarf on the organization’s bases. Despite the organization’s identification with Islamic faith, women’s uniforms and their adherence to dress code is still considered problematic:

The Mojahedin objected to the traditional Iranian head cover (the *Chador*), and propaganda pictures introduced the look that resistance women preferred- a head cover which was actually a scarf covering the hair and the neck. During NLAI training sessions women wore a khaki head cover and during parades a red head cover. According to the Mojahedin, while women were not participating in training sessions they were allowed to uncover their heads. On the other hand, no evidence was found to show that women had indeed lived on the organization’s bases with their heads uncovered (Cohen 2009, 76).

Such emphasis serves no analytical purpose aside from casting doubt on women’s autonomy to remove the headscarf and suggesting that if in fact they do not live on the organization’s bases with their heads uncovered then some oppressive measure must therefore be in place.

Ultimately, where female resisters are not cast as Oppressed Veiled Muslims, both Abrahamian and Cohen describe them as Victims of Indoctrination. Abrahamian’s discussion of ‘cults’ and ‘indoctrination’ begins in the latter half of his book wherein he suggests that, over the course of the organization’s development, members’ motivations ceased to stem from political

grievances and began reflecting a cultivated and somewhat perverted dedication to its leaders. As demonstrated by the following quotation, MEK/PMOI resistors are cast as symptomatic of the ‘cult of personality’ the author claims to have formed around its leadership following the Islamic Revolution in 79’:

the Mojahedin had metamorphized from a mass movement into a inward-looking sect in many ways similar to religious cults found around the world (Abrahamian 1989, 251).

This ‘cult’, Abrahamian claims, is among the most devout in the world classing them among the likings of Hitler and Stalin’s followings:

This was a cult of personality at its most extreme, comparable to that of Khomeini at the height of the Islamic Revolution; of Hitler and Mussolini in the 1930’s; of Mao Tse-Tung during the Cultural Revolution; of Stalin during the second world war; and of Lenin, but only after his entombment in Red Square (ibid, 255).

The latter half of Abrahamian’s account ignores earlier narratives regarding social, political, and/or economic grievances in favor of emphasizing the group’s willingness to idolize a charismatic leader. The author thus paints MEK/PMOI members as ‘crazed’ followers whose motivations are delegitimized through a prescribed victimhood. In other words, we are to believe that these women have been ‘duped’ into the principles they espouse and therefore bare little, if any, responsibility for their actions.

Reiterating the notion of victimization, Cohen’s piece makes the indiscriminant claim that members of the MEK/PMOI were driven to resist in large part due to ‘psychological manipulation’ and the cunning schemes set out by the then leader, Massoud Rajavi:

Following the Shah’s educational reform during the White Revolution, thousands of Iranian students were sent to continue their academic studies outside Iran, especially in Europe and the United States. After the Islamic Revolution, however, many of those students felt that they had nowhere to go back to. Masoud Rajavi, who knew how to take advantage of their potential, began recruiting them to the Mojahedin. He abused them by taking the money they had, and by extorting their families for more money under false pretexts such as “necessary” medical treatment. The MISS, which by the end of the 1980’s was a properly functioning and trained organization, recruited members by employing “mental extortion”. Iranian expatriates who did not wish to join the organization’s circle of supporters were portrayed as cowards who refused to help their country...membership depended on ideological and organizational training, and on passing tests on political indoctrination (Cohen 2009, 4).

Here, Cohen describes membership within the organization as universally coerced by means of its ‘monstrous’ leader, Masoud Rajavi. We are thus left to conclude the following: (1) that

membership within the MEK/PMOI is solely Masoud Rajavi's prerogative and (2) that there exists no such thing as an MEK/PMOI membership that evades coercion, rendering it inconceivable that members should have chosen to join the resistance on their own. MEK/PMOI members and female resisters are thereby cast as 'victims' of the resistance rather than as 'active and willing participants'.

Cohen further relies on a personal interview and unpublished account of an ex-supporter of the organization in order to argue that the resisters were reduced to psychological slaves incapable of free thought¹¹:

The Mojahedin were active in their European and Iraqi bases and employed different ideological brainwashing methods so that the members would blindly obey Rajavi and exercise total loyalty to the organization. Below is a summary of the methods and activities directed at members to ensure their indoctrination...All members were required to forget the outer world and their individual entity- they were to adopt the Mojahedin's organizational entity only... Anyone who wished to leave the organization would be brought to trial; the verdict and sentence were known ahead of time (i.e. capital punishment)... In any trial of a member, Rajavi was the prosecutor as well as the judge... The accused had no legal representative and there was no jury... Rajavi was the sole authority in the organization, and dealt with major as well as minor issues (ibid, 36).

What is more, as demonstrated by the following quotation, MEK/PMOI resisters are deemed cult members insofar as they accept the ideological tenants of the movement and have dedicated themselves wholeheartedly to the movement's armed resistance:

Looking only at the Mojahedin's military arm, it seems that active military life of this kind necessarily matches the characteristics and definitions of a cult. Each military unit is an organic one, a unit that obeys orders, accepts indoctrination that refers to its warlike goals, worships the army's general commander (unlike the Israeli Defense Forces, for instance) and follows his instructions and orders (but does not regard it as "psychological coercion", as in point 1 above). The military unit also recruits its soldiers using practical and propaganda techniques, this coalesces its soldiers' identity with regard to their military goals. Furthermore, the army's financial assets are used to serve the leader's political aims and are not used only for soldier's welfare. Aside from point 5 above, all other points do not usually exist in a democratic country's army (ibid, 45-46).

Ultimately, the classification of 'cult followers' reduces resisters to the archetype of Victims of Indoctrination whereby they are described as unreflexive and 'brainwashed' devotees whose grievances either never existed or were purposefully hijacked by elite members of the movement.

¹¹ That of Anne Singleton and her web-document "Saddam's Private Army" available on her explicitly anti-MEK/PMOI website, *iran-interlink.org*.

Cohen, relying on Mehdi Khoshal's¹² testimony, recounts how "Rajavi kept a number of bodyguards who would threaten anyone with execution if they displayed the slightest opposition towards the leader... Rajavi's bodyguards maintained that he was too forgiving and soft. As far as they were concerned the smallest opposition should lead to a single punishment: execution" (ibid, 42). The author thus implies that current members, fearful for their lives, are being held against their will.

Moreover, reflecting on the treatment of women within the organization and citing the very same source mentioned above, Cohen provocatively remarks that:

Contrary to the organization's stated aims... that the most important factor in the way the Mojahedin controlled their people was the abuse of women... According to Khoshal...a woman could not express her personal feelings and thoughts about issues such as marriage or divorce- the decision was made by the organization itself. Women's love and emotions were deemed to belong to the leader Rajavi, who used them in order to make sure men did their jobs and expressed their loyalty to the organization... Absurdly, Rajavi spoke out against the Islamic Republic for abusing women while he himself abused them "in a most abominable manner" for his own purposes. One might ask, was all that done against the women members' will, or not? If it was not contrary to the women's will, then there was no abuse or coercion. According to Khoshal's document, women did object to the way they were treated, but because of the dread Rajavi instilled in them, they were afraid to express their resistance openly, either verbally or practically. Khoshal said that Rajavi claimed all the women in the organization belonged to him...In order to achieve his goals, Rajavi lowered women's status to that of "slaves", although outwardly he spoke about women's liberties (ibid, 52).

Here, the author asserts the commonplace of women's abuse within the MEK/PMOI stating that women were actively forced into submission despite their objections thereby rendering them 'slaves' to the movement. Confusingly, only one page later and citing the same source it is argued, that "Rajavi's use of the promise of paradise *convinced* women to obey him" (ibid, 53; *emphasis added*).

What is at stake within these conflated discourses are two very different portraits that cast women's motivations in a similar fashion: On one hand, female resisters of the MEK/PMOI are independently minded individuals who express opposition only to be threatened into submission and a life of slavery; and on the other, female resisters are 'convinced' rather than coerced into the roles they occupy. Straddling the medium between two extremities of a narrative that serves to relegate women's resistance, the author cannot distinguish whether the

¹² Mehdi Khoshal's testimony is analyzed in Chapter 5.

women in the MEK/PMOI are simply submissive to their ‘captors’ or whether they are in fact suffering from a form of Stockholm or more specifically ‘battered-person syndrome’.

What remains clear is that in either case the agency espoused by said women is not purported to be their own and their participation in the resistance is deemed a result of an alleged manipulation employed by their male-counterparts.

2.1.3. Casting Her Role

Finally, I question the presence of archetypes aimed at the casting of the female resistor’s role within the *Mojahedin-e Khalq* organization. Available in both texts are varying classifications that appropriate women’s roles in the resistance. Whereas Abrahamian’s writing casts women as all three of the following archetypes: Figureheads, Subservient and False Idols; Cohen’s analysis utilizes only the first two.

The first archetype in question- that of women as Figureheads- is discretely utilized by both authors to suggest that women’s leadership within the organization is in large part ‘just for show’. The first of such assertions comes from Abrahamian who takes aim at the female leadership when he writes:

what contributions, either intellectual or organizational, had Maryam Azodanlu made to deserve to be co-leader: and why, if she was such a committed feminist, was she now giving up her own maiden name to take that of her husband (something most Iranian women did not do and she herself had not done in her previous marriage)? (Abrahamian 1989, 253)

Aside from directly challenging Maryam Rajavi’s personal commitment to feminism for having adopted the name of her partner, Abrahamian puts into question her intellectual and organizational contributions to the resistance thereby challenging the merits of her leadership. It is therefore insinuated that the once leader of the MEK/PMOI and NLA was in fact ‘awarded’ the position serving only as a Figurehead with no real qualifications.

Cohen makes a similar assertion when he too questions the integrity of the council’s election of Maryam Rajavi (first as co-chair of the MEK/PMOI (1985-89), and later as Secretary General of the MEK/PMOI and Deputy Commander of the NLA (1989-1993)):

the organization justified her being elected to this position by praising her skills; however, those who left the organization claimed that she was chosen because Rajavi [Massoud] personally oversaw the process (Cohen 2009, 16).

Disputing Maryam Rajavi’s skills and maintaining that her election was a result of Massoud Rajavi’s final authority, Cohen surmises the organization’s corruption and empty portrayal of

women in positions of power. Once more, it is argued that in 1993 the Leadership Council, comprised of 24 female members and deputies of the MEK/PMOI, elected Fahimeh Arvani “to the position of the *Mojahedin*’s General Secretary so that officially Maryam and Masoud Rajavi did not control the *Mojahedin* (although in practice they did)” and “in order to promote Maryam Rajavi to the position of the NCRI’s president-elect” (ibid, 119).

As demonstrated by the following example, Cohen further questions the merits of Fahimeh Arvani in her role as Secretary General as well as the integrity of an entirely female-led Leadership Council. In so doing, Cohen draws the portrait of women acting as Figureheads, as cogs in a machine ultimately being wielded by a single male authority:

He [Masoud Rajavi] was responsible for promoting or demoting people. The Mojahedin's Leading Committee had 115 members, but it was a body created for external appearances only, since all members were in reality forced to obey Rajavi (ibid, 8).

It is such that the author holds that the movement’s entire organizational structure served only to fool those outside looking in.

Next, both authors demonstrate how they understand female resisters’ roles in the MEK/PMOI to be Subservient to those of their male counterparts. Referencing an earlier stage of the organization’s development in the years prior to the full expression of the *Enghelabeh Ideologique*, Abrahamian holds that:

women in the Muslim organization *invariably* served as a *support system* for the men: as couriers, petitioners, homemakers, and prayer organizers (Abrahamian 1989, 168 *emphasis added*).

Despite the author’s inconsistent claims regarding the invariability of women’s roles¹³, here, he casts female members of the MEK/PMOI as Subservient defining their roles as that of a ‘support system’.

Moreover, if we are to take Cohen at his word, then the entirety of the female commanding council formed following the *Enghelabeh Ideologique* served only as an advisory power to the organization’s male General, Massoud Rajavi; that is, despite the fact that the organization had ‘officially’ elected a female co-chair:

Women in the NLAI served in all commanding roles, from Maryam Rajavi, who served for a time as the army’s Chief Commander, down to the leaders of combat units. Many women had senior jobs within the Mojahedin and the NCRI committees as well as in the NLAI. By the end of 1988, seven out of fifteen senior commanding staff of the army were women and a third of the combat forces consisted of women.

¹³ The claim of invariability of women’s roles is analyzed in Chapter 5.

By the end of the 1997, 70 percent of the NLAI commanding staff were women, and they held all the command jobs on the 25-member commanding council. The council's role was to advise the General Commander, Massoud Rajavi (ibid, 77).

Nevertheless, the author implies that the female co-chair's role was disingenuous and therefore relegates the role of the all-female commanding council to 'pawns in man's game' or at most 'advisors to a man's war'. The author thereby confirms his earlier assertion that "Rajavi was in love with submissive and obedient women and that was why he had only female assistants" (ibid, 53). Through the depiction of their roles as unquestioning and compliant, women are thus repeatedly cast as Subservient to the men that lead them.

Finally, we visit Abrahamian's casting of female resisters as False Idols. The author's use of this final archetype stems from his claim that:

the Mojahedin posthumously elevated some of the rank and file women martyrs, especially those related to prominent figures, into leadership positions (Abrahamian 1989, 233).

Positing an example of this opinion, he writes:

Iran Bazargan, a 56-year-old housewife without any organizational position but with many family ties to prominent mojaheds: she was not only the sister-in-law both of Hanifnezhad, the organization's founding father, and of Fatemeh Amini, one of the few women mojaheds killed in the 1970's, but was also the sister of Mansur Bazargan, a leading defendant in the 1972 trials, and the mother-in-law of Khademi who immediately after the Islamic Revolution had set up the Movement of Muslim Workers. When pasdars in hot pursuit of Khademi demolished Iran Bazargan's home and in the process killed her, the Mojahedin eulogized her as yet 'another eternal symbol of revolutionary womanhood'. The distinct impression was given that she had been a leading figure in the organization's hierarchy (ibid, 233-234).

Despite the fact that it is not revealed to his audience what Iran's leading position was purported to have been, the author's claim implies the organization's fostering of false idolatry whereby the *Mojahedin-e Khalq* are responsible for the casting of Iran Bazargan and other female *Mojaheds* as idols beyond the merit of their real actions.

It follows that through such posthumous elevation in rank and file, women's lives, stories, identities, and goals are appropriated to serve the interests of the organization and therefore do not represent a genuine history of their actions, heroineisms, and ideals of revolution. Ultimately, Abrahamian's classification of many female resisters as False Idols claims a knowledge of the dead that is beyond recourse and that denies the full extent of women's agencies or roles as members of the MEK/PMOI.

Having tested the presence of rhetorical frames within the academic corpus dedicated to the study of the *Mojahedin-e-Khalq* organization, we can confirm the widespread use of all such archetypes in Academia. Next, I test the presence of the same rhetorical frames this time engaging a broader sample of discourse produced in the media.

2.2. Western & Iranian Medias

In this section I look to wider examples of western and Iranian medias in order to test the presence of rhetorical frames within a larger body of discourse producing actors. These include: all MEK/PMOI relevant articles published by The New York Times, The Washington Post, *Le Figaro* and *Agence France Presse* dating back to the year 2003; and a representative sampling of the coverage accorded the MEK/PMOI by the Islamic Republic News Agency, Iranian Student's News Agency, Press TV and FARS news¹⁴ media outlets.

2.2.1. Notable Cases: New York Times Magazine and FARS News Report

Before engaging the figures and findings of a more detailed coding analysis of western and Iranian news articles, I have chosen to qualitatively engage two notable examples of journalistic writing that are particularly relevant to the discourse I analyze in this study. The first is Elizabeth Rubin's NYT Magazine piece "The Cult of Rajavi," which appeared in the first column in section 6 of the NYT Magazine on July 13th 2003. I have chosen this piece (and not her more recent Op-Ed "An Iranian Cult and Its American Friends" which appeared in the NYT on August 14th 2011) because in it the author presents her findings following an investigative trip in which she travelled to Camp Ashraf, Iraq; interviewed several MEK/PMOI members; and detailed her thoughts in a piece spanning nearly five pages in length. Given the attention and centrality accorded to this report I pay it special attention in my study.

Second, I examine an article by FARS News in Farsi titled "از ممنوعیت ازدواج تا کنترل و سوء" "استفاده جنسی"¹⁵ published on 24/08/1391 of the Iranian calendar, which concerns itself primarily with the rights of female resisters in the MEK/PMOI and as such speaks directly to the representations in question. Upon dissecting the content of these articles, I demonstrate their 'extreme' conformity with the normative representations of female resisters outlined earlier as well as discuss their relevance within the greater context of the articles analyzed in my research.

¹⁴ Sampling is further discussed in section 0.5.

¹⁵ Translates to "From Forbidden Marriage to Control and Sexual Abuse".

In her 2003 Magazine piece on the *Mojahedin* Rubin's central thesis is made explicit through her attention grabbing title "The Cult of Rajavi"; an exposé offered to its readers as an in-depth look at the *Mojahedin* and particularly the female fighters who populate its rank and file. Introducing her object, Rubin describes the unique position that women occupy amongst the MEK/PMOI fighters whilst simultaneously engaging a rhetorical frame characteristic of those analyzed in this study: "Led by a charismatic husband-and-wife duo, Maryam and Massoud Rajavi the Mujahedeen," she writes, "had transformed itself into the only army in the world with a commander corps composed mostly of women" (Rubin NYT 2003, 1).

Although the later portion of her claim is apt, Rubin's former assertion, that the organization is led by a 'husband-and-wife duo', does two things: first, it belittles the role of the organization's then leader, Mojgan Parsai, who served as the MEK/PMOI's secretary general in 2003 casting her as a superficial Figurehead; and second, it emphasizes the marital relationship between the organization's former Secretary General Maryam Rajavi and her predecessor Massoud Rajavi thereby relegating Maryam's role to that of a Patriarchal Appendage explicitly alleging Massoud's attempts to make of her "a revolutionary queen" (ibid,3).

Next, Rubin's writing further engages the aforementioned stereotypes through her portrayal of the former MEK/PMOI leaders. Explicitly labeling "the Rajavis" (referred to as a unit throughout her article) as 'cult leaders,' Rubin completely ignores the existence of a democratically elected Secretary General and Leadership Council. What is more, Rubin accuses the organization's former leaders of actively engaging in a grotesque brainwashing operation:

the Mujahedeen operates like any other dictatorship. Mujahedeen members have no access to newspapers or radio or television, other than what is fed them. As the historian Abrahamian told me, "No one can criticize Rajavi". And everyone must go through routine self-criticism sessions. "It's all done on tape, so they have records of what you say. If there's sign of resistance, you're considered not revolutionary enough, and you need more ideological training (Ibid, 4).

Substantiating this position, Rubin gives the account of a man she met while visiting the Kurdish Iraqi north named Mohammad (who unlike others cited in the article does not have a last name and cannot be traced):

The first month at Ashraf, he [Mohammad] said, wasn't so bad. Then came the indoctrination in the reception department and the weird self-criticism sessions. He quickly realized there would be no wives, no pay, no communication with his parents, no friendship, no freedom. The place was a nightmare, and he wanted out. But there was no leaving. When he refused to pledge his oath to struggle forever, he was subjected to relentless psychological pressure (ibid, 5).

Beyond profiling his experience as traumatic and lending validity to hearsay, Rubin, in her account of the tactics allegedly used by MEK/PMOI recruiters to entice Mohammad to resistance, writes of deception and exploitation of circumstance:

A Mujahedeen recruiter spotted him and a friend sleeping on the streets, so hungry he couldn't think anymore. The recruiter offered them a bed and food for the night, and the next day showed the videos of the Mojahedeen struggle. He enticed them to join with an offer to earn money in Iraq while simultaneously fighting the cruel Iranian regime. What's more, he said, you can marry Mujahedeen girls and start your own family (ibid).

Painting a troublesome picture of misguided tactics, the author's claims also serve to underscore the availability of '*Mujahedeen* girls' for marriage. The underlying assertion of such claims is that '*Mujahedeen* girls' are at the disposal of their male-counterparts; thus, depicting them as Whores in the most literal sense. In this case, not only are female resisters portrayed as available for marriage but it is also alleged that they sold as part of a lifestyle of resistance. Insofar as female members of the MEK/PMOI are subject to ad hominem attacks so too is the resistance they espouse; if they are Whores then the MEK/PMOI acts as their brothel.

Further demeaning the motivations of female resisters, Rubin imagines their allegiance to iconic figures of the movement as 'fanatical', "When the U.S. forces toppled Saddam's regime, they were not sure how to handle the army of some 5,000 Mujahedeen fighters, many of them female and all of them *fanatically* loyal to the Rajavis" (ibid, *emphasis added*). What is at stake within this representation is a silencing of individual grievances. In this instance, the author purposefully overlooks female resisters' motivations to arms in favor of disseminating the perception that they are Victims of Indoctrination, whose loyalty can be traced to individuals and not their stated cause. As discussed, the logic of this archetype is two-fold: Implications of this kind not only insinuate a psychological disturbance on behalf of the resistor but they also trap said resistor within a closed discourse of delegitimization wherein she cannot appeal to a different logic by virtue of her prescribed 'insanity'.

Using exaggerated imagery and arguably misleading descriptions, Rubin decides for her readers when she depicts her interviews with female resisters:

One of the most *disturbing* encounters I had in Ashraf was with Mahnaz Bazazi, a commander who had been with the Mujahedeen for 25 years. I met her in the Ashraf hospital. Bazazi was probably on drugs, but that didn't explain the *natural intoxication* she was radiating, despite—or perhaps because—she had just had her legs amputated after an American missile slammed into the warehouse she was guarding. The doctor told me he never heard her complain. "Even in this way, she's confronting the Mullahs," he said. Bazazi interrupted him. "This is not me

personally,” she said in a soft voice. “These are the ideas of the Mujahedeen. It’s true I lost my legs, but my struggle will continue because I have a wish—the freedom of my country.” At the foot of her bed, surrounded by candles, stood a large framed photograph of Maryam in a white dress and blue flowered head scarf (ibid 5 *emphasis added*).

Shadowing Bazazi’s narrative with negative connotations, Rubin sets the stage by planting notions of ‘disturbance’ in the readers mind. Frankly suggesting that the subject had a loose grip on reality partly attributable to drugs and partly attributable to her ‘natural intoxication’ with the cause, Rubin looks past Bazazi’s own words and puts into question her ability to think and rationalize outside the framework of the organization’s mandate. Employing misleading rhetoric, Rubin narrates Bazazi’s story casting it as nothing short of alarming.

The author’s more general observations regarding female resisters in Ashraf employs similar imagery. This time, invested in drawing comparisons between female resisters and forced laborers she writes:

As you pass the checkpoints and dragons’-teeth tire crunchers into the tidy military town, you feel you’ve entered a fictional world of female worker bees. Of course, there are men around; about 50 percent of the soldiers are male. But everywhere I turned, I saw women dressed in khaki uniforms and mud-colored head scarves, driving back and forth along avenues in white pickups or army-green trucks, staring ahead, slightly dazed, or walking purposefully, a slight march to their gates as at a factory in Maoist China (ibid, 2)

Asserting that female resisters are working within a closed and authoritarian system of oppression wherein their work is exploited, Rubin’s description of resisters whom are ‘slightly dazed’ evokes the image of captured women who are unable to think or react properly, who are consumed by their circumstance, and who are reminiscent of cogs in a machine.

Once more, the author alleges the organization to have taken advantage of the presence of female resisters pawning their images to attract political allegiance: “The Mujahedeen has a sophisticated lobbying apparatus, and it has exploited the notion of female soldiers fighting the Islamic clerical rulers in Tehran to garner the support of dozens in Congress” (ibid). Drawing a comparison between “the Rajavis” and “Pol Pot”, Rubin colonizes the opinions of Iran’s political prisoners stating that they consider “the Mujahedeen a plague—as toxic, if not more so, than the ruling clerics” (ibid, 6). Here, Rubin’s claim is problematic not only because *Mujahedeen* supporters and activists comprise a large percentage of those jailed in Iran’s political prisons but also because the author does not provide evidence to support her claim which casts the organization and its members as viral Monsters.

Ultimately, that which could otherwise symbolize heroism and a strong commitment to feminism and nationalism is portrayed by the author as indications of extreme ideological perversion:

I asked Sima, a woman in her late 20's, whether she ever regretted making that celibacy commitment. "When I feel that I'm getting closer to my goal," she shouted in English against the wind, "it's a more beautiful feeling than anything else. It's love." And what was her goal? "I have to teach the women in Iran to feel like I feel inside and rebuild what Khomeini destroyed. He is killing the soul of every person." I noticed that everyone, young and old, at Camp Ashraf referred in the same programmed way to the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini as if the charismatic icon of the Iranian revolution hadn't died 14 years ago. Sima said that whenever she lapsed into the "normal girl dreams" of marriage and children, she looked around her and said she felt proud. "In the difficult situations, I see happiness in the faces of my sisters (ibid, 2).

Citing the 'programmed' way in which she understood Sima and others at the camp to be referencing Khomeini's regime, Rubin's rhetoric suggests that the resisters, and Sima in particular, are somehow distanced from reality, living in a world apart wherein time is not relevant. Even as female resisters describe their reasons for political resistance and experiences in organization she overrides their views in favor of subjugating them to a prescribed lack in authenticity:

After we stopped and dismounted, I noticed my minder, Madani, asking the girls what words we had exchanged out there in the wind. And when he came back, Bashai picked up her feminist cant about the "crimes of the misogynist regime" in Tehran and how Maryam paved the way for women to "qualify for a hegemonic role" in the army's general staff. As she would say later, "Women under Khomeini commit suicide; women here become responsible (ibid ,3).

Suggesting to her readers that Bashai's feminism is not genuine and that it is reflective of her minder's presence, Rubin here casts female resisters as Subservient drones controlled by the men who navigate them. Once again casting them as dubious appendages, Rubin makes the exaggerated claim that female resisters of the MEK/PMOI are nothing but an "army of Stepford wives" (ibid, 6). Ultimately, female resisters, their stories, and their roles are all undermined by the author's prescription.

Next we unpack a second article this time authored by FARS News Agency in Farsi titled: "از ممنوعیت ازدواج تا کنترل و سوء استفاده جنسی"¹⁶. In this article, FARS News addresses the issue of women's rights in the MEK/PMOI in order to highlight the atrocities allegedly committed by the organization against its female members. Over the course of seven pages the

¹⁶ Translates to "From Forbidden Marriage to Control and Sexual Abuse".

exposé engages issues such as: forbidden marriage, sexual misconduct, physical abuse, women's rights towards motherhood and starting a family, as well as the crimes of 'cult leaders' with respect to female members of the MEK/PMOI.

Setting the foreground for such discussion, the agency first describes members of the MEK/PMOI as 'victims of terrorism,' explicitly stating that they have been taken hostage by the organization's leadership:

FARS news agency quoted the "Association for the Defense of Victims of Terrorism." Victims of terrorism are divided into two categories. The first category is comprised of those who are exposed to terrorist attacks. Usually when referring to victims of terrorism we refer to victims of this category. But there exists a second category that so far has received little attention. This category is comprised of those members of the terrorist cult who find themselves members as a result of inhumane conditions and in conditions against their human rights find themselves forced into the group's camp and taken hostage. Members of the terrorist sect *Mojahedin-e Khalq* living in Iraq (Camp Liberty) are part of the latter category of those who have fallen victim to terrorism and have been taken hostage by this sect. This issue is of utmost importance as it pertains to the one thousand *Mojahedin-e Khalq* members that are women. They are either single or they have divorced their husbands or they live alone. This is wanted by the cult. They are induced to devote themselves to this sect and the cult-leaders' desires to achieve salvation (FARS NEWS 1391,1 Author's Translation¹⁷).

In so doing, the article aims to substantiate its own tautological rhetoric whereby female resisters are cast as Victims of Indoctrination whose captivity and brainwashing is assumed by virtue of their involvement with the MEK/PMOI. Moreover, the narrative offered by FARS News denies the possibility for female resisters to have autonomously involved themselves with the organization; which, in turn, allows the article to frame the decisions made as part of a resistor's lifestyle adoption in terms of 'crimes that are committed against their will'.

Portrayed in this way, the decision made by resisters to abstain from marriage is usurped and unfaithfully represented as a forceful violation of their rights:

The rights to marriage and family are the most simple and basic of every individual's fundamental rights; these, and other fundamental rights such as the right to a job and

¹⁷به گزارش خبرگزاری فارسی به نقل از «انجمن دفاع از قربانیان تروریسم». قربانیان تروریسم به 2 دسته کلی تقسیم می شوند، دسته اول کسانی هستند که هدف حملات تروریستی قرار میگیرند. معمولاً هر جا از قربانیان تروریسم یاد میشود منظور از قربانیان، این دسته هستند. اما دسته دوم نیز وجود دارند که تا کنون کمتر مورد توجه قرار گرفته اند. این دسته همان اعضاء گروهک تروریستی اند که تحت شرایط ضد حقوق بشری به عضویت این گروهها در آمده و در وضعیت های غیر انسانی به انجام اقدامات تروریستی وادار میشوند یا در اردوگاههای این گروههای تروریستی گروگان گرفته میشوند اعضاء فرقه تروریستی مجاهدین خلق ساکن در عراق (کمپ لیبرتی) از جمله دسته دوم قربانیان تروریستی اند که در اسارت این فرقه گرفتار شده اند. این موضوع وقتی مهمتر جلوه میکند که هزار تن از اعضاء فرقه مجاهدین خلق را زنان تشکیل میدهند. آنها یا مجرد هستند یا از شوهرهایشان طلاق گرفته اند و کاملاً تنها زندگی میکنند. این خواست فرقه است. به آنها القاء شده که خود را وقف فرقه و خواسته های رهبران فرقه کنند و اینگونه به رستگاری برسند.

a place to live are inalienable and no one can take away the right of another. The women members of the sect in Iraq are denied this fundamental right (ibid, 3 Author's Translation¹⁸).

Beyond reaffirming the article's assertion that women are denied the capacity for self-determination within the MEK/PMOI 'cult' structure, this quote alleges that female members of the MEK are forced into a life without marriage and children. Rather than engage a woman's inalienable right to self-determination and a woman's right to choose, the article makes reference to a woman's rights by way of her potential relationships with men (Patriarchal Appendage) and in light of her capacity to bare children (Mother). As such, female resisters, first cast as Victims of Indoctrination, are further portrayed as Patriarchal Appendages and Mothers.

Once more, throughout the article the MEK/PMOI organization is repeatedly referred to, and branded as, a sect engaged in religious heresy:

Terrorist sect Mojahedin-e Khalq (religious hypocrites) (ibid, Author's Translation¹⁹).

Here, the label of *Monafegheen*²⁰ is intended to undermine the organization's respect for Islam and portray its members as misguided. Resisters are thus prescribed as Heretics distinguishable via their 'perverted' interpretation of religion. The attribution of perversion is also extended to substantiate claims regarding the organization's engagement in terrorizing practices. As such, the article contends that female members of the MEK/PMOI are unjustly removed of their 'natural' aptitudes for child rearing and motherhood by way of 'horrific' means:

In order to eliminate any maternal tenderness or the possibility for women to return to previous conditions, this cult, during the establishment of Camp Ashraf, in an inhumane and terrifying scenario adopted a plan of female sterilization (ibid, 3 Author's Translation²¹)

Beyond portraying MEK/PMOI members as diabolical, this narrative implies two things: first, that there exists an essentially feminine quality of 'maternal tenderness'; and second, that in the absence of her uterus a woman is removed of her capacity for 'tender' child rearing. Ultimately, the audience is led to believe that female resisters are savagely and forcefully 'incapacitated'

¹⁸ "حق ازدواج و تشکیل خانواده از ساده ترین حقوق اولیه و بنیادین هر فرد است. این حق مانند حقوق اولیه دیگری نظیر داشتن شغل و انتخاب محل زندگی سلب نشدنی است و هیچ کس نمیتواند این حق را از دیگری سلب کند. اما زنان عضو فرقه در عراق از این حق بنیادی محرومند."

¹⁹ "فرقه تروریستی مجاهدین خلق (منافقین)"

²⁰ *Monafegheen* or 'منافقین' is used by Iranian media as the plural form of منافق or 'Monafeq', which translates to 'religious hypocrite'.

²¹ "این فرقه برای از بین بردن هر گونه عطفیت مادری و یا بازگشت احتمالی زنان به شرایط قبل، در سالهای استقرار در پادگان اشرف، طی یک سناریوی خوفناک ضد بشری طرح عقیم کردن زنان را پیاده کرد."

towards motherhood and care. What is more, FARS News goes so far as to suggest that female MEK/PMOI members are subjugated to sterilization as part of a genocidal plan devised by the ‘cult’s leader’ Massoud Rajavi:

Massoud Rajavi announced that his [the doctor’s] first and foremost responsibility is to remove women’s uteruses...Forbidding marriage and the sterilization of marriage are attempts to interrupt the generations of those living in Ashraf. In reality this issue is one of genocide. In international law, any effort intended to prevent births of a group, clan or tribe, constitutes genocide (ibid, Author’s Translation²²).

Ultimately, despite the organization’s claims to having a democratically elected Leadership Council comprised entirely of women, the article contends that Massoud Rajavi (the organization’s former Secretary General) continues to be the sole authority in power. This not only implies the superficial nature of women’s leadership within the organization but it also assumes women’s practical subservience. Therefore, the greater narrative espoused by this article carries with it ideological assumptions that lay claim to women’s roles as Subservient Figureheads, all the while implicating them in a genocide characteristic of the organization’s monstrosity.

In summary, both articles exemplify extreme cases of the normative discourse tested for in this chapter; therefore, we must ask if the tropes outlined above are indicative of larger trends in western and Iranian medias? In light of this question I have coded for these stereotypes across 265 western and Iranian media articles in English, French, and Farsi and present my findings below.

2.2.2. Figures & Findings

Next, I test the presence of our archetypes amidst a sampling of western and Iranian media’s coverage of the MEK/PMOI. In so doing, I am able to quantify the frequency and intensity of said rhetorical devices as well as uncover their patterns of emergence. Suggesting interesting trends that I aim to deconstruct are the following findings: In sum across all categories of archetype, western media articles contain at least one stereotype 54% of the time while in sum across all categories of archetype, Iranian media articles contain at least one stereotype 93% of the time. Below, this data is presented in light of our three analytical

²²“توسط مسعود رجوی ابلاغ شد که اولین و مهمترین مسئولیت او برداشتن رحم زنان است”
“ممنوعیت ازدواج و عقیم کردن زنان عملاً تلاش برای انقطاع نسل اعضاء ساکنان اشرف است. در حقیقت این موضوع یک نسل کشی است. در حقوق بین الملل هر گونه تلاش هدفمند برای جلوگیری از زاد و ولد یک گروه، قبیله یا قوم، مصداق نسل کشی است.”

categories: Character, Narrative, and Role; beginning with a look at the most prominent archetypes found in each field. Where relevant I also filter for variables such as media outlet, language, and author affiliations in order to uncover interesting/helpful trends.

Coding for Person

Testing uniquely for representations of character, the most prevalent archetype reflected in my findings is that of the ‘Monster’. Unanimously present across all eight news agencies, female resisters of the MEK/PMOI are repeatedly cast to varying degrees of intensity as brute savages capable of horrific crimes. Such brutality is often depicted alongside the unsubstantiated assertion that the MEK/PMOI, while under the leadership of Maryam Rajavi, were implicated in a violent and arguably genocidal offensive on the Iraqi Kurdish populations in the north:

In 1991, when Mr.Hussein crushed a Shiite uprising in the south and attempted to carry out a genocide against the Kurds in the north, the Rajavis and their army joined his forces in mowing down the Kurds. Ms.Rajavi told her disciples, “Take the Kurds under your tanks, and save your bullets for the Iranian Revolutionary Guards”(Rubin NYT July 13th 2003, 2).

The uncorroborated words here attributed by the journalist to the former MEK/PMOI leader paint the picture of a resistor devoid of humanity whilst simultaneously subjugating her leadership to that of the Iraqi army. Such characterizations of monstrosity serve to excuse her of rationality and political agency in favor of reducing her to the wretched. Moreover, attributing similar characteristics of monstrosity to members of the organization, scores of Iranian media articles cite the brutal tactics used by the organization to ensure against ‘defection’:

Testimonies made by former MKO²³ members reveal an immense pressure on many residents of Camp Ashraf who want to escape but are afraid and unsure of the future. They saw scores of members have recently been killed by the organization and that MKO guards open fire on defectors before they can exit the camp (Press TV November 28th 2011, 1).

Unique to Iranian media, graphic descriptions of the horrific crimes alleged to the organization are also depicted:

Women are fooled by the group’s leaders to feel a need for surgery but then go under hysterectomy unknowingly, the report said, adding that over 150 women have already had hysterectomy in the Camp (FARS News November 6th 2011, 1).

²³ The Iranian Government often refers to the MEK/PMOI by the acronym MKO “*Mojahedin Khalq Organization*”.

Similarly, many sources hint at the organization's alleged encouragement of suicide; conceiving of the female resisters as 'crazed avengers' whose monstrosity is brought to bear with the promise of divinity and afterlife:

L'OMPI est une organisation... où le suicide est encouragé comme une élévation au martyr (Chichizola LF July 19th 2003, 1).²⁴²⁵

Moreover, citing the potential danger brought on by the pathology of suicide alongside the claim that the group's dissidents face threats for speaking of such matters openly, the discourse affirms its own contentions of monstrosity:

En dépit des menaces dont ils font l'objet, les dissidents veulent continuer à dénoncer les Moudjahidine du Peuple: "Un mouvement qui demande a ses membres de s'immoler par le feu quand un de ses chefs est arrêté... peut être très dangereux (AFP June 20th 2003, 1).

In other words, the author's appeal to fear (*argumentum ad metum*) lends credence to the portrayal of dissidents' claims regarding the *Mojahedin's* monstrosity. In this case, not only is the narrative of monstrosity evoked but it is also aroused within a rhetorical system of argumentation that seeks to legitimize its own validity.

Statistically, my findings demonstrate that 21% of the 126 western articles analyzed contain at least one appeal to the Monster archetype. Accordingly, the usage of the Monster archetype is highest throughout articles published by *Le Figaro* where it is embedded in 33% of the 27 articles examined. The second highest incidence rate can be seen in the Washington Post where 22% of the 45 articles examined contain evidence of the Monster archetype followed by the New York Times, which sees the Monster archetype in 16% of the 37 articles examined. The journal that sees the least usage of the Monster code is *Agence France Presse* whose single case accounts for 6% of the 17 articles examined. In all four cases, the average intensity of the codes ranges from 1.3 to 2.0²⁶ demonstrating 'moderate' usage of the archetype. Notably, the Monster archetype is present throughout 64% of Iranian media articles representing 76% of those available in English and 43% of those available in Farsi. The intensity of their usage is also comparably higher ranging from 2.4 to 2.5.

²⁴ "The department asserted that the group has...trained females to be suicide bombers" (Kessler WP, 1).

²⁵ "MKO gang leaders have prepared plans to coaz a number of members into escaping from the camp to shoot them from behind and also persuade dozens of others to carry out self-immolation- by using fuel bottles which have already been prepared- and commit suicide in front of TV" (FARS News 2011, 1).

²⁶ The codes were rated in terms of intensity on 1-3 scale with 3 representing the greatest possible intensity.

The second most prominent archetype in the Character category is that of the ‘Whore’. According to my findings, although the Whore narrative is evoked less frequently than the Monster narrative, female resisters of the MEK/PMOI are nonetheless depicted in tandem with their distracting sexuality, sexual deviance, and/or sexual slavery. Highlighting a ‘seductive’ quality, this first example captures the way in which female resisters are often portrayed as sexualized bodies:

Son retour en France, début 2003, avait alerté la DST. Flanquée de haut dirigeants, Maryam Radjavi avait mystérieusement quitté l’Irak pour regagner Auvers-sur-Oise. Une décision inquiétante pour ceux qui, depuis bientôt trente ans, surveillent cette femmetour à tour ambassadrice séduisante et militante implacable soutenant, à grand renfort de faux papiers et de noms d’emprunt, la «lutte armée»(Chichizola LF June 23rd 2003, 1).

Insofar as a woman’s political role as ambassador is captured first in light of her distracting ‘seductive’ influence, and second in terms of her political activism, both she and her political motivations are cast in the shadows of her ‘inherent’ sexuality.

What is more, undue attention to women’s sexual relationships or lack thereof serves to portray female resisters as sexually deviant insofar as they are ‘deprived’ of sexual relations:

The groups includes 900 young women but no children because members are barred from having sex, he said (Londo WP March 28th 2009, 2).²⁷

The narrative of prescribed sexual depravity aims to usurp legitimate political grievances in favor of questioning resisters’ character. As explained by Sjoberg and Gentry, when a woman is not cast as perverse or plagued with insatiability towards sex she is often portrayed as a sufferer of erotic dysfunction or described in light an “inability to perform [her] basic function in life, providing men with sexual pleasure” (Sjoberg & Gentry 47). As such, the narrative suggests that a woman who is denied sexual relations misplaces her affections elsewhere as a form of compensation:

Members had to attend weekly ideological cleansings in which they publicly confessed their sexual desires. Members were even forced to divorce and take a vow of lifelong celibacy to ensure that all their energy and love would be directed towards Maryam and Massoud (Rubin NYT August 14th 2011, 2).

What is more, in cases where the female resistor is not portrayed as sexually distracting or deviant she is cast as male-property. As previously mentioned, the Whore archetype is echoed to a far lesser extent than the Monster narrative. Although present, my findings demonstrate that

²⁷ “MEK members at Camp Ashraf wear military clothing and adhere to a doctrine that requires mandatory divorce for married members as well as celibacy” (Tate & Warrick WP July 6th 2012, 3).

only 7% of western articles examined include evidence of the Whore narrative. We can thus conclude that although the Whore archetype is real and present it remains marginal within western media depictions of female resisters in the MEK/PMOI. Moreover, it is important to note that while all four western sources demonstrate usage of the Whore narrative, the New York Times leads ahead of the rest showing evidence of the code across 11% of the articles examined. Finally, the average intensity of the codes ranges from 1.0 to 2.0 indicating a ‘moderate’ usage of the archetype.

When we compare those figures to the findings drawn from the Iranian media sampling we notice an interesting disparity. When factoring in Iranian media in both English and Farsi one finds that the archetype is present throughout 18% of the articles, roughly twice as often as in western media. Moreover, when we consider the English Iranian articles alone, the frequency is even higher at 21%. The intensities also range from 2.1 to 3.0 reflecting a much more emphatic usage of the archetype in Iranian media. Interestingly, the focus of the narrative remains much the same; both western and Iranian medias are primarily concerned with female resistor’s sexual desires and the issue of celibacy:

It [the letter] also referred to the terrible conditions of women in Camp Ashraf, and said the female members of the group are forced to choose a single life (FARS News November 6th 2011,1).

Taking for granted the assumption that female resisters are forced into their involvement at Camp Ashraf another headline reads, “MKO Members in France Suffering Extreme Debauchery, Psychological Problems”(FARS News 2011, 1). That same article also goes on to state that “members of the MKO in the camp are deprived of marriage they are also involved in unusual sexual affairs with their inmates.” (ibid). Beyond outlining their sexual depravity, the Iranian media goes so far as to suggest the resisters’ resultant perversions underscoring both their Whorish and Monstrous qualities. Finally, some even suggest that female resisters are all married to Massoud Rajavi:

children and wives prevented them from a good combat, so, he [Massoud Rajavi] dismantled the families like a wolf sending the children to foreign countries and coerced wives to divorce. Thenceforth he himself married them (ISNA June 23rd 2012, 2).²⁸

²⁸ ““Rajavi abused women in the Camp Ashraf sexually and there is a list of 100 young girls and women who had gone under surgical operations to be raped by Rajavi”” (FARS News December 24th 2012, 1).

Serving as an example of the Iranian media's greater conformity with stereotypical representations of female resisters, this narrative (albeit extreme) suggests that female resisters of the MEK are the wives, and, thus, Whores of the organization's former leader.

Largely absent from western media articles, the archetype of Heretic is uniquely pronounced within Farsi Iranian news articles wherein it accounts for 89% of all the articles in question. Used at an average intensity of 2.4 the archetype is widely employed to demonstrate that resisters of the MEK/PMOI are religious misbelievers or more specifically 'religious hypocrites'²⁹. Used in the context of a largely religious national citizenry one can understand how the language of heresy and the branding of an opposition and its members as Heretic serves to undermine their ideological and religious views so as to destabilize their support domestically. Typically, the term '*Monafegheen*' is utilized alongside historical narratives depicting the organization's ideological progression towards religious hypocrisy.

Finally, while examining the archetype of women as Mother, we notice an interesting variance amongst western and Iranian news medias. On average the use of the Mother narrative is relatively low across western sources accounting for only 4% of the articles; however, a different story is brought to light when we examine its usage across Iranian medias. In Farsi, the Mother archetype is only used across 8% of the articles, whereas in English, the stereotype of women as Mothers is utilized across 19% of the sampling.

Although the reasoning for this disproportionality is unclear, it might suggest that the appeal to Motherhood is emphasized for international or English-speaking audiences who share in western and liberal feminist ideologies. Often framed within a discourse of human rights, female resisters' decisions to abstain from Motherhood are repeatedly problematized across different English Iranian news sources:

women in the MKO stronghold in Iraq are deprived of their most basic rights like marriage, pregnancy and even hairdressing. It is also revealed that the MKO ringleaders even force married women to divorce and force them to have hysterectomy in a bid to avoid pregnancies (FARS News December 4th 2011, 1).

Inextricably linking the female body to Motherhood by conceiving of it as a fundamental human right, female resisters of the MEK/PMOI are thus reduced to their (in)capacity to bear children. What is more, it is argued that in cases where women do not bear children it is not by virtue of the woman's choice but rather it is forced upon them, either through severe restrictions on her

²⁹ In Iranian media articles, the MEK/PMOI are often referred to as منافقين or '*Monafequeen*' which is a colloquial application of the plural form of منافق or 'Monafeq', which is defined as 'religious hypocrite'.

sexual freedoms or physical mutilation whereby her reproductive organs are savagely removed. This rhetoric of physical mutilation (uniquely employed by Iranian media) often carries with it connotations of the essentially 'feminine' and references to the womb as a defining feature of woman's being:

ringleaders of the cult believe that once women undergo hysterectomy, they will be devoid of female sentiments and better suit the goals and activities of the group (FARS News November 6th 2011, 1).³⁰

What is at stake within this representation is the symbolic and ideological reproduction of women as Mothers. Framed in terms of a bid to 'save' these women, the stereotype repeatedly casts female resisters as victims who are forcefully denied the ability to fulfill their 'most basic human function'.

Ultimately, this narrative excommunicates ideas of womanhood formed outside of or free from the paradigms of Motherhood and denies women the ability to choose a life of political agency for themselves.

Coding for Story

In this section, I test the presence of archetypes casting the female resistor's story, these include: Victims of Indoctrination, Patriarchal Appendages and Oppressed Veiled Muslims. The most prominent archetype confirmed throughout my research is that of women as Victims of Indoctrination. Representative of the most common archetype across all three sections; coding for women as Victims of Indoctrination results in a frequency equaling nearly one-third of all western media articles and two-thirds of all Iranian Media articles. Distinguishable through a vocabulary of delegitimization, wherein resisters are described as 'brainwashed' and/or 'indoctrinated' into a life of resistance, the archetype of women as Victims of Indoctrination can take several forms, all of which serve to suggest that the resistor's grievances and will to action are not her own:

Iraq's national security adviser said Friday that the government intends to move an Iranian opposition group from its sanctuary near the Iranian border to a location where leaders and "brainwashed cult members" will be separated and later "detoxified"(Londo WP March 28th 2009, 1).³¹

³⁰ "One of the most inhumane practices carried out within the MKO terrorist organization is the misuse of modern science to make women infertile" (Press TV October 21st 2008, 1).

³¹ "The women members who have dedicated their family life, children and husbands to the cult leaders are totally separated from the outside world by the removal of their womb. In the organization, the hysterectomy surgery is considered as reaching the peak" (ibid, 1).

As such, representations of her story that conform to this archetype serve to distract the audience from her real motivations in favor of representing her journey to resistance as misguided and even coopted:

“It is a mystical cult,” said Ervand Abrahamian, a history professor at Baruch College who has written the most authoritative history of the organization. “It’s the stress on obedience to the leader that has kept it going rather than any political program. If Massoud Rajavi got up tomorrow and said the world was flat, his members would accept it” (Sciolino NYT June 30th 2003, 2).

Interestingly, this narrative of cooptation often evokes similar terminology as that used by authors Abrahamian and Cohen. Referring to the MEK/PMOI as a ‘cult of personality’, the following excerpt contains traces of the academic discourse:

Quant au discours de l’Ompi sur sa volonté d’apporter le démocratie à l’Iran, il doit être apprécié à l’aune du caractère extraordinairement autocratique du mouvement, où règne un culte de la personnalité exacerbé. Ses membres doivent être aveuglément dévoués à Massoud Radjavi et à son épouse, et la moindre critique se paye au prix fort (Leclerc & de Belot LF June 20th 2003, 1).

Once more, the ‘cult’ label is explicitly employed as an ad hominem attack against the organization and its members:

the MEK is a hated cult (Warrick WP December 26th 2011, 1).

In so doing, the narrative may even offer ‘similarly classified groups’ to the readers so as to etch a categorical stigma and point of reference in the readers’ minds:

No other countries offered refuge to a group that, in addition to the terrorism stigma from the 1970s, has gained a reputation for cultlike behavior...”I see them as a cross between Hezbollah and the Branch Davidians,” said Karim Sadjadpour, an Iran expert with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Tate & Warrick WP July 6th 2012, 2).

Statistically, my analysis finds that in total 29% of western articles show evidence of this trope (that in some cases accounts for as much as 93% of the codes present in the narrative category). More specifically, the rhetoric of Victims of Indoctrination is evident across 6% of *AFP* articles, 29% of *WP* articles, 35% of *NYT* articles, and 37% of *LF* articles. Accordingly, the average intensity ranges from 1.2 to 2.7 demonstrating ‘moderate’ to ‘strong’ levels of usage. Based on these findings, we can confirm the overwhelming presence of this device as a tool of subjugation within western media. Moreover, with the exception of *AFP* (who nonetheless presents some usage of the archetype) all outlets demonstrate a strong tendency towards relying

on the narrative of women as Victims of Indoctrination when representing female resisters of the MEK/PMOI.

The findings demonstrate that these tendencies are even more prevalent and intense when we examine Iranian media articles. My study finds that 59% of all Iranian media articles employ the rhetoric of Victims of Indoctrination. When we unpack further we notice that English Iranian media articles employ the archetype 56% of the time while those in Farsi utilize the archetype 64% of the time. Observing the rates of average intensity, in this case ranging from 2.6 to 2.8, we can assume that the pronounced rhetoric is intensely repeated throughout the articles and often serves as the article's primary focus. In a 2012 article by the Iranian Students News Agency titled "MKO hostages unaware of their basic rights," the cult narrative is elaborated and subsequently substantiated through the professional opinion of former Unification Church member and 'exit-counselor' Alan Hassan:

Defected members of the cult have described life at their Camp Ashraf base in Iraq as miserable saying the organization has been brainwashing its members for the last three decades. A little more than a month ago, renowned cult expert Steve Alan Hassan said that in his professional opinion, the extreme influence (brainwashing) used by this destructive cult (Mujahedin-e Khalq) to recruit, indoctrinate and maintain control over their members ranks extremely high (ISNA April 2nd 2012, 1).

Explicitly positing that female resisters of the MEK/PMOI have been held in captivity and may be suffering from something similar to Stockholm Syndrome FARS News writes:

A defected member of the MKO revealed in March that the female members of the group had been living in captivity for more than 25 years and were not even allowed to appearing public places alone. "It can be firmly said that 95% of the women in Camp Ashraf (the terrorist group's resort in Iraq) have not even been allowed to step in Iraq's public and recreational places alone all throughout the last 25 years," the defector member said (FARS News Dec 4th 2011, 1).

In the same article, it is further stated that, "entry doors have been locked and none of the members, even those suffering from acute diseases and illnesses, are allowed to leave the camp" (ibid, 2). Ultimately, the discourse suggests that the organization's leadership is engaging in a forceful internment of resisters and thereby denying them the possibility for autonomous will. This is to suggest that the resistance espoused by these individuals is no more than symptomatic of the indoctrination and imprisonment they have endured at the hands of their leaders.

Also prevalent is the narrative of Patriarchal Appendages, which appears less frequently than the archetype of Victims of Indoctrination, yet is steadily used across all eight media outlets through the use of vocabulary such as 'wife', 'sister', 'widow' etc. As previously discussed, the

rhetorical function of such discourse is to portray females as male subjects thereby denying them individual autonomy and political will. Insofar as women are portrayed as appendages to their male-counterparts they are reduced to second-class citizens in the story of their lives.

As per the results of my study, the narrative of women as Patriarchal Appendage is present in 15% of the western media articles in question. This number represents the total percentage of incidence across all four media outlets. However, if we look at individual media outlets we notice an interesting divergence. When examined independently we observe that *AFP* and the *WP* demonstrate fewer cases of the archetype than the *NYT* and *LF*. More specifically, the rhetorical device is found across 6% of *AFP* articles and 2% of *WP* articles, whereas, the device is present across 32% of *NYT*'s articles and 19% *LF* articles. We can thus conclude that the propensity to cast female resisters of the MEK/PMOI as appendages to their male-counterparts is split irrespective of the media's language and country of origin; in other words, both French and English (American) papers show similar trends with regards to their use of the archetype.

The archetype is also visible across 17% of all Iranian articles. What is more, the English Iranian articles employ the archetype nearly twice as often as those in Farsi: the rhetoric of women as Patriarchal Appendage is present across 20% of the English Iranian articles and only 11% of those in Farsi. Moreover, across all eight media outlets the usage of the narrative is demonstrably similar. Most outlets reference female resisters via their relationships with men in the private sphere. The following examples highlight cases in western media:

L'épouse du leader des Moudjahidin du peuple a été écrouée hier (Chichizola *LF* June 23rd 2003,1).³²

The same is demonstrated within Iranian media where it is commonplace to reference leading female figures as extensions of their partners:

Among those arrested was Maryam Rajavi, considered by the group as "the first lady of Iran." She is the wife of Massoud Rajavi, the People's Mujahedeen leader (Sciolino *NYT* June 19th 2003, 1).³³

There exists one caveat, employing the same narrative within a discourse of rights, English Iranian media will often resort to demonstrating the lack of women's relationships with men as evidence of their captivity:

³² "Massoud Rajavi, whose first wife, Ashraf, had also been killed in Iran." (Smith *NYT* September 24th 2005, 2)

³³ "Maryam Rajavi, Massoud Rajavi's widow" (Press TV September 22nd 2012, 2).

nearly 70% of the female members of the terrorist group are single and have not been allowed to marry anyone in or outside the group (FARS News April 25th 2011, 2).

In other words, the above discourse suggests that women cannot, could not, and would not 'choose' such circumstances. Interestingly, this case, and others like it, demonstrate a negative application of the archetype of women as Patriarchal Appendage wherein women who do not engage relationships with men are defined by their incapacity to do so. Understanding this varied application of the rhetoric also helps us account for the differences between medias. Although the reasoning behind the deployment of this narrative remains unclear it might suggest (as we saw with the Mother archetype) that the discourse of 'rights' and discussions of 'access to fundamental freedoms' are reserved within the Iranian media for English-speaking or international audiences. Whatever the impetus, it serves to perpetuate the image of the female resistor as Patriarchal Appendage.

Finally, within the same category we can also conclude the following: the archetype of Oppressed Veiled Muslim is seldom if ever used. According to my findings, the stereotype of Oppressed Veiled Muslim is almost nonexistent within both western and Iranian portrayals of female resisters. It should be noted that the exaggerated usage of the Heretic archetype within Iranian media might account for representations of misguided religious beliefs; however, it does not pointedly suggest the oppression of women based on interpretations of Islam or the application of the veil. Present in only 1-2% of the overall literature examined, my findings suggest that perhaps the stereotype of Oppressed Veiled Muslims is not as rampant in media representations of veiled women as some scholars suggest. Although present in the academic literature previously examined in this study, the casting of women as Oppressed Veiled Muslims in the context of media representations of female resisters of the MEK/PMOI is rare at best.

Coding for Role

In this final section I test the presence of archetypes casting female resisters' roles within the organization as either: Figureheads, Subservient or False Idols. Where no mention of resisters' roles is made, no code is indicated. Moreover, in cases where female resisters' roles are accurately described (i.e. commander, member, guard etc.) no code is indicated. This section tests only the presence of rhetorical frames that serve to denigrate, belittle, and cast doubt on female resisters' authority, autonomy, and participation.

In so doing, I found that the most prominent archetypes differ from Iranian to western medias. Beginning with the most common archetype, we observe the casting of female resisters

as Subservient across 38% of the total articles examined. Exhibited across 59% of Iranian articles, the narrative is found amongst a staggering 70% of English Iranian news reports and 36% of those in Farsi. Present to a lesser extent within western media, the discourse of subservience is displayed across 20% of English media articles and 14% of French media articles. This narrative is indicative of a propensity to describe women's roles as Subservient to that of a man's.

Ultimately, even in cases where women are described as occupying positions of power, this narrative casts doubt on the autonomy of women's actions and suggests that they are subordinate to a man's authority. The most highly repeated example of subservience (evident in articles from all 8 media outlets) is the assertion that the female-led MEK/PMOI organization acted as a proxy force to Saddam Hussein's army until his regime's collapse following the 2003 U.S. led invasion of Iraq:

In 1991, when Iraq's Shiite Muslim and Kurdish populations answered the call of then-President George H.W. Bush to rise up and overthrow Hussein, Mujaheddin tanks rode to the dictator's rescue. The Iranian exiles opened fire on Kurds and blocked roads leading south, where Hussein's remaining regular forces had their hands full with the Shiites (Vick WP November 9th 2003,1).^{34 35 36}

Here, we witness the repeated allegation that the Iranian opposition group was at the behest of Iraq's Saddam Hussein, suggesting that the organization's autonomy was compromised upon the will of a male dictator. Describing the organization as a 'mercenary' force, the discourse suggests two things: first, that the female-led MEK/PMOI organization is willing to compromise its autonomy and mandate in favor of monetary compensation; and second, that the resistance is so exaggeratedly subservient as to comply with the genocidal directives allegedly commissioned by Saddam. Furthermore, the final quote demonstrates an extreme casting of subservience wherein MEK/PMOI resisters are alleged to have sided with a regime at war with their own people. Ultimately, this rhetoric (which is gravely unsubstantiated in the discourse) strips resisters of their autonomy and the organization of its self-determination, thereby representing a

³⁴ "after being given refuge by Saddam Hussein its members were suspected of serving as a mercenary unit that took part in his violent suppression of the Kurds in the north of Iraq and the Shiites in the south" (Brisbane NYT September 13th 2011,1).

³⁵ «*Exilés en Irak, ces anciens hôtes de Saddam Hussein, auxquels ils surent prêter main-forte dans sa répression contre les Kurdes, subirent un lourd revers à la chute de Bagdad, en 2003*» (Minoui LF October 1st 2012,1).

³⁶ "The world needs to hear Mrs. Tanter's story...the utilization of the MEK by Saddam Hussein against Iran during the Iran-Iraq War from 1980-1988, the role of the MEK in carrying out the murder of Kurds at Mr.Hussein's directive..."(ISNA March 3rd 2012, 2).

collective female-led movement as a subjugated element of Saddam Hussein's war machine.

The second most common archetype and the leading stereotype found amongst western media articles is that of women as Figureheads. Implying a lack of engagement on a substantive level, this narrative portrays a female resistor's role as 'symbolic' and therefore void of any real agency or power. Often, this narrative entails referencing a male leader or supervisor whose 'real' authority is claimed to be greater than that of the female resistor in question. It should also be noted that the superseding authority might also be that of another woman or figure whose power is represented as greater than those said to be actually occupying the positions in question. In the following example, we notice how the imagery of a screen or curtain is evoked to cast doubt on the purported leadership of the MEK/PMOI organization:

L'OMPI utilise comme paravent le Conseil national de la résistance iranienne, et dispose d'un gouvernement en exil, domicilié également 17, rue des Gords à Auvers-sur-Oise. Son leader, Massoud Radjavi, est représenté en France par Saleh Radjavi (Leclerc LF June 24th 2003, 1).

Next, we see the repeated casting of the 'Rajavis' as leaders of the MEK/PMOI despite both Massoud and Maryam Rajavi's official roles within the NCRI³⁷ and the MEK/PMOI's own (and very distinct) leadership apparatus:

What is not in dispute is that the Mujahedeen Khalq, or People's Mujahedeen, the Iraq-based Iranian opposition group the Rajavis lead, has been designated a terrorist organization (Sciolino NYT June 30th 2003, 1).

Normatively, discourses such as these serve to invisibilize female resisters in positions of authority whom since 1993 (following Maryam Rajavi's term as Secretary General) have assumed responsibility of the organization's leadership. As such, references to Maryam and Massoud Rajavi's leadership of the MEK/PMOI outside of their symbolic and temporal importance to the organization exemplify the casting of the female resisters as Figureheads in a movement they themselves operationalize.

Statistically, the archetype's frequency is highest when we examine English Iranian media where it is used across 48% of news articles; however, French media also demonstrates a strong tendency towards the Figurehead narrative employing it across 39% of the articles studied. Together my findings demonstrate that 31% of all articles (western and Iranian) exhibit the archetype. The only media outlet to avoid using the archetype altogether is the Washington

³⁷ The National Council of Resistance of Iran is a broad coalition of democratic Iranian organizations, groups, and personalities that act as a 'Parliament in Exile'. The MEK/PMOI have strong representation on the Council.

Post, which also demonstrates the sole example of the False Idol narrative available within my analysis of western media (and one of only two articles demonstrating the archetype in my study as a whole). Employed to detract legitimacy from the organization, the rhetoric of False Idols implicates the MEK/PMOI in the concerted effort to present false information regarding the dead. The following example, drawn from the Washington Post, demonstrates how the False Idol narrative is used to suggest a falsification of the number of casualties:

he said MEK leaders were probably exaggerating the number of casualties to generate “media clamor”(Londo & Jaffe WP July 29th 2009, 2).

The suggestion that the MEK/PMOI may be falsifying death tolls directly undermines the organization’s recourse to integrity and forecasts the image of an organization whose whole purpose may therefore be put in question. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that despite its presence in academic discourse, the False Idol narrative is almost non-existent within both western and Iranian media representations of female MEK/PMOI resisters. We can only speculate as to why, however, this finding might suggest that the casting of resisters as False Idols is more difficult to substantiate than other narratives. Ultimately, we can conclude that despite the overwhelming presence of both the Figurehead and Subservient archetypes, the False Idol narrative is little to be seen in media representations of female MEK/PMOI resisters.

2.2.3. Meta-Findings

Next, I provide a brief summary of the coding trends available for each of the western media outlets in the following order: *Le Figaro*, The New York Times, The Washington Post, and *Agence France Presse*. Below each outlet’s meta-findings, I also track interesting changes that result from the filtering of author types. In so doing, we can highlight each outlet’s general aptitudes towards employing the narratives analyzed in this study.

The media outlet with the highest overall frequency of codes is *Le Figaro*. My findings demonstrate that 100% of the *Le Figaro* articles analyzed in this study contain at least one code. Moreover, the average number of codes present in each case is 1.7 demonstrating that on average more than one code is present throughout a given article.

Subsequently, the media outlet with the second highest overall frequency of codes is The New York Times. According to my findings 51% (over half) of the articles examined contain at least one code. Moreover, the average number of codes present in each of the articles containing codes is 3.2 - demonstrating that those reports that reproduce the dominant narrative evoke

multiple narratives at once.

Of the articles analyzed in the Washington Post 38% (over one-third) contain at least one code. Again, the average number of codes per article is 0.9. Consistently, the average number of codes present in each of the articles containing codes is 2.4. Moreover, if we remove articles whose authors are recognizable sympathizers of the MEK/PMOI organization (insofar as they are linked as a member, spokesperson, and/or advocate); the total percentage of cases with at least one code jumps to 43% bringing the average number of codes per article to 1. Finally, if we account uniquely for the findings of articles authored by Washington Post journalists (removing those authored by sympathizers, Iranian gov't spokespersons, and other agencies) my findings demonstrate that 57% (nearly two-thirds) of the articles in question contain at least one code indicative of the archetypes examined in this study. This 20% disparity highlights the finding that WP journalists are far more likely to engage in the archetypes analyzed in this study.

Lastly, the media outlet with the lowest overall frequency of codes is *Agence France Presse*. My findings demonstrate that as little as 29% (under one-third) of *AFP* articles analyzed in this study contain at least one code. Moreover, the average number of codes per article with code is 1.8 exhibiting the fact that when looking solely at articles wherein codes are present, more than one narrative tends to be present in each – but fewer such narratives than the other western media.

Overall, we can confirm the widespread usage of disparaging archetypes in western media used to represent female resisters of the MEK/PMOI. Moreover, as demonstrated by the findings highlighted in the previous section, this usage is only amplified when studying Iranian media articles wherein disparaging rhetoric *vis a vis* female resisters of the MEK/PMOI is nothing short of rampant. The consequences of such figures are further discussed in Chapter 5. Next, we examine the MEK/PMOI's official discourse so as to gain a better understanding of how the organization themselves portrays female resisters.

Chapter 3 “My Resistance is Symptomatic of My Enemy’s Monstrosity”

As we left, I asked them to stop. I wanted to see Evin³⁸ for the last time. I looked at Khomeini’s Beast crouching in the valley. How many hearts are still beating behind those walls! How many eyes are looking at the sky and the sunrise behind those little barred windows! “*Be damned! O’you monster! Be damned!*” howled my heart. “*How many dear people have you devoured? How many hopes have you reduced to ashes? Be damned, you who have stolen our loved ones. Be damned for eternity!*” I remembered little Rouzbeh and his great dream, and I screamed to the face of the Beast: “*I swear by God that we will demolish you, we will destroy you!*”

~ Hengameh Haj Hassani³⁹ 2013, 178-179

In this chapter, I qualitatively analyze the organization’s official discourse and platform on the subject of women and resistance using a variety of sources including MEK/PMOI-authored books, memoirs, articles, and affiliated websites published after the *Enghelabeh Ideologique*. This analysis will allow us to conclude what disparities, if any, exist between these representations of female resisters and those available in chapter 2; moreover, they will set the stage for my interviews with members of the organization analyzed in chapter 4. As such, I have divided this chapter into two sections: the first examines women’s own representations of female resisters’ resilience and courage in the face of the Iranian government’s persecution; and the second looks at the transformation of their roles as leaders of the Iranian resistance movement. In so doing, I aim to capture both the organization’s symbolic portrayal of female resisters as well as examine its relationship to their gender-equality platform. Published in the form of books, articles in feminist academic textbooks, and/or platforms on their affiliated websites in the years following the *Enghelabeh Ideologique* the sources used in either section are reflective of the discourse made available by the organization to the public and represent solid grounds by which we can affirm or contest the prevalent stereotypes available in the common portrait.

3.1. (Auto)Biographical Portraits of Political Prisoners: Resilience & Courage

The stories captured by the autobiographical accounts of Hengameh Haj Hassan and Azam Hadj Heydari strongly depart from the representations of female resisters offered in Chapter 2. The authors present a narrative of resilience and courage wherein female resisters are

³⁸ Evin Prison or *Zendān Evin* is located in northwestern Tehran and is notorious for having housed thousands of political prisoners both before and after the Islamic Revolution.

³⁹ Hengameh Haj Hassan is an MEK/PMOI member and former political prisoner who writes of women’s experiences in Khomeini’s prisons in her memoir “Face to Face with the Beast”.

cast as strong in face of the Iranian regime's acts of monstrosity. In their respective memoirs "Face to Face with the Beast" and «*Le Prix de Rester Humain*⁴⁰», Hassan and Heydari detail first-hand accounts of women's resistance inside Iran's political prisons and offer their testimonies attesting to the hidden crimes of the Iranian government.

Hengameh Haj Hassan and Azam Hadj Heydari are both active members of the *Mojahedin*. Arrested in their early 20's during Iran's revolutionary period they each spent years inside Ayatollah Khomeini's political prisons including Evin Prison otherwise referred to as 'Evin University' for its housing of some of Iran's foremost intellectuals, activists, and political figures before the revolution, throughout the revolutionary period, and still today. Following their releases they individually refuted to Camp Ashraf, Iraq from where they continued their involvement with the MEK/PMOI. Active members of over 30 years, these women's memoirs speak intimately of their experiences and struggles in the harshest conditions imaginable.

Given that this dissertation is partially defined by standpoint theory, my approach respects the integrity of experiential authorship and contends that these women be accorded a significant role in the telling of their own stories and the stories whose owners have been permanently subjugated to silence by way of their execution. Admittedly, any autobiography is potentially biased, however, the same is also true of any text. Acknowledging the assistance provided by the MEK/PMOI in the publishing of said materials, I recognize their potential limitations (namely, the possible filtering and editing of the story conveyed in the final product) meanwhile asserting the epistemological importance of examining their narratives in light of the fact that they represent the most cohesive examples of self-portrayals offered by female resisters themselves. Arguably, given the circumstances occupied by female-resisters in their counter-hegemonic struggle, their self-portrayals and published testimony should hold greater epistemological standing than narratives offered on their behalf.

Hassan and Heydari's books are representative of what are only a handful of autobiographical accounts written by female members of the MEK/PMOI. Their accounts, which re-live their personal experiences, serve to demonstrate the integrity of female resisters' characters despite their sufferance from psychological and physical torture at the hands of their captors. What remains unique in their descriptions detailing the Iranian government's savagery (and at odds with portrayals of female resisters' characters in academia and media representations) is the careful accordance of such qualities to the government's policies and

⁴⁰ Translates to "The Cost of Staying Human".

actions intrinsic only to their employment and perpetuation of patriarchy, religious fundamentalism, and tyranny. In other words, these resisters describe the monstrosity of an actor's politics (as well as the biopolitical implications of such monstrosity) and not their inherent person; this, then, may speak to their character but only insofar as they have chosen to act in accordance with a given politics. This belief is best captured through the MEK/PMOI's assertion that: "in our view, a person's humanity and character is cultivated and fostered through his or her own choices and actions" (Rajavi 2013, 91). Ultimately, this distinction proves to be of utmost importance when analyzing their discourse.

Situating her readers, Heydari guides her audience through the harsh realities she faced as a young girl growing up in Iran. Problematizing her circumstance, Heydari argues that within her world she could hope for no more than to be recognized as an appendage:

I want to make clear in what kind of family I was born and raised. A fanatically religious family steeped in the ideology of the mullahs that accords women no value and that sees them created only to satisfy the desires of men. In this design, the woman has no identity. Before marriage, she has her father's identity, after marriage, that of her husband's. And even after the latter's death, she still does not have her own identity, but is recognized through one of her sons whose name she will bear (Heydari 2010, 9 *author's translation*⁴¹).

Seeking her own identity, Heydari recalls her early 20's during Iran's revolutionary fervor, her first time leaving her home to attend demonstrations, and her first challenges to her father's authority. Demonstrating courage through her own acts of defiance at home, Heydari describes her first encounter with a female member of the MEK/PMOI wherein she remembers first witnessing courage in the face of a woman:

She seemed bold, independent and confident. Fascinated by her personality, I followed her... On her face courage and combativeness mingled with goodness and kindness, that up to present I had never noticed in an individual, especially not in a woman ... being at her side was for me a chance and I felt strong (ibid 26, *author's translation*⁴²).

Emboldened by another woman's example, Heydari found through her friend an avenue for

⁴¹ «Je veux bien faire comprendre dans quelle famille je suis née et j'ai grandi. Une famille fanatique et religieuse imprégnée de l'idéologie des mollahs qui n'accorde aux femmes aucune valeur et pour qui ces dernières n'ont été créées que pour assouvir les désirs des hommes. Dans cette conception, la femme n'a aucune identité. Avant le mariage, elle a l'identité de son père. Après le mariage, celle de son mari. Et même après la mort de ce dernier, elle n'a toujours pas d'identité propre, mais est reconnue à travers un de ses fils dont elle va porter le nom» (Heydari⁴¹ 2010, 9).

⁴² «Elle paraissait hardie, indépendante et confiante. Fascinée par sa personnalité, je l'ai suivie... Sur son visage, le courage et la combativité se mêlaient à la bonté et la gentillesse, ce que jusqu'à présent je n'avais jamais remarqué chez personne, surtout pas chez une femme... Être à ses côtés était pour moi une chance et je me sentais forte» (Heydari 2010, 26).

resistance; a means to channel her frustrations as well as assume an active role in deciding her own future. Testifying to the choice she herself made, she writes:

I was the new Azam. I had courage now and I decided to fight for my freedom, and fight against my father, my brothers and their convictions both retrograde and necrotic (ibid 28, *author's translation*⁴³).

Explicitly stating her intentions, Heydari indirectly challenges archetypes that suggest her subjection to victimization and indoctrination at the hands of the MEK/PMOI. Similarly, Hassan's narrative also highlights the way in which she came to affirm her involvement with the *Mojahedin*. A practicing nurse at the time of the Islamic revolution, Hassan had never concerned herself with politics. That is, until she was confronted with the Islamic governments persecution of women in her workplace. She and several of her colleagues became partisans of the MEK/PMOI and as such suffered greater persecution:

Little by little, we found ourselves faced with groups of people who threw acid in women's faces and deluged them with obscene insults, making their lives impossible. All so as to make them abandon their social life. My friends Tahmineh Rastegar-Moghadam, who worked at the Sina Hospital, Shekar Mohammad-Zadeh who at that time was employed at the Thousand-Bed Hospital, and myself, had been identified as opponents and we were often used as targets (Hassan 2013, 19).

Here, her use of the word 'opponent' does more than attest to the persecution she faced as a result of her politics; it owns her politics. Insofar as common portrayals of female resisters depict them as indoctrinated and subservient appendages who act in light of men's politics, Hassan's assertion of her political position presents a stark contrast with the common portrait laying claim to her politics in light of her own struggle.

Shortly after, Hassan and her two friends were arrested on charges of supporting the *Mojahedin* and attending to their wounded. Landed in Evin prison, Hassan recounts the heroism, courage, and resilience displayed amongst her female compatriots. Recalling her chance encounter with her friend Tahmineh in prison, Hassan admits that Tahmineh's courage is what spared her life and the life of others:

I told them that you were only a hospital colleague and that I sometime gave you tracts and that everything you had came from me and weren't active in any other way"... Tahmineh had took the blame and sacrificed herself to protect the supporters and all of those who helped the organization. And she passed off even me, the member of her team, as someone anodyne. She had protected everyone she knew... Tahmineh had taken on herself everything that could be judged as incriminating.

⁴³ «J'étais la nouvelle Azam. J'avais du courage à présent, et j'avais décidé de me battre pour ma liberté, et de lutter contre mon père, mes frères et leurs convictions à la fois rétrograde et nécrosées» (Heydari 2010, 28).

That was how she had saved us and that is why she was executed (Hassan 2013, 44-46).

Tahmineh was not alone. According to Hassan's memoir, countless female resisters did the same. Faced with brutal torture session, beatings with cables, sexual assault, rape, and other intimidation tactics; Hassan argues that female resisters of the MEK/PMOI stood strong even when faced with their imminent deaths. As though directly challenging the Mother archetype, Hassan offers her testimony to life of resistor, Afsaneh Afzalnia, who had been arrested, questioned, and tortured in the hopes that she would give up the address to a safe-house used by the *Mojahedin*. Describing her as fiercely resilient, Hassan remembers how she had been rendered unable to eat due to the savage and brutal torture sustained by her body. What is more, she recalls the ruthless tactics of intimidation used against her and her newborn child:

Afsaneh went to sit down, her head against the wall, then she described the pain devouring her body. They [the police] had put her six-month old daughter, Fatemeh, in the corridor opposite. For six days she had eaten nothing and been deprived of her mother. She no longer had enough strength even to cry. From time to time Fatemeh let a feeble moan escape her. *"They've put her there on purpose to make me crack, to force me to sell my people because of my maternal feelings, but I won't do it, not even at the price of my child's life, I won't be a traitor."* And great tears rolled down her cheeks without stopping. They executed Afsaneh twenty days after her arrest. She hadn't given a single detail (Hassan 2013, 70).

Hassan's testament to Afsaneh's courageous and defiant spirit contrasts heavily with the common portrait of female resisters, which as demonstrated in Chapter 2, often recounts their subjectivities in light of their essentialized relationship to motherhood. The harrowing way in which Afsaneh's story is recounted echoes solidarity with Heydari's accounts of female resisters in Iran's prison. These tales, no short of heroic, read much like fiction yet depict the very real circumstances in which these women had found themselves. Ultimately, their stories have been subjugated by the strength of machinery that aims to exclude their voices from public discourse. In stark contrast with those representations found in Chapter 2, these portrayals of female resisters as autonomous, rational, and courageous actors cast a whole new light on their struggle and movement wherein female resisters are not depicted as victims, but rather prideful agents who have actively pursued and chosen their own fates.

Demonstrating her own resilience in face of torture, Heydari captures through her narrative the autonomy with which she chose courage in place of fear and resistance in place of surrender:

They took me to various places, such as the basement, where they hung me up by the

body and made me listen to the screaming and howling of the executed to drive me mad and make me identify the record...I understood that before the executioners, the determining factor is one's own will. Deciding, even at the cost of one's life, to endure or yield. And I decided to resist, not to capitulate (ibid, 53-55 *author's translation*⁴⁴).

At odds with the common representations of female resisters examined earlier in academia, western, and Iranian medias, Heydari's assertion is one of a pronounced volition, not indoctrination. Once more, Heydari is careful to not present a totalizing account of the female resistor. Offering testimonies of prisoners young and old and from every socioeconomic background, Heydari's writing demonstrates the diversity among those who found themselves behind bars for espousing support for the MEK/PMOI. Thus, what takes precedence in these women's stories is not their conformity and irrationality in face of ideological indoctrination, but rather the sameness of their struggle and a unity defined by the common structural limits imposed on them by their government; impositions which, as Heydari remembers, did not discriminate based on age:

There were also small schoolgirls, whose names I remember : Farzaneh, 11, Forough, 12, and Zahra, 15. Their crimes ? Assisting the Mujahideen ... Zahra, who was 15, was executed September 12, 1981, after six months of torture. She affirmed : « I am a Mojahed » by refusing to repeat " I am a hypocrite " as commanded by Mullah Gilani. (ibid, 67-68 *author's translation*⁴⁵).

Sharing what are often painful memories of torture and the dead, Hassan and Heydari depict the alterity of resistor's beings with respect to that of their captors (who in Heydari's case had been her own cousin) (ibid, 72). This alterity, framed in terms of volition towards humanity or its lack thereof; posits the overwhelming need to 'stay human' so as to avoid folding to 'pressures of inhumanity'. Titling her memoir "The Cost of Staying Human" Heydari suggests that the state, its prisons, and its actors sought to victimize her and others by attempting to rid them of their humanity. In other words, she describes a system designed to force one's hand, encourage deceit, and make of you a 'traitor'. As such, Hassan and Heydari address the issue of choice very

⁴⁴ «Ils m'ont emmenée dans divers endroits, comme au sous-sol, où ils m'ont pendue par le haut du corps et m'ont fait écouter des cris et des hurlements effroyables des suppliciés pour me rendre folle et m'obliger à reconnaître le dossier...j'avais compris que, devant les bourreaux, le facteur déterminant, c'est sa propre volonté. Décider, même au prix de sa vie, de supporter ou de céder. Et j'avais décidé de résister, de ne pas capituler » (Heydari 2010, 53-55).

⁴⁵ «Il y avait aussi de petites collégiennes, dont je me souviens des prénoms: Farzaneh, 11 ans, Forough, 12 ans, et Zahra, 15 ans. Leur crimes? Soutenir les Moudjahidines... Zahra, qui avait 15 ans, a été exécutée le 12 septembre 1981, après six mois de torture. Elle avait affirmé: «je suis Mojahed», en refusant de répéter « je suis hypocrite » comme le lui avait ordonné le Mollah Guilani. » (Heydari 2010, 67-68).

seriously. Rather than reinforce notions of victimhood that serve to remove women of their agency, Hassan and Heydari purposefully engage stories of political prisoners and their defiance. In so doing they defend the image of female resisters, re-defining their legacies in terms of courageous sacrifice and unthinkable resilience.

3.2. Female Resisters: Leaders of a Revolution

Next, I analyze the MEK/PMOI's reconceptualization of female resisters roles as 'leaders' of their organization and movement. In so doing, I call on the following four sources published by MEK/PMOI members, former members, and affiliate organizations: (1) the articles of Sorayya Shahri and Maryam Rajavi in the book "Frontline Feminisms", (2) Maryam Rajavi's book "Women Against Fundamentalism" published in the summer of 2013, (3) Mohammad Mohaddessin's book "Enemies of the Ayatollahs" published in 2004, and finally (4) The MEK/PMOI's adopted platform on women's rights and gender equality retrieved via the NCRI's website.

My reliance on these sources is reflective of the availability of materials outlining the organization's official stance on women's rights and the evolution of its practices and rules. Given the fact that there is no accessible policy handbook detailing the organization's practices and procedures, these imperfect proxies serve as the next best thing informing the reader of valuable information that is not made available elsewhere outside of the organization's apparatus. These four sources detail the public analysis of what the organization has achieved with respect to gender equality and women's rights, as well as provide substantial overviews of the historical progression of procedural changes adopted by the organization. In light of the availability of this information, it makes sense to consult how the organization presents themselves to the public.

Based on my findings, it is my conclusion that the official discourse of the MEK/PMOI explicitly forwards a vision of gender and women's power that is opposed to stereotypes available in the common portrait. Before demonstrating the results of my interviews in Chapter 4, I first examine the historical construction of the 'female leadership' narrative and the changes that led to the adoption of women's leadership as a practice within the *Mojahedin* organization.

Since the MEK/PMOI's inception in 1965, the resistance has embraced female membership and welcomed women and men's involvements in various arenas of activism and struggle. However, the leadership structure remained comprised entirely of men until 1985 when

Maryam Rajavi was elected ‘co-leader’ of the organization heralding a slew of practical and discursive changes henceforth to be adopted. As Maryam recalls:

In 1985, our movement was faced with a crucial question while evaluating its annual reports. The question was, “Why had women’s level of responsibility remained three tiers below men’s in the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran (as the pivotal force of the Resistance)?” This occurred while women were widely present in all aspects of the movement (Rajavi 2013, 88).

Having contemplated various suggestions in light of answering this question, the then leadership adopted a plan which would work top-down “through the participation of women in leadership so that the path would be opened for women’s growth in all levels of the movement” (ibid, 89).

Ostensibly, Maryam’s election and initial title of ‘co-leader’ was intended to accomplish two things: First, address the pressing resolve to accord women representation in positions of power, and second, signify women’s equal ownership or partnership and thus responsibility for the movement.

On a theoretical level, the move towards according women equal share in the resistance was defined as a process of ‘de-alienation of the self’ whereby resisters sought to overcome ‘gender-based ideology’. According to Maryam Rajavi, a trailblazer and proponent of this ideology within the resistance, ‘gender-based ideology’ is an ideology “based on the superiority and supremacy of males over females”, which “finds its roots in the history and culture of oppression and objectification, that enslave women, men and all of society” (Rajavi 2013, 90). In other words, resisters had effectively problematized the ideology responsible for perpetuating the status quo. It was such that re-defining women’s roles within the movement took on the symbolic role of combatting an ideology that is “constructed from behaviors, attitudes, and a culture that is itself a product of oppression and exploitation,” and in so doing re-wrote the narrative that presupposes patriarchy as “intrinsic to the human species” (ibid).

At its core, combating a ‘gender-based ideology’ also meant combating its consequences, namely: the casting and acceptance of roles based on gender. As Maryam explains, by way of this ideology, a “woman develops a quality alien to her genuine human nature; that is, the quality of a subject or a product whose worth is correlated only to its usefulness as a commodity for others”; or put simply, a woman ‘becomes’ a woman (ibid, 91). And thus, proving women’s abilities to lead in all arenas took shape as an appropriate response to overriding this phenomenon and lending credence to the insight that women, men and all persons are equal in this respect. In all, the practical and symbolic elevation of the status of women to that of

‘leaders’ rendered null and void the assumptions carried by ‘gender-based ideology’. What is more, as Maryam Rajavi has asserted, it made it so that within the MEK/PMOI structure “divisions between “women’s work” and “men’s work” are obsolete” (Rajavi 2001, 328). Fundamentally at odds with the common portrait analyzed in Chapter 2, this new ideology and its practice asserts women’s equality (not subservience) and defines them as individuals in light of their own capabilities *apriori* to assumptions based in theories of gender and their relationships to men (appendages).

This revolution in thinking intended for and resulted in women’s empowerment throughout the movement. Not only did female resisters assume commanding roles previously reserved to their male colleagues, they did so successfully. In the organization’s armed faction, women who first became active in the NLA as part of transport, supply, and administrative units would soon take part in military operations and training. As Sorayya Shahri (commander of a woman’s battalion) recalls, this progress took shape gradually:

we first formed women’s brigades in the NLA, which was then an infantry army. Within their brigades women combatants ran all of their own affairs, from servicing their equipment to mechanical repairs. They were trained separately from the male combatants. After they learned the ropes, they began to take over logistical support for the military operations, first with mortars and then artillery guns (Shahri 2001, 186).

Next, Shahri describes how women proved their presence on the battlefields in 1987 during the NLA’s first large-scale operation “Shining Sun” in the southern province of Khuzistan:

Women were organized into two separate brigades, and, for the first time, took the field and fought face-to-face with Khomeini’s forces on the front lines. The enemy’s forces were shocked to find themselves captured by one of the women’s brigades... the women of the NLA demonstrated they were capable and qualified (ibid, 187).

Having demonstrated their abilities, Shahri explains how female resisters had earned their place in battle and subsequently merged with the male brigades for the military operations that followed: operations “Forty Stars” and “Eternal Light”; wherein they conquered the western city of Mehran and penetrated 150kms into Iran. Showcasing female resisters’ achievements in battle and demonstrating their preparedness to take on such roles, Shahri argues “three women combatants of the NLA held off a force of 6,000 for hours” and in so doing, indirectly challenges prescribed notions of female resisters commonly portrayed as unqualified figureheads thrust into superficial positions of leadership.

In light of these accomplishments, and with the same goal of overriding ‘gender-based ideology’ in mind, the organization also adopted other unique practices, most notably, the

dissolution of marriage and ‘ideological-divorce’. As Shahri describes, this decision was made for several reasons including the ability to declare all out war on the Iranian government as well as redefining relationships amongst equals:

To shatter the notion of male-superiority, which bound the hands and feet of our men and women, we voluntarily ended our marriages in divorce so that no one had any responsibility to anyone or anything but the all-out war on the Khomeini regime. Our women chose to take this path to disengage themselves from what the world defined as being a woman, the weaker sex, and to disengage themselves from their traditional role, in which, to be recognized, they required the existence of a husband. In the same fashion, the men, to rid themselves of the notion that they owned their wives, body and soul (and it was these men who inspired the women to strive), had to recognize their wives’ right to choose between a life of resistance and a private life. They had to learn to look upon women not as women, but as equal human beings (ibid, 191).

Rejecting the normative representation of female-resistors as Patriarch Appendages, their actions explicitly contrast with the depictions analyzed in the common portrait. What is more, throughout this process the organization engaged in “several years and thousands of hours of discussions” so as to address women’s concerns and insecurities about assuming positions of leadership as well as men’s hesitations with regards to its acceptance (Rajavi 2013, 93). Positing a clear divergence from stereotypes casting female resistors as Victims of Indoctrination, the MEK/PMOI’s practice of deliberation disproves assertions of authoritarianism on the part of its leaders. Having employed a method of consensus building, the MEK/PMOI made a point of deliberating and fine-tuning their ideological approach to women’s leadership.

Although their struggle against patriarchy was tirelessly calculated, the outcome is described as astonishing even by those who paved the way for its success:

“None of us anticipated what actually happened. This change- a woman in the leadership- brought about a major internal revolution in our movement. For women, it acted like a springboard. The organization’s annual report for that year indicated that the percentage of women in the central council rose from 15 to 34 percent, more than double... The movement’s primary goals, democracy and growth, had become entwined with this drive to emancipate women... We were determined to walk the walk: total rejection of the male-dominated culture” (Mohaddessin 2004, 265).

According to the resistance, women successfully rose up to the occasion and their male colleagues eventually relinquished antagonisms. Together, resistors fueled their collective emancipation and it resulted in “Not single, scattered starts, but a galaxy of liberated women [taking] on key positions of leadership” (Rajavi 2001, 328).

In the years that followed, the adopted changes were adjusted to accord women full leadership status and conceive of them as the driving force for revolution. Having implemented the first step in their plan to address the problem of inequality, the MEK/PMOI “launched a policy of positive discrimination and hegemony of women to remove all traces of male-dominated culture and cultivate an atmosphere that enabled the maturing principles of equality” (Rajavi 2013, 100). Rather than act as a simple reversal of the existing hegemonic model, this change was enacted in order to ensure the incapacitation of women’s oppression within the movement. Moreover, it captured efforts to consciously and symbolically empower Iranian women’s resistance. Here, it is important to note that the organization in its evolution during the *Enghelabeh Ideologique* came to understand women’s empowerment as their point of difference or dissimilitude from the Iranian government. Their reasoning was simple: “Khomeini’s “Islamic Republic” began with the suppression of women; and it will see its demise as a result of women’s leadership”(ibid, 6). Presuming the falsehood of archetypes that seek to cast female resisters as Figureheads, the organization insists on the fact that women occupy hegemonic positions of leadership within the organization.

Ultimately, for the MEK/PMOI, conceiving of women as ‘leaders’ of the revolution means defying the thresholds of women’s power defined by the Iranian government. According to my findings, insofar as the MEK/PMOI claim to have deciphered “the most appropriate goal” of overcoming inequality, they also believe themselves to have unlocked the key to revolution (ibid). This finding rests on the organization’s principal assertion that “Khomeini-type fundamentalism is based on gender apartheid” (ibid, 19). In other words, the organization is pronounced in its belief that that which perpetuates the Iranian government’s stronghold is its monopolization of patriarchy and deployment of misogyny.

Citing Khomeini’s first appointed head to his Revolutionary Council and senior Khomeini scholar, Ayatollah Morteza Mottahari, Maryam Rajavi demonstrates how she understands the regime’s ideological abuse of power to be geared towards women when she writes:

The so-called threat of disregarding physiological differences between women and men is illusive. The real danger, which has had a lasting impact throughout history, is the emphasis placed on these differences to provide the theoretical foundation for gender discrimination. Based on these differences, Mottahari affirms: “Men’s spiritual superiority over women has been designed by Mother Nature. It is useless for women to try, however hard, to defy this reality. Since women are more sensitive than men, they must accept the fact that they need men’s supervision over their lives”(ibid, 21).

Directly challenging Mottahari's assertions (assertions which fall in line with the archetypes previously examined), the organization thus seeks to undermine this ideology by way of proving it wrong. As such, in face of the Iranian government and its ideology, the MEK/PMOI's struggle reveres women's leadership and underscores their achievements in this field. Moreover, the organization's attempts at undermining the Iranian government are no secret. The MEK/PMOI have openly engaged in a war of discourse with the clerical regime explicitly faulting their ideological premises in the hopes of inciting mass revolt and revolution.

Beyond conceiving women as 'leaders of the revolution' the MEK/PMOI have fastened their opposition to regime through their acceptance of the National Council of Resistance's ten-point platform on women's rights and gender-equality in a post-revolutionary Iran, which reads as follows:

1. Women shall enjoy the equal right to have all the fundamental freedoms, including standing for elections, casting a vote, and becoming judges. Women, regardless of their ethnicity, religion or social class, shall enjoy equal rights as men.
2. To combat violence, rape, discrimination and violation of their freedoms, women shall have access to credible judicial remedies.
3. Women are free to choose their clothing. The law on compulsory veiling shall be annulled.
4. Women shall enjoy the right to equal participation in the political leadership of society.
5. Women shall enjoy equal rights as men. With respect to inheritance, signing contracts and managing assets, in the labor market, women shall have equal opportunities as men.
6. Women shall enjoy the free and equal right to choose their spouse, and freely decide to marry or divorce. They shall also enjoy the right to have custody of their children. Polygamy is prohibited.
7. All forms of violence against women, threatening actions or forcibly depriving them of their freedoms are considered crimes.
8. The sex trade and all forms of sexual exploitation shall be prohibited.
9. The mullahs' Sharia laws will have no place in the Iran of tomorrow. Disgraceful and barbaric laws like stoning shall be annulled.
10. Women must have access to social welfare programs, especially for retirement, unemployment, illness, and old age (ncr-iran.org 2013, 1).

In so doing, the MEK/PMOI adhere to a rather progressive standard that understands women's equal participation in political leadership as necessary for combatting women's societal subjugations. What is more, the organization welcomes the standards set forth by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, "according to which, women are the masters of their own bodies and feelings and have the right to control pregnancy" (Rajavi 2001, 330). Insofar as the MEK/PMOI respect and vocally support these principles, they espouse a discourse of equality,

which through its symbolic and practical representations of women as ‘leaders of the revolution,’ accords women and female resisters a special place in politics. Unlike the narratives analyzed in Chapter 2, the organization’s pronounced platform does not represent female resisters as subservient; rather, it actively seeks compensation for “the historical deprivation of women” by adhering to a temporary practice of “affirmative action” so that they may even the playing field and reduce the gender-gap in politics perpetuated by patriarchy and its policies of misogyny (ibid). In its own way, the MEK/PMOI’s figurative and literal casting of women as ‘leaders of a revolution’ serves to address the social construction of gendered-antagonisms in order to overcome their effects in society. As such, the organization holds that humanity and citizens-alike may learn to identify as a united form.

The adaption of this kind of frontline feminism seeks to actively disrupt the hegemonic balance currently favored by Iran’s ruling clerics and the pervasive discourse. The MEK/PMOI’s discourse thus reflects their blatant disavowal of this hierarchy, which relies most heavily on the creation and perpetuation of the oppressed female subject both in discourse and in codified reality (law). Demonstrating a stark contrast with the discourse observed in chapter 2, the *Mojahedin* circumvent prescribed notions of femininity forcing us to deconstruct common perceptions of ‘womanhood,’ and positing the need to re-evaluate our understanding and appreciation of gender-specific characterizations and roles through their casting of female resisters as courageous and resilient leaders. In so doing, the MEK/PMOI represent a strong force in favor of discourse-conscious resistance to gender-subjugations and inequalities. What is more, they render their resistance to inequality synonymous with their struggle to overthrow authoritarian rule and estate democracy in Iran.

Following an analysis of the MEK/PMOI’s own discourse it is my conclusion that their public project explicitly forwards a vision of gender and women’s power that is at odds with the prevalent stereotypes of female resisters widely adopted by academia and the media. Furthermore, given the MEK/PMOI’s political opposition to Tehran, it comes as little surprise that there exists the greatest disparity between their image of the female resistor and that proposed by the Iranian media. Hassan and Heydari’s accounts of courageous and resilient women shatter popular notions of oppressed, victimized, monstrous cult-members and restores agency to female resisters respectively. Refusing to accept narratives that concede ownership of women’s agency and political will, their stories unravel prescriptions of indoctrination and refute the casting of women as patriarchal appendages. What is more, in a concerted effort to challenge

the mullah's ideological assumptions about gender, the MEK/PMOI challenge popular imagination casting female resistors in roles antithetical to those embraced by the common portrait. In so doing, their narrative and praxis purposefully disrupts the status quo.

Chapter 4 “Re-Writing the Script: The Personal is Not Pathological”

It was always the smartest and most gifted kids who joined the ranks of the Mojahedin. This was especially true because our society at the time was so contrived and twisted that in order to know the Mojahedin, in order to truly grasp their viewpoints, principles and ideology, one had to read a plethora of books so that one could understand the difference between Khomeini's reactionary Islam and the Mojahedin's platform as democratic, patriotic, tolerant and progressive Muslims who strongly believed in a democratic, pluralistic republic with separation of religion from the state, gender equality, and truly free and fair elections. You see, despite the regime's atrocious efforts to squelch dissent, the Mojahedin continued to garner support. It was such that they used to speak of the Sazman⁴⁶ very negatively; they'd mark us with many labels. From calling us “corrupt” individuals, to Iraq's fifth pillar, to Marxist-Islamists, to claiming that we played a role in the war with the Kurds... others used to attack the organization and call us “petty bourgeois”... There were those who claimed the opposite outside the country, those who called us “anti-imperialists” and questioned how we could tolerate the Socialists and the Marxists; in their opinion, because we could tolerate other groups we had to be mixing Islam and Marxism ourselves

~ Zahra [author's translation]

They raided our office and the Sepah⁴⁷ started doing what it does now; diabolizing the Mojahedin. They lied and said they found in our office evidence of birth control and things to prevent pregnancy as well as other ‘dirty’ items. The people took these claims very seriously and so the movement's office was closed and later re-opened under another name, Anjomaneh Javanan⁴⁸

~Leila [author's translation]

In the following chapter, I analyze narratives volunteered by members of the *Mojahedin* in order to broaden our knowledge of an understudied organization and its struggle. As demonstrated by the findings in Chapter 2 and the stark contrasts made apparent through the MEK/PMOI's official and symbolic discourse analyzed in Chapter 3, it is clear that we are viewing matters through a lens that is obstructed by all kinds of stereotypical assumptions and narratives. In order to paint a more accurate picture of the history of a movement and its members whose policies have radicalized notions of gender equality and its relationship to (armed) struggled, I have undertaken several interviews with female and male members of the *Mojahedin* and asked them to recount their motivations and experiences. Seeking answers to the questions: How do the MEK/PMOI talk about gender? And how does the *Mojahedin* act in light of such discourse? I undertook interviews quoted here through the use of pseudonym so as to allow for the communication of a first person narrative offered by the members themselves. As

⁴⁶ Translates to “organization” and is used colloquially by members with reference to the MEK/PMOI.

⁴⁷ Or *Sepāh-e Pāsdārān-e Enqelāb-e Eslāmi* translates to “Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution”; it, along with the *Basij* militia comprises the Islamic Republic of Iran's paramilitary forces.

⁴⁸ Translates to “Students Association”.

part of this process I sat down with seven longstanding members of the MEK/PMOI. Although this sampling does not allow us to generalize for the entirety of members' experiences, these interviews are sufficiently reflective of the diversity of the organization's members and satisfy the saturation requirements of this project.

Of the seven interviewed, five participants are female subjects and two participants are male subjects. Due to the nature of the study and its focus on women, this sampling is purposefully intended to reflect 150% more female participation. What is more, three-quarters of those interviewed held formal membership prior to the *Enghelabeh Ideologique*, whereas one-quarter joined the organization following its ideological re-structuring. This sampling is chosen so that the interviews are reflective of the thoughts of those who experienced changes as part of the organization as well as those who consciously sought involvement with the organization following the *Eghelabeh Ideologique*. Through the presentation of my findings I aim to portray their words, stories, and depictions as faithfully as possible.

Who are the *Mojahedin*? What motivates its members to resist? What are their experiences as part of the organization? How was/is their resistance gendered? To what extent is gender equality a factor in their resistance to the government in Tehran? And how does their ideology set the stage for their political conception of democracy? These are just some of the issues that structured my interviews with the members of the MEK/PMOI. In light of such questions, I have divided my findings along the following two sections: (1) Adopting a Life of Resistance: Recounting Motivations, and (2) Gender Equality: The *Enghelabeh Ideologique* Examined. Together, they represent a timeline and history of each interviewed member's involvement in the organization and serve to help us better understand the movement, its principles, and ideology as a whole. First, we look to their personal stories and motivations for taking up arms against the Iranian regime. In so doing, we undercut prescribed notions of monstrosity and learn of that which drew them into a life of resistance, struggle, and vocal political opposition.

4.1. Adopting a Life of Resistance: Recounting Motivations

Prompted by their personal and societal interactions, resisters recalled memories from their youths and cited grievances based in the political, social, and economic spheres. Three primary concerns stood out in their interviews: (1) poverty and class divisions, (2) political freedoms, nationalism and democracy, and (3) women's and minority rights. Invoked in this

order, the stories they recounted ranged from personal experiences of injustice to general concerns resonating from the state of their country. Following an elaboration of said findings, I highlight key events that served as catalysts to members' participation in politics and armed struggle. In so doing, I underscore a number of resisters' shared and individual grievances that acted as direct motivators for their membership in the *Mojahedin*. I begin by tracing resisters' struggles from their earliest memories, and in light of the grievances that they contend directly incited their eventual involvement in political activism. First, I elaborate the most pronounced of three motivational factors observed from my interviews, that of poverty.

4.1.1. Poverty and the Class Divide

Is it possible to be a teacher and not show the path to the sea to the little fish of the country? Is it possible to carry the heavy burden of being a teacher and be responsible for spreading the seeds of knowledge and still be silent? Is it possible to see the lumps in the throats of the students and witness their thin and malnourished faces and keep quiet? I cannot imagine witnessing the pain and poverty of the people of this land and fail to give our hearts to the river and the sea, to the roar and to inundate

~Farzad Kamangar⁴⁹, April 2010

Recalling their days as students during the early to late 70's, those interviewed expressed unanimous concern for the overwhelming poverty gap that had taken shape over the course of the Shah's many years in power prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Although six of the seven members interviewed belonged to Iran's middle and upper classes they shared common frustrations over the situation of Iran's poorer communities and the disparities visible in society as a whole. Positing the exception in our sampling and personally affected by the hardships of poverty, Mahmoud, a resistor of nearly 40 years speaks of a day when the Shah's economic policies hit home- literally collapsing his world to the ground:

On August 31st 1347/1968 my family was in the province of Khorasan 50-60 km's from Mashhad...That day there was a very fatal earthquake in my region, the population in the region was not that big because they were smaller villages but nearly four to five thousand people died. From my own family forty people died under the rubble including my two sisters, their children and husbands; their entire families as well as two of my aunts, my uncle and their children, all of them! Most importantly, my two sisters whom I loved very dearly... This issue really fastened my opposition to the Shah, because we took issue with why these homes were so poorly built (Mahmoud, author's translation).

⁴⁹ Farzad Kamangar was a 32-year-old Iranian Kurdish teacher, poet and, activist who was executed on charges of "enmity towards God" on May 9th 2010. He wrote this letter to fellow teachers while in prison drawing on the work Samad Behrangi and his book "Little Black Fish".

Witnessing similar scenes along with the daily hardships of fellow classmates and school children who could not afford their meals, let alone their books, the young *Mojaheds-to-be* began by establishing clubs and student associations in their respective cities as a means of raising funds and awareness in order to help alleviate the plight of those within their communities.

Sakineh, who was enrolled in photography at the time, used her work to help capture the face of such inequality, while Leila at the age of fifteen helped raise funds through choir and theatrical performances at her school in order to help pay for her classmate's epilepsy treatment. Grappling with the issue of poverty from varying angles, they shared in their common frustration with the compelling scope and nature of the problem:

I would go to the south of Tehran and visit the families and take walks with the people. The south of Iran was incredibly poverty-stricken; a simple rain would suffice to ruin hundreds of mud homes. In practice, many times I approached it as a human matter and would reach into my pocket to give a helping hand from what little I had but it accomplished nothing, the overwhelming poverty was more than I could alone address...I remember that at times when I'd go down to see the south of town [Tehran], if it was early in the mornings usually two, five, sometimes six people were laying dead on the streets; from the cold, from hunger, from drug addiction. Come daytime the city would drive by and load their bodies onto a truck (Attà, author's translation).

Feeling trapped in their modest efforts, the resistors - still students at the time - shared the realization that their ideas worked only as a bandage over much deeper societal problems:

A few girls from my program and I, we'd take trips to areas that were negatively impacted by poor living conditions and poverty and we'd try and bring about changes in the community. We quickly realized that this change was hard-pressed to take place (Sakineh, author's translation).

They were captivated by the Shah's inaction in face of such issues. Citing the government's fraudulent death tolls and the empty promises made to his community, Mahmoud, like the others, began looking for his own answers:

Why is there so much oil revenue and yet these homes cannot withstand a small earthquake? ... When I returned to visit my uncle's home that was down the street from ours it seemed only steps away because they had crumbled into one another. This really affected me. It fastened in me that change needed to be effectuated. I was in my 2nd year of high school and I began looking to read books against the Shahs dictatorship and the economic corruption of the regime. They spent so much money on the Shah's family and yet our communities were falling apart... At the time the Shah was leading parades celebrating his kingdom's 2500-year history, on which they spent immeasurable amounts of money. We would read those days that they spent several million toman⁵⁰ to import tons of flowers from Holland or alcohol from

⁵⁰ Toman is the super-unit Iran's official currency, the Rial.

France. And indeed he had because all the royalty had been invited (Mahmoud, author's translation).

Having underscored poverty as a primary motivational factor in their decisions to embark on a life of political engagement, those interviewed carefully highlighted the interrelatedness of such matters with the limited political freedoms they could enjoy while living under the Shah's rule.

In their narratives the issue of poverty took precedence as the primary motivational factor behind the politicizing and radicalizing of their views of the government in favor of regime change and democracy. In the following section, we examine the second set of motivational factors that took precedence in their narratives: political freedoms, nationalism and democracy.

4.1.2. Political Freedoms, Nationalism & Democracy

Throughout their studies, each *Mojahed's* unique set of experiences would eventually bring them face to face with common (structural) limitations imposed on them by their government. Some years later, these very struggles would translate into conscious efforts to become part of a greater network of resistance, one that stood the chance of shifting the balances of power. The government's obstruction of political freedoms combined with a strong sense of nationalism and a deeply rooted desire for democracy, together would lead to their formal engagement with the MEK/PMOI, and come to define their many struggles throughout the revolutionary period.

Recalling a time of nation-wide upheaval and mass protests against the Shah's government following his deeply impactful western-backed *coup d'état* (which placed the democratically elected Prime Minister, Mohammad Mosaddegh under permanent house arrest in 1953) all of those interviewed described a time in their studies wherein they actively sought alternatives to their government. They approached this by exploring various literatures, organizations, and movements for change:

University was cancelled as a result of the ruckus and I had a lot of spare time to spend reading. I had set aside on both sides of my room texts from various religious figures to the right and Leftists texts from Leftists figures to the left. From Bazargan and Shariati, to Marx and Engels, I read them all! At some point for three months I would spend my days protesting and come home and read in the evenings. It was at this juncture that I made my choice. I didn't find affinity with the Leftists because they didn't answer all my questions. I'd think to myself, what came after the material? And the religious texts, like Shariati's texts, they were good but after a certain point they turned in essays, beautiful prose that didn't give you anything real

to hold onto. That was until I read the book “Rahe Imam Hossein”⁵¹ and then that of Mehdi Rezaei⁵², I felt that this was where I had found my answer but I still had to see how it would work in practice (Sakineh, author’s translation).

Likewise, Fatemeh had begun reading the books of Samad Behrangi⁵³, a renowned social critic, folklorist and teacher, when she began frequenting the University of Tehran library and first interacted with various Iranian student associations. Similarly, Leila, who with the help of her brother had been able to acquire books and documents published by the MEK/PMOI, read her first biography; that of Fatemeh Amini, a famed female religious leader in Iran whose parents objected to women’s education, but yet who managed later in life to establish the first female seminary in Qom.

Articulating how promises of reform had managed to appease earlier calls for revolution, one resistor cited lessons they had learned from the Shah’s reforms and the people’s popular slogan “*eslahaat aare, dictatoree nah*”⁵⁴; namely, the realization that despite various concessions they would not attain democratic freedoms through the monarchy. Operating within a newly hostile environment characterized by the Shah’s persecution of political dissent through his then recently instated SAVAK forces, the political scene is described as one which was impervious to methods of civil resistance. Following the events of 15 Khordad⁵⁵, a second resistor chronicles the moment when they first realized the situation had turned deadly and that political freedoms were besieged:

That day, the Shah killed protesters. It is now a day recognized in Iranian history as “Goorestaneh Reformisme”⁵⁶... All the progressive thinkers of the time, the Leftists, the Marxists, or us, the religious progressives, sought new avenues for change. Political activities that had previously been free for two years such as attending demonstrations and Neshat-e Azadi gatherings were no longer viable. With this in mind, I, along with the association we had established at our university, thought that if we could educate the youth that we could change Iran’s circumstances and future. We would say that first you have to change people’s minds to change the society. It was with such thoughts that in 1344 I entered the technical faculty at the University of Tehran; there, I was introduced to university student’s activism like demonstrations, strikes and mobilizations of the kind. I noticed, however, that even through such activism we would always reach a glass ceiling, that of the SAVAK. Every person that attended the rallies was arrested by SAVAK and so the Shah

⁵¹ Translates to “The Journey of Imam Hossein”.

⁵² A member of the MEK/PMOI whose trial during the Shah’s regime was made public to the media and who was later executed.

⁵³ Samad BehRangi’s famous book “The Little Black Fish” was banned in pre-revolutionary Iran.

⁵⁴ Translates to “Reforms yes, dictatorship no”.

⁵⁵ 15 Khordad of the Iranian calendar or June 5-6th 1963 marks widespread demonstrations against Ayatollah Khomeini’s arrest following his speech harshly criticizing the Shah and his Western allies.

⁵⁶ Translates to “The Burial of Reformism”.

would do away with our associations or any actions we held. We'd invite the likes of Dr.Shariati and other progressive figures but the SAVAK would put an end to anything we wanted to accomplish before the event had even started. I realized that it wasn't working, if we wanted to do something to seriously change things we first had to remove the Shah and the barrier the SAVAK had placed in our way. We were in a deadlock, at a stalemate in front of the SAVAK. They stood in the way of all our cultural activities. That is why I slowly entered the political resistance and was motivated to resist the Shah and the SAVAK's authority, to remove them from power so that we may have political freedoms in Iran (Attà, author's translation).

Reflective of the atmospheric shift that took place, their motivations thus drew on the need for extended political freedoms and the ability to protest freely as well as the pursuance of national interests and theories of democracy.

Pointing to frustrations with Iran's inability to establish an autonomous private sector, an issue largely related to the Shah's foreign policy and reliance on the West, one resistor problematized Iran's inability to establish a national bourgeoisie (who worked on Iranian goods in Iranian factories). Rather, they argued the business was one of 'import and export,' with the establishment of factories becoming increasingly reliant on contracts with foreign signatories. To this same end, others problematized Iran's inability to nationalize oil revenues and claimed that Iranian politics reflected western interests in the region and did nothing in the way of advancing Iranian interests at home.

Finally, emphasizing a strong ideological belief in democracy, most depicted their motivations in light of their engagement with the intellectual and progressive thought of the time. Interestingly, all seven interviewees had read very closely the works of Dr.Ali Shariati, a religious sociologist and revolutionary thinker; and although many found his prose intriguing and insightful, they felt it equally lacking in directionality:

I appreciated his work but I didn't feel as though it opened any doors for me. His philosophy was eloquent but it didn't open doors to agency; rather, it took one on a journey into one's thoughts while I sought to address real and pressing issues in society (Fatemeh, author's translation).

Unable to derive agency from Shariati's writing as well as citing practical and ideological differences with the Leftists and Marxists groups (ranging from their lack of organized and dedicated work ethic to their disavowal of any and all religious beliefs and practices) the majority of those interviewed (coming from largely apolitical and irreligious⁵⁷ family

⁵⁷ Five out of the seven interviewed came from Muslim, yet non-practicing family backgrounds; two came from more traditionally conservative families.

backgrounds) found appeal in the works of Mehdi Bazargan⁵⁸ and Mahmoud Taleghani's⁵⁹ (two iconic figures known to have either privately or publicly supported the *Mojahedin*).

It was such that these "religious progressives" inspired the thinking of young *Mojaheds-to-be* reconciling their democratic values with open-minded and accepting interpretations of Islam, respect for individual volition, and secular-jurisprudence. Galvanized by an atmosphere infused with student politics, those I interviewed expressed how they had finally aligned their individual grievances with a movement that represented their interests and saw the same merits in political freedoms, nationalistic interests, and democratic values as they had sought to engage. By the time the 1979 revolution had found momentum, most had already engaged closely with the *Mojahedin* organization but had not yet espoused membership⁶⁰.

In the two and half years surrounding the revolution, during a period they refer to as "*faseh seeyasee*"⁶¹, the activists experienced an overture to political freedoms wherein they engaged with the public through various means including: poverty alleviation; community assistance programs; strikes; demonstrations; establishing, writing and distributing newspapers; and engaging public debate in and around MEK/PMOI political candidates who had prepared to run in the upcoming elections⁶². Chronicling her earliest involvement with the organization, Sakineh recalls her fondest memories during the political phase which ultimately led to her decision to join the MEK/PMOI:

When I look back my favorite part of my struggle working with the Mojahedin, and the moments that I am most proud of I think of the time I spent selling newspapers. It was the first time I'd ever stood at the corner of the stoplights in the neighborhoods and with a loud voice exclaimed my beliefs! You'd say what you had to say and felt as though in that moment you'd attained freedom. It was a really moving feeling for me" (Sakineh, author's translation).

It was around the same time when Khomeini -establishing a progressively tighter stronghold over the nation's politics- began attempting to filter political participation consequently changing the political landscape in a measurable way. Only then did Sakineh and her fellow comrades experience a pivotal change in the new government's tactics; specifically, attempts to render invisible entire segments of the population.

⁵⁸ A democratic activist & scholar who would become Iran's first Prime-Minister following the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

⁵⁹ A senior Shi'a cleric, pro-democracy advocate and Iranian theologian.

⁶⁰ One member interviewed had joined in the years prior to the 79' revolution when he was freed from the Shah's prisons for his involvement with the *Mojahedin*.

⁶¹ Translate to "the political phase".

⁶² All votes received by candidates of the *Mojahedin's* political run for parliament were barred from contest by Khomeini's order.

4.1.3. Women's & Minority Rights

Amongst the many pivotal moments in my struggle was the 21st of Esfand 1357, the same year as the revolution, there grew discussion of the mandatory veiling of women and there was a women's demonstration organized against the regime's policies. Women from all over participated. What was attention grabbing and motivational was that, we, with our hijabs, stood alongside our sisters against its forceful enactment. At the time the Mojahedin had released an official statement stating that the veil is not something that can be forced; this, while the Falanja⁶³ were chanting "ya roosari, ya toosari"⁶⁴ (Fatemeh, author's translation).

Coinciding with earlier stages of the Islamic revolution, concerns over women's and minority rights began taking center stage. Faced with the regime's efforts to forcefully exile women's voices, bodies, and influence from the public sphere; female members of the MEK/PMOI each describe how their motivations to arms quickly became personal. Citing the muscle that the Islamic regime had channeled into bullying women back into the home and the precipice with which Khomeini undid the reforms⁶⁵ the Shah had reluctantly granted female activists; they chronicled the government's concerted efforts and targeting of Iranian women.

My findings ultimately reflect the undivided assertion that women had become the Islamic government's primary target of oppression. Subject to regular beatings and arrests, female *Mojaheds* and opponents to the regime's policies found themselves on the front lines; tortured and executed in numbers rivaling the men:

It wasn't as though the regime would execute 100 men for every woman. No, there were just as many women as men. In fact, at times the women gave more; many pregnant women were killed at the hands of this regime, they didn't differentiate themselves because they were pregnant or abstain from fighting for their country's freedom, they sacrificed in equal measure. The regime did not discriminate; it executed pregnant women, women as old as 70 and girls as young as 9 or 12 years old who sought freedom and participated in the militias. The women, shoulder to shoulder with the men were there on the scene (Elnaz, author's translation).

Drawing on the harsh realities of the regime's brutality towards women, several resisters recounted how rape was devised as a tool of intimidation:

Rape was Khomeini's tactic hundreds of thousands of times over in his prisons. He wanted to break those inside and outside the prisons; as if to threaten, "you who are

⁶³ A term borrowed from the Spanish context and colloquially employed to connote vanguard forces hired by Khomeini's regime to violently disrupt political dissent.

⁶⁴ Translates to "Either veiling or a beating".

⁶⁵ Among the earliest changes adopted by the revolutionary government was the repealing of the Iran's Family Protection Act of 1975.

adopting this way of life, this is the path you are choosing, if you fall into my hands this too will be your fate (Fatemeh, author's translation).

In fact, many of the organization's members who would later join the ranks of the NLA had been subject to such forms of brutality:

The Khomeini regime set up certain units, called residential units, to suppress women political dissidents. There, the regime retaliated against women who had committed the unforgivable crimes of demanding freedom and refusing to submit by having them continuously raped by its Revolutionary Guards. We have women in our organization and in our army, who emerged from these cells (Shahri 2001, 186).

What is more, outside of its prisons and under the new constitution, the Iranian government's biopolitical persecution of women had been codified in law. Following the revolution, women saw their rights dwindle right before their eyes. Within a matter of months the Islamic Republic headed by the *Vali-ye Faquih* (Guardian Jurist) and its Guardian Council⁶⁶ had enacted numerous changes affecting the status of women both inside and outside the home:

The clerics also reduced the marriageable age for girls⁶⁷, closed day-care centers and family planning clinics, banned abortion and birth control devices, and required *hejab* (modest dress) in public for all women. *Mut'a* (temporary marriage) was encouraged and all obstacles to polygyny removed. De facto segregation was instated at the universities, and women were barred from some fields of study. The clerics prohibited women from being judges, dismissing those already practicing that profession. In rewriting the constitution the revolutionary leaders encouraged mother-hood and domesticity, stressing in the preamble the importance of the family as "the fundamental unit of society" and emphasizing a woman's "important duty" as "mother." Moreover, although Article 20 provides "equal protection of the law" for men and women, it states that "all human, political, economic, social and cultural rights will be based upon Islamic precepts," thus placing women in an unequal position (Ramazani 1993, 410-411).

The clergy's conservative- and arguably radical- interpretations of 'Islamic precepts' meant that women were made legally subject to the religious parameters devised by the Guardian Council whose powers are impervious to any checks, balances or mechanisms for appeal. Under such parameters and the *Shari'a* or Islamic Code of Ethics various forms of contractual ownership over women's bodies became possible:

Temporary marriage can be contracted for a fixed period of time- ranging from a few minutes to ninety-nine years- after a nominal fee is paid to the woman and a verse is

⁶⁶ Also known as '*Shora-ye Negahban-e Qanun-e Assasi*' the Guardian Council is a constitutionally mandated council comprised of twelve members, six of whom are experts in Islamic Law and are directly appointed by the Supreme Leader of Iran or '*vali-e faghih-e iran*'. The remaining six are legal-experts nominated by the Head of the Judicial Power (appointed by the Supreme Leader) for election by Parliament.

⁶⁷ "When Khomeini first came to power, he lowered the minimum legal age for girls to marry from eighteen to thirteen years, and now it has been lowered to nine" (Tohidi 1991, 253).

repeated. This type of marriage takes place for the sole purpose of men's sexual pleasure (Tohidi 254,1991).

Moreover, matters of divorce were revised so that men held the unique right to seek the termination of a marriage and were granted automatic custody of girls over the age of seven and boys over the age of two. In matters of the courts and according to the Law of Retribution or *Quasas* passed in 1982, it was decided that “the value of a woman's life [*and testimony*] is only half that of a man's” while “in the case of major crimes such as murder, a woman's testimony is not considered at all” (ibid).

Following the explicit crackdown on political freedoms, civil liberties, and now women's rights, the rampant persecution was extended to ethnic and religious minorities as well. Speaking to her personal motivations for joining the struggle during her time studying abroad in Houston, Texas, Zahra recalls:

As the regime amped up its targeting and persecution women's rights, Kurdish populations, religious minorities and others; we, at the university, felt compelled to expose its crimes and advocate on behalf of the people; relaying their voice on the international stage (Zahra, author's translation).

Meanwhile, the still fragile state sought new ways to instate widespread suppression of political activism during a time when Khomeini's deployment of street thugs and paramilitary forces proved insufficient to silence dissent. Having enjoyed short-lived political freedoms during the political phase, the MEK/PMOI and its supporters- faced with new and increasing measures⁶⁸ taken by Khomeini's regime and *basij*⁶⁹ forces particularly following the events of 30 *Khordad*⁷⁰- entered a new phase commonly known as “*phaseh nezami*”⁷¹. It was during this phase when most remembered themselves to have made their pivotal decisions to become full-time members of the *Mojahedin* and adopt lives centered on resistance.

Ultimately, those interviewed share a set of concrete grievances that serve to justify their opposition to Iran's authoritarian ruler-ship. Insofar as their grievances are based in their personal experiences with poverty, the persecution of political dissent and minority rights, and

⁶⁸ By the month of February 1980, Khomeini's supporters had begun targeting attacks at meeting places and offices of the *Mojahedin* as well as other Leftist groups.

⁶⁹ The *Basij* are a volunteer militia established following the 1979 revolution by Khomeini's order that engage in ‘policing morality’; it, along with the *Sepāh-e Pāsdārān-e Enqelāb-e Eslāmi* or Revolutionary Guard comprise the Islamic Republic of Iran's paramilitary forces.

⁷⁰ 30 *Khordad* 1360 on the Iranian calendar or the 20th of June 1981 on the Western calendar, marks the official outlawing and persecution of political activism and dissent by Ayatollah Khomeini signaling the beginning of mass arrests on charges of conspiring against the revolution and the eventual wave of mass executions which would take place in 1367/1988.

⁷¹ Translates to “the phase of armed struggle”.

stem from the expressed desire for democracy, their narratives are fundamentally at odds with the common portrait captured in chapter 2.

Based on my findings, I can confidently conclude that the image painted by female resisters is not one of Patriarchal Appendages and/or Victims of Indoctrination; rather, it is overwhelmingly one that captures their underlying motivations for their political, social and economic activism in light of principals such as equal rights, political freedoms, and human rights.

Speaking to their personal decisions to take up political resistance as a way of life, resisters also captured pivotal turning points wherein they made the very conscious (and autonomous) decision to join the ranks of the *Mojahedin*. Highlighting impactful moments in their struggle, they recall key catalysts and defining events that fastened their commitment to lifelong opposition and by its consequence political exile and persecution.

4.1.4. Catalysts: Joining the Ranks of the Mojahedin

Shrouded in memories of the dead and the thousands arrested, executed, and martyred at the hands of the Islamic Republic are the stories and events that catapulted these students from lives of activism to lives of armed combat amongst the ranks of the *Mojahedin's* National Liberation Army (formed in 1987). Retold with the help of their own narratives, we visit a few turning points in the lives of those interviewed.

Vowing to her mother that she would not back down from her principles and opposition to the Islamic Republic, Zahra, an activist living in the United States was fastened in her struggle when the regime arrested her father permanently separating the members of her family:

At that time my family was such that my mother travelled back and forth between Iran, and on one of her trips back to the US after over 50 0000 protested in Tehran against the mullah's repression on June 20, 1981; they threatened that if my mother should return to Iran they would arrest her in the airport and execute her for having supported her daughter's activities and simultaneously barred my father from leaving the country... Thus, my mother had to stay in the United States where she is now a citizen with my brother and other sisters by her side. Several years ago my father passed away in Iran never having reunited with all of his family... This is just one of the smaller injustices, other families had experienced far worse at the hands of this regime (Zahra, author's translation).

Zahra's experience was not unique; Leila's family underwent similar hardships. Looking back on her 35 years as a resister, Leila recounts the death of her brother and other loved ones. In *Bahman 60'*, her brother (also a resister) had been captured and executed without the notification of his family. Upon learning of what happened, his family attempted to find his

burial place and when they were unable to locate his grave were forced to commemorate his memory in the *Beheshteh Zahra* Cemetery where they believe he may have been laid to rest. Within the same year, Leila's partner was arrested on the day of their engagement and executed only a short week later. Realizing that she herself was no longer safe, she left her home and province of Isfahan in seek of shelter:

I then left Isfahan shortly after and came to Tehran... where I lived in underground homes until the year 1984 when in reality I was forced to leave Iran (Leila, author's translation).

Like Leila, Fatemeh also affirmed key turning points in her struggle; three moments when she found herself re-evaluating her decision to adopt a life of resistance within the *Mojahedin* and which spurred in her a renewed dedication to her cause. The first time, she recounts, was during the 'political phase' through her first encounters with harassment and violence:

We later moved to the area of Khazaneh and I worked in the neighborhoods where we had offices in the homes of supporters. Everyday while there we were attacked by the Falanja; and everyday the people would enter brawls on our behalf defending us from the authorities... It was a real experience for me, I was seventeen or eighteen years old and I had never been called a name before, never been hit before, never been threatened with knives before; but everyday, we came face to face with these predicaments. When we sold newspapers they'd rip off our hijabs and call us dirty. What really got to them [the regime's paramilitary forces] was the support we'd receive from the people (the men, women and youth of the communities)... Their support really moved me. Honestly, I remember that at that point I felt very threatened, I always worried of what would happen if they hit me with a knife and managed to injure my face... I was a young girl concerned -like many are at that age- of appearances... Every time they'd attack us I'd hold my hands up to cover my face and I'd think to myself that I could handle a knife anywhere else on my body. Now, as you can see, I have this scar here on my chin, it is from a time when I was in the Falakeye Dovom-e Khazaneh with my teammate Zohreh Tabrizi who was later executed; there, we were attacked. We had been putting up posters along the streets when I was finally attacked with a knife. It actually proved to be a positive turning point in my struggle (she laughs)... because I realized I got hit with a knife to the face and nothing happened, life went on, it wasn't the end of the world. I wasn't afraid anymore. I was young and before then I had reason to be afraid (Fatemeh, author's translation).

Describing her newfound courage, Fatemeh explains that during the earliest days of her involvement, the regime had begun executing dissidents. Having not yet entered the period of armed struggle, Fatemeh explains how the names of the first 50 dissidents executed by the Iranian regime were etched in her mind. "Looking back", she notes, "only 7 of my teammates, with whom I worked in the communities, managed to escape the regime after all these

years”(ibid). She later spoke of a night when her younger sister Parvaneh (who died in prison under torture in 1986) had been arrested and attacked by police whilst selling newspapers. Pausing to gather her thoughts she testified to the time when she first witnessed her sister’s face brutalized by their beatings:

She was lucky that my older sister’s home was just nearby. Her nose broken, her clothes covered in blood, her spirit was still strong... My beautiful sister, her beautiful face had been crushed, her entire nose broken under the pressure of the beating... We washed her face and rushed to her to emergency (Fateme, author’s translation).

Emboldened through such injustice, Fateme would go on to become an officer in the *Mojahedin’s* National Liberation Army of Iran where she first served in combat and later on in the area of logistical support. During the years prior, the *Mojahedin* began discussions of the *Enghelabeh Ideologique* and according women equal partnership in the movement. Presented with some very new ideas about women’s leadership that broke from the culture and tradition of patriarchy in which she was raised, Fateme would find herself re-assessing her adoption of the struggle.

Like Fateme, each of the resisters spoke to instances or experiences whereby they solidified their ideological praxis and reaffirmed their dedication to the goal of revolution and regime change. Through their stories, resisters confront prevalent assumptions made of their involvement in the MEK/PMOI conveying their resounding convictions in terms of volition and not ideological manipulation.

Proud of the decisions that led them to a life of resistance these women and men express their membership in terms of a choice; but how- if at all- has gender affected their places in the resistance? To what extent did the *E.I.* imply the adoption of a new methodological framework? And how were the changes informed, received, and implemented? In the following section, I look for answers to these questions with the aim of highlighting the practical changes that took place during this revolution in thinking.

4.2. Gender Equality: The *Enghelabeh Ideologique* Examined

As examined in Chapter 2, women’s involvement in the MEK/PMOI is often attributed to characterizations of monstrosity or heresy and their roles are defined to a certain extent by their (in)abilities towards motherhood and/or sexual objectifications. In this section, we test such representations by asking female members of the MEK/PMOI to recount their own experiences

and understandings of gender equality. In so doing, we are able to break through their normative casting as ‘appendages’ to the movement they currently lead in favor of re-conceptualizing a more diverse and accurate image of the female resistor. What is more, I further engage male voices within the movement on the same issue, so that we may also grasp how the changes adopted in the *Enghelabeh Ideologique* have come to address inequalities in gender as a ‘human’ issue and not simply a ‘women’s’ issue. To this end, the acquired data has been broken down into the following four sections: (1) Gender Equality Defined, (2) Misogyny and Patriarchy as Antithetical to Resistance, (3) From Theory to Practice On and Off the Battlefields, and (4) Women’s Hegemony and the Iranian Resistance.

4.2.1. Gender Equality Defined

Before we can understand the *Mojahedin’s* views on the symbiotic relationship between women’s leadership and their struggle to instate democracy in Iran, it is important that we first attempt to decipher their notions surrounding the idea of ‘Gender Equality’. As such, I attempt to synthesize the definitions offered by MEK/PMOI members themselves and draw relevant conclusions as to their shared understanding of the term Gender Equality; a concept as varied in its usage as ‘Feminism’ and as nuanced in its application as any theoretical conviction in politics.

More often than not, the views entertained by resisters were presented in light of the ideology they oppose. Contending that there exists two schools of thought on the issue; those who believe women and men to be equal in all *fortes* and those who do not; resisters described through various means why and how they fundamentally believe in the equality of the sexes. Unanimously contending the essential precept that all of humanity- free of social conditioning- is equal, those interviewed evoked various epistemological arguments ranging from personal and practical experiences, to theories of nature, and religious ideology.

Just under half of those interviewed cited their personal readings of the Quran and its story of creation, which is subtly different from the biblical story of Adam and Eve in its emphasis on a God-given equality amongst all beings of creation:

Be conscious of your Sustainer, who has created you out of one living entity (nafs)⁷², and out of it created its mate, and out of the two spread abroad a multitude of men and women. And remain conscious of God, in whose name you demand your rights from one another, and of these ties of kinship. (Quran, 4:v1)

⁷² There exists much debate about the intended meaning of the word *nafs* which in this reading denotes ‘living entity’ central to the *Mojahedin’s* thesis on the equality of the sexes.

What is more, positing that one must differentiate between ‘primary’ and ‘supplementary’ characteristics of being, others argued that differences between genders had been socially constructed. Resisters explained that patriarchy is strategic in its attempt to supplant ‘supplementary’ characteristics for the ‘primary’. In other words, they were of the belief that ahead of all else women and men (as well as all persons) are born as unconditionally equal members of humanity. One resistor specified that an individual’s potential for assuming responsibilities within all areas of society does not depend on their gender but rather their essential quality as human. Therefore, they contend that women and men are equal with regards to their competencies, potential, talents and strengths as they concern the social, political, economic and so on. In light of biological variances, it was argued that such differences account for supplementary characteristics of being and that efforts to emphasize a woman’s (in)ability towards motherhood or a man’s (in)ability towards fatherhood casts a purposeful and intentional hierarchy between the sexes; one that perpetuates its own existence.

In light of such ideas, Fatemeh argues that according women equal rights will eventually mean looking beyond gender and redefining how humans relate to one another:

the change that occurred as a result of the E.I. was one that centered on adopting a new gender lens, one that saw humanity first and the potential of humanity in each of us as individuals. This optic is what defines gender equality in our struggle. The ideological revolution was in fact a revolution waged against the regime and its ideology that sustains itself through oppressing women on one end and on producing terror on another. If I could give you a person example, I’d look back on my earlier experiences with various religious student groups inside Iran; I didn’t sense this equality amongst them. They looked at you differently because you were a woman, they looked down when they spoke to you and even turned their backs to you. The fact that during the revolutionary period women were selling newspapers on the street aggravated the reactionary elements in Iran; it was a deadly bullet to their senses. Within the reactionary machine, women exist but women exist as women and women are women upon whom men must impose their hegemony. If I were to put this in one sentence it’s as if a man knows himself through oppressing women because she is his wife, because he is the father of his children. This is in fact our most central opposition to the clerical regime, our refusal to see and know everything through the eyes of gender; rather, we opt to see everything through humanity (Fatemeh, author’s translation).

Offering refreshing insights to the ideology behind a movement widely represented as ‘backwards’, those interviewed underscored the importance of actively undoing preconceived and socially constructed notions of male superiority in areas of leadership with the aim of overcoming barriers to women’s free and equal participation in all aspects of society. Positing the need for women, men, and society to regain confidence in women’s abilities to lead

(following centuries of patriarchal tradition); resisters unanimously understood women's leadership as the first of many necessary steps towards re-instilling equality and impartiality towards gender:

I think that in the 21st century, confidence in women's leadership is the most important yardstick by which we can measure the extent of an individual's or society's belief in democracy and democratic freedoms. For example, there may be a Prime Minister, even within a Socialist regime, who affirms, in theory, the need to overcome gender inequality so that there may no longer exist a gender gap in society; but if that same person experiences difficulty in handing over the real responsibilities of his/her cabinet to a woman and questions her capability to run such serious matters in government, then I say they do not truly believe in democracy. Despite all their 'principles', confidence in women's leadership is the yardstick by which I measure the honesty of their words (Elnaz, author's translation).

Through their assertions, Elnaz and other resisters argued in favor of encouraging a real and substantive push for women to take on positions of leadership, contending that reserving 'some' positions for women was not enough. Vocally opposed to political tokenism, Elnaz explains that women's empowerment does not simply imply placing women at the top so as to give the illusion of women's leadership (Figureheads); rather, it entails entrusting women with real political responsibility.

As such, the image portrayed by resisters contrasts heavily with those offered by the common portrait made largely available through public discourse. Insofar as resisters claim a pronounced appreciation and respect for women's equality, women's leadership, and engendering a human lens, they do not affirm nor accept representations of female resisters as Subservient to men (in any way) and also refuse to define female resisters by virtue of what they consider a 'supplementary' characteristic of gender such as (in)abilities towards Motherhood. Through their progressive conception of gender equality and philosophical adoption of a human lens they categorically reject assumptions and representations based on gender and thus the essentialization of gender roles, characteristics, and tendencies. What is more, their regard for substantive equality dismisses representations that conceive of female resisters (and male resisters alike) as primarily gendered beings thereby breaking the cycle of sexual objectification inherent to the Whore narrative.

Further examining resisters' views on the topic of Gender Equality, in the following section I grapple with their contention that there exists a mutually exclusive relationship between Patriarchy and Resistance to Tehran.

4.2.2. *Misogyny and Patriarchy as Antithetical to Resistance*

Carefully describing their ideologies as irreconcilable with those espoused by the theocratic government ruling Tehran, MEK/PMOI resisters emphasize the significance of such incompatibilities for their goal of revolution. Consciously evoking imagery of a dialectical struggle, the resisters hold that their praxis with respect to Gender Equality serves as the defining feature of their opposition to Iran's clerical regime. In light of the interrelated factors that resisters' argue render misogyny and patriarchy counterproductive to their goals as a resistance, those interviewed touched most heavily on: (1) the need to define the constitutive parts of the enemy's ideology, and (2) the functional exigency of mobilizing any and all potential force in their war with the Iranian government.

With respect to the first factor, resisters conclude that one cannot engage in a war when one does not know itself from its enemy. Centralizing their resistance on that which they understand to be the Iranian regime's defining feature - religious fundamentalism and by consequence the practice of extreme misogyny and patriarchy - they note the importance of living and breathing its ideological opposite:

The regime's most brutal mechanisms of torture have been developed to oppress women. The punishment of stoning is one geared specifically towards women⁷³. We are dealing with a regime in which a woman need a man's permission to travel; a regime in which a woman may be stopped in the street so that she may be asked what male accompanies her and if she cannot answer 'brother', 'father' or 'husband' proceeds to arrest her⁷⁴; a paternalistic regime that targets and tortures the 'feminine'; which rapes and shoots at women's sexual organs... It is their targeting of women and vision of women's subordination that defines their dictatorship. For this reason, in my opinion, if the people of my country wish to fight this regime but do not first believe in equality culturally, ideologically and politically then they will not be capable of instating real institutional change (Attà, author's translation).

As such, the resisters are steadfast in their belief that if they are to be successful in attaining their goals there exists no room for hypocrisy within their struggle. In other words, in order to achieve their goal of revolution and democratization in Iran, dissidents must be prepared to relinquish any and all lingering traces of the patriarchal tradition. Undoubtedly, these self-portrayals bring to light the very real disparities that exist between member's ideologies and those embedded in the archetypes outlined in Chapter 1. These archetypes, commonly utilized to represent female

⁷³ "Women convicted of adultery are stoned to death" (Tohidi 1991, 254).

⁷⁴ "A woman is legally not allowed to leave the house without her husband's permission, and she must get written permission before travelling abroad" (ibid).

resistors, perform patriarchy through their perpetuation of women's subordination and delegitimization in public discourse. As demonstrated by my findings, within the MEK/PMOI this perpetuation is brought to a halt via the conscious disruption of the very ideological assumptions underpinning the archetypes. Only in doing so do resistors agree that they may draw closer the very fragile goal of democracy.

In 1985, with an eye towards bridging the gap between their theories, principles, and practice, the MEK/PMOI's leadership effectuated the radical decision to open the doors for women's equal partnership and representation in the resistance. The then Secretary General of the MEK/PMOI, Masoud Rajavi, initiated the structural and ideological changes by first introducing the nomination and election of a female co-leader thereby abdicating his unilateral role as Secretary General of the *Mojahedin*. In the years and progression that would follow during the period of the *Enghelabeh Ideologique* (1985-1989), the MEK/PMOI's praxis (examined in the following section) would undergo a complete overhaul. Consequently, the organization adopted the position and policies it maintains today reflecting their key and unwavering belief in gender-equality:

In our struggle against the regime, we confront a regime that is at its core based on religious fundamentalism, which is founded on misogyny. Therefore, a resistance, which aims to oppose such despotic ruler ship, cannot fight its enemy whilst favoring the same misogyny because it will inevitably find its enemy within itself (Elnaz, author's translation).

Next, members underscore the practical advantages to mobilizing women's full potential within their struggle. Elaborating on the importance of women's leadership, an element they deem 'necessary' for revolution, members illustrate through the use of metaphor changes resulting from women's contributions to the resistance following the *Enghelabeh Ideologique*; most notably, the harnessing of greater power, energy, efficiency and agency:

To work in any other way would be inefficient. In the same way a weight-lifter channels all their energy to lifting that incredibly heavy bar stacked weights, in the same way they must engage every muscle to accomplish their goal, we too must engage every muscle to accomplish ours; we must channel all our energy into overthrowing this regime (Fatemeh, author's translation).

Beyond citing the utility of women's full engagement, several resistors articulate how it would be counterintuitive to allow the movement to stand in its own way by insisting barriers to women's full and active participation:

Women comprise roughly 50% of the population, if equality exists then women are free to take on responsibilities; take for example our resistance where we now find

such practical equality, the load is split amongst women and men and so we have more effective and efficient agency; whereas, if this were not the case, this same 50% who could otherwise shoulder the burden and weight of their own responsibilities, serve as an added weight to the movement... rather than as agents towards growth (Elnaz, author's translation).

Illustrating the fact that within the *Mojahedin* participation is not determined by gender or anything but the individual's volition and dedication, one resistor explains how the terms 'rank' and 'role' are rarely- if ever- applied; rather, she explains, the term 'responsible' is used to connote the degree of responsibility one volunteers to take on within the organization.

In other words, projects are taken on in various teams (comprised of women and men) and once a project is collectively broken down into a set of tasks; members of each team volunteer their readiness to take on responsibilities. Therefore, at any given moment, one member may choose to invest more time and dedicate themselves more heavily in a particular role; this, however, does not dictate their place in a hierarchy but rather describes the 'responsibility' they have assumed within the organization. Interestingly, this approach is mirrored throughout all levels of the organization; take for example the title and role of 'Secretary General' Zohreh Akhyani, colloquially, she is referred to as '*massoul aval*' or 'foremost responsible of the movement' connoting her nomination, election, and acceptance of said responsibility.

Finally, arguing that the MEK/PMOI's membership would greatly suffer if not for their dedication to women's equal participation, Elnaz discusses her thoughts on the movement's future:

It is essential, if we hadn't given this problem precedence we would have been done away with long ago! With what motivations could have women continued struggling within such a resistance if we weren't treated as equals? ...Women would have lost their motivations. It is of utmost importance, it is that which drives our fate and fuels our eventual success! (Elnaz, author's translation).

At stake, Elnaz argues, is the very real issue of women feeling as though they have recourse to a substantive partnership in the movement. Indirectly challenging the common portrait's relegation of female resisters' roles to that of subservience and symbolic value (Figureheads), Elnaz draws attention to the fact that these independent, strong, and defiant women would not and could not have continued to support an organization (*en masse*) that does not accord them equal participation within its structure after nearly 30 years of gender conscious struggle. What is more, she contends that women's equal participation is the very attribute that sustains the MEK/PMOI's place as the foremost organized political opposition to Iran's clerical regime.

Currently demonstrating a genuine support for the MEK/PMOI's adopted ideology, the resisters also explained their initial skepticisms with regards to the changes that took place. In the following section, we closely examine the process by which Gender Equality became purposefully redefined amidst the *Mojahedin*. In so doing we look at how the metamorphosis was initiated, how it was received by the organization's thousands of members, and how the practical transformations were made feasible.

4.2.3. From Theory to Practice On and Off the Battlefields

Bridging the gap between theories of gender equality and their practice would exact over four years of dedication, focused debate, and deliberation across varying levels of the organization. Presented as an initiative at the organization's highest level of 'responsibility' in 1985, measures taken towards gender equality did not take full effect until 1989. Born out of the necessity to address a 'glass-ceiling' which had developed limiting women's abilities to progress within the movement (a movement that was seeing steady growth in the number of female participants) the *Mojahedin*'s then leaders reconvened to discuss possible ways of addressing gender equality within the organization. It was thereby concluded that women should come to share in leadership responsibilities; responsibilities that had not been formally denied women but that had continued abreast patriarchal traditions. Like most of those interviewed, prior to the *E.I.*, Fatemeh did not feel she was the target of any discrimination resulting from her gender and had never problematized her role within the organization:

Take my family as an example, in my family we were four sisters and three of us joined the organization. Half of the crowds were women. Just look at the days of the militias, women filled the lines! That is my real experience with women in the Mojahedin... I myself since becoming a supporter of the organization never felt as though I wasn't equal, but that wasn't the whole picture. The reality was such that we were second in line... that is where the gap became visible (Fatemeh, author's translation).

Based on my findings I can also conclude that there had been much controversy and debate surrounding the initial proposal of the *E.I.* Although there existed little opposition to the fundamental idea that women and men should be equal, both women and men expressed uncertainty over the implications of practical changes in the organization's structure and responsibility. Attesting to their own hesitations, most of the women interviewed bore witness to the fact that they had not immediately embraced the idea of women's leadership. In fact, some

expressed that they had initially experienced a great deal of fear stemming from their own lack of confidence in women's capacities to lead:

It was a culture, a tradition, you couldn't implement such measures with force you had to discuss and deliberate... It was as a result of such deliberations that each Mojahed was able to uncover the barriers present in their own minds. By way of such deliberations, I discovered that I, a feminist and believer in equality, had been questioning my own abilities as a woman (Elnaz, author's translation).

Many shared in Elnaz's hesitations and some took steps to vocally engage the debate:

In 64 when the issue was first raised, members had a lot to say! Both men and women objected. At the time I was working for the organization's newspaper and I remember we published many letters of objection as well as many letters in favor. People voiced a plethora of opinions (Mahmoud, author's translation).

The reality of introducing such an unprecedented idea was such that the organization would hold meetings and deliberations wherein the issue was weighed and debated. The resisters whom I interviewed each cited their participation in a number of such meetings to varying degrees. At the level of the organization's management, the meetings leading to the first female resistor's election as co-Secretary General of the MEK/PMOI lasted upwards of two months:

In autumn 1984, the annual meeting of the Political Bureau and the Central Committee was held in Paris, as in 1982 and 1983. It was followed by the meeting of the Central Council, which then had 160 members. Together, the meetings lasted more than two months. At that time, 30% of the Mojahedin's members were women; 15% of the Central Council were women. Tens of thousands of Mojahedin women had been imprisoned or executed by the Khomeini regime, many of them viciously tortured. In these sessions, the Political Bureau and Central Committee nominated Maryam Azodanlou, later to become Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, as co-leader of the organization. She had come to France from Iran two years earlier. A graduate of metallurgical engineering, she began her political activities with the Mojahedin in the 1970's. After the revolution, she became an official of the social sectional and head of a major network of organization's sympathizers in Tehran. The Mojahedin had nominated her as a candidate from Tehran for the 1980 parliamentary elections. The Central Council and other members of the Mojahedin welcomed her nomination, electing her in view of her competence, qualifications and experience. She had come to symbolize all the Mojahedin women (NCRI Foreign Affairs Committee 1993, 142).

As one *Mojahed* explained, for some it took months of deliberation to reach the decision that they wished to participate within the new structure. Others only attended three or four meetings before they were convinced of the revolution's merits. There also existed those few members who disagreed with the approach and chose to support the organization's goals by way of support rather than continued membership. All in all, consensus was eventually achieved and by

1985 Maryam Rajavi partnered in the leadership responsibilities of the MEK/PMOI and women began occupying more responsible roles in the organization.

Once it came time to enact their new platform, the organization and its members found the process of implementation to be somewhat easier than the process of deliberation insofar as women successfully took on the challenges of leadership; however, this would still require several years to complete. Four years following the enactment of the policy of female co-leadership, the organization's structural apparatus had transformed dissolving the formal partnership status and abdicating full leadership responsibilities to female resisters of the MEK/PMOI:

In October 1989, Mrs. Maryam Rajavi was enthusiastically elected Secretary General of the Mojahedin by the entire membership... In October 1991 Mrs. Rajavi invited all members of the National Council of Resistance to be her guests at the Central Council meeting to witness the election of new members and of a deputy secretary general... 54 new members were added to the Mojahedin's Central Council bringing the total to 837. The members had between 10 and 15 years of experience within the organization. Mrs. Fahimeh Arvani was elected Deputy Secretary General (ibid, 144).

Meanwhile, women went from largely occupying positions such as working in kitchens, serving as logistical supports on the battlefield, working with computers, and serving as office staff to running entire sections of the organization and its politics. As recalled by those interviewed, it did not take long before women felt comfortable and proved themselves capable of occupying the new roles. By 1993, following another round of deliberations lasting upwards of two months, Maryam Rajavi had enacted an "all-female Leadership Council of 12 members and 12 candidate-members" including more women's voices in the organization's management (ibid, 140). It was in the same year that Fahimeh Arvani (then deputy-Secretary General) was elected to the position of Secretary General assuming the organization's leadership. Practically speaking, the organization saw the complete overhaul of its structure with female resisters taking on new positions throughout all levels of the organization. But how did such changes take effect in areas like the army? How did the *Mojahedin* carve out a place for women where it had not existed just a few years prior?

Through my research I found that practical barriers to women's equality within the movement were approached much like riddles in need of solving. Prior to their immersion on the battlefield women were trained separately so that they may build knowledge, confidence, and skill in their roles before training alongside the men; often, this meant that creative measures had

to be taken in order to overcome obstacles such as size and strength. Rather than assuming limitations based on gender, the organization and its members dealt with such problems as they arose in training. One such problem was some women's unwillingness to begin with coed courses:

In the beginning, the women were generally unwilling to take coed courses. Hence, a group of women commanders had to first undergo the training process, master the materials and skills, and take on the training of the other women in separate classes. But after the first group of women had graduated from the training courses, the "tank taboo" was shattered and coed classes were formed (Shahri 2001, 188).

The organization's willingness to take on 'taboo' subjects including women's practical equality and involvement on the battlefields, demonstrates their point of departure and dissimilitude from theories that rest on the fundamental assertion of 'taboos'; namely, archetypes that constitute common representations of female resisters. Breaking through prescribed barriers casting women as incapable of assuming competent roles equaling those of their male colleagues, the MEK/PMOI took the time to address obstacles on a need basis. For example, when it was observed that some women were experiencing difficulty loading onto the tanks, measures were taken to equip tanks with additional steps easing their access.

Moreover, similar problems were confronted when it came time for transporting heavy weaponry:

I remember during Foroughe Javedan⁷⁵, we had a sister who could handle a BKC (machine gun), she had real physical strength and would manage one all on her own... in other instances we devised ways to address this, at times we carried the BKC's in teams of two, in this way we were able to overcome this problem (Sakineh, author's translation).

Once their immersion took place, various obstacles (even the most uncomfortable) were addressed in light and order of their discovery:

When you engage in army training and exercises you confront some very real issues insofar as women's involvement on the battlefields. The army posits its own peculiar set of circumstances in this area often highlighting differences between women and men...Seemingly small problems quickly became pressing issues that needed addressing. Loaded onto the buses for an exercise, I remember a time when our driver (who was aman) stopped the bus for a bathroom break; for the men it was a simple matter, they could walk some way and still retain privacy; at the time, I was responsible for commanding several of the women, and we soon realized that they did not share the same comforts as men in such matters; as you can imagine this

⁷⁵ Otherwise referred to as "Operation Light" was an NLA offensive waged on July 26th 1988 wherein the 7000 members of the MEK/PMOI's military wing crossed the Iranian border from Iraq managing to secure the city of *Islamabad-e Gharb* before announcing voluntary withdrawal on July 29th of the same year.

was just one of the many problems we had to creatively address, but of course, we always found ways around it (Sakineh, author's translation).

What I found most intriguing over the course of the interviews was the confidence with which such matters were addressed. As Shahri recalls, even when confronted with the very real problem of men who were unwilling to trust in a woman's commands, they insisted on charging forward refusing to accept their principles as 'utopian':

At first, it was no easy task for these men to take orders, even from women who had proven themselves qualified. But we worked out this problem, we did not ignore it. We discussed it at length (Shahri 2001, 190).

Arguably, the organization through its policies had entered uncharted terrain and their ideological convictions made it so that complex issues such as women's equal participation in the arenas of politics and combat no longer seemed insurmountable. Matters usually weighed in light of improbability and risks were re-conceptualized in terms of thwarted possibility and tested via their immediate operationalization. So far, this fluid adaptability has translated into an organized resistance that has lasted upwards of 48 years, and which continues to evolve in face of changing global politics; but what does the gender politics of the MEK/PMOI look like today roughly a quarter century after the *E.I.*? What remains to be done in light of their goals? These are just some of the questions addressed throughout the section that follows.

4.2.4. Women's Hegemony and the Iranian Resistance

In their present day politics, the MEK/PMOI stand firm on their decision to embrace women in positions of leadership. When asked to reflect on the accomplishment of goals set out during the *E.I.*, resisters provided several understandings of how they measure the organization's success. The most prominent convictions offered by resisters were those related to the successes they accord to women's hegemony, namely: women's achievements within greater arenas of responsibility, the adoption of a new gender lens and male acceptance of the status-quo, and finally, the organization's reinforced longevity and perseverance.

Depicting women's achievements across all fields, Fatemeh speaks to how women in the MEK/PMOI organization have been able to uphold any and all roles that had been previously occupied by their male-colleagues.

All the responsibilities men have had in the Sazman women have been able to uphold as well, whether it be as a member, an officer, positions of leadership, political work whatever it may be and in all scenes of work (Fatemeh, author's translation).

In fact, throughout the last 25 years of political turbulence, women in the resistance have successfully led the organization at all levels. Comprising over half of the commanders in the formerly armed NLA and leading the majority of the organization's political affairs, female MEK/PMOI resisters have presided over executive decision-making as well as spearheaded the management and administration of the resistance. Observing a ripple effect, Fatemeh describes how changes in the organization have also made impacts elsewhere:

This brought to light a new potential and gave us a power we didn't have before. It also has affects inside Iran and has meant that our brothers had to be genuine in their desires for democracy and equality, because you see; you cannot say you want democracy and yet continue to see women as inferior. The men reached the conclusion that in order to be true revolutionaries, in order to free their people, they too have to fight patriarchy within themselves (Fatemeh, author's translation).

Careful to highlight the various implications these changes have had for men as well as those observing the resistance from within Iran, Fatemeh underscores the fact that the organization's adopted ideology has mirrored positive effects, including contributing to women's empowerment in Iran by serving as an example and creating feminist alliances across genders.

What is more, Atta describes the engendering of his new outlook and regard for women's hegemony claiming that the adopted changes are reflected in his belief that, as a result, he has become a better person:

In my opinion, we have succeeded in 51% of our goals with respect to gender equality in our movement. Today, as a matter of fact, I can claim that we are home to an organization wherein women's rights, gender equality and respect for women's leadership have taken effect. In this respect (and to which I accord a valuation of success of 51%) we have been successful in overcoming the tradition of Patriarchy that is now a part of our history, a part of our past. To a large extent, this new system has managed to overcome the old traditions of patriarchy replacing them with values, outlooks, and traditions of this new system. At present, we do not entertain a dualist system, it's not like we attempt to mix oil with water; our system is homogenous. For example, when I (as responsible man within this organization) work alongside others, I do not see myself as oil and the women as water or as something 'other', I work- full stop. Second, this revolution has reached 51% of its goals insofar as women have found and assumed their place in leadership and insofar as men have assumed this concept in the here and now as part of their reality and not an eventual standard to come... In reality we 'men' derive great joy from such changes...While it is true that as part of this lifestyle of resistance we have relinquished some of life's beauties (such as missing another spring in Iran which sparks in us a natural desire and longing for the times missed at home), hegemony is not something we look back on fondly. When men in the Mojahedin recall the years before the E.I. we do not do so with nostalgia for the 'good old days' (he laughs) we don't sit amongst one another reminiscing about 'how great it was to be in charge'...This isn't a change we regret, the opposite is true (Attà, author's

translation).

Ultimately, Atta's account demonstrates that members of the MEK/PMOI organization (regardless of their gender) take great pride in the respect they have accorded gender equality and view their involvement in such efforts as ongoing. Seven of the seven resisters interviewed attest to the fact that although the *Enghelabeh Ideologique* has resulted in the successful adoption of a new gender lens, it has a long way to go and further entails a lasting evolution which will always allow room for improvement.

Conceiving of the successes of gender equality in light of the longevity enjoyed by the resistance, Elnaz demonstrates why she believes women's hegemony to be an integral factor to the MEK/PMOI's perseverance:

It's no longer a question of women and men. It began with the issue of women and men and has reached such depth that it has addressed other inequalities justly and accordingly. It is for this reason that it [the MEK/PMOI] has been able to survive in face of such challenges. The Mojahedin organization may have many enemies and the regime's diabolizing apparatus may have successfully swayed many with respect to their views of the organization; yet everyone (friend and foe) agrees to that the Mojahedin are the only organized and serious resistance visible in the arena of opposition to this regime... What has made it so that after all these years of pressure and in face of so many obstacles they [the MEK/PMOI] have avoided collapse and falling by the sidelines? It cannot be some superficial quality... it must be rooted in an immovable principle and belief in equality. That is why I think they have been successful in achieving the goals they set out in the E.I. (Elnaz, author's translation).

As such her belief, (and the belief of many resisters) in the importance of women's leadership, has gone unchanged even decades following the adoption of their mandate.

Ultimately, the gender politics described by members of the *Mojahedin* is at odds with the narratives analyzed as part of the common portrait. It is my conclusion that the testimonies offered by members of the resistance are in line with the organization's official discourse wherein they maintain the pivotal importance of women's rights and a progressive mandate of women's leadership. What still remains to be seen is whether it will in fact serve as the defining strength in their struggle for revolution and democracy in Iran.

Chapter 5 “Conclusions”

Which voices are being heard and more importantly, what are they telling us? As made evident in the preceding chapters, the narratives offered by key discourse-producing actors are not always representative of a greater ‘truth’. In fact, through their repetition and employment of rhetorical archetypes, they participate in the naturalization of ideologies implicated in the oppression and subjugation of disadvantaged actors. In light of tracing the possible outcomes, repercussions, hegemonic agencies, and new avenues for resistance, in this section I explore some key areas problematized by my research.

In the analysis that follows, I first examine some of the side effects of prescriptive rhetoric in academia. Returning to the cases analyzed in the Chapter 2, I trace the authors’ use of inadequate sources and problematic reliance of normative representations so as to demonstrate how their ‘findings’ serve to perpetuate disjointed narratives representative of the ambivalent tradition of ‘the male gaze’ with regards to ‘femininity’. Here, I lay the groundwork for my later discussion on the importance of listening to subjugated actors and their politics.

Next, I underscore telling trends in the journalistic news coverage allotted to female resisters of the MEK/PMOI, so as to discuss the unique circumstance of the female resistor who is caught between two worlds of subjugation (that of the west, and that of her exiled homeland). In so doing, I reiterate the analytic importance of accounting for gender in the study of social/resistance movements and further investigate what this case study tells us about the broader literatures studying social movements and gender. Namely, I offer the assertion that these currently divided fields should move increasingly towards a cross-disciplinary approach, one that reinvigorates academic research through incorporating experiential authorship, women’s voices, and intersectional analyses.

Finally, I demonstrate the rhetorical function of the narratives outlined in this study. Drawing on theorists Jane Ussher, Sjoberg & Genry, Saba Mahmood, Slavoj Zizek, and Michel Foucault, I posit the very real consequences of discourse and narratives used to represent ‘the feminine’ and highlight its biopolitical implications for ‘the female resistor’ who stands at the crossroads of multiple subjectivities. In all, I emphasize the urgent need to refocus our attentions on the ‘political’ so as to avoid contributing to the endlessly character-driven theatrics of modern politics. In so doing, I problematize ‘what is said’ in order to suggest that we must increasingly ask ‘who is being heard?’ thus, positing not my ‘conclusions’ per se, but rather engaging possibilities that may serve to broaden and enrich future discussions.

5.1. The Side Effects of Prescription: Grappling with Disjointed Narratives in Academia

Central to this positioning of the female body as monstrous or beneficent is ambivalence associated with the power and danger perceived to be inherent in a woman's fecund flesh, her seeping, leaking, bleeding womb standing as a site of pollution and source of dread"

~Ussher 2006, 1

Upon a detailed study of academic works published on the subject of the MEK/PMOI, the reader confronts two principal shortcomings that undercuts much of the corpus; the questionable nature of the materials sourced as evidence by the authors and their overwhelming reliance on the archetypes examined in chapters 1 & 2. As a result, in both cases, the authors present a confused portrait of the organization and its resisters; moreover, this confused portrait speaks to the ambivalence with which 'femininity' is approached in general. Ultimately, I contend that this ambivalence is a symptom of attempting to know 'for' the subject in places where the subjects should speak for themselves.

In the first place, Abrahamian narrates with some diligence the history of the *Mojahedin* throughout the late 60s, 70s, and 80s; yet, makes a rather noticeable shift towards incorporating the use of archetypes, ad hominem attacks, and rhetorical strategies of delegitimation in the latter chapters of his book wherein he examines the organization's modern-day structure. Similarly, Cohen's piece offers two extreme caricatures of the organization and its history overlapping rather bizarre claims of indoctrination with information to its contrary:

The internal relationships between soldiers and commanders were defined as "friendships" or "a fraternity". Simple soldiers had to respect their commanders and the commanders were forbidden to treat their soldiers inflexibly or arbitrarily. The army's general commanders tried to impart these values in order to provide encouragement and harmony, since the soldiers were a very mixed bunch of volunteers who had arrived from all over Iran as well as from Western countries. As a result, there were a number of ethnic and religious minorities among the soldiers (Cohen 2007, 73).

Claims such as "commanders were forbidden to treat their soldiers inflexibly or arbitrarily" imply a harmonious and thus collaborated effort towards resistance rather than the previously implied code of strict indoctrination or persecution.

The casting of these two discursive extremes – claims that ultimately contradict one another – present the reader with an ideologically conflated portrait of MEK resisters. Take for example the problematic juxtaposition of Khoshal's testimony to the rampant abuse of women in the MEK/PMOI and Cohen's assertion that "like the men, women wore uniforms and carried

personal weapons- usually a Kalashnikov” (ibid, 76). Arguably, it is difficult to conceive of a situation wherein one would repeatedly abuse another being and pursue to actively arm them with assault rifles in their day-to-day. This example, and many others, force us to take a closer look at the stereotypes depicted, the sources they rely on, and the validity of the information used to draw meaningful and somewhat disjointed conclusions about the movement.

It is such that an analysis of Cohen’s findings unmasks an arbitrary argumentation; one that relies heavily on the use of speculative facts that attempt to generalize a larger group-based rationality. Although Anne Singleton was never a member of the MEK, Cohen draws much of his research from her web-document and repeatedly cites his interview with her and Massoud Khodabandeh an ex-member of the MEK, at their home in Leeds, England as valid record of the movement’s history. In so doing, Cohen communicates Singleton’s personal views on the organization as insider ‘knowledge’, a detailed and wrought knowledge that, it should be mentioned, spans well beyond the years of her support for the organization as well as Khodabandeh’s own brief membership. Cohen’s narrative also relies rather heavily on documents published by Mehdi Khoshal, a former (short-standing) member of the MEK/PMOI.

Although the author makes a point to recognize the problematic nature of taking Singleton, Khodabandeh, and Khoshal’s testimonies as valid (Cohen does not interview any then current members of the organization), he does nothing in the way of attempting to test the validity of their claims regarding the movement or Khoshal’s provocative testimony as it relates to the treatment of women in the MEK. Rather, the author extrapolates claims from an unrepresentative sample of interviewees through willingly naïve means and engages questions on women’s roles in the MEK with heavy bias. In so doing, the author recounts the subjectivities of female resisters in a seemingly objective way attributing faulty characterizations, which are applied *en masse*, to the members of the MEK.

Moreover, despite his very own account of the movement’s history wherein he makes reference to a prominent female *Mojahed* who assassinated a leading figure of the clergy in Shiraz, Ervand Abrahamian’s assertions regarding the ‘invariably subservient roles’ of female resisters prior to the *E.I.* imply the following: (1) that no female members of the MEK stepped outside the ‘subservient’ roles described by Abrahamian and (2) that women’s adoption of such roles (i.e. setting up safe-houses for resisters across the country, acting as messengers, and petitioning their fellow citizens) are somehow ‘lesser’ forms of resistance than the acts carried out at the time by male-members of the MEK/PMOI. Notwithstanding the existent record of

women who did step outside the roles categorized by Abrahamian as ‘supportive’, the author’s problematic assertion is imbued with meaning and belittles the contributions of thousands of MEK/PMOI women; contributions that made possible much of the progress achieved by the organization and cost scores of women their lives and freedom both prior to – and following – the Islamic Revolution.

Regardless of the validity of claims made by either author, their articulation has impactful consequences in the here and now. As Laclau and Mouffe demonstrate, “Any discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a center (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 112). In other words, these (and all) narratives must be understood in light of their attempts to establish discursive hegemony. What is more, their repetition serves to mask their contingency so that the established discourse may circulate as objective knowledge. Effectively, once their contingency is rendered invisible (a function of repetition) these assertions are embedded more deeply in our ideological assumptions and shared perceptions; therefore, it becomes imperative that we intervene, critique, and disrupt their sedimentation. Ultimately, lost within these disjointed narratives is reliable representation of the group’s ideology and practice. This is not to say that the *Mojahedin* may not have undergone changes in ideology and practice such as the *E.I.*, which rests at the center of my research question; but rather, that conflicting reports largely reliant on hearsay and the use of rhetorical strategies of delegitimization do not garner the reader any substantive ‘knowledge’ or insight regarding to the organization’s principles and functions, nor do they frame such understandings within an analysis guided by a clear theoretical framework.

We are thus left with a problem familiar to the male gaze; to decipher whether the subjects in question are dangerous or desirable; to decipher whether the female resisters of the MEK, are in fact subservient drones who are incapable of escaping their implications in a cult or whether they are active members of a hierarchical, yet operationally democratic, resistance movement wherein they play intricate roles as demonstrated by my findings in chapters 3 & 4. Having learned little about the motivations that bring these women to resist in their day-to-day lives, an immovable shadow is cast on the very real grievances that led members of the MEK/PMOI to resist in the first place. In the end, these unforgiving portrayals leave us with no real understanding of the MEK/PMOI or its struggle and force us to decide whether we will approach the organization in light of its politics, or in light of prescribed characterizations of its members. My findings simply conclude that by way of the academic portrait we are painted a

less-than reliable picture of the gender politics within the *Mojahedin*. Ultimately, we must concede to the realization that when it comes to the academic study of the MEK/PMOI, character bias steeped in the patriarchal tradition has largely subsumed our ‘objectivity’.

5.2. A Familiar Spin: The Analytic Importance of ‘Gender’ as Seen Through Media

Perpetuating a familiar establishment of hegemonic discourse; one that employs archetypes that serve to denigrate the political goals of some thousands of women; my findings (analyzed in Chapter 2) demonstrate that western and Iranian medias quite frequently engage specific narratives that result in similar consequences to those discussed above. In the brief analysis that follows, I examine the implications of common tropes found in western and Iranian medias so as to underscore the not-so-double ‘double bind’ facing female resisters of the MEK/PMOI. Moreover, I contend that these findings are largely possible in light of my case study’s adoption of a cross-disciplinary approach to the study of politics, gender, and social movements.

Consulting the figures laid out in Chapter 2, we can ascertain the commonplace of archetypes *vis a vis* female resisters amongst representative samples of western and Iranian media articles. What are not analyzed are the interesting convergences of western and Iranian discourses and the way in which repeated stereotypical assertions are accorded objective value in the articles themselves. Through my analysis, I can conclude the existence of two specific assumptions shared by western and Iranian medias alike: (1) the MEK/PMOI (and its members) were used by Saddam as a mercenary force and (2) that the MEK/PMOI is a cult and its members, instruments of the cult.

Interestingly, despite the west’s vocal opposition to Iran’s policies and politics, western and Iranian media find themselves on the same side of the fence with respect to their castings of MEK/PMOI resisters. Both assumptions are based in speculations and subjective truths (or truthiness) that have little to no recourse in facts. Furthermore, the ‘fixing’ of hegemonic practices or articulations of discourse in each outlet allows for the subsequent referencing of said assertions as evidence to the fact. In other words, the largely unsubstantiated claims made by one journalist serve as a precedent that allows for future journalists and actors to sediment its hegemonic validity simply by virtue of repeating it as a borrowed form of ‘knowledge’.

In this way, the discourse eludes the need for justification outside itself. The result is the creation of a not-so-double ‘double-bind’ trapping the female resistor within a system of

subordination. In other words, instead of the usual double-bind wherein third-world feminist subjects are bound by the need to conform to western prototypical standards of resistance meanwhile balancing rejection from a largely conservative native base; female resisters of the MEK/PMOI find themselves subject to a more universal bind encroaching from either side.

Ultimately, both medias perpetuate the same hegemonic representations of the MEK/PMOI. My findings suggest that the similarity between rhetorical strategies of delegitimization familiar to western and Iranian medias, indicates that they are borrowed or at least connected in some way. The Iranian media's agenda is quite evident insofar as the MEK/PMOI pose a threat to Iranian sovereignty. Less clear, however, is the impetus driving western media's adoption of these representations.

In the end, despite the political antagonisms explicitly expressed between Iran and the west on the world stage, my findings may suggest the existence of an implicit cooperation at the level of discourse wherein policies of appeasement find themselves at work. In such circumstances, it is the female resistor of the MEK/PMOI who finds herself compromised at the foremost intersection of global political interests and negotiations.

By in large, this case study also speaks volumes about our theoretical understanding of the role of gender in social movements, and especially resistance movements. As demonstrated in the literature review, there exists a rather sizeable gap in the literature as it relates to the study of gender and resistance politics. Building on Dr. Bahati Kuumba's approach, I hope to have conveyed here some of the rather striking findings that can be uncovered through the helpful use of gender as an analytical category in the study of the MEK/PMOI specifically, and resistance movements more generally.

This contention – namely that these findings are largely possible in light of my adoption of a cross-disciplinary approach to the study of politics, gender, and social movements – renders explicit the need to reinvigorate academic research with a dissecting lens that is not limited to a single angle of vision. Being able to recognize and appreciate the truly dimensional subjectivities of characters requires that we broaden our studies, accept the salience of gender (and its performance) in our everyday lives and politics, and remove ourselves from the colonizing project of purely positivist epistemology – which has at its center a normative and prescriptive knowledge of the 'object'.

Rather, as demonstrated by this dissertation, the academic community stands to gain valuable insight into the lives, experiences, and his/herstories of crucial actors through the

incorporation of theories that highlight the importance of gendered narratives and the implementation of critical/intersectional tools in research. Only then can we aim to relay a nuanced, multifaceted, and fair form of insight into the global discussion that seeks understanding and not knowing, empathy and not alterity. Ultimately, the similarities uncovered through this case study and its gender analysis of the common portrait necessitate that we value gender as an analytic category and further question the rhetorical function of the narratives used to represent women involved in proscribed violence more generally, and female resisters of the MEK/PMOI specifically.

5.3. The Rhetorical Function of Narratives: Embodied Ideologies

Troughout history, and across cultures, the reproductive body of a woman has provoked fascination and fear. It is a body deemed dangerous and defiled, the myth of the monstrous feminine made flesh, yet also a body which provoke adoration and desire, enthrallment with the mysteries within. We see this ambivalent relationship played out in mythological, literary and artistic representations of the feminine, where woman is positioned as powerful, impure and corrupt, source of moral and physical contamination; or as sacred, a sexual and nourishing, a phantasmic signifier of threat extinguished

~Ussher 2006, 1

An analysis of the rhetorical functions of narratives, specifically, of those outlined and examined in this dissertation, exposes “the places where the (apparently) value-neutral dominant discourses of women’s violence in global politics...exclude women’s agency and other marginalized perspectives” (Sjoberg & Gentry 2007, 29). These narratives often reveal a series of ideological assumptions that perpetuate characterizations of female resisters, subjugating their person to the normative values implied by these signifying structures.

Following a brief analysis of the normative assertions suggested by these archetypes, I underscore the subjugation perpetuated by the rhetorical function of these stereotypes in relation to the subject’s place in society. Moreover, I discuss the biopolitical implications and ramifications of such discourse; namely, the objectification of the subject, the normative qualification of her agency, the riddance of her resistance, and the physical persecution that therein ensues.

Before one can theorize in regards to the ideological assumptions underpinning these narratives it is important that we first conceive of the person or group of people colonized by the use of such discourse. In order to do so, we must examine the female resistor of the MEK/PMOI not by her individual subjectivity but by the common structural factors that serve to totalize her

experience as a woman involved in proscribed violence. Persian, Kurd, Turk, Azeri, Baluch, or otherwise, the female resistor of the MEK/PMOI is of Iranian heritage and subject to political persecution from the state governing her native homeland for reasons related to her values, political ideology, and involvement in resistance.

The female resistor also exists within a culture that is predominantly patriarchal and religiously conservative. Perhaps a religious minority, she is a member of an inclusive Muslim organization that espouses progressive, alternative, and counter-hegemonic views on religion, gender, and secular democracy. Currently, the situation in Iran is such that religious minorities are persecuted for practicing their faith. Christian pastors are imprisoned; Jewish families are denied Jewish newspapers and observation of the Sabbath, while individuals of the Zoroastrian or Baha'i faiths risk their lives facing torture and execution if they do not adhere to the practice of forced conversions.

What is more, the female resistor of the MEK/PMOI may be Farsi-speaking, but she may also speak in her native Kurdish or Turkish language or dialect(s) within a predominantly Farsi speaking population. Kurdish and Turkish populations (representative of the largest ethnic and linguistic minorities in Iran) have long fought to maintain their linguistic, educational, cultural, and even political independence for sake of preserving their customary ways of life. Layer upon layer, the cultural, linguistic, ethnic, gendered, and political complexities of her person locate the female resistor of the MEK/PMOI at the intersection of a long-line of structural subjugations determined largely by her circumstance.

As such, the image of the female resistor is an easy and primary target for disparaging attacks that seek to delegitimize the *Mojahedin* by way of attacking her character, story, and involvement with the organization. Ascribing value to a woman's worth by way of her character, the archetypes of Mother, Monster, Whore, and Heretic are often conveyed by means of ad hominem attacks used to belittle, defame, or supplant a woman's personality and character in favor of a normative stereotype suggested by the author.

When cast as a Mother, a woman's decision to take up proscribed violence is only viewed in light of her predisposition towards maternal sacrifice or resulting from her inability to bare children. Discursively, this stereotype represents women as slaves to their reproductive (in)capacities and does not value women's rationally, politically, socially, or economically-minded reasons for assuming a role in resistance; rather, based on the prescription of these maternal traits the stereotype assumes her involvement as a 'given'.

The obverse is true when a woman is cast as a Monster. Whereas the Mother archetype assumes a set of behaviors based on gender, the Monster archetype is assigned to women whose actions do not conform to the normative expectations set out by popular imagination and discourse. This stereotype implies the abnormality of women's violence and perpetuates the patriarchal tradition wherein space only exists for men to be violent. Thus, "the monster narrative is ridicule for women's non-conforming behavior 'as a means of neutralizing the challenge [women's violence] poses to dominant, hegemonic, patriarchal norms' (Bergington & Honkatukia 2002:57)" (ibid, 37).

Furthermore, when utilized by hegemonic actors, this narrative serves to detract attention from the motivations at stake within female resisters' adoption of violence in favor of maintaining their resistance as 'symptomatic' or indicative of their abnormality and/or monstrosity. Here, the qualitative distinction between discourse that captures the horrors of violence and ad hominem attacks necessarily casting perpetrators as horrific are of utmost importance. The former attributes a quality to the politics and actions of the individual; whereas, the latter defames the individual herself thereby denying the reader the discursive and imaginative space necessary for accurately conceiving of the movement. What is more, it eliminates the possibility for empathy or understanding in favor of establishing alterity.

In the same respect, the Whore narrative dehumanizes female resisters by way of objectifying and sexualizing their being. This representation binds the female resistor to her physical exploitation conceiving of her as an object available for the enjoyment of others; one that lacks the autonomy needed for self-determination, agency, and political will; and one that only exists as part of a struggle in light of men's sexual desires.

Finally, the archetype of Heretic casts the female resistor as a 'misbeliever', an apostate whose personal faith-based values are at odds with the 'acceptable' tradition determined by hegemonic actors (in this case the Islamic Jurists). This label brands the resistor as 'immoral' casting irredeemable judgment on her character and by extension her actions, ideology, and political resistance.

My analysis thus concludes that the rhetorical function of this prescription is two fold: first, it serves to denigrate the female resistor; and meanwhile, perpetuates the dominance of hegemonic interpretations of religion. Ultimately, in all four cases listed above, the image of the female resistor of the MEK/PMOI is qualified through prescriptive means reliant on judgments of her inherent person and not her actions.

Moving away from characterizations of her person, the archetypes of Patriarchal Appendage, Oppressed Veiled Muslim, and Victim of Indoctrination function in terms of ascribing a rationale to women's involvement in resistance. In all three cases, the rhetorical function of such discourse, as Wollstonecraft notes, is to portray females as male subjects and to question their capacities to find recourse in reason outside of their relationships with men:

unless virtue be nursed by liberty, it will never attain due strength-and what they say of man I extend to mankind, insisting that in all cases morals must be fixed on immutable principles; and, that the being cannot be termed rational or virtuous, who obeys any authority, but that of reason (ibid, 291).

Stripping women of their agency, their intellectual capacity for autonomous thought, and their ability to willingly and purposefully participate in emancipatory social movements, this rhetoric represents their involvements in armed struggle as the extension of a man's will. The underlying assertion present across all three stereotypes is the impossibility for women to bare their own political grievances and rationalizations towards violence. Ultimately, these terms are strategic in their supplanting of individual will insofar as they imply the blatant disavowal of women's circumstantial agency.

Implying a lack of substantive value to women's roles in resistance, the archetypes of Figurehead, Subservient, and False Idol each perpetuate the myth of male supremacy. When used, the Figurehead narrative accords women's involvement no real value outside their corporeality and image. The Figurehead narrative presents a unique scenario in which women are assumed to be no more than puppets or mouthpieces manipulated by their male superiors.

Similarly, the narrative of subservience acts as rhetorical justification for treating women as second-class citizen assuming their natural passivity, docility, and obedience. This rhetoric functions in at least two ways: first, it credits women's actions with the quality of subservience perpetuating gendered subordination; all the while, naturalizing the hierarchal relationship at stake within the narrative by means of denying their ability to assume substantive leadership. Likewise, the casting of resisters as False Idols serves to altogether deny the possibility for female participation in the MEK/PMOI.

As such, female resisters' contributions are disparaged rendering it inconceivable that what "may appear to be a case of deplorable passivity and docility from a progressive point of view, may actually be a form of agency- but one that can only be understood from within the discourses and structures of subordination that create the conditions of its enactment" (Mahmood

2005, 14-15). In other words, their agency is forced to concede to the popular understanding and patriarchal insistence that men's involvement in resistance is inherently 'worth' more.

In light of the assertion that "the most elementary definition of ideology is probably the well-known phrase from Marx's *Capital*: "Sie wissen das nicht, aber sie tun es" ("they do not know it, but they are doing it")" (Zizek 1989, 1), I contend that the archetypes analyzed in this dissertation are impregnated with patriarchy and are performative of its ideological sublimation.

In other words, I hold that the ultimate function of this rhetoric is to solidify the subjugation of female resisters of the MEK/PMOI through the implication of "a kind of basic, constitutive naïveté: the misrecognition of its own presuppositions, of its own effective conditions, a distance, a divergence between so-called social reality and our distorted representation, our false consciousness of it" (ibid). Void of critical reflexivity, the narratives outlined in this thesis rely on our tacit acceptance of patriarchy and serve to further invisibilize its practical and discursive hegemony.

What is more, I hold that the normative project implied by these stereotypes ignores the diversity of the female-resistor and objectifies her subjectivity precisely because of the comprised circumstance 'she' occupies. Thus, my analysis of the available discourse is committed to a critical-ideological procedure; the aim of which, as Zizek asserts, "is to lead the naïve ideological consciousness to a point at which it can recognize its own effective conditions, the social reality that it is distorting, and through this very act dissolve itself" (ibid). In other words, we are tasked with familiarizing ourselves with the function of these narratives as the first step towards undoing their influence.

In the case of the female resistor, this influence is anything but inconsequential. The biopolitical implications of such discourse contribute to some very real effects experienced in the lives of these actors. The ex-communication of their testimony from popular discourse; meaning, the active exclusion of their voices from popular discourse; denies the transmission of their agency and also serves to further deny them a relationship to justice and the political community. Exiled by the state governing their homeland, they are further caste out by the forces policing popular imagination and by extension those forces policing world politics. This active process of casting out, in the case of the female resistor, results not only in her displacement, but also her internment, torture, and execution. What is more, the hegemonic 'decree' – influenced largely by the fixing of global political discourse – has denied basic refugee rights to those MEK/PMOI resisters still residing in Camp Liberty (following their recent relocation from Camp Ashraf)

where to date they have experienced several deadly attacks, the denial of medical supplies, and severely disrupted access to running water and electricity.

In order to fully grasp what is intended by my assertion that the common portrait contributes to the objectification of the subject, the normative qualification of her agency, the riddance of her resistance, and most importantly, the physical persecution of her subject; we must first briefly explore Foucault's notion of 'governmentality' and the mechanisms by which it is sustained. Among his famous lectures at the College de France, Foucault introduced a series titled *Security Territory and Population* whereby he sought to examine the genealogy of state strategy. In so doing, Foucault isolated the advent of a new form of governing: a new form of governing "which has population as its main target and apparatuses of security as its essential mechanism", a triangle of "sovereignty, discipline, and governmental management" (Foucault 2007,108).

In other words, he traced the evolving ends of state sovereignty, which, in turn, required the deployment of new strategies. The culmination of these new strategies combined with pre-existing state structures is what Foucault deems 'governmentality'; a new method of state operation aimed at new outcomes. Arguably, this very adaptation, typical of the state's perseverance, has allowed it to sustain itself in the face of resistance and growing populations.

Of the techniques outlined by Foucault, I emphasize his account of the creation of 'knowledges'. This is explained when he writes,

By this word "governmentality" I mean three things. First, by "governmentality" I understand the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument. Second, by "governmentality" I understand the tendency, the line of force, that for a long time, and throughout the West, has constantly led towards the pre-eminence over all other types of power-sovereignty, discipline, and so on-of the types of power that we can call "government" and which has led to the development of a series of specific governmental apparatuses (*appareils*) on the one hand, [and, on the other] to the development of a series of knowledges (*savoirs*) (ibid).

The importance of such developments for my research cannot be overstated. The governmental apparatuses and knowledges of which Foucault speaks, play a pivotal role in subject formation and the analysis of discourse I have chosen to engage.

Ultimately, their discursive function serves to individualize as well as constitute essentialized identities whereby the state can classify – so as to manage – populations. Through his own account of the construction of homosexual identity in his book *History of Sexuality*,

Foucault unmasks the complicit roles of a number of branches of governmentality including: medicine (the sciences), psychiatry, and religion. Though each operates on a seemingly different level, they intersect at the *niveau* of the individual, the subject. This junction allows for the binding of a discursive matrix of domination and the formation of an identity inextricably shackled to its host; in our case, the archetypes discussed above. Ultimately, it is this ‘naming’ that allows for the ‘taming’ of subjects.

Conceiving of a shift in the disciplinary agenda of governmentality, Foucault posits a new form of political power – one that no longer simply relies on the individualization of identity – but rather, the commonality of our physical selves as human. This, he argues, allows for the deployment of a new kind of politics; one which is centered on ‘taming’ subjects:

Unlike discipline, which is addressed to bodies, the new nondisciplinary power is applied not to man-as-body but...to man-as-species...I would say that discipline tries to rule a multiplicity of men to the extent that their multiplicity can and must be dissolved into individual bodies that can be kept under surveillance, trained, used, and, if need be, punished. And that the new technology that is being established is addressed to a multiplicity of men, not to the extent that they are nothing more than their individual bodies, but to the extent that they form, on the contrary, a global mass that is affected by overall processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness, and so on... we have...the emergence of something that is no longer an anatomo-politics of the human body, but what I would call a “biopolitics” of the human race (ibid, 241).

Evoking the essential qualities or characteristics that render us all human, Foucault unveils that sovereignty has come to rely on a new form of power, ‘biopower’. In so doing, he explains how sovereignty’s fundamental right shifted from a power over death to a power over life (ibid).

This means that sovereignty’s new aim is that of regulating bodies. It no longer concerns itself with death as “death is beyond the reach of power”(ibid, 248); rather, sovereignty manifests itself in biological life, in the here and now, and “consists of making live and letting die”(ibid, 247). In other words, through the perpetuation of archetypes and normative signifiers we are confronted with the real-time discursive management of bodies, the objectification of subjective actors, and the respective qualification of their agencies.

As described by Foucault, this new task then serves to eliminate or erode the individual’s bodily autonomy. The issue of management, another form or deployment of biopower, can be spoken of on varying levels: discursive management and biomanagement; both of which are tied to the physical-being and serve to regulate how one’s life is construed and how it is maintained. Ultimately, hegemonic actors perpetuate the function of sovereignty through their use of normative representations. As such, they ideologically manage the female resistor’s being,

disempower her resistance, and attempt to nullify her agency by way of nullifying her person.

The reality in today's world is such that the attribution of prescriptive narratives to female resisters of the MEK/PMOI has strengthened the Iranian government's ability to perpetuate its sovereign hold and subjugate resistance. In the case of the female MEK/PMOI resister this subjugation takes the form of excluding her plight from public discourse and further turning a blind eye to international agreements such as the Geneva conventions as well as the Iranian government's on-going persecution of unarmed dissidents who have sought refuge in Iraq. Therefore, when seeking to capture the full story and restore a democratic balance of power, bearing witness to resisters' testimonies becomes of utmost importance insofar as it destabilizes the state's monopoly over the threshold of life and death and exposes the possibility for a third realm between the 'inside' and 'outside'; between the dichotomous function of biopower that serves to 'include' some and 'exceptionalize' others; and bridge the gap between that which is silenced and that which is heard. Ultimately, I contend that the proliferation of narratives, the telling of stories, and the assertion of one's own power over one's own life challenges the very threshold that escapes state sovereignty, a threshold that we, the international scholarly community, must dare to provoke.

5.4. Shifting the Focus: People, Not Characters; Politics, Not Personalities

“Call us terrorists, call us freedom fighters, we will not be daunted by words, we are ready to fight for freedom”

~Sheila Jackson Lee, Speech at Convention for Democratic Change in Iran, 2013

Given the important role that resistance movement's play in today's global political landscape, and particularly considering the serious challenge they pose to state authorities and their consolidation of political power; we have grasped how ideological rhetoric can serve to strategically defame and delegitimize key actors in the struggle for equality and democracy. Thus, what becomes essential is bearing in mind the implications of such discourse when reading representations of those who object to dominant voices in politics, and as such are rendered increasingly visible targets for character assassination and political persecution.

As demonstrated by the findings presented in the second chapter of this thesis, overwhelmingly, academic and media portrayals of female resisters of the MEK/PMOI, often serve to undermine the political agency of these individuals. Given the contrasts brought to light via the MEK/PMOI's own discourse and that of the members who participated in the interviews,

we can appreciate how their narratives have been devalued, downplayed, and even all together hijacked in favor of casting their persons, stories, and roles as something ‘other’. Presuming that we are embedded/embodied in ideology, I conclude that so long as our debates are centered on ideologues and not the ideas themselves we are committed to a project that confounds characters for people and personalities for politics. Most importantly, I hold that we must not commit ourselves to a project of alterity wherein common representations of female resisters are reified, supplanting their politics in favor of characterizations of their being. Questioning the integrity of narratives whose repetition and common place in the public discourse has rendered their contingency somewhat invisible, this project has aimed to unmask the ideologies behind the widely accepted characterizations of female resisters of the MEK/PMOI, and in so doing disrupt the performance of a self-perpetuating cycle of discourse.

Today, it would seem that faced with the daunting struggle of mobilizing a democratic revolution in Iran, female resisters of the MEK/PMOI, are faced with the equally daunting task of defending their character, motivations, and role within the *Mojahedin* to the world at large. This double burden is perhaps a function of contemporary politics and its elevation of the image; representations hurried with generalizations, prescriptions, and normative assertions void of reflexive content; as well as post-modern conditions that do not recognize the ever expanding influence of ideology in our day-to-day lives.

It is such that in this dissertation I aim to combat the ever-increasing power of the monopolized image and encourage the decolonization of people from their prescribed caricatures. Looking to future discussions, from this thesis we can ‘conclude’ two larger findings: first, the overwhelming falsehood of prescriptive narratives used to represent female resisters of the MEK/PMOI; and second, the fallibility and power of discourses in general. It is with these conclusions in mind that I extrapolate and reaffirm the epistemological importance of investigating self-portrayals, testimonies, and the first-person narratives of subjugated actors when seeking to uncover the many dimensions of an occurrence, event, or story. Only then can we seek to override (however modestly) the omnipotent power of hegemonic discourse.

Appendices

6.1. Search Words and Content Restrictions for Coding Articles

English Media Articles:

Source: The Washington Post

Method of Retrieval: Nexis Lexis Academic

Search Term(s): “PMOI”/ “MEK”/ “Mujahedin” “Khalq” “Iran”

Dates: January 1st 2003- April 4th 2013

Result dates: May 9th 2003- September 29th 2012

Source: NYT (New York Times)

Method of Retrieval: Nexislexis Academic

Search Term(s): “Mujahedin” “Khalq” “Women”/ “PMOI”/ “MEK”/ “Mojahedin” “Khalq” “Iran”
“Mujahedin” “Khalq” “Iran”

Dates: January 1st 2003- April 24th 2013

Result dates: April 17th 2003- February 10th 2013

French Media Articles:

Source: Le Figaro

Method of Retrieval: Factiva

Search Term(s): “OMPI”

Dates: January 1st 2003- April 5th 2013

Result dates: June 18th 2003- October 1st 2012

Source: AFP (Agence France Presse)

Method of Retrieval: Factiva

Search Term(s): “Moudjahidines” “Iran”

Dates: January 1st 2003- April 8th 2013

Result dates: May 9th 2003- September 22nd 2012

English Iranian Media Articles:

Source: “Iran daily” (Islamic Republic News Agency)

Method of Retrieval: Factiva Search + Google Site Search

Search Term(s): “MKO”

Dates: January 1st 2003- April 8th 2013

Result dates: October 12th 2009- April 8th 2013

Source: “ISNA” (Iranian Students News Agency)

Method of Retrieval: Nexislexis Academic

Search Term(s): “MKO”

Dates: January 1st 2003- April 4th 2013

Result dates: January 18th 2010- June 28th 2012

Source: Press TV (Islamic Republic Iran Broadcasting)

Method of Retrieval: Google Site Search

Search Term(s): “MKO” “Mujahedeen-e Khalq” “Rajavi”/ “MKO” “Women”

Dates: January 1st 2003- April 8th 2013

Result dates: October 21st 2008- February 9th 2013

Source: FNA (Fars News Agency)

Method of Retrieval: Factiva + Google Site Search

Search Term(s): "MKO" "Women"

Dates: January 1st 2003- April 5th 2013

Result dates: October 9th 2010- December 27th 2012

Farsi Articles:

Source: IRNA (Islamic Republic News Agency)

Method of Retrieval: Google Site Search

Search Term(s): "رژوی" "منافقین"

Result dates: 1391/04/16- 1391/10/03

Source: IRNA Newspaper (Islamic Republic News Agency)

Method of Retrieval: Google Site Search

Search Term(s): "مجاهدین خلق زنان" "مجاهدین خلق" "مجاهدین"

Result dates: 1360/03/30- 1389/10/08

Source: Fars News Agency

Method of Retrieval: Google Site Search

Search Term(s): "زنان" "منافقین"

Result dates: 1390/10/14- 1392/12/12

Source: Press TV (Islamic Republic Iran Broadcasting)

Method of Retrieval: Google Site Search

Search Term(s): "منافقین"

Result dates: 1391/11/19- 1392/02/09

6.2. Coding Dictionary

What description of female resisters' *character* is being made?

- Women as '**Mothers**'
 - Signifies any description that refers to female resistor through her (in)capacity towards reproduction and/or role as nurturing/sacrificing mother.
- Women as '**Monsters**'
 - Signifies any description that refers to female resistor as psychologically impaired/deviant or demonized (i.e. murderer, horrific, radical, insane criminal, ideologically perverted, suicidal, crazy, bad women etc.).
- Women as '**Whores**'
 - Signifies any description that refers to female resistor as distractions by virtue of their sex and/or any description, which sexualizes their decision to resist as dangerous (i.e. erotomaniac, erotically dysfunctional etc.) or as sexual slavery.
- Women as '**Heretics**'
 - Signifies any description that refers to female resisters as being guilty of heresy (i.e. hypocrites, alliance with evil, accepting a different reading of Islam, undermining accepted morality etc.).

What description of female resisters' *narrative* is being made?

- Women as '**Patriarchal Appendages**'
 - Signifies any description that refers to female resisters alongside their relationships with men (i.e. wife, sister, cousin).
- Women as '**Oppressed Veiled Muslims**'
 - Signifies any description that refers to female resisters as oppressed on the basis that she is a Muslim and a member of the MEK (i.e. adoption head scarf, backwardness etc.)
- Women as '**Victims of Indoctrination**'
 - Signifies any description that refers to female resisters as psychologically indoctrinated or victimized (i.e. cult members, brainwashed, Stockholm syndrome, battered-person syndrome etc.).

What description of female resisters' *role* is being made?

- Women as '**Figureheads**'
 - Signifies any description that refers to female resisters' roles as anything but genuine (i.e. referencing 'the real man in charge', belittling her role, claiming her role is 'just for show' etc.).

- Women as **‘Subservient’**
 - Signifies any description that refers to female resisters roles as subservient to that of their male- counterparts (i.e. adoption of feminine roles such as secretary or administrator, describes them as ‘less involved’, or ‘just petitioners’ etc.).
- Women as **‘False Idols’**
 - Signifies any description that refers to female resisters as non-members or denies their actual membership (i.e. posthumously elevated to rank and file, false representations of membership etc.).

6.3. Coding Spreadsheet

Article	Source	Date	Article Type	Author Type	Character					Narrative				Role				Other	Other
					Mother	Monste r	Whore	Heretic	Total	Patriarc hal Append age	Oppress ed/ Velle d Musli	Victim of Indoctr ination	Total	Figureh ead	Subser - vient	False Idol	Total	At least one code ?	Total count of codes for
1. WP "Iranian group taken off U.S.	The Washington	9.29.2012	1	4					0				0				0		0
2. WP "U.S. to remove Iranian exiles	The Washington	9.22.2012	1	1					0			1	1		1		1	1	2
3. WP "Iranian dissidents to move to a	The Washington	9.17.2012	1	4					0				0				0		0
4. WP "Iranian group told: Move or be	The Washington	8.1.2012	1	4					0				0				0		0
5. WP "U.S. is wrongly challenging	The Washington	7.14.2012	2	2					0				0				0		0
6. WP "Iranian dissidents urged to move	The Washington	7.7.2012	1	1					0				0				0		0
7. WP "Iranian exiles attracting attention	The Washington	7.6.2012	1	1			1	1	2			2	1		1		1	1	4
8. WP "Deadline is set for terror-list	The Washington	6.2.2012	1	1					0				0				0		0
9. WP "U.S. offers the MEK a way off	The Washington	3.1.2012	1	4					0				0				0		0
10. WP "400 Iranian exiles moved to new	The Washington	2.19.2012	1	4					0			1	1				0	1	0
11. WP "Iranian exiles in Iraq agree to	The Washington	12.29.2011	1	1					0				0				0		0
12. WP "Iraq agrees to U.N. deal on	The Washington	12.26.2011	1	1			1		1			2	1		1		1	1	3
13. WP "Without protection, Camp Ashraf	The Washington	12.18.2011	2	2					0				0				0		0
14. WP "The Iranians in Iraq"	The Washington	12.14.2011	2	1		1			1			1	1		1		1	1	3
15. WP "To most of the world, Iranian	The Washington	12.9.2011	2	2					0				0				0		0
16. WP "U.N. to broker deal with Iranian	The Washington	11.4.2011	1	4					0				0				0		0
17. WP "Iranian exiles backed at rally"	The Washington	10.23.2011	1	1					0				0				0		0
18. WP "Rally supports exiled Iranian	The Washington	8.27.2011	1	1					0				0				0		0
19. WP "U.N. confirms 34 killed in	The Washington	4.15.2011	1	4					0				0				0		0
20. WP "Cabinet votes to close Iranian	The Washington	4.12.2011	1	4					0				0				0		0
21. WP "Iraqis raid Iranian dissidents"	The Washington	4.9.2011	1	1					0			1	1				0	1	1
22. WP "GOP leaders criticize Obama's	The Washington	12.23.2010	1	1					0				0				0		0
23. WP "Persian songstress a voice of	The Washington	10.15.2010	1	1					0				0				0		0
24. WP "Court tells State Dept. to	The Washington	8.17.2010	1	1		1			1			1	1				0	1	2
25. WP "Terrorist group swears it's	The Washington	1.13.2010	1	1		1			1			1	1				0	1	2
26. WP "Iraq's plans for Camp Ashraf	The Washington	12.27.2009	2	2					0				0				0		0
27. WP "Iranian exiles told to leave Iraq	The Washington	12.16.2009	1	1					0				0				0		0
28. WP "Iranian exile group under new	The Washington	12.11.2009	1	4					0				0				0		0
29. WP "Troops Free Iranians Detained in	The Washington	10.8.2009	1	4					0				0				0		0
30. WP "Iran Exiles Accuse U.S. Of	The Washington	9.12.2009	1	1					0				0		1		1	1	1
31. WP "Iraqi Raid Poses Problem for	The Washington	7.30.2009	1	1					0				0				0		0
32. WP "Iraq Raids Camp of Exiles from	The Washington	7.29.2009	1	1		1			1			1	1		1	1	2	1	4
33. WP "Iraq Plans to Relocate Iran	The Washington	3.28.2009	1	1	1	1	1		3			2	1		1		1	1	5
34. WP "Iraq Accuses Iranian Exiles of	The Washington	1.29.2009	1	1		1			1			1	1				0	1	2
35. WP "Iraq Threatens to Expel Iranian	The Washington	12.22.2008	1	1		1			1				0		1		1	1	2
36. WP "Iraq Intensifies Efforts to Expel	The Washington	3.14.2007	1	1		2			1			1	1		2		1	1	3
37. WP "Iraq Council Votes to Throw Out	The Washington	12.10.2003	1	1		1			1				0				0	1	1
38. WP "Rice Clarifies Stand On Iranian	The Washington	11.13.2003	1	1					0				0				0		0
39. WP "In a Delicate Balancing Act, U.S.	The Washington	11.9.2003	1	1		3			1			1	1		2		1	1	3
40. WP "No Infiltration in Iran"	The Washington	9.22.2003	2	2					0				0				0		0
41. WP "State Questions Military	The Washington	9.11.2003	1	1					0				0				0		0
42. WP "Washington In Brief"	The Washington	8.17.2003	1	4					0				0				0		0
43. WP "France Jails 150 Iranian Exiles;	The Washington	6.18.2003	1	1					0	1			1				0	1	1
44. WP "U.S. Troops Surround Iranian	The Washington	5.10.2003	1	4					0				0				0		0
45. WP "U.S. Seeks Surrender Of Iranian	The Washington	5.9.2003	1	1					0				0				0		0
Total Cases			45															17	
Total distinct cases with at least one																			
Total number of codes					1	10	3	1	15	1	0	13	14	0	10	1	11		40
Avg # of codes per case																			0.9
Avg # of codes per case with codes																			2.4
Number of codes as % of total Cases					2%	22%	7%	2%		2%	0%	29%		0	22%	2%			
Number of codes as % of codes in					7%	67%	20%	7%		7%	0%	93%		0	91%	9%			
Number of codes as % of all codes					3%	25%	8%	3%		3%	0%	33%		0	25%	3%			
Avg intensity of codes when used					1.0	1.3	1.0	1.0		1.0	#DIV/ 0!	1.2		#DIV/0	1.2	1.0			
46. NYT "Six Killed in Shelling of Iranian	The New York	2.10.2013	1	1					0				0				0		0
47. NYT "Iran Envoy is Assaulted by	The New York	9.28.2012	1	1					0			2	1				0	1	1
48. NYT "Iranian Diplomat Harassed in	The New York	9.27.2012	1	1					0			2	1				0	1	1
49. NYT "Star Lobbyists Help Iran Group	The New York	9.22.2012	1	1					0			2	1				0	1	1
50. NYT "Iraq: Iranian Group May Return	The New York	8.16.2012	1	1					0				0				0		0
51. NYT "U.S. Presses Iranian Dissidents	The New York	8.7.2012	1	1					0				0				0		0
52. NYT "Strange Bedfellows in the	The New York	1.23.2012	1	1			1		1	1		2	2	1			1	1	4
53. NYT "Iraq: Exiles to Leave Camp"	The New York	12.29.2011	1	1					0				0				0		0
54. NYT "Across Party Lines, Lobbying for	The New York	11.27.2011	1	1		1			1	1		2	2	1	1		2	1	5
55. NYT "Tehran's Foes, Unfairly	The New York	10.13.2011	2	2					0				0				0		0
57. NYT "A Reporter Shields His Identity	The New York	9.13.2011	2	1		1			1				0		1		1	1	2
58. NYT "An Iranian Cult and Its	The New York	8.14.2011	2	1		3	2	2	3	2		3	2	2	3		2	1	7
59. NYT "France: Terrorism Charges	The New York	5.13.2011	1	1					0				0				0		0
60. NYT "Marzieh, Iranian Singer and	The New York	10.18.2010	1	1					0				0				0		0
61. NYT "Iraq: Members of Iranian Group	The New York	10.8.2009	1	1					0				0				0		0
62. NYT "Hunger Strikers Press for Iraq's	The New York	9.19.2009	1	1					0			1	1				0	1	1
63. NYT "Camp Ashraf"	The New York	8.22.2009	2	1					0			1	1				0	1	1
64. NYT "Iranian Resistance Group	The New York	12.23.2008	1	1					0				0				0		0
65. NYT "Freeze of Iran Group's Funds	The New York	10.24.2008	1	1					0				0				0		0
66. NYT "Supreme Court Refuses Case	The New York	1.9.2007	1	1					0				0				0		0
67. NYT "European Court Says Exiled	The New York	12.13.2006	1	1					0				0				0		0
68. NYT "Rally in France for Exiled Foe of	The New York	7.2.2006	1	1					0	1	1		2	2			1	1	3
69. NYT "Exiled Iranians Try to Foment	The New York	9.24.2005	1	1		1		1	2	2	1	3	3	1			1	1	6
70. NYT "U.S. Sees No Basis to Prosecute	The New York	8.27.2004	1	1					0				0				0		0
71. NYT "Iranian Rebels Urge Pentagon	The New York	12.13.2003	1	1					0				0				0		0
73. NYT "Paris Frees Head of Group	The New York	8.3.2003	1	1					0	1		1	2				0	1	2
74. NYT "French Court Releases 2 Terror	The New York	8.2.2003	1	4					0				0				0		0
76. NYT "Iranian Rebel Group Had Attack	The New York	7.25.2003	1	1					0	1		1	2	1			1	1	3
77. NYT "French Investigate 7 For Iran	The New York	7.22.2003	1	4					0	1			1	1			1	1	2
78. NYT "World Briefing Europe:3 More	The New York	7.22.2003	1	4					0				0				0		0

Total Cases											37																				
Total distinct cases with at least 1 case																															
Total number of codes												3	6	4	3	16	12	3	13	28	11	6	0	17		19					
Avg # of codes per case																										61					
Avg # of codes per case with codes																										1.6					
% of Cases overall												8%	16	11%	8		32%	8%	35%		30	16%	0%				3.2				
% of codes in category												19%	38	25%	19		43%	11%	46%		65	35%	0%	0%							
% of all codes												5%	10	7%	5		20%	5%	21%		18	10%	0%								
Avg intensity of codes when used												1.7	1.5	2.0	1.3		1.4	1.0	2.0		1.4	1.7	#DIV/0!								
84. IRNA "MKO Offer to Help US Str	Iran Daily	4.8.2013	1	1						1				1				0					0	1	1						
85. IRNA "Why P5+1 Ignores Israel	Iran Daily	4.7.2013	1	1						1				1				0		1			1	1	2						
86. IRNA "Albania Ready to Give	Iran Daily	3.18.2013	1	1						1				1				0					0	1	1						
87. IRNA "Iraq Wants MKO Terror	Iran Daily	2.20.2013	1	1						2						1	1						1	1	3						
88. IRNA "West Using Delisted MKO to	Iran Daily	1.6.2013	1	1						0						1	1			2			1	1	3						
89. IRNA "IRGC: Delisting MKO a	Iran Daily	12.31.2012	1	1						0						0				0			1	1	1						
90. IRNA "Iran Diplomat Target of	Iran Daily	8.10.2012	1	1						0						0				1			1	1	1						
91. IRNA "3 Face Death Penalty"	Iran Daily	8.12.2009	1	1						1				1						0			1	1	2						
92. ISNA "Iraq unanimously resolved to	Iranian Student	7.28.2012	1	1						1								0					0	1	1						
93. ISNA "UNHCR: MEK affects national	Iranian Student	7.24.2012	1	1						0								0					0		0						
94. ISNA "MKO looted Iraqi munitions,	Iranian Student	6.23.2012	1	1			2	2	2		3	2			3	2	3	2	3	3		2	2	1	7						
95. ISNA "Iraq ex-minister urges	Iranian Student	5.30.2012	1	1						0								0					0		0						
96. ISNA "No ties between Iraqi	Iranian Student	5.30.2012	1	1						1								0					0	1	1						
97. ISNA "Kurdish MP rejects rumors of	Iranian Student	5.28.2012	1	1						0					1	1						1	1	1	2						
98. ISNA "Rajavi's senior translator	Iranian Student	5.16.2012	1	1						2					3	1	3						1	1	3						
99. ISNA "MKO hostages unaware of	Iranian Student	4.2.2012	1	1						0					3	1							0	1	1						
100. ISNA "Iraq sends 2nd group of	Iranian Student	3.10.2012	1	1						1							0						0	1	1						
101. ISNA "MKO consented to tent-	Iranian Student	3.4.2012	1	1						0						3	1						0	1	1						
102. ISNA "U.S. political analyst: MKO	Iranian Student	3.3.2012	1	1						1			3				1	3	3			2	1	4							
103. ISNA "400 MKO members	Iranian Student	2.18.2012	1	1						0								0					0		0						
104. ISNA "MKO prevents release of its	Iranian Student	2.5.2012	1	1						2					2	1							0	1	2						
105. ISNA "MKO members' transfer to	Iranian Student	1.1.2012	1	1						1					2	1			1			1	1	1	3						
106. ISNA "MKO expulsion time not be	Iranian Student	12.7.2011	1	1						1					1	1			2			1	1	1	3						
107. ISNA "MKO members should leave	Iranian Student	8.18.2011	1	1						1					1	0						0	1	1	1						
108. ISNA "Iraqi committee to specify	Iranian Student	6.21.2011	1	1						0					0				1			1	1	1	1						
109. ISNA "Iran halls return of	Iranian Student	5.11.2011	1	1						2					1	1	1					1	1	1	3						
110. ISNA "Iran raises probability of	Iranian Student	4.13.2011	1	1						0							0						0		0						
111. ISNA "MKO members' presence in	Iranian Student	1.15.2011	1	1						0							0					1	1	1	1						
112. ISNA "Iran Hangs terrorist MKO	Iranian Student	12.28.2010	1	1						1	1						0		2			1	1	2	2						
113. ISNA "Iran martyrs' families	Iranian Student	11.7.2010	1	1						1					2	1						0	1	2	2						
114. ISNA "Iraqi court issues arrest	Iranian Student	8.5.2010	1	1						1						0		1				1	1	1	2						
115. ISNA "Iranian Families of MKO	Iranian Student	8.3.2010	1	1						2						0		1				1	1	2	2						
116. ISNA "Iranians hold protest before	Iranian Student	7.28.2010	1	1						1	2					0						0	1	2	2						
117. ISNA "Families of MKO victims call	Iranian Student	7.27.2010	1	1						2						0						0	1	1	1						
118. ISNA "Iran starts trial of 5 Ashura	Iranian Student	1.18.2010	1	1						2	1					0							0	1	1						
119. PTV "Al-Qaeda behind attack on	Press TV	2.9.2013	1	1						0		1					1	1					1	1	2						
120. PTV "Mortar attack kills 7 MKO	Press TV	2.9.2013	1	1						2							0		1			1	1	1	2						
121. PTV "West holds double standards	Press TV	1.23.2013	1	1						1						0		1	2			2	1	3	3						
122. PTV "Iran victims of terrorism in	Press TV	12.23.2012	1	1						2					3	1	1	1	1			2	1	4							
123. PTV "US formally removes MKO	Press TV	9.28.2012	1	1						2							0		1			1	1	2	2						
124. PTV "MKO supporters attack Iran's	Press TV	9.27.2012	1	1						0							0						0		0						
125. PTV "US using MKO as	Press TV	9.22.2012	1	1						1	1					1		1		1		1	1	2	3						
126. PTV "UN demands MKO's	Press TV	8.2.2012	1	1						0						0		1					1	1	1						
127. PTV "MKO terrorists must leave or	Press TV	8.1.2012	1	1						0						0		1	1			2	1	2	2						
128. PTV "Lobbying for MKO terror	Press TV	7.6.2012	1	1						1						0		1	1			2	1	3	3						
129. PTV "Paris court summons MKO	Press TV	6.10.2012	1	1						1						1	1	1	1			2	1	4	4						
130. PTV "MKO leader to dress in	Press TV	4.26.2012	1	1						1						0		2	1			2	1	3	3						
131. PTV "MKO helps Israeli agents in	Press TV	3.6.2012	1	1						1		1			3	2	1	2				2	1	5							
132. PTV "US hints at way for MKO to	Press TV	3.1.2012	1	1						1						0						1	1	1	2						
133. PTV "Iraqi tribes demand	Press TV	2.21.2012	1	1						1						0		1				1	1	2	2						
134. PTV "MKO relocates terrorists to	Press TV	1.8.2012	1	1						1						3	1	3	2			2	1	4	4						
135. PTV "Israel funds MKO; MKO	Press TV	2.11.2012	1	1						0						0		1	1			2	1	2	2						
136. PTV "MKO leader orders defectors	Press TV	11.28.2012	1	1						3					3	1	1	1				1	1	3							
137. PTV "EU court upholds delisting	Press TV	12.22.2011	1	1						1					1	1						1	1	3	3						
138. PTV "MKO rejects US relocation	Press TV	8.7.2011	1	1						2					3	1	1	1				1	1	3	3						
139. PTV "MKO defectors offered	Press TV	4.20.2011	1	1						1					3	1		1				1	1	3	3						
140. PTV "MKO agent linked to Mousavi	Press TV	12.6.2010	1	1						2					1	1	2	1				2	1	4	4						
141. PTV "MKO admits involvement in	Press TV	12.30.2009	1	1						2					1	1	1	1				1	1	1	1						
142. PTV "MKO dissident brochures US	Press TV	8.24.2009	1	1			2	3	3		3				3	1	3	2				2	1	6	6						
143. PTV "Hysterectomy, latest MKO	Press TV	8.21.2008	1	1			3	3	3		3	2			3	2	2	1				2	1	7	7						
144. FNA "MKO Ringleaders Abuse	Fars News	12.24.2012	1	1			2	3	3		3				3	1	2	1				2	1	6	6						
145. FNA "MKO Ringleaders Order	Fars News	5.27.2012	1	1			2	2	2		3				3	1	2	1				2	1	6	6						
146. FNA "Defection from MKO	Fars News	5.15.2012	1	1			2	3	2		3				3	1	2	1				2	1	6	6						
147. FNA "Iraq Resolved to Expel MKO	Fars News	5.7.2012	1	1				3							3	1	2	1				2	1	4	4						
148. FNA "Hundreds of MKO Members	Fars News	5.5.2012	1	1				3							3	1	2	1				2	1	4	4						
149. FNA "Iraqi Campaign to Collect	Fars News	3.14.2012	1	1				3							2	1						1	1	3	3						
150. FNA "West Holding Killers of Iran's	Fars News	2.28.2012	1	1						3							0		3			1	1	1	1						
151. FNA "Rights Group Calls on UN to	Fars News	12.4.2011	1	1			3	3	3				1		3	2						1	1	6	6						
152. FNA "Defected Members: MKO	Fars News	11.28.2011	1	1			1	3	1		3				3	1	2	1				2	1	6	6						
153. FNA "Rights Group Voices Concern	Fars News	11.6.2011	1	1			3	3	3		3				3	1	1	2				2	1	6	6						
154. FNA "MKO Plans to Assassinate	Fars News	9.12.2011	1	1			1	3	1		3				3	1	3	1				2	1	6	6						
155. FNA "Iraq: MKO Members	Fars News	8.17.2011	1	1			1	3	1		3				3	1	2	1				2	1	6	6						
156. FNA "MKO Ringleaders Ready to	Fars News	7.31.2011	1	1			1	3	1		3				3	1	2	1				1	1	5	5						
157. FNA "MKO Members in France	Fars News	7.19.2011	1	1				3	3		2				3	1	3	2				2	1	5	5						
158. FNA "Retired US Officer: No	Fars News	5.28.2011	1	1				3	2																						

161. FNA "Iraqis Protest outside MKO's	Fars News	5.7.2011	1	1		2				1			2	1	1	2		2	1	4
162. FNA "German HRC Calls on MKO	Fars News	4.25.2011	1	1		3	3			2			3	1	3	3		2	1	5
163. FNA "Defected Member: MKO	Fars News	4.25.2011	1	1	1	3	1			3			3	1	3	1		2	1	6
164. FNA "Defected Member: MKO	Fars News	4.13.2011	1	1	1	1	3			3			3	1	1	2		2	1	6
165. FNA "Defected Member Reveals	Fars News	3.6.2011	1	1	2	3	1			3			3	1	1	2		2	1	6

166. FNA "Families of Terror	Fars News	11.7.2010	1	1	3	3				2			3	1		2		1	1	4
167. FNA "MKO Asks for US, Israel	Fars News	8.9.2010	1	1		2							3	1	1			1	1	3
Total Cases				84																
Total distinct cases with at																			79	
Total number of codes						16	64	18	3	10	6	1	47	54	40	59	0	99		254
Avg # of codes per case																				3.0
Avg # of codes per case with																				3.2
% of Cases overall						19%	76%	21%	4	7%		1%	56%		48%	70%	0			
% of codes in category						16%	63%	18%	3	11%		2%	87%		40%	60%	0			
% of all codes						6%	25%	7%	1	2%		0%	19%		16%	23%	0			
Avg intensity of codes when						1.9	2.5	2.1	#DIV/0		1.5	1.0	2.8		1.9	1.5	#DIV/0			
168. LF "Le retour en grâce des	Le Figaro	8.1.2012	1	1						0			2		1			1	1	2
169. LF "La nation iranienne mérit	Le Figaro	2.12.2010	2	2						0				0				0	1	0
170. LF "Des milliers d'opposants	Le Figaro	6.22.2009	1	1						0				0	1			1	1	1
171. LF "L'embarras de l'UE face	Le Figaro	1.27.2009	1	1						0			1	1				1	1	2
172. LF "Iran : que le régime des	Le Figaro	12.13.2008	2	2						0								0	1	0
173. LF "Réponse de l'Ambassade	Le Figaro	11.1.2008	2	3			3			1			3	1	1	1	2	1	1	4
174. LF "Iran : l'Europe doit dire	Le Figaro	8.10.2008	2	2										0				0	1	0
175. LF "L'UE maintient les	Le Figaro	8.18.2008	1	1						0					0			0	1	0
176. LF "290 députés pour la	Le Figaro	8.17.2008	1	1						0					0			0	1	0
178. LF "Monsieur Sarkozy,	Le Figaro	11.6.2007	2	2						0					0			0	1	0
179. LF "Deux iraniens jugés pour	Le Figaro	8.17.2007	1	1			1			1					2			1	1	2
180. LF "Terrorisme: la justice	Le Figaro	12.13.2006	1	1						0				0	1			1	1	1
181. LF "La justice s'intéresse de	Le Figaro	1.26.2004	1	1						0								0	1	0
182. LF "Auvers-sur-Oise fait bloc	Le Figaro	1.26.2004	1	1						0								0	1	0
183. LF "Maryam Radjavi chez le	Le Figaro	7.30.2003	1	1						0			1	1	1			1	1	2
184. LF "Radjavi face au juge"	Le Figaro	7.29.2003	1	1										0	1			1	1	1
185. LF "Les moudjahidins arrêtés	Le Figaro	7.3.2003	1	1			1			1			2	1	1			1	1	3
186. LF "Maintien en détention	Le Figaro	7.2.2003	1	1						0					1			1	1	1
187. LF "A l'origine de l'opération,	Le Figaro	6.24.2003	1	1			1			1			2	1	2	1		2	1	4
188. LF "La double vie de Maryam	Le Figaro	6.23.2003	1	1			1		1	2	3		2	2				0	1	4
189. LF "Auvers-sur-Oise- dix-sept	Le Figaro	6.23.2003	1	1			1			1				0				0	1	1
190. LF "Enquête sur les fonds des	Le Figaro	6.21.2003	1	1			1			1	1			1	1	2		2	1	4
191. LF "Pierre de Bousquet- "Les	Le Figaro	6.20.2003	1	1			2			1	1		3	2	1			1	1	4
192. LF "Nouvelles tentatives	Le Figaro	6.20.2003	1	1			2			1			3	1				0	1	2
193. LF "Manifestations interdites	Le Figaro	6.19.2003	1	1			2			1	2		3	2	1			1	1	4
194. LF "Vaste coup de filet contre	Le Figaro	6.18.2003	1	1						0	1			1				1	1	2
195. LF "Quand l'OMPI accueillait	Le Figaro	6.18.2003	1	1										0	1			1	1	1
Total Cases				27																
Total distinct cases with at																			27	
Total number of codes						1	9	1	0	11	5	0	10	15	14	5	0	19		45
Avg # of codes per case																				1.7
Avg # of codes per case with																				1.7
Number of codes as % of total						4%	33%	4%	0	19%	0%	37%		52%	19%	0				
Number of codes as % of						9%	82%	9%	0	33%	0%	67%		74%	26%	0				
Number of codes as % of all						2%	20%	2%	0	11%	0%	22%		31%	11%	0				
Avg intensity of codes when						1.0	1.6	1.0	#DIV/0		1.6	#DIV/0	2.2		1.1	1.4	#DIV/0			
196. AFP "USA: les Moudjahidines	Agence France	9.22.2012	1	4						0				0				0		0
197. AFP "Washington exhorte les	Agence France	7.6.2012	1	4						0				0		1		1	1	1
198. AFP "Raid de l'armée	Agence France	4.14.2011	1	4										0	1			1	1	1
199. AFP "Devant l'ONU, les	Agence France	9.23.2010	1	1						0								0		0
200. AFP "Turquie: la CEDH	Agence France	9.22.2009	1	4						0								0		0
201. AFP "L'Irak doit respecter le	Agence France	4.24.2009	1	4						0								0		0
202. AFP "Les Moudjahidine du	Agence France	1.26.2009	1	4						0								0		0
203. AFP "Liste terroriste UE:	Agence France	1.7.2009	1	4						0								0		0
204. AFP "Washington confirme	Agence France	1.10.2005	1	4						0								0		0
205. AFP "Des députés belges	Agence France	7.7.2004	1	4						0								0		0
206. AFP "Des sénateurs belges	Agence France	7.8.2004	1	4						0								0		0
207. AFP "Appel d'avocats en	Agence France	1.22.2004	1	4						0								0		0
208. AFP "Les Moudjahidine du	Agence France	12.10.2003	1	4						0								0		0
209. AFP "Moudjahidines d'Auvers-	Agence France	8.4.2003	1	4						0								0		0
210. AFP "Mgr Galliot apporte son	Agence France	6.29.2003	1	4						0					1			1	1	1
211. AFP "Les Moudjahidine	Agence France	6.20.2003	1	4			2	1	1	3	1		3	2				0	1	5
212. AFP "Washington veut mettre	Agence France	5.9.2003	1	4						0					1			1	1	1
Total Cases				17																
Total distinct cases with at																			5	
Total number of codes						0	1	1	1	3	1	0	1	2	3	1	0	4		9
Avg # of codes per case																				0.5
Avg # of codes per case with																				1.8
Number of codes as % of total						0	6%	6%	6%	6%	0%	6%		18%	6%	0				
Number of codes as % of						0	33%	33%	33%	50%	0%	50%		75%	25%	0				
Number of codes as % of all						0	11%	11%	11%	11%	0%	11%		33%	11%	0				
Avg intensity of codes when						#DIV/0	2.0	1.0	1.0		1.4	#DIV/0	2.7		2.5	1.3	#DIV/0			
213 IRNA	Islamic Republic	1391/04/16	1						3	1	1		3	2	1	2		2	1	5
214 IRNA	Islamic Republic	1391/05/04	1				1		3	2				0	1	2		2	1	4
215 IRNA	Islamic Republic	1391/07/27	1							0					3			1	1	1
216 IRNA	Islamic Republic	1391/08/01	1				3		1	2			2	1	1	3		2	1	5
217 IRNA	Islamic Republic	1391/09/08	1				3		3	2			3	1	3	1		2	1	5
218 IRNA	Islamic Republic	1391/09/12	1						1	1			3	1				0	1	2
219 IRNA	Islamic Republic	1391/10/03	1				2			1			3	1				0	1	2
220 IRNA- News Paper	Iran News Paper	1360/03/30	1				2		3	2			3	1				0	1	3
221 IRNA- News Paper	Iran News Paper	1389/04/16	1						3	1			1	1				0	1	2
222 IRNA- News Paper	Iran News Paper	1389/04/02	1						3	1				0				0	1	1

223 IRNA- News Paper	Iran News Paper	1389/09/17	1					1	1					0				0	1	1
224 IRNA- News Paper	Iran News Paper	1389/10/08	1					1	1			1	1					0	1	2
225 FARS	FARS News	1390/10/14	1		1	3	3	3	4	3	2	2	3	3	1		2	1	9	
226 FARS	FARS News	1391/06/018	1		3	3	3	2	4			3	1				0	1	5	
227 FARS	FARS News	1391/07/11	1			3		2	2			2	1				0	1	3	

228 FARS	FARS News	1391/07/11	1			3	3	3	3	3			1		3	3	2	1	6
229 FARS	FARS News	1391/08/24	1		3	3	3	1	4	3		3	2				0	1	6
230 FARS	FARS News	1391/09/10	1					3	1			0					0	1	1
231 FARS	FARS News	1391/09/13	1						0	3		2	2	1	1		2	1	4
232 FARS	FARS News	1391/09/30	1					2	1			3	1				0	1	2
233 FARS	FARS News	1391/10/04	1		3	3		3	3			3	1	3			1	1	5
234 FARS	FARS News	1391/10/06	1			1		3	2			3	1				0	1	3
235 FARS	FARS News	1391/10/16	1					2	1			3	1				0	1	2
236 FARS	FARS News	1391/11/15	1					2	1			2	1				0	1	2
237 FARS	FARS News	1391/11/30	1			3		2	2			0					0	1	2
238 FARS	FARS News	1391/12/07	1				3	3	2			3	1	3	3		2	1	5
239 FARS	FARS News	1391/12/08	1			2		1	2			1	1				0	1	3
240 FARS	FARS News	1391/12/08	1					2	1			0					0	1	1
241 FARS	FARS News	1391/12/15	1					2	1			0	2	2			2	1	3
242 FARS	FARS News	1391/12/16	1					2	1			2	1				0	1	2
243 FARS	FARS News	1391/12/22	1					3	1			3	1				0	1	2
244 FARS	FARS News	1391/12/22	1					3	1			0	2	3			2	1	3
245 FARS	FARS News	1391/12/27	1					3	1			3	1				0	1	2
246 FARS	FARS News	1391/12/29	1					3	1			3	1		3		1	1	3
247 FARS	FARS News	1392/01/01	1						0			3	1	3			1	1	2
248 FARS	FARS News	1392/01/03	1				3		1	3		1	3				1	1	3
249 FARS	FARS News	1392/01/14	1					3	1			3	1				0	1	2
250 FARS	FARS News	1392/01/20	1			1		2	2			3	1				0	1	3
251 FARS	FARS News	1392/01/29	1					2	1			0		3			1	1	2
252 FARS	FARS News	1392/01/24	1					3	1			2	1				0	1	2
253 FARS	FARS News	1392/01/26	1			3		2	2			0	3				1	1	3
254 FARS	FARS News	1392/01/29	1			2		3	2			0					0	1	2
255 FARS	FARS News	1392/01/31	1					3	1			3	1				0	1	2
256 FARS	FARS News	1392/01/31	1			2			1			0		1			1	1	2
257 FARS	FARS News	1392/01/31	1					1	1			0					0	1	1
258 FARS	FARS News	1392/02/02	1					2	1			3	1	1			1	1	3
259 FARS	FARS News	1392/02/03	1			2		3	2			0	3				1	1	3
260 FARS	FARS News	1392/02/07	1					2	1			0		3			1	1	2
261 FARS	FARS News	1392/12/12	1					3	1			3	1	3			1	1	3
262 PRESS TV	Press TV	1391/11/19	1			3		2	2			0		2			1	1	3
263 PRESS TV	Press TV	1392/01/23	1			3		3	2			3	1		3		1	1	4
264 PRESS TV	Press TV	1392/02/09	1			2		3	2			3	1		2		1	1	4
265 PRESS TV	Press TV	1392/02/09	1			3		2	2			2	1		3		1	1	4
Total Cases			53																
Total distinct cases with at least one code																		53	
Total number of codes					4	23	6	47	80	6	1	34	41	16	19	1	36		157
Avg # of codes per case																			3.0
Avg # of codes per case with codes																			3.0
Number of codes as % of Total Cases					8%	43%	11%	89%		11%	2%	64%		30%	36%	2%			
Number of codes as % of codes in category					5%	29%	8%	59%		15%	2%	83%		44%	53%	3%			
Number of codes as % of all codes					3%	15%	4%	30%		4%	1%	22%		10%	12%	1%			
Avg intensity of codes when used					2.5	2.4	3.0	2.4		2.7	2.0	2.6		2.3	2.3	3.0			

Legend:

Article Type: (1) News (2) Opinion (3) Feature

Author Type: (1) Journalist (2) Linked/Spokesperson (3) Iranian Government Spokesperson (4) Other i.e. News Agency

List of Content Restrictions and Search Words:

Farsi News Article Titles:

IRNA (213)	نازمد شکست خورده جمهوریخواه آمریکا از رسوایی های اخلاقی تا حمایت از منافقین
214	عملیات مرصاد برگ زرینی در تاریخ دفاع مقدس است
215	700 عضو گروهک تروریستی مجاهدین خلق در انتظار جنگ علیه نظام
216	منافقین از هیچ جنایت ضد بشری علیه ملت ایران دریغ نکردند
217	سر کرده گروهک تروریستی منافقین کجاست؟
218	نامه اعتراضی انجمن قربانیان تروریسم خاورمیانه به دبیر کل سازمان ملل متحد
219	نمایشگاه دگردیسی فرقه تروریستی منافقین در دانشگاه آزاد رشت برپا شد
ISNA (220)	اعلام جنگ سازمان مجاهدین علیه انقلاب اسلامی
221	مجاهدین خلق مسلمان نبودند
222	پشت پرده سازمان منافقین
223	لاهوئی: از نور چشم امام تا عامل منافقین
224	تحلیل خواندنی شهید مطهری از گروهک منافقین در سال 56
FARS NEWS (225)	زنان اردوگاه اشرف بردگان تحت استثمار وحشتناک فکری و فیزیکی
226	کودکان ابزار جمع آوری اعانه در اروپا
227	سناریوی انتقال منافقین و تهدیدهای این فرقه برای شهروندان آمریکا و اروپا
228	از مجاهدین خلق تا منافقین
229	از ممنوعیت ازدواج تا کنترل و سوء استفاده جنسی
230	دورغ منافقین با حضور گروه خبرنگاران برملا شد
231	رجوی معتقد بود والدین الدنگهایی هستند که فقط ما را میزایند
232	جدایی 17 عضو منافقین در ماه دسامبر
233	جزئیات سوء استفاده جنسی سرکرده منافقین از زنان در اشرف
234	خودکشی یکی از منافقین در اردوگاه لیبرتی
235	هشدار به کاربران اینترنتی درباره جاسوسی منافقین در شبکه های مجازی
236	میزبانی بحرین از گروهک منافقین کاملاً سیاسی است
237	منافقین کودک 13 ماهه شهید (بتول صفدری) را آتش زدند / شهادتی به فجیع ترین شکل ممکن
238	رجوی اطلاعات هسته ای ایران را به واشنگتن داد / استراتژی مریم برای جذب افسران آمریکایی
239	ماهین گروهک تروریستی منافقین به نمایش در میاید
240	منافقین با حضور مردم فرار کردند / خط نفاق تمامشدنی نیست
241	برنامه ویژه منافقین برای 8 مارس و چهارشنبه آخر سال

پشت پرده تمرکز روز افزون رسانه ای منافقین در عراق و سوریه	242
پشت پرده منافقین نمایده سازمان را به دست داشتن در حمله به لیبرتی متهم کرد	243
منافقین سر سلسله ترور و اعمال نفاق گونه هستند	244
توطئه تازه منافقین برای باقی ماندن در عراق	245
گروهک تروریستی منافقین ابزار اجرای طرحهای آمریکا در منطقه	246
چرا منافقین از پذیرش پناهندگی اعضا وحشت دارند	247
همه زنان گروهک منافقین همسر مسعود رجوی اند	248
غرب قصد استفاده از منافقین برای ایجاد آشوب در ایران را دارد	249
حمایت دوباره قرضای از منافقین	250
منافقین در ایران منفرند / منافقین قصد داشتند حکومت دست نشانده صدام شوند	251
گامهای سازمان ملل برای اخراج منافقین کند و ناکافی است	252
اظهار نظر انتخاباتی سرکرده منافقین	253
ایران در حمله سال گذشته به اردوگاه منافقین دست داشته است	254
آلمان اعطای پناهندگی به اعضای گروهک منافقین را بررسی میکند	255
حمایت 5 در صد ایرانیان مقیم آمریکا از منافقین	256
اعلام آمادگی آلمان برای پذیرش 100 نفر از اعضای گروهک تروریستی منافقین	257
تمامی بیانیه ها و تشکلهای منافقین جعلی است	258
شیوع ویروس جدید در میان منافقین	259
ماموریت منافقین در انتخابات 92 با حمایت مالی عربستان و قطر	260
منافقین به نام دفاع از حقوق زنان اعمال خود را توجیه میکنند	261
مقام عراقی: منافقین به القاعده برای انجام عملیات تروریستی در عراق آموزش میداد	PRESS TV (262)
آمریکا از پیشنهاد آلبانی برای دادن پناهندگی به منافقین قردانی کرد	263
خروج پنجمین گروه منافقین از پایگاه اشرف	264
سازمان مجاهدین خلق ابزار تروریسم	265

6.4. Interview Guide

- 1) When did you decide to join the MEK and what motivated your decision to join?
 - 2) Describe your involvement with the organization. How many years have you been a member? How would you describe your rank and role in the organization? For how many years have you occupied this position? (5 mins)
 - 3) In your opinion, what does gender-equality mean? To what extent is gender-equality a component in your struggle to overthrow the regime in Tehran? (10 mins)
 - 4) Prior to the *E.I.*, did there exist a gendered division of labor within the organization? How did women's roles compare to that of their male counterparts? (5-10 mins)
 - 5) How did your role in the organization change as a result of the *E.I.*? Were these changes welcome? Were you involved/consulted during the process? (10 mins)
 - 6) How have women's/men's roles in the organization practically changed? How do their responsibilities compare to those of their female/male counterparts today? (10 mins)
 - 7) How do you remember member's (both women and men's) reactions to the *E.I.*? How have they transformed over the years? Were the changes welcomed? Were the changes met with opposition? If so, how were such oppositions communicated and addressed within the organization? (5-10 mins)
 - 8) In the days of armed combat and training, how, in your opinion, were the women treated on the battlefield? Did the training they received differ from that of men's? Were there obstacles to women's equality on the battlefield? If so, what were they? Were they addressed? (5-10 mins)
 - 9) Are there any mechanisms/protocols/policies in place to address concerns of (sexual) aggressions or objectifications of women and men in the resistance? How, if at all, are cases of abuse or alleged mistreatment of members dealt with? (5-8 mins)
 - 10) In your opinion, has the MEK successfully completed the transition they set out? Are there more steps that need to be taken before gender-equality within the movement is attained? (5-8 mins)
 - 11) How, if at all, has the adopted ideology of the MEK affected your personal opinion of women and their capacity to actively participate in resistance movements? (10 mins)
-

6.4. Guide d'entrevue

- 1) Quand aviez-vous décidé de vous rejoindre à l'OMPI et qu'est-ce qui a motivé votre décision?
- 2) Décrivez votre implication dans l'organisation. Depuis combien d'années êtes-vous membre? Comment décrieriez-vous votre rang et votre rôle dans l'organisation? Depuis combien d'années occupez-vous ce poste? (5 minutes)
- 3) À votre avis, que veut dire l'égalité des sexes? Dans quelle mesure est l'égalité des sexes un composant dans votre lutte pour le renversement du régime de Téhéran? (10 minutes)
- 4) Avant le *E.I.*, existait-il une division sexuée de l'emploi au sein de l'organisation? Comment était le rôle des femmes comparées par rapport à leurs homologues masculins? (10 minutes)
- 5) Comment a changé votre rôle au sein de l'organisation suite au *E.I.*? Ces changements étaient-ils bienvenus? Étiez-vous impliqué(e) /consulté(e) lors de ce processus? (10 minutes)
- 6) Comment a changé le rôle des femmes/hommes au sein de l'organisation? Comment leurs responsabilités comparent-elles à celles de leurs homologues femmes/hommes aujourd'hui? (10 minutes)
- 7) Comment vous rappelez-vous des réactions des membres (les femmes et les hommes) au *E.I.*? Ces changements étaient-ils bienvenus? Ces changements étaient-ils heurtés avec opposition? Si oui, comment ont-ils été communiqués et abordés au sein de l'organisation? (5 à 10 minutes)
- 8) Dans l'époque de la lutte armée et de la formation, comment, selon vous, étaient les femmes traitées sur le champ de bataille? Est-ce que la formation reçue différait de celle des hommes? Avaient-ils des obstacles à l'égalité des femmes sur le champ de bataille? Si oui, quels étaient-ils? Ont-ils été abordés? (5 à 10 minutes)
- 9) Existe-t-il des mécanismes/ protocoles/ politiques en place pour répondre aux préoccupations d'agressions (sexuelles) ou objectivations des femmes et hommes dans la résistance? Comment, si du tout, sont les cas d'abus ou de mauvais traitement gérés? (5 à 8 minutes)
- 10) À votre avis, l'OMPI a-t-il réussi avec succès la transition qu'ils ont promise? Existe-t-il

d'autres mesures qui doivent être prises devant l'égalité des sexes au sein du gouvernement atteint?

11) Comment, si du tout, a l'idéologie de l'OMPI affecté votre opinion personnel des femmes et leur capacité de participer activement dans des mouvements de résistance? (10 minutes)

Bibliography

7.1.Bibliographic References

- Abrahamian, Ervand. 1982. "Iran: Between Two Revolutions". Princeton University Press. New Jersey.
- Abrahamian, Ervand. 1989. "The Iranian Mojahedin". Yale University Press. New Haven.
- Abrahamian, Ervand. 1999. "Tortured Confessions: Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran". University of California Press. Berkeley, Los Angeles.
- Adorno, Theodor W. & Max Horkheimer. 1944. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" in "Dialectic of Enlightenment". Ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. Stanford University Press. Stanford, California. 2002.
- Ahmed, Leila. 1992. Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate. Yale University press. Chelsea, Michigan.
- Alexander, Jacqui M. & Chandra Talpade Mohanty. 1997. Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures". Routledge. New York NY.
- Bohman, James. 2012. "Critical Theory". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Bowell, T. 2011. "Feminist Standpoint Theory". *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Campbell, David. 2007. "Geopolitics and Visuality: Sighting the Darfur Conflict". *Political Geography*. 26. 357- 382.
- Cohen, Ronen A. 2009. "The Rise and Fall of the Mujahedin Khalq 1987-1997: Their Survival After the Islamic Revolution and Resistance to the Islamic Republic of Iran". Sussex Academic Press. Great Britain.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. "Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment". 2nd Edition. Routledge. New York, NY.
- Dutton, D.G and Painter, S.L. 1981. "Traumatic Bonding: the development of emotional attachments in battered women and other relationships of intermittent abuse". *Victimology: An International Journal*. 1(4).139-155.
- Eltahawy, Mona. 2012. "Why Do They Hate Us?". Foreign Policy.
- Fairclough, Norman. 2003. "Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research". Routledge. London.

- Foreign Affairs Committee, National Council of Resistance of Iran. 1993. "Democracy Betrayed: A Response to U.S. State Department Report on the Mojahedin and the Iranian Resistance". NCRI Foreign Affairs Committee. Auvers-sur-Oise.
- Foucault, Michel. 2007. "Security, Territory, Population: Lectures At The College De France 1977-1978". Trans. Graham Burchell. Picador. New York, NY.
- Jackson Lee, Sheila. 2013. Speech at Convention for Democracy in Iran. http://isdciran.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1867:us-congresswoman-sheila-jackson-lee-iranian-resistance-the-inheritor-of-the-great-golden-age-of-persia&catid=11:gatherings&Itemid=33
- Hankivsky, Olena & Jo-Anne Lee. 2011. "Part 4: Disrupting Power and Health Inequities" in *Health Inequalities in Canada: Intersectional Frameworks and Practices* Ed. Hankivsky, Olena. UBC press. Vancouver.
- Harris, Paul. 2013. "US Military Lifts Ban on Women in Combat". Friday Jan.25th. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jan/24/us-military-lifts-ban-women-combat>
- Hassan, Hengameh Haj. 2013. "Face to Face with the Beast: Iranian women in mullahs' prisons". Trans. Carolyn Beckingham. HOMA Association. Cergy-Pontoise, France.
- Heng, Geraldine. 1997. "'A Great Way to Fly': Nationalism, the State, and the Varieties of Third-World Feminism" in *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* Ed. by Alexander, Jacqui M. & Chandra Talpade Mohanty. P.30-46.
- Heydar, Azam Hadj. 2010. "Le Prix de rester humain". Trad. Nader Nouri. Jean-Claude Gawsewitch. Paris.
- Israel, Mark. Lyons, Tanya. Mason, Christine. 2002. "Women, Resistance and Africa: Armed Struggles in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Eritrea". *Humanity and Society*: 26: 3.
- Jensen, Kimberly. 2008. "Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War". University of Illinois Press. Chicago.
- Kamangar, Farzad. 2010. "Be Strong Comrades". Letter From Death Row.
- Kuumba, M.Bahati. 2011. "The Social Movement as Gendered Terrain" in *Gender and Social Movements*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Oxford.
- Laclau, Ernesto & Chantal Mouffe. 2001. "Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics. Verso Books. London.

- Lester, D (2006). "Suicide and Islam". *Archives of suicide research: official journal of the International Academy for Suicide Research* 10 (1): 77–97.
- Lykke, Nina. 2010. "Feminist Studies: A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing". Routledge. New York, NY.
- Mahmood, Saba. 2004. *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton University Press. New Jersey.
- McClam, Erin. NBC News. January 24th 2013. "Not so fast: Women on frontlines 'distracting,' say critics". <http://usnews.nbcnews.com/news/2013/01/24/16680097-not-so-fast-women-on-frontlines-distracting-say-critics?lite>
- Mohaddessin, Mohammad. 2004. "Enemies of the Ayatollahs: The Iranian Opposition's War on Islamic Fundamentalism". Zed Books. London.
- Quran. Surat An-Nisā' 4: Verse1.
- Ramazani, Nesta. Summer 1993. "Women in Iran: The Revolutionary Ebb and Flow". *Middle East Journal*. Vol.47. No. 3. P.409-428.
- Rajavi, Maryam. 2001. "January 16, 1997: Message from Maryam Rajavi, President Elect of the Iranian Resistance" in *Frontline Feminisms* ed. Marguerite R. Waller and Jennifer Rycenga. Routledge. New York: 185-191.
- Radjavi, Maryam.2013. "Les Femmes contre l'intégrisme/ Women Against Fundamentalism". Seven Locks Press. Santa Ana CA.
- Rajavi, Massoud. 1980 (June 14th). *Mojahed*, MEK's official organ, no. 87.
- Rajavi, Massoud. 1980 (January 10th). "Future of the Revolution," speech in Tehran University, text published in *Mojahed*, Vol. 2, no. 19. January 15, 1980.
- Said, Edward. 1979. *Orientalism*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. 25th anniversary edition. USA.
- Savoie- Zajc, Lorraine. 2009. "l'Entrevue Semi-Dirigée" in Gauthier Benoit. "Recherche Sociale: De La Problématique A La Collecte Des Données. Presses de l'Université de Québec. Chapitres 13.
- Shahri, Sorayya. 2001. "Women in Command: A Successful Experience in the National Liberation Army of Iran" in *Frontline Feminisms* ed. Marguerite R. Waller and Jennifer Rycenga. Routledge. New York: 185-191.
- Sjoberg, Laura. Gentry, Caron E. 2007. "Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics". Zed Books Ltd. London.

- The National Council of Resistance of Iran Foreign Affairs Committee. "Women, Islam & Equality: Chapter One - A Century-Long Quest For Equality". 1.
- Tohidi, Nayereh. 1991. "Gender and Islamic Fundamentalism: Feminist Politics in Iran" in "Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism". Ed. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Anna Russo and Lourdes M. Torres. Indiana University Press. Bloomington Indianapolis.
- Ussher, Jane. 2006. "Managing the Monstrous Feminine: Regulating the Reproductive Body". Routledge. East Sussex.
- Wallace, Chris. Fox News Sunday. Transcribed January 27 2013. <http://www.foxnews.com/on-air/fox-news-sunday-chris-wallace/2013/01/27/retired-us-officers-react-pentagon-lifting-ban-women-combat#p/v/2122995182001>
- Zizek, Slavoj. 2006. "Connections of the Freudian Field to Philosophy and Popular Culture". <http://www.Lacan.com>.
- Zizek, Slavoj. 2003. "The puppet and the dwarf: the perverse core of Christianity". MIT Press. Cambridge MA.
- Zizek, Slavoj. 1994. "The Spectre of Ideology" in "Mapping Ideology". Ed. Slavoj Zizek. Verso Books. New York.
- Zizek, Slavoj. 1989. "The Sublime Object of Ideology". London & New York. Verso. P. 28-30.
- Worth, Robert & Sharon Otterman & Alan Cowell. 2009. "Violence Grips Tehran Amid Crackdown". New York Times.

7.2. Works Cited in Coding Analysis

- Agence France Presse. June 20th 2003. "Les Moudjahidine s'appartent à une "secte" dénoncent d'anciens membres".
- Brisbane, Arthur. September 13th 2011. "A Reporter Shields His Identity and an Iranian Exile Group's Viewpoint Goes Missing. New York Times.
- Chichizola, Jean. June 23rd 2003. "La double vie de Maryam Radjavi". Le Figaro.
- Chichizola, Jean. June 19th 2003. "Manifestations interdites à Paris après trois immolations". Le Figaro.
- FARS News. 24/08/1391. "از ممنوعیت ازدواج تا کنترل و سوء استفاده جنسی".

FARS News. April 25th 2011. "Defected Member: MKO Ringleaders Kill Dissidents to Control Iraq Base".

FARS News. December 24th 2012. "MKO Ringleaders Abuse Female Members Sexually".

FARS News. December 4th 2012. "Rights Group Calls on UN to Rescue Women from MKO Campativity".

FARS News. November 6th 2011. "Rights Group Voices Concern about Human Rights Conditions in MKO Camp in Iraq".

ISNA. April 2nd 2012. "MKO hostages unaware of their basic rights: Habilian database".

ISNA. June 23rd 2012. "MKO looted Iraqi munitions, land after fall of Saddam".

ISNA. March 3rd 2012. "U.S. political analyst: MKO criminals should stand trial".

Leclerc, Jean-Marc. June 24th 2003. "A l'origine de l'opération, un rapport secret de la DST". Le Figaro.

Leclerc, Jean Marc & de Belot. June 20th 2003. "Pierre de Bousquet- "Les Moudjahidin ont basculé dans une dérive sectaire". Le Figaro.

Londo, Ernesto. March 28th 2009. "Iraq Plans to Relocate Iran Opposition Group; U.S. Guarded Embattled Movement's Camp". Washington Post.

Londo, Ernesto & Jaffe. July 29th 2009. "Iraq Raids Camp of Exiles from Iran; Move Seen as Sign Tehran is Eclipsing American Influence". Washington Post.

Minoui, Delphine. October 1st 2012. "Le retour en grâce des Moudjahidins". Le Figaro.

Press TV. October 21st 2008. "Hysterectomy, latest MKO cult strategy".

Press TV. November 28th 2011. "MKO leader orders defectors executed".

Press TV. September 22nd 2012. "US using MKO as assassination vehicle: Analyst".

Rubin, Elizabeth. July 13th 2003. "The Cult of Rajavi". New York Times.

Rubin, Elizabeth. August 14th 2011. "An Iranian Cult and Its American Friends". New York Times.

Sciolino, Elaine. June 30th 2003. "Iranian Opposition Movement's Many Faces". New York Times.

Sciolino, Elaine. June 19th 2003. "Iranian Rebels Try Suicide By Fire in France". New York Times.

Smith, Craig. September 24th 2005. "Exiled Iranians Try to Foment Revolution From France". New York Times.

Tate, Julie & Joby Warrick. July 6th 2012. "Iranian exiles attracting attention with supporters". Washington Post.

Vick, Karl. November 9th 2003. "In a Delicate Balancing Act, U.S. Woos Iranian Group in Iraq". Washington Post.

Warrick, Joby. December 26th 2011. "Iraq agrees to U.N. deal on Iranian camp". Washington Post.