

# Critical theory, authoritarianism, and the politics of lipstick from the Weimar Republic to the contemporary Middle East

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## Abstract

In 2012–13, we signed up for Facebook in seven Muslim-majority countries and used Facebook advertisements to encourage young people to participate in our survey. Nearly 18,000 individuals responded. Some of the questions in our survey dealing with attitudes about women's work and cosmetics were adopted from a survey conducted by the Frankfurt School in 1929 in Germany. The German survey had shown that a great number of men, irrespective of their political affiliation harbored highly authoritarian attitudes toward women and that one sign of authoritarianism was men's attitude toward cosmetics and women's employment. We wanted to know if the same was true of the contemporary Middle East. Our results suggest that lipstick and makeups as well as women's employment are not just vehicles for sexual objectification of women. In the Muslim world a married woman's desire to work outside the house, and her pursuit of the accoutrement of beauty and sexual attractiveness, are forms of gender politics, of women's empowerment, but also of antiauthoritarianism and liberal politics. Our results also suggest that piety per se is not an indicator of authoritarianism and that there is a marked gender difference in authoritarianism. Women, it seems, are living a different Islam than men.

## Keywords

Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, Erich Fromm, women's employment in the Middle East, women in Modern Iran, hijab in Middle East, lipstick and makeup in the Middle East

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People resist war, marginalization, and discrimination in many different ways. For this woman, the red lipstick was her own form of resistance—Zainab Salbi, Reporting during the Bosnian War, 1992–1995 (Metrus, 2016).

Writing amid the culture wars in Weimar Germany over the celebration and commodification of sexuality, the loosening of patriarchal authority, the rise of feminism, and the looming shadow of Nazism, the Institute for Social Research (*Institut für Sozialforschung*) also known as the Frankfurt School, attributed deep political significance to intimate life. A woman's bobbed hair, dance halls, premarital sex, and whether to work outside the home were not private matters at all. The struggles and anxieties they unleashed were animating antidemocratic and authoritarian forces that were taking over the streets, the airwaves, and eventually the levers of state power.

In 1929, the Frankfurt School conducted a survey to gauge the impact of the modern capitalist order on social relations. Under the directorship of Max Horkheimer and the influence of Erich Fromm, the only trained psychoanalyst in the group, the Institute attempted to synthesize Marxism and psychoanalysis with the goal of studying the social-psychic bases of a host of issues linked to the emergence of modern capitalism.

The 1929 survey was launched by Fromm to gain insight into the attitudes and behaviors of blue- and white-collar workers in Weimar Germany. The survey comprised 271 questions and was given to 3300 participants. By 1931 Fromm and his colleague Hilde Weiss had received 1100 mostly male responses. The Nazis closed the Institute in 1933 and Fromm and other members of the Frankfurt School fled Germany and eventually settled in United States. When Fromm finally turned to an analysis of the results in the US, only 584 of the questionnaires had survived.

Subsequent political and personal conflicts that pitted Fromm against Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno blocked the publication of this survey. The official justification for their refusal to publish the study was that many questionnaires had been lost and the research design was flawed, an accusation Fromm rejected (Jay, 1996: 117). However, the more important issue was its potentially damaging results from a leftist perspective. Herbert Marcuse felt the study might suggest German workers were fascist at heart. The left, after all, maintained that supporters of fascism were based in the elite and lower middle classes and not the working classes. By showing that some of the workers who voted for leftist parties also harbored an authoritarian character, "Fromm had challenged an important part of left-wing ideology" (McLaughlin, 1999: 116, note 14).<sup>1</sup>

Fromm left the Institute in 1939. The results of the survey were not released until 1980, forty years later. An English translation entitled, *The Working Class in Weimar Germany: A Psychological and Sociological Study*, appeared after Fromm's death (Fromm, 1984). While Adorno and Horkheimer had done their best to obliterate Fromm's pioneering contribution, it was well known in the 1950s and 1960s that the theory of the authoritarian character laid out in Adorno's *Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al., [1950] 1989) had originated from Fromm's earlier work (Funk, 1982; McLaughlin, 1999: 115).

Fromm's survey had important gender ramifications: A great number of men, whether on the right or on the left, harbored highly authoritarian attitudes toward women. Fromm argued that there was a close link between an overall authoritarian personality and men's attitudes about gender relations. Having lost a great deal of power in the new industrialized workplace, German men were loath to give up the authority they still had within the family

over women and children. Such tendencies were visible in the responses the men gave when asked about women's use of lipstick and their right to work.

Researching the intimate relations of young Muslims in the Near East, we wondered whether we could compare the relationship between gender and authoritarianism in Europe in the 1920s to the relationship between gender and political Islam in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) at the turn of the 21st century. In 2012–13, we used Facebook (FB) banner ads in seven Muslim-majority countries to survey the young and computer-literate populations of Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, Palestine, Tunisia, and Turkey as well as those living in diaspora (Friedland et al., 2016).<sup>2</sup> There is very little survey information about the intimate sexual and romantic behaviors of contemporary young Muslims, whether practicing or by birth, either in the Middle East or within emigrant communities. Our survey included 85 questions and focused on family, sex, religion, and democracy in the MENA and in Muslim diaspora communities. FB provided us with an alternative vehicle by which to gain access to young Muslims. Some of the questions in our survey, which relate to women's employment and their use of cosmetics, were influenced by similar ones in the Frankfurt School survey.

Eighty years separate our FB survey and that of the Frankfurt School. Our sample populations belonged to vastly different demographics, religious denominations, and political affiliations. The 1929 German survey included mostly blue-collar and some white-collar Germans. Seventy-one percent of the respondents lived in urban centers, many were trade unionists from a Protestant background, and a majority (57%) described themselves as atheists. Less than 10% were women, though many were workers. Our FB respondents who took the survey in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and Urdu were almost all (98%) Muslims (Sunnis and some Shi'is), most of whom were very religious as will be detailed below.

More than thirty-two thousand respondents started our FB survey, and over nineteen thousand completed it. This is not a random sample of the population of these countries. It is biased toward young social network users who are wealthier and more educated than the overall population. We were concerned that women would not participate due to the risks of revealing any possible immodesty. This fear proved to be ungrounded as almost 40% of our respondents were women. And women were no more likely to drop out part way through the survey than were men, with completion ratios exactly the same for both sexes.

Our median respondent is in her twenties, highly educated, and very likely a student. Given FB's Western provenance, we worried that our respondents would be more likely to be secularized. The opposite proved to be the case. Our questions examined levels of Quranic literalism, political monism, and adherence to norms of modesty. Overwhelming majorities of our respondents in all countries—except Iran—believe the Quran is the inspired word of God to be read literally, word for word. Sizable proportions taking the survey held to a politically monist Islamist view, believing that sharia should be the sole basis of law for their nation, particularly in Algeria and Palestine. And overwhelming majorities in all countries—with the exception of Iran and Turkey—adhered to modesty as a requirement of piety, believing that Muslim women should wear the *hijab*.<sup>3</sup>

We hoped to answer two questions: Would we find the same link between authoritarianism and the desire to control women's bodies as in the Frankfurt School survey, and would there be a link between authoritarianism and political Islamism? This correlation between Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) and Christian fundamentalism has been observed in studies in the US and Canada (discussed below).

## Authoritarianism, gender, and Christian fundamentalism in the West

Fromm described the core elements of authoritarianism as conventionalism, submission, aggression, superstition, and identification with power. He believed authoritarian personalities identify with tough and powerful leaders in the hopes of achieving “personal security and strength” (Baars and Scheepers, 1993: 346). Like Fromm, Adorno emphasized the modernity of the authoritarian personality. In contrast to the “bigot” and “fanatic” of the medieval world, this personality combined

the ideas and skills which are typical of a highly-industrialized society with irrational and anti-rational beliefs. He is at the same time enlightened and superstitious, proud to be an individualist and in constant fear of not being like all the others, jealous of his independence and inclined to submit blindly to power and authority. (Adorno et al., [1950] 1989: 219)

Authoritarianism is not a German phenomenon. Recent research has explored the role of authoritarianism in the contemporary US and Canada. Altemeyer, who popularized the term Right-Wing Authoritarianism through numerous surveys in the second half of the 20th century, confirmed Fromm’s thesis that RWA individuals share certain characteristics: (1) they adhere to conventional moral values, (2) they are submissive toward established authority, and (3) they are intolerant of others whose behavior violates conventional mores (Altemeyer, 2004).

Individuals who score high on authoritarianism are very harsh toward themselves, controlling, punishing, or rewarding their own authoritarian tendencies (Duncan et al., 2003; Christopher and Wojda, 2008). They see the world as a dangerous place where “good, decent people’s values and ways of life are threatened by bad people” (Duckitt, et al., 2002: 92; Sibley et al., 2007). They have great difficulty processing ambiguity and exhibit a binary view of social relations, preferring highly demarcated social relations. They score high on prejudice and wish to pass laws to limit “freedom of speech, freedom of the press, right of assembly, and other freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights” (Altemeyer, 1998: 88).

RWA individuals see the world in terms of *inside groups* (same religion, ethnicity, and social class) and *outside groups* (people of color, members of minority religions, immigrants, people with disabilities, and LGBT people). They harbor great hostility toward the latter group, especially when these *outside groups* dare challenge and/or acquire the rights and privileges of the “inside group.” These latent tendencies turn into aggressive and violent behaviors when those in authority permit such hostile reactions toward *outside groups*.

Men’s desire to control women reflects their authoritarianism. When Fromm’s 1929 survey asked whether it was “right for married women to go out to work?” only 18% of the respondents said yes. The communists and left socialists were most supportive (36 and 30%, respectively) and the fascists least so (5%) (Fromm, 1984: 69). In analyzing the results of their survey, Fromm pointed out that while equal rights for women had been a dominant tenet of socialism and while socialist party programs had long propounded the idea that only through economic independence could women gain full equality, the survey revealed a great deal of resistance to the idea of women’s employment. Fromm was aware that both economic and psychological factors played a role in these attitudes. On the economic front, men were threatened by the “fear or actual loss of their jobs” and saw women as “dangerous competitors” (163). However, there were equally important psychological

reasons. Marriage tended to make husbands more conservative on the subject of women's employment.

Deep down they have a strong wish to have someone at their disposal who is weaker, who obeys, who admires them; this need not surprise us in so far as an authoritarian character structure is itself the product of history. Although at the time of our inquiry, in 1929, the purest and most extreme manifestations of the authoritarian personality were to be found among members of the lower-middle-class, they were also frequent among workers. (163)

Adorno and his colleagues showed that individuals who scored high on authoritarianism were often also sexually inhibited and interested in controlling other people's sexuality through "extreme moralism and punitive reactions" (Peterson and Zurbiggen, 2010: 1811). In the United States and Canada, men and women who score highly on RWA scales subscribe to very traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity, including relations between men and women at work, romantic partnerships, and lifestyle choices.

This appears to be true across the globe: Authoritarians try to maintain gender differences, depending on their culture's definitions of such differences. In most countries, this means devaluing women's ability to solve problems, perceiving working mothers as selfish, detesting feminists for daring to question gender binaries, despising anyone who breaks with conventional gender and sexual mores, and a generalized misogyny (Peterson and Zurbiggen, 2010; Duncan et al., 2003; Smith and Winter, 2002; Haddock and Zanna, 1994; Fry, 1975; Centers, 1963). Those with authoritarian tendencies are more likely to have sexually assaulted a woman (Altemeyer, 1998: 88). Peterson and Zurbiggen (2010: 1813) write:

In romantic or sexual situations, the "opposite sex" is considered almost as an enemy with his or her own strategies, goals, and tactics, one who should not be trusted. This is consistent with authoritarian intolerance of ambiguity. Men are men, and women are women, and the two are so clearly different (with opposing needs and goals) that they can be conceptualized as combative factions.<sup>4</sup>

There is a strong correlation between authoritarianism and religiosity in the Christian communities of Canada and the US. An extremely high correlation was found between Christian fundamentalism and RWA. Christian fundamentalists are not just orthodox in the sense of a commitment to a single, fixed interpretation of the revealed word of God. An orthodox person adheres rigorously to that fixed interpretation for themselves but may accept that people who do not share her religious beliefs can be good people. And if she regards those who do not share their views as holding evil ways, the orthodox person leaves it to divine will to punish the supposed evil doer. Christian fundamentalists tend to be antihermeneutic literalist readers of the Bible, believing that the text should be read on its manifest surface level. They believe that those who do not share their beliefs are immoral, but they also seek to use the legal system to impose their beliefs on their fellow citizens, whether it is the banning of abortion or of the exclusive teaching of evolution in the schools. The Christian fundamentalist is a "monist." In her view, there is only one true religion, one group of faithful that has a special relationship to God. When scripture, science, and democracy come into conflict, scripture, interpreted literally, must prevail.

It is an open question whether religiosity fosters authoritarianism or authoritarians are more likely to gravitate to religiosity. Altemeyer (1996: 157) argues that fundamentalism is “not so much a set of religious beliefs, as an attitude toward those beliefs held by a certain kind of personality.” Authoritarianism is not just about religion. Those who scored high on RWA, but were not religious, also held highly ethnocentric views. They were hostile toward LGBT people, and were willing to lock up, torture, and eradicate “radicals” in their community, by which they meant individuals who break societal norms (160).

Studies on authoritarianism and non-Christian communities are in their infancy. Altemeyer found the same correlation in a small sample of Jews, Hindus, and Muslims. Here again, those who scored high on religious fundamentalism—that is adhered to a monist political view—also scored high on ethnocentrism and prejudice. From this Altemeyer (1996: 165) concludes that in all four major religions—Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam, “fundamentalism appears to be the religious manifestation of authoritarianism.” A more recent study of arranged marriage in Bangladesh and South Korea also found that men who scored high on RWA preferred a partner who fit traditional gender expectations. And high-RWA men, who could have had the luxury of choosing their wives, opted for arranged marriages. They were reluctant to share their feelings with a prospective spouse and dismissed the importance of love and emotional compatibility in selecting a partner (Peterson et al., 2011).

## Men’s attitudes toward women’s fashion and cosmetics

One of the interesting aspects of the 1929 German survey is that Fromm and his colleagues did not limit themselves to economic gender issues but also examined cultural ones, including what today would be called gender performances (Fromm, [1941] 1994, 1955). Respondents were asked about women’s fashion and use of cosmetics. The questions regarding women’s fashion focused on short hair and short skirts—fashions of the 1920s that had diminished the differences between male and female attire and provided a more androgynous look. Many progressives of the time regarded such styles as emancipatory because they provided women with greater freedom of movement and did away with highly decorated, elaborate, cumbersome, and expensive dresses and hairdos (Wigley, 2001). Center-right conservatives and National Socialists were much more opposed to such modern trends when compared to communists and left socialists, who almost universally approved them (see Table 3.35 on short hair for women in Fromm (1984: 155)).

Table 3.36. Question 524: Do you like short hair in woman?  
Answers according to political orientation (%)

Response categories	Political orientation												Total
	Social Democrats				Left Socialists	Communists				Bürgerliche	National Socialists	Non-voters	
	1	2	3	Total		1	2	3	Total				
1 Yes	93	82	82	84	91	100	87	89	93	56	59	57	61
2 No	2	11	9	8	2	-	5	11	3	37	29	22	11
3 Other	2	2	4	3	5	-	5	-	3	-	6	6	3
4 No reply	3	5	5	5	2	-	3	-	1	7	6	15	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents	61	125	76	202	45	63	78	9	150	43	17	67	581

Opposition to women’s makeup among the German respondents was almost universal, however, in response to the question, “Do you like the use of powder, perfume and lipstick

by a woman?" In 1929–31, 84% said that they were against them; only 10% approved of them. There were no partisan differences in these attitudes: fascist and communist men were no different than Social Democrats and bourgeois liberals. Women objected as well, although markedly less than men: 27% of women approved of cosmetics compared to only 9% of the men (159).

The cross-class, cross-party rejection of cosmetics was extraordinary and often vitriolic: "It is like prostitution." "No, women should leave that to those who need it for professional purposes." "No. Unaesthetic, pernicious, seductive, false." "These things are certainly not German. They may be alright for French, Italian, Spanish and particularly Jewish women in order to hide their unpleasant smell." "The values of a German woman reside in her person. She has no need for the face-decorations of primitive tribes." "No, it appeals only to sexuality and destroys the naturalness of human and spiritual relationships." "Women made-up so artificially disgust me. They only do it to arouse men" (160). Fromm (158–159) wrote:

This extraordinarily strong rejection has to be seen not only as an expression of aggressive ideologies; the sometimes wild denunciations also reveal a deep personal dislike. The generally violent reactions also show clearly how much emotion can be hidden behind an apparently marginal problem like cosmetics. This provides a point of departure for political propagandists, who frequently seek to inflame such emotions further, in order to use them for their own purposes.

While Fromm recognized the authoritarian sources and uses of hostility toward cosmetics, and the female agency they expressed, other members of the Frankfurt school shared in this cross-party hostility toward them. Notably, Walter Benjamin thought cosmetics were a means of objectifying women and a sign both of their submissiveness to the patriarchal order and their enrollment in the commodification of life. For Benjamin, fashion was the "dialectical switching station between women and commodity, desire and dead things." Fashion used woman as a "parody of a gaily decked-out corpse" (Buck-Morss, 1989: 101).

If the backlash against women's employment in the Weimar Republic could be attributed to economic factors, how did one explain men's opposition to fashion and cosmetics, practices ostensibly aimed at enhancing a woman's desirability in men's eyes? A brief look at the history of makeup might be useful.

Cosmetics, and especially lipstick, have been targets of social prohibition and agitation for centuries. There was a time in Europe when applying makeup and lipstick were highly rebellious acts and expressions of female agency, just as they are today in many Middle Eastern and North African countries. In the 17th century, the Catholic Church labeled lipstick a diabolical device and urged women who used it to seek absolution at confession. In the 18th century, the British aristocracy maintained that lipstick promoted a form of false advertising. "Parliament declared that women who seduced men into matrimony through use of lip and cheek paints could have their marriages annulled as well as face witchcraft charges" (Schaffer, 2005).

In the early 20th century, in response to such condemnations, US suffragists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Charlotte Perkins Gilman embraced lip coloring as a symbol of women's emancipation and red lip rouge became a form of feminist rebellion. During the May 1912 New York Suffrage Rally, many of the women who paraded colored their lips in bright red (Schaffer, 2005). Decades later in the 1970s, the second wave feminist movement in the US, taking a similar position to that of Benjamin, rebelled against the use of cosmetics

as a form of commercialization that degraded women. These feminists were reacting to the billion-dollar cosmetics industry in the post-World War II era, when cosmetics became mainstream and their use almost obligatory by young women of all social classes. In the 1980s, feminist philosopher Sandra Bartky, using Michel Foucault's concept of "docile bodies," argued that the grooming practices of western modernity, which made the female body into an "ornamental surface," created docile feminine bodies (Bartky, 1988). By the 1990s, attitudes would change again as the term "lipstick lesbian" became fashionable as an adjective for a lesbian character who prefers to exhibit feminine gender attributes. Other feminists, especially immigrants from Third World countries, remained partial to cosmetics.

In our MENA survey, we asked questions almost identical to the Frankfurt School survey about cosmetics and lipstick. We also asked very similar questions about women's employment and husbands' attitudes toward it. Before analyzing these results, however, we want to look at historical attitudes about makeup and grooming in the Middle East region and explore how these attitudes changed over the past two centuries.

### **Attitudes toward cosmetics and women's employment in the MENA**

Until the 20th century, the use of cosmetics, and especially eye-catching lipstick, served as a rite of passage for married Middle Eastern women of all religious affiliations, social classes, or ethnicities.<sup>5</sup> Often, unmarried women were forbidden from engaging in such practices regardless of their age or social class. A married woman, however, was encouraged by her community to use lipstick and other makeup, as well as perfume at private family gatherings and to enhance her appearance for her husband.

An unadorned face suggested that a young woman was not yet initiated into sex. Hence the wedding of a young woman was preceded by a festive ceremony known as *band andazun* in Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East. A beautician removed her facial hair by threading it and then applied henna and heavy cosmetics to indicate the girl's entry into womanhood (Sahim, 2002: 191–192). Relatives and friends were invited and were expected to bring gifts. In wealthy families, for every patch of hair that was removed from her face, she received a small gold coin, which was added to her trousseau. In this way, the family announced that the seal of virginity was about to be removed as the young woman became sexually available to her husband.

Starting in the mid-1930s, modern cosmetics were imported from abroad on a large scale. This coincided with the period when imports from western capitalist societies further undermined domestic production of many commodities. Soon, a highly critical discourse on cosmetics emerged in the Iranian press. Not unlike the Weimar case, this new discourse combined elements from the right and the left. A married urban woman who used modern cosmetics was said to be engaging in "immoral behavior" and adopting an "unnatural" appearance. She was wasting her husband's and the nation's money on frivolous expenses, buying lipstick and makeup produced by western companies. This type of urban woman was compared unfavorably to the "wholesome" rural woman who walked about with a "pure" and unadorned face.

What was the reason for this sudden shift in attitude? How did prohibitions on unmarried girls expand into wholesale condemnation of cosmetic use by all women? Where did the



charge of frivolity come from? The changes can be traced to three factors. First and most importantly was the unveiling of Middle Eastern women, which took place throughout much of the Middle East and Central Asia in the 1920s and 1930s. In the 1930s and 1940s, in cities such as Tehran, Cairo, and Istanbul, unveiled but respectable, urban women began to frequent public spaces without the traditional face covering (*rubandeh* in Persian, *niqab* in Arabic) or the all-enveloping veil that had previously covered their entire bodies. They also began to take on tasks in the public sphere previously performed by servants, slaves, fathers, and husbands. These included going to high school, shopping for groceries, clothing, and household items, gradually taking their children to school, and even working outside the home. The end of gender segregation, combined with the introduction of modern means of transportation, and the growth in industrialization and western-style consumerism, gave urban middle-class women greater access to public spaces as they began to frequent the streets and shop for themselves and the family without male chaperones.<sup>6</sup> As these women gained greater individual rights and began to frequent the streets unveiled, implicit authoritarian attitudes toward women became more manifest. Now verbal and physical harassment of women visibly increased. More importantly, there was no overt opposition to it by the public, including the police.<sup>7</sup>

The second factor was the changing political atmosphere, and the rise of modern right wing, left wing, and often authoritarian political tendencies. The Middle East became a hotbed of nationalist, anticolonialist, fascist, and communist ideologies in the 1930s and 1940s. In the Middle East, India, and elsewhere, the “modern girl” who wished to break free from both gender and sexual barriers was deemed an imitator of the West, a frivolous being who wasted valuable national resources on unnecessary consumer goods (Afary, 2009, chapter 5). The “modern girl” was a moral danger and a “threat to national cohesion and social control,” an individual who had to be socially disciplined (Weinbaum et al., 2008: 16; Disko, 2008: 118).

Modernizing state elites—like Atatürk in Turkey or Reza Shah in Iran, who sought to promote capitalist modernization—also encouraged women to abandon the *hijab* and to mix socially with unrelated men in schools, cinemas, and restaurants. Authoritarian communist ideologies, both Stalinism and later Maoism, while speaking for the economic rights of the urban and rural poor men and women, regarded bourgeois and middle-class women as class enemies due to their husband’s social class. In reality, married women of all social classes in the Middle East had very limited legal and social rights. They could be divorced at any time, were not entitled to community property, had limited child custody rights, and inherited very little after the death of their husbands, leaving them at the mercy of their sons and brothers. But the lifestyle of the middle and upper class women, exemplified by their expenditure on western consumer goods, including clothing, makeup, and modern household items and furniture, set them apart. These commodities were almost all imported from abroad. Hence, such women were seen as complicit in western consumerism and more.

Young women who joined leftist causes were advised to avoid cosmetics, perfume, or attractive clothes, and follow the “clean and healthy” look of working class and peasant women who could only afford homespun clothes and traditional makeup. Haideh Moghissi, a member of the Fedaiin leftist guerrilla movement and founder of the National Union of Women, points out that in the 1970s the Iranian left remained obsessed with women’s

grooming practices and constantly admonished young female members of the organization about their appearance:

A Fedaii ex-sympathizer recalled endless debates over the appropriate outfit for the young women who sold *Kar* (the Fedaii newspaper) in the streets and a serious squabble with her “superior commander” over a pink shirt she wore while selling *Kar*. Women were asked to wear simple dresses, not to wear bright colours, makeup, or jewelry. (Moghissi, 1996: 132)

Urban middle-class women, who had embraced the gender reforms of the Pahlavi regime, were now the target of heated debates in leftist circles; radio commentaries berated them for their use of cosmetics and waste of money. They were told to act modestly and frugally and not spend the nation’s hard-earned income on enhancing their appearance.

The third factor that contributed to this climate was the rise of religious fundamentalism, also known as Islamism. Populist Islamist discourse took off in exactly the same period in response to the rise of consumerism as the fascist, communist, and socialist discourses in countries such as Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Egypt. Indeed, Islamists learned a great deal from both fascists and communists in terms of organization and discourse.<sup>8</sup> While highly critical of communists, Islamists were even more vocal in their condemnation of the new mores of urban women, devoting endless columns and religious sermons to the subject of women’s “decadent” and “immoral” practices, such as wearing lipstick, and insisted that urban women should follow the example of the more “natural” rural women. As in Victorian England, beauty and youth were seen as something a woman was born with that was naturally lost with age. Any attempt at enhancing one’s looks was regarded as a type of fraud and an immoral action, even though it was perfectly acceptable for a wealthy man from the traditional sectors to take a new and younger wife, claiming his first wife was no longer attractive.

A good example of this type of argumentation can be found in *Homayoun*, the monthly publication of the Qom theological seminaries, which appeared in the mid-1930s. Alavi Taleqani, a columnist for *Homayoun*, maintained that making oneself more attractive was simply “a waste of time, a waste of money, and a corruption of morals” (Taleqani, [1313] 1934: 29). Women’s excessive interest in makeup was ruining the “honor and dignity” of the people (Taleqani, [1313] 1935: 21). The new antic cosmetics discourse easily borrowed from every school of thought: naturalism, nationalism, fascism, communism, science, opposition to western imperialism, as well as the heritage of Islam. It also vehemently disapproved of women’s education and employment, while continuing to support child marriage, polygamy, and easy male divorce.

While clerics and traditionalists gradually modified their position on women’s education, voting rights, and employment, they never relented on women’s attire and grooming practices. By the late 1960s, modern Islamist intellectuals of Iran such as Ayatollah Morteza Motahari, and lay thinkers such as the Sorbonne-educated existentialist Ali Shariati, were equally contemptuous of the more secular modern women. Shariati, who supported women’s education, sharply attacked the use of cosmetics by unveiled urban middle-class women as an example of their frivolity. In his view, the Pahlavi regime and western colonialism encouraged the impoverished people of the East to fight for this frivolous form of “freedom,” making a mockery of the term. “Women were liberated not with books and

knowledge and culture,” but with “scissors:”

Her veil was shredded and suddenly women became intellectuals! The psychological complexes of the Muslim woman—or Eastern women—became an excuse for psychologists and sociologists who were in the service of colonialism and the global economy. So they defined woman as “a human being who is a consumer.” Aristotle’s comprehensive description of the human being as “an animal who speaks” in so far as women were concerned became “an animal who consumes.” As such, she has nothing else, no feelings, no meaning in her life, no ideals. . . . no values. A women’s magazine devoted to women of the East reports that the consumption of cosmetics in Tehran between 1956–1966 grew 500 times, and likewise the number of beauty salons grew 500 times. Five hundred times is a huge figure. It is a miracle! It is unprecedented in human history.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the enormous popularity of cosmetics in Iran and the Middle East, this type of discourse found receptive ears. In the 1960s and 1970s, the goal of most advocates of women’s rights in Iran and the Middle East was to raise a new generation of educated women and mothers, not “frivolous dolls.” These feminists were often extremely modest in their own use of makeup and clothing, in order not to become targets of the religious right.

At Reza Shah Kabir (Nourbakhsh) High School, a large public all-girls secondary school in Tehran, Principal Farrokhroo Parsay (1922–80) went out of her way to avoid criticisms from the religious right. A medical doctor by profession, and a strong advocate of women’s rights, she had campaigned for women’s suffrage and later for marriage reforms. Filmmaker Mehrnaz Saeedvafa who was a student there in the 1960s, recalls:

Students wore a uniform consisting of a black or white shirt and a pleated grey skirt that covered the knees. Some of the students rolled up their skirts and teased their hair as was the fashion was in those days. This was primarily done to attract the attention of the all-boys Alborz high school students whose school was near ours. Once the girls arrived in school, they would meet the principle (Dr. Parsay and later Dr. Kia) or her assistant (Miss Samareh) who sat by the entrance gate, with a bucket of water and a big brush. They pulled and straightened the girls’ hair, wiped off any traces of makeup from their faces, and pulled down their skirts, before letting them into the school. The school principal also warned such students that if they showed up again with makeup or in nylon stockings, they might be expelled.<sup>10</sup>

Dr Parsay’s concern was that the religious right would politicize the girls’ appearance and force the government to shut down the school. She later became the country’s first female minister of education (1968–71). Parsay would pay dearly for her convictions. In May 1980, after the Islamic Revolution, she was arrested and executed by a firing squad.

Soon after the 1979 revolution, many hard-won rights of Iranian women were eroded. While the state supported women’s education and, nearly a decade later, birth control policies that reduced the population, it ended many legal rights that feminists had fought for and attained. Once again, men could easily divorce their wives and have exclusive guardianship and custody of their children. The legal age of marriage was reduced to nine, and the *hijab*, or modest Islamic dress code, was forcibly imposed. A 1981 law introduced flogging and stoning for crimes of morality. Now young girls, often as young as six,

were required to cover their hair. Showing a bit of hair from under the *hijab*, or wearing lipstick or nail polish, became punishable by heavy flogging and imprisonment.



Since the mid-1990s, as state repression loosened slightly, Iranian women have been able to push for greater legal and social rights; a period captured in Azadeh Moaveni's memoir, *Lipstick Jihad* (2005). By this time, literacy rates were over 95% for young girls, the birth rate had dropped substantially, and women became a major force in every political protest. At the same time, in response to compulsory *hijab*, use of cosmetics and form-fitting clothes became a form of personal protest. In the 21st century, Iranian women were the second largest consumers of beauty products in the Middle East (after Saudi Arabia) and the seventh globally. In a country with thirty-eight million women, Iranians spend over two billion dollars a year on cosmetics (Ghazi, 2010).

Despite the massive change, a significant number of Islamist men—clerics and nonclerics—continue to speak against women's use of makeup, cosmetics, and perfume, and maintain that such practices are “un-Islamic,” “immoral,” and a sign of women's collusion with Iran's enemies. In response to the news that Iran is one of the biggest consumers of cosmetics, Hassan Rahimpour, member of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, maintained that if “according to latest statistics Iran is one of the biggest importers of cosmetics, this means [Iranian women] are feeding the engines of tens of Jewish and Zionist organizations” (Mohammadi, 2017). In fact, if anyone is profiting from this process it is the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which imports luxury goods including cosmetics. The IRGC is a massive business conglomerate which operates independently of

the state and runs the black market which has been created as a result of heavy western sanctions on Iran.

### Gender, religion, and the politics of makeup

How do younger Muslims of MENA in our survey feel about women’s makeup, about cosmetics that draw attention to and accentuate the sensuousness of women’s faces? We asked Muslim respondents whether they approved of women wearing makeup, lipstick, and perfume in public.<sup>11</sup> Respondents were given the option to approve, disapprove, or indicate that they were unsure or did not know with regard to three options: makeup, lipstick, and perfume.

Over 15,000 respondents answered these questions. A majority did not approve of wearing makeup in public. However, women and men have very different attitudes, as was the case in Fromm’s survey. As Table 1 shows, 60% of women approve of women wearing makeup in public, whereas only 37% of men do. The relationship between gender and approval of makeup is statistically significant.<sup>12</sup> The same applies to lipstick, which we will use as our indicator in subsequent analyses (see Table 2). There was far less criticism of the use of perfume in our survey, likely because religious texts are equally divided on the subject.

**Table 1.** Approval of makeup.

Do you approve women of wearing makeup in public?	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Approve (n)	3377	3561	6938
%	37	60	46
Disapprove	4423	1625	6048
	48	27	40
Don’t know/Not sure	1432	792	2224
	16	13	15
Total	9232	5978	15210
	100	100	100

Pearson  $\chi^2(2) = 825.1075$ ,  $Pr = 0.000$ .

**Table 2.** Approval of lipstick.

Do you approve of women wearing lipstick in public?	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Approve (n)	3391	3495	6886
%	38	59	46
Disapprove	4311	1683	5994
	48	29	40
Don’t Know/Not sure	1235	706	1941
	14	12	13
Total	8937	5884	14821
	100	100	100

Pearson  $\chi^2(2) = 698.7168$ ,  $Pr = 0.000$ .

**Table 3.** Support for the hijab.

Do you believe women should wear the hijab?	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
No (n)	1753	1624	3377
%	21	30	25
Yes	6522	3711	10233
	79	70	75
Total	8275	5335	13610
	100	100	100

Pearson  $\chi^2(1) = 148.9676$ ,  $Pr = 0.000$ .

Opposition to women's makeup is related to religious attitudes. Attitudes toward women's makeup are, of course, bound up with the importance of female modesty as a basis of a moral and ordered society, a value elaborated and sacralized within Islamic sharia. In the Middle East, codes of familial honor have historically been founded on female modesty. An overwhelming majority of both men and women believe that women should wear the *hijab* (see Table 3).

After a century of struggle for greater women's rights, women have made significant gains in education, employment, and access to public spaces. In the face of decades of systematic abuse, Arab, Turkish, and Iranian women have made dramatic steps forward over the last few decades. According to UN statistics, in nearly two-thirds of MENA countries there were more women than men in the universities by 2012 (Tait, 2012). Likewise, the average age of marriage for women has gone up to twenty-five and older since the late 1990s. In addition, with the availability of birth control, fertility rates have dramatically declined.<sup>13</sup>

Notwithstanding all these advances, the permissibility of women's access to the public sphere is still contingent on women maintaining codes of modesty. Bringing attention to the sensuousness of her face and body is considered by many as a violation of this implicit social contract. In a social order where one's hair, legs, and arms are generally expected to be covered, a woman's visage is often her only legitimate public face.<sup>14</sup> We find that support for the wearing of a *hijab*, covering a woman's hair, has a strong negative association with support for women wearing makeup. As Table 4 shows, 76% of Muslim men who do not believe that wearing a *hijab* should be obligatory approve of women wearing lipstick in public. This compares to 24% of those who do believe it is obligatory. The difference is huge and statistically significant.

Those men who believe the *hijab* should be obligatory are much less accepting of makeup, among both women and men. For both sexes, those who believe the *hijab* to be obligatory are much more likely to disapprove of women wearing lipstick in public. There is, however, a significant gender difference. Forty-five percent of women who believe in the *hijab* approve of women wearing lipstick in public, whereas only 24% of men with this attitude approve, a difference of 21%. Large percentages of women who cleave to Islamic modesty norms nonetheless believe that women should have the right to wear makeup in public. What this suggests is that for women, the *hijab* is not necessarily an indicator of female subordination. Quite the contrary, it is often an expression of female agency against the wishes of their highly traditional parents, their teachers, and the state with a multitude of purposes. Women who don the *hijab* may wish to cultivate modesty or become closer to God. Their motives

**Table 4.** Crosstab of support for the hijab and approval of lipstick.

Do you approve of women wearing lipstick in public?	Do you believe women should wear the hijab?					
	Male			Female		
	No	Yes	Total	No	Yes	Total
Approve (n)	1295	1489	2784	1406	1597	3003
%	76	24	35	88	45	58
Disapprove	241	3870	4111	129	1442	1571
	14	62	52	8	40	30
Don't know/Not sure	171	845	1016	67	526	593
	10	14	13	4	15	11
Total	1707	6204	7911	1602	3565	5167
	100	100	100	100	100	100

Pearson  $\chi^2(2) = 2.6e + 03, Pr = 0.000.$

may be to be better able to maneuver in public space, including to go on for higher education and a career, or to avoid sexual harassment. Or they may simply wish to signal their piety to a more traditional segment of the population as a mark of their marriageability (Ahmed, 2011; Macleod, 1993; Mahmood, 2005; Ozyegin, 2015; Zuhur, 1992).<sup>15</sup>

That women are much more likely than men to approve of makeup is not because they are less pious. Prayer frequency is one indicator of piety. Male and female prayer frequencies are more or less identical, with women having a slightly lower prayer frequency (Table 5).<sup>16</sup> Sixty-one percent of both women and men in our sample pray five times daily. This small substantive difference cannot explain the huge gender difference in support for female makeup.

Piety *per se* is not an indicator of authoritarianism. However, there are aspects of revealed religion and politicized religion that are indicators of authoritarian attitudes: a certainty about good and evil, an intolerance of ambiguity, a subordination to an absolute authority, and a monist absolutism in which only one source of authority and law can be admitted. As noted earlier, analysts have pointed to these features not only in the foundational Puritanism of the United States, but also in contemporary U.S. and Canadian evangelicalism. The question is whether authoritarian elements in Islamism are associated with hostility toward women's makeup and women's empowerment in similar ways to what the critical theorists found among the secular radical left and right in Germany in the lead-up to Second World War, or more recent studies have shown in the case of the U.S., Canada, and Asia.

We examine two aspects of religiosity, first an antihermeneutic literalism and second a monist and absolutist imposition of *sharia*, Islamic law. We measure literalism as to whether respondents believe that the Quran is the revealed word of God, to be read as literally true in all ways (see Table 6). We measure respondents' political monism via the extent to which individuals exclude other bases of law besides Islam.

We operationalize monism in two ways. First, respondents were asked about the appropriate relationship between Islam and the nation-state (see Table 7). The possible responses included: (1) Those who thought Islam should have no place in *national law*, (2) those who thought Islam had a place as a basis of *national identity*, (3) those who approved of Islam as a basis of *national law*, and finally, and (4) those who thought Islam should be the *sole* basis

**Table 5.** Prayer frequency.

How often do you pray?	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Never (n)	1959	1470	3429
%	17	19	18
Once or twice a month	544	374	918
	5	5	5
Once or twice a week	728	488	1216
	6	6	6
Once or twice a day	579	289	868
	5	4	4
Three times a day	648	439	1087
	6	6	6
Five times a day	7108	4760	11868
	61	61	61
Total	11566	7820	19386
	100	100	100

Pearson  $\chi^2(5) = 27.3683$ ,  $Pr = 0.000$ .

**Table 6.** The truth of the holy book.

Do you believe the holy book of your faith is the inspired word of God?	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Yes, true in all ways and to be read literally (n)	9959	6359	16318
%	84	81	82
Yes, true in all ways but not to be read literally	1196	967	2163
	10	12	11
Yes, it is true primarily about religious matters	293	202	495
	2	3	2
No, it is not the inspired word of God	475	360	835
	4	5	4
Total	11923	7888	19811
	100	100	100

Pearson  $\chi^2(3) = 30.4634$ ,  $Pr = 0.000$ .

of national law. We argue that a belief that Islam is the only legitimate basis of national law is an authoritarian position.

Second, respondents were asked what should happen in the event of a conflict between democratically passed legislation and sharia (see Table 8). Those who believe that *sharia* should trump all other bases of law are understood to take an authoritarian position.

Quranic literalism is the norm in our sample (see Table 6). Women, like men, are overwhelmingly literalist believers in the Quran as Allah's revealed word. Eighty-one percent of women and 84% of men in our sample believe the Quran is the revealed word of God and true in all ways. Although there is a statistically significant difference between men and



**Table 7.** Political position.

How would you define your political position?	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
I support separation of religion and state (n)	1886	1656	3542
%	21	29	24
I am a nationalist but see Islam as an element of national identity	2241	1494	3735
Islamic law should be ONE source of law, especially on family issues	25	26	26
Islam should be the sole source of the law	1002	812	1814
	11	14	12
Total	3719	1727	5446
	42	30	37
Total	8848	5689	14537
	100	100	100

Pearson  $\chi^2(3) = 237.6013$ ,  $Pr = 0.000$ .

**Table 8.** Democratic decision or Sharia: Which should prevail?

If laws are passed democratically that conflict with sharia, which should prevail?	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
The law should prevail (n)	2167	1831	3998
%	24	31	27
Sharia should prevail	3876	1959	5835
	43	33	39
A committee of clerics and/or judges should decide	1862	1327	3189
Don't know	21	22	21
	1152	786	1938
Total	13	13	13
Total	9057	5903	14960
	100	100	100

Pearson  $\chi^2(3) = 159.0281$ ,  $Pr = 0.000$ .

women in terms of this belief, the substantive difference is quite small: Women are 3% less likely than men to take this position. Again this substantively small difference cannot explain the huge difference between women and men's approval of makeup.

While there is very little difference between men and women in their belief in Quranic literalism, there is a major gender gap in their support for political monism, a form of political Islamism. Women are 12% less likely than men to believe that sharia should be the sole basis of their national law and to believe that in the event of a conflict between *sharia* and democratic legislation *sharia* should prevail, a statistically significant difference.

There thus appears to be a gender difference in authoritarianism. Women are less supportive of making Islam the sole basis of state law and in demanding that Islam be privileged over democratic processes in the determination of law, neither of which are specifically

**Table 9.** Politics and lipstick.

Do you approve of women wearing lipstick in public?	How would you define your political position?				Total
	I support separation of religion and state.	I am a nationalist but see Islam as an element of national identity	Islamic law should be ONE source of law, especially on family issues	Islam should be the sole source of the law	
Approve (n)	2689	1667	767	1365	6488
%	78	47	44	26	46
Disapprove	456	1333	688	3214	5691
	13	37	39	61	41
Don't Know/Not sure	298	557	298	663	1816
	9	16	17	13	13
Total	3443	3557	1753	5242	13995
	100	100	100	100	100

Pearson  $\chi^2(6) = 2.5e + 03$ ,  $Pr = 0.000$ .

women's issues. The findings are consistent with an argument that women are somewhat less authoritarian than men in the Middle East.

While there is a correlation between literalism and disapproval of women's lipstick, that between political monism and women's cosmetics is the stronger of the two by far. As Tables 9 and 10 indicate, those who believe that Islam should be the sole basis of the law—and that sharia should trump democratically passed legislation in the event of a conflict between the two—are much more likely to oppose women's makeup.

These results do not accord with the critical theorists' characterization of authoritarianism in secular Weimar. In that context, opposition to women's makeup was widespread among men of all political persuasions, Nazis and Communists, as well as liberals (Fromm, 1984: 165, Table 3:38). Indeed, Fromm believed that the emotional aggression men harbored toward women was available to all parties as an instrument of political mobilization. In the contemporary MENA, hostility toward women's cosmetics has a more ideological and partisan specificity. Quranic literalists and strict monists are most likely to disapprove of women wearing lipstick. But here once again women were much more likely to support the wearing of lipstick even if they were monists. Thirty-eight percent of female monists (those who believe Islam should be the sole basis of national law) approved of lipstick, compared to 21% of male monists.

How to explain these gender differences? At the most basic level, one possible explanation is that these grooming practices are engaged in exclusively by women and that women would therefore be more supportive of them, irrespective of their religio-political views. This is what the critical theorists also found in Germany. Women may be more supportive of makeup, even women who are monists or literalists, because they understand that in a society where women have limited agency in terms of spouse selection, and where divorce laws give men the right to easily discard a wife, a woman's appearance is empowering. Cosmetics may also help a single woman become a player in the mating game and potentially have greater number of suitors from which she might choose a spouse. These issues become even more important to women in a society where the law leaves women financially vulnerable in the event of divorce.

**Table 10.** Politics and the holy book.

Do you approve of women wearing lipstick in public?	Do you believe the holy book of your faith is the inspired word of God?				Total
	Yes, true in all ways and to be read literally.	Yes, true in all ways but not to be read literally.	Yes, it is true primarily about religious matters	No, it is not the inspired word of God.	
Approve (n)	3941	1048	246	440	5675
%	37	65	68	72	43
Disapprove	5132	334	78	140	5684
	49	21	22	23	43
Don't Know/Not sure	1483	233	36	35	1787
	14	14	10	6	14
Total	10556	1615	360	615	13146
	100	100	100	100	100

Pearson  $\chi^2(6) = 820.4603$ ,  $Pr = 0.000$ .

For men, in contrast, control over women's bodies and their display is an integral part of authoritarianism, of the defense of an uncertain male power. As with 18th century English aristocrats, lipstick and makeup are understood as forms of "false advertising" through which naïve men are "seduced into matrimony." A world where women cannot freely use makeup is one where men can more easily distinguish the "truly beautiful" from the "artificial." This is more important in societies where opportunities for intimate contact are far less available. Similarly, a more attractive married woman would presumably feel more emboldened to leave an unhappy marriage.

Literalism and monism are different: the first is an antihermeneutic approach to the religious text, the second a legal imposition of that interpretation on the behavior of others. Which one has the greatest net impact on the permissibility of lipstick? In our analysis we concluded that almost all monists, who would make Islam the sole law of the land, are literalists (92%), but not all literalists are monists (46%). How do literalists who are not monists compare to monists in their view of lipstick? We found that 48% of Quranic literalists who are not monists approve of lipstick, compared to 26% of all monists and 38% of all literalists, whatever their degree of monism. This suggests that monists are far more authoritarian than orthodox literalists in terms of their gender attitudes.

## Sex, work, and gender politics

Is there a relationship between attitudes toward a woman's right to present a sensuous face in public and those toward her right to work? In the Weimar survey, the Nazis were overwhelmingly opposed to women working; only 29% approved, compared to 93% of left wing socialists and 73% of communists. Opposition to married women's employment was much higher across all groups (Fromm, 1984: 167). We asked our respondents whether husbands should have the right to decide whether their wives can work.

There is also a huge gender divide over support for a woman's right to work (see Table 11). Fifty-two percent of the male respondents believe the husband should have the ultimate say over whether his wife works, compared to 26% of the female respondents. Women are more than twice as likely to think the decision is the wife's alone, 23% versus

**Table 11.** Does a wife have the right to work?

	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Do you think that men should have the right to decide whether their wives work?			
The husband should decide (n)	2991	775	3766
%	32	13	25
The husband and wife discuss, husband decides	1833	809	2642
	20	13	17
The husband and wife should discuss, both decide	3281	2925	6206
	36	49	41
The husband should not decide	879	1388	2267
	10	23	15
Don't know	239	113	352
	3	2	2
Total	9223	6010	15233
	100	100	100

Pearson  $\chi^2(4) = 1.3e + 03$ ,  $Pr = 0.000$ .

10% of the men. Strict monists, those who think sharia should be the sole basis of the law, were the least supportive of a wife's right to decide whether she would work (4%), as opposed to the secularists who believed that religion should have no basis in the nation-state's law (42%) (Table 12).

These attitudes about husbands' authority are tightly connected to an individual's opposition to women's wearing cosmetics. There is again a difference between women and men in the alignment of the endorsement of male power and of women's right to adorn her face in public. For both sexes, those who believe that husbands should have absolute power in their households are most likely to oppose the wearing of lipstick (see Table 13). But the relationship is much stronger for men than it is for women: variations in support for a husband's right to control his wife have a greater impact on men's attitudes about female makeup than they do on those of women. And more importantly, women are much more likely to believe a woman has a right to wear lipstick even when they believe that a husband has an absolute right to decide whether his wife can work outside the home. Forty-six percent of women who think men have the right to decide whether their wives can work believe that women have a right to wear lipstick versus 25% of men who think this way. We also found that those whose mothers worked full-time when they were children were much more likely to support women's right to wear lipstick, a correlation also found in the Frankfurt School survey, something that should be explored in future research.

What unites makeup and employment is the question of women's autonomy. There is clearly enormous female support for a woman's autonomy—to wear lipstick and rouge in public on the one side, and to be able to work, if she so chooses, in the labor market, on the other. The results are consistent with a desire for female liberty, the ability to choose. The public sensuousness of women is both an indicator and a source of female power. On the one hand, it is an index of a woman's ability to control her own bodily presentation, and on the other hand, of her ability and right to attract the attention of other men in public.

**Table 12.** Politics and a wife's right to work.

	How would you define your political position?				
	I support separation of religion and state.	I am a nationalist but see Islam as an element of national identity	Islamic law should be ONE source of law, especially on family issues	Islam should be the sole source of the law	Total
Do you think that men should have the right to decide whether their wives work?					
The husband should decide (n)	376	1044	356	1735	3511
%	11	28	20	32	24
The husband and wife discuss, husband decides	224	733	312	1250	2519
	6	20	17	23	18
The husband and wife should discuss, both decide	1381	1514	973	2040	5908
	39	41	54	38	41
The husband should not decide	1470	323	122	220	2135
	42	9	7	4	15
Don't know	52	75	26	142	295
	1	2	1	3	2
Total	3503	3689	1789	5387	14,368
	100	100	100	100	100

Pearson  $\chi^2(12) = 3.2e + 03, Pr = 0.000.$

**Table 13.** Support for a wife's right to work and support for lipstick.

	Do you think that men should have the right to decide whether their wives work?					
	The husband should decide	The husband and wife discuss, husband decides	The husband and wife should discuss, both decide	The husband should not decide	Don't Know	Total
Do you approve of women wearing lipstick in public?						
			—Male—			
Approve (n)	691	430	1451	680	87	3339
%	25	25	46	79	39	38
Disapprove	1792	1059	1221	101	80	4253
	64	61	38	12	36	48
Don't know/Not sure	309	260	515	82	57	1223
	11	15	16	10	25	14
Total	2792	1749	3187	863	224	8815
	100	100	100	100	100	
			—Female—			
Approve	333	358	1571	1135	67	3464
	46	45	55	83	63	59
Disapprove	309	322	859	152	20	1662
	43	41	30	11	19	29
Don't know/Not sure	79	107	414	80	20	700
	11	14	15	6	19	12
Total	721	787	2844	1367	107	5826
	100	100	100	100	100	

Pearson  $\chi^2(8) = 2.1e + 03, Pr = 0.000.$

## Conclusion

In their 1929 survey, members of the Frankfurt School found strong associations between political authoritarianism and the desire to control a woman's agency and her economic independence. German society was then experiencing a gender revolution not unlike what the Middle East is going through today.

Lipstick is still politics. We find in the Middle East, that monists, those who would impose their singular reading of Islam on their fellow citizens and override democratic voices and pluralistic values, are opposed to women wearing lipstick and makeup. The authority in authoritarianism is both sexed and gendered. It refers to both male authority and men's right to control women's sexual bodies. And it is here that we find a gender conflict between women and men. There is an astonishing gender divide on support for women's right to adorn their visible bodies. Women tend to support this right; men to oppose it. This is aligned with women's belief that husbands should not have unchecked authority to determine whether their wives work, while men back a husband's singular authority.

Women, our research suggests, are living a different Islam than their husbands and fathers. They report being just as religious as men, but they do not believe that Islam dictates their subordination to men or that men should have the right to constrain their autonomy in the ways studied here. These results suggest that lipstick and makeup are not just vehicles for the sexual objectification of women, as some traditions of western feminism urged us to believe, but of female agency as "lipstick feminism" now proposes. In the Middle East, a woman's pursuit of the accoutrement of beauty and sexual attractiveness is not only a form of gender politics and women's empowerment, but also one of anti-authoritarianism and liberal politics.

Attitudes about women manifest themselves differently in today's authoritarianism. In the Middle East, there is an emphasis on female covering and disapproval of conspicuous grooming, while in the West the emphasis is on ornamenting the body and the face and its erotic accentuation. If the authoritarian in the Middle East seeks to cover women's bodies, the western secularist seeks to reveal it. What unites them is their promotion of masculine control over women's bodies.

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## Notes

1. Kramer (2011:16) likewise points out that "the survey included a broad segment of older working class individuals, as it were members of the 'labor aristocracy,' and a majority of petty bourgeois white-collar employees who were strongly inclined toward reactionary and fascist ideas."
2. The social media sources we used are not equivalent. Since FB advertising was not permitted in Iran, we used the blogosphere in that country but also posted the survey on branches of the Azad universities, which are more accessible to average students. The percentage of the entire

population that uses FB—known as the penetration rate—varies by country (see Table 1). Algeria and Egypt have the lowest penetration rates while Turkey, Palestine, and Tunisia have much greater rates (see Friedland et al., 2016).

3. Some of the results of this survey have already appeared in Friedland et al. (2016) and Sotoudeh, Friedland, and Afary (2017).
4. Duncan and others show that RWA tendencies are not innate characteristics but reflect one's life experiences and challenges. For example, the underemployed scored higher on RWA than the fully employed; married women with a child scored much higher on the RWA scale than women who had experienced divorce; people with graduate degrees in natural sciences or professional degrees (JDs or MDs) scored higher than those with MAs or PhDs in social sciences and humanities (Duncan et al., 2003: 625).
5. Many of our historical examples in this article are from Iran, where more work on the intricate relationship among Islam, politics, and cosmetics has been done, though other predominantly Muslim Middle Eastern countries, as well as Pakistan, went through similar changes (Chhachhi, 1989). Scholarly publications in English on the history of cosmetics in the Arab or Turkish world are few. Those who have written on the subject have focused on the ways in which western governments, from the French colonial regime in Algeria to George W. Bush in Iraq, and even some mainstream women's organizations, have justified imperialist occupation of the region in the name of defending "women's liberation," which is sometimes measured by women's access to, and use of, modern cosmetics (McLarney, 2009). This is an important point but is not the focus of our article, which looks at significant statistical differences between average Muslim literalists and monists, as well as men and women in urban communities of the MENA on the issue of women's grooming practices.
6. For four decades, from the mid-1930s through the 1970s there was some liberalization outside the schools and in public arenas. This was the same period when unveiled and heavily adorned married women, and eventually single high school and college students, became the target of a great deal of public attention. At the turn of the 20th century, when respectable urban women were seen as an extension of the men in their families, and walked the streets fully veiled, the police had strictly monitored the sex-segregated streets of Tehran. No man would dare touch an unrelated woman, or attempt to remove her face veil, even if he thought that the woman was his wife or sister. Such actions were severely punished, including by fines and public lashing.
7. Sadeq Hedayat's short story *Haj Aqa*, for example, shows that in the 1920s and 1930s, at a time when women were viewed as properties of their husbands and families, harassment of respectable women on the streets was not tolerated by the public or the police. Moreover, perpetrators were severely prosecuted. The situation would change in the 1950s. See the entry "Hedayat," in *Encyclopedia Iranica*.
8. Islamism was founded in the late 1920s and early 1930s in movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and in new religious discourses emanating from Qom in Iran. For its history in Egypt see Richard Mitchell (1993), Leila Ahmed (2011).
9. See Shariati ([1379] 2000: 105). Translation slightly altered.
10. Interview with Mehrnaz Saeedvafa, Professor of Film, Columbia College, Chicago, 4 July 2017.
11. For purposes of the analyses reported here we excluded non-Muslims.
12. Chi-square statistics and probability values are reported at the base of each table. The Chi-square test allows us to test the probability that an observed relationship between categorical variables in a table occurred by chance where the two categories are independent. It is called a "goodness of fit" statistic because it measures the extent to which the observed distribution fits the distribution expected if the variables were independent. The p-value measures the probability that the observed distribution between the two categories might occur by chance. A low p-value indicates a statistically significant relationship, which means there is a low probability the relationship was observed by chance.

13. Today, fertility rates in Bahrain, Iran, Lebanon, Qatar, Tunisia, and Turkey are below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman (Roudi-Fahimi and Kent, 2008; Iqbal and Kiendrebeogo, 2014), which has created its own set of issues not discussed here.
14. One should not assume that the only part of a woman's body she can put forward in an erotic manner is her uncovered face. Historically, women have been able to exhibit a great deal of eroticism through covered body parts in both the East and the West. For a recent discussion of this and related issues, see Lewis (2015).
15. In an earlier study, we also found that support for the hijab has absolutely no relationship to the pursuit of love as a criterion of spousal choice (Friedland et al., 2016).
16. In many Muslim countries women do not go to the mosque and often pray at home alone or in private. Because of the constant demand for women to be present to welcome guests, manage the housework, or take care of children, prayers are often carried out quickly in between chores or errands. In addition, Muslim women are prohibited from praying (fasting, reading the Quran, etc.) while menstruating. These factors might account for the slightly lower prayer frequencies among women when compared to men. E-mail from Hareem Khan, PhD candidate, Department of Anthropology, UC Santa Barbara, 25 July 2017.

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