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Title of the Thesis: Sexuality and the Public/Private Dichotomy in Iranian Society.

Sexuality is relatively a new term that became popular in the later part of the 19th century when the anthropological and sociological study of Europe and North America flourished. The assumption that sexuality is a natural and biological phenomenon was proved wrong by examining how sexuality had changed over time with respect to each socio, economic, political, cultural, religious and geographical shifts. This directed to a new realisation that the history of a society and nation-state is so much the history of sexuality of the respective domains.

Sex and gender are two essential concepts that stand complimentary to the concept of sexuality. In a very brief way one could say that the sex of a body is expected to be directly proportional to the gender performance of the body and should complement the sexual behaviour. That is, a male body is expected to have masculine performance that should sexually get attracted to a female feminine body. But the equation and proportional ratio of this gender and sexual equation varies with the social and cultural shifts. One could see how this gender equations and sexuality patterns have changed over time in the case of Iran.

The binerification of the society of today's Islamic Republic to the present concrete heterosexual patriarchal structure did not happen all at once in a linear pattern. The shifts in political scenario as part of various dynasties, the two major revolutions over a decade, the cultural shifts as part of various reforms in different dynasties and cultural intermixing and hybridisation as part of the travellers in and out to the region, the shift in state structure and

modern education, the imperialism and intrusion of world powers along with the religious and Shia interference in the state system, the wars, the economic crisis, globalisations and the new cyber space had all made tremendous shifts in various levels of human life. There was a conscious attempt by each rulers and dynasties to control and shape sexuality with respect to each national ideologies that lead to the today's patriarchal hierarchal heterosexual structure. For instance, there was a time in the history of Iran, during the Qajar Dynasty, where the society was not normative in the modern sense of the term. Later, a new definition of masculinity was formed in which a heterosexual man was expected to protect not only "his" woman/women but also the nation leading to a new equation of heterosexuality and patriotism. Similarly, during Reza Shah's period, the regime was trying to induce the western norms and mores into the Iranian social system that satisfies the western demands of gender and sexuality. Though there were reforms that encouraged women to come to the public realm and create their own political and economic identity, the reforms ultimately ensure a concrete normative patriarchal heterosexual structure. Likewise, after the formation of the Islamic state, the State system became more patriarchal and hierarchal with the double weight of religion's patriarchy along with the hierarchal heterosexual structure extended from the Shah's regime. In the newly formed theocratic state, there were strict moral policing, and division of the society on the basis of gender and sexuality to ensure no other sexualities and gender patters survived so that the nation stayed "pure" with respect to the state's ideology. Thus Different rulers/dynasties/regimes used sexuality and women's bodies in their own ways to declare their respective political ideology. Thus sexuality that is always assumed to be a matter in the private domain, is shaped, structured and restructured in the public realm and the newly formed structure of sexuality restructures the existing social structures. Thus a process of structuring the structures goes on giving new dimensions to sexuality and the public and private realms of societies.