

Fashion and Soft War: Analysis of Iran's Regulatory Measures for Fashion Industry

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Abstract : Since 2009, when the Green movement, Iran's most significant political uprising in post-Islamic revolution materialized, the term 'soft war' has become an integral part of the Iranian regime's lexicon when addressing the media propaganda waged by the west and the regime's so-called 'enemies'. Iran's authorities describe soft war as a western campaign aiming at undermining the revolutionary values by covert activities, deploying cultural tools and purposeful dissemination of information. With this respect, Internet and in particular, the social media networks, and oppositional radio-television broadcasts have been considered as the west's soft war conduits. With the rising of the underground fashion industry in the past couple of years that does not conform to the compulsory dress codes prescribed by the state, the Islamic regime expands the soft war narrative to include any undesired fashion-related activities and frames the rising fashion industry as a cultural war intoxicating the Iranian-Islamic identity. Accordingly, fashion products created by the Iranian fashion intermediators have been attributed to the westerners and outsiders and are regarded as the matter of national security. This study examines the reactive and proactive measures deployed by the Iranian regime to control the rise of fashion industry. It further puts under the scrutiny how the state as a part of its proactive measure shapes the narrative of 'soft war' in relation to fashion in Iran and explores how the notion of soft war has been articulated in relation to the modeling and fashion in the state's political rhetoric. Through conducting a content analysis of the authorities' statements, it describes how the narrative of soft war assists the state policing the fashion industry.

Keywords : censorship, fashion, Iran, soft war

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