

Comparison of the America Object in the Two Iranian Presidents (Hashmi Rafsanjani and Khatami) Discourses

Mehrdad Navabakhsh¹

Professor of Sociology, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

Ibrahim Motaghi²

Professor of Political Sciences, University of Tehran, Iran

Maryam Jamshidi³

Ph.D. in Sociology, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

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Abstract: In the post-colonial years and during years America becoming a superpower, the anti-Americanism approach compared to the Americanism approach, became more intense in the world. After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, also Iran and the United States' relations completely changed from Americanism to anti-Americanism due to the events happened between the two countries. In this article, according to the anti-American approach of the Islamic Revolution of Iran discourse, the two presidents of Iran's dialogue, namely Mr. Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mr. Khatami, have been analyzed in the face of America, after the imposed war. The research method used in this article is Lacla and Mofe's discourse analysis. According to the results of this research, Khatami's priority in his foreign policy was to seek better relations with the West, but based on mutual respect and interests. For this reason, the level of hostility of Khatami's political discourse in the face of America, like Hashemi's, was competition. Yet, the difference was that, unlike Hashemi, Khatami did not address the US government, and his main audience in this regard was the US people instead of the US government.

Keywords: America (U.S.), Iran, anti-Westernism, Western phobia, discourse, discourse analysis, President, Hashemi Rafsanjani, Seyed Mohammad Khatami.

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Introduction

If someone does criticize Americanism with the explanation that the third millennium is the age of information and communication, then he must have an answer to the question of where the root of the confrontation with America comes from. At the beginning, anti-Americanism had a European nature and insisted on the lack of intelligence and inherent degeneration of the native inhabitants of America. After the publication of the young French sociologist's (Mr. Dutoqueville) prediction that "America will become a superpower in the 20th century", this process intensified. In the case of Iranian society, the issue that "the West" and "Westerners" became "shadows of an assumed enemy" in the Iranian culture and discourse, it goes back to the post-colonial era. (Adibzadeh, 1999) Although the presence of the West in the colonial era and their interference and influence in the Iranian society and politics was very problematic at that time, the transformation of "them" into "shadows of an assumed enemy" became bolder and more justified for Iranians when Iranians had entered the "post-colonial" era. The best time to distinguish Iran "colonial era" from Iran "post-colonial era" is the formation of the nationalism movement, the nationalization of the oil industry and the political campaigns of nationalists led by Mohammad Mossadegh.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, since the 1360s (1980s), the domination object has formed a new discursive identity in the language and dialogue of Iran's foreign policy. What caused such an event was that the discourse subjects used the semantic system and cultural capitals of the religious model of Iranian society. This gave the revolutionary Iranians an opportunity to redefine the "anti-dominion discursive identity" in the field of foreign policy discourse, to the extent that Ayatollah

¹ Email: Navabakhsh@srbiau.ac.ir

² Email: motaghi@gmail.com

³ Email: Maryam.jamshidi14@gmail.com (Corresponding Author)

Khomeini (1367-1988), the founder of the Islamic Revolution, defined the United States as the great devil, and the Soviet Union and Europe as smaller devils, respectively. In this way, the United States became the "Big Other" that defined the revolutionary role of the Iranians and after that, this approach has continued until now. (Navabakhsh and Jamshidi, 2015). Therefore we see, nearly four decades have passed since the Islamic Republic emerges, and America has lasted as an important "other" in the culture of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. And as a result, the anti-American discourse entered the principles of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic, and despite the change of governments, this process has continued in general. Of course, each of these governments has had sub-discourses, although derived from the Islamic Revolution main discourse, in which we can find signifiers that do not match the anti-American discourse in terms of pragmatism and realism. For, it is necessary to examine how the, the anti-Americanism discourse run in the governments after the Islamic Revolution.

Definitions and theoretical bases

Anti-Americanism

Before dealing with the concept of anti-Americanism, we should examine the concept of xenophobia. Foreigner, rooted in the distinction between "native" and "foreigner", gives meaning to the dualities of the modern age. (Adibzadeh, 1999) In addition to this debate, we deal with the concept of xenophobia. This concept formed with the emergence of native man and national borders; in a way that the identity walls between the native and the foreigner men caused a feeling of separation between these "others". Now, any type of negative and undesirable collective images that are reproduced in the cognitive system and cultural world of the society from *foreigner*, is an element of anti- xenophobia. Regarding the root of xenophobia, the study of the contemporary history of the countries shows that some societies could not develop such self-confidence in the field of art of international sociability to face the outside world. It seems that part of this problem roots in the type of vision and attitude of the nation towards the world and the conflict between good and evil inside it; and another part is the result of bitter experiences of foreign interference in the domestic affairs of the country (Sadeghi, 2009).

Regarding the concept of anti-Americanism, you can also refer to the model of xenophobia (Nouri, 2008), but in general, anti-Americanism refers to a set of motivational and behavioral components, which emerge based on a negative and threatening attitude, perception or idea of the identity-cultural dimensions of the American government or the characteristics of its foreign policy and can extend to the level of "systematic and comprehensive opposition or confrontation". (Kivan Hosseini, 2010) In the following, in Table 1 you will find various theories about anti-Americanism.

Table (1): Anti-American theorizing approaches

The foundation of the theory	Theorist
For the reason and cause of anti-Americanism or confrontation with America, five concepts can be considered, which mainly have a philosophical basis and its manifestations are: global duality; tendency; pathology; prejudice and ideology.	O'Connor
Their theory is based on the views of Tocqueville and Marx, they believe that anti-Americanism has historical roots and has nothing to do with the actions of contemporary US.	Boyd and Turner
Anti-Americanism is actually a type of ism and ideology, and Huntington's theory on clash of civilizations is a manifestation of the two tendencies of Americanism and anti-Americanism.	Andrey Makowitz
Anti-Americanism has three sources: left-wing critics; American nationalism; Cultural concerns.	Robert Singh
There are four types of anti-Americanism: liberal, radical, nationalist, and social categories.	Katzenstein and Kohender

Discourse analysis: The word discourse, whose history in some sources goes back to the fourteenth century, appeared in various forms and formats from the 1970s onwards, the most important of which is the format or method of discourse analysis. (Mann 1989). The Discourse theory has strong roots in past theoretical perspectives and traditions, but it is a relatively new approach in political analysis. Discourse theory believes that an action or concept (as a text) should only be understood / explained in the context of time and place and in relation to other actions and concepts (as context); It is on the same basis that a discourse may be positive or negative. In general, it should be said that every discourse creates conditions that give meaning only in those specific conditions. On the other hand, discourse theories reject a clear and definite distinction between the meaning and interpretations of political /objective behaviors and actions. Following the ideas of Weber, Winch and Weinstein, it emphasizes that meanings, interpretations, and actions are always inseparably connected.

Theoretical framework

Considering the presuppositions of the discourse theory, such as that different people do not view the same text or speech in the same way, and the meaning comes from the **text** as much as it is affected by the historical and social context (Tajik, 2004), if we want to present our theoretical framework, it should be said that we have assumed the presidents to be political elites who have power, in other words, both decision-takers and decision-makers. For this reason, it can be said that the model used in this article is rather closer to the definition of Guiroche (2012) where he said: "Elites are individuals and groups who are effective in the historical achievements of a society, as a result of the power they gain and the influence they leave behind, or by the decisions they make or the ideas, feelings or emotions they create." Based on this, we try to examine and compare the Iranian heads of the two construction and reform governments, namely Mr. Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mr. Seyyed Mohammad Khatami in this article. Because these people were considered the highest executive authority of the country, they had the power, therefore, they had the possibility to make decisions. Of course, the discussion of making ties with the US is an issue, in Iran that has been addressed and will be dealt with higher level of government, but the presidents of Iran have been effective since they have been able to make decisions through the decisions they took in many processes related to the United States.

Research method and statistical population

Since discourse, is an organized system and a systematic structure that result from articulation of related elements and concepts, and contain a set of words that are meaningfully related to each other, therefore, we have used the research method of discourse analysis according to the subject of this article, as a discourse is the configuration of a coherent set of people, concepts and words that is placed around a superior signifier, and gives meaning to human life. Thus, semantic coherence is a basic requirement for discourse. (Khalaji, 2007) On the other hand, the discourse analysis method is a qualitative research technique that has different types, among those we have used the Lacla and Mouffe method. The most important reason for this is that, this method shows differences and contrasts better than other methods such as Foucault and Fairclough. At the same time, Lacla and Mouffe's method of discourse analysis, which is a type of critical discourse analysis, is a new discursive approach that is closely related to social actions, opinions, and human behavior in everyday political life (Tajik, 2004). Another advantage of this method (of discourse analysis) is that it gives fundamental importance to the logic of power because Lacla and Mouffe have given great importance to the concept of politics. At the same time, some elements have been used in (the discourse analysis) method of Lacla and Mouffe that can help us with ontological and identity-giving understanding of *others* in a discourse, including the discourse of anti-Americanism and confrontation with America. Among these, we can mention discourse system¹, signifier and signified², antagonism (hostility)³, minute⁴, articulation, chain of distinctions and chain of equivalence. To collect data, we use the library method and documents, which are the most important data collection methods in discourse analysis.

¹ Discursive system

² Signifier & Signified

³ Antagonism

⁴ moment

Application of Lacla and Mouffe theory and data analysis

The world is a product of discourses. Discourses have power. This power enables them to highlight or marginalize a political or social issue. Also, this power allows them to create a hegemony in socio-political conflict or to be deconstructed and in a word, while creating myths, they also create identities. The formation of the chain of equivalence and difference is also one of the other cases that arises as a result of a discourse. Concerning ontology, one can say that, there are no fixed external facts from the point of view of discourse, and these facts are represented only through discourse. In this representation, language creates and changes the truth. (Moghadami, 2011) Of course, to say that the world is a product of discourses does not mean the reality should be negated, but it means that objects and phenomena become meaningful only through discourse. (Kasraei and Pozesh Shirazi, 2009). On the other hand, since Lacla and Mouffe have used many concepts in explaining their theory that we can use as useful tools for empirical analysis, therefore, to explain and describe the formulations of discourses and concepts used by the presidents of Iran, also to explain and analyze the difference of their discourse in facing America and to picture the atmosphere of the discourses, we use the concepts mentioned by Lacla and Mouffe.

Meanwhile, before we examine how the discourse of these political elites was formed, we discussed how the anti-Americanism discourse of the Islamic Republic of Iran was formed and also examined its background. The requirement of this work is to describe the discourse of the Islamic Revolution and the position of the signifier America/West in it. After that, according to the texts we had, we have gone to the governments' discourses. At this stage, it was investigated to what extent the signifier and minutes of sub-discourses of the two presidents regarding confrontation with America were taken from the discourse of the Islamic Revolution. At the same time, the facts and events that led to the formation of such discourses with such *signifiers* and other elements considered by Lacla and Mouffe in the discussion of discourse analysis are identified and mentioned as indications so that discourse formations can be identified, illustrated and showed. In this way, by identifying the semantic system in the mind of each president that is manifested in his speech, it will show the course of evolution and how his discourse formed in the confrontation with America, and finally, it will compare the differences these discourses have with each other.

The government of Hashemi Rafsanjani and the America object

During the presidency of Hashemi Rafsanjani, which began after the end of the imposed war and the death of the founder of the Islamic Revolution in 1989, the disagreements between Iran and the United States were over the issues that Mousaviyan (2014) divided them into 4 groups, including human rights and peace in the region. For this reason, the text and language of the discourse of enmity with America were reflected in the discourse of Iran's foreign policy. Of course, before the beginning of the imposed war, there was a bipolar atmosphere arising from the two Iranian revolutionary discourses and the American anti-revolutionary discourse, which ended after Saddam's attack on Iran in September 1359/1980, and the sub-discourse of "nation-centered idealist" in interpretation of Azghandi and "Islamic idealist" in interpretation of Dehghani Firouzabadi, in opposition to its semantic-discursive antithesis, i.e. liberal nationalism between 1979 and 1981, surpassed completely and marginalized the recent discourse. (Suleimani, /2010)

we can pull out another division from the heart of the internal division of the idealism discourse, which includes two periods of idealistic antagonism from 1360-1364 (1981-1985) and realistic antagonism from 1364-1368 (1981-1985) (Ibid.) The most prominent discourse's minutes and elements aimed at alterity making, in the period of idealistic hostility were consisted of : Contacting with nations instead of governments; providing transnational goals; ideological unity; The duality of Dar al-Islam with Islamic centrality of Iran and Dar al-Kufr on behalf of America; task orientalism and obligationism without regard to the requirements and necessities of achieving goals and also revolutionary-Islamic ideals. (Enayat, 1983) two important components of this period were radical opposition and antagonism (Suleimani, 2010). But important minutes and elements of the realistic antagonism that Mr. Dehghani Firouzabadi and Mr. Azghandi call it the discourse of "Islamic opportunism" and "center-oriented idealism", include: the obligation of protection from essence; the only Islamic government established

in the international system; defense of territorial integrity; preservation of the Shia Umm al-Qara, which all gathered around a central signifier and indication under the title of "maintaining the regime is from the highest obligations". Including the processes that occurred in this period, it was the decision of Iran and America to reduce the tension between the two parties. From amid these actions, we can mention a plan that was put forward in the summer of 1985, based on which, Iran was supposed to use its influence on Lebanon's Hezbollah in order to free seven American hostages, and in return, Reagan agreed to deliver weapons to Iran. This decision was taken by the United States in a situation where an arms embargo had been imposed on Iran since August 1983 /Mordad 1362 under the pretext of supporting terrorism, but with the delivery of "Toa" and "Hawk" missiles to Iran, which began in August 1983 / Mordad 1362, Tehran and Washington took steps to reduce tension .

McFarlane's visit to Iran was another step, taken in line with the policy of de-escalation between Iran and the United States. Considering these cases, it can be accepted that the efforts to resolve the antagonism between the two countries had started in 1985 (Moussavian, 2014, 169). Also, with the end of the imposed war, Hashemi Rafsanjani started efforts to normalize relations between Iran and the West and its neighbors. But this does not mean that his words in the guise of president did not have any hostility towards America. Hashemi Rafsanjani used the discourse of Islamic realism. In this discourse, which had common signifier with the discourse of "realistic antagonism" took place between 1985-1989, the strategy of competition¹ had replaced radical exclusion in the dialogue of alterity making.

This fact can also be seen in Hashemi's words; he never mentions the destruction of America or the collapse of the Western system, and this was while the Soviet Union had collapsed, and some who continued to benefit from the revolutionary ideal-oriented discourse, predicted the imminent collapse of the West after the collapse of the East, but Hashemi thought of improving and normalizing relations with the West because he considered it to serve national interests; for shortly after becoming president in 1968, he held a press conference and in response to a question about Iran's relations with the West in the future, he clarified: "There has been a lot of noise about changing our policy with the West, which is not true and never we intended to have wrong relations with the Westerners, we are ready to work with countries that want to adjust their relations with us with no blackmail, expansionism, and monopoly."² (Jamshidi, Navabakhsh, 2016). A few years later, he repeated his very approach and in response to the question of the American CBS TV reporter who asked him: "Do you suggest that we should have an Islamic Republic of the US?" He answers: "No; I say you just need to have good manners."³

This Hashemi Rafsanjani's emphasis on the fact that the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not thinking of a change in the US regime; is caused by a discourse that is also called "realistic compromise" (Suleimani, 2010) while it represents a kind of adjustment in the revisionist policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran during this period. After examining numerous texts of Hashemi Rafsanjani's discourse centered on America, and according to the findings of this research it finds that the realized *signifiers and elements* include "distrust", "good will", "antagonism towards Iran", "unreasonable", "intimacy", "breach of promise", "non-compensation", "oppressor", "economic relations" and "equal treatment". Conceptually, these signifiers can be seen in two parts, positive and negative, but the existence of signifiers with a negative meaning does not mean that he wants to deny having an economic relationship of any kind with America, because economic pragmatism is one of the principles of his dialogue.

Khatami's discourse and the America object

Khatami had based his political dialogue on rationality and communication ethics. Therefore, Khatami's priority in his foreign policy was to seek better relations with the West, but based on mutual respect and interests. In our target discussion, Khatami, like Hashemi Rafsanjani, replaces the concept of competition with contradiction towards the *others*, or the same America. The signifiers gathered around the signifier

¹ adversary

² IRNA news agency; 1/8/68 (1989)

³ Islamic Republic newspaper, 1/16/76 (1997)

of America in Khatami's dialogue include "respect", "peace", "nation/people", "humiliation", "domination", "trust building", "identity confrontation", "violence", "malice", "justice", "Equality" and "mutual respect" and "oppression" but due to the frequency and repetition, only some of these signifiers have turned to a moment and therefore can be summarized, the most important of which are mentioned in figure no 1.

Table (2): The signified found for frequent signifiers and elements in Hashemi Rafsanjani's words

The concept of signifier or element	Signifier or element
Releasing Iran's blocked assets	Good will
We cannot treat friendly with those who behave like this [supporting Israel and the South African regime/they cannot impose anything on the Islamic revolution], still, it far from friendliness to violence; Well, a person does not need to fight with his neighbors every morning, Well, they work together if the relations are normal, and they consider their neighborhood for the benefit of both parties. Anyway, if they treat us equally and do not want to impose anything on this revolution, we will treat them equally, to the same extent.	Intimacy
Blocking Iran's assets in America / America's non-compliance with the commitments it had to Shah (Pahlavi) regarding the delivery of military weapons, but after the revolution, US delivers neither the remaining weapons nor the money to Iran.	Antagonism
By not imposing sanction on Iran, they can show that they are not against Iran's construction after the war/not supporting terrorism	Reasonable behavior
US failure to amend its behavior against Iran from the beginning of the victory of the revolution to the end of Hashemi Rafsanjani's presidency period/ America's support for Iraq in the imposed war against Iran/ protecting Israel's interests in the region	Distrust

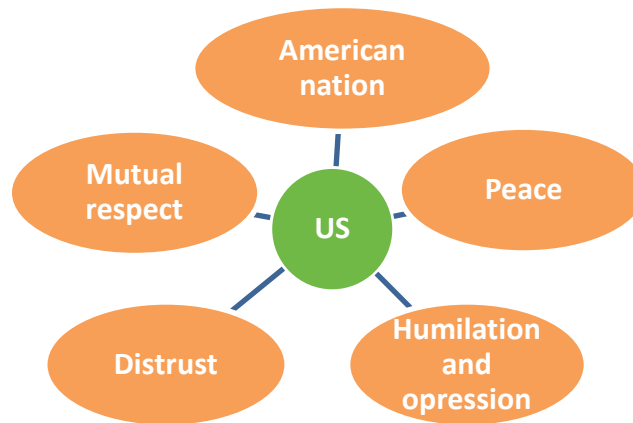


Figure (1): The signifiers gathered around the signifier of America in Khatami's dialogue

Table (3): the signified Found for signifiers and elements in Figure 1

Signifier/elements	Signifier/elements
Peace based on justice/true peace is a kind of peace in which all people are respected and their rights are recognized	Peace
Examples of disrespect: Parading the foreigners' fleet in the Persian Gulf means disrespect to the people of the region / dragging the Iranian nation, which is a tortured people, to the trial table (for some terrorist incidents occurred)	Mutual respect
operating " the 28 Mordad coup d'etat " (19 August 1953 – T PAJAX project) and providing a loan of 45 million dollars to the Shah/putting Iran on the list of terrorist countries and calling Iran: axis of evil/ Damato law	Distrust
Opposition to passing the energy line through Iran to reach Europe/intensification of sanctions due to Iran's non-compliance with the West	Humiliation and bullying
When I am talking about negotiations with America, I address the American nation and not the American government/ the sports and cultural exchanges/ the future happiness of mankind is in the shadow of empathy and cooperation of all nations.	US nation

What is very different from the discourse of his previous counterpart in Khatami's discourse about the confrontation with America, is the presence of the signifier of "the American nation"; the presence of this signifier in Khatami's dialogue when he wants to talk about America is so prominent that it has created a chain of equivalence against the sign of America. The equivalence chain is created when a number of signifiers (and indications) are combined with each other through the creation of a semantic chain and placed in front of other negative identities (here, we mean America) that are considered to threaten them. In this regard, in Khatami's discourse, the American nation is considered separate from the United States government, which represents the American state, because he considers the US nation to be different from the US government. The role of nations is so important for Khatami that he expresses his hope that: "may nations never be trapped by their governments"¹. Since Khatami believes that "communication with nations can solve many existing problems", therefore, in most of his statements, he addresses the American people and thus, in addition to peace, the American nation is considered among the central signifiers of his discourse in confrontation with America, and other signifiers and elements such as identity, religion and civilization are articulated around this signifier. You can see this articulation in Figure no 2.

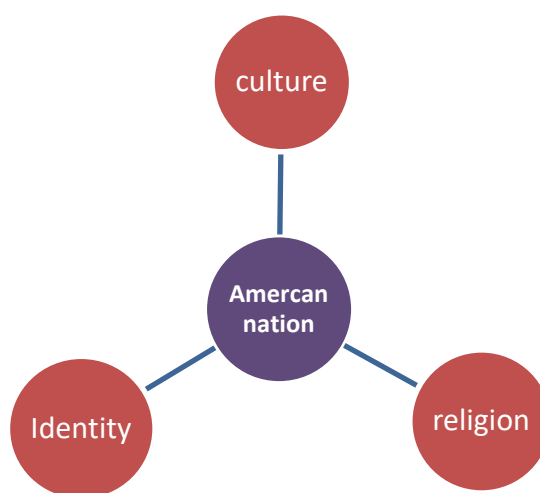


Figure (2): Equivalence chain in Khatami's discourse

It seems that the reason why Khatami focuses on the signifier of "the American nation" when he thinks about improving Tehran's Washington relationship, is because he attaches great importance to nations, so he intends to make the US government responsible and even put pressure on it to change its behavior by means of US people and their demands because he believes in the will of the people and the signified of this claim can be seen in many dialogues of Khatami. Therefore, Khatami, who has seen the experience of Hashemi Rafsanjani, who directly addressed the US governments, but he takes another way to normalize relations during his term of responsibility because the expected result was not achieved; and this way is "influence on American public opinion"², through which he can make the American people participate in improving the relationship between Tehran and Washington.

Khatami's belief in the power of people and nations is so strong that even when he wants to warn the US government about the possibility of its encroachment on Iran's territory due to the proximity of US military forces to Iran's western and eastern borders, He uses words such as people and nation instead of words such as Iran's military forces, and he mentions the word before "Iran" and replies in form of sentences such as: "The nation of Iran will answer you"; "Iranian people answer the aggressor". All these show the importance of the *signifier of the nation* or the *people* in his discourse and this signifier has been established and gained meaning in Khatami's discourse to such an extent that it becomes one of the important signifiers in the sub-discourse of his foreign policy.

¹ Iran newspaper 1377(1998)

² Nowruz newspaper; Interview with Iran's Three National Media Network; TV channel 3, 6/3/80 (2001)

The model used in Khatami's behavior is the nation-state model, and he believes in the success of the "nation-state" and "nation-nation" dualities more than the "state-state" duality. For this reason, when he criticizes America's policies towards Iran, he considers these policies to be against nations and not just governments. In fact, Khatami, by making sense of the *signifier* of nation, produces kind of *the signifier* of identity confrontation; the same identity rising from the American nation and government. Khatami also chooses the signifier of the nation regarding the discourse of confronting America because he considers the government to be the representative of the nation and what is arising from the nation, therefore he defines the power of the government in the will of the nation. In Khatami's mental specifications and, as a result, his discursive patterns, since the governments are elected by the nations in a democratic atmosphere, then they must be accountable to the nation, and no power other than the nation cannot oblige the government to be accountable, and since America is also considered as a symbol of a democratic country in the contemporary world, therefore, it is not possible for it to escape from accountability to its nation. Respectively, he believes that it is possible to confront the American government, through establishing chance of dialogue and talking with American people, intellectuals and cultural groups rationally.

Conclusion

According to the findings of the research, the signifiers of mistrust can be considered the main signifier of Hashemi's discourse, and the rest of the signifiers around it in this discourse turn to a moment. During six years out of the eight years of his presidency, this signifier is fully established in terms of concept and can be seen in Hashemi's discourse until the last day of his presidency, although its signified change, and "not returning Iran's money" is the most important signified of signifiers of mistrust and even the lack of good will of US. Nevertheless, Hashemi Rafsanjani, due to the fact that economic realism was one of the important signifiers of constructive discourse, and in addition, as he advised America to behave rationally, he was also a supporter of rational measures, so during eight years of his presidency, he repeatedly offers his specific proposal of "good faith against good faith" and accordingly, the proposal packages mostly had an economic content. Although, this proposal does not receive a positive response from US, and the convergence Hashemi expected to be conveyed to the West (through his discourse) and especially the US, turned into divergence. This means that the path of economy cannot be separated from the path of politics. Therefore, his discourse failed in this direction because it lacked the signifier of political expansion.

In this way, Hashemi Rafsanjani fails to achieve his goal (i.e. improving relations with the US), in spite of the existence of serious opponents of the agreement with the US and the most important reason for which was the lack of a suitable and reciprocal response to Tehran's good intentions. As a result only, the Iranian opponents of establishing any relationship with US found a sharper language to continue the process of hostility with the West. Also, referring to the signifiers that the head of reform government's discourse leads us to; Khatami has dealt more with the America object than Hashemi Rafsanjani on an epistemological level, and Hashemi has faced the America object entirely according to pragmatic and not conservative theories. As a result, because of his realistic approach, Hashemi Rafsanjani chooses the "good faith" discourse, which has a logical nature. Khatami, in line with his idea of dialogue among civilizations, follows the discourse of "respect" in order to confront America. Another finding of the present research is that although both Hashemi and Khatami consider America an oppressor / autocrat, they never deny the "other" in order to prove themselves and the system they are the head of its government. Also, in the analysis of these two presidents' discourse, we found that, Khatami talks more about the characteristics of the Iranian nation than Hashmi Rafsanjani, in respect of confrontation with America

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