Diffusion and Consumption of Fashion among Iranian youth

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Abstract:

Fashion can be both material and immaterial subject, immaterial part of it can relate fashion goods as a material object to the thoughts of fashion. Immateriality lets the fashion be easily diffused by stream of information. The relation between fashion goods and thoughts about fashion is mutual since they can develop each other. In the case of Iran, struggles exist among individuals and the government about appearance. How fashion as a global phenomenon can influences youth in Iran and spread in such a condition is the case of investigation from theories in “diffusion of Fashion” to consideration of “fashion adoption model” in an empirical work on such a society.

The impact of veil on people and their reaction to change it from covering garment to a trendy fashion is the centre of attention to find out more about personal interactions of young individuals and their impact on the rest of the society. Fashion needs a system of institutions and also individuals to work on that and develop new trends. Then these trends need the system to spread them among different people in different social groups, such a system is different and interesting in the case of Iran.
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1. Introduction

1.1. Background of Iran

Iran is a large country that is situated in south Middle East, with completely four different seasons in a year. In the past the trade crossroad, Silk way (Jadde Abrisham) had joined Far East to Iran and Turkey and then to Europe. Now road transportation has been replaced by shipping method for sending products from Far East (obviously China) to Europe. But still this way has benefits for Iran; goods from different countries are transported to Iran in this way. The population of Iran is estimated to 75,242,000 in April 2011.\(^1\) As the income of the country is high by export of oil and gas and other raw mineral materials and due to the huge amount of import to Iran, the consumption pattern in people’s life has changed them to a consumer society. Although they have abilities to produce different stuffs, the majority of goods in market are imported to the country.

Islamic revolution in 1979 changed the situation of Iran and also the life style of Iranian people very much. As Faegheh Shirazi mentions in her book *The veil unveiled*, there were lots of hopes for improvement in the situation of women’s life after the revolution. But lot of different rules and regulations for their life persuaded them about failure in recognition of difference between reality and imagined hopes. Women often by force were adopted to have veil and minorities of females who disapproved to wear veil were assumed to be in opposition to laws and Islamic Revolution. In eyes of revolutionaries, unveiled women represented Western values and these values were in opposition to Iranian culture and religious belief of being Iranian and also not following other cultures especially western patterns (Shirazi 2001:92). It is very interesting to mention that lots of differences in appearance and especially in different styles of veiling can obviously show distinction in believes and thoughts of women. People, who live in Islamic republic government society in Iran, have to accept and follow some religious laws that limit their choices of appearance and social presence. The government could guide youth in a better way to accept veiling in an easier way and then these creative youth could work on their appearance to have variety of styles and generate a domestic fashion for their selves. Such guidance could prevent direct imitation in a large group of youth from styles of people in other countries. In each period of time by the proof of history, clothing and appearance of people were changed under the authority of governmental needs. It is not a new phenomenon in the history of Iran, from very

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old times in Persia, the time of Maad\textsuperscript{2} civilization to the contemporary society in Islamic Republic system a piece of garment existed on the head of women. But before Safavieh\textsuperscript{3}, these head wearing garments were not a cover to hide their hair and upper parts of their body and women used these garments as a fashionable design. These garments were made from harir (especial type of silk fabrics) or other transparent fabrics such as lace that could not cover body parts. After the entrance of Islam to Iran these type of garment has been changed to darker colors and eventually become a covering garment to veil women. It is very important to mention that some pieces of garment for the face were not used in the past as a part of veiling. Ru bande and Neghaar are some of these type of garment that were used in south of Iran\textsuperscript{4} to cover the face from direct radiations of sun and very hot temperature in this region.\textsuperscript{5}

Diversity in population and different cultures in Iran constitute a very important aspect which is hidden to foreigners; people in Iran represent all the Iranian nations but there are different roots and races inside their past history. It can be seen as a result of numerous people who used Silk way and crossed the country, some of these people settled in different parts of old Iran (Persia). Now there are more than hundred different ethnic and religious groups and subgroups that live in different parts of Iran. For instance, people with Turkish language (Azari), others in north of Iran, Gilaks or Kurd people in the west of the country and many other culturally different people that are named as the same nation of Iranians in studies of contemporary lifestyle in Iran. All of these regions have traditional dresses, these dresses are not their daily garment anymore and in some parts of the country they just wear these traditional garments in especial days. They are adapted to normal dresses that are the same as what people wear in other countries. The main reason for changes in their garment is the need for mobility and comfort ability. From different point of view, there are different social classes which are called different “layers of people” in humanity studies inside Iran and also academic discussions about humanities in Iran. These classes can be investigated in three main groups; minority of individuals in a top upper-class (Super high status people), majority of population consisted of middle-class and another layers in between upper-class and middle-class, and the last group is consisted of low income people who are not very little in numbers to disregard. On the other hand, this lower-class people are not the main group of

\textsuperscript{2} Maad civilization (Medes in English) was very Old Iran.
\textsuperscript{3} Safavieh is the period of governance of Safavieh dynasty in Iran, It was about (1501-1722). They helped Shia Islam to be the official religion in Iran.
\textsuperscript{4} Hot cities such as bandar e abad, bandar e hormozgan, and other cities beside “Persian Gulf” were the dominant cities for having such a covering garments.
\textsuperscript{5} Interview with Mahla Zamani about Fashion in Iran
influential individuals in fashion diffusion and adoption model. Majority of them use garment as a protective layer on their body.

The term *badhijab* (not having veiled properly or at least in the way it is described in law) is a sign of following other cultures such as Western patterns. This style is very important in studies about fashion and the belief of being fashionable in Iran. Using garments such as *rupush, mantuo, rusari* and *shawl* are some of examples of this type of *hijab*. There are some limitations for men’s appearance in regulation such as not wearing short trousers or not making hair styles which are very long or are inspired by subcultures in West. But in comparison to limitations of women it is not very hard to follow and it is not that much bothering.

**1.2. Problem discussion and Purpose**

The problem and question in this thesis is about finding this fashion system and its branches consisted of individuals and institutions. Therefore the main question is: “What is this special system of fashion in Iran?” Then considering different parts of this system will answer the next question “how does it work?”

**1.2.1. Relation between Fashion system and Iranian youth**

As there should be relations between consumers of fashion and the fashion system, fashion as an industry and consumer of fashion as individuals have some thoughts and behaviours in their relations to each other. The relation between the fashion system that is one hand consisted of different members such as individual importers of goods, main marketplace of Iran, Bazaar, brands and their stores in Iran, and on the other hand of different types of consumers such as innovators, early adopter, main groups of buyers and late adopters will be investigated. There could be some interrelations between members of fashion system and of course there must be some interrelations among fashion consumers especially in the case of youth and their interrelations in their different social groups.

**1.2.2. Enlighten process of fashion diffusion and consumption among Iranian youth**

The main and the last purpose of this research is analyzing rules and roles that are played by both consumers and system of fashion in Iran and relate them to scientific theories about fashion diffusion and adoption. The result of research and the practical finding may help consumers and fashion system in Iran to recognize each other and improve their relationship.

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6 In the case of fashion system in Iran, there is no academic study about fashion; therefore the result may help the system to interact with consumers in a better way.
These are hypothesis I am going to follow and answer in this dissertation:

- Diffusion of fashion in Iran follows ‘Trickle down’ theory and there is a model of imitation among different social classes.
- ‘Trickle across’ is the dominant theory to investigate diffusion of fashion among Iranian youth
- ‘Bottom-up’ theory can work in the system of fashion in Iran, although there is not coherent fashion industry there.
- Fashion adoption model of Sproles can be seen among youth in Iran and they are role players in each stage of his theory in Iran.

1.3. Iranian youth

The new generation of Iranians is completely different from previous ones. They are far more educated than previous generation as it can be seen in statistics and they use different sources of information such as Internet, observations in travels to other countries and they are in contact with other youth in different countries. In comparison to other countries and by the reference of statistics one third of population of Iran are youth with the age of 15 to 29. This majority has new opinions and its members follow their ideas with their friend and inside their groups. They know how to find information on the internet and eliminate their distance to other youth in western countries. It is very interesting to mention that the new generation cares about their appearance more than their parents. The parents were the generation of the revolution and now they are a completely different generation with their own thoughts and beliefs. It shows that they have saved ideas of ancient Persians about being well dressed. The combination of having traditional thoughts related to old Persians and modernity of youth can be seen in garments and appearance of this large group of population in Iran. Being conscious about fashion and caring about appearance is related to their age and their need to show their individuality to the society. These factors made me more interested in this group of young individuals between 15 to 30 and their role in the fashion system and its institutions.

1.4. Appearance and special Fashion system in Iran

There are differences between boys and girls in their appearance and also there are governmental regulations that restrict both genders to appear in public in some of possible styles. Men are not allowed to wear short pants and tights and fitted trousers in public places and also they are not allowed to wear short sleeve T-shirt in streets. Special haircuts and tattoos which are similar to Satanists or styles of rap singers or punk subculture is forbidden
by law. There are more restrictions for women and even more emphasis on girls in appearance in comparison to men. The main rule for female’s appearance says that they have to hide all parts of their body other than their hands and feet from their toe to till ankle, and their faces when they are in public and outdoor. As a result there are limitation in film scenes and pictures in newspaper and magazines. Though fashion is related to pictures and photos of garments and models, fashion magazines are not a means of promotion for fashion trends since there are restrictions of publishing pictures of people or showing films of garments on bodies of models. But there should be a system consisted of individuals and institutions other than editorial and also others than institutions in fashion systems for instance in Europe or US.

It could be very strange and interesting to consider such a limitation and imagine if there is any fashion and trend among people in this condition. These rules about hiding body parts are called hijab in Persian language. There are other patterns of lifestyle which attracted Iranian youth such as western lifestyle and inspiration of their clothing that is called western hijab (badhijab). By using this imitation, youth try to go one step beyond the governmental rules to experience the feeling of freedom in their choices of appearance. They will find new trends and fashion in other countries just by using new media such as Internet and satellite channels that are open to audiences and as fashion is an immaterial subject specially when considered as a flow of information to be diffused, it is not difficult to be aware of changes in trends and styles when an individual is inside the flow of information. Then there should be some ways to access to these fashion objects that are fashionable clothes and accessories. In such a condition, there is a need for a system to prepare and disturb fashion goods. This system should be informed and then inform the others about fashion trends and changes in the world and also about needs and desire among different groups of people and distinction between different needs in each group. Another important factor is being on time to prepare and make goods available in market for purchase and send goods to all over the country by considering different stage adoption in different social groups and the best time for them to accept these changes in products. This role is going to be investigated in different places.

2. Method

2.1. Collection of primary data
Initial observation started with finding consumers of fashion and some young Iranian who care about fashion and their appearance. The easiest way to find these groups of individual was surfing the web and especially making connection with youth and searching for some
fashion related pages and fashion blogs both in weblog sites and also in social networks. As individuals in Iran are active users of social networks I started to make connections with them on Facebook and after a while I found different pages about fashion photography and modelling related to Iranian youth. Talking with the page owner on virtual space helped me to categorize my observation and make a list of different influential individuals and institutions in fashion industry and fashion system in Iran.

2.2. Collection of secondary data
Reading number of books about Iran and going through limited number of articles in fashion journals in Iran was the only study part of this research. As there is no public and especially governmental acceptance of fashion, secondary data such as academic papers and research about people and their desire to find and wear what they want and how they can find new trends is not considered as necessary in universities and research institutions. There were only a few number of research by domestic clothing industries and individual who care about design and fashion. These papers had some interesting guides for me but they were not enough to consider as a source of research to be translated to English and be used in my research. Therefore number of interviews and personal observations both were needed to enlighten the process of diffusion of fashion as an immaterial subject with flow of information and then distribution of fashion object in different parts of the country; large cities, middle size cities and at the end to small cities and villages.

2.3. Interviews
As in this research there are two main views of fashion and each view comes from a group of individuals with different roles there should be different types of talks with them. The first group are Consumer and their ways of finding, imitation or creation of new trends and style and the other group is people consisted of importer of goods, garment producers, designer in firms, whole sellers, store owners and shoppers of fashion goods in different cities of Iran.

Iranians are very talkative and kind, they are pleased if they could help you but they have their own ways to help a person. They do not link to answer lots of questions and therefore their answers are not closed to what you may probably ask for. In this way they will let you know things that may contain their personal thoughts both for consumers and the large group of individuals in fashion system. As it was hard to find people in both groups to

7 Some articles in informal monthly magazines on the internet or newspapers in Iran like; ideal, zaneroaz, banoo.
8 “Clothing is accordingly the tangible material product whereas fashion is a symbolic cultural product. (Hauge 2006: 7)”
talk about a hidden topic of fashion, I used “Snowball sampling method”9 as it was suggested to be used in a part of second groups of individuals in the main marketplace of Tehran by Keshavarzian (2007) in his book about Tehran bazaar. The snowball system was very good to use among consumers group, they warmly accepted my questions and helped me to find other individuals who were part of my question or knew some more information about fashion. They also invited me to some personal and private gathering and parties and showed me their ways in which they find new topics about fashion in these events and also they called me after that and informed me about the result of their talks days after these event.

Youth as the main group of fashion buyers and consumer of fashion goods have some ideas about fashion and the ways it has in their country to be diffused and how they can be informed about new trends and new garments. Their special meetings, parties and some private occasions they join; being part of communications with others, talking about their favourite topics that are not allowed to be discussed in public help them to find new information. I heard an interesting quotation from these youth about their solution to come out of limitations and its translation is: “I will try to find a way for a difficulty (problem), if I could not find it I will create a solution for that”.

People in sale system do not like to talk about their work as there are some illegal activities in each market especially in a forbidden market for fashionable clothing. They just let me know some sort of their information which was not critical for their business. Just few store owners in north of Tehran (more wealthy part of this city) mostly younger were more attracted to exchange ideas and information. They even asked me to be in touch with them in the future and were interested to read the final analysis.

2.4. Observation in market and other sources of information

After all interviews, there should be some observation in different parts to evaluate the results of talks with some other realities in the society and taking pictures to show the reader differences in visual perspective and imagined image from market and society. I spent two weeks in different shopping centres, talking with store owners and employees and compare their location, their goods and their thoughts. There were some interesting scenes in these observations that could make very beneficial conversation with shoppers about behaviours of

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9 In snowball sampling method, the researcher starts with finding one or two individuals to ask interview questions and then in the process of asking and answering they are asked to make connections with other interviewees to continue the research process.
buyers and their perception and understanding of these behaviours. By means of these observations some parts of interviews could be confirmed and different angle of some thought could be enlightened.

Some university students suggested me to find private designers who produce and sell their designed clothes in special private events. They inform customers on the internet about their new collections, so I used the Internet (Facebook) to find information about them. I found some films and webpages about their works. As majority of these designers are students of art or garment design, their collection is popular among their friends in university groups and other friendship groups that they are members in them. Interviews and consideration of their virtual activities is another part of my investigation about fashion among youth in Iran.

I used this initial information to divide my work study into four different subjects: 1) Consumers of Fashion and their specific roles and wonderful power, 2) Bazaar as a powerful marketplace in the past and its new role in contemporary society, 3) personal stores of fashion and clothing in different parts of the city (they are other than Bazaar, but majority of them are inspired from bazaar with the same system just by difference of importing some of their goods directly from other countries) and any other private role player in fashion system in Iran (personal designers or private fashion shows), 4) changes in shopping system and shopping centres and its difference to other countries.

3. Theoretical framework

“Large-scale diffusion processes such as those affecting fashionable clothing are difficult to study systematically. The diffusion of fashion is highly complex because of the geographical dispersion of the fashion system, the number of actors involved, and the enormous variety of products (Crane 2000: 14).” It is even harder to study when the fashion system is not visible to researcher. Both trying to find the fashion trends and opinion of individuals about fashion in a society will need lots of studies and interviews with people.

“The fashion process can be approached at both the collective level (fashion diffusion) and the individual level (fashion adoption) (Kaiser, 1990). Fashion diffusion describes the collective movement of styles through a social system. Fashion adoption, on the other hand, is the individual decision-making process used for the adoption of any given style (Forsythe, Butler, Kim 1991: 1).” These two issues are interrelated in a research about fashion without any concerning about differences in geographical and cultural situations.
In theoretical view within fashion theory and fashion relation to individuals, two main concepts should be identified: diffusion and adoption. The concept of “Diffusion” is the spread of fashion within and across social systems. While “Adoption process” focuses on individual decision-making, the diffusion process centres on the decision of many people to adopt an innovation (Kawamura 2005:74). The pace of this spread for fashion and number of people adopt a new fashion trend depends on communications in which diffusion of innovation happens. Influential communications in this case are; between individuals and mass media, interrelations among different types of individuals who have influences on potential adopters and the last one in large scale (macro system) communication between different “social systems” and different groups of people (Kawamura 2005). There are two points of view to diffusion to fashion; one from individuals’ perception of fashion (“small-scale analysis”) and the other, about systematic institutions (“large-scale approach”). “Diffusion theories of fashion seek to explain how fashion is adopted by many people within a social system. A social system might be the residents of a city, the students of a school, a group of friends, or any other group of individuals who regularly interact. Each interaction can be considered an act of communication through which information and influence concerning an innovation, such as new styles of clothing, can be spread. (Kawamura 2005:75).” As Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) mentions, “person-to-person” interactions in everyday life and informal communication among individual inside their groups is the most effective mean for fashion to be disturbed.

3.1. Theories from sociology in Diffusion of fashion

“Trickle down” model, in the theory of Simmel ([1904] 1957), is about adoption of upper-classes to a new trend and the imitation of followers who are situated under these classes to attain social status (Kawamura 2005). “Simmel has been criticized for emphasizing the role of superordinate groups in initiating the contagion process. Instead, McCracken (1985) identifies an upward ‘chase and flight’ pattern created by a subordinate social group that ‘hunts’ upper-class status markers and a superordinate social group that moves on in hasty flight to new ones (Crane 1999:14).” ‘Trickle-Down Theory’ was revised by McCracken in 1985 and 1988; in comparison to Simmel’s model (1904) he found some differences. The first is that the fashion movement is not the same as traditional belief about social status; instead gender, ethnicity and some other parameters are new dimensions to shift this movement. Second, individuals or groups of followers do not necessarily imitate styles of
higher status groups entirely, some elements of those styles can be chosen. In result lower status people would have their basic identity just with borrowing elements of styles from groups in higher social position (DeLong 1998).

“Trickle-across” is right after ‘trickle-down theory’ that can be used to interpret some adoption behaviours from another point of view. It is not an independent theory the same as ‘trickle-down’ or ‘bottom-up’. “Proponents of the trickle-across theory claim that fashion moves horizontally between groups on similar social levels (King; Robinson). In the trickle-across model, there is little lag time between adoptions from one group to another. Evidence for this theory occurs when designers show a look simultaneously at prices ranging from the high end to lower end ready-to-wear. Robinson (1958) supports the trickle-across theory when he states that any social group takes its cue from contiguous groups in the social stratum. King (1963) cited reasons for this pattern of distribution, such as rapid mass communications, promotional efforts of manufacturers and retailers, and exposure of a look to all fashion leaders (Delong 1998: 2).”

When the new trend is overused, the high-status group start their seeking to find another new trend in response to their desire of differentiation form other groups of followers (Crane 1999; Kawamura 2005). The wealth and inheritance of “highest-status groups”, make their eminence secured, therefore they do not need to seek new and latest fashion trends relatively. Members of adolescent subcultures often in lower classes in society have complicated interest to seek for new trends even in luxury fashion goods. The fact is that these groups adopt soon after appearance of these trends and are more likely to discard these luxury items even before an end in life time of these goods and put them be out of fashion (de La Haye and Dingwall 1996; Crane 1999). “Blumer (1969a) suggests that fashion must be seen as a process of ‘collective selection’ in which the trickle-down theory plays no significant part. Clothing does not take its prestige from the elite. Instead, ‘potential fashionableness’ (Blumer 1969a: 281) is determined by factors independent of the elite’s control. Blumer argues that Simmel’s theory, while suitable for European fashions in the past, cannot account for the fashion of modern society (1969a: 278). (Kawamura 2005:98)"

The second theory is more acceptable in today’s societies and is focused after creation of industrial fashion and especially its relation to street fashion. “Bottom-up model” is about generation of a new style by individuals not in upper-class groups of the society and then adoption of higher-status groups to that style. In this model, social status is replaced by age
differentiation, therefore youth and adolescents are innovators of new trends and imitation goes to other age groups commonly older groups (Polhemus 1994; Crane 1999). Lower status groups (commonly individuals belonging to middle classes) innovate a new trend as their new style and then higher status people are faced to those styles in the market. As Sproles (1985) argues “The process of social saturation” makes that styles to be adopted widely and then the same as any fashion trend over used (Kawamura 2005).

As Crane (1999) compares diffusion models, 1960s was a peak in the increase of demographic and economic factors and their influence on the power of youth at all social class levels to take part in fashion innovation and consumption of clothing. Thereafter 1960s, the role of bottom-up model has been increased, firstly in the segment of fashion related to younger people (street fashion) and then in the whole fashion phenomena. Changes in taste and needs of consumers in this time explicitly mentioned in this statement; “Clothes were selected on the basis of personal tastes rather than conformity to rules set by fashion authorities (Crane 1999:18).” Clothes in today’s life carry complicated codes and meanings. These codes can be interpreted differently in each group in society and these meanings are different from each other in different groups. As a result, there is not wide acceptance for all of new styles the same as what it was in the past anymore (Crane 1999).

3.2. Adoption theories (or model)
“Blumer (1969a) argued that fashion comes out of collective selection and that it is the consumers’ taste that dictates fashion (Kawamura 2005:92).” As Kawamura (2005) mentions “increasing social visibility” is an important factor to make changes in collective behaviour towards new styles that become fashion. “There is a tremendous amount of social visibility and a constant urge to be different from others, but not too different, only slightly different (Kawamura 2005:103).” As DeLong (1998) argues, in all theories of fashion distribution there are common groups of leaders and followers; “fashion leader” adopt new trends before follower and by their social visibility transmits a “particular look” to followers. By this communication, majority of individuals in the society who constitute “Fashion followers’ group” and from another point of view majority of consumers accept new trends and start their purchases.

3.2.1. Different individuals in adoption process
Rogers (1983) classifies consumers into five different groups, this categorization is based on the time they need to adopt the new fashionable items: innovators, early adopters, early
majority, late majority and laggards (Kawamura 2005). First group of individuals who adopt new style or make it by their out taste are named “innovators”. As Innovators do not have the ability to persuade people to follow them, another group is shaped, "early adopters". This group is larger in number of its members that innovators. They can evaluate the new style for groups of follower, two major groups of adaptors “early majority” and “late majority”. “Laggards” are the last group of adopters with traditional thoughts that make them very hard to penetrate (Hauge 2006). Rogers (1983) in his adoption theory divided consumers into five categories and proposed the proportion of the population in each category. These were innovators (2.5 per cent), early adopters (13.5 per cent), early majority (34 per cent), late majority (34 per cent) and laggards (16 per cent). In ‘top-down model’ (Trickle-down), innovators are designers. Fashion magazines and its editors, “highly visible fashion consumers” consisted of “society women, movie stars, and popular music stars” are examples of opinion leaders. Group of people who follow fashion actively and accept it easily are early adopters, other people will be categorized as late adopters. It is noticeable that in this model, there is group of people who never adopt a new style. On the other hand, in ‘bottom-up model’, the innovators are individuals in urban areas such as members of music and art groups. These initial innovators are followed by “secondary innovators”, small firms close to these innovators. Media stars in popular music, television, or film have the role of opinion leaders and then adolescents and young adults from different status levels evaluate fashion trends as early adopters. In this model new fashion style goes to other age levels who are late adopters (Crane 1999). As Rogers (1983) explains “different types of roles are important at each stage in the diffusion of an innovation: innovators originate a fashion or a fad, opinion leaders perform important roles in initiating the process of dissemination, early adopters are attracted by its exclusiveness and uniqueness, and late adopters unintentionally contribute to its demise by making it too popular to be distinctive (Crane 1999:15).”

3.2.2. Adoption Models
Rogers (1983), Robertson (1971), and Sproles (1979) presented models for adoption of innovation. Models of Rogers and Robertson are related to “generic adoption”, therefore they are limited in the field of fashion adoption. The Sproles (1979) model is similar to the Rogers and Robertson, but it is prepared specifically for fashion adoption, therefore it is more appropriate in examining fashion adoption. According to Sproles, the individual first should become aware of a new style, then development in level of interest persuade the individual to evaluate that new style and other alternatives related to that. After evaluation individual
makes a decision if adopt or reject the new style. Purchase and usage of fashion goods is a response to accepting and adopting the new style. Fashion loses its identity as a new style by the pass of time or an over use of that style in society. Identity and motivations of adopters and influences from environment are some of key factors in process of adoption (Forsythe; Butler; Kim 1991). Eight stages that Sproles argues in his adoption model are: awareness, interest, evaluation, identification of alternatives, decision, inventory of clothing, use and at last Obsolescence.

“Individuals differ in cognitive orientations and those differences influence which products are adopted at a particular time (Sproles and Burns 1994). Other studies have revealed that individuals with different self-perceptions have different attitudes towards fashion (Gutman and Mills 1982; Shim et al.1989). Cognitive motivations such as self-confidence and self-consciousness have frequently been studied to determine their influence on purchase intention and brand choices (Solomon and Schopler 1982; Wells and Tigert 1971) (Belleau; Nowlin; A. Summers; Jiao Xu 2001: 135).” “Research has also shown that social influences are important in the consumption process (Forsythe et al. 1991; Goldsmith et al. 1991)”. Attitude as a basic value and a social influence is an important key factor in appearance and adoption to fashion since it has influences on “the individual's preferences” for clothes, and then individuals’ purchases (Belleau; Nowlin; A. Summers; Jiao Xu 2001).

4. Previous Research and Backgrounds
Doing research in humanities and especially in the field of lifestyle and fashion is not qualified enough to be used in Iranian academic context and I found some essays and papers related to appearance and the use of garment among people in some virtual magazine that would help me to find some sources to start my empirical study. Other than these essays, there are two articles in by Balasescu in Fashion Theory Journal about Iran and Fashionable dresses of Iranian women. Both are useful and related to contemporary fashion in Iran. As they are related to my research, I am going to start with parts of his findings.

4.1. Veil, Veiling; Fashion context or anti-fashion
As Balasescu (2003) argues, there is a tension between being modern and not being modern or being out of this modernity. This tension is obvious in daily life of different individuals in different locations and the most important issue about this tension is the fact that no one can separate these two completely from each other and consider their different characteristics. Then about fashion he writes: “fashion design is the core of the creation of the image of the
modern individuals and that there are zones of fashion in which the tension between the modern and the non-modern individuals resurges, pointing to a stereotypical, aesthetic, and racialized image of the modern individuals; it also designates the (always) exotic non-modern (Balasescu 2003:40).” In other part of his article he mentions a phenomenon among middle- and upper- class women in Tehran who wore headscarves especially what is called rusari in Persian words as a part of their hijab. These groups use scarves with signatures of designers such as Paloma Picasso, Dolce & Gabanna and Yves Saint Laurent and it was popular among them at that period of time. It was very interesting that he mentions the ways in which these fashion accessories are imported to Iran by Iranian travellers to foreign countries and also some of them are gifts to relatives in Iran from people who live outside the country. At that time these two options were the only ways to have these branded goods inside Iran and then there are individuals who are users of counterfeits as he considered (Balasescu 2003). In Balasescu’s research in Iran, the point of view of a foreigner (not an Iranian researcher) towards scarves and their social meanings is shown. Always there are some hidden cultural meanings and dress codes behind the scene that are not visible to individuals who have not lived in a culturally different society like Iran (a Middle Eastern country). Although his findings was true at that period, after about eight years there are other changes in process of using scarves and some changes in their meaning as a dress code specifically among youth. From the point of view of an Iranian writer, scarves interpret more meaning and codes when she wrote: “A specific style of hijab that a woman may adopt can be interpreted in numerous ways. It might serve as an indication of her degree of religiosity or affiliation with or protest against a political party; a cue of her progressiveness; a silent communicator of her strong belief in the feminist movement; a symbol of her struggle against colonial regime; or it might indicate nothing more than her adherence to traditional cultural values (Shirazi 2000:115).” There can be other interpretation of hijab that would be mentioned in empirical findings of my investigations about contemporary situation of society. In other part of the same chapter, as Shirazi (2000) argues, intensive hijab in Iran was imported by maghnae, piece of garment to cover hair and the whole head in a way that just the face of women could be seen in public.¹⁰ This garment was imported from neighbouring Arabic countries in initial years of Islamic revolution and was adopted in combination with chador. As she mentions about the shape and use of this garment; “Maghnae is also a semi-circular sewn garment covering the head, the entire chest and the shoulder areas at the back. This head veil is fitted tightly around

¹⁰ Pictures of different styles of individuals indoor and outdoor are all available in picture appendix.
the head and loosely around the chest. It resembles the habit of Catholic nuns (Shirazi 2000:120).” In opposition to this severe style of hijab, less religious people, in other words as Balasescu mentions modern individuals in comparison to non-moderns choose to have rusari, that is in the same shape to scarves and combined it with rupush, “an outer gown rupush (in Persian “worn outside, or worn over garments”) (Shirazi 2000:120).” The combination of these two pieces of garment can have different patterns and colours that can bring it to a fashion garment as Shirazi describes here: “Color and pattern of the fabric used, the length, as well as variations in cut, and other embellishments such as buttons, pockets, lapel width, gathers and slits are indications of fashionable trends or keeping up with “European styles,” which the Islamic regime tried to eradicate from the Iranian society (Shirazi 2000:120).” According to another Iranian writer, Nesta Ramazani, wearing brighter colors, patterned stocking and even lipsticks in 1992 was an initial start to change dress code and replacing some sort of intensive hijab with more preferred ones. But these changes were interpreted as improper hijab from governmental view (Eastwood 2010). When this style become familiar to society and majority of women are adapted to it, the dress code behind this style and its social meaning would be presented to government and also to different groups of people in society; “A woman who adopts the more fashionable form of rupush and rusari may be publicly projecting her disapproval of the political power in Iran. She understands that she will risk her life and the lives of her loved ones if she protests by not wearing a veil in public. Yet she also understands the power invested in clothing, a silent and “visual” medium of communication, a tool that she uses to demonstrate her ideologies in a small but effective way. In this regard she may try to get by with the minimum possible coverage, still staying within the dress code and silently and effectively showing her disapproval (Shirazi 2000:121).” The term badhijab (improper hijab) comes from religious thoughts about changes in hijab so there are other names such as westernized hijab or imported hijab (new type of hijab that came from others countries). The purpose of using the word badhijab or others synonyms, is the new style of hijab that is inspired by European styles such as rusari with rupush (shirazi 2000). They are not approved by the government so they call them with such words to show their opposition with these appearances. Here should be a reason to follow western styles and maybe some backgrounds information to find some roots for these behaviours of people especially contemporary youth. In history of Iran before revolution, as shirazi (2001) mentions here; “Modern Iranian history may best exemplify the many possible

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11 These styles and its combination will be shown in pictures appendix.
alterations in the meaning of the veil: in 1936, Reza Shah abolished the veil because he saw it as a sign of backwardness; in 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran forced women to adopt the veil because the Iranian clergy regards it as a sign of progress along the ideological path of Islam. In a period of less than fifty years, the rulers of Iran have allotted the veil diametrically opposed meanings (Shirazi 2001:7).” The reason to do so, was thoughts of Shah about being secular and the first step to do so was changing appearance of people both male and females; changes in men’s tradition form wearing hat to chapeaus and for women trying to unveil them (Shirazi 2000). In late 1970s Clothing again became a major political issue as Eastwood (2010) mentions, dissatisfaction increased with shah’s successor, Mohamad Reza Shah (the son of Reza shah) and his policy oriented towards Westernised lifestyle that made people’s interpret it as a corruption in Iran (Eastwood 2010). In history the movement towards unveiling women was called kashfe hijab and as shirazi mentions it was to facilitate the process of being modern; “Reza Shah’s intentions on “modernization” and “emancipation” of women came under attack decades later by the clerics who saw Reza Shah’s “improvements” as nothing more than “westernizing” and secularizing Iran - contrary to the orthodox view of the country (Shirazi 2000:121).” From 1960s to early 1970s differentiation between garments worn in urban parts of the country and regional dresses just started to be visible. “The urban elite wore Western haute couture garments bought in all the major European and North American cities. Woman’s magazines carried regular articles in fashion. Following the arrival of British fashion designer Mary Quant’s miniskirt in 1965, women’s clothing, especially in Tehran, become equally short (Eastwood 2010:9).” As Iranian writer Sattareh (Setareh is its true spelling) Farman Farmaian observed in summer of 1977, students in Tehran started to wear facial stubble or beards to and used special type of shirt without ties and in some regions these shirts did not have collars. The goal of these changes in their appearance was emphasizing their differentiation from Westernization of two Shahs and also promoting their interest to Islamic Marxism. More men adopted not to wear ties and also, lots of women used different types of head scarves as a political dress code to show their opposition to shah and his governmental killing of people in anti-shah demonstration in Black Friday (8 September 1978). Wearing veil, reasonably wearing chador by women was symbol of their support of revolutionaries and their opposition to Shah. “For many women, the wearing of the chador represented a mixture of political and religious reasons and beliefs, but mostly it stood as a protest against the shah himself (Eastwood 2010:9).” After these incidents that happened in near years before revolution, a person with ties (Kravati man in Persian) was seen as an individual in opposition to Islamic thoughts and people who were killed in demonstrations.
supporters of these dead people and Islamic thoughts were a very huge majority in Iranian society at that period. The last sign of being outside the circle of Muslim men (outside circle was called estekbar; “ostentation” in English) before revolution, was wearing any type of smart and even clean clothes. The following years after Islamic Revolution wearing shorts, T-shirts and even tight pants and Jean trouser as an obvious sign of western garment was unusual for people and after a while it remained improper for political elites, mainly revolutionaries (Eastwood 2010). In 1987, 8 years after the revolution, one of Iranian-Muslim Theologian, Ayatollah Taleghani announced that people, who wore hijab in demonstration, do that as a responsibility to their Islamic thoughts and this kind of wearing hijab can show the genuine feeling of them to the world, for some others, who did not agreed with Taleghani wearing chador was a turn back to traditional moral and social values of past such as purity and dignity instead of showing religious thoughts. It shows that there were different interpretations of the meaning of hijab and exactly fully covered with chador among religious parties, leaders and people in society (Eastwood 2010). There were some movement against improper hijab and some “enforcement of hijab” for instance some violent personal attacks to women who wore some sort of veiling that were considered as badhijab or more closer to the term bihijabi (not having veil). On the other hand, there were more conservative thoughts about people such as speech of Ayatollah Khamenei (president of Iran from 1981 to 1989 and Supreme Leader of Iran since 1989), that called for using words and talk to badhijab people instead of violence to persuade women to follow correct and proper hijab (Eastwood 2010).

As Balasescu (2003) conclude that veil can be in both sides a means to protest against fashion in other words, an anti-fashion and from different point of view or maybe in other styles in other regions such as Iran (societies with different culture with unique condition for lifestyle), a fashionable item for itself and in combination with other garments. In this fashionable view juxtaposition of veil with non-Islamic clothing and other accessories without any dress code or meaning from Islamic backgrounds such as jeans, non-traditional shoes, makeup and cosmetics not originated in Islamic or Iranian culture, obviously show and prove the possibility of relation between veil and fashion. Balasescu (2003) answers the misunderstood of the idea that puts veil out of fashion as it does not belong to “Western space” -fashion itself belongs historically to the West- in three steps; first at the level of practice “headscarves are worn, and have been fashionable on and off, with a peak period in the 1950s.” although there is not an off in having headscarves in Iran, but there are lots of changes that can be interpreted as on and off in this way. Second reason is that in fashion theories no one can refer to specific ways of dressing and “how the cloth should actually
look.” And as the result of his observations in Iranian society he says: “In social spaces that emphasize in one way or another particular dress code, there is a very large possibility that people would “play” with that code, testing its limits and beautifying if possible.” The third reason is the continuous movement among western cities and other cities of the world, about shape, colour and others specialities of dress. Globalization of trends can connect trends and styles of dressing in Iran to West and especially to European styles (Balasescu 2003). He brings a quotation from Eicher about ethnic dress and its relation to fashion as below: “ethnic dress in the late twentieth century cannot be analysed without acknowledging the phenomenon of world fashion, for ethnic dress and world fashion are interrelated” (Eichr 1995: 296).” This suggestion about considering cloth of an ethnic in relation to global fashion is very useful in investigating clothes of people in Iran and especially youth who are caring about their distance with other youth in Western countries.

In January 2001 there was an Iranian fashion show\textsuperscript{12}, of course with permission of the government in Tehran and it was the start of a new movement which is now more generalized in public. But as he describes it had some sort of limitations; “Only women were allowed to the show, and the attendance was somewhere around sixteen thousands! The dresses on display, while in line with Islamic Republic regulations concerning the covering of hair and body, were tailored with “smart” cuts, and accompanied by chic accessories and shoes, building on an urban fashionable style already present in Tehran. The maybe timid emergence of a fashion show in Tehran is indicative of the existence of fashion practices in this city. The re-work of Islamic dress codes through cuts, style, and accessories in order to be presented on a catwalk points to a local system of legitimation of clothing as fashion (Balasescu 2003:49).”

Then he mentions a short talk with participant in show about and proves his result of observation: “Care for clothing and individual image, and for being in fashion, is wide-spread among Tehrani women. As one of my conversation partners underlined: “we do not like to wear the veils. We have to do it, but I try to make it beautiful. But this (the collection of veils with designer signatures) is only for women in North Tehran. Not all people can afford to buy them, and some women want and like to wear chador. If you go in South (Tehran), we cannot dress like this.” This affirmation makes clear the class distinction among urban women from Tehran. This distinction is marked upon clothes, by their style, and often with the help of the signatures on the veil. Nevertheless, equally important is the make-up and hairstyle, and the

\textsuperscript{12} As I found out it was the only fashion show that were allowed by government which was not related to styles of dress that were promoted by government itself.
way in which the hair is exposed from beneath the veil, that is, how much of the hair one shows.\textsuperscript{13}

The urban middle- and upper class as Balasescu (2003) found have chosen their way of wearing veil in order to show their level of modernity and that is a truth about distinction in class and as a result in appearance of people in each class, these distinction make him say; “In Tehran, wanting to wear a veil puts one automatically in an inferior class position. The fashionable dresses are not appropriate for more religious, and poor, neighbourhoods of South Tehran (Balasescu 2003:50).” I have to mention here that women are forced to cover their hair and parts of their body, but the level of this coverage can be easily interpreted to categorize them in distinct social class. Balasescu also mentions obligation of veiling, transmit fashion to a political statement. Restriction of fashion cannot restrain zealous individuals out of global scene for fashion. “fashion and its use in Tehran constitutes a particular mode of relating to a social context, directly emerged from it, though a modern form of expression that use elements or material objects produced in Western locations in a particular configuration adapted to that particular context (Blasescu 2003:50).” It is very clear to mention limitations even in advertising policies; “Thought there are billboards all over Tehran advertising various products, clothing is very seldom their focus. Only men’s clothing is advertised, while billboards about women’s clothing appear only when Mahla has her public fashion shows (Balasescu 2007:307).”

These configurations which are needed to persuade some sort of obligations in Iran is not against modernity. In contrast, it offers “multiple possibilities of modernity’s expression” and shows creativity of individuals to choose and combine trends and style in Western world with their limitation and domestic social contexts.

In his final conclusion, he mentions that putting veil and veiling out of fashion or perceive it as an anti-fashion movement in a country with specific limitations of appearance is poor understanding of the concept of fashion, veil in other geographies. Traditional clothing of that time\textsuperscript{14} and fashionable context of that can be related to Western fashion accessories and other fashion trends for clothing successfully in appearance of Iranian people. “Human rights are equated with the right of being a consumer (Balasescu 2003:52).” In the case of Muslim women, specifically Iranian people in Balasescu’s research consumption was

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\textsuperscript{13} I mentioned the whole dialogue with participant of fashion show and perception of Balasescu (2003) to show the view of a foreign researcher about appearance of women in 2003 in Tehran the capital of the country. It was true for that specific time but there are lots of changes in distinction and appearance of different social classes in this few years after this observation.

\textsuperscript{14} Year 2003 is far different from now 2011
absent or hidden as people cannot wear or in good condition show it and as he points out “the
darkness of lack of right.” But new generation of Iranian youth has its own ways to show
consumption and even change consumption pattern in a way that traditional structure or
market could feel the need for change in its hierarchy. Eastwood mentions changes in the
beginning of twenty-first century in wearing chador to some other outwear garment outside
(on streets and public places). Part of these changes in the content of outwears was in relation
to increase of communication with other countries mostly Western countries. These
communications and access to information has different sources such as; Satellite channels,
expansion in using Internet and also other ways of information more related to garment and
fashion such as traveling abroad by upper classes and mostly wealthier families in Iran and
also travels and gift giving of Iranian who have lived outside the country for years and in this
period are coming back for their nostalgia feelings. Then he mentions major cities of Iran
such as Tehran, Isfahan and Shiraz and movements of women in these large cities to change
their appearance in public and their resistance to change social meanings of their new
appearance and lifestyles to gain the acceptance of public about wearing colourful scarves
and tightfitting coats (manteau or rupush), leaving some parts of their hair visible or maybe
heavy facial makeup and nail vanishes in1980s (Eastwood 2010). These movements have
continued in the 1990s and with some changes in the shape of movement are going on in the
twenty-first century.

4.2. New Media and changes in Iran
The Internet became available in Iran a few years later than its introduction in other Western
countries. It was introduced in Iran in 1993 and has expanded in last ten years. Recent
statistics show more than 33 million Internet users in Iran. This percentage of population was
about 43.2 percent\(^\text{15}\) of the population of Iran in 2010 and about one third of population\(^\text{16}\) in
domestic statistics. Increased number of university students and amount of annual graduated
students in universities in Iran (it is about 3 million annually)\(^\text{17}\) makes the pace of Internet
penetration in everyday life fast enough to be measured as a new media for this new educated
generation in Iran (Sohrabi-Haghighat 2011). The use of internet as a social means like social
networks and blogging is widely disturbed among youth. It can be seen in reports about
number of Iranian bloggers about 700,000 and 60,000 blogs that are updated routinely in

\(^{15}\) By reference of data collected in Internet world stats 2010.

\(^{16}\) By reference of domestic statistics in Iran, CINA 2009.

\(^{17}\) There are two main types of universities in Iran. This number is sum of their graduation per year by reference
of centre of statistic in Iran. (2008)
Iran. These numbers of participation in network activities is proving to show high rate of blogging among Iranians. The other choice of receiving information among Iranian youth is Satellite channels. Number of people watching these channels, is not exactly known, but some sources\textsuperscript{18} estimated it around 40 percent (Sohrabi-Haghighat 2011). It is not the majority of people but as it would contain majority of people live in cities, Satellite can be considered as another type of new media in Iran. Besides channels like \textit{BBC}\textit{Perisan} and \textit{VOA}, that broadcast news about Iran and other Persian language (\textit{Farsi}) countries around Iran, there are some popular entertainment channels. \textit{MBC} \textit{Farsi}, \textit{Farsi}1 are two of such channels that show movies and serials for Iranians. Attracting millions of viewers to serials in \textit{Farsi}1 channel just in one year, is a proof to find Satellite as wide distributor of different sorts of information and attention to it among people. As Sohrabi-Haghighat (2011) mentions about comparison of satellite and internet: more than half of the population do not have access to the internet and it has different reasons such as financial affordability, moral panic of using these means of information in more traditional families and lack of knowledge or skill to use it.

\textbf{4.3. Cultural consumption among Iranian youth}

The contemporary situation of Iran and the socio-cultural changes in the country and its influences on life of Iranian were well described by; “The pre-revolutionary (1925–79) economic development of the country, in the form of capitalism, industrialization, and modernization, was rapid. The country was also experiencing a Western model of lifestyle and consumerism. All of this changed with the 1979 Revolution. Increased government involvement in the economy stunted the economic growth, which was also hindered by the imposed eight-year war with Iraq (1980–88). The Revolution heralded significant sociocultural, economic, and political changes that reversed the country’s orientation toward the West (Jafari 2007:367).” In 1997, the government made some changes such as giving path to youth and more freedom for their social activities. These changes influenced the country and peoples behaviours a lot, “relaxation of strict Islamic codes brought exceptional livelihood to the young population of the country (Jafari 2007:367).” The impact of these changes in situation and this relaxation on youth, a highly educated and ready for any good changes segment of society drive them to follow others nations and try to mix international cultures with their culture be become more globalized and being in the same way as the other youth in the world are and enjoy with them globally. These changes in lifestyle and cultural

\textsuperscript{18} Iran Focus 2010
thoughts of youth as Jafari (2007) argues bring consumerism as tangible and vital part of daily lives of this new generation of youth. On the other hand, existence of foreign goods in the market, made another pole in the way of youth to consume goods that are imported by different means and therefore are related to global culture (derived from international cultures). Some of behaviours of youth such as what Moaveni (2005) mentions as a Westernized image of the Iranian youth are called “Westernization” both among youth and also in governmental investigations about changes in youth culture. Hidden lives of the underground youth culture in northern Tehran or jihad, a Persian word that she uses to show struggle of women for having and also showing their makeup in public are some examples of Westernization. But now it is a bit different from the time Jafari wrote about it in his dissertation; as just upper class in north Tehran are following Westernization as a part of their new gained culture. In another narrative, Zeidabadi (2006) uses women’s attention to improper hijab (badhijab) as a sign of their silent demonstration against state politics (Jafari 2007). Consumption practices of youth, a new social phenomenon, have its roots in a cultural practice toward modernity which was started in 1960s, but it was interrupted by the revolution. This phenomenon is now continuing its way by new youth generation in an unbelievable pace (Jafari 2007). “The recent acceleration of consumerism in Iran is rooted in some factors such as the post-war economic development of the country, privatization, importation of foreign goods, promotion of commercial advertising, and a shift in the social value system (from immaterialism to materialism) (Jafari 2007:371).”

The different of youth with their parents is the influence of “cultural globalization” in their interpretation of their selves and perception of identity (Jafari 2007). For Amir, one of individuals has been interviewed in case study of Jafari, movies let him start thinking in a different way not just about others’ lives but also thinking to change himself as he said: “the more you see, the more you learn.” Amir’s interest as Jafari mentions; is not only towards the culture of ‘the others’, but also movies in his case is a means to gaining knowledge about his own culture in comparison to other cultures. An initial result of interviews is about identities of youth that are found here; “Departing from the grand narratives of the state, the youth make their own personal choices of their identities. These perceptions of collective identities in the form of nationalism or religiosity indicate the state’s failure to tailor a uniform collective identity for its citizens (Jafari 2007:378).” The result of comparing themselves with others is finding a new individual personality that helps the person to critique traditional culture and as a result

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19 Main source was Faramarz Rafipoor, Modernization and Iran. (Tehran 1998)
20 Interview with youth during Jafari’s case study in Iran (2007)
of that a collective identity from that culture. Gidden (1991) calls this individuality “high or late modernity” and for him it refers to globalization. The modernity that is in relation to this globalization by the use of new communications, without the previous limitations of time and space, helps the individuals to find the self in their relations to globalized cultures. Modernity and availability of modern goods in market helps the individuals, benefit from consumption to practice individual freedom and “fulfilment their desire”. In the case of Iran modern shopping centres\(^21\) such as Mahestan in Karaj or Golesttan in Tehran prepare a ground for youth to have the freedom of choice to select from globalized goods (Jafari 2007). “The youth are aware of the presence of globalization and the diversity of choices that it offers them. The self-actualization projects of individualism have also given them the privilege of making deliberate choices of their own favourite lifestyles, identities, and meanings (Jafari 2007:379).” “Most of these youth do not regard consumption of Western culture (which brings novelty to them) as Westernization. They believe that using such terms is either because of a lack of knowledge about the conditions of today’s world (presumably globalization) or the result of a conspicuous conspiracy to place more limitations on them (Jafari 2007:379).”

The other outcome of his interviews is about “intricate codes of political dynamics” that have influence on youth appearance and their behaviours. For instance, group of youth who do not believe in necessity of hijab in the modern era, have to follow at least some of limitation lines which are forced to the society; “go with the tide” not to be “out of place” in traditional society. In an interview, Sara says: “I believe that whichever society you enter, you should adapt yourself with that society.” On the other hand, there are other limitations coming from family values. These “unwritten laws” mostly comes from tradition (non-modern) thoughts of parents and old members of family, these groups of people cannot accept modernity and similarities of Iranian youth with global youth. The case of Morteza in his interview is a good example of these believes inside families; He usually wears T-shirt and shorts in hot weather in travels to ‘north part of Iran’\(^22\), but in one of these journeys, he has problem with his uncle who said he shouldn’t wear these type of clothes in front of other members of family specially girl. It is very important to mention that such conflicts do not exist inside young people’s gatherings and young girls and boys do not think of these issues (Jafari 2007).

\(^{21}\) Modern shopping centres in Iran, they cannot be considered as modern in comparison to modern shopping centres in contemporary and westernized cities; hyper markets and Galleries with large sized stores.

\(^{22}\) Iranians usually go to north in hot seasons to swim in sea and be relaxed in damp and good condition of there; it is a habit for majority of people to spend part of their summer there.
“In the conditions of globalization, where individuals are exposed to a wide range of lifestyles, ideologies, identities, and modes of being, the idea of restricting people within the boundaries of a single ideology sounds more like an illusion. That is why, in the above example, Maryam feels overburdened by the forces that drive her restless. As a result, she uses her clothing style to express her anxiety toward this system. Besides, in its transitional phase—like many other developing counties—the Iranian society is experiencing a change in sociocultural value systems. The clash between Morteza and his uncle is not related to the meta-narratives of the state policies, but to the specific value system of his family. These value systems—which depend on many demographic and psychographic variables (e.g., class culture, geographical location, traditionalism, religious orientation, etc.)—vary from one context to another (Jafari 2007:381).”

Lack of entertainment in Iran that Iranian authority’s state; pace of growing in population of the youth made them unable to prepare enough entertainment for an over-growing number of youth. It results in poor condition of entertainment and limited number of activities for them. “Some other economic variables such as uneven distribution of wealth, unemployment, and poverty have also led to a situation in which only those from relatively affluent backgrounds can afford (both to spend money and time) particular recreational activities such as skiing, horse-riding or overseas holiday trips (Jafari 2007: 381).” Another example of consumption which is related to lack of entertainment is in Fariba’s words: “I wear makeup because I want to entertain myself. If I don’t do even this small thing in my life, I will die. Like other people, I cannot afford to go for things that cost a lot. Women don’t have enough facilities here and wearing makeup is the only thing that keeps them away from monotony.” The view of Fariba toward makeup is far different from Moaveni’s argument, Lipstick Jihad, as mentioned before and it can be interpreted that Iranian youth are in lots of different groups in thinking and also their behaviours and no one can put them under one generalized and specific category.

“A historical review of the Iranians’ lifestyles shows that makeup has always been an inseparable part of women’s practices. What makes this special case of wearing makeup probably more tangible is that in the past, women used to wear makeup only at home; but nowadays, they do it outside home as well. In other words, once-privately consumed things are now being used publicly, and this is not exclusively a characteristic of the Iranian society (Jafari 2007:382).” This change in showing makeup outside homes (outdoors), can be interpreted in different ways but one of them can be a change in thoughts of this new generation in comparison the past, the time of their parents’ youthfulness.
In conclusion consumerism of youth in relation to globalization can be argued like this: “In the conditions of cultural globalization, youth decode the symbols and meanings carried by cultural goods and translate/interpret them in their own discourse; they deconstruct their inherited identities and reconstruct new identities; then, they communicate these identities and meanings with others (Jafari 2007:383).”

4.4. Haute Couture in Tehran (about private designers in Iran)
There are “private designers” in Tehran that try to use “modernity” in their works on traditional Iranian dresses. Their products are not “so modern” in comparison to Western clothes but they are changing traditional dresses to make modern usages for them (Balasescu 2007). In a short description Balasescu shows interactions of market, industry and consumers of clothes and fashion: “In Tehran, one may easily find tailors ready to cut clothes to measure. In Enghelab Street between its intersection with Vali Asr and the Ferdousi Square there is a long series of tailors’ shops for men. Zaratousht Street23, west of Vali Asr is the well-known textile quarter, and there are also tailors for both men and women in this neighbourhood. These shops usually offer their clients suits and dresses, cut to measure, that are copied directly from Western fashion magazines. They are open to the public all year around and are very much considered to be part of the fashion scene (Balasescu 2007:302).”

Tailor shops, textile and fabric stores that are mentioned above are a traditional part of Iranian clothes production, the category of “private fashion designers”, “ready-to-wear boutiques” in different parts of Tehran can be seen as generator of more urban style of clothing. But it is very hard to consider them as an organized fashion industry. For instance there are some private collection shows in houses of these private designers before Norouz.24 Most of these private shows are for women and men are not allowed to before late night which is the time for families to present and see the collection. These limitations are both due to governmental laws and also to prepare a calm environment for women to try garments. It mostly depends on designer and her experience to have between two to four collections peer year (not always seasonal shows). The time of presenting collections more than seasons are based on major purchase of people and their needs for garments in scheduled events of the country such as Norouz, beginning of school season in late September and some other religious events (Balasescu 2007).

23 Pictures of these fabric sellers are placed in appendix.
24 New Year in Persian Calendar is called Norouz and there are lots of ceremonies and gathering in this time. People used to purchase new garments to take part in these meetings and show changes in their appearance and also mentality.
Lotus, is the name of “the first Persian fashion quarterly journal” that is published by Mahla’s Fashion house. The brand name for her works is the same as its magazine and comes from a Zoroastrian symbol derived for the name of an Iranian flower. Mahla starts her worked straight with cutting fabric and then a group of tailors, mostly students of ‘art and design faculty’ in ‘University of Tehran’, stitch these parts of fabric to shape garments. Beside ready-to-wear collections (manetus or mantou)\textsuperscript{25}, Lotus house has some clothes for workers in firms and institutions such as air travel firms, hotels, university and school women teachers and also school girls(Balasescu 2007).

“In the past, photographs of female models had their faces erased, sometimes with paint. Likewise, the plastic female mannequins in shop windows lack facial features, or the upper half of their heads altogether (Balasescu 2007:308).” In this way, Mahla’s creation to meet the requirements of the government let her house passing the limits of showing models publicly (Just for women) and also being able to advertise collection on her “Fashion magazine, Lotus”. The creation of her was ““Mixing culture with modernity” is both responding to the requirements of the Islamic government and meeting the consumers’ desires for fashion, elegance, and “modern dress.” In her discourse, “culture” refers both to Muslim and to Zoroastrian traditions, depending on the context (Balasescu 2007:310).”

“In this respect, Lotus house is unique in Tehran, being the only design house that produces for clientele on this scale, and that plays such an important role in constructing a public image. It also benefits from occasional international press coverage. The public show in January 2001 was heavily commented on in the European press, and the second issue of Lotus magazine has been covered in the Financial Times Europe (March 17 2003). The article took the usual journalistic approach of presenting Iranian fashion as if it were in the “Dark Ages.” Temporal and historical references were used to suggest that Iran was lacking, or lagging behind, modernity (Balasescu 2007:308).”

The other designer of this type, Parissa, is inspired by traditional designs from villages in different parts of Iran. She combines their colours and pattern of their garment with essential mobility for urban usage of cloth and changes some part of these traditional garments to make them “wearable or practical”. For instance she reduce the amount of fabric that is used in this clothes or close up some holes under armpits to adapt them for modern use in urban part of the country and also other big cities in the world. As Balasescu mentions, Iranian customer from other countries are appealed to this type of clothes for their feeling of

\textsuperscript{25} As Balasescu mentions the Persian word ‘mantou’ derived from French word “Manteau”, an outwear other than chador that is compulsory in streets of Iran for women.
nostalgia about their home country. Parissa prepares part of her textile material from India, Dehli or Karachi with a very low price and the main fabrics she uses can be easily purchased in Zartosht Street in Tehran. Then she cuts the materials with her tailor according to measurements she obtained by her experience. The tailor will continue the process in his own workshop and then send her the final work. The final price of these clothes cannot be as reasonable as ready-to-wear collections in big fashion industries. Therefore customers of her works are high-class ladies from wealthy families or young actresses and artists who care about this different style of clothing and they are ready to pay more for that. For Parissa, it is a response to governmental restriction in clothing and appearance especially after revolution that made women to use dark colours in their outwear (Balasescu 2007).

4.5. Diffusion of Fashion and the role of different gatekeepers
“Gatekeepers” are some actors with key roles in systems of information diffusion. They have high influence in quality of knowledge that slips through the pipes and the way this information is distributed (Hauge 2006).

Journalists and editors are obvious examples of gatekeepers; they first emerge and judge some fashion information as important to work on and the others to be put aside. Potent weapons of fashion editor are being silent and putting space for information. After selection and evaluation of fashion trends, they disseminate their choices to be known in public. They are close to consumers (Kawamura 2005).

“Tushman and Katz (1980, p. 1071) defines gatekeepers as those key individuals who are both strongly connected to internal colleagues and strongly linked to external domains (Hauge 2006: 2)”. As Hauge (2006) mentions the gatekeepers in fashion industry can be identified at different geographical levels; in global stage, domestic and urban fashion producers and even down to the consumer. The role of consumers can be seen as Kawamura (2005) argues indirect participation of consumers in the production of fashion. In close relation to consumers, retail buyers have lots of influences in sort of garments would be offered to the consumer by their decisions (Hauge 2006). “The end consumer is maybe the most important gatekeeper, especially when it comes to the choice of distinct brands. This reflects a view that consumer are very self-aware and reflexive; people are not buying products just because they work, but consumers “are involved in relationships with a collectivity of brands so as to benefit from the meanings they add into their lives” (Fournier 1998: 361) (Hauge 2006: 16)”. Consumers are active since they create meanings for what
they consume and they are reflexive on brands; therefore producers need to negotiate with consumers about the socially constructed meanings of brands (Bengston 2002; Hauge 2006).

5. Empirical Findings and Analysis
Before starting any investigation and visual observation in real world, I ask questions about fashion from some Iranian youth, some of them were inside Iran and other individuals who have travels to Iran but they are living outside the country. On virtual realm, I used Internet means; sending and receiving Emails and using Facebook features to talk with youth. Majority of answers conducted me to garment stores and window shopping as the most influential source of distribution of fashion goods among different groups of people. They informed me about institutionalized relations between these stores and importers of fashion commodities in different parts of Tehran and also expansion of such a relationship to other big cities in Iran. No one could explain the gap between these large cities and smaller ones in the way they can find new trends. Number of these youth argued that Iranians care about their appearance and they are overambitious at least in their purchases. This characteristic provides a role for them to change some of principles behind the scene in market of clothes. Branded clothes were another role player in this topic; so they described international brands as a new option to follow fashion changes. Previously these branded goods were just available to individuals who had foreign journeys.

As I used Internet as a means to communicate with youth in this step, almost all of them mentioned that internet is a source of information and they use it to find out more about fashion whenever they need information about that. They could relate branded goods to their main sources, on the brand website to evaluate if it is original and if it is in fashion or out. Satellite channels were another important source of information, next to the Internet for youth. The most interesting result of these initial conversations was about imitation and their thoughts of being out of fashion, since they could obtain goods with a delay in time inside the limitation of the country.

5.1. Consumers
My first interviewee, Azin 20 years old girl from Isfahan, explains that fashion goods and new trends in her city are available in stores of one specific street and lots of trendy

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26 The general questions in this step were just about available ways for diffusion of fashion in Iran. Also how they have been informed about a new trend.

27 Isfahan is one of the largest cities of Iran situated in the middle of the country.
individuals go shopping in this street. The relationship between customers and shoppers are based on their trust to each other. Stores and shoppers are knowledgeable about new trends as they have lots of travels to order new goods for their stores. On the other hand, these stores need to have loyal customers to support them with their purchases and also with ‘word-of-mouth’ promotions. Azin and her peers as she argued are members of friendship groups and in these groups they usually have discussion about their appearances and shopping’s. In this way they can use each other’s information and thoughts about new trends and interact with friends.

In relation to this case, as McCraken (1988) argues these individuals are not imitating the whole style from each other or other groups, they see some trendy style and choose some of its items to combine with their way of dressing, as a result this combination will create a new style for them. King (1963) and Robinson (1958) replaced the goal of trickle-down with adoption of style from one group to another and what they named “trickle-across”. As people living in cities other than Tehran are considering Tehrani’s appearance as more fashionable and they all agreed that there are far more choices to shop in stores of Tehran in comparison to their cities imitation (partly imitation as McCkracken argues ) can be interpreted as diffusion of fashion in ‘trickle-down’. From another view inside these groups and interaction between groups, the imitation and adoption to new styles are happening in different stages as the group members are accepting new trends differently. Therefore in these imitations and adoptions ‘trickle-across’ can be replaced to “trickle-down”.

Nima, a young photographer with some experiences in fashion photography was another interviewee. He categorized Iranians in different groups by differences they have in their appearances and opinions about fashion. The first group is a minority of limited wealthy people who travel abroad frequently and follow trends by their selective purchases from famous brands there. They are not attracted to changes inside the country. Normal people constitute large groups with differences in geographical living condition or differences in their income level. They are about half of the population of Iran and their choices and behaviours have direct impacts on market and society; therefore they are very influential majority in the issue of fashion. Diversity of individuals in these groups will need vast investigations in humanity sciences but as they are very important in fashion, he explained their interests in fashion and their dominant manners in some of them. “Their tastes are closer

28 These new trends are fashion objects (garments and other fashion goods), these object can be related to a subject (Fashion as an immaterial subject; information flow of knowledge about new trends).
to European, they have fresh information about Brands, fashion exhibitions in western countries. Unlike older ones who had great attention to Turkish garments that have some similarities to Iranian-Islamic traditions, these youth individuals exactly know what they need and what are they going to purchase. The result is that, importer and seller of fashion goods cannot bring and sell whatever he like or think that customers are attracted to. In the past 10 years, market felt this change in consumers and reorganized itself toward needs of these consumers. ” I do not completely agree with Nima, but in reference to Rogers (1983) model of adoption, some groups of followers such as “early adopters”, “majority of adopters” and parts of “late majority” are members of the groups Nima named and categorized. Fashion conscious groups that Nima mentioned are not a few in number but they are not half of the population as he argues. These groups who care more about fashion are inhabited in large cities and only one third of the whole population of Iran are living in these large cities and also not all of the population in big cities are interested to fashion. He also mentioned that there are individual in this group that are few in their number but as they are designing what they want to wear their selves their work is very interesting and they are going to be known very fast. These individuals in Rogers’ categorization should be “innovators”: but in observation of them I found out that they has a role in between “innovator” and “early adopter” as they design part of their garment and combine it with other garments that they have the feeling of wear-ability on them. The third group is an interesting one; it is not poor people or very lower-classes, they are a group of youth who are studying art. In his viewpoint these groups are inspired by different things and are designing traditional patterns to revive old national styles of dressing. As this group are separated in their appearance from others they have to play the role of innovator and early adopter at the same time. He saw them abnormal and heterogeneous as they are promoting and showing their difference in public and the society has been accepting them in two or three previous years.

From academic view toward humanity and fashion when members of this group are not just in opposition to one specific way of thinking; they are supporting their nationality, their own creation and more that these two, not using pattern of other countries and also industrial forces to consume promoted garments. They can be seen as a youth subculture that design, create, wear to show what is desirable for the individual. As these styles are developing and some small firms are producing limited number of such garments and people

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29 Wear-ability for this creative individuals has its specific meaning other than the obvious meaning of it: for them a piece of garment should have characteristics such as mobbility, its appearance far different from what the majority are wearing and also being more related to modernity they are moving toward it.
from other social classes (mostly upper-classes in comparison to these innovators) started wearing them; it can be considered as a “bottom-up” model for diffusion of fashion.

In an article in Persian fashion blog I found an interview with a costume designer, Farhad. He explained how design of garments in TV series changed the appearance of people in the society; “after the Islamic revolution and 8 years of war, actresses have the same style as women in public, long manteaux and very long and big scarves to cover the whole body with it. Some costume designers such as malek jahan khazaie, zhila mehrjouyi started using fashion trends in their designs for actresses. TV series such as hamsaran, khaneye sabz are examples of khazaie’s changes in design of actresses. In these series designed manteau and replaces scarves with Shawl. After that mehrjouyi introduced a new style of veiling in her design in ‘leila”.31 I found him on Facebook and asked him about contemporary costume designs in TV series and films and their impacts on people and he mentioned that because of limitations in films and costume designs for them, nowadays people’s appearances are ahead of the style of actors and actresses in films. Therefore unfortunately, no one is attracted to domestic films and it is replaced by satellite and online movies on the internet. From another point of view people can easily travel to other countries and buy their desired clothes, then these personally imported clothes would be worn by those people and the process of imitation and inspiration both will happen for those trends.

I asked another interviewee to introduce me the ways she finds new trends, buy them and then what happens in the period of time she wears them. Negin is a trendy young girl and student of architecture in university, she divide her purchases of street fashion into two different groups; first, manteau and veiling garments for outwear and the other group is other garments for women. “In finding other garments, I start with searching on the brands’ websites and trying to shape an idea about new trends in my mind, and then I would go shopping. By exercises I took in years of shopping, I can decide to go to different shopping centres and stores to find garments I am seeking for. Sometimes I travel to other countries such as Turkey or Emirate or other neighbour countries, I have more choices there and their goods are more up-to-date that what I can get inside Iran. It can only happen once a year for me. There is a delay between what I can find on the internet and their availability in stores in Iran, this is a problem for me and all the other who do not have the ability to travel abroad frequently.” As she mentioned in this group of clothes the only difference for a trendy girl in

30 Leila is an Iranian movie that was produced in 1996 in Iran
Tehran is the delay to reach the goods in market. On the other side, in finding out wear garments, the main source of awareness about new trends is styles of people in street and other public places that they have to wear some sort of veiling and then trying to find something with similarities to that and some rational relations to the individuals taste in stores. Not having media to support fashion trends made individuals seek for trend by their eyes and talk to others about fashionable style they could find. Negin explained a serious problem about these outwear garments; “when I need an outwear for more formal places such as university it is easier to find some simple manteau and combine it with other usual garments such as jeans or pants and so on, but no one in my age would prefer to wear a simple and untrendy style like those in other places. Only these simple outwears the same as uniforms and in opposition to them some manteau with lots of designs that make it out of style in other ways are available in stores.” She showed me the solution for this problem, lots of these trendy and fashionable young girls started using some sort of western dresses that are similar to manteau in covering the body (long enough to be worn in public) as those are more casual and comfortable. These garments attracted lots of these young girls toward dresses with brands that are available in Tehran and some other large cities. Mango and Zara were to major choices of Negin and her friends. From both outwear and usual garments from brand, it is easy to find that youth in Iran are brand sensitive and they prefer to purchase branded garments but the frequency of their shopping depends directly on their income.

After finding about purchase and consumption of fashion object, the process of diffusion and adoption became the subject of my interview with Negin. She started with herself and her styles when she buys fashion goods from other countries. For instance specific model of pants were in market in Turkey 6 months ago when she bought it and now it is a new fashion trend in the streets of Tehran. She explained that when her friends, mostly in university saw her new style of dressing they did not asked her about that. Two months later they started to copy some elements of this style when they saw it more and more in public and they accessed in stores. But as there is vast diversity of independent stores in Tehran garments in stores can prepare a large range of choices and it makes it difficult to investigate new trends and find a confident source for the followed trend. Then she mentioned two other ways that sometimes help her to find new trends; the first one was considering her friend Roya. As she works in a company that needs lots of travels every month and his family are in travel the same as her, she always buy her clothes from retailers in international market and this introduced her as a fashionable stylish girl in different groups
in university and parties. Now the others consider her styles whenever they saw her and they choose to follow some of her choices and often combine it with their own tastes. The second option for Negin, is Tara and her sister that organize some private shows in their own house. Tara’s sister is a private designer and invites her friends to look at her collections and choose among them. As Negin argued some of her works are eye-catching enough to decide at once and buy them. But other designs are not like that; they just bring ideas to her mind to work on in her future shopping, combine and design to make a pattern and then order it to a tailor. By asking about quality and design of clothes in these shows, all the interviewees complained about the high prices of these goods but these designs were very interesting for youth. As prices of branded dresses are cheaper than these art works and these youth (trendy girls that are not late adopters) can use them both as outwear and in the same use as dress.

As these private shows are not permitted by government and they organize these shows on their own, they were not allowing men to enter; therefore just pictures of these designs could be used in my observation. There are some new stores in fashionable shopping centres mostly in north of Tehran that is established by some of these private designers. They tried to prepare some designs but as their designs are more inspired by national and traditional beliefs, youth are do not t want to accept them for their daily wear.

The other interviewee, Sepide, 28 years old girl who finished her university study and now works on her own business, explained price sensibility of individuals in fashion purchases; “when I was younger and I did not have work condition the prices were more important that now, although they make sense for me even now, with my reasonable and high income. Those days, I had free times to go out and watch the windows of trendy shops, there are some store which are famous and known to fashion follower such as ‘Sorkhe shopping centre’ in our era. As we (me, my friends and family) did not have enough money to follow all new trends we could see them and get inspirations about their shapes and colours there. Then it was easy to find the fabrics in Zaratousht streets or maybe in Bazaar which was cheaper. Tailoring was not hard and had much fun to do when we could create what we want.” There are two major markets for fabric in Tehran and also you can find tailors in different parts of the city, they accept orders with or without pattern. Each woman in Tehran at least has some tailored dresses from these tailors as their wage is reasonable and the

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32 Pictures of these private designs are in picture appendix.
33 Pictures of shopping windows in this shopping centre can be seen in picture appendix.
freedom of choice and feeling of individuality can be satisfied in this way. She also mentioned that there should be a hierarchy among fashion stores in showing new trends in their windows, people care a lot about these changes and follow whatever they see in these windows. It was not the same about 6 years ago, but now trends in windows of shops with famous brand names such as Mango, Benetton, Zara and some others are very influential on youth and their imitations.

Mino, 26 years old girl with special outwear garments took my attention on street. I made a quick interview with her as she was in hurry to go to a meeting; she was student of graphic and computer design. As she argued her manteau was produced by her mother based on her own design; “I do not want to wear something very different from others but outwear garments in stores could not satisfy my passion, I started preparing the pattern of my outwear garments from 3 years age when I started my studies in university. Since then I always designed my outwear garments: mantreau or overcoats depends on the season and weather condition. I usually follow new trends on the internet, clothing brands’ websites or some fashion blogs and by inspiration of their designs I can prepare an initial pattern for my outwear. Then my mother helps me to implement it and make it applicable.” It became usual for her to design her outwear garment and then combine it with other garments to has her own style. Her styles are very popular as she mentioned among her friends in university and other public meetings. She argued that the same as me some other individuals, mostly young girls ask her about her different style and try to take pictures of her clothes to find some similar ones in market.

The last case on consumers’ side was an interesting trend in maghnæ; I found a new style change of formal head-wear by two university girls. When questioning them about how they found it, they argued that one of their university friends, Shadi is very creative and she cares about her style so much. This characteristic has made her very famous among students in university. They saw this style of maghnæ on her head, when they couldn’t find it in stores they made it at home. Then after 2 months this new trend in maghnæ became visible in public. A new style transmitted from a limited covering garment to a trendy piece of garment to show brilliant taste was an example of what individuals made and then it is going up other classes in society and thereafter, fashion system in Iran started to mass produce it and make it

34 This study program has courses in art and design and also some other courses in computer science, as a result students of this program are a bit more realistic in their thoughts about appearance and they are not attracted to thoughts of national-traditional dress. They are more attracted to what they can design and make and they are inspired by modernity and global culture.
available to masses. As these girls argued about other components of veiling, for majority of adolescents shawl are adopted and it is replaced previous trends about scarves. This change in trend has direct relations with age level, as they explained youth with ages after adolescence are a bit conservative about scarves and when they set their style to very formal parties they prefer to have scarves instead of shawl. You cannot see the same preference in adolescents. Shawls for these adolescents brings more freedom to show parts of their hairs, ears and on the other side they have more choices to fasten or tie it in comparison to scarves.

5.2. Tehran Bazaar

As I knew that in the past, bazaar (Tehran bazaar) was the most powerful and the only determinant role player in consumption, I interviewed some people who worked there in the field of clothing. Although the result was far different from what I expected, it showed that consumers could force this giant role player to be out of the main circle of fashion (at least in large cities that majority of individuals have access to flow of information). Bazaar is consisted of lots of small size stores (hojre in Persian), they used to import, manufacture goods and distribute commodities in different parts of the country. In the past 10 years lots of changes happened in the role of bazaar at least in clothes and fashion sector. Now bazaar has only the role of wholesaler, goods in bazaar cannot be sold in Tehran and large cities. Therefore bazaar has loosened lots of its authority and it is now transformed to a gatekeeper of goods and intensifier trends to middle and small cities in Iran. As Sadegh, one of wholesalers in bazaar, explained majority of their goods are produced in China by their orders about trends in large cities. When these orders reach the bazaar they test them on their small stores and then store owners of others cities come to buy these goods and sell them in their cities. Each buyer knows some of bazaari people to go and ask for goods and each store in bazaar are known for a range of garments. Some bazaari’s goods such as mantreau are designed (mostly copied from other stores) and then small manufacturers make them by orders from bazaar. As these bazaari people decide about their imports and their good they have a role of gatekeeping. They found out about tastes of consumers in Tehran and other large cities with their communications with small size stores in these cities which import goods personally from brand stores in other countries such as Turkey and Emirate. As people in small cities are trying to obtain social status and being closer to people in large cities, especially Tehran the model of diffusion and the role of bazaar for those can be “trickle-down”. The other bazaar person, Nasser explained the difference between Tehran and smaller cities very clearly; “the taste of people in Tehran is closer to Turk products, when peoples
from other cities come and see the appearance of Tehrani people, they slowly adapt to their
new trend. The process of adoption happens slowly for them, so it would take 6 to 10 months
for new trends to find its way in these cities. In this period of time bazaar can order and
prepare goods for these remaining markets.”

5.3. Stores in large cities
Most of fashion and clothing stores in Tehran are built by the same pattern as stores in bazaar
and the only different they have in their shape is their place in different streets or shopping
malls all over the city. Dispersion of stores in city brings availability of frequent shopping
and accessibility of goods to consumers. Patterning from stores in bazaar has made these stores
in small or middle size. Not being big enough for retail store gives the store owner the ability
of personal buying and import of fashion goods privately. In this way they choose whatever
they think their customers will buy easier and their shops is full of their own tastes. As Atena,
owner of women’s shop mentioned, in the past 2 or 3 years the consumers had a big change
in their purchase behaviour; previously they came to stores and buy goods which were
available there. Now they know what they are seeking for, so they just come to stores and ask
for that they have seen somewhere or what they have made in their mind. Sherri, another
shop owner which imports her goods directly from Turkey argued that “I make some goods
being in Fashion”; when individuals come to store they are seeking something new and if the
shop assistant suggests them something as a new trend majority of them accept and buy it.
But there are always a minority of individuals who are not there to buy what merchant
suggests, they know what they want. For instance some trendy girls come to store and ask for
especial type of poncho last month and she imported that type in her next purchase from
Turkey. In less than one week all the stock of that sample were sold out. As these two fashion
sellers mentioned stores has their role as a powerful gatekeeper for majority of consumers but
there are always some people who make them bring new trends to their stores and these
people can be categorized as “innovators” or “early-adopters”. These groups of individuals
have some sort of gatekeeping impact on these importers.

There are some trendy and more fashionable stores and shopping centres in Tehran;
Milade Noor, Sorkhe Bazaar, Tandis, Bazaar Safavie are some of instances of these shopping
centres that I observed. In stores of these places majority of shop owners and shop assistants
are youth, they are working in groups and they have some designers for their works. Depends
on end prices they decide to produce some sort of their goods in Iran these garments are
mostly manteaus and other goods are imported to Iran from different countries such Turkey,
Emirate, Portugal. It is not easy to find Chinese goods in these shops as they prefer to have a better quality and they do not have consumers who care about prices so much. As they have designers for their collections they try to suit their goods with tastes of their customers. But after lots of talks they argued that they have lots of remained goods at the end of each season and therefore they need to develop their understandings about consumers taste. In an interview with one of these shops that had different window they explained different types of their consumers; “some of our consumers do not accept new trends when we suggest them, but there are others who come here to buy these new trends, they even know more than us and sometimes more than our designing groups about trends. When this group buys her clothes, others see their purchases in our store and then their appearance on street and in their meetings make another group of customers start their purchases. We also have a large group among our consumers that change our clothes in a way they prefer, these changes help us to find out more about changes in consumers’ tastes.”

The other interesting store is consisted of 8 chain stores in different parts of Tehran. It is a fashion store just for scarves and shawls. They have a large group of designers; both men and women. They observe new trends in public, especially among university students and adolescents and take the major part of their inspiration from them, on the other side they design some other collections based on their own imaginations. The director manager of the main store explained diversity of trends in scarves and shawls; “although people are not satisfied with wearing these covering garments, they have vast obsession toward setting their style with different models and colours of scarves or shawls. Another important factor in quantity of these trends and purchases is the reasonable prices of these pieces of clothes.”

There are some other stores both in middle-size shops and some of them “mango” in big-size stores. Majority of these middle size brand seller stores are not representation of the main brand and its chain stores, they just purchase large amounts of goods and import them to Iran, as they are major buyers and the main brands’ chain stores are not interested to enter into a country with lots of limitations they are free to use the brand name here. Prices without rational reasons (sometimes higher and sometimes lower that real prices), long delays in presenting collections (buying goods in sale off and sell them as new collections) are just some issues that makes dissatisfaction in consumers’ imagination of brands. “Mango” is one of large size branded stores in Tehran what follows some rules to attract attention of more customers toward its stores and brand image. The manager of this chain store in Tehran

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35 As this store was more knowledge based I took pictures of their window and inside their store. These pictures are available in picture appendix.
explained some of characteristics of mango’s brand which attracted Iranian youth; “there are some collections that are designed by a Lebanese designer, ‘Zuhair Murad’, her designer are closer to Iranian’s taste. The statistics of sale in dresses that can be used as outwear are surprisingly high not just in Iran but also among all other countries in this region. We try hard to bring new collections without long delays to present them in stores and now after 3 years our consumers felt that. We did not have more than 2 weeks delay for at least one year.” Another interesting issue about Mango is that last year, the main firm asked them to send some samples of scarves and then they worked on designing some scarves to catch the attention of their consumers in Iran. As the case of Mango was very interesting I ask number of youth about their ideas to compare mango with other brands. The result showed that almost all the individuals who knew the brand were satisfied with presentation of new collections without delay in comparison to others. Two of these trendy girls argued that mango cares a lot about its customers as they bring new type of maghnæ in stores just in response to request of consumers.

“The contribution of the department store to changing tastes and preferences, changing purchase behaviour, a changing relationship between buyer and seller, and changing marketing techniques was immeasurable. It worked to shape and transfer cultural meaning of goods and also served as an important site for the conjunction of culture and consumption (Miller 1981: 180; Kawamura 2005:93).” Mentioned above department stores has influences in different issues related to fashion, in the case of Iran, starting retailing systems and establishment of two hyper markets in Tehran is a sign of a new generation for consumption habits and consumers.

5.4. Summary of Analysis
As fashion is not free to expand and improve itself in Iran, the government and traditional society do not accept fashion followers. There is a lack of an organized system for fashion; there are only fashion limited numbers of fashion firms and they are in men’s fashion. In such a condition it cannot exists a powerful fashion industry. As a result there was no need and also no support for fashion system. When new generation comes up in such a society there should be some changes as they have different beliefs and they want to change some traditions in their culture. In this way they can start to make a fashion system in a way they want. New generation of fashion stores, private fashion shows, personal designers and designing and making their own needs of clothes is a sign and also a proof to existence of this system but not the same as anywhere else.
When a fashion system is not organized to work and concentrate on a specific field, it will have some untidiness. The first sign of it can be seen in the roles of different stages of adopters in Rogers (1983); “Innovators” and “early adopters” are completely mixed in the fashion system of Iran. “Early majority” has lots of diversity that makes it very hard to follow and observe. They are in lots of different groups and these groups are in interrelations with each others. In such an untidy system no one can draw a limitation line in between “early majority”, “late majority” and it becomes even worst when someone needs to find differences of “late majority” and “laggards”. Since the fashion system in not in the same position and the knowledge about that cannot be reached by different people in different groups, different social levels and also in different parts of the country, they will experience different stages of adoption. There would be some overlaps in these stages and people who are in these different layers. When the fashion system is not completely knowledge based, there could be some gates for information and also lots of wrong information. As a result it is not easy become aware of new trends in such a system and individuals may start by their own interest for new trends and these interests would not have direct and rational relations to trends of the other groups inside the same system and also the same society. Then far more than normal alternatives would be available to choose for each person the process of taking decision and purchasing fashion goods is not in the same way as in other societies.

On the other hand, the diffusion of fashion in such a society with unbelievable diversity of people with different thoughts in different groups and from different layers both in financial levels and social status would be so complicated. In a summary almost all the three main theories of diffusion can be found in fashion and social system of Iran. Imitation from upper-classes to gain social status, “trickle-down” model of diffusion is happening when people in small cities can see the appearance of people in large cities and they feel distances between their current location and those. They may imitate parts of their trends and combine it with their own belongings as McCracken (1988) revised this theory. From another view, different groups of individuals are in interactions with far more different groups and the result of these interactions bring them to observe each other and then follow some trends in other groups. Without any doubt this model of diffusion, “trickle-across” is the major model of diffusion among early majority, late majority and other individuals after them. “Trickle-up” or top-down model of diffusion is very obvious in this case; since youth cannot find their needs in market so it would make them desire to have or to find ways to make those desires and then follow them. In this way they will seek for information about trend and what others without these limitations are doing and here is the point that immaterial aspect of fashion
helps these individuals to shape their thoughts and vision toward what they want to make and then distribute. All private designers and personal fashion shows are can be interpreted as an example of this way of diffusion.

It is very important to mention that in a limited system of fashion what individuals can observe in their daily life has deep impact on their decisions, for instance, being able to see the same goods on the body or in appearance of innovators and early adopters, in windows and wardrobes of shops is a proof for them to accept that these are real new trend.

Diversity, diversity and again diversity make it difficult to categorize an individual in a specific and fixed role such as early adopter or innovators as most of individuals are in between these roles in their life. They have different appearances in different places they need to become present.

6. Conclusion
The same as other countries, young individuals in Iran care about their style, the only differences they have in comparison to the others are the limitations in their appearance and lack of organized system to work on fashion. Therefore they established their own fashion trends personally. In a response to their needs a fashion system, not as organized enough as the system in other regions, is shaping. This system is more based on the individuals and their interactions with other groups in society. They are consumers, importers of goods, personal designers and groups of creative youth who create novel trends by their inspirations from global culture to make domestic trends that will be more applicable in situation of Iran.

Diversity in age and social status of people and differences in their views to fashion results in diversity in their tastes and categorize them in different stages of adoption to new trends. Therefore it was very hard to find what is really new trend and fashionable among the majority but dividing people with their differences to different groups could help me to find trends that were in fashion and then observation showed that there are proofs that different individuals are in different stages of adoption and they are following the same process of ‘adoption to innovations’ but regarding to their local conditions. These conditions caused merge and some changes in stages of adoption. From other view, diffusion of fashion as spread of information took influences from the diversity among Iranians; some people try to obtain social status from imitation style of others social classes are still in top-down process of diffusion but most of Iranian youth are imitating part of styles from others groups without any exclusive attention to their social position and spread of fashion in this level is
interrelated to different groups with a few differences. Individuality and personal taste hand in with lack of specific styles of clothes in market to satisfy innovative youth and make them create their own needs to answer their desire of being fashionable. The raise of these styles diffuses completely different fashion trends from the streets to the fashion system. The fashion system needs to meet the emerging needs of larger groups of consumers who are mostly youth and interested to wear new fashion trends but they have financial limits that need mass production to reduce the final price of garments.
List of References

Books:

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Milani, S. (14 May 2011) Personal communication in Melody
Milani, S. (17 May 2011) Personal communication with Mahla Zamani
Picture appendix:

Tehran Bazaar:
Shopping malls in Tehran:

Milade Noor,
Bazaar Safavieh,
Golestan,
Sorkhe Bazaar,

Naroon shopping Centre,
Sample picture of brand stores in Tehran:
Different store mentioned in page XX (more knowledge based)
New Shopping mall with big size stores:
(The last picture of this shopping mall is forbidden for men as it only sells women’s underwear)
People:

Street (outdoor) styles in Iran
Chadori, in development of Balasescu’s argument
Zartosht Street (Fabric stores)
Scarves Stores
Private designers and shows:

Lotus House: (couture house and designers of uniforms by order.)
One of private design stores in Tehran

Nimany Art works:
(Source of pictures: http://www.nimany.com/)
H&A Manteau Designs (source of pictures: www.seembrgh.com)

Taar Aval Designing Group (Source of pictures: www.dukht.com)
You can watch the video of their introduction in the link below:

Cherry clothing group (Source of pictures: http://www.facebook.com/pages/Cherry-Fashion-Clothing/203786109635803)
Youth styles in private parties
(Caricature of Private Party in Tehran: http://www.shirinadl.co.uk/party.htm)
Youth styles outside:

Questions from interviewees:
(These questions are just starting points in interviews; as in this case study I just started discussions and then interviewees were free to talk about their experiences about fashion.)

Consumers:
- In your opinion, who has the main role in fashion in Iran?
- Do you feel that the market (stores) has the dominant power in introducing new trends?
- What is your way to be informed of new trends or at least examining the credibility of stores new trends?
- What bother you the most in existing condition for fashion in Iran?
- How do you find the new trends? Where do you go to find and buy them?
- Have you found any weakness in the fashion system inside Iran?
- Are you following any specific fashion trends from a country other than Iran?
- Do you know one or more trendy person with specific style of dressing that make you think about buying new clothes? If yes, can you explain such a situation?

Stores and bazaar:
- Which one has more influential role in the fashion market these days? Wholesaler, individual importer or customers.
- Have you felt any change in consumers’ fashion purchases in the last ten years?
- Have you ever seen a rejection in customers purchase behaviour? If yes, can you explain that situation?
- What do you usually for finding new trends and examining these trends with taste of your customers?
- Can you explain any differences among your customers in relation to their purchases?
- Can you categorize your customers in different groups? Do you focus on one of those or you prefer to have garments for a wide range of tastes?
- Can you compare the fashion trends in Iran with any other country?
- How do you prepare goods for you store?
- Do you have any institutionalized system for fashion in Iran?
- Do you work in groups and cooperate with your partners or you prefer to work as an individual store?
- Do you feel any limitations or difficulty in your work?