

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

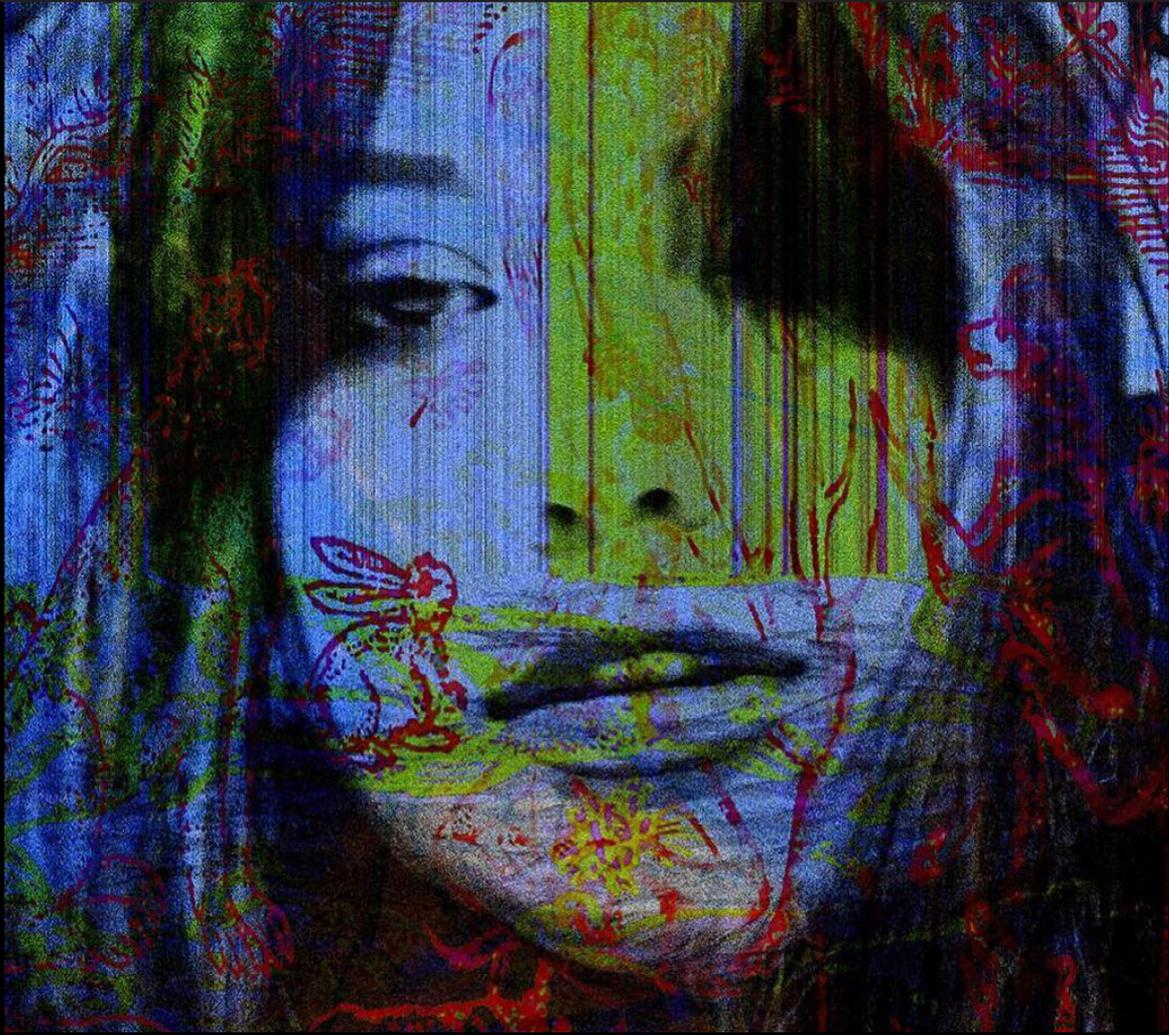
# ROSHANGAR

روشنگر

ROSHAN UNDERGRADUATE PERSIAN STUDIES JOURNAL

ROSHAN UNDERGRADUATE PERSIAN STUDIES JOURNAL

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2



SPRING 2018

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

SPRING 2018

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

# ***Roshangar* Editorial Board**

## **Student Members**

**Homa Hajarian**, co-editor

*Anthropology, Plant Science, and Persian Studies*

**Michael Leggett**, co-editor

*Government & Politics, Philosophy, Russian Studies, and Middle Eastern Studies*

**Anne Mohler**,

*Government & Politics and Persian Studies*

**Mason A. Jean**, coordinator

*History Studies, Russian Studies*

## **Faculty Advisors**

**Dr. Ida Meftahi**

*Roshan Institute for Persian Studies*

**Dr. Laretta Clough**

*School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures*

**Q-Mars Haeri**,

*PhD student in Theatre and Performance Studies*

**Check out our blog!**

Stay up to date with *Roshangar*, Persian events in the D.C. Area, book reviews and more at [www.RoshangarUMD.com](http://www.RoshangarUMD.com)!

## **A Letter from the Editor**

Roshangar is an academic resource for undergraduate students to share and access research in Persian studies. This journal also allows for academics and non-academics alike to learn and further their own scholarship.

In this edition of Roshangar we include articles from a variety of research topics, ranging from cultural history to gender and ethnic studies. These articles are written by undergraduate students, and we also have a special featured article from scholar Zohreh Baseri. After submission, these were chosen by the Roshangar student board and faculty advisors as distinguished pieces of scholarship.

Our board produces a blog and is active on social media, writing articles, and making posts on the history and culture of the Persianate world. This issue, our posts, and more information are available on our website ([www.roshangarumd.com](http://www.roshangarumd.com)) and social media. Roshangar is free to download online through our website.

It is our hope that this journal, and other Roshangar activities, will serve to encourage interest and research in Persian studies. Please enjoy this edition of Roshangar, and we encourage you to follow us in our future endeavors.

Homa Hajarian  
co-editor

## Foreword

I am thrilled to present to you the fourth issue of our academic journal, *Roshangar*, dedicated to undergraduate research and scholarship on Iranian and Persian studies. As with our previous issues, for this issue we received a number of submissions that represent the depth and diversity of interests and approaches toward the study of Iran among undergraduate students.

An important update on our team is the graduation of our active co-editor, Michael Leggett. Majoring in government and politics, Michael's interest in Iranian studies stemmed from a class on modern Iranian history which he took with me in Fall 2016, a topic that he passionately pursued during his tenure with the journal. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors. Likewise, this issue of *Roshangar* especially benefited from the tireless efforts of our co-editor Homa Hajarian as well the rest of the team.

As always, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Fatemeh Keshavarz, the chair and director of Roshan Institute for Persian Studies; Dr. Laretta Clough; and Roshan Institute colleagues Drs. Nahal Akbari, Ali Abbasi, Navid Bazargan, and Matthew Miller. We are especially indebted to Ms. Samar Ali Ata, who has been our support 24/7 in the past three years since she joined Roshan Institute for Persian Studies. I hope that you enjoy reading this issue.

Dr. Ida Meftahi  
Faculty Advisor

# Table of Contents



The Reflection of Burnout in Contemporary Iranian Cinema <i>Sarvar Oreizi-Esfahani</i> <i>University of Maryland, College Park</i>	1
An Overview of Parthian Coins and Their Iconography <i>Zohreh Baseri</i> <i>Islamic Azad University of Tehran</i>	9
<i>The New York Times'</i> Coverage of the Iranian Revolution <i>Melle van Hinten</i> <i>Leiden University, The Hague</i>	12
Exploration of <i>Rom</i> in Persia <i>Melika Tabrizi</i> <i>University of Maryland, College Park</i>	19
The Success of Women Mathematicians in Iran and Lack Thereof in the United States <i>Anglica Dayhoff</i> <i>University of Maryland, College Park</i>	25

# The Reflection of Burnout in Contemporary Iranian Cinema

Sarvar Oreizi-Esfahani

University of Maryland, College Park

Abstract

Films are powerful means of art which allow for the communication of an individual's thoughts, emotions, and experiences to large audiences. In particular, by pointing to difficult and often controversial societal issues, filmmakers encourage the start of open conversations with the ultimate hope that a solution will be found. Iranian cinema has created many films that reflect on a multitude of societal matters, many times ensuring very accurate depictions of these problems. A concern that is commonly portrayed in Iranian movies is the issue of burnout. Burnout is a psychological condition which is caused by "a physical or mental collapse caused by overwork or stress" ("Burnout" 2017). Because burnout is brought on by a variety of chronic stressors, a better understanding of this construct can be made possible only if the specific factors leading to the development of this condition within Iranian society could be identified. To investigate the condition of burnout and the issues that are leading to the evolution of this syndrome, several social movies depicting a variety of issues from the years of 1998 to 2017 were analyzed. For the sake of comparison the two time periods were divided into what I will call the *early era* (1998-2002) and the *late era* (2003-2017). The results indicated that there was a general increase in the amount of burnout that was seemingly being experienced by Iranians. However, the issues that contributed to this rise were not constant throughout this time. These findings provide an interesting initial look at the occurrence of burnout within Iranian society through the lens of the camera. Future empirical studies could help further illuminate the state of burnout in Iran as well as the elements that lie at the root of this psychological state of being.

---

## Film as an Important Tool in Understanding Societies

Regarded technically, a film can be defined as "A story or event recorded by a camera as a set of moving images and shown in a theater or on television" ("Definition of Film" 2017). However, a film is much more than a "motion picture," it is an art-form-a powerful medium by means of which individuals can become immersed in a particular time/setting and experience situations to which they have never been exposed (Lindgren 2011). Not only this, films are also powerful tools through which people can express their thoughts, experiences, and emotions. In particular, films offer an especially effective means through which the filmmaker can shine light onto the different issues that may exist within a certain society. Utilizing multiple visual and auditory elements, the filmmaker breathes life into a dynamic storyline which not only engages and entertains the

audience, but also allows them to contemplate the message that is being conveyed. By deciphering the hidden meanings that have been planted meticulously throughout a movie, one may understand a lot about the present condition of a society and the troubles that threaten to devastate its well-being.

Iranian films, in particular, make great use of films to relay information about current social concerns. Within a film, the character's thinking and actions are many times made transparent to the audience, allowing one to conduct an objective analysis of the presence of certain issues and the factors that may be motivating them. Films, although fictional, may also contain a great deal of reality. Writers of social dramas, in particular, attempt to grasp a relatively accurate image of a society as it is, therefore creating a "fictional documentary" of sorts. This can be very beneficial to the analyst who wishes to learn more about the societal dynamics of a country. Also,



many issues in society carry with them controversies, thus making it difficult to carry out open conversations about them. Because movies have the ability to portray different aspects of a problem without openly expressing them, they can prove to be very helpful in allowing one to gain a holistic understanding of such issues.

## **The Burnout Syndrome**

Burnout is characterized as “a physical or mental collapse caused by overwork or stress” (“Burnout” 2017). Common symptoms of this condition include but are not limited to: chronic fatigue, insomnia, cynicism, apathy, forgetfulness, anxiety, and depression (Montero-Martin et al 2014). Many causes have been identified to lead to the development of burnout among different populations of people. These factors can be attributed to three Macrolevel, Mesolevel, and Microlevel categories (Weber & Reinhard 2000). The Macrolevel points to burnout as a result of stress that has not been efficiently handled, the Mesolevel highlights a person-environment misfit as a cause for the development of this syndrome, and finally, the Microlevel explores discrepancies that exist between individual expectations and reality (Weber & Reinhard 2000). Examples of such variables may include lack of control, extremes of activity, lack of social support, work-life imbalance, and mismatched values and expectations (Montero-Martin et al 2014). Living in a day and age where these factors seem to be ever-present, the occurrence of burnout among the general population has become exceptionally common. The most prevalent form of burnout, job-burnout, is seen within the workplace, however other forms of burnout (such as student burnout, caregiver burnout, and relationship burnout) can often be observed.

Although no formal studies have looked at the condition of burnout in Iran, different sources have expressed its presence and the potential factors that may be leading to its development. Specifically, many studies have been done regarding occupational burnout, especially within the Iranian healthcare industry (Yousefy & Ghassemi 2006). This information may be valuable in that it will allow one to be able to attribute one of the factors leading to burnout as job dissatisfaction. However, no previous investigations have systematically analyzed the presence and causes of burnout with the other

realms of society. Some analysts, on the other hand, have looked into the existence of this condition in Iran. One article pointed to the inefficient design of cities as a potential cause of burnout within society (Fakhari 2017). Another potential cause of burnout was attributed to the lack of non-government funded institutions (Moghadam-Salimi 2017). Some studies pointed to the lack of sport entertainment as a factor contributing to job burnout (Motahari et al 2017). In addition, another study highlighted the contribution of social sincerity and fulfillment to student burnout (Rostam-Zade & Narimani 2017). Although these findings and observations are very helpful in guiding our ideas regarding the potential causes of burnout, the completion of a full analysis of the presence of burnout and the factors that are motivating it are still necessary.

## **Burnout in Iranian Society**

Burnout, if left to develop on its own, may have many disruptive effects on the health of individuals in the long run. People suffering from burnout are themselves at a higher risk of developing depression and anxiety which can be extremely damaging (Rada & Johnson-Leong 2004). The rate of burnout within the Iranian population in 2012 was estimated to be approximately 20.3% in urban areas and 20.1% in rural regions (Toker & Biron 2012). In comparison, approximately 6.7% of all adults in the United States reported having depression in 2012 (“Major Depression Among Adults” 2017). Although this dramatic difference can be attributed to many causes such as a lack of proper treatment, it is important to note the potential existence of certain fundamental social issues that may also be contributing to the higher percentages of those suffering from this disorder in Iran as compared to the United States.

Increased drug addiction has also been associated with burnout (Shanafelt et al 2002). Unfortunately, this indication is widely observed in Iran and which can potentially be a byproduct of the burnout that is increasingly being felt by Iranian youths (Aholah et al 2006). Furthermore, burned-out individuals cannot function efficiently and therefore are not able to make any considerable contributions to society as a whole. If the larger part of people suffers from this condition, then the psychological well-being of society will most definitely be compromised. As a result,

it also becomes very important to be able to identify the underlying elements that may be motivating this syndrome.

Because burnout is not a result of microscopic social factors and can actually be attributed to macroscopic elements, it is important to identify the general overarching factors that may be motivating this condition within the Iranian society. As with any other country, Iran faces a series of social dilemmas which may be compromising the quality of life of its citizens. At the root of these issues lies a series of factors that may lead to the worsening of living conditions in Iran. Such problems include sanctions (Katzman 2014), increasing class differences (Salehi-Isfahani 2009), unemployment (Amuzgar 2004), changing social standards (Millward 2007), conflicting belief systems (Yaghmaian 2002), and lack of effective law enforcement (Ayed 2017). Unfortunately, these shortcomings have led to the overall development of social, economic, and political instability which have in turn created more issues for the inhabitants of this country. Such issues include poverty, addiction, controversial laws, increased restrictions, higher emigration, diminishing healthcare, gender inequality, and intergroup conflict. As these difficulties become more and more widespread, the number of problems that one individual must handle increases dramatically. As a result, the amount of chronic stress to which people are being exposed surges, therefore putting more and more Iranian people at risk for developing burnout (Carter 2017).

### **Burnout in Iranian Films**

If the Iranian society is truly being plagued by burnout, recognizing the many factors that may be causing it will be vital to finding a way to stop it. This knowledge can allow one to propose potential solutions or even preventative programs to stop its further spread. By analyzing a variety of Iranian social films, one can gain a general understanding of the state of burnout within the Iranian population as well as identify the evolution of the most prominent issues that may have contributed to the development of this condition from 1988 up until 2017. By studying the presence of burnout in mov-

ies, one can take a step towards understanding the complexities of this issue within the public realm, guiding the pursuit of potential future studies.

### **Methods and Materials**

In order to assess burnout and the evolution of the societal issues that may be leading to it, a film analysis of several movies was conducted. Several contemporary Iranian social dramas which were made in the interval from 1988 to 2017, were selected. These movies each highlight a broad social issue that has persisted up until today and are thought to be at the root of burnout within Iranian society. These issues include addiction, immigration, healthcare, poverty, corruption (social, political, and economic), controversial laws within the judicial system, women's issues, and increased restrictions of everyday life. Furthermore, in order to be able to compare the shift from the core issues that existed in the early days following the Iran-Iraq war with the more contemporary issues that are seen in present-day Iran, films from two time periods were assessed; the earlier films (1988-2002) and the later films (2003-2017). It must be noted that although many other societal issues may be addressed within a film, the most central theme was taken into consideration and analyzed. In addition, the majority of these films have gained the approval of many Iranians, allowing one to assume that their portrayal of society at the time was relatively accurate. The selected movies, their directors, and the issues that were addressed can be seen in the tables below (Refer to Table 1 and Table 2 on page 8).

Once these movies were compiled, analysis of the burnout level of the main character as well as the central societal issues that may be contributing to the development of this condition was carried out. To gain a relatively unbiased understanding of a character's level of burnout, the Stress and Burnout Questionnaire and the Burnout Prevention Assessment were utilized (Goldberg 2017). The scores of both of these questionnaires were summed, resulting in an overall burnout score out of 50 points. So that researcher effects could be eliminated, a research assistant who was unaware of the study

hypothesis was recruited to aid in carrying out the study. After watching each film, the research assistant was asked to calculate a burnout score for the main personality within each movie based on the information that was provided. At times, due to the limited information that was presented in the film, certain questions could not be directly assessed. As a result, an educated assumption based on the living conditions of the character was made. In addition to this, all the potential causes for burnout were also analyzed and compiled into a universal list. This would allow for further assessment of the shift and pattern of recurring causes of burnout within the Iranian society.

### Results:

Results from this analysis indicated many interesting features of Iranian society and the dynamics that exist within it. Among all categories, there seemed to be a general increase in the amount of burnout that is currently being experienced in the late era (2003-2017) as compared to the earlier era (1998-2002). This can be shown through several factors. First, the overall average burnout score of the main characters in the early era was found to be approximately 38.9 while that of the later era was observed to be 44.3. Although not very precise, this estimation quantitatively illustrates the increase in the level of burnout that is expressed by the main characters of these studied Iranian movies.

In addition to this, films made after 2002 display less happy endings, indicating an overall loss of hope that certain issues will be resolved. Many films including *A Separation* (Farhadi 2011) and *A Special Day* (Assadian 2017) present the audience with an open-ended resolution, potentially indirectly indicating that the characters are doomed regardless of what might follow. Such feelings of being trapped is a characteristic sign of burnout. In *A Separation* (Farhadi 2011), the movie ends with a young girl having to choose between staying with her dad in Iran or accompanying her mom who plans to immigrate to France. In *A Special Day* (Assadian 2017), Hamed has to come to terms with the death of her sister, Manijeh, who needs a heart transplant but cannot get it in time. On the contrary, similar movies addressing the same issues in the earlier era show a little more optimism. For example, in *Mercedes* (Kimiayi 1998), Esfandiyar, who

is planning to leave Iran, begins to appreciate the valuable friendships that he has and, although he knows that he will have to face many hardships, decides to stay in Iran. Similarly, *Passing Through Dust* (Derakhshandeh 1998) which also addresses the immediate need for an organ transplant, ends with the lady receiving a kidney from a donor whose kindness is a beacon of hope for those who are struggling to maintain their happiness. Such transitions in the way that similar problems are addressed points to the increase in hopelessness and depression that is being caused by the burnout that is being felt by Iranians due to their chronic exposure to problems that do not seem to have a solution.

Perhaps, after the war, people's tolerance for problems was higher as they had hope that conditions would improve, however, as time passed and such societal issues continued to persist, this outlook was replaced with a grim perspective towards the potential for any positive change. Specifically, the economy has continually gotten worse which has put a lot of pressure on Iranians who are struggling to make ends meet. This is beautifully demonstrated in the film, *Infinity and One Day* (Roustayi 2016) where audiences can view how the effects of poverty have devastated the lives of a family coming from a low socio-economic class. Although the film is not completely pessimistic, it does point out the important role of poverty in contributing to the rise of addiction that is being witnessed in Iran, especially with the introduction of new synthetic drugs. In addition, many of the problems that sit at the root of the societal issues have not been properly addressed throughout the years, thus leading to the upsurge of increasingly high frustrations. As a result of this, tensions have risen and intergroup conflict has increased, as people search to explain why they cannot find solutions to their problems. As seen in the movie *My Tehran for Sale* (Moussavi 2009), many young people even consider themselves to be from the "burnt generation," as tumultuous political, economic and even social circumstances have restricted them from being able to live their lives to the fullest. This has also caused many to seek immigration, hoping for a better life. In addition, as Iran has become more globalized, misunderstandings between the youth and the older generation is also leading to miscommunications

and thus more clashes. This is leading to a decrease in the cohesion that used to exist between the different groups in society in the earlier era. As can be observed, this lack of social support and constant exposure to the aforementioned stimuli has created an ideal atmosphere for the development of burn-out.

Although the majority of films seemed to show an increase in the factors that may lead to burnout, it is also important to note that some issues have remained relatively static over time. For instance, gender inequality and women's rights have not gotten better nor worse throughout these years. Women in Iran continue to challenge the restrictions that have been placed upon women due to their gender, however, the issues for which they are fighting have definitely changed. As compared to the past, women seem to play a bigger part in society as observed in the more dominant roles of women in the films that were viewed. In addition, they are now openly contesting issues which, in the past, they were not allowed to point out. For example, in the earlier era, women disputed minor legal issues such as seen in the movie *I am Tarahneh, 15* (Sadr Ameli 2002). In this film, a girl who has been abandoned by her husband and must raise her child alone, struggles to defeat the society that condemns her for things that are completely unjustified. This movie points out the early uprising of women against unmerited cultural double standards. Similarly, the movie *Daughter* (Mirkarimi 2016) illustrates the incompatibilities that exist in the belief systems of the younger generation and those who are older. However, it also provides a positive outlook as it shows the communication that takes place between a daughter and her father, even showing an improvement in terms of burn-out-inducing conditions. Seeing these creations, one can safely say that women's issues have remained relatively stable.

The same thing goes for the constant battle against controversial judicial laws. For example, *Hush! Girls Don't Scream* (Derakhshandeh 2013) challenges the judicial system and its stance regarding the punishment that a woman who herself

was a victim of sexual abuse as a child must receive after killing a man she witnessed abuse a child on her wedding night. Such topics are definitely more controversial and challenge the stance of women within Iranian society. However, the same type of debated contentions can be seen in the *Hidden Half* (Milani 2002), where the principles of executions based on political affiliation are being addressed. These movies display issues which are similar in magnitude and reflect the normal development of laws within a country, making it less likely to lead to burnout.

It is also interesting to note a decrease in the number of restrictions that exist on individuals in the past as compared to now. The main characters of the current films are more expressive and speak their minds more often than those from the early era. They do not conform as much to cultural standards and are more independent from the collectivistic regulations that existed previously. For example, in *The Passion of Love* (Moghaddas 2000) the relationship between the girl and the boy is constantly monitored by the elders, showing great contrast with *My Tehran for Sale* (Mousavi 2009) which depicts the relationship between the protagonists as very friendly and open. They even show rebellious attitudes and risk-taking. Albeit, it should be noted that this observation may, in fact, be correlated with presence of burnout, which many times leads to uncalculated and unsafe behavior.

### **Conclusion:**

All in all, there are several chronic factors, in particular poverty and social instability, that seem to be greatly contributing to the development of burnout among the (urban) population. These factors, which are escalating as time passes, are causing Iranians to experience a loss of morale, which inhibits them from being able to battle the psychological strains with which they are presented. Although this film analysis was helpful in estimating the amount of burnout within the Iranian society and helped in gaining an overall understanding of the potential factors that may be leading to this development, it is important to note that further analysis must be conducted in order to gain a more



accurate estimate of the prevalence of this psychological condition.

In order to raise the accuracy and precision of result, a higher number of films must be assessed. In addition, it is also important to further explore whether these issues are a direct result of the Iranian society or whether they are, in fact, a by-product of the changing global atmosphere. Capturing an idea of the presence and development of burnout within Iranian society has allowed for increased insight regarding the dynamics and evolution of modern Iranian life. It has also helped to point out areas of improvement for those who wish to initiate constructive efforts to eradicate such problems. By addressing the issues that are leading to burnout within the Iranian society, many associated problems such as depression and substance abuse can become more manageable. But, what is most important is that the elimination of burnout, may lead to increased individual well-being and productivity and therefore a healthier society overall.

#### Works Cited

- Ahola, K., Honkonen, T., Pirkola, S., Isometsä, E., Kalimo, R., & Nykyri, E. et al. (2006). "Alcohol dependence in relation to burnout among the Finnish working population." *Addiction*, 101(10), 1438-1443. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2006.01539.x>
- Amuzegar, Jahangir. "Iran's Economy: Status, Problems, and Prospects." Conference Paper, The Woodrow Wilson Centre and National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies. 2004.
- Assadian, H. (2017). *A Special Day*. Tehran: Filmiran.
- Ayed, Miriam. "Iran Corruption Report". Business Anti-Corruption Portal, 2017, <https://www.business-anti-corruption.com/country-profiles/iran/>. Accessed 23 Apr 2018.
- Bourgh Carter, S. (2017). "The Tell-Tale Signs of Burnout." *Psychology Today*. Retrieved 6 December 2017, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/high-octane-women/201311/the-tell-tale-signs-burnout-do-you-have-themburnout>". *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc. 29 Oct. 2017. <Dictionary.com <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/burnout>>.
- Definition of Film*. (2017). *Merriam-Webster.com*. Retrieved 14 December 2017, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/movie>
- Passing Through the Dust*. Dir. Poursan Derakhshandeh. Perf. Khoshrow Shakibai, Mahnaz Afzali, Ata Zahed, and Nematollah Gorgi. Iran Film, 1998.
- Hush! Girls Don't Scream*. Dir. Poursan Derakhshandeh. Perf. Tannaz Tabatabaei, Marila Zarei, Babak Hamidian, Shahab Hosseini, Nima Safei, Farhad Aesh, Amir Aghaei, Shirin Bina, Jamshid Hashempour, Hadi Marzban, Arash Mohajer, and Maedeh Tahmasebi. Khovarmehr Film, 2013.
- Fakhari, E., "The recreation of the city in an attempt to treat social burnout." 2017.
- A Separation*. Dir. Asghar Farhadi. Perf. Payman Maadi, Leila Hatami, Sareh Bayat, Shahab Hosseini, Sarina Farhadi, Merila Zare'i, Ali-Asghar Shahbazi, Babak Karimi, Kimia Hosseini, Shirin Yazdanbakhsh and Sohibanoo Zolqadr. Asghar Farhadi Productions, 2011.
- Goldberg, S., "Self-Care for Social Work Managers: Stress and Burnout Questionnaire." *Social Work Manager*. (2017). Retrieved 29 October 2017, from <https://socialworkmanager.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Stress-and-Burnout-Questionnaire.pdf>
- Katzman, Kenneth. "Iran sanctions." *Current Politics and Economics of the Middle East* 5.1 (2014): 41.
- The Feast*. Dir. Masoud Kimiai. Perf. Fariborz Arabnia, Behzad Khodaveisi, Parsa Pirouzfard, Ramin Parchami, Hassan Joharchi, Mehdi Khayyami, Yadollah Rezvani, Akbar Moazezi, Jalal Pishvaian, Seyyed Ebrahim Behrololoumi, Shahrzad Abdolmajid, Kianoosh Gerami, and Ali Asghar Tabasi. Afagh Film, 1995.
- Mercedes*. Dir. Masoud Kimiai. Perf. Mohammad Reza Fourtan, Marjan Shirmohammadi, Rombod Shekarabi, Parsa Pirouzfard, Shervin Fathi, Kianoosh Gerami, Akbar Moazezi, Abbas Ghajar, Mir Salah Hosseini, Sayyed Ebrahim Bahrol-

York: Macmillan Company.

"Major Depression Among Adults." (2017). *National Institute of Mental Health*. Retrieved 19 December 2017, from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/major-depression-among-adults.shtml>

Mehrjui, D. (2007). *Ali Sautoori*. Iran: Hedayat Film.

Milani, T. (2002). *The Hidden Half*. Iran: Arta Film.

Millward, William G. "Traditional values and social change in Iran." *Iranian Studies* 4.1 (1971): 2-35.

Mirkarimi, R. (2016). *Daughter*. Tehran: Dreamlab Films.

Moghaddam-Salimin, F., "The social responsibility of the municipality and the logic of profit." (2017).

Moghaddas, N. (2000). *The Passion of Love*. Tehran: AVA Film.

Mollagholi Poor, R. (1999). *The Burnt Slip*. Iran: Vara Honar Film.

Montero-Marin, Jesus, et al. "Coping with stress and types of burnout: explanatory power of different coping strategies." *PloS one* 9.2 (2014): e89090.

Moussavi, G. (2009). *My Tehran for Sale*. Iran: Cyan Films.

Motahari, M., Shahlayi, J., Afshari, M., Farid-Fathi, A., "The analysis of the role of sports entertainment on the development of job burnout among people who take part in group sports in Tehran." *Noor Mags*, (2017).

Najafi, M. (1999). *Taher's Love*. Iran: Varahonar.

Panahi, J. (2000). *The Circle*. Tehran: Jafar Panahi Film Productions.

Panahi, J. (2015). *Taxi Tehran*. Tehran: Jafar Panahi Film Productions.

Rada, R. E., & Johnson-Leong, C. (2004). "Stress, burnout, anxiety and depression among dentists." *The Journal of the American Dental Association*, 135(6), 788-794.

I DavRostamzade, Nahid and Mohammad Narimani.

"The analysis of the role of social sincerity and fulfillment on predicting burnout in high school students". *Noor Mags*, vol 16, no. 11, 2017, pp. 15-25.

Roustayi, S. (2016). *Infinity and One Day*. Iran: Daricheh Cinema.

Sadr Ameli, R. (2002). *I'm Taraneh*, 15. Iran: Soureh-cinema.

Salehi-Isfahani, Djavad. "Iran: Poverty and inequality since the revolution." *The Brookings Institute*. Retrieved November 29 (2009): 2012.

Shanafelt, T. D., Bradley, K. A., Wipf, J. E., & Back, A. L. (2002). "Burnout and self-reported patient care in an internal medicine residency program." *Annals of internal medicine*, 136(5), 358-367.

Yaghmaian, Behzad. *Social change in Iran: An eye-witness account of dissent, defiance, and new movements for rights*. SUNY Press, 2002.

Yousefy, Alireza & Reza Ghassemi. "Job burnout in psychiatric and medical nurses in Isfahan, Iran." *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, vol 12, 2006, pp. 662-9.

Weber, A., & Jaekel-Reinhard, A. (2000). "Burnout Syndrome: A Disease of Modern Societies." *Occupational Medicine*, 50(7), 512-517. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/occmed/50.7.512>



Major Issues	Year of Production	Name of Movie	Topics Covered
Addiction	1999	Taher's Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addiction</li> <li>Gender Norms</li> </ul>
Immigration	1998	Mercedes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immigration</li> </ul>
Healthcare	1988	Passing Through the Dust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthcare</li> <li>Social Support</li> <li>Patient-Physician Interaction</li> </ul>
Poverty	1999	The Burnt Slip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corruption</li> <li>Poverty</li> </ul>
Corruption (Social, economic, political)	1995	The Feast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changing norms in Iran</li> <li>Friendship</li> </ul>
Laws/Judicial System	2001	The Hidden Half	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The many facades of Iranian politics</li> </ul>
Women's Issues	2002	I'm Taraneh, 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women's Issues</li> </ul>
Cultural Restirctions	2000	The Passion of Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Endless guidelines and rules</li> <li>Clash of belief systems</li> </ul>

Table 1: **Films Analyzed in the Early period of the assessed Era:** This table describes the films that were selected to be analyzed, the year of production, and the major issues that were addressed.

Major Issues	Year of Production	Name of Movie	Topics Covered
Addiction	2007	Ali Santoori	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addiction</li> <li>Music</li> <li>Poverty</li> </ul>
Immigration	2011	A Separation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immigration</li> <li>Divorce</li> </ul>
Healthcare	2017	A Special Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthcare/Patient-Physician Interaction</li> <li>Sanctions</li> <li>Social Support</li> </ul>
Poverty	2016	Infinity and One Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addiction</li> <li>Poverty</li> </ul>
Corruption (Social, economic, political)	2015	Taxi Tehran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall conditions in Iran</li> </ul>
Laws/Judicial System	2013	Hush! Girls Don't Scream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women's Issues</li> <li>Judicial System</li> </ul>
Women's Issues	2016	Daughter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationships</li> </ul>
Cultural Restirctions	2009	My Tehran for Sale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restrictions on many aspects of life</li> </ul>

Table 2: **Films Analyzed in the Late period of the assessed Era:** This table describes the films that were selected to be analyzed, the year of production, and the major issues that were addressed.

# An Overview of Parthian Coins and Their Iconography: The Collection of the National Museum of Iran

Zohreh Baseri

## Abstract

Documents from ancient civilizations are few and one of the most reliable is the coins and seals that have survived. The Parthian coins of this group, available in the National Museum of Iran, was solely due to the cultural effects shown by these objects. Now that we are on the threshold of the second millennium and are reviewing the means needed for establishing communication among different culture, it is necessary to look at the past and see how it can guide us in the future. In the present paper attempts to gather distinct samples, with characteristics that reflect the artistic culture of Iran and Greece, the two most influential areas of the Parthian empire.

## Introduction

Coins and seals are one of the few primary sources that provide important information about the Parthian period. The present discussion highlights some aspects of symbols that appear on Parthian coins in the collection of the National Museum. It is an attempt to gather examples of coins that reveal Iranian artistic trends and those that have influence from the west. These objects offer firm evidence of inter-cultural connections between the third century BC and the beginning of the third century AD. In the pre-Hellenistic period, the royal mints of Achaemenid Iran were situated in the western part of the Persian empire, where satraps appointed by the Great King also had the right to mint coins. Here we find some of the best examples of coin portraits. In addition, the Persian king minted darics and sigloi. After the conquest of the Persian empire by Alexander, coin portraits reached a new peak, when his successors, the Diadochoi, divided up his realm and each ruler produced his own coinage. For example, coins in the name of Alexander show his portrait, sometimes wearing a lion's scalp or the horns of Zeus Ammon. Seleucus, who inherited the former Achaemenid empire, appears wearing a helmet on his so-called trophy coins, some of which come from the David Stronach's excavations at Pasargadae in the 1960s.

In the Parthian period, coins were minted

in silver and bronze. Iconographic details such as facial features, hair style and costumes are an essential tool for the attribution of the coins to the various kings. This is particularly important, as the majority of Parthian kings use the dynastic name "Arsaces" and personal names appear only occasionally and late. The legendary ancestor usually appears as a seated archer on the reverse of silver drachms, while the ruler's portrait is shown on the obverses. The language of the coin inscriptions is typically Greek, but occasionally from the first century BC onwards words and names appear in Parthian using the Aramaic script.

Areas that were conquered by the Parthians from the Seleucids also produced coins. For example, Elymais and Characene first used Seleucid prototypes, which were soon replaced by Parthian-style iconography. The kings of Persis, who ruled in the heartland of the former Persian empire, seem to have minted coins already under the Seleucids. These coins show strong Achaemenid links, but after the Parthian conquest of Persia, coin portraits began to show a remarkable similarity to the Parthian royal image.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See V.S. Curtis 2010; Baseri and Askari 2001, pp 156-157; for coins of Persis, Elymais and Characene and Parthia, see Alram 1986, pls 13-21.



## Greek and Iranian cultural relations during the Seleucid and Parthian periods (331 BC-224 AD)

After the collapse of the Achaemenid empire in 330 BCE, Iranian traditions and various elements of the Greco-Macedonian culture of the conquerors were combined in the Hellenistic east. Alexander and his successors built many cities throughout the former Persian empire and established new mints in their territories. The new rulers were attracted to the culture of the conquered regions and adopted many local traditions and encouraged intermarriage between Greeks and Persians. A result of the fusion of two cultures was the merging of features of western religions and local deities. Thus many Greek gods have Iranian parallels: Zeus and Ahura Mazda, Apollo and Mithra, Heracles and Verethragna, Artemis and Anahita.

In the Iranian lands, resistance to the Seleucids started around 250 BCE, when the Parthians from eastern Iran rebelled against their overlords. This began a gradual pushwestwards into Media, and in 148BC ancient Ecbatana was conquered. By 140 BC, Mithradates I had conquered Mesopotamia and was crowned in Seleucia on the Tigris. The Parthians initially embraced Greek culture and described themselves on their coins as "Philhellene". The Greek language remained a predominant feature of the Parthian coin, although in an increasingly corrupt form as time passed. Gradually the Greek influence declined and strong Iranian features emerged. Parthian coin iconography is a mixture of Greek and Iranian influences. The designs on Parthian coins suggest that there was Greek influence mixed with western Asian and Iranian traditions.

### The Parthians

The victory of the Parthians did not happen at once. The founder of the Parthian dynasty, Arsaces I (Ashk), came to power in 247 BC. This marks the beginning of the Arsacid calendar. In addition, they also followed the Seleucid calendar, which starts in 312 BC. This Seleucid calendar was used for date inscriptions on Parthian tetradrachms. With the conquest of Ecbatana and Mesopotamia under Mithradates (Mehrdad) I, tetradrachms became a feature of Parthian coinage. These were minted in Seleucia on the Tigris from 140 BC onwards. Here Mithradates wears a diadem in the Hellenistic fashion and uses the title "Great King".

In the first century BC, the encounters between Parthia and Rome increased in frequency, and there is also historical evidence of direct contact between the two empires. For example, a slave called Musa was sent by the emperor Augustus to Phraates IV (Farhad). She became his queen and with the help of their son, she murdered him. She then married her son Phraataces and together they issued tetradrachms and drachms which bore the portrait of the king on the obverse and his queen on the reverse.<sup>2</sup> Once again, the legends are in Greek and they describe the consort of Phraataces as *Thea Musa Urania*.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps this was the result of the intense political situation in the second half of the first century BC when Rome and Parthia were fierce rivals.

### Works Cited

- Baseri, Khadijeh [Zohreh] & Asgari, Elaheh Marzieh "Coins and Seals Department", in *Iran bastan, negahi be ganjineyeh moozeyeh melie Iran* [the Ancient Iran catalogue. the look at the treasure of Iran national museum], cultural Heritage organization of Iran, Tehran, 2001, pp 156–157.
- Bayani, Malekzadeh, "Coins of History", Institute of Publications and Printing of Tehran University Tehran, 1995, pp1-46.
- Curtis, Vesta Sarkhosh & Stewart Sarah. "The Age of the Parthians" in association with the London Middle east institute at SOAS and the British Museum, London & New York, 2007a , pp 7-25.
- Curtis, Vesta, Sarkhosh, "Religious iconography on Ancient Iranian coins", in J. Cribb and G. Herrmann (eds), *After Alexander: Central Asia before Islam*, Proceedings of the British Academy 133, Oxford, 2007b, pp 413-434.
- Curtis, Vesta, Sarkhosh, "The Frataraka Coins of Persis: Bridging the Gap between Achaemenid and Sasanian Persia", in *The World of Achaemenid Persia: History, Art and Society in Iran and the Ancient Near East*, J. Curtis and St J. Simpson, London, 2010, pp 379-394.
- Erickson, K, and Ramsey, G. (eds) "Seleucid Disso-  
lution, the Sinking of the Anchor" edited by

<sup>2</sup> Sellwood 1980, 58.6 and 58.9. For a detailed discussion of religious iconography on ancient Iranian coins, see V.S. Curtis 2007b; F. Sinisi 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Wroth 1903, p. xli.

Kyle Erickson and Gillian Ramsey, Wiesbaden-Erbenheim, Harrassowitz Verlag, Germany, 2011, pp 195-201.

Haaff, van't, P.A. "Catalogue of Elymaean Coinage," Ca. 147 B.C. – A.D. 228, Lancaster, PA, and London, 2007, pp4-16.

Houghton, A., and Lorber, C. "Seleucid coins: a comprehensive catalogue, Part I. Seleucus I through Antiochus III", VOLUME I, 2 vols, New York, and Lancaster, PA. 2002, pp219- 226.

Houghton, A., Lorber, C., and Hoover, O. "Seleucid coins: a comprehensive catalogue, Part I. Seleucus IV through Antiochus XIII", VOLUME II, 2 vols, New York and Lancaster, PA, 2008, P219.

McDowell, Robert Harbold (1935). "Coins from Seleucia on the Tigris", Ann Arbor, university of Michigan press 1935, pp 61-237.

Sellwood, D, "An Introduction to the Coinage of Parthia", 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London, 1980, pp 1-20.

Sinisi, F. "Tyche in Parthia: the image of the goddess on Arsacid tetradrachms", *Festschrift für Günther Dembski*, Numismatische Zeitschrift 116/117, 2008, pp 231-248.

Wroth, W. (1903). "A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum: Coins of Parthia", London, 1903, IXV-IXXXVII.

*The Catalogue "Iran and Greece: a dialogue among civilizations"*, a glance at the exhibition of the common heritage of Iran and Greece at the national museum of Iran, published by national museum of Iran prepared by historical-Luristan dept & coins and seals dept. Tehran. Iran & Greece, 2000, pp3-5.



# ***The New York Times'* Coverage of the Iranian Revolution**

Melle van Hilten

Leiden University, The Hague

Abstract

The way in which newspapers report on news events can have a significant impact on public perception and understanding of events. The events constituting the Iranian Revolution drastically altered the relationship between the United States and Iran in tandem with a more general change in public opinion regarding the other country and its people. This paper investigates how the *The New York Times'* attitude was influenced on its reports of the Revolution. Through extensive analysis of newspaper articles published in the paper between 1975 and 1980, this paper asserts that reporting moved from being rather impersonal and neutral to far more critical and normative over this time period. Prior to the Revolution, reporting was limited and focused on the economic and diplomatic relations between the United States and Iran. As revolutionary activity developed, the newspaper grew more critical of current leadership. After the revolution, the paper became increasingly more actively engaged with the day-to-day political developments within the country.

---

The Iranian Revolution in 1979 represents a pivotal moment in Iranian history, as is exemplified by the way in which it influenced the relationship between Iran and the United States. The U.S. government had enjoyed a rather close alliance to the Shah and his government prior to the Revolution. With the institution of the Islamic Republic in Iran, relations changed dramatically. Not only diplomatic and political bonds were transformed, attitudes within the two countries regarding the other became increasingly more negative and hostile. Media coverage of events, especially those occurring in remote regions, generally have a significant impact on public perception. Consequently, the way in which the media reported on the events may thus be vital for understanding how and why these public attitudes changed.

This paper will delve into how *The New York Times* reported on the Iranian Revolution and the leadership involved, in order to discern what influence this particular newspaper may have had on how the public perceived the regime change in Iran. This research will shed more light on how a widely circulated, and arguably liberal, newspaper approached the situation in Iran, and subsequently reported it to the American public. This paper will provide a brief history of the Iranian revolution. Subsequently, the coverage of the Iranian Revolution will be analyzed by discussing trends in reporting in

the periods prior, during, and after the Revolution separately.

Tracing the roots of the Iranian Revolution requires going back far into Iranian history. For the sake of convenience and space, the focus here will be solely on Mohammed Reza Shah's rule in general and the immediate events surrounding the revolution. The Shah was firmly placed at the helm by a coup in 1953, in which the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States played a fairly non-trivial role in dismantling parliamentary opposition to the monarch. After the Shah resumed his position in 1953, his rule turned considerably more hands-on, and arguably more authoritarian as the Majles' effective control and jurisdiction shrank markedly. In 1963, the Shah initiated his White Revolution, which was primarily geared towards land reform. One of the primary aims was to strengthen his base among the peasants and rural notables. However, in the long run, the White Revolution ended up alienating much of his support in the countryside. The economic policy the Shah implemented enlarged income differences and further aggravated the educated and urban middle classes. The social tensions that emerged in combination with dissatisfaction regarding the Shah's authoritarianism and secularism resulted in strong and radical political opposition. These grievances were further intensified when the Shah abolished all political parties and declared Iran

to be a one-party state in March 1975 (Abrahamian, 2008).

The political and social tensions started being voiced on a large scale in public spheres in 1977. In the autumn of 1977, middle class dissidents took to the streets to voice their critiques. The protests inspired later demonstrations in Qom in January 1978, organized by seminary students protesting the one-party decree and a government-controlled newspaper's critique on Ayatollah Khomeini. The incident is a clear illustration of Khomeini's growing influence. Clashes between protesters and authorities resulted in casualties, the exact number of which is disputed. The clashes indirectly resulted in three separate crises in mid-February, late March, and May respectively. Tension were further exacerbated by two separate events. A full movie theatre was incinerated on August 9, inspiring conspiracy theories about SAVAK, the Shah's covert intelligence agency. In addition, authorities shot indiscriminately into protesting crowds on September 8, after the government had instituted martial law. Mass demonstrations intensified and widespread strikes were initiated. On December 11, 1978, an enormous rally took place in Tehran. Khomeini returned from exile on February 1, and by February 11 his group of revolutionaries had taken effective control of the country (Abrahamian, 2008).

The state building process was not without its problems, as the interim prime minister Mehdi Bazargan and revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini set up parallel institutions that disagreed on the ideal form of government for Iran. The conflict between Bazargan's provisional government and Khomeini's Revolutionary Council became evident in their disagreement over the referendum establishing an Islamic Republic. The referendum was held on April 1, and a huge majority voted in favor of an Islamic Republic. And thus, a government was formed that matched more closely Khomeini's wishes, as he was instilled with great power in the Islamic Republic of Iran (Abrahamian, 2008).

Now that a brief overview of the history has been given, the coverage by *The New York Times* can be discussed. To analyze the way in which *The New*

*York Times* interpreted the events, the periods prior to, during, and after the Revolution will be explored separately. Although there is no strict delineation, for the purposes of this paper, the start of the Revolution will be marked by the protests in Qom in January, 1978. February 11 is considered the end of the Revolution here. Roughly 120 newspaper articles published in the period between 1975 and June 1979 have been researched to discern general trends and themes in *The New York Times'* reporting on the political changes in Iran.

Prior to the Revolution, articles typically offered a neutral or positive perspective on the Shah and his political control. Newspaper articles from this period are rather hard to find, with only a few pertaining directly to the Shah and his regime. The writers seem unaware of the growing unrest, or at least undercut its importance. The focus of the coverage is the economic development in Iran. This focus is easily explained as the U.S. at this time largely depended on oil from Iran, in addition to having friendly economic relations in general. Headlines such as "The Consequences of Growth" (Sulzberger, 1975) and "The Biggest Deal of All" (Sulzberger, 1975) refer specifically to the swift and economic development in Iran on the aggregate. Moreover, the articles focus specifically on what this accelerated growth means for the U.S. and their standing trade agreements. In discussing this diplomatic and economic relationship, the favorability of the Shah to the U.S. is often emphasized.

In terms of the Shah's politics, *The New York Times* did address the one-party decree, which according to democratic standards and ideals is reasonably questionable. As a result, one could expect some kind of condemnation of this policy. However, the limited number of articles pertaining to the decree tend to downplay the political effects and the domestic outrage. The questionability is not ignored, yet, statements like: "In Iran, moreover, the shift from two or more parties to one is by no means as drastic a change as might be implied in other lands" (Sulzberger, "The Shah," 1975), appear to argue that the Shah is justified in his decision. Even as the years progressed and tension in the country built,



the newspaper remained ignorant to growing unrest. Many were unhappy with the one-party system and opposition groups grew in prominence. Nonetheless, a headline read: "Iranians Use Party to Voice Grievances" (Howe, 1977), and the content of the article asserts that those dissatisfied with the state of affairs use the one party instituted by the Shah to voice their critiques. In other words, the resentment caused by the decree is disregarded. Reporting on the Shah has thus generally been generous, especially in light of the unrest that was undeniably building in this time period.

During the Revolution, reporting was dissociated from the experiences within the country. Instead, the bulk of the articles concentrate on the possible economic and strategic consequences of prolonged unrest. Notably, the growing threat to the Shah's power continues to be overlooked and downplayed until the very last months, or arguably even weeks, leading up to the culmination of the revolution. A report from June, 1978, for example, does mention protests in Iran while still affirming that the Shah is by no means expected to be overthrown. This article only mentions religious opposition, despite the multifaceted nature of the Revolution (Gage, "Shah of Iran Faces," 1978). Even in November, as protests continued and strikes were initiated, the newspaper states: "But, at present anyway, the Shah seems justified in his cool confidence that he is above defiance from his countrymen." (Lewis, 1978). Only after the mass demonstration on December 8, does the word 'revolution' show up in *The New York Times* (Gage, "Iran: Making of a Revolution," 1978). From this point onward, reporting on the developments of Iran are factual and distant. There is little mention of fighting and casualties. On the contrary, little opinion seems to be attached to the increasingly Islamic nature of the revolution. For instance, an article on a million Iranians taking to the streets in support of Khomeini, fails to meet the arguably reasonable expectation that a liberal newspaper would be concerned about Islamist trends (Apple Jr, 1979). However, fervent critiques are reserved for the U.S. government and, eventually, the Shah. In January 1979, an article, quite ironically, condemns the American government for not seeing the building pressures in Iran earlier (Oaked, "Tightrope in Iran," 1979). In that same month, the implicit support for

the Shah is resolutely revoked as the headline reads: "Years of autocratic rule by the Shah threw Iran into turbulence" (Ibrahim, 1979).

The focus on economic and strategic ramifications during the revolutionary period can be seen throughout 1978 and into 1979. In July of 1978, an almost propaganda-like article details the great relationship between the U.S. and Iran, and the great economic strides the latter is making. The article, published roughly a month after the first article mentioning protests, notably by the same author, also reiterates the belief that the Shah has "absolute control of the country" (Gage, "U.S.-Iran Links" 1978). Shortly after *The New York Times* formally acknowledged the developments in Iran as a revolution, the newspaper turns to consider what the situation might mean for American businessmen operating in Iran (Apple Jr, 1978). The economic interests are further illustrated by articles published on January 7 (Silk, 1979) and February 12 ("Iran faces major," 1979) that honed in on the economic consequences of a Revolution for the U.S. and other Western countries. The latter article was published the day after the culmination of the revolution. Nonetheless, it focused exclusively on the economic challenges of the new government, as opposed to ideology or human impact. The strategic concerns regarding Iran, especially in light of the Cold War and Iran's direct proximity to the Soviet Union, are most clearly expressed in an article published on January 23: "It is already shaping up as a sure 'plus' for the Russians, big 'minus' for the United States." (Oaked, "Iran's Tidal Wave," 1979). Additionally, on the final day of the revolution, an article is published that analyzes what the Iranian Revolution has meant and will mean for the alliances held by the U.S. (Burt, 1979). These trends in reporting, and in particular the articles published around the final days of the revolutionary process, expose the significance given to national economic and strategic impacts.

After the Revolution, the quiet acceptance of Ayatollah Khomeini as a new political leader quickly dissipated, as the reporting became increasingly more critical. For this period, the frequency of reports went up considerably, signaling a deeper interest in the developments in Iran on the side of the newspaper. The focus even after the Revolution was the economic ramifications, as well as the multitude

of tasks that the new government was to face. Initially, the prospect of Khomeini as head of government was viewed with optimism. On February 16, an article's title read "Trusting Khomeini", and the content was as positive as the title suggests (Falk, 1979). Additionally, several publications in February emphasized the influence Khomeini wielded in the country. For example, two articles spoke specifically of the weight Khomeini himself carries among Iranians. Specially, one article spoke of the devoted way Iranians obeyed Khomeini's pleas for the resumption of work (Markham, "Strikers in Iran," 1979). Another article published soon after the Revolution argued that the support for Khomeini ran deep in society, beyond just his religious appeal (Markham, "Khomeini, for Many," 1979). Other positive reports regarding Khomeini followed the attacks on the U.S. embassy in Teheran, which Khomeini's forces helped dismantle (Gage, 1979). This article also refers to the one group that the newspaper does seem very concerned about after the culmination of the revolution, namely communists, the Tudeh party specifically. Just a few days after the revolution, the threat of communist guerilla groups was extensively elaborated on (Markham, "Marxist-Leninist Guerilla," 1979). One day after this article was published, the newspaper talks specifically of the Tudeh party (Markham, "In Iran, Fears," 1979). Alternatively put, the newspaper overall seemed much more concerned with communists than with radical Islamist forces.

The relative condonation of Khomeini and his government's actions began faltering with the executions of political prisoners with little trial to show for. The first mention of such executions is on February 17, however, the article claims that Khomeini is not supportive of this, let alone in charge (Markman, "20 More Shah Aides," 1979). This claim does not stand for long though, as Khomeini's role becomes a point of contention. As the struggle between Khomeini and Bazargan intensifies, the newspaper more commonly reports on Bazargan's grievances (Gage, "Premier Seeks," 1979) ("The World," 1979) ("Iranian Premier Predicts," 1979) (Reuters, 1979). Through this process, criticisms on Khomeini from other corners became more prom-

inent fixtures in the paper's reporting too. As early as February 27th, the newspaper comments that some Iranians may not be as in accordance with Khomeini as previously perceived, as the executions of Shah supporters rub "some in Iran" the wrong way (Jaynes, "Some in Iran," 1979).

In March, the perception of Khomeini and his Revolutionary Committee, as well as his legal 'Komitehs' further deteriorates. Reporting on the executions continues, with a progressively accusatory tone regarding Khomeini. Essentially, *The New York Times'* focus in its reporting shifted more so to the groups opposing Khomeini, on what the paper appears to consider reasonable grounds. Especially the grievances of secular activists and women are more enlightened, for example in the article "Some in Iran finding Islamic Law Harsh, its Justice Swift" (Ibrahim, 1979). The newspaper also covered women protests in mid-March, with a very positive reaction to a perceived expansion in opposition. Specifically, when reporting on the protests, the paper stated: "They also offer hope for Iran's future", thereby indicating that little hope is vested in Khomeini himself ("Behind the Veil of Iran," 1979). Moreover, negative headlines like "Iran Sees Signs of Bad Old Days" (1979) and "Iran Regime Executes 7 More Officials" (1979) make regular appearances in the paper in this period. Also in this pivotal March, criticisms on the Revolution itself were voiced, whereas reports had before generally viewed the events as a testament to widespread support for Khomeini. One article in particular calls the Revolution "a Revolution of the bourgeoisie", in which large segments of the population played no role, neither did they desire to do so (Jaynes, "In Teheran," 1979). The final example of how the reporting on the Revolution changed in the months following the events in February is the very telling quote: "Iran is learning that freedom can suffer as much from too little government as from too much" ("Trial by Komiteh," 1979). The quote appeared in one of many articles reporting on the executions in Iran, and unequivocally represents the negative view the paper holds of the new Iranian government.

Reporting by *The New York Times* has



changed over time in reaction to the changes in society and politics that resulted from the Iranian revolution. Reporting on the Shah prior to the Revolution was rather positive. While ignoring and downplaying SAVAK's actions and the one-party decree, reports emphasized his power and following. As protests started developing, reporting shifted to the economic and strategic ramifications political unrest could have on the United States. During the Revolution, judgement was held back for Khomeini and the revolutionaries. However, after the revolution, the newspaper became increasingly more critical of the new regime. In terms of explaining why these changes occurred, it is hard to discern the exact reasons. A strong indicator could be the author writing the article. For example, most of the positive articles on Khomeini came from Markham. This does not change the fact that the way the newspaper reports on remote events has a significant influence on public perception, making the observations the newspaper presents vital to public understanding of the Iranian revolution.

#### Works Cited

"Behind the Veil of Iran." *The New York Times*, 15 Mar. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/03/15/archives/behind-the-veil-of-iran.html>.

"Iran Faces Major Economic Difficulties." *The New York Times*, 12 Feb. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/12/archives/iran-faces-major-economic-difficulties-prices-likely-to-soar.html>.

"Iran Regime Executes 7 More Officials." *The New York Times*, 5 Mar. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/03/05/archives/iran-regime-executes-seven-more-officials-seven-officials-listed.html>.

"Iran Sees Signs of Bad Old Days." *The New York Times*, 4 Mar. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/03/04/archives/iran-sees-signs-of-bad-old-days.html>.

"Iranian Premier Predicts Referendum in a Month." *The New York Times*, 28 Feb. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/28/archives/iranian-premier-predicts-referendum-in-a-month.html>.

"The World: Power in Iran has Two Centers." *The New York Times*, 25 Feb. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/25/archives/the-world-in-summary-power-in-iran-has-two-centers-many-claimants.html>.

"Trial by Komiteh." *The New York Times*, 19 Apr. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/04/19/archives/trial-by-komiteh.html>.

Abrahamian, Ervand. *A History of Modern Iran*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Apple Jr, R.W. "A Million Marchers Rally for Khomeini in Teheran Streets." *The New York Times*, 20 Jan. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/01/20/archives/a-million-marchers-rally-for-khomeini-in-teheran-streets.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FIran>.

Apple Jr. R.W. "Ominous Stalemate in Iran." *The New York Times*, 23 Dec. 1978, <http://www.nytimes.com/1978/12/23/archives/ominous-stalemate-in-iran-hints-of-disunity-on-both-sides-and.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FIran>.

Burt, Richard. "Swiftly Changing Political Currents Lead U.S. to Ponder a New Kind of Foreign Alliance." *The New York Times*, 11 Feb. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/11/archives/in-the-balance-the-trouble-is-client-states-dont-always-remain-so.html>.

Falk, Richard. "Trusting Khomeini." *The New York Times*, 16 Feb. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/16/archives/trusting-khomeini.html>.

Gage, Nicholas. "Armed Iranians Rush U.S. Embassy." *The New York Times*, 15 Feb. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/15/archives/armed-iranians-rush-us-embassy-khomeinis-forces-free-staff-of-100-a.html>.

Gage, Nicholas. "Iran: Making of a Revolution." *The New York Times*, 17 Dec. 1978, <http://www.nytimes.com/1978/12/17/archives/iran-making-of-a-revolution-shah.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FIran>.

Gage, Nicholas. "Premier Seeks to Build Authority of the New Iranian Government." *The New York Times*, 23 Feb. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/23/archives/premier-seeks-to-build-authority-of-the-new-iranian-government.html>.

com/1979/02/23/archives/premier-seeks-to-build-authority-of-the-new-iranian-government-iran.html.

Gage, Nicholas. "Shah of Iran Faces Challenge Headed by Moslem Clergy." *The New York Times*, 4 June 1978, <http://www.nytimes.com/1978/06/04/archives/shah-of-iran-faces-challenge-headed-by-moslem-clergy-shah-of-iran.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FIran>.

Gage, Nicholas. "U.S.-Iran Links Still Strong." *The New York Times*, 9 July, 1978, <http://www.nytimes.com/1978/07/09/archives/usiran-links-still-strong-move-toward-liberalization.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FIran>.

Howe, Marvine. "Iranian use Party to Voice Grievances." *The New York Times*, 2 Apr. 1977, <http://www.nytimes.com/1977/07/10/archives/iranians-use-party-to-voice-grievances-official-movement-claims-6.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FIran>.

Ibrahim, Youssef M. "Some in Iran finding Islamic Law Harsh, its Justice Swift." *The New York Times*, 1 Mar. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/03/01/archives/some-in-iran-finding-islamic-law-harsh-its-justice-swift-news.html>.

Ibrahim, Youssef M. "Years of Autocratic Rule by the Shah threw Iran into turbulence." Jan. 17, 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/01/17/archives/years-of-autocratic-rule-by-the-shah-threw-iran-into-turbulence.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FIran>.

Jaynes, Gregory. "In Teheran, Very Rich and Very Poor Await the Future." *The New York Times*, 5 Mar. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/03/05/archives/in-teheran-very-rich-and-very-poor-await-the-future-southern-rim-of.html>.

Jaynes, Gregory. "Some in Iran Ask if the Retribution Is Going Too Far." *The New York Times*, 27 Feb. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/27/>

[archives/some-in-iran-ask-if-the-retribution-is-going-too-far-reputedly.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/27/archives/some-in-iran-ask-if-the-retribution-is-going-too-far-reputedly.html).

Lewis, Flora. "Iran: Future Shock." *The New York Times*, 12 Nov. 1978, <http://www.nytimes.com/1978/11/12/archives/iran-future-shock-iran.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FIran>.

Markham, James M. "In Iran, Fears of a Revolution Within a Revolution." *The New York Times*, 16, Feb. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/16/archives/in-iran-fears-of-a-revolution-within-a-revolution-news-analysis.html>.

Markham, James M. "Khomeini, for Many, Embodies Ancient Persian Virtues." *The New York Times*, 21 Feb. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/21/archives/khomeini-for-many-embodies-ancient-persian-virtues-the-worldly-is.html>.

Markham, James M. "Marxist-Leninist Guerrilla Group Is a Potent Force in the New Iran." *The New York Times*, 15 Feb. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/15/archives/marxist-leninist-guerrilla-group-is-a-potent-force-in-the-new-iran.html>.

Markham, James M. "Strikers in Iran Heeding Plea to Return to Their Jobs." *The New York Times*, 18 Feb. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/18/archives/strikers-in-iran-heeding-plea-to-return-to-their-jobs-now-we-are.html>.

Markman, James M. "20 More Shah Aides Said to Face Death in Start of a Purge." *The New York Times*, 17 Feb. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/02/17/archives/20-more-shah-aides-said-to-face-death-in-start-of-a-purge-regime.html>.

Oaked, John B. "Iran's Tidal Wave." *The New York Times*, 23 Jan. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/01/23/archives/irans-tidal-wave.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FIran>.



com/1979/01/12/archives/tightrope-in-iran.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FIran.

Oaked, John B. "Tightrope in Iran." *The New York Times*, 12 Jan. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/01/12/archives/tightrope-in-iran.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FIran>.

Reuters. "Premier Now Threatens to Quit Unless He Gets More Effective Power." *The New York Times*, 1 Mar. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/03/01/archives/premier-now-threatens-to-quit-unless-he-gets-more-effective-power.html>.

Silk, Leonard. "The Economic Scene." *The New York Times*, 7 Jan. 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/01/07/archives/the-economic-scene-wests-concern-over-iran.html>.

Sulzberger, C. L. "The Shah (II): Authority." *The New York Times*, 22 Mar. 1975, [www.nytimes.com/1975/03/22/archives/the-shah-ii-authority.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FIran](http://www.nytimes.com/1975/03/22/archives/the-shah-ii-authority.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FIran).

Sulzberger, C.L. "The Consequences of Growth." *The New York Times*, 16 Mar. 1975, <http://www.nytimes.com/1975/03/16/archives/the-consequences-of-growth.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FIran>.

# Exploration of Rom in Persia

Melika Tabrizi

University of Maryland, College Park

## Abstract

This paper takes a look at the Iranian *Rom* – a minority group in Iran that is often looked down upon. While there are several existing stereotypes and misconceptions on this group of beings, such as the commonly accepted deceiving and thieving notions that are associated with them, the Rom have a rich culture that is heavily engaged with music, dance, and performance. There is a wide range of these nomadic peoples who are currently still living throughout Iran. It is unfortunate how denounced this community is, therefore making it valuable to educate others on the Rom. This paper is written in hopes of looking past the common misconceptions through defining who the Rom are as an ethnic society and giving a sense of prominence to the uniqueness of the Roma culture; this paper will bring light to the distinctive culture of the Rom by exploring the beginnings of their time in ancient Persia, how the existing Persian Rom are treated, how they interact with Iranians, the etymology of the Romani and Persian language, as well as a significantly more detailed look at how the Persian-Rom are portrayed in Iranian literature and film. The terms gypsy/gypsies, Rom, Roma, and Romani are used interchangeably throughout this work.

### The Beginnings: History of Rom in Persia

The gypsies, properly known as Rom/Roma/Romani, are a mysterious group of nomads who began their journey nearly one thousand years ago from Northern India. In about 5th century AD, Persia was the first country where the Rom were imported to by request of the Sasanian king Bahrām V Gōr. King Bahrām Gōr “asked the king of India to send him ‘ten thousand *luris*, men and women, lute playing experts” in light of his appreciation for the arts and especially for his desire to make music more accessible (Digard). Upon the arrival of these performers (dancers, singers, musicians, etc,) king Bahrām Gōr is said to have given “each one an ox and an ass and an ass-load of wheat so that they could live on agriculture and play music for the poor.” Their departure from Persia by the 5th century was a result of the king becoming angered with seeing what he had provided them with having gone to waste, so he “ordered them to pack up... and go wandering around the world” (Digard). Nowadays there are several different groups of Rom living all around Iran and often go by various names depending on what area they are from.

### Rom in Iran Today

The term “koli” in the Persian language is what is often used to refer to the gypsies. This is a derogatory term (just how the term “gypsy” is seen insulting, as it refers to Egyptians, they prefer to be called Rom) that is often even used as an insult to others, for example telling someone to not act “koli-bazi” translates to “gypsy-play” and connotes a meaning for an individual not to act in the manner of a gypsy because they are seen as wild and on the loose. This general misunderstanding and harsh judgment of a whole culture is a signifier of how misjudged the Rom and their culture can be in Iran; they are seen as lower and are rather mocked for their differences instead of being valued for them.

Most Iranian Rom are said to “live in the slums of south Tehran in narrow, twisting alleys.” For work they “clean car windscreens, sell an assortment of junk and oddities: chewing gum, flowers, fortune poems and nylon socks or simply beg” in the streets, mostly dangerously roaming around the cars in traffic. However, the Dom Research Center believe “theses [sic] days their old tricks no longer win the empathy of the passersby” (Dom Research Center). They lack an inclusion in the Iranian society for “[t]



hey are as deprived, isolated and hard to approach" and "are not included in any official statistics simply because they have no permanent place of residence." This, along with a lack of cards of identification, further pushes them away from the typical inhabitants of Iran. Additionally, families are said to decide and arrange their children's marriage, which "is not registered anywhere" later leading to "the off springs of the marriage [to also lack] identity card[s]" (Dom Research Center). This exclusion from society based on lack of evidence for their legitimacy in society particularly hard on the kids they raise because they get "denied education [for having] no identity cards," along with suffering from "simple diseases because they are deprived of healthcare facilities" (Dom Research Center).

It is important to note that "almost everywhere in Iran there are groups with characteristics similar to those of the [Rom,] but they are called by different names." In Tehran, the capital, Lorestān, Baḳtiāri, Fārs the term "koli" is used in reference to this group, however, "it is not at all certain [whether] all the groups referred to as [koli] are authentic gypsies... nor that only the groups referred to as [koli] should be considered gypsies" (Digard). This brings out a notable point because the Rom of the city are portrayed to better fit the description of a poor beggar, while the more authentic travelers, living in the rural areas such as the *ḡorbati*, another, more preferred term for the Rom, of the Lorestān/Baḳtiāri regions tend to be more fulfilled from living off the resources of the rural lands. The difference between certain these groups is "designating [to] their geographic or ethnic origin, sometimes their social status, and sometimes their profession" (Digard).

### Experience with the Rom in Iran

My interviewee Amaneh Moghadam, who had encounters with the fortune-teller Roms from Shiraz, explains: they first "ask for your name and you become mesmerized to respond because they are so intriguing in their extravagant long layered dresses, sometimes decorated with gold, sequins, and many colors; they have a love for gold and show it from the jewelry they wear." These groups are said to become "slightly offended when you don't respond with your name." After this, they "take a look at your palms, then right away look at your face and being reading you... their response

is usually very accurate" because of their knack for reading people very well. She says: "although they can't really tell the future they are very keen on recollecting one's inner mood through what is written on one's face; they can tell if you are aggressive or nice right away." They try to assure you that everything will be well, but in order for them to continue making money off you, they "claim not to tell the rest of your future until you pay them a little more." She also notes on the "beauty of the [Rom] females" who have "spellbinding eyes, and are likely to have long, dark, gorgeous hair." As part of their dress, they tend to always "outline their eyes with kohl eyeliner," often made from ground walnut hulls (Moghaddam).

### Language of the Rom with Persian

The Rom's dialect is noted for being influenced by Persian words, implying that their establishment in Persia might have meant, "that the Roma must have been in contact with the Persian-speaking population over an extended time" (Rombase). A few terms that are close cognates, stemming from Persian dialect, include:

English	Romani	Persian
Blind	Corredo	Coor
Sea	Dooriya	Darya
Medicine	Drav	Daru
To do or make / work	Ker	Kar
I/myself (very seldom used)	Man	Man
Cook	Pekt	Pokhtan
Feather	Por	Par
To hear	Shoon	Shinide

(Borrow)

### How the Rom are Represented in Persian Literature

As mentioned in the beginning paragraph of the "History of Rom in Persia," the poet Ferdowsi (940-1020) notes the presence of the Rom being delivered from India to Persia in his longest epic

poem, the *Shahnameh*, or *The Book of Kings*; this classic epic also has come to be known as the first written account of the Rom's presence in literature.

In a translation of one of his poems, the famous Persian poet, Hafez (1315-1390) writes: "My heart is bound to that wild, coquettish gypsy / who breaks promises, and kills, and is false" (Hafez). While the English translation of this line features some stereotypical diction attached to the character of a gypsy, assumably highlighting the negative ideas that they are associated with such as being overly seductive, lying, and killing, the use of a gypsy in Hafez's poem is rather representative of a alluring and playful character being used and seen as a beloved figure. The beloved figure in Persian poetry is typically known as someone who does not keep their words and makes use of their allure and charisma to capture the heart of a lover. The beloved, or gypsy in this case, is being described as being so beautiful that their physical looks have the power to kill.

A more contemporary poet, Simin Behbahani, takes a feminist stand in her collection of poems titled "Gypsyesque" which "address the persona of the Kowli [gypsy], a liberated and passionate women whose ways are incompatible with the societal conventions" (Rezvani). She uses "[t]he gypsy... [as] a symbolic figure... [that] inspires the seeking of freedom and breaking through confinement" (Rezvani, quoted from Firouzeh Dianat). Her collection of poems, including one titled "Gypsy," has "tried to turn [k]oli into a myth... and create a distinctive poetic personality [of its own... containing] several characteristics, the most important of which is gypsy womanhood" (Mahbub). It is profound how reference to the term "gypsy," or "koli," has changed in Iranian poetry, from being one that carried a sexual connotation, to one that is meaningful in representing the power of womanhood.

### **Representation of Rom in Iranian Cinema**

Aspects of Rom culture such as song, dance, attire, and traditions/customs are very prominent in some earlier Persian films, otherwise known as "film-Farsi", such as in *Gypsy Love (or Eshghe Koli)* (Reza Safaee, 1968) and *Gol Pari Joon* (Azizollah Ba-

hadori, 1974,) along with the common stereotype of the Rom stealing young children. More recently, Abbas Kiarostami's *Through the Olive Trees* (1994) picks up on the notions and traditions of the Rom with how they are commonly viewed nowadays.

*Gypsy Love* (Safaee, 1968) starts off with a young boy, Iraj, getting lost while shopping with his mother, a gypsy woman who is strolling by selling hand-made baskets and chanting that she also tells fortunes finds him crying on the streets and comforts him; she realizes that she wants to keep him and raise him as her own. The following scene is a performance done by the same gypsy woman of her tribe singing about being very joyful and delighted; the lyrics of her song declares that her purpose is to bring about happiness and good times with her performance.

The attire of the Persian Rom in *Gypsy Love* includes elaborate ensemble with golden-hooped earrings on every character, even the boys, along with other gold jewelry. The females wear decorated headpieces with gold coins hanging from it and long flowy/ruffled clothing, while the males wear a thin silky scarf around their heads and often have their muscles exposed in a silk vest. All the Persian Rom females are presented with heavy dark makeup that brings out dark features, such as in their eyebrows and eyes, and their hair equally is extremely dark and long. Men, both Rom and non-Rom, are shown being very aggressive with Rom woman for her beauty.

There are plenty of songs sung by the Persian Rom that tell the story of their innocent purpose, to entertain, such as in one lyric a Rom man chants "our job is to entertain/make people happy... with the pretty woman [Rom dancer], we go from here to there... she has love, song, and beauty." The distribution of money is quarreled in a performance group done by two Persian Rom and two others who are gadjo musicians; the Rom performers run off with the money from the other two street performers they worked with. This gives the implication of how the Persian Rom are perceived stingy with the money they make from performing.

Marriage is shown to be a choice of the



parents and/or the group leader. The film mentions how a male Rom of the community want to pursue Maryam, a kidnapped child, who is “not a koli [gypsy]” and cannot marry within the Rom community she grew up in because it is not culturally permitted. As a result of these strict cultural restriction on marriage –being that the Rom can only marry other authentic Rom– Maryam and Iraj, another kidnapped boy who was raised in the same Rom community, are permitted to marry in a Rom wedding which is confirmed by the couple splitting their wrists in a ceremony in order to be officially joined in marriage.

The death of mother, who kidnapped Iraj, results in the tribe to pick up their travels, as the young are advised to go make use of what they can in the town by selling their goods, such as baskets and metal works, and telling fortunes in their last few days. In the city the Rom character roams the streets singing of telling fortunes; they go up to the people in the streets and start flattering them and reading them, one passerby comments that Maryam is “disgusting” she gets offended and cusses her out as she leaves, proving a bold attitude. Signs of illiteracy in the Rom community of Iran are shown when Maryam and her Rom friend cannot read the signs in the shops, stating that they were not educated to read or write in Persian.

In *Gol Pari Joon* (Bahadori, 1974) a gypsy midwife, dressed in elaborate clothing with a headpiece dangling with several shiny coins, steals a twin baby, raises her into the gypsy culture, while the other twin, with the same name, grows up in the city of Tehran. On her departure from the midwife the rightful mother of the twins, who has unknowingly given birth to two baby girls, asks what would be a good name for her daughter, to which the gypsy woman responds “Gol Pari.” This is noteworthy because “golpar” is the name of a spice that his harvested and dried from *Heracleum Persicum* plant, also known as Persian hogweed; “gol” translates to flower, while “par” translates to wing. This is a meaningful name choice for a Persian Rom to mention because of its connection to agriculture, which was an important skill adapted by the Rom who inhabited Persia years before.

Years later, the Rom raised Gol Pari and her two male Rom friends as part of a traveling per-

formance troupe, one where audiences pay to see Gol Pari dance and put on a show. The males put on acts that test their strength along with acrobatics, and their traveling truck makes the statement that their performances will “blow your mind.” These performances that they put on are done for a means of income and present the issue of money distribution; at one point they are arguing over their earnings and accusing each other of not distributing it fairly. There is also plenty of singing done by the Rom group, which giveaway hints of their lifestyle, such as one line which states of how they “go from town to town” in search of something to do for food.

Gol Pari’s ensemble consists of a revealing cropped top with flowy sleeves, revealing skimpy skirt, shiny coins hanging from a headpiece, and heavy dark eye makeup that emphasize her determinedness. She has a bold attitude, is heavily emphasized in sexuality, and very brazen with the way she handles every situation; she even carries a knife for protection against sleazy men and stabs a man at one point.

In another scene, Gol Pari and her fellow gypsy companion steal a bag and are disappointed to find out there is no money inside, so they decide to take advantage of the opportunity and play heroes by returning it themselves and lying that someone else was trying to get away with it. This scene puts emphasis on the stereotype of how the Rom are seen as thieves and liars; it is almost expected of them to do such things. She is also open to lying as being her twin in order to please the expectations of others and avoid getting in trouble.

In order to get accustomed with public settings the Persian Rom tend to break out in song or dance performances; towards the end of the film there is a strong impression given that Rom are very good dancers; Gol Pari’s companion brags about how she can perform the dances of many nearby cultures such as Arab, Turkish, and Indian.

This film covers the perceived attitudes of gypsy culture between the two twins in how the Rom Gol Pari was raised with vivacity for her love for music and dance, and with a courageousness from the way she deals with others who disrespect her; she is very determined to stand for who she is, while the city raised Gol Pari has a bashful and

irresolute character.

*Through the Olive Trees* (Kiarostami, 1994) tells the story of a behind-the-scenes look at a movie being filmed in Koker, Iran during the aftermath of an earthquake. While this movie is not centered on the Rom it does highlight how they are viewed in Iran along with a few aspects of their culture.

A girl from a small community is shown choosing an outfit for a movie she is playing in; she is told to wear something country-side-like for the part she has to play, but, being a self-conscious teen, she refuses and insists on wearing an outfit that is in style; she goes on to mock what a peasant would wear and claims that "only koli's [gypsies]" would wear an outfit of such, and goes on to say that "gypsies are illiterate", therefore she cannot stand presenting herself as one.

Later in the movie the crew is shown giving a ride to some Rom women in their truck; one of them instantly claims to not speak Persian when they are questioned by the director of where they are going, while another explains, with a distinct accent, that they are headed to a bathing area that is up in the mountains. The director asks why they are going so far when there is a similar place in town and the woman replies saying that it is "in the bazaar with shops, bakeries, etc;" while this part of their conversation is perplexing, it implies how these women are very serious about cleanliness, just as emphasized it is in the Rom culture. The Rom are very particular with the issue of uncleanness and being around food it is notable how the woman mentions there being "bakeries" in the town as a reason for not agreeing to bathe there. A "clutter-free therapeutic [cleansing] space [is considered] helpful and respectful [to] the Roma culture," (Hockersmith & Arman) therefore explaining a need to go up to an area in the serene mountains, away from crowds and food shops, in order to cleanse themselves. The Rom woman is then questioned about her daughter, to which the director says she does not resemble her mother, this, yet again, implies that who she claims to be her daughter might have been a stolen child. The director, wanting to

recruit the daughter for the film, then asks for the girl's name to which the whole family stays quiet; another passenger explains that it is not customary to give out names. The scene ends with the group of women being dropped off halfway up a mountainside and interrogated of where they live for future reference in case they could be useful for the movie's production, to which the talkative Rom woman repeats a number of times that she has no address and that she just resides somewhere past the olive trees.

Overall, the Persian Rom woman is one that withstands everything; through all the stereotypes of kidnapping children, being liars and thieves, and over-sexualization of the female body, the Rom woman proves to be daring with a brazen character, as well as representative of her culture. As proven from the feminist outlook of gypsies in Persian poetry, along with their display in the films mentioned, the "characterization...[of the gypsy] female performers...[is] rather pure, organic, obstinate, and entertaining," (Meftahi, 51) proving to be more representative of their cultural stance as opposed to how ever the stereotypes may make them seem.

#### Works Cited

- Borrow, George Henry. *Romano Lavo-lil, Word-book of the Romany: Or, English Gypsy Language*. Vol 3. 1905. Print.
- Digard, Jean-Pierre. "GYPSY i. Gypsies of Persia." *Encyclopædia Iranica*. 15 Dec 2002. Last updated 24 Feb 2012. Web. Retrieved 16 October 2017. [www.iranicaonline.org/articles/gypsy-i](http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/gypsy-i).
- Dom Research Center. "Iranian gypsies in Southern Tehran's Slums". *Dom Research Center of the Middle East and North Africa*. Web. Retrieved 16 October 2017. <http://www.dom-researchcenter.com/news/iran/iran1slums.html>
- Hafez. "Remove yourself, Hafez!" *Beauty in words, others' and mine*. June 2015. Web -Blog post. Retrieved 23 Nov 2017. <https://blogs.harvard.edu/>



Mahbub, Ahmad Abu. "GYPSY SIMIN." *Iranameh*. Vol. 23. Foundation for Iranian Studies. 09 Jul 2008. Web (translated). Retrieved 25 Nov 2017. <http://fis-iran.org/fa/iranameh/volxxiii/simin-gypsy>

g Roma Americans: Cultural and Practical Implications Center. 2014. Web. Retrieved 24 Nov 2017. [https://www.le\\_75.pdf?sfvrsn=7](https://www.le_75.pdf?sfvrsn=7)

Meftahi, Ida. *Gender and Dance in Modern Iran: Biopolitics on stage*. Routledge London & New York. 2016. Print.

Moghaddam, Ameneh (Amy). Personal interview. 22 October 2017.

Rezvani, Saeid. "BEHBAHANI, SIMIN ii. Poetry." *Encyclopædia Iranica*. 14 Dec, 2016. Web. Retrieved 25 Nov 2017. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/behbahani-simin-2-poetry>

Rombase. "Origin of Roma." *Rombase – didactically edited information on Roma*. 2002. Web. Retrieved 23 Nov 2017. <http://rombase.uni-graz.at/cgi-bin/art.cgi?src=data/hist/origin/origin.de.xmlW>

#### Filmography

*Gypsy Love/Eshghe Koli*. Dir. Reza Safaee. 1968. YouTube.

*Gol Pari Joon*. Dir. Azizollah Bahadori. 1974. YouTube.

*Through the Olive Trees*. Dir. Abbas Kiarostami. 1994. Online Media Reserves for FILM 298.

# The Success of Women Mathematicians in Iran and Lack Thereof in the United States

Angelica Dayhoff

University of Maryland, College Park

## Abstract

This paper delineates the differences between Iranian and American culture and explores how these cultural contrasts can create large gaps in education quality, especially regarding women in the STEM fields. Iran has almost no gender gap with women in STEM fields, whereas only 24 percent of STEM jobs in the United States are held by women, according to the Economics and Statistics Administration. It is remarkable that in a country which has a reputation for women's oppression, there are more women thriving in fields which Americans label "boys' clubs." This paper explores the reasons behind this large differentiation and makes educated suggestions on how the United States can learn from Iran's education system to improve upon its own.

Humanity has always been curious about the world which surrounds us. This is a factor that makes humans different than other animals. Since the study of metallurgy which began in 40,000 B.C., humans have sought to answer some of the world's most important questions and develop its most useful tools. Science, mathematics, and engineering were used in order to develop herbal medicines, to determine that matter is made up of atoms, and to develop tools such as soap, paper, and gunpowder. At the start of true modern science in the 17th century, instruments like the telescope and microscope were created which catalysed the development of basic chemistry and biology ("A Brief History"). Each of these movements throughout all eras of time pushed scientists, mathematicians, and engineers to test their current understandings of the world and discover more.

In 9th century Persia, Muhammad Ibn Musa-al-Kharazmi created the logarithm table, which had a profound influence in the development of mathematics. Persia also had a large part in setting the foundation for modern medicine, astronomy, chemistry, and physics (Hill 222). In modern Iran, despite "limitations in funds, facilities, and international collaborators," the fields of pharmacology, pharmaceutical chemistry, and other biology/chemistry related fields have developed international

accolades ("Increase"). Within the last 40 years (since the Iranian Revolution of 1979) an uproar of Iranian women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields has occurred. Two of these many women are the late Maryam Mirzakhani, who was the first woman to earn the Fields Medal (equivalent to the Nobel Prize in mathematics) in 2016, and Sara Zahedi, who won the European Mathematical Society Prize in 2016 (Andrew 1). Many women mathematicians have risen in validity since the late 20th century, but women in math, science, and engineering have not been present for most of human history.

As early as 250 B.C., men were present in the world of mathematics. In the 1600s, Descartes, Pascal, Newton, and Fermat were developing theories which continue to be significant today. Many women were working in math or science at this time; however, most of the work done by women was providing commentary on work already published by men as Maria Agnesi did in 1748 or translating work as Émilie du Châtelet did for Isaac Newton in 1759 ("Elizabeth A. Sackler"). In 1915, the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) was founded in order to develop camaraderie between mathematics students at the undergraduate level ("About MMA"). However, the Association of Women in Mathematics (AWM) was not created until 1971, and its goal is



vastly different than MAA. Rather than focusing on current students in math, AWM encourages girls and women of all ages to pursue academia and careers in mathematics and advocates for the equal treatment of men and women in STEM fields ("About AWM").

There is a stark contrast between the success of women in science and mathematics in modern Iran and in the United States. According to U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, women fill close to half of all jobs in the United States but hold less than 25 percent of STEM jobs in the past decade. Also, the number women with STEM undergraduate degrees in the United States is extremely disproportionate to men with those undergraduate degrees; and "women with a STEM degree are less likely than their male counterparts to work in a STEM occupation; they are more likely to work in education or healthcare." In Iran, these ratios are drastically different. Around five percent of Iran's 80 million person population (4 million people) is in college, and about 60 percent of these students (2.4 million) are women ("30 Facts"). Of all of the Iranian students who pursue majors in STEM fields, 70 percent of them are women (Guttman 1).

This paper researches the post-revolutionary era of Iran to determine what has changed in the Iranian educational system which has led to a boom of women in STEM. This paper will focus on comparing Iranian and American educational systems, culture, and psychology in order to detect differences, since the United States has failed to produce an equal gender ratio in STEM academia and workplaces. Hopefully, the results of my personal research and the data I collect can be used to change America's educational system to encourage more women to pursue careers in the STEM field.

After Russia defeated Persia in the Russo-Persian War of 1828, math and technology development drastically increased (Tabsh & Salehi 5). The Persian empire realized that a large reason for their loss was due to a lack of advanced technology, so they shifted the

focus of education on to STEM fields (Tabsh & Salehi 5). To understand modern Iranian education, one must go back to the Pahlavi era, during which the development of a secular and modern education was pursued passionately. Promoting higher education was considered a top priority, and the establishment of the University of Tehran in 1931 and other centers for higher learning support that notion. The doors of higher learning opened for women in 1935, although met with initial hesitation from the public ("History of Higher Education"). Iran used to have six years of elementary school and six years of secondary school, but switched to system similar to America's in the late 1960s and established the Iranian Mathematical Society in the late 1960s as well ("30 Facts"). After the 1979 revolution, the newly founded government pushed for the Islamization of education. As a result, co-educational schools were made illegal and students were sent to gender-segregated schools. The curriculum included more religious education and textbooks were written through an Islamic filter (Paivandi 7-10).

Dr. X, who would like to remain anonymous, is an Iranian mathematician who earned her undergraduate degree in mathematics and computer science at Sharif University of Technology, which ranks as the top technical university in Iran. Dr. X stated in an interview that "her all-girls high school in Tehran, where she grew up, was supportive, but her undergraduate environment at Sharif University of Technology 'was not very friendly to women studying mathematics; sometimes women who asked questions in the classroom were ignored'" ("CT"). Because Dr. X's high school was all-girls due to Iranian law, there was not as much competition or comparison between men and women performance in mathematics. Therefore, there was less judgement upon women who succeeded in STEM fields versus those who thrived in humanities fields. Dr. X stated in an interview with me that she has observed that women in the United States associate beauty with success and do not believe that intelligence and beauty can coincide. Thus many American girls from a young age do not value education enough. Contrasting this attitude with that of Iranian women, it can be argued that having gender-separated high schools leads to more success of women in STEM. It should not be overlooked that it was when Dr. X entered a co-ed college that she began to feel the gendered segregation. However, the foundation of her mathematical and technical

confidence was set because of her own intuitive passion for math along with the supportive, all-girls high school.

Although there are negative aspects to the Iranian education system such as historical and religious censoring, there are positive aspects which are necessary for developing higher rates of women in STEM fields. The rates of attendance of higher education increased by eight times since 1990 with the establishment and expansion of private universities, and the number of women who attend has become larger than the number of men who attend (Paivandi 9-13). By 12th grade in Iran, students are learning topics which many American students do not learn until college such as linear algebra, discrete math, and number theory (Kaboodvand & Ayub 155). During an interview with Iranian native and University of Maryland student Hirbod Akhavan, he stated that when he came to America, "math was a joke compared to Iran." However, the system is more test-oriented which encourages memorization rather than true comprehension; this may be a result of the cultural pressure from parents onto their children to enter STEM careers such as medicine and engineering, which is later detailed in this report (Arani 118).

In the American educational system and American culture, girls and women are subconsciously discouraged from entering STEM fields. There is a stigma in American culture that femininity and intelligence cannot coincide, and that women are biologically and innately more drawn to arts and humanities (Marks 1). This notion is false; standardized testing in America has shown that boys and girls in the United States perform equally well in math and "the [gender] gap is due, in large part, to sociocultural and other environmental factors, not biology or gender per se" (Hyde & Mertz 1). These environmental factors include societal norms and pressures, gendered communication, and the difference between acceptable standards for men and women (Hyde & Mertz 1). Although men and women perform equally well in math, less than 25% of the jobs held in STEM fields are held by women ((Hyde

& Mertz 1). It is evident that culture plays a large role in how women's roles are perceived in society, which therefore determines which career paths women choose to enter. In American culture, women are not seen as equals in terms of ability to perform in STEM. Although Iranian culture is largely perceived as discriminatory toward women in areas beyond academia, education and careers in STEM provide equal opportunity in Iran.

This does not imply that Iranians do not face restrictions in education. Since the Pahlavi era, the notion of censorship being used for the government's advantage has become popularized. Pahlavi's regime prevented people from speaking negatively about the people in office. Because of this censorship, career fields that are humanities and art based, career fields that are based on self expression and societal commentary, are dwindling. As a result, it is common in Iranian culture for parents to strongly encourage their children to go into STEM careers such medicine, computer science, and engineering. Non-stem careers like law and finance/economics are also pushed (Sadeghi 1). The commonality between these careers is that they are fact based; they do not depend on the opinion of society or state of the government, and therefore they are jobs that are highly employable.

After speaking with students who have been in the Iranian educational system within the past 10 years and who are in tune with Iranian culture, this notion that there is a high amount of pressure for people to pursue STEM careers is corroborated. According to student Ashkan Alaie, "there is a greater tendency to push children towards math and general STEM...partly due to success being associated with a narrow field of professions...There is a greater emphasis on such subjects [in school] rather than humanities." In an interview with Dr. K, she stated she "was attracted to mathematics because it offered the possibility of attaining absolute truth...Mathematics, unlike politics and history, is not ruled by opinion; it is unequivocal," ("CT"). This corroborates the idea that the arts and humanities, although crucial to culture and society, are not practical fields to work in in Iran due to their rapidly changing nature and the risk involved in saying anything considered controversial.



Pursuing a career in the STEM field also nearly guarantees a stable and hefty salary. According to Statistical Center of Iran statistics in 2014, the average salary of Iranian families is 17,030,000 Rials (\$470 per month), while the average salary for one single software developer in Iran is \$500 per month and the maximum is \$1200 per month. This is a large difference, since the average household in Iran is 3 people (Daneshpajoooh 1). The stability and potential prosperity that STEM careers provide is justification for people to enter that field.

The final aspect of the Iranian educational system which will be addressed is psychological. Spatial visualization ability is the ability to mentally manipulate multi-dimensional figures. Several studies have found that this is a cognitive ability where there is a clear difference in ability based on sex - males on average have better spatial visualization ability than female (Downing 195-209). This gives males a great advantage in math, where mental visualization of two and three dimensional figures is nearly crucial to understand more theoretical concepts, especially in the fields of advanced algebra, calculus, and geometry. In Iran, geometry (*hendeseh*) is taught separately from other areas of math for both men and women (Akhavan). The visual subjects in math are moved into the topic of *hendeseh*, and a separate textbook is used to teach it as well. Alaie believes that "math is taught more theoretically than visually in Iran. In North America it is the opposite way" From these interviews, it appears that the teaching methods in Iran are less visually driven, and therefore women do not suffer as much from the disadvantage of having less acute spatial visualization ability. However, contrary to this belief, Maryam Mirzakhani, who does research in geometry and surface structures, was the first Iranian and first woman to earn the Fields Medal. As Alaie observed, in the United States mathematics is taught very visually and with the examination in mind, so American teachers tend to be more memorization focused rather than comprehension focused. This leads to those who are already uninterested in math growing frustrated due to the method of teaching and lack of fundamental understandings.

With the research I have conducted, both primary and secondary, I have come to several conclusions. The first of which is that the education

systems in America and in Iran are vastly different. Elementary, middle, and high schools in Iran are gender separated, which creates a positive environment for girls to thrive in whatever topic they enjoy rather than subduing their intelligence to impress members of the opposite gender, as the case often is in the United States education system. The second conclusion is that the state of the economy and politics lead most Iranians to pursue fields in STEM because it is non-controversial, not a risky industry, and one can consistently be employable, no matter the state of the government. My third conclusion is that math is taught less visually and more comprehensively in Iran, which gives men and women equal opportunity to learn the fundamentals of mathematics, whereas in the United States, math is taught very visually and via memorization, which gives females a disadvantage due to male's superior spatial visualization ability.

With these findings, I propose that two significant changes should be made in the United States educational system and culture. The first change must be a shift in societal perceptions that intelligence and beauty can coincide in women. The second change should be within schools: the memorization and visual method of teaching must be reduced in the United States not only so that men and women are given a level playing field, but also because comprehension should be emphasized rather than memorization for good grades. Creating a more comfortable environment for women to explore the field of STEM is a solution to America's problem of discouraging women from pursuing their passions. Perhaps, when this problem is fixed, other major national women's rights issues, such as the wage gap, will be ameliorated.

#### Works Cited

- "About AWM." *AWM Association for Women in Mathematics*. Google Sites, n.d. Web. 01 May 2017.
- "About MAA." *Mathematical Association of America*. N.p., n.d. Web. 01 May 2017.
- "A Brief History of Science." *PBS. Public Broadcasting Service*, n.d. Web. 30 Apr. 2017.
- Hill, Donald Routledge. *Islamic science and engineering*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh U Press, 1993.

- Print.
- Akhavan, Hirbod. "STEM in Iran." E-mail interview. 30 Apr. 2017.
- Alaie, Ashkan. "STEM in Iran." E-mail interview. 30 Apr. 2017.
- Andrew, Elise. "Iranian Becomes First Woman To Ever Win The "Nobel Prize" Of Mathematics." *IFLSscience*. IFLScience, 15 Aug. 2016. Web. 22 Feb. 2017.
- Arani, Mohammad Reza Sarkar. "Cross cultural analysis of an Iranian mathematics lesson." *International Journal for Lesson and Learning Studies* 4.2 (2015): 118-39.
- Beed, David, and Tiffany Julian. *Women in STEM: A Gender Gap to Innovation*. Rep. no. 4-11. N.p.: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, 2011. Print.
- "CT." Web. 06 May 2017.
- Daneshpajoo, Hossein. "What is the average salary in Iran?" *Quora*. N.p., 8 Jan. 2015. Web. 9 May 2017.
- Downing, R. "The effects and interaction of spatial visualization and domain expertise on information seeking." *Computers in Human Behavior* (2004): n. pag. Web. 26 Mar. 2017.
- "Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art." *Brooklyn Museum*. N.p., n.d. Web. 01 May 2017.
- Guttman, Amy. "Set To Take Over Tech: 70% Of Iran's Science And Engineering Students Are Women." *Forbes*. Forbes Magazine, 10 Dec. 2015. Web. 26 Mar. 2017.
- "History of Higher Education in Iran." *Iran Chamber Society: Education in Iran*. N.p., 2001. Web. 01 May 2017.
- Hyde, Janet S., and Janet E. Mertz. "Gender, culture, and mathematics performance." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. National Acad Sciences, n.d. Web. 02 May 2017.
- "Increase in Scientific Research." *Iran Daily*. N.p., 20 June 2009. Web. 30 Apr. 2017.
- Kaboodvand, Tahereh, and Ahmad Fauzi Mohd Ayub. "Causes of poor math education in Iran and Solutions for Improving Based on Other Countries Experience." *Journal of Applied Environmental and Biological Sciences* (2013): n. pag. Web.
- K. "STEM in Iran." Personal interview. 30 Apr. 2017.
- Marks, Gene. "The Real Reason Most Women Don't Go Into Tech." *Forbes*. Forbes Magazine, 19 Mar. 2015. Web. 02 May 2017.
- Pai vandi, Saeed. "Education in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Perspectives on Democratic Reforms." *Rep. Legatum Institute*, 12 Nov. 2012. Web. 2 May 2017.
- Sadeghi, Shirin. "Iran's War on Female Doctors and Male Nurses." *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 22 Aug. 2012. Web. 02 May 2017.
- Tabesh, Yahya, and Shima Salehi. *Mathematics Education in Iran - From Ancient to Modern*. Rep. N.p.: Sharif U of Technology, n.d. Print.
- "30 Facts on the Education System of Islamic Republic of Iran." *Academic Exchange*. N.p., 17 July 2015. Web. 22 Feb. 2017.

## **Roshangar Undergraduate Research Submissions**

*Roshangar: Undergraduate Persian Studies Journal* will be accepting submissions for the upcoming edition on a rolling basis.

Requirements for Submission:

- Title page with name of author(s) and institution
- 250-word abstract
- 1,500 - 2,500 words in English
- Electronically editable version of paper
- Works cited in MLA format

Submissions and questions can be sent to the Roshangar Editorial Team: [Roshangar.UMD@gmail.com](mailto:Roshangar.UMD@gmail.com)

---

### **Acknowledgements**

Journal design by Homa Hajarian

Front and back cover design by Q-Mars Haeri

Front page photograph: Nader Davoodi

Back page photograph: University of Maryland College Park's Calvert Hall captured in 1930s

Roshangar logo design by Amaal Yazdi

Thank you for taking time to read and enjoy this edition of *Roshangar*. Please continue to follow our work, and contact us with comments, questions, and suggestions at [www.roshangarUMD.com](http://www.roshangarUMD.com)

The *Roshangar* Editorial Team would like to give special thanks to the Roshan Institute for Persian Studies at the University of Maryland. It was only with their support and guidance that the journal came to be. Roshan is a wonderful supporter of arts, culture, and education.

<http://sllc.umd.edu/persian>

**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND  
COLLEGE PARK**

