



Article

“Our House Was a Small Islamic Republic”: Social Policing and Resilient Resistance in Contemporary Iran

Alireza Delpazir ^{1,*} and Fatemeh Sadeghi ²

¹ Institute of Education, University College London, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL, UK

² Institute for Global Prosperity, University College London, 149 Tottenham Ct Rd, London W1T 7NE, UK; f.givi@ucl.ac.uk

* Correspondence: alireza.delpazir.19@ucl.ac.uk

Abstract: In this article, we address a question that has been frequently asked: Why is the Iranian government unable to defeat the struggle by women against the compulsory hijab? What distinguishes women’s resistance from other forms of freedom and justice movements? We address these questions by highlighting women’s “resilient resistance” within the family domain as both flexible and sustainable. The article examines how the domestication of politics and the politicization of family have interconnected dynamics in Iran, as illustrated by the “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement. It shows how women have shifted the Iranian family from a collaborator of oppressive patriarchal power to a more egalitarian structure to accommodate their protests against the compulsory hijab. As the catalysts for this change, they succeeded in discrediting the Islamic Republic’s moral discourse based on the compulsory hijab as a manifestation of modesty for women. They also validated their own morality based on personal choice. Using ethnographic fieldwork, including participatory observation and in-depth interviews with movement participants, this paper shows how women’s invisible yet significant resistance within the family has transformed this institution and profoundly affected the broader political landscape of Iran. It examines a unique case where social transformation drives larger political change.

Keywords: resilient resistance; compulsory hijab; social policing; transformative politics; personal choice



Citation: Delpazir, Alireza, and Fatemeh Sadeghi. 2024. “Our House Was a Small Islamic Republic”: Social Policing and Resilient Resistance in Contemporary Iran. *Social Sciences* 13: 382. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci13080382>

Academic Editor:
Manijeh Daneshpour

Received: 1 May 2024
Revised: 18 July 2024
Accepted: 19 July 2024
Published: 23 July 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

A few months before the Woman, Life, Freedom movement in Iran, a young activist, who is also a poet, painter, writer, and editor, had an altercation on a public bus with another woman over hijab rules. The video became viral on social media. A few days later, she was arrested, subjected to torture, and forced to make a televised confession on the Islamic Republic’s TV. This incident deeply shocked and affected society’s conscience and ignited rage. She was suspended from university and sentenced to three years and eleven months in prison. In August 2022, she was released from prison on heavy bail. She later publicly narrated her return to her family after these incidents:

“After eleven months, I returned to my father’s home. Iraj (my father) thought his daughter had submitted, wore a headscarf in Tehran, and diligently pursued her studies. That was precisely why he agreed to my return to Tehran after my initial arrest. However, not only had his daughter not worn a headscarf, but she had also completely abandoned university and her studies following that academic suspension. She immersed herself fully in the world of activism she had discovered. The next day, visiting my grandmother’s village, I was met with disapproving glances at my choice not to wear a hijab. My father unleashed his anger at my mother in a shout—why hadn’t she forced me to wear a headscarf? But I refused to feel ashamed. Something had changed in those eleven months.

Now, he knew he could no longer control me. Here, in this alley, a 23-year-old woman once ran through the night's darkness, sweat on her neck, towards an uncertain future. She was heading to a place where she either had to stay and live a lost life or leave for a real one, accepting the damage. Now, at 29, she returns, no longer hiding her truth, not running or fearing confrontation. She proclaims, "Long live all the dams that broke, long live all the dam breakers. Long live the victors standing on the dams, long live the Vidas!" (BBCPersian, 12 January 2024)¹

She had been arrested, imprisoned, and tortured, but she had conquered all these obstacles. Nonetheless, now she had to deal with emotional relationships with family members, something perhaps more difficult than dealing with security or police. What should she say to her father? How should she address her grandmother? Did they even understand what she's been through? It is hard for her to appear in the village without a hijab—a place where a hijab has a completely different meaning than it would in the city. She, however, refused to wear a headscarf after that experience when she suffered greatly for refusing to wear one.

In this article, we will speak about the invisible aspect that is often overlooked. Our findings show that her experience has been the experience of many Iranian women protesting against gender discrimination in Iran. Resistance against mandatory hijab on the streets was the main driving force of women's movement, life, and freedom. But the street is not the most significant nor the last manifestation of women's resistance. By resisting home control, several women crossed from the street to their homes during this movement. While the story of the street has been discussed ([Sadeghi-Boroujerdi 2023](#); [Khatam 2023](#)), women's struggles with their families and their consequences and impact on the formation of this movement have hardly been examined. As will be discussed in this paper, women's resistance against the mandatory hijab in Iran could not be fully understood without considering the invisible yet resilient resistance of women against gender inequality within the family and their success in changing it from within.

With the break of the "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement in 2022, attention has turned to the streets of Iran. Due to the strength of this movement and its eruption in remote areas, many assumed this movement as having the potential for regime change. It seems that such a perception is rooted in the traditional paradigm of Middle Eastern politics, which predominantly views political change as being possible through massive street protests, such as those that took place in the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the Arab uprisings. This is not always the case, however. Street protests alone are unable to bring political change, and the realities on the ground are more complicated. Moreover, as [Asef Bayat](#) indicates, the political movements in the MENA region highlighted the emergence of a generation that are rich in movements yet, regrettably, poor in change ([Bayat 2021](#)). While the Woman, Life, Freedom movement poses a serious challenge to the government, the view that it topples the regime not only simplifies the highly capable apparatus of violence and oppression but also ignores the possibility of political transformation through bottom-up social transformation. This achievement is significant because in authoritarian contexts characterized by severe repression and control, independent civil and political institutions and organizations, such as political parties and syndicates, are not typically tolerated or lack the capacity to accommodate effective and meaningful change. Consequently, individuals resort to alternative forms of resistance to instigate political and social transformations. By focusing on the developments of the Iranian family, this article demonstrates how women seek the potential for change beyond conventional forms of politics.

Theoretical Approach

The role of family in political transformation has hardly been addressed in studies on Iran. This is while family and family studies have undergone significant changes, moving away from traditional concepts that fail to capture the diversity of modern family forms ([Smart 2007](#)). For instance, [Carol Smart \(2007\)](#) criticized the old paradigms on family for

their limitations and called for more complex models, such as those by [Widmer et al. \(2008\)](#), analyzing families within broader social relationships. Moreover, David Morgan introduced the concept of “family practices” as a framework that critiques traditional models in terms of their holistic view of social groups, including families. “Family practices” bridges sociological theory and lived experience, stressing the importance of actual relationships and the interplay of individual and group structures within the family. This approach also considers the historical and spatial evolution of family configurations, encompassing broader relational webs beyond dyadic ties. His approach, influenced by feminism, ethnomethodology, poststructuralist thought, and Bourdieu, emphasizes the dynamic nature of family life and its agency. Morgan argues that families are actively constructed through everyday practices, allowing for a nuanced understanding of their fluid and diverse nature. He highlights the importance of everyday interactions in family life, suggesting that these evolving practices turn families into active engagement sites rather than fixed structures ([Morgan 2011, 2013](#)).

Morgan views family not merely as passive recipients of ideological notions but as an active space of negotiation, resistance, and transformation. His emphasis on everyday family practices enables us to provide a detailed analysis of how Iranian families transformed from compliance to discontent with state-imposed norms such as the compulsory hijab and prescribed gender roles. In the dominant approaches, family is primarily seen as a private domain. However, in this study, we explore the interaction of family with broader sociopolitical developments in Iran. This is the case not only in pre-revolutionary Iran but also in post-revolutionary Iran. Despite the dominant approach emphasizing mosques and clerical establishment as the main players in the Iranian Revolution ([Amir Arjomand 1988](#)), our findings demonstrate that with the suppression of political parties and civil society organizations during the Pahlavi regime, family played a significant political role.

Drawing on Morgan’s approach, this study also reveals how women have transformed power relations in the post-revolutionary Iranian family. It seems that this gradual yet sustainable transformation has become a foundation for women’s resistance to the compulsory hijab. Within their homes, Iranian women engaged in resilient resistance, which reflects the dynamic interplay between personal agency and structural constraints. Iranian families today are quite different from those during and after the Revolution. Although it is still discriminatory, it recognizes women’s rights to self-determination and choice more than ever.

The transformation of family also exemplifies a fundamental aspect of women’s resistance, which we term “resilient resistance”. It is a form of resistance characterized by flexibility and fluidity, adapting various methods and strategies aimed at enduring survival. Through multiple individual and collective actions, such as dialogue, negotiation, compliance, and overt rebellion in appropriate moments, women have succeeded in effectively transforming family into a political institution in the vacuum of civil society organizations and the inability of political parties to bring a meaningful change. Resilience in this context implies the ability to survive repression by evolving in different spheres and using diverse methods.

Women’s resistance against compulsory veiling is not confined to street protests. It is rather rooted in invisible yet countless micro-resistances in both public and private spheres. Understanding this resilient resistance helps answer the question, “Why does the Iranian government fail to defeat women’s demand for gender equality?” For over four decades, the Islamic government has faced various political, economic, and social challenges, many of which it has suppressed. However, resistance to mandatory veiling persists despite violent oppression. This persistence is rooted in women’s ability to shift from one sphere to another. Through resilient and fluid resistance, women have brought social transformation capable of meaningful change to Iranian society and politics. Even if street protests are suppressed, women continue their transformative actions in other domains, particularly within the family, and resurface in public when appropriate.

The paper shows how political change in post-revolutionary Iran, among others, was rooted in social transformation initiated by women within families. The question that arises is how women have transformed patriarchal family norms and succeeded in accommodating social change by resisting the compulsory hijab, primarily within families.

The first section of this article discusses the domestication of politics. By this, we mean the Islamic Republic's ability to impose its gendered politics, particularly the compulsory hijab, through family. The transformation of the Iranian family into a main instrument of governance was crucial for its success in imposing its desired rules. As a result, the Iranian family, particularly in the early years after the 1979 Revolution and during the war with Iraq (1980–1988), had become a small-scale Islamic Republic, as our interlocutors repeatedly mentioned: "Our family was a small Islamic Republic". It continued during the war, during which Iranian families were most important in supplying materials and recruiting.

However, after the war, the situation began to change as families gradually took distance from the state and its gendered politics. As demonstrated in this paper, women played a significant role in this transformation, which we call the politicization of family. By politicization of the family, we mean a process in which families started to question and critique the ideological norms that previously seemed obvious, natural, and unquestionable. Their insistence on self-determination and personal choice considerably impacted family norms and resulted in the gradual dissociation of the family from the government. In doing this, women succeeded in dissociating the hijab from modesty and associating it with masculine domination and moral decadence. They succeeded in subverting the sociopolitical morality that viewed women and the feminine body as a source of lust and sin.

The transformation of norms within the family is crucial for understanding the roots of women's challenge to the compulsory hijab, particularly the Woman, Life, Freedom movement. This paper presents a novel outlook to understand Iranian politics through social change initiated by women in the family.

Our findings also illustrate the complexities of this transformation. For many women, resisting the mandatory hijab in public poses challenges as significant as standing against their families' values and norms, especially when the desire for self-determination is hindered by family ties and emotional relations. For many women, including the activist at the beginning of this paper, street protests effectively encourage resistance against patriarchal relations within families through solidarity networks, which enabled them to pursue self-determination and personal freedom more confidently and effectively.

2. Research Methodology

The core data of this research were collected through twenty-five semi-structured interviews with participants in street protests in 2022. The interviews were conducted in two sessions. In the first session, open-ended questions were asked to create a space where participants could freely narrate their stories. Questions such as "Can you talk about your experience when you started refusing compulsory hijab?" and "What moments or experiences led you to decide to resist?" were used to prompt detailed responses. Then, questions like "What was your family's view of the hijab?", "What were the main challenges you faced regarding the hijab within your family?", "How did you resist hijab within your family?", "What was your family's reaction when you participated in the movement against compulsory hijab?", and "If your family changed their perspective on hijab and resistance to it, what do you think caused this change?" were also included to gather comprehensive insights. This method ensured that the data collected was rich and comprehensive, capturing the nuanced experiences of the participants.

Part of this research also encompassed archival research, including historical analyses of the Iranian family, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s. For this segment, we examined reports, documents, and articles that scrutinize the dynamics and transformation of the family in post-revolutionary Iran.

We also heavily drew upon participant observation, including first-hand experience of sociopolitical transformations in Iran. We both spent extended periods in Iran and in various urban spaces, including streets, cafes, theatres, parks, universities, and cultural centers. These participant observations not only enriched our understanding of sociopolitical dynamics in Iran but also enabled us to understand and experience the everyday forms of politics employed by women.

We also benefited from our personal experiences in post-revolutionary Iran as we both have first-hand and personal experience of the social, familial, and political transformations that we explain in this paper.

2.1. Sampling and Data Analysis

The interviews of this research were conducted by Alireza Delpazir using snowball sampling. Initially, he used his network of friends who were themselves activists in the women's movement. This approach was facilitated by his several years of engagement in women's issues and my presence in Iran during the Woman, Life, Freedom movement, which enabled him to establish connections with a broad network of active women. Through these activists, he was able to access other active women. Due to the sensitivity of the topic and the need to ensure security and gain trust for the interviews, the recruitment method was the most suitable. The interviews were conducted in Turkey². The reason was that after the movement began, the heightened security situation in Iran made it impossible to conduct interviews there, as it was necessary to ensure the safety of both the interviewees and the researchers. Also, during and after the movement, Turkey became a significant center for women who had to leave Iran due to persecution by the Iranian government.

The interviewees comprised a diverse range of women in terms of age, social status, economic situation, and religious or secular background. The researcher also engaged with families that initially supported the government and its policies but later stood against the regime's policies regarding women and hijab.

In the next phase, the interviews were conducted in Persian and subsequently translated into English. This stage involved recording all catchphrases, pauses, and non-verbal reactions, such as laughter and silence, to obtain a complete and accurate portrayal of the conversations. The precise transcription of the interviews ensures that no part of the interviewees' statements is omitted or altered, thereby preserving the authenticity of the data.

After completing the transcription, the Persian text was translated into English with high precision and semantic accuracy to ensure the correct conveyance of the original meaning and message while preserving the tone and style of expression. Special attention was given to specific cultural terms and concepts, with necessary explanations provided in footnotes or explanatory sections to ensure that non-Iranian audiences could understand the context accurately. Throughout the research and interview process, as well as during data analysis, participants' identities were anonymized to ensure their security and confidentiality.

For the analysis of the interview data, the translated transcripts were imported into NVivo. The data analysis process was conducted in two main stages: initial coding and thematization. In the first stage, the data were coded using *in vivo* coding. This approach helps maintain the authenticity of the data and minimizes the researcher's interference in interpretation, ensuring that concepts and themes emerge from the perspectives of the interviewees themselves (Saldana 2016). At this stage, approximately fifty different codes were identified, including emotional challenges, negotiating, compromising, living a double life, and generational changes, each reflecting various aspects of women's resistance to compulsory hijab within families.

2.2. Positionality and Ethical Issues

During this research, we encountered several critical ethical issues. One of the primary challenges was the issue of the positionality of the male gender of the researcher as

opposed to the female interlocutors. A critical question arose: how can a male researcher comprehend the experiences and emotions of women regarding the hijab, an experience he himself has never had?

To address this challenge, various strategies were employed. Initially, critical self-reflection was adopted as a fundamental principle of the research. Critical self-reflection is crucial as it enables the researcher to continuously assess the impact of their own identity on the research, thereby preventing any distortions or biases. This practice contributes to the generation of more valid and profound knowledge, allowing the researcher to attain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the research subjects (Giri 2022). Awareness of the social position's influence of a male researcher on the research process facilitated the avoidance of any distortions or biases. Accordingly, the male researcher of this study continuously examined and reviewed his role and influences to accurately and impartially incorporate the perspectives of the women.

The involvement of the second author, with over two decades of experience in research and teaching on politics and gender, significantly contributed to the research. The collaboration between a male and a female researcher significantly mitigated the issue of positionality. This collaborative approach was applied before, during, and after the interviews, ensuring that issues related to positionality were consistently examined. Moreover, the authors sought the perspectives of other female researchers in the field during the research process.

The authors adhered to ethical research principles and diligently upheld their ethical responsibilities toward the participants. Creating a safe and respectful environment for the activists to express their experiences and opinions was a top priority during data collection. Employing participatory methods and ensuring that the voices of our interlocutors were heard fully and directly played a crucial role throughout the process. This approach involved considering the participants as active collaborators rather than mere subjects of the research. This included organizing sessions where our interlocutors preferred to participate with their friends, as well as conducting in-depth interviews that provided women the opportunity to share their experiences and opinions directly and freely.

A further significant concern in this study pertained to legal and security matters. Before the movement began, some interviews were conducted within Iran due to the relatively safe environment. However, with the onset of the movement and the resulting stringent security and control measures in Iran, conducting in-person interviews within the country became unfeasible. Consequently, it was decided to interview only women residing outside Iran. This decision ensured the safety of both the researchers and the participants.

Obtaining informed consent from the participants was another crucial consideration. To ensure that participants were fully aware of the project's purpose, risks, and benefits, consent forms were prepared following the protocols of (blinded for peer review) and provided to the participants.

Maintaining privacy and data confidentiality was of paramount importance. To this end, data were collected anonymously and stored securely in (blinded for peer review), protected by password encryption.

3. Domestication of Politics: Islamization through Family

The imposition of compulsory hijab on women and the Islamization process seemed impossible without the collaboration and compliance of Iranian families (Khosravi 2017). Only two weeks after the 1979 Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran's leader, abolished the Family Protection Law, which was more cognizant of women's rights and replaced it with the new family law of the Islamic Republic, granting men greater authority over women in matters of marriage, divorce, and child custody (Haeri 1989; Mir-Hosseini 1997). He also made the Islamic hijab mandatory, restricting women's access to employment, public spaces, and politics that dictated acceptable standards of femininity and domestic roles (Sedghi 2009). These policies linked feminine virtue to the sanctity of family, which was also incorporated into the state's welfare policies, including the provision of additional

economic incentives for larger families (Hosseini-Chavoshi et al. 2006). As Jaleh Shaditalab (2005) demonstrates, women's entitlement to welfare benefits was shaped based on their status as mothers and wives, prioritizing their reproductive roles over other needs.

State power mechanisms have been instrumental in repositioning the family as a strategic site for the Islamic government. However, family structure has also been significantly influenced and changed by both the Islamic Revolution and post-revolutionary social policies. The state's efforts to control and enforce "Islamic" values, particularly regarding gender roles and family life, have permeated both the public and private spheres.

Families, for the most part, embraced and reinforced the veil as a response to this wave of revolution. The newly-established government succeeded in the domestication of politics (*khanegi kardan-e Siyasat*). However, for some families, this endorsement was not a religious choice but a symbol of loyalty and allegiance to the Revolution. These transformations operated as intricate networks of relationships and new meanings, leading to the emergence of novel dynamics in social relations and attitudes toward women and the hijab. Revolutionary families did not merely accept the veil as defined by the authorities but actively integrated and reinforced it with their own beliefs, values, and everyday practices.

However, the hijab was not an isolated practice. During the 1980s, other policies reinforced this, such as encouraging higher birth rates, which was another agreement between the government and many families. According to the United Nations' comprehensive census data, between 1985 and 1990, the population growth rate of Iran was 3.4% (United Nations Publications 2021). The newly established Islamic Republic had various reasons and motivations for encouraging childbirth. In addition to religious motivations that suggested Islam prefers more offspring (Sadat Moinifar 2007; Aghajanian and Mehryar 2005), the high casualties in the Iran–Iraq war were a significant reason.

The cooperation between families and the government concerning the hijab and fertility continued well into the following decade, a period during which the government sought to reduce the high population growth rate. Since 1989, Iran adopted a neo-Malthusian policy, actively promoting family planning. As a result, fertility rates significantly declined, with a reduction of up to 70% between 1986 and 2003 (Ladier-Fouladi 2021; Hoodfar 2008). However, many families had already begun to adopt family planning measures before the official policy implementation in 1989. This indicates the shifting social attitudes parallel to women's increased desire to control their fertility and awareness of their rights and status.

3.1. The War and Its Impact on Family

The eight-year war between Iran and Iraq (1980–1988) was one of the most destructive wars of the twentieth century. It also had a significant impact on Iranian society, which continues to affect the country to this day. Although the war was waged in the south and west of Iran, it had a profound effect even in the farthest parts of the country. The war fostered collective solidarity among those who endured it together (Ehsani 2020). Rationing of basic needs such as milk, soap, cigarettes, inexpensive sneakers, and butane cylinders was another shared experience during the war.

The war engendered numerous crises for the government, including the displacement of war refugees in the southwest and west of the country and economic crises (Maloney 2015) due to disruptions in oil exports, increased inflation, and human casualties ranging between 30,000 and 500,000. International isolation and significant damage to industrial and urban infrastructure were also among the consequences (Chubin and Tripp 2018). However, the war presented the government with a golden opportunity to pursue the Islamization of society and consolidate the newly established regime. During this period, the government established or expanded organizations such as the Revolutionary Guard, Basij, and the Construction Jihad (*Jahad-e Sazandegi*). These organizations played a prominent role not only during the war but also in the post-war period in economic development, mobilizing the populace, garnering public support, countering domestic and foreign opponents, disseminating revolutionary and religious values, and mobilizing public support for the government (Lob 2018).

During the war, other political parties opposing the Islamic Republic government were also purged. Many members of these groups, including left-leaning religious organizations such as the Mujahedin-e Khalq, secular leftists such as the Tudeh Party, and liberal Islamists such as Nehzat-e Azadi were oppressed or forced to flee (Behrooz 2012; Cohen 2009). It was not only a political conflict but also a family conflict. During that period, many families might have one child leaning toward the Islamic Republic and another toward opposition parties. An example is Mohammad Jahan Ara, a well-known commander killed in the Iran–Iraq war, and his brother Hassan Jahan Ara, who was executed as a member of the People’s Mujahedin during 1988 mass executions.

With the elimination of various political groups and control over institutions such as media and broadcasting organizations, universities, and schools, the government effectively monopolized the war narrative (Ehsani 2020). It also bestowed its desired ideological narrative on the war as the Iran–Iraq conflict was transformed into the “Sacred Defense”. Following the 1979 Iranian Revolution, self-sacrifice and the culture of martyrdom, especially during the Iran–Iraq war, were emphasized as a prerequisite for Islamic Shiite identity. The war further solidified the link between nation-building and martyrdom (Varzi 2006). The youth on the frontlines embraced martyrdom as the ultimate form of self-sacrifice. The government viewed the war not only as a conflict between two countries but as a conflict between Islam and blasphemy (*kufir*). For this reason, Ayatollah Khomeini mobilized the Iranian people, emphasizing that the war would be fought by the masses as the Muslim Ummah, not just by a professional army (ibid.).

The Islamization of the war had various impacts. On the battlefield, although many participated in the war for reasons other than Islam, such as patriotism or compulsory military service for religious minorities, the war front in the government’s ideological propaganda was presented as a sacred Islamic arena, leading to significant discrimination, especially against religious minorities and women killed in the war.

During the Iran–Iraq war, families became the main providers of Basij soldiers and a repository of war procurement by sending children to war, supporting the fronts materially, and reproducing the regime’s ideological apparatuses through the Islamization of family, hijab, etc. The experiences highlight how Islamist socialization, amplifying notions of piety, sacrifice and duty for the revolutionary cause, underpinned much of the grassroots mobilization during the war, including the dispatch of underage Iranians.

The attainment of spiritual purity and piety transcended battlefronts, permeating not only the public but also private spheres. Consequently, numerous devout families underwent a process of control, elimination, and transformation of perceptions and practices in their pursuit of spiritual purity and piety. Throughout the 1980s, the Islamic government domesticated its politics, entailing abstinence from “sins”, necessitating stringent control in both the public and private spheres and an extraordinary level of protection and vigilance (Ibn Manzur 2014).

During the years from the 1980s to the early 1990s, the Islamic Revolution Committees were engaged in creating a pious society by controlling public spaces regarding hijab, mingling of the opposite sex, entertainment, and so forth, with the collaboration of many families who acted as an extension of the government’s apparatus. This harmony between the government and families is well reflected in the Iranian cinema. Popular series and movies such as *Cheragh-haye Khamoosh* (2000), *Shab-e Dahom* (2001), *Sahebdelan* (2006), *Mivey-e Mamnoo’eh* (2007), and many others³ each attempted in their own way to depict self-purification, hijab, and a strict sense of piety.

3.2. Hijab as a Requirement for Being Revolutionary

Revolution and war deeply affected Iranian families. A wide range of interpretations and personal experiences were created as a result of these developments, where families played a major role. These interpretations and experiences, each reflecting a dynamic and multifaceted interaction between the ruling ideology and family life, signify the families’ activity in self-transformation and adaptation to the changing social and cultural

conditions. In this process, many families acted not merely as passive consumers of the dominant ideology but as architects in shaping and redefining the evolving ideological landscape, where the hijab emerged as a key constitutive element. The alignment with the ruling ideology regarding the hijab within families took various forms. In some families, this alignment is accompanied by an inner transformation within the parents. The story of Marjan, a forty-year-old woman with a Ph.D. in one of the humanities disciplines, illustrates this inner transformation. It shows how families that initially embraced the Islamic Republic's ideals and ideologies gradually experienced a shift in their beliefs and practices:

"I grew up in a family that was initially very liberal. Neither my mother nor anyone around us wore a hijab. We lived in the south, and I don't know if you're aware, but the Bakhtiari people and those living in Ahwaz are generally more relaxed than other cities, at least from what I've seen. However, in the 1980s, my mother became intensely religious, and her mental state changed dramatically, transforming her into a completely different person. Her deepening religious fervour led her to enrol in a seminary (howzeh), where she studied and obtained her seminary license. I'm not sure about her level, but I know she spent four or five years completing her studies there, and she really wanted me to follow in her footsteps. She even took on the responsibility of managing a Basij station in our neighbourhood, where they referred to her as the commander, spending most of her time at the mosque and the local Basij base".

The personality evolution of Marjan's mother exemplifies a profound identity transformation to comply with the new circumstances. Her journey from a secular to a religious person demonstrates a significant shift, where her quest for spiritual depth and existential meaning actively merges with the prevailing Islamist ideology promoted by the government. This process of self-change does not represent a passive shift; rather, it is an active process fueled by a desire for a new mode of existence.

The transformation in identity and the inclination toward religiosity experienced by Marjan's mother did not remain confined to the personal realm. Marjan recounts how her mother's self-directed transformation had suppressive and controlling effects on her life:

"I had no issue with wearing the hijab as a child, but my mother became extremely strict about it. From the sixth to the tenth grade, she forced my younger sister and me to wear the chador. She employed various methods to ensure our compliance, including bribes, coercion, and even violence. My mother's behavior became more stringent than the government. We were prohibited from listening to music entirely. I recall that during Muharram, we were required to always wear black, even at home; my mother strictly enforced this rule. In the year between my second and third year of high school, my mother aggressively enforced the hijab on me through beatings, arguments, and constant surveillance. Unable to control me, she decided, with my father's assistance, to forcibly send me to a seminary. I endured a terrible dormitory in the seminary for three months before running away. This incident delayed my university education by a year."

Marjan's experience with her mother's transformation reveals vital aspects of contemporary Iranian society: the deep penetration of Islamist ideology into families' existential fabric and its impact on the practices and beliefs of even previously non-religious families. This interplay between personal faith and broader social transformation signifies a deeper change, where family dynamics reflect the wider ideological and political developments in post-revolutionary Iran. Marjan and her mother's story shows how the Islamist notion of piety penetrated from the public to the private realm of families and the mentality of people. That was how social control, prohibition, and suppression became the norm in many families, as if Iranian homes became another Islamic republic on a smaller scale. This passion to be harsher than the government and enforce stricter rules was a curious case that needs careful investigation, though it goes beyond the scope of this research.

Tedi, a 23-year-old activist who earned a bachelor's degree in the arts and is a teacher, relates a similar experience. I (Alireza Delpazir) asked her about her initial encounter with the issue of the hijab, to which she responded as follows:

"The first time this issue became significant was within my family. My father was practically an atheist, and my mother, though she prayed and fasted, did not wear a veil. At home, revealing dresses were not allowed; my father insisted on modest clothes. When I reached puberty, he believed my changing body required loose clothing and a scarf. His insistence surprised me, making me question if I had grown up too quickly. This imposition by my father marked the beginning of my concern and distress over the hijab."

"If your father was not religious, why did he control your hijab?" I asked.

"Hijab was separate from religion for my family" Tedi answered. "For them, it was a matter of culture rather than faith. My father has not lived in Iran for many years, and when I visit him now, he no longer objects to me wearing a tank top and shorts. I recently realized that my father's concern was that in Iran, hijab is required, and you need to conform to that. Their culture and mindset were that you should take care of yourself and get used to wearing a hijab from a young age so that you wouldn't face pressure when you grew up and entered society."

"Did you resist your father's demands at the time?" I asked.

She responded "Honestly, I complied because my father was a dictator, and there was no way to argue with him. The dictatorship started within our family, not society. This made the familial dictatorship very distressing for me, and I can see its impact on society. When I was a child and didn't understand reality, I certainly didn't resist and was forced to wear a chador, even though I didn't know how to use it. I got accustomed to the hijab through my family before experiencing social enforcement. I think the problem lies in this early conditioning—starting at a time when you don't understand what you're getting used to. If I removed my scarf and wore a T-shirt, I would have a panic attack, feeling like everyone was staring at me. This has made me ashamed of my own body, to the point that I can't even show it to anyone. Even now, when I wear a T-shirt, I pull the neckline up to hide my neck."

As Marjan's and Tedi's experiences demonstrate, the hijab reinforcement was beyond faith and religion. It was rather a manifestation of revolutionary piety in which women's bodies were strongly seen as threatening the harmony of the masculine revolutionary self. Their experiences make it clear that the hijab was not just a governmental regulation but deeply embedded within families and different strata of Iranian society as a requirement of the revolutionary existence.

Carolyn [Pedwell \(2021\)](#) describes the mechanism of habit as a key role in revolutionary transformation. She demonstrates that mundane, everyday habits, as Marjan and Tedi experienced, contribute as much to social transformation as revolutionary moments. By introducing the concept of "habit assemblages", she shows that meaningful change emerges through engaging with the intricate, evolutionary relationships within these assemblages (*ibid.*).

While Tedi's family did not have strong religious beliefs, it adopted the wider "habit assemblage" based on control, prohibition, and suppression. These examples illustrate how even secular families in post-revolutionary Iran inadvertently reinforced state regulations. These cases disclose the subtle mechanisms of surveillance and control that are often self-imposed and how intended state values and norms become ingrained in people's everyday lives through the mechanisms of habituation and daily practices.

In response to this atmosphere of control and censorship, many women resorted to resisting compliance to reduce clashes with their family members. This is exemplified in the experience of Shamim, who describes it as follows:

“When I was in high school, there was always a struggle within the family, and I had to comply. Therefore, after school, in the streets and the city, my hijab was loose, but as soon as I got near home, I had to wear the chador. When I got older and gained more independence than in my school days and went to university, I decided not to wear the chador. This decision to set aside the chador was sudden, not gradual, but I still observed the hijab [by wearing scarf] because if I didn’t, the restrictions and annoyances from the family would increase.”

In such circumstances, secrecy provides an escape from the surveilling and judging gaze of the family, creating an alternative realm of identity and life that remains hidden from the family’s view. As Somayeh puts it:

“When you don’t observe the hijab and try to somehow get along with your family regarding the hijab, you have a double life. For instance, I don’t observe the hijab in my personal life, but my parents don’t know about this. In fact, they are unaware of many other aspects of my life. For example, I can’t show them photos of myself without a hijab when I go abroad. Or when I go to mixed parties, I can’t tell them I was at this party where there were many *non-mahrams* (men who are not close kin) because the hijab brings with it the concepts of *mahram* and *non-mahram*. So, you’re always living a double life. Due to not wearing the hijab, a significant part of our lives remains hidden from our parents, and they become *non-mahrams* in your life.”

The experience Somayeh had is quite interesting since she questions the notion of *mahramiyyat*, which is a traditional Muslim concept. The real *non-mahrams* in her life are her parents, from whom an important part of her life is hidden. In post-revolutionary Iran, women had to face both political and social policing. The first was on the streets, and the second at home. As these experiences reveal, women adopted various strategies to counter this dominance. When women did not directly challenge patriarchal power, they resorted to compliance. The strategy involved aligning their dress codes, moral values, and normative expectations with those established by power while internally constructing their desires in other areas. In this way, they could secure their personal or family security, avoid conflict, or maintain their independence in other areas.

4. Politicization of Family through Resilient Resistance

Over time, families’ collaboration with the government has declined steadily. The erosion of loyalty is rooted in different economic, political, cultural, and social factors. However, women’s resistance against compulsory hijab, both within the family and in society, played a major role in political disenchantment. Although the shift from control to tolerance has been a long process, it was often accompanied by everyday challenges and emotional burdens.

Women were routinely harassed by the government in Iran after the Revolution, from arresting women for not complying with hijab regulations to detaining those for mixing with the opposite sex or even possessing music cassettes. In any of these cases, parents may be summoned to police stations and forced to pledge to release their children. Over time, families became more aware of the problems their children were facing simply because of being young. Many parents had experienced their youth without such restrictions under the previous regime.

This process was accelerated by the reform era (1997–2005) and the presidency of Mohammad Khatami, who, in his electoral campaign, recognized youth and women. Khatami’s emphasis on dialogue, civil society, and participation became key signifiers in the reform era. The emphasis he placed on the Dialogue of Civilizations (Petito 2007) and his efforts to improve relations with the West led to a period of relative freedom of expression (Mir-Hosseini and Tapper 2006; Kamrava 2008), which tremendously affected women’s situation.

During the reform era, the new generations, especially children of the 1980s and 1990s, engaged in dialogical discussions with their parents about various topics. In this strategy,

alternative discourses and representations are created and promoted to cleverly change norms and social values (Lilja 2021). By moving away from direct opposition to power and compliance, this strategy instead focuses on reshaping realities, situational contexts, and mindsets through language, artifacts, and images. Resistance of this kind acknowledges power's constructive role in shaping reality and seeks to undermine it through the creation of new narratives and meanings, thereby facilitating gradual social change.

Marjan, whom we met earlier, used such a strategy within the family to change her mother's perspective:

"look! I think our parents' shift was in line with a broader generational shift. The 1980s generation including myself, did not accept everything at face value. We were inquisitive and sought answers, raising those questions at home. When we gathered, we discussed things with facts, evidence, documents, films, or anything available, trying to prove our points. For instance, I would tell my mother, 'Look, you're wrong here.' I didn't try to convince her, but I avoided speaking without a basis. Through repeated discussions with my two other sisters, my mother gradually realized she couldn't justify her points with the same arguments she used years ago. She began to listen and, at times, conceded. I believe our generation has had a significant impact. The 1980s generation was like spoiled fruit for the government and patriarchal families, leading subsequent generations astray. Children of the 1990s and 2000s were substantially influenced by us. Many kids from the 1990s, still inclined towards religion, were influenced by our conversations. Our generation read books, watched films, and participated in group discussions. These changes began during Khatami's reform period when we attended to university and practiced debate. The 1980s generation was resilient, rejecting imposed influences and attaining self-awareness. We distanced ourselves from ready-made ideas and pursued independent thinking. We practiced this dialogue with our parents and others in the family. I talked with my sisters, my mother, my father, using facts and anything you can think of. The first sparks of my mother lowering her guard started there, and I saw her resistance fade. She would talk to me and sometimes even say, 'Marjan is right.'"

The younger generation's dialogue strategy within families was not about directly opposing power relationships. It rather challenged the norms, values, and beliefs that facilitated the construction of suppressive power within families. Parnian, born in the 1980s, describes her experience as follows:

"I was absolutely unable to discuss with my father the idea of not wearing a hijab or colorful clothes outside. He would react with such anger that you wouldn't dare bring up such a discussion in front of him. However, gradually, I tried to at least talk to him about his other beliefs that wouldn't make him angry. Like the pointless spending on pilgrimages to Imam Hussein's shrine in Karbala when we have so many unemployed youths in Iran. Or like the issue of women's blood money being half that of men's. Well, my father only had three daughters. He loved his daughters and was not willing to accept that they were worth less than his sons. This made him doubt."

Samaneh describes this transformation as such:

"My father is a street vendor and used to be a carpet weaver. He has eight daughters and two sons and is very traditional and strict about hijab and religious beliefs. His attitude began to change when we grew up and went to university, hoping for a better future. Despite my sisters' higher education, women had no job opportunities. We told my father that this situation was not fair under an Islamic government. Eventually, he agreed to let me work in a cosmetics boutique and my other sister become a hairdresser. Initially, he was against us wearing a colored manteau or scarf. However, he later accepted that these jobs were not feasible with chador, and he eased up on his strictness a bit."

Marjan, Samaneh, and Parnian each adopted a similar approach to negotiating, discussing, and expressing their opinions about the hijab. They practiced dialogue with their parents. Instead of directly questioning the hijab, they used an indirect, creative, and practical approach that incorporated religious beliefs and traditional social values. Their dialogues were practical, as Marjan mentioned, involving recognition over time. This dialogical practice had a significant impact on two generations by creating a form of incremental persuasion where challenging imperative norms are made through dialogue, reducing the risk of resistance.

Public protests and resistances often take the form of collective actions and direct confrontations with laws and regulations, whereas, within families, it is more challenging and complex. Here, flexibility is needed. This type of resistance uses different tactics because, in the family, emotional bonds are deeper and more complex, and the costs of resistance can be significantly higher for younger generations. This complicated situation requires an effort to find a delicate balance between maintaining individual choice and responding to familial expectations. For instance, Marzieh, who actively participated in recent protests, describes her experience as follows:

“Changing hijab practices is not binary; it’s a daily struggle, especially within the family. Unlike outside, where you can choose your battles, living with parents means constant negotiation due to emotional ties. Inside the home, resistance is gradual, long, and exhausting. For example, appearing without a hijab during family gatherings can strain or sever familial relationships, a cost many are unwilling to pay. One might protest against the hijab publicly and accept political repercussions, but the personal cost within the family is often too high.”

Comparing the struggle within her family and on the streets, she notes:

“Fighting hijab on the streets is often easier than at home. For instance, my main argument is with my mother. I have a friend active in women’s issues who wears a hijab at home because her father opposes her being without it. I tell her she’s lost the first battle of resistance because she hasn’t transformed her family. Often, you’re alone in this struggle; no law supports you—in fact, the laws work against you regarding the hijab.”

Marzieh’s experience of confronting compulsory hijab, both in public spaces and within the family, provides a clear picture of the existing challenges women face in Iran. She highlights how resistance against these mandates becomes increasingly difficult and more complex at home due to the dominance of patriarchy and its associated expectations. These complexities not only indicate the limitations of women’s resistance within the family framework but also reflect the profound impact of existing power structures on their choices and methods of resistance. With these discussions, Marzieh lays the groundwork for a better understanding of the challenges that Manijeh faced while detailing the impacts of familial patriarchy on women’s struggle against compulsory hijab. According to Manijeh:

“The challenge of the hijab within the family is very complicated. In society, when you don’t wear the hijab, at least you have the support of others who will stand by you when the government and its apparatuses confront you. For example, one of our ways as women in everyday urban resistance is to scream and shout if we see the police coming for us, so that people gather around and prevent them from arresting us. But within the family, no matter how much you scream, there is no one to help you. Women are generally alone in their resistance to the family. And this loneliness is difficult. No one sees what happens in the family. Fighting with the family is difficult because they are not some stranger police; they are your parents, the closest people in your life, and you have an emotional relationship with them. Often, you’re forced to take the fight against the hijab to society because it’s not feasible within the family, and you wait for social change to at least bring some pressure on your family to change their views on the hijab.”

It is noteworthy that many women involved in the Woman, Life, Freedom movement were born in the 1980s and 1990s. Their childhood and adolescence were spent in the early years of the Revolution and the Iran–Iraq war under severe repression, insufficient welfare, and various deprivations. Even though they resisted the compulsory hijab, they were not able to challenge it directly. However, they have every reason to fight for the freedom of their children. Nazanin, a 42-year-old woman who participated in this movement and was also imprisoned for a while, notes that she joined this movement for the future of her 15-year-old daughter:

“You see, when we were kids, we were always under the oppressive and unnecessary pressures of traditional family norms and ideological government. But I tried to ensure that my children, or at least my daughter, wouldn’t face the same. For instance, when my daughter had her first monthly period, her father got her sanitary pads, and she felt completely comfortable discussing it with him. I really liked that. . . We were a lost generation, but we don’t want our children to be the same.”

5. Social Transformation

Over the past two decades, Iranian families have been through a significant transformative process, although they remained invisible for the most part. A visible manifestation of this cultural shift is the rejection of forced marriages. Women resist forced marriages due to relative privacy and autonomy of family from the government. They have raised their voices in protests, negotiated with family members, and asserted their right to choose their life partners. This resistance reflects a growing assertion of women’s rights and independence within the family structure, challenging traditional practices that often prioritize familial unions over individual consent (Mahdavi 2009).

Acceptance of romantic relationships between girls and boys is another change in Iran. The shift from patriarchal models toward mutual consent, respect, partnership and romantic relationships indicates less control over women. It also proves greater independence and personal choice of women in love and marriage. This is best exemplified in non-registered cohabitation, known as “white marriage” (*ezdevoj-e sefid*), which poses a major challenge to conventional heterosocial norms in Iran (Afary and Faust 2021). As opposed to conventional forms of marriage, in white marriage, partners choose to have emotional, sexual, rational, and moral obligations to each other. However, they cannot maintain a permanent marriage due to economic hardships and social expectations. White marriage illustrates a broader cultural transformation toward valuing women’s self-determination and freedom in relationships. Homosexual relationships and digital forms of emotional engagement are other examples of how personal choice challenges the conventional Islamist family paradigm.

In recent years, many of the political and social backgrounds for dialogue laid during the reformist government were later dismantled or suppressed with the rise of Ahmadinejad’s government (2005–2013) and the conservatives’ takeover. As a result, the basis for dialogism at the political or social level did not achieve significant results. Politically, in addition to the extensive economic and political sanctions, the conflict with the West over the nuclear issue intensified. Socially, there was severe suppression of intellectuals, expulsions of professors and students, newspaper closures, and women’s marginalization in economic, social, and political activities.

Despite governmental efforts to solidify hijab regulations in the public sphere, the domestic environment continues to serve as a central battleground for enhancing women’s control over their bodies and destination. The overflow of resistance from homes to the streets constitutes one of the most significant impacts of this transformation.

As Asef Bayat (2013) and Shahram Khosravi (2017) indicate, with generational shifts in Iran and profound transformations, younger Iranian generations have adopted a non-ideological approach and distanced themselves from their families’ ideological zeal. Bayat’s central idea posits the emergence of “post-Islamism” as a phenomenon following the

“exhaustion” of political Islam. This includes a shift toward the secularization of Islam and its integration with personal faith, individual freedom, and choice, alongside democratic values and aspects of modernity (Bayat 2013). Bayat describes post-Islamism not as an anti-Islamic movement but as a tendency toward the secularization of religion.

One of the major ideological transformations that Iranian society has experienced is the notion of piety. The politicization of Islam resulted in more members of society engaging in dialogues that were previously exclusive to elites. According to Niloofar Haeri (2021), a noteworthy aspect of this transformation is the change in the role of homes, which became semi-public spaces where religious, literary, and political discussions flourished. These spaces turned into venues for intellectual and spiritual exchange, not only deepening individuals’ understanding of religion but also serving as a foundation for rethinking the concept of piety and its role in everyday life (ibid.). The politicization of Islam prompted Iranians to explore the true nature of Islam and its application in the modern world, a topic extensively examined and redefined among women. As Haeri demonstrates, in the personal domain, piety took on a more dialogic, subjective, and accessible form, where women established a dialogic relationship with God and distanced themselves from traditional religious obligations (ibid.).

Such a shift in approach to religion and piety has had significant macro-level impacts. For example, according to the National Survey of “Iranians’ Values and Attitudes”, conducted between October and November 2023 with 15,878 face-to-face interviews, various questions were asked, including whether respondents agree with the separation of religion from politics. In response to this question, 72.9% of respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed with the separation of religion from politics. In contrast, 22.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the separation of religion from politics. This is while in 2015, only 30.7% of respondents said they agreed or highly agreed with the separation of religion from politics, and 36.3% emphasized disagreement or strong disagreement with this separation. That is, while in 2015, disagreement with the separation of religion from politics was higher than agreement with it, in 2023, proponents of the separation of religion from politics were three times more than its opponents (Bastani 2024).

Participants were also asked if they agreed with the statement, “Being religious means having a pure heart even if one does not pray”. A total of 61.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (ibid). Moreover, in the family survey regarding giving children more freedom in terms of lifestyle and dress, 19.3% neither agreed nor disagreed, while 46.1% agreed or strongly agreed (ibid).

In a separate segment of the 2023 survey, participants were asked how they responded to women’s non-compliance with the hijab. A total of 38% said they have no issue with women not wearing a hijab. In contrast, 46%, although opposed to the unveiling, stated they do not interfere with others’ choices in this matter. Only 12.5% reported that they would admonish someone for not wearing a hijab. According to these statistics, the percentage of respondents who stated they had no issue with non-compliance with the hijab in 2023 had increased threefold compared with 2015, when only 10.6% of respondents expressed no issue with “improper hijab”.

It is noteworthy that in the 2015 survey, individuals’ opinions regarding “improper hijab” (incomplete adherence to hijab) were inquired about, whereas in 2023, in the aftermath of the “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement, people’s views on “non-wearing of the hijab” were questioned. Despite this, the percentage of respondents who confidently stated they had no issue with the non-wearing of the hijab has seen a remarkable increase.

Such statistical change on a national scale indicates a significant transformation in norms and values among Iranians. Women asserted their presence and agency in these spaces and contested government efforts to control their bodies and movements (Shahrokni 2019). Since 2017, Iranian society has witnessed public opposition to compulsory hijab, beginning with the Girls of Revolution Street in 2017 and 2018, culminating in the Woman, Life, Freedom movement, which has taken on a nationwide character. Without profound changes within the family, such a strong street presence would not have been possible.

6. Conclusions

This article asked why the Iranian government failed to defeat women's struggle against compulsory hijab and what makes women's resistance distinctive from other forms of freedom and justice. As we demonstrated in this paper, the answer lies in women's resilient resistance within the family and their success in transforming it from an oppressive apparatus to a more egalitarian structure accepting women's choices. By resisting compulsory hijab in the family, women played a major role in broader sociopolitical transformation. The Iranian family is more than a private sphere; it is a very political institution, especially since the Iranian Revolution. Therefore, by changing families, individuals also change society and politics.

This paper's findings are significant for several reasons. Firstly, in authoritarian contexts such as the Islamic Republic of Iran, politics is often domesticated. We called this phenomenon *khanegi shodan-e siyosat* (domestication of politics). Therefore, the bottom-up resistance that dismantles this domestication is highly significant for sociopolitical change. Although women's resistance was not to subvert political power relations, over time, and through micro transformative politics, they succeeded in eroding the gendered apparatus of the Islamic Republic embedded in the compulsory hijab and women's inferiority to men.

Secondly, contrary to the approach that views the street as the determining factor in political change, this paper emphasizes the significance of invisible but sustainable resistance to political transformation. As we demonstrated in this paper, the family in post-revolutionary Iran was transformed into a controlling apparatus targeting women's bodies through compulsory hijab. Therefore, micro resistance against the hijab led to the re-politicization of Iranian family. This resulted in a profound sociopolitical transformation that cannot easily be reversed.

Iranian women have succeeded in dismantling the social policing within the family, although it seems there is still work to be done to disrupt the political police.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.D. and F.S.; investigation, resources, data collection, date curation, and the original draft preparation, A.D.; writing, review and editing, F.S. and A.D. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee Z6364106/2023/05/123.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author due to privacy, legal, or ethical reasons.

Acknowledgments: Fatemeh Sadeghi's contribution to authorship was made during her tenure at the ERC-funded TAKHAYYUL project. The authors are grateful to two anonymous reviewers, as well as Matteo Tiratelli and Julian Walker from UCL, for their invaluable comments on earlier versions of this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ Referring to Vida Moghed, the Iranian activist who initiated the movement of "the Girls of the Revolution Street". On 27 December 2017, on Enghelab (Revolution) Street in Tehran, she symbolically took her white headscarf off to protest against the mandatory hijab. Her picture became viral, and her action was followed by other activists.
- ² Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. All interviewees gave their informed consent for inclusion before they participated in the study. The interviews were conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and the protocol was approved by the researcher.
- ³ Such as Leili ba Man Ast (1996), Gomgashteh (2000), Hamraz (2001), Komakam Kon (2004), Oo Yek Fereshteh Bood (2006), Akhareen Gonah (2006), Ekhraji-ha (2007), Eghma (2007), Tala va Mess (2010), and Malakoot (2010).

References

- Afary, Janet, and Jesilyn Faust, eds. 2021. *Iranian Romance in the Digital Age from Arranged Marriage to White Marriage*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Aghajanian, Akbar, and Amir H. Mehryar. 2005. State Pragmatism versus Ideology: Family Planning in the Islamic Republic of Iran. *International Journal of Sociology of the Family* 31: 57–69.
- Amir Arjomand, Said. 1988. *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bastani, Hossein. 2024. ۳۷ درصد موافق جدایی دین از سیاست: نظرسنجی محرمانه حکومت ایران [Confidential Survey by the Iranian Government: 73% in Favor of Separating Religion from Politics]. *BBC Persian*. February 20. Available online: <https://www.bbc.com/persian/articles/cmlgj8j3xl1o> (accessed on 21 February 2024).
- Bayat, Asef. 2013. *Post-Islamism: The Changing Faces of Political Islam*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bayat, Asef. 2021. *Revolutionary Life: The Everyday of the Arab Spring*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Behrooz, Maziar. 2012. Iran after Revolution (1979–2009). In *The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History*. Edited by Touraj Daryaee. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chubin, Shahram, and Charles Tripp. 2018. *Iran and Iraq at War*. London: Routledge.
- Cohen, Ronen. 2009. *The Rise and Fall of the Mojahedin Khalq, 1987–1997: Their Survival after the Islamic Revolution and Resistance to the Islamic Republic of Iran*. Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press.
- Ehsani, Kaveh. 2020. War and Resentment: Critical Reflections on the Legacies of the Iran-Iraq War. In *Debating the Iran-Iraq War in Contemporary Iran*. Edited by Narges Bajoghli and Amir Moosavi. London and New York: Routledge.
- Giri, Keshab. 2022. Can Men Do Feminist Fieldwork and Research? *International Studies Review* 24: viac004. [CrossRef]
- Haeri, Niloofar. 2021. *Say What Your Longing Heart Desires: Women, Prayer, and Poetry in Iran*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Haeri, Shahla. 1989. *Law of Desire: Temporary Marriage in Iran*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Hoodfar, Homa. 2008. Family law and family planning policy in pre- and post-revolutionary Iran. In *Family in the Middle East: Ideational Change in Egypt, Iran and Tunisia*, 1st ed. Edited by Kathryn M. Yount and Hoda Rashad. London: Routledge.
- Hosseini-Chavoshi, Meimanat, Peter McDonald, and Mohammad Jalal Abbasi-Shavazi. 2006. The Iranian Fertility Decline, 1981–1999: An Application of the Synthetic Parity Progression Ratio Method. *Population (English Edition)* 61: 701. [CrossRef]
- Ibn Manzur. 2014. *لسان العرب [The Arab Tongue]*. Beirut: Darul Kutubul Ilmiyyah, vol. 15.
- Kamrava, Mehran. 2008. *Iran's Intellectual Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Khatam, Azam. 2023. Mahsa Amini's killing, state violence, and moral policing in Iran. *Human Geography* 16: 299–306. [CrossRef]
- Khosravi, Shahram. 2017. *Precarious Lives Waiting and Hope in Iran*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Ladier-Fouladi, Marie. 2021. The Islamic Republic of Iran's New Population Policy and Recent Changes in Fertility. *Iranian Studies* 54: 907–30. [CrossRef]
- Lilja, Mona. 2021. *Constructive Resistance: Repetitions, Emotions, and Time*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Lob, Eric. 2018. Development, Mobilization and War: The Iranian Construction Jihad, Construction Mobilization and Trench Builders Association (1979–2013). In *Debating the Iran-Iraq War in Contemporary Iran*. Edited by Narges Bajoghli and Amir Moosavi. New York: Routledge.
- Mahdavi, Pardis. 2009. *Passionate Uprisings: Iran's Sexual Revolution*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Maloney, Suzanne. 2015. *Iran's Political Economy since the Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mir-Hosseini, Ziba. 1997. *Marriage on Trial: Islamic Family Law in Iran and Morocco*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Mir-Hosseini, Ziba, and Richard Tapper. 2006. *Islam and Democracy in Iran Eshkevari and the Quest for Reform*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Morgan, David H. G. 2011. Locating 'Family Practices'. *Sociological Research Online* 16: 174–82. [CrossRef]
- Morgan, David H. G. 2013. *Rethinking Family Practices*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pedwell, Carolyn. 2021. *Revolutionary Routines: The Habits of Social Transformation*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Petito, Fabio. 2007. The Global Political Discourse of Dialogue among Civilizations: Mohammad Khatami and Václav Havel. *Global Change, Peace & Security* 19: 103–26. [CrossRef]
- Sadat Moinifar, Heshmat. 2007. Religious Leaders and Family Planning in Iran. *Iran and the Caucasus* 11: 299–313. [CrossRef]
- Sadeghi-Boroujerdi, Eskandar. 2023. Iran's uprisings for 'Women, Life, Freedom': Overdetermination, Crisis, and the Lineages of Revolt. Sadeghi-Boroujerdi. *Politics* 43: 404–38. [CrossRef]
- Saldana, Johnny. 2016. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Sedghi, Hamideh. 2009. *Women and Politics in Iran: Veiling, Unveiling, and Reveiling*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Shaditalab, Jaleh. 2005. Iranian Women: Rising Expectations. *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 14: 35–55. [CrossRef]
- Shahrokni, Nazanin. 2019. *Women in Place: The Politics of Gender Segregation in Iran*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Smart, Carol. 2007. *Personal Life: New Directions in Sociological Thinking*. Cambridge: Polity.
- United Nations Publications. 2021. *World Population Prospects 2017*. New York: United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

Varzi, Roxanne. 2006. *Warring Souls: Youth, Media, and Martyrdom in Post-Revolution Iran*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Widmer, Eric D., Anna-Maija Castren, Riitta Jallinoja, and Kaisa Ketokivi. 2008. Introduction. In *Beyond the Nuclear Family: Families in a Configurational Perspective*. Edited by Eric D. Widmer and Riitta Jallinoja. Bern: Peter Lang, pp. 1–11.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.