

List of abstracts

Wednesday, 14th of June

Panel 1: What is happening in Iran? No abstracts for this panel

Thursday, 15th of June

Keynote

Janet Afary

Title: Gender Wars: Have We Moved Towards Greater Social Reconciliation?

Abstract: Beneath the surface of the recent political protests in Iran, a profound cultural shift has been taking place particularly in the institution of marriage and sexuality—changes that threaten the core principles of the Islamist regime and have substantially weakened its ideological appeal. While the Iranian media presents these changes as highly negative and destructive, in many cases they have released women from the shackles of outdated notions of “morality” and “propriety,” and made it possible for them to emerge as leaders in the unrelenting grassroots protests against the authoritarian regime. This presentation will look at some of these changes in the last several decades and the ways in which they continue to threaten the ideological fabric of a regime that has built its legitimacy on old notions of justice, gender segregation, family values, and supposed piety and morality.

Panel 2: Gender

Kristin Soraya Batmanghelichi

Title: Brother, Would You Step Aside? The Role of Patriarchy in Subverting the *Zan, Zendegi, Azadi* Movement

Abstract: At multiple points throughout Iran’s modern and contemporary history, the more than a century-old Iranian women’s movement has been on the cusp of achieving civil and political rights only to face cynical chants of “The time is not yet right” and “Sister, wait your turn.” As different political actors of varied forms and creeds took helm of the state in the past century, women were either subsumed into the fold of state “feminist” projects, or, as has happened in the past four decades, they have been repeatedly marginalised as their civil and political rights faced both erosion and reform by patriarchal ideologies run rampant. The nascent “*Zan, Zendegi, Azadi*” movement necessitates some very frank discussions and acknowledgement regarding one, the lingering force and role of patriarchal ideology in historically impeding women’s activism in Iran and two, the persistence of patriarchy and the intensity of its values in legislation, personal status laws, social norms, and economic arrangements, among

others. How impactful and long standing will this women-led movement be if bottom-up reform of gender relations is not put forward as a demand by its stalwarts? Moreover, what risk is there of history repeating itself when the role of patriarchy in subjugating Iranian women's status is treated as merely an afterthought?

Nayerreh Tohidi

Title: Gender, a blind spot no more!

Abstract: Unlike in the past, women's rights and gender issues in Iran's pro-democracy movement are no longer a blind spot. Fortunately, not only the majority of women, but also millions of men have come to realize the necessity of respect for women's rights as equal and full citizens and also the significance of women's active participation in the process of building a democratic and secular system in the country. But how can we maintain this progressive and egalitarian shift in Iran's gender politics? What strategies and mechanisms are needed to prevent regressive trends that may marginalize or instrumentalize gender issues in favor of nondemocratic, despotic, and violent alternatives?

Zeinab Nobowati

Title: Between Orientalism and Islamic Fundamentalism: A Postcolonial Feminist Reflection on the Discourse of Hijab in Modern Iran

Abstract: This talk discusses the affinity between colonial modernity and Islamic fundamentalism in their discourse about Muslim woman and the centrality of the veil to her identity. This affinity is relevant for the analysis of compulsory hijab in Iran and resistance against it mainly because of how it has been masked by the dominant power relations that determine dominant discourses about Iranian women's freedom. The idea that the fight against women's oppression requires a fight against religion in the public sphere, and that the emergence of secularism will ensure the freedom of Iranian women not only neglects the central role of secularism is the oppression of Muslim women globally, but also offers a deceiving promise about the future that stems from obliviousness about the past and the history of orientalism and secular fundamentalism in modern Iran. I draw from the work of postcolonial scholars such as Edward Said (1979), Ann Lara Stoler (2016), and more recently Felguni Sheth (2022) to elaborate on the so-called relationality between colonial modernity and its "Other". Through discussing Minoo Moallem's (2005) feminist scholarship that invites us to rethink the links between the gendered elements of Islamic fundamentalism and colonial modernity, I suggest pathways for theorizing a form of feminist liberation that challenges the legacies of orientalism in modern Iran and moves towards what David Scott calls "an ethos of agonistic respect for pluralizations of subaltern difference" (1999, p.224).

Fataneh Farahani

Title: The post-revolutionary sexual politics of Iran and the epistemic vulnerabilities of diasporic scholars

Abstract: Jina Mahsa Amini's death on September 16, 2022, following her arrest for 'improper' wearing of the hijab and the exceptional women-led uprising in Iran have put the gender and sexual politics of the Iranian regime at the center of global attention. What lies behind the regime's demand for the 'proper' covering of the Iranian female body and how is this related to the broader discourse of Iranian post-revolutionary sexual politics? More broadly, different political responses to veiling in Europe, within different diasporic contexts and elsewhere illustrate a strong entanglement of un/veiling practices with variety of intersecting valences; gender (in)equality, freedom of (or from) religion, European's colonial

history, Islamophobia, individual and citizenship rights. As a racialized Middle Eastern scholar in a Western context, I have found writing / talking about veiling challenging, with specific regard for the historical and culturally specific practices of compulsory unveiling and re-veiling in Iran as well as existing Islamophobic context in West. How to write and talk about the veiling practices, sexuality and gender oppression while also refusing victimization, exoticization, and valorization of Muslim/ Middle Eastern women? How to address the lack of recognition of the diverse histories of women's struggle for being veiled as well as being unveiled within Eurocentric knowledge production? Drawing on my personal and academic journeys (which are not mutually exclusive), for the purpose of this presentation, I aim to reflect on the significance of Eurocentric knowledge production and race-based epistemologies. In so doing, I seek to open up a venue to have a dialogue on:

- * Iranian Post-revolutionary sexual politics; the enduring patriarchal symbol

- * The epistemic vulnerabilities of a diasporic scholar within the mimetic entwining of Eurocentric knowledge production and wide-ranging willful ignorance

Panel 3: Class, poverty, and Inequality

Peyman Jafari

Title: Workers and Iran's Women, Life, Freedom Revolt: Class, Democracy and Global Capitalism

Abstract: This paper advances three interrelated arguments about the “Women, Life, Freedom” (WLF) protests that rattled the Islamic Republic of Iran from September to December 2022. First, it postulates that these protests are best characterized as a revolt with a revolutionary perspective, to differentiate their constraints as an event, and their potential as an open-ended process. Second, by examining labor in contemporary Iran, it explores the constraints and possibilities that occupy the space between what the WLF protests are and what they aspire to be—revolt and revolution. These constraints and possibilities are evaluated in two spheres: the ubiquity of socio-economic grievances such as poverty and inequality and their relative absence in the slogans of the WLF revolt; and the complex relationship between street protests and labor strikes during the WLF revolt. The unfolding of the protests, it is argued, depends on how these tensions will be resolved, or in other words, which obstacles are overcome, and which potentials are realized. Finally, the paper argues that these obstacles and potentials are rooted in structures of power that are shaped by the developments of global capitalism.

Farhad Khosrokhavar

Title: Iranian middle classes and their revolt against the Islamic State

Abstract: were politically excluded. Their embrace of the revolutionary movement facilitated the overthrow of the Shah in 1979. Under the Islamic government, these modernized middle classes faced war (1980-88) and a significant part (at least three million) left Iran. But those who remained in Iran preserved their secular mores and the Islamic government, after more than forty years, could not extirpate their cultural influence. Not only did the middle-class families continue their secularized mores, but the youth from the Islamic strata joined them under the influence of the Internet, the Iranian diaspora, and their education at school and university (some 4 million male and female students).

The Islamic Republic's project of Islamizing society has thus completely failed.

The motivation to identify with the middle classes is found in a culture that makes young people, even of working-class origin but increasingly educated, "would-be middle class members". They dream to be part of the middle classes, the more so as their university culture and their identification through the Web go in that direction. The aspiration to join the middle classes at the economic level while having a middle-class culture attracts these young people to an alternative culture, namely a secular one. The latter opens them the perspectives of the enlarged modernity. The logic of prohibition established by the Islamic regime becomes an additional factor in their secularization through transgression. Access to the

virtual space allows young people to become aware of what is happening outside Iran, and to dream of their departure to the West. The September 2022 movement gave them the opportunity to denounce the forced Islamization of society and the recourse, on the side of women, to unveiling, as the emancipation of the body from undue restraints imposed by an illegitimate government. The economic decline of the middle classes, which more or less consciously has become a systematic project since Ahmadinejad's accession to the presidency in 2005, has also been a factor of self-awareness in opposition to Islamic rule. The combination of these factors, namely a globalized middle-class culture accessible through the Internet but also through the diaspora, the logic of transgression against the Theocratic Regime, the existential freedom that finds its immediate translation at the level of the body (hence the rejection of the veil by women), and the absence of any hope on the part of young people to have access to a better life (the impossibility to join the middle classes for the lower-class, educated youth) were the causes of the youth's revolt against the Islamic regime. Women, in particular, excluded from a financially autonomous life although they have the competence to be active, due to their university degrees, have become the avant-garde of this revolt.

Anahita Hosseini

Title:

Abstract:

Panel 4: Media

Gholam Khiabany

Title:

Abstract:

Kaveh Abbasian

Title: A Clash of Media Aesthetics: Hegemony and Counter-hegemony during the Woman, Life, Freedom Movement

Abstract: The 'Woman, Life, Freedom' movement has resulted in a vivid display of long-standing clashes between opposing forces of Iran's socio-political sphere, being domestic or diasporic. Among these clashes, perhaps the contrast between the media aesthetics of various forces of the movement with each other, and with that of the Islamic Republic's propaganda machine is one of the least talked about. In this paper, I identify two lines of hegemonic aesthetics; one the IR propaganda, and another the pro-West, right-wing, and monarchist opposition to the IR (including some of the diasporic television channels). In contrast to these two hegemonic lines, I identify a revolutionary counter-hegemonic aesthetics led by ordinary people in the streets, cemeteries, schools, universities, homes, and online spaces. I argue that the political clashes between these two camps is in line with their opposing aesthetics. I draw on Hito Steyerl's *In Defence of the Poor Image* to discuss the power of low-resolution audio-visual material. I also take inspiration from works such as Glauber Rocha's *The Aesthetics of Hunger* and Julio Garcia Espinosa's *For an Imperfect Cinema*, along with William Brown's key term of "non-cinema" to discuss microbudget media productions and their revolutionary aesthetics.

Sama Khosravi Ooryad

Title:

Abstract:

Panel 5 (Persian): Gender and diversity

Emmanuel Shokrian

Title: Self-Organization of Gender in Social Movements: A Case Study of the Women, Life, Freedom Movement

Abstract: From a network science perspective, society can be seen as a complex adaptive system composed of diverse components with varying degrees of influence, dynamically interacting and evolving over time. Social transformation is a non-linear process that involves temporary patterns of order-disorder-adaptation leading to the emergence of new orders, which perpetuate further transformation. Social movements, on the other hand, represent dynamic and complex forms of social change, characterized by diverse actors, projects, and methods. This presentation adopts an interdisciplinary approach that draws from cybernetics studies, sociology of social movements, applied behavior analysis, and gender and sexuality studies. It presents an analytical and multifaceted model to explore the meaning of gender and sexuality within the context of the recent Women, Life, Freedom movement protests in Iran. This movement has gained international recognition for the leading role of women and the emergence of a new meaning of femininity.

Keyword: Self-Organization, Social Movements, complex adaptive system, gender, diversity.

Parvin Ardalan

Title: (Dis)continuities of the Feminist Movement in Iran in the Mirror of Jina's Revolution

Abstract: The bright and enlightening strikes of the 'revolution-in-the-making' of woman, life, freedom – in the aftermath of the governmental murder of Jina Mahsa Amini – led to an explosive, diverse and multi-voiced movement at the intersection of gender discrimination with other forms of discrimination. In this multi-layered revolution sexuality and gender were both an infliction point and the point overlaps with all other causes of discrimination. This uprising acted as a link, although with different intensity, between various social layers such as class, gender, sexuality, and nationality, as well as movements such the environmental activists, students, and workers. This horizontally organized movement as it proceeds and develops in a bottom-up manner, has been both emancipatory and enlightening because of its central discourse: "women, life, freedom."

Jina's uprising is not the first popular protest in Iran, nor is it the first-ever uprising of women. Earlier uprisings were also diverse and widespread. What we have observed in the last decade is the continuation of strategies that have been interdisciplinary in their diversity, quantity and in their methods. In this process, these multi-dimensional movements and multi-voiced uprisings have multiplied and pluralized in the face of brutal suppression of the state. These protests reached their peak during Jina's uprising.

In this talk and from the perspective of a feminist activist of the women's rights movement in Iran, I try to unpack the continuities and discontinuities between Jina's uprising and the historical trajectory of the contemporary feminist movement in Iran. In doing so I will historically and critically examine the representation of the feminist movement in Iran in the public discourse to highlight the contextual knowledge produced and the practical experiences gathered by the women's rights movement during this current uprising. Diversity and the spread of Jina's intersectional uprising, the importance of gender

and sexuality as the focal point of the uprising, centralising and visibili- ing the formerly marginalized voices, organization from the bottom, the discourse of ‘women, life, freedom, and the current threats and pitfalls in front of us will be the at the centre of my examination.

Somayeh Rostampour

Title: Understanding Gender Through the Prism of Core-Periphery Relations: Mapping the Feminist Movements in Iran

Abstract: The tendency to articulate the unity of multiple forms of social oppression via an intersectional analysis is growing in Iranian, especially since the beginning of Jina uprising. Ethnic-national minorities, especially non-Shia and non-Persian women, have played a leading role during the uprising, building a political discourse and practice based on the intertwining their ethnic and gender ‘identities, the one that highlights their lived experiences as a ‘minority’. Focusing on women from ethnic minorities, the presentation attempts to critically investigates how the concepts such as ‘diversity’ and ‘the local’ can be concretized and through historically. More specifically, two arguments are proposed. First, the political subjectivity of marginalized women must be recognized as a result of longstanding historical process, not simply ‘contingent’ and ‘new’ that fell from sky as dominant and homogenizing narratives on Iranian women’s movement often claim to be, ignoring the intersections of ethnicity and gender. Second, diverse gender experiences in Iran should be perceived with their varied but complementary historical temporalities, driven by the political and social constructions that differentiate the periphery and the center. The two propositions enable one to grasp why the periphery’s women struggle against de-historicization is not only about the present, but it aims also to recall a repressed past and to build a more inclusive future. The Jina uprising promises a new form of ‘alliance’ between the divided women along ethnicity lines, which despite its vulnerabilities appears to be capable of radically transforming the unity of knowledge production and feminist action in the country. Yet, as the final part of the presentation discusses, problems such as nationalism could potentially divide the mobilization around gender relations.

Friday, 16th of June

Panel 6: Iran and Islam into the future

Sharam Alghasi

Title: Islam and Iran, and the political left; The everlasting search for identity

Abstract: In Iranian modern history, Nationalism, Islam, and Political left, in Iranian understanding of the term, have stood as three major ideological forces in interplay and struggle with one another to shape the define Iranian society and Iranianness. The current condition in Iran, manifested in the social movement, also announced as revolution, *Woman, Life, Freedom*, among other things provide us a unique opportunity to revisit these three ideologies. All three ideologies, as Iranian history testifies have endeavored to shape a society in their own images. Common for all three however is their *reductionist* view in defining the Iranian society and the members of this society as individuals and groups. As well, common for all three ideologies is their lack of approaching the *diverse quality* of groups and individuals they try to shape. The presentation gives a) an account of these three ideologies in a historical perspective, ways they have battled one another, and struggles they have carried to form a homogenous Iran, and b) traces the history in current sociocultural and sociopolitical discourses as appeared in *Woman, Life, Freedom* movement, in order to c) give an account on the shortcoming of these ideologies to map a future Iran.

Fatemeh Sadeghi (presented by Touraj Atabaki)

Title: Shame on You; Leave the Government: Political *Haya* and Feminine Constituent Imagination in Iran

Abstract: Opposition to the mandatory hijab took on a more individual or semi-organized form in post-revolutionary Iran. In 2017, the situation began to change dramatically with the formation of a movement called the Girls of the Revolution Street. The death of Mahsa Amini in the Police Detention Center in Tehran on the 13 of September, 2022 due to her veil was another turning point in the life of Iranian women. It resulted in massive uprisings throughout the country and the formation of the Woman, Life, Freedom movement. This uprising succeeded in questioning the moral hegemony of Islamism regarding the hijab. In particular, it succeeded in dissociating *haya* (حیا) and hijab and redefining it as a transgender virtue that is lacking from Iranian politics. The paper investigates female subjectivity as a constituent imagination, in which dignity and rights (حق) are the foundation of community. It also investigates the widespread assumption that poor people, especially women, are less political and morally less sensitive. They are believed to be more utilitarian and concerned with self-interest rather than collective ones. Our findings show that this view is not credible. In fact, poor women have played a significant role in this movement. The paper answers the following questions: Why and how this shift from *haya* as a notion related to women's modesty and sexuality has changed? How has the political *haya* been defined? And what is the importance of this shift?

Roja Fazaeli

Title: “Amameh Parani - Turban Tossing:” Acts of protests and the (il)legitimacy of *Ruhaniat* within the context of the *hawza*

Abstract: This paper examines the performative and symbolic aspects of “tossing the turban” of Shi’a clergy in Iran as acts of protest against the perceived (il)legitimacy of *Ruhaniat* in contemporary Iranian society. Such protests, coupled with slogans such as “*akhoond boro gom sho*” (cleric get lost), highlight public manifestations of dissatisfaction with the politico-religious hegemony of the state mandated clergy, even as many clergy themselves have regarded women taking off their headscarves as a threat to their own authority and legitimacy. This paper discusses these acts of protests in their historical context vis a vis the authority of Shi’a clergy. It will also discuss the structural changes of *hawza* (*houz-e illmiye*), including the training of female *tolab* being linked to the state control of religion and religiosity. It concludes by examining the propagation of a notion of womanhood constructed by the state and valued by the traditionalists in light of *amameh parani* protests.

Panel 7: Nationalities, ethnicities

Azadeh Kian

Title: Woman, Life, Freedom: The emergence of an inclusive definition of National Identity

Abstract: The ongoing revolution in Iran with women at its forefront has spread to various social groups, ethnicities, genders and religions across the country so are the demands for the separation between religion and state. The revolutionary practice has led to the emergence of a new inclusive definition of Iranian-ness that rejects social hierarchies both under the Pahlavis and the Islamic regime. Under the former regime, social hierarchy was based on Persian male identity and belonging to the detriment of other genders and ethnicities. Under the Islamic regime, the Shiite dimension of Iranian identity is emphasized at the expense of other religions, including Sunnis, and women are subjected to the neo-

patriarchal authority of men. Shi'ism thus over- determines individuals and tends to legitimize structural power relations based on gender, ethnicity, religion or class. The ongoing revolution has also led to the rise of an intersectional consciousness according to which democracy, freedom and social justice are closely intertwined with gender, ethnic, religious, sexual or class equality.

Emdjed Kurdnidad

Title: Why the Public Opinion of Kurdistan should Lead the Jin Jiyan Azadi Revolution in Iran

Abstract: A coherent harmonic country called Iran has never existed in reality, but in the mythologies of the region. Historically, Iran was referred to either as Persia or by the name of the empires at the time. It is even questionable how the name Persia started to be used to refer to that region. After the coronation of Reza Khan in 1926, and officially naming the country Iran in 1935, enormous amounts of financial budgets were spent to construct a homogeneous historical justification for an imaginary Persian country called Iran. Part of these budgets were spent on so-called academic research to track the continuity of Persian identity in the region, at the cost of covering other identities and distorting historical facts. This nation-state building project that was aggressively led by Pahlavi family in the newly named country Iran, has never been successful and a mono-nationalist identity across the country never emerged. The Jin Jiyan Azadi revolution was a manifestation of three countries co-existing with Iran: Kurdistan, Balochistan and Iran. Iran is economically exploiting these other countries and these countries have different political dynamics. Now, in the Jin Jiyan Azadi revolution, we clearly miss a proper alternative for the political and economic future of Iran. Whose plan should we trust to reach the best alternative? In my presentation I will argue that Kurdistan's public opinion (Kurdish local activists, journalists and intellectuals) provides the best alternative for Iran and their discourse should lead the revolution.

Kamran Matin

Title: On the Iranian Question

Abstract: Through a critical analogy with Karl Marx's argument in his 'On the Jewish question' this paper argues that secularism and liberal democracy demanded by most Iranian nationalist groups are necessary but insufficient conditions for democratising Iran. I argue that the formation and reproduction of Iran as a nation-state is predicated on what I call 'inter-subaltern colonialism', i.e., colonial violence involved in postcolonial states' nation-building through ideological reconstruction of stateless peoples within their territory as 'ethnic minorities'. These minoritised communities are then ontologically securitised and hence subjected to politico-cultural destruction, assimilation or subordination. In such an historical context, notions of secular democracy limited to negative, individual freedoms fail to address collective unfreedoms and subalternisation of non-Persian nationalities and cultural communities. Consequently, building a genuinely democratic Iran requires the juridically enshrined recognition of Iran's multicultural texture whereby the political equality of its ethno-linguistic components is ensured in a new social contract. This enables a politics of solidarity in difference as the only viable solution to the centrifugal force of subaltern nationalisms; and one that is strategically aligned with the normative orientation of the revolution of 'Woman, Life, Freedom'.

Panel 8 (In Persian): Social Change

Saeed Paivandi

Title: Iran and the issue of unaccomplished protest movements

Abstract: Two paradoxical processes are at the root of a growing gap between the Islamic State and society in Iran: an increasingly closed, archaic, inefficient and repressive political system; a plural

society more and more open to the world and turned towards modernity. Multiple social movements since the 2010s seem to reflect the widespread distrust of Iranian society vis-à-vis the Islamic Republic. Research on social movements in Iran underlines that the Iranian society of the post-green movement period is characterized by the existence of different forms of popular protests and dissatisfied, disappointed and protesting citizens. However, these various protest movements and collective revolts were all ephemeral and severely repressed by the Islamic Republic. The Woman, Life, Freedom movement has succeeded in resisting over time, he succeeded in creating a deep and unprecedented political crisis, developing a strong identity and paving the way for radical political change. But, despite the power of its slogans and the heroic engagement of its young actors, especially the women, the movement could not impose political change. My presentation attempts to make a critical analysis of the protest movements and the political impasse in Iran. The idea is to understand why social movements are unable to develop a collective imaginary around a new political order.

Farhad Khosrokhavar

Title: The September 2022 Protest Movement in Iran: the new mindset of young male and female activists and their innovations in social action

Abstract: The purpose is firstly to highlight the mindset of the young men and women who came to the streets in the Aban Movement of 1401 (September 2022) without organization or leadership, in protest against a totalitarian state.

My attempt is to analyze the emergence of new social actors into the social arena in terms of a new perception of themselves and others: firstly, young women whose mothers' generation were leading feminist intellectuals, many of whom are now in prison. They don't accept the veil as a restraint on their bodily, existential freedom. They translate this existential freedom into political freedom, in close collaboration with the young men. Second, the emergence of a new kind of intellectual singers, hip-hop, rap and blues, who have become the "organic intellectual" of this protest movement.

On the other hand, the influence of the Iranian diaspora through television channels such as Manoto has been effective in the new mental landscape of young activists.

My second goal is to show the theocratic regime's lack of understanding of this social phenomenon, which is the result of the mental changes of young activists.

Finally, my aim is to show the characteristics of secularization in Iran despite concerted attempts by the Islamic government to shape the Iranians as Islamic citizens, obedient to the Theocratic Regime. The failure of the Islamic regime in de-secularizing society is obvious. The 1401 Movement, which shook the Islamic Regime, has failed politically in overthrowing it, but culturally it has succeeded in showing its illegitimacy, and women continue to question its legitimacy by appearing unveiled in public.

Nayereh Tohidi

Title: Gender Dimensions of recent socio-political changes in Iran

Abstract: Using a glocal perspective, I will try to analyze what specific social changes at local/national and global/international levels have resulted in or contributed to the Iranian women's movement and feminism, particularly the Jina movement (Woman, Life, Freedom). I will argue that due to certain political, demographic, legal, cultural, technological, economic, and environmental changes, Iran's feminist discourse and women's movement have evolved from a women's rights orientation toward a women's liberation orientation. This recent shift is in tune with not only the trends in global feminisms but also with the recent paradigm shift in Iran's national politics, especially among the younger generation as reflected in the WLF movement. Can this trend expand the potential of Iranian feminists and women's movement to further contribute to the formation of a strong national solidarity toward the formation of a national liberation movement across gender, sexual, ethnic, religious, and class differences or may further complicate the process of democracy building by intensified identity politics?

Title: The Agency of Unemployed and Precarious Workers in the Protest-Revolutionary Movements of Iran 2017-2023

Abstract: This study delves into the agency of unemployed and precarious workers within the protest-revolutionary movements that unfolded in Iran between 2017 and 2023. While the decline of industrial workers has been observed globally, the situation in the Global South, including Iran, presents unique circumstances. The unemployed workforce in Iran has expanded, accompanied by an influx of precarious workers. Despite their active participation in protest movements against the ruling establishment, the agency of these marginalized groups is often neglected and overshadowed.

This study aims to transcend teleological essentialism by examining the role and agency of unemployed and precarious workers within the broader context of social change in Iran. By addressing the tendency to prioritize the agency of the middle class and overlooking other social groups, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics shaping the protest-revolutionary movements in Iran during the specified period. Through an analysis of primary sources, including testimonies, manifestos, and socio-political developments, this study aims to shed light on the significant contributions and agency of unemployed and precarious workers in the pursuit of societal transformation and democratic aspirations in Iran.