

*Freedom of Thought Journal*  
 Spring 2022, No. 11, [Persian]  
 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53895/VW-AH6437>

## Intellectuals and Social Movements in Iran in the 14th SH Century: A Narrative of Ups and Downs

Farhad Khosrowkavar, Saeed Paivandi

### Abstract

*This article focuses on the place of intellectuals in the main social movements over the course of a century in Iran. Four social movements have been chosen according to their importance during this period: the post-World War II nationalist movement that gathered around the nationalist government of Mossadegh; the anti-monarchy social movement (1978-79) associated with the overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty and the advent of the Islamic Republic in Iran; the Green movement, which organized around electoral integrity in 2009, and the popular revolts of 2017 and 2019, which addressed governmental corruption, democracy, and the future of the country. The article analyzes how the role of intellectuals has evolved through contemporary history in Iran. As such it traces the course from a nationalist social movement (1950-53), in which intellectuals had a significant role, up to more recent popular revolts (2017-19) against poverty, unemployment, and state corruption, in which the effective participation of intellectuals was minimal. The article proposes the following tripartite typology of modern Iranian social movements in relation to intellectuals: the category of social movements with "prophetic" intellectuals; the category of social movements which give birth to their own intellectuals on the spot; the category of social movements which are devoid of intellectuals. The article focuses on the crisis of intellectuals in recent social movements in Iran.*

### Keywords

social movement, intellectuals, democracy, social change

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Saeed Paivandi is a sociologist and professor at the University of Lorraine (Nancy, France). His research focuses on the sociology of higher education and young people. He also works on intellectual and social movements in Iran. His latest books are Paivandi, Saeed, and Nathalie Younès, eds. *À l'épreuve d'enseigner à l'université: Enquête en France*, Peter Lang, 2019, and Fontanini, Christine, K. M. Joshi, and Saeed Paivandi, eds. *International Perspectives on Gender and Higher Education: Student Access and Success*, Emerald Publishing, 2020.

*Freedom of Thought Journal*  
Spring 2022, No. 11, [Persian]  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53895/PCLJ6746>

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## The 14th SH Century and the Challenges of Muslim Intellectuals

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*Mohsen Mottaghi*

### Abstract

*This article addresses the rise of the Muslim intellectual movement in the 14th SH century in the context of contemporary Iranian history. To better understand the Muslim intellectual movement during this time, we will examine four generations of Muslim intellectuals whose main concern has been to rethink the Islamic system of thought in order to adapt it to the values of the modern world. The purpose of this article is to highlight the close relationship between the Muslim intellectual movement and social developments in Iran.*

### Keywords

intellectuals, Muslim intellectuals, rethinking religion, Iran, Islam

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Mohsen Mottaghi, PhD, is the author of *La pensée chiite contemporaine à l'épreuve de la Révolution iranienne*. L'Harmattan, 2012. He is also a contributor to *Religions de la libération: Espérance, justice sociale et politique*. Van Dieren, 2021, and his forthcoming book, with Farhad Khosrowkhavar, is *L'islam et le christianisme au défi de leurs théologies*. Rue de Seine, 2022.

*Freedom of Thought Journal*  
Spring 2022, No. 11, [Persian]  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53895/DPJS1022>

## The Problematic Confrontation of "Us" with the Other: One Dream and Multiple Interpretations

Sayeh Azarpanah, Maedeh Maktoum

### Abstract

*"Stranger, talk! Tell me, what should I do to awaken Iranians?" This question from Abbās Mirzā clearly portrays an encounter between Iranians and "the other" at the beginning of Iran's modern age. The Stranger is assumed to hold some kind of truth, the revelation of which would lead to the awakening of Iranians. This article considers an Iranian "we" that arises from imaginative confrontations with "the other", beginning with Akhundov's *Maktubat* and tracing "our" imagination up to the 1979 revolution. The 1979 revolution was a unique turning point in the life of "our" dream; its strange difference made "the other" interested to ask, with Foucault: "What are the Iranians dreaming about?" Foucault's account of the Iranian dream has often been criticized. In favor of the "spirituality" of the revolutionary events, he separated spirituality from violence, and even considered the violence of revolution inevitable. As the fundamentalist government that longed for the Islamic Caliphate continued using violence, the dream turned into a nightmare and Foucault no longer pursued his discussion. To better understand this nightmare, the article examines the 2009 protests in Iran and focuses on Nikfar's argument around "religious truth" that emerges in prison. The article concludes by relating the 1979 revolution and 2009 protests to Žižek's reading of the "Iranian event", and argues that the emancipatory potential of Islam should not be ignored because of its violence.*

### Keywords

The 1979 Iranian Revolution, Michel Foucault, Mohammad Reza Nikfar, Slavoj Žižek, political Islam.

*Freedom of Thought Journal*  
Spring 2022, No. 11, [Persian]  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53895/ZTH6923>

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## My Encounters with the Question of Iranian Identity

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*Ahmad Ashraf*

### Abstract

*In encountering the question of Iranian identity from my early childhood years to the present, I have been drawn to, struggled with, and ultimately abandoned both the “romantic Achaemenid nationalist” and the “critical modernist” approaches to fundamental aspects of Iranian culture. Instead, I have proposed a “historicizing” perspective that makes a clear distinction between Iranian identity (iranīyat) as a historical entity, on the one hand, and, on the other, “Iranian national identity” as a modern construct that cannot not be applied retrospectively to the historical past. This approach acknowledges the rise of “civic nations” as a product of modernity, but rejects the disjuncture between a people’s history and their contemporary cultural identity. In the case of Iran, I have argued that, while modern conceptions of “Iranian national identity” were subjectively and retrospectively constructed from ancient myths, symbols, and collective memories, they are in fact re-constructions of historical identities that are based on verifiable ethnolinguistic and territorial ties.*

### Keywords

Iranian identity, Iranīyat, romantic nationalism, modernism, historicizing approach

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Dr. Ahmad Ashraf served as a member of the Board of Editors and as Associate Editor of *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Professor Ashraf has taught sociology and social history of Iran in the universities of Tehran, Princeton, Columbia, and Pennsylvania. He has published a number of books and numerous articles in various areas of Iranian Studies.

*Freedom of Thought Journal*  
Spring 2022, No. 11, [Persian]  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53895/KJOP7041>

## The evolution of gender discourse in modern Iran

Claudia Yaghoobi

### Abstract

*Historically, Iranian women have endeavoured to access public spaces in society in various ways. During the Pahlavi era, women practically participated in national debates on gender and family protection law reform. At the time, a number of factors – from the unveiling decree to women’s increasing presence in public spaces to the encouragement and promotion of norm-based socialization – caused disruption in all-male spaces of society. Although modernity and social changes between 1900 and 1979 led to the establishment of heterosexuality as the fundamental norm of society, the Islamic Republic has always sought to rebuild a gender-apartheid society. The regime has always been involved in shaping the discourses of sexuality and gender through the imposition of the hijab, the reversal of reforms related to the family protection law, and the endorsement of polygamy and temporary marriage. Whereas the Islamic Revolution transformed women’s status in society four decades ago, today Iranian women are revolutionizing with a determined and calm desire for sexual and physical independence. In today’s Iran, mothers and daughters from different socio-economic backgrounds are fighting together for equality and freedom of choice.*

### Keywords

public spaces, gender apartheid society, family protection law

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Claudia Yaghoobi is a Roshan Institute Associate Professor and director of Persian Studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She is the author of *Subjectivity in ‘Attar, Persian Sufism, and European Mysticism*. Purdue UP, 2017, and *Temporary Marriage in Iran: Gender and Body Politics in Modern Persian Literature and Film*. Cambridge UP, 2020.

*Freedom of Thought Journal*  
Spring 2022, No. 11, [Persian]  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53895/YMFZ1615>

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## A Historical Study of the Iranian Queer Non-movement

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*Shahram Kiani*

### Abstract

*This article applies critical discourse analysis and content analysis as a method of data analysis to queer discourses from Iran over the last three decades. "Orthodox discourse" and "heterodox discourse" are studied from historical, ontological, epistemological, and executive perspectives. The author also uses the model of historical sociology. The first part of the article addresses a theoretical study of the concepts of movement and non-movement. In the second part of the article an overview of the history of pre-modern sexuality and modernization in Iran is presented. In the third part of the article, while narrating the historical events after the 1979 revolution, the author examines the gradual formation of an orthodox discourse in the field of Iranian sexuality, first in the Iranian diaspora, and then in relation to domestic activists. The final section of the article provides an overview of heterodox discourse as a critical discourse in this area.*

### Keywords

orthodox discourses, heterodox discourses, Queer, LGBT, exile, Iranian diaspora, information technology, movements

*Freedom of Thought Journal*  
Spring 2022, No. 11, [Persian]  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53895/ZSVN5742>

## The 14th SH Century: A Century of Education, Lessons Learned, Not Learned, and Mislearned

*Interview with Saeed Paivandi by Mohammad Reza Nikfar*

### Abstract

*Education is one of the manifestations of modernity, as well as being a context for, and promoter of, modernity. The 14th SH century in Iran is a century in which the institution of education was transformed. Yet, this transformation was not due to a critical break with the past, but as a result of both being alienated by the past, as well as continuing elements of it. In this article Mohammad Reza Nikfar discusses these dynamics with Saeed Paivandi, a professor of sociology in France who specializes in education.*

### Keywords

modernity, education, official language, critical thinking

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Saeed Paivandi is a sociologist and professor at the University of Lorraine (Nancy, France). His research focuses on the sociology of higher education and young people. He also works on intellectual and social movements in Iran. His latest books are Paivandi, Saeed, and Nathalie Younès, eds. *À l'épreuve d'enseigner à l'université: Enquête en France*, Peter Lang, 2019, and Fontanini, Christine, K. M. Joshi, and Saeed Paivandi, eds. *International Perspectives on Gender and Higher Education: Student Access and Success*, Emerald Publishing, 2020.

Mohammad Reza Nikfar, PhD, is Professor of Political Philosophy in the Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities, Iran Academia. He is the author of *Die Erörterung des Satzes vom Grund bei Martin Heidegger*. Peter Lang Verlag, 1997. and the Persian-language books *Khoshunat, hoquq-e bashar, jame'e-ye madani*. Tarh-e No, 2000. and *Ideolozi-e Irani; dar naqd-e Aramesh Dustdar*. Roonak, 2021.

*Freedom of Thought Journal*  
Spring 2022, No. 11, [Persian]  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53895/VVUB9045>

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## Jamshid Behnam: Narrator of Loneliness, Violence, and Crises

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*Ali Reza Manafzadeh*

### Abstract

*Ali Reza Manafzadeh, during his speech at the funeral of Jamshid Behnam, a prominent Iranian sociologist, focused on the writings and themes of his research works. In this article Manafzadeh interprets the position and importance of Behnam's works in the historical context in which they were written. He concludes that sociological readings of Jamshid Behnam are essential in order to understand the current Iranian society. Behnam's works not only provide researchers with valuable methodological insights, but his analysis and conclusions can form the basis for deductive studies of current sociologist.*

### Keywords

Jamshid Behnam, Iranian sociologists, demographics

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Ali Reza Manafzadeh is an historian and author of *Abmad Kasravi l'homme qui voulait sortir l'Iran de l'obscurantisme*. L'Harmattan, 2005, as well as *La construction identitaire en Iran*. L'Harmattan, 2010.



