self. To flesh this out, Dabashi draws on the couple's extensive, albeit censored, letters and correspondence to great effect. Al-e Ahmad was cognizant of his considerable debt to Daneshvar and readily acknowledged that from 1950 onward he did not publish anything without first having her read and comment on it (with the exception of *On the Service and the Treachery of the Intellectuals*). In an interview some years after her husband's untimely death, Daneshvar told us that if it were not for her Al-e Ahmad would not have become Al-e Ahmad. In this regard, Dabashi's crucial intervention has been a long time coming; up to now it has remained palpably absent from how scholars have approached and read Al-e Ahmad. Yet as Dabashi contends, "we have always (though unbeknownst to ourselves) read them together rather than against each other. . . . Together they did not just become complete but transcended the fictive binaries of gender" (p. 106).

One possible area for further research relates to Al-e Ahmad's time in the Tudeh Party, when he edited *Nameh-ye Mardom*, and specifically how the party, with which nearly every significant intellectual of the period was associated in one way or another, shaped and informed his subsequent trajectory. Although some scholars have touched upon this, more attention has been given to his close relationship with the Socialist League (see, for example, Negin Nabavi's *Intellectuals and the State in Iran*).[2]

That said, Dabashi's reading of Al-e Ahmad as a dialogical interrogator and thinker who unsettles the line between certitude and doubt, conviction and ambivalence, masculine and feminine, secular and religious, liberation and mastery, and nonidentity and difference allows us to read him anew and with fresh eyes, in ways that continue to illuminate our own crisis-ridden condition.

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Women in Place: The Politics of Gender Segregation in Iran. Nazanin Shahrokni (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2020). ISBN 9780520304284 (paperback), 176 pp.

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The establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) had pivotal effects on the country and its citizens, with women being the first and most affected group among the population. Starting with a decree requiring modesty for women in the public arena, the theocratic state instituted a series of controversial measures controlling male-female interactions in the public domain and segregating spaces where these interactions might occur. Although many of the secular gender policies of the Pahlavi era were abolished as time went by, the exigencies of the political formation of a theocratic state in modern times forced the IRI to adapt its professed ideological gender policies to conflicting pressures and demands from women of different social classes, political persuasions, and world outlooks.

Recipient of the 2020 Latifeh Yarshater Award from the Association of Iranian Studies, *Women in Place* presents sociologist Nazanin Shahrokni's preoccupation with "regimes of gender segregation" in Iran and their conflicting functions. Her research is based on firsthand experiences, fieldwork in the megacity of Tehran, primary sources in Persian, and the latest theoretical developments and research in the fields of women's studies, urban sociology, and

[2] Negin Nabavi, *Intellectuals and the State in Iran: Politics, Discourse, and the Dilemma of Authenticity* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2003).

postmodernist theories—all essential for examining the controversial subject of gender regulation within the secularized society of a theocratic state. Combining her ethnographic fieldwork with the latest theories in the above-mentioned fields, she examines gender segregation policies of the IRI by focusing on three specific public arenas: city buses, a women-only park, and a major sports stadium.

The book is composed of five chapters and a preface. In the preface, Shahrokni offers an autobiographical introduction to the issues and experiences that attracted her to the topic. Chapter 1 offers a brief review of gender segregation during the Qajar era, the desegregation implemented by the Pahlavi state, and changes in the laws affecting the status of women in the first decade of the IRI. Although her historical narrative is broad, Shahrokni provides a good exposition of de-veiling and desegregation prior to the 1979 revolution and lays out her theoretical approach to the issue of spatial gender segregation. Rejecting a monolithic view of the IRI and its gender-specific policies, she describes the nuanced and changing nature of those policies, the adaptive nature of state responses to the various demands and pressures of diverse women's groups, and the varied impacts these responses have had on women of different classes and ideological persuasions.

Shahrokni's major thesis is that in developing and implementing its political and ideological goals the theocratic state utilizes both provisional and prohibitive measures. Specifically she contends that, at times,

> gender-segregated spaces [in the IRI] shifted from functioning as *spaces of exclusion* aimed at restricting women's movements in the city to *spaces of inclusion*. . . . The shift from one regime of gender segregation to the other reflects, and is enabled by, a shift in the state's mode of regulation from *prohibition*—the disabling of undesired effects—to *provision*, the enabling of desired effects. The movement from prohibition to provision . . . is accompanied by a discursive shift from protecting women's virtue and chastity in the name of *Islamic morality* to protecting women's rights and safety in the name of *secular liberal citizenship*. (p. 5, author's emphasis)

As the state evolved from one decade to the next, not only did women's definitions and expectations of women-only spaces change, the state's "gender logic" also adapted itself to these changes and definitions, leading to new "modes of discourse, patterns of segregation, different methods of regulation, and shifting notions of female subjecthood" (p. 20). These policies were "ideologically motivated and clearly not devoid of symbolic violence" (p. 18). However, since the state could not be indifferent to pressures emanating from international standards of liberal governance, these policies had to be couched in careful language and presented as provision of service.

Chapter 2 examines the city's treatment of gender segregation in public buses and outlines the contour of changes and meaning in separating bus seats of males from those of females in the context of a male-dominated environment. Describing the bus as "a mobile space, an ideology in motion" (p. 34), the author argues that the meaning of gender compartmentalization on buses changed with shifts in the sociopolitical contexts of the war decade (1980–88), the postwar reconstruction era (1989–96), the reformist period (1997–2005), and the liberalization period that followed. Through these periods and regulation changes, women's access to the city expanded, the state's definition of womanhood transformed "from subjects of revolutionary morality (sisters)" to "rights-bearing citizens, and eventually, to consumers" (p. 34). The flexibility of these changes and expansions offered the state the ability to adjust to shifting, conflicting female demands for the use of mass transportation, but it did not erode the power of the state. Rather, the state asserted its authority as the arbitrator of gender boundaries on these buses.

Chapter 3 addresses the formation of the first women-only park in Tehran. Offering her own observations from field interviews in this park, Shahrokni discusses the failures of the state's first decade of gender segregation policies to produce desired goals. She discusses the

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state's confrontation with the deteriorating conditions of Tehran as an overpopulated and heavily polluted city with serious implications for its citizens' physical and mental health. In this context, the women-only parks (four of them by the time of the book's publication) provided the state with a responsive solution to the goals of both provision and exclusion. While keeping women separated from men, these parks offered women with diverse interests and ideological orientations a safe and protected site for physical exercise and relaxation.

In chapter 4, the author covers the opposition to the ban on women's spectatorship of men's sports matches. It begins with the aftereffects of a memorable playoff soccer match between Iran and Australia for participation in the 1998 FIFA World Cup. Iran's victory resulted in jubilant outpourings of Tehran residents into the streets, dancing, cheering, and celebrating. To prevent airport crowding during the team's arrival, the government announced a men-only welcoming ceremony in Azadi Stadium. The announcement moved the existing ban on female spectators to the surface of national consciousness and resulted in public protests. Given the high-profile international attention to the ceremony, the state felt compelled to allow women in, but seated them in a separate section. The announcement of an old ban and its reversal set in motion a prolonged struggle for female access to sport stadiums. Shahrokni examines the reasons for the ban, its changing status over time, the national and international political actors contesting it, and the strategies employed to achieve state objectives. Although the call for repeal of the ban was limited to feminist circles in Tehran, it acquired symbolic significance among younger voters. Supporters of the ban or of its removal were both national and international, with varied and conflicting reasons such as equal rights, gender protection, upholding religious and moral values, physical security, and protection from the loutish atmosphere of sports arenas. Access to the stadium became "a microcosm of broader developments in political contestations and state fragmentation . . . in the pursuit of power [and] the assertion of ultimate sovereignty" (pp. 84–85).

The last chapter pulls together the points made in previous chapters: the metal bar in buses that separates women from men, the walls that keep women inside the parks, distant from the "prying eyes of men, the gates that keep women outside the sports stadiums, away from men's rowdy behavior [and] . . . fences, curtains, signs, and posters, were all installed as a way of signifying the new gender order established by the Islamic state" (p. 112). By emphasizing the role of women in the early revolutionary protests in Tehran, Shahrokni demonstrates the constitutive significance of woman's place in "the Islamic city" and the contestation of its meanings, interpretations, and import by different stakeholders, groups, and actors with an investment in urban boundaries, as well as the relevance of a woman's place in a state characterized as "Islamic"—a quality that itself has been the product of competitive confrontation, negotiation, and compromise. The "Islamic city" was to be the epicenter of urban development. However, during formation of exclusionary and inclusionary measures, "the role of gender and religion and the interaction of the two" (p. 115) often varied and changed. When in crisis, the state used three strategies for managing gender boundaries: outsourcing the task to the private sector, scaling it down from the national level to the local level, or scaling it up by transferring it from the local to the national level (pp. 119–20).

Nazanin Shahrokni's book follows the late Parvin Paidar's warnings against essentialist approaches with gender-blind methodologies to Iranian women's contributions to political processes in the IRI, a concern that I also wrote about on the subject of conflicting sociological variables affecting Iranian women's gains and losses in both the revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods.[1] Focusing on state policies after the Iran–Iraq War, Shahrokni describes the shifting terrain of gender politics in the IRI and develops her own theory of the patterns and politics of gender segregation in public spaces and spheres. She masterfully addresses the challenging contradictions women experience in segregated spaces, the state's

[1] See Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Ali Akbar Mahdi, "Reconstructing Gender in Post-Revolutionary Iran: Transcending the Revolution," *Middle East Insight* 11, no. 5 (1995).

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ideological and practical transformations, and the broader theoretical tensions of her subject matter. Her work is a significant challenge to essentialist ideological approaches to the study of women in Iran and the broader Middle East. Her vivid descriptions of women's presence and interactions within public spaces are intimate, engaging, and illuminating; her theoretical grounding of these experiences is rich and informative, although sometimes repetitive.

Finally, a few words on the generalizability and reliability of Shahrokni's theory. First, although her theory is successfully and convincingly applied to three selected sites in Tehran, it has yet to be tested in public spaces in mid- and small-size cities, which are often more traditional, religious, and conservative in orientation and have relatively stronger municipal and administrative controls.

Second, Shahrokni "challenges the practice of reification of gender segregation by pointing out the differential degrees of prohibition and provision in the context of different regimes of gender segregation" (p. 5). Pointing to the shifting boundaries of segregation and their contestations by women, she seeks to emphasize the diversity of the forms and meanings of these boundaries. Yet she acknowledges that "the state's practice of . . . segregation acquires its unity at the level of representation" (p. 5), that is, the IRI is intent on creating and maintaining control over women's movements and presence in public spaces, albeit with tactical adaptivity and differential modes. Although we need to be cognizant of the ebb and flow of the operational aspects of these inclusionary or exclusionary measures, we cannot forget that the purpose of these controlling measures is to discipline women's bodies in the public arena. The degree of provision or prohibition of these measures, the timing of their implementation, and their operational modes are determined principally by male authorities, based on the political and ideological interests of the state first and the target population second. For instance, the state has been quite willing to relax prohibitive measures during elections and yet often resorts to stricter measures after the election. Furthermore, decisions regarding enforcement are not politically or religiously neutral. Support for or opposition to the state and status as a religiously acceptable citizen figure heavily in the state's implementation process. Any violation of the rules of segregation by supporters or affiliates of the state are treated with much more leniency than violations by secular women who actively oppose these rules.

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The Seljuqs and their Successors: Art, Culture and History, edited by Sheila R. Canby, Deniz Beyazit and Martina Rugiadi, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020, ISBN 978-1-4744-5034-8, xviii+310 pp.

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The Seljuqs and their Successors presents, by and large, the proceedings of a June 2016 symposium held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in conjunction with the exhibit, "Court and Cosmos: the Great Age of the Seljuqs." Its chapters range from general surveys of the Seljuq period to technical studies of individual objects. There is something here for anyone with an interest in the Seljuq world: politics, religion, and the remarkable artwork at the center of "Court and Cosmos." This volume advances the scholarship on the Seljuq world and proposes new methods for future scholarship.