

the history of the conflict outside the confines of the IRGC and how this history compares with that of the organization.

Second, somewhat related to the first question and broadening the analytical lens beyond Iran, how does the IRGC's historiography of the war compare with such projects in the United States and other countries? Although the IRGC may "not fit neatly into existing conceptual categories," as Samuel's book contends (20), the organization's chronicling of the conflict may bear some similarities to the field of military history in the United States and other Western countries. As in Iran, the field in these countries tends to be largely dominated by military entities like the US Army Combined Arms Center's Combat Studies Institute and Center of Military History, and less developed and more marginalized in other areas, particularly academia.<sup>3</sup> One reason for this reality is that militaries have a vested interest in studying wars and their historical parallels, lessons learned, and best practices, to avoid repeating past mistakes and to improve current and future performance, the IRGC being no exception to this rule, as Samuel's book makes clear. Another reason is the added difficulty for individuals and institutions outside the military and government to access classified and sensitive documents and records, assuming they exist and have not been destroyed. As is likely the case in Iran and elsewhere, military history in the West has been plagued and distorted by idiosyncratic and inherent biases, such as Euro- and state-centric analysis.<sup>4</sup>

In sum, Samuel's book is required reading for students and specialists of Iranian and Middle Eastern history and politics and, more generally, armed conflict, social revolution, and collective memory. It makes a significant scholarly contribution by delving into untapped sources and by offering unique insights into the IRGC, the Iran-Iraq War, and the Islamic Republic. Finally, the book raises stimulating and engaging questions about military historiography as a national project in Iran and beyond. These questions will surely prompt path-breaking research within the disciplines of history, area studies, and comparative politics in the future.

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## **Iranian Women & Gender in the Iran-Iraq War, by Mateo Mohammad Farzaneh. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2021. 457 pages.**

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*Iranian Women & Gender in the Iran-Iraq War* by Mateo Mohammad Farzaneh breaks new ground in both Iranian feminist studies and social histories of the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88). The book relies on interviews, documentaries, archival research of official documents—as well as diaries, letters, memoirs, and secondary sources—to piece together the days of war for Iranians. It pays special attention to women's participation and the war's impact on gender. As such, readers are gifted with the first historical study that reframes the contingencies,

<sup>3</sup> Ian F. W. Beckett, *A Guide to British Military History: The Subject and the Sources* (Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Military, 2016), 24; Ronald H. Spector, "Teetering on the Brink of Respectability," *Journal of American History* 93, no. 4 (2007): 1158–60.

<sup>4</sup> Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2004), ix.

logistics, and legacies of the Iran-Iraq War with a focus dedicated entirely to the pious women who participated in it. Ethnographic research on the Iran-Iraq war and its legacies is scarce, especially when it comes to the role of women. Showing the interplay of patriotism and Islam in pious women's decisions to defend Iran at wartime, Farzaneh fills many gaps in Iranian Studies. One of the most important issues addressed is how pious women gained confidence in the process of their participation, emboldened to ask for roles beyond that of being the wife or mother of a martyr. In this sense, Farzaneh offers an up-close view of how the Iran-Iraq war advanced the women's rights struggle more broadly by empowering non-elite pious women.

The book chronicles the physically and emotionally strenuous activities pious women undertook during and after the war, including: safeguarding ammunition storages, burying the dead, keeping dogs away from bodies awaiting burial, engaging in armed combat, exposure to chemical warfare agents, staffing and operating laundry facilities, volunteering as nurses, preparing food and uniforms for the front, gathering intelligence, identifying spies, waiting on the missing, and sending their sons, daughters, fathers, husbands, and other loved ones into war. While many of the women whose stories are narrated in *Iranian Women & Gender in the Iran-Iraq War* are understood by peers as the Zaynab—Imam Hussein's outspoken sister—of their time, Farzaneh takes readers into the space traversing these women's otherworldly aspiration to sacrifice for God and the worldly grief of living through an extraordinary human experience. In the process, readers glimpse the emotional agility, physical strength, economic resourcefulness, and intellectual stamina embodied by pious women involved in the Iran-Iraq War.

From the introduction through chapters one and two, Farzaneh provides a historical backdrop to the Iran-Iraq War. This segment attends particularly to the ways in which pious women entered public spaces at the intersections of war and revolution, thereby contradicting the Islamic Republic's new limitations on women's rights. An exceptional aspect of these chapters is Farzaneh's emphasis on the ways in which both feminist scholars and men in Iran have overlooked pious women who participated in the war. For instance, he states in the introduction:

Yet even though women provided such varied services, men chastised them in the process, belittled, beat, threatened, used and then ignored, and eventually forgot them until the women volunteers began speaking out to seek recognition. They never complained about what they did because they considered their actions honorable, which God rewarded in many ways. (p.1)

Having been discounted, used, and discarded by the majority of their male counterparts in post-1979 Iran, the female volunteers of the Iran-Iraq War take solace in telling their stories publicly today and remembering God's reward and love for them.

Following on, each subsequent chapter highlights the diversity among the pious by focusing on a specific group of women involved in the war. Chapter three focuses on the women of Khorramshahr and Abadan, asserting that humanitarian concerns, patriotism, and religious values shaped women's desires to participate in the war, though they received little to no financial or moral support from their male counterparts. Farzaneh highlights both the challenges pious women encountered and the familial support they received at their insistence on volunteering at a time when women's access to public spaces and legal rights was significantly compromised. He discusses the support of some of the local Khorramshahr men, such as Abadan's Friday prayer leader Gholam Hossein Jami, to illustrate the importance of historical contingencies in studies of the war. Jami crossed the strict gender segregation boundaries imposed at the time by meeting with women and mentioning their demands in his monthly journal. As the representative of Ayatollah Khomeini in Abadan, Jami's support created space for pious women to achieve their goal of participating in the war.

Chapter four moves toward women state employees, including female war volunteers who worked for state media. This chapter, and also chapter six, reveal that female war veterans were often denied state benefits because the men working in Veterans Affairs did not believe they had actually participated in the war. Nevertheless, many women who worked for the state during the war did so out of a patriotic (and not necessarily ideological) congruency with the state in transformation. The difficult negotiations Iranian women made with others—and also with themselves—is an important finding of these chapters, and readers see the central role such negotiations played in keeping the nation united during the war.

Chapters five and six address the sacrifices women made on the home front, which, for some, was also the warfront. Chapter five discusses female relatives of war martyrs by contextualizing their emotional labor in real-time. A central argument here is that “for each male involved [in the war], there were sometimes as many as three, four, or five females affected” (p.197). This chapter also examines male martyrs, questioning whether their sacrifice outweighed those of the women who loved them and were left behind: “Who is to say whose contribution was more significant and whose participation more worthwhile? Hassan died on the night of Operation Karbala-ye 2, but Masoumeh’s battle continues to this day” (p. 200). Chapter six explores the experiences of women in small towns and villages who encountered the war as an invasion of their homes.

Chapter seven focuses on female prisoners of war and highlights the resilience of Iranian women who were tortured, threatened with rape, and witnessed sexual violence while held captive in Iraqi prisons. Chapters eight and nine illustrate the emptiness of women’s lives whose husbands had either disappeared, were martyred in battle, or returned as injured veterans. These women often ended up living in their memories with the dead in a constant state of war, decades after the cease-fire. Chapter ten demonstrates that in the post-war years, it has become increasingly difficult for women participants—even relatives of male fighters—to maintain the right to speak as female warriors with a commitment to women’s rights.

A notable theme in the book is that although pious women in post-revolutionary Iran recognize gender inequality as an obstacle to their progress and quality of life, the pursuit of legal change does not take center stage in their political struggle. Instead, access to public spaces and resources, and a constant remembrance of God, define their struggles. As such, *Iranian Women & Gender in the Iran-Iraq War* exposes a disconnect between feminist and non-feminist strategies for materializing gender justice in Iran today.

The book historicizes pious women’s activism with an eye toward capturing the relevance of their labor to women’s rights struggles in modern Iran. For example, in chapter three, readers are reminded of the historical contingencies that, similar to secular women, pious women also encountered in 1980:

Religious thoughts as expressed entirely by men prescribed what was good for women. Secularity was gone, and women had either to fight the new system or accept the “Islamic” views of women. Zahra Hosseini and other women volunteered in the war under such circumstance. The contradiction between an Islamic state that limited women’s participation in the public sphere and the presence of women volunteers in the war zones couldn’t have been more evident, but no one paid much heed to it at the time. (p. 72–3)

Avoiding an enchantment with the past or future, Farzaneh centers his narrative on the *now*, making the book, its many questions, and the post-revolutionary gendered social patterns it reveals politically relevant.

Each chapter, by drawing attention to the emotional labor pious women in Iran bore during the eight-year war, reminds readers of the inner strength these women developed by sitting still with grief, mourning, and hope—all at once. As chapters historicize this experience in the contingencies of both the war and post-war years, this book also demonstrates

that embodying spiritual agility and force are indeed a legacy of the war for all Iranian women.

With a commitment to speak across borders and boundaries, one of the book's subtle contributions is its capacity to reach a broad audience, in Iran and abroad. The book is written for an international audience by an author who both witnessed the war first-hand as a young volunteer and witnessed its aftermath as a historian in the diaspora. Farzaneh writes as an eyewitness who remembers the past and an observer who sees the present to offer us a detailed historical account of pious women's role in post-1979 gender struggles.

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**Development, Architecture, and the Formation of Heritage in Late Twentieth-Century Iran: A Vital Past.**  
**Ali Mozaffari and Nigel Westbrook (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2020). 304 pages. \$130 hardcover. ISBN 9781526150158**

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In the past decade, the architecture of Iran in the late Pahlavi period has received a considerable scholarly attention. Drawing on archival research and critical theories, these studies have advanced our understanding of the cultural meanings of monuments, while also elucidating the politics and social dynamics of urban planning and housing projects. These works primarily have been produced by a generation of scholars who came of age, as did the author of this review, under the Islamic Republic and look at the Pahlavi era as a distant yet ironically palpable past—a bygone age whose characters are still partly with us today. As the 1970s recede further into history, their distinctive architectural trends and traits can now be seen in sharper grain.

In *Development, Architecture, and the Formation of Heritage in Late Twentieth-Century Iran: A Vital Past*, Ali Mozaffari and Nigel Westbrook offer new insights into Iran's architectural culture in the 1970s as well as during the two decades after the 1979 Revolution. The purpose of the book—as the authors emphasize throughout the volume—is to analyze the relationship between development, architecture, and heritage. Development, they argue, created massive societal change, laying the ground for new perceptions of the past (or heritage). These emerging notions of heritage (understood in terms of authenticity, tradition, or civilization) were in turn mediated, negotiated, and (re)constructed in the present through architecture.

Mozaffari and Westbrook examine this dialectic through four case studies that include realized and unrealized projects for collective housing complexes as well as civic monuments and urban ensembles dating from the 1970s through the 1990s. In describing and analyzing these cases, the authors draw on the publications of the era, recent scholarly works, and on-site investigations and interviews with users; interviews with architects and Mozaffari's personal experiences provide further insights into the context of the projects. What sets this volume apart from other recent studies is that it does not merely focus on