Acknowledgements

The Wellcome Trust provided the funding for my doctoral research under the Society & Ethics Doctoral Scholarship [Grant no. WT10988MA], which is the basis of this book. It did so within an intellectual framework and academic vision that is rare in today's funding landscape, especially for works related to Iran and the Middle East, where geopolitical interests overshadow any intellectual curiosity. Without this support, I would have not achieved my degree and this research would have not been written.

I am also grateful to the team at the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* and the *Institut de Recherche Interdisciplinaire en Sciences Sociales* in Paris, where I spent a beautiful eventful year as a postdoctoral fellow. Their humanistic kindness and intellectual overtures provided a stimulating, open-minded environment which made this book a less painstaking journey. I look forward to collaborating with them in the years ahead.

My fieldwork and primary research owes much to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime where I worked as an intern in Summer 2012. Gelareh, Setareh, Hamid-Reza Mitra, Ani, Negar and Maryam, as well as the country representative Antonino De Leo – and many others – shared with me all the contacts and information necessary to lay the ground for this research. In the addiction recovery centres, during outreach programmes and in methadone clinics, people made my daily encounters with the thorny issue of 'addiction' an enriching human experience. The many who shared their stories for the sake of my research were the engine of this whole work; without their kindness and human warmth, this work would have not been finished.

I wrote this book as a nomad: in Brussels' Café Union and Bibliotheque Royale; in Paris' EHEES and SciencesPO libraries; in Mantua, Sant'Omero and the Dolomites; in Tehran's National

Library and the 70 *Qolleh* farm in Arak; and at the *Middle East Centre* in Oxford. I am grateful to the staff and workers in the libraries that enabled an ideal working environment. A special token of gratitude goes to Fariba Adelkhah for having hosted me at CERI as part of the Oxford-Sciences Po Exchange Programme in 2014/15; and to Stéphane Lacroix for having invited me to work at the Paris School of International Affairs in 2015/16 and in Menton in 2017/18.

I discussed ideas and approaches with a number of scholars who I am not exhaustively naming here: Jean-François Bayart, Beatrice Hibou, Edmund Herzig, Didier Fassin, Neil Carrier, Virginia Berridge, Michael Willis, Eugene Rogan, Alessandro Stella, Cyrus Schayegh, Roham Alvandi, Houchang Chehabi, Maasumeh Maarefvand, Rasmus Christian Eiling, Janne Bjerre Christensen (whose book inspired me many years ago), Federico Varese, Orkideh Behrouzan, Kevan Harris, Mitra Asfari, Dennis Rodgers, Jim Mills (for his advise on how to turn a thesis into a book), Isaac Campos, Walter Armbrust, Philip Robins, Marco Giacalone (who introduced me to Giorgio Agamben and Furio Jesi), Pietro Zanfrognini (the pir-emoghan), and many others. Matteo Legrenzi, from my former university in Venice, advised me throughout this journey and without his initial encouragement to apply at Oxford I would have never embarked on this mad plan. Simone Cristoforetti, also from Venice, shared with me part of the fieldwork time when he persuaded me to depart northward 'to capture the moment the Autumn Equinox's first light enters the Gonbad-e Kavus'. His vision is holistic. Colleagues at the Middle East Centre at St Antony's (Oxford) have been a constant support for me. Stephanie Cronin is the person who first suggested that I should apply to the Wellcome Trust and that is the genealogical origin of this book. Her intellectual guidance made my Oxford experience a most valuable one. I am truly grateful for this.

I thank Anne for her patience in reading through these pages, editing and clarifying what at times may have sounded more Latin than English. She has been a friend and a great host over these last years. My *broder* Rafa for his enthusiasm (the Greek etymology is revealing) and love for life. The chats and exchanges we had over the last seven years are at the heart of this book, together with what I learnt from his ethnographic gaze on Salvadorian gangs (and beyond). Massimiliano for his friendship and the pipe's smoke on his Venice veranda. We shall persevere in Belgrade one day soon. The farmhouse coop made up of Lupi, Fruk, Sara and Lorenzo and now Flora who cheered me up with their animal verses. Violetta for her

magic of introducing new friends. Giò for making the seasonal stays in Mantua a semiotic trip. Shireen for teaching me how the internet and yoga are ethnographic fields. Minoo and Babak, and Nazila and Babak, Nazanin, Golnaz and Bahareh took care of me during my fieldwork in Tehran and I keep fond memories of these moments spent together. Kiana and Pietro for the ongoing discussions on Jalal Al-e Ahmad, Pier Paolo Pasolini, films, photography and culture across the invisible border between Italy and Iran. And the Parisian crew of 'Quartierino', *la commune de la Goutte-d'Or*.

Ideas and narratives in this book developed thanks to a number of academic encounters. Chapter 2 is inspired from a 'Global History Workshop on Pahlavi Iran' organised by Roham Alvandi at the LSE, published by Gingko Press in 2018. A modified, shorter version of Chapter 3 was awarded the Azizeh Sheibani Prize (2013) at Oxford and published in *Iranian Studies* (2015). I had the opportunity to reflect upon crisis politics and the role of the Expediency Council, discussed in Chapter 5, at a conference on the 'Implications of the Nuclear Agreement' hosted at the University of Copenhagen. Some of the materials appeared in an article published by Middle Eastern Studies (2019). I discussed material used in Chapter 6 in the seminar 'Consommation et Prohibition de drogue: approche transversal', organised by Alessandro Stella (CNRS) at the EHESS in Paris, and in a lecture at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Ideas and theories discussed in Chapter 7 emerged from a conference I organised in Oxford in Autumn 2016 on 'Drugs, Politics and Society in the Global South', which is part of the homonymous Special Issue published in Third World Quarterly.

But nothing has been as reassuring, gratifying and inspirational as the steady love of my family: my parents Faegheh and Gabriele, whose *mohabbat* and *forza* have been life-blood all the way through; Neli and Massimo, for a kind of love that only aunts and uncles can provide; Mahin and Habib, for being the true reason I first went back to my native country; Mammad, for our travels in villages, cities, mountains and islands and the fires and stars in Haftad Qolleh; and Ali and Afsaneh, who first convinced me that Oxford was worth the go and for being patient with my nonsense; Tara, Aryan, Dena and Yas, for we are brothers and sisters; and Carmen, Bob and Tim for their encouragement on the Abruzzo side. And in Tehran, Mohsen and Sasan, for poetic verses, anecdotes, commentaries and photos on the

anthropological mutation of drugs in Iran. Altogether, their encouragement was one essential reason to give sense to an endeavour that, as time passed, shrank in meaning.

The daily existence of this book is shared with my partner Billie Jeanne. I thank her for her incommensurable patience for my highs and lows, and her perseverance of nomadism as a way of life. She is, after all, my drug of choice.

People at Cambridge University Press took care of the big and small details behind the publication: Maria Marsh, Natasha Whelan and others, as well as the copyeditor, Ursula Acton and Podhumai Anban. Without their help this book would look different and surely less scholarly. Nicola Zolin, a traveller friend, very kindly provided the cover image for the book.

The Wellcome Trust, again and finally, provided the funding to make this book open access. Good things must be shared. Errors are mine only.