

1 State Formation and Citizenship

An Investigation beyond a Eurocentric Gaze

1.1 Introduction

Women and the Islamic Republic's central argument is simple: If we shift our gaze from institutions and elite political contestations to everyday encounters, we will see how the Islamic Republic's hybrid governance structure produces citizens who cross, abide, and (at times) manipulate the state's formal boundaries. This pushes the postrevolutionary state toward a balancing act to pacify its female population.

More specifically, by exploring the experiences of diverse groups of women during the Iran–Iraq war (1980–1988) and in the postwar years, this book demonstrates how women's contextually contingent remaking of their rights, responsibilities, and statuses in postrevolutionary Iran also intermingles with, shifts, and conditions the state formation process as a consequence of what was, at least initially, an imposed war (Hiltermann, 2010). Previous investigations of non-elite women's and other populations' everyday encounters have shown how the state employed “women” as an important trope for the postrevolutionary state, as well as how women, in turn, used the trope to make the state answer to their concerns (Bayat, 2010a; Deeb, 2006; Mir-Hosseini, 2000; Moallem, 2005; Osanloo, 2009). *Women and the Islamic Republic* contributes to these studies by addressing a significant gap in this literature: I explore the effects of the Iran–Iraq war *on the status and formation of women's rights, roles, and responsibilities* in conditioning the state's formation. Each chapter illustrates the different forms and scales of citizenship that my interlocutors performed in postrevolutionary Iran within the broader milieu of legal inequality and ambiguous governance. My interlocutors also negotiated citizenship within the context and legacies of the Iran–Iraq war, as well as the Shi'i foundation of the state, which venerates female religious figures who crossed public/private boundaries (Povey and Rostami-Povey, 2012).

By studying statecraft as entailing acts of citizenship, *Women and the Islamic Republic* contributes to feminist political theory and the feminist

struggle to move beyond resistance in discussions of women and the state. The importance of my non-elite female interlocutors to the conditioning of the state formation process is not tied to the Iranian context. Rather, my exploration of gendered citizenship in contemporary Iran can more broadly help us understand the substance of citizenship, as well as the state formation process for hybrid regimes in the region (De Souza and Lipietz, 2011). This book, then, does not take citizenship as central to state formation because of the Eurocentrism that plagues political science despite being a “global discipline” (Acharya, 2014, p. 649). Instead, by sidelining a Eurocentric gaze, I join other scholars who question their own assumptions to demonstrate what the post-1979 Iranian experience teaches us conceptually about citizenship and the art of statecraft.

1.2 Postrevolutionary Conflicts: Numbers and Logistics

The Iran–Iraq war, as well as the emergence of a civil war between the state and its opposition, placed the Iranian state in a unique position to shape women’s rights struggles in postrevolutionary Iran. As such, this section will briefly historicize the 1980–1988 period. The victory of the 1979 revolution and conflict between different oppositional forces after the fall of the Shah coincided with the start of the Iran–Iraq war. In September 1980, Iraq invaded Iran, beginning what would be an eight-year war. Farhi (2004) has argued that coherent statistics do not exist regarding the number of people who participated in the Iran–Iraq war during different periods. This renders all estimations problematic.

There is limited scholarly research and social analysis of the Iran–Iraq war, and the Islamic Republic continues to dominate this discourse (Saghafi, 2001). However, for the purpose of presenting a broad statistical perspective, I offer the following data, which I verified through several and mostly reliable sources. This conflict resulted in the death of an estimated 188,000–213,000 people at the front; approximately 16,000 were killed in city bombings and attacks (Ghasami, n.d.; Sepahe Pasdarane, Revolutionary Guards website). According to Farhi’s research, between 1.5 and 3 million people participated in the war, with Iran’s population growing from 35 million in 1979 to 50 million toward the end of the war in 1986 (Farhi, 2004).

Different sources seem to suggest the following regarding women’s participation in the war: According to one source, 6,601 women are considered martyrs of the war by the Islamic Republic, but approximately 100 of these women were killed by the Pahlavi Monarchy prior

to the revolution (Ghasami, n.d.; Saeidi, 2008). Estimates suggest that 27 percent of these women were martyred in Khuzestan, southern Iran, parts of which were occupied from 1980 to 1982 (Safavi, 1389/2010). During the war, about 22,808 women volunteered as first-aid medics on various warfronts. Scholars based in Iran argue that 2,276 female doctors also worked on the front lines (Anon., 1390/2011; Ghasami, n.d.). In 1984, the Revolutionary Guards trained 4,000 female volunteers to carry out intelligence-gathering operations (Moghadam, 1988). While these statistics are hardly definitive, we can surmise that Iranian women had a significant presence in the Iran–Iraq war.

The number of Marxist groups, organizations, and parties grew in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution. As Behrooz (1999, p. 105) argues:

While prior to the revolution there had been perhaps a dozen such groups, after it their numbers grew to perhaps over 80, and this number increased as Marxist groups began to fragment into smaller units. Indeed, after the revolution it became common for any gathering of a few Marxist activists to call itself an organisation or party and claim to be the rightful vanguard of the working class. Hence, it is neither possible, nor perhaps necessary, to produce an account of all Marxist organisations, parties, and groups in the post-revolutionary era. It is safe to suggest that whatever happened to the major organisations and parties also broadly happened to the smaller ones.

Women and the Islamic Republic focuses on different Marxist groups. One of the largest Marxist organizations post-1979 was the Fadaïyan. In June 1980, it split into two factions: aksariyyat (majority) and aqaliyyat (minority). While the aksariyyat were willing to negotiate with the newly established regime, the aqaliyyat believed in armed resistance against the regime. During this time, the organization had fewer than 100 members, but it was estimated to have had over half a million devoted supporters (Behrooz, 1999, p. 105).

Paykar was a small organization that had between thirty and fifty influential members (Behrooz, 1999). Paykar is believed to have had thousands of supporters that were former Muslim Mojahedin who had moved away from religion and toward Marxism (Behrooz, 1999). The organization was influential in the Kurdistan region, where it ideologically supported militant Kurdish groups, such as the Komoleh. The Tudeh was another Marxist organization that lacked popular support in post-1979 Iran. This was partly because it could not garner significant popular support after the 1953 coup. In 1980, it sided with the aksariyyat faction and revamped its ideological framework (Behrooz, 1999). By 1981, the Tudeh Party had lost its connections with other leftist groups, including the aksariyyat. The Tudeh and aksariyyat both collaborated with the newly established regime to suppress other leftist groups

(Behrooz, 1999). Smaller organizations such as the Organization of the Worker's Path (Sazman-e Rah-e Kargar) were important not because of their large support base – which did not exist – but because of their approach to instigating discussion among Iranian leftist organizations (Behrooz, 1999).

Another Marxist group with an insignificant number of supporters was Communist Unity (Sazman-e Vahdat-e Komonisty), but between 1979 and 1981 it continued to generate debates within the left through publications by a small circle of intellectuals (Behrooz, 1999). The Communist League of Iran (Etehadieh Komonistha-ye Iran) was a Maoist organization that began an armed struggle against the Islamic Republic in 1982 (Behrooz, 1999). The Iranian left grew post-1979 but did not enjoy popular support the way Ayatollah Khomeini did. Nevertheless, their experiences within prisons clarify leftist women's engagement with the postrevolutionary regime's gender policies in a space that continues to be of great importance in current Iran.

People from various backgrounds fought and died in defense of Iran, including members of the Islamic Mojahedin and the leftist Feda'iyyin guerrilla group (Saghafi, 1378/1999; Tagavi, 1985). Efat Mahbaz (2008), a supporter of aksariyyat, remembers this: Her brother Ali, also connected to aksariyyat, was arrested and executed a month before he was to leave for the front to offer medical support. Ali Mahbaz was an expert in laboratory science and a supervisor of the laboratory at Sarkhah Hasaar Hospital prior to his execution in the fall of 1981. Moreover, leftist political prisoners were not indifferent to Iran's war with Iraq. Efat Mahbaz (2008, p. 271) remembers being freed after seven years in prison:

As we were freed from prison, many Iranian prisoners of war were also released by Iraq. Like many other Iranians, I too went to greet these prisoners near Azadi Square upon their return to Iran. They had sorrowful faces with cold smiles on their lips. They were given red roses to hold. The suits they had on appeared to be in pain. Most of the people [that had come to welcome them home] were crying. Everything came together in a way that I instinctively began to compare them to political prisoners.¹

The Iran–Iraq war served as a backdrop to the experiences of leftist political prisoners from behind bars, but it also shaped the Islamic Republic's view of its opposition. In another illustration, memoirs of Iranian prisoners of war have claimed that in the last few years of the war Iraqis relied on members of the Islamic Mojahedin as translators

¹ Translations are my own and occasionally edited by my dear friend Zahra Abbasi.

during interrogation of Iranian fighters (Hosseini-pour, 1391/2012). The war was understood from and lived in different perspectives, many of which still require further investigation.

After the 1979 revolution, different political factions initially thought that supporters of Khomeini, who had quickly gained popular support, would share power with them (Arjomand, 1988). This would not, however, be the case. In the 1980–1985 period, women (and men) associated with Marxist–Leninist organizations or the Islamic Mojahedin faced mass imprisonment and execution as the Islamic Republic Party gained control of institutions under Khomeini’s leadership (Shahidian, 1997). Many believe that a second revolution took place from 1980 to 1983, as well as a civil war, following the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran.

In 1981, the Islamic Mojahedin retaliated against the consolidation of power by the Islamic Republic Party and its human rights violations in prisons by killing over 1,000 influential clerics and laymen in bombing attacks (Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, 2009). One local nongovernmental organization (NGO) in Iran estimates that the Mojahedin killed close to 17,000 armed and unarmed Iranians between 1980 and 2012, with most of the killings having taken place between 1980 and 1988.² Mahmoud Amjadian was a prisoner of war in Iraq when he was killed by the Mojahedin only twenty-five days before he was to be released following six years of imprisonment. The following is his friend’s reaction to witnessing his death, as shared with Amjadian’s family:

The free spirit Shahid³ engaged in the combats accompanying his brothers and was also a prisoner of war. He was martyred by the filthy hands of the hypocrites.⁴ You, family of the free Shahid Amjadian! The night of Mahmoud’s martyrdom, you were not there to mourn his death. It was unbelievable how the whole campsite was in grief of his death! In the campsite where I was imprisoned, the doors were closed and prayers were already said. That night, after Salah⁵ was observed, every single one of the men there was stricken with inconsolable grief.

His friend continued:

Even though they did not know yet if he had been martyred for sure, they faced to Qiblah⁶ and mourned his death. The sound of crying and mourning made one

² Shaheed (2012, p. 13). For more on these killings, see the website for Habilia, a local NGO in Iran that has documented the names of victims and locations of their deaths: Habilia, Iran, accessed in 2012, www.habilian.ir/en/.

³ The Iranian prisoners of war are called *Azadeh* (free), signifying their free spirit.

⁴ In the Islamic Iranian jargon, the term *Monafeqin* (hypocrites) refers to the Islamic Mojahedin.

⁵ An obligatory religious duty in Islam that must be observed five times a day.

⁶ Mecca: In Islam, all Muslims face Mecca at the time of prayers as an indication of unity.

Iraqi soldier (guards of the prison) so curious that he had come behind the doors to see if we were making trouble. The mourning stopped, but sound of grief was heard occasionally. The guard called me and said: "Come out! Go wash your face. Your brother is not dead yet!" The guard tried hard to stop the mourning, but in vain. Believe me, they cried so uncontrollably and loudly that the Iraqi soldier told me: "Go tell others that your brother is not martyred. Do not worry!" The enemy knew that our brother was already martyred. (Amjadian, 1381/2002, pp. 18–19)

This narration illustrates the heartache that Iranians experienced because of the Mojahedin's acts of violence. Viewing prisoners mainly through their group identity, the Islamic Republic in turn carried out mass arrests and executions of all opposition forces. Some imprisoned members of the Islamic Mojahedin were connected to those who were actively fighting the Islamic Republic outside prison. For instance, Nasrin Parvaz (2002, p. 99), a member of the Union of Communist Militants (which merged with the Komoleh shortly after the revolution) who was initially given an execution sentence, stated that imprisoned members of the Islamic Mojahedin would steal money from leftist prisoners to send to their organization outside prison. She describes the complex system Islamic Mojahedin had created to support their organization (Parvaz, 2002, p. 122):

They were Mujaheds that had become penitents [*tavvabs*] in prison. After some time, their organisation establishes relations with the organisation outside of prison. At the same time, they continued to work closely with interrogators. This collaboration was so extensive that at one point they were able to sneak a film of someone's torture out of prison. They were even able to steal the files of some of their friends and save them from execution. The interrogators trusted them so much that they were allowed to go home and rest for a few days, and then return to prison.⁷

Within this context of attacks and counterattacks, the precise number of political prisoners from 1980 to 1988 is impossible to determine. Indeed, most researchers agree that only certain individuals within the Islamic Republic's ruling elite could verify this information.⁸ However,

⁷ I have both interviewed Parvaz and read her work. Parvaz's memoir is over 300 pages and in Farsi. Parts of the memoir have been translated into English; see Parvaz and Namazie (2003). Her writing and poetry can be downloaded here: www.nasrinparvaz.org/web/. Parvaz's claims here regarding the Mojahedin's complex interaction with prison officials are also supported by Talebi (2011, p. 80).

⁸ This question was posed to Shadi Sadr, Ervand Abrahamian, and Reza Afshari via online communication. All three are experts on the plight of political prisoners in postrevolutionary Iran, and none were able or willing to offer an estimate. On March 11, 2012, in an email exchange, Abrahamian stated that it is "impossible to give even half-estimates" as prisons were "revolving doors" during the 1980–1988 years. In an email

we do know this for certain. From 1981 until 1988, mass arrests and summary executions were common. We also know that the terror and mass arrests that followed the 1979 revolution resulted in the relocation of 4 million Iranians to the West, particularly the United States (Afshari, 2001). And, during the 1988 massacre, up to 1,000 prisoners in Tehran's Evin prison were executed; many more in Karaj's Gohardasht prison met the same fate (Robertson, 2011, p. 75).

Abrahamian (2008, p. 181) estimates that at least 8,000 executions took place between 1981 and 1985, and most of the executed were members of the Islamic Mojahedin. Between 1980 and 1988, 10,588 political prisoners are believed to have been executed in total.⁹ Prisoners believe that everyday prison conditions improved between 1984 and 1987. This was a period when Ayatollah Montazeri's followers occupied key administrative positions (Robertson, 2011, p. 35). Afshari (2001, p. 105) argues that Montazeri and his followers had a significant role in removing the fanatical networks that maintained power within the prison system.

Additionally, prisoners remember resisting the state more forcefully during this period. They recall being more confrontational with guards, even attacking them when they heard news that the state was nearing collapse from relatives, visitors, and other prisoners who would join at later stages (Robertson, 2011, p. 36). For instance, in 1988, when news reached prisoners that fewer Iranians were willing to go to the front lines of war, Marxist prisoners refused to observe the Muslim fast during Ramadan (Robertson, 2011, p. 37). However, at times when Iran was losing at the front, such as the 1988 period when it was forced to end the war, prisoners also experienced the worst treatment, including summary executions and increased lashings.

While the level of violence fluctuated, dominant trends in the conditions at Evin prison in Tehran and Gohardasht prison in Karaj, as well as in the treatment of political prisoners, allow us to draw some tentative conclusions about female prisoners' experiences. The former political prisoners included in this study were held either with the general population or in solitary confinement. During the most difficult torture, they were held in solitary confinement, itself a form of torture (Mesdaghi, 1383/2004). Men and women were oftentimes held on different levels of

exchange on March 13, 2012, Afshari added that it becomes particularly difficult to make an estimate given that we still have limited knowledge of prisons in the provinces that are distant from Tehran.

⁹ These data come from www.iranrights.org/farsi/memorial-search.php?pagenum=0. Many thanks to Leila Mouri and Shadi Sadr for helping me find this information.

the Evin and Gohardasht prisons. They saw each other in the corridors and during visitations, and they were sometimes placed in the same room when brought in to see the dead bodies following an execution (Mesdaghi, 1383/2004). Forcing prisoners to see and touch the corpses of their former comrades was, for prison officials, a “teaching moment” they believed would encourage other prisoners to submit to the demands of interrogators (Mesdaghi, 1383/2004).

Discussions around the use of rape in prisons circa 1980–1988 are rampant and controversial. In a 2011 report, Sadr argues that rape was common during this period in Iran’s prisons. In my interviews with fifty former political prisoners (2008–2009) now living in Germany and Sweden, however, interviewees were adamant that rape was not widespread at the time.

Significantly, Sadr and I had interviewed some of the same women. During a conference in 2012 at Oxford University, I saw Sadr and some of our interviewees. I asked the interviewees why they had given us different responses to the question of rape. Most ignored my effort at starting a debate, but one woman became outraged that I would suggest that prison rape was not widespread and mentioned it had long been settled in memoirs. She believed that because many former prisoners, including Nasrin Parvaz and Iraj Mesdaghi, had discussed the rape of women in prison, I should not be concerned about this inconsistency, and she viewed my curiosity itself as an indication of my carelessness.

I will always remember the faces of a few leftist men sitting next to her at the lunch table changing color as they physically leaned in toward me with looks of disgust. It was one of the few times during my research where I lost my confidence. I was scared. My fear was not of a physical confrontation but of the scholarly concern of hurting my interlocutors in the process of research. As more prison memoirs were published, this issue became hazier. For instance, Shahrnush Parsipur (2013, pp. 38–39) observes,

In truth, I never heard prisoners talk about sexual abuse. But it was rumored that on their final night, young girls sentenced to death were wed to the guards so that they wouldn’t be buried as virgins. It was said that if a girl was buried while still a virgin, she would lure a man to follow her to the grave. My only proof that this might have been happening were Shahin’s last words [this prisoner had stated that her interrogator had touched her breasts, and she felt this meant she would be executed. Indeed, she was executed shortly after the alleged incident]. I did know a couple of other prisoners who had gotten close to having sexual relations with the guards, but in one instance it was a prisoner’s strategy to stop her torture, and in another, deeply affectionate feelings had developed between an interrogator and a prisoner.

These inconsistencies capture the complexity of working with memories, as well as of the formation of analysis in qualitative research, and raise many questions: What is at stake in such claims for a feminist lawyer living in exile (Sadr) versus former political prisoners who are also living in exile? Given the conservative elements in Iran's left as well as the political work that the terms *rape* and *prostitute* carry out in Iranian society, could it be that shame, self-care, and self-preservation prevented some women from discussing rape with me, an outsider?

These questions will continue to unsettle me and complicate the possible uses and boundaries of ethnography in general and interviews in particular. Reflecting on such moments of the research process reminds me of Hartman's (2008) emphasis on recognizing what may never be retrieved in the lives of the marginalized. At the same time, Hartman insists on thinking imaginatively about that which we cannot know for certain by using, with restraint, innovative reading practices such as an investigation of narratives.

1.3 Intersections between Ambiguous Citizenry Structures and War in a Hybrid Regime

Feminist scholars generally agree that women's citizenship is often compromised in postrevolutionary periods as they are pushed back into the home (Hatem, 2000; Joseph, 2000; Tetreault, 1994; Vickers, 2008). Iran's formal citizenry framework and unique experience with war in the postrevolutionary period animated the possibility for innovative gendered approaches to citizenship. My investigation of citizenship in the postrevolutionary Iranian state illustrates that, in addition to explicit legal inequality, the ambiguity surrounding the legislation of Islamic law engenders what Nyers (2011) has identified as "irregular citizenship": namely, that "citizenship has not been revoked per se, but ... rendered inoperable, or 'irregularised.'"

Minoo Moallem (2005) asserts that the Islamic Republic implements a citizenry agenda through the transnational notion of an *Islamic Ummat* to downplay the diversity among Muslims in Iran as well as abroad. Moallem (2005, p. 24) states: "The patriarchal control of women's bodies and sexuality as a major subject of religious and cultural discourses converges with hegemonic notions of sexuality that privilege heteronormativity in the context of modernity and postmodernity. Thus, both gendered and sexual citizenship are created (and of course contested) as sites of exclusion and inclusion."

The Iranian constitution explicitly addresses civic rights as well as social rights. The problem is that these rights are inconsistently upheld

and overshadowed by a vague notion of Islamic authenticity. For instance, as Paidar (1995) has argued, the Iranian constitution identifies the state as being responsible for adhering to Islamic law with respect to women, but the constitution refers to Islamic law “as an extra-constitutional criteria in many of its articles” (p. 261). Paidar has illustrated, for instance, that Article 21 – which addresses the protection of mothers and the family – identifies the state as being responsible for also protecting women’s rights within an Islamic legal framework. However, there isn’t any clarification on what women’s rights are or what qualifies as Islamic law. I agree with Paidar’s assessment that “this resulted in the subjection of the constitution to a divine law outside and above it” (p. 261). *Women and the Islamic Republic* demonstrates that in addition to conflict over explicit legal inequalities, citizenship’s irregular nature in Iran has intensified elite and non-elite contestation over the term in practice as well as theory.

In another example, Paidar (1995, p. 261) notes that Article 151 identifies the state to be responsible for providing military service for all citizens within the boundaries of Islamic law. Whether women should be permitted to defend the country in the context of war remains vague, though. In some instances, the law is unambiguous regarding women’s rights but equally irregular. While Iranian law does not ban women from biking, for example, in 2016 Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, identified women’s cycling in public as impermissible.¹⁰

While Khamenei’s fatwas in relation to social issues are national law according to Article 110 of Iran’s constitution, they are not legislated the same way throughout the country because of the controversy that surrounds the exceptional amount of power the position of Supreme Leader has been granted in Iran’s post-1988 constitution. Khamenei’s rulings, then, are not equally and consistently abided by in practice by other state agents, including his representatives, or by the population at large.¹¹ Iranian women in Kurdistan’s province of Marivan, for instance, have been prohibited from cycling in public. As a result of such

¹⁰ See BBC Persian’s reporting on this topic: www.bbc.com/persian/iran/2016/09/160918_126_khamenei_cycling_women_forbidden. See also the Supreme Leader’s official website: <http://leader.ir/fa/content/16227/16227/دوچرخه-بانون-سوارى-دوچرخه/>.

¹¹ In another instance, while Iran’s law and the Supreme Leader view music concerts as permissible, Ayatollah Alamolhoda, who is the Supreme Leader’s representative and the leader of Friday prayers in Mashhad, does not allow music concerts to take place in the holy Shi’i city: [www.entekhab.ir/fa/news/285820/اندانداخته-را-دارد-دو-کشی-رضا-امام-مقابل-در-کن-زندگی-دیگر-ی-جای-میخواهی-کنسرت-اگر-کر-د-نی-80%E2%80%A2چانه-فکر-80%E2%80%A2کوته-مسنو-لان-بر-خی-یا-مر-دم-یا-کنسرت](http://www.entekhab.ir/fa/news/285820/اندانداخته-را-دارد-دو-کشی-رضا-امام-مقابل-در-کن-زندگی-دیگر-ی-جای-میخواهی-کنسرت-اگر-کر-د-نی-80%E2%80%A2چانه-فکر-80%E2%80%A2کوته-مسنو-لان-بر-خی-یا-مر-دم-یا-کنسرت-اندانداخته-را-دارد-دو-کشی-رضا-امام-مقابل-در-کن-زندگی-دیگر-ی-جای-میخواهی-کنسرت-اگر-کر-د-نی-80%E2%80%A2چانه-فکر-80%E2%80%A2کوته-مسنو-لان-بر-خی-یا-مر-دم-یا-کنسرت). On Alamolhoda’s position and how it conflicts with the Supreme Leader’s views on this issue see: www.ghatreh.com/news/n33212192/است-هر-ی-نظر-خلاف-صدر-صد-الهدی-علم-اظهار-ات-کرماتی-حجتی/.

inconsistencies, women in different parts of the country experience conflict over this issue in everyday life.

Another important contextual factor in the formation of gendered citizenship during the 1980–1988 period in Iran was that the postrevolutionary leadership was unprepared for the Iraqi invasion. As an indication of Iran's unpreparedness, Khomeini suddenly ordered the release of ninety American-trained pilots who were imprisoned for months due to allegations of treason (Stempel, 1981). The unexpectedness of the war also affected how women living in southern Iran remember how their lives were interrupted. Narges Aghajari, a medical assistant from Abadan, states the following about the day the war began:

I was 20 when the war started. The Youth Organization at the time, or Hilal Ahmar today [Iran's equivalent of the Red Cross], offered training courses, such as typewriting, and sewing ... I had signed up for typewriting. On the morning of the 31st of Shahrivar [September 22], I was getting ready to attend my class. My brother came home, and when he found out I wanted to go to class he said, "so you don't hear these sounds?"

He then went on to inform her about the Iraqi attack on Iran. She continues:

Then when I saw the war planes and heard the sound of bombs and missiles, I realized that yes! There is a real attack on our soil. Like many families in the city, my family insisted that I leave Abadan. In fact, they said the city must be evacuated. But we pleaded with my father until he allowed us to stay. He would not accept our request easily but he was a committed man, we continued to insist, and finally he allowed us to stay. ("Revayat-e Zan-e Emdadgar-e Abadani az Ruzhaay-e Jang," 1396)

Saham Taghati is an Iranian-Arab from Khorramshahr and one of fifteen women who stayed and defended their hometown as medical assistants at the onset of the war. She recalls the beginning of the war in the following way:

Exactly on the 30th of Shahrivar [September 21] I was at the bazaar with Fakhri [her sister] and two of our friends: Nabati and Alieh Hajipour. They were both seamstresses and wanted to buy some fabric and sew themselves *manteau* [Islamic garment]. It was about 7 pm, but the sun had not set yet, and suddenly we heard the sound of a few loud explosions. We were close to the Jamae Masjid [a popular Mosque in Khorramshahr]. We turned toward the Seif Bazaar. We were trapped between the waves of people that were moving. Everyone was saying something different. Most people stated that "they have attacked the *bandar* [port]." Alieh hit herself on the head and screamed "my father is dead!" That day it was her father's turn to work at the port's customs. We went to their house very quickly. Their father knew his family would be worried and he arrived just as we did. Alieh was delighted that her father was alive. We said goodbye to them and returned to

our own home. There was no security anywhere, and if we were killed, we did not even have identification documents on us. We walked toward our home. Our neighborhood was 200 meters from customs, and they were attacking that area aggressively. I told Fakhri, from tomorrow we have to wear sneakers and have identification on us in case something happens. Unlike the environment outside, our home was calm. (Soleimani, 1381/2002, pp. 15–16)

The context of invasion meant the war was “imposed” in the view of the Iranian state and parts of society, at least initially. This view on the invasion of Iran by Iraq was also instrumental in engendering long-term volunteer participation in the war with little state compensation in return. This understanding challenges the historical top-down approach utilized to study the connection between war and citizenship formation (Kage, 2010; Mann, 1987; Markoff, 1996; Marwick, 1988). The Iran–Iraq war was a people’s war for the Islamic Republic, and the leaders of the new regime would have been unable to carry out the war without popular support (Gongora, 1997). In fact, one of the reasons the war came to an end was precisely that popular participation in the war waned by the mid-1980s (Gongora, 1997). This is also an important reason why the Iranian people felt it necessary that the postrevolutionary state respond to *their* needs – because they participated in the effort to fight against the invasion and support the Islamic Republic. Now the postrevolutionary state needed to heed their aspirations, demands, and desires.¹²

According to the Islamic Republic’s own records, the invasion of Iran by Iraqi forces was unexpected. For instance, The Center for War Studies and Research states the following:

The Islamic Republic had no preparation or readiness for getting involved in classic warfare between 1357 and 1359 [1978–1980]. Iran’s national security and defense strategy were completely disrupted. Among the state’s armed forces (the army, police, Revolutionary Guards, and Basij) there was extensive discoordination, so much so that foreign observers, including Iraqi military elites, believed the following: “Iran is lacking reliable defense forces.” Similarly, Iran was also short on military supplies because all of the country’s military relations were cut-off, and all military contracts were suspended. The armed forces of the country were not ready to respond to the invasion of Iraq. (Markaze motalat va tahgheghate jang, 1378/1999, p. 100)

This lack of preparation and coordination meant that much of the defense was popular and spontaneous (Basij Jamaah Zanan-e Keshvar, 1391). In fact, Iran’s main advantage in the war was its manpower – a population that stood at 45 million in 1985, more than three times the

¹² Thank you to the reader who made this connection during the clearance review of the book.

size of Iraq's population (Farhang, 1985, p. 662). Additionally, during the 1980–1988 period, Iranian society was emerging from a revolution guided by the utopian vision of creating a new society (Bayat, 2010a).

A young and enthusiastic population was already mobilized and ready to make sacrifices prior to the Iraqi invasion of Iran because of the 1979 revolution (Skocpol, 1988). For instance, young female students associated with the Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research (*jihad daneshgahi*) – established after the 1979 revolution in different parts of the country – volunteered at fronts in the south, washing soldiers' clothing and preparing their meals (Basij Jamaah Zanan-e Keshvar, 1391; Judaki, 1395/2016, p. 91).

In other instances, there was little institutional support for organizing women's volunteer work (Akbari, 1390/2011). For example, women living in southern Iran individually volunteered at local hospitals and washed soldiers' bloodied clothing (Judaki, 1395/2016, p. 91). The estimated fifteen women who stayed at Khorramshahr when the city was attacked in September 1980 remember burying the dead to prevent the corpses from being eaten by dogs (Soleimani, 1381/2002; interview, Tehran, June 2008). During the early days following the revolution, many hospitals were not equipped to handle the amount of laundry. Iranian women, particularly those geographically close to the front lines, carried the emotional and financial burdens of the war by caring for refugees and the families of martyrs with visitations and distribution of clothing, food, and other material goods (Akbari, 1390/2011).

Women from across Iran volunteered to become medical assistants and received short-term training before joining various warfronts (Jafarian, 1381/2002). Iranian women wrote letters to soldiers, as well as their own fathers, brothers, and husbands. See, for instance, a letter titled "A Small Contribution" from a woman who identifies as a martyr's wife to men on the warfront in 1366/1987:

I am the wife of one of the martyrs who gave their blood for the revolution. After being injured four times, my husband finally paid the ultimate sacrifice for Islam in Esfand [March] 1365 [1986] during the successful operation of Karbala 5. In addition to a corporeal jihad, he went on a financial jihad as well. For that purpose, he saved some of the foreign currency that he used to take care of his basic needs during travels abroad. This amounted to more than 300 British pounds. He donated all of this money to the National Development Fund. Likewise, I have gathered all of the jewelry that I was gifted by this martyr during my marriage, and I am bestowing it to the Revolutionary Guard Corps. I hope with this small step, I am able to contribute to the freeing of Hossein's Karbala. (Shirazi, 1387/2008, pp. 22–23)

Shamsy Sobhani, a medical assistant who volunteered in southern Iran, remembers how the local women of Andimeshk, in the Khuzestan province, would offer washing powder to the Shahid Kalantari Hospital's laundry room:

The local women would come to help. Although there was plenty of washing powder in the hospital, they would bring powder and bleach. There was an older lady who had sold her chickens so she could buy washing powder for us. No matter how much we stressed that the hospital has enough, please don't do this, it did not matter. (Jafarian, 1381/2002, p. 115)

Saham Taghati, who worked closely with ten other women in Khorramshahr to support soldiers, remembers going to Abadan once a week with five or six of these women to take a shower:

In Khorramshahr, they had shut off the water. To be more exact, there was water only during certain hours, and we rushed to store as much as we could for necessary tasks. Once a week, five or six of us would take a shower in Abadan! We did not know anyone there [in Abadan]. We knocked on people's doors and asked "can we use your bathroom?" The women of the home would usually agree. Sometimes as we were taking a bath, the homeowner would put our clothing in the washing machine. When we came out of the bath, we would put on clean clothes and say goodbye to the homeowner. (Soleimani, 1381/2002, p. 25)

Similar to women in other contexts, Iranian women participated in the war in a variety of ways that included emotional, physical, and financial support of the warfront. They also supported each other.

Iranian war studies expert Jalili (1396/2017, p. 48) states the following with regard to the role of the people in the war and the significance of the revolution to mobilizing popular support for the war in the postrevolutionary period:

Our war differed greatly from other wars in the world. One of these differences was the popular nature of the defense. Our war was not taken forward by organizations such as the Revolutionary Guards or the army. The revolutionary guards and the army were influential. The bulk of the work, however, was carried out by everyday people. This is what makes our war unique. Certainly, it is bad that we had two armies, and still the war fell on the shoulders of Basij volunteers. At any rate, this was the case. The reality of the war was that our soldiers departed for warfronts from mosques.¹³ Even a lot of military training took place in mosques. The place from which all sorts of preparations were made was the Basij headquarters. From the commanders to jams and food stuff, it all came spontaneously from the people. Therefore, while the state's formal military

¹³ Mosques were crucial centers of mobilization for Islamists before the 1979 revolution as well. For more on this see Ghodsizad (1383/2004).

organizations should have taken the lead in the war, their role was less significant than that of the people.

Iran's dire situation, but the people's optimistic outlook, can also be noted in the writings of Iranian feminist scholar and women's rights activist Mehrangiz Kar. Visiting the Khuzestan province in southern Iran only four years after the end of the war, Kar offers some of the initial sociological observations on the destruction that the region had endured. In *Nakhl haye Sukhteh* (Scorched Palm Trees), Kar (1379/2000) discusses her first moments in Abadan in 1371/1992, although the book was published several years later:

I gave my directions to the driver. Homelessness, instability and pain have taught him the lesson of patience. He is peaceful and kind. During the drive, my attention goes toward homes that are ruined. I tell myself that these are the same homes prepared for employees of the oil company. Those beautiful homes had many amenities, but there is no trace of the colors, the green grass, the gardens, and facilities that are still in our dreams. Homes that have been rebuilt resemble second-hand patchwork clothing, and bring great sorrow to my heart. (pp. 12-13)

Kar notes the destructive impact of the war as she travels in Khuzestan and poses questions about the slow reconstruction process that many in the region still complain about (Kar, 1379/2000, pp. 12-13).

The context of the war demanded popular support and cooperation, and wartime urgencies undermined the political boundaries that the Islamic Republic sought to formalize through legal and structural mechanisms (Saghafi, 1378/1999). There were also specific temporal, regional, and historical contingencies that at times supported women's participation in the war and established situated forms of citizenship. As Koolae (2014) has argued, unlike the Iraqi experience, Iranian women were not invited into the public sphere during the war due to a lack of human resources. Instead, the 1979 revolution and the Iranian constitution politicized women and encouraged them to pursue their interests, desires, and justice-oriented goals in the postrevolutionary state. There were also regional norms that enhanced the possibility for women's involvement with the war. For example, Kar (1379/2000) states the following about the women of Khuzestan:

Unlike the city, where women had the right to appear as they wished and be demanding as they worked in most offices and training centers, the women living on the margins of the city or in villages worked in the most difficult conditions. They did not even ask for any salary or rights in return. These barefoot women were involved in both production and distribution of homemade products.

Kar goes on to explain how the working conditions of women living in southern Iran prepared them to engage with extended war conditions:

At dawn, they would put black cloth on their heads and place their black pots on top of it, and they would take their products to the city for distribution. Their system for distribution did not include any machinery and was exacting, extensive, and non-stop. These women managed a complicated process with great agility and ease. As such, by sunrise, on every street corner there was a bin of rice milk, a bin of fresh cream, a scale with a few rocks, and a plastic bag for collecting cash. Additionally, there was an alert woman present greeting customers. (pp. 24–25)

As Kar explains, gender relations in Khuzestan were traditionally more relaxed than in regions such as Mashhad and Qom. This meant that women could more readily engage with the public fronts of the war, including those in southern Iran. Additionally, the women who lived in the small villages that bordered Iraq also had a history of involvement in the informal economy and hard physical labor. Prior to the onset of the war, Revolutionary Guards had trained women who supported Khomeini to confront various armed resistance groups targeting the Islamic Republic (Jafarian, 1381/2002; Judaki, 1395/2016, p. 71). With the start of the war, many of these women, such as Maryam Amjadi and Sakeenh Hoorsi, trained other women and men in armed resistance (Judaki, 1395/2016, p. 71). As another illustration, Maryam Seyaaval trained male soldiers in Iran's Kurdistan during the war (Judaki, 1395/2016, p. 72). Mothers who had sons at the warfront also managed rest stops and centers where they washed and prepared clean uniforms (Judaki, 1395/2016, p. 72). Within at least some segments of Iranian society, there was an embedded readiness to carry the weight of the war where the state was lacking. As I will shortly discuss, many women – particularly those living in southern Iran and in the border regions – participated.

The power structure in postrevolutionary Iran relied upon parallel institutions that depended extensively on popular participation (Bayat, 2010a; Ehsani, 2009; Kamrava, 2000). Unlike classic cases of state formation and warfare in the West (Tilly, 1985, 1990a), the postrevolutionary Iranian state was unable to consolidate its power or establish a unified citizenry body within the context of the Iran–Iraq war. Ehsani (2017) has argued that in Iran political and institutional fragmentation became a hallmark of the postwar period. The already ambiguous citizenry guidelines in a hybrid regime with republican elements intersected with the unexpected invasion of Iran by Iraq. But the postwar fragmentation of the power structure fashioned the situated nature of women's gendered citizenship, which continues to condition the state formation

process. Additionally, the centrality of sacred female figures in the Shi'i faith, such as Hazrat-e Fatemeh, daughter of Prophet Mohammad, and Hazrat-e Zeinab, his granddaughter, gives the Islamic Republic a particular readiness to recognize issues pertaining to women's concerns (Shariati, 1356/1977). The following chapters illustrate how historical contingencies made the state an important instigator of gendered citizenship. This chapter sets *Women and the Islamic Republic's* tone by arguing that in post-1979 Iran the flux in state regulatory measures has been central to the expression of micropolitics and formation of unrehearsed acts of citizenship from within society.

1.4 Citizenship and State Formation: Toward a New Approach

Coupled with the ambiguities that define the interplay between Islamic law, women's rights, and their application within society, the Iraqi invasion meant that different expressions of acts of citizenship develop. These expressions are contingent on the context, opportunities, and limits that specific historical moments forge.

Women and the Islamic Republic draws upon the more recent generation of state formation literature to construct an original theoretical framework for studying the art of statecraft through acts of citizenship. Popular claim-making efforts and the state's cultural dimensions have been examined, particularly within ethnographic studies of the state, but without a lens on acts of citizenship (Chatterjee, 2004; Coronil, 1997; Das and Poole, 2004; Gupta, 1995; Hansen, 1999; Hansen and Stepputat, 2001; Joseph and Nugent, 1994). Additionally, studies of state formation have depicted the state as the "effect" of particular practices (Migdal, 2001; Mitchell, 1991, 2002, p. 77) and stressed the importance of studying political practice "as it is" (Abrams, 1988, p. 82; Biersteker and Weber, 1995; Doty, 2003; MacKinnon, 1989).

I argue that this unstable nexus between statecraft and particular enactments (Dunn, 2010; Strauss and Cruise O'Brien, 2007) makes acts of citizenship integral to the state's conditioning. Importantly, "the state then is not the focus of the story: the process of crafting the state, which is constantly being performed in a variety of ways, is the focus of understanding political authority and power. Statecraft is highly contextual and is a crafting, a process with a multiplicity of particular instantiations" (Auchter, 2014, p. 5). While we know that citizenship is about governance and an important attribute of the modern state (Faulks, 2000), we

also know that the subject-making process is contested during everyday life to complicate how citizenship is studied (Ong, 1996).

Women and the Islamic Republic retheorizes Engin Isin's notion of acts of citizenship as a lens to understand how the non-elite women I interviewed conditioned the state formation process in post-1979 Iran. For Isin, agency on the local terrain results in intervening acts or the making of "scenes" that demonstrate self-actualization by disrupting the status quo or the regime's governing tactics, as feminist scholars have rightly argued within Middle East studies and citizenship studies (see, e.g., Kandiyoti, 1991; Sayigh, 1998a,b). Drawing on the work of Arendt and Butler among other philosophers, Isin argues that once an act is performed it produces unpredictable effects within society between "others" and the "Other." This particular component of Isin's theorization allows me to illustrate how agency constructs anything beyond one's own subjectivity or disposition to external forms of oppression like patriarchy, which is an important feminist task in political science and beyond (Kantola, 2006; Zerilli, 2005).

I understand Isin's work to argue that citizenship can take different forms that might be considered more or less top down or bottom up but can become scripted and acts of citizenship interrupt those established scripts – but not necessarily from one direction or the other.¹⁴ I read acts of citizenship not necessarily as merely acts of agency or self-actualization because this suggests an intentionality and predictability that Isin argues may not be present.¹⁵ Isin contends that acts of citizenship are breaks or interruptions of established scenes or scripts, which may or may not have longevity or transformative effects in the longer term. We therefore must not overemphasize individual acts of citizenship and attribute an unrealistic level of influence to individual interventions (Abu-Lughod, 1990; Bayat 2010a). As such, I contextualize acts of citizenship within the broader historical contingencies that women encountered during different time periods in postrevolutionary Iran. As the Islamic Republic addressed women's rights, roles, and responsibilities grounded in prevailing citizenry frameworks interwoven with republicanism, Shi'i reverence for female Muslim figures, and the Iran–Iraq war (and manipulation of its legacies), women and men also entered into this negotiation with the state.

I use acts of citizenship as a working concept (Slaby, Mühlhoff and Wüschner, 2019) that discloses how citizenship forms in momentary bursts through contentious politics aimed at the state and/or society

¹⁴ I thank Anne McNevin for explaining this argument to me.

¹⁵ I thank Anne McNevin for discussing this point with me further.

(Abdelrahman, 2013). While Isin conflates acts of citizenship with “the right to demand rights,” I refrain from this approach. At least in the Iranian context, acts of citizenship are at times forged through commands that fall outside the “right to demand rights” framework. By looking at citizenship as appeals made to the state and its institutions, we place limits on women’s engagement with rights.¹⁶ For instance, in Chapter 3 I highlight spiritual acts of citizenship – interventions evolving out of the historical contingencies of the 1979 revolution and geared toward preserving the revolutionary citizen that one had created with care through familial and community support, as well as erudite poetry. In another illustration, as I show in Chapter 4, people sometimes exert their agency from within society with acts of citizenship centered on belonging and togetherness – not in the name of rights alone but instead grounded in moral assessments. Nevertheless, Isin’s notion of acts of citizenship and the attention he draws to claims of specific rights in contextualized moments permit me to consider the interventions of people living with irregular citizenry frameworks in relation to conditioning of the state formation process.

Each chapter illustrates the diverse, complementary, and conflicting notions of rights, roles, and responsibilities that the women included in this study express through their rights demands, pursuit of spiritual growth, moral calculations, and formation of belonging during different moments of postrevolutionary Iranian history. Moreover, each chapter demonstrates how in particular moments research participants’ acts of citizenship uphold, and in other instances destabilize, larger power structures in the Islamic Republic. Acts of citizenship, as I employ them in this book, do not collapse this insight with claims of a homogeneous identity for those performing citizenry acts in an effort to offer a view of an “essential self.”

The term “citizen” is used in official state newspapers and media productions daily (Pourreza, 1397/2018) by scholars based in Iran who write in Persian for an Iranian audience (Shaditalab, 1397/2018). It is also used to demand specific rights during assemblies. “Citizen” is employed by women’s rights activists today to defend their rights from behind bars (Baniyaghoob, 2011/1390). Young Hezbollah cultural activists¹⁷ also use “citizen” to discuss the subjectivities of male soldiers who volunteered in the Iran–Iraq war (Kashfi, 1385/2006). There is even

¹⁶ I am grateful to reviewer one for bringing this point to my attention.

¹⁷ Hezbollah is usually associated with the Lebanese movement. However, there is a diverse and evolving Hezbollah faction in Iran that carries out pro-Islamic Republic cultural activism.

a chain department store in Tehran called *Shahrvand* (citizen). Yet, perhaps due to the nondemocratic elements that exist in the Islamic Republic, the non-Islamic roots of the term, or the academic tendency to connect citizenship to the state (instead of the city, for instance), the word “citizenship” remains controversial in contemporary Iran.

During my years of living in Iran and traveling in the country, I continually encountered people who expressed confusion over (or complete rejection of) their citizenry status. This happened *despite* documentations of contestations over citizenship rights and responsibilities in the postrevolutionary constitution, as well as such striking illustrations of citizenship theories and practices in Iranian society. The feeling among Iranians that they are not citizens has been addressed in novels such as Mahmoud Dowlatabadi’s *The Colonel* (2011). The novel addresses post-1979 Iran’s social complexities through the ordeals of a retired colonel who has children involved in Islamist and leftist activism. Two of his children are executed in prison for their leftist activism, one is martyred in the warfront, and one is confined to the house as a disappointed revolutionary. In this context, we encounter his daughter, Farzaneh, who is married to an abusive husband. She correlates her abuse to the experience of the nation after the 1979 revolution, finding a sense of commonality: “I’m a stranger in my own home! The tragedy of our whole country is the same: we are all alienated, strangers in our own land. It’s tragic. The odd thing is that we have never got used to it. Yet, woe betide us if we do” (p. 91). The sentiment of not being a citizen but acting like one anyway came through in my fieldwork as well. My book captures this response to life in postrevolutionary Iran by imagining Isin’s notion of acts of citizenship through ethnographic research in a context “beyond the West.”

Acts of citizenship, as I conceptualize them, do not signify an identity or a reliable “map” for thinking through postrevolutionary Iranian politics (Slaby, Mühlhoff and Wüschner, 2019, p. 3). Citizenship and state formation are inextricably interconnected. Acts of citizenship, then, are not a “definitive concept” in *Women and the Islamic Republic*. Instead, I “merely suggest directions along which to look” when we explore non-elite women’s roles in conditioning the state formation process (Blumer, 1954, p. 7). *Women and the Islamic Republic* traces the endurance of the past in the present to consider the import of religion and warfare on the making of postrevolutionary Iran.

I locate my analysis at the intersection of the situated social circumstance in which people live, the real-time contingencies that they experience, and their individual capacity for creativity (Boltanski, 2011). Recognizing that people do not generally “invent an entire ontology of

actions from scratch,” what follows reveals the situated historical contingencies that engendered my research participants’ variegated approaches to what are, at times, surprisingly unruly expressions of citizenship (Velleman, 2013, p. 27). Acts of citizenship, as I came to understand them during this project, are not “unilaterally imposed” by society. Instead, they “are transmitted and translated through negotiations with situated religious and citizenship norms” (Ong, 2011, p. 27). The Islamic Republic’s political structures, Shi’i foundations, and political experiences cannot be sidestepped for a glorification of women’s desires, thoughts, and acts.

1.5 Methodological Rationale: Pushing the Boundaries of Political Science

My research was “driven by an interest in investigating concepts and theories through deep contextuality” (Iqtidar, 2011a, p. 23). My approach is similar to Iqtidar’s (2011a). As an Iranian American raised in the Washington, DC, area, I saw firsthand how noncontextualized concepts such as “Islamism,” “secularism,” “state,” and “hardliners” stripped Iranian politics (but also the broader global Muslim community) of particularities that not only could have enriched the field of political theory but also might have forged more productive US engagement with Muslim Americans, Iran, and the broader Middle East.

In this section, I will briefly show how up-close engagement with interlocutors and analysis of textual documents helped me theorize how non-elite women’s acts of citizenship condition the state formation process. My decision to rely on qualitative methodologies stemmed from studying hybrid regimes. Given that I sought to capture a view of “social processes as they unfold” (Tilly, 2006, p. 410), I chose methods that allowed me to “zoom in” and “zoom out” (Nicolini, 2013) of case studies and individual interviews. For instance, extensive political ethnography permitted me to build long-term relationships that were fostered through in-person interactions and also via social media. I used participant observation to understand what citizenship meant to my interlocutors and interviewees (Lichterman, 1998).

Through a preliminary analysis of interviews carried out in 2007 and 2008, I began seeing citizenship and conditioning of the state formation process as interlinked in real time. I gained insight into the daily lives of interlocutors and how they navigated macrolevel structures by remaking microlevel politics (Benzecry and Baiocchi, 2017). At the same time, “shadowing” participants during a variety of events – including commemorations of loved ones lost to the war or state executions – revealed

the contexts, social networks, and limitations that interlocutors struggle with. Also, by shadowing Hezbollah affiliates as they participated in Islamization projects, I not only studied the artefacts they were creating (Miettinen, 1999) but also saw the different layers and scales of governance taking place within cultural institutes. I noted in real time how Hezbollah affiliates engaged with the ambiguity of governance in these spaces.

I also had to educate myself on the production of war and prison memoirs in postrevolutionary Iran. With respect to memoirs written by former political prisoners living in Europe, I have interviewed nearly all of the women whose memoirs I use in this book. These up-close interactions with different women and men during fieldwork in Europe guided my selection of books. I also relied heavily on discussions with Shahla Talebi, a professor and former political prisoner, to discuss the ideas and quality of the memoirs.

In exploring war memoirs produced in Iran, I relied on a similar strategy of consulting with the younger and more critical generation of war studies experts based in Tehran. This generation is intimately connected to men and women who were impacted by the war; it actively produces research on the war, including managing publication of the renowned student magazine on the history and culture of the holy defense, *Habil*. The newer generation of Iranian war experts, such as Mazaheri (1392/2012) and Zibakalam (1385/2006), argue that memoirs addressing the participants in the Iran–Iraq war are oral histories. These oral histories, produced in recent years, contrast the memoirs written during the war, which focus mostly on issues pertaining to warfare that the state is invested in pushing toward a particular militaristic narrative. Oral histories, on the other hand, are not regulated by the state because they address one person’s broader life experiences in the context of war. In many ways, oral histories of the war oppose the Islamic Republic’s formal narratives of the war, or what Mazaheri (1385/2006, p. 4) labels as “governmental” narratives of the “holy defense.”

Women and the Islamic Republic is grounded in interviews that gave me insight into how women framed their experiences during the 1980–1988 period. I also rely on oral histories to further contextualize the ideas introduced during interviews. My own experiences in speaking with women who have written memoirs reconfirm Mazaheri’s (1392/2012) and Zibakalam’s (1385/2006) analysis regarding the validity of these texts.

I found that there generally existed little state regulation of these books. Often, the conflicts that did emerge were between authors and narrators. There are also many cases where the woman whose experience

is being recorded does not write her own memoir. Instead, she narrates it and another person, usually a younger woman, produces the actual memoir. For instance, during one disagreement that I witnessed, a martyr's wife had shared a story about life with her late husband that she did not want disclosed. Her amanuensis argued that it was in fact her right to determine what should go into the volume. Publication was halted indefinitely. By interviewing the women and addressing the production of their memoirs with them during face-to-face encounters, I accounted for the quality of these books, which do undergo some level of censorship, either state- or self-imposed.

As a member of a younger generation of Iranian studies scholars, I felt that there existed far too much essentialization of Iran as a case study. Povey (2012) has illustrated that Iran's experience with colonialism, women's rights struggles, war, religious reform, and postcolonial aspirations are important similarities that it shares with regional neighbors. She insists that Iran's women's movement and intellectual contributions to "religious reformism" have influenced Muslims in the region and the Muslim minority in the West (Povey, 2012, p. 169). *Women and the Islamic Republic* centers on what non-elite women's struggles during everyday life meant to them. I argue that the concepts of "hybrid regimes," "citizenship," and "state formation" can "travel" to other countries in the region and beyond, although not seamlessly (Collier, 1993; Landman, 2000; Sartori, 1970). My methodological approach highlights the potential for thinking comparatively without making universal claims geared toward broader applications.

I refrain from universal claims on these terms or even generalizations of Iranian women's experiences through my case studies. I concur with Singh (2018) that scholarly claims on "mastery," even in postcolonial texts, are undergirded with a writer's illusions of individual transparency and desires toward control of something. I reject this colonial practice while recognizing that, despite my intentions, my vantage point may also generate new forms of exclusion. Nevertheless, my findings demonstrate how acts of citizenship helped me understand the ways that non-elite women can condition the state formation process in postrevolutionary Iran by remaking their statuses, rights, and responsibilities.

Inspired by the work of Cooper (2015, 2016), I understand there to be many ways that the state is imagined and enlivened. Focusing on how my interlocutors condition the state-making process through acts of citizenship, *Women and the Islamic Republic* invites others to examine this process with different lenses and a focus on a variety of national and transnational social groups. As I demonstrate how acts of citizenship developed to condition state making during different moments, I also

reveal the conceptual problems associated with a binary formulation of democratization and authoritarianism, Western and non-Western. Comparing women's acts of citizenship in Iran during the war and in the postwar years not only uses concepts that are relevant elsewhere but also allows us to further develop those concepts through case studies and draw inferences without making general or universal claims (Landman, 2000, chapter 2).

Women and the Islamic Republic creates "a breach of self-evidence" and takes readers into the specific moments where women conditioned the state formation process by drawing attention to the conditions, structural spaces, and opportunities that intersect with their acts of citizenship (Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, 1991, p. 76). This methodological approach also lends itself to a triangulation of my findings and allows me to demonstrate the variations that exist in the ways acts of citizenship have emerged among diverse social groups in the postrevolutionary state. Instead of offering an absolute response to non-elite women's role in conditioning the state formation process, *Women and the Islamic Republic* illustrates the different forms and scales of citizenship that the women in my study enacted to condition the state formation process. In what follows, I bring out as many possible directions of meaning to see the complex ways in which notions of citizenship are addressed, without insisting upon a singular logical substructure.

1.6 Disrupting Categorical Boundaries: Positionality, Affect, and Understanding

The narrative or practice turn in international studies has been closely linked with a renewed investment in interpretative methodologies. An initial observation during long-term ethnographic research on practices is that there is a need to develop stronger qualitative methodology skills. The significance of research skills to the study of politics from below has also been noted by feminist scholars. Debates regarding feminist uses of gender and sexuality as categories of analysis have once again been rekindled within feminist studies. In her 2006 essay "Beyond the Americas: Are Gender and Sexuality Useful Categories of Historical Analysis?", Najmabadi, a historian of modern Iran, chronicled her struggles with surpassing gender and sexual binaries while using them as categories of analysis in her path-breaking *Women with Moustaches, Men without Beards* (2005). Najmabadi (2006, p. 18) asks, "How can we bring out as many possible directions of meaning to see the complex node at which notions of gender and sexuality are worked out, without seeking a singular logical underpinning?" A methodological concern with

assumptions of singularity that conceal the historical specificities and multiplicities of genders and sexualities as analytical categories was also at the forefront of US historian Boydston's thought-provoking 2008 paper "Gender as a Question of Historical Analysis." Boydston similarly questions the usefulness of gender as a category of analysis when the historical processes of gender are often explored uniformly and with binary associations that efface understandings of nonlinear interrelationships between multiple forms of the social.

Feminist scholars of conflict studies have also initiated this debate, and this variant of the debate is my focus here. Vickers, for instance, argues that because Western feminists have systematically relied on specific approaches to studying gender and the nation, their scholarship is currently unable to capture the complexities of this association in different contexts as it lacks contextually appropriate theories and methods (Vickers, 2006; Daulatzai, 2008). Elshtain (2009) has also joined this conversation, voicing her dissatisfaction with the routine application of gender as a category of analysis in feminist studies of war. She too laments that we have lost sight of the analytical variations that can be noted if closer attention is paid to historical contexts, suggesting that citizenship and identity formation may generate more nuanced feminist analyses of conflict.

Despite these cautionary notes, mainstream feminist studies of conflict exemplify the continued uncritical deployment of gender and sexuality as categories of analysis. I heed the above concerns regarding a lack of focus on the particularities of case studies in some feminist investigations of conflict. These scholars persuasively argue that the use of sexuality and gender as imported categories of investigation can impede the production of knowledge in studies of the global South and North when one particular categorical routine becomes "common sense for our work" (Boydston, 2008, p. 561).

Boydston (2008) suggests that by letting go of categories we may begin to respond to less scripted questions of gender and sexuality that emerge from the specificities of our studies. However, gender and sexuality can simultaneously be categories, questions, and tools. This complexity makes it methodologically impractical to (de)prioritize gender as a category. More importantly, I am unsure as to how we can make gender less central to our perceptions in contexts where feminist consciousness (Stanley and Wise, 1993) – multiple visions of social reality that account for various forms of inequalities, discriminations, and imaginations – supports investigation. Using gender and sexuality as categories of analysis is not intrinsically (and need not be functionally) restrictive. If we are paying attention, then, in unpredictable moments during the research

process, these categories can transform into conceptual tools for analyzing and revising interconnected epistemologies that ultimately develop whole projects.

More specifically, this section demonstrates this: By analytically engaging with the affective questions that the research process generates, gender and sexuality as analytical categories can gradually account for greater theoretical and empirical variance by interrogating positionalities and demanding adjustments in the researcher's feminist consciousness for the duration of a specific project. While feminist scholars of conflict readily address their positionalities and emotional relationships to their projects, rarely is affect connected to methodological frameworks.¹⁸ The transformations that emotional labor engenders in the researcher's own subjectivity could reveal associations and evidence that remain invisible without an awareness of one's own positionalities.

Scholars of both conflict and Middle East studies have voiced methodological concerns over the limits assumptions pose for researching politics. Barkawi and Brighton (2011) contend that within the social sciences war is primarily believed to be a destructive force, and this "anti-militarist" stance has historically limited domains of enquiry. From a different angle that also speaks of the importance of recognizing the emotional labors of research for methodological purposes, Schayegh (2010) asserts that the complexities of state–societal relations during the Pahlavi Monarchy, which ruled over Iran prior to the 1979 revolution, have yet to be adequately addressed in Iranian studies. Schayegh (2010, p. 47) argues that this is because "in the West, many historians of Iran are Iranians, for whom monarchy and revolution were deeply personal experiences."

Similarly, Chehabi (1998, p. 495) postulates the following concerning studies of Iran's Pahlavi Monarchy: "the upheavals of the post-revolutionary years have preoccupied scholars so much that the detailed and dispassionate analysis of Iran under its last dynasty is still in its infancy." Methodologically accounting for our priorities, questions, and patterns by repositioning ourselves and allowing, when necessary, for shifts in our consciousness permits submerged perspectives to infiltrate investigations and develop more robust empirical analyses and theoretical prisms.

¹⁸ Weiss (2011) argues that even when we address our positionality and the situated nature of knowledge creation, we may still be evading aspects of our knowledge production journey.

1.7 Subtle Interventions and Remaking Categories: Fieldwork on Iran's 1980–1988 History

Women and the Islamic Republic illustrates how evidence gathered through personal narratives in case studies can develop into theoretical propositions when researchers analyze encounters with emotions as evidence and remain open to shifting their positionality and consciousness. I demonstrate this by showing how gender and sexuality can also be tools for deciphering narratives, as well as that there also exists an “epistemology arising from ontology,” when researchers are prepared to rethink their categories and even let go of their embedded explanations (Wickramasinghe, 2010).

I conducted more than twenty-four consecutive months of fieldwork in Iran, Sweden, Germany, and the United Kingdom (2007–2009; 2012–2014). My research practices included participant observation, narrative analysis, and in-depth interviews using the snowball sampling method. When possible, the interviews were recorded. I participated in the daily life of participants, non-elite women and men whose lives crossed paths with national politics during the 1980–1988 period. I did so through conversations and interactions, by observing, and sometimes by participating in activities (e.g., religious ceremonies, regime-run activities for families associated with the war, and human rights gatherings among former political prisoners in Europe).

Broadly, I was interested in understanding women's and men's citizenship in everyday life during different periods in postrevolutionary Iran. These years included the 1980–1988 Iran–Iraq war and other moments of national and international conflict. The 1980–1988 period is understood as a particularly violent and isolated time in contemporary Iranian history because of intersections between local and international violence due to the revolution's unexpected outcomes. My study focused on a range of different spaces. I interviewed the following social groups: former Islamist volunteers of the Iran–Iraq war, women who entered Iran's religious seminaries after the revolution, nurses employed during the war, and leftist political prisoners whom I interviewed in Europe. Part of my work examined the legacies of the Iran–Iraq war on different and at times conflicting social groups, including families of war martyrs and post-2009 Iranian Hezbollah cultural activists.

I analyzed interview data thematically and linked emergent themes with individual narrations of experience. I also relied considerably on my field notes, including recordings, scribbles, commentaries, questions, and analyses. These reflected, regrouped, and prepared me for further interviews and archival research (Barz, 1997, pp. 45–62). These

interpretations were vital for gaining insight into my own positionality during the interviews and archival work, as well as for shifting my consciousness when it circumscribed the horizons respondents' narratives assembled. I relied on my field notes analytically in and out of the field. By engaging with the affective questions the research process generates, gender and sexuality as analytical categories can gradually account for greater theoretical and empirical variance by interrogating positionalities and demanding adjustments in the researcher's feminist consciousness.

When this project began, I had already been an anti-racist feminist of color for close to a decade, and intellectually I was familiar with the relevance of power relations in the production of knowledge. I had not, however, thought extensively about the visceral dimensions of this understanding. While feminist scholars of conflict readily address their positionalities and emotional relationships to their projects, rarely is affect connected to methodological frameworks. The transformations that emotional labor engenders in the researcher's own subjectivity could reveal associations and evidence that remain invisible without an awareness of one's own positionalities.

During my 2007–2008 fieldwork, interviews revealed my unconscious perspectives, as respondents demanded recognition of their emotional positionality toward me. The questions this process generated subsequently became material knowledge and informed my use of categories of analysis. For example, while meeting with Parvin H., a former political prisoner, and her teenage son, the subject of going without sexual intimacy while in prison came up during our discussion. Without intending to, I said, "But that must not have been a problem for you," to which my interviewee quickly and sharply responded, "Yes, it was actually."¹⁹ As an Iranian American woman from the diaspora, my nostalgic perspective lay behind this categorical assumption and was at play in my method of interviewing and analysis. Subconsciously, I imagined "real Iranians," the ones raised in Iran, had more self-control than those living in non-Muslim societies. Apparently, I was uncomfortable talking about sex in front of her son and assumed that she felt the same way. As a younger woman, I struggled to envision that a woman from her generation wished to follow through with her sexual desires.

In another instance, the daughter of a war martyr, Sahar A., was discussing her dedication to modest clothing, and again I unconsciously interrupted by saying, "But that's easy for you," to which

¹⁹ Personal interview, Cologne, Germany, April 2008.

she retorted, “It is the hardest of all sacrifices Islam requires.”²⁰ My assumption about an uncomplicated set of negotiations for Muslim women who practice their faith was shaded by a simplified understanding of Islam as simply someone’s way of life – not possibly a constant struggle within the self for maintaining one’s piety. By being reminded of my bodily unconsciousness through these affectively charged retorts from respondents, I strengthened a feminist consciousness that was suspicious of claims regarding the omnipresence of silences, as well as my own impulse to respond in place of other people, to “find” their voice.²¹ The responsibility and necessity to listen with curiosity, without taking refuge in the boundaries that gendered points of reference constructed, was integrated into my categorical universe and interviewing methods.

Together, the unexpected responses above called for attention to the specificities of my case studies. Interlocutors wanted me to begin moving toward them through an intimacy that I had not previously shared with strangers. However, I quickly learned that this repositioning, created by breaking down the emotive boundaries between participants and myself, was structured. Field notes indicate that interviewees contested my emotional engagements during the interview process, which included not only a series of suppressed assumptions that prevented sympathetic listening but also a lot of crying on my behalf over the losses women endured due to political violence – that is, their presumed victimhood. In short, respondents thought my life and living “at the intersection of individual and social dynamics” while carrying out the field research prevented me from sufficiently appreciating the complexities surrounding their histories (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett, 2008). The following comments are a sample of what I was told.

Maryam Nouri, a former political prisoner affiliated with aqaliyyat, mother, and author, stated, “I will never forgive you if you misrepresent my criticisms of other prisoners,” as I left her home after a week-long stay that included interviews with other former political prisoners to whom she had introduced me.²² Laleh Z., a war veteran, housewife, and mother, made the following statement at the end of our interview: “I hope that you will share your work with all of us that have participated in these interviews. I hope that you write what we have told you.”²³ Halimeh E., a Bakhtiari (an Iranian tribe) mother of three war martyrs, stated as I was leaving her home in Ahvaz (a city in southern Iran), “[T]hey [her sons] were like pieces of my body and soul. I gave them

²⁰ Personal interview, Tehran, Iran, May 2008. ²¹ Gallagher (1995, pp. 225–244).

²² Personal interview, Cologne, Germany, April 2008.

²³ Personal interview, Shiraz, Iran, July 2008.

[to the war]; that's okay. View them as your brothers, there is no difference."²⁴

The symbols, metaphors, and timing used to address intersections between my position as a researcher and interviewees' accounts of individual experiences suggest that they wanted me to express solidarity in an empathetic manner as a "feeling-with" (Bartky, 2002, p. 81). This strikes a balance between losing oneself in other people's stories and leaving sufficient distance to acknowledge the individuated nature of their pasts. While they welcomed me into their homes, showed me the physical marks of torture that remained on their bodies, shared photos and stories of dead loved ones, and embraced my identities and affection, interviewees finalized our encounter by reclaiming their love, survival, and loss as uniquely their own. For example, as her concluding words, Halimeh E. chose to identify her sons as pieces of her "body and soul" but projected a more distant relationship, that of sister, onto me. In Iranian culture, some mothers have a closer relationship to their sons than other women in the family, including even a man's wife. Recognition of narrators' frustration with my emoting over their experiences of political violence posited gender and sexuality as context-specific categories that form through the intersubjective relationship between individual participants and myself, and not my systemized lens for analysis (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett, 2008).

Interview dynamics revealed the methodological significance of the conscious and unconscious assumptions I held, forcing my feminist consciousness to work its way through verbal and visual narratives without "preconceived conceptual schema" (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett, 2008, p. 116). Simultaneous repositionings, in light of interviewees' responses, felt like blindness. I relied on my standpoint politics for motivation while navigating rapid movements as my perception readjusted to analysis without the security of familiarity in sight and sense. I had to stop analyzing discourses through my own preferences. During this light but intense journey, the underpinnings of my "categorical vision" (Boydston, 2008, p. 561) were also fragmented. This is because I could no longer recognize as significant the rhetoric that captured my attention the fastest, reached my core the quickest, or the binary frameworks I felt most at home with as an Iranian American student of gender, race, and sexuality studies.

I became accustomed to continually moving between people, feelings, claims, and ideas during interviews and archival work until the specific

²⁴ Personal interview, Ahvaz, Iran, July 2008.

complexities at issue became apparent – not depictions of gender and sexual categories as I understood them through my own history, solidarities, and education. Repeated and strategic totalizing statements in the written text or during interviews, such as frustration toward the West for supporting Iraq in the war, also informed my analysis. For instance, the relevance of Iran’s international isolation during the war and its connection to local political interventions initially emerged through these discourses. However, I did not allow the most well-established discourses or the most articulate individuals to distract me from noticing anomalies, additional logics within narratives, or overlaps between social processes, where they emerged. After all, isolation was not only caused by US and regional policies toward Iran; it also developed out of a radical remaking of cultural and social norms within a state that was in transition to becoming an Islamic Republic. However, interviewees were less forthcoming about this information due to their concerns regarding privacy and security. In contrast, when asked specifically about everyday processes – education, marriage, mourning, and child-rearing – narrators elaborated on the manifestation of emotions that traversed through them in a postrevolutionary state at war.

I began noting respondents’ interventions that at first glance may have been overshadowed by a storyline’s larger claim to “coherence and common understanding” (Scott, 1988, p. 38). Put somewhat differently, I learned to navigate the architecture of narratives that cemented past experiences with desires for current action through the standard plot of beginning, middle, and end. How stories of sexual violence and harassment during the war were told reveals how personal narratives were developed first into arguments and then supported a reconsideration of mainstream theorizations of citizenship and nationalism theories.

In the summer of 2008, I had two interviews with Somayeh R., a war veteran from southern Iran who was an active member of the women’s Basij, a paramilitary force. She told me that the popular claim made by the Revolutionary Guards and Basij that a group of Iranian Arab women and girls were raped and murdered by Iraqis in Susangerd (a city in southern Iran) was publicized and memorialized before an official investigation could take place.²⁵ I also had another revealing interview with Ali Q., a former male member of Basij. Ali informed me that some Iranian female members of the Mojahedin, who had participated in the

²⁵ Personal interview, Tehran, Iran, June 2008.

1988 operation Eternal Light, were raped by Iranian soldiers.²⁶ Another interlocutor, Habibeh R., recalled how some Iranian men sexually harassed women on the streets of Khorramshahr (a city in southern Iran) at the onset of the Iraqi invasion, though she was adamant that this was not common.²⁷

We remember in the present. These narratives were likely performances used to express interviewees' disapproval of, or allegiance to, reformist or conservative political movements in Iran. Yet, and perhaps outside of their intentions, they also displayed how state-sponsored associations between gender, sexuality, and the nation during war might be acted upon on the ground. I found the multiple interventions within recurring discussions of sexual harassment and rape – such as disruptions of the male hero image or depictions of silent females standing by male soldiers – to hold deeper narrative insight than the claim of wartime sex crimes alone.

When reading memoirs and other archival literature, repositioning myself and questioning my “categorical vision” was slightly more complicated, simply because no one was present to question my thinking and perspective. I was aware of how important this process was due to my previous experiences with interviewing. During archival research, scholars often feel that their subjectivity destabilizes through engagement with writing. This experience may not, however, occur so readily for everyone. Some might lose sight of the urgency in monitoring their relation to sources. Similar to conducting interviews, when reading memoirs and other literature, we can create methods out of our affective engagements with books to move toward the specificities at issue and away from unjustified simplifications engendered by our egos.

I slowly learned that close readings offered the best protection against making unfair general claims. However, I needed methods for performing this task in isolation. I therefore began to write immediate summaries of the literature I was reading (particularly for the war and prison memoirs), which I shared with my then-supervisor by email. The trust that had developed between us and the speed with which he saw my analyses meant that the very act of this exchange made me feel *responsible* for the writing. I would otherwise not have felt this responsibility that strongly while undertaking archival work; often, there is no one else present while we look through libraries across the globe in search of data

²⁶ Operation Eternal Light took place in 1988 after Iran accepted the ceasefire. Male and female members of the organization invaded Iranian territory from neighboring Iraq. Personal interview, London, UK, September 2010.

²⁷ Personal interview, Tehran, Iran, June 2008.

for our projects, and it is easy to simply select data that fit our categorical and other assumptions. I would reread my emails to him that same day or the next and question my analysis, repositioning myself accordingly. My interpretations were also not readjusted in accordance with his judgment or preferences; neither of us would have allowed or wanted such a methodology. Rather, this self-reflection in front of another person forced me to acknowledge my own unfair readings. Often I would go back and reread memoirs or at least sections. My own rereadings of the emails, in front of an audience that I had now created through my supervisor, made me feel *accountable* to my readers. A method for holding ourselves both responsible and accountable, and for shifting our positionality, is needed if we are to read and analyze sensibly with the intent to possibly create new approaches or theoretical propositions. We are not writing alone as scholars, and our write-up experience is indeed a relational one connected to different people and communities.

With careful attention to narrative themes and structures, I also detected popular gender interventions into the state's war propaganda through the analysis of memoirs published in Iran.²⁸ Although memoirs of the Iran–Iraq war may undergo some censorship, the Iranian people have skillfully mastered the art of disclosing suppressed histories. For example, in *Khabarnegar-e Jangi* (Wartime Journalist) (Raissi, 1383/2003), Maryam Kazemzadeh writes in the prelude that the men she encountered during her time at different warfronts can be “role models” for “all generations” in search of exemplary figures to emulate. The Islamic Republic continues to manipulate the identities of war martyrs to impose its narrative of heroic youth, and Kazemzadeh's introductory sentence converges with such an agenda.

However, throughout the memoir, she also narrates how male soldiers and journalists dismissed her, refused to collaborate with her, and deliberately scared her. It was only through the radical support of a few key individuals, such as Mostafa Chamran, Chief Commander of the Revolutionary Guards during the early days of the Iran–Iraq war, that she carried out her professional duty and personal desire to work as a female journalist reporting from the warfront.²⁹ Despite state interference in publishing, readers were given a sophisticated description of her struggles and her eventual success in creating a space for herself in an

²⁸ There are currently over 200 memoirs written or narrated by Iranian women regarding their experiences as nurses, fighters, or relatives of war martyrs during the Iran–Iraq war. Memoirs written by political prisoners during this same period are also flourishing in the Iranian diaspora.

²⁹ See, for example, Raissi, 1383/2003, pp. 27–28, 59, 70–71.

unwelcoming atmosphere. As such, readers can formulate a specific understanding of her historical experiences as a female journalist in postrevolutionary Iran, one that runs counter to the state's broader war agenda and gender politics enacted both at the time and today.

Based on the evidence I gathered during interviews and from memoirs, I began to suspect what in the later stages of my work would become more detailed: Through their spatial and rhetorical disruption of, and at times compliance with, the state's wartime propaganda system, it was also possible for people, including state elites, to destabilize the conventional gender and sexual associations that upheld state-promoted nationalisms and citizenship in the first place.

However, this finding also meant that *how* I understood intersections between the state, nation, and citizen had to be rethought, a process that I delve into further throughout *Women and the Islamic Republic*. I was hearing provocative histories; meetings and interviews continually posed new questions for me. This meant that I conducted more interviews than I'd originally planned, resulting in approximately 200 in-depth interviews by the conclusion of the project. Not all were necessarily useful. Where I had further questions regarding my field notes, I contacted respondents once again. I had continued my conversations with several interviewees after the end of my fieldwork. When still uncertain, I shared my analyses with former interviewees to obtain their comments. Chiefly constructing arguments through a terrain of ambiguities, I also sought feedback from a colleague who had directly experienced Iran's prisons in the 1980–1988 period. Today she is a social scientist and university professor in the United States; she has also had extensive conversations with political prisoners and families involved in the Iran–Iraq war, and she commented on significant portions of my analysis.

Another colleague, who lost her father in the Iran–Iraq war, also read and commented on my work. Additionally, analyses of in-depth interviews and informal exchanges were conducted with a metaphorical eye on other documents to capture the range of meanings and implications that interpretations offered. Because of the emotional labor of many individuals, I became comfortable with changing my positionality and consciousness, collecting and connecting pieces of an uncultivated story through multiple feelings, languages, spaces, and discourses.

1.8 Structure of the Book

This book consists of two parts that illustrate the different forms of gendered citizenship that have developed in post-1979 Iran as well as how within different historical contingencies women's acts of citizenship

remade their statuses, rights, and responsibilities to condition the state formation process. I begin by questioning the validity of a linear conceptualization of women's rights struggles in modern Iran. Chapter 2 explores how much Iranian women rely on memories of women's activism in modern Iran as they challenge and reconsider their own statuses, rights, and responsibilities today. The chapter demonstrates that both during the 1980–1988 period and today, the women I encountered relied significantly on their own immediate memories to engender their acts of citizenship.

The next two chapters introduce readers to the different forms that acts of citizenship took from 1980 to 1988. In Chapter 3, I present the notion of spiritual acts of citizenship as geared toward preserving one's status as a revolutionary citizen. Building on the work of Ghamari-Tabrizi (2016a) and his investigation of Foucault's notion of political spirituality, this chapter demonstrates that if we account for women's subjectivity, political spirituality did more than engender a move toward martyrdom or a fascination with death. Islamist and leftist women's spiritual acts of citizenship were also interspersed with familial love, erudite poetry, and literature that enhanced their capacity for self-preservation. This chapter contributes to our understanding of subjectivities during the 1980–1988 period, which remains an understudied dimension of politics in postrevolutionary Iran.

Chapter 4 operates more as a hinge chapter, exploring more fully a proposition that seeps through in Chapter 3: During conflict, opportunities for conditioning the state formation process become feasible for non-elite women. The chapter illustrates that the process of self-preservation addressed in Chapter 3 was entangled with acts of citizenship geared toward the formation of collectivities. Women's conceptions of collectivity involve a sense of personal responsibility toward unifying a community that is on the verge of disintegration due to the isolation and fear that violent conflict entails. This chapter recognizes the productive potential of the isolation and loneliness that constitute political struggles during everyday life within conflict zones. It argues that this sort of isolation propelled different Iranian women to use their bodies for the making of politics, as well as to destabilize the heteronormative underpinnings of the regime's state-building endeavor through moral assessments grounded in the postrevolutionary pious worldview. In this chapter, affect is understood as an emotive backdrop, or that "feeling in the air" that we sense, but it also interfaces with emotive connections between people.

Women's spatial movement into new spaces during conflict is widely recognized as one of the outcomes of war (Berry, 2018). This process in

Iran was met with opposition from state and societal forces, but it also provided women with the means to build new political communities to support their own and others' survival. As Martin and Miller (2003, p.145) have argued, "space is produced through social relations and structures." To interrogate issues pertaining to morality in a postrevolutionary context, Iranian women used their bodies to galvanize polities that upheld women's individual and collective visions of a more egalitarian and just society. While the body has been central to Western feminist thought, the body's flesh and material capacities have commonly been sidestepped for its metaphorical usages; this trend exists in feminist studies of conflict and citizenship as well (Beasley and Bacchi, 2000; Davis, 1997). The second point the chapter illustrates is that there was a tension between how state and societal forces wanted these women to function in public spaces and how they wanted to live. This conflict pushed women to self-determine their public and private subjectivities and destabilize the heteronormative structure of state-building in wartime where men are the protectors of the nation-state and where the ideal female citizen is a wife or mother who quietly sends her loved ones to war.

Studies grounded in multiple sites of conflict have argued that within the context of violence women often make significant gains, but these transformations can also be undermined in the aftermath of war (Baumel, 1999; Berry, 2018; Bop, 2001; Enloe, 2000; Thomas and Bond, 2015; Sharoni, 1988). As Berry (2018) has argued, very few studies have relied on a gendered lens to explore war's long-term effects. Chapters 5 and 6 investigate how two social groups – families of war martyrs and Hezbollah cultural activists – perform acts of citizenship, as well as what their enactments tell us about the legacies of war for women's remaking of their statuses, rights, and responsibilities. As social groups understood to be close to the state because of their commitment to the notion of an Islamic state and close association with the Islamic Republic's religious interpretations, families of war martyrs and Hezbollahi citizens are entrusted by the state to continue the ideals of the 1979 revolution. One conclusion that emerges from both chapters is that, despite the state's effort at placing these social groups above others in society as first-class citizens, their practice of Islam is heavily embedded in the experiences they share with the rest of the Iranian nation. Women affiliated with these two social groups continue to enact varied performances of acts of citizenship that at times push back on the state's enforcement of women's statuses, rights, and responsibilities in the postwar period – often in unexpected ways.

The state depicts war martyrs' wives and daughters as embodying a higher level of morality and religiosity than others. This gives them significantly more political power than other segments of Iran's society. Chapter 5 examines the legacies of the first decade of violence in the postrevolutionary state. Studying Islamist politics after the reform movement (1997–2005), the chapter illustrates how political orientation is often dependent on larger national political trends, as it also draws attention to generational differences. With a focus on how Islamist women use their memories and moral power, I argue that these women have significantly transformed since the 1980–1988 period, although they claimed to be dedicated to the notion of an Islamic government as Islamists (at least until 2008). Today, the activism of these women explicitly engages with the rights of others as they construct a more pluralistic society and challenge the state's exclusivist approach to citizenship through acts that invite more Iranians into the national body. In fact, the underlying aspiration for citizenry equality among wives and daughters of martyrs is one reason that the state began to draw attention to the mothers of war martyrs and families of nuclear energy martyrs in post-2009 Iran.

Yet, while families of war martyrs directly rely on their political power to advance others' interests, female Hezbollah cultural activists – who are positioned as another group following the path of war martyrs – perform acts of citizenship that in certain moments remain uninterested in others' communities and rights. Through case studies of different Islamization projects, Chapter 6 argues that a new form of collectivity has emerged among Iranian women after the 2009 conflict. Discussing Hezbollah cultural activists' engagement with the Islamization of the social sciences and women's rights in post-2009, this chapter also illustrates that, for the first time in postrevolutionary Iranian history, some non-elite Iranian women who identify with the transnational Hezbollah movement in Iran have begun to defend other women's rights by activating morals and sensibilities similar to those held by the rest of Iranian society. This trend was not predominant among Islamists during the 1980–1988 period but has slowly transformed through the interventions of families of martyrs and other privileged Islamist social groups in the postrevolutionary state. Nonconnectivity was a significant feature of women's rights struggles during the 1980–1988 period, and it was visibly surpassed in 2009. Chapter 6 shows that at the same time as bringing about such developments, acts of citizenship can also be used to uphold the state's authoritarian tactics and do not necessarily move the state toward democratization. The concluding chapter addresses some of the major themes that the previous chapters shed light on.

One final note: I have used interviewees names only when they gave me permission, and in other instances I have used pseudonyms. Some leftist women did not want to highlight or acknowledge the political organization the state accused them of collaborating with, and I have omitted that information to protect their privacy.