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978-0-521-83581-7 - Women and Politics in Iran: Veiling, Unveiling, and Reveiling

Hamideh Sedghi

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Women and Politics in Iran

Veiling, Unveiling, and Reveiling

Why were urban women veiled in the early 1900s, unveiled from 1936 to 1979, and reveiled after the 1979 Revolution? This question forms the basis of Hamideh Sedghi's original and unprecedented contribution to politics and Middle Eastern studies. Using primary materials gathered from field research, interviews, and oral history collections and secondary sources in Persian and English, Sedghi offers new knowledge on women's agency in relation to state power. In this rigorous analysis of gender politics from the last years of the Qajar dynasty to the Pahlavi period and the current Islamic regime, she places contention over women at the center of the political struggle between secular and religious forces and compellingly demonstrates that control over women's identities, sexuality, and labor has been central to the consolidation of state power, both domestically and internationally. In contrast to Orientalist scholars who view Middle Eastern women as victims, and in opposition to Western policy makers who claim that aggressive incursions into the region will help liberate women, Sedghi links politics and culture with economics to present an integrated analysis of the private and public lives of different classes of women and their modes of resistance to state power. For Sedghi, politics matters to gender, and gender matters to politics.

Hamideh Sedghi is a Visiting Scholar at Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies and a former Visiting Scholar at Columbia University. A professor of political science, her previous teaching venues include Villanova University, University of Richmond, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, and Vassar College. She is the first Iranian female in the United States who wrote on women in Iran from a social science perspective. Author of numerous publications, Sedghi is the recipient of many awards and honors, including the 2005 Christian Bay Award for the Best Paper presented at the American Political Science Association Meeting.

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To the beloved memory of

Baba,

Hossein Sedghi

(1300/1921–1354/1975),

and Maman,

Afsar Shishehchi

(1307/1928–1375/1996)

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Acknowledgments

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Transliteration and References

The transliteration of Persian and Arabic words widely used in Persian generally follows the system suggested by the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. For reasons of simplicity, I have eliminated diacritical signs with the exception of those standing for Persian glottal stops represented by hamze and 'ein. For these exceptions, as well as for a more precise transliteration of Persian diphthongs, I have consulted L. P. Elwell-Sutton and have relied on my own knowledge of Persian.¹ Translations and transliterations of Iranian titles, words, names, and concepts are given in parentheses (e.g., *zan*, meaning woman) in the text, notes, and bibliography. Familiar variant names follow the spellings as used by the individuals in question (e.g., Mohammad Reza Shah). In the case of dual languages, I have followed their respective method of transliteration (e.g., *Keyhan*). Persian and Arabic words commonly used in English are spelled as they sound in Persian (e.g., *Qoran*), except when they appear differently in citations (e.g., *Qur'an*). The Glossary highlights my transliteration of the Persian pronunciation of both Persian and Arabic words. Nevertheless, when references are general, the English term, like "clergy," is used for convenience.

Because of space consideration, not all titles are transliterated. But important titles to the reader are transliterated.

The footnotes are constructed differently. In order to save space, I merged several references in the same paragraph. An identifying word or phrase is used to refer to the exact sentence I used in the text. If the identifying word or phrase is based on a specific citation, it is in quotes;

¹ Elwell-Sutton, L.P., entire.

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otherwise, it is not. In addition, titles of books/articles are not generally included in the notes, especially that they appear in the Selected Bibliography. When more than one publication is used by the same author, a portion of the title of her/his work appears in the notes as well. Finally, when I refer to the entire article or a book, I refrain from including any specific page numbers. In contrast, page numbers are included when I refer to a specific citation and/or idea. The Selected Bibliography includes full citations of sources.