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Research Article

Women, Resistance, and Digital Activism: The "Woman, Life, Freedom" Movement in Iran

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Abstract

Iranian Contemporary politics took a sharp turn towards global feminist resistance after the death of Mahsa Amini in September 2022 who was arrested and assaulted by Iran's morality police for allegedly violating mandatory hijab laws. Her death sparked nationwide demonstration under the slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom". The movement evolved into a broader revolutionary movement against authoritarian patriarchy, gender discrimination, censorship, and systemic repression in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This chapter studies the Iranian uprising through feminist theory, digital activism studies, postcolonial perspectives, historical analysis, and human rights discourse. It contends that the movement represents at its core a fight for bodily autonomy, democratic participation, gender equality, dignity, and political freedom. It further compares the uprising with the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and the Sudanese Revolution to explore the patterns, drivers and outcomes of global revolts. The paper argues that the modern media platforms such as Instagram, X, Telegram, and TikTok are vital in mobilizing resistance, documenting state brutality, and constructing global solidarity networks. Digital media transformed Iranian women from subjects of state regulation to vocal political activists capable of pushing back authoritarian narratives in real time. The chapter also discovers the paradoxes of digital feminism, counting algorithmic sensationalism, cyber surveillance, internet shutdowns, and state repression. In addition, the chapter analyses the historical evolution of Iran from a comparatively liberalizing monarchy under the Pahlavi era to a theocratic state governed by Islamic jurisprudence after the 1979 Revolution. It examines how the "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement may shape the future of Iran and discusses how Iranian governance could balance women's liberties with theological principles through democratic reforms, reinterpretations of Islamic jurisprudence, and inclusive political participation.

Keywords

Iran, Mahsa Amini, Woman Life Freedom, Digital Activism, Authoritarianism, Surveillance, Censorship, Transnational Feminism

1. Historical Timeline: From Liberalization to Islamic Theocracy

The Constitutional Revolution of 1906 in Iran introduced parliamentary governance (*Majlis*), constitutional reforms, and modernization with the aim at limiting the absolutist rule of the Qajar dynasty. Campaigners, intellectuals, and

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nationalists supported modern state institutions and initiated debates concerning women's education, civic participation, and public visibility (Martin 751) [1].

During the reigns of Reza Shah Pahlavi and Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi respectively, Iran experienced rapid modernization and Westernization. The famous "White Revolution" introduced industrialization, literacy campaigns, and women's rights reforms, significantly expanding female access to education and employment. By the late 1970s, female university enrolment had increased from mere 6 percent in the early 1960s to approximately 30 percent. Urban cities such as Tehran became the growth pole of cultural liberalization where Western fashion, cinema, and secular education flourished. Female literacy increased significantly from approximately 17 percent in 1966 to nearly 47 percent by 1976. By the late 1970s, women constituted nearly 30 percent of university students in Iran, particularly in urban centres such as Tehran and Isfahan (Abrahamian 123-130; Paidar 187; Keddie 142) [2-4].

However, modernization under the monarchy remained authoritarian and state controlled. Opposition groups, dissents and religious revivalist movements were suppressed through SAVAK (*Sâzemân-e Ettelâ'ât va Amniat-e Kešvar/* brutal secret police), which employed harsh measures of censorship, digital monitoring, and imprisonment against dissidents. Religious leaders including Ruhollah Khomeini criticized the Shah's reforms as culturally alienating and harmful to Islamic identity. Scholars argue that rapid Westernization widened the inequalities between urban elites and rural folks. Although women gained voting rights and legal reforms through the Family Protection Laws of 1967 and 1975, feminist scholars note that these changes primarily helped educated urban women while basic widespread structural inequalities continued (Moghissi 52-57) [5] (Abrahamian 436; Keddie 150-154; Mohhissi 52-57) [2, 4, 5].

These contradictions fuelled the Iranian Revolution, which replaced the monarchy with an Islamic Republic under the doctrine of *"Velayat-e Faqih"* (guardianship of the Islamic jurist). Consequently, the new regime enforced mandatory hijab laws in 1983, expanded gender segregation, and revised family laws according to conservative interpretations of Sharia, limiting women's rights in divorce, inheritance, and child custody. Moral police units such as "*Gasht-e Ershad"* (guidance patrols) enforced dress codes and public morality regulations, signifying the state's control over women's bodies, autonomy, liberty and public behaviours (Paidar 256-261; Moghissi 94-101) [3, 5].

Despite restrictions, Iranian women continued resisting patriarchal governance through activism, journalism, literature, cinema, and legal reform movements. Despite legal and political restrictions, women today constitute more than 60 percent of university students in several academic disciplines in Iran, illustrating the growing educational advancement of women despite limited political and economic participation. During the Constitutional Revolution, women formed independent *Anjumans* and participated in protests and educational campaigns. In the reformist era of Mohammad Khatami, women activists advocated legal reforms and greater social freedoms. The One Million Signatures Campaign challenged discriminatory family laws, while women also played visible roles in the Green Movement demanding democratic reforms (World Bank; Afary 89-102) [6, 7].

Contemporary gender inequalities remain significant. According to the World Bank Gender Data Portal, female labour force participation in Iran was approximately 14 percent in 2025 compared to 67.2 percent for men, placing Iran among the countries with the largest gender employment gaps globally. Restrictions concerning travel, marriage, and family decisions continue to require male guardian approval, contributing to frustration among younger and educated women. Scholars also identify increasing emigration among educated Iranian women as part of a broader "brain drain" linked to censorship, political repression, and gender inequality (Keddie 289, World Bank) [4, 6].

The death of Mahsa Amini in 2022 became a turning point in contemporary Iranian politics. Amini died in the custody of Gasht-e Ershad after being arrested for allegedly violating hijab regulations, triggering nationwide protests and international condemnation. The slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom," rooted in Kurdish feminist movements, became the defining discourse of the uprising. Women publicly removed hijabs, cut their hair, and confronted security forces in performative acts rejecting patriarchal and coercive control (Azizi and Vakil 44; Afshar 118) [8, 9].

Digital media played a transformative role in the protests. Platforms such as Instagram, Telegram, X, TikTok, and WhatsApp enabled protesters to document violence, organize demonstrations, and communicate globally. Hashtags such as #MahsaAmini and #WomenLifeFreedom connected activists with diaspora communities and international audiences, transforming the movement into a transnational feminist struggle (Castells 221) [10]. Videos and images of unveiled women confronting security forces became symbols of "visual resistance," demonstrating how political activism increasingly operates through digital culture and viral imagery.

At the same time, Iranian authorities responded with internet shutdowns, platform restrictions, arrests of journalists, and digital scrutiny. Internet monitoring organizations reported that Iran experienced some of the most extensive internet shutdowns globally during the protests, with mobile internet access repeatedly disrupted across major cities and universities. According to Human Rights Watch, authorities monitored social media activity and used cyber-policing to identify protesters. Before the protests, Iran reportedly had more than 48 million Instagram users, making it one of the largest social media markets in the Middle East despite state censorship and platform restrictions. These developments reveal the contradictions of digital feminism in contemporary society: while online spaces empower political mobilization and global solidarity, algorithm-driven platforms can also reduce complex

political struggles into simplified and consumable visual narratives (Access Now; Human Rights Watch; Statista; Banet-Weiser 203) [11-14].

Nevertheless, these tensions do not invalidate the Woman, Life, Freedom Movement; rather, they highlight the complexity of dissent in digitally mediated societies where activism, identity, aesthetics, and political communication increasingly intersect. During the protests following the death of Mahsa Amini, Iranian authorities-imposed internet shutdowns, blocked platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp, and arrested journalists and activists covering demonstrations. These measures aimed to isolate protesters, disrupt coordination, and restrict international visibility of state violence (Rahimi 81) [15].

According to Human Rights Watch, Iranian authorities also expanded digital observation by monitoring social media accounts, tracking online activists, and using cyber-policing to identify protesters. Surveillance technologies therefore became central tools of state repression, extending state control into digital spaces (Foucault 195) [16]. Despite censorship, activists continued using VPNs, encrypted messaging platforms, and diaspora networks to circulate protest videos and document abuses internationally. The movement thus demonstrated both the emancipatory and repressive dimensions of digital technology in contemporary authoritarian societies.

The Iranian state increasingly viewed digital media as a direct threat to centralized control over information and political narratives. Consequently, internet shutdowns and platform restrictions intensified during periods of unrest, particularly in universities, schools, and urban protest centres. Authorities blocked or restricted access to platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, and X to disrupt communication and reduce international visibility of protests (Rahimi 73-78) [15]. According to internet monitoring organizations, Iran experienced some of the world's most extensive internet disruptions during the 2022 protests, severely limiting digital communication and access to independent information sources.

At the same time, the Iranian case demonstrates the dual nature of technology within centralised societies. While digital platforms enabled activists to mobilize support, document abuses, and build transnational solidarity, the state simultaneously weaponized technology through surveillance systems, cyber-policing, facial recognition technologies, and online monitoring. Human Rights Watch documented widespread cyber regulation practices, including monitoring social media accounts and identifying protesters through online activities. Scholars argue that such practices reflect broader patterns of "digital authoritarianism," where governments use technological infrastructures to regulate dissent and expand state power (Human Rights Watch; Zuboff 322) [12, 17].

The government's response to the Woman, Life, Freedom Movement involved extensive repression and human rights violations. Amnesty International organizations also documented the deaths of dozens of minors during the protests, reflecting the broad participation of younger generations in anti-government mobilization. International organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch documented arbitrary arrests, torture, disappearances, sexual violence, and killings of protesters. Reports indicated that security forces used tear gas, batons, pellet guns, and live ammunition against demonstrators, including women, students, journalists, and children (Amnesty International) [18]. Videos circulating online showed violent crackdowns in universities, streets, and residential neighbourhoods, further intensifying domestic and international criticism of the Iranian government.

According to the United Nations Human Rights Council, more than 500 protesters were reportedly killed during the 2022-2023 demonstrations, while thousands were arrested, including students, journalists, lawyers, and women, while thousands were detained across Iran between 2022 and 2023. Former detainees reported forced confessions, solitary confinement, denial of medical treatment, and psychological abuse in prisons. Human rights organizations also documented cases of sexual violence against female prisoners and intimidation of victims' families aimed at preventing public criticism and participation in memorial gatherings (United Nations Human Rights Council) [19]. Funerals frequently evolved into sites of political resistance, transforming mourning rituals into anti-government demonstrations.

The Iranian judiciary accelerated prosecutions under charges such as "enmity against God" and "corruption on earth," drawing criticism from international observers for lack of due process and restricted legal representation. Reports emerging in 2025 and 2026 described executions linked to the protests, including allegations of secret trials and coerced confessions. These developments intensified concerns regarding authoritarianism and the politicization of Iran's judicial system.

Women activists such as Narges Mohammadi and Nasrin Sotoudeh became global symbols of oppositional politics. Mohammadi continued advocating women's rights and exposing prison abuses despite repeated imprisonment and deteriorating health conditions. Their activism highlighted how women-led push back directly challenged the ideological foundations of compulsory morality laws and patriarchal governance within the Islamic Republic.

Diaspora communities also played a critical role in sustaining international attention. Iranian women abroad organized demonstrations, translated protest materials, lobbied international institutions, and amplified activist voices through digital media networks. Consequently, Iranian feminist activism evolved into a plural and intersectional movement uniting diverse ideological perspectives, including secular democracy, Islamic feminism, legal reformism, and broader structural transformation.

The movement significantly influenced contemporary feminist discourse by highlighting the intersections between gender, authoritarianism, religion, nationalism, and digital resistance. Scholars caution against orientalist narratives portraying Iranian women as passive victims requiring Western

intervention, arguing instead that Iranian women themselves articulated the goals, strategies, and meanings of their movement (Afshar 141) [9]. Social media therefore functioned not merely as a communication tool but as an alternative political sphere enabling decentralized activism, emotional solidarity, and transnational mobilization despite state censorship and surveillance.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Digital Feminist Theoretical Perspective

The Woman, Life, Freedom Movement can be understood through the framework of digital feminism developed by theorists such as Nancy Fraser, Zizi Papacharissi, and Manuel Castells, who examine how digital technologies reshape political participation, identity formation, and resistance. Digital feminist theory argues that online platforms create alternative public spheres where marginalized groups challenge dominant power structures and build collective political identities. In coercive governance states such as Iran, where traditional media remains heavily censored, digital platforms became crucial spaces through which women resisted patriarchal authority and state-controlled narratives.

Papacharissi's concept of "networked publics" explains how emotionally connected communities emerge through hashtags, viral images, and personal testimonies. During the Iranian protests, videos of women removing hijabs, confronting security forces, and documenting state violence circulated globally through Instagram, Telegram, TikTok, and X, generating emotional solidarity among domestic and international audiences. Similarly, Castells' theory of the "network society" demonstrates how decentralized digital communication weakens state monopolies over information and enables horizontal forms of mobilisation. Iranian women therefore utilized social media not only for communication but also for feminist consciousness-building, mobilization, and international advocacy (Castells 221; Papacharissi 114) [10, 20].

Nancy Fraser's concept of "subaltern counterpublics" further explains how digital spaces enabled Iranian women to articulate political discourses excluded from official institutions (Fraser 67) [21]. Through hashtags, citizen journalism, and online campaigns, women transformed personal experiences of gender discrimination into collective demands concerning bodily autonomy, dignity, and democratic rights. Digital feminism therefore highlights how technology creates new possibilities for visibility, solidarity, and political agency even under conditions of censorship and repression.

2.2. Foucault, Digital Surveillance, and Power

Michel Foucault conceptualized power as a diffuse force embedded within institutions, surveillance systems, and everyday social practices rather than merely direct state coercion (Foucault 195) [16]. In Iran, these dynamics operate through both physical institutions such as Gasht-e Ershad and digital mechanisms including cyber-surveillance, internet restrictions, facial recognition systems, and online censorship. The regulation of women's bodies through compulsory hijab laws reflects what Foucault described as "biopower," where political authority governs populations through control over bodies, morality, and behaviour.

During the protests, however, digital technologies transformed surveillance into a contested political arena. Protesters used social media platforms to document police violence, expose abuses, and circulate alternative narratives beyond state-controlled media. Public acts such as removing hijabs, filming confrontations, and sharing protest footage online challenged state's repressive attempts to control visibility and information. Thus, digital spaces became sites where disciplinary observation and oppositional politics coexisted simultaneously.

Foucault's concept of the "panopticon" is particularly relevant in understanding Iran's digital governance structure. Authorities implemented internet shutdowns, blocked social media platforms, and monitored online activities to suppress mobilization. Yet activists responded through VPNs, encrypted messaging applications, and diaspora communication networks that bypassed censorship. The Iranian case therefore demonstrates the dual nature of technology as both an instrument of authoritarian control and a tool of political resistance.

2.3. Subaltern and Postcolonial Perspectives

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak questioned whether marginalized groups can genuinely "speak" within hegemonic systems dominated by elite narratives (Spivak 271) [22]. Iranian women challenged this exclusion by using digital platforms to bypass state-controlled media and communicate directly with global audiences. Through videos, testimonies, and online activism, protesters countered state portrayals depicting demonstrators as foreign agents or threats to national security.

Postcolonial perspectives are equally important because Western representations of Iranian women often reproduce orientalist assumptions portraying Muslim women solely as oppressed victims needing Western rescue. Scholars such as Sara Shaban argue that transnational feminism must recognize the diversity of Iranian women's cultural, religious, ethnic, and political experiences rather than homogenizing them (Shaban 34) [23]. Iranian women therefore emerge not as passive subjects but as active political agents negotiating patriarchy, authoritarianism, nationalism, and global media representation simultaneously.

The movement also demonstrates how digital technologies reshape transnational solidarity. Diaspora communities, feminist organizations, journalists, and activists amplified Iranian voices through online campaigns, solidarity protests, and international advocacy. Consequently, the movement evolved from a domestic uprising into a global feminist struggle connected through digitally networked activism.

3. Comparative Revolutionary Analysis, Future Implications, and the Way Forward for Iran

The French Revolution established important ideas concerning liberty, citizenship, equality, and resistance to absolutist monarchy. Despite its universal rhetoric, however, women remained excluded from equal political participation. Female revolutionaries actively participated in protests and political mobilization, yet revolutionary citizenship largely remained male-dominated. Olympe de Gouges challenged this exclusion through *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen*, arguing that women deserved equal political recognition. Her later execution symbolized the dangers faced by women who confronted patriarchal revolutionary structures (Hunt 112) [24]. Similarly, Iranian women became central actors within revolutionary politics while simultaneously struggling for recognition as equal political subjects. Both cases demonstrate how women often participate decisively in transformative political movements yet remain marginalized within post-revolutionary power structures.

The Iranian uprising also parallels earlier revolutions through its emphasis on dignity and resistance to humiliation. Just as the French Revolution emerged partly from frustration over inequality and exclusion, Iranian women resisted compulsory veiling, morality policing, and surveillance as forms of symbolic degradation. However, the Woman, Life, Freedom Movement differs from many earlier revolutions because gender itself became the central revolutionary framework. Unlike previous revolutionary movements where women's issues remained secondary, bodily autonomy and feminist activism became core political demands.

The Russian Revolution similarly demonstrates tensions between revolutionary liberation and authoritarian consolidation. Women workers in Petrograd played critical roles in initiating revolutionary protests, and the Soviet state initially expanded literacy, employment, and legal rights for women. Yet later authoritarian centralization under Joseph Stalin restricted political freedoms and reinforced state control over social life. Iran reflects a comparable contradiction. Women participated extensively in the 1979 revolution against the Shah expecting justice and dignity, yet compulsory hijab laws and conservative gender regulations became institutionalized after the revolution succeeded. These historical parallels reveal how revolutionary movements may promise emancipation while later consolidating ideological authority and restricting dissent (Goldman 58; Moghissi 77) [5, 25].

The Sudanese Revolution provides another important comparison because women became visible symbols of revolutionary resistance. Images of Sudanese women leading chants during demonstrations gained global attention and challenged both authoritarian governance and patriarchal social expectations. Iranian women similarly transformed themselves into symbols of resistance through public unveiling, cutting their hair, and confronting security forces. In both movements, female visibility reshaped revolutionary imagery and demonstrated how younger generations increasingly connect gender equality with democratic transformation (Eltantawy 214) [26].

The Iranian protests also exposed a widening generational divide within society. Younger Iranians, influenced by globalization, higher education, and digital communication, increasingly demand personal freedoms and democratic participation. Approximately 60 percent of Iran's population is under the age of 35, contributing to growing tensions between a digitally connected younger generation and conservative political institutions (United Nations Population Fund) [27]. According to the World Bank, Iran's youth literacy rate exceeds 98 percent, while internet penetration among urban youth remains among the highest in the region, contributing to greater exposure to global political and cultural discourses ("World Development Indicators"). Simultaneously, the state continues emphasizing ideological conformity, centralized religious authority, and social regulation. This tension between a digitally connected youth population and a conservative political establishment remains one of the defining challenges confronting Iran's futures.

Several possible trajectories may emerge from these tensions. One possibility involves gradual reform within the Islamic Republic through limited relaxation of hijab enforcement, expanded women's legal rights, and greater internet freedoms. Reformist scholars argue that Islamic governance and democratic freedoms are not inherently incompatible and advocate reinterpretations of Islamic jurisprudence capable of adapting to contemporary realities (Mir-Hosseini 134) [29]. However, conservative factions fear that liberalization could weaken theological legitimacy and encourage broader opposition movements.

Another possibility involves intensified repression through expanded surveillance, cyber-policing, internet shutdowns, arrests, and judicial repression. The Iranian state increasingly relies on digital monitoring systems and facial recognition technologies to regulate dissent and enforce morality laws. While these measures may maintain short-term stability, they risk generating long-term social and economic consequences. According to the World Bank, Iran continues experiencing significant migration of highly educated professionals, including women, contributing to concerns regarding intellectual and economic "brain drain" (World Bank) [28]. Continued repression may therefore weaken Iran's scientific, cultural, and professional sectors over time.

A third possibility involves gradual democratic transformation driven by youth mobilization, women-led reform coalitions, diaspora activism, and expanding civil society networks. The protests demonstrated widespread dissatisfaction extending beyond gender issues to include economic inequality, corruption, censorship, and political exclusion. Importantly, democratic transformation in Iran would likely differ from Western secular models because religion continues shaping Iranian national identity and social life. Consequently,

sustainable reform may require negotiation between Islamic traditions and pluralistic freedoms rather than complete rejection of religion.

The future stability of Iran may ultimately depend on whether the state can reconcile Islamic identity with women's rights, democratic participation, and personal freedoms. Comparative examples from Tunisia, Indonesia, and Malaysia demonstrate that Muslim-majority societies are not politically uniform and that Islamic traditions can coexist with broader female participation in education, employment, and public life. Reformist scholars emphasize the concept of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), arguing that Islamic jurisprudence historically evolved through contextual interpretation rather than rigid uniformity (Badran 91) [30]. Many Muslim feminist scholars therefore contend that patriarchal restrictions often reflect political interpretations rather than inherent religious principles.

Ultimately, the "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement represents far more than opposition to compulsory hijab laws. It is a broader struggle concerning citizenship, dignity, gender equality, democratic participation, and political legitimacy in contemporary Iran. Like earlier transformative revolutions, the movement demonstrates that political upheaval often emerges when populations reject systemic humiliation and exclusion. Iranian women transformed personal experiences of repression into a globally recognized movement of resistance through digital activism, visual culture, and transnational solidarity.

Whether Iran evolves toward reform, intensified authoritarianism, or gradual democratization will depend largely on its ability to reconcile theology with liberty, tradition with pluralism, and religious identity with human dignity. The future of Iran may therefore depend not on suppressing women's voices, but on recognizing them as central participants in shaping the country's political, cultural, and moral future. The Iranian case demonstrates how twenty-first century feminist movements increasingly operate at the intersection of digital communication, authoritarian governance, transnational solidarity, and embodied political resistance.

4. Conclusion

Ultimately, the "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement represents a significant turning point in the historical evolution of feminism in Iran. Rather than emerging as an isolated protest movement, it reflects the continuation of multiple feminist waves that have developed from the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 through the reformist movements of the late twentieth century and into the digitally networked activism of the present era. What distinguishes the contemporary phase of Iranian feminism is its increasingly intersectional, decentralized, and transnational character. Questions of bodily autonomy, gender justice, ethnic identity, freedom of expression, economic precarity, and democratic participation have become deeply interconnected within a broader struggle over citizenship and social legitimacy. Kurdish women, students, journalists, academics, artists, and diaspora communities have collectively expanded feminist politics beyond legal reform alone toward wider demands concerning dignity, visibility, and participatory rights within public life. At the same time, the movement demonstrates how contemporary feminism increasingly operates within postmodern and digitally mediated environments where resistance is no longer confined to formal political organizations or physical protest spaces alone. Images, hashtags, visual performances, online testimonies, underground art, independent cinema, and transnational digital networks have become central instruments of feminist political expression. Iranian women have therefore transformed everyday acts of unveiling, public visibility, artistic production, and online narration into forms of political agency and symbolic dissent. Yet the Iranian case also reveals the dual nature of the digital world. While digital platforms created alternative public spheres that enabled solidarity, visibility, and decentralized mobilization, they simultaneously exposed activists to cyber-surveillance, algorithmic monitoring, misinformation, internet shutdowns, and new forms of state regulation. Technology thus emerged both as a mechanism of emancipation and as an instrument of disciplinary control within contemporary authoritarian governance. The future of feminism in Iran will likely depend upon how effectively civil society, reformist intellectuals, women's organizations, student movements, and younger generations continue negotiating the tensions between religious identity, democratic aspirations, national sovereignty, and gender equality. Current developments suggest that even where formal political transformation remains uncertain, important social and cultural shifts are already underway. Increasing numbers of women publicly challenge compulsory dress norms, feminist discourse has become more visible within public debate, and younger generations appear increasingly unwilling to accept rigid forms of gendered control despite ongoing repression. Scholars therefore argue that the movement's long-term significance may lie not only in immediate political outcomes, but in its gradual transformation of public consciousness, cultural norms, and the boundaries of political imagination within Iran. Consequently, the Iranian case demonstrates how twenty-first-century feminist movements increasingly function through interconnected spaces of digital communication, emotional solidarity, cultural expression, and transnational activism while simultaneously confronting evolving systems of surveillance and ideological regulation. The trajectory of feminism in Iran will likely remain complex, uneven, and contested; however, the "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement has already altered the social and political landscape by establishing women not as peripheral participants, but as central actors in shaping the future discourse of citizenship, freedom, and democratic possibility in contemporary Iran.

Abbreviations

CCAS	Centre of Central Asian Studies
VPN	Virtual Private Network
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
ORCID	Open Researcher and Contributor ID
SAVAK	National Intelligence and Security Organization
Gasht-e Ershad	Guidance Patrol
CCAS	Centre of Central Asian Studies
VPN	Virtual Private Network
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
ORCID	Open Researcher and Contributor ID
SAVAK	National Intelligence and Security Organization
Gasht-e Ershad	Guidance Patrol

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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