

as in graduate and undergraduate courses focusing on concepts such as prison literature, writing as a form of resistance, and genre studies.

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A Social History of Modern Tehran: Space, Power, and the City

Ashkan Rezvani Naraghi. *The Global Middle East Series* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2023). Pp. 488. \$120 cloth. ISBN: 9781009188906

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The modern social history of Iran has often overlooked its spatial dimension, while the literature on Iranian cities and urban spaces has shown a relative neglect of social dynamics. In the prevailing literature on 19th-century Iranian society, urban spaces have been treated as neutral backdrops for social interactions, as spatial settings, streets, and buildings, both public and private spaces, are considered empty containers for social processes. In contrast, in studies focusing on Iranian cities and urban history, people are absent, portraying them as passive occupants who simply fill spaces without any reciprocal dialogue with them. To bridge this gap between the two dominant research traditions, Ashkan Rezvani Naraghi's book, *A Social History of Modern Tehran: Space, Power, and the City*, skillfully intertwines spatial analysis with social analysis. In an empirically rich and theoretically sophisticated way, Rezvani Naraghi demonstrates the deep interrelationship and mutual construction of social processes and spatial forms. Drawing on the "spatial turn" discourse in the social sciences and humanities, initially developed by Henri Lefever and David Harvey, the author adopts a social constructionist conception of space to view Tehran as a place which is both socially produced and simultaneously shapes social interactions.¹ In doing so, Rezvani Naraghi argues that between the mid-19th and mid-20th century, Iranian urban society and the state gradually abandoned their indigenous and traditional spatial understandings, embracing a new spatial knowledge influenced by Russian and Western European cities. This transformative process turned Tehran from a segmented society into a class-based city. The book analyzes four key relationships to explore the impact of this discursive shift: (1) the spatiality of ordinary people's social practices, (2) the contested relationship between society and the state, (3) the relationship between the state and the city in terms of space production and commodification, and (4) the spatial strategies of the state for social control and legitimation.

A Social History of Modern Tehran employs an array of archival sources, including newspapers, magazines, administrative files, diaries, travelogues, and maps, to demonstrate the transformation of Tehran's spatial discourses and spaces. The chapters of the book cover various historical periods. Beginning from the early 19th century and concluding in the mid-20th century, it looks over the 1870s expansions of Tehran, the 1906 Constitutional

¹ Although the author, a gifted mountaineer, perished in an avalanche in the mountains above Tehran in 2022 soon after completing this manuscript, his colleagues and friends in Iran, the UK, and the US helped bring his manuscript out into the world.



Revolution and its aftermath, Reza Shah Pahlavi's reign (1925–41), and the turbulent years after World War II up to the 1953 coup. While the chapters do not strictly follow a chronological order, they focus on specific historical periods related to each spatial relationship. This provides a comprehensive understanding of the ontological shift and its profound impact on Tehran's spatial configuration.

The book begins by exploring the spatiality of ordinary people's daily lives in pre-1870s Tehran. Suggesting the notion of the "communal sphere," Rezvani Naraghi shows that Tehran used to be a segmented society consisting of mosaics of numerous smaller communities. Each community had its own public spaces like coffeehouses, bathhouses, traditional gymnasiums (*zürkhānihs*), and the places for holding Muharram ceremonies (*takiyyihs*). The spatial configuration of these neighborhoods was not primarily based on the economic status of their residents, but rather geographical differences had bold noneconomic attributes. In these segmented configurations, comprising rich and poor, workers and merchants, ordinary people and high-ranking officials, and clerics and laymen, people used public spaces for political mobilization and collective matters, though within the limits of communal, ethnic, and religious identities. During the 1906 Constitutional Revolution, a sort of public sphere emerged as the outcome of various communal spheres coming together through the binding forces of religion and political activities. Ironically, the religious discourse that played a crucial role in the transformation of local communal spheres of the city into a public sphere initiated a process that resulted in secularization and gender diversification of the public sphere and political public spaces. In this context, women's social and political mobilization within the interior sections of Iranian houses, or gender-exclusive spaces like women's bathhouses, transformed these places into centers of feminist organizations and political public spaces.

The 1870s expansion of Tehran was a point of departure when traditional urban elements, spaces, and vocabularies were gradually replaced with modern European-style ones both at the state and societal levels. From this period on, developing new ceremonies similar to the imperial models of legitimation in European countries, the state redesigned the city as a spectacle for the demonstration of royal power in squares, plazas, and streets. At the same time, the Iranian modern middle class's desire for a new lifestyle led to the production of spaces, such as European-style cafés, restaurants, theaters, cinemas, hotels, and sports clubs, which had no precedent in Iranian cities. The combination of these measures resulted in the dichotomization of the city and society into two poles: old and new, traditional and modern, and south and north. This socio-spatial contrast between the south and north of the city brought about not only geographical contrast but also created a strong power and economic relationship between the two poles, with vast spatial manifestations. The city's contour transformed as the two poles of north and south gradually stratified the city, with northern Tehran being European, modern, alive, rich, and enchanting, while southern Tehran was poor, dilapidated, filthy dark, and unsafe. As a result of this spatial reconfiguration, political public spaces went through fundamental transformation: (1) The sacred spaces of the city lost their role as the primary congregators and were replaced by the streets and squares of northern Tehran; (2) women established their presence in political public spaces; and (3) the segmented and communal identity of political public spaces transformed into a class-based identity.

In order to elucidate the transformation of Tehran from a segmented society to a European-style city, the author makes a pause in the middle of the book (chapter 3) to highlight the significant role of Persian travelogues in fostering new spatial knowledge in 19th-century Iran. He argues that the exposure to alternative European and Russian forms of urban organization and political and social spectacles contributed to the transformation of Tehran, its spatiality, and its sociality. While travelogues did impact the emergence of modern spatial discourse, overemphasizing their role risks reducing the author's material and sociological approach to a mere epistemological one, which contradicts the overarching interdisciplinary approach of the book. Furthermore, this chapter stands alone in the


organization of the work and disrupts the flow of the narrative. If the author had incorporated the travel accounts into the other chapters, treating them in the same manner as other primary sources, the book would have been more coherent and concise.

Overall, the book will significantly contribute to the fields of urban studies and the social history of cities, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, by offering an original analysis of Tehran, not as a taken-for-granted place in which sociopolitical events occur but as a dynamic space that produces and is produced by social processes. While cities like Cairo and Istanbul have been extensively covered in English academic literature, Tehran, an equally influential city in the region, has been noticeably absent when it comes to its spatial aspects. However, Rezvani Naraghi's *A Social History of Modern Tehran* successfully fills this gap. It provides valuable insights and becomes an invaluable source for scholars, instructors, and students of Iranian studies, Middle Eastern studies, and everyone interested in contemporary urban history.

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A Landscape of War: Ecologies of Resistance and Survival in South Lebanon

Munira Khayat (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2022). Pp. 286. \$85.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 9780520389991

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Many readers living in the United States or other places distant from war zones are used to thinking of war as an event, bounded in time. Wars are supposed to begin and end, whether brief, like Israel's July 2006 war on Lebanon, or prolonged, like the US war on Afghanistan. *A Landscape of War* disrupts that temporal understanding of war, providing readers instead with a lyrical and poignant ethnographic detailing of lives lived alongside and within war as a continuous state. Reminiscent of Patrick Wolfe's theorizing of settler colonialism as a structure rather than an event, war here is a necropolitical structure infusing daily struggles to make a living, raise a family, and resist by persisting.

To theorize life in war, Khayat coins "resistant ecologies," a concept that beautifully encapsulates relations among humans, and between humans and nonhumans, that work to "make life amidst returning seasons of devastation" (p. 4). "Resistant ecologies" connects *sumūd*, steadfastness, to landscape and its seasonal rhythms as they cycle alongside war's ebbs and flows. In building her argument, Khayat thoughtfully recuperates "resistance" from recent theoretical decline, showing how one can honor it as a local way of living without diluting the depth and complexity of the workings of power. In taking resistance seriously again, she reminds us to be clear about for whom and from whence it was foreclosed, underscoring how we source theory in her intervention.

Khayat's use of landscape as method, "as in-habitation, experience, and embodied practice" (p. 28), reaches richly toward ontological renderings of land-as-being alongside depictions of cultivation, navigation, and spaces that produce both life and death. Tobacco is in relationship with human beings, oaks harbor sentient spirits, goats and humans share the dangerous pursuit of navigating foodscapes. These multispecies relations best exemplify