FINAL PROJECT

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DEGREE

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024

JUNE

TITLE

COLLECTIVE ACTION AND WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN:
MOBILIZING PAIN THROUGH REVOLUTION

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In Madrid, on June 4th, 2024

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THROUGH REVOLUTION

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INTRODUCTION

The role of women has undergone significant and often contradictory transformations over the past century, particularly since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. This research explores how these changes have impacted Iranian women and how they have responded collectively through activism.

Following the Revolution, the Islamic Republic introduced a series of policies that restricted the rights and freedoms of Iranian women. The new government, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, mandated the wearing of the hijab, segregated education by gender, and limited women's participation in public and working life. The implementation of these measures represented a regression from the progressive reforms implemented during the Pahlavi dynasty, which promoted secular education and women's integration.

In addition to governmental changes, several factors have exacerbated the situation, such as the conservative interpretation of Sharia or foreign economic sanctions. In this context, religion has been used as a tool to justify repression, while sanctions, mainly imposed by the United States, have put Iran in the international spotlight, significantly affecting its economic development.

Despite the adversities, the feminist movement has gained even more strength and visibility over time. Iranian women have challenged the authorities through collective struggle, organizing massive protests and campaigns to demand their rights. This work also aims to highlight Iranian feminism, which has managed to persist and evolve, inspiring new generations and various ethnic groups in the struggle for gender equality.

The recent death of Mahsa Amini and the subsequent protests underscore the resilience and desire for change in Iranian society. These uprisings not only highlighted the regime's brutality but also fostered solidarity both regionally and internationally in the face of injustices.

In conclusion, this study not only covers the relentless struggle of women in Iran but also aims to inspire feminist movements worldwide, highlighting the importance of collective action. The perseverance of Iranian women in the face of unprecedented oppression sends a powerful message of hope and determination, reminding us that the effort for equality and freedom knows no bounds.

JUSTIFICATION AND METHODOLOGY

The choice of the topic "Collective Action and Women's Human Rights in Iran" is based on the need to understand the evolution of feminist movements and the role of women in a sociopolitical environment as complex as Iran. The importance of this topic lies in the urgency of exposing and analyzing how Iranian women fight against oppression, as well as understanding the dynamics of collective action in repressive contexts. Through the case of Mahsa Amini, we can examine how individual events can trigger massive social movements, changing public perception and putting pressure on governmental policies.

The methodology used is based on a review of academic literature and relevant documentation, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the historical and current conditions of women in Iran and the Muslim world. For this purpose, a wide variety of sources will be used, such as interviews, testimonies, academic articles, reports from international organizations, and highly relevant news. Throughout the study, key issues will be addressed, such as the evolution of women's human rights in Iran and the sociocultural and political factors, both internal and external, that have contributed to the current situation of oppression. Finally, the emergence of the Iranian feminist movement, its characteristics, and prominent figures will be studied, with a particular focus on the case of Mahsa Amini.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

General Objective 1: To examine the historical evolution of the situation of women in Iran:

This objective seeks to analyze and understand how the situation of women in Iran has changed throughout history, including their historical background, sociocultural factors, and political influences that have shaped their current position.

General Objective 2: To explore the emergence and development of the feminist movement in Iran:

This objective aims to investigate the origin and evolution of the feminist movement in Iran, identifying prominent figures and organizations and assessing their impact on Iranian society and politics.

Specific Objective 1: To analyze the role of collective action in transforming women's rights in Iran:

This objective focuses on investigating how the collective action of women in Iran has contributed to the improvement of their human rights, particularly in revolutionary contexts.

Specific Objective 2: To evaluate the impact and future prospects of the feminist movement in Iran on a global level:

Finally, this objective aims to evaluate the findings obtained throughout the research and reflect on the future of the feminist movement in Iran and its potential influence on global feminist movements.

HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis 1: The collective action of women and their participation in revolutionary movements in Iran have been crucial factors in advancing the improvement of their human rights and their status in Iranian society.

Hypothesis 2: The success of women's collective action in Iran, especially in revolutionary contexts, has the potential to inspire and influence feminist movements globally, thus contributing to the promotion of women's rights worldwide.

I.   RECENT HISTORY OF IRAN

1.1.   INTRODUCTION

Iran, endowed with a rich cultural heritage and a strategically located geopolitical position in the Middle East, has maintained a prominent presence on the international agenda. Its location places it at an intersection of regional and international interests, resulting in a complex network of diplomatic relations. From ancient Persia to its current position, Iran has witnessed transformative changes and events that have shaped the history of the region and the world.

Situated in a strategic region between Europe, Asia, and Africa, its location grants it access to natural resources such as oil and natural gas, which have made the country a significant player in the global economy. However, its economic dependence on these resources has been a hindrance to its growth and development, especially due to international sanctions. In response, Iran has sought to diversify its economy by investing in sectors such as tourism, agriculture, or the petrochemical industry.

Map 1 Geographic Mapo f Iran
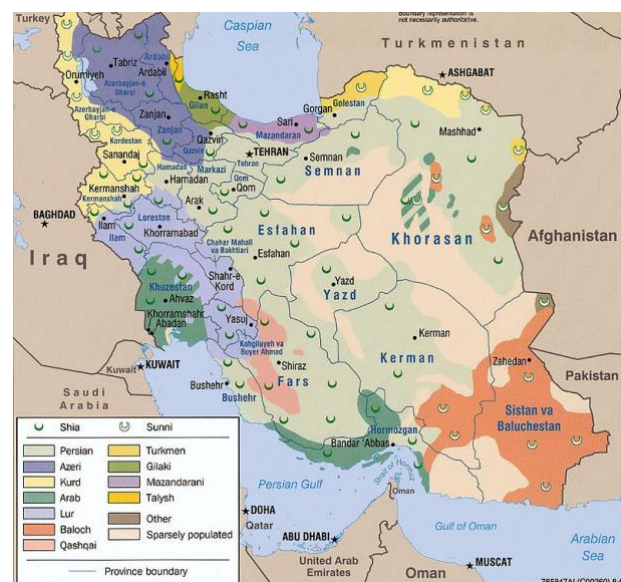
Source 1 El Orden Mundial, s.f.

Iran stands out as the most heterogeneous country in the Middle East, with a complex linguistic and ethnic mix. Persians constitute the majority ethnic group, followed by other minority groups such as Azaris, Kurds, Arabs, and Baluchis, among others. On one hand, Azaris, of Turkish origin, make up 25% of the population and are the most integrated minority in society, as they share the Shia religion with Persians. In contrast, Kurds and Baluchis, who are Sunni, have maintained a tense relationship with the authorities since before the 1979 revolution, exacerbating clashes with the authorities. Lastly, Arabs, concentrated on the border with Iraq, also face a complicated situation with Tehran due to the spread of Sunni Wahhabism.

Persian is the official language, spoken by 52% of the population, but other languages such as Azeri, Kurdish, Baluchi, and Arabic are also spoken by large segments of the population, reflecting historical migrations and population exchanges. Regarding religion, 80% practice Twelver Shia Islam, although there are Sunni minorities, as well as Christian, Zoroastrian, Jewish, Hindu, and Baha'i communities. This ethnic and religious diversity highlights the complexity and cultural richness of Iran (CIDOB, 2015).

Map 2 Geopolitics of Iran
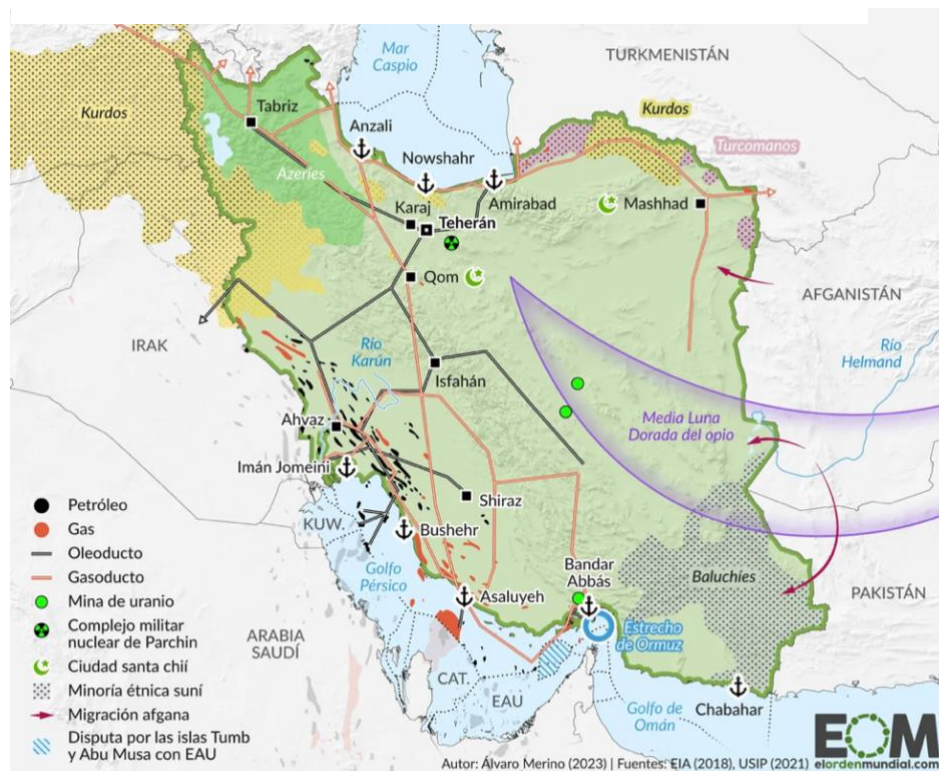
Source 2 El Orden Mundial s.f.

While it is true that Iran plays a crucial role in the cohesion of its regional environment, its stability determines the balance of numerous key actors in the international system. Therefore, it is essential to delve into its history to understand its evolution in this context.

The ancient splendor of Persia, with its legacy in art, literature, and science, laid the groundwork for a national identity rooted in history. The influence of the Pahlavi dynasty, especially during the reign of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, brought significant changes but also sparked tensions and conflicts in society. All of this culminated in the Islamic Revolution of 1979, an event that not only spread within Iran's borders but also triggered reactions globally, redefining the political and religious sphere of the Middle East.

The revolution, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, marked an unprecedented change in Iran's history, establishing an Islamic republic that radically altered the power dynamics in the region. Since then, the country has held a central position in international affairs, actively participating in regional conflicts such as the war against Iraq, its role in internal struggles in Iraq and Afghanistan, and its involvement in nuclear negotiations. Additionally, its numerous confrontations with the United States have added further complexity to its global situation, especially following the withdrawal from the nuclear agreement in 2018.

Regarding its internal affairs, Iran's recent history has been marked by the relationship between religion and the state, where theocracy has played a dominant role in policy formulation and social life. It has also been embroiled in a dilemma between its identity as an Islamic country and its aspirations for modernization, manifested through social movements and reforms. The interaction between these two pillars has defined the course of the country's evolution in the 21st century, generating tensions between conservative and progressive visions. This tension has been reflected through events such as the electoral protests of 2009 and the presidential elections of 2013 and 2017.

In a global context of constant change, Iran continues to struggle in its quest for modernity. Amidst this instability, the feminist social uprisings of 2022 challenged the Islamic laws imposed by the Ayatollahs' regime, led by Ali Hoseini Khamenei. These recent movements reflect the desire for change and represent a challenge to authority, demonstrating the pursuit of a more just and equitable society in Iran.

1.2. IRAN IN THE MODERN ERA

This historical introduction aims to uncover the reasons, actors, and events that have transformed Iran's political and social structure in order to understand their repercussions on the Iranian people, especially concerning the role and situation of women in society.

By exploring the trajectory of this nation, we understand how history has shaped and continues to shape the Iranian social fabric. From the Persian Empire to the times of the revolution, each period has left its impact on culture, social norms, and gender roles in Iran.

The historical evolution of the country offers us a great opportunity to understand the challenges it faces today, not only regarding the situation of women but also in the political, social, and economic spheres. These challenges, along with internal

debates on human rights and freedom of expression, have created a complex scenario that influences the everyday dynamics of Iranian society.

To facilitate further reading, it is essential to identify the three main epochs that defined Iran's trajectory in the 20th century. These stages encompass the ancient monarchical regime of the Pahlavi Dynasty, the Islamic revolution that brought about a radical change in 1979, and the subsequent neoliberal revolution.

1.2.1. *The Pahlavi Dynasty (1925-1979)*

The modern history of Iran begins with a momentous event: the death of Mozafar o-Din Shah in 1906. This event occurred just days after the Shah promulgated a new constitution that limited monarchical power, established a parliamentary government, and guaranteed extensive powers of representation, opinion, press, and association.

Following him, Mohammad Ali Shah, son of Mozafar Shah, ascended to the throne in 1907. With the aim of consolidating monarchical authority, he attempted to revoke the constitution signed by his father and abolish the newly established parliamentary government. This attempt sparked significant resistance led by Reza Shah Pahlavi, who overthrew the Shah. As a consequence, Mohammad Ali Shah went into exile in Russia, and his son, approximately 11 years old, assumed governance under the tutelage of a tribal group called the Bakhtiares.

Finally, in 1921, Reza Pahlavi, with international support, especially from the British who had interests and investments in Iran due to the oil fields, managed to overthrow the monarch through a coup d'état. Subsequently, he proclaimed himself Shah of Iran, marking the beginning of what we know as the Pahlavi dynasty.

During this period, Iran embarked on a process of modernization and secularization in its policies, under the watchful eye of England and the United States. Reza Pahlavi completely reformed both the political and religious structure, imposing plans that led towards the westernization of the country. Among his most controversial reforms was the separation of religion and the state. Throughout this period, the Shah incorporated Western laws that contradicted Sharia as the primary law of Iran. Additionally, he introduced secularization and secular education plans, allowing schools and universities to be controlled by foreigners. Iran's modernization marked a step towards adopting a capitalist system. This process entailed the imposition of new economic and social structures associated with capitalism, altering pre-existing modes of production. In this context, the Iranian oil industry intensified, becoming one of the major attractions for the Western world.

In 1951, Iran witnessed a decisive event in its international relations: the nationalization of the country's oil industry led by Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq, which ended British control. This caused great dissatisfaction among the British, who allied with the United States to impose a worldwide boycott on Iranian oil. The Shah opposed nationalization and was deposed by Mossadeq's followers. Subsequently, in 1953, the CIA and the Shah's supporters carried out a coup against Mossadeq, and he was arrested. These tensions led to the formation of an opposition

composed of communist, nationalist, and religious groups that supported Mossadeq, thus challenging the monarchy's stability.

In the context of reforms, the White Revolution took place. In 1961, the Shah's government initiated a series of agrarian reforms aimed at expropriating lands from Iranian elites. As John explains in his book "The Iranian Revolution," cited in Castillo Elbaum's project (2004) (page 14), "this reform helped almost 90% of agricultural workers become landowners. Socially, the Revolution brought more rights to women and funds entered the country's educational system. The reforms were launched to try to justify the Shah's somewhat fragile government and to try to turn Iran into an economic power based on the Western model."

However, these policies brought about much corruption and jeopardized Iran's democracy. According to Juste González (2014) in his essay "IRAN: 1966-1969," this revolution was criticized as the Shah's greatest "sin." As a result of these reforms, Iran's lack of cultural and religious identity increased, generating discontent among the people, especially among the clergy, who claimed that the Shah was causing them to lose their identity as a country. Among the opposition was Khomeini, who, taking advantage of the mobilization and promoting Islamist ideals, initiated a popular uprising against the Shah. This event laid the groundwork for the country's new political direction and became the precursor to the future government led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. In early 1979, the Shah was forced into exile from Iran, thus marking the end of his long reign, and he passed away the following year.

1.2.2. *The Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the Establishment of the Islamic Republico f Khomeini (1979-1989)*

The historic revolution of 1979 proved to be an inevitable revolution that, until then, had been postponed by the violent repression unleashed by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. However, what remained uncertain was the outcome of this process: the establishment of an Islamic republic.

Following the Shah's death, Prime Minister Bakhtiar facilitated the return of Khomeini, who was in exile in Paris. Upon his return to Iran, Khomeini dismissed Bakhtiar from the government, appointing Mehdi Bazargan as prime minister instead. Finally, on February 11, 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran was declared, marking the end of the monarchy that had lasted for 25 centuries. Under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, policies reflecting Islamic principles were implemented in key areas such as culture, education, and legislation, guided by Sharia. These transformations represented a substantial break with the secular modernization pursued during the reign of the Shah, leading to the creation of a political system that merged divine sovereignty with popular will. Iran conceived itself as an anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist state, opposing capitalism and Marxism.

During the Islamic republic, clerics held the highest authority in the government, and Shiism became the official religion of Iran. Despite what was established in the constitution, which accepted popular sovereignty, Khomeini held all the power and represented the sovereignty of God's laws. Alongside him, the Guardian Council,

composed of twelve Islamic jurist members, supervised his decisions and ensured that legislation was in accordance with Islamic law. They also had the power to veto any laws deemed anti-Islamic.

As explained in Castillo Elbaum's research (2004) "Iran: Islam and Democracy," society at this time seemed to enjoy new rights that they did not have during the Shah's government, such as the ability to vote, participate in assemblies, and engage in public debate. However, could this regime truly be considered democratic? Although it is true that this new form of government exhibited democratic characteristics such as the separation of powers and the election of a president by majority vote, it was nothing more than a democracy tailored to the needs and demands of the Ayatollah.

Despite society's expectation of change after the revolution, transformation never arrived with the Islamic Republic. Instead of moving towards a more open system, the state became an ultraconservative and theocratic regime, resulting in the imposition of even more repressive laws. Women in Iran faced severe restrictions on their rights and freedoms, affecting basic aspects such as participation in public life, education, job opportunities, or attire. Undoubtedly, this new system contrasted with the hopes of openness anticipated after the end of the Shah's government, creating a much more complex scenario.

During Ayatollah Khomeini's leadership, significant events took place that jeopardized Iran's stability. In the context of the revolution, Iranian militants seized 52 hostages from the United States embassy in Tehran, initiating what is known as the Iran Hostage Crisis, which lasted until 1981. This event marked a turning point in bilateral relations between Iran and the United States, leaving an indelible mark on Iran's international perception, which was subsequently regarded as a challenging political actor.

Following the Hostage Crisis, Iran found itself immersed in a crucial episode of its modern history: the Iran-Iraq War. The conflict erupted in 1980 due to border and ideological tensions, especially regarding territorial disputes over control of the Shatt Al Arab River. With the arrival of Ayatollah Khomeini and the establishment of the Islamic Republic, rivalry intensified between Iran, now under an Islamic regime, and Iraq's secular government. Despite Iraq's attempts to seek a peace agreement, the Ayatollah's hostility towards Saddam Hussein and the economic crisis propelled the continuation of the conflict until 1988 when a ceasefire proposed by the UN was accepted. The conflict resulted in enormous loss of life and severely affected Iran, which suffered shortages and rationing due to the budget invested in the war and the interruption of oil production.

1.2.3. Late 20th Century XX and Present Day (1989-present)

After the death of Ayatollah Khomeini until the mid-1990s, Iran underwent an economic and political transition. With the arrival of Ali Khamenei, the Islamic Republic experienced internal divisions into factions and parties, creating numerous institutions. Although the new constitutional system appeared to be stable, Khamenei and Rafsanjani, who was appointed as President, struggled daily to ensure the satisfaction of the citizens, exhausted after years of war and scarcity. The presidency of

Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, with the support of Khamenei, involved the liberalization of the economy and Iran's economic opening to the outside world. However, internal resistances and corrupt practices of the leaders hindered the process. Privatization initiatives and economic reforms sparked social unrest and protests. The parliamentary elections of 1992 witnessed the corruption and repression suffered by the country, as numerous candidacies were annulled, limiting the participation of "Islamic left" parties. Despite censorship and repression, revolutionary movements began to emerge within the population, manifested in debates about human rights and democratic freedoms. Ultimately, despite the generated discontent, Rafsanjani was reelected in 1993 (Salamanca Rodríguez, 2016).

Regarding relations with the United States, tensions were still evident. Following the 9/11 attacks, the United States accused Iran of supporting terrorism by providing assistance to the Lebanese group Hezbollah and Hamas in Palestine. Although Iran consistently maintained its innocence, President Bush included Iran, along with Iraq and North Korea, in the so-called "axis of evil." The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 prompted Iran to develop its nuclear program, further intensifying the conflict.

Finally, after years of sanctions and negotiations, the agreement known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was reached in 2015, limiting Iran's nuclear program. This event allowed Iran to improve its international image, and tensions began to ease between the two countries. However, with the arrival of Trump, the JCPOA agreement was withdrawn, and in response, Iran announced that it would resume uranium enrichment for nuclear purposes. Currently, with Joe Biden's presidency, tensions seem to be calming again (El Orden Mundial, 2021).

In 2021, Ebrahim Raisi assumed the presidency of Iran after being declared the winner of the elections. His political trajectory, marked by conservative positions, has raised concerns in Iranian society. Raisi's election raises questions about the potential increase in social control activities, as well as greater restrictions on the freedoms and rights of women. In this context, uncertainty about Iran's intentions in the nuclear sphere has once again jeopardized diplomatic relations, presenting challenges for regional stability in the years to come.

II.   HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF WOMEN IN IRAN

This chapter aims to analyze the historical trajectory of women in Iran, with the purpose of understanding past events that have led to the current situation. By delving into this, we can elucidate the socio-cultural elements that have allowed the inequality faced by Iranian women today.

Iran has undergone numerous social transformations over the years, and the position of women has been a clear reflection of these changes. Throughout this section, we will take a historical journey from the authoritarian regime of Reza Pahlavi to the present day, highlighting the significance of the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the subsequent restrictions of the Islamic Republic.

We will delve into internal factors, where the conservative interpretation of Sharia and entrenched cultural norms have left an indelible mark on women's

experiences. Additionally, we will explore external influences, such as international pressure, international agreements, and the diaspora, which have exerted their impact on the pursuit of gender equality.

This research not only aims to understand the past but also to clarify the factors that have influenced and continue to influence the reality of Iranian women. Through this, we will provide insight into the true challenges in the fight for women's rights, serving as a catalyst for future change initiatives.

2.1.   HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN IRAN

The Pahlavi dynasty, led initially by Reza Pahlavi (1921-1941) and later by his son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (1941-1979), initiated a modernization process that brought both positive and negative aspects to the gender dynamics of Iranian society. During their leadership, they implemented a series of measures that met resistance from a significant portion of the population, including the female sector, which was beginning to assert itself against injustices.

Reza Pahlavi's reforms aimed at Westernizing Iran, changing its social and cultural structure by empowering the bureaucracy and diminishing the authority of the ayatollahs. The drive for modernization led to reforms that purported to address women's welfare, presenting Iran as an advanced country to the West and neighboring nations. Among these reforms was the adoption of Western attire and the subsequent prohibition of the veil in 1936, which caused more problems than benefits. However, this was merely a facade for external representation, as women's true needs, such as the right to vote, remained unmet.

Other measures implemented included providing free and accessible education for women, establishing a legal age for marriage, and requiring marriage registration. However, laws regarding polygamy, honor killings for adultery, and custody favoring fathers in divorce remained unchanged. Additionally, the economic measures introduced by the Shah also had some positive consequences, such as the formation of a working class that allowed women to enter the workforce, albeit under unfavorable conditions.

With the ascension of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, decisions were made according to the interests of Great Britain, which influenced the freedoms and rights of the people. Nevertheless, it is essential to highlight the measures adopted during the White Revolution in 1963, which granted women the right to vote and established brigades of educators and health workers to combat illiteracy.

In response, the ayatollahs opposed these measures, especially those related to promoting women's rights and agrarian reform. Khomeini considered Westernized women to be carriers of all Western diseases, consumers of capitalist and imperialist goods, corrupted by Western culture, undermining moral order and the preservation of Islamic tradition. Moreover, he argued that allowing women to expose their faces and bodies, as well as participate in public spaces with men, betrayed Islamic society's values and encouraged immoral and promiscuous behavior.

The failed White Revolution caused discontent among much of the Iranian population, leading to protests and ultimately the Shah's overthrow. In this revolutionary context, women played an active role, marking a turning point in the history of gender issues in Iran. Women's participation in demonstrations not only reflected the pursuit of rights but also raised awareness of their capabilities and the possibility of accessing and integrating into the socio-political sphere. This participation became a watershed moment, establishing the Islamic Revolution of 1979 as the beginning of the feminist movement in Iran.

The Islamic Republic, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, brought about new authoritarian measures that broke away from anything related to the West. The results of the revolution were far from what the Iranian people had hoped for, leading to an Islamization and theocratization of laws. Although revolutionary groups, including women, demanded purely social changes, these demands eventually turned into even more repressive measures.

In this context, the French film "Persepolis" (2007) provides a clear narrative of a young woman's life after the Iranian revolution. In this story, we see how the protagonist, who attended a secular, mixed-gender school, is forced to transfer to an all-girls Muslim school due to the closure of her previous school by the new regime. Additionally, the use of the hijab was reintroduced, and girls were compelled to wear a veil covering all their hair to differentiate themselves from Western women. Furthermore, we witness the complete exclusion of women from public freedoms, denying them the right to divorce and punishing those who had relations with men outside of marriage. Along with other restrictions, makeup was banned, and the opportunity to listen to music or dance was limited. Reality intruded into everyday life, and women were insulted and assaulted in the streets by men. Ultimately, women became objects of ridicule and sexualization.

However, despite the repression, women continued to pursue a common goal: to end the patriarchal order and establish gender equality. Following the war with Iraq, the early 1990s in Iran saw a shift in women's mentality, with more women taking to the streets demanding social justice. In recent years, feminist movements have brought about significant changes both nationally and regionally, challenging the norms imposed by Islamic leaders. Today, the legacy of these women continues to inspire new generations to defy barriers and raise their voices against inequality.

TABLE 1 Transformation of Women's Rights in Iran

HISTORICAL STAGE	TRANSFORMATION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN IRAN
PAHLAVI DYNASTY (1925-1979)	- Adoption of Western clothing - Prohibition of the veil in 1936 - Secular, free and accesible education for women - Establishment of legal age for marriage - Obligation to register marriage in ciil registry - Incorporation of women into the workforce - Authorization of wome's suffrage in 1963
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC (1979-1989)	- Mandatory use of hijab or Islamic veil - Muslim education - Prohibition of the right to divorce and penalizarion for adultery. - Prohibition of the use of makeup and Western clothing - Prohibition of listening to music or dancing - Authorization of polygamy - Prohibition by the husband of the wife's employment
LATE 20th CENTURY AND CURRENT TIMES (1989-present)	- Mandatory use of hijab or Islamic veil - Educational and employment restrictions - Access to higher and secondary education - Persistence of prohibition of Western clothing and makeup - Need for male authorization for travel, marriage, and employment access

Source: Own elaboration

2.2.   SOCIOCULTURAL AND POLITICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CURRENT SITUATION

In the Iranian context, the situation of women is deeply influenced by an intersection of sociocultural and political factors that have shaped the country's history. In order to provide an enlightening insight into the elements that have shaped the current reality of women in Iran, we will focus the analysis on two key aspects: internal and external factors.

Internally, we will examine the deeply rooted cultural norms in Iranian society through interpretations of Islamic religion, as established in the Quran and Sharia. Similarly, we will explore the impact of the Iranian political system and its regulations, including Family Law. Finally, we will address educational and employment conditions as determinants of women's roles in society.

Externally, we will investigate the impact of international pressure, considering the effects of economic sanctions, global political agendas, and treaties and agreements related to women. Additionally, we will analyze transnational feminist movements that have influenced the advocacy for women's rights in Iran.

2.2.1 Internal or local factors:

Fundamentals of Islam: The Quran and Sharia

Iran, as a Muslim country, has a different legal structure because religion governs its legal system. Therefore, it is advisable to analyze the pillars of Islamic law, represented by Islam, the Quran, and Sharia, in order to understand the application of women's rights in Muslim countries, especially in Iran.

The Quran

The Quran is the sacred book of Islam, considered by Muslims as the revealed word of God to the prophet Muhammad. It is conceived as a spiritual guide and addresses various aspects of life, ethics, and Islamic law (Sharia).

Despite having been subject to numerous interpretations throughout history, the sacred book does not mention any kind of discrimination against women. It expresses spiritual equality between both sexes and recognizes the dignity of women.

As Guillén Campoverde (2016) explains in his research "Cultural Rights vs Human Rights: Women as Victims of Cultural Relativism," the Quran recognizes women a series of rights that encompass different spheres:

- In terms of civil rights, aspects such as freedom of worship, the right to divorce in case of abuse, or the right to choose their future husband are included.

- In the field of social rights, the right to education, work, and active participation in public life are recognized.

- Regarding the political sphere, the right to vote and the possibility of accessing political or military positions are contemplated.

- In terms of economic rights, it expresses women's economic independence from men and total control over their income and commercial relationships.

According to Terrón-Caro (2002), citing Paulina López, although Islam does not discriminate against women, their exclusion from power is due to interpretations of sacred texts and their interests. Throughout the history of Islam as a religion, many women have participated in political life, yet none of them are portrayed in the books. However, with the arrival of Muhammad, the situation improved, and women were given a social identity, equating them with men in terms of salvation.

Sharia

Sharia, or Islamic Law, is conceived as the legal and ethical system derived from the precepts of the Quran and the Sunnah. It is the body of Islamic Law and establishes the standards of conduct that men and women must adhere to in society. It contemplates aspects of both religious life and family life.

While it is true that the Quran establishes equality between men and women, it qualifies men as "protectors and providers of women" and expresses that "righteous women are devoutly obedient and guard in the husband's absence what Allah orders them to guard." In these words, we can observe the legitimization of direct control over women, who have been placed in a subordinate hierarchy under the power of men (Guillén Campoverde, 2016).

Unlike the Quran, Sharia is interpreted differently from country to country. Each country applies it uniquely, according to its culture and political regime, resulting in more or less extreme interpretations. In nations like Saudi Arabia, Sharia is established as absolute law, leading to restrictions on the rights of excluded groups such as women or homosexuals. In contrast, in areas like Turkey, Sharia is merely a source of inspiration.

In the Iranian context, the interpretation of Sharia is similar to that of Saudi Arabia, resulting in legislation of a radical nature. Laws discriminating against women have been enacted, dictating regulations regarding clothing and the obligatory use of the veil, limiting participation in certain sports, prohibiting driving, or hindering access to certain jobs. Likewise, norms related to marriage, divorce, or child custody have also been subject to criticism.

The Iranian political system and Family Law

The Islamic Republic of Iran was founded after the 1979 revolution and constitutes a political system divided into the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. It is characterized by following the Shiite branch of Islam, where the Supreme Leader, known as Rahbar, plays the central role embodying political and religious power. Shiism exerts a significant influence on the political sphere through the interpretation of Sharia law and the participation of clerics in decision-making.

Additionally, there are institutions tasked with ensuring the compliance with Islamic principles, such as the Guardian Council and the Assembly of Experts.

Regarding its structure, it is composed of elective and non-elective bodies, both subordinate to the Leader or head of state. The non-elective bodies hold greater authority and have been predominantly occupied by the more conservative factions, which advocate for a society rooted in cultural and religious norms.

The Iranian state is configured as a patriarchal structure that perpetuates the subordination of women through legal instruments such as the 1979 Constitution, the Civil Code, and the Family Law; or institutions such as the Guardian Council, which holds legislative power. This results in various forms of discrimination in the daily lives of women, who are under the guardianship of male family members and require permission to work or travel abroad. Despite the historical struggle of Iranian women for their rights and freedoms, gender inequality remains present in all institutions, laws, and administrative measures, posing an obstacle to change (Gutiérrez Luna & Fuentes Arzate, 2021).

After the revolution, religious leaders turned women into symbols of virtue and honor as wives, mothers, and representatives of national chastity, thus enacting laws that represented the "traditional family" in contrast to the West. In this context, the Family Law was implemented, which Mehrangiz Kar and Golriz Far-shi (2008) summarize in the following points:

- "The minimum age for marriage is 15 years for women, while for men, it increases to 18 years.
- In the case of murder, the blood money for a woman is half that of the money corresponding to a man.
- In most cases, a woman's testimony is not valid in a court of law.
- A woman cannot leave the country without the approval of her husband.
- A woman is legally obligated to be obedient to her husband.
- A man can take more than one wife, even without the consent of the first spouse.
- A man can prohibit his wife from employment.
- A man has the unequivocal right to divorce."

(Gutiérrez Luna & Fuentes Arzate, 2021).

Educational and labor conditions

In Iranian society, education for women is considered a means of freedom and a fundamental social value. Thanks to the literacy program for women initiated by Khomeini in the 1980s, women in Iran have significantly expanded their presence in schools and universities. According to data from the World Bank (2022), the literacy rate in Iran continues to increase, reaching over 85% for women today.

This remarkable improvement in the educational field has also had a significant impact on the labor market in Iran, allowing women to occupy more positions in both the public and private sectors. However, according to data extracted by the International

Labour Organization in the past year 2022, the female labor force participation rate in Iran is 18.3%, making it one of the lowest globally.

Although it is evident that Iran faces a serious unemployment crisis at a general level, women are the most affected. This is partly due to government-imposed laws that enforce segregation in workplaces and require the consent of guardians or husbands for employed women. Often, to avoid these costs and procedures, employers choose to hire more men, thus contributing to greater inequality.

Overall, according to the 2023 Global Gender Gap Index, Iran has a percentage of 57.5% and ranks number 143 out of 155 countries regarding economic and political gender inequality, educational opportunities, and life expectancy. This ranking reflects the need to address and remedy the disparities between men and women in Iran, which continue to increase year after year (Datosmacro, 2023).

2.3.2. External factors: international agreements, feminisms in other countries, international pressure…

The impact of economic sanctions

The economic sanctions imposed on Iran by foreign powers have become a crucial issue in global diplomatic negotiations. Since 1979 with the hostage crisis, and later with the nuclear program issue in 2005, U.S. sanctions against Iran have had a significant impact on various aspects.

Economically, they have limited the country's participation in global markets, resulting in an economic recession, currency devaluation, reduced oil exports, and a consequent increase in unemployment and inflation. Moreover, these restrictions have also affected other areas such as access to essential goods and services, including medical equipment and medications.

However, following the U.S. decision to withdraw from the JCPOA in 2015, the sanctions became even harsher and influenced aspects such as maritime transportation, energy, or financial sectors. As a consequence, the lives of the young population and especially women have been limited in terms of employment and education. Additionally, the economic dependency situation has led to a return of women to environments of domestic violence (Gutiérrez Luna & Fuentes Arzate, 2021).

On the other hand, Iranian feminism has also faced challenges due to the new security strategies implemented by the government. The international blockade has provided conservative factions with the opportunity to strengthen their anti-imperialism and consolidate their influence in the highest authorities of the Republic. As a result, the most conservative sectors promote new campaigns regarding women's dress and behavior in public places.

The international agenda regarding women: Conventions

In recent decades, the international community has made significant advances in the field of rights and equality, supported by various international instruments such as treaties, protocols, and conventions. With the aim of protecting the most vulnerable groups, a series of agencies were established to safeguard the rights of women, migrant workers, children, and persons with disabilities.

Next, we will analyze those instruments that have shaped the international regime of women's rights. With the establishment of the United Nations in 1945, the first international body concerning women's issues emerged, the Commission on the Status of Women, in 1946. Currently, the Commission continues to perform its functions as a body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), responsible for implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995, as well as addressing emerging issues affecting gender equality and women's rights worldwide. On the other hand, UN Women, created in 2010, is the United Nations entity dedicated to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment by supporting Member States in the development of international norms (UN Women, n.d.).

Internationally, there is an institutional framework composed of various conventions and treaties that have been designed to ensure the fulfillment of women's rights. Firstly, to achieve gender equality, the consecration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 was necessary because without it there would be no premise of equality for all, without distinction of sex, language, or religion. After that, conventions dealing with more specific issues followed, such as the Convention on the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others in 1949, the convention recognizing women's political rights in 1952, the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women in 1957, or the Convention against Discrimination in 1963, among other instruments (Guillén Campoverde, 2016).

However, it was not until years later that the fundamental pillar on which the agencies operate on the issue of women was consolidated: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979. It is the international charter of women's rights and has a binding character for the Member States that ratify it. Specifically, the Convention establishes the obligation of the Member States to reject any type of discrimination against women, requiring them to recognize rights equivalent to those of men in all areas and to adopt specific measures to ensure the effective exercise of these rights (OHCHR, n.d.).

In this context, many States refuse to ratify the convention or do so with reservations, i.e., modifying the legal effects of certain clauses. In this way, there is a lack of consensus in the community on the limits of discrimination and the concept of equality. Iran, for its part, decided to join CEDAW in 2001, however, it never became part of it. In 2003, the Guardian Council refused to ratify the proposal to accede to the convention because it considered it incompatible with its internal laws contained in the Constitution and civil and penal codes (Amnesty International, 2003).

Iranian experts argued that CEDAW was an attempt by the West to globalize its culture and that Western standards of human rights and women's rights cannot be implemented by the Islamic world. Some of the issues in which contradictions are found

include inheritances, polygamy, clothing, and the issue of marriage and divorce. Despite several attempts by some politicians, Iran is not currently part of CEDAW and, therefore, has been left out of the international commitment to promoting gender equality (NCRI Women Committee, 2016).

Finally, in December 2022, Iran was expelled from the UN Commission on the Status of Women in response to the repression exercised in the riots triggered by the death of the young Mahsa Amini. In September 2022, the young woman was detained by the Moral Police for not wearing the veil properly and subsequently subjected to a series of tortures that caused her death. This event triggered a wave of demonstrations throughout the country, especially by women, who took the opportunity to demand their rights. In response, Iranian authorities initiated a crackdown through torture, death sentences, and sexual violence, leading to the deaths of more than 500 people.

According to the organization Human Rights Watch (HRW), Iran's expulsion from the Commission is a step for Iran to be held accountable for its long history of discrimination and cruelty against women and girls. The international community has called on the Iranian government to cease the campaign of violence against demonstrations, and the UN has created an independent mission to investigate the repression (RTVE, 2022).

Transnational feminist movements

The strategies of various feminist movements globally are one of the international factors that have influenced the situation of women in Iran. Through transnational solidarity, women have been able to create networks of sisterhood to give visibility to their experiences. Throughout history, women in Iran have been involved in various movements seeking improvement in their rights, especially in the legislative, political, and democratic spheres, leading to significant changes. Currently, women play an essential role in driving a civil society where women lead and collaborate in independent organizations. As a result of these initiatives, numerous nations have been influenced and have joined demonstrations seeking improvements in the condition of women in their respective countries, thus generating a new network of women committed to freedom (Gutiérrez Luna & Fuentes Arzate, 2021).

In the following chapter, we will explore Iranian feminism, analyzing in more detail the women's movement in Iran, considering especially its prominent leaders and organizations, as well as its influence both regionally and internationally. Additionally, we will evaluate how collective action has impacted Iranian society, leaving its mark on its political and cultural dynamics.

III.   FEMINISM AND COLLECTIVE ACTION IN IRAN

Exploring feminism and collective action in Iran, we delve into a scenario where women have emerged as agents of change in the pursuit of gender equality and the defense of their rights in a complex sociopolitical environment. In recent decades, women have faced numerous restrictions imposed by social laws derived from interpretations of Sharia. Despite this, feminism in Iran has gained strength over the

years, thanks to the activism of courageous women advocating for social and legal change.

At this point, it is crucial to address the concept of Islamic feminism. Badran (2010) defines it as a "feminist discourse and practice that derives its understanding and mandate from the Quran, seeking rights and justice within the framework of equality between women and men in their entirety as an integral part of the Quranic notion of human equality." In other words, Islamic feminism seeks to advance an equitable and socially just Islam by exposing patriarchal thought, with the aim of achieving an egalitarian and pluralistic Islamic community.

According to Shirin Ebadi, Islamic feminism is a completely erroneous concept. She argues that it is possible to be feminist and Muslim by following an appropriate interpretation of Islam, but feminism itself is nothing more than a universal term unrelated to religion.

In this context, many women dissociate feminism from religion with the goal of destigmatizing Islam. According to Ebadi, the goal is to demonstrate to the world that Islamic religion is compatible with modernity and respects human rights, despite those who try to tarnish its reputation (BBC News Mundo, 2018).

In contrast, Mir-Hosseini argues in favor of using this term due to the diversity of forms of feminism that exist, each rooted in a different context. She also emphasizes the need to define both "feminism" and "Islamic," as each of them takes on meaning according to the political, social, and economic environment. Therefore, the concept of "Islamic feminism" generates controversy as it evokes the most extremist image of political Islam in recent years.

How can equality rooted in the precepts of Islam thrive? Is it possible to reconcile the cultural and religious interpretations that have shaped gender dynamics in predominantly Muslim societies?

As expressed, Muslim feminists believe that it is possible through a progressive reinterpretation of their teachings. They argue that historically, conservative interpretations have perpetuated the discrimination of women in Muslim societies, but through a more inclusive and updated understanding, Islam promotes equity and justice for all human beings, regardless of gender.

These questions lead to an interesting debate about a feminism that challenges conventions and laws imposed by the government, committing to the task of strengthening and reinterpreting women's rights. Throughout this chapter, we will explore the challenges and achievements of the Iranian feminist movement. We will focus on analyzing its roots and evolution, highlighting the personalities and organizations that make up the movement, as well as the impact that collective action has had on the society and politics of the country.

3.1 EMERGENCE OF THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT IN IRAN

The 1979 Revolution marked a starting point for women's movements in Iran. In response to restrictions, women gained visibility in the socio-political scene and began to play more prominent roles in public spaces. This transformation led to governmental repression, pushing some of the female population to radicalize in favor of the Hezbollah movement, integrating into the state to access politics.

The active participation of women in the revolution was so remarkable that it even garnered the support of Khomeini, who had opposed women's suffrage in 1963. Additionally, the writings of the Imam emphasized the importance of women having political rights. Globally, these demands were present in revolutions such as the Bolshevik Revolution or Kemalism in Turkey (Ribas Ferrer, 2016-2017).

After the revolution, a model of womanhood was imposed, representing Islamic morality and rejecting Westernization through the regulation of women's dress and behavior. Although many women did not share this perspective, they decided to tolerate the situation to secure government backing. This strategy influenced a change in Khomeini's discourse regarding women, as the new female ideal now respected Islamic moral boundaries in terms of dress and gender relations. The situation turned out to be favorable for women, as it made access to secondary and higher education possible, facilitating the literacy of a large part of the population (Suárez, 2013).

Due to the conflict against Iraq and the subsequent economic crisis, authorities were forced to recruit women to enter the labor market, occupying important positions in sectors such as health or education. The integration of women into the workforce contributed to the creation of women's associations, both political and cultural, allowing for a greater female presence in the public sphere and creating a conducive environment for the formation of feminist movements (Suárez, 2013).

Regarding the sociological profile of the women involved in the movement, they were young women from urban circles representing a break from traditional gender relations. Most of them had professional training and a defined goal: to transform the legal system and raise awareness among the population through social and cultural campaigns. To achieve their purpose, they created feminist press. Through publications in newspapers or magazines, they sought to gain the understanding of society and publicly advocated for their rights. In this context, it is worth mentioning the publication of the newspaper Zan in 1998, led by Deputy Faizeh Hashemi and allied with reformist currents. Another prominent magazine was Zanany, which continues to this day and includes women from various circles who, despite their ideological differences, share the same feminist cause (Suárez, 2013).

As mentioned, the feminist movement was not homogeneous. According to Ribas Ferrer (2016-2017), there were up to three categories among the women who participated in the revolution: traditionalist Islamists, modernist Islamists, and secular modernists. As a symbol of solidarity among different sectors, the author highlights that secular modernists wore the veil (hijab) during the revolution, even though their ideals did not align with the regime, in order to support their fellow women.

In this situation, we face a clear division within Iranian feminism. On the one hand, secular women argue that human rights are the basis of their struggle, while Islamists reference Islam. However, despite the differences, both groups seek to combat the patriarchal societal system in which they find themselves.

3.2 FIGURES AND MOVEMENTS HIGHLIGHTED IN IRANIAN FEMINISM

In the dynamic context of Iranian feminism, it is the women themselves who have paved the way for gender equality by challenging social and political structures. From women activists to pioneering organizations and movements in the region, they have led the fight for the transformation of Iranian society. In this section, some of the most influential figures and significant movements that have shaped the history of Iranian feminism will be discussed.

Firstly, it is important to highlight the progress made in politics. Despite the limitations of the regime and gender disparities, Iranian women's participation in politics has always been very active. However, their presence in decision-making bodies remains limited and poses a significant challenge. In this regard, Velasco de Castro (2012) mentions the leadership of women such as Massoumeh Ebtekar, Azam Talegahani, and Zahra Rahnavard.

Massoumeh Ebtekar, recognized as one of Iran's most important politicians after the Revolution, became the first woman to hold a vice presidency position in the government, specifically as the head of Women and Family Affairs during the tenure of reformist President Muhammad Khatami. She also served in Parliament and led the Environmental Department until 2005. Her activism dates back many years, as she was the spokeswoman for students during the occupation and hostage-taking at the US embassy in 1979. Despite being considered conservative, Ebtekar has advocated for women's right to hold public office, under the condition of obtaining their husband's consent to leave the home.

On the other hand, Azam Taleghani, the daughter of Ayatollah Mahmud Taleghani and linked to the reformist stance through her feminist activism, was a member of the first parliament after the Revolution and headed the Islamic Women's Institute. Her work as a journalist has been notable in advocating for women's rights, arguing that Islam is not the problem, but rather its biased interpretation. Despite her efforts, her attempts to run for president were rejected in the 1997, 2005, 2009, and 2017 elections (the latter attempt at the age of 74), demonstrating the resistance of power structures to female inclusion in politics.

Lastly, Zahra Rahnavard is worth mentioning, a prominent figure in Iranian politics who challenged established laws. Her extensive political experience positioned her as a significant force in the 2009 election campaign, where she began to gain popular support. Although she faced criticism from conservative sectors, her advocacy discourse in defense of women's rights mobilized a large number of voters. Today, Zahra is recognized as one of Iran's most important female intellectuals and activists, continuing her fight for reforms against corruption, youth unemployment, and the lack of individual and collective freedoms.

Despite the significant social and political progress made by women in Iran, forms of discrimination persist, both vertically and horizontally. Vertical discrimination refers to barriers that limit women's ascent to positions of authority in the government, while horizontal discrimination is evident in the allocation of responsibilities, which, although relevant to the social sphere, lack the necessary authority to influence the country's political decisions. In this context, although these women are great examples of overcoming obstacles in Iran, they still play roles as community activists, with the potential to access more relevant positions where their voices could have a deeper impact on society.

Continuing on the theme of the previous section, it is essential to highlight the importance of feminist press in activism for women's rights. Feminist press emerged as a tool used by young women to challenge gender dynamics and provoke changes in the legal and social system. As previously mentioned, among the most outstanding publications are the newspaper Zan and the magazine Zanan, along with digital magazines like Zanestan (Velasco de Castro, 2012).

Faezeh Hachemi Rafsanjani was a prominent activist in Iran, recognized for her role as the founder and director of the newspaper Zan. This newspaper challenged established cultural and political norms by denouncing the corruption suffered by women due to inequality. In this way, it became one of the most read newspapers in the country, thus provoking government censorship in 1999, a year after its creation.

On the other hand, Parvin Ardalan founded the Women's House along with Khorasani, a center that examined and debated women's issues in Iran. Ardalan sought to change societal attitudes towards women's rights, promoting a series of workshops, discussions, and political campaigns. Through this organization, she also published the first digital magazine on women's rights, Zanestan, following the closure of Zan. Under censorship and persecution, it became a space that addressed taboo topics such as discrimination, marriage, AIDS, or prostitution, following the legacy of its printed predecessor, Zanan. Finally, by court order, both were closed in 2007, and Ardalan was arrested for violating Islamic penal code (Velasco de Castro, 2012).

During the years of the foundation's activism, Ardalan and Khorasani launched the One Million Signatures Campaign in 2006 with the aim of collecting public support to pressure for legal changes in the Iranian parliament. According to Sheida Besozzi (2010), it included the following requirements: gender equality in marriage and divorce, the abolition of polygamy and temporary marriage, raising the age for judging both men and women to 18 years, allowing women to transfer their Iranian nationality to their children, equal compensation rights in inheritance, reforming laws that decrease punishment for honor crimes, and equalizing women's testimony in courts.

Campaign activists faced obstacles such as the closure of the website and the imprisonment of some members, but today they continue their struggle on the streets. Despite not achieving the initial goal of collecting one million signatures, the campaign sparked important dialogue on gender equality in Iran (Besozzi, n.d.).

Following the success of this campaign, numerous movements on social media in support of the freedom of Iranian women emerged. In 2014, journalist Masih Alinejad created My Stealthy Freedom, a Facebook page that served as a space for

women to feel free from wearing the hijab. Women shared photos and videos of themselves without the veil, challenging government restrictions. This virtual movement became a symbol of resistance and empowerment, inspiring cultural change in society (Harper's Bazaar, 2017).

To prevent the initiative from being forgotten, in 2016 Alinejad invited Iranian men to show solidarity with women by wearing the hijab through the hashtag #MenInHijab. These photographs demonstrated that the fight for equality is not exclusively women's and men could be part of the process. A year later, in 2017, the Iranian journalist once again called for a peaceful protest movement called White Wednesdays. The movement involved women taking to the streets dressed in white or with a white scarf as a symbol of resistance against the imposition of the hijab. Unlike the images shared in My Stealthy Freedom clandestinely, thanks to the White Wednesdays initiative, women had the opportunity to openly express their protest in the streets.

Following the tragic death of Mahsa Amini in September 2022, it is worth highlighting the Jin, Jan, Azadi (Woman, Life, Freedom) campaign that emerged as a protest against police repression. The death and detention of the young woman triggered a national uprising against the authorities, turning Tehran into the epicenter of an unprecedented women's revolution. The streets were filled with women willing to defy the system, burning their veils, and cutting their hair as acts of bravery to reclaim their rights. However, the regime's response was immediate, and the protests were violently suppressed through torture and death sentences.

This event caused significant international outcry, mobilizing thousands of people who joined in solidarity with women in Iran. In a gesture of support, many women from around the world shared videos on social media cutting their hair as a show of support for the Iranian protests.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the figure of activist Narges Mohammadi, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in October 2023 for her tireless struggle in defense of human rights and the oppression of women in Iran. This recognition made her the second Iranian woman to receive this award, following in the footsteps of Shirin Ebadi in 2003. The award ceremony took place after a year marked by feminist demonstrations following the death of Mahsa Amini, highlighting the movement's influence worldwide. The Nobel committee decided to honor Mohammadi's legacy, who for years has been a courageous voice speaking out against abuses in her country. However, the activist could not attend the ceremony and receive the prize because she was serving a prison sentence as a result of her activism (BBC News Mundo, 2023).

IV. THE ROLE OF COLLECTIVE ACTION IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS: THE CASE OF MAHSA AMINI

The death of Masha Amini on September 16, 2022, sparked a wave of protests in Tehran, where women, men, and children rebelled to demand their rights. Amini, of Kurdish origin, was arrested by the Moral Police on September 13 for allegedly violating laws regarding the wearing of the veil. Two days later, the young woman died as a result of the beatings inflicted by the authorities.

Her case became a turning point that exposed the entrenched oppression against women in Iran. It generated deep discontent among the population, which had been suffering systematic discrimination and lack of freedoms under the theocratic regime for years. The protests quickly gained momentum and found a powerful echo on social media, where thousands of people could openly express their outrage.

However, in a country where voices are suppressed, the mobilizations lost strength over time, subdued by strong repression exerted by the Iranian government. The authorities' response manifested in extreme brutality, including shootings, tear gas, beatings, torture, sexual violence, and imposition of the death penalty. During this wave of repression, more than 500 people lost their lives and up to 22,000 were detained. Many of them were victims of torture, forced disappearances, or unfair trials, while others were executed (Amnesty International, 2022).

During this final chapter, the investigation will delve into the responses of different international actors in the case of Mahsa Amini. The actions and statements of Western countries will be examined, reflected in the tightening of international sanctions, as well as the reactions in Muslim countries and their relevance in the regional landscape. Finally, the impact of the event in Iran, both politically and socially, and the consequent government policies will be analyzed. Through this analysis, an even more detailed insight into the geopolitical dynamics and international relations surrounding this important event will be provided.

4.1. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES: IMPACT AND REACTION IN WESTERN COUNTRIES

In response to the scale of repression, international solidarity has expressed support for the demands for change in Iran following the case of Mahsa Amini, who became a global symbol of the struggle for justice in the country. The protests were not confined to Iranian borders but transcended worldwide, garnering significant media attention that underscored the urgency of addressing the situation of oppression.

The call for change reverberated through political speeches, newspaper headlines, and artistic campaigns, extending even to social media through the "Woman, Life, and Freedom" campaign mentioned in the previous chapter. Additionally, international politicians with significant influence on the geopolitical stage raised their voices to denounce human rights violations in Iran.

In the West, specifically European and American authorities, backed the demonstrations and condemned the repression by the Iranian regime. The United States has sanctioned numerous individuals and entities for their active role in the repression, including Iran's attorney general, several military officials, and five senior Iranian officials and commanders of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of Iran, accused of violating human rights during the protests in the country.

On the anniversary of Mahsa Amini's death, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken confirmed that sanctions would target 25 Iranian citizens, three government-backed media outlets, and an internet research company, as well as prison officials for abuses in the country's prisons. Additionally, Iran's state-run English-language channel, Press TV, was condemned for allowing Iranian intelligence services to recruit assets, including American citizens.

The United Kingdom, the European Union, Canada, and Australia have collaborated in imposing punitive measures against over a dozen government officials, businessmen, companies, and Iranian institutions for their involvement in abuses against women and girls. Furthermore, entry to the country was banned for those responsible for the detention or killing of peaceful protesters, accused of limiting rights to freedom of expression and assembly (EFE Agency, 2023).

On the other hand, the EU has also called for a thorough investigation of the case. Raha Bahreini, a lawyer for Amnesty International, regrets that the measures taken against those responsible are not sufficient given the severity of the crimes committed. She also notes that it is a complicated situation, as Iran's judiciary is not independent, and those responsible are rarely brought to justice. Therefore, she urges the international community to go beyond sanctions and ineffective statements, demanding even more decisive actions. Other European partners, such as Spain, Germany, France, Italy, Denmark, and the Czech Republic, have joined the initiative against the Iranian regime, showing solidarity with the cause (Euronews, 2022).

On October 6, 2022, the European Parliament adopted the Resolution on the death of Mahsa Jina Amini and the repression of protesters defending women's rights in Iran in Strasbourg. Taking into account reports issued by the EU and the UN on the human rights situation in Iran and considering the events that have occurred, the European Parliament outlined a series of measures against the country. Among those included in the Resolution, summarized as follows:

Condemnation of the death of Mahsa Jina Amini and expression of condolences to her family and Friends.
Petition to the Iranian government to allow an impartial investigation into the death of Mahsa Jina Amini and allegations of torture and ill-treatment.
Expression of solidarity with the protesters, especially women, and support for the peaceful protest movement in Iran.
Condemnation of the use of force by Iranian authorities against peaceful protesters and a call to end the violence.

Demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees exercising their right to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly.
Condemnation of discrimination against women in Iran and a call for the repeal of laws imposing mandatory veil-wearing.
Rejection of the practice of blocking access to the internet and mobile networks during protests in the country.
Regret over the use of torture in Iranian prisons and condemnation of the increasing use of the death penalty by authorities in recent years.
Call on the EU and its member states to use their engagements with Iranian authorities and demand an end to repression and the release of detainees.
Request to the United Nations to initiate a thorough investigation of the events and establish an accountability mechanism.
Call for coordination among EU embassies in Tehran to protect human rights defenders.
Proposal for the Commission to study the possibility of allowing EU communication providers to offer tools to Iran to exercise their human rights online.

In response to the mentioned coercive measures, the spokesperson for the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Naser Kananí, expressed discontent with the West for interfering in their internal affairs and requested the cessation of sanctions imposed against the country.

Furthermore, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi stated in an interview with NBC News that the unrest following Masha Amini's death was exploited by the West to escalate the war against Iran. In response to the accusations, the Iranian government emphasizes respect for the freedom of assembly within established legal frameworks and calls for a distinction to be made between peaceful protesters and those who resorted to violence (Al Mayadeen, 2023).

4.2. CULTURAL CONTEXT: IMPACT AND RESPONSE IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES

The impact of the protests over Masha Amini's death has transcended the country's borders, resonating notably among women in different Muslim regions. In a phenomenon reminiscent of the days of the Arab Spring, tens of thousands of women across the Arab world have mobilized to express their support for Iranian revolutionaries. This act of solidarity, marked by the chant "Jin, Jiyan, Azadi!" which means "Women, life, freedom," reflects a cultural connection and a shared understanding of the challenges faced by women in patriarchal and repressive environments.

This event has represented a turning point for women in Iran, triggering the largest cycle of protests in the last generation. Iranian women have received support from their neighboring countries, which have also shown solidarity against the repression. Across the border between Iran and Iraq, Iraqi women, through banners and messages of support, joined efforts to protest against the imposition of mandatory hijab and to defend women's rights. Baghdad's Al-Firdaws Square became a meeting point for the revolution, though not the only one, as social media also served as a channel for spreading protests through the hashtag "no to mandatory hijab."

In Palestine, radio station Alhara also joined the unrest with a special program titled "In Solidarity with Iran," showing support for Iranian musical artists. In northern Syria, hundreds of women, mostly of Kurdish origin, gathered to protest against the oppression suffered by Kurdish women in Iran. Among them, Syrian activist for prisoner liberation, Wafa Ali Mustafa, expressed solidarity with Iranian women, sharing their struggle against dictatorship and patriarchy. Alongside her, thousands of Muslim women used social media as a channel to advocate for their rights.

The outrage over Amini's death spread to other countries like Turkey or Lebanon, where protests were replicated through hijab burnings, banners, and chants in front of authorities. This transnational support strengthens the message of Iranian women, showing that their struggle is not isolated but supported by a global Muslim community advocating for justice and human rights (El Salto, 2022).

The resurgence of protests in 2022, sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini in Iran, has drawn comparisons to the Arab uprisings of 2011. Both movements stand out for their activism on social media, where protests are coordinated and the message amplified. As expressed by Campagnolo Martínez-Calcerrada (2023), in the words of López-Tomás (2022), more than a decade ago, Egyptians, Syrians, Tunisians, and Libyans experienced situations similar to those facing Iranians today.

In this context, prominent figures from different parts of the world have recorded themselves cutting their hair live, sharing it on social media as a protest against Iran's authoritarian regime. This gesture, which has become a symbol of solidarity with Iranian women, has also led anonymous women to join the initiative. Protests found their main dissemination on Youtube and Instagram, while on Twitter, hashtags like #IranRevolution resurfaced, previously used during the Arab Spring.

Although protests and widespread dissemination on social media have generated significant global impact and alerted the international community, their concrete impact on Iranian society and government remains to be determined. However, it is undeniable that these protests have significant importance as a reminder that demands for human rights and social justice cannot be ignored. In the next section, we will explore the potential repercussions in Iran and how they could affect the country's political and social future.

4.3. INTERNAL DYNAMICS: IMPACT IN IRAN AND GOVERNMENTAL STRATEGY

The death of Masha Amini has triggered a series of consequences that have deeply impacted Iranian society. Beyond being an individual tragedy, this event has acted as a catalyst for the ingrained indignation and fear in Iran. Following the harsh government crackdowns, the surveillance system of women's dress codes became even more oppressive at the hands of the Moral Police. In recent years, women have faced severe consequences for dress code violations, ranging from fines to floggings and imprisonment.

The regime resorted to violence to suppress the protests, leading the demonstrators to escalate their demands, challenging the theocratic regime with messages like "we do not want the Islamic Republic" and "death to Jameini." According to Professor Saeid Golkar, the Islamic Republic has lost all its legitimacy and has turned into a police state, employing the "victory through terror" strategy, which encompasses widespread violence in the form of shootings, beatings, torture, and hostage-taking. Currently, the regime will not accept opposition and is willing to use the most extreme violence to stay in power (Álvarez-Ossorio Alvariño, 2023).

As we outlined in the previous section, the mobilizations following Amini's death in Iran share many similarities with those recorded during the Arab Springs. So much so that even the origin of the protests bears a notable parallel. An individual incident, like Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation in Tunisia, acted as a catalyst for the protests, much like Masha Amini's murder. Additionally, in both revolutions, social media played a fundamental role as a means of spreading the demonstrations, which were not led by any specific figure but rather had widespread participation from the people. Just as in the Arab Springs, young people played a leading role in the protests in Iran, mobilizing various sectors of the population, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, or religion (Álvarez-Ossorio Alvariño, 2023).

This parallel highlights the ability of an isolated event involving an individual to trigger socially significant movements. Throughout history, numerous individual cases have had a significant impact on shaping movements for social change. Examples include Rosa Parks in 1955, marking a milestone in the civil rights struggle in the United States, or Jan Palach, a Czechoslovak student who self-immolated in protest against the Soviet invasion and triggered the Velvet Revolution in Prague and the subsequent fall of the communist regime in 1989. In a more recent context, Bouazizi's case in Tunisia, who set himself on fire in protest against police harassment and corruption, sparked the uprisings that spread across the Arab world, initiating the Arab Springs and overthrowing authoritarian regimes in several countries.

Building on the aforementioned idea, after the onset of the protests and the intense campaign on social media platforms, the question arises about the impact on Iranian society and its government. Although the assessment cannot be precise due to the lack of reliable data on imprisonments and victims of repression, some observations indicate certain outcomes of these demonstrations. Interactions on platforms like Twitter or Youtube indicate a growing disapproval towards the government, with numerous campaigns seeking to overthrow the regime. However, the foundations of the

system do not seem to have been severely affected (Campagnolo Martínez-Calcerrada, 2023).

Nevertheless, the country's reputation and image abroad are causing repercussions in the global sphere. The negative perception derived from the protests and repression has led to increased distrust from other countries and international organizations towards the Iranian government. As a result, Europe and the United States have implemented economic and legal sanctions against Iran, aiming to pressure the country into altering its domestic policies. These restrictive measures are having a considerable impact on the Iranian economy, affecting sectors such as trade, foreign investment, and access to key resources. Additionally, the imposed limitations are hampering Iran's ability to maintain diplomatic relations with other countries, posing a threat to its long-term economic stability.

CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the historical development of the Iranian feminist movement and considering the evidence presented in the previous sections regarding the influence of these movements both nationally and internationally, we will proceed to verify whether our initial hypotheses are confirmed or refuted.

1. The collective action of women and their participation in revolutionary movements in Iran have been crucial factors in advancing the improvement of their human rights and their status in Iranian society.

The collective action of women in Iran has been crucial in the fight for their rights and the improvement of their status within Iranian society. Recent events, such as the death of Masha Amini in 2022, demonstrate how the mobilization of women can trigger changes, both locally and internationally. These protests highlighted the brutality of the regime and were subject to sanctions by the international community.

From the Islamic Revolution of 1979 to the present day, the history of the Iranian feminist movement has shown significant evolution. This movement has not only been a continuous pursuit of rights, but also an awakening of consciousness among women about their ability to influence the socio-political sphere in Iran.

Therefore, through this hypothesis, we can confirm that the collective action of women in Iran has been key to advancing human rights and their position in society.

2. El The success of women's collective action in Iran, especially in revolutionary contexts, has the potential to inspire and influence feminist movements globally, thereby contributing the promotion of women's rights worldwide.

The global impact of the feminist movement in Iran has been evident through the international solidarity generated in recent years. The protests of 2022 and the campaign "Women, Life, and Freedom" mobilized not only thousands of people within Iran but

also received support from around the world through social media and public demonstrations.

Likewise, the recognition of figures such as Narges Mohammadi, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2023, highlights how the struggle of Iranian women has captured attention internationally. This recognition highlighted the courage of Iranian activists despite oppression and also served as inspiration for other feminist movements in similar contexts around the world.

In conclusion, as mentioned in the final section of this research, collective action in Iran has not only brought about changes within the country but has also strengthened movements worldwide, especially in Muslim countries such as Iraq or Palestine. The visibility and impact of these actions have demonstrated the importance of global solidarity and support in the fight for gender equality and human rights.

As a final point, we can affirm that the feminist movement in Iran has shown great adaptability to circumstances, emerging spontaneously and without centralized leadership, driven solely by the individual will of women. This characteristic demonstrates that the movement has a solid and consistent foundation that can endure over time, challenging an authoritarian regime that has attempted to silence it on multiple occasions.

Despite the resistance of the movement and the gradual change in the moral of Iranian society, it is undeniable that the challenge of wresting power from authorities in Iran remains a daunting task. Authoritarian regimes have very powerful means capable of repressing and controlling the population through violence and intimidation. However, the determination of feminist activists offers some light in the darkness.

The voices of Iranian women have become a symbol of power and resistance against oppression worldwide, demonstrating that even in the most repressive environments, injustices can be exposed on a global scale. In this sense, international solidarity emerges as an essential tool to drive governmental changes in the country, fostering hope to achieve a future where gender inequality does not exist for Iranian women.

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ANNEXES

Illustration 1 Imposition of the veil after the Islamic Republic
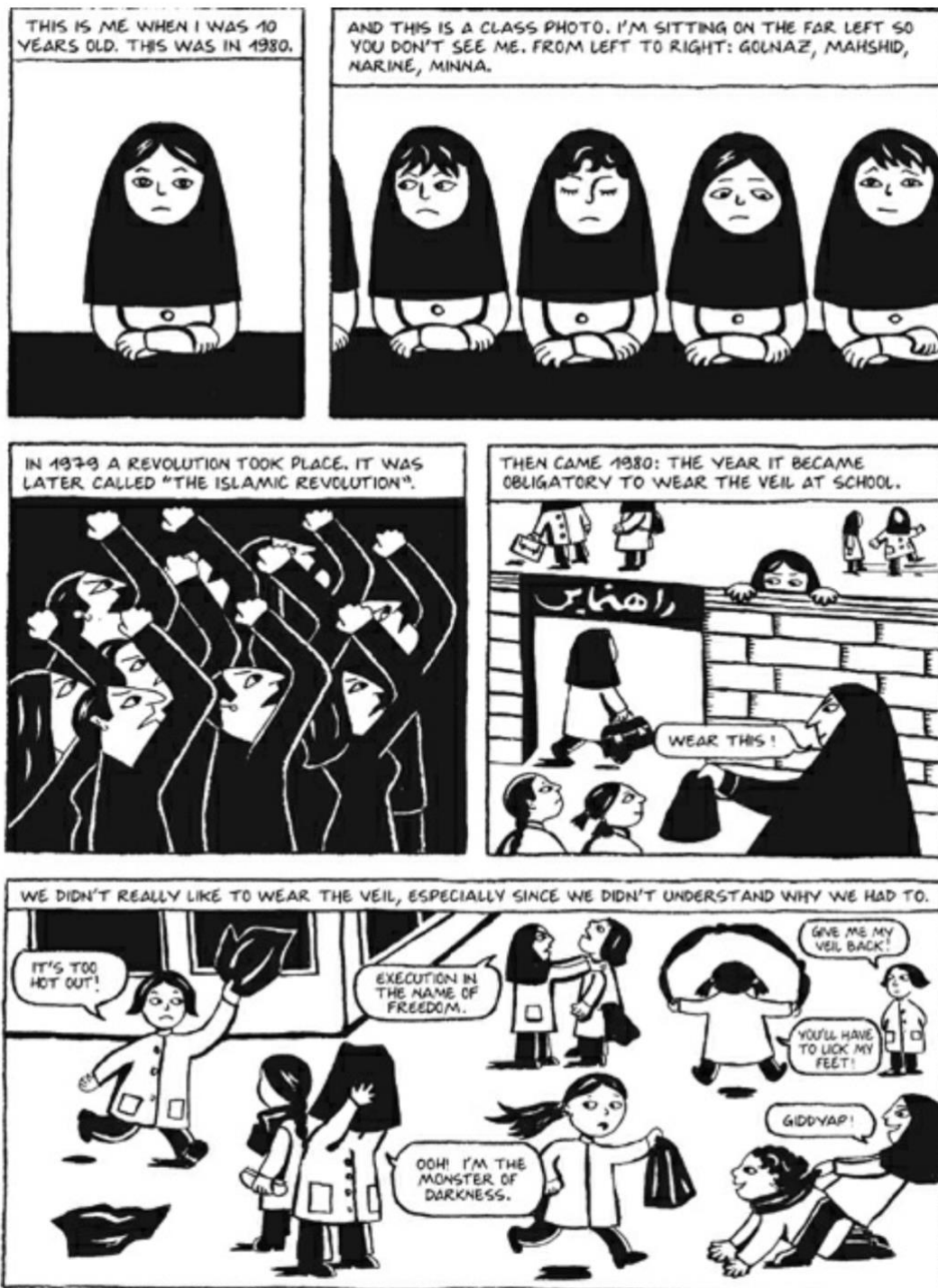
Source 1 Persepolis

Ilustration 2 Mixed and secular education becomes differentiated and muslim

Source 2 Persepolis

Ilustration 3 Women start demonstrating and censorship begins

Source 2 Persepolis