The Politics of Women's Rights in Iran

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Arzoo Osanloo

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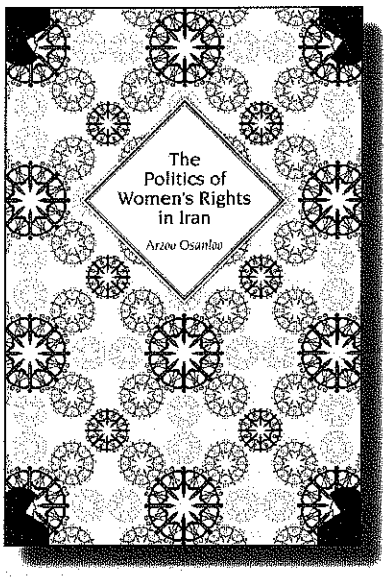

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In ***The Politics of Women's Rights in Iran***, Arzoo Osanlqo explores how Iranian women understand their rights. After the 1979 revolution, Iranian leaders transformed the state into an Islamic republic. At that time, the country's leaders used a renewed discourse of women's rights to symbolise a shift away from the excesses of Western liberalism. Osanloo reveals that the postrevolutionary republic blended practices of a liberal republic with Islamic principles of equality. Her ethnographic study illustrates how women's claims of rights emerge from a hybrid discourse that draws on both liberal individualism and Islamic ideals.

Osanloo takes the reader on a journey through numerous sites where rights are being produced - including Qur'anic reading groups, Tehran's family court, and law offices - as she sheds light on the fluid and constructed nature of women's perceptions of rights. In doing so, Osanloo unravels simplistic dichotomies between so-called liberal, universal rights and insular, local culture.

The Politics of Women's Rights in Iran casts light on a contemporary non-Western understanding of the meaning behind liberal rights, and raises questions about the misunderstood relationship between modernity and Islam.

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About the Author:

Arzoo Osanloo is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology and in the Law, Societies, and Justice Program at the University of Washington. Previously, she worked as a human rights attorney, practicing asylum and immigration law.

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