

the national development agenda.⁵

At the same moment, the book rarely contains the opinions of Dossym Satpayev, Rakhim Oshakbayev and his Center for Applied Research ‘TALAP,’ nor those of Olzhas Kudaibergenov, Alikhan Baymenov, Andrey Chebotarev, Yerlan Karin, experts from the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, and it lacks the voices of other researchers who today are trying to decipher the official discourse or present a position and opinions that differ from it, including on such subjects, as public administration, economic reforms, and social policy.

Finally, Chapter 9 shows that many issues of the modern development of Kazakhstan overlap in one way or another, and reinforce the importance of their detailed study from different angles. The authors additionally note the importance of inter-sectoral thinking and policy integration as key aspects of achieving sustainable development in Kazakhstan. However, the book covers the regional or international context to a lesser extent, which cannot but influence the adaptation of the Kazakhstani development model to external factors.

In this regard, this book could also be recommended to students and researchers not only in the field of public administration but also in the field of international relations for a deeper understanding of the domestic context of foreign policy initiatives and the economic diplomacy of Kazakhstan.

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Shahrokni, Nazanin. *Women in Place: The Politics of Gender Segregation in Iran*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2020. vii + 155 pp. ISBN: 9780520304284. DOI: 10.22679/avs.2021.6.2.009

Nazanin Shahrokni’s *Women in Place* is about gender, space, and the state. It is the study of the contemporary Iranian government’s policies on gender segregation and women’s access to public spaces in Iran. Based on the author’s doctoral dissertation, completed at UC Berkeley, the book largely focuses on gender-segregated spaces in the post-revolutionary capital city of Tehran. The author shows “that the unsettling of the gender order caused by shifts in Iran’s social, political, and economic environment prompted the Islamic state to develop a new regime of gender segregation, including strategies that would be flexible enough to address

⁵ Bureau of the National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan. “Information and Analytical System.” Accessed May 2, 2021. <https://taldau.stat.gov.kz/ru/NewIndex/GetIndex/702840?keyword=>.

the need for women's increased use of public space while never relinquishing the state's authority as regulator" (p. 4). In *Women in Place*, Shahrokni concludes that gender-segregated spaces transformed from serving as *spaces of exclusion*, prohibiting women's public presence, to *spaces of inclusion*, facilitating women's mobility in public domains.

The book is divided into five chapters: "The Politics of Gender Segregation in Iran" (pp. 1-29), "Boundaries in Motion: Sisters, Citizens, and Consumers Get on the Bus" (pp. 30-56), "Happy and Healthy in Mothers' Paradise: Women-Only Parks" (pp. 57-80), "Soccer Goals and Political Points: The Gendered Politics of Stadium Access and the Expansion of the State" (pp. 81-108), and "Re-placing Women, Remaking the State: Gender, Islam, and the Politics of Place Making" (pp. 108-126).

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction in which the author reviews recent scholarship upon which the study is built, provides chapter outlines, explains the methodological approach, and lays out the main arguments of the book. While pointing out a lack of a comprehensive plan on gender segregation from the beginning of its formation, the author maintains that the disrupted gender order in the wake of the Iranian Revolution facilitated the newly established Islamic state to develop new policies concerning gender segregation. Although these new policies were directed at regulating women's increased use of public space, they were supposed to help strengthen the state's authority as regulator. Viewing gender-segregated spaces as *spaces of inclusion*, the author highlights the gradual transformation of the state's agenda from *prohibition* to *provision* through the discourse of protection. Challenging the commonly accepted view of gender segregation as prohibitive and restrictive, the author shows that gender segregation does not necessarily exclude women from either public or political activities.

Chapter 2 examines gender segregation in public transportation, especially on city buses. The author vividly shows how the metal bar in the bus that acts as a divider between women's and men's sections serves as a symbol of the state's involvement in securing a place for women in public transportation, in addition to creating opportunities to increase women's mobility in public. In this scenario, the state displays its authority not only by patronizing women as vulnerable passengers in public transportation but also by acting as negotiator of the moving divider on the buses.

Chapter 3 introduces women-only parks created in Tehran while highlighting the state's growing regulation of gender segregation that brings about prescribed performance among its subjects. In other words, through protection and provision, the state successfully redraws the gender boundaries by creating new segregated spaces that allow women to be active in public, away from the male gaze. Exploring the case of the first women-only parks, known as the Mothers' Paradise in Tehran, the author describes these parks as a state project that was developed based on the discourse of public health, emphasizing the need for access to public green and exercise spaces for women. This is illustrated by the following quote: "The walls that embrace the Mothers' Paradise, just like the metal bars that divide the bus space, signify the undeniable fact of the state's enduring authority" (p. 80).

Chapter 4 explores the intricacies of women's sports spectatorship based on the

example of Freedom Sports Stadium, where women are prohibited from attending men's sports matches. Viewing the ban through the lens of political contestations, the author shows how political parties use the discourse of gender boundaries to proclaim their assertion of authority and political power. Examining the cases of parties that prohibit or allow women in sports arenas, the author demonstrates "how gender segregation has become an instrument in the pursuit of power, of the assertion of ultimate sovereignty" (p. 85). By patronizing and regulating women's bodies and their activities in public, including sports stadiums, different political entities, both internal and international, lay claims on authority and dominance over their political adversaries.

Chapter 5 concludes the book by not only revisiting some of the concerns in Chapter 1, but also further challenging the notion of gender segregation while problematizing the discourses of gender, statehood, and Islam. Viewing state-building intertwined with gendered processes of city and placemaking, the author points out the lack of a definitive blueprint used by the state in building the Islamic city, during which process the notions of gender and Islam are reinterpreted and renegotiated as arbitrated through the imperatives of power and politics. "By placing women at the center of city-building and state-making projects, women's issues have been further politicized, creating opportunities for political struggle at the very loci wherein gender boundaries are drawn" (p. 124).

Although the author downplays the role of Islam in the state's mode of regulation from *prohibition* to *provision*, *Women in Place* clearly presents a bold challenge to the conventional understanding of gender segregation. It is an excellent study that renders an alternative lens, allowing us to understand state policies concerning women's access to public spaces in post-revolutionary Iran. Nazanin Shahroki's persuasive critique not only debunks the "outdated" thinking about gender segregation, but also problematizes the way we understand the roles of the state, Islam, and "Islamic." In addition to being a refreshing alternative to the conventional discourse on gender-segregated spaces, *Women in Place* poses a significant challenge to the way the notions of gender, space, and the state have been traditionally viewed.

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Bhat, Mohd. Aslam. *The Sociology of Central Asian Youth: Choice, Restraint, Risk*. New York: Routledge, 2018. 160 pp. ISBN: 978-0367431808. DOI: 10.22679/avs.2021.6.2.010

Youth studies, although having gained importance in recent decades, does not enjoy its deserved attention outside the global south. Mohd. Aslam Bhat, a scholar of youth studies, political sociology, and social research, usefully writes a book about Central Asian youth, exploring their 'aspirations, anticipations and risks' within cultural, political, and sociological discourses