

XV Convegno SeSaMO

Università degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale

22-24 giugno 2022



SOCIETÀ PER GLI STUDI SUL MEDIO ORIENTE

TITOLO/TITLE: The politics of health and crisis in Iran: stories of memory and trauma

PROPONENTE/I – PROPONENT/S: M. STELLA MORGANA, RASSA GHAFFARI

ABSTRACT (1500 parole/words):

This panel aims to promote a transdisciplinary space of dialogue and debate in which the relationships between crisis and health, bodily issues and (bio)politics in the Islamic Republic of Iran can be explored.

Words such as 'crisis' usually dominate mainstream media headlines regarding Iran. These terms are often associated with geopolitical analyses, critiques of authoritarian politics or pro-regime language and activities. Yet, the word *bohran*, crisis, mobilises different political, cultural and intimate imageries connecting the public and the private spheres under the Islamic Republic. At the crossroads where politics meets health, stories of memory, trauma, class, family, depression, mismanagement and solitude emerge.

Starting from these arguments and urging different theoretical approaches and scientific-disciplinary perspectives, the panel intends to reflect on the several dimensions and interrelations of the concept of crisis, involving both collective and individual aspects, and to call into question the gaze through which to acknowledge social change and responses to crisis in Iran.

This space is intended as a **call for papers** that broaden the understanding of crisis in contemporary Iran and what this entails in terms of both political ideology and choices, as well as ordinary practices.

Some of the questions we may address are: what specific forms of institutional neglect, old and new, acute and chronic, did the pandemic bring to light, and how do gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and economic precariousness play into those? What language is mobilised to inspire the politics of health in times of crisis? What are the less visible forms of coping with health and crisis?

We welcome both theoretical and empirical approaches that present, problematize and discuss topics including, but not limited to:

- **Biopolitics:** what are the main approaches and turning points in developing reproductive policies and family planning in Iran?
- **The Covid-19 crisis:** what new contradictions and weaknesses, resistance ties, and solidarity strategies can be observed in the contemporary situation?
- **Public discourse:** how is crisis articulated in health-related campaigns?
- **Wellbeing/illness:** what are the strategies for the bodies to articulate health through medicine, illness, death or pregnancy?

- **Memory and trauma:** collective and individual memory as embodied site of political negotiation and historical witnessing. How are the multiple crises mobilised in these dimensions?
- **Technology:** what role do new tech, science, and knowledge play in times of health-related crisis?
- **Mental health:** what are the biomedical discourses related to it and how can we read it as an analytical and political category?

Recent fieldwork, archival accounts, and reports based on primary source materials are particularly welcomed.

Language: English

The final contributions will be collected in a special issue for an academic journal.

PROFILO ACCADEMICO DEL/DELLA/DEI/DELLE PROPONENTE/I – SHORT BIO OF PROPONENTS

M. Stella Morgana is Lecturer in Middle East Politics at the University of Amsterdam. Her research focuses on the politics of participation, labour, hegemonic versus counter-hegemonic discourses in Iran and the Middle East. Her academic articles have been published in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, *Iranian Studies*, *IRAN – Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, *Middle East Institute*. Stella is currently working on her monograph on workers' *precarization* in Iran.

Rassa Ghaffari holds a MA in African and Asian Studies and a PhD in Applied Sociology and Methodology of Social Research. Her research focuses on intergenerational representations of gender roles, sexuality and familiar relationships in Iran, where she has conducted extensive fieldwork. She currently works at the University of Milano-Bicocca as adjunct faculty of Sociology of Family. Her research has been published on *The Anthropology of Middle East*, *Participation and Conflict*, and the *Public Arts Journal*.

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