



10/08/2022.

To Whom It May Concern

Reference letter for Mitra Shamsi

I am very pleased to provide this reference for Mitra Shamsi, whom I have known since 2016 as my PhD student working on Iranian Women's Digital Activism: Gendered Discourses on Social Media Platforms.

In her thesis, Mitra examines the activism of Iranian feminists on digital media, within a theoretical framework informed by political communication and feminist media studies. Her research centres on the feminist discourses generated and circulated on Iranian social media, focusing on women activists' strategies of self-mediation through the textual and visual content posted on their online profiles and campaigns. Rather than offering a merely celebratory approach to the opportunities provided by social media for women's activism, Mitra's research explores how mediated feminist discourses draw on digital media affordances to present an individualized, simplified and aestheticized version of feminism, which can be framed using the concept of popular feminism. She also argues that the mediation of women's activism is shaped by the country's political opportunity structure, in general, and the trajectories of Iranian women's movements within this structure, in particular.

While pursuing her PhD research, Mitra was my assistant on the module Gender, Media and Family. This was an opportunity for her to explore teaching as a field, to lead and engage in seminar discussions and to offer closer support to those students who needed it. Student feedback was very positive and praised Mitra for her inspiration and diligence.

Beyond the PhD, Mitra sustained her research project through various research fellowships held at prestigious institutions, including Erasmus University. She also obtained an Osgoode IFLS Fellowship at the University of York. Furthermore, she has managed to publish several articles in academic journals. We co-authored an article entitled *Life and the time of Iranian Women: an Ideological Approach to the Women's Self-Representation on Instagram* which was published quite recently in the Quarterly Journal of New Media Studies [Motaleate Resanehaye Novin]. Our most recent co-authored article on *Popular Feminism in Iranian Instagram: A Critical Investigation into the Mediation of Iranian Women's Activism on Social Media Platforms* is accepted recently by the Journal of Society, Culture and Media [Jamea, Resaneh Va Farhang].

I am happy to testify to Mitra's qualities as a hardworking academic, a dedicated teaching assistant, and a well-focused researcher. She is determined to make her research the focus of her career. I have therefore no hesitation in recommending her for the The Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian Studies at University of Toronto.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Azam Ravadrad'.

Br Azam Ravadrad

Professor at the Department of Social Communication.