

From:

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To:

Search Committee

Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute of Iranian Studies

University of Toronto

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I am writing to apply for the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian Studies for the 2024-2025 academic year at the University of Toronto. With a Ph.D. in History from the University of Isfahan, a completed postdoctoral fellowship, and my current pursuit of a second Ph.D. in Iranian Studies at the University of Tehran, I believe my academic background and research align well with the goals of the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute.

My monograph, *Ambiguous Roads to Democracy: Electoral Participation and Political Culture in Pahlavi-Era Iran*, explores the complexities of political participation in Iran during the Pahlavi era, focusing on the electoral dynamics in Isfahan from 1923 to 1978. Through a mixed-methods approach, my research highlights the tension between formal democratic structures and the authoritarian practices that characterized this period. I analyze how state policies, socio-economic factors, and cultural dynamics influenced electoral outcomes, shedding light on the broader implications for Iran's political development.

During my postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Isfahan, I had the opportunity to deepen my research on these themes, contributing to several academic publications and presenting my findings at Iranian Studies conferences. My ongoing research at the University of Tehran builds on this foundation, with a focus on the impact of socio-economic reforms on

political participation in Iran. This work seeks to understand how historical events, such as the White Revolution, have shaped contemporary political behavior and culture in the country.

I am particularly drawn to the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship because of the Institute's commitment to fostering innovative research in Iranian Studies. The intellectual environment at the University of Toronto, combined with the Institute's resources, would provide an ideal setting for me to refine my monograph for publication and further develop my research. I am eager to contribute to the Institute's vibrant scholarly community and to engage with other scholars working on related topics.

Enclosed with this letter are my curriculum vitae, a synopsis of my monograph, and a statement of my research interests. I have also arranged for two letters of recommendation to be sent directly to you. I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to be in residence at the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute and to participate in its dynamic academic life.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the possibility of contributing to and growing within the academic community at the University of Toronto.

Sincerely,

Mohammad Afghari

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