

Dear Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Dissertation Completion Fellowship Selection Committee,

My name is Gunha Kim. I am a third-year Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations at the University of Toronto, under the supervision of Professor Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi with Professor Elise Burton and Professor Adrien Zakar serving as members of my dissertation committee. Before beginning my doctoral studies at the University of Toronto, I earned my bachelor's and master's degree from Seoul National University, where I majored in Middle Eastern Studies and International Relations.

Throughout my PhD studies, I have developed a strong foundation in social and intellectual history of Iran and the broader Middle East, as well as historical approaches to death and critical studies of the history of science from feminist, postcolonial, and global perspective. These experiences have equipped me with the tools to connect Iranian studies to the wider academic community, particularly through globalization of Iranian Studies. My comprehensive exams in modern Iranian history, the history of life sciences in the Middle East, and the politics of death have provided me with the ample academic background necessary to work on my dissertation. Additionally, my involvement in various projects at the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute of Iranian Studies—including roles as a bibliographer for the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, an archiver at Tavakoli Archive, and editorial intern of *Irannamag*—have greatly enriched my knowledge and methodology in Iranian and historical studies.

My dissertation investigates how modern science has shaped discussions of death in Iran. It examines techniques used to address death across multiple scientific disciplines at different scales, including medicine, psychiatry, sociology, and environmental science. My project particularly attends to the epistemic violence embedded within the scientific characterization of death in medical, quantitative, and social-engineering terms. It contextualizes these approaches within broader regional and global scientific projects. Consequently, it interrogates how these scientific frameworks contribute to the reimagining of martyrdom as a distinct mode of political resistance, which seeks to denaturalize deaths.

Through my project, I aim to make several contributions to the history of modern Iran. Primarily, I seek to connect the history of science with the history of political violence in Iran. Given that Iran was never officially colonized, the historiography of its science, often viewed through a lens of national science, paid less attention to the violence perpetrated in the name of science. Conversely, the historiography of political violence in Iran has highlighted the authoritarian nature of the Pahlavi dynasty rather than recognizing violence as an inherent component of scientific projects. In this context, I will offer a deeper understanding of martyrdom as a particular form of resistance in a modern society shaped by the politics of life and death.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gunha Kim

# Gunha Kim

Curriculum Vitae  
(Last Updated: May 17, 2024)

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## EDUCATION

Sep. 2021– Present	<b>PhD, Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations</b> <i>University of Toronto (Supervisor: Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi)</i>
Aug. 2021	<b>MA, West Asian Languages and Civilizations</b> <i>Seoul National University (Supervisor: Siavash Saffari)</i> Dissertation: “Iranian Masculinities: Analysis of Changing Islamic Masculinity Found in the Martyrdom Discourse of Ali Shariati and Morteza Avini”
Aug. 2018	<b>BA, West Asian Languages and Civilizations (Cum Laude)</b> <i>Seoul National University</i> <i>Double Major in International Relations</i>

## ACADEMIC INTEREST

Modern Iranian History; History of Science; History of Gender; History of Death and Suicide; Masculinity; Martyrdom; Necropolitics; Iranian Cinema; Political Islam; Pollution; Postcolonial International Relations; Environmental Politics

## CONFERENCES AND PUBLICATIONS

Kim, Gunha. “Necropolitics of Environmental Preservation in Pahlavi Iran.” Paper to be presented at 2024 History of Science Society Annual Meeting. 7-10 November 2024, Mérida, Mexico (Abstract Accepted).

Kim, Gunha. “From “Death to America” to “Women, Life, Freedom”: Necropolitics of Social Movement in Iran.” Paper presented at NMCGSA 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Symposium, University of Toronto, 14 March 2024, Canada.

Kim, Gunha. “Rewriting Revolutionary Martyrology: Necropolitics of Death Commemoration in the Women, Life, Liberty Movement.” Paper presented at Women, Life, Liberty: A Symposium Dedicated to Dr. Shirin Ebadi, the 2003 Nobel Peace Laureate, University of Toronto, 23 September 2023, Canada.

Kim, Gunha. “The Iranian Revolutionary Martyrology, 1978-1979: Between Pathologization and Valorization.” Paper presented at The Iranian Revolution: The Graduate Student Symposium, University of Toronto, 12 April 2023, Canada.

Kim, Gunha. “Iranian Martyrdom: Embedded Masculinity in the Discourse of Ali Shariati and Morteza Avini.” Paper virtually presented at Asian University Alliance Conference 2021, Chulalongkorn University, 20-21 February 2021, Thailand.

Kim, Gunha. “Construction of Iranian Jewish Diaspora in United States Examined by Shofar Magazine.” Paper presented at Spring Conference of Korean Association of Middle East Studies, Yonjin, Korea, 27 April 2019 (presented in Korean).

Han, Sang Gyu, Gun Ha Kim, Hye Jin Woo, Hye Yeon Yoon, and Jae Hun Jung. "Legislative Watch and Citizen Politics." In *Citizen Politics of Gwanak: Six Cases Studied by Students, Local Residents, and Civil Servants*, edited by Euiyoung Kim, 219-271. Seoul: Purungil, 2018 (published in Korean).

Kim, Euiyoung, Sang Gyu Han, Gun Ha Kim, Hye Jin Woo, Hye Yeon Yoon, & Jae Hun Jung. "Legislative Watchdog at the Local Level: Case of Gwanak People's Solidarity." *Journal of Korean Politics* 26, no. 3 (2017): 243-275 (published in Korean).

## INVITED TALK

"Writing Martyrdom and Suicide in Revolutionary Iran, 1969-1979." School of Digital Humanities and Computational Social Sciences, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, May 31, 2023, Korea.

## TRANSLATION

Saffari, Siavash. "Iran: The Specter of War or the Prospect of Revolt?" *Diversity+Asia* 8 (2020). <https://diverseasia.snu.ac.kr/?p=3618> (Translated from English to Korean).

## AWARD

Nov. 2019	<p>Outstanding Student Paper  <i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea</i>            ✧ "Blood, History, and Soil: Strategy of Iranian Jewish Diaspora in United States," won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in 3<sup>rd</sup> Middle Eastern Studies Student Paper Contest.</p>
Feb. 2019	<p>Outstanding Undergraduate Thesis  <i>Department of International Relations, Seoul National University</i>            ✧ Undergraduate thesis for International Relations major, "On Imperfect Rationality in Diplomacy: Evaluation of Iran's negotiation tactics during 2013-2015 Eu3+3 nuclear negotiation," won best paper award in the major.</p>
Sep. 2014	<p>Outstanding Research Paper  <i>Center for Teaching and Learning, Seoul National University</i>            ✧ Co-worked article with 3 colleagues, "Politico-economic Analysis on Renminbi Internationalization," won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in 20<sup>th</sup> Seoul National University Outstanding Report Contest.</p>

## SCHOLARSHIP

Apr. 2022	<p>Merit Scholarship  <i>Dalsoon Memorial Scholarship, Korean Canadian Scholarship Foundation</i></p>
Sep. 2021– Present	<p>University of Toronto Fellowship  <i>Including Program Level Fellowship and Recruitment Top-up, University of Toronto</i></p>
Mar. 2020– Aug. 2020	<p>Monthly Academic Grant for Outstanding Students  <i>CORE (Initiative for College of Humanities' Research and Education)</i></p>
Sep. 2019– Feb. 2020	<p>Scholarship for Creative Researchers  <i>Joeeun Son Creativity Scholarship, The Yoonmin Foundation</i></p>

Jun. 2018; Jun. 2017	Scholarship for Overseas Language Training <i>Kim Joong-Su Academic Fund, Center for Central Eurasian Studies, Seoul National University</i>
Aug. 2016– Aug. 2018	Monthly Academic Grant for Outstanding Students <i>CORE (Initiative for College of Humanities' Research and Education)</i>
Mar. 2012– Feb. 2018	Full Tuition Scholarship <i>SBS Seo-am Academic Scholarship Foundation</i>

## ACADEMIC WORK EXPERIENCE

### Research Experience

Oct. 2022– Present	Editorial Intern <i>Iran Namag Journal</i>
Oct. 2021– Present	Bibliographer <i>Encyclopaedia Iranica: Cinema Iranica &amp; Women Poets Iranica</i>
Oct. 2021– Aug. 2022	Research Assistant <i>Tavakoli Archive</i>
Sep. 2020– Feb. 2021	GSI Research Assistant of Professor Hawon Ku <i>Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations, Seoul National University</i>
Sep. 2018– Feb. 2019	GSI research assistant of Professor Siavash Saffari <i>Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations, Seoul National University</i>
Feb. 2018– Aug. 2018	Research Trainee <i>West Asia Center, Seoul National University</i>

### Administrative Experience

Mar. 2021– Jun. 2021	Administrative Assistant <i>Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations, Seoul National University</i>
Aug. 2019– Jun. 2020	Resident Advisor <i>Gwanak Residence Hall, Seoul National University</i>
Sep. 2013– Aug. 2014	Undergraduate Assistant <i>Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations, Seoul National University</i>

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Winter 2023	Teaching Assistant <i>Safavid Iran</i>
Fall 2023	Teaching Assistant <i>Science, Technology, and Empire</i>
Fall 2022	Teaching Assistant <i>Introduction to the Modern Middle East</i>
Spring 2019	Teaching Assistant <i>Introduction to the Study of Study of Asian Civilizations</i>

## RELATED EXPERIENCES

Jan. 2019– Feb. 2019	Intensive Language Training <i>Shiraz University International Center for Teaching Persian to Non-Persian Speakers</i>
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Dec. 2017– Jan. 2018	Intensive Language Training <i>Dehkhoda Institute of International Center for Persian Studies, University of Tehran</i>
Dec. 2014– Aug. 2016	Mandatory Military Service <i>Republic of Korea Army</i>
Dec. 2012– Dec. 2013	Departmental Student <i>Division of Religious Studies, Student Council of College of Humanities, Seoul National University</i>
Sep. 2012– Dec. 2013	Lecturer <i>Wemajor</i> ✧ Participated in civil group giving advice to high school students on major selection and college entrance.

## LANGUAGES

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<b>Korean</b>	Native
<b>English</b>	Fluent
<b>Persian</b>	Working Proficiency
<b>French</b>	Reading Proficiency
<b>Arabic</b>	Reading Proficiency

## Synopsis of Dissertation and Completion Timeline

### Chapter 1. Investigating Death

This chapter examines the introduction of sociomedical studies on death in mid-twentieth century Iran as part of broader criminological reforms that began earlier in the century, aimed at disciplining rather than executing criminals. It explores the discipline of legal medicine, which expanded beyond its focus on criminal psychology, by investigating the institutional history of the Office of Legal Medicine, established in 1950, and the journal, *Pizishkī-yi Qānūnī* [Legal Medicine], published between 1965 and 1968, by Dr. Sayyid Mohamad Tabatabai, who succeeded Dr. Abdolhossein Mirsepassi as the head of the department.

Legal medicine during this period encompassed a range of fields, including forensic science, pathology, psychiatry, social medicine, bioethics, criminology, environmental science, and the political theory of death. This chapter explores how these medico-legal studies represented “material shift” in understanding death on multiple scales from human body to society, reflecting the evolving authority and standpoint of doctors on death, as well as their engagement with both domestic others and international scientific networks. Furthermore, this chapter interrogates how these studies inherited the relationship between medicine, state violence and management of life and death as seen in earlier police journal, *Shahrbanī*.

### Chapter 2. Social Pathology of Suicide

This chapter examines the psychiatric shift of the journal *Pizishkī-yi Qānūnī* into *Ravānpizishkī* [Psychiatry] in 1968/9, spurred by the suicide of Gholamreza Takhti (1930-1968), a wrestling champion and National Front leader, and public skepticism and dissident movements that followed. This shift, reflecting the situation in which “the mental state is the most important issue that judges and legal doctors investigate during the criminal investigation,” marks the re-psychologization of medical studies on society, signified by the assumption of the editorship by Dr. Mirsepassi, a key figure in Iran’s modern psychiatry and former head of the Office of Legal Medicine.

This chapter studies the implication of this shift, by focusing on the discussions of suicide and the psychiatrists’ mode of approaching social pathologies in *Ravānpizishkī*. It also examines the journal *Ravānshināsī* [Psychology], a journal launched in 1971 under the editorship of Dr. Ali Akbar Siyasi, and how psychiatry differentiated itself from earlier criminal psychology. Furthermore, this chapter attends to the quantitative research methodology utilized by psychiatrists. This chapter explores how this statistical approach is linked to the World Health Organization’s social psychiatry project.

### Chapter 3. Counting Deaths

This chapter expands its focus from sociomedical methodologies that quantify life to include social scientific approaches, particularly sociology, where demographic studies played a

significant role in analyzing life and death through numerical data. While concerns about depopulation owing to high mortality rates were significant issues in Iran since the early twentieth century, systemic efforts to count and study death in aggregate became successful since the 1950s. With support from UNESCO's mission to promote social sciences internationally, the Institute for Social Studies and Research was founded in 1958, acquiring substantial sociopolitical influence within the state. This chapter explores the connection between expansion of American social sciences during the Cold War and the development of quantitative methodologies in Iran.

Although quantitative methods for understanding life and death are central to modern state policy making, they often fail to fully capture the reality. This chapter also investigates how these quantitative approaches influenced the state's understanding of dissident movements. During the revolution, periodicals used statistics to downplay the popularity of revolutionary movements, potentially shaping Pahlavi authorities' perception of the revolution as "improbable," if not "impossible."

#### Chapter 4. Pollution and Death

This chapter explores the emergence of environmental pollution as a significant discursive site of death in Iran during the 1960s and 1970s. This discourse on pollution combined the language of public hygiene, which antagonized religious and lower-class populations, with preservation efforts initiated by sportsmen like Eskandar Firouz, who later became the first director of Iran's Department of Environment in 1971. This chapter investigates how their early interests in hunting and zoology influenced their views on environmental protection by analyzing their periodical, *Shikār va Tabī'at* [Hunting and Environment], published since 1960, along with personal memoirs of key figures such as Firouz and Manuchehr Riahi.

This chapter also examines the Pahlavi Dynasty's international environmental initiatives, including hosting the Convention on Wetland Protection in Ramsar and funding the Pahlavi International Environmental Award. It explores how these global aspirations translated into violent domestic policies and how they link to the discourses of environmental death during the late 1970s. Furthermore, this chapter analyzes why they did not question the undifferentiated concept of the universal human subject (*bashar*) as the polluter of the planet, overlooking developmental stages. Additionally, it explores the potential links between these international environmental initiatives and growing international human rights critiques of the Pahlavi regime's treatment of prisoners' lives from the late 1960s onward.

#### Chapter 5. Responses to Death Sciences and Martyrdom

This chapter examines popular responses to the scientific discourses on death, exploring broader social trends in thinking about death through various cultural sources such as obituaries—a literary genre popularized by newspapers—movies, novels, poems, post cards, posters, leftist texts, and works by twentieth century thinkers. It aims to understand why the discourse of martyrdom was able to mobilize a large number of urban protestors during the late 1970s, considering the role of the state-led scientific projects in creating an environment that

characterized the necropolitical nature of resistance in Iran, emphasizing the religiopolitical language of martyrdom.

By juxtaposing scientific approaches to death—such as quantification, legalization, regulation, criminalization, socialization, nationalization, medicalization, and naturalization—with the emerging tropes of martyrdom that de-naturalized, empowered, politicized, and revealed certain deaths, this chapter seeks to understand how and why martyrdom became a powerful force. This chapter also explores how death of others beyond the national border has been perceived, questioning the significance of national boundaries in cases of genocide, natural disasters, executed revolutionaries, pandemic, and pollution.

I aim to write and defend my dissertation within the next two years according to the following timeline.

- 2024-2025 Academic Year: Focus on data collection and completion of Chapter Four.
- Summer 2025: Completion of Chapter One and Chapter Two.
- 2025-2026 Academic year: Completion of Chapter Three and Chapter Five.
- Summer 2026: Finalization of the dissertation and Defense.