



Iran Today: An Encyclopedia of Life in the Islamic Republic, 2 volume set

Manochehr Dorraj, Mehran Kamrava

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Iran dominates the media headlines once again and has taken center stage in the U.S. and European Union strategy toward the Middle East. A more nuanced understanding of Iranian society has assumed even greater significance and urgency. *Iran Today: An Encyclopedia of Life in the Islamic Republic* offers crucial insight for students and the general reader into an often misunderstood and complex country that is shrouded in mystery and misperception. Heir to a long history and a great culture and civilization, Iran embodies a rich, complex, and diverse mosaic that defines its national identity. Diversity is also the operative word that describes Iranian landscapes and geography, its multiple ethnic groups and their varied cultures and traditions, as well as the uneven and vastly different levels of economic and industrial development, conflicting political tendencies, and different and often contradictory social and cultural outlooks. Because of its tumultuous recent political history, Iran appears to encapsulate all of these internal differences and stark contrasts somewhat more distinctly than most of its neighbors. The 1978-1979 revolution transformed the society and culture in fundamental ways and redefined social life. It created new institutions of governance and Islamicized the culture, education and the legal system in an attempt to create a new society that would usher in the reign of piety and virtue. Yet, Islamization had to come to terms with pre-Islamic and illustrious Persian history and culture, as well as the realities of an interdependent, postmodern, globalized world in which, as a developing country, Iran resides in the periphery. Within this framework, the dynamics and complexity of social life in the Islamic Republic unfold. This encyclopedia is the source for up-to-date, authoritative information on a full range of critical topics of interest.

Coverage of the Islamic Republic here falls into the general categories of history, politics, economics, society and culture. The most significant aspects of the life in Iran since the revolution-the era of the Islamic Republic so far-are stressed. The wide range of entries shows the richness and complexity of Iranian society, its multiple and varied facets, its expressions and outward manifestations, and its nuanced responses to political repression, instability, war, pervasive crisis and the chronic tension between modernity and tradition. Some of the entries designed to highlight these important phenomena revolve around the country's ethnic mosaic, the social role and position of women, veiling, the educational system, sports, intellectuals, the arts and artistic expression, literature, poetry, cuisine, healthcare, and the family. Other entries range from regionalism and urban development to the petroleum industry, agriculture, the banking system, issues of wealth and poverty, class structure and economic mobility, and the private sector. In a number of significant areas economic, social and cultural phenomena intersect. These intersections are reflected in entries on broadcasting and communications technology, the Internet, public relations, electronic and print media, and family planning and healthcare. A chronology, selected bibliography, and photos complement the entries.

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