

Arlene Kaplan Daniels Paper Award Report, July 16, 2026

Committee Members: Marlese Durr, Popy, Begum, Rachael Rayburn, Jinsun Yang

There were nineteen papers to review for this award, and two stood out, ranking consistently in the top five among the four review committee members. So, we have a winner and one honorable mention. Both papers fit the Arlene Kaplan Daniels Award Criteria of (1) addressing contemporary issues of women's justice locally, nationally, and globally; (2) Brings a fresh perspective to women's inclusion in global society and advancing new theoretical directions discussing women and social justice; (3) being theoretically informed and possessing empirical orientation.

Our winner, **Mahbubeh Moqadam's** timely article, "**Fractal Scaling of Feminist Politics and the Emergence of the Woman, Life, Freedom Movement in Iran,**" published in *Social Forces* (2025), offers a compelling and theoretically innovative account of how decades of women's everyday resistance culminated in Iran's 2022 Woman, Life, Freedom movement. Rather than treating the uprising as a spontaneous response to state violence, Moqadam demonstrates that it emerged through the cumulative, decentralized, and often invisible labor of feminist organizing across generations. Drawing on a rich socio-historical methodology that combines archival research with digital ethnography spanning the mid-nineteenth century to the contemporary movement, the paper traces how women continually created spaces of resistance and political possibility despite authoritarian repression.

The committee was especially impressed by the paper's original theoretical contribution. Moqadam introduces the concept of "fractal scaling," that is, how feminist politics expand recursively across historical periods, geographic spaces, everyday practices, and digital networks through decentralized feminist friendship networks. In doing so, Moqadam advances feminist social movement theory by showing how resistance is reproduced, adapted, and amplified across multiple scales without centralized leadership.

This paper exemplifies the aims of the Arlene Kaplan Daniels Paper Award by addressing a pressing issue of women's justice with global significance. Like Dr. Daniels' scholarship on women's often-overlooked labor and contributions to social life, Moqadam's analysis makes visible the cumulative, often unseen work through which women sustain resistance, forge new political possibilities, and transform society. The committee recognizes this exceptional paper for its originality, intellectual ambition, and lasting contribution to feminist sociology, social movement scholarship, and the study of women and social justice.

Honorable mention goes to **Upasana Garnaik's** "**Invisible Money and Gendered Dispossession: Relational Work in Matrimonial Disputes in India**", published in *Social Problems* (2025), which examines the role and meaning of women's money in matrimonial disputes, using 12 months of ethnographic fieldwork. The author highlights legal and familial mechanisms by which money becomes gendered. Again, the author integrates concepts from economic sociology on relational

work and Daniels' (1987) concept of invisible labor; I conceptualize "invisible money," using the "invisible money" frame to show how women's tangible economic contributions in the household are rendered invisible, alongside the "invisible labor" they perform there.