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The Culture of revolution: Revolutionary transformation in Iran

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THE CULTURE OF REVOLUTION: REVOLUTIONARY

TRANSFORMATION IN IRAN

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ABSTRACT

**The Culture of Revolution: Revolutionary
Transformation in Iran**

by

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The current challenges to the authority of the Islamic Republic and mass

demonstrations in opposition to the presidential elections of 2009 in Iran, have raised the

specter of another revolution in the country. In the 20$^{\text{th}}$ century, the country underwent

two major revolutions: the Constitutional revolution during the first decade of the century

and the Islamic revolution in the late 1970s. In this thesis, I will examine why revolutions

occur in Iran with greater frequency than other societies. By relying on a historiography

and contemporary empirical evidence, I will explore the cultural underpinnings of the

Iranian revolutionary worldview embedded in its long history of monarchism, combined

with the Shi'a sense of political activism tied to a cultural sense of justice, fairness, and

rejection of oppression.

To many, the question is not whether or not Iran will experience another revolution. It

is rather when that transformation will occur. In this thesis, I will argue that mass

mobilization, especially in response to political opposition to injustice, is a common

cultural feature of Iranians. Thus, one may very well expect that the current public

reactions to the regime will most likely result in another revolution, marking the end of

the Islamic republic in light of its repressive policies.

This study, in contrast to earlier examinations of political transformation in Iran, is largely focused on the cultural explanations rather than institutional and external dynamics. It will, hopefully, provide an insight into the dynamics of change in undemocratic developing systems in search of indigenous models of development.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

As a growing power in the Middle East, it is extremely hard to ignore the future path of the Islamic Republic of Iran; therefore it is particularly helpful to recognize the prospects of revolutionary change in a nation that appears to influence the politics of many countries within the region. Uncovering potential regime disturbances in Iran can help better predict systemic changes in nations heavily dependant on the politics of the Islamic Republic. Iran has the potential to prop up or destabilize surrounding nations therefore understanding the regime and its future is essential to uncovering the future of the region.

Over the past few months interest in Iran has increased as a result of recent election disputes that have guided the rise of the so called "green movement". Some believe the green movement is proof that another Iranian revolution is on the horizon; however others question the capacity of such a movement when taking into consideration the strength of Iran's revolutionary guards. It is extremely important to understand why scholars are hypothesizing revolutionary transformation as a probable mechanism to change rather than less radical institutional alterations. Can Iranians possibly have a cultural inclination to revolt? If two revolutions in the past century are not adequate proof of this propensity to revolt then; massive uprisings caused by the recent presidential election further provides evidence that Iranians are accustomed to reacting to perceived injustices through revolutionary behavior.

It appears that for the people of Iran, protest based behavior has become the standard method of responding to rising political expectations and political injustice. The constitutional revolution of 1906 proved that Iranians were ready to end the absolutist

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monarchy and establish a constitution that could limit the power of the monarchy. The 1979 revolution proved that Iranians were tired of the *Shah's* policies and corruption in the monarchic system. Both of these revolutions are proof that Iranians chose revolutionary transformation through mass mobilization instead of simply accepting such frustration with the system.

This thesis utilizes a cultural approach to explain the motives that drive this revolutionary behavior. Iran has encountered economic instability, uneven social and economic development, and various other issues that can not be fully explained through simple economic or structural-based approaches. There is clearly some other variable that is promoting such wide scale mass mobilization among the Iranian people that has yet to be uncovered in the political science literature. I believe the key to understanding why the Iranian masses have mobilized so often in the last century is found through careful analysis of Iran's political culture. By utilizing a cultural approach one can prove that; although economic factors played an important role in both revolutions that Iranians accepted this type of behavior as means to voicing their frustration with a system that appeared to be failing the Iranian masses.

Political cultural values vary according to the environment that surrounds the population being studied (Hitchner, 1968). This particular approach is essential to understanding a unique element of political such as revolution that appears to occur more often within a specific nation. Political culture is the values that guide and operate the political system. These values are particularly important in the case of Iran because of the unquestionable influence that religion and particular Zoroastrianism and Shi'ism has in the Iranian political system. Political-cultural theory is different and probably more

applicable to revolutionary behavior because it not only focuses on the cultural values that shape the political system but also the behaviors motivated by such values (Thomas, Ellis, Wildavsky, 1990).

To better understand the significance of the theory utilized to explain this Iranian inclination to revolt, it is best to begin by thoroughly conceptualizing the terms; political culture and revolution. Although culture is typically used in loose terms to explain the social responses of a set of people (Malinowski 1944, p. 36), this thesis further expands on the term to show that culture is far more detailed than most scholars believe it to be. By over simplifying political culture, some scholars have changed the term into a vague and nearly immeasurable concept (Wildavsky, Ellis, 1997).

Revolutions are generally considered to be immense transformations that essentially alter the major components of the system from one type to another. In the case of Iran both the constitutional revolution and the 1979 revolution resulted in key transformations in the political system. Since revolutions are comprised of large scale uprising, studying this behavior in terms of political culture is extremely important.

The recent election dilemma that sparked unrest among the Iranian people has certainly illuminated the prospects of a future revolution in Iran[1] .Growing frustration among the Iranian masses could perhaps result in a movement that even the Revolutionary Guard can not prevent. This thesis focuses on the dynamics that suggest that revolutionary change is essentially built into the political culture of the Iranian people and that, given the current situation in Iran, such a culture will inevitably result in a future revolution. I believe that if the current pattern of repression continues, it is very

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[1] A dispute in regards to the legitimacy of the 2009 presidential elections led to large scale protests in the major cities of Iran. Reformist believed that Ahmadinejad lost the election and that the government falsified votes in order to reelect Ahmadinejad.

possible that we will see small movements like the one initiated during the presidential elections of 2009 expand into much larger and more organized oppositional groups. Revolutionary transformation is a form of political change that rarely occurs within nations. The reason that such a change has occurred twice in the last century for Iranians is because they have a culture based on revolutionary values. This culture is shaped by not only their religion that promotes resistance to injustice but also their nationalist ideology that is rooted in the long and influential history of the Iranian kingship. Iran's long history and its transition to Islam has created a set of values that has encouraged not only a strong civil society but also population that is willing to sacrifice a lot for political justice. Thousands of years of history as a largely Zoroastrian nation centered on the Iranian kingship has encouraged a pride among Iranians that simply can not be overlooked. A combination of the pride resulting from the nation's history as a leading empire and its resentment for all things Arab in origin pushed Iranians to adopt a religion that not only enabled the nations' historic kingship to continue but also show that Iranians have a different way of doing things. Throughout this thesis I will explain why culture is essential to understanding revolutionary behavior and why Iranians appear to have a revolutionary culture that will eventually lead to yet another revolution in the future.

Chapter one begins by revealing the reason why a cultural approach is suitable for explaining revolutionary behavior. Throughout this section the focus will be to conceptualize revolution by providing various explanations of the term, how different scholars believe revolutions occur and which theories appear to be the most plausible. The second half of the chapter will focus on conceptualizing culture through an anthropological perceptive and providing various definitions of the term as described by

social science scholars. In this section, the focus will also be to explain why it is important to utilize a broader definition of culture and how the term relates to politics. The role that norms and values play in shaping perceptions toward leadership, regime type, institutions, political participation and various dynamics relating to politics will also be discussed. Various classical and post Marxist theories of revolution and the obstacles these theories face in explaining revolution in Iran will be revealed to explain why these theories are generally unable to explain revolutions that are not strictly economic based. It is important to then explain structural and culture based approaches revolution as well as some perceived issues with past theories and how to overcome them. The remainder of the chapter will clarify the political-cultural approach to revolution and why this method appears to work best in explaining revolutionary transformation in Iran.

Chapter two will uncover the dynamics that are the foundation of Iran's revolutionary behavior. This chapter will be centered on explaining how the combination of Iran's ancient monarchic system, Zoroastrianism and Shi'ism has led to a nationalist ideology that essentially encourages revolutionary behavior. This chapter will be focused on how Iran transformed from a Zoroastrian nation to a Shia nation in order to maintain Iran's historic monarchic system of leadership; and why this transformation was essential for the nation's autonomy. The chapter will also focus on how Shi'ism in Iran has changed in order to more properly reflect the values of the population.

Chapter three will discuss political movements such as uprising that paved the way for the constitutional revolution of 1905 and the revolution of 1979. This chapter will focus on why such movements occurred, what they intended to achieve and how the

changed the political system in Iran. The focus will be to show how protests and rebellions eventually led to the Iranian revolution of 1979.

Chapter four will focus strictly on the 1979 revolution and the dynamics that enabled such a large scale movement to occur by discussing how the absolutist nature of the monarchy resulted in bad social and economic policies, which eventually led to mass mobilization. This chapter will center on how the development of civil society in Iran enabled public mobilization and the role that Shi'ism played in strengthening civil society. Also it will focus on the roots of the revolution by explaining how the *Shah's* policies caused alienation, lack of cooptation, class concerns and economic issues shaped through cultural factors.

Chapter five will discuss the future and the potentials of revolution in Iran. This chapter will explain how the spiritual elements of the Islamic regime has become marginalized by those in power and why this has become a major concern for the Iranian people. The focus of this chapter will be to explain how the separation between the political and spiritual is changing the way Iranians feel about the Islamic leadership structure, and why change will either come via major institutional alterations or through revolutionary transformation.

CHAPTER 1

POLITICAL CULTURE AND REVOLUTION:

A CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL

ASSESMENT

Why do some nations go through revolutionary transformations while others do not? Theories of revolutions have evolved from economic methods of analysis such as Marxist based speculations to more detailed theoretical models such as Dependency and World Systems. Although such theories have appeared to work in generally explaining revolutionary outcomes, they fail to properly explain the diverse roots of many past revolutions. The last Iranian revolution was not strictly a response to economic factors, the revolution was far more detailed than most accounts suggest. Iran's last revolution was the result of political injustice, economic inequality, cultural imperialism, women's rights, religious revival and various other dynamics (Nikki Keddie, 1981). Revolutions are hardly geared toward one particular outcome as some would like to believe.[2] The Iranian revolution of 1979 is a prime example of how various groups can organize within a repressive regime to overthrow the leadership and transform the institutions within the system.

Conceptualizing Revolution

A revolution is defined by Goldstone (2003, p. 38) as "… a rapid fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, and government activity and policies".

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[2] The Iranian revolution can be considered in part as a form of Shia revivalism brought on by policies of secularization such as the White revolution. It can also be viewed as a means to attaining women's rights as many Iranian women took to the streets to show their anger with a nation that showed little regard for women's rights in regards to marriage, property, jobs etc.

Revolutions have also been defined in broader terms by scholars such as Bauer as simply social changes that are sometimes successful, often fail, but includes some form of intrusive violence in civil culture that involves the most "basic level of man's communal existence"(Johnson 1982). I look at revolutions as large scale alterations to the system through massive uprising triggered by various factors such as poor leadership, bad economic conditions and social stratification. By poor leadership I mean that the leadership has either lost control of its people or instead become too controlling and oppressive to the masses. Clearly such leadership issues can be the result of numerous factors in which I will discuss more thoroughly throughout this work but the main point to take away from this discussion is that revolutions are a fairly new phenomenon that involves considerable discontent with the system, violence, desire for change, poor leadership and of course mass mobilization on behalf of the oppressed people and eventually leadership failure which leads to an immense social and institutional change.

In the field of political science the term revolution is much more than just simply a change of great magnitude. The term represents political transformations such as the ones that occurred in France, Iran, Russia, China, Cuba and Algeria. that could easily be distinguished from the unsuccessful non-revolutionary changes that previously took place in those nations. Revolutions are violent because previous non violent methods to change are generally not successful in implementing the changes necessary by the masses. Such movements can not be characterized by just a list of causes and effects as scholars like Gottschalk (1944) have tried to formulate. They are unique to each nation and society and necessitate more in depth psycho-social analysis to uncover the rationale for such movements. When studying revolutions, we must look at the social interdependence of

man through understanding the maintenance of "order and stability" (Johnson 1982, p. 4).

The act of maintaining stability is clearly different among various societies which is why

it is important to look to the political cultural values within a society to uncover the

dynamics that cause such behavior.

<div align="center">Revolutions in Theoretical Perspectives</div>

The Radical Perspective

   Classical approaches to explaining revolutions such Marxian models look to class

consciousness as the basis for revolution. Marx believed that the "urban proletariat" (

Jack A.Goldstone, Ted Robert Gurr and Farrokh Moshiri, 1991, p. 9) would eventually

become alienated through capitalist modes of production and realize, or become

conscious, of this alienation and eventually revolt. Marx thought that revolution was

strictly the outcome of this alienation brought on by capitalist modes of productions and

that other working class members of society would be "nonrevolutionary" (p. 9).

    If alienation of the proletariat advances to class consciousness and ultimately

revolution as Marx would like us to believe, then why have such Marxist revolutions not

occurred more often? In studying Marxist approaches to revolution it becomes apparent

that economic based class consciousness is not necessarily adequate enough to cause

revolutionary transformation in all nations.[3] Through his distinction of town and country

Marx neglected the probability of peasant revolts (p .9) but more important he completely

overlooked the possibility of urban middle class revolts. Probably the most ironic part to

Marx's theory of revolution is that most revolutions have not taken place in advanced

capitalist countries as he had predicted; instead such Marxist revolutions have transpired

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[3] Revolutions have taken place in underdeveloped segments of the world (i.e Russia, Cuba, Iran, Algeria etc) or prior to development, not highly advanced capitalist nations as he had predicted.

in more underdeveloped parts of the world such as China, Cuba and Russia (Goldstone, p. 183).Although much of Marx's predictions in regards to revolution have been somewhat erroneous, his general speculation regarding alienation and class consciousness can be rather valuable (as will be revealed in the latter portion of this chapter) in explaining revolutionary transformation.

Post Marxist Approaches

Post Marxist based approaches essentially use the Marxian model; however they utilize different operational definitions than the classic approach and apply the basic principles of the theory (class struggle, exploitation, alienation, class consciousness and revolution) to different degrees (Cohan 1975, p. 59). Such models include systems based theories such as that of Galtung (1974), Wallerstein (2004), Amin (1982) and Dunn (1989) that employ a larger level of analysis than classical Marxist theories but continue to apply Marxist principles to the case studies. [4]

World-system theorists attempt to explain inequality in the global system as an outcome of bourgeoisie, core, state policies that impair periphery state growth. They argue that core states exploit periphery states for raw materials such as natural resources or labor by unilaterally establishing their prices in the global system. According to such scholars, periphery states are forced to export only materials desired by the core at prices also established by the core. Because of product specialization, periphery states become unstable when global demand for their exports decline. Therefore, the internal dynamics of periphery states are directly affected by the global fluctuation of demand through

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[4] Marx's theory of revolution focused on the interaction between society and the state whereas systems based theories use a macro level of analysis and apply the basic Marxist principles of revolution (exploitation, alienation, class consciousness) to the interaction of states rather than varying classes in a particular society.

policies that become more repressive with declining demand. Export diversification could empower periphery states to become more internally stable, however core states prohibit such reform by sustaining repression.

Nations considered part of the core are typically nations that developed during the period of industrialization. Core states are able to structurally develop by weakening other states through military force, invoking either full phased colonization or cultural/ economic imperialism (Shahid Alam, 2006). Degrees of imperialism vary with time, however the initial phase of imperialism can be characterized as physical occupation through colonization. According to such theorist; the second and most common phase of imperialism is achieved by utilizing international organizations as a means to restrain development (structural/economic) in periphery States. Colonizers are empowered with the ability to set the terms of production by either physically or fiscally influencing the periphery. They typically assign leaders within the periphery states to manage instead. Leaders of periphery states therefore become the "core" within the periphery that benefit from the imperialist policies of core states.[5] Periphery states are those that are structurally weak and undeveloped in relation to core states and are typically selected on the basis of orientalist features such as culture, race, and religion (Immanuel Wallerstein, 1982). Nearly all world-system scholars agree that periphery states are colonized with the certainty that citizens of periphery states are racially, culturally or religiously inferior to those of the core states, or as Wallerstein (1982) claims a partition between white and nonwhite actors. Orientalist convictions enable core states to dominate periphery nations

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[5] Wallerstein argues that "core states keep periphery states weak enough that the peripheral states don't have the power to set the terms of the flow of factors of productions, yet strong enough to guarantee this flow against interference of local potentates or the resistance of the local work force" (Amin, Arrighi, Gunder Frank, Wallerstein, 1982,p. 26).

with the assumption that such control is necessary in order to stabilize the global

economy.

Structural/Functionalism (Parsons, Johnsons, Skopcol)

Funcitionalist scholars such as Parsons (1967) and Johnson (1982) believe that

society can indeed be conflictual but they argue that such class conflict is simply the

result of a natural resource allocation problem (Cohan 1975, p. 120). Such theorists are

more concerned with how conflict is contained because they simplify the cause of

conflict to merely an issue of resource scarcity and avoid further discussion of other

potential causes. Johnson believes that conflict is contained because groups are able to

minimize differences through socially agreeable solutions (p. 121). Johnson also argues

that values must be adjusted to gain equilibrium through a process of evolution. He

believes that if people's values are not adjusted through evolution then a revolution will

have to result to restore the equilibrium. From a functionalist perspective there will be no

movement toward communist society, instead the people will redefine their roles and

statutes in terms of the new social values that more properly represent the environment

(Cohan, p.125). In the end scholars such as Johnson (1982) believe that revolution is not

the preferred method and certainly not the way to go to achieve change, therefore

evolution is the way to go to achieve equilibrium and stabilize society.

The problem with functionalist theories of revolution is rooted in the

oversimplification of the foundations of revolutionary behavior. Functionalists reduce the

cause of revolution down to simply a matter of resource scarcity. Although resource

allocation has been partly responsible for almost all past revolutions, it has not been the

main and only cause of systemic transformation. Revolutions are multifaceted and must

be studied as such. It is simply not possible to generalize all revolutionary behavior in terms of resource scarcity.

Cultural Politics

   Cultural theorists such as Pye (1991), Rosenbaum (1975) and Wildavsky (1997) look to the cultural factors that lead to political actions rather than institutions or the structure of society to explain a type of political behavior. Such theorist use a more comprehensive approach to explaining revolution because they believe its impossible to look merely at the structure of the political/ economic system to explain revolutionary transformation when so many other psychological factors are at play. Or as Hitchner says "Political Systems are always part of a larger environment, shaped and influenced by a broad context of forces, historical, social, philosophical, and psychological" (1968, p. 553). To understand the politics within a nation we must also comprehend the elements that influence it. Although there is little literature on political culture and revolutionary behavior it is imperative to provide the fundamentals of the theory to later show how this material will be synthesized into a more comprehensive approach to explaining revolutionary behavior.

Conceptualizing Culture

   To understand political-cultural theory one must first understand the term culture and the dynamics that are contained within the phrase. First, it is important to realize that culture is a vital and fundamental dynamic of society and that it"… matters extrinsically for outcomes" (Jan-Eric Lane, Svante O. Ersson 2005, p. 42). Culture guides the decision making process within a group and is relevant outside of the culture itself in determining how the group will react certain phenomenon's. Culture involves ethnicity, religion and

heritage and provides universal values for individuals within a group. Lane and Errson (2005, p. 23) say that culture is a "…total body of beliefs, behaviors, knowledge, sanctions, values and goals that marks the way of life of any people". It is socio-psychological phenomenon that is formed through human interaction and therefore exists among all groups (Micheal Thompson, Richard Ellis,Aaron B. Wildavsky 1990, p. 49). Equally important to understand is that cultures can be distinguished by themes that guide them.[6] One can also view culture as a secondary environment created by individuals as a response to their social and physical environment (Bronislaw Malinowski 1944, p. 36). The theory of culture focuses on why groups want what they want and how such collectivities go about getting what they want (Thompson, Ellis, Wildavsky 1990, p 97). If for instance a group wants peace, how will they go about attaining peace? Will they rebel, revolt or kill to achieve peace? Every culture has a different set of values that guides their decision making; therefore we must comprehend these values in order to understand how they will react to various political circumstances such as repression. Culture is comprised of the history preceding a group of people, the language that dictates the verbiage they use, the religion that guides their system of morality and the physical environment that they live in. Without culture individuals would have little guidance in life and be forced to make decisions based their own understanding rather than that of individuals within society that have already experienced such circumstances. Culture allows individuals to save time by adhering to socially accepted patterns of decisions making to guide their everyday lives, it simply makes life easier, and can viewed as a guide book to living within a society.

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[6] Different cultures have varying themes. By themes I mean elements found within the culture that appear to dominate the tone of the culture (i.e. freedom, rebellion, capitalism etc.).

Defining Political Culture

The study of culture only became part of political science in the behavioralist era of the 1950's-1960's (Wildavsky 1998). During that time, political scientist slowly moved away from focusing on the role of formal institutions to studying the informal behavior that were essentially said to be the moral fiber of such institutions. Wildavsky (1998 p. 1) claims that there are over 164 definitions for the term culture and that the dynamics that relate all these definitions together are that culture is a system of "values, beliefs, norms and assumptions". To condense this lengthy argument of which definition is most suitable, I provide the definitions that appear most often within the political science literature to demonstrate that although there are various definitions for the concept, they are essentially based upon the same fundamental dynamics stated above.

Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba define political culture as "…specifically political orientations and attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system" (1989, p. 12). They also define in terms of a "…set of orientations toward a specific set of social objects and processes" (p. 12). Rosenbaum (1963, p. 4) defines political culture as the orientations in which a person or group holds in regards to the fundamental elements of the political system, or if using a larger level of analysis; the way in which the masses evaluate and respond to their political officials and institutions (p.4).   Ross (Lichbach, Zuckerman 1997, p. 42) provides a far broader definition in his chapter on political culture and begins with a definition of culture as "…a system of meaning that people use to mange their daily worlds" and as "…the basis of social identity that affects how people line up and how they act in a wide range of matters".

Almond and Verba (1989, pp. 30-31) argue that political culture is the variable most often omitted that links both macro and micro politics together. They argue that micro levels of analysis are crucial for understanding the behavior of the group or macro level analysis (1980, pp. 30-31). Rosenbaum attempts to distinguish the two levels of analysis to provide two different definitions for the term political culture but Almond and Verba clearly explain how political culture can only be studied through a synthesis of both micro and macro level analysis. [7] According to Rosenbaum (1963) political cultural orientations can be divided into the three groups "Orientations toward government structures", "Orientations toward others in the political System" (p. 7), and Orientations towards one's own political activity" (p. 7). Political culture is more than just how one acts politically it is how one evaluates the particular regime in which they live within, how they react to government inputs and outputs, the political identification one chooses, the amount of trust an individual has towards others in society, the preference of rules one wishes to follow, one's political competence in addition to one's feeling of political efficacy (Rosenbaum, p. 7).

I define political culture as the collective behavior in which a group has in regards to and in response to the political system. This behavior is shaped by many factors such as values, history, language, religion and physical environment. I agree with Almond and Verba (1989) that the individual level of analysis is important for studying political culture and that the singular persons behaviors and the groups can not be studied separately. I believe this is simply because individuals constitute the group and in order to uncover patterns and build generalizations about a population we must first understand

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[7] Almond and Verba (1989) are correct in arguing that individual level of analysis, personalities of individuals etc. are necessary for understand macro or group level behavior of a society. They also argue however that this synthesis has been rarely achieved in political cultural literature (p. 31).

the behavior of the individuals within that population. Knowing the values and norms of individuals within a nation will allow us to understand what political issues are important to them and why. Such analysis enables us to see why societies behave in a particular way when situations surrounding a political phenomenon such as revolution are relatively similar. Political-cultural analysis enables us to build a clearer picture of a group or society within a nation and permits us to uncover the motive for certain behaviors that are only partially explained with preceding theories of revolution. By centering the majority of such research on widely held orientations within a society we can uncover patterns that will help us calculate how such group will behave in various circumstances. Political culture can be viewed as the glue that can either retain or disable an entire political system. Cultural theory focuses on who a person is, and what they will do and how they will react in certain politically heated situations rather than just assuming institutions implement the rules for such circumstances.

Political Culture and Political Behavior

Cultural approaches are especially useful in explaining phenomenons such as revolution because revolutions consist of large groups of people, behaving in a specific way to transform the system. Why do some groups revolt in repressive systems while others do not? Why do some nations go through a pattern of massive uprising while in bad economic conditions while other nations in the same or even worse economic conditions do not? Cultural theory allows us to uncover the answers to these questions in which most other economic and structure based theories can only partially explain. By applying a political cultural approach to revolution we can uncover how economic, social and political issues are shaped by the history, religion, language and physical

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environment of the people. Such analysis enables us to see various dimensions of revolutionary behavior that have been generally absent in past theories o revolution. [8]

In this thesis, political cultural and psychological theories are used in unison with basic Marxist principles (similar to that Pierre Bouridue's work) to explain a number of different factors that cause revolutionary behavior. By looking at the four sub categories of psychological approaches to revolution (Cohan, 1975), I provide a broader, more comprehensive explanation of revolutionary behavior.[9] It is incredibly important to use a comprehensive approach to explaining revolutionary behavior because as mentioned before, revolutions are complex phenomenons. People revolt for various reasons and although fiscal conditions play an important role in such behavior economic theories are hardly adequate in explaining the entire situation.

If Ted Gurr's theory of relative deprivation is correct in arguing that an individual's behavior to deprivation is relative to the environment in which they reside, then culture has a large impact on revolutionary behavior. One's perception of deprivation is shaped through one's history and religion; which is why people respond to political situations in a multitude of ways. Some societies are able to suppress the elements of imperialism that may lead to colonization while others are not. Some chose to give up and accept their destiny while others do not. The element that fuels such decision making is culture.

Culture and Revolutionary Behavior: Theoretical Considerations

Because revolutions are almost entirely behavior-related phenomenons, one must understand the dynamics that construct a group's behavior to uncover the various causes

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[8] Marxist theories only briefly discuss the psychology of the proletariat and hardly touch over the cultural attributes of society.
[9] Cohan (1975) provides four subcategories of psychological approaches to revolution that focus on the: background of individuals, repression of instincts, rising expectations and relative deprivation.

of revolutionary transformation. In this study, culture is utilized as the means to uncovering behavior related dynamics because culture consists of the norms and values that construct individual perceptions in regards to the political system. If political perceptions are subjective as most culturalist would assume, then it is essential to analyze the immediate environment to search for factors that are most influential in shaping such political perceptions. The political cultural factors most important within a case study depends on the society being studied; however I believe civil society, religion, economics and leadership configuration/style are the most essential components of revolutionary behavior within a nation. The approach utilized in this work to explain revolutions combines post Marxist based notions of economics such as that of Pierre Bourdieu's with culturally rooted elements.

<div align="center">An Alternate Approach</div>

Populations revolt for different reasons, which is why a political cultural approach to explaining revolution is necessary. Most social science theories are concerned with how groups attempt to get what they want.[10] So such theories are essentially focused on how certain circumstances such revolution occur rather than why they occur (Thompson, Ellis, Wildavsky, 1990). The trouble with explaining revolutions in such a way is that the how (revolt/revolution) question is already answered. Although mass mobilization is not always the way a certain group may go about getting what they want, one must ask why revolutions take place to understand why they occur among specific groups and in certain circumstances while they may not within other groups with the same or similar circumstances. Political preference construction is incredibly important in the study of

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[10] In this case study I am concerned with the wants that are demanded of the government rather than the population and society itself.

revolutions as it allows us to uncover the demands of individuals within a group that eventually leads such individuals to revolt (Thompson, Ellis, Wildavsky, p. 97). Most social science approaches provide little insight into revolutionary behavior and they tend to do little more than argue that revolutions occur as a result of instability. How individuals perceive political instability is just as important as acknowledging that instability is present within a particular system.

Cultural Theories of Revolution: Problems and Prospects

As with many concepts utilized in the field of political science the term culture is described through varying definitions. Although not all explanations are the same, most definitions of culture focus on the norms and values that influence political behavior (Wildavsky, 1998 p. 1). Although defining the term can have its challenges, issues of conceptualization are hardly unique to the study of political culture. To completely omit a variable such as culture in a study on political behavior is unfeasible because revolutions are almost entirely reliant on the (culturally formed) behavior of the masses. So although culture can be considered a broad term refering to various dynamics, it appears to work well in large scale behavior related movements such as revolution that are based on a broad range of issues. Some scholars believe that cultural based approaches are reductionist in origin and tend to be overly descriptive (Chilcote 1994, pp. 186-189). Although cultural based theories can be considered somewhat reductionist, such approaches still permit a greater of level of generalization than rational choice approaches. Some also claim that cultural theory is too concerned with "passive and conditioned behavior rather than active and spontaneous behavior" (Chilcote p. 186). All political science theories aim to build to generalizations, therefore the fact that cultural

theory focuses on patterns of conditioned behaviors is hardly unique to cultural based approaches. Spontaneous behavior simply can not be generalized in order to build a theory. And, because all theories focus on some sort of pattern building process, conditioned or repetitive behavior /situations are essential to building a solid approach.

Some argue that political cultural/psychological approaches are only utilized when contending theories fall short of answering the question at hand, or simply as a theory of last resort (Wildavsky 1998 p. 1). Although using such theories as last resort measures are not always the worst case scenario, it certainly proves that most political science scholars dislike detail orientated approaches such as political culture. The problem is not that political cultural approaches are unreliable or weak; it is that that many political scientists avoid variables such as culture because such variables are simply difficult to quantify. If social scientists can come to an agreement that culture is comprised of norms and values that shape our orientations, we as political scientist can get past the main issues that surround this dilemma and focus on qualitatively analyzing the political dynamics of culture. Yes, culture is difficult to quantify, changes little over time, and has numerous dynamics that are tricky to measure; but that only proves that we must study its political elements qualitatively over a long period of time to understand its impact on institutions, leadership and systemic transformations. To utilize micro level data such as culture to explain a macro level phenomenon such as revolution is without a doubt a challenging task; nonetheless such a study is feasible and almost certainly one of the most reasonable ways to explain reoccurring revolutionary behavior within certain systems.

Conclusion

    Revolutions occur for varying reasons therefore understanding the dynamics that lead to such behavior is essential. How these movements occur can be explained through numerous theories but almost all fall short of explaining why revolutions have almost become a norm within some nations. If internal and external factors like leadership structure and stability of the economy are relatively similar or quit possibly better in a particular nation, then why would those people revolt? How do their perceptions differ in regards to politics? What makes individuals within a particular nation chose revolutionary transformation as a means to dealing with instability? These questions can be answered by utilizing a political cultural approach to explaining revolution. Marxist based theories of revolutions focus entirely on the economic aspects surrounding massive uprising, so such theories can only be applied to revolutions that result from economic instability. Structural theories rely too much on institutions and essentially overlook the role of individuals or groups in revolutionary transformation. Cultural based approaches to explaining revolutions are far more comprehensive than theories that focus strictly on the economy or structure of institutions; because such approaches consider individual and group perceptions regarding politics. This cultural theory of revolution does not overlook the economic factors that have been found to influence revolutionary transformation; instead it utilizes parts of Marxist based theories to prove that although the economy may have an impact on behavior, group orientations in regards to the regime matter.

CHAPTER 2

IRAN'S REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE: MONARCHISM,

NATIONALISM, SHI'ISM AND

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Iran has a revolutionary culture that is comprised of a unique combination of political-religious economic and historical dimensions. The factors discussed in this chapter may not be sufficient in causing massive uprising within other nations; however such dynamics appear to cause a revolutionary culture among the Iranian people. If revolutions are simply the result of unbearable widespread oppression, then scholars such as Goldstone are correct in asking why revolutions occur in some nations or within certain groups and not in others (Goldstone, 2003). In this chapter, the focus will on Iranian monarchism, twelver Shi'ism, Iran's history of nationalism, and the notions of justice that appear to have contributed to a revolutionary behavior that has almost become second nature for the Iranian people.

Some scholars such as Samih Farsoun and Mehrdad Masheyekhi believe that political culture in Iran can be divided in four ideological groups "monarchist", "secular democratic", "Islamic" and "liberal nationalistic" (1992, p. 9). By dividing Iranian political culture into four distinct groups, I believe the scholars oversimplify political culture within Iran and overlook other important features that contribute to this revolutionary behavior. Iranian political culture is more detailed than what scholars such as Farsoun and Masheyeki (1992) believe it to be. Iranian political culture can be understood in terms of the nation's monarchist past, Shi'ism, nationalism and social

justice. Although these factors may overlap throughout the course of this chapter, they are without a doubt the components most significant to Iran's revolutionary behavior.

As discussed in the previous chapter, political culture is in essence the orientations that an individual or group may hold in regards to politics. Political orientations are shaped by the environment; therefore the history, religion, ethnicity, language and institutions essentially constitute the political culture of a given nation. The combination of these elements has created a revolutionary culture that is unique to the Iranian people. If isolated, such elements would more than likely have little impact on revolutionary behavior, however when combined, they cause Iranians to not only question their political system but also allows citizens potential opportunities to implement political transformation.

Monarchist Roots of Political Culture

The Iranian monarchic system has been a driving force in the Iranian political culture for thousands of years; however the image of the kingship has changed significantly over time. The positive image that kings held during the Achamenian dynasty (550-330 B.C.) has been essentially lost because of the path that Persian kings took in order to maintain power. What began as an empire based on social justice has transformed to an empire rooted in absolutism. The absolutist nature that the kingship took on eventually pushed Iranians to revolt. The constitutional revolution was the first step that Iranians took to free themselves of what some perceived as nothing more than a dictatorship. Over time frustration with the dysfunctional kingship was heightened to a point that essentially became unbearable to the Iranian people. The focus of this section will be on the Achamenian, Sassanid, Safavid, Qajar and Pahlavi dynasties due to their impact in

shaping Iranian political culture and identity, and because of the significant political events that took place during these dynasties.

The original inhabitants of Persian lands were believed to be Assyrians; however they were invaded by the Median and Persian tribes during the reign of King *Shalmensar* which ruled from 858-852 BC (Limbert, 1987 p. 54). During this period, the Medians overthrew the Scythians, Assyrians and "subdued" (p. 54) the Armenians of eastern Anatolia. Eventually the Achamenian Empire emerged under the rule of King Cyrus (also known as Cyrus the Great and son of Cambyses and Mondana).[11] Cyrus ultimately rebelled against the Median lord and conquered the Medes (p. 55). During the Achamenian Empire Persia was expanded to include Lydia, Afghanistan, Babylonia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Phoenecia and Palestine (p. 55). As a result, Persians were extremely proud of their great king and frequently associated their nations triumphs to Cyrus and a various other kings that followed.

<div align="center">Sassanid Dynasty (224-651 A.D.)</div>

The Sassanid dynasty was known for two major achievements that have clearly had an impact on Iran's political culture. First, the Sassanid Empire was essentially responsible for centralizing the government and dividing the Iranian society into four groups; "Priests, warriors, secretaries and commanders" (Curtis, Hooglund 2008, P. 11). Therefore the Sassanid dynasty formed social stratification within a society that was created on the bases of equality and justice. Some would say Iran's problems began with the implementation of such stratification that was essentially shunned by kings in the past. The Sassanid dynasty was also responsible for adopting a state religion (Limbert

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[11] Cambyses was Persian and Mondana was the daughter of a Median king, therefore Cyrus was representative of the unity between the two tribes until Cambyses overthrow the Medians (John Limbert, 1987 p. 54).

1987) that again was avoided by previous kings in order to promote equality and shy away from favoritism among the citizens of the nation. By declaring Zoroastrianism as the state religion, the Sassanids essentially alienated minority groups within the nation and added to the stratification that had already fragmented the Iranian people. It is nonetheless extremely important to acknowledge the policies implemented by the Sassanids because they introduced elements of Iranian politics that have carried on throughout Iran's political culture.

<div align="center">Safavid Dynasty (1501-1736 A.D.)</div>

The Safavid dynasty has also influenced the Iranian political culture in a way that is evident in the scholarly literature on Iran. Prior to the Safavid dynasty, Iranians were conquered by Arabs and forced to adopt Islam. When the Safavids came to power they not only added a religious ideology to Iranian politics but also established Shi'ism as the state religion (John Limbert 1987, p. 70). Some scholars believe that the early period of Safavid rule could essentially be considered theocratic in nature (Curtis, Hooglund 2008, p. 18). The Safavids are said to have intentionally chosen Shi'ism as the state religion because it essentially distinguished Iranians from their Sunni-Arab neighbors, created a sense of national identity that was absent during Arab rule, and legitimated their dynasty. (Limbert 1987, p. 72). During the Safavid monarchy Iranians gained a sense of national identity again that was nearly forgotten. Persians were again given the opportunity to celebrate their culture and history as a people. The famous *Shahnameh* was written during the Safavid dynasty as a means to celebrating the kings that ruled over Iran (Limbert 1987, p. 73). Although the Safavids were known for eliminating the caliphate and establishing Shi'ism as the state religion (Monochehr Dorraj 1990, p.84), they were

also known for the heavy taxation policies that depopulated cities and ruined countrysides (Limbert 1987, p. 73). The Safavids also maintained strict control over religious affairs within the nation (p. 74). During this period two types of Ulama were brought into Iranian politics; one that was appointed by the state and filled official religious posts and the other an unofficial type of Ulama that had non governmental functions (Dorraj 1990, 86).[12] The major achievement of the Safavids was clearly their role in converting Iranians to Shi'ism and instilling a national identity among Iranians that was nearly forgotten as the result of foreign occupation.

Qajar Dynasty (1794-1925 A.D.)

Iran, under the Qajar dynasty, confronted a wide range of problems and new sets of challenges. During the Qajar era, Iran was characterized by its political weakness, military and diplomatic defeats, economic stagnation, territorial loss, protests, emergence of religious movements and disputes between religious and tribal factions (Limbert 1987, pp. 75-79). The Qajar kings essentially monopolized violence, administration, and taxation in Iran and utilized such powers continuously throughout the dynasty (Ervand Abrahamian 2008, p. 8). Although Shi'ism was maintained as the state religion, it was without a doubt marginalized to empower the kingship. The loss of Georgia, Darband, Ganjeh and Baku through the Goleston Treaty with Russia proved that Iran had lost its power in the region and that the monarchy was failing its people (Limbert 1987, p. 77). Territorial losses exposed the nation's weakness to the world but the internal disputes that the Qajars provoked damaged much of the unity among Iranians. [13]

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[12] Prior to the introduction of the Shia Ulama system there was no official position for members of the Ulama in politics.

[13] Prior to Qajar rule, ethnic diversity was not an issue; however in order to strengthen the kingship, the Qajars promoted racial, religious and ethnic disputes that eventually set tribal factions against each other.

The Qajars kings enjoyed lavish trips to Europe which essentially enraged citizens of Iran who were struggling through a period of economic instability. Economic turmoil and government deficits led to further taxation which essentially reached its limit by the early 1900's (Abrahamian 2008, p 38). After selling construction rights for railways, tramways, damns and roads to a British citizen in efforts to raise government revenue, Nasser Al Din *Shah* moved on to selling a monopoly of the sale and export of tobacco to yet another foreigner (p. 38). Iranians responded to the *Shah's* tobacco policy by boycotting tobacco and causing the *Shah* to essentially reverse the concession; however numerous smaller concessions were continually implemented by the king. [14] Frustration continued to grow among the Iranian people which eventually led to the constitutional revolution of 1906. The Qajar king who followed only continued the legacy of his predecessors by borrowing money from European banks in return for additional concessions (Limbert 1987, p. 79).

Throughout the period of the Qajar dynasty, Iran suffered ethnic, religious and tribal fragmentation. Religion was marginalized in order to strengthen the kingship, repression increased, taxation increased as did general frustration with the system. The monarchy had created a distance between itself and its citizens that led to boycotts, protests and eventually revolts. The absolutist nature of monarchical rule essentially alienated the Iranian people by disregarding Iranian values such as social justice.

<u>Pahlavi Dynasty 1926-1979 A.D.)</u>

The Pahlavi dynasty had to contend with similar issues and forces in a more or less unfriendly international political environment as the previous Qajar rulers. Reza *Shah* tried to emphasize the Persian roots of Iran through increased secularization and limiting

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[14] It is said that even a number of the Shah's wives participated in the boycott.

the power of the Ulama but his policies only intensified the problems the Pahlavi dynasty would face in the future(Limbert, p. 85). Taxes, alienation and repression increased but eventually became unbearable during the reign of Mohammad Reza *Shah*. The policies the Pahlavi dynasty pursued hardly supported social justice, equality and the communal rights that Iranians valued throughout their long history. Over time the Iranian kingship had simply changed into a mechanism of control and absolute rule rather than an institution in which Iranians could identify with.

Persians initially began to question the legitimacy of the monarchy during the Sassanian era as it became authoritarian while being empowered by the Zoroastrian faith (p. 60).[15] The relationship between the people and the monarchy changed after the Achamenian dynasty; repression increased because the majority of the kings following the Achamenian Empire did not achieve legitimacy in the eyes of the people. Retaining the throne essentially became more important to the Persian kings than social justice. [16] Iranian perceptions in regards to the kingship shifted over time to eventually represent the anger and frustration that Iranians felt. It is easy to see that Iranian political culture is heavily influenced by its long monarchic tradition.

There is no doubt that the absolutist nature in which the Iranian monarchy took on over time, led to a revolutionary culture among Iranians. The policies in which the later kings pursued seemed to be geared around gaining more power for the kingship rather than protecting and providing for the Iranian people. The monarchic traditions of the past were no longer as important as ideals such as social justice for the Iranian people.

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[15] "Sasan was local lord of Fars and keeper of the shrine of the goddess Anahita at Istakhr, a religious center near persopolis" (Limbert 1987 p. 60). During the Sassanid dynasty, the kingship was essentially maintained by leaders and lords of the Zoroastrian faith.

[16] Anushiravan was the last "just" (Limbert, 1987 p. 61) king that Iranians would encounter throughout their history. He ruled from 531-579 during the Sassanid dynasty.

Iranians today reminisce of the old kingship that promoted justice, equality and diversity and perhaps question what happened to such values that were the pillars of the old Persian society. Can any other king be as great as Cyrus, or are Iranians just living in a dream? Was *Anurshirvaran* really the most just king? Do Iranians truly believe these men were so great? It appears that most Iranians do deem the greatness of the ancient kings that ruled Persia to be true. The greatness of such kings whether true or not has created a value system for Iranians that carries on to this day. Iranians truly believe that the nation was established by the great king Cyrus and attribute their general shortfalls as a people to the leaders that ignored the diversity and justice that the nation was founded upon. Iranians also seem to believe that their role as citizens is to achieve the glory that Persia once had by restoring justice within the nation. How justice and similar notions are achieved can be debated, however, the Constitutional Revolution of 1905 and the 1979 revolution are symbolic of how far Iranians will go in order to try and implement their social vision and realize these ideals.

Nationalist Roots of the Iranian Political Culture: Zoroastrianism,

Monarchism and Shi'ism

Iranian nationalism was initially based on the history of the Persian Empire and its role as one of the largest and most dominant empires of the time. The Persian Empire during Achamenian dynasty had physical boundaries that consisted of current day Iran and segments of India, Armenia, Afghanistan, Assyria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and Libya. Although expansionist, the Persians were able to dominate parts of the world and accept the various races that became part of the vast empire. It appears that present day Iranians have formed a sense of superiority

based on their expansionist history and that this nationalism although manifested in Persian art, music, customs and history has formed a bond between Iranians of almost all ethno-linguistic backgrounds.[17] The Persian Empire was unique because of the racial, ethnic and religious diversity found among its citizens. Modern day Iran is no different. Mackey claims that although present day "Iran is cast in a mold of Persian language and culture, it contains within its borders other groups who speak their own languages and possess variations of Persian culture" (Mackey 1998, p. 2). The diversity of the nation proves that nationalism does not have to be comprised of strictly ethnic elements in order to build a bond among it citizens. Nationalism is based on the history that certain people share that not only unites them but also distinguishes them from others outside of their group. [18]

Some scholars believe that Iranian nationalism stems from the nation's long history of foreign invasion that dates back thousands of years. (Farsoun and Masheyehki 1992, p.84). Foreign occupation in Iran began with the Greeks in 334 BC and continued with the Arabs in the seventh century, Turks in the eleventh century, and eventually the Mongols in the thirteenth century (p. 84). How this history shaped the Iranian psyche is hardly debatable; Iranians have formed a sense of distrust that is nearly impossible to overlook. Iranians are known for their insecurity and mistrust which is the result of foreign invasions that led to war, bloodshed and destruction; that was only partially stabilized nearly six hundred years later (Amuzegar 1991, p. 99-101). Extended periods

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[17] Iran currently has over 150 languages spoken within its borders, the ethnic and linguistic diversity is absolutely visible within the nation however Farsi or Persian is the language spoken by nearly all inhabitants of Iran. Azari Turkish is the 2nd most common language in Iran and the 2nd largest group in Iran as well.

[18] For Iranians nationalism serves a mechanism of unity and a means to distinguishing themselves from their Arab neighbors. Iranians have tried for years to show to the world that although they are Muslim they are different from Arabs in that they speak a different language, look different, have a different history and are racially and ethnically very different from the Arabs who conquered them.

of instability essentially caused Iranians to be become fearful of not only foreign occupation but foreigners in general. For generations, Iranians have felt a sense of helplessness which has contributed to this revolutionary culture that they are experiencing today.

Persians have been invaded numerous times throughout history however their culture had remained relatively untouched until the absorption of the Arab-Islamic Empire. Although Iranians adhered to Islam they were able to maintain most of their language by adopting only the Arabic alphabet (Mackey 1998, p. 41). Their shared cultural ties to the past were only partially lost with the transition to Islam. Therefore, Persians were able to maintain the most important elements of their culture. While adhering primarily to the religious elements of Arabic culture, Iranians were able to preserve the various cultural, linguist, and territorial bonds that kept them united and contributed to a strong sense of nationalism.[19]

Memories of past invasions left Iranians in fear for the survival of not just the people but their precious history that had survived mainly through Iran's historic monarchy. This memory of "negative and exaggerated fear of foreigners" eventually transitioned to a modern form of nationalism, based on national autonomy during the "…sixteenth century reunification of the Iranian territory under the Safavid dynasty" (Farsoun, Masheyehki 1992, p. 85). During this period Twelver Shi'ism became the official religion of the state. Therefore Iranians were essentially able to take credit for a form of Islam that not only distinguished them from Arabs but also appeared to align more closely with their leadership structure.

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[19] Iranians chose Shi'ism as the state religion because Shi'ism also served as a form of distinction from the largely Sunni Arab population.

During the 1930's and 1940's Iranians revitalized Persian culture by promoting ancient festivals based on Zoroastrian traditions such *Nowruz, Mehregan, Tirgan* and *Sadeh* and by promoting Persian folklore to again show that their culture was not only old but able to adapt to the nation's new Muslim ways (Fazeli 2006, p.62). In effort to reunify the nation, Reza *Shah* renamed the nation from Persia to Iran in 1935 (Mackey 1998, p 178).[20] By changing the nation's name back to Iran, Reza *Shah* essentially distinguished Iranians from their Arabic neighbors who were perceived to be backward, uneducated and mostly tribal people. Reza *Shah* wanted the world to know that Iranians were different, looked different, spoke a different language, practiced a different religion and had very little aside from elements of their religion in common with Arabs.

To conclude, Iranian nationalism is a diverse concept that dates back to creation of the Persian Empire that emerged during Achamenian dynasty. The belief that Iranians are superior to others stems from the national history that Iranians of all races and ethnicities share. The ethno-linguistic diversity although problematic throughout the Qajar dynasty, has only had a limited impact on national unity. This is because Iranians associate with a national identity that dates back to long history of accommodating ethnic and religious diversity. Iranians generally appear to associate with their nation and its history more than they do the ethnic or linguistic factors that set them apart. Nationalism to the Iranian people is more than just simply associating with the land; it's a connection that Iranians share with the unique history of the land.

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[20] Iran essentially means land of the Aryans. It was a term that distinguished Iranians who were Indo-European from their Semitic neighbors.

Shi'a Roots of Iranian Political Culture

During the Arabs conquests Iranians were forced to either adopt Islam or pay taxes and maintain their own (Zoroastrian) faith.[21] Some of the most religious segments of society escaped to India to continue practicing their religion while the remainder of Iranians either adopted to the Sunni form of Islam or paid taxes to preserve their faith.[22] According the Mackey (1998, p. 48), conversion to Islam was relatively easy because Islam carried many components of their own monotheistic (Zoroastrian) faith which essentially enabled them to retain most of their culture; while practicing Islam.[23] Some believe that Iranians converted to Islam with ease because the social stratification created by the Sassanids essentially caused Iranians to lose their loyalty to Persian traditions (Limbert 1987, p. 63).

The component of Islam that did however hamper Iranian culture was clearly in the leadership structure of the faith. Muhammad believed that people were equal before Allah, which left no place in Islam for the Iranian kingship (Mackey 1998, p. 49). Persians refused to let go of the kingship and the memories of the great kings that they believed were responsible for creating Iran, it's culture and it's people.[24] For Iranians, Shi'ism became the religion that not only allowed for the existence of the Iranian kingship but also supported the main components of the Islamic value system.

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[21] Those who paid Jizya (taxes) for refusing to convert to Islam remained part of the society as Zimmi (protected foriegners) that had only limited rights (Bauson 2000 p. 111).
[22] The Arab conquests began in 641 A.D., during the Sassanid Dynasty that was ruled by king Yazdegird III (Bauson 2000 p. 111).
[23] Mackey claims that the conversion to Islam was not difficult for Iranians because Islam was monotheistic, promoted the fear of evil, existence of angels, heaven, hell and justice. The gradual transition worked well because Iranians essentially replaced Ahura Maza with Allah and Zoraster with Muhammad.(1998, p. 48).
[24] Mackey claims that "although language, literature, art and architecture all acquired Arabic influences under the mandate of religion, the soul of Persian ethos remained untouched by the Arabs" (Mackey, 1998, p 49).

Shi'ism essentially surfaced because of dispute as to who would succeed Muhammad.

Shi'ites believed that Ali should be the successor to the prophet Muhammad while

Sunni's believed the line of succession belonged to the caliphate (Momen 1985, p. 62).

The Shia movement was nothing more than dispute of political leadership that resulted in

a religious movement, eventually adopted by the Iranian people. The movement was said

to have started when Ali retired from his position as a community and military leader to

succeed the prophet Muhammad (pp. 61-62). Some scholars such as Momen believe that

Ali must have received some type of designation from Muhammad because Arab customs

of inheritance would have given Muhammad's uncle the position; therefore many believe

that Ali must have been told by Muhammad himself that he would succeed the prophet

(p. 61-62). [25] Ali, however, was not chosen as the successor to the prophet. Years of

battles between the followers of Ali and the Ummayads led to the formation of various

splinter groups that Ali and his followers continually battled with (Armstrong 2002, p

35). After Abu Bakr, Omar and Osman, Ali is finally selected as the caliph but only

serves a five year term before he is stabbed to death on the 21st of Ramadan (Shirazi

1980, preface). Ali's life and death essentially became an icon of disunity and instability

surfacing from political fragmentation among the Muslim population. To Shi'i Muslims,

Ali's existence signified the magnitude of social justice in a largely unjust world.

Iranians embraced a branch of Islam that seemed to represent elements of their

Zoroastrian past.[26] Iranians generally believed that Shi'ism was the only true form of

Islam and that they were indeed true Muslims that based their faith and values on the

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[25] As the son-in-law of Muhammad "Ali was supported by the ansar of Medina and those Meccans that resented the rise of the Umayyads" (Armstrong 2002 p. 33).
[26] Mackey describes the distinction between these two religions as: "Sunni orthodoxy portrays Arab culture, Shia nonconformity mirrors Persian culture" (1998, p 41)

components of justice and equality that Muhammad himself and past Zoroastrian leaders encouraged. In a translation of Shariati's speech on Shi'ism, a scholar by the name of Shirazi explains how Shi'ites differ from their Sunni counterparts. [27] He argues that Shi'ites are more concerned with justice, and equality rather than the "opulent mosques" and fraudulent Sunni leadership system (Shirazi 1980, p. 8). Shariati claimed that Shi'ism promotes a sense of vengeance and revolt that will ultimately result in the downfall of the tyrants that spread justice by the sword (1980, p. 12).

Iranians appear to have selected a form of Islam that not only sheltered the monarchy but also emphasized social justice arguably more than the Sunni form Islam. According to Momen (p. 258-259) however, Shariati claimed that the Safavids changed the pure form of Alid Shi'ism that represented the socially active form of Islam to a type of faith that essentially waited for the Twelfth Imam to come. [28] Shariati argues that the Safavids turned a revolutionary religion into a faith that utilized *taqiyah* [29] far too often (Shirazi 1980, p. 2). Scholars such as Shariati questioned the legitimacy of the Safavid form Shi'ism because the Safavid kings endorsed a sense of obedience through *taqiyeh* rather than adhering to the original form of Shi'ism that stood for justice. While in power the Safavids created political posts strictly for members of *Ulama*. By doing so the Safavids

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[27] "Shi'ites do not accept the path chosen by history. They negate the leadership which ruled over history and deceived the majority of people through its succession to the prophet, and then, supposed support of Islam and fight against paganism. Shi'ites turn their backs on the opulent mosques and magnificent palaces of the caliphs of Islam and turn to the lonely, mud house of Fatima. Shi'ites who represent the oppressed, justice seeking class in the caliph system, find, in this house, whatever and whoever they are seeking…" (Shirazi 1980 p. 8)

[28] "Shariati in particular presents a theory that the original 'pure' Shi'ism (which he calls Alid Shi'ism) was perverted in the Safavid times so that the socially active 'Alawi Shi'ism in which each Muslim had an obligation to strive for achieving the ideal Shi'i society became the passive Safavid Shi'ism in which each Muslim enjoined to sit back and wait for the advent of the hidden Imam who put everything right" (Momen 1985, pp. 258-259).

[29] Taqiyah or dissimulation "is a practice in which a person hides his or her religion or religious practice in situations that would cause a definite or probable danger as a result of the actions of those who are opposed to his or her religion or particular religious practices" (Shirazi 1980, p. 2).

created a cohesion between the state and religious establishment that was absent while the Arabs ruled the nation. As time passed, however, scholars such as Shariati and various members of *Ulama* began to question the legitimacy of the kingship and the doctrine that it endorsed.

<div align="center">The Shi'a Religious Establishment</div>

The religious establishment in Iran has varied in regards to its political involvement, but, its role in Iran has been evident since the period in which Islam took hold of the nation. [30] Prior to the Safavid dynasty, Islam was simply a religious institution with only a limited role in politics; however the Safavid's changed the function of the *Ulama* by creating a unity between the two institutions. As would be expected though, political involvement of the *Ulama* did however vary in regards to individual preference. Some clerics chose to keep their role limited to only issues that directly affected religious laws while others decided their function in the political system should be me more universal. [31] Some clerics were even ostracized and attacked by theological students for their involvement in politics therefore in certain cases the clergymen at Qom had no other choice but to abandon clerics that chose such paths. [32]

The *Ulama's* power and role in politics continued to fluctuate throughout time. During the Qajar dynasty its power was limited because of the absolutist nature of the

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[30] Iran is not a secular nation. Religion and politics have been intermixed ever since the Sassanid dynasty declared Zoroastrianism as the state religion and this policy continued even after the nation became Islamic. In more recent times Ayatolla Boroujerdi, Ayatollah Seyyed Kazem Yazdi and Ayatollah Haeri were said to have been clerics that steered away from political involvement unless laws or bills appeared to be in variance of religious rules(Farsoun, Masheyekhi 1992 p. 59).

[31] Ayatolloah Kashani pushed for the religious establishment to have a greater role in Iranian politics; however the religious center of Iran (Qom) remained indifferent toward his actions. Clerics such Boroujerdi kept their distance from him because of his involvement politics (Farsoun, Masheyekhi 1992, p. 60).

[32] Ayatollah Seyyed Ali-Akbar was "…ostracized after his involvement in politics in 1953. Theological students attacked his home as well as the bookstore owned by his son in the Qom bazaar, and the Ayatollah had no recourse but to flee Qom" (Farsoun, Masheyekhi 1992, p. 60).

kings however the religious establishment attempted to gain political influence once again during the Pahlavi dynasty. In order to partially deal with the growing power of the *Ulama*, the *Shah* started the White revolution (1963); a series of reforms that would essentially interfere with the role of the religious establishment. [33] The *Shah* perceived the *Ulama's* behavior as a threat to him and the kingship in general. In a sense, the White revolution was simply a way for the *Shah* to prove that the power of the kingship was far greater than that of the religious establishment. The *Ulama* continued to disagree with the *Shah*; however the *Shah* responded by portraying the religious establishment as a barrier to Iran's modernization process. [34]

   Ayatollah Khomeini changed the role of the clergy and brought a sense of politicization to the religious establishment that was generally absent in the past.[35] Many believe that his charismatic personality changed the way the Iranian people perceived the *Ulama* and essentially gave the religious establishment the political authority that esd needed in order to change the system. The clerical establishment became more politically active over time in order to respond to the policies that attempted to eliminate clerical interference in politics. Over time the clash between the monarchy and the religious establishment grew, which eventually led to a revolution in 1979 that essentially put an end to the Iranian monarchy and handed control over to the *Ulama*.

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[33] The White revolution essentially dealt with "reorganization of government, privatization of certain class of government owned factories, profit sharing plans for some workers, and the enfranchisement of women…" Mackey 1998. p. 220).
 Some members of religious establishment opposed segments of the reforms; mainly those that dealt with land reform and the measures that provided women with the right to vote (Kamali 1998. p 145).
[34] "The Clergy was characterized as having rejected modernization to the extent that they banned radio programs, considered modern education as a corrupt institution and regarded civil service work as vulgar" (Farsoun, Masheyekhi 1992, p. 61).
[35] He portrayed a sense of connection between the religious establishment and the people that had not occurred in the past. He accepted modernization, and connected with the members of the younger generation in a way that no other cleric had done before (Farsoun, Masheyekhi 1992, p. 65).

The Shi'a clerical establishment in Iran has also had some influence in shaping political culture within the nation. The positions in which the *Ulama* were given in the government distinguished them from the Sunni form of leadership and bestowed a power to the clerical establishment that was never before seen within the Islamic community. The Sunnis shunned the Iranian Shi'ites for politicizing Islam but the Iranians believed that their form Islam was better suited for their monarchic system. The role of the religious establishment has continued to grow ever since the 1979 revolution and this transition has without a doubt influenced political culture within the nation.

Today, Shia political culture is visible through much of the rituals and traditions found in Iran. Such rituals and traditions include prayers, narrative recitations and street processions.[36] These rituals include a prayer known as Namaz that is preformed on a daily basis. In addition to the daily prayers in Iran, there is a Friday prayer, in which Muslims typically attend the Mosque to pray and listen to members of the religious clergy discuss a variety of matters that may at times include current political issues.[37] Friday prayer is a time in which clerics can preach about morality but also occasionally discuss issues that one may believe is out of the realm of the religious establishment. The ritual of narrative recitation can be considered to be one of the most politicized traditions of Shi'ism within Iran. Although according to Tamadonfar this ritual is practiced throughout the year, it appears to be most intense during the month of Muharram (Ray Brown and Michael Marsden 1994, p. 26). During this month Shi'ites essentially narrate the life of the Shi'a martyrs on the streets in their homes and the mosques. The political

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[36] Tamonadonfar explains that "While such rituals are practiced primarily by the Ithna 'Ashari (Twelver) Shi'is, other extremist and moderate Shi'is also exercise these rituals" (Brown, Marsden 1994. p. 26).
[37] Matters of politics are widely discussed by the clerics during Friday prayer however other matters such as the family, morality etc. are also discussed.

motive behind such narrations is clear; Iranians want to remind everyone of the injustice

that Shi'ites have endured throughout history and that such injustices will neither be

forgiven nor forgotten. Street processions also serve as reminder that justice and sacrifice

are important components of Shi'ism. [38] Such processions are followed by mini ritual

plays that essentially reenact "…the events of Karbala and martyrdom of Hussein"

(Brown, Marsden 1994, p. 28). [39]

Political culture within Iran is clearly influenced by the history of Shi'ism and its

establishment as the state religion. Iranian Shi'ites continue to remind themselves of the

injustice that Ali encountered at the hand of the Sunni Caliphs and associate such

injustices to the leaders that repressed them throughout history. The political dimensions

of Shi'ism have been ingrained in to Iranian culture in a way that is simply impossible to

refute. Even the religious minorities within Iran can associate with the political

dimensions of the state religion. Shi'ism simply acts as reminder to the Iranians that they

as people must continue to pursue social justice in what they perceive as an unjust world.

<center>The Political Roots of Social Justice</center>

The concept and the struggle to achieve social justice plays an important roles in

guiding the decisions and thought process of many Iranians. What justice means to

Iranians is hard to explain because Iranians tend to feel the concept emotionally rather

than actually defining it. [40] The following section will attempt to explain how the

concept of social justice originated as a component of political culture, what it means,

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[38] Tamadonfar explains that during such processions men walk the streets and beat their chests with either
their fists or chains and sometimes beat their foreheads with swords to ritualize the death of Hussein and
his companions (Brown, Marsden 1994. p. 26).

[39] According to Tamadonfar such plays became popular in Iran because of support from the Safavid and
Qajar leaders and later gained popularity in Iraq and Lebanon as well (Brown, Marsden 1994. p. 28).

[40] Mackey argues that "Because the concept of justice is as much mystical as a concrete bond between ruler
and ruled, Iranians feel justice more than they define it" (1998 p. 24).

<center>40</center>

how it has transferred throughout time as well as its impact on Iranian political culture today.

   To Iranians social justice fundamentally equates to acting in a way that supports the values of one's community rather than one's individual self interest. Therefore the needs of society as a whole are perceived to be more significant than one's individual needs. Social justice promotes honesty, equality and responsibility to the community. The concept also allows for a sense of injustice to run deep as Iranians have long memories regarding arbitrary rule, foreign encroachment, and other similar situations where the values of the community are either disregarded or trampled upon. Iranians make communal issues personal therefore instead of emotionally detaching themselves from acts that violate the values of society, they personally involve themselves in such issues. As a result the line between personal and communal is blurred within Iranian culture.

   The concept of social justice essentially became embedded within the Iranian culture through its pre-Islamic religious roots. Zoroastrianism essentially explains life as a battle between good and evil or those who are just and unjust. Iranians therefore attained a dichotomous perception of the world through their Zoroastrian roots. Zoroastrians also believed that in order for a leader to maintain legitimate control over a nation he or she must rule a society based on justice; therefore Persians believed that their leaders must consider the needs of the Persian community before considering one's own personal needs (Mackey 1998, p. 23). A leader that failed to consider the needs of his people was simply not a legitimate leader. Due to Zoroastrian influence, kings during the Achamenian and Sassanid dynasty were generally proponents of a Persian political system rooted in social justice. King Cyrus (of the Achamenian Empire) and King

Anurshiravan (of the Sassanid Empire) were both believed to have emphasized a Persian value system rooted in social justice.[41]

The importance of social justice appears to have carried on with the nation's introduction to Shi'ism. Many Shi'ites believe that Ali should succeed Muhammad simply because he was the first convert to Islam and also because Muhammad had personally introduced him to many as his successor (Tabatabai 1975, p. 40). Sunnis however maintained control of the Caliphate; during which time supporters and descendants of Ali began political movements in opposition to what they considered an illegitimate line of succession.[42] The deaths that resulted from the battle for leadership essentially lent to a political culture rooted in social justice that continues to this day.[43] The sacrifice that both Ali and Husayn made in order to restore the leadership structure of Islam is viewed in a positive light by Shi'ites. Shi'ites mourn the death of the martyrs today but celebrate their role in attempting to restore social justice in world that appears to have moved away from such values.[44]

Today Iranian political culture is heavily rooted in the values of both Zorastrianism and Shi'ism. Protests and small uprisings have become a norm in Iran because of the way that Iranians perceive social injustice and their obligatory role in obtaining it.[45]

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[41] "Khosrow I Anurshiravan (ruled 531-579), marked the apogee of Sassanian wealth, power and prestige. In Iranian national tradition, Khosrow I was the pre-islamic monarch. Islamic writers have called him al-adil ("the just") and have portrayed his rule as the model of kingship" (Limbert 1987, p. 61).

[42] Shi'ism has been distinguished from Sunni Islam in that it from the beginning promoted revolutionary behavior through protest (Tabatabai 1975, p. 41)

[43] Husayn the grandson of the prophet Muhammad continued the battle for leadership with the support of many Muslims, however as he approached the Umayyad camp to show the letters that prove that he had backing, he and his small army of approximately 72 armed men and women were killed. The day that Husayn was killed by the Umayyad's is know today as Ashura. (Momeni 1985 p. 30).

[44] Social justice in the form of martyrdom was not unique to the Islamic faith as it was practiced and endorsed by early Zoroastrian prophets such as Mani. Dorraj explains that "Refinement of the soul was, for Manichaeans, possible only through self-denial and avoiding the pleasures of the flesh" (Dorraj, 1997. p.4)

[45] Iranians believe that it is their obligation as a people to recognize and respond to injustice.

Dishonesty or deception to one member of society is translated as social injustice to the entire Iranian community. Iranians share the problems of society with each other; therefore they essentially translate bad leadership as an injustice to the Iranian people that requires massive response. Iranians tend to respond to social injustice through protests that if large enough can result in revolutionary transformation.

Conclusion

Political culture is a combination of values that has been accumulated over time to represent orientations toward one's government structure, toward others in political system and toward political activity. Iranians clearly have a strong sense of identity that dates back to the history of the nation as a leading empire. Although Iranian identity has shifted over time as result of various political transformations, certain elements have remained constant. The elements that truly identify Iranian political culture are based on a combination of components that when alone, have little impact on revolutionary behavior, but when combined result in a revolutionary political culture that is, to a degree, uniquely Iranian, but also somewhat typical of political culture in other parts of the Developing World . The monarchic traditions within Iranian culture, the nationalistic ideology, religious impact of Zoroastrianism and Shi'ism and perceptions of social justice all create this revolutionary culture that exists within Iran. When met with injustice Iranians essentially think of their past as a powerful empire, and envision the great kings that ruled them, the Martyrdom of Ali and Hussayn and the massive instability that foreign occupation caused for the Iranian people. These components of the ancient culture cause a sense of fear, anger and insecurity that essentially translates into this revolutionary behavior that has been witnessed in the past. The general Iranian psyche is

therefore comprised of a combination of the social, historical, religious and political developments of the nation. Iranians to this day feel the glory of ancient Persia and its Zoroastrian past that built the nation but they also relive the moments in history in which Iranian Kings abused and oppressed them. Their pride stems from such unique components as does their revolutionary behavior that has almost come to define them as both a people and a nation.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL ANTECENDENTS TO THE

IRANIAN REVOLUTION

Protests and small uprising are hardly unique in Iran as such events tend to occur on a

daily basis within the nation; however larger uprisings that successfully gain the attention

of the world generally occur less often. Iran has encountered a series of large scale

political protests that serve as evidence that Iranians have a culture of revolutionary

behavior which is the outcome of a clash between the absolutist nature of the Qajar

monarchy and the values of the Iranian people.

The Tobacco Rebellion of 1891-1892

Nasser Ad Din *Shah*, a Qajar Monarch, became renowned in Iran amongst many for

laying the foundation for political instability that would eventually lead to the Iranian

Revolution. During the period in which he was in power Nasser Ad Din *Shah* lost large

segments of Iranian land to Russia thereby creating an image of failure for the Iranian

people (Nikki Keddie 2003, p. 41). [46] Aside from losing land to Russia, the Qajar king

increased taxes and reduced Iranian sovereignty through concessions that essentially

handed the Iranian market over to foreigners (Mansoor Moaddel 1994, p. 10). In addition

to the concessions and land loss, Nasser Ad Din *Shah* heightened general disapproval

among the Iranian masses by constantly traveling the world on tax payer dollars

(Limbert, 1987). Nasser Ad Din *Shah* was generally disliked by the Iranian population

because his policies increased taxes on Iranians who were already suffering through

economic hardship. The *Shah* not only proved that he was bad at protecting his nation but

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[46] The 1828 treaty of Turkamanchai essentially ceded land and cash to Russia for losing the war, set a five
percent tariff limit on Russian goods and gave Russia the right to handle issues with consular employees
within the Russian court system rather than the Iranian court system (Nikki Keddie 2003, p 41).

also that he had no expertise in handing the economic concerns of the Iranian people. During the period in which he ruled, Iran as a nation fell apart.

Protests began in the early nineteenth century in response to a number of policies that effectively hijacked the Iranian commerce industry and pushed Iranian merchants out of the market. The first of such protests started in 1837 as result of what Iranians perceived to be low quality British fabrics being imported into Iran. The Protests were initiated when the British company responsible for importing such low quality fabrics opened a branch in Tabriz (Moaddel 1994, p. 8). Iranians continued protest behavior by also refusing to consume tea because Russian Georgians had taken control "… of the principle traffic in the area where native merchants had none" (p. 8). Iranians were frustrated with how European merchants had taken over their market and asked the government to intervene in order to prevent Persian manufacturers from failing (Moaddel p. 8). The economic issues brought on by Western control of the market basically undermined Iranian handicrafts and transformed carpet weavers into low wage laborers (Keddie 2003, p. 58). Besides taking business from Iranian merchants; the concessions given to the Europeans by Nasser Ad Din *Shah* clearly interfered with the nationalist ideology of the Iranian people.

Nasser Ad Din *Shah* also sold the rights to establish the first state bank in Iran to a forienger. In January 1889 the *Shah* granted a concession for establishing a state bank in Iran to a wealthy English man by the name of Baron Julius De Reueter (Brown, E.G., 1966, p.31). The concession permitted the bank to have exclusive rights to issuing bank notes as well as exploiting mineral resources within Iran (1966, p. 31). Nasser Ad Din *Shah* had not only given major segments of the natural resource sector to foreigners but

he also handed the rights to build railways and the first official banking system to foreigners as well. His policies clearly showed his disregard for Iran's autonomy as well as the livelihood of his citizens. How were Iranians to survive when the Iranian job market has essentially been handed over to foreigners? Some would say that Nasser Ad Din *Shah* was anything but a king; he failed at protecting his nation from war, lost segments of Iran and sold the Iranian merchant industry to foreigners. In the eyes of Iranians, Nasser Ad Din *Shah's* actions equated to selling the entire nation of Iran, its land and its people to foreign control for simply personal profit.

The Iranian Tobacco rebellion is the first movement of the 19th century to properly portray what some would believe as the start of Iran's modern revolutionary culture. The tobacco movement is also a good example of how Nasser Ad Din *Shah's* policies severely differed from the Iranian value system and how Iranians chose to manage this divergence of values through revolutionary rooted behaviors such as protests and rebellions. It is important to note that such movements were relatively absent in the previous Iranian dynasties. The reason for such is because Iranians were provided with a certain amount of freedom in regards to conducting business that was taken away from them through Nasser Ad Din *Shah's* policies. His actions essentially demonstrated how little his values as a leader aligned with the values of the Iranian people.

The Tobacco Concessions

The famous tobacco rebellion of Iran began in response to policies implemented by Nasser Ad Din *Shah* while on a trip to Europe. It believed that negotiations for the concessions probably began around 1898 but were not fully implemented till 1890 (Brown 1966, p. 33). The tobacco concession consisted of an agreement to essentially

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rent the entire tobacco industry to a British man by the name of G.F. Talbot (1966, p. 33).

Through this agreement, Talbott was granted control over the production, sale and export

of tobacco in Iran for fifty years in return for an annual rent of 15,000 pounds, one

quarter of the annual profit and a five percent dividend on the capital (1966, p. 33). The

concession led to the creation of the Tobacco corporation of Persia which was a

corporation managed solely by the British. At the time there was over 200,000 Iranians

involved in the tobacco industry and approximately 10 million consumers of Iranian

tobacco, so the impact on the Iranian economy was undeniable, Iranians clearly lost jobs

as result of the concession (Mohsen Milani 1988, p. 48).

Nasser Ad Din *Shah's* policies did not take into consideration those employed by the

Iranian tobacco industry and the impact that such policies would have on the general

public. It is however possible that Nasser Ad Din Shah was fooled by the British into

believing the tobacco concession would be good for the Iranian people because foreign

propaganda in support of the tobacco concession was everywhere. [47] It is hard to say if

Nasser Ad Din *Shah* was truly attempting to Europeanize or as he claimed modernize his

nation as he and much of his supporters claimed or if he was simply granting these

concessions to quickly raise revenue for his own personal use. Nonetheless the

concession that he granted had severe and negative consequences for the Iranian people.

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[47] E.G. Brown (1966. p. 34) discusses a segment that was published in Iranian paper in support of the tobacco concession that explained how the quality of tobacco will essentially go up because it will pass through fewer hands and avoid dilution. According the Antoine Kitabji; as the merchants receive the tobacco they mix it with other products to increase profit and with the concession such issues will essentially be eliminated therefore consumers will receive purer tobacco. Antonie also claimed that "The growers will be the most favored in this matter, because the merchants do them great injury by depreciating their goods, in order to purchase at reduced prices and long term, whilst your company will be careful to encourage the production of better qualities by paying remunerative prices, and by making advances" (1966, pp. 34-35).

It appears that Iranians were initially taken by surprise when news of the tobacco concession surfaced because details of the concession were published in a British paper before they were revealed in Iran. Iranian newspapers translated segments of the British paper regarding the concession and provided some thoughts on the policies and it's impact on the Iranian people (Brown 1966, pp. 46-49). [48]The Iranian people responded to Nasser Ad Din *Shah's* tobacco concession by protesting and boycotting the use of tobacco in Iran. The tobacco protests initially began with the merchant class that has lost jobs and businesses to British corporations. It then excelled with the help of the *Ulama* that received much of their financial backing from the Iranian merchant sector and spread with the help of ordinary citizens that were outraged by the *Shah's* policies (Moaddel 1994, pp. 5-7).

In order to understand the major components of the tobacco protest it is best to start off with a brief explanation of the two groups responsible for initiating and carrying out the protests. The following section will focus on explaining the details of the various groups involved in the protests; who they were, why they were important and how their actions indicate the presence of a revolutionary culture within the nation.

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[48] Brown (1966, pp. 46-47) provides a translation of an article in Iranian paper that explains why the tobacco concessions are bad for Iran: "… The exports of every country are reckoned as one of the principle sources of its wealth and that consequently the ruler of every country ought, by all possible means and in every practical way, to facilitate and promote them, and remove restriction and obstacles to trade. But this concession and monopoly which the Persian government has granted to the English company is diametrically opposed to the general considerations, so that the tobacco growers are left helpless and defenseless in the hands of the company, and will be unable to sell the produce of their toil at the remunerative price, or to profit by trade competition".
Ervand Abrahamian (1982, p. 73) cites a portion of an article from the Akhtar newspaper that explains how the tobacco concession will effect the Iranian people: "It is clear enough that the concessionaire will commence the work with a small capital and purchase the tobacco from the cultivators and sell it to the merchants and manufacturers for higher prices, and all the profits will remain in the purse of the English. As the Persian merchants have no right to export tobacco from Persia, those who were formally engaged in this will be obliged to give up their business and find some other work. The concessionaire does not take into consideration how many merchants who were engaged in this business will be left without employment and will suffer loss in finding other occupations".

The Merchant Class and the Tobacco Protest

The Iranian commerce industry was already very developed by the early 1800's as a result of the nation's geographic location and petty commodity production (Moaddel 1994, p. 5). At that time, Iran traded with Afghanistan, central Asia, Turkey, India and Russia however trade for British products through India was generally limited at the time. As Iran's interaction with the West increased, trade also increased by three fold between the periods of 1800-1850 and had quadrupled by 1914 so the role in which the merchant classed played in politics increased as well. Iranian merchants were responsible for financing government activity as well as paying government quotas, therefore proper functioning of Iranian commerce industry was certainly vital to raising government revenue(1994, p. 5). Besides raising revenue the merchant class was known for its social honor as members of an elite segment of Iranian society. Members of the merchant class were typically more educated than other Iranian classes and in some cities in Iran up to 90 percent of the merchant class was capable of reading and writing ;therefore members of the merchant class enjoyed a certain level of prestige that even Iranian bankers lacked (1994, p. 6). Merchants also gained much of their prestige from Islam as it promoted the act of trading and considered merchants as messengers of God for providing goods to the Muslim population (1994, p.6). One can see how decreasing or eliminating jobs within the merchant industry would generally be viewed in negative light since the merchant industry not only provided for the livelihood of many within the nation but was also promoted by Islam.

The concession that Nasser Ad Din *Shah* awarded to foreign investors reduced the amount of jobs in the tobacco industry and took tobacco profits away from Iran's

merchants sector. Iranian merchants shifted their interests to buying land and growing

cotton and opium crops for export; however merchants became vulnerable to shifts in the

global market that were generally not as prevalent in the local Iranian market (Moaddel

1994, p. 9). When Iranian merchants realized that they were essentially being eliminated

from commerce industry, they started devising ways to stop the concessions. The first

step that merchants took was to create a type of union called the "Majlis-i Vukala-yi

Tujjar" (1994, p. 10) also known as "the society of representatives of the merchants" as a

way to counter the *Shah's* policies (1994, p. 10). The union, however, was generally

unsuccessful and quickly disbanded by the government. Some scholars believe that the

union was not dissolved solely for its support for merchants, but instead disbanded

because the union was incompatible with the "monarchical absolutism and the institution

of the *Ulama*" (1994, p. 10). [49] Merchants wrote protest letters and took to the streets but

their attempts at rescinding the tobacco concession had little success until religious

principles were invoked against the *Shah's* policies. [50]

<div align="center">The Ulama and the Tobacco Rebellion</div>

Once the merchants shifted the focus of the concessions to a simple a confrontation

between Muslims and infidels rather than an issue of mere self interest, they were able to

gain the support of various segments of the religious establishment as well as the Iranian

masses. Some members of the *Ulama* initially had little interest in interfering in matters

of the government however once the focus shifted and the *Ulama* realized the impact that

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[49] Moaddel (1994, p. 10) argues that the Ulama were in opposition of the merchant union because it was against paying taxes to the clerical establishment As explained earlier on in the chapter, the clerical establishment was heavily reliant on taxes from the merchant class; therefore the merchant union was disliked by the clerical establishment.

[50] According to Moaddel (1994, p. 11) the merchants of Tehran were the first to protest by writing and distributing leaflets that said "Tobacco belongs to Iranians, the buyers and consumers are Iranians, why should then tobacco trade be monopolized by foreigners?" The protests also took hold in Fars where politically minded merchants began sending telegrams to their cities government officials.

such concessions would have on the clerical establishment they stepped in to help put an end to the concessions as well.[51]

The religious establishment was at the time very important in Iran. Therefore, if Iranian merchants wanted any chance of repealing the tobacco concession they would need the assistance of the clerical establishment to do so. When the merchants made the issues surrounding the tobacco concession as a confrontation between Muslims and none Muslims,   various members of the *Ulama* took charge and began to writing letters to the king and his administration in regards to the problems surrounding the concession. A radical cleric and political activist, Al-Afghani, urged one of the highest members of the religious establishment by the name of Haj Hassan Shirazi to issue a Fatwa calling the use of tobacco as a war against the "Imam of the age" (Milani, 1988, p. 49). Some members of the *Ulama* even went to so far as refusing to enter mosques as away to demonstrate their resistance to the concessions. Some clerics even prevented people from entering the mosques to answer their daily call to prayer (1994, p. 11). The *Ulama* wanted to make sure that Nasser Ad Din *Shah* was aware of how un-Islamic the concessions were and that the religious establishment would not tolerate such injustice toward Muslims. The *Ulama* invoked a sense of Persian nationalism by promoting anti-Western rhetoric as a means to waking the masses in order to repeal the *Shah's* tobacco concession (Milani 1988, p. 48). It appears that by promoting nationalist values, the

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[51] It is important to note the existence of factions within the clerical system because certain members of the Ulama had allegiance to the Shah and his administration rather than the people; however an overwhelming majority of the Ulama did align with the people in order to repeal the tobacco concession (Bayat, Mangol 1991, p. 16). Bayat argues that although the Russians helped instigate the protests, the Ulama took over and made the tobacco boycott a "semi religious, semi nationalist" opposition movement. Nonetheless there is overwhelming evidence of a fragmentation within the clerical establishment.

Ulama were able to gain popularity among the Iranian people and to organize even those that had little association with the religious establishment.

Russian opposition to the concessions as well as protests and boycotts eventually persuaded Nasser Ad Din *Shah* to reconsider the agreement. *Bazaars* in Shiraz, Tehran, Isfahan, Tabriz, Mashad, Qazvin, Yazd, and Kermanshah were shut down when agents of the tobacco company arrived in order to demonstrate Iran's anger with the concessions. Some Iranians even broke their water pipes and refused to smoke tobacco in order to argue that without the support of Iranian consumers, the Iranian tobacco industry would fail (Abrahamian 1982, p. 73). Throughout the crisis, Nasser Ad Din *Shah* remained stern in his response to the *Ulama* by scolding members of the religious establishment for refusing to adhere to his demands (Bayat 1991, p 19). It appears however that Nasser Ad Din *Shah* finally realized that Iranians were not willing to hand their nation over to foreigners without a fight. The Tobacco concessions were repealed by the *Shah* in 1892, however, the decision to repeal the concession came with a hefty price. The *Shah* was forced to pay large penalties to the British for annulling the concession and was also forced to endure a sense of shame in the global market for canceling the tobacco concessions (Milani 1988, p. 49).

The *Shah* increased political repression in the years following the protests by forbidding new schools from opening. He also outlawed the news papers that had criticized the concessions as well and discouraged publications outside of Iran (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 73). The *Shah* was clearly angered with the religious establishment for supporting the protests and dealt with his anger by instilling repressive policies to restore what he believed was order among the unstable and angered Iranian

population. The tobacco concessions demonstrated that Iranians were unwilling to accept one sided policies that had little benefit for the Iranian people. The absolutist nature in which the monarchy had taken, was clearly disliked by the Iranian population. Iranians were fed up with the way that Nasser Ad Din *Shah* was ruling their nation and retaliated by fighting for their values. It appears that Iranians perceived the tobacco concessions not as un-Islamic but un-just and simply bad for the nation in general. They believed that it was their duty as citizens of Iran to put a stop to policies that run counter to the Iranian value system.

<div align="center">The Persian Constitutional Revolution (1905)</div>

Nasser Ad Din *Shah* became extremely repressive and reactionary after the tobacco rebellion which eventually resulted in his assassination in 1896 (Milani 1988, p. 51). Mozaffar Ad Din *Shah* took control of the throne in 1893 and continued much of the same policies that Nasser Ad Din *Shah* had implemented until his rule ended in 1907. However, this time Iranians were far more organized than ever and were ready to confront the monarchy for its wrongdoings. The Persian constitutional revolution offered a systemic change to the absolutist structure of the Iranian government that Iranians needed in order to regain control of their nation.

Iran as a nation fell into an even deeper economic crisis during the reign of Mozaffar Ad Din *Shah*. Similar to the previous monarch, he would spend lavishly and tax the Iranian people in order to fund his personal needs. These issues would probably be less visible in an economically stable nation; however the decline of native industries, economic stagnation and lawlessness magnified dysfunction in the Iranian leadership system (Milani, 1988, pp. 52-53). Western penetration in the Iranian commerce industry

essentially siphoned money out of Iran and into the hands of foreigners while Iranians were left to deal with the mess the *Shah* had created. When the situation eventually became unbearable, Iranians took to the streets and protested for change.

Economic Downturn

By the early 1900's Iran had already borrowed the equivalent of its entire budget for the year 1900 from Russia and England and its currency had significantly dropped in value (Milani, 1988, p. 52). At the time unemployment was extremely high and as much as 300,000 construction workers had migrated to Russia to find work. To make a bad situation worse however, Mozaffar Ad Din *Shah* raised tarrifs as well as land taxes to raise revenue and did so with the assistance of a foreign appointed minister of customs (1988, p. 52). The king was not only betraying his people by bringing an outsider to manage the affairs of the nation but he was doing so with little regard for how such policies would impact the livelihood of the Iranian people.

Emergence of the Iranian Intelligentsia

The Iranian intelligentsia essentially emerged as a group of individuals who were concerned with fundamentally changing the political and economic system within the nation.[52] Members of the intelligentsia, however, were ideologically different than the merchants and *Ulama*. The intelligentsia believed that human progress was far more important than dynastic changes within the system or, as the *Ulama* believed, God's will (Abrahamian 1982 p. 61). The intelligentsia also believed that Iran was in need of a

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[52] Abrahamian (1982, p. 61) says that "… contact with the West- through travel, translations, and educational establishments-created modern ideas, modern aspirations, modern values and thereby, modern intellectuals". "Western history persuaded them that human progress was not only possible and desirable but also easily attainable…" Abrahamiam (1982, p. 62) also claims that "… Western education convinced them that true knowledge derived from reason and modern science, not from revelation and religious teachings".

major change that would entail an end to "royal despotism, clerical dogmatism and foreign imperialism" (1982, p.62). Such groups essentially gained popularity through the emergence of Masonic like secret societies such as the "Farmushkhaneh" and "Ketabche-ye gheybi" led by individuals such as Al Afghani and Mirza Malkom Khan. During weekly meetings such groups would criticize the king for his absolutism, argue for nationalism and discuss socialist strategies for change such as mass protests and strikes and revolutions (Kamrava 1992, pp. 33-34). Although the intelligentsia was ideologically very different than the *Ulama* and merchant class, they as a group all desired an institution that could balance power within the Iranian political system and put an end to monarchic absolutism. Once news of the existence of such societies reached the *Shah* they were banned but new societies based on the same political principles continued to emerge throughout the reign of Mozaffar Ad Din *Shah*.[53]

Ulama, Merchant and Intellectual Class Cooperation

It appears that by 1906 Iranians had put their differences aside in order to push for the creation of a parliament (Bayat 1991, p. 123). Iranians realized that in order to change the system they would have to work together and overlook their political differences to in turn achieve the ultimate goal of creating a parliamentary system. They knew that without a parliament the absolutism of the monarchy would continue. the Iranian constitutional revolution would not have been possible without the "hybrid coalition of forces, which included the liberal reformers, members of the *Ulama*, merchants shopkeepers, students, trade guildspeople, workers and radical members of secret societies who promoted the

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[53] Kamrava (1992, p. 35) explains how Nasser Ad Din Shah dealt with the Faramushkhaneh:"…Like most activities not under his control, he soon became suspicious, banning the society in 1861 and sending Malkom to exile". Kamrava (p. 35) argues however that such groups created a general awakening within society that resulted in intellectual discussion and political activity.

formation of an assembly of delegates and a constitution" (Afary 1994, p. 21). The

"religio-radical alliance" between the intellectuals and the clerical establishment

essentially made the revolution possible (p. 22). The Participation by these groups

appears to have been essential to the organizational structure that made revolutionary

change possible. [54] Iranians united to stop European domination over Iran and to prevent

the *Shah* from doing further damage to the economic and political system.

Iranians knew that Russia would intervene with any attempt to overthrow the Qajar

government so revolutionary action would have be taken while Russia was preoccupied

with Japan (Keddie 2003 pp. 66-67). The constitutional revolution began when

Ayatollah Behbahani and Tabataba-i joined forced to oppose the policies of prime

minister Ayn al-Dowleh in 1905 (Kamrava 1992, p. 35). It is believed that Ayn ad-

Dowleh beat the feet of several sugar merchants in Tehran for refusing to lower the price

of sugar as he had ordered.   The merchants claimed that the price increase was a result of

higher import taxes rather than their own discretion (Keddie 2003, p. 67). Behbahani and

Tabataba-i immediately moved out of the capital and into a suburban mosque in order to

display their discontent with the royal court for punishing the merchants. Merchants

angered by the government followed suit and closed their shops and *bazaars* not only to

show their support for the two clerics that stood up for the innocent sugar merchants, but

to also demonstrate that they would no longer tolerate government corruption (Kamrava

1992, pp. 36). Behbahani and Tabataba-i demanded the *Shah* create an "Edalat Khaneh"

or a house of justice and it appears that the *Shah* formally agreed after dismissing Ayn

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[54] Afary explains that " radical intellectuals, and members of the secret societies encouraged the recruitment of both disgruntled or orthodox members of the Ulama and alienated politicians, seeing this as the only way to create a national coalition with broad mass appeal" (1994, p. 23).

Ad-Dowleh as governor but never stood by his promise to do so.[55] Once it became

evident that the *Shah* would not follow through on his promise to establish a house of

justice, anger with the regime and the *Shah* flared again throughout country.

"clandestine leaflets, called night letter (shab-nameh), were distributed by the Anjomens

and were posted throughout the city's walls, calling for reforms and end to absolutism"

(Kamrava 1992, p 36). Violence however continued, and only decreased when

approximately twelve to fourteen thousand merchants abruptly shut down the *bazaar* and

refused to return to work until some type of govern reform was implemented. [56]

The revolt was successful and came to a conclusion in 1906 when the *Shah* gave in to

the demands of the dissenters by agreeing to implement a constitution that produced an

Iranian parliamentary system. Iranians recognized the need for an institution that could

regulate the *Shah's* power and essentially end the monarchy's absolutism. They believed

that a constitution that created a parliament could be the key to solving their differences

with the *Shah* and that they must continue to boycott, protest, and revolt until they

achieved their goal of creating such an institution. The protests accomplished part of what

Iranians were yearning for; a sense of pride for formally changing the political structure

of the Iranian system; however it did not entirely put an end to the *Shah's* repressive

policies. The Qajar era was a very important time in modern Iranian politics because this

period marked the point in which Iranians acted on their cultural values to respond to the

Shah's repressive policies. Throughout the Qajar era, it appears that Iranians were able to

overlook their ideological differences to improve the dubious political atmosphere that

[55] Keddie (2003, p. 67) explains that the "meaning and composition" of the Adalatkhaneh were probably
left unclear to perhaps maintain unity between the merchants, Ulama and the intellectuals that wanted
government reform.
[56] According to Keddie " Even more bazaar merchants and tradesmen in numbers reaching twelve thousand
to fourteen thousand took bast in the British legation, and Tehran business was at a standstill" (2003, p. 67).

had taken shape when Nasser Ad Din *Shah* came to power. The groups involved clearly had different reasons for disliking the *Shah* however as a group they were able to unite in an attempt to change the components of the Iranian political system that had hindered Iran's global influence for decades.

Iranians felt a sense of confronting the *Shah* and became even more pleased when the parliament refused a loan from Russia and established a national bank instead. By doing so the nation was able to regain some it's autonomy that was lost when Nasser Ad Din *Shah* came to power; but Mohamad Ali Qajar hardly considered the Parliament as a challenge. Unfortunately the parliament was not fully capable of ending the *Shah's* repression. The Qajars were eventually overthrown by the Pahlavis, but the policies that Iranians thought would end with the conception of the constitution clearly continued. The constitution did, however, increase media activity and bring a flurry of political ideas to Iran that were essentially suppressed by the *Shah* prior to the construction of the new constitution (Kamrava 1982, p. 87). Civil society began to flourish during this period time. Iranians began to discuss new political ideas and formed political parties to represent their interests in government.

When the Pahlavis came to power, Iranians were still recuperating from problems the Qajar kings had produced but they appeared to be ready to move on and focus their energy on the new parliament. Competition for seats in the parliament brought a sense of plurality to the Iranian political system that was clearly absent in the past. The political atmosphere in Iran had essentially awakened through systemic changes brought on by the revolution. The protests, boycotts and revolts successfully changed the Iranian political system and brought a flurry of political activity among the Iranian people. Throughout

the period just before Reza *Shah* came to power Iran had a series of ideological

movements that contributed to the political atmosphere of Iran. The Iranian people had

started political movements focused on modernization, nationalism and Islamism to

represent their very distinct political attitudes that had emerged as result of the

constitutional revolution.[57]

<p style="text-align:center">Reza *Shah* and the new parliament</p>

Reza *Shah's* reign could be characterized by a number of policies that changed the

political and economic atmosphere of Iran. Although some of the approaches he utilized

to modernize the nation were undoubtedly good for Iranian people, an overwhelming

majority of his policies either alienated or repressed various segments of the Iranian

population. The following section will focus on the policies the *Shah* used in order to

retain power and how such policies essentially widened the gap between the *Shah* and the

Iranian masses and increased *Shah's* absolute power.

Reza *Shah* utilized a different approach to ruling Iran by concentrating on military

growth and modernization as the central foundation of the Iranian state. Although he was

known for creating Iran's modern infrastructure, he was also well known for his corrupt

policies that undoubtedly contributed to the frustration that led to the Iranian revolution

of 1979. While in power Reza *Shah* significantly expanded Iran's armed forces by

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[57] Micheal P. Zirinksy (1994, p. 46) explains how various ideologies emerged : "Modernization appealed especially to elite individuals exposed to Western ideas by education or travel; during the years of Reza's rise., these ideas often were called liberal, republican, or socialist. Modernist sought to adapt to Iranian conditions Western style military organization and equipment, public administration and urban structures". "Nationalism took different forms depending on group, education, and social orientation…" Nationalist belong to different groups, those who supported Western secular nationalism and those that supported local and popular control framed through an Islamic perspective. Islamist on the other hand made very little distinction between Iran and Islam and focused more on nation's resistance to foreign powers than anything else.

implementing a law that made military participation mandatory.[58] Reza *Shah* was able to

fund military and bureaucratic expansion through profits from oil revenue, collection of

tax delinquencies and high import and export tariffs. Taxes on sugar, tobacco, cotton,

hides and opium were all increased to fund the armed forces and the bloated bureaucracy

that had taken shape while Reza *Shah* was in power. [59] Besides expanding the military,

Reza *Shah* also increased control over the nation by replacing urban police officers with

friends and family that adhered to the *Shah's* demands in return for large bonuses,

discounted land and key government positions.[60] The *Shah* essentially traded positions

within the government for support of policies that could not be otherwise implemented

through popular support.

The Majles that many Iranians believed would be the key to limiting the monarchy's

power essentially became nothing more than a puppet for the monarchy because Reza

Shah monitored access to the parliament and only permitted compliant candidates to enter

the institution (Abrahamian 2008, p. 72). The parliament that Iranians had fought so hard

to create had essentially become an extension of the monarchy by implementing only

laws that Reza *Shah* himself supported. While in power Reza *Shah* also banned political

parties, took away parliamentary immunity, closed independent newspapers, and

imprisoned or killed those who criticized him. The *shah* used his new dictatorial regime

to carry out policies that were generally disliked by the population.

Reza *Shah* maintained control of Iran with British support until he began

implementing a number of policies that both the British and Russians clearly disapproved

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[58] The constricption law of 1925 required all healthy males over the age of twenty one to serve two full years in the armed forces and four years in the reserves (Abrahamian, 2008. p.68).
[59] More than 34% of Iran's tax revenue was spent on the armed forces (Abrahamian. 2008, p. 67).
[60] The Shah even overlooked financial irregularities that proved his men were stealing in order to keep them in power (Abrahamian. 2008, pp. 70-71).

of. He expanded state power over the economy through a series of policies that eased out

foreign influence over Iranian territory. He essentially damaged the relationship that the

Iranian government had with Britain and Russia by removing foreign administrators from

government. By canceling a number of treaties that gave extra-territorial jurisdiction,

however, Reza *Shah* essentially increased his oppositional base (Abrahamian 2008, p.

76).

Reza *Shah* also created a significant amount of tension with the religious

establishment by implementing various laws that the reduced the *Ulama's* power. Such

policies included a variety of dress codes that were intended to portray and promote a

sense of modernization among the Iranian masses. The *Shah* began the dress code

policies by first outlawing tribal and tradition clothing among Iranian men and later

implementing a law that legalized women to go out in public without a veil. Reza *Shah*

gained control of the religious establishment in Tehran and neighboring cities by

determining who could teach religious material as well as establishing the content of

scripture taught within classes. Until Reza *Shah*, Iranian kings generally did not interfere

in the teaching methods utilized by the *Ulama*; therefore such policies upset members of

the religious establishment. Moreover, Reza *Shah* implemented policies that made

clerics in government exchange their turbans for Western styled slacks and coats to again

promote a sense of modernity in addition to decreasing the visibility of the *Ulama*. Reza

Shah also went to so far as banning street processions to commemorate the death of

Shi'ite Martyrs during Muharran as well as opening mosques to foreigners (Abrahamian

2008, p. 94).

The *Shah* created enemies along the way by promoting corruption within his administration, annulling treaties, alienating minorities and weakening the religious establishment. Dislike for him continued to grow until he was finally deposed when the Russians in the North and the British in the South forced Reza *Shah* to relinquish power and leave the nation. Reza *shah* focused more on expanding and institutionalizing Iran's armed forces than he did on the nation's sovereignty therefore. When Russian and British forces defeated the Iranian military in less than three days, it became clear that the military that Reza *Shah* had created was only good for suppressing internal opposition to the regime. Although his policies of modernization were without a doubt a step in the right direction, his taxation policies and the patronage system he had implemented clearly were not. By implementing land reform policies and protecting those in his administration that illegally took land from private citizens, he undoubtedly undermined the legitimacy of the monarchy and added economic turbulence to a politically unstable environment. Although Reza Shah's son at first significantly diverged in regards to how to run the maintain power the damage could no longer be reversed.

When Muhammad Reza *Shah* came to power in 1941, Iranians were relieved to have some form of change in the political system.[61] British and Russian forces allowed Muhammad Reza *Shah* to maintain control of the army in order to preserve the nation's armed forces in return for cooperation with the two nations. "The allies had agreed to give the young *shah* a trial "period" subject to good behavior…" (Abrahamian 2008. p. 98). The *Shah* acted on his promise to behave in a way that the allies approved of by granting a series of extensive land reforms that clearly made the *Shah* appear more honest

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[61] Muhammad Reza Shah ruled Iran from 1941-1979.

to the Iranian people. [62] Over time however Muhammad Reza *Shah* showed that he was unable to rule Iran in the way that both Iranians and foreigners would like. The political parties such as the *Tudeh* that had taken shape while his father were in power became stronger than ever, civil society in Iran became more organized as a result of the *Shah's* lenient leadership style that essentially gave rise to oppositional movements throughout Iran.

By 1942 inflation and food scarcities had caused an overwhelming sense of dissatisfaction with the government. As a result Iranians created oppositional groups and protested to counter the political and economic conditions that had surfaced. By 1942 the situation had deteriorated; grain shortages led to hoarding and bread riots in Tehran while taxes steadily increased in effort to balance the budget. [63] WWII also initated a disruption in supplies which essentially caused more hoarding and the rise of black market operations that triggered even more price hikes. Indirect taxes hit the Iranians least able to afford them. Government monopolies on food caused producers to sell their products to the Iranian government for even less than the free market value (Keddie 2003, p. 113). For example the purchase and sale and wheat (Iran's principle crop) was monopolized by the government and by 1948 the government was paying only one third of its free market price to wheat producers. Besides hurting peasants that relied on income from such jobs, the monopolies also led to a significant regression in wheat production that ultimately forced the Iranian government to import wheat after the war (Keddie 2003, p. 113).

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[62] According Abrahamian (2008, p. 98) The shah restored Iranian property illegally acquired by his father back to the state and returned approximately 600 million Rials that his father had stolen from the government. While doing so however, Muhammad Reza also secretly transferred 1 million dollars for himself to a bank in New York as a nest egg for him and his family.

[63] The administrator general of finances, Millspaugh introduced a progressive income tax to help balance the budget. He was also put in charge of improving the grain collection and storing process but was believed to have caused more damage by removing subsidies that provided cheap bread to Iranians (Keddie, 2003, p. 107).

A number of political groups were formed to counter to the volatile economic and political atmosphere that Reza *Shah* had left behind. Political forces once suppressed by Reza *Shah* resurfaced and "committed themselves to preventing the reemergence of an imperial despotism" (Milani 1994, p. 38). The first and most prominent group to evolve from the political circumstances of the time was the leftist organization known as the *Tudeh* party. The *Tudeh* Party emerged from a group of European educated individuals who were frustrated with the Iranian government's policies that had pushed the Iranian economy into further economic turmoil. As a Marxist based political group, *Tudeh* members pushed for workers' rights and better compensation for the Iranians that worked for the Anglo-American Oil Company.[64] The party essentially represented the educated elites, working class, and various members of the salaried middle class. The group was later expanded to represent trade unions with over 275 thousand members. Nearly all of Iran's industrial labor force belonged to the *Tudeh* party. The party was however dismantled by the *Shah* when the secessionist movements that occurred in both Azerbaijan and Khuzestan were blamed on the actions of the *Tudeh* party.[65] The *Tudeh* party was undoubtedly a threat to the oil industry in Khuzestan, therefore eliminating them from the political environment was extremely important for the British.

A series of other political groups such as the Democratic Party, Toiler's Party, Society of Muslims, the Iran Party, the National Front, and the Milli organization had also emerged at the time the *Tudeh* was in power however these groups were limited in

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[64] According to Abrahamian (2008, p 110) The central council of trade unions organized a strike throughout the oil industry and "… The Anglo Iranian Oil Company had no choice but to concede to the eight-hour day, Friday pay, over time scales, higher wages, and better housing since the unions had de facto control of Khuzestan as well as over the refinery, the oil wells, and the pipelines.
[65] The government, according to Abrahamian (2008, p. 112), "…[d]eclared martial law in Tehran, clamped down on the trade unions and closed down many Tudeh clubs and party offices throughout northern cities."

size and therefore restricted in influence. When the *Tudeh* party was essentially diffused by the *Shah* a less radical and more diverse political group emerged in its place. The National Front essentially came to power as an organization that placed the needs of Iran and its people above all else. Many believed that the *Tudeh* party was more concerned with soviet subservience rather than the needs of Iran as a nation; the National Front, however, was more representative of the Iranian masses.

<div align="center">Oil Nationalization</div>

The leader of the National Front movement, Mohammad Mussadegh came to power by opposing foreign control of Iranian resources and encouraging protests to influence parliamentary decisions. Mussadegh was one of the foreign educated elites that realized Iran as a nation was in need of major reform. He came to power in the early 1900s, serving within a variety of political positions before he was forced into retirement by Reza *Shah*. While in the political realm, however, he advocated two major causes; "Strict constitutionalism at home and an equally strict policy of "negative equilibrium" abroad to assure independence from foreign domination (Abrahamian 2008, p. 114). Mussadegh denounced the oil agreements made with the British and Soviets and eventually decided his main political goal in the future would be to nationalize the Iranian oil industry.

Muhammad Reza *Shah's* weakness as a leader essentially permitted Mussadegh to gain an overwhelming amount of influence as an educated leader of the nationalist movement.   Muhammad Reza appointed Mussadegh to the position of prime minister, however, it appears the *Shah* had little choice in the matter because Mussadegh had achieved almost absolute control of the Majles by 1951 (Farhad Diba, 1986, p. 115). Mussadegh's "charisma created an unprecedented opportunity to effect change and as far

as his nationalist goals were concerned, Mussadegh had the support of the majority of the politically active urban population" (Sussan Siavoshi 1994, p. 118. He gained popularity because of his desire to transfer the control of Iran's natural resources out of the hands of foreigners and back to the people of Iran. The inflation, scarcity and high taxes persuaded Iranians to support Mussadegh's nationalization policies.

As prime minister, Mussadegh immediately pushed for negotiations with the Anglo Iranian Oil Company over the terms of the oil concessions. British members of the oil industry had little desire to negotiate with Mussadegh over the terms of a resource they believed they had full and legal control of (Siovashi 1994, p. 120). For the British the oil nationalization issue was purely economic while for the Iranians, oil nationalization was a political issue that focused on the "…fundamental principal of Iran's right to the control of its own oil" (1994, p. 120). When the British refused to amend the terms of the oil concession, Mussadegh went straight to the people of Iran to get support for reforms. Through petitions and street demonstrations, Mussadegh gained the support he needed to pass the oil nationalization bill in the parliament (Abrahamian 2008, p. 117). Mussadegh created the National Iranian Oil Company to take over the Anglo Iranian Oil Company that controlled the Iranian oil industry since the early 1900's. Although Mussadegh's intentions were to bring a sense of sovereignty to his nation by nationalizing its oil industry, global oil consuming actors such as the United States and Europe prevented Iran from taking pleasure from the benefits of such reforms. A series of boycotts on Iranian oil prevented Iran from profiting through the reforms, Mussadegh therefore focused on freeing Iran from oil dependency rather than negotiating with its biggest oil consumer; the United States (Siovashi 1994, p. 21).

The Coup of 1953: The End of the Mussadegh Era

If Iran's oil nationalization policy was to be successful, there would be disastrous

consequences for nations that relied on exploiting resources from the developing world.

The United States and Britain knew that they would have to overthrow Mussadegh to set

an example and deter other resource rich developing nations from following suit.

Western nations spread negative propaganda about Mussadegh in order to try and

delegitimize his achievements and gain internal Iranian support for his removal. When

the United States and Britain realized that public support for Mussadegh was strong, the

allied forces moved on to other ideas for removing the powerful prime minister. The CIA

along with the SIS devised a plan to overthrow Mussadegh by staging a coup and

restoring the *Shah's* power. With help from royalist and various members of the religious

establishment, civilian dressed military members surrounded Mussadegh's home and

killed approximately three hundred people before taking Mussadegh into custody and

restoring the *Shah's* power.

Conclusion

As one can see, revolutionary based behavior in response to repression and economic

inequality has become rather common in Iran. When met with periods of difficulty

Iranians hold their leaders responsible for such problems and typically use political

organizations to protest for change. Civil society in Iran clearly expanded and diversified

during the late stages of the Qajar era and led to the creation of numerous political groups

that were generally absent in the past. The growth of civil society groups in Iran has

made the process of organizing political movements relatively easier; therefore riots,

protests and revolutionary based behavior has increased over time. When met with

political injustice, the primary method of change for Iranians appears to involve activities

and processes that may lead to revolutionary transformation. Iranians more than likely

find small institutional changes too slow or generally useless in meetings their demands,

because of the amount of corruption typically found in the Iranian leadership system. The

protest and revolutionary based events discussed in this chapter are proof that Iranians

frustrated with the system choose transformative change when faced with leaders that

defy the Iranian value system.

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[91] It is important to understand that opposition groups exist in periods of high repression but until repression is lessened they are forced to operate within very difficult parameters. By lessening repression such groups are essentially able to communicate, organize and expand with more success.

CHAPTER 4

THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION OF 1979

When Iranians lost confidence in the parliament's ability to reduce the *Shah's*

absolute control over the nation, they set out to reorganize the political structure of the

Iranian state by completely eradicating the monarchy. The *Shah* had essentially betrayed

the majority of Iranians by overthrowing Mussadegh and instilling even more repressive

policies to punish Iranians for taking political matters in their own hands. After

Mussadegh was removed from power, Muhammad Reza *Shah* reinforced his grip over

the nation to disband the political parties responsible for generating political competition.

As a result, Iranians utilized civil society organizations such as religious groups, schools

and unions as a means of combating the *Shah's* repression.

Roots and Causes of the Revolution

When repression is elevated in a political system, oppositional movements tend to

have little opportunity for organization and expansion; therefore such movements have

only a slight impact during such phases. If repression is lessened even to a small extent,

political opposition can be reduced and eventually eliminated or be given the opportunity

to expand.[91] Authoritarian leaders are generally aware of the impact in regards to

decreasing repression but are typically forced to implement changes within the system to

reduce but not eliminate repression. Pressure to reduce repression can come from inside

the regime itself or from actors outside of the nation. Outside actors with an economic

interest in the nation may push to lower repression for various reasons such as human

rights concerns but may do so at the cost of complete state failure.   In the case of Iran,

Muhammad Reza *Shah* faced the same situation. He had control over the Iranian people

through use of his Mussad and CIA trained secret police known as SAVAK that used

brutal tactics to subdue and eliminate oppositional groups. Any reduction in repression

could result in retaliation for the *Shah's* behavior as was the case in the 1970's. The

United States and Britain pressed the *Shah* to lessen repression and because the *shah*

owed the restoration of his power to both nations for overthrowing Mussadegh he had

little choice but to adhere to their demands.[92] As repression decreased opposition

activities increased, therefore the Iranian masses were able to mobilize around a single

issue; removal of the *Shah*.

Although the revolution was geared toward removing the *Shah*, motivation to

mobilize was due to varying reasons. Different segments of the Iranian society clearly

suffered from plethora of issues the *Shah* had created for them. Peasants suffered from

the adverse effects of the *Shah's* land reform and taxation policies, intellectuals and urban

elites from joblessness and lack of freedom, *Ulama* from alienation and general loss of

influence, and merchants from taxation and modernization policies that took income

straight from their pockets and into the hands of the *Shah*. After years of pent up anger

and frustration; Iranians organized with the help of the religious establishment to

overthrow the *Shah* and completely reform the Iranian political system.

<div align="center">Land Reform and a Move toward Industrialization</div>

The reform policies which the *Shah* pursued between the 1950's and 1970's entirely

transformed the Iranian economic and class system. By changing the system from an

agrarian economy to an industrial economy, the *Shah* essentially alienated large segments

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[92] According to H..E. Chehabi (1990, p.142) the American government was critical of attitude "… Third World regimes in general and the Shah's in particular". President Eisenhower essentially said that the repressive militaries policies of the Iranian government will not bring peace and justice to the nation and that policies must be reformed in order to do so.

of the Iranian population that still relied on agricultural based business for income. The problem with the reforms in which the *Shah* implemented was that the Muhammad Reza *Shah* did not apply a planning framework for his economic plans till much later in the process (Robert E. Looney 1982, p. 9). For this reason the *Shah's* economic development plans only benefited certain segments of society while clearly alienating others. Over time frustration with his policies grew because large segments of the Iranian population financially suffered from reforms that led to higher taxation for the agriculture sector and lower taxes for the urban capitalist based elite population.

Muhammad Reza *Shah's* first attempt toward modernization and economic reform was implemented through what he called a seven year development plan in 1949. The plan focused on improving agriculture, transportation and communication; however most of the objectives went largely unfulfilled because of economic difficulties during the struggle for oil nationalization. The 2nd seven year plan occurred between 1955-1962, during this period Muhammad Reza *Shah* focused on constructing factories and dams as well as improving transportation and communication systems. The 3rd, 4th and 5th development plans financed import substitution industrialization by relying heavily on Western technology and managerial skills.[93] The development plans led to economic expansion, unequal distribution of wealth, heightened social mobility, changes in class structure and a rapid and extensive decline within the Iranian agriculture sector (Milani, 1994, pp. 59-60).

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[93] According to Robert E. Looney (1982, p. 40.) "Import substitution industrialization as implemented in Iran created several severe sectoral imbalances. As the terms of trade turned against agriculture (due to increased cost of manufacturers to the agriculture sector), agriculture production fell. Normally over time, this process would be self-correcting and eventually short agriculture supplies would reverse the declining price trend. Oil revenues permitted almost unlimited food imports at constant prices, however. As a consequence, Iran was not only a net importer of agricultural commodities including grains in the 1970's, but the gap between consumption of food stuffs and domestic production was increasing at an alarming rate".

The White Revolution is perhaps the most extensive and influential economic

development policy to take place in modern Iranian history. Through this measure, the

Shah made reforms to land distribution, nationalized forests, sold a number of state

owned factories to the private sector, implemented profit sharing for industrial workers,

extended voting rights to women and created rural literacy groups (Kamali, 1998, p. 144).

All of these reforms benefited certain segments of the population while harming others;

however most of the impact was due to the *shah's* land reform policies. The reform

policy of 1963 forced land owners to sell vast majorities of land to the government so the

government could in turn sell it to the working class peasants at a discounted rate. The

first step of the land reform process began in 1962 through a set of laws that limited land

ownership to one village per land owner (Looney 1982, p. 45). The *Shah* purchased any

remaining land that did not fall within his new law and sold it to peasants at a discounted

rate in return for membership in multipurpose cooperatives. The second phase of the

land reform in 1965 provided a number of options for land owners but basically entailed

much of the same policies such as taking land from land owners and selling or renting it

to the peasant population for discounted rates.[94] The objective of these reforms was to

create a rural middle class in which the government could use as political base. The *Shah*

was also under the impression that the compensation paid to the landlords would provide

funds for industry based investment (Looney, p. 46).The problem with the land reform

policy however was that nearly 40 percent of the rural population was completely

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[94] According to Looney (1982, p. 46) " A number of options were provided to the land owners the
remaining villages at that time. These included" (1) leasing their land to peasants; (2) dividing their land
with the peasants according to ownership of labor, land water seed and oxen; (3) selling their land to the
peasants ; (4) forming agricultural units with the peasants with shares of each group determined on the
basis of the ownership factors; (5) buying the peasants rights and employing them as wage laborers".

bypassed by the government and therefore received no benefits from the reforms at all. The inequality of the policy soon became a driving point for opposition.

The religious establishment being one of the largest land owners of the time also opposed the *Shah's* reform policies. The *Ulama* however did so because the policy ran counter Islamic beliefs in regards to the sanctity of private property and because large segments of land donated to the *Ulama* over time provided a great amount of income for the religious establishment (Kamali, p. 147). By decreasing the *Ulama's* land the *Shah* essentially lowered income for events and organizations operated by religious the establishment. As part of his reform measures the *Shah* also created an endowment program in 1964 to monitor and manage all public donations to the religious establishment and as a result a number of shrines and religious schools came under the control of the Endowments Organization (Kamali, pp. 147-149). Such alterations quickly caused some members of the *Ulama* to align against the monarchy.

The *Shah's* economic reform policies included a number of modernization measures that created modern sectors of the economy without completely eliminating the power of the *bazaar*. Therefore by creating supermarkets in the city as part of his modernization measures, the *shah* expanded his oppositional base to include angry *bazaaris* affected by the loss of business. The *bazaaris* clearly viewed such modernization measure as a threat not only to Iranian tradition but also to their reputable business structure. Besides raising taxes on the *bazaaris* and accusing them of price fixing, the *shah* also continued to fund construction of road ways and supermarkets far from the *bazaars* in order to decrease the *bazaar's* influence within the nation.

The reforms which the *Shah* believed would bring him greater supporter, only helped the "dependant bourgeoisie" and "international capital" (Moaddel 1993, p. 65). Capitalism became the dominate form of production during the *Shah's* modernization reforms and agriculture generally suffered as a result of government's strong emphasis on industrialization. The move to an industrialized economy angered the peasants that felt they were fooled into purchasing land from the government. Those who benefited from the reforms were approximately 1000 wealthy aristocratic families affiliated with the private bank owning sector, modern communication centers, industrial sector and some of the *Shah's* own friends and family in the agro-business. Nearly 1 million families affiliated with the *bazaars* suffered.

The economic policies implemented by Muhammad Reza *Shah* appeared to only assist those were who associated with the capitalist modes of production; namely his friends and family belonging to the urban elite population. The economic down-turn that resulted from his policies motivated jobless educated Iranians to align against the monarchy. The angered *bazaaris* funded and organized the *Ulama* against the Muhammad Reza *Shah* because of their long history with the religious establishment essentially enabled them to do so. Land owners enraged by the *Shah* organized with the rest of the population affected by the economic reforms to help overthrow the *Shah* and restore stability and income to a large population of the Iranian masses. Most Iranians felt that the *Shah's* policies were unjust and that they were based on increasing profit for his friends and family rather than actually diversifying the economy and stabilizing the nation. This perception, true or not is what Khomeini and other oppositional figured advocated to the Iranian people. Although the *Shah's* economic policies generally failed the Iranian people

it is doubtful that his land reform policies were intended to make the agriculture sector

crash. His lack of economic expertise motivated him to focus on the industrial sector

instead of formulating the proper transition process needed to transform the nation from a

largely agrarian based society to one of industry.

<div align="center">Class Based Issues</div>

The economic reforms policies that industrialized the economy caused a number of

class issues in Iran. The reforms produced a new land owning class out of nearly sixty

percent of the rural population, but the remaining forty percent of the rural populace not

given property through reforms became known as the new rural proletariat class (Maryam

Panah 2007, p. 28). The new rural proletariat was forced in to low wage labor and into

extremely poor living conditions. Many were forced to move to resettlement centers

created by the *Shah's* land reform policies. The meager living conditions essentially

motivated a large segment of the rural proletariat to migrate to the cities for work but the

already fragile urban economy caused the unemployed labor force in the cities to expand.

The transfer to an industrialized economy caused a small urban proletariat and a large sub

proletariat population reliant on temporary jobs to emerge. The *Shah* created an unsightly

class based societal division between the traditional and modern segments of society as a

result of his efforts to modernize the nation. Instead of equally distributing reform by

concentrating on renovating both the industry and agriculture sector, the *Shah* focused on

one and caused an imbalance in the nation's class system. Power shifted from the hands

of the landed aristocracy and into the hands of the newly formed industrial based

aristocrats.

The urban unemployed, including the rural population that migrated to the cities for jobs, were alienated through poor living conditions shaped by the Shah's reforms. High housing costs and inflation motivated a large majority of unemployed and poor working class Iranians to move into box towns or slums adjoining the city. Instead of considering ways to resolve the unemployment predicament that led to the emergence of the shanty towns, the *Shah* focused on demolishing the box towns in order to improve the visual appearance of the cities parameters. By doing so the *Shah* created an even larger opposition. The poor and unemployed members of society had more than enough reason to be angry. Muhammad Reza Shah had completely changed the system without considering the impact that such alternations would have on the population.. The influx of unemployed migrants caused the cities to swell with poor, unemployed and generally unskilled labor which therefore reinforced and expanded the *Shah's* oppositional base. The *Shah* appeared to have no resolution to the problem because he had not considered the impact that his modernization efforts would have on nation that was mostly agrarian-based in nature.

The middle class urban population also suffered as a result of the *Shah's* economic reforms. Large segments of the educated middle class population were jobless because the economy in Iran was simply failing. Only a small segment of the Iranian population was benefiting from these reforms while most did not. Land owning clergy, educated unemployed individuals, merchants, bankers, artisans and shopkeepers in the *bazaars* were all significantly impacted by the reforms. Muhammad Reza attempted to modernize the nation without providing the skills necessary to bring about the modernization process, therefore a large majority of Iranians unskilled or un-needed in the industrial

sector became unemployed. The *Shah's* modernization policies created two distinct segments within Iran; those that relied on traditional means to making income such as farming, owning land, selling products in *bazaars* etc., while the modern segment of society relied on banking, communications, modern shopping centers, teaching, and modern based farming methods. This change in the class system exaggerated competition between the two segments of society and caused even more opposition to the *Shah's* policies (Kamali 1998, pp. 166-170).

<div align="center">Severing Ties with the West</div>

American presence in Iran in the late 1970's led to the belief that the United States if not fully responsible for the situation in Iran was at least partially to blame for the economic turmoil caused by industrialization process (Keddie 1981, p. 273). That widespread perception motivated Iranians to consider removing Western control over Iranian resources and trade in order to increase the nation's financial autonomy. Iranians realized their natural resources were being exploited by Western powers such as the United States and therefore began to perceive the West as simply an adversary to the Iranian masses. This perception led to overwhelming dislike for foreign interference and eventually motivated Iranians to consider severing the ties with the West.

After the coup of 1953, Muhammad Reza *Shah* came to the realization that social mobilization in Iran was intensified by political groups wanting to take part in the political process. Because political participation was necessary for the modernization process, The *Shah* utilized a strategy founded on elite participation and the suppression of all forms of opposition. Middle class participation was particularly suppressed because the *Shah* considered those with communist and nationalist tendencies to be of greatest

threat to Iran's political stability. (Milani 1994, p.67) To counteract middle class political participation the *Shah* focused on the promotion of economic growth for the lower classes through economic concession and wage increases. By attempting to strengthen the lower class segments of society, the *Shah* believed that he would essentially weaken the middle class intellectuals that brought Mussadegh to power. The *Shah*, however, did not realize that centering his efforts on suppressing nationalism and communism by strengthening the lower classes would cause other segments of society to come forward and confront the monarchy for its repressive policies.

Economic growth and modernization in Iran influenced social mobilization by essentially eroding old psychological commitments. New ideas and modes of living brought on by two decades of state sponsored modernization radically altered the structure of the Iranian population (Milani 1994, p. 66). The largely agrarian and illiterate Iranian population urbanized and became literate in a short span of time, therefore exposing the Iranian masses to new ideas. A new set of ideas essentially motivated Iranians to question the leadership structure of the nation and develop groups to combat the repressive leadership style of the monarchy. Large scale transformations to the system such as "commercialization, urbanization and industrialization" (Misagh Parsa, 1994, p. 135) eroded the traditional value system of the Iranian masses. Such changes to the system enabled Iranians to build new ideological perspectives in regards to the political system that were generally absent prior to the modernization process. Failed promises to decentralize the economic and political structure of the nation led to the rise of opposition groups (Keddie 2003, p. 214).

Contending ideological perspectives clearly preformed an important role in the 1979 revolution; therefore understanding the roots of these ideological perspectives can allow us to better understand political behavior in Iran. The diverse array of political ideologies that surfaced prior to the revolution made the suppression of political activity by the *Shah* more difficult. Iranians had multiple reasons for disliking the *Shah's* policies; therefore by concentrating on the two political groups believed to be of greatest threat to the regime, the *Shah* enabled the growth of other oppositional groups. Although ideologically these groups differed, the goal for most was generally the same. Removing the *Shah* from power or reducing his control over the government was the central objective for the political parties involved in the 1979 revolution.

Iranian Civil Society: Organization and Public Mobilization

Although civil society is generally described as a social sphere where " … individuals and groups interact and organize their social life", civil society in Iran is centered more on the group rather than the individual (Kamali 1998, p. 36). Ezatollah Sahhabi describes civil society as: a society "in which all social groups-whether classes, cooperatives, syndicates, or ideological groups can coexist together as members of the same national society, have equality and equal opportunity to pursue their goals, where there is no discrimination, and where political decisions are not the work of anyone individual, thus there is no ideological or class hegemony, and if there are hegemonic tendencies, they are kept in check by the larger society. Therefore there is no civil society in countries where the wealthy control social affairs, even if they are advanced and there is a division of labor. Civil society stands in contrast to discriminatory societies or places where there is control by a single group or class". (Mehran Kamrava 2001, p. 174) Some scholars view

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civil society in terms of "sacredness of personal property, the ability to improve society and alleviate social alienation; the universal right to receive justice and to be heard, the making of thought, science and rational: acquiring new and contemporary understanding of the family and social class, freedom, and love; and where an attempt is made to foster unity of thought both in one's own community and the global society" (Mehran Kamrava 2001, p. 175). Alireza Alavi-Tabar and Majid Muhammadi define civil society " as a collection of (social) organizations that are independent of the government and have their own internal dynamics" (Mehran Kamrava 2001, p. 175). I define civil society as nongovernmental groups or organizations that are formed to improve the societal, political and economic environment. Therefore, civil society groups tend to emerge when the values of a society differ from values of those managing the nation. In the case of Iran, civil society groups emerged during the Nasser Ad Din *Shah* Era to respond to the *Shah's* bad economic and political policies that drained the life out of the nation's economy and rendered Iran powerless in the global system. When leaders such as Mozzafar Ad Din *Shah* lessened control of the nation, civil society groups were able to better coordinate and respond to the issues of the political atmosphere. During such periods, groups were able to expand and new groups were able to emerge.

In Iran, civil society is comprised of a combination of social, political and religious groups that are not necessarily shaped to persuade political outcomes in the system but often do. As a nongovernmental group, the religious establishment has enjoyed a great deal of influence in the political sphere of Iran. The theological basis of the *Ulama's* social authority comes from the nation's history of political order pre-Islamic and Islamic Iran both maintained a certain sense of external hierarchal political order legitimized

through divine order (Kamali 1998, p. 39). Therefore, the religious establishment in Iran, although not explicitly part of the leadership system, has held a great deal of political authority. One can see the emergence of this political authority during the Sassanid Era and its continuity over time. Civil society in Iran has differed from the West in that it is "civic sphere of local communities, the *bazaaris*, Muslim individuals, and the *Ulama* where the *Ulama* have a leading position" (Kamali 1998, p. 43). A number of groups, such as the bazzaris, socialist, communist, educated elites, and peasants, influenced the Iranian revolution of 1979, however, the religious establishment being one of the most developed and organized segments of Iranian civil society appears to have had the greatest impact on the political transformation that Iran encountered. A general dislike for the *Shah* pushed various segments of civil society to invoke political change through a process of collaboration. After the 1953 coup, much of the secular political groups responsible for changing the political system were disbanded by the *Shah*, therefore "at the time, the political opposition had no option remaining but to mobilize within the mosque and religious structures" (Parsa 1994, p. 136). Because the religious establishment was generally more organized than other segments of civil society, oppositional groups essentially utilized the institution to organize political resistance.

Revolutionary Forces

After the coup of 1953 most of the political groups involved in bringing Mussadegh to power were diffused by the *Shah* in order to eliminate political competition for the monarchy. Shifting support for political leaders such as Mussadegh also weakened political parties within the nation as is evident from the *Tudeh* parties waxing and waning support for Mussadegh. A clear fragmentation among political party's that opposed the

Shah made the process of disbanding such ideologically diverse groups much simpler. Some scholars believe that political parties in Iran were also easy to disband because personal differences within the leadership structure of such groups made the process relatively easy (Jahangir Amuzegar 1991, p. 108). To counter political competition to the monarchy, a number of unsuccessful political groups were created by the *Shah* in the late 1950's, however, rivalry within the royal parties that resulted in election fraud eventually put an end to the political parties created to present an image of pluralistic political competition. The reality was far from such as the *Shah* had no tolerance for political competition and used extremely repressive methods to weaken his opponents.[95]

The *Shah's* tyrannical policies were unable to eradicate the roots of displeasure against his regime. The repression radicalized opposition by intensifying denunciation of the government. Oppositional groups managed to organize but had little success in transforming the system. A series of Marxist groups motivated by the guerrilla movements in Latin America became popular in Iran as did new nationalist and Islamist groups focused on institutional change. Political groups in Iran prior to the revolution were generally categorized as either nationalist, Leftist, or Islamist. And while not all oppositional groups fell within these exact categorical divisions, oppositional groups were certainly understood within the three broad ideological perspectives. The nationalists, for instance, focused on economic independence and the Persian identity as the main focus of their mobilization. The Leftist groups on the other hand were centered on socialist policies as well as economic independence for the nation. Islamist groups

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[95] According to Milani (1994, p. 70) "... the single most significant reason for stability was the Shah's effective use of repression against perceived opponents. He relied on the might of the armed forces, SAVAK, and his court, providing huge financial rewards to these pillars of society." "In Iran SAVAK did rely on atrocious ,methodsof torture "such as whipping, and beating, electric shock, and extraction of nails and teeth, boiling water pumped up the rectum, heavy weights hung on the testicles, etc."

were concerned with renewing the religious establishment's authority and restoring

Islamic values that the *Shah* had essentially overshadowed with his policies. During the

twentieth century politics in Iran had been centered on a competition for power among

the nationalist, communist, Islamist and the state. Although these groups were unable to

single-handedly change the system, the incremental changes they made through the

introduction of new ideological perspectives without a doubt enabled the revolution to

occur (Maziar Behrooz, 1999 p. xi). Due to the *Shah's* tyrannical policies, however, the

nationalist and Islamist groups were most successful in invoking transformative change

in the Iranian system.

Leftist Groups

Marxist based ideologies gained popularity through the Iranian Marxist group known

as the *Tudeh* party. The *Tudeh's* influence although relatively high while Reza Shah was

in power significantly declined by the time Muhammad Reza took over. The close

relationship in which *Tudeh* members had with the Soviet union also motivated a number

of Iranians to reduce support for the organization which helped nationalist groups such as

the National Front to gain popularity through a cohesion between the two groups . It is

important to note that the Iranian Marxists of the 60's and 70's differed from other leftists

groups of the time in that they adjusted their theories to align with the nation's mass

culture. Iranian Marxists therefore embraced Islamic values to increase support for their

party. [96]

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[96] Dorraj explains the Marxist alignment with Islam through a statement made by Khosrow Golsorkhi " I
am a Marxist-Lennist, but I deeply respect the teachings of Islam. In a court whose legality and jurisdiction
I do not recognize, I do not defend myself. As a Marxist, I speak to the masses and to history. The more
you persecute me, the more proud of myself I become; the more distant I am from you, the closer I am to
the people. The more you hate me and my ideas, the more I am loved and adored by the masses. Even if
you bury me, as I am sure you will, my corpse will inspire banners and songs" (1990., p. 118).

The *Tudeh* party's power however waxed and waned over time, leading to the emergence of new leftist based organizations. The *Shah's* repressive policies changed the way in which oppositional movements operated within the regime therefore Marxist based groups moved toward constructing underground organizations that would be more difficult to find and diffuse. Instead of the largely peaceful methods of protests in which the *Tudeh* party had used in the past, Marxist groups, such as the *Jangalis*, believed that armed struggle would be the way to achieve political salvation (Milani 1994, p. 77). Various Marxist guerilla groups eventually joined to form the Fada'iyun –e Khalq but the *Shah's* secret police used torture to locate and kill a large number of the Fada'iyun members. An ideological split in regards to the success of the guerilla tactics utilized by the party eventually caused the group to split into two factions by the mid 1970's. Some of the Fada'iyun members pushed for educating the masses while others focused on guerilla warfare (Milani 1994, p. 77). The ideological split between Marxist groups essentially inhibited the Left from transforming the political system.

Nationalist Opposition

The National Front was the most successful political movement in Iran because of its ability to organize the Iranian masses during the constitutional revolution. While the *Shah* focused on suppressing the group; the organization formed an ideological split that caused the political movement to splinter. After the 1953 coup, the National Front divided into two segments; one that supported a secular perspective and one that moved toward a more religious ideological perspective. The *Shah* suppressed the nationalists but those that escaped after the 1953 coup continued underground political activities in

Iran.[97] For that reason, the *Shah* specifically focused on containing the expansion of nationalist groups in Iran and by doing so caused Islamic nationalist oppositional groups to expand.

The Third National Front organization formed in the 1960's had moved toward a more religious perspective as a means to mobilize the masses. (Mehran Kamrava 1990, p. 59). Individuals such as Mehdi Bazzargan, Ali Shariati and Jalal Al-e Ahmad focused on promoting Shia political thought in order to neutralize Western hegemony in Iran. They believed that by doing so they could "end the endemic alienation of educated Iranians and protect the country's identity and heritage" (Milani 1994, p. 78). Such individuals used Iranian nationalism and Shi'ism to build a link between Shi'ism and the secular intelligentsia; an alliance that would be necessary for achieving transformative change. By moving toward a more religious perspective however, the National Front organization suffered. A political party known as the Liberation Movement did however remain relatively active in the 1970's. The Liberation movement led by Dr. Bazargan focused on the synthesis between Islam and politics and promoted its ideology through lectures and debates sponsored by the organization. The Liberation Movement, although clearly active in Iran, was far more successful in activities overseas. By promoting anti-regime propaganda to expatriates and Iranians studying oversees the group was able to grow but after a period of time ideological fragmentation oversees caused the Liberation Movement to split into the Confederation of Iranian Students and the Islamic Students

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[97] According to Milani The National Front was essentially divided, one group supported secular transformation while the other focused on changing the Iranian political system by religious means. These groups most operated over seas in Western Europe, North Africa and Lebanon and had ties to Bazargan as well as Khomeini (1994, p. 78).

Society. These groups continued to operate in Iran but their political influence remained minimal (Milani 1994, p. 78).

<center>Islamic Marxists</center>

When the *Tudeh* and National Front parties were suppressed by the *Shah* a guerilla organization known as the *Mujahadeen* was created to carry on where the two parties had left off. The *Mujahadeen* was formed by previous *Tudeh* and National Front members that had grown tired of the rather peaceful tactics that oppositional groups had grown accustomed to. Members of the Mujahadeen believed that armed struggle was the only way to achieve regime change and that the Iranian masses were ready to shed blood in order to change the system.[98] The *SAVAK*, however, imprisoned most of the *Mujahadeen's* leaders in order to impair oppositional activity. Some members of the *Mujahadeen* moved toward a more Marxist based ideology while other members centered on an Islamic based ideology. The division caused the *Mujahadeen* to split in to two factions by the mid 1970's and another split in the communist based segment of the group left the *Mujahadeen* completely fragmented. Because of assassinations and bombings by the *Mujahadeen*, the *Shah* further increased repression in order to diffuse the two groups. A lack of ideological cohesion among the leaders of *Mujahadeen* caused a sense of skepticism that aroused public suspicion about the party. This, like other oppositional parties at the time, suffered as a result of the *Shah's* repressive policies. The *Shah* successfully imprisoned most of the remaining leaders responsible for opposition, thereby reducing threat to the Iranian regime.

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[98] Milani quotes a statement made by a Mujahadeen leader, expressing Iranian's readiness to respond to the injustice brought on by the Shah: "Our people, when they find a trustworthy leader, will not hesitate even to shed their blood in order to destroy the reactionaries" (1990, p. 61).

Islamic Nationalists

When the *Shah's* tyranny nearly put an end to the political parties that developed in the early 1900's, new political outlooks and ideologies based on Islamic thought emerged in the mid 1960's. These new Islamic nationalist ideologies surfaced because secular political principals were not only difficult to establish in an Islamic nation but also because ideological splits within previous parties made them easy to disband. The Intellectuals slowly realized that in order to change the political system they would need a strong opposition backed by one of the most influential components of Iranian culture; Shi'a Islam. In the past political resistance to the *Shah* remained secular in nature and were typically based on foreign views of the political system. These ideas, however, had little success in a nation with bonds to Islamic values. Intellectuals such as Shariati knew that Shia Islam would have to be integrated into the political system in order to mobilize the Iranian masses.

Public opposition to the Shah was largely ineffective up until the 1960's because of the fragmentation caused by ideological differences; however a number of intellectuals altered the political atmosphere by unifying the nationalist and Islamist groups in order to mobilize the Iranian masses. Intellectuals such as Ali Shariati, Jalal Al-e Ahmad and Mehdi Bazargan and Abolhassan Banisadr paved the way for political transformation by focusing on that link between Islam and politics; a move that political groups of the past had little success in achieving. [99] These individuals were all intellectuals and all of them were previously affiliated with oppositional groups disbanded by the *Shah*.

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[99] These individuals were known for their intellectually formatted speeches and publications on Islam and politics. Unlike members of the clerical establishment, Shariati, Al-e Ahmad and Bazargan were able to connect to a much larger segment of the Iranian population.

By partaking in oppositional activities, Shariati, Bazargan, Al-e Ahmad and Banisadr had come to the realization that secular based resistance could not achieve transformative change in a largely Islamic based environment such as Iran. Shariati emphasized the political and revolutionary role of Islam as well as the social responsibility of intellectuals through speeches to the public. By doing so he and others like him were able to create a new set of ideas in regards to the Iranian political system. Shariati enabled Iranians to realize the revolutionary based roots of their political culture and that they as a community must overcome social and political injustice to transform the political system. Shariati and Al-e Ahmad both believed that intellectuals "must become 'socially responsible': they must inject a sense of self awareness into their society and must lead its people in the direction of tawhid" (Kamrava 1990, p. 74). These individuals were clearly under the impression that a political system founded on Islamic values would have to be integrated into the Iranian political system in order to establish stability within the Iranian system. Intellectuals such as Shariati, Bazargan, Al-e Ahmad and Banisadr made the revolution a reality by advocating the transformative elements of Shi'ism into the Iranian political system. These individuals built a bridge between two very different ideological perspectives to facilitate transformative change within the Iranian system.

Islamist Opposition

The clerical establishment also wanted to politicize Islam, however, the *Ulama* wanted to do so in order to strengthen their role in Iran, whereas the intellectuals did so because they not only believed that Islam would remedy the political, social and economic problems of the nation but also because they had come to the realization that there was no other means to mobilize the masses other than through Islam. Individuals, such as

Ayatollah Morteza Mottahari, gave speeches and published works on the importance of "social, political, and Islamic values" (Kamrava 1990, p. 78). By urging people to become active in the social and political affairs of the nation, Mottahari and other clerics like him brought on a level of political participation that undoubtley clashed with the monarchy's absolutism. Knowing that such speeches and publications would encourage public opposition, the *Shah* promptly cracked down on the *Ulama* by shutting down various religious centers in Iran. The *Shah* escalated opposition by the *Ulama* through his actions which enabled public opposition to further expand.

The *Shah's* actions toward the *Ulama* in the 1960's gave way to a new more politically active group of *Ulama*. Religious figures such as Ayatollah Khomeini were frustrated with the *Shah*'s behavior toward the *Ulama* and therefore went after the *Shah* for his actions. The political dimension that Khomeini brought to the scene was not necessarily innovative because intellectuals such as Shariati had been advocating such ideas prior to Khomeini coming to power; however his charismatic personality is what distinguished him from other political figures of that time. Instead of simply focusing his mobilization tactics on members of the religious establishment, he went straight to the people of Iran. By dispensing taped lectures to the people of Iran he essentially rekindled the link between Islam and politics that had been lost as result of Reza *Shah's* secularization policies.[100] Until then, Iranians simply followed the works of intellectuals but lacked the leadership approach needed to motivate mass public mobilization.

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[100] "Tapes of Khomeini's sermons and speeches passed through the mosque network from his residence in Iraq to Qom, Iran's most holy city and the Ayatollah's home until his exile. From there, they were taken to other cities, where enterprising and friendly bazaar merchants duplicated tapes and sold them to the faithful. Beginning in 1976 the mosque network eliminated the middleman and delivered the cassettes and pamphlets which revolutionary doctrine directly to the sympathetic mullahs. They in turn passed it to the people in the mosques" (Stempel 1981, p. 45). Because of the relatively quiet and organized method of transferring Khomeini's revolutionary based lectures, the process went relatively unnoticed until the 1977.

Ayatollah Khomeini was the charismatic leader that Iranians had been looking for. His ability to emotionally arouse the population by advocating social justice through an Islamic value system enabled him to gain popularity among the Iranian masses. The intellectuals built the ideological fusion that necessary for changing the system and Khomeini used that readiness to his advantage by quickly mobilizing the masses to overthrow the *Shah*. His success was due to his charismatic personality that stimulated the Iranian masses into an angry mob of individuals, ready to fight and possibly die with the intention of restoring the elements of justice and social equality that the *Shah* was believed to have taken away from them.

Conclusion

A series of modernization reforms and a reduction in repression led to the mobilization of the Iranian society. Although unable to agree on how the political system should be operated, oppositional groups could no longer withstand the *Shah*'s absolutism. Economic and land based reforms intended to create a support base for the *Shah* backfired. By forcing land owners to sell their property to the government the *Shah* created a new group of enemies out of the traditional land owning segments of society. The *Shah* also amplified his oppositional base by selling land to peasants without formulating a plan to develop the agriculture sector. The unlucky individuals unable to receive loans for land and unable to work on farms due to high inflation and low wages were forced to move to the cities for work but only added to the millions of unemployed urban portions of society. Iran at the time could be described as a nation divided in terms of modernity and traditionalism, suffering from economic turmoil, political repression, and foreign economic domination, unequal distribution of wealth and alienation. The

policies created by the *Shah* completely ran counter to the Iranian value system. By trying to secularize and modernize Iranians through Western based economic and development plans the *Shah*, in essence, alienated a large majority of the Iranian masses. The *Ulama* were angered for various reasons such as land reform, changes to voting rights, secularization of the education system and the *Shah's* general behavior toward the religious establishment. The Bazzari on the other hand were frustrated by high taxation, the creation of modern shopping centers and accusations of price fixing. Rural peasants were angered by land reform laws that enabled them to buy land but provided them with little opportunity to financially grow. Unemployed rural landless segments of society were clearly frustrated with the imbalance in the system that left with them with nothing. Educated modern middle class segments of society were angered by political repression and lack of jobs. Iranians were generally tired of foreign influence and ready for Iran to sever it's ties with the West. Those who benefited from the *Shah's* policies were a clear minority in Iran therefore Iranian frustration with the system ultimately led to systemic transformation through revolution.

CHAPTER 5

THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC

The longer an authoritarian regime stays in power the less likely it is the political

system becomes democratic through mass mobilization (Chehabi 1995 p. 35) Although

assembling the oppositional masses is generally the best way to remove non-democratic

regimes, the transition typically results in "bloody repression" or complete success by the

opposition, which again reduces the chance of introducing democratic procedures into the

political system (p. 35). When power is seized by the opposition rather than transferred

through more peaceful measures, the likelihood of instilling democratically based

institutions is much lower because political tension caused by the violence and repression

generally results in repressive based tactics by the new leaders in order to quiet the

oppositional masses. This was the exact situation in Iran immediately following the

revolution of 1979. The revolution, although geared toward removing absolutism, only

enhanced authoritarianism. To maintain control of Iran and deter further political

participation on behalf of the enraged masses, Khomeini increased repression by

immediately commissioning the formation of a new constitution.

Adoption of a New Constitution

Khomeini assembled a provisional government to help "undertake the political, social,

and economic restructuring of post revolutionary Iranian society" (Riaz Hassan 1984, p.

676). The provisional government was comprised of a large majority of individuals from

the Liberation Movement but those in charge of restructuring Iran were largely members

of the Islamic faction of the Liberation Movement. Although the provisional government

was set to restructure the nation, various groups such as Khomeini's own Revolutionary

Council, the *Mujahadeen*, the Revolutionary guards and the Komiteh all formed obstacles to prevent such changes (p.677). Eventually the Revolutionary Council became provisional government main rival and kept the government from achieving its goal of creating a balanced government. In 1980 the provisional government was commissioned to draft a new Iranian constitution and did so within a time span of just over six months. The constitution was quickly approved by Khomeini and adopted by the revolutionary council with only minor amendments (P. 681). Khomeini and the clerics in the Revolutionary council wanted the constitution to be put to a referendum but this was opposed by members of he provisional government because of the difficulty involved in saying either yes or no to the entire one hundred seventy article constitution. Khomeini, The Religious Council and the provisional government eventually compromised and decided to place the constitution before the parliament for its approval and then put the Parliament's decision to the referendum.

Because an Islamic government based solely on Islamic law is inadequate for modern political systems and largely inconsistent with modern day issues, Muslim countries such as Iran have had little choice but to integrate modern and generally Western based legal theories with traditional Islamic legal principles (Mehran Tamadonfar 2001, p. 205). A number of Muslims blame the social and political problems that Muslim countries face today as a result of integrating these two very different philosophies. Therefore, a majority of Islamists believe that such nations must move away from Western philosophies and back to Islamic legal principles in order to restore stability and solve the social and political problems that plague the Muslim nations of today (2001, p. 205). A vast majority of Iranians believed that the nation would stabilize by restoring Islamic

based values and set out to change the system, only to find that the leader of the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini had no intention of limiting his leadership capacity to Islamic based legal principles as he had claimed to do, Khomeini was simply a dictator like the leader before him. The new constitution is proof that Khomeini and the *Ulama's* initial desire to Islamize the legal system and the nation has transformed into a system centered on maintaining control over the nation instead.

Vilayat-e-Faqih

Tension between the Islamic intellectuals and the traditional *Ulama* emerged immediately following the revolution because of a series of ideological differences between the two groups. To reduce conflict, Khomeini quickly commissioned the provisional government to draft a constitution for the newly formed government. A draft of the constitution was submitted to Khomeini for approval and adopted by the revolutionary council soon after.[101] The parliamentary elections that followed the creation of the constitution gave a large majority of the parliamentary seats to clerics from the Islamic Republican Party.[102] The win enabled the clerics to make fundamental changes to the constitution by inserting a number of articles regarding the *Velayat-e-Faqih*.[103]

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[101] The Revolutionary Council is a group of clerics and experts selected by Khomeini to oversee the Islamic revolution and legal aspects of the interim government.

[102] The Islamic Republican Party or IRP's central goal was to represent the political needs of the Ulama (Said Saffari, 1993, p 65).

[103] "During the occultation of the Lord of age the governance and leadership of the nation devolve upon the just and pious faqih who is acquainted with the circumstances of his age, courageous, resourceful and possessed of administrative ability ; and recognized and accepted by the majority of the people. In the event that no faqih should be recognized by the majority, the leaders or the leadership council composed of fuqaha possessing the afformented qualifications will assume this responsibility in accordance with article 107" (Riaz Hassan, 1984, p. 682).
 The Velayat- e Faqih translates to guardianship of the jurisprudent. This term essentially explains the role in which Shia clergy have in regards to controling the matters of the state and the people. Some members of the religious establishment believe that the Valayet – e Faqih does not give absolute power to Ulama while figures such as Khomeini and his followers disagree. The constitution however created a position within

Article Five enabled Khomeini to be the absolute leader of the Islamic Republic while Article 110 gave the Valie-e-Faqih power to dismiss commanders of the armed forces and Revolutionary Guards, declare war and peace, to approve presidential candidates and dismiss them if such action would be in the best interest of the nation (Hassan, 1982, 682). This essentially made the president subordinate to the faqih and largely made it a symbolic position in the newly established Islamic Republic (Milani 1993, p. 362). The Islamic intellectuals that helped bring Khomeini to power absolutely resented the actions that leaders of the regime had taken in order to retain control of the nation. Bazargan and other members of the provisional revolutionary government opposed the changes made by the *Ulama* because it brought back the absolutism that Iranians had hoped to eliminate through revolutionary transformation. Khomeini slowly dismissed government officials affiliated with the Liberation Movement and replaced them with members of the *Ulama* that supported his actions and desire for absolute power.

The Iranian Constitution and the amendments made to it by the *Ulama* were simply an attempt to centralize power within the regime. A large number of contradictions within the constitution are proof that the legal document was created to serve the interests of those that held powerful positions within the regime. Although the Iranian Constitution provides for secularly rooted principles such as rights, equality, and justice, it also "acknowledges the supremacy of restrictive Islamic views on rights, justice, and equality" (Tamadonfar 2001, p. 206). Although the constitution recognizes the sovereignty of God by claiming that God has absolute power over man and the world and

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the political system that bestowed this form of absolute power to the leader of the revolution himself, Ayatollah Khomeini.

that man is in charge of his own "social destiny" (p. 206), a section following that

statement contradicts the claim by arguing that sovereignty of God is exercised on Earth

by members of the Shi'a Clergy (p. 206). The verbiage in the newly formed constitution

monopolized power to the Islamic clergy by restricting individual rights. The Iranian

Constitution gave clerics the ability to govern based on the interests of the regime rather

than the needs of the Iranian population, therefore it becomes clear that maintaining

political control is far more important to the leaders of the regime than aligning with an

Islamic based value system.

<div align="center">Islamization of Laws</div>

Khomeini changed the legal structure of the state by Islamizing the laws. The idea was

to resist Western legal theories and move toward a more Islamic-based traditional legal

system by removing Western influence. Some Iranians believed that returning to Islamic

based laws was the answer to the nation's problems while others believed the issues that

plagued Iran were generally due to the authoritarian leadership style that dominated

Iran's history. Khomeini and his followers advocated an Islamic based legal system by

codifying the Sharia and Fiqh to construct such a legal structure within Iran.[104] The

problem, however, is that the Islamic Republic's government has been selective in

choosing which segments of the Sharia to enforce. Laws are clearly slanted in favor of

those who are in power through codes that limit the organization and expansion of other

political groups. Media control by the Islamic Republican Party and Islamic

Revolutionary Guards ensures that oppositional groups are suppressed (Hassan, 1984, p.

684). Laws that help maintain the regimes authority are generally enforced more

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[104] Islamic law consists of two main components: The Sharia which is based on two primary sources, the sayings of Muhammad and the revelations within the Quran and The Fiqh which is comprised of interpretations of the Sharia by Muslim Jurists (Tamadonfar, 2001, p. 209).

forcefully in order to ensure the regime's stability. Therefore, laws in Iran are based

mainly on ensuring those in powerful government positions maintain their authority

through all possible means. Revolutionary based behavior or any form of opposition to

the government is perceived as a threat and therefore illegal under Iranian law.

 Laws in the Islamic Republic are generally geared toward power maintenance rather

than enforcing a truly Muslim based value system. This type generally normal outcome

of revolutionary transformation because when power is seized, leaders must increase

repression to stop opposition in order to construct a new leadership system (Chehabi,

1990). What started off as a religiously based nationalist framework for operating the

state turned into an ideologically rooted mechanism for control. Again, the likelihood of

choosing another method of control is not only slim but generally impossible given the

circumstances that Khomeini and his followers were facing at the time. The laws initiated

by the constitution were said to be Islamic and rooted in Islamic values when in reality

they were founded to help the *Ulama* maintain political control of the nation rather than

eliminating absolutism.

<div align="center">Economic and Social Policies</div>

 Economic policies in the Islamic Republic have been generally based on nationalizing

natural resources and redistributing land and jobs throughout nation. Private property was

considered sacred to Islam therefore Khomeini made sure Iranians were aware of the

importance of private ownership by issuing an Eight Point Declaration on property rights.

Through this measure, authorities were told to respect people's "movable and immovable

possessions, including homes, stores, workshops, farms and factories" (Abrahamian,

2008, p. 179). Although Khomeini preached to Iranians that property rights were sacred

to Islam he ended up confiscating large amounts of agricultural business land run by leaders of the Pahlavi regime and later distributing it to poor peasant families. Khomeini focused on helping the peasant population and bringing a sense of self sufficiency to a segment of the Iranian society that was neglected by the *Shah*, therefore various aspects of his reform measures were beneficial to the Iranian population. The government also focused on a number of labor related laws to ensure factory workers rights. Various unions were formed and limits were placed on the amount of hours worked per week. Attendance in elementary schools rose by nearly thirty percent, infant mortality rates dropped by nearly eighty percent, the population nearly doubled within a ten year span and literacy more than doubled by 1989 (2008, p. 180).

Social Policies in Iran changed significantly after the revolution. Institutions promoting Western based culture such as cinemas were either closed or burned down to suppress Western influence (Keddie 2003, p. 290) All types of music except Iranian folk and classical music was also banned. The government implemented policies to separate the sexes but the most notable changes were in regards to women's rights (p. 291). The Islamic Republic implemented policies that forced women to cover their hair with veils and their body's with large loose fitting coats to hide their figures. In the first year of the revolution, Iranian women were treated poorly through laws that essentially took private and publicly rooted rights away from women. Iranian women's organizations however did their best to change such laws and were largely successful at doing so. Although women are still required to obtain permission for travel, wear Hejabs and loose fitting coats on top of their clothing, they have certainly gained a significant amount of power in

the Iranian political system through a series of laws aimed at increasing the rights of women.

Foreign Policy

Foreign policy in the Islamic Republic was initially characterized by a period of general disconnect from the global system. While in the process of systemic transformation Iran cut ties with the West for a number of years to prove that the Islamic Republic was capable of sufficiently providing for its population, without being reliant on the Western world. Although the decision to cut financial ties with the West was certainly viewed by Iranians as a positive move toward gaining autonomy, the decision to do so has brought a multitude of problems for the nation. The Iranian government has come under scrutiny for reducing ties with the West as well as a series of human rights related issues that appear to be prevalent within the Islamic regime. Although Iran has enjoyed relatively smooth relations with Eastern countries such China and India, sanctions implemented by the West have certainly strained relations with those nations as well. Besides Iran's relationship with Iraq, Iran has generally had a peaceful relationship with its neighboring nations.The regime's desire to bring a sense of self sufficiency to Iran has generally worked, but its continued behavior toward The United States and Israel is beginning to backfire. The regimes continuous support of militant Islamist groups such as Hezbelloh has painted the government as merely an outlet for funding terrorist opposition to Israel and Western based domination. This image has not only hurt the Iranian trade industry by sanctions imposed by West but also limited the financial and social growth of the nation. Iranians, however, seem to believe that the Islamic Republic's behavior toward the West is generally acceptable. Ahmadinejad has received a great deal of

support from the Supreme Leader for vocalizing his opposition …" to so called arrogant outside powers (especially the United States)" (Thaler et. al, 2010, p. 77). Iranians continue to believe that subservience to the West is simply unacceptable, and the regime continues its reclusive behavior that was adopted in 1979 with a certain amount of support from the Iranian population.

<div align="center">Regimes Actions toward Various Founders of Revolution</div>

A number of groups initially involved in the revolutionary process such as the *Mujahadeen* and the Liberation movement were phased out of power by Khomeini because of the potential threat they posed to the *ulama's* political authority. The provisional government's Prime Minister, Mehdi Bazargan, realized within a short period of time that Khomeini had no intention of distributing power among the various political groups that were responsible for carrying out the revolution. Khomeini replaced members of the provisional government with clerics from the Islamic Republican Party and various other Islamic based sectors created and endorsed by Khomeini himself. Through his actions, Khomeini created opposition, but also suppressed it by utilizing the newly formed Revolutionary Guards. Khomeini focused on the negative aspects of foreign influence to motivate the masses to align with him, but a large majority of the revolutionary forces involved in the transformation continued to support the less religious and less centralized political system. The Liberation Movement tried to remove the clerical monopoly over religion by attempting to synthesize "mild features of European socialism with progressive ideas of Shia Islam, and the advantages of industrial technology with the cultural value of their own traditional society" (Hassan, 1984, p. 679). The Liberation Movement's intent was to formulate a more progressive form of

Shi'ism that could be accepted by the anti-*Shah* clergy, junior clergy, the modern middle class and the dissatisfied intelligentsia (1984, p. 679). Khomeini, however, believed that Bazargan and the Liberation Movement were far too radical for the Iranian system. In 1981 Dr. Abu Hassan Bani Sadr, a member of the Liberation Movement, was dismissed as president of the provisional government and replaced with a member of the Islamic Republican Party. Because of the provisional government's opposition to Article five of the constitution, Khomeini made it his priority to remove such figures from office and replace them with conservative clerics that aligned more with his own ideology.

<div align="center">Shift to a Military Authoritarian System: The Pasdaran</div>

The Islamic Revolutionary Guards, known as the *Pasdaran*, was created in May of 1979 to suppress opposition to the revolution. The institution that began as an unorganized and generally poor militia formed by non-clerical supporters of the Islamic regime transformed into a highly centralized institution with a great deal of political autonomy.[105] As an organization completely separate from the Iranian military, the *Pasdaran* were forced to rely on volunteer support from non-clerical supporters of the regime as well as funding through contributions from the clerical establishment. Although not officially affiliated with the Iranian military, the *Pasdaran* was combined with the Iranian military for a number of years. A separation, however, was maintained throughout most of the institution's history. Today the *Pasdaran* is a highly funded institution with a great deal of autonomy. Leaders of the *Pasdaran*, although ideologically aligned with conservative clerics, have a great deal of influence in the

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[105] One can see that the Pasdaran has a great deal of autonomy from the Islamic Republican Party and other institutions within the regime because throughout its existence leaders of the Pasdaran had generally decided the composition of the insitution with little input from outside sources (Keneth Katzman, 1993, p. 116).

political process within Iran. By utilizing volunteer support through its Basiji units, the

Pasdaran is more powerful than it has ever been.[106] Internal opposition to the regime in

Iran is typically suppressed through support form the *Basiji* while export of the revolution

is generally handled by the Qods unit of the *Pasdaran*.[107] The Qods unit is currently

responsible for exporting the revolution through financial and arms support in Lebanon,

Iraq, Afghanistan and various other nations. Domestically and internationally, the

Pasdaran has expanded into a large institution with members also associated with the

leadership structure of the nation.

<div align="center">Privatization of Religion</div>

The politicization of religion that resulted from the establishment of a religious based

regime has changed the practice of religion in Iran. By politicizing Islam, Iranians have

moved away from attending Friday prayer for religious purposes to more private ways of

observing their religious duties (Abdolmohammad Kazemipur and Ali Rezaei p. 352)

Friday prayer in Iran has become a political duty that enables political growth and

maintenance of leadership positions. Studies show that public participation in events such

as Friday prayer have gone down for individuals that attended more often in the past (p.

352). Those in opposition to the regime have found that the political elements are what

dominate the so called religious discussions of clerics during Friday prayer. Many

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[106] "The Basiji were relatively young (school age) and old (retired) volunteers who served a three-month tours at the front and returned back to their villages" (Kenneth Katzman, 1993, p. 396). " The Basiji were not organized in fixed formation but rather were sent to the front en masse, where they were inserted into fixed Pasdaran units on short notice, at direction of their Pasdaran commanders" (p. 396). The Basiji were an integral part of the Iraq offensive but their inexperience and general use of them as simply unarmed, untrained bodies led to a large causalities in which the military opposed.

[107] The Qods unit "which is staffed by the most radical pasdars, became operational in 1982 when a Pasdaran contingent arrived in Lebanon, ostensibly to help repel the Israeli invasion of that country earlier that year. The unit primarily refers to Iran's Lebanon contingent, the flagship of the Pasdaran's export of the revolution apparatus but also includes Pasdaran contingents in Sudan, and apparently Bosnia, as well as intelligent and anti-dissident operations abroad" (Katzman, 1993, p. 396).

Iranians closely associated with the leadership mechanism publicize their religion to gain the support of the religious establishment. By doing so, Iranians affiliated with those in power strengthen their bonds with the religious establishment and therefore enable their own political, social and economic success.

The 2009 Election Dispute

Reformists have continued to push for political influence in Iran, however, their success has been limited since president Mohhamad Khatami was replaced by the very conservative president Mahmud Ahmadinejad. While in power Khatami enabled civil society to grow by encouraging freedoms that the Islamic Republic had taken away from Iranians. Ahmadinejad, however, perceived the previous leader's (president Khatami) reforms as barriers to the regime's stability and therefore pushed for more government control. Iranians that wanted Ahmadinejad out of the political arena put their financial and physical support in campaigning for a new reformist president.

President Ahmadinejad's disputed election in 2009 intensified opposition to the regime. Although a large segment of the Iranian population appears to believe that Ahmadinejad may have won the election against reformist opponent Mir- Hossein Musavi, many believe the government's desire to hide election data raises doubts regarding the legitimacy of Ahmadinejad's selection. Ahmadinejad's economic policies, which are aimed at helping the lower income strata, has enabled him to gain the support of poor and more conservative segments of the Iranian population (Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, 2006, p. 667). The Iranian population is changing however as Iranians are beginning to question whether Ahmadinejad's policies are worth enduring an increase in government repression. Reformists clearly believe that the conservative segments of the

Iranian leadership have taken these policies of repression too far for too long. Reformists in Iran and abroad have come to the consensus that the Iranian government's behavior toward street protesters in 2009 was simply unacceptable and took the absolutist nature of the regime too far. It appears that reformists such as Musavi have become a burden to the Islamic Republic. The government's desire to eliminate opposition through violence and oppression has caused a new wave of opposition to emerge.

<div align="center">Re-emergence of Oppositional Groups</div>

Oppositional groups are remerging again within the Iranian political atmosphere. Those angered by the regime are joining reform organizations in hopes of removing the clerical establishment's absolute power over the domestic and foreign policies of the nation. Liberal Islamists are again frustrated with the absolutist structure of the leadership apparatus in Iran, and it appears they are merging once again to alter the system and bring a sense of representation to the Iranian masses. Iranians are generally disappointed at how the wealth of those affiliated with the regime continues to grow while the economy in Iran remains stagnant. Educated Iranians unable to find jobs are moving in the direction of reform because the economy in Iran is simply incapable of sustaining the large educated population that has emerged.

Political competition through increased mass communication is motivating candidates to seek the support of the Iranian masses rather than simply appeasing the Supreme Leader and the Council of Experts. Public opinion is starting to matter more and more each day as a result of increased communicative ability, which is the main reason why censorship in Iran has become prevalent in more recent years (Adib-Moghaddam, 2006, pp.666-68).

Reformist groups appear to have gained popularity in more recent times as a result of an increase in repression and economic instability that has caused dissatisfaction among the largely young population of Iran. Maintenance of the theocratic regime is getting more difficult as time passes and because of that government endorsed cruelty toward the masses has increased to help the regimes continuity. High unemployment and general lack of freedom has reproduced a political atmosphere nearly identical to that of the mid to late 1970s. A lack of tolerance for opposition groups on behalf of the government has caused a heightened dislike for the regime but this regime, unlike the *Shah's*, has a large, highly centralized and wealthy institution which was deliberately formed to suppress such opposition. The *Pasdaran*'s ability to utilize discrete forces such as the *Basiji* to control the Iranian masses has completely enraged Iranians pushing for reform. The regime's relative independence has enabled it to overlook foreign disapproval for its actions and therefore pressure from the outside to weaken the authoritative nature of the regime has been relatively unsuccessful. Iranians aware of the regime's ability to withstand foreign pressure are slowly beginning to coordinate opposition with the realization that they will be responsible for implementing change. The regime's authoritative nature has proven its resilience to foreign demands and so Iranians are becoming aware that it will be their responsibility to set forth transformative measures with limited foreign assistance. Iranians in favor of reform are receiving a great deal of moral and financial support from expatriates to push for reform but ultimately Iranians within Iran will be responsible for instigating change.

The Cyclical Process of Politics in Iran

Over the last century Iranian politics has gone through a cyclical pattern. Leaders competing with the Iranian masses for power have increased repression and cruelty in order to maintain authority but have instead are created even more resistance through such tactics. A lack of legitimacy normally drives the need for repression but the vocal nature of the Iranian masses certainly contributes to the repressive nature that Iranian leaders of the last century have possessed. It appears that Iranians are culturally much less willing to accept government endorsed brutality because their value system essentially forbids them from doing so. When repression increases, oppositional mobilization on behalf of the Iranian masses tends to increase as well. A decrease in repression permits the growth of civil society which in turn increases political participation and opposition to the regime. Iranian leaders therefore increase repression to control the masses and continually add to the population's dislike for the regime. The recent election disputes are proof of this argument. Khatami's liberalization measures enabled civil society to flourish, but when Ahmadinejad came to power and suppressed the people through various policies aimed at increasing the regime's power, the Iranian masses again pushed for reform. As a result those in power increased censorship and banned political websites to reduce communication and therefore reduce or hopefully eliminate political opposition. The Reformist attempting to gain political influence are basically pushed out of the political arena or violently removed by members of the *Pasdaran* to help maintain the regime, but this behavior only makes the cycle of repression and opposition continue.

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Conclusion

The events of the last century serve as evidence that when met with authoritative control and injustice, Iranians revolt. An inability to explain this revolutionary behavior through simple classical approaches linked to economic instability and alienation leads to a belief that economic issues are simply not sufficient in explaining such a response on behalf of the Iranian population. Although economic problems have certainly had partial influence on the revolutionary behavior Iranians posses, their values are more diverse than applying a simple Marxist approach to the issue. It appears that Iranians are more concerned with social justice, Islamic and nationalist values and the symbolic history of the monarchy than they are with strictly economic based issues. Post-Marxist approaches such as World System based theories, which focus on the role of the global economy in promoting revolutionary behavior, appear to lack the ability to explain why Iranians of varying income brackets would revolt. Functionalist approaches oversimplify the cause of revolution to a simple issue of resource allocation but their reductionist approach lacks the details necessary for explaining revolutionary transformation. Patterns of protest and rebellion found in Iranian political behavior lead to a belief that Iranians have numerous revolutionary based elements within their culture. The values that construct this revolutionary behavior in Iran appear to be best explained through a cultural approach to revolutionary transformation. The monarchic system, nationalist beliefs, Shi'a political culture and a general desire for justice all appear to be the elements that promote the boycotts, protests and revolutions that Iranians have encountered within their history.

The clerical establishment's desire to maintain authority has shifted the focus of the Islamic regime to one of only power retention. Maintenance of the regime's authoritative

structure appears to be the focal point of the regime's policies. The leadership has marginalized Islamic values in order to strengthen its authority but most religious segments of society are beginning to realize that the regime has moved away from Islam and toward authoritarianism. Arresting, beating, and killing people in the name of Islam appears to be less accepted by the Iranian masses. The reason for this is that Iranians that truly believe in the values that Islam promotes, know that those in power pick and choose the segments of Islamic law that enable them to stay in power rather than adhering to all components of the religion that could limit leadership authority.

Iranians have been protesting for a long period of time but now this behavior is simply unacceptable to the regime that was brought to existence through such measures. Ancient Persian holidays that have been practiced for thousands of years are now being shunned by the government because of the threat that such events pose to the regime. Basiji forces surround neighborhoods during such holidays to prevent mass gatherings and the potential for protests. Various women's groups have been banned by the government. Reformist based papers and websites have been outlawed. The regime is systematically attempting to eradicate opposition by breaking down civil society organizations responsible for endorsing reform. This behavior, however, is causing Islamists of various backgrounds that once supported the regime to turn their support to reform based political organizations. The women that once supported the regime for their ties to the leadership are now questioning the state's policies. The new educated upper and middle class segments of society that developed as a result of the revolution are also beginning to realize that the regime tends to benefit only those closely affiliated with the leadership apparatus. These people, although provided with opportunities at the start of regime, have

generally had little allegiance to it because of its inability to financially sustain them as a new class within the Iranian system. Such class problems were also prevalent prior to the revolution. Iranians appear to be frustrated with the leaders of the regime for encouraging cruelty toward those that participate politically to promote reform. Mass arrests, imprisonments and beatings have led Iranians of varying segments of society to question the regime's legitimacy.

If the Islamic regime does not stop religious marginalization and reduce repression, a revolution will likely occur in the near future. Iranians have clearly grown frustrated with the system and the religious establishment's support for the dictatorship that has taken control of Iran and its people for the last thirty plus years. Iranian leaders will have to reconsider the way they maintain power because the Iranian masses are no longer willing to accept the social, political and economic situation in Iran. The likelihood of accepting a decrease in power however is very slim and because of this, revolution will more than likely be the method Iranians utilize in order to change the political system. Incremental changes to the internal structure of the regime may prolong the survival of Iran's leadership apparatus, but such changes will probably be insufficient for an oppressed and largely educated population in need of social and political freedom.

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