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The Iranian Leviathan
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To my mother

Table Of Contents

List of Graphics

List of Tabels

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Abstract

Democracy in Iran has since 1979 been a major preoccupation for the West. Most commentators have failed to see the Iranian revolution as a step towards the establishment of a modern democratic state. This illustrates a profound misunderstanding of different steps in this direction. In three phases contemporary Iranian history reads as a tale of state formation. In the sense that a state needs to be strong enough to democratize, the Iranian twentieth century reads as a long journey towards democracy. In a first phase the State prevailed over concentrations of private, non-statal power like the tribes, the clergy and the bazaar. In a second phase within the State new actors, like civil society or the Islamic armed forces, emerged on new foundations of power. In an ongoing third phase these new actors now battle for domination of the state. The nuclear issue could determine the outcome. The West might have an ace to play, by accepting Iran's nuclear destiny and a future of both deterrence and further democratization in the country and region.

1.   Introduction

The June 2009 events in Iran were shocking for most of those observers following the country. After an intense and competitive campaign Ahmadinejad was reelected. If such was not *per se* incredibile, the high number of votes he gathered was. Officially the incumbent got a bit over 24 million votes, more than the hugely popular Khatami had gotten in 1997. Sure Ahmadinejad has his partisans, yet such a crushing defeat for Mir Hussein Mousavi, who got a little over half Ahmadinejad's votes was hardly credibile. The images of young supporters of Mousavi hitting the streets only to get beaten by a mix of riot police and *Basij*, a section of the *Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enqelab-e Eslami*, the Islamic Guardians Guard Corps. Mousavi's partisans spoke of the beginning of a velvet colored revolution, while Ahmadinejad compared their riots to little more than the violence of unhappy soccer fans whose team had just lost a game.

So what is happening? Is the Iranian revolution collapsing? Unsurprising maybe, since it *"was virtually destined for a big fall from the outset"*.[1] At least, such has been the sentiment (or the hope?) of many observers since 1989. Until now it has proven illusory. Even today there seem to be more questions than answers. If Iran is an Islamic Republic ruled by the ayatollahs, where were the ayatollahs during the upheaval? And during the presidential contest? Why did Mousavi's supporters have such a clearly determined social profile, in essence young, educated and generally middle-class, without him being able to gather national support?

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[1] R. WRIGHT, "Dateline Tehran: A Revolution Implodes", *Foreign Policy*, No.103, Summer 1996, pp.161-174 (172)

To answer these questions the basic interrogation of this study turns upside down the question of democracy and democratization in Iran. Why did the so-called Third Wave of democratization not affect Iran? Why did or do the regime not move? Is it "stronger" or "more ferocious" than other regimes ? Can traditional models of analysis answer this question? Does it suffice to say it is a non-democratic system "in transition"? I wonder where transitology went wrong. Why has it proven unable to present a general theory of democratic transitions? And, more importantly, why have its statements on Iran been so very much at odds with reality? Is it time to accept that a certain model of "authoritarianism" can be sustainable? If so, what are the institutional characteristics of such regimes. Rather than looking for paths towards democracy in Iran, this study would thus try to understand the durability of dictatorship in a country that has known undemocratic rule in different forms throughout the twentieth century.

Only such an analysis will permit me to consider the internal dynamics of the system and help to understand how these dynamics brought about the situation of today, where civil society and a section of the military dispute power, without allowing religious leaders to plays a significant role.

Although with every new book on Iran, the author feels obliged to underline "how unknown this complex country still is", the amount of articles, studies and books on the country clearly outdoes scholarship on many countries of the region. Yet, and perhaps surprisingly, there do not seem to be many scientific reasons explaining why Iran should get more attention than for one Saudi-Arabia. The only major reality that makes Iran truly and considerably differ from other countries is the revolution. Iran is the only country in the region and one of the very few countries worldwide to have experienced a large-scale popular revolution amounting to an apparent total transformation of its social and political order. Predictably and justifiably many social scientists have focused on this event, its causes and consequences.

Simplistically one could subdivide approaches of the revolution in two very different macro-visions. A first approach underlines the rupture between the pre-revolutionary revolution of Iran and the post-revolutionary period. In such a sense Pahlavi modernization might be opposed to religious obscurantism. Or pro-Western tendencies to anti-Western radicalism. A second approach underlines continuities between both pre- and post-revolutionary Iran. This line of thought has focused both on religion as on the economy, both on foreign policy and on internal developments.

In order to explain the revolution social scientists have gotten up, close and personal with Iran. This has especially been the case for many scholars of Iranian origin, who are often and understandably, very embedded in and familiar with the realities of their native country. To these have been added all those non-Iranian scholars, that have taken a particular interest in some specific reality of the country. All this has especially, but not only, since the revolution offered a substantial quantity of rather detailed accounts on different Iranian realities.

The reasons for the attention given to Iran are undoubtedly multiple. Scholars focusing on religion, culture, and revolution, just as much as anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, and a whole series of other –ists find in Iran "a particular interest" because of a very "specific context". For a variety of reasons, most of them linked to national pride, Iranians themselves eagerly underline the specificity of their country. This "specificity" has now and again brought about some unpleasant side effects.

Until 1979 many analyses of Iran used what one could call a paradigm of similarity. In essence Iran was considered a country well underway to "join" or "copy" the Western socio-political reality. The basic presumption was: Iran is different but similar. In essence scholars used a bias analogous to the one that is still today used for Israel. Israel is obviously not a traditional Western liberal-democratic regime, as such it is different. Yet it is also considered the regime most similar to the West. As such many of the analyses and paradigms commonly used to

analyze Western liberal democratic societies were applied to these "similar" polities. Reviewing pre-revolutionary scholarship on Iran something analogous can be said.

This changed with the revolution. The change is a very subtle one, yet quite remarkable. From a paradigm of similarity one shifts to a paradigm of dissimilarity. In essence what will be stressed now will be the differences between the "dissimilar" country and the Western liberal democratic countries. The most apparent changes are often the incorporation of new concepts or terms, something especially obvious in the analysis of Latin-American dictatorships. Those new "concepts", generally considered "impossible to translate", are then to reinforce the "specificity" of the country under consideration. In the Iranian case the best example is offered by the concept of *velayat-e faqih*. This so-called "guardianship of the jurist" is based on Shi'i jurisprudence and transformed in a political concept by Khomeini. Since scholars have been engaged to understand to "true" character of this "new" concept. The question increasingly became what Khomeini truly meant and if his interpretation was or was not in line with traditional Shi'i jurisprudence. For some it has become impossible to understand Iran without profoundly understanding the religious jurisprudence on and genesis of *velayat-e faqih*. Quite a bit like Latin-American studies now "require" the use of words as "*caudillo*". The incorporation of new concepts is always an extremely delicate undertaking, since it might constitute an excuse to go around the established concepts of the social sciences.

Is such a shift in focus detrimental? It clearly does not have to be. One can perform an in-depth scan of a polity and subsequently conclude that the polity is more or less dissimilar to the polity of reference. These are the very basic tenets of comparative politics. It becomes detrimental however when dissimilarity is no longer a conclusion but a point of departure. The latter has become the case more often than not. What could be called a bias of dissimilarity has started to permeate the analysis of the Iranian political system. Hardly any study of

contemporary Iran omits a reference on just how specific and unique the Iranian situation is.

The detail of some punctual sociological analyses have started to obscure the bigger picture. Micro-analyses offer an infinitively complex image of any policy. And micro-analyses have come to colonize the bigger picture. Unsurprisingly most scholars underline that the complexity of decision-making in the Iranian polity makes a total understanding seems near to impossible. All of them underline the importance of informal power structures in the Islamic Republic. Such claims are not necessarily false, but somewhat short-sighted and naive. The claims are not false in the sense that the Iran polity is indeed characterized by informal power structures. They are naive when they pretend to capture some kind of "specificity" of the Iranian system. From China to the world's oldest democracy informal links among the power elite are numerous. This is no different in European parliamentarian democracies.

It is remarkable how such bias of dissimilarity inextricably leads to some kind of "our" system versus "their" system paradigm. The Marxist paradigm has considered fascist authoritarian systems as a special form of liberal democracy (dictatorship of the bourgeoisie).[2] This line of argumentation was somewhat altered in 1935 when the Komintern's leading figure, Bulgarian communist leader Dimitrov, stated that fascism had to be considered not just "another" form of capitalism[3] but the expression of the most chauvinist, imperialist and reactionary fractions of the bourgeoisie. The fundamental link between

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[2] The "class against class" policy, abandoned temporarily, but not forgotten, between 1934 and 1939, of the Comintern which inspired among others the KPD to consider the German Socialist Party as "social-fascist" are well known. For an overview consider: M. DREYFUS (ed.), *Le siècle des communismes*, Paris, Les Editions de l'Atelier/Editions ouvrières, 2000, especially pp.208-215 and pp.503-506

[3] G. DIMITROV, « Pour l'unité de la classe ouvrière contre le fascisme : Discours de clôture, prononcé au VIIe Congrès Mondial de l'Internationale Communiste, le 2 aôut, 1935 », in G. DIMITROV, *Oeuvres Choisies en trois volumes,* Vol.II, Sofia, Presse, 1972, pp.95-132 (101)

both types of regimes was however never really questioned.[4] Both systems were (and are) from a Marxist point of view an expression of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. More recently the authoritative Marxist scholar Poulantzas underlined the close family bond between fascism and other forms of "the Capitalist State".[5]

Most non-Marxist scholars, on the other hand, have been straightforward in their effort to separate liberal democracy on the one hand from fascism, communism and other authoritarianisms on the other. In a way however, the result of their analyses is formally similar to the Marxist one. Indeed, both "liberal democratic" scholars and Marxists start by considering the system they prefer as "fundamentally" different from other systems. These "other ones" can be either Communism and Fascism for a liberal democratic scholar or Fascism and Liberal Democracy for a Marxist. In this way, the classification seems to say at least as much about the scholar using it, as it does about the object it is supposed to define.[6]

Other than ideological predispositions, cultural and regional studies have clearly contributed to this process. Understandably both cultural and regional studies tend to stress differences rather than similarities of a specific "culture" or a particular "region". Although theories of democratization have been looking to develop a general theory of democratization, often minimizing the role of cultural factors, they have played an equally detrimental role in the process. It is arguably literature on transitions towards democracy that has suffered most clearly from the dissimilarity bias. Notwithstanding all the nuances and refinements different scholars have tried to develop, transitological literature has remained very much on the track of a binary distinction

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[4] G. DIMITROV, "L'offensive du fascisme et les tâches de l'Internationale communiste dans la lutte pour l'unité de la classe ouvrière contre le fascisme : Rapport au VIIe Congrès Mondial de l'Internationale Communiste, présenté le 2 août, 1935», in G. DIMITROV, *Oeuvres Choisies en trois volumes,* Vol.II, Sofia, Presse, 1972, pp.5-94 (11)

[5] N. POULANTZAS, *Fascisme et dictature*, Paris, Seuil-Maspéro, 1974, p.348

[6] G. HERMET, "Prologue", in G. HERMET (ed.), *Totalitarismes*, Paris, Economica, 1984, p.5

between "democracy" on the one hand, and "non-democracy" on the other.

Once such a fundamental binary distinction had been established, the "science of transitology" could develop. Transitology and democratization have, since Huntington's Third Wave,[7] come to constitute a "new branch" of social sciences. Transitology covers the study of political transitions from authoritarianism in any form to (liberal) democracy. In doing so it requires a clear distinction between both regime types. Not surprisingly contemporary analyses of political systems within the framework of transitology have something in common: a basic distinction separates democracy from authoritarianism. Societies and polities are divided on the basis of their "open" or "closed" nature. One cannot go without noticing the classificatory logic of such an approach. Transitology relies heavily on a binary classification, democracy versus dictatorship. The opposition of dictatorial, authoritarian or other non-democracies to democracies becomes even harmful when used to put aside normal analytical instruments. Such notably happened with certain theories of totalitarianism defending the impossibility of an internal collapse.[8] The same temptation of methodological exceptionalism can be found in some works of scholars in transitology who pretend implicitly that during a transition "normal social science methods" are to be suspended.[9]

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[7] S. HUNTINGTON, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991

[8] See M. DOBRY, "Introduction : Les Processus de Transition à la Démocratie", *Cultures et Conflits,* no.17, 1995, pp.3-8 and the work of J. J. KIRKPATRICK, *Dictatorship and Double Standards*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1982

[9] See: G. DI PALMA, *To Craft Democracies. An Essay on Democratic Transitions*, Berkeley University of California Press, 1990, p.34 but, as M. DOBRY, "Introduction : Les Processus de transition à la démocratie", *Cultures et Conflits*, no.17, 1995, pp.3-8 notes quite correctly such a reasoning is present as well in writings of G. O'DONNELL & P.C. SCHMITTER, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain democracies*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1986

Considering the failures of Iraqi and Afghan campaigns for democracy, it might be an idea to question such a simplistic bias. Yet there are theoretical scientific reasons to do so as well. Transitology relies heavily on the idea that transitions are initiated or accomplished by elites. If elites should transform dictatorship in democracy, how to identify ruling elites? Who rules Iran? Who is really in charge? These are not questions that are easily answered.

Be it for cultural reasons, for its type of government, or for regional particularities, the paradigm of dissimilarity tries to convince us that Iran is different. It does so by turning certain undeniable realities into absolute, coherent entities supposed to characterize the polity. At the same time it downplays the role similar realities play in other polities. Why would informal power structures be quantitatively or qualitatively more important in Iran than in any other polity? Why would ideology have a more important role in Islamic Iran than in the liberal-democratic United States? Are there objective scientific measures that permit us to state such beyond reasonable doubt?

Whatever the answer to these questions might be, it is undeniable that from such a perspective Iran is not a democracy. Iran is a dictatorship. The self-evidence of both statements is matched only by their straightforwardness. So-doing things become remarkably simple. The only question remaining would then be: how to ma make a democracy out of the Islamic Republic. Some analysts, taken such an evolution for granted, put it even more bluntly "*It would, of course, be ideal for this transformation to take place with a minimum of damage and with a high level of freedom and democracy.*"[10] In essence, does the West have to go to war for democracy ?

Until here the story reads as the revenge of essentialism, with all the problems this implies. But the kind of essentialism applied to Iran has two characteristics that make it especially harmful. Firstly, it is an

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[10] M. SAZEGARA, "The Point of No Return : Iran's Path to Democracy", *Policy Focus #54*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, April 2006, p.17

orientalist essentialism. Secondly, it appears to be based on common sense.

Edward Said's work has often been reduced to its political critique of Orientalism.[11] In reality, one of the fundamentals of Edward Said's famous criticism of Orientalism concerned essentialist visions of the Orient. Said famously argues that the gap between the Orient and the West is willingly constructed. One of the ways this is done is by essentializing those realities that differ most visibly from the West. Such essentialism formed and arguably still forms the most basic foundation of Orientalism, be it in fine arts or literature. The question is why such essentialism is still permeating social science.

The latter question becomes all the more relevant when considering how essentialism constructs its entities. Pierre Bourdieu wrote: "*Social science must break with the preconstructions of common sense, that is, with 'reality' as it presents itself, in order to construct its proper objects, even at the risk of appearing to do violence to that reality*".[12] Unfortunately essentialism as used today towards Iran departs exactly from observed reality, from the most visible aspects of the political system. The best illustration of this point is that still today a huge majority of scholars consider the Islamic Republic as the Republic of the *mollahs. Velayat-e faqih* offers another illustration. A number of social scientists indeed takes the pseudo-concept at face-value, turns it into an object of study and then uses it as a criterion of distinction between Iran and other countries.

Charles Tilly described the process eloquently as follows: "*The separation of sociology from history operated, curiously enough, through both abstraction and concretization: abstracting social processes from the constraints of time and space, concretizing social research by aiming it at reliable observation of currently visible behavior.*"[13] This study considers

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[11] E. SAID, *Orientalism,* New York, Penguin Books, 2003

[12] P. BOURDIEU, "Vive le crise! For heterodoxy in social science", *Theory and Society,* Vol.17, No.5, September 1988, pp.773-787 (777)

[13] C. TILLY, "Historical Sociology", *Current Perspectives in Social Theory,* Vol.1, 1980, pp.55-59 (55)

Iran can be both similar and different. It can even be judged unique. But none of these qualifications should be transformed in absolute signs of distinction, permitting to construct some kind of social reality, opposing it to another construction. Rather than qualifying *a priori* the Iranian political system this study turns back to the very basics of political sociology, bringing back in the historical dimension.

I argue that labels as "democracy" or "dictatorship" tell us surprisingly little about the quantity and the quality of the rulers. Democracy, going back to ancient Greek tradition where it often had a negative connotation, would technically mean the "rule of the people". Although it has come to mean the government of the people, by the people and for the people, Schumpeter gave a more realistic definition of modern liberal democracy by describing the democratic method of rule as "*the institutional system, resulting in political decisions, in which individuals acquire power to rule (legislate) as a result of a competitive struggle for the votes of the people.*"[14] Dictatorship on the other hand goes back to an institution of the Roman Republic where one person was for a limited time assigned "full" authority by the Senate. The opposition between democracy and dictatorship with regard to the quantity of the rulers seems hence rather straightforward. In dictatorship the one rules, in democracy, directly or indirectly, the people. On the quality of the ruler, in essence their nature, the difference seems similar. Democracy is based on the selection of rulers by competitive elections and alternate rulers; while in contemporary literature dictatorship now includes the lack of "truly free" elections.

If this might seem a clear-cut distinction to some, the Iranian case poses a challenge to the essentialist distinction between democracy and dictatorship. It presents both a democratic structure, as an authoritarian structure.

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[14] J. SCHUMPETER, *Capitalisme, Socialisme et Démocratie*, Paris, Payot, 1990, p.355 as quoted in P. RIUTORT, *Précis de sociologie*, Paris, PUF, 2004, p.508

Some scholars, by either simplifying Iranian reality[15] or by adapting the concept of totalitarianism[16], have classified Iran as a "totalitarian state". Such a qualification makes little sense. If what opposes democracy to dictatorship are both qualitative aspects, Iran is probably both. It combines an indirectly elected official, the Supreme Jurisprudent, ruling not unlike a Roman Republic-style dictator, with a system of relatively democratic institutions and competitive elections. Yet even the Supreme Jurisprudent is elected, albeit indirectly through an Assembly of Experts, elected through relatively competitive elections as well.

Quantitatively, it might be a different story. Iran might be ruled by one coherent *mullah-junta* and therefore be labelled a dictatorship. It seems indeed easy enough to criticize classificatory logic, the question remains: is there really no sense to it at all? Maybe common sense and political science do match. Returning to the very basics of political science, I will attempt to separate authoritarianism from democracy by looking at these Aristotelian interrogations.[17]

I distinguish between those scholars asserting that the one rules, monists, and those claiming that multiple actors rule, pluralists. This is basically the quantitative criterion separating democracy from dictatorship. In the former the many rule, in the latter the one.

Although some strong points of elitist analyses are discovered, an overview will inevitably demonstrate some of their limits. Both pluralists and monists share with transitology a predominantly essentialist and elitist vision of the polity. First, regimes are categorized according to who rules, the one or the many. Subsequently transitology intervenes to see how elites can be incited to "choose" democracy. Or to put it even more reductively: how can a regime in which the one rules

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[15] R. KAMRANE & F. TELLIER, *Iran: Les Coulisses d'un Totalitarisme,* Paris, Flammarion, 2007

[16] C. BENARD & Z. KHALILZAD, *The Government of God: Iran's Islamic Republic,* New York, Columbia UP, 1984, pp.114-115

[17] ARISTOTE, *Les Politiques*, Paris, GF-Flammarion, 1993, p.229-230

be converted into a regime with a plurality of rulers. What is then looked for is elite fragmentation and situations in which moderates side with the opposition. The latter is supposed to lead to democratization if not democracy. Once again Iran seems to defy this logic. The country's harsh conflicts between elites are combined with a remarkable regime stability. This observation has led scholars to add still other concepts to the already extensive list of existing labels. To "limited democracies", "tutelary democracies", "illiberal democracies", "competitive autocracies" have been added labels as "*factionalized authoritarianism*"[18] or "*fragmented authoritarianism*", the latter supposedly characterized by "*a highly fragmented state that generates and nourishes elite factionalism and public contestation but all along allows hard-liners to monitor and manage political forces, ensuring that conflicts among elites persist without unravelling into an authoritarian breakdown*".[19] Although Ibrahim Karawan's "*Mullastroika*" offers some competition,[20] the best illustration of classificatory logic's failure has perhaps been offered by Houchang Chehabi when he described the Iranian Constitution as "*doubly hybrid semipresidential and quasitheocratic*".[21]

When classificatory logic does not hold even within the theories favouring it, the idea of stepping over from one regime to another loses much of its sense. But the mentioned paradigms present considerable limitations even in their answers on the basic question of who rules. Since the answer remains limited to either one elite or multiple elites, the identity of these elites is foregone. Another major flaw of these

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[18] H. CHEHABI, "The Political Regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Comparative Perspective" , *Government and Opposition,* Vol. 36, No.1, Winter 2001, pp.48-70 (62)

[19] A. KESHAVARZIAN, "Contestation Without Democracy: Elite Fragmentation in Iran", in M. PRIPSTEIN POSUSNEY & M. PENNER ANGRIST, *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Regimes and Resistance,* London/Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005, pp.63-88 (65, 73)

[20] I.A. KARAWAN, "Monarchs, Mullas, and Marshals: Islamic Regimes?", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* Vol.524, November 1992, pp.103-119 (110)

[21] H. CHEHABI, "How Theocratic is the Islamic Republic", *Daedalus,* Vol. 120, No.3, Summer 1991, pp.69-91 (78) also quoted in A. KESHAVARZIAN, "Contestation Without Democracy: Elite Fragmentation in Iran", in M. PRIPSTEIN POSUSNEY & M. PENNER ANGRIST, *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Regimes and Resistance,* London/Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005, pp.63-88 (73)

elitist theories is indeed their mostly a-historical nature. By acknowledging that "*many scientific mistakes would be avoided if every sociologist were to bear in mind that the social structures he or she studies at any given time are the products of historical development and historical struggles that must be analyzed if one is to avoid naturalizing these structures*" this study tries to avoid the basic antinomies produced by essentialism. [22]

This study does not aim at classifying the Iranian system, nor does it hope to assert once and for all who rules Iran. Its objective is to understand the system. Understand where it comes from, the history of its institutions and the sociological background of its rulers. To do so I found useful inspiration in the work of both Norbert Elias and Charles Tilly. Both sociologists always paid special attention to the historical dynamics of state and elite formation. These and other scholars consider elites and political systems not as such, yet analyze and underline their formation, rise and downfall.

State formation is often a process of competition for the monopoly on the means of organized violence. It would however be a mistake to think that once certain social units lose the competition, these disappear completely. Surely by the conquest of the monopoly of the means of coercion the State takes over their despotic power. Bluntly, only the State can shout "Off With His Head". At the same time however many of the preexistent social units maintain a high degree of infrastructural power.[23] Infrastructural power being the power to penetrate civil society and implement decisions, in essence this means that such units still dominate the state on certain matters not directly linked to coercion. Education forms an excellent example. Be it in Iran, be it in catholic Western European countries, even after state formation education remained for quite a while in the hands of the clergy. It sometimes proved an efficient way to oppose the State's influence on

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[22] P. BOURDIEU, "Vive le crise! For heterodoxy in social science", *Theory and Society*, Vol.17, No.5, September 1988, pp.773-787 (779)

[23] M. MANN, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," in J.A. HALL (ed.), *States in History*, Oxford, B. Blackwell, 1986, pp.109-36 (113)

society. After the consideration of state formation, the internal dynamics of the system will hence be examined.

I claim that these internal dynamics are closely linked to the genesis of the state and the system. That much even that the nature of the system and its durability will depend in a high degree of the characteristics of the genetic process. The coming into being of a system determines its longevity and its further evolution. This evolution can, but does not have to, lead to liberal democracy. It can, but does not have to, lead to military dictatorship. And so on. Much, if not all, depends on pre-established dynamics. Unfortunately, yet in the light of what was said above not unsurprisingly, this is often left out in discussions on Iran and the future of its political system.

The first and fundamental question on the genesis of a system regards the forces animating it. Forces is here to be understood not as entities, but as forces of nature, as dynamics. Indeed, I will argue that depending on how the system was established and on what social units composed it in what manner, the internal forces and dynamics permit to predict in a rather reliable way the future of the system under consideration. The first chapter makes this very clear by opposing the genesis of the Nazi-system to the genesis of the Stalinist Soviet Union. Contemporary social science has the tendency of assimilating these two regimes, often under the label of "totalitarianism". I argue that such assimilation proves extremely harmful for the understanding not only of both, but equally of other non-liberal democratic systems. I, briefly, indicate fundamentally different dynamics leading to respectively centrifugal and centripetal tendencies within the Nazi and the Stalinist regimes. A case is then made to consider these two great dictatorships of the twentieth century as opposites on an axis. The former incarnating a self-destructive and disintegrative form of dictatorship, which ultimately destroyed the German state. The latter on the contrary is claimed, expanded the range of the Soviet state and hence reinforced it by integrating or destroying all competitors to its infrastructural power.

To place the Iranian revolution between these two opposites is no easy task. If it is done in an attempt to qualify the Iranian regime it would even be futile. I decided not to analyze the Islamic Revolution and Republic from a classical perspective used for dictatorships. Using parameters as ideology, one-party, repression or mobilization, this study would enter the dissimilarity bias denounced earlier. Nor did I chose to make the revolution the object of my investigation. The present Iranian regime was not created in 1979. Scholars of revolution limit their analysis to three basic stages: the pre-revolutionary socio-political and socio-economic situation of the country, the revolution and the post-revolutionary conditions. They explain the new regime by identifying pre-revolutionary actors and circumstances, revolutionary dynamics and power struggles and finally post-revolutionary state construction. State construction is something very different from state formation, since the former necessarily implies the possibility of voluntary action in a specific direction. For the analysis of contemporary Western European polities scholars have went back as far as 990, no reason hence to limit my study of the Islamic Republic to a study of the consequences of revolution.

Rather I chose to identify the actors by considering the dynamics of Iranian state formation since the end of the 19th century. The second chapter is therefore mostly historical. It does not obviously not offer a complete and total history of pre-revolutionary Iran. The chapter reconsiders pre-revolutionary Iran from the point of view of state formation. Practically this implied that elements as territorial control and integrity; competition for the means of coercion and the expansion of the State's infrastructural power lie at the very center of this chapter. The evaluation of both the Qajar and Pahlavi dynasties will predictably be done from a similar perspective. In what way did these succeed or not in constructing an Iranian state.

All this is not to say that those constructing the state were voluntarily and consciously doing such. It might well be that none of them was fully aware of the process he, because women were marginalized, was taking part in. Nor is Iranian state formation assumed to constitute a

historical necessity or a predetermined destiny of the Iranian people. It all might have turned out very differently. I acknowledge that. But in the end it did not turn out in any other way. It could have, but it did not. A process of state formation was initiated.

Chapter three brings us to 1979 and what turned out to be the Islamic

Revolution, it is the Trotsky-Stalin debate that perhaps illustrates best the dispute. While Trotsky advocated world revolution, Stalin preferred to insist on building so-called "socialism in one country". This does not mean that Stalin was against Soviet socialist expansion, as history would show. Yet he, or at least his system, avoided a process of falling forward that would have endangered the survival of the Soviet system. Hitler's foreign policy on the contrary seems the incarnation of a process of falling forward. These differences are no coincidence, nor do they depend on the will of either Hitler or Stalin. They are closely linked to the genetic process of both systems. Arguably Trotsky's defeat in the dispute was too. The centripetal tendency of the Soviet system barred the way of advocates of a falling forward kind of foreign policy. So depending on the conclusions of the second to the fourth chapter, Iranian foreign policy should either be characterized by a process of falling forward and radicalization, or by a more circumscribed advancing of its national interest.

Be it the institutional analysis, be it the analysis of foreign policy making and the internal dynamics of the system will subsequently lead to an assessment of future scenarios, based on a tentative model of the contemporary Iranian system. It will answer the simple question "*Who Rules How?*".

This study is based on a variety of oral and written documents, both first and second hand. An extensive bibliography gives an overview of many of them. Others, often valuable first-hand information, had to be omitted for different reasons.

On a more technical note, I have not chosen a specific system of transliteration for Iranian concepts, names and terms. Especially for names such would have forced me to prefer sometimes unconventional transliterations over more frequently used ones for the sole sake of coherence with the chosen system. I have generally preferred the most common transliterations. Obviously, at times quotations or articles used have forced me to do otherwise. I ask the reader's understanding for possible incoherencies.

2. The Iranian System: Dictatorship, Democracy and the State

2.1. *Understanding Elites*

What has come to constitute the field of "transitology", in essence the study of transitions towards democracy, has given much attention to elites. Elites are supposed to play a preponderant role in the transition process and thus in the determination of the type of regime. In transition theories, and especially in its Game Theoretic form, the main actors of transition are the elites (reformers of the regime), considered responsible for transition by siding with the moderate opposition.[24] Competition between elites and collusion with a certain objective shows vital to such an approach. The "only" question remaining is then: why do these step over to the other side? Many have asked a similar question concerning Iran: "What to do to make elites choose "*democratization*"?[25] What constitutes a "critical juncture" for the regime and so on.

The answer of why elites "choose" democracy, has often been more or less related to the development of civil society or the opposition. Scholars defending this assumption indicated a certain confrontation between the totalitarian state on the one hand and mass mobilization or popular organizations on the other hand. Unfortunately, this has often not been the case. In Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Romania transition started not when popular mobilization was at an all-time high but

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[24] D. ACEMOGLU & J.A.ROBINSON, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2005, but see also J. COLOMER, "Transitions by agreement: Modeling the Spanish Way", *The American Political Science Review,* Vol.85, No.4, December 1991, pp.1283-1302 & A. PRZEWORSKI, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reform in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, New York, Cambridge UP, 1991
[25] See for example : S. SIAVOSHI, "Authoritarian or Democratic: The Uncertain Future of Iran", *Iranian Studies,* Vol.32, No.3, Summer 1999, pp.313-332

rather close to rock-bottom (and this contrary to 1956, 1968,…).[26] Albrecht has even demonstrated that in some cases the opposition can be a blessing for authoritarianism.[27]

Moreover, even if popular mobilization would be the factor igniting change, would democracy have to be the "logical consequence" of such mobilization? Obviously not. Others have underlined the importance of a rise in income, but even these theories have been challenged, often leading to the introduction of new qualifications, as "partial" democracies or "semi-democracies", that obscure as much as they reveal.[28]

In reality and notwithstanding the excellent scholarship on the issue *no general theory of democratization* has emerged. This is not a coincidence. Tökés underlines how transitology assumes, irrespective of the cultural context, that a global continuum (wave) exists in which "*actors act and institutions perform in a modal fashion*"; that all actors consciously pursue strategic objectives, "*mainly the instauration of institutions of liberal democracy*"; that ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities constitute "*obstacles to progress toward liberal democracy*" and "*will, and ought to be, swept away by transnational forces of modernization, secularization and the ultimate triumph of a free enterprise-driven global economy*" and finally that "*institutions, values, and system-building precedents of the Western political community represent an inherently superior alternative model*" to both authoritarian and communist systems.[29]

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[26] A. HORVAT & A. SZAKOLCZAI, "Du discours sur la société civile et de l'auto élimination du parti", *Cultures et Conflits,* No.17, 1995, pp.47-80 (47)

[27] H. ALBRECHT, "How Can Opposition Support Authoritarianism? Lessons from Egypt", *Democratization,* Vol.12, No.3, June 2005, pp.378-397

[28] See the illustrative paper on democratic transitions D.L.EPSTEIN, R. BATES, J. GOLDSTONE, I. KRISTENSEN & S. O'HALLORAN, "Democratic Transitions", *American Journal of Political Science,* Vol.50, No.3, 2006, pp.551-569

[29] R.L TŐKÉS, "Post-Communism: 'Transitology': Global Dreams and Post-Communist Realities", *Central Europe Review*, Vol. 2, No 10, 13 March 2000, http://www.ce-review.org/00/10/tokes10.html

Charles Tilly identifies four risks of teleological reasoning: firstly, the working back from an outcome to subsequently pick from the past those elements that are consider to have caused the desired outcome, "*while ignoring crucial factors in political change that seem antithetical or irrelevant to democratization*; secondly, system functionalism, a specific form of regime exists because the system needs equity or stability; thirdly ideal-case reasoning, that is an "*idealized summary of all positive experiences, as the model*" for transition; and, finally, the search for "*sufficient conditions*", supposing that the "*social world conforms to immutable general laws producing the same whole structures and sequences everywhere.*"[30] In France, Michel Dobry has repeatedly advanced similar criticism.[31]

Three of these criticisms have to be addressed briefly. The first one concerns the so-called teleological aspect of transitology and its inherent tendency towards historicism and historical determinism. The two other major criticisms have been centred on the voluntarist approach of transitology and its regressive nature.

Teleology leads to an analysis in which no other outcome than liberal democracy is seriously considered. Such is best clarified by the conceptual difference between democratization and transition towards democracy. If the former is a process that democratizes at least a (possibly insignificant) part of a political system, it is not necessarily the first step in the direction of a full democratic system. The limitation of the powers of the Iranian Council of Guardians would without a doubt signify democratization, but it would at the same time probably be impossible to speak of a transition towards democracy. The preposition "towards" implies a movement "in the direction of". The impression often arises that although (probably) no one expects a model of Western democracy to emerge in Iran or China, numerous scholars try

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[30] C. TILLY, *Contention and Democracy in Europe 1650-2000,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2004, pp.38-39

[31] M. DOBRY, " Les voies incertaines de la transitologie : choix stratégiques, séquences historiques, bifurcations et processus de *path dependence* " , *Revue Française de Science Politique,* Vol.50, No.4-5, August-October 2000, pp.585-614

to determine a "path" that will eventually lead to "democracy" in some larger definition. A number of "characteristic" (not to say necessary) stages are then individuated and in each of these stages steps towards democracy imply certain measures (quite a bit like "problem-solving"). Creating the illusion of a certain homogeneity between transitions in Eastern Europe, Latin America and earlier in Southern Europe is a necessary prerequisite for the ultimate objective of transitology, namely the elaboration of a "theory of democratic transitions". This homogenization contributes to the illusion of a "one best way" to democracy, in this way one explains the result (democracy with a market economy) by the path followed by the country (state, society,…). Nuances are then introduced, since no country follows exactly this "one best way" and the approach in the end consists in "*explain*[ing] *the specificity of the result by the specificity of the trajectory*".[32]

In a way the teleological danger was acknowledged by path dependence-theories in their preference to speak about "transformations" rather than "transitions", but as the French sociologist Michel Dobry explains, this doesn't necessarily change a whole lot.[33] Although by recognizing the influence of the old system and its structure on the issue of the transformation process, path dependency-scholars do incorporate the possibility of different outcomes for a particular process (depending on the particular characteristics of the old system), many of them do not avoid a regressive method of analysis. While path-dependency scholars do not start with the preoccupation of explaining the establishment of democracy, they still seem to analyze the establishment of a certain type democracy or a certain type of market economy by the (determined) "extrication path" offered by a certain *ancien régime*. The result remains a result of a specific historically determined "march towards democracy".

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[32] M. DOBRY, " Les voies incertaines de la transitologie : choix stratégiques, séquences historiques, bifurcations et processus de *path dependence* " , *Revue Française de Science Politique*, Vol.50, No.4-5, August-October 2000, pp.585-614 (590)
[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 594-596

Criticism of the teleological nature of transitology is a logical consequence of the difficulties encountered in separating democracy from authoritarianism as seen above. Once it becomes clear that democracy is not a sortal but a scalar concept; the task of identifying transitions or transformations towards democracy becomes very difficult.

Second criticism under consideration should be the regressive nature of the transitological analysis, which Tilly describes as "working back", and is intimately linked to its teleological character. When starting from a particular outcome, the installation of a democratic system, the risk of omitting factors and of not grasping the entire societal dynamic is colossal. This is all the more the case since often the most basic feature of logic is forgotten: how many scholars of transitology effectively test their hypothesis and framework by attempted falsification? In the attempt of developing a general theory the downplaying of "negative examples" is extremely hazardous. Another way of approaching the elite-question in pacted transitions would be to ask why do elites stay loyal to the system? Why do the main institutions not break away more often and more quickly? Why did Khatami in the end despite massive popular support decide to stay within the framework of the Islamic Republic? What makes or breaks the loyalty of elites? Even when John Stuart Mill warned scholars not to apply his methods to social phenomena, he underlined that in social sciences "*plurality of causes exists in almost boundless excess, and effects are, for the most part, inextricably interwoven with one another.*"[34] In the same sense Tilly avows that any scholar must avoid: "*picking through the past selectively while ignoring crucial factors in political change that seem antithetical or irrelevant to democratization.*"[35] Something that has proven very difficult in scholarship on transitology.

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[34] J.S. MILL, *A System of Logic*, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1887, as quoted in C. TILLY, *Contention and Democracy in Europe 1650-2000*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2004, p.37
[35] C. TILLY, *Contention and Democracy in Europe 1650-2000*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2004, p.38

Thirdly, we have to underline the unilateral voluntarist approach of many of these "transition-paradigms". Truth be told, much depends on the delimitation of transitology. If one wishes to include state formation theories covering centuries of the development of states, it has to be acknowledged that some of these were probably overly structuralist.

There are still remnants of this scientific tradition in voluntarist transitology. All transition theories, from the basic transitology studies to scholars studying the rise of fascism, seem to share the idea that a regime holds as long as its elites and thus the basic institutions hold or stand strong. "To hold" is to be understood as to maintain their loyalty to the existing regime. In transitology the break-up of incumbent elites or the rising of alternative elites is often considered decisive for the breakdown of dictatorship, in the criticisms on the thesis of a so-called French allergy to fascism one can read a similar story, the other way around. French democracy stood strong because the elites didn't consider fascism a viable or necessary alternative to the existing republic.[36] Other scholars underlined that France might have been defeated so quickly in the World War II because basic institutions had at that time already been undermined by pro-Nazi elites.[37]

Notwithstanding these structuralist remnants, both in what have been called respectively the second post-1970's and the third "integrative" generation of transitology, human agency has become prominent.[38] It often reduces the questions of institutions that stand strong (or not) to a

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[36] Compare R. REMOND, *Les droites en France,* Paris, Aubier, 1954 ; M. WINOCK, *La Fièvre hexagonale : Les grandes crises politiques de 1871 à 1968*, Paris, Seuil, 2001 to M. DOBRY, « Le thèse immunitaire face aux fascismes. Pour une critique de la logique classificatoire », in M. DOBRY (ed.), *Le mythe de l'allergie française au fascisme*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2003. Contemporary repercussions of this debate can be found in the discussion on the Front National. If the French society is "allergic" to fascism as some authors defended than the FN is either not fascist, or not dangerous. Against this logic of qualifying the FN as a mere "populist" party see A. COLLOVALD, *Le "Populisme du FN", un dangereux contresens*, Paris, Eds. Du Croquant, 2004

[37] A. LACROIX-RIZ, *Le Choix de la Défaite*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2007

[38] See M. MAHDAVI, "Rethinking Structure and Agency in Democratization: Iranian Lessons", *International Journal of Criminology and Sociological Theory*, Vol. 1, No. 2, December 2008, pp. 142-160 (143-144)

consequence of choice. Adam Przeworski, and Juan Linz, prominent representatives of respectively the second and the third generation, all underline the importance of elite "choice" . In economic literature different kind of approaches have been proposed, most of which based on either Game Theory (appropriate for so-called "pact-ed" transitions, in essence transitions that see elites "agree" on the establishment of democracy) or more basic Rational Choice Microeconomics (useful as well for mass mobilization transitions?). This voluntarist approach, as the work of Linz and Stepan[39] proves, is however not limited to economically inspired theories of political change. Even in path-dependence approaches such voluntarist approaches are not wholly absent, since with the introduction of critical junctures these theories undeniably give way to "big strategic decisions" by actors.[40]

Voluntarism is problematic because it poses the risk of underestimating historically or sociologically determined structural factors beyond the power, control and even imagination of actors involved. Moreover, it supposes rational actors acting voluntarily in the direction of some kind of democracy. It is evident from the experiences in Eastern Europe that this has generally not been the case. Those taking over from the old regime were all but dedicated to democracy, to paraphrase Jeremy Brecher, movements starting democratization rarely start with liberal democracy as a scope *per se*.[41] James Mahoney has underlined that this kind of voluntarist transitology has made knowledge accumulation in the social sciences extremely difficult because it has "*led many analysts to characterize each transition as unique and unpredictable(..) little effort has*

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[39] J. LINZ & A. STEPAN, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press, 1978

[40] M. DOBRY, " Les voies incertaines de la transitologie : choix stratégiques, séquences historiques, bifurcations et processus de *path dependence* " , *Revue Française de Science Politique,* Vol.50, No. 4-5, August-October 2000, pp.585-614 (588)

[41] J. BRECHER, *Strike !,* San Francisco, Straight Arrow Books, 1972, p.240. BRECHER uses the sentence for social revolutions, while M. DOBRY applies this idea to democratization in M. DOBRY, " Les voies incertaines de la transitologie : choix stratégiques, séquences historiques, bifurcations et processus de *path dependence* " , *Revue Française de Science Politique,* Vol.50, No. 4-5, August-October 2000, pp.585-614 (588)

been devoted to offering generalizations that might stimulate processes of hypothesis testing."[42]

But transitology might be flawed by an even more fundamental assumption. That is the passage from one system to another, from dictatorship to democracy. Such transition implies and requires a clear definition of and distinction between both concepts. As mentioned in the introduction, there is a qualitative and a quantitative aspect to the distinction between democracy and dictatorship.

Schumpeter's definition of democracy already implied it, if the people rule, it is at best indirectly. Competitive elections and alternation are generally considered part of the qualitative difference between democracy and other systems. This seems straightforward enough. However the qualitative aspect is also a very problematic one. In Iran the elective process is quite democratic a part from the interventions of the Council of Guardians concerning the selection of candidates. Moreover, history illustrated how alternation at top-level is possible.

The quantitative aspect is related to the number of individuals that rule, at best, for the people and, at least, in their name. Contemporary analyses of elites and elitist views on politics are without exception tributary to early elite theorists as Michels, Mosca, Pareto and Gramsci. Notwithstanding the differences between them, what linked these scholars was their profound belief in the impossibility of truly pluralist democracy and the conviction that rule would always be in the hands of a single unit or elite. In his *Quaderni del carcere*, Gramsci fulminates against those that suppose that "number is the supreme law" in the elective system. What is measured during elections for Gramsci is "*the*

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[42] J. MAHONEY, "Knowledge Accumulation in Comparative Historical Research: The Case of Democracy and Authoritarianism", *in* J. MAHONEY & D. RUESCHEMEYER, *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, New York, Cambridge UP, 2003, pp.131-174 (160)

effectiveness and the capacity of expansion and persuasion of the opinions of the few, of active minorities, of the elites, of the vanguards,…"[43]

The genesis of modern political ways of governing is at the centre of Gaetano Mosca's writings. Yet his conclusion on the identity of rulers is less than satisfying. Mosca supposes that the "*best*" rule and quite candidly limits his conception of these to some kind of Machiavellian outlook.[44] The "best" are not "*the most altruistic, the most inclined to sacrifice themselves for others*" but rather those that are "*best adapted to political life.*"[45] The adjective "best" can hence in normal times "*always be applied to the ruling classes* (classi dirigenti), *because the fact that these are such proves that at a given time, and in a given country, these contain the elements most apt to govern.*"[46] When addressing the appearance of the particular Western European type of liberal democratic rule, Mosca underlines the legacy of ideas of political freedom and popular sovereignty from Greeks and Romans, adding that "*it is useless to discuss if moral forces predominated on material ones or material ones on moral ones.*"[47] A statement that has to be reframed in his Mosca's virulent opposition to Marxists who underlined the material and economic bases of political change. However Mosca's approach has obvious limitations, since the "idea" of political freedom existed in many Western and some Eastern societies, yet these have all generated very different regimes and types of government. Impossible on the basis of "ideas" to explain the fundamental differences in result between the *Chartist* movement in Britain and their contemporary

[43] A. GRAMSCI, "Noterelle sulla politica del Machiavelli", *Quaderno 13,* in A. GRAMSCI. *Quaderni del carcere,* Vol. 3, Quaderni 12-19 (1932-1935), Torino, 2001, pp.1553-1652 (1624-1625)

[44] See R. MEDICI, *La Metafora Machiavelli, Mosca, Pareto, Michels, Gramsci,* Modena, Mucchi Ed., 1990, p.92

[45] G. MOSCA, *Scritti Politici: Elementi di Scienza politica,* Vol.2, Torino, Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1982, pp.1066-1067

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] G. MOSCA, *o.c.,* pp.1059-1061

French social struggle, the explanation of which clearly sends us back to very determining material and structural conditions.[48]

Robert Michels on the other hand was very explicit on why undemocratic rule appears. His Iron Law of Oligarchy pretends that no party structure, as democratic as it might claim to be, can ever escape an oligarchic power structure. One of the main reasons for this is in Michels' view the specialization within the organization, which leads to an inevitable take-over of power by the "professionals" of politics.[49] Michels hence linked the appearance of undemocratic rule to very down-to-earth almost technical motives. Although Michels' analysis of political parties was indisputably of great value, Galbraith's *Technostructure* offered an indirect counter-argument by asserting that in any corporation, so why not in a political party, decision-making is in the hands of "*all who bring specialized knowledge, talent or experience to group-decision making*". These include both the management as white and blue collar workers.[50] The opposition between Michels and Galbraith illustrates a broader divide that characterizes contemporary elitist theories. They prefer to answer the question "How Many Rule" rather than "Who Rules". Today analyses of elite-rule can *grosso modo* be divided in two groups: a monist side claiming that one elite dominates and a pluralist side asserting that at least two or more elites rule, alternate or intervene in policy-making. Logically from a quantitative perspective dictatorship should imply the rule of the one, and democracy the rule of the many.

2.1.1.   The One Dictator

Undemocratic or dictatorial systems seem to lend themselves extremely well to a monist approach. Indeed, if liberal democracies pretend,

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[48] See for a comparative discussion of both movements : C. TILLY, *Contention and Democracy in Europe 1650-2000,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2004

[49] R. MICHELS, *Les Partis politiques,* Paris, Champs Flammarion, 1971

[50] J.K. GALBRAITH, *The New Industrial State,* London, Hamish Hamilton/Pelican Books, 1967, p.80

rightly or wrongly, to be pluralistic systems where the "many" or the "people" rule, authoritarian regimes often defend and justify power monopolies, be it for a particular party, the army or some charismatic leader.

Some analyses of undemocratic policies have offered a clear monistic view of undemocratic politics. Max Weber's "Sultanism" is an excellent example of such. Following Weber Linz and Stepan consider regimes like those of Trujillo, Duvalier, Marcos, Bakaso, Kim Il Sung or Mohammed Reza as "sultanist regimes".[51] Sultanism is characterized by a high fusion (in the person of the ruler) of private and public whereby the polity becomes the personal domain of the sultan. There's no rule of law and low institutionalisation. Although social and economic pluralism can exist, political pluralism is absent. There is no sphere of activities for any opposition, for regime moderates or for civil society that is not subject to the will of the sultan. Sultanism is supposed to differ from totalitarianism because it is short of an elaborated ideology by which the policies of sultan can be measured (on the contrary Stalin's policies had to be justified referring to Marxism-Leninism), nor does it mobilize the citizens. It is an unrestrained personal leadership, free of any ideological, organizational or social constraints.

The best expression of liberal democratic scholarship that stresses the similarities between fascism and communism is offered by the totalitarian model. Who rules a totalitarian state? Different elements have been said to characterize a "totalitarian" regime and differentiate it from other regimes. Ideology, mobilization and a single party have generally been among these characteristics.[52] Subsequently other

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[51] J.LINZ & A. STEPAN, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe,* Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, p.51 See also the essay of J. LINZ, "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes" in N. POLSBY & F. GREENSTEIN (eds.), *Handbook of Political Science,* vol.3, Reading, Addison-Wesley, 1975

[52] Consider for example H. ARENDT, *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* New York, Harvest, 1976; R. ARON, *Démocratie et Totalitarisme,* Paris, Gallimard, 1965; C.J. FRIEDRICH & Z. BRZEZINSKI, *Totalitarian Dictatorship & Autocracy*, Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1965; C.J.

scholars have cast doubts on each of these characteristics.[53] It is therefore still not clear if calling a regime "totalitarian" clarifies more then it obscures.[54] When looking at "*who rules?*" most scholars of totalitarianism offer a very simple answer. Power is (almost) always supposed to be exclusively held in the hands of one unit, be it the leader, the party or a bureaucracy. Arendt's image of an atomised society of individuals facing an all-potent state (or system) illustrates such vision. This doesn't mean that these scholars do not see differences within the totalitarian state; indeed most of them see at least a dual structure of power.[55] This "dual" structure of power however in no way implies power sharing, since for totalitarians it is unthinkable to separate State from party or vice versa.[56]

FRIEDRICH, M. CURTIS, B.R. BARBER, *Totalitarianism in Perspective: Three Views*, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1969; G. HERMET (ed.), *Totalitarismes*, Paris, Economica, 1984; J. J. KIRKPATRICK, *Dictatorship and Double Standards*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1982; J. LINZ, "An Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Spain" in E. ALLARDT & Y. LITTUNEN (eds.), *Cleavages Ideologies and Party Systems*, Helsinki, Transactions of the Westermarck Society, 1964; J. LINZ, "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes" in N. POLSBY & F. GREENSTEIN (eds.), *Handbook of Political Science*, vol.3, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975

[53] Consider the German "*Historikerstreit*" as well as Structuralist scholars such as M. BROSZAT or H. MOMMSEN. Other examples are: J. KOCKA, " 'Totalitarismus' und 'Faschismus'. Gegen einen falschen Begriffskrieg." in X., *Totalitarismus und Faschismus. Eine wissenschaftliche und politische Begriffskontroverse*, Kolloquium im Institut für Zeitgeschichte, 24. November 1978, München 1980, pp. 39-44 or for a French translation: E. TRAVERSO, *Le Totalitarisme. Le XXe siècle en débat*, Paris, Le Seuil, 2001; I. KERSHAW & M. LEWIN, *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000; but see also R.C. TUCKER, "The Question of Totalitarianism", *Slavic Review*, Vol.20, No.3, October 1961, pp.377-382; S. ZIZEK, Did Someone Say Totalitarianism?: Four Interventions in the (Mis)Use of a Notion, London, Verso Books, 2002 (Vous avez dit totalitarisme?, 2004).

[54] We'll return to this point with practical examples. For an overview of the debate about totalitarianism an interesting anthology is offered by E. TRAVERSO, *Le Totalitarisme. Le XXe siècle en débat*, Paris, Le Seuil, 2001

[55] H. ARENDT, *Le Système totalitaire*, Paris, Le Seuil/Points, 2002, p.174-175

[56] S.H. ROBERTS, *The House that Hitler built*, 1939, p.72 quoted approvingly by H. ARENDT, *Le Système totalitaire*, Paris, Le Seuil/Points, 2002, p.175

One thing that all models of totalitarianism[57] have in common is the institutional vision of a command-structured system. [58] Orders come from above (or from the "centre") and the fear of those on lower echelons makes that these orders are, generally, respected and executed, no matter how illogical they might be. Many scholars of totalitarianism have implicitly (and some explicitly) considered totalitarian systems "immune" from society. Since political and civil liberties and freedom of organization are extremely limited or inexistent, the system doesn't need (to care about) the people, it just needs to break their resistance. Although overly simplified here this thesis forms the essence of most scholarly work using the concept of "totalitarianism". The essence of an undemocratic system, and especially of totalitarianism, should in this conceptual framework be the absence of democracy and the (near) absence of pluralism.[59]

Research indicating at the very least some kind of pluralism in those so-called totalitarian states flawed these theories in a rather important way. Scholars of totalitarianism have not been blind to its weaknesses. Two main reactions to the criticisms can be noted. First, limiting the concept of totalitarianism to Stalinism, Nazism and, sometimes, Maoism. Second, describing totalitarianism not so much as a static model that accurately describes a certain system, but rather as a regime or movement with "a totalitarian temptation".[60]

Dobry states that categories used in political science are frequently mere adaptations of classifications used in political practice and

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[57] We'll consider some exceptions under the heading Pluralism and Undemocratic Politics

[58] The oldest example of such a structure can probably be found in E. DE LA BOÉTIE, *Discours sur la Servitude Volontaire*, Publication complète en 1576

[59] J.J. LINZ, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes,* Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000, p.53-54

[60] The term has generally been used to characterize the positive attitude of Western intellectuals towards certain communist regimes, but contributes to undermine the static nature of the initial concept. See K.D. BRACHER, *Schlüsselwörter in der Geschichte*, Düsseldorf, Droste Vlg, 1978 and J.-F. REVEL, *La tentation totalitaire*, Paris, Laffont, 1976

struggle.[61] This makes that often those categories can benefit from a certain vagueness in range and content. Used for decades as a political tool against the Soviet-bloc, the concept of totalitarianism never actually found a precise signification. [62] It is far from certain if the introduction of categories as post-totalitarianism will fundamentally change this fact.

If totalitarianism never did find an unambiguous signification, the concept of authoritarianism seems at least to have benefited from a clearer definition. The definition offers a more disperse view of power and control structures in undemocratic systems. It is thus no coincidence that Linz' definition[63] of authoritarianism, considers it a political system "*with limited, not responsible political pluralism: without* [an] *elaborate and guiding ideology (but with distinctive mentalities); without intensive nor extensive political mobilization (except some points in their development); and in which a leader (or occasionally a small group) exercises power within ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones*" in which "*personal leadership is a frequent characteristic but not a necessary one*". This definition was developed in contrast to "totalitarianism". If the characteristics of "totalitarian" regimes included total control, the complete absence of any form of pluralism or power-sharing and a guiding ideology, many undemocratic regimes did not qualify, so social science was in need of a new concept. In his definition Linz

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[61] M. DOBRY, « La thèse immunitaire face aux fascismes. Pour une critique de la logique classificatoire », in M. DOBRY (ed.), *Le mythe de l'allergie française au fascisme*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2003, pp.17-68 (32)

[62] It suffices here to refer to the debate concerning the nature of the Soviet regime after 1956. The recent introduction of post-totalitarianism by Linz & Stepan is an explicit recognition of this vagueness that reigned for decades. J. LINZ & A. STEPAN, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996

[63] Originally in J. LINZ, "An Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Spain" in E. ALLARDT & Y. LITTUNEN (eds.), *Cleavages Ideologies and Party Systems*, Helsinki, Transactions of the Westermarck Society, 1964 but here quoted from J. LINZ "An Authoritarian Regime: Spain" in E. ALLARDT & S. ROKKAN, *Mass Politics,* New York, The Free Press, 1970, pp.251-283 (255) Applied as well in J.LINZ & A. STEPAN, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, pp.40-54

incorporates Matthews' idea of a Franco who keeps "all parts of his regime weak" and who "as long as his position is not attacked" does not intervene in the nation's affairs[64] and Almond's vision of "*structural pluralism (…) so typical for authoritarian regimes*"[65] Yet, although he considers some degree of pluralism, in Linz' definition power is still in the hands of the "one", which not only qualifies it as a monist approach, but moreover brings it close to the monist analysis of democratic systems in which some "apparent pluralism" exists.

2.1.2.   A Plurality of Dictators

Pluralists have generally excluded non-democracies from their purview. To put it bluntly: a dictatorship is no pluralist democracy. Pluralists seem to offer the exact opposite answer to the question "*Who rules*"?: the many, a plurality, be it different elites, different parties, different classes, different groups… Although monism seemed, at first sight, more adapted to undemocratic regimes, we've seen that it has also rather successfully approached liberal democratic systems. It appears more difficult to apply pluralism to autocratic systems. Yet, even though it was in the analysis of democracy that pluralism found its most fertile soil, it has not been limited to the sole domain of liberal democratic systems.

Indeed, scholars as Medvedev, Ionescu, Deutsch or Almond, analysing Soviet politics, pretended to have detected what has been called the "Iron Law of Pluralism".[66] "Transitologists *avant la lettre*" these pluralists considered that the development of pluralism could not

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[64] H.L. MATTHEWS, *The Yoke and the Arrows: A Report on Spain*, New York, George Braziller Inc, 1957, p.100

[65] G.A. ALMOND, "Comparative Political Systems", in H. EULAU et al. (ed.), *Political Behavior, Glencoe (Ilinois), The Free Press*, 1956, pp.35-42 (40) quoted by J. LINZ, "An Authoritarian Regime: Spain" in E. ALLARDT & S. ROKKAN, *Mass Politics*, New York, The Free Press, 1970, pp.251-283 (252)

[66] For a critical analysis of this Iron Law see: S. WHITE, "Communist Systems and the 'Iron Law of Pluralism'", *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol.8, no.1, January 1978, pp.101-117

durably be blocked in any society. It is no coincidence that it was the author of the Third Wave that saw *competing special interests* appearing in Soviet society.[67] Pluralization was or is considered a first step towards democracy.[68]

If pluralists were right in limiting accomplished pluralism to liberal democracies[69] and considering every step of pluralization a step towards systemic change, any attempt to extend pluralist models to undemocratic systems would be rather futile, if not in a perspective of democratic change. Yet some scholars pointed out that Dahl's "Polyarchy" did actually fit quite well some undemocratic political systems.[70] Moreover, Dahl's pleading for "limited popular participation" in the system[71] also fuels the temptation to attempt a pluralist interpretation of undemocratic politics. Could one not argue that Iran has a system with some liberalization (relatively competitive elections) and high participation rates in those elections (at least during the Khatami period)? Dahl acknowledged some of those criticisms in his 1989 book, *Democracy and its critics*,[72] by further specifying characteristics of polyarchy to exclude "non-democratic" systems.

One of Dahl's most basic ideas, elite rule with infra-elite competition, did however remain quite stable and it's exactly this aspect that reveals extremely interesting in our perspective. Dahl does indeed consider

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[67] See especially the theses developed in S. HUNTINGTON & C.H. MOORE, *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society: The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems*, New York, Basic Books, 1970

[68] K. W. DEUTSCH, "Cracks in the Monolith: Possibilities and Patterns of Disintegration in Totalitarian Systems", *in* H.E. ECKSTEIN & D.E. APTER (eds.), *Comparative Politics: A Reader*, New York, The Free Press, 1963, pp.497-508

[69] Even though he considered they would not be able to resist pluralist trends. R.A. DAHL, *Polyarchy. Participation and Opposition*, New Haven, Yale UP, 1971, pp.78-79
Another study on "pluralist trends" in communist systems can be found in: A. KORBONSKI, "Comparing Liberalization Processes in Eastern Europe A Preliminary Analysis", *Comparative Politics,* Vol. 4, No. 2, January 1972, pp. 231-249

[70] Dahl took these criticisms in account. Already in 1971 he created the category of "quasi-polyarchies" see also R.A. DAHL, *Democracy and its critics,* New Haven, Yale UP, 1989

[71] Limited in Dahl's vision to electoral participation. R.A DAHL, Preface to Democratic Theory, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956, p.58

[72] Although already in 1971 he created the category of "quasi-polyarchies" see also R. DAHL, *Democracy and its critics,* New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989

that one of the main reasons a democracy is viable has to do with the alternation of elites and the limited participation of the population.[73]

The breaking with the monocratic analytical model of undemocratic regimes is not new. In his book Behemoth, Franz Neumann preferred the idea of a clique-ruled system to the concept of "Nazi State". His was probably the first attempt to nuance the idea of an all-powerful state structure.[74] Others were to follow[75], some of whom found source in Fraenkel's *Dual State*[76] and its distinction between "*Normenstaat*" and "*Maßnahmenstaat*".

This dual structure of the state was specifically elaborated by Martin Broszat,[77] who considered the Nazi-state a structure of competing institutions. According to Broszat National Socialism not only nazified the normal republican institutions but also constructed a parallel structure of power of specific Nazi-institutions. He thus proposed "polycracy" as a new model, rather than the dominant theory of monocracy. Although Broszat probably underestimated the importance of Hitler's role in the system, his research allowed to definitively debunk the myth of a unified Nazi-structure and replace it with a picture of intra-institutional competition, for example between rival bureaucracies like the NSDAP and traditional state institutions inherited from the Weimar Republic. Broszat's idea is not far away

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[73] To oversimplify one could say limited to the participation to free and competitive elections.

[74] F. NEUMANN, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1942

[75] We do not agree with G.A. ALMOND, "Comparative Political Systems", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol.18, No.3, August 1956, pp.391-409 that H. ARENDT is one of those. In our vision Arendt offers a clearly monocratic model of totalitarian systems. Almond himself mentions Arendt's thesis that the purpose of the atomisation of society is to avoid any reduction to the freedom of manoeuvre of those at the very centre of the system. (p.404)

[76] E. FRAENKEL, *The Dual State: a contribution to the theory of dictatorship*, New York, Oxford University Press. 1941 Consider also another classic structuralist text: F. NEUMANN, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1942

[77] M. BROSZAT, *Der Staat Hitlers*, Wiesbaden, Marixverlag, 2007

from what is now a classical micro-economic theory of the political economy of dictatorship.

Broszat's underestimation of Hitler's role was more or less corrected by the model of "working towards" proposed by the British historian Ian Kershaw.[78] Although he accepted Broszat's model of institutional rivalry, Kershaw attributed a bigger role to Hitler in the system. He did so mainly because his research on German foreign policy and Hitler's frequent interventions in this domain, made him come to the conclusion that if Hitler did not intervene so often in domestic politics, this reflected not so much a lack of power as a lack of interest. The concept is based on a bi-directional interaction between Hitler and those proposing policies to him. Hitler left it up to them to fight out their conflicts concerning a certain policy and chose the policy option victorious in such a confrontation. In this way not only did he always seem right ("his" choice always prevailed which contributed to development of the "Hitler myth")[79], but moreover he avoided to get mixed up in "lower levels" of debate. In the end those proposing policy options started, although not for these motives alone, proposing options "in his direction", that is to say anticipating what the Führer would be thinking. Kershaw envisioned a close interaction between elites and the Hitler myth. Priority seems however to be given to the actions and impressions of elites, rather than to Hitler's personal action.

On the Soviet Union too authoritative authors, like Merle Fainsod, Walt Rostow and Barrington Moore, have contested the image of a

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[78] I. KERSHAW, *The Nazi Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 1985 We use the French translation: I. KERSHAW, *Qu'est-ce que le Nazisme,* Paris, Gallimard (Folio), 1997 & I. KERSHAW & M. LEWIN, *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000 & I. KERSHAW, « Retour sur le totalitarisme. Le Nazisme et le stalinisme dans une perspective comparative », *in* E. TRAVERSO, *Le Totalitarisme. Le XXe siècle en débat*, Paris, Le Seuil, 2001, pp.845-872
[79] I. KERSHAW, *The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich,* Oxford, Oxford UP, 2001

monolithic polity, demonstrating that intra-systemic competition and fragmentation were very concrete in everyday political life.[80]

In this context Almond's concept of "*structural pluralism*", mentioned earlier, is quite interesting and cannot but remind us of the main innovation of Jerry Hough namely the concept of "*institutional pluralism*". Hough's attempt consisted in extending the idea of institutional differentiation of elites to communist systems and more particularly to the USSR. Hough's work was not without link with the studies done by Gordon Skilling, who had developed a theory of interest groups in the USSR.[81] The theory has been harshly attacked, but never really refuted on the basis of hard empirical evidence.[82] Shtromas, a Soviet scholar, later émigré, went even further by stating that even under Stalin a certain form of interest group activity had existed. The "totalitarian tendency" of the regime made independent organization impossible, but this did not mean that certain groups, especially when they were not considered a priority for the regime, as for example lawyers, could not form pressure groups.[83] This is hardly a Soviet totalitarian particularity, even under Mao informal factions seem to have existed.[84]

The existence of pressure or interest groups might have been Hough's starting point, his model of "institutional pluralism" should not be confused with it. His model shows numerous weaknesses, starting with

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[80] M. FAINSOD, *How Russia is Ruled,* Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1964; W.W. ROSTOW, *The Dynamics of Soviet Society,* New York, Norton, 1967 & B. MOORE, *Terror and Progress USSR,* New York, Harper & Row, 1954

[81] See for example: H. GORDON SKILLING & F. GRIFFITHS, *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1971

[82] As Gordon Skilling himself notes not without pleasure in H. GORDON SKILLING, "Interest Groups and Communist Politics Revisited", *World Politics*, vol.36, no.1, October 1983, pp.1-27 (2)

[83] A. SHTROMAS, *Political Change and Social Development: The Case of the Soviet Union*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang - Europaisches Forum, Vol.1, 1981

[84] See for example L. DITTMER & Y. WU, "The Modernization of Factionalism in Chinese Politics", *World Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 4, July 1995, pp. 467-494 & T. TSOU & A.J. NATHAN, "Prolegomenon to the Study of Informal Groups in CCP Politics", *The China Quarterly*, No. 65, March 1976, pp. 98-117

its name,[85] and would gain from comparison with sometimes interesting alternatives as Schmitter's "*state corporatism*".[86] At the same time however it is of some interest. Hough's institutional pluralism remains far from classical pluralism.[87] The differences, as he states, "*centre on the framework in which the political process takes place*".[88] While in classical pluralism citizens have the chance to choose freely between competing elites[89] and to form new organizations, in a model of institutional pluralism those who wish to further their interests must work within the official institutional framework. Hough describes different bureaucracies and elites coming from them as acting in their own interest and furthering their own goals rather than those of the system, insofar as the latter could be defined.[90] Matthew Evangelista goes a step further and notes how the transition from the Soviet Union to the new Russian state had "*the paradoxical effect of making transnational actors simultaneously less constrained in promoting their favored policies and less effective in getting them implemented*."[91] Evangelista underlines how once a special interest group got access to top leaders of the system,

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[85] In an essay written for the work S. GROSS SOLOMON, *Pluralism in the Soviet Union: Essays in Honour of H. Gordon Skilling*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1982 Hough affirms that it was his editor who pushed him to use such a term (p.49).

[86] P.C. SCHMITTER "Still the Century of Corporatism", *Review of Politics*, Vol. 36, No.1, January 1974, pp. 85-131 converging on the existence of different "corporations" still considers that all these are mere transmission organs. Schmitter hence rejoins a kind of monist approach.

[87] And this contrary to what asserts S. WHITE, "Communist Systems and the 'Iron Law of Pluralism'", *British Journal of Political Science,* vol.8, no.1, January 1978, pp.101-117

[88] J.F. HOUGH, "The Soviet System: Petrification or Pluralism?", *Problems of Communism*, Vol.21, No.2, March-April 1972, pp.25-45 (29)

[89] Let's note here the similarity between Hough's vision of classical pluralism and Dahl's initial concept of polyarchy.

[90] J.F. HOUGH, "The Bureaucratic Model and the Nature of the Soviet System", *Journal of Comparative Administration*, Vol.5, No.2, August 1973, p.134-167. In a way he's not so far a part from Trotsky's and Brzezinski's idea that bureaucracy had taken over the system, with however the nuance that Hough considers of the essence the existence of different bureaucracies and not just or mainly state-bureaucracy. Compare however: Z. BRZEZINSKI, "Victory of the Clerks", *New Republic*, No.151, November 14, pp.15-18 and L. TROTSKY, *The Revolution Betrayed*, New York, Dover Publications Inc., 2004

[91] M. EVANGELISTA, " The paradox of state strength: transnational relations, domestic structures, and security policy in Russia and the Soviet Union", *International Organization*, Vol.49, No.1, Winter 1995, pp.1-38

their lobbying often gave them a decisive advantage over others in policy making. An argument made many times in pluralist analyses of non-liberal democratic policies.

The above does not mean however that those institutional forces are irresponsive to societal forces. Quite on the contrary, either they are genuinely concerned with the interests of their popular base, or they can easily use popular mobilization to further their own goals. It would be unthinkable to have an entire organizational structure (or bureaucracy or institution) that is completely irresponsive to its clients. This is no matter of philanthropy for the bureaucracies, but primarily a matter of survival. Wouldn't the Iranian *Bonyads* lose their legitimacy if they wouldn't listen to their clients clamoring for redistribution? For the individual citizen the existence of different bureaucracies seems to open a pathway towards "social mobility"[92] (climbing up the bureaucratic ladder) or at the very least to the formulation of some particular group interest (e.g. women's rights).

It is undeniable that existing institutions have to offer sufficient space for social mobility and popular participation if they want to preserve legitimacy. In his model of "Bureaucratic Authoritarianism", which pays quite some attention to the role of bureaucracies in dictatorship, O'Donnell acknowledges this and states that the main characteristic of regime crisis is the fact that certain groups "*seek to establish new channels of access to governmental roles and new criteria for political representation*".[93]

The role of the dictator or, in a communist system, the party, in the model of institutional pluralism, is one of a coordinating broker or of an arbiter of these different interests.[94] Not unlike the role of the state in a "democratic" system.

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[92] At least until no fixed nomenclature has been installed.

[93] G. O'DONNELL, *Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: Argentina 1966-1973 in Comparative Perspective*, Berkeley, University of California Press, c1988.
http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft4v19n9n2/ , p.24

[94] J.F. HOUGH, "The Soviet System: Petrification or Pluralism?", *Problems of Communism*, Vol.21, No.2, March-April 1972, pp.25-45 (34)

2.1.3.   Many Democrats

If we failed to agree on how many rulers rule a dictatorship, can we at least agree on the fact that democracy means alternation between different elites, competing for power? Pluralists attempt just that. Contemporary pluralist theory can probably be said to have started with de Tocqueville's Democracy in America[95], but for our purpose more useful examples of pluralist theory are offered by D. Riesman, D. Truman, P. Bachrach and M.S. Baratz, N.W. Polsby, R. Aron and obviously R.A. Dahl.

Based on a decisional analysis, Truman used a classical lobby-groups centred approach.[96] Since there are different ways of access to the political arena, due as well to interpenetration between political and lobby-group personnel, lobby-groups have to be taken into consideration in the decisional process. They hence rule or at the very least influence the rulers in a decisive way. Riesman[97], although acknowledging that some kind of "ruling class" has existed, considers it a phenomenon of the past and sees it replaced by a multitude of groups, called "veto-groups". Rather than lobbying to obtain something, they attempt not to lose what they have previously won (often in lobby-group activities). In contrast to command-structured groups like lobbies these groups are internally divided. Riesman's vision of power is thus a very fragmented one. Power is not only not in the hands of some kind of cohesive elite, interest differentiation within those veto-groups fragments power even more. In *Power and Poverty*[98]

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[95] A. DE TOCQUEVILLE, *De la Démocratie en Amérique*, Paris, GF Flammarion, 1982 (2 tomes)

[96] D. TRUMAN, *The Governmental Process,* Westport, Greenwood Press, 1993 (1951) influenced if not inspired by A. BENTLEY, *The Process of Government: A Study of Social Pressures*, New Brunswick (NJ), Transaction Publishers, 1995. Originally published as early as 1908!

[97] D. RIESMAN, *The Lonely Crowd*, Garden City, Anchor, 1953

[98] P. BACHRACH & M.S. BARATZ, *Power and Poverty*: *Theory and Practice,* London/Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1970

Bachrach and Baratz, while trying to develop a theory of social change by comparing reformers and conservatives, in reality analyze the inability to arrive at a decision. A decisional process consists of different stages (from the conception of an idea to its implementation) and at each of these stages reformers have to gain over the conservative forces. The latter only need a decisive victory at one of the stages to block any change. If the conservatives do thus seem to have some advantage, this does not entail that they alone have power. Especially since one can be a conservative in one decisional process and a reformer in another.

In his classic work on the city of New Haven[99], R.A. Dahl, who had at that time already offered some reflections on pluralist democracy,[100] starts from a decisional analysis too. Analysing decisions in three major fields (social, political and economic) he remarks that while elites in one field do intervene more or less frequently in decision making in other fields, this doesn't mean that only one group, of more or less colluding or cohesive elites rules. Rather, the intervention of different elites and groups in different fields of decision proves the pluralist thesis, since they all are categorized by a certain degree of independence, heterogeneity and permeability. Dahl doesn't see the generalized "common interest" monists see and links pluralism to liberal democracy.[101] About a decade after *Polyarchy* Dahl further developed the concept of "organizational pluralism", which allowed him to incorporate Rokkan's "corporate pluralism"[102] and Lijphart 's *verzuiling* or "consociational democracy"[103] into his model of pluralism.[104]

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[99] R.A. DAHL, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, New Haven, Connecticut UP, 1961

[100] R.A. DAHL, *Preface to a Democratic Theory*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956

[101] See R.A. DAHL, *Polyarchy. Participation and Opposition*, New Haven, Yale UP, 1971

[102] S. ROKKAN,. "Norway: numerical democracy and corporate pluralism" in R.A. DAHL (ed.), *Political oppositions in Western democracies*, New Haven, Yale UP, 1966, pp.70-115

[103] A. LIJPHART, "Typologies of democratic systems" *Comparative Political Studies,* Vol.1, No.1, April 1968, pp.3-44.

[104] See a.o. R.A. DAHL, "Pluralism Revisited", *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 2, January 1978, pp. 191-203; R.A. DAHL, *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy vs. Control*, New Haven, Yale UP, 1982

Dahl's vision of pluralism is not unilaterally positive. He admits that *"It has altered th[e] concept [of political equality] by replacing equality among individuals with equality among organizations, as if the latter were a functional equivalent of the former in a fully developed capitalist economy." "Consequently, whilst pluralism has prevented the tyranny of (diffused) majorities, it has at the same time facilitated domination by (concentrated) minorities."*[105]

Polsby and Aron deserve to be treated separately from the authors discussed above. Polsby focuses on the, in his idea, almost infinite resources usable in the struggle for political power (economic, status, knowledge, rights or even the time at disposal) which pluralists have to consider.[106] He pushes pluralism to the extreme and provokes a reaction of, among others, Schattschneider[107] who contested the assertion that all resources are equally useful.[108] Polsby thus unwillingly illustrates the huge methodological difficulties pluralists are confronted with: how to measure the importance of distortions in the democratic political arena? How to account for inequalities in resource distribution or in the relative weight of certain resources?

Aron[109] deserves a special mention because although joining the pluralist thesis in acknowledging the existence of different and sometimes conflicting ruling "categories" and underlining, anticipating Dahl, the importance of their permeability, he's not blind to shared interests at the top levels of society. For this reason he doesn't so much

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[105] S. FABBRINI, "A European Looks at Dahl's Democracy", *Public Affairs Report*, Vol.42, No.2, Summer 2001, pp.4-5

[106] See especially the article N.W. POLSBY, "How to study community power: the pluralist alternative", *Journal of Politics*, Vol.22, No.3, August 1960, pp.474-484

[107] E.E. SCHATTSSCHNEIDER, *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*, New York, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1960.

[108] For a rapid overview of the debate consult: A.J. HICKS & F.J. LECHNER, "Neopluralism and Neofunctionalism", *in* T. JANOSKI e.a., *The Handbook of Political Sociology*, New York, Cambridge UP, 2005, pp.54-71 (56-57)

[109] R. ARON , "Catégories des classes dirigeantes", *Revue française de Science politique*, No. 1, February 1965, pp.7-27

refute monist theses, as he "regrets" the fact that they have, in his vision, never been proven.

2.1.4. Democracy's Sole Ruler

Even when what is under discussion is liberal democracy, the monist paradigm's answer to *Who Rules?* is generally: a single unit, be it one person, one class, one elite, one part or one family. The best known examples of this approach are found in the writings of the Lynds, C. Wright Mills', Floyd Hunter and G. William Domhoff.

Helen and Robert Lynd, while researching the typical American city of "Middletown",[110] found that, although there seemed to be an open and democratic political system, one family actually controlled everything thanks to a single industry (fruit-canning) on which depended in one way or another local banks, farmers, shopkeepers and so on. Yet although this family virtually controlled Middletown, it did not try to transform its economic dominance into an exclusive political monopoly. On the contrary, the inattentive observer could conclude that this family had no interest in politics whatsoever. The Lynds do however show how the family applied just the necessary resources in political life to avoid unpleasant surprises. It controlled but did not directly exercise power.

One of the most interesting monist approaches was of the hand of C. Wright Mills. In an attempt to rebut Riesman's pluralistic thesis of veto-groups, Mills analysed what happens in the top echelons of society.[111] He considered three institutional orders: *the military*, *the political* and *the economic* and stressed both the possible and the actual alliances between them. Not only did these three orders, according to Mills, share common interests, which allowed them to form a kind of cartel and

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[110] R.S. LYND & H.M. LYND, *Middletown: a Study in Modern American Culture*, San Diego, Harvest/HBJ Book, 1959 (1929) and R.S. LYND & H.M. LYND, *Middletown in Transition: a Study in Cultural Conflicts*, New York, Harcourt, 1982 (1937)
[111] C. WRIGHT MILLS, *The Power Elite*, New York, Oxford UP, 1956

limit the influence of "undesirable pressure groups", they would also grow closer everyday for structural reasons. They shared common social origins, played golf on the same courses, formed marriage alliances, met at family reunions and so forth. Such togetherness predisposed them to exchange high ranking jobs or to grant each other favours. Although Mills offered little empirical evidence for his thesis the person of Robert McNamara who moved from the Pentagon (military elite) to the State Department (political elite), while also becoming President of Ford (economic elite), offers a nice illustration of what Mills meant. Another example is offered by former US President Bush Sr. once a CIA-director. The *elite-cartel* or closed elite[112] controls and rules the system while permitting only a facade of democratic power-sharing.

A third monist approach is offered by the reputation-based inquiry of F. Hunter.[113] The results of Hunter's research clearly rebut Mills' idea of three converging elites. For Hunter dominance belongs to big business (e.g. Coca Cola in Atlanta City). One (economic) elite, presenting some similarities with Mills' power elite, is supposed to hold power over Atlanta and, by extension, the US.

In numerous works the harshly criticised Domhoff[114] insisted that, notwithstanding appearances, the US is actually ruled almost

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[112] It seems to be neither an aristocracy because it's not a hereditary blood-based elite (but this is questionable), nor a class since they do not share common class interests.
[113] F. HUNTER, *Community Power Structure*, Chapel Hill, University of North-Carolina Press, 1953 & F. HUNTER, *Top Leadership U.S.A.*, Chapel Hill, University of North-Carolina Press, 1959.
[114] Among others: G. W. DOMHOFF, *Who Rules America?*, Englewood Cliffs (NJ), Prentice Hall, 1967; *The Higher Circles*, New York, Random House, 1970; *Fat Cats and Democrats*, Englewood Cliffs (NJ), Prentice Hall, 1972; *The Bohemian Grove and Other Retreats: A Study in Ruling Class Cohesiveness*, New York, Harper & Row, 1974; *Who Really Rules? New Haven and Community Power Re-Examined*, New Brunswick (NJ), Transaction Books, 1978; *The Powers That Be: Processes of Ruling Class Domination in America*, New York, Random House, 1979, *Who Rules America Now: A view for the '80's,* Englewood Cliffs (NJ), Prentice Hall, 1983; *The Power Elite and the State: How Policy Is Made in America*, Hawthorne (NY), Aldine de Gruyter, 1990

exclusively by one cohesive elite.[115] Domhoff recognizes that groups which are not part of the ruling elite *seem* to have some influence but adds that in practice they lose in the field of political competition. Pluralism is only apparent since the "ruling class" controls society through four special processes.[116] First there are "special interest-processes", lobbying *sensu largo* or interventions in a Lynd-like manner via networks organized or used for the obtaining of especially short-run advantages. Second, Domhoff identifies their involvement and dominance in expertise-bodies. These activities are summarized by the author as "policy-formation processes". The third process concerns the extremely small role of American political parties in elections which he confronts with the fundamental role of private financing of candidates. Domhoff asserts that American political parties are hardly responsive to their electorate after elections, nor are election campaigns focused on the needs or concerns of the general public. The fourth and final process concerns the diffusing of ideology to the entire system, in the American case centred especially around "laissez-faire liberalism" and "individualism" and often understood as "Good Americanism".[117] The particularity of liberal ideology is the strong accent put on individual responsibility. By constantly downplaying the role of social forces and of the system in one's failures, the elite obtains a "resigned acquiescence" of the people which allows the elite to perpetuate its dominance.[118]

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[115] Although the causal factors he identifies for this cohesiveness differ little from those of C. Wright Mills, Domhoff came to recognize the possibility of conflicts within the ruling class. Such conflicts do however not prove any form of pluralism, since they remain within the ruling class.

[116] See G. W. DOMHOFF, *The Powers That Be: Processes of Ruling Class Domination in America*, New York, Random House, 1979 and for a favourable summary of some of Domhoff's thinking: H. BLOKLAND, "De corrumpering van de Amerikaanse democratie", *Socialisme en Democratie*, Vol.61, No.3, pp.8-24

[117] G. W. DOMHOFF, *The Powers That Be: Processes of Ruling Class Domination in America*, New York, Random House, 1979, pp.170-172

[118] *Ibid.*, p.191-200

2.1.5.　　　　　　　　A Qualitative Distinction

For an essentialist, the above is confusing. Some scholars find that those systems traditionally qualified as dictatorships have many rulers. Is it still a dictatorship then? Others have argued that those systems traditionally qualified as democracies have in reality only one ruling elite. How to speak of democracy then?

If one analyzes the methodologies of the two paradigms, an important difference is noted. Although some, like Broszat also consider the structural side of the system, the pluralist paradigm generally uses a decisional methodology. That is it focuses on how a decision is reached, or not reached, and which individuals and groups intervene in the decision- or policy-making process. The monist paradigm on the other hand is characterized by a method of institutional analysis (*Who's Who?* and *Who's Where?*). More practically it analyzes who occupies the highest positions within the system, it traces the presence of party-members in different state organs or on the lack of institutional constraints for policy-makers. Although both approaches are of obvious relevance, considering their very different outcomes, the question of the influence of the technique on the result has to be posed.[119]

The discussion on the number of rulers illustrates how complex a clear-cut separation between democracy and non-democracy can be. It is however possible that I have focused too unilaterally on the quantitative aspect of the distinction. Let us therefore consider the differences on four qualitative key dimensions as found in Linz'

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[119] Outside the Anglo-American debate this link between technique of analysis and result seems to persist. The French sociologist P. BIRNBAUM in his *La Classe dirigeante française*, Paris, PUF, 1978 starting from the Who's Who (and thus an institutional technique of analysis) arrives again at a rather monist conclusion. (see as well P. BIRNBAUM, *Les Sommets de l'Etat*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1977 on legal collusion among elites)

classical definition of authoritarian regimes: pluralism, leadership, ideology, mobilization. [120]

Monism seems to undermine theories that put forth a difference of "nature" between undemocratic or democratic systems. If one stays within a monist framework the answers to the question "Who rules?" or even "How Many rule?" are very similar for both types of regimes. There are clear differences in the degree of freedom, repression and ideology, but if these are differences in *degree,* they do not indicate differences in *nature,* democracy becomes a "*scalar*" rather than a "*sortal*" concept.[121]

In monist theory the difference in political pluralism between democracy and non-democracy lies in the fact that while liberal democracy keeps up appearances, totalitarian regimes as Stalinist Russia officially rule out pluralism. Yet in the end both liberal democracies as undemocratic regimes have a small, more or less cohesive, elite deciding. The distinction blurs even more when Linz and others admit a "certain degree" of pluralism in authoritarian systems, to distinguish them from totalitarian regimes. If "one" elite rules both in democracy and non-democracy, the size of the elite (ranging from one person under sultanism to some percentage of the population under liberal democracy) brings us back to a mere difference in degree.

Can mobilization be considered fundamental? In monist analyses liberal democracy counts especially on "resigned acquiescence", while most models of totalitarian politics consider mobilization a fundamental aspect of it. Nevertheless even here some ambiguities appear. As Linz and Stepan show, in the transition from totalitarianism to post-totalitarianism, mobilization can diminish without bringing about democracy. More important yet, under sultanism mobilization is considered generally absent![122] Moreover, Almond writes that in

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[120] J. LINZ, "An Authoritarian Regime: Spain" in E. ALLARDT & S. ROKKAN, *Mass Politics,* New York, The Free Press, 1970, pp.251-283 (255)

[121] A. WEALE, *Democracy,* New York, St.-Martin's Press, 1999, p.18

[122] J.LINZ & A. STEPAN 1996, *supra*

totalitarianism acquiescence is, over time, based on "*conformity and apathy*".[123] Could then responsiveness be a decisive criterion? Monists consider non-democracy obviously rather unresponsive, but at the same time cast doubt on how "responsive" the ruling elite in democracy really is.

Domhoff and many others underline the existence of a liberal ideology which permeates liberal society as a communist ideology could permeate a certain class or society. The difference between liberal democracies and illiberal regimes could however lie in the nature of the ideology. Indeed, a totalitarian ideology is, in theory, a politically guiding and mobilizing ideology; while the liberal one is based more on acquiescence and is guiding "only" insofar as it indicates a personal way of life. Sultanism however lacks such guiding ideology. Is the nature of totalitarian ideology such that it allows to separate totalitarianism from all other regimes, liberal democratic or not? To distinguish between totalitarianism and non-totalitarianism on the (sole?) basis of the nature of the ideology (politically guiding or not) there has to be absolute clarity on the nature and function of ideology. Unfortunately we lack such insight. There is no actual proof that ideology actually always guided politics even in totalitarian regimes. Many scholars on Nazism consider Nazi ideology did not guide Hitler's regime. Rather they claim it evolved and radicalized because of the structural mechanics of the Nazi-system. The arguments stating that Nazi-ideology guided the majority of the German population are not especially convincing either.[124] As we will see one of the main differences between Nazism and Stalinism might just have been the nature of their respective ideologies. The former's ideology being less elaborate and based on a "Hitler-myth", while the latter's was an elaborate theory for all parts of society, on which a Stalin-myth was merely superposed.

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[123] G.A. ALMOND, "Comparative Political Systems", *The Journal of Politics,* Vol.18, No.3, August1956, pp.391-409 (403)

[124] Consider for example: G. ALY, *Hitler's Beneficiaries*, New York, Metropolitan Books/ Henry Holt 6 Co., 2007

The influence and role of liberal ideology is equally at the centre of contradictory debates: does it guide ruling elites and/or people in liberal systems? Should it? Should illiberal parties then be excluded from elections and power-sharing? The matter seems especially interesting in post-communist countries: some of the Baltic countries have forbidden communist parties and the Czech Republic recently outlawed the Communist Youth Movement (KSM). But the question is even relevant for contemporary Western democracies. It was relevant when West-Germany banned the German Communist Party about a decade after the end of World War II and it is even more so today while these democracies are confronted with other illiberal parties, movements or policies.[125]

A further criterion that could help us separate democratic and undemocratic systems, might be the presence or absence of free and competitive elections. Unfortunately, in a monist view of liberal democracy those elections are not much more than a formality. It is hence unclear whether their mere existence could determine the nature of the regime. And, in the end, aren't social scientists often measuring the *degree* of freedom and competition in a particular election?

Let us return to the pluralist paradigm. Does the pluralist paradigm offer us a decisive qualitative difference between democracy and dictatorship?

Pluralism seems to present a clear vision of how decision-making and especially public-policy-making happens. By considering politics as an arena in which actors freely compete and the state as a referee to guarantee the free competition. between private interests, it espouses a traditional liberal view. Pluralist or quasi-pluralist approaches of systems where the state has a clearly more important function do have a propensity to stress the competition between different actors in the making of policy.

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[125] One thinks of far-right parties and Islamist movements

Pluralism has not been immune from criticism. The problematic teleological nature, implicit in the so-called "Iron Law of Pluralism", has been one point of criticism. Another, mainly monist, criticism concerned the fact that most pluralists, although rightly emphasizing the intervention of different groups in a decisional process neglect to "measure" these. In essence, pluralists suppose that all interventions and actors are of equal value and have equal influence. As Hicks and Lechner rightly remark pluralists have reacted to these criticisms by, on the one hand, extending the rage of agency of their model, incorporating state-based or class-based interest groups, which led to organizational pluralism or corporate pluralism, and, on the other hand, acknowledging possible constraints or empowerments coming from a particular context that might favour some particular actor.[126]

Pluralist analyses focus on interest groups and lobbies and the fundamental difference between democracy and non-democracy, from a systemic point of view, appears to be the absence or presence of freedom of association. Interest groups under non-democracy are generally not spontaneous or free associations in defence of certain groups. This distinction is on the other hand not that absolute if we adhere to Shtromas' thesis of independent informal interest groups under Stalinism.[127]

Where monism underlined consensus, collusion and cooperation, pluralism accentuates competition between actors, be it elites or institutions. The competition can be more or less free and autonomous or on the contrary organized by state-bureaucracy and hence top-down in nature. Pluralist writings seem to confirm that the degree to which a state or society are "open" is more of a *scalar* difference, illustrated by two ends of an axis. On one end we find a system dominated by freely constituted competing actors, on the other a system dominated by

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[126] A.J. HICKS AND F.J. LECHNER, "Neopluralism and Neofunctionalism", *in* T. JANOSKI e.a., *The Handbook of Political Sociology*, New York, Cambridge UP, 2005, pp.54-71 (58-62)
[127] Supra.

actors established or controlled by the regime. All the existent polities could then be placed on such an axis.

Concluding one can not go without noticing that, neither monism, nor pluralism or corporatism, have been able to offer a clear distinction between democracy and dictatorship. This is well illustrated by the Dahl's 2001 "*How Democratic is the American Constitution*" in which he challenges the democratic nature of the US Constitution.[128] The first problem is obviously a methodological one, the answer to the question "*How Many Rule?*" depends almost entirely on the selected approach. The second issue concerns the very different answers offered to the "*Who Rules?*" question. For some the very abstract "Technostructure" rules, for others rule is in the hands of a coagulated power elite, for others still one party, lobby-groups, veto-groups, bureaucracy, state institutions, corporations, and so on. The actors present on the competition-collusion axis are hence all but clear. Arguably these actors vary over time and space, yet the variety of conclusions regarding one single regime, the United States, over one single period of time, indicates that such variation is not the main reason of the paradigms' inability to clearly determine the actors.

Such an inability proves the limits of the classificatory logic inherent to many of transitological approaches. The mentioned paradigms actually reveal quite useful to undermine basic "our" system versus "their" system analyses of regimes, by introducing a scalar difference between different regimes based on elite behaviour. Monists, as C.W. Mills or Taylor, often acknowledge the existence of different elites and either stress the collusion between these (the power elite) or the absolute dominance of one of these elites. Pluralists on the other hand accentuate the different actors competing for power, but some, like Aron, do acknowledge a common interest of the ruling elite. Moreover, if one compares C.W. Mills' account with Broszat's or Hough's competing institutions, what differs is above all the degree of collision among elites. In Kershaw's pluralist approach of Nazi Germany

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[128] R.A. DAHL, *How Democratic is the American Constitution?*, Yale, Yale UP, 2001

consensus building was undeniably essential for the Führer's policy. The so-called *bargaining* to reach a consensus also shows that collusion in pluralist theses is all but absent. What most seems to separate these scholars reveals in the end not much more than a scalar difference of complicity.

Pierre Bourdieu might have offered the clearest characterization of the limits of the above paradigm. The French sociologist avows that the matter is totally irrelevant. In his vision elites are always at the same time divided and united. They are united because they are part of the ruling elite, which requires close interaction and mutual acceptance. They are divided because each and every part of the corps attempts to dominate it.[129] Although reframing the question, Bourdieu as well acknowledges the dialectics of collusion and competition. If the combination of both paradigms thus offers us some useful analytical tools, like the competition-collusion spectrum to characterize elite-rule, both paradigms also present numerous problems.

2.2.   *So… Who Rules?*

The limits of essentialism are now clear. Constructing a naturalized concept of dictatorship and pretending a transition to a naturalized kind of liberal democracy would necessitate a correct and deep analysis justifying such a classification. None of the above mentioned approaches has been able to do so. This is hardly a surprise. Debating on if a state or a system is ruled by one or more elites, by a coherent ruling class or different lobby- or veto-groups, occasionally permits some tentative conclusions on the degree of pluralism and perhaps democracy in a given state or system, yet it does not constitute a sociological analysis of the functioning and origins of the regime as such.

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[129] See his analysis in P. BOURDIEU, *La Noblesse d'Etat,* Paris, Minuit, 1989 & P. BOURDIEU, "Rethinking the State : genesis and structure of the Bureaucratic Field", *Sociological Theory,* Vol.12, No.1, March 1994, pp.1-19 and the Bourdieu-inspired synthesis of monist and pluralist paradigms in P. RIUTORT, *Précis de sociologie,* Paris, PUF, 2004, pp.506-510

The action of the ruling elite is often described in a vacuum, sometimes a time vacuum, sometimes space vacuum, often both. In essence one labels the elite, private or state, moderate or radical, yet at the same time rigorously ignores their history and the background of their power. By answering the question "Who Rules?" in such a reductive way, one obscures an essential part of the calculus. By answering "The Elite Rule", the question "Who are the Elite?" is forgotten.

The time vacuum is best exemplified by the lack of historical analysis of the emergence of elites that characterizes many of the above mentioned approaches. In short the description of the elites in place and their action is given more importance than their emergence. This seems a step back in comparison to what could perhaps be called the founding fathers of respectively historical sociology and elite analysis, namely Montesquieu and Gaetano Mosca. Neither of them would have thought of starting an analysis of elites without considering the socio-economic and socio-political evolution and situation that led the elites to be the elites. Yet today, even those scholars preoccupied with the interpretation of institutional functioning, like Kershaw[130], Hough[131] and Broszat[132], or scholars describing the "origins of totalitarianism"[133], often downplay, if not totally ignore, the influence of history on the formation of the functioning and very nature of the regimes they are studying. The space vacuum is related to the relative absence of description of the environment elites compete in, for those who consider the state an arena, or, for those cherishing an instrumentalist vision of the state, of the tool used by the elite. Most Marxists and classical Liberals would probably consider the State rather passive, while others, like for example Poulantzas or Pahl and Winkler, see a

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[130] I. KERSHAW, *Qu'est-ce que le Nazisme,* Paris, Gallimard (Folio), 1997

[131] See for example J.F. HOUGH & M. FAINSOD, *How The Soviet Union is Governed,* Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1982 which treats the question of historical development in less than 7 (!) pages.

[132] M. BROSZAT, *Der Staat Hitlers*, Wiesbaden, Marixverlag, 2007

[133] H. ARENDT, *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* New York, Harvest, 1976

more significant role for the State.[134] The corporatism described by Schmitter and Manoïlesco[135] allows to bring the State back in, although still only partially and prudently.[136] Seeing the State merely as an "arena" for competition or an "instrument" of power and domination is less harmful than hardly considering it at all. This is no twist of fate. The fact that many, if not all, of the above mentioned refrain from analyzing the formation of the state is inextricably linked to the lack of situation in time.

To be sure, there is more to it. For many of the authors the lack of situating in space and time of elite struggle is an almost natural consequence of the fact that their "general theory" of power and government is a mere extrapolation of what they empirically found on a local level, in a small town (New Haven, Middletown), a corporation (Technocracy) or part of the system (Shtromas). Concluding that pluralism exists nationally since it does in New Haven or since lawyers form interest groups or that technocracy commands since this seems the case in entrepreneurial structures, is making a big leap from small empirical evidence to grand theoretical conclusions.

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[134] N. POULANTZAS timidly defends the idea of a "relative autonomy" for the State and accused other Marxists and especially R. MILIBAND of fostering an "instrumentalist" vision of the State (something MILIBAND always denied). See N. POULANTZAS, 'The Capitalist State: A Reply to Miliband and Laclau', *New Left Review*, No. 95, 1976, pp.63-83; N. POULANTZAS. *Political power and social classes*. London, New Left, 1973; N. POULANTZAS *State, power, socialism*. London, Verso, 2001(1978) and R. MILIBAND, "The Capitalist State: Reply to Nicos Poulantzas", *New Left Review*, Vol.1, No.59, January-February 1970, pp. 53-60; R. MILIBAND, "Poulantzas and the Capitalist State", *New Left Review*, Vol.1, No.82, November-December 1973, pp. 83-92; R. MILIBAND, *Capitalist Democracy in Britain*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 1982; R. MILIBAND, *Class Power and State Power*, London, Verso, 1983; R.E. PAHL AND J.T. WINKLER, "The Coming Corporatism", *Challenge*, No.18, pp.18-35 as quoted in L.G. GERBER, "Corporatism and State Theory", *Social Science History*, Vol.19, No.3, Autumn 1995, pp.313-332 (322-323)
[135] P.C. SCHMITTER, "Still the Century of Corporatism", *Review of Politics*, Vol. 36, No.1, January 1974, pp. 85-131
[136] About the return of the State in Social Science P. EVANS, D. RUESCHEMEYER and T. SKOCPOL (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, New York, Cambridge UP, 1985

2.3.   *State Formation*

Such ills are not easily overcome. A look at state formation theories, to which transitology is inextricably linked and indebted, and their evolution offers some relief. Where transitology and modern elitist theories underline how elites make the system, theories of state formation underline how the system makes elites. It would be reductive to reduce difference between both to a simple voluntarist-structuralist debate, yet there are undeniable parallels.

At first sight, theories of state formation are flawed by similar ills that undermine transitology. Tilly's four-folded characterization of state-formation theories offers four broad approaches of how states were formed: one, the Statist approach, accentuating the importance of the State as an arena for political infighting and factionalism and hence focuses on political rather than on economic factors. "*Among historians, sociologists, and students of comparative politics, statist accounts of states' formation are by far the most popular (..) searching for clues as to the conditions producing strong, effective stable states, and assuming only one such set of conditions exists. (..) they often posit a single, central path of European state formation and a set of deviations from the path explained by inefficiency, weakness, bad luck, geopolitical position, or the timing of economic growth and its concomitants.(..) Bertrand Badie and Pierre Birnbaum, for example, treat France as the most fully realized European state: 'Prussia, Spain, and Italy followed related paths, but the process of differentiation and institutionalization never went so far [as in France].*" A second theory is based on mode of production and its contradictions of which the most famous example is offered by Perry Anderson's Marxist analysis[137]; a third named the geopolitical approach, incarnated by James Rosenau,[138] which links state formation to international relations and their own logic, claiming that the latter heavily influences the kind of state formation; and a fourth approach, linked especially to

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[137] P. ANDERSON, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London, Verso, 1974
[138] J.N. ROSENAU, *The Adaptation of National Societies: A Theory of Political System Behavior and Transformation*, New York, McCaleb-Seiler, 1970

Immanuel Wallerstein[139], of world system analysis, *"regarding the structures of individual states as consequences of their positions within the world economy."*[140]

Arguably much of transitological literature would today be situated in the Tilly's "statist approach to state formation". The essence of much of it is indeed elite choice and behavior and the underlying calculations inspired by the struggle for power. This struggle for power among elites would then influence the form of government and the state, when these elites deem such a change useful for the advancement of their cause, in essence their collective power. Unsurprisingly hence, some of the criticism of these state formation paradigms by Tilly has bases not too different from those founding our criticism of transitology.[141] Indeed, Tilly mentions how many theories fail because "*they assume implicitly a deliberate effort to construct the sorts of substantial, centralized states that came to dominate European life during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*" (statist theories) or "*fail to capture the impact of war and preparation for war on the whole process of state formation*" (geopolitical and world system theories).[142] Tilly also acknowledges that the propositions made in a book edited by him on the formation of national states in Europe[143] were flawed by an ill similar to the one characterizing the four theories above: "*in fact, we implicitly substituted a new unilinear story – one running from war to extraction and repression to state formation – for the old one.*"[144]

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[139] I. WALLERSTEIN, *The Modern World- System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World System in the Sixteenth Century,* New York, Academic Press, 1974

[140] C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1990*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990, pp.5-11

[141] For a more methodological criticism of state formation theories see P. ABRAMS, *Historical Sociology,* Ithaca, Cornell UP, 1982, pp.147-189

[142] C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1990*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990, p.11

[143] C.TILLY(ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1975

[144] C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1990*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990, p.12

A part from common ills, there are obviously other points on which theories of state formation on the one hand and transitology on the other meet.[145] One is the interest for the type of regime, classification so to say. The opposition between "democracy" and "dictatorship" in Barrington Moore's work and between "*Staatsverfassung*" and "*Heeresverfassung*" in Hintze seem to parallel the distinction between "authoritarianism" versus "democracy" in Juan Linz or between "democracy" and "totalitarianism" by Aron. However, it is hardly a coincidence that state-formation scholars, with often a background in historical sociology, have been more successful than their transitological colleagues in overcoming these ills. Avoiding such a trap of simplistic dual classification requires an attempt "*to explain neither uniformity nor yes-no differences, but variety and change.*" [146] Attempting to systemize and understand the contemporary Iranian regime is a fruitless undertaking if one forgets the fundamental contributions not only of elitist theorizations, but also of the underlying structures and dynamics, both clearly situated in time and space. Concerning ruling elites state-formation theories harbor the obvious advantage of describing the emergence of elites, their incorporation in the system and their influence on the structure of the system. By identifying historically driven forces, elites and their action, a paradigm based on historical sociology can hence succeed where both transitology and monist-pluralist paradigms fell short.

Many state-formation theories do exactly what contemporary elitist analyses neglected: situating in space and time the emergence of elites. In doing so state formation theories replace Aristotle with Montesquieu. Notwithstanding Auguste Comte's critique of Montesquieu's classification of political regimes, which Comte considered a return to "*the primitive type of Aristotle's Treaty*",[147] French

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[145] There is arguably no better incarnation of this fact than C. TILLY, *Contention and Democracy in Europe 1650-2000*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2004

[146] C. TILLY, *Contention and Democracy in Europe 1650-2000*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2004, p.38

[147] A. COMTE, *Cours de Philosophie positive : La Partie dogmatique de la Philosophie sociale*, Tome Quatrième, Paris, Société Positiviste, 1893 (1839), p.196

sociologist Emile Durkheim seems to have understood Montesquieu somewhat better than Comte did. [148]   The former underlines that Montesquieu's classification, although formally similar to Aristotle's, draws from a different register in that it does not consider the number of governors as a decisive criterion. For Montequieu, democracy, government of the people, the many, and aristocracy, government of the few, the elite, are part of one category of society: the Republic. Montesquieu opposes the Republic to Monarchy and Despotism. In the Republic all are inspired by the collective good, the virtue of putting the interests of the collective before the personal interests, what Montesquieu calls "political virtue". A situation possible only because all are if not equal at least similar and personal wealth is kept within limits. There is no, what Durkheim would later describe, "division of social labor".[149] According to the author, such a Republic has only existed in small polities as ancient Greece and Sparta or Rome in its Republican period.

Monarchy seems the exact opposite of the Republic. Under Monarchy wealth, social tasks and labor are extremely divided among different classes (e.g. peasants, fishermen, hunters, workers,…) of the polity. This specialization does not allow Montesquieu to define Monarchy as the rule of the one, because different classes, groups or "organs",[150] each with their specialization limit the range of action of the others. It is this careful balance between different societal forces in competition in the defence of their own domain that Montesquieu will consider the basis of the separation of power and the limitation of power. Durkheim describes the internal dynamics of Montesquieu in an admirably clear way: "*The members of society thus divert everything from the general interest to the personal interest* [honor] *(..) But the cohesion of the elements is born out of their diversity. This ambition that moves orders and individuals, indeed*

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[148] We base our considerations on Montesquieu here heavily on the excellent synthesis made of them in E. DURKHEIM, *Montesquieu et Rousseau: Précurseurs de la Sociologie,* Paris, Librairie Marcel Rivière et Cie., 1966, pp.55-68

[149] E. DURKHEIM, *De la Division du Travail social*, Paris, PUF, 1986

[150] Term used by Durkheim in E. DURKHEIM, *Montesquieu et Rousseau: Précurseurs de la Sociologie,* Paris, Librairie Marcel Rivière et Cie., 1966, p.64

at the same time stimulates every single one of them to fulfil in the best possible way is function. They also unconsciously further the common good, believing to focus solely on personal advantages."[151]

Despotism, the government of the Persians in Montesquieu's view, holds the middle between both Republic and Monarchy. Not knowing any division of labor, nor hence "organs" or "classes", it nonetheless has one ruler, that drew centralized all forces in his person. People are not motivated by political virtue, since they are far from public affairs, nor by honor or ambition since all are "equal in servitude". Montesquieu thus offered an infinitely more sociological vision of state and government than Aristotle had done. In his analysis of polities, he immediately and inextricably links the question "*Who Rules?*" to the interrogation "*How Do These Rule?*" and to a given society's social infrastructure. For Montesquieu discussing the former question is useless if one has not first found a sufficient answer to the latter. Little imagination is needed to see her the precursor of more nineteenth and twentieth century analyses of feudalism, absolute monarchy and other topics now covered by historical sociology.[152]

If simplifying, we would consider the Republic to be an ideal-type of fusional society, not unlike ideals of a classless society or a Rousseau-inspired social contract, the regime of Monarchy could represent most of the regimes today, at least at the level of their social bases. Indeed, division of labor is widespread and the description of competition instigated by "ambition" and individuals competing furthering the common good while believing to focus on mere personal benefits sounds similar to the tenets of both economic capitalism and political liberalism. Montesquieu's vision is clearly more complex, more developed and arguably more precise than Aristotle's. Montequieu answers questions considering historical development, resource attribution, competition between elites, socio-economic structures and

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[151] E. DURKHEIM, *Montesquieu et Rousseau: Précurseurs de la Sociologie,* Paris, Librairie Marcel Rivière et Cie., 1966, p.65

[152] See P. ABRAMS, *Historical Sociology,* Ithaca, Cornell UP, 1982 who identifies Anomie, Class Formation, Rationalization as some of these topics.

so on. Montesquieu's classification is also more specific on the nature of specific regimes, because the French author analyzes their roots and practical functioning. Elites and rulers are no longer operating in a relative vacuum.

Contemporary state formation theories bear some resemblance to Montesquieu's approach, which has allowed them to solve, at least partially, the ills flawing still today much of transitological literature. On the other hand many scholars of revolution have in the past fallen in a similar voluntarist trap. While some of them acknowledge possible structural constraints, most of them assume that revolutionaries have some kind of plan for the construction of a new order. Such plan can be explicit, expressed by some kind of revolutionary ideology, or implicit, expressed in actions. Without *a priori* refuting such perspective, I prefer the more nuanced approach of human agency found in state formation theories. The importance of voluntarist teleological action in the direction of state formation has rarified and teleology in general been minimized. Indeed, while Tilly still regretted voluntarism in statist approaches of state formation which in his vision assumed an intentional effort to construct modern states, Norbert Elias had already underlined how state formation theories can avoid assumptions of voluntarism in state construction. Elias mentioned how the interaction of uncountable ambitions and individual interests can create a phenomenon no one explicitly wanted or planned for, but remains nonetheless the result of the actions and aspirations of a great number of actors.[153]

At the same time, by considering countries where state formation did not develop as in, for example, Western Europe, contemporary state formation theory also limits the risk of "*analytical regressiveness*".[154]

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[153] N. ELIAS, *Über den Progress der Zivilisation*, tonne II, 1969 in its French translation N. ELIAS, *La Dynamique de l'Occident*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1975, pp.98

[154] Tilly has repeatedly stated for example that his model of state formation, based on the European experience, might not be applicable to any other region or period of time. See for a limited illustration, linked to the absence of state formation according to the Tilly's theories in the colonial world C. TILLY, "War Making and State Making as Organized

Barrington Moore's "*Terror and Progress USSR*" and *"Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy"* offer much earlier illustrations of such.[155] Tilly somewhat ungenerously summarizes Moore's argument as follows: "*To the extent that great, exploitative landlords survived the transition to intensive cash-crop farming (..) authoritarian government persisted into the contemporary era. To the extent that the bourgeoisie predominated, some form of democracy existed.*" [156] This synthesis illustrates two aspects of Moore's work. Firstly, a more structural (as opposed to voluntarist) analysis, secondly, the "open end" (as opposed to teleological types of analyses) side of it. Tilly's own approach as offered in *Coercion, Capital and European States* also avoids relating state formation to "strategic decisions", leaves space for some falsification and explicitly refutes teleology.

Undeniably, Tilly's merit in the domain of state formation domain has been extremely valuable and probably decisive, yet his main argument was probably less original than is generally assumed. Tilly's central argument is that "*state structure appeared chiefly as a by-product of rulers' efforts to acquire means of war*" and "*relations among states, especially through war and preparation for war, strongly affected the entire process of state formation.*"[157] This explanation combines much of the other theories of state formation by reframing them. Although Tilly quotes Norbert Elias only once in his chapter on "how war made states, and vice versa", preferring to stress the influence of Barrington Moore, Stein Rokkan and Lews Mumford on his theory, Elias' influence seems major. Elias underlines that throughout history arms have been the best way to obtain means of production just as threat has been an

Crime", in P. EVANS, D. RUESCHEMEYER and T. SKOCPOL (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, New York, Cambridge UP, 1985, pp.169-187 (186)

[155] B. MOORE, *Terror and Progress USSR,* New York, Harper & Row, 1954; B. MOORE, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy,* Boston, Beacon Press, 1993 In the former work Moore explicitly states how passions of the moment, and not scientific concern, define what assertions concerning the USSR do or do not require proof.

[156] C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1990*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990, p.12

[157] C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1990*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990, p.14

indispensable auxiliary to production, especially in the struggle for the monopolization of power. Every "social unit" faces a choice, claims Elias, either to be defeated which implies the loss of its independent autonomous existence, or to be victorious and extend its influence and power.[158] Inexorably this competition between social units leads to an order of monopolization where competition without monopolies is substituted by competition organized by monopolies. During the same process private monopolies evolve to public monopolies, notably on the fiscal and the military level.[159]

The originality of Elias' approach lay not in his underlining of the importance of war and armies in state formation. Since, notwithstanding the fact that more recently some have tried to put emphasis on the co-evolution of states and economic network developments,[160] the importance of war and military centralization on state-making forms an almost transversal characteristic of classic state-building theories from Hintze over Wallerstein and Perry Anderson to Giddens, Tilly and Finer.[161] Some of these scholars, like Otto Hintze, Charles Tilly and Michael Barnett, have underlined that the threat of

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[158] N. ELIAS, *Über den Progress der Zivilisation*, tonne II, 1969 in its French translation N. ELIAS, *La Dynamique de l'Occident*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1975, pp.84-88

[159] N. ELIAS, *o.c.*, p.99

[160] See for example the extremely interesting work of J.F. Padgett on Florentine state-formation. J.F.PADGETT & P.D. MCLEAN, "Organizational Invention and Elite Transformation: The Birth of Partnership Systems in Renaissance Florence", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.111, No.5, March 2006, pp.1463-1568

[161] A. GIDDENS, *The Nation-State and Violence*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1985; O. HINTZE, "Military Organization and the Organization of the State", in F. GILBERT, *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*, New York, Oxford UP, 1975, pp.178-215 as quoted by T. ERTMAN, "State Formation and State Building in Europe", *in* T. JANOSKI e.a., *The Handbook of Political Sociology*, New York, Cambridge UP, 2005, pp.367-383 ; I. WALLERSTEIN, *The Modern World- System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World System in the Sixteenth Century*, New York, Academic Press, 1974 ; P. ANDERSON, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, London, Verso, 1996 ; P. ANDERSON, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London, Verso, 1974 ; C. TILLY, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1975 ; C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1990*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990 and S.E. FINER, "State- and Nation-Building in Europe: The Role of the Military", in C. TILLY, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1975, pp.84-163 (95-98)

war might be enough to ignite the process of centralization.[162] Hintze spoke about "compelling political imperatives" (*zwingende politische Notwendigkeiten*)[163] and in his view one of these "*continuous state of war dominating the continent*" (*beständigen Kriegszustand der auf dem Kontinent herrschte*)[164] Hintze went as far to state that every political system (*Staatsverfassung*) is originally a military system (*Heeresverfassung*).[165] Elias' approach was innovative because it systemized the link between war making, taxation and state making. A theme that would become central in Tilly's state formation theory.

But Elias is also to be credited for another major innovation. When he considers the competition and struggle between different social units, he adds to his analysis how private monopolies develop into public monopolies. One of the fundamental questions of state formation will indeed be the passage of concentrations of private power to state institutions *sensu largo*. In other words, how are concentrations of private power transformed in state institutions. How are groups that were until then competitors *to* the state become competitors *in* the state.

2.4.   *The Corporatist Complex*

This idea of competitors within the state brings us back to the pluralist paradigm. Pluralist scholars have reacted in different ways to criticism

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[162] See for example: O. HINTZE, "Machtpolitik und Regierungsverfassung" in O. HINTZE, *Staat und Verfassung. Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Allgemeinen Verfassungsgeschichte*, 3rd ed., Goettingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913, pp.424-456 (427-428) and M.N. BARNETT, *Confronting the Costs of War: Military Power, State, and Society in Egypt and Israel*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1992

[163] English translation by T. ERTMAN, "State Formation and State Building in Europe", *in* T. JANOSKI e.a., *The Handbook of Political Sociology*, New York, Cambridge UP, 2005, pp.367-383 (368)

[164] O. HINTZE, "Machtpolitik und Regierungsverfassung" in O. HINTZE, *Staat und Verfassung. Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Allgemeinen Verfassungsgeschichte,* 3rd ed., Goettingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913, pp.424-456 (428)

[165] O. HINTZE, "Staatsverfassung and Heeresverfassung", Conference at the Gehe-Stiftung, Dresden, 1906, in O. HINTZE, *Staat und Verfassung. Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Allgemeinen Verfassungsgeschichte,* 3rd ed., Goettingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913, pp.52-83

regarding the pluralist paradigm. An interesting development of classical pluralist theory can be found in "stretched organizational pluralism". As Pollard notes the concept usually refers to the degree "*to which the foreign policy making power is shared, willingly or unwillingly, with other individuals and institutions*". Unlike polyarchy it *"does not necessarily imply a high degree of representation or contestation in the larger polity. […] whereas Robert Dahl's polyarchy refers to the widest possible contestation and representation, stretched organizational pluralism includes both democratic and authoritarian social movements and constitutional systems."*[166]

Therborn once stated that "*Corporatism has become a bit like God. Many people believe it is an important phenomenon* (…) *But nobody really knows what it looks like.*"[167] As many social scientific concepts, corporatism has been subjected to cross-examination, but one clear definition has yet to emanate. To avoid losing too much time in conceptual hair splitting, I will adopt Schmitter's definition. Schmitter puts the essence of corporatism in the institutional aspect of it, rather then in the ideological or philosophical aspect. For Schmitter corporatism is a "*system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for obtaining certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports.*"[168]

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[166] V. K. POLLARD, "Dissertation Abstract: Systematic Qualitative Comparison of Sources of Power in Presidential Foreign Policy Decision Making by Presidents Diosdado Macapagal, Ferdinand Edralin Marcos and Corazon Conjuangco Aquino", *Explorations in South-Asian Studies*, Vol.1, No.1, Spring 1997,
http://www2.hawaii.edu/~seassa/explorations/v1n1/v1n1-toc.html
[167] G: THERBORN, "Lessons from 'Corporatist' Theorizations", in J. PEKKARINEN, M. POKJOL & B. ROWTHORN, *Social Corporatism: A Superior Economic System?*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992, pp.24-43 (24)
[168] P.C. SCHMITTER "Still the Century of Corporatism", *Review of Politics*, Vol. 36, No.1, January 1974, pp. 85-131 (93-94) Later "interest representation" became "interest intermediation" See: P.C. SCHMITTER, "Modes of Interest Intermediation and Models of Societal Change in Western Europe", in P.C. SCHMITTER & G. LEHMBRUCH (eds.), *Trends towards Corporatist Intermediation*, Beverly Hills (CA), Sage, pp.63-94

By including state-organizations neo-pluralism draws closer to corporatism. Borrowing from Romanian scholar Manoïlesco, Schmitter distinguishes between democratic and undemocratic pluralism, or societal and state corporatism respectively.[169] While in the latter model state-instituted corporate bodies are mere transmission belts for state policies and ideology, the former seems compatible with democracy since it presupposes social groups organized on a voluntary basis and hence freedom of association. The problem is that because of the monopoly these "corporations" enjoy, freedom of association is, even in cases of "societal corporatism", at least *de facto* limited. Obviously, the distinction can be founded on the difference between autonomous and penetrative corporations versus dependent and penetrated corporations, yet this distinction is never very clear cut. Manoïlesco already noted a mixed form, so-called "mixed corporatism".[170] The full-fledged societal corporatist system then greatly resembles, without identifying entirely with it, the state corporatist regime.

Two fundamental differences still seem to separate corporatism from pluralism: on the hand competitiveness forms the essence of pluralism and seems absent from corporatism, on the other hand pluralism is a system in which freely organized, not-compulsory groups are the actors, while in corporatism Schmitter underlines the compulsory nature of such entities.

A first difference seems to lie in the concept of "competition". Pluralism accentuates the free competition between freely-constituted groups, while Schmitter's definition of corporatism underlines the non-competitive nature of "corporations". Corporatism is a system based on looking for consensus and overcoming societal cleavages, something that at an elite-level does effectively bridge the gap with some monist

[169] P.C. SCHMITTER "Still the Century of Corporatism", *Review of Politics*, Vol. 36, No.1, January 1974, pp. 85-131 (102-103)

[170] P.C. SCHMITTER "Still the Century of Corporatism", *Review of Politics*, Vol. 36, No.1, January 1974, pp. 85-131 (103) and M. MANOÏLESCO, *Le Siècle du Corporatisme*, Paris, Alcan, 1934

analyses. If we wish to adhere to a radical interpretation of non-competitiveness, even the slightest presence of competition could exclude a polity from being corporatist.

Reality however rarely offers such clear-cut differences. Citing Van den Brande[171] Schmitter qualifies post-1945 Belgium as a more "pluralist" system since pillars, based mainly on confessional differences, that is socialist versus catholic, are neither monopolistic (both offer among other things trade unions, medical insurance system and political parties), nor non-competitive.[172] With the augmentation of tripartite consultation, consensus seeking organs and depillarization, Belgium has today probably moved closer to corporatism.

Not unexpectedly, some authors have argued that the difference between corporatism and pluralism is indeed not as insurmountable as it might seem. Consensus building and competition are not mutually exclusive; neither are authoritarianism and "many rulers". By considering the process, the searching for consensus, by which multiple actors, corporations, elites or other institutions come to decisions, corporatism also considers decision making. Martin for one asserts that the bargaining in pluralism and the consensus building in corporatism show remarkable parallels. The revival of corporatist theory was partially due to the unsatisfactory results obtained by the then dominant pluralist paradigm. Moreover, some authors have argued that there's little or no conceptual difference between so-called "liberal corporatism" and "pluralism".[173] The idea of multiple interest representation is present in both, and so is the vision of the state as a

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[171] A. VAN DEN BRANDE, "Voluntary associations in the Belgian political system 1954-1968", *Res Publica,* Vol. XV, No.2, 1973, pp. 329-356.

[172] See P.C. SCHMITTER "Still the Century of Corporatism", *Review of Politics*, Vol. 36, No.1, January 1974, pp. 85-131

[173] G.A. ALMOND, "Corporatism, Pluralism and Professional Memory", *World Politics*, Vol. 35, No.2, January 1983, pp.245-260; R.M. MARTIN, "Pluralism and the New Corporatism", *Political Studies*, Vol.31, No.1, 1983, pp.86-102; for some other references see L.G. GERBER, "Corporatism and State Theory", *Social Science History*, Vol.19, No.3, Autumn 1995, pp.313-332 (320)

necessary actor, be it to license certain institutions, be it as an indispensable referee.

An interesting proposal made by Colin Crouch is to consider pluralism and corporatism (liberal or authoritarian) different stages on a continuum.[174] By using two variables, respectively representation of private interest and discipline of members in favour of the general interest, the function interest organizations fulfil determine if the system is a corporatist or a pluralist one. At the left hand of the scale, closest to the disciplining pole, we observe a system in which the interest representing (or intermediating) organizations having no representative function and are mere transmission belts for the government, state or authoritarian corporatism. At the other extreme we perceive a system in which interest organizations have a strictly representative function, pluralism or, more radically, "contestation" in Crouch's approach.[175] In between those extremes other forms, liberal/societal corporatism or corporate liberalism can be placed. Competition is in this scheme not completely impossible in a corporatist system, but becomes more pronounced the more a system develops pluralist tendencies.

State Corporatism	*Societal Corporatism*	*Corporate Liberalism*	*Pluralism*
Disciplining			Representative
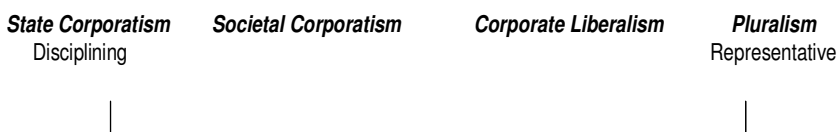
Even though corporations are in theory non-competitive, since all actors or their peak organizations are in the same "corporation" and co-

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[174] C. CROUCH, "Pluralism and the New Corporatism: A Rejoinder", *Political Studies*, Vol. 31, No.3, September 1983, pp. 452-460 (456-457) Discussed also in L.G. GERBER, "Corporatism and State Theory", supra. We prefer CROUCH's variables to those used in some other attempts. Moreover the continuum allows to consider a possible transition from pluralism to corporatism, if not a passage and evolution from democracy towards authoritarianism and vice versa. See also N.H. KEEHN, "A World of Becoming: From Pluralism to Corporatism", *Polity*, Vol. 9, No.1 Autumn 1976, pp.19-39
[175] Although Pluralism as such never is, in Crouch's view, entirely without disciplining function.

decide about policy, this does not in our view *per se* mean that competition between corporations for the allocation of means or resources has to be excluded. Soliciting the state to invest more in a particular sector or category is not irreconcilable with corporatism. Given that corporatist entities are subdivided in categories (e.g. a military corporation vs. a steel corporation) it seems in no manner incompatible with corporatism to suppose competition on a macro-level between representatives of categories.

The continuum brings us to another important distinction between corporatism and pluralism. Corporatists do generally not use a decisional analysis. Yet while looking at institutional arrangements, they do not automatically conclude that power is in the hands of a single unit. It seems reasonable to choose a more complicated and nuanced vision of the polity which seems less dependent on the applied methodology.

The continuum illustrated earlier thus allows us to account for quite some aspects of monism and pluralism together. Nonetheless, it does say little on the degree of responsiveness. In state corporatism the many can rule and corporations can hypothetically be quite responsive. On the other hand pluralism can witness an absolute dominance of one interest group. The proposed approach via a continuum and the refutation to treat undemocratic and democratic polities fundamentally differently should allow us above all to refute *methodological exceptionalism* so very present in transition studies.[176]

Yet when taking a closer look at the continuum it is obvious that the continuum does *not* escape classificatory logic. When trying to place classical fascist and communist regimes, admitted they both have corporatist features in the above sense, we would probably end up at the left of our continuum. At the same time, when trying to locate the US' political system we would probably end up towards the right. Our continuum does thus something very similar to the concept of

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[176] For a general overview of normal methodologies consider: L. MORLINO, *Introduzione alla ricerca comparata*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2005

totalitarianism. It opposes liberal democracy to what it is not, but it doesn't allow to differentiate between different kinds of authoritarian regimes. Although it offers some interesting perspectives, corporatism does thus not avoid the risk of developing categories that do nothing more than distinguish "us" from "the others".

An attempt to overcome to this dilemma is offered by Rommetvedt (Figure 1) in the following scheme.[177] It allows us to separate fascism from communism. Even though both would be placed in opposition to liberal democracy, the strong concentration of private power under fascism, absent in communist systems, offers us a first seemingly objective criterion to differentiate not only liberal democracy from other systems, but also to distinguish between those "other" systems.

Concentration of private power			
Monolithic	**Private government**		**Corporatism**
Segmented		**Segmented State**	
Dispersed	**Pluralism**		**State-directed**
	Dispersed	Segmented	Monolithic
	Concentration of government power		

Figure 1. Concentration of power and government systems

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[177] H. ROMMETVEDT, "Private and Public Power at the National Level", in H. GOVERDE, P.G. CERNY, M. HAUGGARD, and H.H. LENTNER (eds.): *Power in Contemporary Politics.Theories, Practices, Globalizations*, London, Sage, 2000, pp.112-132

Understood in this way corporatism wields some clear advantages in respect to pluralism. The reintegration of the state and its institutions in the model is obviously one of them. Corporatism also permits to underline the institutional background of elites and the use of the respective corporatist units in their struggle for power. When state formation is considered the incorporation of social units in the state, subsequently the state is composed of corporation-like entities. This evolution explains the emergence of the corporatist-complex. Corporatism offers some tools to understand it. One could even imagine state formation, in a first phase, as the passage of societal corporatism to state corporatism.

Nonetheless even a corporatist approach, appears not totally free of the ills of the pluralist paradigm. It still seems to require a quantification of the degree of concentration or segmentation of private and state power. In reality, to the question on the respective weight of the social units in the process of state formation, theories of state formation offer a tentative answer. A balanced view, which links corporatism and state formation, could permit us to identify the relevant social units and consider their degree of incorporation in the state. Hough's model of institutional pluralism and O'Donnell's bureaucratic authoritarianism permit us to bear in mind state institutions.

2.5.   *State-Formation and Competition*

When one considers a "competition" for power by "actors" which are the actors that should be taken into consideration? Situating elites, their rise, their emergence and eventual downfall in space and time does not solve all questions. Social units that are at first competing and then lose the competition to what subsequently becomes the state are in the end "swallowed" by the state. Most scholars have in one way or another seen the basic quest of the State as one for social homogenous foundations, to which often social classes are considered the main obstacle.[178] Marxism found one answer by offering a paradigm of

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[178] G. BURDEAU, *L'Etat,* Paris, Le Seuil, 1970, p.114

dictatorship of one class over another, or, in more complex situations, of class coalitions over other class coalitions. Another answer was offered by so-called "corporatist" theories in which class collaboration or at the very least meaningful consultation was proposed. Yet this does not mean in our vision that such swallowed social units do always and immediately disappear. Rather on the contrary, they now compete within the state for the control of the institutions. The state, by developing different kinds of institutions also enables them to do so.

If state-formation is to be successful however the foundations of power have to shift. In a first phase one might go from societal corporatism to state corporatism. This means the incorporation of social units in new, state initiated bureaucracies, institutions or corporations. However, the autonomization of the state vis-à-vis social units that composed it, is one of the indicators of successful state formation. In a second phase an evolution from corporatism to pluralism or liberal democracy could be observed. In essence, when the social definition of subjects is no longer considered in terms of "*estates of the realm*"[179] but in terms of citizens, state and the connections between both through political parties and the interest groups.[180] Or in other words, when civil society emancipates from the "corporatist complex" and progressively acquires a role as a political subject. Habermas underlined how through its articulation in political parties and interest groups conditioning the so-called *volonté générale,* civil society becomes the material constitution of the public sphere.[181] To be sure, we are not offering either one of these as definitive starting points or objectives. Yet both extremes are useful to illustrate a certain type of evolution that sees the citizen and his intermediaries replace the social units now incorporated in the state. The destruction of these, or at least the undermining of their basis solidifies the state, insofar as the state can recuperate their clientele. The

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[179] P. ANDERSON, *Lineages of the Absolutist State,* London, Verso, 1974, p.45

[180] H.-P. KLINGEMANN & D. FUCHS, *Citizens and the State,* Oxford, Oxford UP, 1995 and P. FLORA, S. KUHNLE & D. URWIN, *State Formation, Nation-Building, and Mass-Politics in Europe: The Theory of Stein Rokkan,* Oxford, Oxford UP, 1999

[181] J. HABERMAS, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a category of Bourgeois Society*, Polity, Cambridge, 1962 as quoted in P.P. PORTINARO, *Stato,* Bologna, Il Mulino, 1999

state is dominated no longer by corporatist-like social units, with a power base outside the state, yet by new groups with their power base within the state.

Autonomous foundations of power can be defined in different kind of ways, yet they are all concentrations of private power. They can have different grounds, different bases and different foundations, yet it is always non-statal. On the other hand we find those actors either dominated or initiated by the state. The clear analogy of such a vision with corporatist theories need not underlined. For obvious reasons autonomous concentrations of power do not need much theoretical elaboration. Their heterogeneous nature imposes a very case-to-case and *ad hoc* analysis. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to think "state institutions" are always that easily identified. And when duly identified, the question then rises: are state institutions actors in their own right or rather organs of power that are competed for. In essence, do state institutions have an autonomous role or not?

2.6.   *Social Units and Institutions*

Considering competitors, it is tempting to look at individuals. This would be a mistake. To understand political exchange on what he calls the "political marketplace", Wintrobe replaces political parties by individuals as the central institutional actor.[182] Although in some cases empiric verification might not be impossible[183], on a state level this is clearly not much more than a useful fiction taken from economic literature. The same observation has to be made when considering the dictator's interaction with his subordinates. Out of the domain of

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[182] R. WINTROBE, *The Political Economy of Dictatorship*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1998, p.30

[183] A. SCHNYTZER & J. SUSTERIC, " Why Join the Party in a One-Party System: Popularity vs. Political Exchange", *Public Choice*, vol. 94, No.1-2, 1998, pp. 117-134 or V. LAZAREV & P. GREGORY, "Commissars and Cars: A Case Study in the Political Economy of Dictatorship", *Journal of Comparative Economics*, Vol.31, No.1, March 2003, pp.1-19

economics and philosophy it seems difficult to put the dictator's dilemma as one between him and individual subordinates that could possibly work together and form (a fraction of) the people. The main problem with such an approach is that the dictator does not fear his people directly: Caesar was not assassinated by the people but by a bunch of Senators, Stalin didn't fear the people as much as he did the members of high ranking in some institutions (Politbureau, Army,…), Mao's Cultural Revolution was in its basic scope and despite its results not directed against the people but against the CP threatening his power. As de La Boétie noticed almost 5 centuries ago, the dictator is surrounded by 5 or 6 men who submit the country to his will. Under these 6 you will find 600 others, corrupted by the inner circle of power. These 600 others will then control 6000 others giving them some kind if dignity by allowing them to raise from their miserable position to control some larger fraction of the population and so forth. This huge pyramidal structure has two interesting consequences. The first one concerns the people's perception of the tyrant. Since they are not oppressed directly by him, they often do not consider him responsible for their suffering. Hence the well known exclamation "if only the King knew!". The second consequence is that the ruler is in direct and constant contact with a very small fraction of the population, which he fears and is feared by. It is therefore not much of a surprise that most dictators have been assassinated or betrayed by what where once their most loyal supporters.[184] The dictator fears and interacts thus mostly with those in "power positions". The elite.

A part from those social units that are integrated in the state during the process of state formation, and whose incorporation sometimes causes the emergence of new institutions or bureaucracies, it can be said that every modern state has two basic and separate components that offer such power positions: a civil and a military component. Generally, but not necessarily, characterized by a dominance of the civil component over the military. Tilly 's argument that the military has had a dominant role in the process of modern state formation even in

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[184] E. DE LA BOETIE, *Discours sur la Servitude Volontaire*, Publication complète en 1576, http://fr.wikisource.org

countries that are today characterized by a predominance of civil power over the military component (as for example Russia, Sweden or Prussia) illustrates how essential the military is in any state structure.[185]

On the military component, little extra explanation is needed, a part from the degree of political penetration of the traditional military and a possible parallel armed force, there is no relevant difference between armies of liberal-democratic and non-liberal-democratic states.

On the side of the civil component one has to distinguish between "democratic state institutions" and "parallel institutions." Although some dictatorships, especially so-called totalitarian ones, tend to multiply parallel institutions, these are not absent from democracies either. If one does not accept the argument that the US today has several parallel security structures, with not always clearly differentiated tasks; it is undeniable that for a long time (and still today) quite some European countries possessed such competing structures. The Gendarmerie was one institution used in France and Belgium to control the Army, yet at the same time it was not that different from a regular police force. No wonder Belgium decided to abolish it just a couple of years after its demilitarization. Moreover most European democracies have competing intelligence services. Most of them have at least two: one, military, depending on the Ministry of Defense and another one, civilian, depending on the Ministry of the Interior.

A big difference could possibly be found in accountability, yet most of these services are accountable only to their superiors in dictatorships as much as in democracies. The only basic difference would be the origin of these superiors. Are they democratically elected? Unfortunately this brings us back to the problem of the *degree* to which elections are free and competitive. Moreover, even in democracies military intelligence services can all too often be considered unaccountable for their activities. Nonetheless the systematic development of parallel

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[185] C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1990*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990

structures on state level and on the level of policy-setting appears to constitute somewhat of a difference between liberal democratic regimes on the one hand and non-liberal democratic regimes on the other.

On the one hand, one of the most remarkable features of non-liberal democratic countries lies not so much in the existence of classical state-democratic structures, since often non-democracies use democratic institutions to cover up their true structure of command, but in their relative democratic functioning at certain levels. Can be considered "democratic state institutions", those political institutions constitutionally determined and used for the normal functioning of a democratic state order.[186] These state institutions have a double function in the system, on the one hand they allow social promotion (getting from mayor to MP for example), on the other hand they can offer a resource in political struggle ("*I represent the will of the people*"). The example of Parliament brings some clarity. On the one hand Parliament is by nature an institution which competes for power with other institutions, as for example the executive. On the other hand it is also an objective of competition in the eyes of other institutions. The military trying to get into parliament is only one of the many possible examples. Some institutions are at the same time actor and object of competition. This should not come as a surprise. It should on the contrary be considered completely normal, since *all* of them are both. There exists competition within the social units, within bureaucracies and also *for* a place within these. A brief and not totally accurate comparison with a football team might clarify the case. In a particular village children from different groups, let us say neighbourhoods will compete for membership of the team. Those (s)elected by the team will subsequently compete within the team to make it to the A-team. The A-team will then compete with other teams in the A-League. If the team grows hugely popular it will also become object of competition by other actors on the market, like sponsors or even other teams. This team is hence both actor and objective of competition.

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[186] Our definition of "institution" is thus much narrower than the one used by D. C. NORTH, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, New York, Cambridge UP, 1990, p.3

On the other hand a non-liberal democratic system contains so-called parallel institutions. These are generally understood as those institutions that are characteristic of a double system. It is above all important to underline here that we are not speaking about a parallel state as for example a party-state. The party-state is only the ultimate form of development of parallel institutions. A state can possess parallel institutions that can be more or less important but lack the necessary degree of development to extend to a complete parallel state. Secondly, it is essential to understand the possibly double function of these institutions. On the one hand they are parallel institutions and hence can have at every level of the organ they are parallel to (army or democratic state institutions), a parallel equivalent. On the other hand it can be or be part of a bureaucracy which can form the basis of social promotion and hence a resource to be mobilized in case of political conflict. In this sense the Central Committee of the CPSU, a parallel institution in respect to democratic state decision-making institutions, would be part of bigger a parallel institution/bureaucracy; while the CPSU itself would be a parallel bureaucracy in itself.

The essence of a parallel system is that next to the normal state institutions, where traditional elites and non-party-members maintain some power, parallel ones are erected in which the "party" or regime loyalists dominate.[187] In this sense in Iran as well parallel institutions do exist, as they do in Communist regimes as Cuba or Stalinist Russia. But in that case, would Parliament become a "parallel institution" when dominated by "regime loyalists"?

The definition has to be specified. One of the clearest and most workable definitions of a parallel state comes from Lenin. According to Lenin parallelism is best characterized by the existence a "government of control" formed by the Soviets that do not possess any organ of state power, in our model we would rephrase this as "no organ of

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[187] E. FRAENKEL, *The Dual State*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1941 & R.O. PAXTON, "Les fascismes. Essai d'histoire comparée", XVI Conférence Marc Bloch, 13th of June 1994, EHESS, http://cmb.ehess.fr/document51.html#ftn30

democratic state power", but is supported "directly by the majority of the people", which one would have to rephrase as "possessing revolutionary legitimacy".[188] Considering this definition the Iranian Guardian Council, in no way comparable to the classic parallel institutions as there is for example the CPSU, could be considered a "parallel institution", while, on the other hand, it can also be seen as one of the legislative chambers of Iran or as an institution acting as a constitutional court. The *Sepah-e Pasdaran* could be considered a parallel institution to the army, also because it is today a full-fledged armed force with internal fractions and tendencies.

Such a definition offers us a characterization that is at once clear, limited and flexible enough to be workable. Social units defeated by the state are incorporated in state institutions, some in democratic state institutions, others, occasionally, in parallel institutions. Within the state these social units start competing for influence and power. A similar competition then sees the light between the both pillars of the new state structure.

However within the framework of state formation both the democratic state institutions and the parallel institutions have to be seen in their respective histories of coming into existence. From such a perspective, Elias work on what he calls the "progress of civilization" is of great interest.[189] Although the concept of "social unit" as used by Elias is admittedly vaguer than other concepts, it can be very adequate if used in the sense of Elias' historical perspective of monopolization of power. Elias speaks of the monopolization of private power which then evolves into a public monopoly of power. The historical evolution of Iran will show more than some similarities with this vision.

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[188] V.I. LENINE, "Les Tâches du Prolétariat dans notre Révolution" in V.I. LENINE, *Œuvres Choisies,* Tome II, Moscou, Editions en langues étrangères, 1947, pp. 17-47 (19-20)
[189] N. ELIAS, *Über den Progress der Zivilisation,* tonne II, 1969 in its French translation N. ELIAS, *La Dynamique de l'Occident,* Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1975, pp.84-88

2.7.   *Integration and Disintegration*

The concept of totalitarianism puts the accent on similarities between Stalinism and Nazism, but hides a major difference: after Stalin the Soviet system persisted, the Nazi-system died and had to die with Hitler.[190] Can institutional competition explain this difference? If it can, institutional competition, its nature and the framework in which it operates can be considered a key variable for regime sustainability.

Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union had some formal similarities. In this framework the most interesting ones are the coexistence on the one hand of both civilian as military parallel structures and, on the other hand, the essential weight of a leading figure in the system. Rent-seeking both in and by institutions was an essential part of their being. Such an observation should however not obscure essential differences.

Three differences seem particularly important. First, Hitler and Stalin's systems and their respective parallel institutions went through a very different process of formation. Ontologically they were very different systems and institutions. Secondly, the position and behavior of Stalin and Hitler in their respective systems was entirely different. Thirdly, the relationship between different institutions, both parallel and state democratic was very different in both regimes.

Ontologically the parallel institutions were different, because their origins were different. Hitler's Germany created parallel institutions without incorporating new elites in the system, nor did Nazism eliminate elites. Stalin on the other hand incorporated or destroyed possible competitors.[191] The best known example being the local

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[190] This is obviously no matter of "what would have happened if Nazi Germany would not have gone to war", but rather on the contrary implies that the Nazi-system was animated by a propulsion to go to war until utter defeat.

[191] See also T. SKOCPOL, States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1979 on the dictatorship of the Party-State

landlords which opposed collectivization. These were offered the explicit choice, either to incorporate the new state order, or, in case of resistance to the new order, to disappear, often physically.

The picture for Nazi Germany was very different. Inspired by Neumann's rebuttal of the concept of "Nazi State",[192] Mommsen shows how Nazism was characterized by an inherent tendency towards self-destruction, mostly due to a process of internal dissolution by fragmentation of the administrative apparatus through the creation of ad hoc institutions and the undermining of public institutions by arbitrary decisions and expansionist policies.[193]

Hitler's parallel institutions decentralized the state, while Stalin actually brought under state control sections of the country, the economy and society that had never been controlled by the state until then. The parallel institutions of Soviet Russia hence actually increased the state's power and reach, while the establishment of similar institutions in Nazi Germany undermined and decentralized the existing state structure.[194] Although Michael Mann, still doubting the usefulness of the concept of totalitarianism, affirms that a similar movement towards self-destruction animated the USSR, such a statement seems rather awkward considering that the USSR and its political system that Stalin helped to shape survived him for decades.

Secondly, the relative position and behavior of both leaders was fundamentally different. What Kershaw calls the "Hitler myth", illustrates how Hitler was above the state and the system.[195] Closely

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[192] F. NEUMANN, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1942
[193] H. MOMMSEN, "Cumulative radicalization and progressive self-destruction as structural determinants of the Nazi dictatorship", in I. KERSHAW & M. LEWIN, *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.74 (74-87)
[194] Contrary to what claims S.A. ARJOMAND, "Iran's Islamic Revolution in Comparative Perspective", *World Politics*, Vol.38, No.3, April 1986, pp.383-414 (397)
[195] I. KERSHAW, *The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 2001

linked to this position was Hitler's behavior. Kershaw's Hitler is no interventionist; he allowed free elite competition.[196]

Stalin never reached a position anywhere close to Hitler's. He was an exponent of the PCUS. His policies could, at least theoretically be challenged, and often were so. The fact that Trotsky could challenge Stalin's legitimacy illustrates a process that would have been unthinkable in Nazi Germany. As different as his position was Stalin's behavior. The Soviet leader was an interventionist who by his frequent and radical interventions limited competition. The elimination by Stalin (and the Revolution) of possibly competing traditional elites and the fact that Stalin, unlike Hitler, was not above but in the system made moreover that cumulative radicalization by competition to please Stalin never could have attained Nazi-Germany one.

In the framework, the concept of *cumulative radicalization*[197] is an extremely useful one. Cumulative radicalization is an immediate consequence of the Hitler myth and the competing towards the Führer. It illustrates the hierarchical vertical nature of Hitler's influence on society. Hitler's myth gave the (autonomous) elites and state institutions a scope. They worked *towards* the mythical figure of the *Führer.* Hitler's parallel institutions which actually unmade the state, caused the absence of control on this sort of competition. A structural approach focusing on the incapacity of Nazism to create a "coherent institutional framework" constraining power indeed explains, in combination with the "working towards"-concept, the cumulative radicalization by the absence of institutions able to limit the catastrophic course. The pushing of different groups and institutions that offered ever more radical propositions to the *Führer* combined with

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[196] Idea proposed by I. KERSHAW, *Hitler, 1889-1936: Hubris,* London, Penguin Books, 2001 & I. KERSHAW, *Hitler, 1936-1945: Nemesis*, London, Penguin Books, 2001 but mentioned as well in et. al.. R.O. PAXTON, *The Anatomy of Fascism,* London, Penguin Books, 2004

[197] H. MOMMSEN, "Cumulative radicalization and progressive self-destruction as structural determinants of the Nazi dictatorship", in I. KERSHAW & M. LEWIN, *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.74 (74-87)

an emergence of *ad hoc* institutions disintegrating and dissolving the administrative apparatus, resulted in a falling forward of the regime.

In Stalin's Soviet Union, all institutions were invaded by the parallel structure of the Party (in which Stalin leaded the way), organs of popular sovereignty as the Supreme Soviet or the Congress of People's Deputies existed and functioned, at national and local levels. The parallel institutions, which served to either incorporate or destroy possible competitors to the state, on the one hand extended the state's grip, but on the other were also closely intertwined with the existent democratic state institutions. The CPUS recruited from Parliament, or rather, Parliament was infiltrated and controlled by the CPUS. Such a close interconnection was absent in Nazi Germany. A good example of this is the Army. The German Army maintained, at least in its functioning, a certain autonomy from the Nazi-State for quite some time. Although the degree and at the end even the existence of this autonomy has been debated and discussed at length,[198] such a debate was quite unnecessary for the Red Army which was formed by the Revolution, infiltrated at all levels by Soviet Commissars and even lost its major officers under Stalin.[199] There is no comparison possible between the USSR and Nazi-Germany on the level of ad hoc institutions. While in Germany they seemed to appear and disappear whenever useful, the USSR had rather stable parallel institutions. Not surprisingly, with Stalin's disappearance, bureaucracy, of which he was an exponent, could take over.[200] Thanks to the excessive use of it by Stalin, bureaucracy developed quite well, still possessed a useful

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[198] O. BARTOV, "Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol.63, No.1, March 1991, pp.44-60

[199] This is admittedly a bit of a shortcut, which will be put in perspective later on.

[200] A legitimate question would be: if one institution took over, was there no dictatorship to limit it anymore? The answer is necessarily double. First of all we underline that cumulative radicalization would however have been impossible since there was no leader nor a myth towards which to work; moreover institutional interpenetration has without a doubt reached a level that could limit such competition. Secondly however, since there was one bureaucracy that clearly dominated this competition, the institutional competition, so necessary for the functioning of dictatorship and led to an excessive non-competitive bureaucratization, which in the end caused the system's breakdown.

ideology (Marxism-Leninism could be used without Stalin, Nazism not without Hitler)[201], wasn't stuck with irrational objectives and most importantly didn't have to worry about purges no more.

A third major distinction between the Stalinist system and the Nazi one regards the interlinkage between different bureaucracies and institutions. Competition is not without risks. Three of them are particularly obvious. The first one concerns the bases of the competition. For competition to exist, one needs parallel structures, but these parallel structures should be limited in number, otherwise the centralization of the state[202], basic condition for state-genesis, is endangered. The second point concerns the objective of these parallel structures. The objectives as well should be limited and well-described, to avoid cumulative radicalization. The third point concerns the autonomy-interdependency of competing institutions. The higher the degree of autonomy of an institutions, or the elite leading it, the less control or influence the system can exert on it and hence the higher the risk of cumulative radicalization, destructive competition and even disloyalty.

The elimination by the 1917 Revolution and especially by Stalin of possibly competing elites made that Stalin was in the end ruling a simplified form of civil society in which, and this contrary to Nazi-Germany and to Fascist Italy, the CPUS had to worry less and less about "concentrations of inherited socio-economic power."[203] Moreover, the existent institutions, limited in number as they were, were also highly interdependent and integrated. Victor Zaslavky correctly underlines: "*Stalin reinforces all these fundamental structures of*

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[201] M. LEWIN, "Stalin in the mirror of the other", in I. KERSHAW & M. LEWIN, *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.116 (107-134)

[202] Centralization is here to be understood as including the state incorporation of social actors like in R. COLLIER & D. COLLIER, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America,* Princeton, Princeton UP, 1991

[203] R.O.PAXTON, "The Five Stages of Fascism", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol.70, No.1, March 1998, pp.1-23 (19)

power, and they have remained unchanged after his death."[204] The increasing integration and interdependency in essence strengthened stateness. The main tendency of Stalinism was centripetal not centrifugal.

It is time to offer some operational definitions of the concepts used. The autonomy of an institution or an incorporated social unit means its capacity to further its own interests within (or outside) the system. Intra-systemic competition between different social units can be useful. Such becomes a problem when their rent-seeking becomes excessive and unbalances the system. Bureaucratic interdependence, or interlinkage, is the opposite of autonomy. The interlinkage of incorporated social units and institutions means their capacity to autonomously defend their corporatist interests will be undermined. Political commissars, interventions of the Leader, purges and checks and balances are typical examples of interlinkage. Cumulative radicalization consists, certainly in foreign policy, in the process of "falling forward". Cumulative radicalization, as the Nazi-state demonstrates, is the result of an excessive degree of autonomy of the competing social units and institutions. In essence, cumulative radicalization occurs when intra-systemic competition transforms from a positive characteristic of a dynamic system, into a destructive rent-seeking process. The dynamics of the disintegrating Nazi-state illustrated how in such a process, excessive institutional autonomy is paralleled by a lack of institutional control and interlinkage.

From such a perspective the Stalinist situation contrasted sharply with Nazi Germany. The uncontrolled competing of different elites in Nazi-Germany contributed importantly to the regime's radicalization. This uncontrolled competition even animated the so-called parallel institutions. In essence those institutions that should have formed the government of control enjoyed such an autonomy that they incited the process of *falling forward* that animated the Nazi regime. The Gestapo was born out of a law enforcement institution: the Prussian political police, but there was an important difference between the two

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[204] V. ZASLAVSKY, *The Neo-Stalinist State*, New York, M.E. Sharpe, 1994, p.9

institutions. "*In mid-April 1933, immediately after Goring's appointment as Prussian Minister of the Interior, the entire Prussian political police force, comprised of the old Abteilung I and the new Sonderabteilung, was physically and organizationally separated from the Berlin Police Presidium. The 'Law for the Establishment of a Secret State Police Office' (Gesetz über die Errichtung eines geheimen Staatspolizeiamtes) of 26 April 1933 put the Prussian political police on a new legal footing, making it an independent agency*"[205] The SS notably had a relatively high degree of autonomy attempting to become the new political elite, replacing any other elites.[206] Arguably the man responsible for their development, Josef Dietrich, was not even a committed Nazi.[207] Although contrasting views dominate the debate, many authors have also argued that the Waffen SS was not just a subsection of the SS.[208] The internal loyalty of all these organizations was very vertical, directed to for example Himmler and then Hitler, rather than guaranteed by political commissars.

Schematically and clearly oversimplified (the most important missing features being probably ideological top-down influence and the chaos and competition at institutional level) one could reflect the differences in institutional structure between both systems in the following schemes. These provisional schemes succinctly reproduce the differences between both systems partially explaining the non-self-destructiveness of Stalinism. If, Stalin and the CPSU, infiltrated and penetrated all levels of society, which (could have) led to a "physical"

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[205] C. GRAF, "The Genesis of the Gestapo", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 22, No. 3, July 1987, pp. 419-435 (423)

[206] M. WOLFSON, "Constraint and Choice in the SS Leadership", *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 3, September 1965, pp. 551-568 (553) & E. KOGON, *Der SS-Staat, Das System Der Deutschen Konzentrationslager*, Frankfurt am Main, Verlag Der Frankfurter Hefte, 1946 and for a discussion of the "true" nature of the SS see R. KOEHL, "The Character of the Nazi SS", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 34, No. 3, September 1962, pp. 275-283

[207] J.J. WEINGARTNER, "Sepp Dietrich, Heinrich Himmler, and the Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler, 1933-1938", *Central European History*, Vol. 1, No. 3, September 1968, pp. 264-284 (265-266)

[208] See for a discussion of the debate C.W. SYDNOR, "The History of the SS Totenkopfdivision and the Postwar Mythology of the Waffen SS", *Central European History*, Vol. 6, No. 4, December 1973, pp. 339-362

total control of society, the situation under Hitler was quite different. But, as mentioned before, it was different on at least three levels. The difference in degree of penetration of the main "institutions" of the USSR was coupled to a limitation of the number of parallel institutions and their stability in the USSR and the absence of great private concentrations of power, able to disturb the system of state-controlled competition. To which a different position of Stalin in respect to Hitler's has to be added.

The Nazi-scheme shows the working in towards or in a "same" direction (often towards the Hitler myth), moreover the parallel lines indicate the relative autonomy of institutional functioning. The scheme in this way reflects Broszat's thesis of the ability the Army, the Church or even bureaucracy to function according to their traditional values, rather than suffering from totalitarian interventions. Both schemes indicate the different position of both leaders in their respective systems: Stalin as an integral part of it, a *primus inter pares*, clearly belonging to the parallel structure and Hitler above it. Stalin intervening directly, in a triple way: with the party, within the party and by the party, while Hitler is shown more aloof and only in close contact with a small circle of trusted lieutenants. In this way, it also illustrates that no one could have menaced Hitler's position, again a different story than Stalin's one.[209]

The schemes also show Nazi cumulative radicalization, a consequence as said from institutional competition, lack of institutional limits and "working towards a myth", by the unending arrows, possibly absent for a part of traditional elites that refused to get too involved in the system and institutions as the Church or the Army. Such process of radicalization is notably absent from Stalin's model, in which rather

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[209] The assassination plot against Hitler does not debunk this argument since the plotters could not threaten Hitler's position nor hope to replace him, they could merely try to assassinate him. Even if they had succeeded for themselves their act would have been institutionally useless. If Trotsky or some other "plotter" would have succeeded in overthrowing Stalin's power (or ideological legitimacy) on the contrary, he could legitimately have aspired to the thrown of Party Secretary.

than institutional competition, we see high interweaving and control of one column with the other ones. The limitation of competition in the Stalinist system is also as can be deducted from the schemes linked to the absence of an objective for competition.

Hitler's Internal Institutional Competition

Hitler

Trusted Circle

Wehrmacht	Civil Institutions	Parallel Civil Institutions	Parallel Security Institutions Gestapo, WaffenSS, SS,...	Traditional Elites (Social & Economic)

State Democratic		**Parallel**	

Stalin's System of Penetration
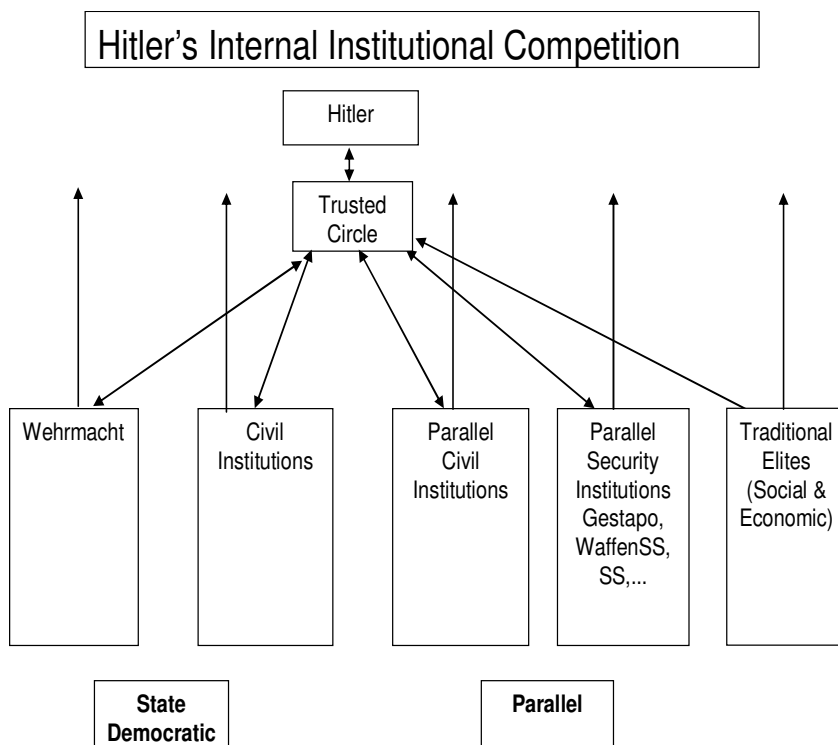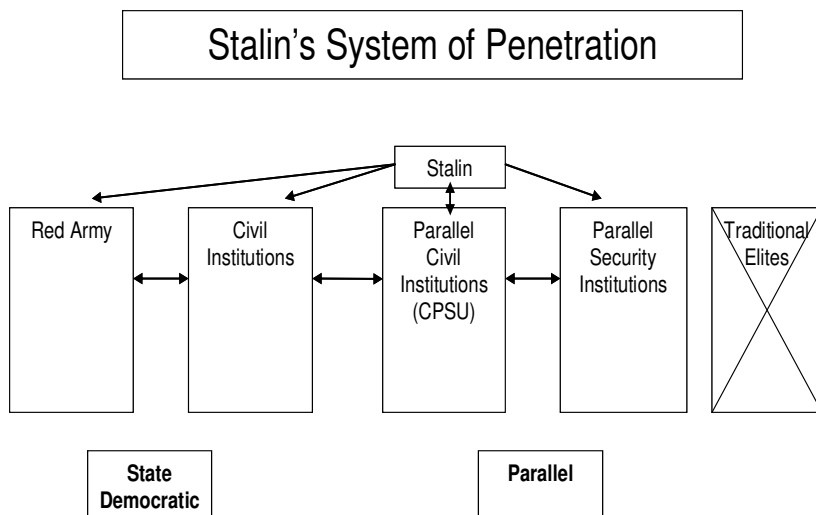
2.8.   *Iranian State Formation*

State-formation theories have enriched social sciences in a significant way, and as we argued before, they are an excellent tool for the analysis of political regimes. Yet Rolf Schwarz and Georg Sørensen put forward an important question: why do they fail to explain Third World state-making?[210] For some developing countries the answer to this question could be rather straightforward: "*The quasi-states in, for example, Africa, however, were born through unilateral decolonisation. Sovereignty was exogenously "granted", partitioned by artificial boundaries drawn by former imperialists.*"[211] Yet the same can not be said for all developing countries and this kind of analysis is certainly not applicable to the Iranian case.

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[210] R. SCHWARZ, "State Formation Processes in Rentier States: The Middle Eastern Case", *Draft Paper to be presented at the Fifth Pan-European Conference on International Relations,* ECPR Standing Group on International Relations, Section 34, The Hague, September 9-11, 2004, p.5

[211] C. NG, "How does the process of state formation in most developing countries differ from the process experienced in Europe and with what consequences for their

War-making and state-formation, asserts Schwarz, have not been self-reinforcing in the Middle East, since the decisive difference between Europe and the Middle East is the rentier state dimension of Middle Eastern states. Since these states depend on external (oil) rents, they do not need to develop a well-equipped fiscal bureaucracy to fiscal gains that would allow to maintain standing armies.[212] Consequently, the demands of political participation "no taxation without representation" would hinder or prevent European-like state-formation leading to a strong state representing its citizens.[213] Consequently, the link Tilly makes between state formation, war-making and fiscal centralization would not be applicable automatically to Iran. From a slightly different perspective, Thierry Gongora claims that, in the Middle Eastern case war-making and state-formation could even be negatively correlated as modern warfare makes developing nations turn to foreign rents (currency, military assistance,…), because these necessary rents can not be domestically extracted.[214] Nonetheless, Gongora has to admit that of the entire Middle East Iran was the country that most relied on its own domestic resources to conduct to war against Iraq.[215]

Not surprisingly, scholarship that explicitly and directly deals with Iranian state formation is rare. Homa Katouzian is probably the best illustration of the almost explicit negation of such a long-term progressive process in Iran. Katouzian's main argument has been well reassumed as follows: "*Modern studies of Iranian history and society have often been based on theories developed for the study of European society. This*

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developmental potential?", *E-International Relations,* 28 June 2008, www.e-ir.info; B. BADIE, *Les deux Etats: Pouvoirs et société en Occident et en terre d'Islam*, Paris, Fayard, 1986 & B. BADIE, *L'Etat importé, l'occidentalisation et l'ordre politique*, Paris, Fayard, 1992

[212] G. OKRUHLIK, "Rentier Wealth, Unruly Law, and the Rise of Opposition: The Political Economy of Oil States", *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 3, April 1999, pp. 295-315

[213] G.LUCIANI, "Economic Foundations of Democracy and Authoritarianism: The Arab World in Comparative Perspective", *Arab Studies Quarterly,* Vol.10, No.4, Fall 1988 pp.457-475 (463) & R. SCHWARZ, *l.c., p.*21-26

[214] T. GONGORA, "War Making and State Power in the Contemporary Middle East", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* Vol.29, No.3, August 1997, pp.323-340 (331)

[215] T. GONGORA, *l.c.*, p.334

has led to important anomalies which can be resolved by recognizing the fundamental differences in the development of the two types of society within the framework of a single social science. Agricultural property was owned by the state, parts of which it assigned or farmed out to individuals or groups as a privilege, but not a right. There was social stratification, but the social classes did not enjoy any rights independently from the state; hence there was no aristocracy, and the composition of the social classes changed rapidly through time. Therefore there was no law outside the will of the state, which stood above the society, despite a body of rules which were subject to rapid and unpredictable change. The state's legitimacy was not founded in law and the consent of the influential social classes, and the mere success of a rebellion was sufficient ground for its legitimacy. This explains the frequent crises of succession in Iranian history. Until modern times, revolts and revolutions were led against an 'unjust' arbitrary ruler to replace it with a just' one. The result was generalized chaos until a new arbitrary rule was established. Notwithstanding their many differences, the two revolutions in the twentieth century were massive revolts by the society against the state for lawful government. But, despite some temporary successes, the long experience of the society proved to be more powerful than the newly acquired political ideas and programmes."[216] In short Iranian exceptionalism would make indigenous state formation in a European sense impossible.

If state formation is a rarity, "democracy" is a much more popular topic. Many authors see democratization in Iran in function of how the state can be "pushed back", ignoring that without the establishment of

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[216] Abstract of H. KATOUZIAN, "Arbitrary Rule: A Comparative Theory of State, Politics and Society in Iran", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, May, 1997, pp. 49-73; but consider as well H. KATOUZIAN, "Nationalist Trends in Iran, 1921-1926", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 4, November 1979, pp.533-551; H. KATOUZIAN, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran: Despotism and Pseudo-Modernism, 1926-1979*, New York, New York University Press, 1981; H. KATOUZIAN, "Problems of Political Development in Iran: Democracy, Dictatorship or Arbitrary Government?", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1-2, 1995, pp. 5-20 & H. KATOUZIAN, *Iranian History and Politics: The Dialectic of State and Society*, London, Routledge, 2007

some kind of modern state democracy is impossible to think of. In other words by considering "democracy" and "democratization" or "elites" and "elite factionalism" these authors make the same mistakes enumerated above. The lack of historical insight, that is historical insight in the state formation process, then has very considerable and negative consequences. Innumerable works for example analyze the Islamic Republic's particular double state structure as a "logical" consequence of the *velayat-e faqih* doctrine of Shi'i political thought.

There are a few notable exceptions to this general tendency. Gheissari and Nasr convincingly describe some kind of state formation process, including a search for territorial integrity and the provision of security at least until 1941. They then characterize the period between 1941 and 1979, in essence the period of rule of the second Pahlavi shah as "*the triumph of the state*".[217] Rahnema and Nomani on the other hand illustrate how the Islamic Revolution continued a process of centralization undertaken decades before.[218] Arjomand underlines that forms of European state formation, based on fiscal factors for French absolutism and for the development of city councils emerging from *Steuerräthe* for Prussia, have little relevance in analyzing early Iranian state formation.[219] Yet, in his view another factor that allowed the "*disengaging of state from dynastic, proprietary, and social interlinkages was the development of the idea of the state*". According to Arjomand, "*the idea of the state*" played a significant role in Iranian state formation by an impact on its political *ethos*.[220] How tempting such an "idealist" explanation might seem, it is important to note that in the Iranian case it would however take a revolution, 1906-1907, and a subsequent military coup to put this state formation on the right track. [221] The new regime quite unsurprisingly started from fiscal and military reforms.

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[217] A. GHEISSARI & V. NASR, *Democracy in Iran: history and the quest for liberty*, New York, Oxford UP, 2006

[218] A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic Policy in Iran,* London, Zed Books, 1990

[219] S.A. ARJOMAND, *The Turban for the Crown,* Oxford, Oxford UP, 1988, pp.27

[220] Arjomand bases his approach here on E. BARKER, *The Development of Public Services in Western Europe: 1660-1830,* Oxford, Oxford UP, 1944

[221] S.A. ARJOMAND, *The Turban for the Crown,* Oxford, Oxford UP, 1988, pp.37-48

The main opponents of this process turned out to be the numerous tribes, the clergy and, quite unsurprisingly considering the fiscal centralization, the merchant class.[222] *Mutatis mutandis* the same social units that would oppose state formation and centralization until 1979.

The breakdown of states is such a complicated matter that it could not possibly be treated extensively in the context of our study. All the more so since recent developments in scholarship seem to have exacerbated divergences. Jeff Goodwin once divided studies of revolution in three macro-approaches: modernization theories, Marxist theories and state-centered theories.[223]

The first macro-approach sees a connection between revolution and transitions towards modernity. Concerning Iran Abrahamian summarized such approaches of the breakdown of the royal regime in Iran: "*Two very different interpretations have been offered to explain the long-term causes of the Islamic revolution. One interpretation – accepted by the supporters of the Pahlevi regime – claims that the revolution occurred because the shah modernized too much and too quickly for his traditional-minded and backward-looking people. The other – favored by opponents of the regime – argues that the revolution occurred because the shah did not modernize fast enough and thoroughly enough to overcome his initial handicap of being a CIA-installed monarch in an age of nationalism, neutralism and republicanism.*"[224] His personal theory appears to be somewhere in between these two extremes, asserting that it was the economic

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[222] M. MALEKZADEH, *Tarikh-e Enqelab-e Mashrutiyyat-e Iran*, 6 Volumes, Tehran, Ebn Sina, Vol 2, as quoted by S.A. ARJOMAND, *The Turban for the Crown,* Oxford, Oxford UP, 1988, p.57 (note 150)

[223] J. GOODWIN, "Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements" in T. JANOSKI e.a., *The Handbook of Political Sociology*, New York, Cambridge UP, 2005, pp.404-422 see also J.GOODWIN & T. SKOCPOL, "Explaining Revolutions in the Contemporary Third World", *Politics and Society*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1989, pp. 489-509 For a different more Iran-centered categorization see A. BAYAT, "Revolution without Movement, Movement without Revolution: Comparing Islamic Activism in Iran and Egypt", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 40, No. 1, January 1998, pp. 136-169

[224] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two Revolutions,* Princeton, Princeton UP, 1982, pp.426-427

modernization and development accompanied by a lack of political modernization and development that caused the revolution.[225]

Marxists on the other hand obviously stress the transition from one mode of production to another. In developing countries Marxist analysis of revolution has often been linked to global capitalism and imperialism. Classes and class structure in peripheral countries would present specific characteristics explaining the emergence of (socialist) revolutions. For Iran the Marxist scholar Jazani developed a similar analysis based on peripheral dependency.[226] A similar paradigm has led other authors like Bayat and Kazemi to compare the Iranian revolution to Latin American upheavals.[227] On state formation there is an obvious vicinity between these theories and Wallerstein's world system analysis.

Yet even within more inclusive state-centered approaches, controversies are many. Indeed while some scholars, like Wintrobe and Skocpol claim that weaknesses of the state lies at the origin of its breakdown and revolution,[228] others pretend that reform strengthening and modernizing the state leads to revolution.[229] According to Pincus for example the old state or *Ancien Régime* always ceases to exist before the revolution, yet not because of some kind of weakness or disintegration, but because of centralization, accelerated growth and economic development with state intervention, updating of the armed forces and the development of means of political oppression and

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[225] In the same sense: A. SAIKAL, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah,* Princeton, Princeton UP, 1980

[226] B. JAZANI, *Capitalism and Revolution in Iran*, London, Zed Press, 1980

[227] See respectively A. BAYAT, *Street Politics, Poor people's movements in Iran*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997 and F. KAZEMI, *Poverty and Revolution in Iran*, New York, New York University Press, 1980

[228] See the works of both authors quoted in this study and the empirical verifications Wintrobe invokes in R.WINTROBE, "Dictatorship: Analytical Approaches", in C. BOIX & S.C. STOKES, *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics,* Oxford, Oxford UP, 2007, pp.363-394 (375-377)

[229] E.B. DAVIDHEISER, "Strong States, Weak States: The Role of the State in Revolution", *Comparative Politics,* Vol.24, No.4, July 1992, pp.463-475

control.[230] Among the empirical confirmations of his theory Pincus mentions the Iranian revolution. In his vision the repressive elements of the Iranian state before the revolution were strengthening rather than weakening. The chapter on pre-revolutionary concentrations of power illustrates that such a vision lacks empirical foundation. Finer's mentioning of the fiscal (cash-flow) crisis before the French revolution seems a more valuable explanation of the Iranian revolution, considering the consequences of the fall on oil prices in the 1975-1977 period.[231] Skocpol had to admit that her theory of revolution as developed in *States and Social Revolutions*, which relied heavily on international factors weakening the state domestically and offering possibilities for revolutions to "come", showed its limits in respect to the Iranian revolution, since the Iranian military crumbled without any defeat in war and the revolution did not merely come, it was clearly made.[232] History of the developing world had already shown that by what Hobsbawm calls " *undermining the old structures of its economies and the balance of its societies, and by destroying the viability of its established political regimes and institutions*", a revolution became highly probable.[233] As this study illustrates the Shah undeniably did all of this.

The Iranian revolution is not the object of my study. If any causal mechanisms of revolutions are addressed in this study, it is in a larger historical perspective. Considering the risk of a dissimilarity bias it seemed unthinkable to analyze the Islamic Republic as a consequence of the Islamic Revolution. Indeed why would the contemporary Iranian state have to start in 1979 when for the analysis of contemporary Western European polities scholars have went back as far as 990 ? The

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[230] S. PINCUS, "Rethinking Revolutions: A Neo-Tocquevillian Perspective", in C. BOIX & S.C. STOKES, *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 2007, pp.397-415 (403-404)

[231] S. E.FINER, *History of Government from the Earliest Times*, Vol.III, Oxford, Oxford UP, 1997, p.1524

[232] Compare T. SKOCPOL, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1979 and T. SKOCPOL, "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution" in T. SKOCPOL, *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1994, pp.240-25

[233] E. HOBSBAWM, *The Age of Capital*, London, Abacus, 2004, p.277

approach of this study has clearly to be categorized as state-centered. Underlining both economic contradictions (between coexistent modes of productions) as political ones that saw powerful elites and their concentrations of power excluded from participation to the political arena, I cover the first two of Tilly's categorization of state formation theories.[234] At the same time however I recognize international factors and more concretely the Iran-Iraq war between 1980-1988 as a fundamental step in Iranian state formation. If my study acknowledges the importance of economic change, it does not consider that there is an immediate direct relationship between economic contradictions and the political ones. In a review of Barrington Moore's classical work on state formation[235], Theda Skocpol regretted the fact that Moore stayed within the Marxist framework which denied the independent role of state elites and organizations.[236] Poulantzas, even though he was probably closer to Marxism than Moore, partially overcame this criticism by proposing a theory of autonomous state action.[237] By using not only social classes, but also other concentrations of private power, that are not necessarily or exclusively economic, like the clergy, our approach lays the foundations for a similar look at post-revolutionary Iran.

It is tempting to adopt a definition of "the State" and subsequently compare the formation of the Iranian state to the characteristics of the

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[234] C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1990*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990, pp.5-11

[235] B. MOORE, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1993

[236] T. SKOCPOL, "A critical review of Barrington Moore's Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy", in T. SKOCPOL, *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1994, pp. 25-54 (37)

[237] Admittedly SKOCPOL does not agree with it and classifies POULANTZAS as just another Marxist that denies state autonomy. M. MANN "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results", in J.A. HALL, *States in History,* Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1996, pp.109-136 does something very similar. On the basis of Poulantzas' Political Power and Social Classes this seems a bit reductive. SKOCPOL's remark that no Marxist "*ever acknowledged fully-independent, non class-conditioned state action*"(T. SKOCPOL, 1994, p.37) seems, if equally exaggerated concerning POULANTZAS' scholarship, also rather meaningless. It can hardly be expected from a scholar inspired by a theory that considers class struggle as the "motor of history" that he/she drops the concept when analyzing the State.

modern state present in such a definition. This would be a grave mistake. Proceeding in such a manner would pull us right back into the meanders of teleology with the ultimate scope of an ideal-type of the State as ultimate goal of the development.

Mostly states are defined in terms of their functions, something exemplified by Engels and Lenin for the Marxist side and Dahl for the Liberal side.[238] The Weberian-Tilly approach does something very similar when it defines the state as an entity claiming the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force (Weber) or controlling the principal means of coercion within a given territory (Tilly).[239] Alfred Stepan specified the Weberian definition by characterizing the State as the "*continuous administrative, legal, bureaucratic and coercive systems that attempt not only to structure relationships* between *civil society and public authority in a polity but also to structure many crucial relationships within civil society as well.*"[240]

If it is to be asserted that the Islamic Revolution and afterwards the Islamic Republic continued and accelerated the process of state formation, we have to concentrate on what states do. Tilly asserts: "*the agents of states characteristically carry on four different activities: 1. War making: Eliminating or neutralizing their own rivals outside the territories in which they have clear and continuous priority as wielders of force; 2. State making: Eliminating or neutralizing their rivals inside those territories; 3. Protection: Eliminating or neutralizing the enemies of their clients; 4. Extraction: Acquiring the means of carrying out the first three activities –*

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[238] F. ENGELS, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, New York, Pathfinder Press, 1972 & V.I.LENINE, *L'Etat et la Révolution*, Paris/Moscou, Editions Sociales/Editions du Progrès, 1972

[239] C.TILLY(ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1975, p.638 and M. WEBER, *Economie et Société,* Tome 1, Paris, Pocket, 1995 quoted as well by J.E. THOMSON, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1994, p.7

[240] A. STEPAN, *The State and Society*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1978, p.xiii as quoted in P. EVANS, D. RUESCHEMEYER and T. SKOCPOL (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In,* New York, Cambridge UP, 1985, p.7

war making, state making, and protection" [241] This "functionalist" approach requires us to take into consideration what Michael Mann has described as the infrastructural power of the state. Indeed, to be more effective in performing these functions, the state needs to develop its infrastructural power. Hence state formation and the development and enhancement of its infrastructural power are inseparable.

If we wish to understand the contemporary Iranian regime an approach based on theories of state formation, understood in the sense of the increasing capacity of the state to fulfill the described constitutive tasks, seems hence the way forward. Such an approach will allow us on the one hand to avoid simplistic answers to the Aristotelian questions, and on the other hand will permit to steer clear of some weaknesses of transitological literature.

The chapters on concentrations of power outside the state offer a view of Iranian society that is based not so much on class as a unit of analysis as on concentrations of power. As is explained more in detail when addressing the clergy as a social actor, such power can then be socio-economic, have socio-economic roots, but contrary to what supposes a pure class-analysis, it can not be limited to such.

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[241] C. TILLY, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime", in P. EVANS, D. RUESCHEMEYER and T. SKOCPOL (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In,* New York, Cambridge UP, 1985, pp.169-187 (181)

3. Directions of Iranian state formation before the Islamic revolution

3.1. *The Beginning*

Scholars from different disciplines and with different interests going from anthropological studies over social and religious history to sociology have already offered major and extremely valuable empirical data on state formation in Iran. What need to be done here is offer a historical framework of the main characteristics of the evolution of the state in Iran before the Islamic revolution. Indeed to assert that the Islamic revolution continued a process started about a century earlier, the existence and nature of such process has to be proven. This chapter intends to do so.

Arguably state formation in Iran started in the Safavid era, yet the beginnings of modern state formation can be situated during the Qajar era. The analysis of state and society under Qajar rule is not an easy task Speaking of "the Qajar pact" Vanessa Martin argues that "*Qajar government depended not only on the use of force for control of its subjects, but just as much, or rather more, on a consensus understood in deed rather than word. Such a consensus was itself shaped from a complex system of checks and balances.*"[242] She goes on to add that "*segments of society (..) are found to have been demanding of their rights.*"[243] Speaking of a pact between society and the state or the Qajar administration made up of "bargaining" and "protesting" is not a very specific characterization of the Qajar state.

Alamdari tries to systemize in a more general way the relationship between state and society in Qajar Iran. Referring to the thesis of Karl

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[242] V. MARTIN, *The Qajar Pact,* London, I.B. Tauris, 2005, p.1-2
[243] *Ibid.*

Wittfogel on *Oriental Despotism*,[244] Alamdari starts from the idea that in Iran no such thing as "feudalism" developed.[245] Wittfogel's famous thesis, based on an elaboration of Marx' *Asiatic Mode of Production*, underlines the role of irrigation works in Asiatic (Indian and Chinese) state formation. Wittfogel's argument is that these irrigation works, too important to be carried out by local powers, required stable and elaborate state bureaucratic structures. These structures were then in Wittfogel's vision responsible for the employment of the population at large, which would require not only a developed bureaucracy, literate bureaucrats and hence an educational system, but also a higher degree of infrastructural state power. By controlling an essential part of the agricultural and life resources, water, the state was in the position to dominate any other possible societal competitors to its power. Considering certain similarities between irrigation systems in Iran, India and China, notably the *qanat* system, this theory would, in Alamdari's vision, explain the formation of a strong and stable state in Iran.

Alamdari develops and adds complexities to Wittfogel's argument, but he basically agrees with Wittfogel that the domination of despotism was due to the centralized government control of water resources which led the countryside to be divided in self-sufficient villages, with little inter-village relations, under the leadership of a leader appointed by the King. In Alamdari's view the lack of unity between and within the villages allowed the continuation of despotism.[246] One will notice the similarity between Alamdari's argument and Katouzian's negation of the existence of social classes and notably aristocracy in Persia.[247]

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[244] K. WITTFOGEL, *Oriental Despotism, A Comparative Study of Total Power*, New Haven, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1957

[245] K. ALAMDARI, *Why the Middle East Lagged Behind: The Case of Iran*, New York, University Press of America, 2005

[246] K. ALAMDARI, *Why the Middle East Lagged Behind: The Case of Iran*, New York, University Press of America, 2005, pp.97-99

[247] H. KATOUZIAN, "Arbitrary Rule: A Comparative Theory of State, Politics and Society in Iran", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, May, 1997, pp. 49-73

Unfortunately since Wittfogel's book was probably as much an act of accusation against communist regimes as it was a historical analysis of Asiatic countries, the theory also has its limits. In that way for example it tends to overestimate the power of states. A practical example is offered by the legendary account of Sir John Malcolm on Persian politics of the time. Although he asserts that "*the Monarch of Persia has been pronounced one of the most absolute in the world; and it has been shown that there is reason to believe his condition has been the same from the most early ages*."[248], he also has to admit that in the appointing of city chief magistrates: "*though nominated by the king, must as necessarily be selected from the most respectable natives of the cit (..) Though these officers are not formally elected, we may assert that the voice of the people always points them out.*"[249] The voice of the people has to be understood as "*the members of the corporation of any city or town in England*" or still "*the merchants, tradesmen, mechanics, and labourers, have each a head, or rather a representative* (Wasta-asanaf) *(..) This person is chosen by the community to which he belongs, and is appointed by the king.*"[250] Hence, by looking at the formal power structure Alamdari and Wittfogel more than slightly overestimate the sovereign's power.

This nuance illustrates the importance of the distinction between *despotic* power of the state or the king on the one hand, and *infrastructural* power on the other. The former is to be coined as "*the range of actions which the elite is empowered to undertake without routine, institutionalized negotiation with civil society groups.*" The concept of infrastructural power implies "*the capacity of the state actually to penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm.*"[251] Mann identifies some "*logistical techniques*" that help the state to penetrate social life: "*a division of labour between the state's main activities which it coordinated centrally*"; literacy; coinage and "*rapidity of*

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[248] J. MALCOLM, *The History of Persia from the Early Period to the Present Time*, Vol.2, Tehran, Imperial Organization for Social Services, 1976, p.428
[249] *Ibid*, p.456
[250] *Ibid*, pp.456-457
[251] M. MANN, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," in J.A. HALL (ed.), *States in History*, Oxford, B. Blackwell, 1986, pp.109-36 (113)

communication of messages and of transport of people and resources, through improved roads, ships, telegraphy etc.".[252]

Thus, if the despotic power of the Qajar kings was probably as absolute as it gets, their infrastructural power was far more limited. Malcolm underlines three groups in particular that obstructed and opposed the development of the infrastructural power of the Persian monarchy: merchants, clergy and tribes.[253] These limitations weighing on the power of the state in Qajar Iran were observed in at least three domains of which the development is considered characteristic of state development and formation: fiscal matters, the armed forces, and bureaucracy.

The system of tax collection was relatively decentralized. It were indeed the local authorities, rather than the central government that collected taxes.[254] Willem Floor states: "*Because the bulk of the central government's expenditures were financed through local government transfers, the financial and military basis of the center would remain weak as long as the government's hold on the provinces remained precarious.*"[255] The nominal ownership of grounds by the Shah should hence not be overemphasized, since between actual control and nominal ownership existed a considerable gap.[256] It was not rare to hear even governors of provinces complain they lacked the power to levy taxes from local magnates.[257] Revolts of groups most hit by tax collection also frequently

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[252] M. MANN, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," in J.A. HALL (ed.), *States in History*, Oxford, B. Blackwell, 1986, pp.109-36 (116-117)

[253] J. MALCOLM, *o.c.*, Chapter XXIII

[254] W. FLOOR, *A Fiscal History of Iran in the Safavid and Qajar Periods*, New York, Bibliotheca Persica Press, 1998, p.251

[255] *Ibid.*

[256] Compare *a contrario* K. ALAMDARI, *Why the Middle East Lagged Behind: The Case of Iran*, New York, University Press of America, 2005, pp.86-87

[257] W. FLOOR, *A Fiscal History of Iran in the Safavid and Qajar Periods*, New York, Bibliotheca Persica Press, 1998, p.257

forced the state to retreat. Action through protest and occupations, sometimes with religious connotations was often effective.[258]

During the Qajar era, what determined the development of the state was the extension of its fiscal administration, much more than any centralization by war. Tax districts were administrative districts and administrative districts were tax districts. The first Minister of Finance was appointed under Fath' Ali Shah, who ruled from 1797 to 1834. Fath' Ali Shah forced to "*run an empire instead of just an army*", needed a bureaucracy to maximize the governments incomes.[259] Not surprisingly the Shah increasingly needed coercion to extract tribute. It was only in the second half of the 19th century however that Amir Kabir, prime minister of Nasser al-Din Shah and one of the more famous prime ministers of the time[260], was able to increase government revenues by establishing custom rights and confiscating properties of those that failed to pay taxes.[261] The Qajars did increasingly try to levy taxes that influenced directly on the lives of important socio-economic groups, like merchants[262], yet by the end of the 19th century tax collection had become an increasingly complicated task for the Qajar dynasty, although the situation was not completely a direct consequence of Qajar policy,[263] the Qajar's failure to further develop the state had become clear by this time.

If the development of tax administration went hand-in-hand with the development of bureaucracy, such a bureaucracy was nowhere similar

[258] V. MARTIN, *The Qajar Pact*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2005, p.53 For a more complexly motivated revolt, that however illustrated the limits of state power see N. KEDDIE, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891-1892*, London, Cass, 1966

[259] W. FLOOR, *A Fiscal History of Iran in the Safavid and Qajar Periods*, New York, Bibliotheca Persica Press, 1998, p.443

[260] Yet by no means the only one of stature, for a more detailed account on Qajar Prime Ministers and their policies see P. AFSHARI, *Nakhostvezaran Seleseleye Qajarie*, Tehran, Markaz-e Asnad va Khedamat-e Pozhuheshi, 1383

[261] *Ibid.*, p.447-453

[262] See for example G. ANSARI RANANI & G. A. KERMANI, *Tejarat Dar Dowreye Qajariyye*, Tehran, Daneshgah Allameh Tabatabe'ee, 2001, p.415-418

[263] Other factors as plague also played a role. See V. MARTIN, *The Qajar Pact*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2005, p.54

to Weber's "rational bureaucracy". It was much more a form of patrimonial administration structured around the Shah's family.[264] Nasser al-Din Shah tried to implement some reforms that could have increased the infrastructural element of state power. He reformed, or tried to do so, education (establishing military colleges), the administration (establishing Ministries) and tried to keep the clergy out of politics.[265] To understand to continuity of the Pahlavi policies with these policies it is important to underline that the first systematic attempt to create a national educational structure was the foundation of the Council of National Schools in 1889.[266]

However, at the same time one of the major parts of the Safavid ruling structure, an administration developed to influence and invade the realm of religion,[267] collapsed in the Qajar period. "*though the 'ulama continued to have a close relationship with the state, (..) the major religious figures appear separate from the state in the early years of the Qajar period.*"[268] The clergy enjoyed a rather comfortable position, with financial resources derived from its own taxes and foundations, which were, according to Vanessa Martin, by the end of the century worth approximately half of state income. Furthermore the clerics enjoyed "*virtual immunity from prosecution by the state*".[269] Keddie underlines that the strength of the clergy was also due to the fact that its main centers of power lie in Iraq, that is outside the reach of imperial Persia.[270] On this level the infrastructural power of the state declined in comparison

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[264] A. REZA SHEIKHOLESLAMI, *The Structure of Central Authority in Qajar Iran, 1871-1896,* Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1997, p.101

[265] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two revolutions,* Princeton, Princeton UP, 1982, p.57

[266] A. BANANI, *The Modernization of Iran 1921-1941*, Stanford, Stanford UP, 1961, p. 89

[267] A.J. NEWMAN, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire,* London, I.B. Tauris, 2006, p.24 & pp.56-59

[268] M. SEFATGOL, "From *Dar Al-Saltana-Yi Isfahan* to *Dar Al-Khilafa-Yi Tihran*", in R. GLEAVE, *Religion and Society in Qajar Iran,* London, RoutledgeCurzon, 2005, pp.71-83 (80)

[269] V. MARTIN, *Islam and Modernism: The Iranian Revolution of 1906,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1989, p.35-39

[270] N.R.KEDDIE, "The Roots of the Ulama's Power in Modern Iran", *Studia Islamica,* Vol. XXIX, 1969, pp.31-53

to the situation during the Safavid dynasty.[271] Moreover the last Qajar

Iranian Armed Forces and their constitution at the time is very intimately linked to different imperialist countries. Qa'em Haqani mentions how also the French and the German contributed to the army's development and dependency.[279] To these forces dominated by foreign powers, Abrahamian adds a centralized cavalry of 80,000 men which was however organized along lines of tribal loyalties. Simplifyingly one could say that one tribe constituted more or less a division and the commander of such a division was the tribe's leader.[280]

While hence the Qajar dynasty was failing rather desolately in reforming and restructuring the state in order to adapt it to new realities, something not unlike a civil society decided to take over. Shaul Bakhash describes the situation as follows: "*The last years of the reign of Naser ad-Din Shah witnessed a serious deterioration in the already indifferent standards of Qajar administration. (..) The finances of the State, never very strong, began to break down. The hold of the government over the provinces weakened; and the tendency (..), towards a fragmentation of power, reasserted itself.*"[281] Intellectuals and merchants formed their own societies and newspapers, separated from the regime, hence decreasing further the power of the state.[282] In such a situation the Qajar Shah turned more and more towards the British to guarantee his power. Too weak to impose his will on society, not nearly strong enough to resist European imperialism, the Qajars started to make virtue out of necessity and allied ever more with British colonialism.[283]

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[278] H. SADRI, "Iran", in C.P DANOPOULOS & C. WATSON, *The Political Role of the Military,* London, Greenwood Press, 1996, pp.207-222 (208)

[279] J. QA'EM HAQAMI, *Tarikh-e Tahavvolat-e Siyasi-e Nezam-e Iran,* Tehran, Chapkhune Ali Akbar Elmi, 1326, Chapter Three & pp.88-89

[280] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two revolutions,* Princeton, Princeton UP, 1982, pp.50-59

[281] S. BAKHASH, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy & Reform under the Qajars: 1858-1896*, London, Ithaca Press, 1978, p.261

[282] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two revolutions,* Princeton, Princeton UP, 1982, p.57 & S. BAKHASH, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy & Reform under the Qajars: 1858-1896*, London, Ithaca Press, 1978, p.305

[283] See for example the documents published or quoted in A. MOSTOFI, *The Administrative and Social History of the Qajar Period,* Vol. 2, Costa Mesa, Mazda Publishers, 1997, pp.721-732

3.2.   *The Constitutional Revolution*

The Constitutional Revolution of 1906[284] has hence to be considered in a very clear environmental setting: relative disintegration of the royal state as a consequence of a failure to modernize, centralize the state and adapt it to the necessities of the time. It were thus the contradictions between the necessities of innovation on one side and the failed attempts to do so on the other that led to the first Iranian revolution of 1906. More concretely it were the regime's necessities to raise extra funds, through increased and enforced custom tariffs organized by Belgian officials and loans which indebted Iran to the Russians, without being able to show accountability for these or being able to use sufficient coercion that provoked revolt.[285] The forces behind this revolution would predictably be those concentrations of power that had not only been disgruntled by the (attempted) reforms, but also had sufficient capacity to organize resistance. At the same time, as is the case with every proper social revolution, these forces were joined by a hybrid coalition.

A first influential group joined the movement not so much out of socio-economic considerations as out of a genuine intellectual conviction that Iran had to modernize following the European model. The intellectual fascination for European culture and political systems, also animated the court. The Shah himself used to spend his summers in Europe. This "Westernphilia" resulted in the introduction of the 1831 Belgian constitution during the Constitutional revolution. To those fascinated by the West Mangol Bayat adds "religious dissidents", that, often linked to minority religious networks as the Baha'i or Azali Babis, pushed for secularization.[286]

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[284] M. AJUDANI, *Mashruteye Irani,* Tehran, Akhtaran, 1382

[285] V. MARTIN, *Islam and Modernism: The Iranian Revolution of 1906,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1989, p.47-51

[286] See Chapter 3 of M. BAYAT, *Iran's First Revolution,* Oxford, Oxford UP, 1991

No need to adhere to the continuity-thesis[287] which sees the role of the clergy in Iranian society and politics as the wire through Iran's twentieth century history, to admit the clergy did play "*a highly significant role in the events which culminated in the Constitutional Revolution*".[288] An argument could be made that the clergy was far from united. The action of three high-ranking clerics Tabataba'i, Behbehani and Sheikh Fazlallah could exemplify this. The first opposed the Shah more for ideological reasons, asking for "proper laws", while the second was especially sensitive to the demands and grievances of the merchants.[289] However the Spring 1905 alliance proved this disunity of lesser importance. Sheikh Fazlallah, representing perhaps a third of the clergy, and appeared more in support of the system and condemned unrest, while affirming his support for monarchy.[290] Notwithstanding this nuance, the alliance between modernists and the oppositional part of the clergy, in essence the majority, which probably found its origins in the Tobacco revolt of 1891-1892 would prove a powerful actor in the 1905-1906 revolutionary process.[291] All the more so since the clergy had become progressively a spokesman and a reliable partner for some interests that saw no other options to make their voices heard.[292] The power of the clergy was undeniably reinforced by the role their preaches played as "*substitutes for mass media*".[293]

If the Constitutional Revolution is rightly considered a "nationalist" revolution, it would be a grave error to consider it a revolution "made"

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[287] A. MOLAJANI, *Sociologie politique de la révolution iranienne*, Paris, l'Harmattan, 1999 ; see for an illustration N.R. KEDDIE, "Iran: Change in Islam; Islam and Change", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 4, July 1980, pp. 527-542

[288] V. MARTIN, *Islam and Modernism: The Iranian Revolution of 1906*, London, I.B. Tauris, 1989, p.35

[289] V. MARTIN, *Islam and Modernism: The Iranian Revolution of 1906*, London, I.B. Tauris, 1989, p.59-64

[290] *Ibid.*

[291] N.R. KEDDIE, "The Origins of the Religious-Radical Alliance in Iran", *Past & Present*, No. 34, July 1966, pp.70-80

[292] N.R. KEDDIE, (1971) "The Iranian Power Structure and Social Change 1800-1969", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.2, No.1, pp.3-20 (6)

[293] A. FATHI, "Preaches as Substitutes for Mass Media: The Case 1905-1909", in E. KEDOURIE & S.G. HAIM, *Towards a Modern Iran* London, Frank Cass, 1980, pp.169-184

by nationalist forces. This is best be illustrated with a reference to the nature of the participation of the bazaar and Iranian merchants in the revolution. A powerful concentration of power, they apparently joined the movement because of the fiscal policies and foreign concessions of Nasser al-Din Shah and his successor Muzaffar al-Din Shah between (1848 and 1907).[294] Nationalist motivations might have inspired the merchants. Truth be said, history had at that time already proven that their nationalism ended at the precise point their interests started. These interests were much more linked to modernization than to any moral or ideological principle. The Reuter concession the Shah had offered to an "imperialist" businessman and which had stirred revolt of the clergy and parts of the court exemplified this.[295] Lord Curzon described the concession as the: "*most complete and extraordinary surrender of the entire industrial resources of a kingdom into foreign hands that has probably ever been dreamed of, much less accomplished, in history. Exclusive of the clauses referring to railroads and tramways, which conferred an absolute monopoly (..) of seventy years, the concession also handed over (..) the exclusive working for the same period of all Persian mines, except these of gold, silver, and precious stones; the monopoly of the government forests; all uncultivated land embraced under that designation; the exclusive construction of canals, kanats, and irrigation works of every description; the first refusal of a national bank and of all future enterprises connected with the introduction of roads, telegraphs, mills, factories, workshops, and public works of every description,…*"[296] Although this concession was manifestly a way of outselling the country to foreign industrialists, the merchants did not oppose it. The reason for their acceptance were multiple, but easily imaginable. The agreement attracted foreign investment and promised to realize infrastructural work that were urgently needed for the facilitation of their trade activities but for which they themselves lacked sufficient capital.[297] Moreover the agreement explicitly ruled out

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[294] J. AFARY, "Social Democracy and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1911" in J. FORAN, *A Century of Revolution: Social Movements in Iran*, London, UCL Press, 1994, pp. 21-43 (23)

[295] M. BAYAT, *Iran's First Revolution*, New York/Oxford, Oxford UP, 1991, pp.46-47

[296] L. CURZON, *Persia and the Persian Question*,Vol.1, London, F. Cass & Co., 1966, p.480-481

[297] M. BAYAT, *Iran's First Revolution*, New York/Oxford, Oxford UP, 1991, pp.46-47

national industrialization, which could have proved a threat to the merchants, who preferred to continue dominating the economy as "middleman", rather than seeing an important national industrial class emerge. They eventually joined the movement when the continuing trade concessions to foreigners started undermining their position. The unrest in the bazaar was sponsored heavily by the merchants, obviously, but also, subsequently, by the clergy. [298]

The events of 1906 to 1911 including a civil war, a royal coup and the reestablishment of the Constitution left Iran with a rather modern constitution and an equally modern institution as Parliament. Although a guaranteed quorum of tribal representation was refused[299], electoral laws nevertheless guaranteed guilds representation as the Constitution did clerical influence in politics.[300] This constituted an attempt to incorporate the "external" concentrations of power into the new order and as such could have constituted a centralizing measure. The infrastructural power of the state also seemed on the rise with the growth of municipal, departmental and provincial councils with impressive executive and judicial powers.[301]

All this is not to say that centralization was truly achieved. During the entire period tribes, like the Bakhtiari or regionalist movements in Azerbaijan would continue to challenge central authority in Tehran.[302] During the second Constitutional period, in essence when the 1908 royalist coup was undone in 1909, by joining forces with the revolutionaries Bakhtiari tribes succeeded in taking over key

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[298] V. MARTIN, *Islam and Modernism: The Iranian Revolution of 1906*, London, I.B. Tauris, 1989, p.56

[299] J.AFARY *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906-1911*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996, p.64

[300] See *infra*

[301] J.AFARY *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906-1911*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996, p.74

[302] To be sure the argument of the tribes is a very complex one that will be treated from one dimension only in this study. For a more comprehensive understanding of tribes, their political role and their relation with the state see: P.S. KHOURY & J. KOSTINER, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990

government positions.[303] Another attempted comeback by the Shah in 1911 was impeded by both military defeat and Anglo-Russian diplomacy.[304]

When modernist intellectual Ahmad Kasravi[305], who had played an important role in politics both during and after the revolution, travels on behalf of the post-revolutionary government to the South-Western Iranian province of Khuzestan, he notices how a local *sheikh* and his sons (in close collaboration with the British) had practically taken control of the province, where Iranian sovereignty appears nothing more than nominal.[306] The First World War aggravated the situation and had devastating consequences on Iran. The country became the arena where Russian and British interests first coalesced and then clashed. After the Russian revolution, the Soviet Union has the intention to abandon much of the foreign activities of the former tsarist empire, yet very soon Soviet involvement starts again in order to counter British activities. On the one hand Soviet influence relies on the links with the Cossacks, but political activities of the Soviet Union are probably exemplified by the change of name of the Justice Party (*Edalat*) in Hezb-e Komunist-e Iran (Iranian Communist Party, ICP).

It is not uninteresting to consider briefly the history of this and other parties in Northern Iran. With Southern Iran under direct of indirect British (military and economic) influence[307], Soviet influence in the North gives some idea of how one of the basic characteristics of Iranian

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[303] N.R. KEDDIE, (1971) "The Iranian Power Structure and Social Change 1800-1969", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.2, No.1, pp.3-20 (9)

[304] X., "Iranian Nationalism and The Great Powers: 1872-1954", *MERIP Reports*, No.37, May 1975, p.1-28 (7)

[305] For an interesting review of his economic thought, that reveals influence from social-democracy, and proposals for land reform. K.M. DADKHAH, "Ahmed Kasravi on Economics", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.34, No.2, April 1998, pp.37-59

[306] A. KASRAVI, "Zendegani-e man" *in* A. KASRAVI, *Zendegani-e man ba Do Sal dar Adeliye va Chera az Adeliye Birun Omadam*, Chap-e aval, Tehran, 1323, pp.5-111 quoted in a different edition by A. MANAFZADEH, *Ahmad Kasravi L'homme qui voulait sortir l'Iran de l'obscurantisme*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2004, p.78

[307] For an overview of British operations see IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM (ed.), *Operations in Persia 1914-1919*, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1987

state formation had remained unsolved after the Constitutional revolution: control over the national territory.

The first Congress of the CPI decided in June 1920 to adopt the name of CPI. At the start of the First World War the party had been founded in Baku as a radical party under the name of "Edalat". It was clearly a workers' party that enjoyed high degrees of popularity among the, mostly Iranian, workers in Baku. The party declared itself a proletarian party, struggling for freedom and the well-being of mankind in a classless society. It quickly started to organize party cells and sections in Iran. Although party reports mention many arrests of party members on Iranian soil, the party has notable success in Northern Iran, not coincidentally especially around Tabriz, the Azeri region of Iran. From Tabriz the militant Sadeqzade calls upon Soviet troops: "*We await the arrival of Bolshevik forces to rise up, to capture offices of the government and organize them according to the instructions and plans [worked out] by you, comrades.*" [308]

The foundation of the CPI was a consequence of different factors. One of these was the grouping of Edalat with the Committee of Peasants of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) and the Hemmat, tocsin of Oriental communism, which had oriented many Muslim workers in the direction of Communism[309], into the Communist Party of Azerbaijan. Two other events also need played a role: the arrival of Soviet troops in Anzali on 18 May 1920 and the declaration of the Republic, often called the Persian Socialist Soviet Republic of Gilan, by Mirza Kuchek Khan of the regionalist Jangali movement.

The *Jangali* movement (from the Persian word *jangal*, forest) was made up especially of peasants and petty bourgeoisie (doctors, journalists, merchants, clerics, small landowners and so on), which made the

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[308] K. SHAKERI, *Le Parti Communiste iranien,* PhD Thesis, Paris, EHESS, Unpublished, January 1980, pp.85-87

[309] EFENDIEV, « Au sujet de l'organisation *Himmat* », in C. CHAQUERI, *La social-démocratie en Iran (articles et documents)*, Florence, Mazdak, 1979, pp. 118-119

movement a very heterogeneous one.[310] Many of them had joined the Ettehad-e Eslam movement (Islamic Unity)[311], others as Ehsan Allah Khan, had first participated in the activities of the *Komitéh Mujaza't*[312] a "punishment committee" assassinating pro-British politicians in Tehran.

The Jangali movement was no communist movement and Mirza Kuchek Khan, inspired by pragmatism, became a friend of the Soviet Union merely to further his regionalist goals. Aware of the proclamation of the Gilan Republic, the Soviets incited the PCI to form a front with the *Jangali*s. The front will not hold, since Mirza Kuchek Khan and the Soviet Union can not accept the CPI's proletarian rhetoric, defended especially by Avetis Sultanzadé,[313] considered premature at a phase in which the revolution still needs some of the middle-classes.[314] Sultanzade[315], later condemned by Stalin, defended a "pure Communist movement" [316], while Lenin at the time stated that the existence of a pre-capitalist reality in developing countries and the practical inexistence of an industrial proletariat in those countries, rendered such a purely proletarian movement impossible.[317]

These different visions on tactics undermined unity even within the CPI. After a PCI coup that puts the entire leadership of the Jangali

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[310] P. ROCHARD, « Entre réforme et tradition: le mouvement Jangali de 1915 à novembre 1921 », summary in M. ANASTASSIADOU (ed.), *Sociétés et cultures musulmanes d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, Paris, AFEMAM, 1996, p.418 (418-420)

[311] This movement was nonetheless more nationalist than religious. Reality reflected in its name change to Ettehad-é Iran (Unity of Iran) on 9 May 1918. See P. ROCHARD, « Entre réforme et tradition : le mouvement Jangali de 1915 à novembre 1921 », *Luqman*, Vol.11, No.1, Autumn-Winter 94-95, pp.67-80 (71)

[312] E. YBERT-CHABRIER, « Gilan 1917-1920 : The Jengelist Movement according to the Memoirs of Ihsan Allah Khan », *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 2, No.3, November 1983, pp.37-61 (43) With a note in: C. CHAQUERI, "The Jangali Movement and Soviet Historiography: A commentary", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.5, No.1, 1986, pp.57-64

[313] Whose real name was Avetis Mikailian

[314] S. RAVASANI, *Sowjetrepublik Gilan*, Berlin, Basis-Verlag, s.d., p.291

[315] C. CHAQUERI, "Sultanzade : The Forgotten Revolutionary Theoretician", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.3, No.2, 1984, pp.57-73 (58)

[316] A. SULTANZADE, *Politische Schriften I*, Florence, Ed. Mazdak, s.d., p.98

[317] S. RAVASANI, *Sowjetrepublik Gilan*, Berlin, Basis-Verlag, s.d., p.275

movement under communist control, factionalism immobilizes the new Republic. Sultanzade is replaced by Haydar Khan Amogli at the head of the CPI. Eshan Allah Khan even launches an adventurous "March on Tehran". Progressively the Soviets start to understand that the Republic of Gilan has little future and when their negotiations with Reza Khan, linked to their Cossack brigades, seem to offer satisfying results, Soviet troops withdraw from Gilan and the "independent" Soviet republic collapses. Although it continues its activities after the fall of the Gilan Republic the CPI will quickly lose influence due to Soviet support to Reza Khan. Indeed, As Michael Zirisnky notices: "*Soviet policy favored the development of an Iranian buffer against British expansion northward. Moscow supported the development of Reza's dictatorship after February 1921. Relations between the Kremlin and the Cossack barracks were often so close during the early 1920s that at times British officials were convinced Reza Khan was Moscow's man. Soviet relations with Reza possibly reached their peak in 1926, shortly after his coronation when Moscow and Tehran exchanged ambassadors, giving the Soviet emissary personal access to the new king and precedence over the British minister.*"[318] Notwithstanding these impressions, reality was very different.

3.3.   The Pahlavi Dynasty: First Act

Reza Khan's coup was if not directly organized at least supported and facilitated by the British. After the end of the First World War Major General Sir Edmund Ironside reorganized the Iranian army in order to allow the British to withdraw their troops, as the Soviets had promised to do, while leaving behind a pro-British military corpse.[319] In Reza Khan Ironside found the military leader he thought able to impose law and order and oppose Soviet influence, by any means necessary.[320] The

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[318] M.P. ZIRINSKY, "The Rise of Reza Khan" in J. FORAN, *A Century of Revolution: Social Movements in Iran*, London, UCL Press, 1994, pp.44-77 (52)

[319] C. GHANI, *Iran and the Rise of Reza Shah,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1998, pp.144-160

[320] C. GHANI, *Iran and the Rise of Reza Shah,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1998, p.154 See also the Persian translation of the Memoirs of Ironside, translated to Persian by E. IRONSIDE [B.

idea of a model of law and order and one strong national army and leader was relatively new, even in British politics. Until then the British had accepted the *de facto* division of the country between them and the Russians. But the 1917 Revolution had changed that, the struggle for Persia was no longer a mere struggle between two imperialist interests, rather it had become one of political nature. Hence the idea of a strong uniform national army launched by more nationalist Iranians during the First World War was no longer looked down upon by the British. [321] Yet the preparation of such an Army, notwithstanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the North, would not prove an easy task. The developing national army was brought to the center of the Iranian state by Reza Khan's 1921 coup. Even though "*by late January 1922 (..) Reza Khan had issued decrees eliminating the terms 'Gendarmes' and 'Cossacks': the two forces would henceforth be members of a single armed force. The [South Persian Rifles] had already been disbanded in late December,*"[322] more than its completion the *coup* marked the beginning of the unification of armed forces and the country.

The defense budget increased fivefold between 1926 and 1941.[323] The necessary capital for these operations came from Britain. The British minister Sir Percy Loraine had convinced London to finance Reza Khan's activities through the Imperial Bank of Persia.[324] Reza Shah successfully capitalized on the situation by trying to find some kind of equilibrium between the British, who considered Iran as their privilege, on the one hand and France, the United States and, to a lesser extent, the Soviet Union who all wished to obtain some degree of influence in the emerging state.[325] It is incontestable that this "choice" or rather the

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QAZVINI (transl.)], "Khaterat va Safarnameye Zheneral Aironsaaid", Tehran, Ayene, 1363

[321] Wm. J. OLSON, *Anglo-Iranian Relations during World War I,* London, Frank Cass, 1984, p.155

[322] C. GHANI, *Iran and the Rise of Reza Shah,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1998, pp.242

[323] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two revolutions,* Princeton, Princeton UP, 1982, p.136

[324] M.P. ZIRINSKY, "The Rise of Reza Khan" in J. FORAN, *A Century of Revolution: Social Movements in Iran*, London, UCL Press, 1994, pp.44-77 (60)

[325] See for example C. GHANI, *Iran and the Rise of Reza Shah,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1998, pp.208-209

possibility to balance between different foreign influences enabled Iranian state formation, much more so than a direct colony could have pretended.

The task of developing a modern and unified army came in parallel with the urgent need for the establishment of control over the peripheral regions of Iran. Gilan would become only the first test, and arguably the easiest one, since infighting had already destroyed the independent Republic from the inside by the time Reza Khan's troops arrived.[326] A more serious test proved the Kurdish uprising in the Autumn of 1921. The Kurdish leader Simko[327] inflicted heavy casualties on troops of the Army and Gendarmerie alike. But also in Khorasan and regions of the South the Army was confronted with strong regional uprisings. The tribal uprisings were perhaps the most challenging. Since as in the Qajar army, tribal divisions also continued to form "*the most significant fighting element*" of Reza Khan's armed forces.[328] Moreover the military might of certain tribes, like of the Bakhtiyari, was coupled with prestige and practical fighting experience, as they had participated in the struggle against the Qajar shah after the latter's anti-constitutional coup of 1908.[329] Reza Khan's centralized armed forces on the contrary were often badly equipped and lacking motivation.[330]

Reza Khan had hence to move with extreme caution and he often preferred political maneuvering to actual armed confrontation. The Qashqai tribes[331] were disarmed progressively by bringing important

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[326] W. ZUERRER, *Persien zwischen England und Rußland 1918-1945,* Bern, Peter Lang, 1978, p.421

[327] Other accounts mention the Tribal leader Simitqu

[328] S. CRONIN, "Riza Shah and the Paradoxes of Military Modernization in Iran 1921-1941" in S. CRONIN (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran,* London, Routledge, 2003, pp.37-64 (39)

[329] A.M. ANSARI, *Modern Iran since 1921,* London, Longman, 2003, pp.49-50

[330] S. CRONIN, *The Army and the Creation of the Pahlavi State in Iran 1910-1926,* London, Tauris Academic Studies, 1997, p.171

[331] For an anthropological approach see L. BECK, *The Qashqa'i of Iran*, New Haven, Yale UP, 1986

tribal leaders to Tehran, "*ostensibly as Majlis deputies, but in reality prisoners*"[332] Reza Khan also allied with the Bakhtiyari against other tribes, which permitted him subsequent victories over the Kurds, the Qashqai nomadic tribes in the province of Fars, and Sheikh Khazal in Khuzestan. Combined with attempts to bring Baluchistan under national control these victories show the interaction between the development of the nation and the development of the new armed forces in the years immediately following the *coup*.[333]

The Bakhtiyari were dealt with after the so-called Shalil incident, in the mid-1920's, where allegedly Bakhtiyari troops killed over 100 soldiers.[334] This allowed Reza Khan to undermine the prestige the tribe had built up among Iranians, that had not forgotten their participation to the Constitutional movement, present the tribe as "anti-national" and inflict a heavy military defeat on them. The tribe's friendly relations with the British in the South obviously contributed to Reza Khan's case to win over Iranian public opinion. Military defeat also sparked internal strives within the tribe. While tribe elders had been co-opted by Reza Khan, one of them became even Minister of War[335], the younger tribe leaders saw their chance and started contesting not only Reza Khan but also the alliance their elders had forged with central authority in Tehran. Moreover these younger *khans* were confronted to an ever declining realm for their tribe: the Ministry of Justice took their right of dispensing justice away, the military conscription threatened their military might and the Pahlavi dress code even cut into their private traditions. All these factors contributed to the 1929 Bakhtiyari rebellion. Its failure signed the end of the autonomous Bakhtiyari

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[332] A.M. ANSARI, *Modern Iran since 1921,* London, Longman, 2003, pp.49-50

[333] For an overview of the struggles see: W. ZUERRER, *Persien zwischen England und Rußland 1918-1945,* Bern, Peter Lang, 1978 pp.418-446

[334] S. CRONIN, "Riza Shah and the Disintegration of Bakhtiyari Power in Iran 1921-1934", in S. CRONIN (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran,* London, Routledge, 2003, pp.241-268 (258), first published as S. CRONIN, "Riza Shah and the Disintegration of Bakhtiyari Power in Iran 1921-1934", *Iranian Studies,* Vol. 33, No. 3-4, Summer - Autumn, 2000, pp. 349-376

[335] For an overview of the struggles see: W. ZUERRER, *Persien zwischen England und Rußland 1918-1945,* Bern, Peter Lang, 1978 pp.418-446

power center and from 1932 the state started with the sedentarization of the tribe.[336]

By 1925, Reza Khan had completed the territorial unification of Iran and had become the unquestioned leader of the unified military. The time was now ripe for the next step, his coronation as King. Reza Khan's transformation into Reza Shah was approved by Parliament between October 1925, when it deposed the last Qajar, Ahmad Shah, and December 1925, when Reza Khan became the first Pahlavi Shah. It appeared the consecration of his power, yet was rather a sign of the contrary and the illustration of a major failure. Reza Khan had throughout his ascendancy to power tried to rally supporters of a republican state order, yet his idea had successfully been opposed by the clergy and, more importantly, by large sections of the army who threatened revolt and started plotting.[337] By proclaiming himself Shah Reza Khan solved the loyalty problem.[338] Social forces no longer had to choose between him and republicanism on one side and the Qajars and monarchy on the other. They could now opt for both monarchy and the new man in power.

The most important reform of the Army came with the Conscription Law. Generalizing military conscription obviously increased state power. It was no coincidence that both tribes and clergy opposed it. The former feared a decrease in their potential of military mobilization, the latter did not look favorably on the idea of seeing all young people pass two years in a secular institution. Even the landlords looked unfavorably upon the idea of losing their cheap labor to a national and public institution.[339] Yet the unification of the army and the

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[336] S. CRONIN, "Riza Shah and the Disintegration of Bakhtiyari Power in Iran 1921-1934", in S. CRONIN (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran,* London, Routledge, 2003, pp.241-268 (261)
[337] S. CRONIN, "Riza Shah and the Paradoxes of Military Modernization in Iran 1921-1941" in S. CRONIN (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran,* London, Routledge, 2003, pp.37-64 (52-53)
[338] S. CRONIN, "Riza Shah and the Paradoxes of Military Modernization in Iran 1921-1941" in S. CRONIN (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran,* London, Routledge, 2003, pp.37-64 (54)
[339] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two revolutions,* Princeton, Princeton UP, 1982, p.131

establishment of its role at the center of the new Pahlavi state, formed only part of the state formation process under Reza Khan. Keddie nicely summarizes: "*To exist as an independent nation, Iran needed a civil service, army, and efficient tax system. The middle classes grew after the war (…) wanted new outlets for their talents and capital. The revival of foreign trade meant a growth of Iranian merchant capital.*"[340]

Although many "totalitarian" measures, like imposing a Pahlavi cap or a particular uniform for public officials, were to amplify the impression of state influence and nation-building[341], Reza Shah's bureaucracy developed around two main pillars. First the establishment and development of Ministries like Foreign Affairs, Justice, Post and Telegraph, Agriculture, Trade, Roads and Industry, the Interior and Finance, paralleled by the adoption of French inspired Codes of Law as the Criminal Code of 1926 and the Civil Code of 1928[342].[343] This structure was used to increase the infrastructural power of the state at many levels, which was to form the second pillar. I will focus here on reforms concerning education and the economy , although admittedly a similar argument could be made for the Judiciary where Reza Shah ultimately wanted to guarantee state domination and control by removing the clergy from the entire system.[344] Therefore clerical influence was first (1929) limited to marriage and divorce cases and then saw *sharia* courts abolished altogether.[345]

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[340] N.R. KEDDIE (Y. RICHARD), *Modern Iran, Roots and Results of Revolution*, London, Yale University Press, 2003, p.87

[341] See H.E. CHEHABI, "Staging the Emperor's New Clothes: Dress Codes and Nation-Building under Reza Shah", *Iranian Studies,* Vol.26, No.3-4, Summer-Fall 1993, pp.209-229

[342] Consider however A.K.S. LAMBTON, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia,* London, Oxford UP, 1953, p.209 who asserts: "*the influence of Islamic law on the Civil Code in so far as land questions are concerned has been strong*"

[343] A.M. ANSARI, *Modern Iran since 1921,* London, Longman, 2003, p.45; E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two revolutions,* Princeton, Princeton UP, 1982, p.136-137 & N.R. KEDDIE (Y. RICHARD), *Modern Iran, Roots and Results of Revolution*, London, Yale University Press, 2003, p.90

[344] A. BANANI, *The Modernization of Iran 1921-1941*, Stanford, Stanford UP, 1961, p.72-73

[345] N.R. KEDDIE (Y. RICHARD), *Modern Iran, Roots and Results of Revolution*, London, Yale University Press, 2003, p.89

Under Reza Shah so-called *étatism* or state involvement in economic affairs constantly increased. After decades of stagnation[346], Reza Shah understood that a "*big push*" was needed to get the economy going. He proceeded by "*abolishing capitulations and commercial treaties unfavorable to Iran, repealing or revising the concessions, and concentrating his efforts on the development of transport and industry, the reform of fiscal and financial institutions, and the control of foreign trade.*"[347] Such a development had obviously to see an increase of tax programs. Reza Shah even tried to tax opium, widely consumed domestically and ranking second in value of Iranian exports.[348]

The infrastructural results were rather impressive. While at the beginning of his reign Iran only had 2,400 km of roads, this amounted to 24,000 km at the end of his reign.[349] The most impressive achievement was arguably the Trans-Iranian Railway totaling 1,394 km and connecting the north and the south of the country, by linking Bandar Shah on the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf city Bandar Shahpur. Similar projects towards the northwest (Tabriz) and the northeast (Mahshad) were started but unfinished in 1941.[350] These railroads did not only favor trade as such, but also, and perhaps foremost, state control over peripheral areas.

One of the main characteristics of the increase in infrastructural power of the state is the increase in literacy and state education programs. There is little sense in speculating whether Reza Shah "truly" wanted to modernize his country through the development of education, or

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[346] C. ISSAWI, *The Economic History of Iran 1800-1904*, Chicago, Chicago UP, 1971

[347] C. ISSAWI, "The Iranian Economy 1925-1975: Fifty years of Economic Development" in G. LENCZOWSKI, *Iran under the Pahlavis,* Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1978, pp.129-166 (131)

[348] B. HANSEN, "Learning to Tax: The Political Economy of the Opium Trade in Iran, 1921-1941", *The Journal of Economic History,* Vol.61, No.1, March 2001, pp.95-113 (95-96)

[349] *Ibid.* Other figures speak of an increase of 200 miles of roads in a bad condition to 14,000 miles in a reasonably good condition, see A.M. ANSARI, *Modern Iran since 1921,* London, Longman, 2003, p.53

[350] C. ISSAWI, "The Iranian Economy 1925-1975: Fifty years of Economic Development" in G. LENCZOWSKI, *Iran under the Pahlavis,* Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1978, pp.129-166 (131)

whether he merely wanted to increase state control over the population by increasing his means of communication for the sake of propaganda. Even so it is undeniable that in my framework the second point is the most interesting. As mentioned before, under the Qajar period the clergy had obtained quite some power from its quasi monopoly on the transmission of information in its preaches, which forced political forces to woo the clerical corporation if they wanted their opinions to be spread. Hence to increase state power and diminish the influence of sub-groups and autonomous concentrations of power, the development of state education system, and consequently mass media, became inevitable.[351] To improve literacy in rural areas the literacy committees corps were formed and by 1937 90,000 adults and which rose to 160,000 adults in 1940 had participated in these.[352] Since the academic year 1936-37 1,500 classes for adults had been established all over the country and due to great success 97 classes were added to these.[353] Yet the bulk of the educational reforms lay elsewhere. Reza Shah first developed so-called vocational schools, directly linked to the Ministries, like the Tehran school of law which would form one of the basis of the University of Tehran.[354] This University also challenged religious education by instituting a Faculty of Theology, but the development of public education soon went much further.[355]

Over the period 1922 to 1935, the number of elementary schools evolved from 440 to 1336, while the number of students and teachers in the same period went from respectively 43,025 and 440 to 170,077 and

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[351] A.R. ARASTEH, *Education and Social Awakening in Iran 1850-1968,* Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1969, pp.143-146 & A. BANANI, "The Role of the Mass Media", in E. YAR-SHATER (ed.), *Iran Faces the Seventies,* New York, Praeger Publishers, 1971, pp.321-340

[352] R. MATTHEE, "Transforming Dangerous Nomads into Useful Artisans, Technicians, Agriculturalists: Education in the Reza Shah Period", in S. CRONIN (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran,* London, Routledge, 2003, pp.123-145(128)

[353] A. BANANI, *The Modernization of Iran 1921-1941*, Stanford, Stanford UP, 1961, p. 103

[354] R. MATTHEE, "Transforming Dangerous Nomads into Useful Artisans, Technicians, Agriculturalists: Education in the Reza Shah Period", in S. CRONIN (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran,* London, Routledge, 2003, pp.123-145 (126)

[355] For a general overview consider W. EILERS, "Educational and Cultural Development in Iran during the Pahlavi Era" in G. LENCZOWSKI, *Iran under the Pahlavis,* Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1978, pp.303-332

6,805.[356] The number of girls' schools increased from 41 in 1910 over 190 in 1920 to 870 in 1933.[357] Girls came to make up 35,000 of 150,000 pupils in elementary and secondary education in 1930.[358] The development of public state education also signified a relative decline in the number of students frequenting traditional (*maktab*) and religious (*tullab*) educational institutes who had both been dominated by the clergy. David Menashri calculates that in the period going from1929-1930 to 1940-1941[359] public elementary and secondary schools went from 127,546 to 314,173, that is about 2.5 times the initial number. *Maktab*s also increased but only 1.4 times, while *Tullab* schools decreased impressively from the number of 5532 to 1341, which meant a decrease fourfold decrease.[360] Although figures differ somewhat and exact numbers are hard or impossible to obtain. Statistics also served a propaganda objective. Nonetheless, a considerable increase in public education was just as undeniable as was the relative decrease of education outside the public system. However even if the educational expenses of the state rose from 100,000 dollar in 1925 to 12 or 13 million dollar in 1940, still less than 10% of the population that received elementary education.[361]

All these reforms were accompanied by a conscious and explicit effort of nation-building. Not only did the Shah change the name of the country from Persia to Iran, he also installed programs of "Iranification", inciting shops to use Persian rather than foreign signs, starting a committee that had to purify Persian language from Arabic

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[356] R. MATTHEE, "Transforming Dangerous Nomads into Useful Artisans, Technicians, Agriculturalists: Education in the Reza Shah Period", in S. CRONIN (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran*, London, Routledge, 2003, pp.123-145(127)

[357] M. KAMRAVA, *The Political History of Modern Iran From tribalism to Theocracy*, Westport, Praeger, 1992, p.56

[358] R. MATTHEE, "Transforming Dangerous Nomads into Useful Artisans, Technicians, Agriculturalists: Education in the Reza Shah Period, in S. CRONIN (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran*, London, Routledge, 2003, pp.123-145(128)

[359] The double year calculation is explained by the fact that the basis of calculation is the Iranian year which starts at the end of March of the Western calendar.

[360] D. MENASHRI, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran*, New York, Cornell UP, 1992, pp.102-103

[361] N.R. KEDDIE, *Modern Iran*, New Haven, Yale UP, 2003, p.99

influences (*farhangestan*, an organization that continues its activities under the Islamic Republic) and the celebration of the so-called "pure" Persian, a concept very close to the Nazi-ideology.[362]

The positive results of his reforms should not obscure their more negative aspects. First of all bureaucracy resembled ever less a rational bureaucracy. The best example is possibly offered by Arthur Millspaugh's experience, whose efforts made the army reforms possible in the first place.[363] The Brit had been asked by Reza Shah to reorganize and rationalize the finances and expenses of the Ministry of War. Millspaugh failed: the Shah considered *"his own personal account and the army account as being a joint one"* and hence spent whatever he wished whenever he wished on whatever he wished.[364] That officers still owed their promotion more to nepotism than to meritocracy, was for the expansion of state power not a problem *in se* but showed the limits of Reza Shah's modernization politics.

Increasing state influence had alienated the merchants from the King's case. If they had looked favorably on more state protection after WWI, they now strongly resented the monopoly the state had established over foreign trade and important sectors of domestic trade.[365] The clergy, which had been a target of both the educational reforms, the secularization process and some state control established over part of their traditional *vaqf* lands,[366] had been forced to accept a more liberal dress code for women, and was a part from the protestations of ayatollah Hassan Mudarris in the Majles[367], as good as silenced, was

[362] A.M. ANSARI, *Modern Iran since 1921*, London, Longman, 2003, pp.45, 61-65

[363] A. BANANI, *The Modernization of Iran 1921-1941*, Stanford, Stanford UP, 1961, p. 117

[364] S. CRONIN, "Riza Shah and the Paradoxes of Military Modernization in Iran 1921-1941" in S. CRONIN (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran,* London, Routledge, 2003, pp.37-64 (39)

[365] H. KATOUZIAN, "Riza Shah's Political Legitimacy and Social Base, 1921-1941" in S. CRONIN (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran,* London, Routledge, 2003, pp.15-36 (29)

[366] A. MAHRDAD, *Iran auf dem Weg zur Diktatur – Militarisierung un Widerstand 1919-1925*, Hannover, SOAK Verlag, 1976, pp.96-97

[367] S. AKHAVI, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran,* Albany, State University of New York Press, 1980, p.59

obviously not going to enter the arena in defense of the Shah. One undeniable step forward in enhancing state power during the reign of Reza Shah had however been the "nationalization" of the clergy. This did not mean the incorporation of the clergy in the state, but the "de-internationalizing" the clergy. In the Qajar period one of the strong points of the clerical institution that had permitted it to escape state control had been its power base in Iraq. The period of Reza Shah saw an important part of it leaving Iraq for Qom. There were still two sides to this medal. On the one side there was the fact that the state did now have a more national competitor which could be dealt with on a national scale. On the other side however the clergy could use this "nationalization" to develop even further its national power base and become a more powerful competitor to the State.[368]

Politically Reza Shah at first ruled through a triumvirate of a Minister of Court from the landowner class, Teymourtatche, a Minister of Finance, Prince Firuz of the Qajar nobility and a technocratic Minister of Justice, Davar, that together represented some kind of social base[369]. Yet at the very last during the thirties they had all been alienated from power by drastic means. Adding to this his huge personal enrichment which had made him the country's large landowner,[370] had left the Shah with himself and the Army. Yet when even the Army realized that Reza Shah's position had become untenable, the question merely became how and when Reza Shah "the Great" would be deposed.[371] The foreign invasion of Iran due to its relatively sympathetic attitude to Nazi Germany during World War II effectively answered this question.

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[368] N.R. KEDDIE (Y. RICHARD), *Modern Iran, Roots and Results of Revolution*, London, Yale University Press, 2003, p.103 and A. MAHRDAD, *Iran auf dem Weg zur Diktatur – Militarisierung un Widerstand 1919-1925*, Hannover, SOAK Verlag, 1976, pp.96-97
[369] A.M. ANSARI, *Modern Iran since 1921,* London, Longman, 2003, p.43
[370] X., "Iranian Nationalism and The Great Powers: 1872-1954", *MERIP Reports,* No.37, May 1975, p.1-28 (7)
[371] H. KATOUZIAN, "Riza Shah's Political Legitimacy and Social Base, 1921-1941" in S. CRONIN (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran,* London, Routledge, 2003, pp.15-36 (32-33)

3.4.   *The Pahlavi Dynasty: Second Act*

The quick defeat of an army specialized only or foremost in internal policing and the establishing of law and order signified the collapse of much of the successes obtained in those years. The collapse was especially visible on the level of state control over peripheral areas: regionalist tendencies rose once again. Especially the Turks and the Kurds. Until 1953, Mohammed Reza's reign, which officially started in 1941, when foreign powers put him in place of his father, proved to be more of a struggle *for* than an exercise *of* power. Pahlavi-sponsored journalists defended an argument very similar to what the Islamic republic would defend later on the same topic: "*The Turks and Kurds of Iran are not distinct nations, they are 'Iranians'*" and "*the 'puppet' governments in Kurdistan and Azarbaijan were a small band of communists and godless 'rascals'*".[372] There does indeed seem to have been some Soviet influence on the Kurdish national movement that even developed a Kurdish hymn to Stalin.[373] At the same time some other groups like the Qashqai clearly had pro-Nazi inclinations. Their strength was such that Mohammed Reza and the British army decided to use them against the pro-Soviet forces rather than continuing a desperate struggle with them.[374]

The clergy as well quickly reaffirmed its role in Iranian society and politics, a sign that Reza Shah's claimed successes against this social group had been little more than apparent. Ayatollah Kashani would come to incarnate this reemergence of the clergy and its eruption in the political arena. Kashani would play a major role in the 1953 events surrounding nationalist premier Mossadeq. Contrary to ayatollah Burujerdi, who defended a more quietist approach, Kashani stated that religion and politics were inseparable and that the clergy must

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[372] A. HASSANPOUR, "The Nationalist Movements in Azarbaijan and Kurdistan 1941-1946" in J. FORAN, *A Century of Revolution: Social Movements in Iran*, London, UCL Press, 1994, pp.78-105 (79)

[373] A.M. ANSARI, *Modern Iran since 1921*, London, Longman, 2003, p.93

[374] S. CRONIN, *Tribal Politics in Iran*, London, Routledge, 2007, p.193-195

intervene in politics to "*attend to the affairs of Muslims.*"[375] The Mossadeq-period, which has been documented exhaustively elsewhere, did if anything illustrate the weakness of the Iranian state in the period 1941-1953.[376] The pro-Moscow communist *Tudeh*-party played a major role, especially through its infiltration of the army and its strong trade union in the oil sector, the CCFTU. The clergy with ayatollah Kashani weighed on politics and even on the appointments of ministers.[377]

If Kashani is, and not without reason, presented today as a nationalist cleric, it is probably more correct to consider him a defender of clerical interests, who tried above all to avoid the reemergence of the kind of dictatorship that undermined the clergy's power and authority in the preceding decades. Indeed, when Mossadeq tried to reinforce state power, and more specifically the power of the executive, in the midst of allegations of Republicanism, Kashani turned against him.[378] Although for example the quietist ayatollah Burujerdi never openly sided with the Shah, it is undeniable that after the CIA inspired *coup* which led to the reaffirmation of Mohammed Reza and the strengthening of monarchy, a *modus vivendi* between the royal regime and the clergy was found all the easier since much of the clergy withdrew to mosques and religious colleges.[379] The acceptance by the government of certain educational reforms (of which a greater role for Islam in public

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[375] *Ettelaat* 17 March & 5 June 1951, as quoted by S. AKHAVI, "The Role of the clergy in Iranian Politics, 1949-1954", *in* J.A. BILL & Wm ROGER LOIS, *Mussadiq, Iranian Nationalism, and Oil*, London, I.B. Tauris, 1988, p.91-117 (96)

[376] The weakness of the state and in essence also the weakness of the Shah. This is arguably ironic since Mossadeq is today considered by some Iranian commentators, see M. TAHERI, "Darshaye Mossadeq baraye Ma", *Iran-e Farda,* No.41, Esfand 76 - Farvardin 77, pp.75-77 as the opponent of a concentration of power, while his emergence and politics illustrated the weakness of state power.

[377] S. AKHAVI, "The Role of the clergy in Iranian Politics, 1949-1954", *in* J.A. BILL & Wm ROGER LOIS, *Mussadiq, Iranian Nationalism, and Oil*, London, I.B. Tauris, 1988, p.91-117 (99-101)

[378] S. AKHAVI, "The Role of the clergy in Iranian Politics, 1949-1954", *in* J.A. BILL & Wm ROGER LOIS, *Mussadiq, Iranian Nationalism, and Oil*, London, I.B. Tauris, 1988, p.91-117 (103-110)

[379] S. AKHAVI, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran,* Albany, State University of New York Press, 1980, p.74

education) and the relative increase in the number of religious students showed how the balance of power was shifting away from the central state. The increase in the population of religious students had been visible since the collapse of the military regime of Reza Shah. Indeed between 1941-1942 and 1946-1947 the number of *tullab* students increased from 784 to 3057 a multiplication by 3,75. In early 1956 it was estimated to have reached 5,000 which came significantly close to the number of *tullab* students of just before the Reza Shah reforms.[380]

If on a general level the need to strengthen and develop Iranian central bureaucracy and its control over particular power concentrations made a durable alliance unlikely, two factors made it explode rather quickly. The first related to US President Kennedy's insistence to the Shah on the fact that military repression alone would not guarantee stability and that a more modern capitalist state had to be developed.[381] The second factor was the lesson the Shah himself had drawn from the Mossadeq period in which he risked to lose his thrown almost as rapidly as he had obtained it. Both the activist clergy nationalist middle classes had challenged his position without him being able to defend it. The lesson was well understood. *The Christian Science Monitor* observed: "*If the Shah can identify himself with successful reform, radical changes in the present social and political system of his country would not automatically mean the establishment of a republic.*"[382] The Shah had become aware that a new order and new elites were needed, not so much because "*the traditional power groups had consistently impeded modernization and circumscribed power to the center*"[383] but because his own position would be untenable if such a new order were not to be installed. Not surprisingly his father's policies were continued and reinforced: nation-

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[380] Compare the figures of S. AKHAVI, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran,* Albany, State University of New York Press, 1980, p.72 with D. MENASHRI, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran,* New York, Cornell UP, 1992, pp.102-103

[381] J.-P.DIGARD, B. HOURCADE & Y. RICHARD, *L'Iran au XXe siècle,* Paris, Fayard, 1996, p.120

[382] Foreign Office 371 157603 EP 1015/99 15 May 1961 as quoted in A.M. ANSARI, *Modern Iran since 1921*, London, Longman, 2003, p.150

[383] D. MENASHRI, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran,* New York, Cornell UP, 1992, p.160

building and three components of state-building by reinforcing the army, developing education and furthering the state's power and influence on the country side and autonomous groups.

The project of nation-building passed through the glorification not only of monarchy, with its supposedly eternal symbols, but also of the celebration of a mythical nation knowing "*injustice, lies, avarice and egotism to be the signs of evil and darkness*" and promoting "*justice, truth, and humanitarianism.*"[384] The mainly symbolic 1946 victory of the Iranian army against separatists in Iranian Azerbaijan and Iranian Kurdistan showed Mohammed Reza how reliant he would be on this military structure. [385] The new Shah was however confronted with a major challenge from within the armed forces: the *Sazeman-é Makhvi Afsaran-é Hezb-é Tudeh* (the Secret Organization of Officers of the Tudeh Party).[386] The communist Tudeh party had indeed succeeded in developing within the army an organization of officers that could be used against the shah. Whatever the limits this network might have had[387], it still was a potential threat to the regime.[388] The Shah expressed his feelings

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[384] M.R. PAHLAVI, *The White Revolution,* Tehran, Kayhan Press, s.d., p.20

[385] I use the word "symbolic" since the Iranians arrived when the Soviets had left and basically faced an inexperienced and under equipped enemy.

[386] See also X., *Chap dar Iran: Be Rouyati Asnad-a Savak: Sazeman-e Afsaran-e Hezb-e Tudeh, Ketab-e Shishom,* Tehran, Markaz-e Barrasi Asnad-e Tarikhi Vezarat-e Ettelaat, 1380

[387] Consider E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two Revolutions, revolution*s, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1983, p.338 who attributes the limits and failures of this network to, among other factors , the position of the officers-members and M. BEHROOZ, *Rebels with a cause,* I.B.Tauris, Londres, 2000, p.14

[388] In 1954 around 600 officers were arrested, see also the description of the network in S. ZABIH, *The Communist Movement in Iran*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1966. P. JAHAN-BAKHCH (*La question ouvrière à travers le devenir socio-politique en Iran 1941-1962,* Thèse de Doctorat d'Etat de Sciences Politiques sous la direction de M. le Professeur H. Portelli, Juillet 1990, UPX, p.450) counts 27 executed officers , of which Khosrow Rouzbeh, historical leader of the organization ; 42 officers condemned to death (reduced to life imprisonment or forced labor), 92 condemned for life with forced labor, 119 officers condemned to 15 years imprisonment, 79 to 10 years of individual incarceration, 7 to 8 years, 5 to 7 years, 38 to 4 years, 36 to 3 years and 3 officers to 18 months. Counting two « natural » deaths he gets to a total number of 450, mentioning however that the process concerned over 500 members of the military organization. E. ABRAHAMIAN (*Iran between two…, p.338*) gets to similar conclusions : 466 condemned in the period of three years after the discovery of the network in 1954 of which 144 life-sentences). Among

later in this way: "*even the commander of the most trusted battalion of my Imperial Guard was a hard-core Communist.*"[389] Moreover, the network's rapid, albeit partial, resurrection after the 1979 revolution, showed all its potential. The examples of a communist party infiltrating with such a success the armed forces are few in history. It remains an enigma why the secret organization has had such limited operational effects, but its very existence already permits to question the coherence of the military institution.

The attitude of the military during the 1953 events illustrates this even better. As history records, the CIA's intervention, of which the famous operation *Ajax* was only the start, convinced general Zahedi to overthrow Mossadeq and bring the Shah back from his temporary "exile" in Rome when it became clear that the initial hopes of the US to take over the British role in Iran would not materialize.[390] Although historians still disagree on the factual history of the time, two lines of thought can be distinguished.

The first one, proposed by Gasiorowski et Azimi,[391] asserts that the role of the Tudeh (and its military organization) during these events has been at best insignificant and at worst extremely negative. These authors state that the attempted coup of 16 August 1953 failed because of the deployment of pro-Mossadeq sections of the army. The CIA would then during two days have organized pseudo-Tudeh demonstrations, which would have been attended by genuine but

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these 22 colonels, 69 majors, 100 captains, 193 lieutenants, 19 sergeants, et 63 cadets. Other estimations go in the same sense (cf. M. BEHROOZ, "The 1953 Coup in Iran and the Legacy of the Tudeh", in M.J. GASIOROWSKI & M. BYRNE, *Mohammad Mossadeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran*, Syracuse (New York), Syracuse University Press, 2004, p.105). The Shah's fear can hence be understood.

[389] M.R. PAHLAVI, *Mission for my Country*, London, Hutchinson of London, 1960, p.105

[390] K. ROOSEVELT, *Countercoup, The struggle for the Control of Iran*, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1979; On the coup consider as well: S. KINZER, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*, Hoboken (NJ), John Wiley & Sons, 2003

[391] M.J. GASIOROWSKI & M. BYRNE, *Mohammad Mossadeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran*, Syracuse (New York), Syracuse University Press, 2004 and accepted also by J-P DIGARD, B. HOURCADE ET Y . RICHARD, *L'Iran au XXe siècle,* Paris, Fayard, 1996

misled Tudeh militants. These demonstrations were designed to offer an image of chaos and disorder in the streets, which would justify a return to "law and order". This return to order, implying above all a return to the barracks of pro-Mossadeq factions of the army and a mobilization of the anti-Mossadeq bazaaris, then opened the way to the putschist factions of the military. Indeed, these factions were no longer confronted with pro-Mossadeq troops, which had returned to the barracks, but only with demonstrators, the majority of which, according to this viewpoint, was organized by the CIA, and hence anti-Mossadeq. This thesis, denying any significant and autonomous role to the Tudeh military organization, does nonetheless acknowledge at least two factions in the military.

A second line of thought, which differs quite importantly from the first, has been offered by Abrahamian and, to a lesser extent, Behrooz.[392] They underline the action of the Tudeh prior to and during the events of the 16 August 1953, describing it in a rather positive way. According to these authors, the military organization of the Tudeh would have contributed in an important way to the failure of the first coup attempt. The organization would indeed have warned Mossadeq of the coup preparations by offering him the information they had collected within the army. Behrooz more or less agrees with the first thesis on the fake or pseudo-Tudeh demonstrations of the 17th and 18th , but stresses that interviews of the time show that none of the Tudeh militants present at the time noticed any of these "fake Tudehis". [393] This obviously doesn't prove that the latter did not exist, but it might indicate that the first thesis exaggerates their importance. Since the Tudeh demonstrations continued to increase in size, Mossadeq, fearing the Tudeh's slogans of a "democratic republic" which recalled Eastern European republics[394], would then have used the armed forces against these demonstrations.

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[392] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two revolutions*, …, p.277-280 and M. BEHROOZ, "The 1953 Coup in Iran and the Legacy of the Tudeh", in M.J. GASIOROWSKI & M. BYRNE, *Mohammad Mossadeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran*, Syracuse (New York), Syracuse University Press, 2004, p.118
[393] M. BEHROOZ, *l.c.*, p.118-119
[394] *ibid.*

By arresting these demonstrators Mossadeq actually destroyed part of his support, since, notwithstanding past contradictions, his National Front and the Tudeh were still fundamentally on the same side. By using the armed forces against the Tudeh, Mossadeq disorientated the party, which proved no longer able to offer him any real support at the time of the second coup some hours later. This thesis, without denying the pro-Mossadeq factions of the army, hence stresses two other factions of the army: the Tudeh-faction and the "reactionary" faction.

The second thesis probably offers a more accurate image, since the first one fails to clarify, among other things, why the Tudeh military organization, with its considerable importance, would not have acted at all against the coup. The second line of thought is also a lot closer to the memoirs of Tudeh militants of the time. In his memoirs Amou'i, one of these officers describes to some detail how the Tudeh used this network in order to protect Mossedegh [395]

Aware of the weaknesses caused by this situation the Shah tried to increase his influence on the army in every way possible. One example is the unconstitutional custom of appointing his own nominees to head the War Ministry[396] The Shah took the 1953 warning very serious and he made sure his reign would see an essential transformation of the Iranian military. Two major transformations can be distinguished.

In the first place, Mohammed Reza erected the SAVAK (Security and Intelligence Organization of the Country), which would become an all-powerful repression and intelligence apparatus, specialized in tracking and assassinating political opponents. Although not a military organization *pur sang* SAVAK took care of political opponents in the military as well. It offered the Shah an extra tool to influence on the

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[395] M.A. AMOU-I, *Dord-é Zamane,* Tehran, Anzam Entesharat, 1377; Consider as well F.M. JAVANSHIR, *Tajrobe 28 Mordad,* republished by Navideno, 1385, pp.82-84 and the memoirs of future party secretary N. KIANOURI, *Hezb-e Tudeh Iran va Doktor-é Mossadegh*, Tehran, republished by http://chawoshan.mihanblog.com , 1359
[396] E. ABRAHAMIAN, "The Crowd in Iranian Politics 1905-53" in H. AFSHAR, *Iran: A Revolution in Turmoil*", London, McMillan, 1985, pp.121-148 (127)

internal functioning of the army, that had revealed itself vulnerable to outside (communist) infiltration. While the Shah used the SAVAK to limit the armed forces' power, he also gave generals important political roles, to assure the military's allegiance.[397] At the same time however he merged, or tried to do so, in his person both governmental and military policies. In an interview then general Fereydoun Djam describes the interaction between these three actors: "*there were two independent chains of command (…) the armed forces were separated from government policies which were in case dictated by the Shah. Therefore the Shah alone was the coordinator of both military and government policies.*"[398]

The second major military "innovation" of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi was the "Americanization" of the armed forces. Grateful to the US to whom he owed his return to power and aware of its indispensableness to his reign, he sponsored the Americanization of the Iranian armed forces. He hence made Iran a typical example of what Tilly describes as a characteristic of the armed forces of most non-European: "*states that have come into being recently through decolonization or through reallocations of territory by dominant states have acquired their military organization from outside*".[399] A part from the massive arms sales and other forms of technological military collaboration, one of the main signs of this Americanization was found in the presence of American advisors and technical personnel in Iran. According to an investigation of the American Senate in 1980, American military personnel and their relatives amounted to around 50.000 and 60.000 people. Moreover, the Iranian army structure was highly dependent on these foreign counselors since it lacked know-how, experience and skills to maintain

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[397] H. AFSHAR, "The Army", in H. AFSHAR (ed.), *Iran: A Revolution in Turmoil*, , McMillan, 1985, pp.175-198 (186)

[398] Interview by Haleh Afshar. Extract published in H. AFSHAR, "The Army", in H. AFSHAR (ed.), *Iran: A Revolution in Turmoil*, McMillan, 1985, pp.175-198 (187)

[399] C. TILLY, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime", in P. EVANS, D. RUESCHEMEYER and T. SKOCPOL (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In,* New York, Cambridge UP, 1985, pp.169-187 (186)

and use the American military equipment purchased in such massive amounts by their king.[400]

With the 1953 coup and the establishment of SAVAK the Shah had succeeded in bringing the army more or less back under his control and make the military once more the central part of Pahlavi reign. On education as well Mohammed Reza decided to follow in his father's footsteps. A campaign of public and secular education was launched towards the countryside, which the clergy immediately grasped as being directed against its interests. [401] The powerful revolt of the clergy, which would become famous as the 15th Khordad Movement and lead to the exile of Khomeini demonstrated hence as much the clergy's understanding of the direction of the new policy as it illustrated the corps' reestablished power. Reza Khan had been able to avoid such a large revolt by undermining the clergy's power base and countering it with a strong army and a developing bureaucracy.[402] Mohammad Reza was not. The Literacy committees that had existed under his father were reestablished as a Literacy Corps in which at the end of 1977 over 166,949 men and 33,642 women had served. The new Shah also extended the campaign to rural areas, and while in 1962/1963 only 7930 schools could be found in 7,000 villages, at the end of his reign 30,000 villages were reached by 33,500 schools. Nonetheless by 1974 due to a strong growth of population the number of illiterates increased by 2 million people.[403]

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[400] S. ZABIH, *The Iranian Military in Revolution and War*, London & New York, Routledge, 1988, pp.9-12

[401] E. NARAGHI, *Enseignement et changements sociaux en* Iran, Paris, Eds.de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1992 & A. TABARI, "The Role of the Clergy in Modern Iranian Politics", *in* N.R. KEDDIE, *Religion and Politics in Iran*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1983, p.60

[402] N.R. KEDDIE (Y. RICHARD), *Modern Iran, Roots and Results of Revolution*, London, Yale University Press, 2003, p.90

[403] D. MENASHRI, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran,* New York, Cornell UP, 1992, pp.180-189

If quantitatively the Shah's reforms showed impressive results[404], qualitatively they were less impressive, and proportionately ever less students that graduated from high school got access to universities. This was partially a consequence of the lack of quality of high school graduates, or better, of the education they had received, but equally of the lack of university infrastructure. The Vocational Schools Mohammed Reza had founded, once again inspired by the work of his father in this domain, lagged behind both quantitatively as qualitatively. Designed to form agricultural and technological experts the colleges received mostly low-grade elementary school graduates and rather than 28,000 students as foreseen by the development program (1963/1964 to 1968/1969) they had only 16,000 inscriptions; while regular schools surpassed the program's expectations by enrolling 658,000 students rather than 400,000. [405]

But military and educational reforms to tighten the state's grip on society and solidify his position were not enough. The Shah became ever more wary of possible opponents and profoundly disliked the feeble opposition he sometimes had to endure from the big landlords on the one hand, which were no doubt nostalgic of the days of the weaker more feudal-like Qajar dynasty and the left, or what was left of it, demanding a land reform on the other. Moreover the development of industry[406], highly accentuated, needed a different economic order in the countryside. Rather than being a "personal policy choice", land reform was hence imposed on the Shah. Both internal as external pressures, like the land reform underway in Iraq after the 1958 revolution, had made it inevitable.[407]

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[404] For other indicative numbers see A.R. ARASTEH, *Education and Social Awakening in Iran 1850-1968*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1969

[405] D. MENASHRI, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran,* New York, Cornell UP, 1992, pp.190-201

[406] Industrial development would stagnate due to the revolution, yet increased between 1973 and 1978 by 14%. J.-P.DIGARD, B. HOURCADE & Y. RICHARD, *L'Iran au XXe Siècle,* Nouvelle édition, Paris, Fayard, 2007, p.255

[407] M.J. AMID, *Agriculture, Poverty and Reform in Iran*, London, Routledge, 1990, p.71

The agricultural development initiated with the White Revolution of 1962. Some Western observers, admiring the high level of economic growth in the period 1962-1972, described the White Revolution as removing of loosening "*many obstacles impeding Iran's development*".[408] Other, more attentive, observers as Bani Sadr noticed how all measures regarded growth almost without productive investment.[409] The fact that the Shah's development programs strongly based on foreign importations did not allow an autonomous national bourgeoisie to blossom. At first choked by the chains of "feudalism", it were now the royal "development" policies that blocked their ascension. The bazaar for example had the habit of using its own capital and choosing its own suppliers, which contrasted rather strongly with the new habits of becoming "exclusive" representatives dependent on foreign firms. Politically as well the national bourgeoisie saw its ascension blocked by the system's standstill, a situation that compared very unfavorably with Mossadeq's policies.[410]

On the countryside the White Revolution reforms were the beginning of a process that may well have been one of the more fundamental causes of the monarchy's downfall. Katouzian identifies how the Iranian countryside, probably not without resemblance to what Marx describes as the Asiatic mode of production,[411] was characterized by the domination of villages by intermediaries of landlords (generally absent because living in the city).[412] Exact numbers are difficult to obtain, yet according to estimations before the reform 56% of all lands and somewhere between 34-43% of all villages were owned by large

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[408] C. ISSAWI, "The Iranian Economy 1925-1975: Fifty years of Economic Development" in G. LENCZOWSKI, *Iran under the Pahlavis,* Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1978, pp.129-166 (135-136)

[409] A.H. BANISADR, "Développement de la consommation du future et misère", in P. VIEILLE & A.H. BANISADR, *Pétrole et Violence,* Ed. Anthropos, 1974, pp.65-136 (69-73)

[410] P.VIEILLE, *La féodalité et l'Etat en Iran*, Paris, Eds. Anthropos, 1975, p.266-268

[411] See for example the irrigation system of *qanat*s K. MARX, "La domination britannique en Inde", in K. MARX & F. ENGELS, *Œuvres Choisies*, Tome 1, Moscou, Editions du Progrès, 1970, 508-513 (509-510)

[412] H. KATOUZIAN, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran: Despotism & Pseudo-Modernism 1926-1979*, New York, New York UP, 1980, p.229

proprietors (although *bigari*, imposed labor was also common).[413] Others mention that 54% of the land was cultivated by sharecroppers totally dependent on the landlords, 50% of which were considered absentees.[414] This class of landowners could be split up in different categories: members of the court, traditional landlords and merchants. Because of their contacts with the urban reality and the interdependence between bazaar and agricultural producers in the countryside, this class often mixed with commercial and state bourgeoisie.[415]

In accordance with his plans of developing a classical capitalist state, be it in combination with an authoritarian political environment, the Shah tried to introduce capitalist production relations in the countryside as well. The White Revolution had three phases. Theoretically the first phase was directed against landlords possessing more than one village and nomads. The second phase was intended to hit land ownership of the clergy (*waqf*) and the third phase was supposed to force landlords, that had until then more or less successfully avoided excessive obedience to the Shah's program, to sell some land to the peasants working on it at a price fixed by the state.[416] Other accounts see the pro-peasant bias of the first phase reversed in the second phase, which largely guaranteed property rights of the owners, that could retain more land and were even permitted to buy tenants out. [417]

The Shah's scope was double, destroy the electoral support of the landlords and undermine the popularity of those forces demanding a

[413] W.B. FISHER (ed.), *The Land of Iran, The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol.1, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1968, p.687
[414] R. GRAHAM, *The Illusion of Power,* London, Croom Helm, 1978, p.40
[415] F. HALLIDAY, *Iran: Dictatorship and Development*, New York, Penguin Books, 1979, p.106 and T. SKOCPOL, "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution" in T. SKOCPOL, *Social Revolutions in the Modern World,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1994, pp.240-258 (245-246)
[416] F. NAHAVANDI, *Aux Sources de la Révolution iranienne,* Paris, L'Harmattan, 1988, pp.98-100
[417] M.J. AMID, *Agriculture, Poverty and Reform in Iran*, London, Routledge, 1990, pp.86-87

land reform.[418] His land reform consisted among other things in the development of agricultural holdings or corporations.[419] These were, contrary to what was the case for landlords who could retain "just" one village, not limited in size.[420] Moreover a redistribution of lands was initiated in which land was given to small peasants, officially with the scope of permitting them to develop their own private agricultural activities.[421] In reality, as Abrahamian remarks, for every peasant that got a piece of land big enough to be able to start an independent farming activity, three peasants received a totally useless amount of land.[422] Farazmand gives an overview of the situation after the land reform in which the new distribution of land is illustrated quantitatively.[423] Knowing that something between 7-10 hectares was considered the "useful minimum"[424]; 320 peasants were allowed between 300 and 25,000 hectares; 9,000 of which the majority absentees 100 to 300 hectares; 37,000 peasant 51 to 100 hectares; 100,000 11 to 50 hectares; while 1,200,000 were left with 3 to 10 hectares and 1,000,000 with ½ to 3 hectares of which about 80% with less than 1 hectare. Finally about 1,400,000 were left landless. They would become the new landless wage laborers in what the Shah intended to be agricultural capitalist production relations. Statistics of the International Labor Office mention how among the big landowners 350 families had farms of over 300 hectares; 1,000 families possessed farms between 200 and 300 hectares; 4,000 families possessed between 100 and 200 hectares.[425]

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[418] F.E. MOGHADAM, "State, Political Stability, and Property Rights" in S. RAHNEMA & S. BEHDAD, *Iran after the Revolution: Crisis of an Islamic state*, London, I.B. Tauris, 1995, p. 45-64 (57)

[419] For a more detailed description of the types of corporations see A.K.S. LAMBTON, *The Persian Land Reform 1962-1966*,Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969, pp.291-346

[420] R. GRAHAM, *The Illusion of Power,* London, Croom Helm, 1978, pp.40-41

[421] On the importance of such small peasants even before the reform see M.GHOLI MAJD, "Small Landowners and Land Distribution in Iran, 1962-71", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1, February 2000, pp. 123-153

[422] E. ABRAHAMIAN, "Structural Causes of the Iranian Revolution", *MERIP Reports,* No.87, May 1980, pp.21-26

[423] A. FARAZMAND, *The State, Bureaucracy and Revolution in Modern Iran*, New York, Praeger, 1989, p.139

[424] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *A History of Modern Iran*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2008, p.132

[425] E.ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two,…*, p.429

When adding to it the 40,000 smaller landlords owning between 50 and 100 hectares of land, it can be said that a little more than 45,000 families owned as much as twenty percent of Iran's cultivated land.[426] Although with these numbers it does not come as a enormous surprise that big landlords were able to retain the best lands with the best infrastructure,[427] and considering that even in urban Iran right up to the time of the revolution pre-capitalist crafts coexisted side by side with industrial enterprises,[428] capitalist production relations were in some way installed.[429] Notwithstanding certain continuities, the reform offered a new kind of stratification to the countryside, of which a higher degree of centralization, with 1,300 commercial enterprises, and state involvement was one of the characteristics.[430]

As Fred Halliday mentions in a Leninist sense commodity relations were installed just as a separation of land and labor, the growth of a home market with the exchanges of commodities and the development of a capitalist class structure. [431] By giving less than the viable minimum to many peasants the state hoped to strengthen this process and "encourage" the peasants to participate as wage laborers in state run farming firms while still taking advantage of the propaganda effect linked to a land reform. This propaganda effect was all the more clear when the clergy, losing some of its lands, tried to revolt against the reforms. The small peasants, who would in the end benefit the least from the reform, did not support the clerical rebellion, because they considered they could only benefit from the coming reforms.[432]

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[426] *Ibid.*

[427] R. GRAHAM, *The Illusion of Power,* London, Croom Helm, 1978, p.42

[428] H. MOGHISSI & S. RAHNEMA, "The Working Class and the Islamic State in Iran" in S. CRONIN (ed.), *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran*, London, Routledge/Curzon, 2004, p.284

[429] M. MOADDEL, "Class Struggle in Post-Revolutionary Iran", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3., August 1991, pp. 317-343 (318)

[430] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *A History of Modern Iran*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2008, p.132-133

[431] F.HALLIDAY, *Iran: Dictatorship and Development*, New York, Penguin Books, 1979, p.104

[432] A. MOLAJANI, *Sociologie politique de la Révolution iranienne,* Paris, L'Harmattan, 1999, p.101

Yet the land reform also had other, maybe less intended consequences. First of all many of the landlords, even when they reconverted successfully to other more modern capitalist activities, kept a profound resentment towards the Shah. As Firouzeh Nahavandi correctly underlines, the White Revolution alienated the Shah from one of the only classes he could reasonably expect support from for his absolutist way of rule.[433] Moreover, the agricultural reform impoverished many peasants. The newly formed "rural bourgeoisie", in essence those benefiting from the reform, became ever less numerous, an inevitable evaluation considering the nature of the land reform. Some more fortunate peasants that decided to emigrate to the cities to invest in urban real estate, but for many others it was a deteriorating economic situation that forces them to leave the countryside. Wanting to try their luck in the cities, they often became members of the so-called *lumpen* or subproletariat (*mostazafan*). Although due to the land reform, the relative share of independent farmers increased from 5 to 76% of the rural population,[434] the part of Iranians employed in agriculture decreased with 23% between 1956 and 1976,.[435] Between 1966 and 1976 the urban population increased with about 6% annually. In the same decade around 2,111,000 persons emigrated to urbanized environments, hence 35% of the total increase in urban population came from immigration.[436] If these numbers partially show the extent of urbanization, the social consequences of this migration are more difficult to measure. It remains indisputable that if Tehran in 1979 was a city profoundly divided between the rich north and the poor slums of the south, immigration had more than a marginal role in it. A member of the upper classes at that time asserts that since living in the north was not very different from living in any European city, the houses, offices, clothes, schools, restaurants and overall the behavior of the

[433] F. NAHAVANDI, *Aux Sources de la Révolution iranienne*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1988, p.102
[434] E.ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two,…*, p.429
[435] M. REZA GHODS, *Iran in the Twentieth Century: A Political History*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989, p.204
[436] F. KAZEMI, *Poverty and Revolution in Iran*, New York, New York UP, 1980, p.13 and A. MOLAJANI, *Sociologie politique de la révolution iranienne*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1999, p.119

population were perfect copies of their European equivalents, they never felt the necessity to visit the south of the city.[437] The few exchanges between both parts of the city went through the workers living in the south but working in the north of the city. [438] Rural migration that added a subproletariat to the existent working class in the cities only accentuated this social segregation.

Although the activity and class consciousness of these immigrants differed depending on the generation of migration, it is probably not too much of a generalization to describe them as the "urban poor" or even, considering their exclusion from the benefits of development and participation in institutions, as "marginal".[439] In the end these immigrants, in their diversity, would prove a fruitful "fishpond" for the clergy and bazaaris during and especially after the revolution. Khosrokhavar states that " *the ever increasingly fascist vision of the Hezbollah is to consider in relation with the adhesion of the urban plebs to the post-revolutionary order. (…) It mobilizes this plebs assuring it a central place in street parades (…), Friday prayers, (…) and by supporting it financially with the distribution of prebends by revolutionary organizations.*" [440] In this manner different organizations and « Islamic » foundations bought an efficient support for Khomeini. Hard not to see the parallel with the 10 December Society of Louis Bonaparte.[441] Although officially a society of beneficence it had no other function than buying support for Bonaparte. It remains ironic that those poor peasants that initially seemed to support the Shah's White Revolution ended up as urban sub-proletariat giving a decisive support to the establishment of Khomeini's

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[437] T. MCDANIEL, *Autocracy, Modernisation and Revolution in Russia and Iran*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991, p.131

[438] F. KAZEMI & L.REYNOLDS WOLFE, "Urbanization, Migration and Politics of Protest in Iran", *in* M.E. BONINE, *Population, Poverty and Politics in Middle East Cities*, Gainesville (Florida), University Press of Florida, 1997, p.259 (256-284)

[439] A. BAYAT, *Street Politics, Poor people's movements in Iran*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997, p.24

[440] F. KHOSROKHAVAR, *L'Utopie sacrifiée,* Paris, Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1993, p.164

[441] K. MARX, *Le 18 Brumaire,* in K. MARX, *Les luttes de classes en France*, Paris, Gallimard, FolioHistoire, 2002, p.244-245

power. At the same time the old concentrations of private power in the hands of the landlords were left almost unchanged. Indeed as a public servant of the time asserts, the Shah's objective had never been to expropriate the class of landowners, but rather to integrate them in the state structure.[442] As time would show, the only thing that the Shah had really succeeded in, had been turning one of the oldest concentrations of private power against his regime. In pre-revolutionary times French revolutionaries had had to seduce the aristocracy, in Iran the Shah's policies drove part of this class, even reconverted, in their arms.[443]

However, and this is extremely important to underline, the changes made in the socio-economic composition of the countryside were not reflected by equal changes in the development of the state's bureaucracy and legitimacy, since the structural changes were "*primarily derived from the personal power and authority of the monarch*" and "*designed to strengthen his power.*"[444]

If one would have to indicate one rationale of the Shah's policies on the political level, it might be the tendency to centralize power ever more in his own hands. The dissolution of the two royalist parties and their replacement by an even more loyal party Rastakhiz in 1975 symbolize in an unambiguous way this political absolutism. This party intended to invade what had been the exclusive grounds of the traditional classes and more importantly the bazaar and the clergy, by forcing some of them to join the party and opening its own Chambres of Guilds and branches of the bazaar, while dissolving century-old autonomous guilds.[445] It were not only the Shah's socially progressive reforms that hurt the clergy, but also his insistence on what one newspaper called "nationalizing religion": imposing public accountability to religious endowments and foundations, limiting the publication of religious

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[442] F.HALLIDAY, *Iran: Dictatorship and Development*, New York, Penguin Books, 1979, p.134

[443] S.E.FINER, *History of Government from the Earliest Times,* Vol.III, Oxford, Oxford UP, 1997,p.1523

[444] F.E. MOGHADAM, *From Land Reform to Revolution: The Political Economy of Agricultural Development in Iran 1962-1979*, London, Tauris Academic Studies, 1996, p.201

[445] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *A History of Modern Iran*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2008, p.151

books to those institutions approved of by the state and increasing state influence on religious colleges.[446] The developments in rural Iran intended to increase the role of the State, be it on the economic level by the corporations, be it on the social level, with the development of public education. If some kind of socio-economic development was indisputably achieved, the political area remained very exclusive. While the State's importance grew, important actors as the clergy or even the bazaar were increasingly excluded from the political arena, while seeing there traditional "*chasse gardée*" come under government scrutiny.

3.5. *Net Results in State Formation*

Inspired by Lenin's *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Nicos Poulantzas asserted in his *Political Power and Social Classes* that no social formation presents itself ever in pure form. It always consists of different and intertwined "pure" modes of production.[447] There is probably no better example of this statement than the second Pahlavi king's rule. The best illustration of it is offered by the origins and causes of the Shah's White Revolution.

Notwithstanding the emergence of industry, accompanied the development of trade unions and workers' revolts, until the mid-twentieth century some kind of feudalism was the dominant economic and social system of society in rural Iran.[448] After the 1953 agitation

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[446] [446] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *A History of Modern Iran*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2008, p.152

[447] N. POULANTZAS, *Pouvoir Politique et Classes Sociales,* Tome 1, Paris, François Maspéro, 1978, p.9

[448] See N. KEDDIE, "The Iranian Power Structure and Social Change: 1800-1969", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, January 1971, pp.3-20 also quoted in A. FARAZMAND, *The State, Bureaucracy and Revolution in Modern Iran,* New York, Praeger, 1989, p.70 In our opinion the nuance offered by J.A BILL, "The social and economic foundations of power in contemporary Iran", *The Middle East Journal,* Vol. 17, No. 4, Autumn, 1963, pp. 400-418 (400) does not fundamentally change these authors' analysis.

around nationalist prime minister Mossadeq, the US started inciting the Shah, with Israel the best guarantee for US regional interests, to develop a traditional capitalist state, deemed more stable than outright despotic rule.[449]

What were then after two Pahlavi-kings and more than a century since "modernization" began within the boundaries of the country, the results on the field of state formation? Some of these results, notably on education, tribal policies and the economy have already been cited. Yet what has to be evaluated is how the state performed, or better how the Shah performed, in subduing those other concentrations of private power that had challenged the state's role since the Qajar period. Two of those concentrations in particular had proven able to undermine the process of state formation and the extension of infrastructural state power: the *bazaar* and the clergy. Sabouri identifies above all three actors of the Islamic revolution. First the intellectuals, bureaucrats and lettered, then the clergy and finally the bazaar.[450] Although this classification is indubitably a bit reductive, it justifies the attention that will go to clergy and bazaar under this section.

In order to assess how much competition to the state these concentrations of private power really formed, I will envisage the clergy's degree of institutionalization. In short I will assess if the clergy is more than just a social group, if it truly had the capacity of acting as a challenger to the state. For the bazaar the institutional question, although not superfluous, seems of lesser importance, attention should primarily go to its nature and considerations of its socio-political character. Can it be considered an actor whose actions exceed the

See also H. RICHARD, "Land Reform and Agribusiness in Iran", *MERIP Reports,* No.43, December 1975, pp. 3-24 (5)

[449] S. AKHAVI. "Shi'ism, Corporatism, and Rentierism in the Iranian Revolution," in J.COLE,
Comparing Muslim Societies: Knowledge and the State In a World Civilization, University of Michigan
Press, 1992, pp. 261-293

[450] R. SABOURI, *Les révolutions iraniennes,* Paris, L'Harmattan, 1996, pp.124-153

domain of business and economics? Is it in other words justified to consider it an actor opposing state formation and centralization?

3.5.1. Concentrations of Private Power

3.5.1.1. The Bazaar

Analyzing the pre-revolutionary class structure of Iran and the consequences the Shah's reforms had on it, a distinction between modern middle classes and traditional middle classes is often made.[451] The socio-economic reforms of the Shah did undeniably create some kind of new or modern middle class, many of which received education in the US, very often employed as technocrats. Exemplary is indeed the growth of state bureaucracy. Although bureaucratization had already started under the first Pahlavi Shah,[452] its continuation caused the Ministry of Economy to triple and the Ministry of Education to double in size between 1956-1963.[453] Although the distinction between modern and traditional middle classes is certainly not meaningless, it should not be exaggerated. In Mossadeq's National Front were active members of both traditional, with the Tehran Association of Bazaar Trade and Craft Guilds[454], and more modern middle classes or technocrats, with for example the Iran Party.[455] However, since it were especially the traditional middle classes and above all those present in the bazaar that most successfully mobilized their support and shaped the post-revolutionary state, the bazaar merits some attention.

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[451] See for example: J.A. BILL, *The Politics of Iran: Groups, Classes and Modernization,* Columbus (Ohio), Merill, 1972

[452] S.A. ARJOMAND, *The Turban for the Crown,* Oxford, Oxford UP, 1988, pp. 59-74

[453] J.A. BILL, *The Politics of Iran: Groups, Classes and Modernization,* Columbus (Ohio), Merill, 1972, pp.66-67, as used by W. THOM WORKMAN, *The Social Origins of the Iran-Iraq War,* Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994, pp.44-45

[454] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *A History of Modern Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2008, p.115

[455] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two revolutions,* Princeton, Princeton UP, 1982, p.253

Orientalist accounts of Iran and Islamic countries in general are often characterized by a strange sense of fascination towards it.[456] The clergy as well is often and generally not without reason linked to the bazaar. But how to qualify the bazaar? What is the nature of this seemingly separated social space? Is it an independent sector of the economy or on the contrary a highly interdependent one? Most Orientalist approaches appear unable or unwilling to answer these questions. In his admirable study of the bazaar of Sefrou (Morocco) Clifford Geertz understandably regrets the lack of scholarship that treats the bazaar as a separate cultural formation, as a social institution and as an economic (proto-?)form.[457] Geertz underlines that the bazaar is a lot more than just a place where people meet to cheat, he describes it as a particular and separate system of social relations and a special kind of economy centered around the consumption of goods and services.

It lies beyond the scope of this analysis to offer a profound analysis of the Iranian bazaar, only a brief assessment of its main characteristics can be presented here. As will be seen, the clergy-bazaar alliance was a plain encounter of well-understood interests, rather than an ideological or automatic choice.[458] Or what Nacify has called: "a symbiotic relationship".[459] Classical Marxist analyses would insist on the class nature of the bazaar. This generally leads to some kind of analysis of the bazaar as a (petty-)bourgeoisie or national bourgeoisie with a incoherent and unstable attitude towards the *compradore* bourgeoisie or the big bourgeoisie. Such an, admittedly simplistic, scheme could then account for the hesitating and ambiguous nature so characteristic of the bazaar's attitude towards the ruling classes throughout the twentieth century.

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[456] See for example W .M. WEISS, *The Bazaar: Markets and Merchants of the Islamic World*, New York, Thames & Hudson, 1998

[457] C. GEERTZ, *Le Souk de Sefrou, sur l'économie du bazar*, Paris, Editions Bouchène, 2003, p.57

[458] In contrast with N.R. KEDDIE, *Roots of Revolution – An Interpretative History of Modern Iran*, London, Yale University Press, 1981

[459] M. NAFICY, *Klerus, Basar und die iranische Revolution*, Hamburg, Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1993, pp.37-43

However when trying to increase the complexity of the analysis the primary question should be if anything like a bazaar exists. Or better, if it can be considered as a separate entity. In other words, is what Geertz states sufficient to include the bazaar as a separate social and unified entity or, why not, institution? In other words, did the bazaar constitute, at least at the socio-economic level, a credible opponent to the state?

The use of the concept "bazaaris" as one category or social group is indeed not that self-evident. The frequently used concept seems to erase immediately all kinds of socio-economic differences existent within the bazaar. Moreover, a distinction would probably have to be made between the urban bazaars of the great cities (Mahshad, Tehran, Isfahan, Tabriz, Shiraz) and those in rural areas, or even among different bazaars in the same city.

Nacify offers us a clear and sufficiently simplified categorization,[460] which allows us on the one hand to distinguish quite finely between different groups within the bazaar and, on the other, because of its explicit rebuttal of Marxism, to consider the bazaar from a Weberian point of view (*Schichte*). [461] Nacify mentions the "big" traders (*tujaar-e bozorg*), the middlemen between these and the retail salesmen (*bonakdar* and *dallal*), bankers (*sarraf*, those that offer credit to the bazaaris), producers and manufacturers (*karkhanehdar* and *kargahdar*) and finally the small retail salesmen (*kaseb* or *taji-e kuchek*) and in the same category street vendors (*pilehvar*). Artisans (*pishevar*) and "people of the square or place" (*meydani*, often but not necessarily fruit or vegetable sellers). Prestige and power of these differs greatly, but such are not necessarily linked to economic capital. It seems obvious that a big trader's prestige and influence will be superior to that of a street vendor. However, so-called middlemen, lacking any significant economic capital, frequently enjoy more respect than others with a bigger share of economic and material possessions.

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[460] M. NACIFY, *o.c.*, pp.37-43
[461] M. WEBER, *Economie et Société,* Tome 1, Paris, Pocket, 1995

This categorization underlines the, at least theoretical, possibility of class struggle in the bazaar. If the guilds of the craftsmen, artisans and shopkeepers can be considered to represent the bazaar's middle classes,[462] workers, small salesmen, pilehvar, pishevar and the strange combination between *meydani*'s and *luti*'s could have very different interests from those of the bazaar's middle classes and theoretically revolt. [463] This however often remain merely theoretical, since even though factions have existed among bazaaris, an important conflict, dividing the bazaar along class lines has yet to emerge. It seems that rather on the contrary the masses of the bazaar have generally been mobilized by the big traders.

The seemingly total absence of infighting along class lines brings us to the core argument concerning political action of the bazaar: its remarkable cohesion. What is to be explained in other words is that organic feeling of unity, the "*Wir-Gefühl*".[464] What seems to be missing among the bazaari proletariat or subproletariat of the bazaar is class consciousness. Can this corporatist solidarity among different members of the bazaar be explained by mere geographical closeness? Or by some kind of class or communitarian solidarity?[465] A more prolific approach might be to consider the reasons of collective political action of the bazaar.

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[462] A. ASHRAF, "Bazaar and Mosque in Iran's Revolution", *MERIP Reports*, March-April 1983, p.16-18 (16)

[463] So-called Luti's are considered some kind of physical defence force. Characterized by an ambiguous morality (sometimes very religious and moralizing, then again the incarnation of opposite values), they have at specific times transformed in civil guards (some type of neighbourhood watch) of which the scope was never entirely clear. At times they seemed to maintain public order, at other they were considered installing their own criminal order. The common culture they share with the meydani's has often led to a remarkable inter-group solidarity. Although the important political role they obtained during the revolution decreased gradually, they are still an existent and somewhat impenetrable actor.

[464] M. NAFICY, *Klerus, Basar und die iranische Revolution*, Hamburg, Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1993, Mitteilungen 45, p.35

[465] Consider: S. ZUBAIDA, « Class and Community in Urban Politics », *in* K.BROWN, B.HOURCADE, M. JOLE, C. LIAUZU, P. SLUGLETT, S. ZUBAIDA (eds.), *Etat, ville et mouvements sociaux au Maghreb et au Moyen-Orient – Urban Crises and Social Movements in the Middle East*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1989, p.67 (57-71)

What have been the reasons for the bazaar to revolt? As was illustrated above most times the bazaar acted as a corporation defending its collective rights and position in the Iranian economy. "*Reza Shah established a modern code of commerce and a series of laws regulating lending, credit, and taxes in his efforts to laicize the Bazar. These measures, as well as those taken later by Mohammad Reza Shah were applied only partially to the Bazari system, while the Bazar did what it could to elude the state legal system.*"[466] Bazaari interests did not always parallel clerical interests. When the clergy turns against Mossadeq a large part of the bazaar remains loyal to him.[467] No miracle in this because Mossadeq as the incarnation of national bourgeoisie incarnated certain policies the bazaar favored. More concretely the bazaar had been displeased by the massive imports of foreign products of which they controlled much less distribution and prices. Only force made them reopen their shops after the coup of 19 august 1953. During the Mossadeq trial, in November of the same year, the Tehran bazaar closed down once more. The Shah's answer was unforgiving: 300 bazaaris were arrested, 218 sent into exile and parts of the bazaar's roofs were destroyed by the notorious general Zahedi. This piece of collective action of the bazaar, although one should not be blind for internal contradictions in any of its actions, illustrates very concretely how the bazaar acts as a professional corporation in its own (economic) interest. As Rotblat's long-term study demonstrates, the maintaining of its dominant position in the Iranian economy and the very survival of the bazaar are in this sense a transcending interest which allows to unify the bazaar.[468]

Assessing the bazaar as a corporation allows us to evaluate the omnipresent religious sentiment in a different way. Mottadeh notes

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[466] M. MOZAFFARI, "Why The Bazar Rebels", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 28, No.4., November 1991, pp. 377-391 (378)

[467] M. PARSA, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution*, New Brunswick, Rutgers, 1989, p.95-105

[468] As mentioned in B. SMITH, "Collective Action with and without Islam, mobilizing the bazaar in Iran" in Q. WIKTOROWICS, *Islamic Activism: a social movement theory approach*, Bloomington, Indiana UP, 2004, pp.185-204 (192) & M. PARSA, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution*, New Brunswick, Rutgers, 1989

how "*there were also ways in which religion lived in the bazaar independently from the mosque as an endogenous expression of bazaar life.*"[469] The autonomous religious rites that take place in the bazaar seem to reinforce the idea that the bazaar is the house of popular religion. To link the merchants ethics to an Islamic ideology would probably be a step to far, but it is interesting to mention that it always has been in the interest of a merchant to appear pious because this obviously increased potential clients' trust.[470] Nonetheless the function of religion in the bazaar has undoubtedly always been wider and especially been focused on increasing the *"Wir-Gefühl"*. Increasing the bazaar's cohesion by using religion, brings us very close to what Durkheim says when analyzing these rites : " *They are as necessary for the well functioning of our moral life as aliments for our physical life, because it is through them that the group asserts and maintains itself.*"[471] Khomeini himself stated in an address to the clergy on the occasion of the holy (Arab) month of Muharram that typical Shi'i mourning ceremonies achieve nothing but unifying the people and allowing to mobilize it.[472]

However one should not overestimate the influence of religion. Abrahamian notes that the 1977 slogans of the middle-classes did not have any "Islamic" or "religious" content, but were entirely based on (economic) freedom.[473] When he admitted at the end of his reign that he had acted directly against the bazaar, describing them as a lot of obsolete fanatics[474], Mohamed Reza Pahlavi undoubtedly revealed one of the main causes for revolt of the bazaar. The Shah's campaigns against "profiteering" hit the bazaar double. First of all they had been

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[469] R. MOTTADEH, *The Mantle of the Prophet: religion and politics in Iran,* Oxford, OneWorld, 2004, p.347

[470] *Ibid.*

[471] E. DURKHEIM, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse,* Paris, PUF/Quadrige, 2003, p.546

[472] "Khomeini addresses Muslim Clergy on Event of Muharram", Broadcast 05/11/80, FBIS-SAS-80-217,06/11/80 as quoted in D. BRUMBERG, *Reinventing Khomeini,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001, p.129

[473] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two…,* p.515

[474] M. REZA PAHLAVI, comme cité dans J.D.GREEN, *Revolution in Iran, the politics of countermobilization,* New York, Praeger, 1982, p.41

hit themselves by the inflation, secondly the Shah, by launching the slogan "no inflation without inflators" held the bazaaris personally responsible for the inflation.[475] Parsa describes the important consequences the campaign to fix prices launched between 1975 and 1977 had for the bazaaris. During the first days 7,750 of them were arrested, as were some landlords. Between 1975 and 1977 109,800 and 200,000 shopkeepers had been under investigation for the violation of fixed prices. These politics made the bazaaris appear as criminal thieves, awaiting only the next occasion to rip of customers. [476] A bazaar merchant declared to the New York Times that the bazaar would be flattened if the Shah was to get his way.[477]

The individualization of responsibility for economic problems served a double objective. The intention was to deresponsibilize the government while at the same time offering a scapegoat to the population. Since the attempts of the bazaaris to negotiate with the government remained without success, a solution by struggle seemed ever more attractive. It lies beyond the scope of this study to analyze in depth the *Why Men Rebel*,[478] yet two elements of the bazaar's evolution to revolt have to be mentioned. First of all there was the fact that the bazaar, due to the regime's reforms was losing part of its mobilizing power and traditional networks. Its quantitative importance in regard to the urban workforce had decreased from 16,09% in 1966 to 13,13% in 1976. [479] An admittedly small yet undeniable quantitative decrease. Secondly and more inmportantly, its mobilizing force diminished because the modernization policies of the royal regime (and especially the construction of huge shopping malls outside the bazaar specialized in luxury goods) had led many more fortuned bazaaris to leave the

[475] See also M.R. PAHLAVI, *Réponse à l'Histoire*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1979, p.150
[476] M. PARSA, *o.c.*, p.103-104 See also M. PARSA, "Entrepreneurs and Democratization: Iran and the Philippines", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 37, No. 4, October 1995, pp. 803-830
[477] B. SMITH, "Collective Action with and without Islam, mobilizing the bazaar in Iran" in Q. WIKTOROWICS, *Islamic Activism: a social movement theory approach*, Bloomington, Indiana UP, 2004, pp.185-204 (196)
[478] T.R. GURR, *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970
[479] Statistics SCI, table 4.1 in M. PARSA, *o.c.*, p.107

bazaar, which increased the potential for conflict between the less fortuned (suffering the decreasing importance of the bazaar) and the high classes of the bazaar (taking advantage of the new possibilities offered by the reforms). The Shah himself stated: "*I could not stop building supermarkets. I wanted a modern country. Moving against the bazaars was typical of the political and social risks I had to take.*"[480] The royal reforms were, unwillingly, preparing and promoting class conflict within the bazaar. The growing conflict between both groups materialized in shops being burnt down if they remained open during a strike. The very existence of the bazaar came under siege. In this context of a decrease in organizational capacity and potential autonomous action and the quasi-disappearance of the National Front, the religious way out appeared to be the only way left to mobilize and express concerns of an almost purely economic nature. All the more so since other, communist or Marxist, movements did not seem appropriate for the defense of the bazaar's interests. No wonder hence that the bazaar started acting in close alliance with the clergy. Ashraf and Banuazizi show how 64% of 2.483 demonstrations during the revolution and half of the massive strikes between October and November 1978 were organized by the mosque-bazaar alliance.[481]

Nevertheless even among religious bazaaris divergences existed and flourished. If after the revolution, ayatollah Shariatmadari received the (financial) support of the upper classes of the bazaar, Khomeini was favored by the lower classes. When in 1981 certain sections of the bazaar chose president Bani Sadr's side, others defended staunchly Khomeini's positions. [482] An example of these contradictions was offered in the same year when some shops in the bazaar closed down as a reaction to Bani Sadr's anti-bazaar remarks, while other remained open at his request. The chaotic and potentially explosive situation that

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[480] M.R. PAHLAVI, *Answer to history*, New York, Stein & Day, 1980, p.156 as quoted in A. KESHAVARZIAN, *Bazaar and State in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007, p.1
[481] A. ASHRAF & A. BANUAZIZI, "The State, classes and modes of mobilization in the Iranian revolution", *State, Culture and Society*, Vol.1, No.3, spring 1985, pp.3-40 (25)
[482] M. ABDULLAHZADEH, « Political Significance of the Bazar » in R. TAPPER & K. MCLACHLAN, *Technology, Tradition and Survival*, London, Frank Cass, 2003, p.239

resulted from it was probably one of the reasons that led Khomeini to get rid of Bani Sadr and launch a purge of the bazaar to free it from contra-revolutionary elements, in essence those that had supported the former president. The appearance of some kind of class cleavage in the bazaar, which sometimes took the upper hand on the corporatist tendencies within it, became clear in the support of lower class bazaaris for Khomeini's nationalization of foreign trade, which could hardly be considered a measure benefiting the bazaar. [483] One of the elements that was supposed to cement the corporatist social relations within the bazaar (religious fervor) will now allow the bazaar's lower classes to access state power, be it in a dominated position. This objective possibility of social promotion will permit some of them to turn their backs on the ancient dominating forces of the bazaar. Yet as a whole the *bazaar* will react in a rather unified manner during the revolution. Mohammed Reza had tried to undermine the bazaar's power by incorporating some of them in a new economic framework, yet it had turned against him. His failure or unwillingness to incorporate the bazaaris in his political structure was what distinguished him fundamentally from the Islamic Republic's regime.

3.5.1.2. The Iranian Shi'i clergy

In state formation it is not just about traditional elites, in essence those social groups that have historically been seen as concentrations of private, not state-dominated, power, but also about "institutions" that wield private power. In the first part of this chapter it has been underlined how the clergy has often been a social force and a political actor, if not always unified, because the foundations of its power lay beyond the reach of Iranian secular political authorities.

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[483] A. ASHRAF, "Bazaar and Mosque in Iran's Revolution", *MERIP Reports*, March-April 1983, p.17

Where the clergy would certainly be a "social unit" for Elias, Poulantzas would qualify it as a social category or force.[484] Contrary to a class, a social category is not defined on the economic level. Rather, a social category is any distinct social grouping that could be defined as such by virtue of having certain (non-economic) characteristics in common. For example, university students, intellectuals, and the clergy can be considered social categories. The question then rises how to evaluate the cohesion of such a social category. And especially to see to what degree the clergy was a credible competitor to the state.

In the sixties Samuel Huntington offered a definition and four criteria (adaptability, coherence, autonomy and complexity) of successful institutionalization.[485] The problems with Huntington's typology are many,[486] applying it to pre-revolutionary "*institutions*" only increases these. It is indeed of little use to verify if the clergy has been able to "adapt" in a Huntingtonian sense of the concept, nor does it seem useful to do so since its lasting for centuries now has sufficiently proven such adaptability. Yet although some interesting new definitions of "institutions" have emerged, Huntington's criteria have not been replaced or improved since. Applying these criteria and "measuring" the degree of institutionalization of the clergy will offer us an idea of how independent, autonomous and credible this social unit was in its opposition to the development of the state's power.

Some other criteria than those proposed by Huntington have to be taken into account as well. Namely hierarchic structure, which is not without link with Huntington's complexity, and independence, which will be linked to Huntington's autonomy. All these will be useful to consider to what degree the clergy can be considered a cohesive entity wielding socio-economic and socio-political power on a national level,

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[484] N. POULANTZAS, *Political Power and Social Classes*, London, Verso, 1978, pp.84-85.
[485] S. HUNTINGTON, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968
[486] See for a criticism concerning its application in the analysis of the Sepah: J.BILL, "The Challenge of Institutionalization: Revolutionary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* Vol.26, No.3-5, Summer/Fall 1993, pp.403-406

rather than just a grouping of uncoordinated and divided clergymen spread over the country. In essence the better the clergy passes Huntington's test of institutionalization, the more our argument that it was the clergy on the whole as a social entity that opposed state formation from the Qajars until the Pahlavis gains in credibility.

3.5.1.2.1. *Hierarchic?*

The first characteristic to be verified concerns the hierarchic, and thus in a way the bureaucratic, nature of the clergy. It is commonly known that Islam does not have a structured clergy as for example the Roman Catholic Church does, yet twelver Shi'ism forms an exception to this general rule. The twelver Shi'i conception of worldly rule is based, not only on the vanguard role of the Imams but also on the occulted Imam. The twelfth Shi'i Imam (so-called Mahdi[487] and single legitimate ruler) being occulted and expected to return only at the end of times, the question has always been who will fill the gap in the meanwhile. The Safavid dynasty succeeded in "replacing" the occulted Imam with an institutionalized and hierarchical clergy apparatus. This process undoubtedly started during the reign of Ismail I (1488-1524). The Lebanese Karaki, accepting the title of "Just Sultan" or even "Just Imam" for the Safavid king was all to happy to pronounce himself general deputy of this ruler. Afterwards Shah Abbas I, famous among other things for his urban development programs in the city of Isfahan, then capital of the empire, also developed an infrastructure allowing the clergy to further strengthen their positions.[488]

Amir-Moezzi rightly mentions how this process "*took place in a specific direction: its aim was to drag Imamism into the political arena, apply it to the collective level and crystallize it as an ideology*".[489] The development of a Shi'i clergy was hence an inherently political choice, with little or no

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[487] H. CORBIN, *L'Imam caché*, Paris, L'Herne, 2003

[488] A.J. NEWMAN, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2006, p.24 & pp.56-59

[489] M.A. AMIR-MOEZZI, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1994, p.139

connection to religious necessities. The Shi'i clergy quickly became a rather powerful actor in Iranian society and would remain so for centuries. However and notwithstanding the strong hierarchy, indicated by degrees as *tullab* (student), *mujtahed, hojjat ol-eslam, ayatollah, ayatollah-ozma, marja-e taqlid*, all these levels are highly interdependent. Momen states: " *The local mullas are the main means of spreading public recognition of a mujtahid's piety and learning since the common people are not considered able to discern such things (…). Thus the great mujtahids need the local mullas for recognition and the income that that ultimately entails. Local mullas need the great mujtahids since they tend to bask in the reflected glory of the mujtahid they follow.*"[490]

The highest level reachable for a Shi'i cleric is unquestionably *marja-e taqlid* (source of imitation). In a way *marja'iyya* is the top of the pyramid. Because of its politicization some predict the end of *marja'iyya* as "an institution" and consequently in one way or another the disappearance of a clear hierarchy within the Shi'i clergy.[491] This point of view considers Shi'i hierarchy from a mere religious point of view. Nonetheless the flexibility and adaptability of this institution should not be underestimated. Centuries ago the relative newcomer Karaki declared himself something like a *marja*, without the approval of many of his seniors. In contemporary Middle Eastern history, a well-known example is Mohamed Al-Shirazi, whose father Mirza Hasan Shirazi, had been active in the Tobacco rebellion, but who himself was dispraised by the central Shi'i center of Najaf, yet nevertheless pronounced himself *marja* at 34 years of age. He would try to legitimize this claim at least as much in the political as in the religious field.[492] The best known example is obviously Khomeini, whose acceptance as a *marja* by the Shi'i world was at least as much inspired by his political activities as by his religious authority.

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[490] M. MOMEN, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam,* New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1985, p.205

[491] M. KHALAJI, "The Last Marja", *Policy Focus #59,* September 2006, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, www.washingtoninstitute.org

[492] L. LOUER, *Chiisme et Politique au Moyen-Orient*, Paris, Editions Autrement, Collection Mondes et Nations, 2008, pp.22-23 & pp.58-60

A big part of the "clergy" consists of "non-professionals". Men and women with limited religious training, who *perform a variety of religious functions ranging from services officially sanctioned by the clerical hierarchy to activities which, if popular, are frowned upon or even condemned by Shi'i scholars.*[493] One can not but notice the similarity between this structure and functioning and the structure and functioning of a political party or maybe even a state's administrative apparatus. For our purpose it suffices however to underline the similarity with the local functioning of any political party and especially a communist party. Local militants or party officials were essential to for example Stalinism since they formed its backbone, its information and propaganda structure. For these local party militants or soldiers, Marx, Lenin or Stalin were then useful to refer to as a model of authority and glory.

In scholarly literature, Moaddel identifies two main theses for the understanding of clerical politics: an ideological explanatory thesis and a modernization-based theory.[494] The first thesis pretends that twelver Shi'ism as a religion and an ideology leads the path of the clerics when these become politically active. The modernization-based explanation of the clergy's political action considers the clergy's political action in the light of modernization efforts of the secular state and clerical resistance to it.

It is especially the second approach that is of some interest to us. Independently of its usefulness for the analysis of the political positioning of the clergy, its statement that the strength of the clergy and that of the state have always been inversely correlated is extremely interesting. Not so much because of the statement in itself, as because of the interesting supposition it uses. In such a vision the state and the

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[493] E. HOOGLUND, "The Revolutionary Clergy", in N.R. KEDDIE & E.HOOGLUND, *The Iranian Revolution & The Islamic Republic*, Revised Edition, New York, Syracuse University Press, 1986, p.74-83 (76)
[494] M. MOADDEL, "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran", *Theory and Society*, Vol. 15, No. 4. (Jul., 1986), pp. 519-556 (519-520)

clergy are seen as competitors for power. And such has undeniably been the case.

3.5.1.2.2.   Autonomy-Independence

The autonomy and independence of the clergy has to be considered on the one hand as autonomy-independence from the state and on the other hand as autonomy-independence from its main political ally, the bazaar.

When Huntington mentions autonomy, he defines it as the extent to which organizations and procedures exist independently of other groups and behaviors.[495] Autonomy, in a bureaucratic sense, can be understood as the power of autonomous policy-making, where bureaucracies become "*politically differentiated from the actors who seek to control them*".[496] For our model some additional features which justify a shift from the concept of "autonomy" to some kind of "independence" are at least as important. Financial and organizational independence from the state on the one hand, and from another social grouping the Iranian clergy is traditionally very entwined with (the bazaar) on the other hand, being the ones that interest us most in this framework.[497] The financial independence of Shi'i clergy is traditionally due to three kinds of revenues. *Khom* (an income tax of one fifth), *zakat* (religious alimony for the poor) and gifts received from believers that wish to support a particular cleric.[498]   The causes of organizational independence are harder to grasp, but the autonomous system of education the clergy has developed did indisputably play a role in it.

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[495] S. HUNTINGTON, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968, p.20

[496] D.P. CARPENTER, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 2001, pp.14-15

[497] These are probably the main differences between the Sunni clergy and Shi'i one as well. See N.R. KEDDIE, "The Roots of the Ulama's Power in Modern Iran", in N.R. KEDDIE (ed.), *Scholars, Saints and Sufis*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1972, pp. 211-229 (226-228) and H. ALGAR, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1969

[498] M.-R. JALILI, *Religion et Révolution, L'islam shi'ite et l'Etat* , Paris, Economica, 1981, p.22

Long before the establishment of any system of public education in Iran the clergy disposed of a very well developed education system that provided anything from elementary education (*maktab*) in the villages to higher (religious) education in more religiously important cities (*madrasa* with levels from *moqaddamat*, *as-sutuh* to *dars al-kharij*)[499]

To understand the special role and function the clergy had and has in Iranian or other Muslim societies, it is not enough to refer to the hierarchy (or "hierocracy"), nor does it suffice to mention the development of a (parallel if not unique) system of education. One of the most important assets of this social category has been and remains the mosque. While, especially until 1924, state and public functionaries only occasionally passed in the countryside, the clergy was permanently present. Papoli-Yazdi notes how: "*the* rapport de force *favorable to the clergy can in a large measure be explained by the fact that, because of its presence and the work of its members, it possesses the equivalent of an administration, which is greater in number, more efficient, more motivated, better embedded on the entire territory and hence having an unsurpassed network of information, than the government's administration.*"[500] It is seldom exaggerated to speak of a true control of public space by the clergy.[501]

The omnipresence of the mosque in most Muslim countries has put it often at the very centre of societal and political activities. Yet, although not automatically belonging to it , the almost natural domination of these mosques by the clergy in combination with the mosque's omnipresence make it a formidable asset for this social category. As a disillusioned communist militant told me pointing at a mosque: "*You don't need a political party when you have these.*" The role of these mosques in the Islamic revolution and especially in the divulgation of

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[499] M. MOMEN, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam,* New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1985, p.200-202

[500] M.-H. PAPOLI-YAZDI, "Le contrôle de l'espace par le clergé chi'ite en Iran", in D. BALLAND, *Hommes et Terres d'Islam,* Mélanges offerts à Xavier de Planhol, Tome I, Tèhéran, Institut français de recherche en Iran, 2000, pp.405-418 (407)

[501] *Ibid*.

Islamic revolutionary thought, like the speeches of Khomeini, was fundamental.[502] Especially from the publication of an anti-Khomeini article on 7 January 1978 to the victory of the revolution, the mosque played a central role in revolutionary mobilization by sermons, pamphleteering and the distribution of recorded speeches on tape.[503] No wonder that after the Islamic revolution the new government promoted the proliferation of mosques.[504]

Independence also partially explains the oppositional role Shi'i clerics have played so often.[505] This independence does however have two separate, contradictory yet complementary consequences: greater independence (separation state-clergy) combined with greater political influence (involvement of part of clergy in politics). Most of Keddie's work has been based on some kind of continuity assumption. Her analysis of the Iranian revolution[506] interpreted this revolution as a « logic » consequence of Iranian history which for centuries saw the clergy protagonist in politics. Molajani is right to call this an orientalist approach, all the more so since it minimizes the role of other autonomous social groups in the revolution.[507] A discussion on the relative importance of the clergy in Iranian history does not endanger my basic assumption, namely that the Iranian clergy can be considered

[502] A. ASHRAF & A. BANUAZIZI, "The State, classes and modes of mobilization in the Iranian revolution", *State, Culture and Society*, Vol.1, n.3, spring 1985, p.25 (3-40);
[503] S. BAKHASH, « Sermons, Revolutionary Pamphleteering and Mobilisation », in S. A. ARJOMAND, *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, London, McMillan Press, 1984, pp.177-194
[504] Y. RICHARD, "Des Mosquées et des Clercs, in « Téhéran, au-dessous du volcan ", *Autrement*, Hors-Série, No.27, 1987, pp.118-124
[505] See e.g. H. ALGAR, "The Oppositional Role of the Ulama in Twentieth-Century Iran", in N.R. KEDDIE (ed.), *Scholars, Saints and Sufis*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1972, pp.231-255 but also A. BAKHSHAYESHI, *Ten Decades of Ulama's Struggle,* Tehran, Islamic Propagation Organization, 1985
[506] N.R. KEDDIE, *Roots of Revolution – An Interpretative History of Modern Iran,* London, Yale University Press, 1981and N.R. KEDDIE (Y. RICHARD), *Modern Iran, Roots and Results of Revolution*, London, Yale University Press, 2003
[507] A. MOLAJANI, *Sociologie politique de la révolution iranienne*, Paris, l'Harmattan, 1999 ; Keddie does however not ignore these groups, what allows us to separate her from more generalizing orientalist works as for example B. LEWIS, *Le Retour de l'Islam*, Paris, Gallimard, 1985, p.488

an institution in the sense of my model. Rather on the contrary, up till now I have demonstrated how history seems to have contributed to the institutionalization of a clerical establishment able to function as a parallel institution after the revolution. It is hence important to notice that, whatever the causes and reasons for it might be, in Iran the clergy had, even before the revolution, become an independent entity or, to use the words of Yann Richard, an *autonomous social category*.[508] Inspired by Weber, Arjomand indicates it as a "hierocracy".[509] A neologism that does perfectly illustrate not only the nature of the clerical Shi'i hierarchy but also its usefulness in the structure of our model.

Although it recognizes the essential role the clergy has played in Iranian history[510], the continuity thesis, which sees the Iranian revolution as a logical consequence of the well-built alliance between the bazaar on the one hand and the clergy on the other, seems at the same time to undermine the idea of the clergy as an autonomous institution. The lack of autonomy appears even more plausible since of the above mentioned financial revenues of the clergy an important share, of *khoms* notably, is obtained through the bazaar. Something Khomeini himself admitted gladly.[511] Even though some authors, as Parsa[512], assert that the bazaar and the clergy have sometimes acted in opposition to one another, this can hardly obscure the fundamental alliance that has characterized the relationship between both groups. If one wishes to limit the analysis to contemporary Iranian history, the Tobacco protest of 1891-1892 was probably the first modern example of collective political action of these two groups.[513] Even when we take a

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[508] Y. RICHARD, *L'Islam chi'ite,* Paris, Fayard, 1991, p.106

[509] S.A. ARJOMAND, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1984, pp.215-264

[510] Other historical analyses have downplayed this role, see A.M.ANSARI, *Modern Iran since 1921,* Essex, Pearson Education Ltd., 2003

[511] Ayatollah KHOMEINI, "The Necessity of Islamic Government", in L. RIDGEON, *Religion and Politics in Modern Iran: A Reader,* London, I.B. Tauris, 2005, pp.197-215 (205)

[512] M. PARSA, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution,* New Brunswick, Rutgers, 1989, p.95-105

[513] N. KEDDIE, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891-1892,* London, Frank Cass, 1966

closer look at the Mossadeq era, it is undeniable that for most of the period ayatollah Kashani, one of the most influent clerical representatives of that time, coordinated his action closely with the bazaar. His Society of Muslim Warriors, together with the Feda'iyan-e Eslam and, to a lesser extent, the Toiler Party of Maleki and Baqai, were even considered the political expression of the bazaar.[514] At the same time it is accurate to state that different interests coexisted in this alliance. Kashani turned away from Mossadeq especially because of the socio-cultural reforms the latter wished to implement, parts of the bazaar on the other hand, although ultimately disgruntled by the coup d'état, feared that Mossadeq's socio-economic reforms would lead to some kind of "communist Iran". Other parts, of which Bazargan is probably a good example, although fervidly opposed to the communist Tudeh party chose to remain loyal to Mossadeq, inciting him to take a stauncher stand against the communists.

The continuity thesis is thus not immune to criticism. The close alliance between both groups should indeed not hide the fact that both groups continue to pursue their own interests. In the beginning of the sixties, Khomeini and with him an important part of the clergy mobilized against the modernizing reforms of the shah out of disquiet caused by decreasing clerical power. The action of the clergy demonstrated and not for the first time that it had proper and material interests. The secularizing educational reforms of the Shah for example were perceived as posing a threat to the social role of the clergy and its control on the people's education. [515] Moreover, by taking over the educational system from the clergy, the state was also, indirectly threatening the financial power system of the clergy. Many of the personal ties that would convince a believer to pay his religious taxes to

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[514] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two revolutions,* Princeton, Princeton UP, 1982, pp.256-259 & 275-278

[515] W. EILERS, "Educational and Cultural Development in Iran during the Pahlavi Era", in G. LENCZOWSKI, *Iran under the Pahlavis,* Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1978, pp.303-332; E. NARAGHI, *Enseignement et changements sociaux en* Iran, Paris, Eds.de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1992 et A. TABARI, "The Role of the Clergy in Modern Iranian Politics", *in* N.R. KEDDIE, *Religion and Politics in Iran*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1983, p.60

the clergy were indeed forged during the education of these "future taxpayers" in the religious school. By developing a national state tax system the Pahlavi-dynasty directly threatened the clergy's financial interests. For obviously, what is paid to Caesar can not be paid to God.

The ulama's policies will generally and officially be centered around "how best to serve religion". The theological discussion on the political role of the clergy between "quietists" on the one hand and "activists" or "revolutionaries" on the other, has to be replaced in this framework. Does the clergy have to intervene directly in politics or should it, on the

Having established that the main, but not sole, motivation of the ulama's political action are material interests, the autonomy of its political action can be better appreciated. Returning to the sixties, the clergy massively mobilized in favor of Khomeini, who was about to be expelled from the country for his role in the protests against the Shah's White Revolution. The bazaaris were at that time fighting recession and it was only after the arrest of the leaders of the National Front (with whom they had collaborated in 1963 on a boycott of the referendum evaluating the Shah's policies) that they turned to the clergy for joint action. When later that year Khomeini was arrested only a part of the bazaar protested and, according to eyewitnesses, "without much passion".[518] Most of them were shopkeepers or artisans. Shopkeepers outside the bazaar even often refused to close their shops, which made them vulnerable to acts of pillage and plunder afterwards. When in June 1975 more than one thousand religious scholars and students revolt in the holy city of Qom and occupy the most important religious seminar of the city, the Shah reacts with violent repression. This bloody massacre does however in no way stir revolt in the bazaar.[519] Logical if one looks once more at the economic situation and interests of that time. The bazaar was at that time still profiting from the oil rent, the increase in consumption and investments. No reason hence to close down.[520]

If one asserts that the clergy does not have an autonomous action by pointing at the many historical examples of joint action with the bazaar, one also has to explain why this alliance seemed all but natural in the sixties. Obviously by assimilating both groups in discourse and by pursuing policies that hurt both groups the Shah contributed to their alliance, yet even in 1975 this alliance was not "automatic" or "natural". The conclusion can consequently only be that acknowledging the profound links between both groups or social categories does in no way prove that the clergy would not be (an) autonomous (institution).

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[518] M. PARSA, *o.c.*, p.100-101
[519] M. PARSA, *o.c.*, p.100-101
[520] Compare with other mentioned references

3.5.1.2.3.   Coherence?

Moaddel offers a criticism of traditional approaches of the Shi'i clergy that could jeopardize the conception of the clergy as a corporation or institution. The author correctly underlines that the clergy has never been a united homogeneous group.[521] Although the Islamic Revolution temporarily united most parts of the clergy, this unity proved, unsurprisingly, impossible to maintain during the construction of the new state. The different visions of this future state within the clergy, called subsystems united under the umbrella of Islam by Rahnema and Nomani,[522] cast doubt over the coherence of the clergy as an institution.

This factionalism can be considered from a political point of view. One could for example take the unconditional and continuous support of the later Ayatollah Taleqani, then Hojjat al-Islam, for Mossadeq and his National Front even when his "superior" Ayatollah Kashani turned away from Mossadeq's cultural policies. This political approach will be analyzed later on. At this stage it seems fundamental to recall the important religious disputes that have animated the clergy through the centuries. Since the death of the twelfth Imam in Shi'ism, but even before that, when considering the schism between Sunni and Shi'i or among different schools of thought within both Islamic sects, the esoteric meaning of the Quran and sometimes even the interpretation of exoteric passages of Islam's fundamental text have led to enormous divergences between different *mojtaheds*. More recently, as mentioned before, an important division emerged when Khomeini presented his idea of the Islamic state. The main concept of *velayat-e faqih* and its width was (and still is) all but accepted by other main *mojtahed*s, as for example Ayatollah Al-Sistani.

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[521] M. MOADDEL, "The Shi'i Ulama and the State in Iran", *Theory and Society*, Vol. 15, No. 4., July 1986, pp. 519-556 (520)

[522] They identify 4 subsystems clerical and not.: Motahhari's, Ali Shariati's, Navvab Safavi's and Bazargan's subsystem.   A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, "Competing Subsystems in Contemporary Iran", in S. RAHNEMA & S. BEHDAD, *Iran after the Revolution: Crisis of an Islamic State*, London, I.B. Tauris, 1995, pp.65-93 (70)

In Shi'i belief, there exists an institutional or doctrinal reason for this factionalism. Namely, what could be called the principle of free choice of a cleric. This principle implies that every Shi'i believer is supposed to choose a high-ranking cleric whose teachings and religious interpretations he wishes follow. Such obviously leads clerics to offer personal interpretations, all the more so since more followers means more prestige and more income.

Next to the difference between urban and rural clergymen,[523] a more structural division is the one between the upper and lower clergy. This separation has also characterized certain periods of the history of the Catholic Church, especially in Latin-America. During the Constitutional Revolution, while the majority of the high-ranking clerics favored the Constitutional movement,[524] disputes continued among clerics at grassroots level concerning the new Constitution. Seven decades later, Bani Sadr, first elected post-revolutionary president of Iran, failing to understand that his election was due only to the explicit support of Khomeini, tried to use this division in his post-electoral discourse in which he offered his thanks to the lower clergy. His hope was that if he could turn the lower clergy in his favor, he would be able to decisively defeat the upper clergy and his rival Ayatollah Beheshti.[525]

The question to be answered is now crystal-clear: does this factionalism challenge my assumption that the clergy is a coherent institution?

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[523] E. HOOGLUND, "Rural Iran and the Clerics", *MERIP Reports*, No. 104, March- April 1982, pp. 23-26.

[524] Among them Sayyed Mohammed Tabataba'i, Sayyed Abdollah Behbani & Sheikh Fazlollah Nuri, although the latter eventually turned against the Constition when it became clear that its purpose was not the Shari'a rule. See N.R. KEDDIE (Y. RICHARD), *Modern Iran, Roots and Results of Revolution*, London, Yale University Press, 2006, pp.179-181 & R. MOTTAHEDEH, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, Oxford, One World Publications, 2004, p.101

[525] M. MILANI, *The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1988, p.282, The same misunderstanding is present in A.FAROUGHY, "La guerre ouverte succède au conflit de tendances au sein du mouvement islamique iranien", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, August 1981, p.6 and E.ROULEAU, "Khomeini's Iran", *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1980, pp.1-21 (14)

Huntington's definition of coherence (as opposed to disunity) runs as follows: "*an effective organization requires, at a minimum, substantial consensus on the functional boundaries of the group and on the procedures for resolving disputes which come up within those boundaries*".[526] Huntington adds that, although in theory an organization can be coherent without being autonomous or vice versa these two characteristics are generally connected. If for Huntington autonomy allows the "group" to develop and elaborate special and particular processes and marks, distinguishing it from other groups and preventing external disruptions; coherence prevents the fading away of group unity, morale and discipline.[527]

According to this definition the clergy has developed not only some degree of autonomy, but also a rather important form of independence. Yet, when speaking of the capacities of coordination and discipline, it seems a slightly different matter. If one could still argue that the clergy has been able to coordinate, at least at the Iranian level, its actions at essential moments of history, its ability to discipline seems questionable to say the very least. The above mentioned political activities of Taleqani against the positions of the senior Kashani form only one example. However, one should not mix up the clergy's primary function (concerning the religious domain), with its secondary function (the political). Even though the institutionalization of the clergy in Safavid Iran had a political function, its essential function remains the management of spiritual affairs. And on the spiritual level, within the boundaries of its structures, the clergy does have ways of disciplining and sanctioning insubordination, through special and distinctive procedures.

The question should certainly not be if the clergy can, as an institution, oppress or avoid factionalism, since as mentioned, the rules and the structure of the Shi'i clergy itself offer a space and a forum for different factions. In the very same manner, not one scholar of Soviet politics

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[526] S. HUNTINGTON, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968, p.22
[527] *Ibid.*

would doubt that the CPSU was an institution, although different factions clearly existed and continued to exist throughout Soviet history. To put it in the terms of eminent French scholars: "*These internal divisions of the clergy are as old as the corps spirit* (esprit de corps) *that forms its unity.*"[528] In a very similar way Khosrokhavar notes how even if an important section of the higher clergy and a part of the middle clergy were not too happy with the activist clerical tendencies of 1979, they still subscribed to the general movement that brought the clergy as an institution to power.[529] Akhavi underlines how this was a collective reflex born out of the fear that increasing bureaucratization and rationalization would undermine the independence of the clerical corpse.[530] The 1979 example was on that level a mere confirmation of what had been observed in the sixties when the government tried to overtake the clergy's system of education and develop a system of secular education.[531]

3.5.2.   The Iranian Armed Forces

A look at the military structure of Iran before the revolution is unavoidable. Especially since the armed forces will have an essential contribution to the construction of the Islamic republic. Moreover, it is hardly conceivable to speak of state formation without assessing the strength and the role of the military in such a process. Comparing the degree of military development, and why not its institutionalization, with the development of powerful concentrations of private power, also gives us an idea of the limits to state power.

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[528] J.-P. DIGARD, B. HOURCADE & Y. RICHARD, *L'Iran au XXe siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 1996, p.220

[529] F. KHOSROKHAVAR, *L'Utopie sacrifiée*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation nationale des Sciences politiques, 1993 p.272

[530] S. AKHAVI, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran: Clergy-State Relations in the Pahlavi Period*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1980

[531] E. NARAGHI, *Enseignement et changements sociaux en* Iran, Paris, Eds.de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1992 et A. TABARI, "The Role of the Clergy in Modern Iranian Politics", *in* N.R. KEDDIE, *Religion and Politics in Iran*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1983, p.60

What was the state of the military in 1979? The pre-revolutionary Iranian army belonged almost entirely to non-military (the Shah) or non-Iranian (the US) actors. Its role in the revolution was, at best, limited. Scholars are still wondering where it disappeared to during the revolutionary upheaval. The contrast with social categories as the clergy or the bazaaris could not possibly be any bigger. The contrast becomes even clearer when considering its role in state formation. If the Iranian army was, especially under Reza Khan the institution *par excellence* that had to guarantee the process of Pahlavi state construction, the *bazaar* and the clergy were two groups that in the end would prove ardent opponents of this project.

So while stressing the fundamental differences between the armed forces fundamentally from *bazaar* and clergy, it has to be underlined how equally essential they were to the project of state formation. Their fundamental role in the immediate post-revolutionary period and in the war with Iraq where it ended up stabilizing the new regime will be the best illustration of such.

One would be tempted to take the bureaucratic nature of the army for granted. Perhaps more than any other institution, the military is characterized by a strong hierarchy, while offering a clear-cut way to (internal) social promotion. Unnecessary hence to elaborate on the military school or grade system. On the other hand the coherence of the royal armed forces is an element that will prove of some interest. It was seen how factionalism is an integrative part of the Shi'i clerical structure, the same can not be said of the military. The military is overall to be considered acting as "one". Some historical examples of the royal military's action in times of crisis have however demonstrated that this was not automatically the case for the pre-revolutionary armed forces of Iran.

A primary and fundamental question does arise. Since common sense is often the natural enemy of science, the basic assumption that the military as such is a bureaucratic institution has to be questioned. More

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specifically, regarding the Iranian army, its independence cannot be assumed, but should be proven. Throughout the ages it is precisely this independence that has troubled many scholars and states alike. The debate on the civil-military relationship has raged on at least since the Roman Republic. What I am interested in here, in a first phase, is the existence of an autonomous internal dynamic. Could the Iranian royal military be considered sufficiently independent to be an independent player in our model? Did it possess the necessary coherence?

3.5.2.1. An Independent Institution?

Although the military could probably be considered a "social category" in a neo-Marxist way,[532] a better model for its internal structure would be the Weberian bureaucratic one. In other words, a part form its possible autonomy, is the military at all an institution or a bureaucracy? At first sight the military hierarchy seems the incarnation *par excellence* of the Weberian legal authority in a rationalized bureaucratic administration. Indeed, in his *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, Weber includes the military in his examples of rational authority. Weber goes as far as explicitly quoting the military as an example of a "constituted authority" (*Behörde*).[533]

Notwithstanding this inclusion, the absence of a true sociology of the military in Weber's work is unfortunate. All the more so since from Weber's perspective the military was "*the ultimate in bureaucratization*".[534] Miewald criticizes this Weberian vision, stating that: "*there is simply no basis in German military doctrine, as it developed during Weber's lifetime, to support his characterization of the army as a machine-like bureaucracy*"[535] Officers, at least since Clausewitz, would on the contrary have struggled with the uncertainties inherent to the

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[532] N. POULANTZAS, *Political Power and Social Classes,* London, Verso, 1978, pp. 84-85

[533] M. WEBER, *Economie et Société*, Tome I, Paris, Pocket, 1995, p.292

[534] R.D. MIEWALD, "Weberian Bureaucracy and the Military Model", *Public Administration Review*, Vol.30, No. 2, March - April 1970, pp. 129-133 (130)

[535] R.D. MIEWALD, *l.c.*, p.131

activities of the army. However, Keegan, whose criticism is not without resemblance with Miewald's, by stating that war is *not* what the Clausewitzean formula suggests, stresses not so much the internal dynamic of the military, as it accentuates the special dynamics of war, in a way Clausewitz would certainly have approved of.[536] If it is obvious that the military at war can not and will not always act according the calculable rules (Weber[537]), this has little or nothing to do with its internal structure, but everything with the specific nature of war and its unpredictability. The passions and irrationalities released by war do not change the fundamental fact that Weber was probably right to consider the military bureaucracies the ultimate form of bureaucratization. It is equally reasonable to say that military bureaucracies, because of their special task and character, should be allowed to differ a bit from civil ones.[538] This does not mean that the question of the predictability of this administration's action in a particular situation (war) can be neglected, yet as Weber himself admitted, his typology is merely one of ideal-types. Weber never had any illusion that historic reality could be limited to these ideal-types.

So realizing that military sociology is still one of the more underdeveloped branches of sociology, it can, for the time being, be affirmed that, at least, the underlined modern military structure *in se* fulfills the characteristics of a Weberian rational bureaucracy. Since it seems to combine normative regulations, technical rules, administrative hierarchy, an activity of public functions linked to applicable (written) rules, a limited domain of competence and of use of coercive means, a separation of the administrative direction from the means of administration with the absence of personal appropriation of a function.[539]

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[536] J. KEEGAN, *A History of Warfare.* New York, Vintage Books, 1993

[537] See also R. VODA, "Bureaucracy and Military Bureaucracy", *Final Matter Paper,* Brasov, The Regional Department of Defense Resources Management Studies, http://www.dresmara.ro/Final_papers/mai%202007/Bureaucracy%20&%20Military%20Bureaucracy.pdf, p.5

[538] S. KITAOKA, "The Army as a Bureaucracy: Japanese Militarism Revisited", *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 57, No. 5, October 1993, pp. 67-86 (67)

[539] M. WEBER, *Economie et Société*, Tome I, Paris, Pocket, 1995, p.292-293

Having established this, the famous Clausewitzean phrase, used and abused for about a century, that war is the continuation of politics (or policy) by other means, brings us to our second question. When even the most basic and fundamental activity of this institution is not in its own hands, how can it then possibly be an independent actor ?

As I mentioned in the first chapter and with regard to the relativist remarks uttered hereunder, the independence of the military depends highly on the type of regime. For example, the Nazi armed forces maintained internally, a certain independence from the political regime for some time. Although this independence and its importance have been debated at length,[540] there never was any doubt that the Stalin's Red Army, infiltrated at all levels by political commissars, did not enjoy a similar degree of independence.

French political historian Pierre Barral has attempted to analyze, in what is unfortunately an extremely general study, the interaction between civilian and military command. In different chapters he offers a brief description of different distinctions of which the most relevant in this framework seems the evolution from the King as supreme commander or commander-in-chief of the armed forces (*le roi connétable*) to either a revolutionary dictatorship or the primacy of civilian command structures over military ones.[541]

If the Shah of Iran would probably qualify as some kind of *roi connétable*, the post-revolutionary status of the military seems less obvious. It seems not impossible to consider the Iranian army as a bureaucracy in which the civilian command enjoys some kind of primacy: since the revolution the Supreme Leader is in charge of the armed forces and even when he delegated this power, it was to the president, another civilian authority. On the other hand it seems more

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[540] O.BARTOV, "Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol.63, No.1, March 1991, pp.44-60

[541] P. BARRAL, *Pouvoir civil et commandement militaire,* Paris, Les Presses de Sciences Po, 2005

tempting to define Iran as a revolutionary dictatorship. The "revolutionary dictatorship" of which Barrel finds three examples in history, not surprisingly the Nazi State, pre-World War II Soviet Union and Mao's revolutionary dictatorship, is characterized by one chief dominating both the civilian structures of the regime and the military ones.

However Barrel focuses especially on what could be called external influence of the political leaders on the Army. Mentioning that Hitler offered himself the position of supreme commander of the armed forces by taking Hindenburg's position after the latter's decease, is hardly questioning the internal autonomy of the military. By focusing on Stalin's purges at the top-level, Barrel says little about how the Soviet army worked internally. In the first chapter, in which the framework of analysis was presented, a methodological shortcut was used concerning the difference of internal functioning between the Red Army on the one side and the Wehrmacht on the other. It was mentioned that a debate on the autonomy or independence of the Red Army was quite unnecessary since it was formed by the Revolution, infiltrated at all levels by Soviet Commissars and even lost its major officers under Stalin. As all shortcuts it offered a somewhat simplified vision of reality. Khrushchev memoirs show a somewhat different picture. Khrushchev stated: "*some people from our military department come and say 'Comrade Khrushchev, look at this! The Americans are developing such and such a system. We could develop the same system, but it would cost such and such.' I tell them there's no money, it's all been allotted already. So they say, 'If we don't get the money (…), then the enemy will have superiority over us.' So we discuss it more, and I end up giving them the money they ask for.*"[542] This discussion of Khrushchev with Eisenhower on how military decisions were taken in the USSR, showed not only how military technical expertise offers almost automatically some kind of autonomy to the armed forces, but also that the Red Army, even though penetrated at all levels still maintained some kind of

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[542] KHROUCHTCHEV, *Souvenirs*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1971, p.487, also quoted in J.F. HOUGH & M. FAINSOD, *How the Soviet Union is Governed*, Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1982, p.395

independent functioning in certain domains. There exists a famous example in which Khomeini refutes a similar request advanced by Mohsen Reza'i, then commander-in-chief of the *Sepah* (IRGC), who asked for additional resources for his institution in order to win the war in "a few years".[543] If the request illustrates the *Sepah*'s autonomy, its rebuttal shows the limitations of its influence. The question now is hence: if *in abstracto* the army can be considered a bureaucracy with a certain degree of independence, can the Iranian army as it presented itself before the Islamic revolution be considered such?[544] Subsequently, in the next chapter, the fate of its structures after the revolution will be taken into consideration.

3.5.2.2. The Iranian Case

The rise of the first Pahlavi Shah, Reza Khan, was an example of extreme independence. It was little less than an outright military coup d'état. Such a coup was *in se* a new phenomenon, since the previous Qajar dynasty had been ruling mainly by dividing the armed tribesmen.[545] The existing army was not only not that strong, but moreover commanded by foreigners, mainly Russians and British. After the 1917 Russian revolution the recalling of the Russian officers to their homeland permitted Reza Khan to rise to the head of the Iranian Cossacks (and the Army) and in this way take over political power.[546] Until Reza Khan became Reza Pahlavi, first Pahlavi Shah of Iran, his domination of the political sphere was based on his military support.

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[543] R. ZIMMT, "The Ayatollah Khomeini Legacy", *The Jerusalem Post,* 24 September 2007 as reprinted by Iran Press Service in January 2008 http://www.iran-press-service.com/ips/articles-2008/january-2008/the-ayatollah-khomeini-legacy.shtml

[544] Only the Pahlavi dynasty will be considered, for a larger historical perspective see: Y.PARSABENAB, *Tarikhe Siasie Arteshe Iran,* Washington, Enteshare Azar, 1323 (1924) as digitalized by Anjomane Bakhtiariha Amerikaye Shomali, www.bakhtiaries.net

[545] H. AFSHAR, "The Army", in H. AFSHAR (ed.), *Iran: A Revolution in Turmoil*, , McMillan, 1985, pp.175-198 (175)

[546] A.J. COTTRELL, "Iran's Armed Forces under the Pahlavi Dynasty", in G. LENCZOWSKI (ed.), *Iran under the Pahlavis,* Hoover Institution Publication, 1978, pp.389-432 (390-391)

His civilian title did not change much to this fact. No matter whether he was Minister of War or Prime Minister, he dominated politics thanks to the general domination of military over civilian power. Reza Khan made sure it would stay this way, even after he became king, by campaigning against the tribes[547] and transforming the Iranian army in a strong centralized and unified structure that, as some authors affirm, allowed him to mobilize over 400.000 man by 1941.[548]

Mohammed Reza Pahlavi came to power in a very different way. His legitimacy was in no way based on his own achievements in- or outside the military. His father's neutrality in WWII had not pleased the allies.[549] So in 1941 Soviets and British intervened jointly and Reza Shah was *manu military* removed from power. Although Mohammed Reza came to power due to foreign intervention, directed *against* the Iranian military structure that was still greatly loyal to his father, he would rapidly understand the importance of the Iranian armed forces for the maintaining of power.

However, through the Americanization and his own personal role, the new Shah came to question the very autonomous existence and functioning of the Army, something that never happened even to the Red Army. In theory the structural relationship between military and civil power would show, on a structural level, two columns (civil and military) working independently from each other. During Mohammed Reza's reign seems however to be the almost non-existent internal dynamics of those "pillars". They would indeed prove to be entirely dependent on the Shah and/or his (foreign) support.

Considering the apparently well-structured, unified military the Pahlavi's had built and taking into account the fact that it probably

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[547] H. ARFA, *Under Five Shahs*, London, John Murray, 1964, pp.114-142
[548] F. KAZEMI, "The Military and Politics in Iran: The Uneasy Symbiosis", in E. KEDOURI & S.G.HAIM, *Towards a Modern Iran*, London, Frank Cass & Co., 1980, 217-240 (219-220)
[549] A neutrality inspired probably by the vast penetration of fascist ideas among the Iranian elites at that time. Moreover around 48% of Iranian foreign trade relations were with Nazi Germany. See B. ALAVI, *Kämpfendes Iran*, Berlin, Dietz Verlag, 1955, p.69

outmatched any army in the region, an interesting question has to be asked: where was it when the revolution started?[550] The answer to this question is clearly complicated and would indeed merit an in-depth analysis. However what matters most here are the few causal factors that can be extracted from the above.

The first obvious problem was the relative lack of independent functioning. Contrary to what the unified structure of the army might have led to suppose, the army was highly dependent on different external actors. Foreign advisors left the country before the revolution and in the end so did the Shah. A military structure that had gotten so used to direct orders from the Shah, who used to replace senior officers before they could get too popular, was hence "lost" without him.[551] As secret US envoy General Huyser stated: "*the military had been conditioned for years by the Shah to expect and rely upon this type of direction* [central direction] *from him*"[552] The hopes of some, like the US government, which were the fears of others, like Taleqani, of a military coup would prove totally unfounded.[553]

Yet loyalty also played a role. Just before Khomeini's return to Iran the SAVAK told Qarabaqi, then Minister of Interior, that some commanders were in contact with Khomeini supporters.[554] Although the Shah's tactics of replacing and parachuting certain officers could have led to some kind of loyalty building, as was the case in Stalin's Red Army, the Shah's arrogance and mistrust for his own officers

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[550] J.M. SMITH asks this question in his Masters Thesis, "Where Was the Shah's Army?", Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1980 cited in N. SCHAHGALDIAN, *The Iranian Military Under the Islamic Republic,* Santa Monica, RAND, 1987

[551] H. AFSHAR, "The Army, l.*c*, p.188

[552] R.E. HUYSER, *Mission to Tehran,* New York, Harper & Row Publishers, 1986, p.289

[553] See for example G. SICK, *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter with Iran,* New York, Penguin Books, 1985, p.161 and the sources quoted in M. ROBERTS, "Khomeini's Incorporation of the Iranian
Military", *McNair Paper 48*, National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, January 1996, http://www.ndu.edu/inss/McNair/mcnair48/mcnair48.pdf, p.12-24

[554] S. ZABIH, *The Iranian Military in Revolution and War*, London & New York, Routledge, 1988, p.60

which, according to one of his generals, made him "treat them like dirt"[555] limited the amount of loyalty that could be cumulated.

There were however some more "technical" reasons for the army's "absence" as well. Canby bluntly states that in reality the Shah's armed forces were probably "*ill suited for all but one of their intended tasks: political symbolism*".[556] Although the military was, at least partially, intended to quell possible rebellions, it did not prove very efficient in doing so. Religious demonstrations were difficult to quell for quite some reasons, especially the possibility of increasing the number of martyrs. Yet, the army did not perform much better on other occasions. A famous example is offered by the events of the 7th of February 1979 when a part of the army attacked cadets and technicians of the rebelling Iranian air force. When the Tudeh-party and guerilla organizations came to the air force's rescue (!), the military loyalists had to retreat.[557] The internal factionalism, that had openly observed in 1953, became once again crystal-clear. The revolutionaries would exploit it successfully. Moreover, the limited experience of the military, contrasting with at least a decade of guerilla experience of the Feda'i or Mujahideen did not allow the army to face organized and orchestrated riots.

This limited capacity of riot quelling was combined with what is commonly called the *naseem-é Carter* [558] (Carter's breath). Since he became president Jimmy Carter had pressured the Shah to improve his human rights' record. For those, and there are many, in Iran that consider the advent of Khomeini an American[559] or Western complot, it

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[555] H. AFSHAR, "The Army, l.*c*, p.188

[556] S.L. CANBY, "The Iranian Military: Political Symbolism Versus Military Usefulness", in H. AMIRSADEGHI (ed.), *The Security of the Persian Gulf,* St. Martin's Press, New York, 1981, pp.100-130

[557] E.ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two,…*, p.528

[558] A. BAYAT, *Street Politics, Poor people's movements in Iran*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997, p.36

[559] Consider for example the works of Houchang Nahavandi: H. NAHAVANDI, *L'Iran 1940-1980 : Crise, révolution et tragédie*, Paris, IREP, 1980; H. NAHAVANDI, *Iran : deux rêves brisés,* Paris, A.Michel, 1981; H. NAHAVANDI, *Anatomie d'une révolution*, Paris,

was obviously the US that incited the army not to resist. In reality, even without mentioning grand complots, the confusion and hesitation the Shah showed when crucial decisions concerning the protests had to be made, was indisputably a consequence of the attitude of his foreign protector. This further undermined the effectiveness of his main Iranian support. As Arjomand mentions the Shah: "*could not overcome his fear of a strong military leader even after he had decided to pack his bags and go. In the early days of January 1979, he could not be pressured into appointing the hard-liner, General Ja'farian, as the commander of the Ground Force.*"[560] When Carter then decided to encourage the military to support the Bakhtiar government (last prime minister of the Shah) and Bakhtiar himself inevitably failed to give the same kind of leadership to the military the Shah had, the collapse of the armed forces was unavoidable. From the perspective of the study of revolution such explains why, contrary to what Skocpol asserted, military defeat in a major war was not a necessary precondition for revolution.[561]

3.6.   *Conclusion*

This chapter asserted in the first place which social groups or entities existed autonomously before the revolution and indirectly investigated the sources of their power. When discussing state formation and considering different social entities that have to construct the state or be involved in the process, such an analysis proves unavoidable. The reign of Mohammed Reza consisted in a form of very exclusive authoritarianism. Because of the rentier character of the Iranian system,

SEGEP, 1983; H. NAHAVANDI, *La Révolution iranienne : vérités et mensonges*, Lausanne, L'Age de l'Homme, 1999; H. NAHAVANDI, *Carnets Secrets*, Paris, Osmondes, 2004.

[560] S.A. ARJOMAND, *The Turban for the Crown*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 1988, pp.123-124

[561] S.A. ARJOMAND, "Iran's Islamic Revolution in Comparative Perspective", *World Politics*, Vol.38, No.3, April 1986, pp.383-414 (387) & M. PARSA, "Economic Development And Political Transformation: A Comparative Analysis of the United States, Russia, Nicaragua, and Iran", *Theory and Society*, Vol. 14, No. 5, September 1985, pp. 623-675 (624)

the Shah thought he could rule without "society".[562] Whatever form of state be it "corporatist" be it "absolutist", it was exclusive.[563] The state against the rest.

Successes of the Pahlavi rule were not inexistent and from a state-formation perspective they undoubtedly included the relative monopolization of violence and the increase of infrastructural state power through the development of education. Moreover the ill-designed modernization process of the countryside can on the whole be considered a (small) step forward in that it not only introduced capitalist production relations to the countryside, but also tried to (and miserably failed to) develop a link between agriculture and industrialization.

As this brief assessment shows, the social structure of Iran just after the revolution was more than just complex. The century-old countryside's social structure had been profoundly upset or as some would argue destroyed by the Shah's White Revolution; massive immigration had destabilized the urban environment; the bazaar saw its position threatened by the Shah's economic reforms; an important part of the clerical establishment was abandoning the regime and the military which was, with the SAVAK, intended as the main internal support for the royal regime seemed little more than a scarecrow.

When considering the socio-political consequences of the Shah's socio-economic policies, one is confronted with an enormous contradiction. His socio-economic policy tried to undermine but not destroy traditional sectors of the economy. In this sense and notwithstanding the fact that the bazaar and the clergy correctly considered some of the Shah's policies as a direct attack on their structures and activities, the

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[562] See also H. SHAMBAYATI, "The Rentier State, Interest Groups, and the Paradox of Autonomy: State and Business in Turkey and Iran", *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 26, No. 3, April 1994, pp. 307-331

[563] Some have indeed argued that the Pahlavi dynasty created a "corporatist Iran", consider S. AKHAVI, "The Ideology and Praxis of Shi'ism in the Iranian Revolution", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 25, No. 2, April 1983, pp. 195-221

royal policies left their networks more or less intact. Abrahamian underlines how the bazaar "*continued to control as much as half of the country's handicraft production, two-thirds of its retail trade, and three-quarters of its wholesale trade*", while the clergy "*was big enough to send preachers regularly into shanty towns and distant villages*". The author adds: "*Paradoxically, prosperity had helped strengthen a traditional group*".[564]

Yet although his policies helped strengthen these groups, his political attacks on them also made them profoundly distrusting towards him. Landlords, that had not fared too badly, presented one example; the bazaar, shocked by the anti-profiteering or anti-inflation campaign another. Although the clergy actually became a more important and independent actor throughout his reign, it was dismayed by the Shah's attempts to decrease its role and importance. Mohammed Reza's state formation project was hence a partial failure. While he had to start all over again after the collapse of his father's army, he was most successful in those domains in which he continued and furthered his father's work, like educational reform. Yet like his father he failed in extending the state's power over traditional social units as the bazaar and the clergy. His attempts to do so were not only counter-productive, but moreover hastened his own removal from power.

This chapter put the focus on different groups of Iranian society and how they presented themselves just before the revolution. The landlords have been indicated as one of those powerful and traditional social classes that had still an important part to play in the economy, but that, because of the Shah's White Revolution, were less and less inclined to support him with much enthusiasm. Yet a part from this social class, there were also what I have called private concentrations of power. Some of these, like bazaar and clergy, often possessed some corporatist structures. The pre-revolutionary societal structure can maybe, cautiously, be compared to some kind of societal corporatism. For the time being I might call it a "proto-societal corporatism". The

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[564] E.ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two,…*, p.433

clergy proved to be a social category and, arguably and notwithstanding its factionalism, even an institution since when the interests of its corporation were threatened, as for example was the case with the modernization policies that tried to replace religious education by public and secular education, it reacted in a united and coherent manner. The bazaar has proven to be a social force capable of united action, even though it proved not immune to internal divisions. The most surprising conclusion of this chapter is undoubtedly that, although the military institution as such seems to come the closest to being a Weberian bureaucracy, the Iranian armed forces proved in a way even less of an institution than the clergy. They did not have the capacity to function autonomously, nor did they function coherently during the two major crises of the royal regime in 1953 and 1979.

The Shah's vision of Iran was a competitive one in which the State had to fight against other social units and corporations. In every competition there can be only one winner. The Shah's development programs intended to assure it was monarchy. However this vision proved profoundly mistaken. If the state has to extend its reach, defeating independent corporations as the clergy is a possibility. At the condition however that one disposes of sufficient strength to do so. Policy towards the tribes and other concentrations of powers had through the ages taught that the art of royal governance and the reason for the monarchy's survival lay in a divide and rule policy, in a careful act of balance, in tactical concessions and in cooptation when necessary. Mohammed Reza's modernization program broke with this century-old tradition, not in a wise way. Mohammed Reza only understood the second half of the process Tilly describes as *"the pacification, cooptation, or elimination of fractious rivals to the sovereign seems an awesome, noble, prescient enterprise, destined to bring peace to a people; yet it followed almost ineluctably from the logic of expanding power. If a power holder was to gain from the provision of protection, his competitors had to yield."*[565]

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[565] C. TILLY, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime", in P. EVANS, D. RUESCHEMEYER and T. SKOCPOL (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In,* New York, Cambridge UP, 1985, pp.169-187 (175)

Different "social units" were forced by the Shah's policies to compete with the state in domains as diverse as the economy, education or ideology. This competition became ever more hostile as the state tried to use its coercive power to be victorious in this process. Unfortunately, as has been shown, the main comparative advantage the state was supposed to have over the other competitors, that is coercive force, revealed utterly incapable to confront institutions and social units whose independence, autonomy and coherence were stronger. Therefore as had been the case centuries ago in some European states, the royal regime lost the competition and was reversed by other forces. These forces would now have to be integrated in the new state if any stability was to be obtained. A difficult task since the instability caused by the Shah's reform policies was not simply due to the exclusion of many from the political arena, but also by a disintegration of the traditional social tissue. Both would have to be reckoned with.

4.   Post-Revolutionary Aspects of State Formation

4.1.   *A Retrograde Revolution?*

If one takes an ideological look at the Iranian revolution of 1979, it seems to have been a religious revolution[566] or more precisely an Islamic revolution. Still today this point of view is shared by numerous observers, which then leads to statements on the failure of the revolution or of "political Islam".[567] Others speak of a betrayed revolution, betrayed because the people fought for "freedom" and got "autocracy" instead; betrayed because "anti-imperialism" was abandoned and so on.[568] These analyses have obviously their relevance in fields as religious studies and sociology, yet they forget the fundamental tendency that made the revolution necessary and would have characterized whatever regime or tendency following the revolution.

In his analysis of the French Revolution De Tocqueville describes how the French revolution was "*a political revolution which acted like a religious revolution*" because it "*did not have a territory of its own; further, to some extent its effect has been to erase all the old frontiers from the map. It has united or divided people despite their laws, traditions, characters, and languages, turning compatriots into enemies, and stranger into brothers* "[569] Something similar could easily be said for the universalistic pretensions

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[566] D. SHAYEGAN, *Qu'est-ce qu'une révolution religieuse,* Paris, Les Presses d'aujourd'hui, 1982

[567] See for example O. ROY, *The Failure of Political Islam,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1994 and S. FARKHONDEH, *Societé civile en Iran : Mythes et Réalités,* Paris, L'Harmattan, 2008

[568] Information obtained from different interviews with representatives of leftist and communist movements in exile in Paris, like Tufan, Feda'i (majority), Feda'i (minority) and Tudeh party.

[569] A. DE TOCQUEVILLE, *The Old Regime and the Revolution,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2004, p.99

of the Islamic Revolution, that quickly divided the world between Muslims and non-Muslims. In many analyses of the Iranian Revolution however something profoundly distinguishes the Iranian from the French revolution. De Tocqueville writes: "*administrative centralization is an institution of the Old Regime, and not the work of either the Revolution or the Empire*"[570] The Iranian revolution on the other hand is often considered as a backward revolution, designed to undo modernization, in other words "*the revolution occurred because the shah modernized too much and too quickly for his traditional-minded and backward-looking people.*"[571] Or it is considered to have occurred because the Shah was unable to adapt to new times, in essence it "*occurred because the shah did not modernize fast enough and thoroughly enough*"[572] Both viewpoints have their value, yet the present chapter shows how both of them close the eyes to fundamental aspects of the Islamic Revolution inextricably linked to state formation. Although he seems to offer an in-between analysis of the emerging of the revolution, Ervand Abrahamian underestimates the same aspects in a similar way. [573] The state had indeed to be further modernized; it had to increase dramatically its infrastructural power to eliminate competitors and to guarantee its survival under the pressure of internal and external forces. In this way hence it can be said that the Pahlavi dynasty did non modernize quickly enough and that the revolution, as we will see, continued the process of Pahlavi state formation.

One of this chapter's main arguments however is that the Islamic Revolution also changed course in *how* the state was to be modernized, *how* infrastructural power was to be increased and *how* challenges to the state were to be eliminated. As shown in the previous chapter, the royal regime's answers to these questions were that such had to be

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[570] A. DE TOCQUEVILLE, *The Old Regime and the Revolution,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2004, p.118

[571] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two…*, p.426-427

[572] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two…*, p.426-427

[573] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two revolutions,* Princeton, Princeton UP, 1982 where he develops the theory that it was economic modernization without political modernization that was at the bases of the Revolution.

achieved by the destruction of obstacles and by imposition of modernization against existing forces.

In a text on the tasks of the proletariat in the Russian revolution Lenin spoke about what he called the duality of power, its origins and significance in the revolutionary process. This duality of power said Lenin was a consequence of the existence of two governments: one bourgeois in the form of a provisional government and another formed by a "*government of control*" formed by the Soviets that did not possess any organ of state power but were supported directly by the majority of the people.[574] Lenin saw this state as temporary, to maintain only until the dictatorship of the proletariat could take over completely. The *soviets* were used first to undermine the provisional Kerensky government and then to take over the state from it.[575] In the end however, such double structure was institutionalized, not only in the USSR, but also in other revolutionary regimes and notably the Islamic Republic. The question to be asked is why. The answer to this question will show how this apparent decentralization of the state in reality guaranteed the state's ever expanding domain of control and interference. And how therefore it offered a different answer to *how* challenges to the state had to be dealt with.

In my opinion the change of course in state formation was neither voluntary nor intended. It was a consequence of internal and arguably unstoppable dynamics initiated decades ago. This chapter sets out to illustrate how the state was strengthened in a process officially designed to undo it and impose a "backward" regime led by so-called "archaic" or "retrograde" mullahs. Notwithstanding its essentially non-voluntarist character, many have argued that Islamic ideology has played an important role in the design of a new order. To verify this claim, I will briefly address this ideological framework, its main characteristics and some essential points of development.

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[574] V.I. LENINE, "Les Tâches du Prolétariat dans notre Révolution" in V.I. LENINE, *Œuvres Choisies,* Tome II, Moscou, Editions en langues étrangères, 1947, pp. 17-47 (19-20)
[575] C. TILLY, *Les Révolutions européennes 1492-1992,* Paris, Seuil, 1993, pp.341-342

4.2.   *An Ideological Framework*

In order to grasp the post-revolutionary debate, or its essence, on what sort of state order was to prevail, the relative weight of the religious order and the republican order have to be considered pivotal. Concerning our two state pillars Ayatollah Morteza Mutahhari and Ali Shariati are the two intellectuals that offer us most clarity on the confronting viewpoints. To be sure, I do not select Shariati and Mutahhari here because I consider them more important or their influence more decisive than that of other Islamic ideologues like Navvab-Safavi or Jalal Al-e Ahmad. Nor do I pretend that Islamist scholars as Mawdudi or Sayyid Qutb have been totally irrelevant.[576] Nonetheless the practical influence of the ideas of these are much harder to grasp and measure. Shariati and Mutahhari, on the contrary, are commonly referred to in order to clarify two different but not always opposing positions on the post-revolutionary state. On Navvab-Safavi, Rahnema and Nomani write: "*No major and visible social or political organization claimed allegiance to Navvab-Safavi during the revolution.*" [577] With some nuance, something similar could be said about Jalal Al-e Ahmad, who died ten years before the revolution. If his writings "*constitute the first crucial link in a chain of cumulative ideological statements that collectively constitute what was later to be called 'Islamic ideology'*" ,[578] his practical influence on the revolutionary process and the practical and concrete organization of the post-revolutionary state order are all but easily distinguishable.[579]

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[576] See for a disputable parallel between their thought and totalitarianism M. WHINE, "Islamism and Totalitarianism: Similarities and Differences", *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions,* Vol.2, No.2, Autumn 2001, pp.54-72

[577] M. MUTAHHARI, *Moshkellat-e Assasi Dar Sazeman-e Ruhaniyat,* Tehran, p.4 as quoted by A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic Policy in Iran,* London, Zed Books, 1990, p.73

[578] H. DABASHI, *Theology of Discontent,* New York, New York UP, 1993, p.41

[579] Although the anti-imperialist discourse of among others Shariati was obviously deeply indebted to Jalal Al-e Ahmad and his *Gharbzadegi.* See M. BOROUJERDI, "*Gharbzadegi:* The Dominant Intellectual Discourse of Pre- and Post-Revolutionary Iran", *in* S.K. FARSOUN & M. MASHAYEKHI, *Iran, Political Culture in the Islamic Republic*, London, Routledge, 1992, pp.30-56

4.2.1.   Morteza Mutahhari

Morteza Mutahhari will be one of the first to try to develop a coherent political theoretical state alternative able to counter the influence Marxist visions of the state had among many young Iranians.[580] Although Mutahhari's vision of an Islamic state will be slightly influenced by leftist ideas, it will always remain notably different from Shariati's. While Shariati, trying to give a Marxist content to the flag of Islam, will become the "ideologist of the Iranian revolution", Mutahhari's theories will form the basis of the concept of the Islamic state as designed by Khomeini. Both shared the idea to reserve a central role for the organized clergy.

While Shariati defends a class-like approach of Islamic society, Mutahhari prefers to drop the class-based analysis of Muslim society.[581] His main unit of analysis is the individual. The main division in society is the one between believers and non-believers. Not unlike Karl Popper's principles of falsification[582], Mutahhari asserts that one counterexample is enough to invalidate a theory, idea which he applies to class-analysis. By underlining historical events in which the individual did not act according to the interests of its class, Mutahhari rejects class-based analysis of society.[583]

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[580] For an overview of the development summarized here consider: M. DAVARI, *The Political Thought of Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari*, Oxon, RoutledgeCurzon, 2005 & V. MARTIN, *Creating an Islamic State*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2003

[581] For Mutahhari's refutation of Marxism and its replacement with a world view based on "Unity" (*Towhid*), a concept Shariati also based his worldview on, giving it however a different content. See the collection of texts M. MUTAHHARI, *Fundamentals of Islamic Thought: God, Man and the Universe*, Berkeley, Mizan Press, 1985

[582] See for example K. POPPER, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London/New York, Routledge, 2000 (1959)

[583] A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic Policy in Iran*, London, Zed Books, 1990, p.40-41

This does however not make Mutahhari a liberal, since his concept of freedom differs quite a bit from the liberal one, he comes to join paradoxically the concept of "limited freedom" as defended by many Marxists.[584]   Mutahhari's state is one of high moral constraints. In Master and Mastership he notes: "*will it be proper to make no effort to know the destiny of man or to overlook his spiritual genius and his sublime essence? Can we take him to be a beast living in the world of appetite, sleep, passion and sex, and leave him to wriggle like a worm to meet his animal desires only?*" The answer is not surprising: "*Man, despite the passage of so many centuries, has not yet known even 50 per cent of the physical actions and reactions of his body, how can he be expected to understand its metaphysical aspects or to lay down a programme to secure that remote objective? Hence there can be no denying the fact that there should be a leader the essence of whose existence may have a link with the metaphysical world, and who may be conversant enough with its intricate ways to be able to lead mankind, for he, who himself does not know the way, cannot be a guide.*"[585] For Mutahhari, democracy in Islam is based on freedom, yet not on the kind of freedom that finds its primordial expression in desire, but rather the kind of freedom consisting in imprisoning the animal and free the man. The objective of freedom is thus to develop the humanity of mankind by limiting desire and no one better placed to do so than "*a guide*".

As opposed Mutahhari might have been to Marxism his vision of the role of the clergy is more than slightly influenced by Marxist political thought. Regretting the influence the "common people" have on the clergy's action through the taxes they pay to this or that cleric, in his treatise on the *Fundamental Problems in the Organization of the Clergy*, he proposes a stronger financial centralization of the clerical institution in order to free the clergy at all levels from the (ignorant) people's influence and to constitute the clergy as a true vanguard.[586]

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[584] To be sure the limitations to freedom in the liberal sense proposed by Marxists are of a totally different order than those proposed by Mutahhari.

[585] M. MUTAHHARI, *Master and Mastership*, Islamic Seminary Publications, s.d., http://www.al-islam.org/mastership/index.htm

[586] M. MUTAHHARI, *Moshkellat-e Assasi Dar Sazeman-e Ruhaniyat*, Tehran, p.4 as quoted by A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic Policy in Iran*, London, Zed Books, 1990, p.46 For dependence of the clergy on funds of the

4.2.2.   Ali Shariati

Notwithstanding Mutahhari's elitist vision, the leader in his political theory can be elected by the people, the only precondition being a profound knowledge of Islamic law. This concept, a political form of the free choice of one's religious guide in Shi'a Islam, was rather close to the political project of Ali Shariati. The latter indeed foresaw a period of "guided democracy" and "benevolent dictatorship" before arriving at the "Islamic classless society". Hamid Dabashi underlines that there was more to the relationship between Shariati and Mutahhari than just plain rivalry and philosophical or theological disagreement. In a way it was their "*ideological affinity and continuity that have been more instrumental for the outcome of the Revolution.*"[587] Ayatollah Mutahhari was also co-founder of the Hosseiniyeh Ershad center in Tehran, where Shariati would give some of his most influential lectures.[588]

However Shariati was no cleric and perhaps the fundamental difference between him and Mutahhari originated in this different social background. Where the role of guidance had to be played by a centralized clerical vanguard for Mutahhari, Shariati saw things rather differently.[589] In his idea "guidance" was a matter of choice for all: "*The Prophet, in the Quran, is not regarded as the major factor in the transformation and change of history, but is introduced as a messenger who should reveal the school of thought and the way of Truth to the people. His*

"commons" see also V. MARTIN, *Islam and Modernism: The Iranian Revolution of 1906*, London, I.B. Tauris, 1989

[587] H. DABASHI, *Theology of Discontent,* New York, New York UP, 1993, p.157

[588] N. YOUSEFI, *Religion and Revolution in the Modern World: Ali Shari'ati's Islam and Persian Revolution,* Lanham, University Press of America, 1995, p.82

[589] Deductible even though admittedly he was often too abstract on the structure and organization of society. S. AKHAVI, "Ali Shari'atis Gesellschaftstheorie" in X., *Religion und Politik im Iran, Mardom Nameh-Jahrbuch zur Geschichte und Gesellschaft des Mittleren Orients*, Frankfurt am Main, Berliner Institut fûr vergleichende Sozialforschung, Syndikat, 1981, pp.178-196 (192)

mission ends here. It is up to the people, then, to choose that school of thought or not, to be guided or not.."[590]

His unit of analysis was undeniably "class" rather than the individual, his worldview was based on class struggle and the struggle between oppressors and oppressed, a "*continuous fight that started with Abel and Cain and continues indefinitely*."[591] Maybe his political vision is best illustrated by the name of a clandestine group he joined in the mid-1940's: "*The Movement of God Worshipping Socialists*".[592] However important this distinction in paradigm may be[593], considering the opposition between "*believers*" and "*non-believers*" of Mutahhari on the one hand and of "*oppressed*" and "*oppressors*" of Shariati on the other hand, intuitively shows how both doctrines could be fruitfully used for the sake of revolution. It "suffices" to identify the regime in place as either "*oppressing*" or "*non-believer*". Searching for religious and revolutionary legitimacy outside the clerical corpse from which he was excluded, Shariati turned against the clergy defining their Islam as outdated and even polytheistic,[594] for monotheism equaled the absence of any mediator between the believer and God.[595] Shariati wanted the clergy to be replaced as a vanguard by chosen intellectuals[596], in other words the group he belonged to, an idea all too happily obscured by

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[590] A. SHARIATI, *An Approach to the Understanding of Islam,* Tehran, The Shariati Foundation/Hamdami Publishers, 1979, p.28

[591] A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic Policy in Iran,* London, Zed Books, 1990, p.58

[592] N. YOUSEFI, *Religion and Revolution in the Modern World: Ali Shari'ati's Islam and Persian Revolution,* Lanham, University Press of America, 1995, p.69

[593] For a summarized version of Shariati's world vision compare other quoted texts with A. SHARI'ATI, *On the Sociology of Islam,* Berkeley, Mizan Press, 1979

[594] See also his attack on the historical role of the clergy in A. SHARIATI, *Reflections of a Concerned Muslim,* Houston, Free Islamic Literatures Inc., 1979

[595] H. DABASHI, *Theology of Discontent,* New York, New York UP, 1993, p.112 & A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic Policy in Iran,* London, Zed Books, 1990, p.62

[596] K. HAYAMA, *Dr. 'Ali Shari'ati's Revolutionary Ideology and the Role of the Roushanfekr in Social Change*, Working Papers Series No,1, Niigata (Japan), The Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, International University of Japan, pp.59-60

the IRP after his death.[597] Not unsurprisingly influent clerics forbade his books and rejoiced in his imprisonment under the royal regime.[598]

A part from his opposition to the clergy's worldly power, his Rousseau-like interpretation of *imamate*[599] has to be mentioned. For Shariati the *umma* is, very much in line with Rousseau's "*volonté générale*[600]", "*a society in which a number of individuals, possessing a common faith and goal, come together in harmony with the intention of advancing and moving forward toward their common goal.*"[601] Imamate is "*not the democracy of heads, not irresponsible and directionless liberalism which is a plaything of contesting social forces, not putrid aristocracy, not anti-popular dictatorship, not a self-imposing oligarchy. It consists rather of 'purity of leadership' (not the leader, for that would be fascism) committed and revolutionary leadership, responsible for the movement and growth of society on the basis of its worldview and ideology (…).*"[602] A more obvious refutation of *velayat-e faqih* as the rule of one clerical Guide than the one found in Shariati's work would be hence be hard to find. On the other hand his interpretation of the *umma* seemed quite compatible with a more republican Islamic order or an Islamic republican order.

4.2.3.   Plato's Republic

Considering the previous paragraphs and the importance of guidance both in Mutahhari's as in Shariati's vision, a parallel with one of the classic texts of Western political philosophy inevitably comes to mind.

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[597] See for example the accent put by Beheshti, head of the IRP, on Shariati's religious credentials and intellectual capacities "Nazar-e Ayatollah Doktor Behesti" in S. LAME'I, *Doktor Shari'ati dar aiineye khaterat*, Tehran, Ramand, 1389, p.183-184

[598] A. RAHNEMA, *An Islamic Utopian: A Political Biography of Ali Shariati*, London, I.B.Tauris, 1998, pp.266-276

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[600] J.J. ROUSSEAU, *Du Contrat social*, Paris, Flammarion, 2001

[601] A. SHARIATI, "The Ideal Society – The Umma", from *Islamshenasi*, Vol.I, pp.97-98 translated by H. ALGAR and republished in A. SHARI'ATI, *On the Sociology of Islam*, Berkeley, Mizan Press, 1979, pp. 119-120

[602] *Ibid.*

"Behold! human beings living in a underground cave, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the cave; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets."[603]

The image is rather clear. Men chained somewhere deep down see the shadows of objects carried and shown by those "from above". They mistakenly confuse these shadows and the actual objects. Plato's idea is that if one of them would be able to break his chains, turn around and climb up, to the fire or eventually to the sun at the very end of the cavern; this person would, after a period of adaptation, finally see the objects as they really are. The climbing and the adaptation to the light are a hard and difficult experience but once surrounded by light, the "illuminated one" will be in a very comfortable position. He will not feel the need to climb down again. And even if he would do so his former "comrades-in-chains" would not believe him. How could they? Even he himself did not believe what he saw, moreover, what he is now telling them is contrary to everything they experience and see for themselves. They might even threaten his life if he would overly annoy them with his questioning of their perception.

Plato considers it nevertheless a moral plight to climb down once again and guide others to the light. No surprise thus when Plato states that philosophers must become kings and those called kings must genuinely and adequately philosophize. He underlines values as justice (climb down to free others), courage (risk one's life) and self-discipline

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[603] http://www.plotinus.com/plato_allegory_of_the_cave.htm; For one of the numerous English translations see: PLATO [D. LEE (transl.)], *The Republic*, Penguin Books, Penguin Classics, 2003

(needed for the climbing up). Al-Farabi, one of the Arab scholars that underwent most Platonic influence, will develop the concept of "Al-Madina al-fazila" or "The Virtuous City", highlighting the social dimension of the care a guide should have for his people. Ibn Arabi, an Arab mystic with Spanish roots, will develop a theory of the Perfect Man, who without sin and inspired by wisdom and divine knowledge will obtain the status of vice-regent of God on earth. In his theory it is thus possible to "acquire" such a status, while the Imamate is "given". These different theories will all influence Mulla Sadra who will elaborate a theory in four steps that coincide more or less with the stages of climbing out of Plato's cave. Mulla Sadra's work will have a major influence on Khomeini during the first part of his career.

4.2.4.   Ruhollah Khomeini

Before the revolution Khomeini's political ideas were communicated to the Iranians under the form of cassettes and other tapes distributed illegally through bazaar and mosque-linked networks, although many Iranians insist that they had not read them before the revolution, two books are basic literature if one wishes to understand the ideas behind Khomeini's political vision[604]. The Revelation of Secrets (*Kashf al-Asrar*), published in 1943-1944, was his first work analyzing the question of the

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[604] Khomeini's vision has been the object of uncountable articles and books, among the most useful we found: E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Khomeinism*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993; H. ANSARI, *The Narrative of Awakening*, Teheran, Institute for compilation and publication of the works of Imam Khomeini, s.d.; H. & A. BENABDERRAHMANE, *Kufa, Principes de Gouvernement de l'Imam Ali*, Bayreuth, Al Bouraq Editions, 1999; IMAM KHOMEYNI, *Le Gouvernement Islamique*, Téhéran, Institut pour l'édition et la publication des œuvres de l'Imam Khomeini, s.d. ; V. MARTIN, *Creating an Islamic State*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2003 ; M. MOZAFFARI, *Pouvoir Shî'ite, Théorie et evolution*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1998

State in itself.[605] The text is intended above all as a rebuttal of theological and other attacks against the Shi'i clergy.[606]

Khomeini takes a rather ambiguous position towards monarchy in this book, which could lead to a conclusion that monarchy is in itself not in contradiction with Islamic law.[607] The basic idea is that any regime is still better than no regime at all. Khomeini quotes some examples of cases in which the clergy has supported a corrupt government to save the higher interest and to improve the position of "the Servants of God". On laws and sovereignty Khomeini is then again very clear: there can be no sovereign but God and no law but God's law. A government lacks hence all sovereignty and can only implement God's law. Khomeini firmly rejects any kind of man-made legislation that can only be imperfect and impede the implementation of divine laws. Khomeini is no fan of representative democracy either, because representatives will only be elected through a democratic charade based on force and corruption. Both man-made legislation as representative democracy seem Western inventions, which allows the author to link them to colonialism, imperialism and decadence.[608]

Although the concept of *velayat-e faqih* is already developed in this text[609], Khomeini seems to favor a mere "supervisory role" for the clergy.[610] His ideal seems to lie in a Council of clerics and jurists electing a leader for the country. This leader does not have to be a jurist but will have to apply divine law under supervision of the Council. A

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[605] Some basic principles can however already be found in works from his earlier Irfan-period.

[606] M.H. RAJABI, *Zendeginameye siasi Emam Khomeini: Az aghaz ta tabi'd*, Jeld-e Avval, Tehran, 1373, pp.188-189

[607] G. ROSE, "*Velayat-e Faqih* and the Recovery of Islamic Identity in the Thought of Ayatollah Khomeini", in N.R. KEDDIE, *Religion and Politics in Iran*, New Haven and London, Yale UP, 1983, pp.166-190 (186)

[608] See the discussion of this topic in V. MARTIN, *Creating an Islamic State*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2003

[609] See for example M.H. RAJABI, *Zendeginameye siasi Emam Khomeini: Az aghaz ta tabi'd*, Jeld-e Avval, Tehran, 1373, p.189

[610] A.H. FERDOWS, "Khomaini and Fadayan's Society and Politics", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* Vol.15, No.2, May 1983, pp.241-257 (244).

popular vote is not envisaged, even though one could argue that every cleric is more or less "elected" or at least "chosen" by his supporters. Since a higher degree of supporters and followers will bring about more prestige, funds and recognition, the highest religious leaders present in the Council are in a way "elected" a priori by the believers.

The second major text of the same author that should be discussed is "*Hokumat-e Islami : Velayat-e faqih*" (Islamic government: the guardianship of the jurist). The book, that dates from around 1970, is probably one of the most elaborate justifications of theocracy. For Khomeini "leadership" is now to constitute a force that leads people from trouble to their goals and the realization of their wishes.[611] The author goes a lot further in the role attributed to (Islamic) jurists and clerics under Islamic rule. Khomeini develops the right of the clergy to take power. In his speech after the referendum on the establishment of an he will rather bluntly state: "*Do not oppose the clergymen*"[612] Recalling that the ideal situation is one of consensus of the entire ulama or clergy. Khomeini will understandably consider the possibility of leaving guidance to one jurist, which is not without foundation in Shi'i religious history.[613]

Clearly, Western ideas as much as Islamic ideas influenced Khomeini's vision of the state to come. And both, from Plato onwards, produced an ideology that did indeed offer a useful framework for the establishment of a dual state, or at the very least a state led by an "illuminated" vanguard. Some authors attribute an important if not decisive role to ideology and Islamism.[614] Said Amir Arjomand once claimed that ideologies: "*progressively defined and formulated during the revolutionary*

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[611] A. OMIDZANJANI, *Feqh-e Siasi: Nezam-e siasi va rahbari dar eslam,* Djeld-e 2, Tehran, Moaseseye Entesharat Amir Kabir, 1367, p.259

[612] R. KHOMEINI, "The First Day of God's Rule", 3 April 1979, in R. KHOMEINI, *Selected Messages and Speeches of Imam Khomeini*, Tehran, The Ministry of National Guidance, s.d., pp.1-4

[613] See Chapter 8 "Philosophie politique de la République islamique" in H. NAHAVANDI, *L'Iran 1940-1980 : crise, révolution, tragédie,* Paris, IREP, 1980, pp.111-122

[614] See for example J. FORAN, *Fragile Resistance: Social Transformation in Iran from 1500 to the Revolution*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1993

process, do *shape the political order installed by the revolution to a significant extent"* pretending that the success of ideology is the "*novel and teleologically distinct mark of the Islamic Revolution.*"[615] Hamed Dabashi even states: "*The fateful success and the immediate failure of the Islamic revolution in Iran brought its ideological foregrounding, cultivated over the last two hundred years, to an historic conclusion*"[616] Others without going as far nonetheless assert treat ideology as consisting "*of a general principles, concepts, symbols, and rituals that shape human actions in a particular historical period, and considers revolutionary phenomenon as a particular mode of historical action constituted by revolutionary ideology.*"[617]

This is an exaggeration. Khomeinism was shaped at least as much by reality as it shaped reality. The influence of Marxism on both Shariati's and Mutahhari's writings was as much a consequence of their personal experiences as of the objective societal situation in Iran. The same can be said for their respective visions of the role of the clergy in the state. Ervand Abrahamian emphasizes that "Khomeinism" as a political doctrine should probably be considered as "populism" rather than fundamentalism since he "*broke sharply with Shi'i traditions, borrowed radical rhetoric from foreign sources, including Marxism, and presented bold appeal to the public based not on theological themes but on real economic,*

[615] S.A. ARJOMAND, "Iran's Islamic Revolution in Comparative Perspective", *World Politics,* Vol.38, No.3, April 1986, pp.383-414 (384, 414)

[616] H. DABASHI, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*, New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 2006, p.xiv

[617] M. MOADDEL, "Ideology as Episodic Discourse: The Case of the Iranian Revolution", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 57, No. 3, June 1992, pp. 353-379 (353) In other works Moaddel identified what was in his eyes the basic problem of Weberian, Marxian or Marxist scholarship , of which he saw remnants in Foucault, Mitchell, Durkheim and others: "*The major problem of the perspective, however, is the absence of a mechanism that connects ideas to social structure.*" Logical in Moaddel's vision since although "*The producers of sociopolitical ideas make reference to such problems of social life as economic development, poverty and inequality, race and gender differences, political domination and arbitrary rule, and national security. What they actually say, however, cannot be directly derived from these problems.*" See M. MOADDEL, "Conditions for Ideological Production: The Origins of Islamic Modernism in India, Egypt, and Iran", *Theory and Society*, Vol. 30, No. 5, October 2001, pp. 669-731 (671, 673-674) See also M. MOADDEL, *Class, Politics, and Ideology in the Iranian Revolution*, New York, Columbia UP, 1992

social, and political grievances."[618] Once in power Khomeini attempts to find a middle way between Shariati's and Mutahhari's conception of an Islamic state, the main difference between the two being the insistence on democratic choice by the former and the elitist clerical vision of the latter. That Khomeini's own vision was probably more pro-clerical than Shariati's, but probably less elitist than Mutahhari's, did not make an enormous difference, what determined the outcome was the societal weight of the concentration of power formed by the clergy. In a very similar way the fact that the fundamental writings of Khomeini did not leave space for a republican state structure, did not prevent the establishment of a republican state structure. Misagh Parsa, in our vision correctly, underlines that "*to argue convincingly that an ideological shift towards a theocratic Islamic regime preceded its formation, the analysis would have to show that the Islamic movement's leadership was open about its ideology and goals, and that a majority of those who participated in the revolution supported such goals.*"[619] Something arguably no scholar has until now demonstrated. Many accounts even give credibility to the opposite. On the ideological level a comparison between socialist and Iranian revolutionary ideologies is not meaningless. In a study on the Cuban socialist regime Susan Eckstein noted how there is "*reason to believe that Marxist-Leninist-legitimated regimes may have been less ideologically driven over the years than portrayed in studies of Communism.*"[620] Domenico Losurdo stressed how communist revolutionaries possessed a useful revolutionary theory to take over power, but lacked a theory that could indicate the way in which the new system "should" be shaped.[621] Considering that Shi'i revolutionary political thought and Khomeinism were neither as elaborate nor as

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[618] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Khomeinism,* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p.3
Consider as well M. KARSHENAS, "L'Islam "radicale" e la specificità iraniana", *Religioni e Società,* No.46, 2003, pp. 123-133 & S. ZUBAIDA, "An Islamic State? The Case of Iran", *Middle East Report,* No. 153, July-August 1988, pp. 3-7
[619] M. PARSA, "Ideology and Revolution in Iran: Review" *Middle East Report,* No.196, September-October 1995, pp.30-32 (30)
[620] S.E. ECKSTEIN, *Back from the Future: Cuba Under Castro,* Princeton, Princeton UP, 1994, p.13
[621] D. LOSURDO, *Fuir l'Histoire : La Révolution russe et la Révolution chinoise Aujourd'hui,* Paris, Editions Delga/Temps des Cerises, 2007, p.67

precise as Marxist-Leninist writings, it is unclear why any autonomous role for ideology should be acknowledged.

4.3. *Emerging Power Centers*

As is the case in every revolution, the breakdown of the ruling system created a multiplicity of power centers.[622] The emergence of such power centers potentially threatened the state and centralization. A part from the official state institutions, four main centers of power can be identified: the Islamic Revolutionary Council (IRC) and the parallel structures of the revolutionary clergy, the guerilla organizations and other armed forces not linked to the IRC, regional(ist) centers of power, and grassroots institutions, like revolutionary committees or councils. All of these emerged immediately after the revolution and their defeat was essential if the state was to maintain and eventually enlarge its hold on society. That is, if the movement towards state-making and nation-making that had started under Qajar rule was not to end in the disintegration of the country and its territorial integrity.

The first post-revolutionary government was led by Mehdi Bazargan, a nationalist liberal. This government headed what can be called a first center of power. It *grosso modo* coincided with the major pre-revolutionary institutions, even though the latter were clearly democratized under revolutionary impulse. At the same time this liberal leadership would show a "*scant ability to establish a mass base of support*".[623]

A second center of power was the Islamic Revolutionary Council (IRC), of which partisans of Bazargan were as good as totally absent. It was not totally under clerical domination, yet its loyalty to Khomeini as opposed to loyalty to Bazargan and the official state government can

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[622] S.A. ARJOMAND, "Iran's Islamic Revolution in Comparative Perspective", *World Politics*, Vol.38, No.3, April 1986, pp.383-414 (389)

[623] R. COTTAM, "Inside Revolutionary Iran", *Middle East Journal*, Vol.43, No.2, Spring 1989, pp.168-185 (169)

not be questioned. Bazargan acknowledged the danger of this council and tried, unsuccessfully, to merge it with his provisional government.[624]

A third center of power was formed by regional(-ist) groups. As seen in the preceding chapter, parts of the different ethnic groups that compose Iran had throughout history enjoyed a differing degree of independence and were inclined to use any event to obtain more rights, more autonomy and in some cases, some kind of independence.[625] The Islamic Revolution would be no exception to this rule, although it will no longer be the tribes but rather specific ethnic groups that challenge Iranian territorial sovereignty.[626] The tribes that had escaped the Shah's policy sedentarization would be not get away from the same policies during the first ten years after the Islamic revolution. Institutions tactically established like the *Showra-ye Ali-e Ashayeri* (High Council for the Tribes); economic incentives, like practical protection of tribal agricultural interests and the development of effective communication systems in tribal areas, a necessary step initiated by Reza Khan, all contributed to the success, which permitted the Islamic Republic to finish a process necessary for Iran's emergence as a unified state. [627] The fundamental difference between the Islamic Republic's policy towards tribes and Mohammed Reza's lay hence in these positive incentives for sedentarization under the Islamic Republic, whereas under the last Pahlavi Shah, "*on being settled, the nomads* [were] *often assigned the worst land, the richer soil being reserved for agribusiness and other so-called modern forms of production.*"[628] The progressive identification following sedentarization with Arab national identity in

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[624] M.H. MALEK, "Elite Factionalism in the Post-Revolutionary Iran", *Journal of Contemporary Asia,* Vol.19, No.4, 1989, pp.435-460 (443)

[625] The chronology offered here is based on different pieces of scholarly studies, yet the text of M. BEHROOZ, *Rebels with a cause,* London, I.B.Tauris, 2000, p.178-184 has been especially useful.

[626] See on this evolution S. CRONIN, *Tribal Politics in Iran,* London, Routledge, 2007, p.196

[627] J.-P.DIGARD, B. HOURCADE & Y. RICHARD, *L'Iran au XXe Siècle,* Paris, Fayard, 2007, p.306-307

[628] T. BRUN & R. DUMONT, " Imperial Pretensions and Agricultural Dependence ", *MERIP Reports,* No.71, Vol.8, October 1978, pp.15-20 (18)

Khuzestan was linked to the broader movement of Pan-Arabism. It should however not be overestimated, a mistake Saddam Hussein arguably made.[629]

This brings us to the fourth center of power, the "councils" (*showra*) and "committees" (*komiteh*) erected often autonomously a bit throughout the country. "Nazm-e Kargar" (Worker's Order), edited by so-called Socialist Revolutionary Students and defending a political line of left radicalism, [630] gives a small overview of some of the activities of workers' councils during the revolutionary process. "*The victory of the insurgency transformed the committees of strikers in factory soviets. (…) The working class considered the formation of soviets as a revolutionary task and not only as an instrument for "revendicative" struggle as such.*" In the factories one could see the emergence of "*a new order differing 100% of what was decided in the mosques*". Nazm-e Kargar quotes Bazargan, who wished to extend the power of his legitimate government, complaining that "*workers are now the true chiefs of industry.*" [631] The same texts attributes, the social advances of the revolution (as for example nationalizations) to the existence of these councils and to their "disappearance" the partial de-nationalizations of Behzad Nabavi.

4.4.   State-making and Protection: From Multiplicity to Duality of Power

4.4.1.   The Parallel Challenge

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[629] See for example the partial analysis of this movement in N. FIRZLI (réd.), *Le Conflit Irako-Iranien,* Paris, Institut d'Etudes et de Recherches des Editions du Monde Arabe, 1981, p.99-104

[630] X., "Bulletin de discussion des comités d'action ouvriers", *Ordre Ouvrier*, May 1983, No.1, p.3

[631] *Ibid*, p.18

Next to, and soon in alliance with, the IRC other organizations more openly dominated by the mobilized activist clergy emerged.[632] Abdollah Noori relates how "*there is no doubt that* [the passivist] *Borujerdi was a great man (..), but after him* [the activist] *Khomeini found a special place in our mind.*"[633] Stating that "*the increasing involvement of the clergy in politics in the most recent two centuries has had to do with a variety of causes, not all of them doctrinal*" is clearly an understatement.[634] The clergy's involvement in politics was above all inspired by the defense of its materialistic corporatist interests in order "*to regain the prerogatives and functions they had lost as a result of the centralization and modernization of the state.*"[635]

Rafsanjani writes: "*My liberation[636] came in the month of Aban, no more than two or three months separated it from the victory of the revolution. (…) In that environment Marxist tendencies and nationalists had a publication policy that tried to weaken the original groups of the struggle, in essence the clergy and its prominent faces, and in the same sense they tried to decrease the importance* (kamrang kardan) *of my liberation.*"[637] This was one of the reasons why Rafsanjani, in close contact with Khomeini (still in Paris), tried to assemble "the militant clergy". The "*materialistic clergy*" needed very down-to-earth means of political struggle.[638] In collaboration with Mottahari, Beheshti, Dr. Bahonar, Mousavi Ardebili and others they

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[632] Although it is clearly an exaggeration to say that "the clerical community was unanimously in support of such an interpretation of velayat-e faqih" as does M.H. MALEK, "Elite Factionalism in the Post-Revolutionary Iran", *Journal of Contemporary Asia,* Vol.19, No.4, 1989, pp.435-460 (446)

[633] X., "Goftoguye Shahrvand-e Emrooz ba Abdollah Noori", *Shahrvand Emrooz,* 21 Bahman 1386

[634] S. AKHAVI, "The Ideology and Praxis of Shi'ism in the Iranian Revolution", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 25, No. 2, April 1983, pp. 195-221 (205)

[635] S.A. ARJOMAND, "Iran's Islamic Revolution in Comparative Perspective", *World Politics,* Vol.38, No.3, April 1986, pp.383-414 (401)

[636] From the royal prisons

[637] A.A. HASHEMI RAFSANJANI, *Dorane Mobareze* [Years of Struggle], Tehran, Nashre Mo'aref Enqelab, 1386, p.320

[638] W.O. BEEMAN, "Iran's Religious Regime: What Makes it Tick? Will it Ever Run Down?", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 483, No.1, January 1986, pp. 73-83 (76)

started contacting befriended clerics, which led to the constitution of a "Guidance Committee" for the militant clergy.[639] After the Revolution the Committee of the Islamic Revolution too would play a certain role in imposing or at least promoting clerical rule. The clergy sometimes got rather unexpected support: the communist Tudeh party wrote in its theoretical journal *Donya* that the party "*has shown solidarity with the progressive Muslim clergy in their struggle for freedom and democracy because our party is fighting for the same cause.*"[640]

A bit before the revolution the Council of the Islamic Revolution (*showraye enqelabe eslami*) was formed, initial members were not surprisingly Rafsanjani, Mottahari, Beheshti, Dr. Bahonar, Mousavi Ardebili and obviously Khomeini himself. Later other people, like Bazargan, Khamenei and Bani Sadr, would join. A short while after the revolution. the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) was founded. This party differed from the Council of the Islamic Revolution by the higher degree of clerical participation and domination. The IRP was founded by the above mentioned usual suspects (although Khomeini himself never joined), and regrouped both left-wing, as Mir-Hossein Mousavi, and right-wing members in its central committee.[641]

In reality, this modern tool of politics which was the IRP had by no means been the one preferred by the clerics. Rafsanjani describes how none of those of the Khomeini-camp had a particular good feeling when they offered the post of Prime Minister to Bazargan. "*The problem*, Rafsanjani writes, *we had with giving the executive to someone of the Freedom Movement was that the Imam* [Khomeini] *did not feel well about parties. His agreement with the establishment of the IRP was also inspired by a lack of choice.*"[642] Indeed, both the giving of power to Bazargan as the

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[639] *Ibid.*, p.322

[640] E. TABARI, "Socialism and Islam", *Donya* as published in *MERIP Reports,* No.75-76, Vol.9, March-April 1979, pp.29-30

[641] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.60 & A.A. HASHEMI RAFSANJANI, *Dorane Mobareze* [Years of Struggle], Tehran, Nashre Mo'aref Enqelab, 1386, pp 336-337

[642] A.A. HASHEMI RAFSANJANI, *Dorane Mobareze* [Years of Struggle], Tehran, Nashre Mo'aref Enqelab, 1386, p.334

foundation of the IRP were inspired by pure necessity. The former because, as Khamenei later admitted "*at that time we ourselves lacked the ability.*"[643] This problem was wider than just political. For example the new Republic lacked the necessary amount of competent religious judges to administer Islamic justice throughout the country.[644] The IRP was established to counter the growing influence of otherwise inspired movements. The main task of it was hence not surprisingly to rally all supporters of *velayat-e faqih*.[645] In other words to assure the victory of the parallel state institutions dominated by the clergy. Although Maziar Behrooz somewhat exaggerates when he states that from the very beginning organs as the *Sepah*, the *Bonyad-e Mostazafan*, *komiteh*s, the *Hezbollah*, the *basij* just as grass-roots Islamic societies came under the control of the IRP, there is some truth in it.[646] Reza Alijani for example underlines how the most central axis of the IRP, where policy-making went on, was controlled by clerics.[647]

Although the clergy made up the vast majority of the leadership of the IRP, the bazaaris also filled up central positions within the party. Clerics as Azari-Qomi, Mahdavi-Kani, Nateq-Nuri, Meshkini, Imami-Kashani and future president and Supreme Leader Khamenei were all linked in one way or another to the interests of the bazaar.[648] Apart from within the IRP these groups were also active in other organizations, like the *hojjatiyeh* and the *Motalefe*. The *Jameyate Motalefeye Eslami* (Society of Islamic Coalition or in short *Motalefe*) was

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[643] S. BAKHASH, *The Reign of the Ayatollahs,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1985, p.65

[644] M. BEHROOZ, "Reflections On Iran's Prison System During The Montazeri Years (1985-1988)", *Iran Analysis Quarterly,* Vol.2, No.3, Winter (January-March) 2005, pp.11-24 (14)

[645] S. AHMADI, "About the Abolition of the Islamic Republican Party", *Aqazi,*No.5-6, Summer-Fall 1987, p.27 as quoted in M. BEHROOZ, "Factionalism in Iran under Khomeini", *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol.27, No.4, October 1991, pp.596-614 (600)

[646] M. BEHROOZ, "Factionalism in Iran under Khomeini", *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol.27, No.4, October 1991, pp.596-614 (600) & M.H. MALEK, "Elite Factionalism in the Post-Revolutionary Iran", *Journal of Contemporary Asia,* Vol.19, No.4, 1989, pp.435-460 (442)

[647] K. MEHREGAN, "Rishe haye daruni bohran dar jenahe rast", *Etemaad,* 4 Tir 1387 & K. MEHREGAN, "Raste Efrati be Saie miravad", *Etemaad,* 5 Tir 1387

[648] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.59

born out of a coalition of three associations initiated by big merchants from the bazaar with the intention to defend the bazaar's traditional interests against the Shah's interventions.[649] *The Hojjatiyeh* is more difficult to define. It is a Shi'i lay volunteer organization founded after 1953 by Mahmoud Halabi to defend Islam scientifically against Baha'i influences. Especially in the 1970's the organization developed some influence among students. It became increasingly modernized and eventually even gave in to modern principles of management and division of labor including public speakers, political activists, instructors and intelligence operatives.[650]

After the revolution *hojjati* (member of the *hojjatiyeh*) was gradually applied to anyone opposing calls for a radical transformation of the state, society or the economy.[651] Baktiari underlines that however secretive this organization might have operated, some of its members, like Mahdavi-Kani, Imami-Kashani and Ashgar-Owladi appeared regularly in the media. The Hojjatiya did not adhere to Khomeini's concept of *velayat-e faqih* since in the absence of the Mahdi, the twelfth Imam, no such thing as an Islamic government could exist. Rafsanjani describes the Hojjatiya as *"religious Muslims, but not revolutionary."* Member of this group massively obtained positions in the administration of especially cultural affairs.[652] Moreover the society believed in collective rather than individual leadership and opposed direct clerical involvement in politics.[653] No surprise hence that the organization, more or less formalized after the revolution, would

[649] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.54
[650] M. SADRI, "Hojjatiya", in E. YARSHATER, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. XII, New York, Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation, 2004, pp.426-428
[651] B. BAKTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran,* Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1996, p.82
[652] A.A. HASHEMI RAFSANJANI, *Obur az Bohran,* Tehran, Nashr-e Moaref-e Enghelab, 1386, p.231, 297
[653] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.59

quickly come under attack of Khomeini and eventually had to "renounce its activities".[654]

Another important association from which the traditional right within the IRP drew its strength were the *Jame'eye Modaresin-e Howzeye Elmi Qom* (The Society of Teachers of the Scientific Seminars of Qom) which was in essence the religious ideological headquarters of the new regime.

The IRP thus included the two strongest pre-revolutionary concentrations of private power. Their political action, their autonomous organization and the increased centralization imposed upon them by the struggle for power would forge these pre-revolutionary power concentrations to become a powerful apparatus. Those forces that had until now resisted the state thought their time had come to take over the state. Rather than take over the state however, they were to evolve into Lenin's "government of control".

Taking into account not only the form of these organizations but also the continuity in their leadership structures, the above constituted an evolution in the direction of the "centralization" of a parallel state structure. It allowed a higher level of political coordination of local clerical resistance, but not only. It would soon be used against other centers of power that had appeared during the revolution. The only of these different centers of power that succeeded in constructing a top-down column going from a relatively centralized leadership to an organized militia would prevail over all the others.

This constellation at least partially explains the success of the coordinated attacks against secular forces promoted directly or indirectly by the IRP. It succeeded from the very beginning in offering and constructing a different order. The IRP was at this level even more effective than the Revolutionary Council, which opposed the government of Bazargan, but also marginally included some liberal

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[654] See for example A.A. HASHEMI RAFSANJANI, *Be Sooye Sarnevesht,* Tehran, Nashr-e Moaref-e Enghelab, 1386, pp.106, 340

elements as Ezzatollah Sahabi, who would later become a major regime critic. A fundamental factor in this was the mobilization of the *mostazafan* and the control of paramilitary organizations, like the *Sepah*, whose action was not limited to violent repression, but through their journal *Payam-e Enqelab*, also included propaganda against communists, liberals and islamo-marxists.[655]

Not ideology or politico-religious theories founded the bases of the parallel structure, but a particular dynamic which found fertile ground in the pre-revolutionary structure of Iranian society.

4.4.2. The Peripheral Challenge

Throughout history the Shahs had been forced to maintain a delicate equilibrium in their relations with the different tribes present on Iranian territory. Sometimes, as in Baluchistan, national Iranian sovereignty had been established quite late; in other regions it had often been nothing more than nominal. It has been seen how the undermining of autonomous tribal lordship (*muluk al-tavagif)[656]* had been a difficult and precarious process. Yet at the time of the occurrence of the Islamic Revolution it can be said that what Keddie has called "*tribal feudalism*" in essence a system with a "*feudal type of service fief*" and was "*strongly colored by powerful and essentially autonomous tribal enclaves within the polity.*"[657] , had come to an end. In Khuzestan for example the revolts were inspired more by "Arab" nationalism than by tribal, Bakhtiari, identities.[658] Often these rebellions were inspired as much by materialist interests as they were by regionalist or nationalist ideas: "*in areas where semitribal forms of social organization persisted, such as Kurdistan, Fars, and Baluchistan, the khans*

[655] A. ALFONEH, "The Revolutionary Guards' Role in Iranian Politics", *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol.15, No.4, Fall 2008, pp.3-14 (5-6)
[656] F. KAZEMI, "The Military and Politics in Iran: An Uneasy Symbiosis, in E. KEDOURI & S.G. HAIM, *Towards a Modern Iran*, London, Frank Cass, 1980, pp. 217-240 (218)
[657] N. KEDDIE, *Iran Religion, Politics and Society*, London, Frank Cass, 1980, pp.140-141
[658] S. CRONIN, *Tribal Politics in Iran*, London, Routledge, 2007, p.196 -202

and the landlords sought in the general disorder to reclaim lands they had lost under the shah's land reform."[659]

As soon as the 18th of March 1979, little more than a month after the official victory of the revolution the new government is faced with an armed rebellion in Sanandaj (Kurdistan), their movement is supported by the Feda'i. A week later, on the 26th of March the government clashes with Turkmans. Less than a month later fighting along ethnic lines breaks out in Nassadeq, Kurds oppose Azéris (ethnic Turks). Another month passes and in Khorramshahr Arab armed groups attack government forces. Mid-August governmental troops conquer the city of Paveh after harsh fighting with Kurds and the communist organization Komalah. At the end of the same month Khomeini prefers to crush Kurdish opposition rather than accepting the offered ceasefire. Although most of the Kurdish rebellion can considered to be crushed after the taking by of government forces of Mahabad, a total ceasefire will come in vigor only on 26 November 1979. On 5 December 1979 ayatollah Shariatmadari denounces from Tabriz (Azeri territory) the newly drafted constitution, his partisans attempt to take control of the streets and audiovisual media. A week later about 700,000 persons demonstrate in support of Shariatmadari and for the liberation of dissident Azeris. Although in January 1980 the situation in Tabriz calms down, the struggles between government and Kurds restart on the 20th of March. These regionalist groups attacked one of the fundamental characteristics of the Iranian state and its coherence: its territorial integrity. The crushing of these was absolutely essential if Iran, in whatever form, was to survive. This partially explains Khomeini's hard handedness towards for example the Kurds.

The main danger of these movements did not come from any form of political disagreement, as important as such divergences might have been, but from their rejection of the state as such. The alliance between these regionalist tendencies and insurgents on the one hand and leftist or more politically inspired groups on the other mainly symbolized

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[659] M. MOADDEL, "Class Struggle in Post-Revolutionary Iran", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3., August 1991, pp. 317-343 (320)

their common opposition to the central state, even if the Feda'i officially defended a strong centralized state. Both were defeated by common action of future parallel and present state democratic institutions.

4.4.3. The Challenge from below: the Revolutionary Councils

The exact nature and importance of the revolutionary councils could be debated at length. Soviet observer Demchenko opposes them to the *komiteh's.* He notes that the relationship between "Islamist" committees (*komiteh*) and workers' councils (*showra*) were often complex and difficult. Since on the one hand these *komiteh's* wanted to consider workers as their allies, yet on the other hand they were pleading in favor of "brotherhood" and refuse class struggle, which leads them to denounce every worker who does believe in class struggle as "counterrevolutionary". [660] In the Soviet perception a clear difference existed between the revolutionary activities of working councils on the one hand and that of *komiteh*'s on the other. The working class was no doubt fragmented[661], but its concentration in certain regions (Azerbaijan, Khorassan, Isfahan and Tehran) permitted the emergence of some kind of interaction within heterogeneity. This in turn permitted some "working class demands" to appear. Demchenko's approach of opposing Islamist *komiteh's* to working councils is hence understandable. Unfortunately, it is equally wrong.

The name given to the workers' councils, "showra", has religious origins.[662] In a religious context, it means consultation by councils, what

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[660] S. AKHAVI, "Soviet Perceptions of the Iranian Revolution", *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 19, No.1, Winter 1986, pp.3-30

[661] M. PARVIZI AMINEH, *Kapitalistische expansie, periferisering en passieve revolutie in Iran (1500-1980)*, Maastricht, Shaker Publishing, 1998, p.363

[662] At the beginning the prophet Mohamed's political power was more that of an arbiter ; later on it will evolve towards some kind of absolute power limited only by the Quran. The limitation of power by the Quran implied the principle of consultation (showra, S.3, v.153-159) 159), which was supposed to exclude absolutism. The range of the principle

is in Shi'i tradition supposed to have been applied by Imam Ali himself. But everyday in Persian language, one speaks of the "*enqelabe showravi*" (Revolution of the Councils) when one wishes to discuss the 1917 Russian revolution, which explains the tendency to put on a pair both *showra* and *soviet* which unquestionably influenced even an attentive Soviet observer as Demchenko. In its modern sense it is used for the first time by the communist Tudeh party in the 1940's and came to indicate certain provincial councils. When it reappears on the eve of the 1979 revolution used by the Mujahedin and the Feda'i, it has undergone a profound semantic evolution.[663] Lenin might have qualified the Iranian *showra*s as some form of "spontaneaous struggle".[664] A worker discussing the organization of the councils illustrates its spontaneous character[665]:

> Worker : Before the Revolution we were members of the Trade Union. We
> sometimes outside the factory. To plan and coordinate in an efficient way the Tra
> start a committee for the coordination of demonstrations. This committee was obv
> would started it to impede others from intervening and probably changing
> activities.
> Question: How did strikes start?
> W.: Plans were made secretly of course.
> Q. : Were there workers that did underground work in the factory?
> W.: Sure, undoubtedly. One informed another; he informed the next and so on.
> started.

Another report is offered by one of the founders of the *Association of Oil Industry Staff Employees*.[666] He describes the pre-revolutionary debates

has been debated notably concerning « who to consult ». Moreover "consult" the people does not necessarily mean "follow the advice" of the people.

[663] H. LADJEVARDI, *Labor Unions and Autocracy in Iran*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1985, p.250

[664] V. LENINE *Que faire*, Paris/Moscou, Editions Sociales/Editions du Progrès, 1971, p.44-51 (e.a.)

[665] Interview taken and translated from: P. VIEILLE & F. KHOSROKHAVAR, *Le discours populaire de la révolution iranienne,* Tome 2, Paris, éd. Contemporanéité, 1990

[666] X, "How we paralysed the Shah's Regime", *MERIP Reports,* , Vol.9, No. 2/3, March-April 1979, p. 20-28

between blue- and white-collar workers. At first the latter tried to convince the blue-collar workers to maintain a certain level of production, but they were soon forced to admit that this helped the Shah's regime: "*since they* [the blue-collar workers] *knew the local situation better than we did*." [667] The way these white-collar workers organized already showed some elements of the council structure. The elected representatives were principally occupied with the fixing of objectives and the preparing of actions, generally in direct contact with their basis. This extremely democratic form of organization was an indirect consequence of repression, since it prevented the formal separation between representatives and their basis. In case of such a separation the representatives would have been arrested immediately. Maintaining a certain coherence was a way of escaping SAVAK. Moreover the continuous necessity to organize concrete actions also made it impossible to develop a clear organizational framework. In general the showra's do not seem to have been dominated by one or another movement. Which does not mean that political movements were totally absent. At Shiit-e Jahan near to Karaj the majority of the workers' council of 7 workers were members of the People's Mujahedin.[668]

The Iranian scholar Bayat divides the leaders of these *showra's* in three categories: those inspired by leftist ideas (Caterpillar factory or the industries close to the Caspian Sea); the trade-unionist leaders (Zagros Factory in Tehran) and those linked to the religious movement (Leyland Motor, Iran-Transformer).[669] It would hence be a mistake to state that these councils were dominated since the very beginning by religious leaders; but it is just as wrong to see them as an homogeneous anti-religious bloc. Empirical evidence of this lack of homogeneity that would render these councils rather inefficient on the national political

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[667] X, "How we paralysed the Shah's Regime", *MERIP Reports*, Vol.9, No. 2/3, , March-April 1979, pp.20-28 (27)

[668] C. GOODEY, "Workers' councils in Iranian factories", *MERIP Reports*, June 1980, No.88, pp.5-9 (6)

[669] A. BAYAT, *Workers and revolution in Iran*, London, Zed Press, 1987, p.92

level is offered by the factories of Iran National[670] and the PM (metallurgy) in Tehran[671].

The Iran National *showra* is atypical because it presents a certain degree of continuity with the old régime. Its leader was part of the factory's administration under the shah. After the revolution he claimed to be clearly pro-Khomeini, 100% religious and apolitical. The workers of the factory showed a "reasonable brand of anti-imperialism" by continuing to accept British equipment. The advantages offered to workers were limited to preferential housing and an ex-interrogation room of the SAVAK. Even though the pro-Khomeini discourse of this council should not be overstated, the contrast with our second example is important.

The second showra was instituted only after Khomeini's order to workers to stop the strikes and start work again. Faced with an unchanged reality when compared to pre-revolutionary times, workers decide to take things into their own hands. Initially the main mission of the showra seems to be the elimination of former SAVAK members, in which it actually precedes the governmental decision to purge ancient SAVAK members from different productive units. After a while the purges in the factory were no longer limited to former members of the SAVAK but also started to target the new management. Opposing the continuity in management, workers questioned how the same man that had organized oppression before the revolution, could now be represented as managers by the revolutionary state. [672] Although no major leftist organization intervened, the independence of the council and its early contradictions with the new Islamic leadership are very clear.

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[670] C. GOODEY, "Workers' councils in Iranian factories", *MERIP Reports*, June 1980, no.88, p.6 (5-9)

[671] A. BAYAT, "Workers' Control after the Revolution", *MERIP Reports*, March-April 1983, pp.19-23 & 33-34 (20-23)

[672] *ibid.*

The weakness of these councils on the political level, or rather in the field of political action was also criticized by ayatollah Taleqani in the journal *Ayandegan* of 17 January 1979. The lack of centralization would give way to the creation of a committee in which both clergymen (Rafsanjani, Bahonar) and liberal more or less religious laymen (Bazargan, Sahabi, Moinfar) regrouped 118 productive units and some public services inciting them to stop strikes for the future of the country.[673] Yet even after personal interventions by Khomeini workers continued to show the limits of their affection for the charismatic leader, underlining to pro-Khomeini militants that they could bring down Khomeini's government just as easy as they had brought down the Shah's. [674]

This increase in democratic control and local power between February 1979 and August 1979 was also due to the rapid escape of managers to the West after the victory of the Revolution. It was the power vacuum left by these departures that allowed workers to overthrow the internal power structure of certain productive units. The Bazargan government will try to counter the power *showra*'s had acquired and from August 1979 onwards his attacks on the political Left were accompanied by harsh attacks on the *showra*'s that he found resisting his model of a more traditional liberal-democratic republic. One could distinguish between three groups opposing Bazargan and causing the instability of his government: left-wing forces, Islamist forces directed by Beheshti and those called "the revolutionary masses", in essence those, like the *showra*'s, that had been mobilized by or through the revolution and did not wish to relinquish the limited autonomy they had obtained.[675] The repression of the Bazargan government, which considered the *showra*'s a third form of opposition to his government, created a new situation between September 1979 and June-July 1981, coincidentally the period of Bani Sadr's removal and the outlawing of left-wing organizations as

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[673] A. BAYAT, *Workers and revolution in Iran*, London, Zed Press, 1987, p.95
[674] A. BAYAT, "Workers' Control after the Revolution", *MERIP Reports*, March-April 1983, pp.19-23 & 33-34 (22)
[675] D.A. BABA'I, *Bist-o panj sal dar Iran chi gozasht? Az Bazargan ta Khatami, Az 19 Dei Moh 56 ta 15 Bahman Moh 58*, Jelde Aval, Tehran, Omide Farda, 1384, pp.237-239

the Mujahedin and the Feda'i. Morad Saghafi underlines how the clerical part of the system, first allied with the parliamentary side, and the provisionary government, to weaken the councils as such and then slowly reintegrated them in the system's structure.[676] The *showra'*s

to undermine them. The militarization of the factories from July 1981 onwards accompanied by straightforward attacks on workers' rights signed the *de facto* end of the *showra* experience.

Even though the mentioned examples of *showra'*s include especially workers' councils, neighborhood *showra'*s existed as well, just as village *showra'*s and even in factory *showra'*s workers were not the only ones present. When taking a closer look at those *komiteh'*s we see that a similar diversity can be observed. Some seem to emerge from the spontaneous popular will in a certain area or environment, others are started and promoted by religious institutions. The majority of the former are found in the bigger cities like Tehran, the latter materialize more in less developed cities.[681] However tempting, any form of essentialism should be avoided when considering these *komiteh'*s, since internal struggles are often very virulent, even or especially when they are due not to political or ideological differences but to personal ambitions.

The recruitment policy of these committees does not seem based on ideological considerations. Let us once more take two examples. First a *komiteh* of unemployed. As Khosrokhavar notices during his research on the *komiteh* of Hamadan, the attractiveness of the *komiteh* as a way of obtaining a steady form of employment in a conjecture of high unemployment should not be underestimated. Some militants of the *komiteh* do not hide their hopes to use their membership as a stepping-stone towards a paid job at the *Sepah*. [682] Rent-seeking was hence already present in the very first days of the revolution at the most basic level of institutionalization.

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[681] F.KHOSROKHAVAR, " Le comité dans la révolution iranienne", *Peuples Méditerranéens*, October-December 1979, No.9, pp.85-100 (85-86)
[682] *ibid.*, pp.93-94

Our second example, an interview with Asrhare, an electrician, shows how the membership of workers adhering to the *komiteh* was in no way a logical consequence of the "Islamicization" of the minds. [683]

Question : Why did you join the *komiteh* ?

Asrhare : During the revolution, before entering the *komiteh* I offered my services to the Revolution, that sweeps you along. The day of the referendum, I went to observe the ballots. Afterwards, when the vote was over I carried the ballots to the Mosléme-ebne-é-arhile Mosque.

Q.: Since when were you in the *komiteh*.

A.: The day I was hurt by a bullet, the 22nd Bahman (11 February 1979), the rumor was that they had attacked television, and since I was wounded at the jaw, I couldn't be very active; but I guarded our neighborhood in the evening, they came to break windows (*chiché michkoundane*), and buildings and burn banks and I guarded only to protect women and children, for no other reason ; only so the families would not be worried (*dar mazirhé na-bâchane*), so they would not be scared (*tarse*), so they would now we were protecting them

Q.: Under whose leadership did this happen

A.: Under the leadership of the chief of the *komiteh*

Q.: Was he a religious figure?

A. That was not important, the fact was that we trusted in him and so the people of the neighborhood let him do his work. For example, they came to say they had trust in him, that he had lived in the neighborhood since 25 or 30 years, that he had a good reputation (*étémâde dârime*) and that he was accepted as chief of the *komiteh*, as director. That man, without asking any remuneration, a dime of you, of your brother, your mother, of whoever, started to work. (…) They gave me 400,500,600 tomans but I did not need it and, God be my witness, I did not take them. (…) Since I have a wife in the end I had to quit the *komiteh*, but even now if something was to be done, I would do it.

[683] P. VIEILLE & F. KHOSROKHAVAR, *Le discours populaire de la révolution iranienne,* Paris, éd. Contemporanéité, 1990, Tome 2, p.287-288

Answering the question what had been, for him, the most important result of the revolution, Asrhare answers : "*The most important thing, is above all that workers can now gain money by their work and spend it for their family. Important is as well that the worker can now speak and expose his problems (darde del).*"[684] On if the emergence of the *komiteh* had any link with moral depravation, the worker answers: "*I didn't think of that question until now. (…) I don't know, maybe it had an influence, maybe not.*" It is to be noticed that after the revolution the *komiteh*'s start recruiting more and more subproletarians (*mostazafan*), small criminals, thieves, unemployed, people on the margin of society. Some people start complaining that the *komiteh* itself lacks moral values. [685] The Islamic dimension of the *komiteh* in the sense of morality is hence reduced to zero. Its Islamic dimension will be incarnated by an absolute loyalty to power.

The heterogeneity between and among *showra*s and *komiteh*s in no way confused Khomeini about the challenge their independent existence, with whatever ideology, posed to the new order. Islamicization hence became the flag that covered a very different and much more simple load: incorporation of these independent power centers in the new order. Islamicization of both *showra*'s and *komiteh*'s has to be understood in the same sense: the homogenization of both in order to make them organs of transmittal for the new order. In other words eliminate them as autonomous power centers. However, it would be a mistake to think that this Islamization, was a mere ideological operation. An illustration of how the groups orchestrated from above, in essence the newly installed *Sepah* and the *Hezbollah*, infiltrated those defending their autonomy and local rights, as *showra*'s, is offered by the experience of a council in South-West Tehran.[686] Noticing a number of empty houses, thirty families of the extreme south of the city, Shoushe

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[684] *Ibid.*

[685] F. KHOSROKHAVAR, *L'utopie sacrifiée,* Paris, Presses FNSP, 1993, p.182

[686] Example taken from H. BASSRI & B. HOURCADE, "L'expérience conseilliste", Iran 1984, *Peuples Méditerranéens,*No.29, October-December 1984, pp.41-52

and Gowde[687] more or less led by a leftist worker, had decided to occupy them. The news spread and rapidly all empty houses in what was to be called Islamabad were occupied. The squatters are mostly workers from the Shah-Passande factory, but some lower rank military personnel is also present. The surfacing of this *showra* is a reaction to the attitude of the previously existing *komiteh*.

Although an essentialist absolute opposition between both types of councils under consideration makes little analytical sense, because of their nature, *komiteh*'s often had the tendency of choosing the legalist camp. In this case the defense by the *komiteh* of the legal proprietor hastened the appearance of the *showra*. When the *Sepah*, at the orders of Khomeini, try to disband the *showra* and kidnap the *showra's* leaders, the *showra* counterattacks and kidnaps the leader of the local *komiteh*. The struggle between the two councils obliges the squatters to obey to a strict form of organization with the common objective of continuing the squat. The unity of the *showra* will be broken by the appearance of an Islamic faction within it. Organized by the emerging state power, the Islamic tendency is born out of a proposal made to some members of the *showra*. They are promised a legal title of propriety if they abandon the occupation. The appearance of this Islamic faction is hence not the consequence of the victory in an ideological war, but of a simple rational calculus. Using both negative (threat of expulsion) as positive incentives (promise of legal property) the Islamic government breaks up the council and constructs a so-called Islamic faction. Islamicization without Islam.

Hence in the policy towards these councils, the challenge from below, as well a joint action of state democratic and (future) parallel institutions is observed. Both were above all preoccupied with the disintegration of the Iranian state. However the existent state democratic institutions would obviously try to resist the emergent power of parallel institutions. The parallel institutions on their hand will try to monopolize as much power as possible.

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[687] *Gowd* meaning hovel, dirty hole,…

4.4.4.　　　　The Challenge from Within: Opposition to the New State Model

The establishment of the official provisory government of Bazargan was the result of an explicit demand by Khomeini on the 5 of February 1979. Bazargan's position as a representative of the official government was not particularly enviable. Allied with clerics that opposed his societal project against leftist councils and unable or unwilling to ally himself with anti-clerical leftist forces that dominated part of the street, sooner or later his resignation would be unavoidable.

Much has been written on the meeting between Bazargan and US President's security advisor Brzezinski on 1 November 1979. It has given rise to some controversy between Brzezinski on the one hand and the Iranians present, especially Bazargan and then Minister of Foreign Affairs Ibrahim Yazdi, on the other concerning who had asked for the meeting.[688] Robert Gates, also present at the time, recently claimed that the insistence of the Iranians on the extradition of the Shah was probably one of the reasons the meeting was not brought to a successful end.[689] Even in contemporary Iran the discussion on what Bazargan exactly said and or offered has not been closed yet.[690] It will probably remain unclear if perhaps Bazargan was looking for foreign support for a project he knew had little domestic supporters. Nonetheless, Bazargan's readiness to discuss and negotiate with what was at that time on the Iranian streets the most important "enemy of the people", did, to say the least, not favor him in domestic policies. Three days after the meeting students "following the Line of the Imam" occupied the American embassy, Bazargan's position became

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[688] D.A. BABA'I, *Bist-o panj sal dar Iran chi gozasht? Az Bazargan ta Khatami, Az 19 Dei Moh 56 ta 15 Bahman Moh 58*, Jelde Aval, Tehran, Omide Farda, 1384, p.265-269

[689] "Joz'iyyat Didare Brezhinski va Bazargan", *Etemaad,* 13 Mehr 1387

[690] S. BARSAQIAN, "Bazargan be Brezhinski chi goft?", *Shahrvand-e Emrooz,* No.67, 21 Mehr 1387 (October 13, 2008), pp.56-57

untenable. He resigned two days later. Liberalism would for now remain an unfinished symphony.[691] More importantly, the "*government of control*" and those responding directly to it had shown the limits of the "*official government*".

The first post-revolutionary President of Iran Bani Sadr could in a way be qualified as a "liberal" as well, although less than Bazargan of which he was highly critical.[692] Bani Sadr will spend his time in office, not unlike Bazargan, trying to reinforce the traditional state organs at the expense of parallel institutions, defending a democratic and Islamic Iran. Bani Sadr was intimately convinced of the progressive character of the activist clergy and of Khomeini himself, whom he had lived with in Paris. In an article dated 14 August 1979 and published in the newspaper *Enqelabe Eslami*, he opposed the "reactionary" clergy to the "progressive" clergy. [693] Bani Sadr also supported and partially organized the Cultural Revolution that was to "Islamize universities", in reality it was especially designed to expel royalist but also leftist forces from the universities. This Cultural Revolution was to be equipped with and led by a institutionalized committee, comparable to an army staff (*setad*). The establishment of such a *Setad*, omade up fo students and clerics, made it possible to institutionalize even the Cultural Revolution.[694] Wanting to strengthen traditional state institutions, Bani Sadr did not favor incorporating too many clerics in these institutions. The government he proposed in September 1980 contained only one major cleric, ayatollah Mahdavi-Kani at the Ministry of the Interior.[695] At the same time he did not hesitate to attack

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[691] M. MOHAMADI, *Liberalism Irani, Olguye Natamam*, Tehran, Jameheye Iranian, 1379

[692] S. SIAVOSHI, *Liberal Nationalism in Iran*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1990, pp.142-151

[693] A. BANISADR, *Quelle Révolution pour l'Iran ?*, Paris, Fayolle, 1980, p.307

[694] See " Mosahebe dar bareye Setad-e Enqelab-e Farhangi ba Seyyed Ali Khamene'i (Reis-e Jomhoor)", in X., *Mosahabe ba Seyyed Ali Khamene'i* , Tehran, Entesharat-e Soroosh as republished in D.A. BABA'I, *Bist-o panj sal dar Iran chi gozasht? Az Bazargan ta Khatami, Edameye Riasate Jomhoorie Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamene'i va Nakhostvazirie Mir Hussein Mousavi, Jeld-e Hashtom*, Tehran, Omide Farda, 1387, pp.432-436

[695] "Reise Jomhoor 14 Nafar az A'za' Kabine ra Mo'arefi Kard", *Ettelaat*, 19 Shahrivar 1359, as republished in D.A. BABA'I, *Bist-o panj sal dar Iran chi gozasht? Az Bazargan ta Khatami, Az Bani Sadr ta Showraye Movaqqat Riasate Jomhoori, Jelde Sevvom*, Tehran, Omide Farda, 1384, pp. 714-715

his "own" Prime Minister nor to choose the side of the armed forces against his "own" government.[696] Worried of the personal support Bani Sadr was developing among the armed forces, in which some will see Bonapartist tendencies[697], and his defense of traditional state organs versus the new parallel organs in construction, Khomeini got convinced to ouster him. And this notwithstanding the support he received from among others the Mujahedin and the National Front. The Mujahedin ended up provoking in their own words a "civil war" [698] in favor of the president. The regime reacted with "*an 18-month reign of terror*"[699] the president's supporters were militarily defeated by the new *Sepah*, one of those parallel institutions of which Bani Sadr had wanted to limit the action radius.

Bazargan, Bani Sadr, the Councils, the Mujahedin and Feda'i came under fire not because of Khomeini's totalitarian tendencies which, as some asserted, made that he could not tolerate any divergent opinions.[700] One should always be very careful with such psychological explanations. In fact, divergent opinions continued even after the elimination of these groups and factionalism was present and tolerated in the Islamic Majles since the very beginning of this institution. If one looks for a common characteristic shared by persons and institutions that were eliminated or undermined in that period, anti-Khomeinism does not seem a good measure either. Most importantly because the diversity of the councils does not permit to say that they were anti-Khomeinist. Bani Sadr as well could hardly be called an opponent to Khomeini at the time. Differing ideologically from the majority of the

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[696] W. THOM WORKMAN, *The Social Origins of the Iran-Iraq War,* Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994, p.121
[697] A.S.HASHIM, "Civil-Military Relations in the Islamic Republic of Iran", in J.A. KECHICHIAN, *Iran, Iraq and the Arab Gulf States,* New York, Palgrave, 2001, pp.31-53 (38)
[698] M. MILANI, *The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1988, p.291-292
[699] R. COTTAM, "Inside Revolutionary Iran", *Middle East Journal,* Vol.43, No.2, Spring 1989, pp.168-185 (171)
[700] Contrary to what asserts B. ARAS, "Transformation of the Iranian Political System: Towards a New Model", *MERIA,* Vol.5, No.3, September 2001, http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2001/issue3/jv5n3a2.html

revolutionaries does not seem an adequate measure either, since, while it seems clear for Bazargan, it seems hard to define at what level all the others were so ideologically "different" from the majority of the revolutionaries. The answer to our question lies once again in the institutional attitudes of those that were purged. All of them directly or indirectly challenged the new institutional order. Bazargan and Bani Sadr challenged the parallel institutions, the latter challenges even his own government favoring the army, the councils undermined the process of state centralization and both Mujahedin and Feda'i physically challenged the new order in the streets and hence the state's monopoly of violence. Those opposing the new parallel institutions were all purged. It could be argued that the state was unsuccessful in avoiding the emergence of parallel institutions, quite as the Shah had been unsuccessful in destroying the concentrations of private power that now dominated them. In reality the emergence of a parallel pillar would prove the way *par excellence* to incorporate competing social units.

4.4.5. The Victory of the New State

If it is the militarization of mid-1981 that definitively eliminates the autonomous experience of the councils, *komiteh*'s continue to function under supervision of the system, until in 1991 they are incorporated in the *niruhaye entezami*, a new kind of police force that incorporates traditional police activities with morality controls.[701] Other power centers are eliminated by the collaboration between Khomeini as a charismatic leader, the Islamic Revolutionary Council and the Islamic Republican Party as centralized power organs and the newly constituted *Sepah* and *Hezbollah* as *force de frappe*. This structure had the advantage of being top-down inclusive. Indeed, if the councils were only active at a local level and quite isolated, this parallel column had a centralized leadership and local militias alike. Where Bani Sadr and Bazargan were excluded from most of the parallel institutions, this column entered and sometimes dominated the "democratic state

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[701] A. SCHIRAZI, *The Constitution of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1998, p.152

column". The competition between Bazargan's government and the Council of the Islamic revolution offers one example of it, the massive presence of the Islamic Republican Party in the Majles another.

Bazargan and his provisionary government will be eliminated by a coordinated action of propaganda, mass mobilization and military force. The publicity given to his meeting with Brzezinski in Algeria and the impossible position he as a liberal was put in when students "following the line of the Imam" occupied the American embassy would lead to his dismissal. The Mujahedin and the Feda'i (minority faction) will be defeated by brutal force, after they noticed they were becoming, especially to the growing influence of the Islamic Republican Party, evermore emarginated from the political scene. Bani Sadr was ousted by a similar collaboration between political forces undermining his position in Tehran and military force when the Mujahedin tried to take his defense. Not unlike Lenin foresaw for the Russian revolution, the Islamic second power structure formed by a charismatic leader, centralized political organs and an organized *force de frappe* based on the subproletarian *mostazafan* took over power and recentralized it in its own hands.

The primacy of the Islamic Republican pillar in this era has led some to qualify the regime as a *"Theocracy clothed in Republican Garb"*.[702] Nonetheless, the end of the Bazargan government, which brought government under "clerical" control, and the dismissal of Bani Sadr, were maybe, from an institutional point of view, less important than the duration of their existence. Indeed, by ousting specific persons, the institutions were not questioned. Sure, both the position of Prime Minister and President would in the end go to clerics and Parliament as well will be dominated by clerics, yet the institutions were not abolished. The elimination of the Mujahedin, the Feda'i and the councils permitted Khomeinists to undermine the functioning of these councils, but not to exclude them from the new Republic's state order. The existence and temporary predominance of forces within the

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[702] M.M. MILANI, "Power Shifts in Revolutionary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* Vol.26, No.3-4, Summer-Fall 1993, pp.359-374 (359)

revolution that had not favored a theocratic state made that Khomeini and his followers had to accept a republican wing to their regime, something Khomeini never mentioned in his works on Islamic government. A reality that would, ironically, prove to save his type of government. In this way indeed the pre-revolutionary concentrations of power were integrated in the state, yet the state was not destroyed. Rather on the contrary the incorporation of the pre-revolutionary concentrations of power in the state could eventually strengthen the state.

As a provisory conclusion, one could say that the post-revolutionary developments offer in the field of state formation different elements. First of all, the emergence of different and new centers of power, outside the control of central government. Secondly the construction of (successful) top-down parallel institutions by a certain section of the post-revolutionary leadership to dominate government in the widest sense of the word. Thirdly, the maintaining of the majority of the old institutions and the attempt of certain factions to give them predominance on the emerging new elements, which provoked a harsh reaction of those trying to stabilize their parallel institutions. Finally, the incorporation, centralization and "*mise au pas*" of the new power centers when possible and the elimination of these when necessary by those factions that had most successfully created new power centers. What was left was an institutionalized dual power structure. One, republican and arguably pre-revolutionary, with preexisting institutions like parliament, government and the traditional armed forces, and one, "Islamic" or post-revolutionary, with parallel newly constructed institutions like the Supreme Leader's Office, the Council of Guardians, the IRP and the *Sepah*.

4.5.   *The Constitutional Reflection of the Duality of Power*

This extension of state power by the emasculation and incorporation of traditional power groups would not have been possible without a double institutional structure of which at least one pillar offered nominal and face value predominance to the groups that had to be incorporated. When looking at the Iranian constitution, as for that matter at any other constitution, it is hard to grasp true reality of the political system. Important actors as the IRP, although now abolished, or the *Hezbollah* (now *Ansare Hezbollah*) are absent. Other institutions as the "workers' councils" are mentioned but have lost practically all relevance. Moreover, Khomeini's power went sometimes even further than the already large powers the Constitution had offered him. Well aware of the limits that characterize constitutional law analyses when used for political analysis, notably caused by the difference between formal and material constitutions or still between theory and reality, there is no steadier starting point to understand the design of a state than its constitution. Moreover it is interesting to see the continuity even on the formal legal level. A continuity not limited to the link between the former royal regime and the contemporary Islamic regime, but even between constitutions that sanctioned the emergence of modern states in Europe like the Belgian or the French Constitutions.

4.5.1. The President and the Supreme Leader (Assembly of Experts)

The position of the Supreme Leader is both the single most important position in the Islamic Republic the one that has changed most fundamentally since its inception. The Supplementary Fundamental Laws of 1907[703] stated that the King was entrusted with sovereignty by the people as a Divine gift. Some kind of double legitimacy emerged, yet popular sovereignty seemed to dominate, indeed for every fundamental act, be it the appointment of Ministers (art.46), be it his

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[703] Articles 35 to 57 of The Supplementary Fundamental Laws of October 7, 1907 as reproduced in E.G.BROWNE, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1966, Appendix A

own ascension of the throne, the king needed parliamentary approval. At the same time he was entrusted with the supreme command of the armed forces and the declaration of war and peace.[704] A similar duality between religious legitimacy and popular sovereignty is found in the contemporary Iranian constitution, with that nuance that the official founding principles as enumerated in article 2 of the Constitution put a heavy accent on the primacy of religious legitimacy. At the same time however many elements of popular sovereignty are to be found in the text, free elections being only the most obvious of these. *Velayat-e Faqih*, the Guardianship of the Jurist, a consequence of the acceptance of Divine sovereignty and the legitimizing principle of the position of the Supreme Leader of the Revolution is discussed elsewhere,[705] it will suffice here to underline the constitutional result of the ideological discussions.

According to article 110 the competences of the Leader are mainly: defining, after consultation of the Expediency Council, and supervising the execution of the general policies of the Republic; ordering national referenda; assuming the supreme command of the Armed Forces; declaring war and peace and the mobilization of the Armed Forces and resolving disputes between different sections of the Armed Forces. In addition the Leader appoints, dismisses and accepts the resignation of the clerics of the Guardian Council, the Head of the Judiciary, the head of the radio and television (*seda o sima*), the Chief of the Joint Staff, the General Commander of the *Sepah*, the Supreme Commanders of the Armed Forces and law enforcement forces. It has to be underlined how the nature of the position changed in 1989. Khomeini himself seemed initially unenthusiastic about ruling, he preferred to guide. In reality he soon was forced, or felt so, to intervene directly into politics. A change reflected in the constitutional changes of 1989 by an increased power of the *faqih*.[706]

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[704] Articles 50 and 51

[705] See the chapter on ideology

[706] A.M. ANSARI, (2003) "Continuous Regime Change from Within", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.26, No.4, pp.53-67 (58-59)

Originally the Constitution was to be elaborated by a Constituent Assembly, yet Khomeini, well aware of the risks of such a large assembly, engineered an "elegant exit" for the idea of a Constituent Assembly and replaced it with an elected "Assembly of Experts" (*Majles-e Khobregan*). The elections for the Assembly of Experts were rigged so that 55 out of 72 delegates were clerics of "the Line of the Imam".[707] These quickly abandoned the initial constitutional draft which had not even mentioned the principle of *velayat-e faqih*. Article 5 of the new Constitution was to become the clearest expression of the fact that in the absence of the "Prince of Times", the twelfth Imam, the Leadership of the Islamic Republic and the Islamic *Ummah* would devolve on a just, pious and courageous jurist who enjoyed the support of the majority of the people. Article 107 and 109 added that the concerned Islamic jurist (*faqih*) should also be recognized as a *marja* by the majority of the people. During Khomeini's life, only one person could possibly satisfy these exigencies.[708] Article 112, now article 107 al.2, declaring that the Leader is equal with the rest of the people of the country in the eyes of the law, sounded even less convincing then than it does now. Khomeini was more than just the elected *faqih*, he was the charismatic Leader of the Revolution, the one that had implemented it, Father of the Nation and so further. Still today politicians, but not only them, perform some kind of pilgrimage to Khomeini's tomb, a huge still unfinished complex few kilometers outside the Tehran city center. If in the West he has often been assimilated to evil, for his supporters he has received the status of a semi-saint. Something he himself had contributed to by preferring the title Imam to the one of Ayatollah, which had the advantage of inspiring some kind of link with the disappeared Twelfth Imam. His death provoked a reaction Hamid Algar describes as follows: "*The outpouring of grief was massive and spontaneous, the exact counterpoint to the vast demonstrations of joy that had greeted his return to Iran a little over ten years earlier. Such was the press of mourners, estimated at some nine million, that the body ultimately had to be transported by helicopter to its place of burial to the south of Tehran on the road leading to Qum. A still expanding complex of structures has grown up*

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[707] A. SCHIRAZI, *The Constitution of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1998, p.32
[708] *Ibid.*, p.35

around the shrine of the Imam, making it likely that it will become the center of an entire new city devoted to ziyara and religious learning."[709] Khomeini had successfully become an iconic image as Lenin had been in the USSR or Fidel Castro in Cuba.

Some time before Khomeini's death, it became clear that no *faqih* possessing the necessary requirements and being politically acceptable would be found. The Constitution required the acceptance by the majority of the people of the future Leader as *marja* and Leader, the interest of the regime required something else. Many scholars underline the importance of political rather than religious standards in the revised constitution. This is undeniably correct. When ayatollah Montazeri, a respected ayatollah was shifted aside as Khomeini's successor, a substitute had to be found. The task was not an easy one, but the solution was found, designed and developed by Khomeini himself and codified by a change of the Constitution prepared by a commission in which the "usual suspects" hojjat al-eslam's Rafsanjani and Khamenei were present. The future Supreme Leader, the *faqih* of the Islamic Republic, did no longer have to be a *marja'* but a person that except for some (certainly not extraordinary) religious qualities also possessed political and social insight or perspicacity and held popularity among the majority of the people.[710] The amendment to the Constitution that made it possible for a non-*marja'* to accede to the highest religious-political authority in the Islamic Republic allowed Khamene'i, who was to become ayatollah almost overnight, to become *faqih*.[711] His political capabilities, shown throughout his presidency and the close links he had developed with certain essential militant groups showed decisive.[712]

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[709] H. ALGAR, "A Brief Biography of Imam Khomeini", *The Virtual Vendee*,
A Center for Traditionalist and Integrist Studies, http://www.wandea.org.pl
[710] See article 107 and 109 of the Constitution
[711] For an original view see S. GIELING, "The "Marja'iya" in Iran and the Nomination of Khamanei in December 1994", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 4, October 1997, pp. 777-787
[712] F. SABAHI, *Storia dell'Iran*, Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 2006, pp.191-192

Gradually the position of the Leader shifted from an absolute superior position to some kind of politically chosen *primus inter pares*. Although Khomeini's interventionism had already set the tone, the defining moment at this level was the Leader's disappearance.[713] This *primus inter pares*-character of the new faqih is also underlined by the way the Leader is (s)elected. Article 107 mentions that experts elected by the people will be responsible for this duty. However rigged and engineered the elections might in reality be, it is undeniable that this article gives some kind of democratic legitimacy to the Supreme religious leader. Article 108 adds that the experts, now regrouped in an Assembly of Experts, will themselves determine their internal code of conduct and regulations. One of the more disputed rules has been the Assembly's choice to limit its membership to clergymen.

Even so the Leader's legitimacy evolved from religious to politico-religious, it can still hardly be called democratic. The exact contrary is true for the president. The presidency was originally designed as a weak and divided institution, yet today the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran is constitutionally the second most important official of the Republic (art.115) and elected for a four-year term directly by secret ballot, with a possibility of a second round if no candidate gets a majority in the first round very similar to the system of the French Fifth Republic.[714] He is eligible for re-election just once. His field of competence is limited to the field of the executive. Before the constitutional reform the president named his prime minister, who then suggested other ministers to present to the Majles, where every minister would have to go a vote of confidence. The elimination of the post of Prime Minister has had two major consequences. Firstly it made the President head of the Council of Ministers. Secondly by doing so it increased his relative weight. Interesting to notice that hence the relative weight of the Leader decreased and the relative weight of the President increased in the constitutional reform. They are still far from

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[713] A.M. ANSARI, (2003) "Continuous Regime Change from Within", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.26, No.4, pp.53-67

[714] M.M. MILANI, "The Evolution of the Iranian Presidency: From Bani Sadr to Rafsanjani", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20, No.1, 1993, pp.83-97

equal positions, yet an attempt to balance the system just a bit more has undeniably been made. Milani observes how "*the faqih has been unable to dominate the executive branch.*" [715] Arguably the quick acceptance of the rigged election results of June 2009 proved that the *faqih* is now also unable to control the *Sepah*. I will return to this point.

4.5.2. The Majles and the Council of Guardians

The first Iranian Parliament (Majles) was organized as a consequence of the Constitutional Revolution of 1906. Yet, although it was undoubtedly a step forwards from the feudal (or quasi-feudal) rule Iran had known until then and even if the Constitution was heavily inspired by European constitutions and especially the Belgian one, the first Majles was undoubtedly a child of its time. This becomes especially clear when one considers the First Electoral Law of 9 September 1906[716] Article 2 of the law mentions that electors should be 25 years old and Persian subjects, adding to it that they must possess property of the value of at least one thousands *tomans*, but also requires from the merchants among them a definite office and business and from the members of trade-guilds that they belong to a recognized guild, engaged in a definite trade or craft and in the possession of a shop of a certain importance. Women, soldiers and criminals are deprived of electoral rights. One sees here that on the one hand the Electoral Law recognizes the predominance of certain groups within society, yet on the other it clearly offers some kind of elite right of vote. These stipulations can be seen as a logical, if one may say, consequence of the main actors of the revolution, like the merchants and the traditional middle class, who both suffered, differently but similarly from the

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[715] M.M. MILANI, "Power Shifts in Revolutionary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* Vol.26, No.3-4, Summer-Fall 1993, pp.359-374 (371)

[716] First Electoral Law of 9 September 1906: Regulations for the Elections to the National Assembly, Monday, Rajab 20, A.H. 1324, as reproduced in E.G.BROWNE, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1966, Appendix A

Shah's economic policies.[717] Article 7 made this class-based character, and partially corporation-based character, of the Electoral Law even clearer by stating that each voter had only one vote and could vote only in one class. Article 6 enumerated the numbers, per class, that were to be elected. A proposal to give similar importance to tribal representation had been rejected.[718] For Tehran the partition was as follows: princes and members of the Qajar family were entitled to 4 representatives; doctors of Divinity and students to 4 as well; 10 merchants were to be elected; just as 10 land-owners and peasants; while trade-guilds were entitled to 32 representatives in all, one from each guild.[719] In total the number of representatives should not exceed 200, the Fundamental Laws of 30 December 1906 fixed this number at 162.[720] If hence these passages foresaw a formal incorporation of merchants and clerics, the fundamental difference with the system of the Islamic Republic lies in the fact that only the Islamic Republic offered a new way of social representation to the members of these groups. In other words, the first Iranian revolution incorporated elites as representatives from their social groups, the second Iranian revolution incorporated them while undermining the social cohesion and institutional character of their original constituencies.

The Majles was given the right to "*propose any measure which it regards as conducive to the well-being of the Government and the People, after due discussion and deliberation thereof in all sincerity and truth; and, having due*

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[717] For other works on the Constitutional Revolution see: M. AJUDANI, *Mashruteye Irani,* Tehran, Akhtaran, 1382; J.AFARY, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1911,* New York, Columbia UP, 1996; M.R. AFSHARI, "The Historians of the Constitutional Movement and the Making of the Iranian Populist Tradition, *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* No.25, 1993, pp.477-494; M. BAYAT, *Iran's First Revolution,* Oxford, Oxford UP, 1991 and V. MARTIN, *Islam and Modernism: The Iranian Revolution of 1906,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1989

[718] J.AFARY *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906-1911*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996, p.64

[719] It is most noticeable that The New Electoral Law of July 1, 1909 was remarkably less class-based, even though it still imposed a minimum property requirement to electors.

[720] Article 4 of The Fundamental Laws of December 30, 1906 as reproduced in E.G.BROWNE, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1966, Appendix A

regard to the majority of votes, to submit such measure, in complete confidence and security, after it has received the approval of the Senate, by means of the First Minister of the State, so that it may receive the Royal Approval and be duly carried out."[721] Article 16 of the Fundamental Laws underlined that all laws that were aimed to "*strengthen the foundations of the State and Throne and to set in order the affairs of the Realm and the establishment of the Ministries, must be submitted for approval to the National Consultative Assembly.*" Legislative initiative was thus not limited to the Majles and even the laws "proposed" by the Majles were subject to royal approval. These articles should not automatically be taken at face value. Indeed they seemed to divide legislative powers between the King, the Senate and the Majles, just as the Belgian constitution did and still does.[722] Yet, as the Belgian example shows the importance of royal interference with the legislative process highly depends on the socio-political state of affairs. If some Kings of the Belgians have had a sometimes decisive influence on legislation, others like Baudouin I were shifted aside when they opposed the work of the legislators. The same could have been and, to a certain degree proved, true for Iran.

It is interesting to consider how the Senate was conceived. Article 45 stipulates: "*The Members of this Assembly shall be chosen from amongst the well-informed, discerning, pious and respected persons of the Realm. Thirty of them shall be nominated on the part of His Imperial Majesty (fifteen of the people of Tihrán, and fifteen of the people of the Provinces), and thirty by the Nation (fifteen elected by the people of Tihrán, and fifteen by the people of the Provinces).*" As long as no Senate has been constituted royal assent will give proposals of the Majles force of law (art.47). Article 48 gave the power to the Senate to dissolve the Majles in case of persisting disagreement between both institutions and a refusal of the King to support the Majles proposal.

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[721] Article 15, The Fundamental Laws of December 30, 1906 as reproduced in E.G.BROWNE, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1966, Appendix A

[722] See also The Title Powers of the Realm and notably article 27 of The Supplementary Fundamental Laws of October 7, 1907 as reproduced in E.G.BROWNE, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1966, Appendix A

One of the main adaptations made to the Belgian constitution concerned the role of religion.[723] The Supplementary Fundamental Laws that came on 7 October 1907, almost a year after the original Fundamental Laws[724], stated in article 2 that: "*At no time must any legal enactment of the Sacred National Consultative Assembly, (…), be at variance with the sacred principles of Islám or the laws established by His Holiness the Best of Mankind (on whom and on whose household be the Blessings of God and His Peace!)."* In essence all laws should be conform to Islam and the laws enacted by the prophet Mohamed. Moreover the Majles was supposed to elect a "*Committee composed of not less than five mujtahids or other devout theologians, cognizant also of the requirements of the age*" proposed by the clergy itself so that these "*may carefully discuss and consider all matters proposed in the Assembly, and reject and repudiate, wholly or in part, any such proposal which is at variance with the Sacred Laws of Islam, so that it shall not obtain the title of legality. In such matters the decision of this Ecclesiastical Committee shall be followed and obeyed, and this article shall continue unchanged until the appearance of His Holiness the Proof of the Age (may God hasten his glad Advent !)*"[725] No surprise hence that according to article 20 the freedom of press did not apply to heretical books and matters hurting Islam. As would be the case in the 1979 Constitution, here as well sovereignty is placed both with the people and with God.[726]

This brief overview of the beginning of the constitutional history of the Iranian parliament permits us to put in perspective the Majles[727] as

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[723] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two…*, p.90

[724] The Supplementary Fundamental Laws of October 7, 1907 as reproduced in E.G.BROWNE, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1966, Appendix A

[725] Art.2 of The Supplementary Fundamental Laws of October 7, 1907 as reproduced in E.G.BROWNE, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1966, Appendix A

[726] And this contrary to what states M. MOZAFFARI, *Authority in Islam from Muhammad to Khomeini,* London, M.E. Sharpe, 1987, p.48-49 on the nature of the 1979 Constitution

[727] For some similarities on both revolutions see also S.R. MOUSAVI, "La religion et le système politique en Iran: étude comparative des révolutions de 1906 et 1979", *Canadian Journal of Political Science/ Revue canadienne de science politique*, Vol.32, No.2, Jun.1999, pp.347-366

conceived by the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran drafted in different stages between Paris and Tehran. The final text was approved by referendum on December 2, 1979 with about 99% of the sixteen million votes cast, clearly less than the number of people that had voted for an abstract "Islamic Republic" in a populist referendum organized just after the revolution on March 30, 1979.[728] Compared to the Electoral Law of 1906, the new constitution followed the movement initiated by the New Electoral Law of July 1909 and continued by the Pahlavi regimes to generalize the right to vote. The Electoral Law of 1980 stated that the candidate had to be 25 years of age, no record of moral corruption and a belief in the revolution.[729] If the clergy had rebelled when Mohamed Reza Shah proposed to accept women's right to vote, the constitution of the Islamic Republic did not exclude women from the right to vote.[730] Article 71 to 90 are dedicated to the Powers and Authority of the Majles. Article 71 gives it the right to legislate on all matters within the limits of the Constitution. Article 72, not unlike article 2 of the Supplementary Fundamental Laws of 1907 underlines that the Majles: *"cannot enact laws that would contradict the official religion of the country or to the Constitution."* Article 74 gives the legislative initiative to both members of governments and members of parliament. Article 87 gives the Majles a certain degree of control on the Executive. The original article, that is before the amendment of the Constitution in 1989, stated that the Council of Ministers had to receive a vote of confidence before it could carry out any other step. Today, with the post of Prime Minister abolished, the article states that the President has to seek the vote of confidence. It was clear from the very first days of the Majles that this capacity of control would not be a mere formality. President Bani Sadr, confronted with a parliamentary majority of the IRP that was hostile to him, struggled to get a candidate for the post of Prime Minister through, even the candidate of the IRP

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[728] The text of the Iranian Constitution of 1979 used in this study is Vahede Pozhuhesh Maj, *Qanune Asasi Jomhooriye Eslamie Iran*, Tehran, Majmahe Elmi va Farhangi Maj, 1376 which for articles changed in the revision process in 1989 contains both versions.
[729] B. BAKHTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran*, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1996, p.64
[730] See article 62 and the Electoral Laws of the Islamic Republic

itself, which Bani Sadr had in the end been forced to accept, Mustafa Mir Salim, was vetoed after intensive lobbying of the younger, more radical members of the "Line of the Imam" in the Majles.[731] During his presidency, even future Supreme Leader Khamenei, certainly less of a heterodox than Bani Sadr, saw his candidate for the post of Prime Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, refused by the Majles.[732]

Yet, as was the case in the fundamental texts produced by the Constitutional Revolution, the Majles received no monopoly on legislative work. Article 72 states that the responsibility of determining whether a law is in contradiction with either Islam or the Constitution lies with the Guardian Council (or Council of Guardians, *showraye negahban*). According to the Constitution the Guardian Council will be composed of six clergymen (*foqaha*) "*righteous and aware of the exigencies of the time and matters of the day*", chosen by the Supreme Leader and six Muslim jurists specialized in different legal branches proposed by the Head of the Judiciary to and approved by the Majles.[733] Before the 1989 change the six religious men were to be chosen by the Leadership Council. The existence of the Guardian Council is, according to article 93, a prerequisite for the legal functioning of the Majles. Article 94 stipulates that all legislative acts should receive approval of the Guardian Council. The Constitution also gives the same council the right to vet candidates for elections and attributes it the authority of constitutional interpretation.

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[731] H.I. ASHKURI, *Dar Takapuye Azadi*, Jelde Dovvom, Nashr Qalam, as reproduced in D.A. BABA'I, *Bist-o panj sal dar Iran chi gozasht? Az Bazargan ta Khatami, Az Bani-Sadr ta Showraye Movaqqate Riasate Jomhoori*, Jelde dovvom, Tehran, Omide Farda, 1383, pp.449-453

[732] *Ettelaat*, "Majles Nakhostvaziri Doktor Velayati ra Ta'iid Nakard", 30 Mehr 1360 (1981), as reproduced in D.A. BABA'I, *Bist-o panj sal dar Iran chi gozasht? Az Bazargan ta Khatami, Az riasate jomhoorie Reja'i ta riasate jomhoorie Khamene'i*, Jelde Panjom, Tehran, Omide Farda, 1384, pp.357-358

[733] For discussions on the formation of the Guardian Council

The Guardian Council has often been described as a parallel institution and even as "an obstacle to democracy".[734] If the former statement is probably not completely wrong, it should not as such entice us to consider it an institution totally incompatible with liberal-democracy. First of all, according to the Iranian political order the Guardian Council is merely one of the parts of the legislative branch of government.[735] It should be noticed how the Guardian Council, considered an institution so "characteristic" of the Islamic Republic by many, presents many similarities in function and membership with both the Senate and the Committee of Mujtaheds mentioned in the constitutional texts that emanated from the Constitutional Revolution. Moreover, its functions are comparable with both those of a Senate or Chamber of Lords in a Western constitutional order and those of a Constitutional Court. The Iranian government is not surprisingly the first to underline such similarities. In a booklet published by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology at the occasion of the eighth parliamentary elections, the Iranian constitutional order is explicitly compared to the French Republic: "*The French National Assembly and Senate can not pass just any law, because these laws have to be confirmed by the Constitutional Council of this country."[736]*

All depends on how the Council uses its powers and hence much will depend on who will be elected member of the Council. On the French Revolution Moore states "*The rich peasants, (…), set the limits to which radical anticapitalism could go.*"[737] *Mutatis mutandis* something similar can be asserted with regard to the Iranian revolution and the Guardian

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[734] A. W. SAMII, "Iran's Guardian Council As An Obstacle to Democracy", *Regional Analysis,* http://www.regionalanalysis.org/aboutus/articles/samguard.pdf , last accessed on 10 December 2008, See also M.M. MILANI, *The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution,* Boulder, Westview Press, 1994, p.154 and S.BAKHASH, *The reign of the Ayatollahs. Iran and the Islamic Revolution,* New York, Basic Books, 1990, p.74 quoted by A. W. SAMII, *l.c.*
[735] See for example. A. MANOUCHERI, *Nezam-e Siasi-e Iran,* Tehran, Markaz-e Motale'ate Farhangi-Beinolmelali, 1381, pp.65-66
[736] Mo'avenate Farhangi va Ejtemahi Vezarate Olum, Tahqiqat va Fanavari, *Khuneye Mellat,* Tehran, Daneshgah Tamadonsaz, 1386, p.37
[737] B. MOORE, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy,* Boston, Beacon Press, 1993, p.69

Council. The Guardian Council's resistance to agrarian reform was a logical consequence of the fact that the first constitutional Guardian Council, installed in 1982, was, under the presidency of ayatollah Yusef Sane'i, now a member of the reformist camp, but at the time a hard-line conservative, totally dominated by the conservative right. The other five clerics were Ahmad Jannati, who would take over the presidency of the council in 1988; Abdolrahim Rabani Shirazi, Gholamreza Rezvani, Lotfollah Safi and Abdolqassem Khaz'ali.[738] All of them, not surprisingly, members of the Society of Qom Seminary Teachers, which can be called "*the bastion of high-ranking ulama in Iran.*"[739]

If I pretend that there is little difference between the Guardian Council and a Senate or Constitutional Council/Court in a liberal-democratic state, how can I justify defining it a "parallel institution"? This is admittedly problematic and it is problematic because of the Council's double nature. If we look at the selection of its members, these are chosen for fifty percent by an institution, the Office of the Supreme Leader, clearly a parallel institution. The other half is nominated by the Majles, clearly a democratic state institution, yet on the proposal of the Head of the Judiciary, which is in turn nominated by the Supreme Leader. On the level of its composition it can hence be considered closer to the parallel dimension of the system. On the other hand if we look at its functions, as said, there is little that would make it differ fundamentally from institutions that we would in Western countries without much ado consider democratic. The question remains which criterion should be determinant? Looking at the standards the Council uses to vet candidates and veto laws, both the respect of the democratic state order (republican Constitution) and the parallel order (Islamic law) are mentioned by the Constitution. However, there can be no doubt that majority of the candidates vetted until today have been so for a lack of "Islamic credentials" or "adherence to the principle of *velayat-e faqih*". The majority of the laws vetoed were so because of incompatibility with Islam. Both these elements hence reinforce the

[738] B. BAKHTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran,* Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1996, p.68

[739] M.MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* Syracuse, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.54

impression that the Guardian Council can be considered a parallel institution. Moreover, since these measures have often been applied rather arbitrarily and more to block political opponents or specific factions, than out of concern with Islam, according to Lenin's definition the Guardian Council clearly becomes part of the "government of control".

4.5.3.   The Council for the Discernment of the Interest of the Order

When analyzing the "Council for the Discernment of the Interest of the Order" (*Majmehe Tashkhise Maslahate Nezam*, also Expediency Council), the difficulties in defining encountered in respect to the Guardian Council, are totally absent. Article 112, inserted during the constitutional revision of 1989, states that: "*The Council for the Discernment of the Interest of the Order shall gather at the order of the Leader when the Guardian Council judges a proposed bill of the Majles to be against the principles of Shareh (religious law) or the Constitution, and the Assembly does not meet the expectations of the Guardian Council and for consideration on any matter given to it by the Leader and to carry out any other responsibility mentioned in this Constitution.*" The members of the Council, both permanent and changeable (*motaqhir*) are appointed by the Leader and, article 112 continues, the regulations regarding the Council shall be formulated and approved by its members, subjected to the approval of the Leader.

The main function of the Council was hence mediation between the Guardian Council and the Majles. It finds its (formal) origins a year before the constitutional revision and was installed by Khomeini himself. Khomeini himself often acted as an arbiter between different sections and factions of the regime, because of his moral authority and his position of "Founding Father" of the Islamic Republic he could fulfil such a function without too many questions being asked. However, after his death few would have been able to take over this function,

Khomeini realized this very well himself and instructed a commission to incorporate the institution in the constitutional text.

If it is a parallel institution by virtue of its membership and their selection, its control on legislative activities and its, non-constitutional but nonetheless very real, legislative function makes it a true parallel institution. Nevertheless, if we were to use a similar criterion as with the Guardian Council, that is an analysis of its activities, the conclusion has to be that the institution has truly been in between both pillars. In the end its official function of "mediator" has permitted the council to evolve to a factor of integration between both pillars. Its activities offer some kind of rapprochement to the first pillar.

Firstly, its activities are clearly not founded on the same bases as "the government of control"; nor did it have the function of integrating social units in the state system. Secondly, the Council has, especially under the impulse of Rafsanjani, after the end of his presidency in 1997 and subsequently as a consequence of his defeat in the 2005 presidential election obtained a status that has given it a role both in the executive and in the legislative state power. Probably exaggerating Morad Saghafi perceives this process as the emerging of a true "shadow of the state".[740]

The Council is hence clearly parallel in its composition, although not without autonomy in its functioning (art.112). This relative functional autonomy has permitted it to direct its activities in such a way that it has become much more than just part of the "government of control". It has become the link *par excellence* between both state pillars.

4.5.4.   The Ministries and their parallels

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[740] M. SAGHAFI, "The State in the Shadow and the Shadow of the State: An Evaluation of the Political Disorder reached by the Last Two Elections", *Goftogu*, No.45, Bahman 1384, pp.7-24 (16-19) [In Persian]

In 1989, RAND-linked scholar Schahgaldian offered an interesting, albeit somewhat exaggerated and simplified, overview of the parallel environment faced by ministries of the Islamic Republic since the Revolution. He opposes the Ministry of Housing to the Housing Crusade; the Ministry of Agriculture and Plan and Budget Organization to the Reconstruction Crusade; The Foundation of the Downtrodden (Bonyade Mostazafan) and the Martyr Foundation (Bonyade Shahid) to the Ministries of Commerce and Light Industry; the Literacy Movement Organization to the Ministry of Education and Training; the Supreme Council for Educational (& Cultural) Revolution to the Ministry of Higher Education; the Ministry of Trade to the Supreme Council of Trade and so on.[741]

The Supplementary Fundamental Laws of 1907 had formally divided the Iranian judiciary in two sections ecclesiastical tribunals for religious matters on the one hand and civil courts for civil matters on the other.[742] The Constitution of the Islamic Republic would bring little change, if it were not the higher influence it gave to religious judges over civil matters. A clear example is offered by article 163 which handles the qualifications required of judges. It explicitly mentions expertise in religious law as a criterion. The innovation of a Head of the Judiciary was a clear way of the parallel institutions to control the Ministry of Justice. The Minister of Justice, depending of the President, constitutionally only has "responsibility" concerning the relationship of the judiciary with other power. The Head of the Judiciary on the other hand, appointed by the Leader and hence a perfect exponent of the parallel column of the system, is responsible for all matters regarding the judiciary, among which the drafting of judiciary bills and the employment, selection, dismissal, transfer and so on of judges. He also selects the Minister of Justice from a list presented to him by the President of the Republic. The parallel column of our state structure

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[741] N. SCHAHGALDIAN, *The Clerical Establishment in Iran,* RAND National Defense Institute, June 1989, p.44

[742] Articles 27 and 71 of The Supplementary Fundamental Laws of October 7, 1907 as reproduced in E.G.BROWNE, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1966, Appendix A

also installed Special Clerical Courts to judge the clergy, to centralize power even more in its own hands an increase its control over the clergy, the strongest pre-revolutionary institutional actor.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is probably the ministry that without having a clear parallel institution, is confronted with the most complex power structure. On the one hand its policy-making, or executing, is obviously determined by the President and the Majles. However, it is the Leader that sets general policy objectives and through his command of the armed forces has a decisive influence on foreign policy and defense. The Ministry is represented in the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), next to the ministries of the interior and of intelligence. In the SNSC these representatives of the Executive are mixed with high ranking officials of the *Artesh* and the *Sepah*, the Heads of the three branches of government and two representatives of the Leader. Additionally the Ministry is confronted with the Al-Qods force, a section of the *Sepah*. In 2006 all Iranian operations in Iraq, a fundamental piece of Iranian foreign policy, were placed under the command of the Al-Qods force, which saw its personnel strength increased to 15,000 by the Supreme National Security Council, which shows the relativity of the influence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this Council.[743] Another limitation of the activities of the Foreign Ministry is the consequence of the action of the so-called Foundations (*bonyad*). The Foundations, semi-public, semi-private, are undoubtedly part of the parallel dimension of the system. Initiated after the Revolution, they had officially different tasks from reconstruction over education to assistance to the lowest classes of society, yet as Mehdi Moslem correctly underlines, "*through their Islamic and revolutionary credentials, these bodies accelerated the process of indoctrination and Islamization of society*."[744] The clientelist logic of these institutions, like the *Komiteh-ye Emdade Emam Khomeini*, the Relief Committee bearing

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[743] A.H. CORDESMAN, "Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and Other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces", *Rough Working Draft*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 16 August 2007, p.8

[744] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.23

Khomeini's name which was directed at development obviously built on pre-existent paternalist mentalities to strengthen domestic consent. Yet other foundations, like the *Bonyad-e Mostazafan* (Foundation of the Disinherited administrating the wealth of the old Pahlavi foundation) or the *Komiteh-ye 15 Khordad* (Foundation of the 15th Khordad), also undermine the weight of the Foreign Ministry. The first can weigh on the economic dimension of Iranian foreign policy because of its economic importance. It is today one of the biggest, if not the biggest, economic entity in the Middle East. Just after the revolution it already controlled 203 industrial complexes, 472 large agricultural lands, 101 big construction firms, 283 trade- and services enterprises and 2786 pieces of real estate. Today it is active in all important sections of Iranian economy and Iranian influence in the Middle East would not be what it is without its investments. [745] The 15th Khordad Foundation became famous in the West for countering the foreign policies pursued by presidents Rafsanjani and Khatami. Both presidents had tried to improve relations between Iran and the West for about ten years, when the Foundation increased the bounty on Rushdie's head, undermining the ongoing détente.[746] A better example of parallel structure undermining the policy-making of democratic state organs would be hard to find. In 2002 this situation led the reformist president of Commission on National Security of the Majles (2000-2004), Mohsen Mirdamadi, to declare: "*There exists no consensus whatsoever between the political groups in power on how to guarantee national security, enhance the position of the country on the international chessboard (…) There is a tension and competition between the pillars of power.*".[747]

4.6. *War-Making and State-Making*

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[745] http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iran/mjf.htm
[746] BBC News, "World: Middle East Rushdie death bounty raised", *12.10.1998,*
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/191724.stm
[747] *Hamshahri,* 23 April 2002, as cited by A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, *La République islamique d'Iran, De la maison du Guide à la raison d'Etat,* Paris, Editions Michalon, 2005, p.80

As already pointed out in the brief theoretical overview of state-formation processes elsewhere, in any such process the army is of quintessential importance. The role of the Army in Reza Khan's rise and reforms has been underlined, just as the limits of a model based almost uniquely on the military's coercive force. The problems faced by the Iranian army, less "institutionalized" than old-standing traditional groups like the clergy, have also been pointed out and cannot be underestimated in analyzing the downfall of the Pahlavi regime in 1979. More specifically these armed forces did hardly allow the state to assert its domestic monopoly of coercion.

In line with the assessment of the armed forces prior to the revolution, it has now to be considered if or not the nature of the armed forces as such and notably its institutionalization have fundamentally changed and have permitted or not to make it a stable pillar of state formation. Under investigation will hence also be the role the armed forces, and more generally the war, have been able to play in the formation, unification and centralization of Iran since 1979.

4.6.1. The Organization of the Armed Forces Before the War

The Constitution accentuates above all two of the three branches of the Armed Forces, the *Artesh* and the *Sepah*, yet since the beginning of the 1990's the above mentioned *niruhaye entezami* should be added to these. These have, a part from centralizing even more the *komiteh's*, not had a determining influence on our state formation. Therefore they will not be analyzed in depth. It should nonetheless be mentioned that the fact that these forces, whose tasks are more of policing nature, have played a rather important role in imposing the state's influence in contemporary Iran. By taking over the *komiteh*s that were described in some detail earlier, they have succeeded in becoming one of the most visible signs of state presence in daily life. Contrary to the *Basij*, who are often present in parks and streets yet, a part from a small badge, without uniforms or special signs of recognition, the *niruhaye entezami*

are extremely visible. For example, the so-called *gasht-e entezami* combine green police uniforms and white-green police cars with vigilantes dressed in black on motorbikes, all designed to increase visibility. The compulsory veil and the more general rules of morality offer them an excellent excuse to intervene in daily life.

4.6.1.1. The Artesh

Responsible according to article 143 of the Constitution for the independence and territorial integrity of the country, as well as the "order" (in essence the regime) of the Islamic Republic. The title of Hickman's book "*Ravaged and Reborn: The Iranian Army, 1982*"[748] quite accurately illustrates what happened to the armed forces during and after the revolution. The armed forces where ravaged (but not destroyed) and they were reborn (in a very similar form).

One of the first acts of the post-revolutionary government were purges. Contrary to what some might pretend, the first phase of purges (16 February - 30 September 1979) did not have the objective of dismantling the armed forces.[749] This first phase is to be framed in a more general replacement of the old elites with new ones.[750] The majority of the executed personnel came from the state security apparatus, not from the regular armed forces. According to Rose the executions fell especially heavily on the Imperial Guards division.[751] Rose concludes: "*its scope was very limited and its impact on the armed forces even more so*".[752] Contrary to what the Mujahedin and the Feda'i

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[748] W.F.HICKMAN, *Ravaged and Reborn: The Iranian Army, 1982*,The Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 1982

[749] Compare with S. ZABIH, *Iran since the Revolution*, London, Croom Helm, 1982

[750] M. SAGHAFI, "Revolution, War and the Turnover of the Elites", *Goftogu,* No.23, Spring 1378, pp.35-63 [In Persian]

[751] G.F. ROSE, "The Post-Revolutionary Purge of Iran's Armed Forces: A Revisionist Assessment", *Iranian Studies,* Vol. XVII, No.2-3, Spring-Summer 1984, pp.153-194 (169-171)

[752] G.F. ROSE, "The Post-Revolutionary Purge of Iran's Armed Forces …", *l.c.*, p.178

guerillas or even leftist military personnel wished, no "national revolutionary army" or other form of "the people in arms" was installed. Khomeini did not wish to disband the Iranian military, since he knew that the armed leftist guerilla forces could in such a case take over power. In his own words about two weeks after the victory of the revolution: "*The army, the police and the gendarmerie are now in the service of Islam and the nation. The nation should support them, and do nothing that might discourage them or hurt their feelings. The security forces should now that after the purge of corrupt elements all of them will enjoy respect and welfare under the rule of justice and Islam. (…) Attacks on security forces' barracks throughout the country must be prevented.*"[753]

However Khamenei, then Deputy Defense Minister and future President and Supreme Leader, underlined that something had to be done about the armed forces of the *ancien régime*. About a month before the end he hinted at a second phase of purges by stating : "*The armed forces of the Islamic Republic should be the antithesis of the Imperial Armed Forces. What is important for the new Islamic military is to become part and parcel of the larger society within which it operates – it should transform itself into a people's armed forces.*"[754]

As this statement insinuates the second purge (which started in October 1979) was indeed of a different nature. Its scope was the "Islamicization of the armed forces". Rather than punishing military personnel for crimes committed under the *ancien régime*, the objective was now to guarantee the military's loyalty to the new regime and its basis. The rising to power of defense minister Chamran inaugurated this second phase.[755] The "ideological purge", because that was what it was, in contrast to the judiciary purge that had preceded it, targeted above all two kinds of dissenters. The first were what can be called the

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[753] Foreign Broadcast Information Service/Middle East-North Africa (FBIS/MEA), 1 mars 1979, as quoted in G.F.ROSE, "The Post-Revolutionary Purge of Iran's Armed Forces:…", *l.c.*, p.157

[754] A. KHAMENEI in *Ettela'at,* 18 August 1979, p.11 as quoted in N. ENTESSAR, "The Military and Politics in the Islamic Republic of Iran", in H. AMIRAHMADI & M. PARVIN, *Post-Revolutionary Iran*, Boulder Colorado, Westview Press, 1988, pp.56-74 (56)

[755] G.F.ROSE, "The Post-Revolutionary Purge of Iran's Armed Forces:…", *l.c.*, p.183

"usual" suspects, the second were the leftist elements. The purge was rather unsuccessful for the latter, since in 1983 a network of Tudeh officers was, once again, discovered.[756] Rose affirms that although 24% of the field-grade officers, 10% of the company-grade officers and 82% of the general-officer corps were purged, the purge did, for reasons specific to the Iranian army[757], not have a significant influence on the armed forces.[758] This assertion is not entirely improbable, Afshar however notices that few years later entire branches of the army were led by junior officers.[759] In 1980 the Ideological-Political Directorate of the Armed Forces (*modiriate aghidat o siasie artesh*) was installed, one could say to couple purges to indoctrination.[760]

Whatever the influence of these purges on the military capacities of the army might have been, the message sent to the Iranian armed forces was unambiguous. First of all, absolute loyalty to the new state order was required. Secondly, in exchange for such loyalty almost the same military structure that collapsed during the revolution was reinstated. Or, at least, the total destruction of the repressive apparatus of the *ancien régime*, as Lenin had advocated,[761] could be avoided.

The demise of Bani Sadr was a determining moment in the post-revolutionary history of the Iranian military. The ousting of the president, who had preferred the *Artesh* not just to the *Sepah* but even to some branches of the executive power of the country, more precisely his Prime Minister Raja'i, meant that the Army would now be forced to

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[756] In the final decision to prosecute the Tudeh direction these considerations have undoubtedly been paramount. Especially since the Iranian elite were rather preoccupied with the pro-Iraq attitude of the Soviet Union, the Tudeh's main source of inspiration. See for example A.A. HASHEMI RAFSANJANI, *Be Sooye Sarnevesht,* Tehran, Nashr-e Moaref-e Enghelab, 1386, p.260

[757] Overstrenght in field-grade officers and, considering the long term in office of many field-grade officers, a rather experienced pool of company-grade officers to fill the gap.

[758] G.F.ROSE, "The Post-Revolutionary Purge of Iran's Armed Forces:…", *l.c.*, p.187

[759] H. AFSHAR, "The Army, l.*c*, p.194

[760] W. THOM WORKMAN, *The Social Origins of the Iran-Iraq War,* Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994, p.129-130

[761] V.I.LENINE, *L'Etat et la Révolution*, Paris/Moscou, Editions Sociales/Editions du Progrès, 1972, pp.57,64

conquer its place in the Iranian system all over again. All the more so since it was confronted with more radical *Sepah* and *Basij.* One could also see a class distinction between these three groups. If the *artesh* was made up mostly of middle-class nationalists, the *Sepah* had recruited especially religiously oriented and Islamic revolutionaries, of which often quite some urban poor; while the *Basij* found there support especially in rural areas.[762]

The new Islamic rulers were not blind for the limits the former imperial armed forces had shown, especially on the level of internal security. For this reason, two other organizations were created. One of these, was merely a recreation of an former royalist institution. The most effective organization the Shah had possessed to search, infiltrate and destroy the "internal enemy", that was to say, the communist or leftist movements, had been the SAVAK. Immediately after the revolution Khomeini faced a very similar challenge as the Shah, one of the biggest threats to his new regime seemed the leftists. Khomeini's solution to this problem was going to be equally similar. A Tudeh-pamphlet explains:

"*April 5 (…) M. Amir Entezam, spokesman of the provisory government (…) announced that a group (...) had had the mission the purify the Savak. Amir Entezam did not name these persons but indicated that the Savak possessed a substantial apparatus (…) that had to be used. Amir Entezam pretended that the Law on the Protection of Public Security, that created the Organization for Security and Intelligence of the Country – Savak – was originally dedicated to the struggle against foreign agents, but that in reality it was abused of. According to the spokesman of the provisional government, one could make proper use of this law, as of the installations and apparatus of the Savak. The whole of the assertions of the governmental spokesman on the Savak are scandalous and astonishing. If these assertions would become reality, the Savak would be reconstructed.*"[763]

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[762] A.S.HASHIM, "Civil-Military Relations in the Islamic Republic of Iran", in J.A. KECHICHIAN, *Iran, Iraq and the Arab Gulf States,* New York, Palgrave, 2001, pp.31-53 (39)
[763] TOUDEH, « Nous sommes profondément inquiets », in *Le Parti Toudeh d'Iran et la révolution iranienne (2)*, Brochure of February-August 1979, published for the « Fête de

This pamphlet proved prophetic. The external and foreign activities of the former SAVAK, just as quite some of their operatives that had survived the initial revolutionary fever, were reborn under the form of the SAVAMA, Organization for Intelligence and Security of the Homeland (*Sazeman-e Ettela'at va Amniyat-e Mihan*), which eventually became VEVAK, the Ministry of Intelligence and Security of the Country (*Vezarat-e Ettela'at va Amniyate Keshvar*).

However, the functions of internal security were not given solely to the resurrected SAVAK. Concerning its limited efficiency in riot-quelling and the heavy armament of some of the guerilla and or regionalist groups, in combination with the questionable loyalty of the *artesh*, another organization of a militia-character was erected. Namely the *Sepah (*or *Pasdaran*). Their full name, The Corps of Guardians of the Islamic Revolution, is an evident sign of what their intended task was: the safeguarding of the Islamic Revolution.

4.6.1.2.   Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enqelabe Eslami

Although not ready to disband the former's ruler's army, Khomeini did question of its reliability and loyalty. In combination with the proved limitations in the performing of tasks, Khomeini considered vital in the immediate post-revolutionary phase, the new regime started to develop what was initially a militia-like, "paramilitary" force. The Constitution attributes a slightly different function to the *Sepah* than it does to the *Artesh.* Article 150 reads that the *Sepah*, organized in the first days of the victory of the revolution, should continue their work of "guarding the Revolution" (*negahbani az enqelab*), which would indicate a more internal domestic role for the organization.

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l'Humanité » (8 & 9 September 1979), Stand « Mardom » Central Organ of the Tudeh Party of Iran, p.4

As soon as the 5th of March 1979, barely a month after his return to Iran and only a few weeks after the victory of the revolution, Khomeini ordered the establishment of the *Sepah*, which was organized officially the 6th of May. Their tasks were fourfold. Restore order in the cities, suppress ethnic uprising, support Khomeini's faction in their attempt to monopolize power and develop an intelligence and infiltration network.[764]

Morteza Reza'i commander of the *Sepah* had a clear vision on the difference between his institution and the *artesh*: "*The aim of the Revolutionary Guards corps is to protect and preserve the Islamic Revolution. Unlike the army… the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps is in charge of safeguarding the revolution and its gains. We (..) give primary importance to ideological and political dimensions more than military ones.*"[765]

The *Sepah* will promptly show their usefulness in the oppression of "counterrevolutionaries". The 7th of August it will be this organization that will effectively close down the journal Ayandegan. In close cooperation with the less institutionalized *hezbollahi* forces they will also attack and or intimidate demonstrations. The *Sepah* will have a major role in defeating movements for regional independence, while militarily removing internal threats as the People's Mujahideen[766], when the latter launch a military attack on the new regime.[767] It was his awareness of the threat posed by the *Sepah* that made Bani Sadr, temporarily try, rather unsuccessfully, to revalorize the traditional *artesh*.

[764] S. ZABIH, *The Iranian Military in Revolution and War*, London & New York, Routledge, 1988, pp.210-211
[765] M. REZA'I, Tehran: International Service, 13 December 1980, *FBIS* VIII, I 16-17, 15 December 1980 as quoted in S.CHUBIN & C. TRIPP, *Iran and Iraq at War,* London, I.B.Tauris, 1989, pp.43-44
[766] Voir entre autres M. ABRICHAMTCHI, *Iran Moudjahidines du peuple : la résistance aux ayatollahs*, Paris, J.Piccolec, 2004, p.69-70
[767] M. MILANI, *The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1988, p.291-292

4.6.2.   From Revolution To War

War is often a consequence of revolution, as revolution has often been a consequence of a new step in state development. If many of the Iranian state institutions were already formally in place before the war, Tilly's famous dictum that war makes states and vice-versa, undeniably proves of some value when one analyzes the war. Such an analysis is surprisingly absent from literature.

Considering the link between state-making and war-making Tilly sees the history of state making in Europe in three different stages divided between an internal or domestic aspect on one side and external or international aspect on the other side:
"*(a) The differential success of some power holders in "external" struggles establishes the difference between an "internal" and an "external" arena for the deployment of force;*
(b) "external" competition generates "internal" state making;
(c) "external" compacts among states influence the form and locus of particular states ever more powerfully." [768]

While the third point lies beyond our perspective, it is easily observable that the first point was hardly applicable to revolutionary Iran in 1979. A part from an improbable contestation of Khuzestan by Saddam Hussein the internal arena had been established for decades. However the second point proves of some relevance, a point can be made that the "competition" first domestically that is in the peripheral areas of Iran, this aspect was developed earlier, and later internationally with the invasion by and then of Iraq.

Many analyses have insisted on the international and regional implications, others have stressed different military or ideological

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[768] C. TILLY, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime", in P. EVANS, D. RUESCHEMEYER and T. SKOCPOL (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In,* New York, Cambridge UP, 1985, pp.169-187 (185)

aspects of the war.[769] Those that on the other hand have considered the war from the point of view of its consequences and results in the domestic field, have often limited themselves to seeing the war as an event that helped "stabilize" Khomeini's power. Although such an assessment is evidently correct, it is equally superficial since it puts the accent on the victory of one "faction", the one linked to the Islamic Republican Party, over other factions. It is rather unlikely that one would launch a major war that arguably endangers the regime to defeat another faction. The *Sepah* had by then proven to be sufficiently efficient to domestically defeat any political faction.

Eric Hooglund is more accurate, yet still partial, in stating: "*the war's impact has not been entirely negative; in an important sense the war has served as a catalyst to help the post-revolutionary theocratic regime to consolidate its power*"[770] and "*the Iranian clergy and their lay allies have used the Iraqi invasion to enlist popular acquiescence towards the new political institutions.*"[771] In my understanding, the 1982 decision of Iran to invade Iraq simply makes no sense if one leaves out the consequences of such a decision on the state level. It is unimaginable that Iranian policy-makers would not have considered such possible consequences for their rule. Not merely from a factionalist viewpoint, but also and perhaps more decisively from a viewpoint of state formation, or in the view of Iranian policy makers: regime survival. Pelletiere sees the war in a similar perspective, although he judges that the domestic necessity that forced war on Iran was the deadlock reached between partisans of radical legislation and the Guardian Council.[772] It does however seem more accurate to affirm that by 1982 policy makers had understood

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[769] The discussion on if the war was religiously or nationalistically inspired has obvious offered fertile terrain to scholars. Although Islamic justifications were undoubtedly prevalent, the nationalist aspect was certainly not absent, see for example S. GIELING, *Religion and War in Revolutionary Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1999

[770] E. HOOGLUND, "Iran 1980-85: Political and Economic Trends" in N.R. KEDDIE, *The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic*, Syracuse, Syracuse UP, pp.17-31 (17)

[771] E. HOOGLUND, "The Gulf War and the Islamic Republic", *MERIP Reports,* No.6/7, Vol.14, July-September 1984, pp.31-43 (31)

[772] S.C. PELLETIERE, *The Iran-Iraq War : Chaos in a Vacuum,* New York, Praeger, 1992, pp.49-56

what "positive" results the war could bring domestically. According to Digard, Hourcade and Richard: "*the socializing and populist principals of the revolution were reinforced by the war*"[773] and the war permitted the regime to "*impose its control over State and society*" in a more efficient way.[774] Chubin and Tripp state: "*It is not too much to say that domestic politics continued to take priority over the prosecution of the war, epitomized in the slogan 'Revolution before victory'*".[775] Hence if Iranian policy-makers were very much aware of the impact war had on domestic politics, it was another aspect that made the step to invading Iraq unavoidable. It can hardly be called a coincidence that the decision to invade Iraq came in 1982 when most of the other challenges both from below as from the peripheries had been eliminated. In Tilly's words: "*a state that successfully eradicates its internal rivals strengthens its ability to extract resources, to wage war, and to protect its chief supporters.*" [776]

Iran had a qualitative military disadvantage in respect to Iraq, yet it also possessed a relative quantitative advantage in manpower: "*With a population three times that of Iraq, and a manpower tool approaching nine million people, Iran is rich in sons, so rich that the lives of young men can be poured out in costly infantry attacks on prepared Iraqi positions.*"[777] However, notwithstanding this quantitative advantage, a general mobilization was not used when Iraq invaded Iran in 1980. The underlying rationale of such a decision has to be sought in the domestic situation. Different armed groups were still contending national power and competing with the newly emerging Islamic state. General mobilization would have made the establishment of the state's

[773] J.-P.DIGARD, B. HOURCADE & Y. RICHARD, *L'Iran au XXe Siècle,* Paris, Fayard, 2007, p.202

[774] J.-P.DIGARD, B. HOURCADE & Y. RICHARD, *L'Iran au XXe Siècle,* Paris, Fayard, 2007, p.184-185

[775] S.CHUBIN & C. TRIPP, *Iran and Iraq at War,* London, I.B.Tauris, 1989, p.37

[776] C. TILLY, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime", in P. EVANS, D. RUESCHEMEYER and T. SKOCPOL (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In,* New York, Cambridge UP, 1985, pp.169-187 (181)

[777] J. TOWNSEND, "Economic and Political Implications of the War: The Economic Consequences for the Participants", in M.S. EL AZHARY, *The Iran-Iraq War*, London, Croom Helm, 1984, pp.51-65 (57)

monopoly on organized violence precarious since rather than combating internal opposition forces, the state would have been forced to fight with them on the same side. Such a situation would have rendered impossible the elimination of internal competitors.

As an alternative conscription was enforced, "mobilization" was merely declared, which made the *artesh* swell "*to over 200,000 men almost overnight.*"[778] The Iranian state and those dominating it decided to rely on revolutionary networks of mobilization and resource extraction. However what was asked from the people were not merely their "fiscal" resources, but their sons and men. Indeed the most valuable asset of Iranian war-making were ordinary people prepared to die in service of the state, some, like the Basij without receiving any financial retribution for their services.

It might seem awkward to consider the recruitment of soldiers as a form of resource extraction. That is why I insist on the difference between conscription and general mobilization. Napoleon's *levée de masse* required relatively little state involvement in comparison to the Iranian case. In Iran general mobilization would have been a risk. Conscription forced the state to enter the local and rural areas in a very similar way tax collectors would do in order to promote and control the recruitment process. In this undertaking the ideological-religious legitimacy of the new state proved very useful. Ramazani names it an "Ideological Crusade" and claimed that it was this "Crusade" that kept the war going.[779] The local clergymen or *mullahs* "*became active recruiting agents for the Pasdaran which had reached a strength of about 70,000 urging young men to volunteer.*"[780] In this way hence *mullah*s were transformed in state recruiters and the state introduced itself in regions where it had had great difficulties to penetrate. This penetration made it possible for the new power to recruit even 11-year old children from the Kurdish

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[778] E. O'BALANCE, *The Gulf War,* London, Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1998, p.50

[779] R.K.RAMAZANI, *Revolutionary Iran, Challenges and Response in the Middle East,* Baltimore, John Hopkins UP, 1986, p.19

[780] E. O'BALANCE, *The Gulf War,* London, Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1998, p.50

northwest of the country, hardly a region open to state penetration.[781] Predictably the war witnessed a huge increase in military personnel and hence in state dependents. The active and reserve ground forces of the *artesh* went from respectively 150,000 and 400,000 in 1980 to 305,000 and 350,000 in 1988; in the same period the active and reserve forces of the *Sepah* went from nothing to respectively 250,000 and 400,000. The *Basij*-forces grew even more spectacularly after their establishment to 350,000 active personnel and 2,650,000 reservists.[782] In 1986 the hope was even expressed that the Basij could reach 4,5 million students.[783] Their exact size is hard to estimate, some, inspired by Khomeini's hopes, mention 20 million, other, more realistic, estimates speak of about 90,000 full-time armed personnel.[784] To this, Cordesman adds a reserve strength and mobilization capacity of respectively 300,000 and 1,000,000 men.[785] In any way the *Basij* as the *Sepah* came to constitute a considerable force. The rapid increase in effectives on the part of the *Sepah* increased rivalry with the *artesh*. Different reports from the war front illustrate how the *Sepah*, which was to become quantitatively superior to the *artesh*, wanted to take over military decision-making.[786]

Most of the Basij were recruited directly by *mollah*s, even more so than was the case for the *Sepah*. Gradually though the force developed from a force made up of those too young or too old to be regularly enlisted to an effective militia group that got military training by *Sepah* instructors. This training which at the beginning lasted only a month or six weeks

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[781] I. BROWN, *Khomeini's Forgotten Sons,* London, Grey Seal, 1990, p.10

[782] D. HIRO, *The Longest War,* London, Paladin Grafton Books, 1990, Appendix II

[783] *Iran Times,* 25 October 1986, p.5 as quoted in N. ENTESSAR, "The Military and Politics in the Islamic Republic of Iran" in H. AMIRAHMADI &M. PARVIN, *Post-revolutionary Iran*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1988, pp.56-74 (67)

[784] X., "Niruye Moghavemat Basij", *Global Security,*
http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/iran/basij.htm, last accessed on 12 December 2008

[785] A.H. CORDESMAN, "Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and Other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces", *Rough Working Draft*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 16 August 2007, p.10

[786] A.A. HASHEMI RAFSANJANI, *Pas Az Bohran,* Tehran, Nashr-e Moaref-e Enqelab, 1386, p.276

was gradually extended.[787] In his sociological overview of the *Basij* Khosrokhavar distinguishes between two "social" groups within the Basij. A first group of so-called "martyropaths", made up of those that for reasons of ideological and religious belief, feel the need to die fighting. Another group faced death because of more material down-to-earth reasons: the search for employment, excitation or financial autonomy. Yet he admits that both groups are directly being manipulated and used by the regime.[788] This is important since it shows that the *Basij* were not a mere local decentralized force, but consciously established and used by the new Islamic state. Its organizational structure, made up of three sections Guidance, Intelligence and Propaganda, also demonstrates this characteristic.

War mobilization was not the only way the state extended its reach into society. It also looked for different sources of finance. The state exercised influence on companies to make them pay their workers to rejoin the front, voluntary contributions through the development of a systematic network for the collection of these (through guild members, Foundation of the Disinherited, the *Jehad-e Sazandegi* and the Ministry of Education). Trade associations and distribution cooperatives turned out to be one of the most systematic sources of finance. Membership of these conferred significant economic benefits yet in return the state asked for a more significant contribution to its war effort.[789] More strictly economic measures as well were used to increase the state's resources for war like "*administrative controls such as direct distribution of goods, rationing, and price controls proliferated.*" Among such measures were found more classical measures as rationing, voucher-systems, ration stamps and the Economic Mobilization Booklet given to *every* household.[790] If some post-revolutionary measures recalled the Chinese

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[787] E. O'BALANCE, *The Gulf War,* London, Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1998, p.108
[788] F. KHOSROKHAVAR, *L'Islamisme et la Mort*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1995, pp.175-180
[789] V.F. NOWSHIRVANI & P.CLAWSON, "The State and Social Equity in Postrevolutionary Iran", in M. WEINER & A. BANUAZIZI, *The Politics of Social Transformation in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan,* Syracuse, Syracuse UP, 1994, pp.228-269 (240-243)
[790] V.F. NOWSHIRVANI & P.CLAWSON, "The State and Social Equity in Postrevolutionary Iran", in M. WEINER & A. BANUAZIZI, *The Politics of Social*

Cultural Revolution, this combination of compulsion, control and incentives were not without parallel with the politics of industrialization in the former USSR.[791]

In so-called reconstruction efforts, discussions concerning which started as early as 1982, the government directly relied on *bonyad*s, *jehad*s and eventually Ministries to direct the effort of reconstruction. Amirahmadi lists some of the Iranian initiatives: *Vezarat-e Sazandegi* (the Ministry of Reconstruction which the *Jehad-e Sazandegi* was turned into), *Bonyad-Maskan* (Housing Foundation, to which one could today add the *Bank-e Maskan*), *Bonyad-e Mostazafan* (Foundation of the Disinherited), *Monyad-e Omur-e Mohajeran-e Jangi* (Foundation for the Affairs of War Migrants), the *Astan-e Qods* (the foundation that manages the tomb of the eight Imam at Mashad) and the *Sepah*. Moreover a centralized organ, the Headquarters for Renovation and Reconstruction of War-Damaged Regions was established.[792] In addition different ways of traditional political mobilization were used, like the "War Week" which also helped to incorporate popular organizations and self-help projects. The success of this popular mobilization efforts was shown by the fact that between 1982 and 1984 1,1 billion dollar, around 30% of the total amount spent on reconstruction, came from such assistance.[793]

The *Jehad-e Sazandegi*, the crusade for reconstruction, had been launched almost immediately after the revolution and has at times been called *Sepah's* civilian counterpart.[794] The *Jehad* took care of the

Transformation in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, Syracuse, Syracuse UP, 1994, pp. pp.228-269 (257-258)

[791] B. MOORE, *Terror and Progress USSR,* New York, Harper & Row, 1954, pp.32-71

[792] H. AMIRAHMADI, "War, Damage, and Reconstruction in the Islamic Republic of Iran", *in* H. AMIRAHMADI & M. PARVIN, *Post-revolutionary Iran,* Boulder, Westview, 1988, pp.126-152 (143)

[793] H. AMIRAHMADI, "War, Damage, and Reconstruction in the Islamic Republic of Iran", *in* H. AMIRAHMADI & M. PARVIN, *Post-revolutionary Iran,* Boulder, Westview, 1988, pp.126-152 (144-145)

[794] See E.FERDOWS, "The Reconstruction Crusade and Class Conflict in Iran", *MERIP Reports,* No.3, Vol.13, March-April 1983, pp.11-18 (11)

infrastructural part of the war effort in the countryside by expanding civilian infrastructure of all kinds. "*The core of its personnel is formed by idealistic, educated youths who volunteer for the work with little or no pay. They consider themselves the young elite of the present state, devoutly religious and selflessly dedicated to the welfare of the common people (..) in relation to their very limited budget their activities are indeed impressive. These range from the construction of bathhouses, mosques, and tributary roads to the provision to farmers of tractors at half the going fee.*"[795] After two years the *Jehad* claimed to have constructed 8000 miles of roads, 1700 schools, 1600 public baths and 110 health centers, almost exclusively in rural areas.[796]

The continuity with the infrastructural works of the *Ancien Régime* and the preexistent state building efforts are evident. It is of some interest to compare this revolutionary state building with more recent attempts of state construction. All the more so since the 2003 US intervention in Iraq was, at least officially, intended to construct an Iraqi state. Naomi Klein eloquently exemplifies the difference between the internal process of state formation in Iran and the external process of state making attempted in Iraq. Klein writes: "*if 'nation creating' was to happen in Iraq, what exactly was supposed to become of the nation that was already there? The unspoken assumption from the beginning was that much of it would have to disappear, to clear the ground…*"[797] Both structurally and organizationally differences between both approaches are blatant.

4.7.   *Conclusion*

The Islamic revolution has permitted to incorporate into the state some of the old power concentrations, like the clergy and the bazaar. Both groups have, through a process of mobilization and socio-political

[795] R. LOEFFLER, "Economic Changes in a Rural Area Since 1979", in N.R. KEDDIE & E. HOOGLUND, *The Iranian Revolution & the Islamic Republic*, Syracuse, Syracuse UP, 1986, pp. pp.93-107 (96)

[796] E.FERDOWS, "The Reconstruction Crusade and Class Conflict in Iran", *MERIP Reports*, No.3, Vol.13, March-April 1983, pp.11-18 (12)

[797] N. KLEIN, *The Shock Doctrine*, New York, Pirador, 2007, p.417

action, structured themselves in a functioning power structure, parallel to the Republican democratic one. Next to Parliament appeared a Guardian Council, dominated by the incorporated social units. And as next to the President appeared a Supreme Leader, so were parallel institution added to all major ministries. The "government of control" expanded towards the military structure as well.

This process has offered the newly incorporated social units unprecedented leverage within the state and a road to power they had only dreamt of until then. This simple fact immediately explains why they were so eager to integrate the state.

Once again with great cautiousness one could assert that an evolution from proto-societal corporatism towards state corporatism was observed. The emergence of new corporatist actors, like the *Sepah*, and the incorporation of "freely constituted" corporations, like the clergy, in the State are some indications of such transformation. What fundamentally distinguished both pillars was not so much their members as their respective type of legitimacy. The state democratic pillar was largely founded on civil or popular legitimacy, while the parallel pillar relied on numinous legitimacy.

It is clear that the institutional setting illustrated in this chapter could have two different negative consequences. On the one side it could lead to centrifugal tendencies which would make policy-making impossible and would effectively undermine the state. On the other hand it could lead to a stalemate, in which the different competing institutions lose interest in the competition because there is nothing left to gain. A positive, long-term, consequence would do the exact opposite, the system would integrate ever more in the direction of "one chain of command".

The main question remains if the developments led to a continued and dynamic competition or rather to a stalemate. If competition continued, the question will be if it is characterized by a centrifugal or a centripetal nature. In other words, is the institutional setting of the Islamic

Republic making a modern state or unmaking it? Is stateness increasing or decreasing?

The fact that the Islamic revolution has integrated new social units in the state would suggest *a priori* a similarity with Stalin's model. At the same time however the relatively high degree of autonomy of certain competing actors undeniably implies possible centrifugal and destructive rent-seeking mechanisms. A superficial analysis suffices largely to see the potentially explosive mix institutionalized in the Iranian constitution.

Two pillars clearly emerge and the only institution that more or less links both pillars is the Council for the Discernment of the Interest of the Order, which has in essence taken the place of the mediating leader. On the one hand state democratic institutions basing their legitimacy on popular sovereignty with on the other hand parallel institutions whose legitimacy gradually evolved from mainly religious charismatic to some kind of institutionalized stato-religious legitimacy. Both pillars, that is the state democratic pillar and the parallel Islamic pillar also dispose of their own armed forces, respectively the *artesh* and the *Sepah*. These are in constant competition for resources and influence, apparently furthering at least as much their own interests as those of the Iranian state.

5. The Victory of the State And The Struggle For It

The previous two chapters insisted heavily on the struggle of the state. In essence how the state emerged from and against specific competitors. Obviously, the incorporation within the state structure of these pre-revolutionary concentrations of power did not automatically imply their disappearance. Hence the incorporation of these presented only one side of the argument. Once they had been incorporated they would no longer struggle against the state, but surely would participate in the struggle for the state.

For these actors, the struggle for the state now comes to replace the struggle against the state. So much so that in 2004 it could be said that "*capturing the state has been the central focus of all recent parliamentary elections and political activities.*"[798] If my hypothesis of a state ever more successful in eliminating competitors is to hold, the representation and influence of collective actors should diminish over time. For instance, if policies towards the clergy are really the "ultimate example of centralization" as I pretend, the power and influence of the clergy as a collective actor such should diminish. Or rather, the evolution of the struggle for power should demonstrate what was asserted in the previous chapter, namely that the overtake by the state gradually destroyed other power concentrations.

This should become apparent on at least two other levels. Both levels take us back to the monist-pluralist debate at the beginning of this study and the opposition between a so-called "decisional" (*who decides*) and an "institutional" (*who's who where*) approach. The question becomes if a quantifiable evolution in for example the role of the clergy within the framework of the state can be observed. The same exercise

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[798] M. SAGHAFI, "The New Landscape of Iranian Politics", *Middle East Report*, No.233, Winter 2004, www.merip.org

will have to be done for the bazaar and ultimately, but inversely for the armed forces. When discussing pre-revolutionary concentrations of power, the armed forces were considered the weakest link of Iranian state formation until then. Now if such was correct and the Islamic revolution truly perfected a process of state formation, then one could expect to witness a relative increase in the role of the military within the polity.

5.1.   Incorporation of pre-revolutionary concentrations of power

The construction of the new order and the continuity of the old order will permit the new regime to develop the infrastructural power of the state by incorporating "*the traditional power groups* [that] *had consistently impeded modernization and circumscribed power to the center*".[799] In essence the destruction of those social units, arguably corporations, that had made up the main forces of what I have called pre-revolutionary proto-societal corporatism. Quite unsurprisingly, the bazaar and the clergy would obviously turn out to be the most impressive examples of these successes.

5.1.1.   The Clergy: the ultimate example of centralization

If it can be stated that the clergy is not only a social group in a Neo-Marxist sense of the concept but also an institution in the Huntingtonian categorization and characterization of institutions, many analyses assert that the clergy took power in the Islamic Republic, as will be seen in next chapters this thesis contains some truth. Clearly the clergy has been independent[800] from the state for

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[799] D. MENASHRI, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran,* New York, Cornell UP, 1992, p.160

[800] In the sense mentioned above

centuries, and many analyses of the Iranian revolution consider that the clergy as an institution has taken over power after the 1979 Revolution. Indeed, never was direct clerical participation in power organs higher than just after the revolution.[801] While this is admittedly an understandable approach, it also reminds us of the superficiality of Orientalist analyses.[802] Rather than affirming that the clergy took power in Iran, which seems the dominant thesis, I will show that the state took over the clergy.

5.1.1.1. Decapitation of the Clergy

The first step was the decapitation of the clergy as an institution. When Khomeini took (political) power, he was not the uncontested religious leader of the Shi'i community. If grand ayatollahs or marja's living outside of Iran could be tolerated, even within Iran harsh inner struggles followed the revolution. This was unavoidable considering the very different forces that had "made" the revolution. Not only did clerics struggle among themselves to impose their vision of an Islamic state, but violence or political struggle between Khomeinists and Marxist groups (as the Feda'i Khalq) or Islamo-Marxist groups (Mujahedin-e Khalq), among Marxists groups, between Khomeinists and Liberals, between civil liberties defenders and Hezbollahi's and so further characterized the first post-revolutionary years. Yet while Khomeini emerged ever more as the undisputed leader of the revolution and the new state, the construction of the new state, in a definitely totalitarian approach, tried to establish total control of power. This included the fields of economics (on June 7th 1979 all banks are nationalized and only a month later the car and steel industry follow); politics (gradual ejection of liberals from government and physical repression of Marxist movements); education (Bani Sadr's cultural

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[801] R. HASSAN, "Iran's Islamic Revolutionaries: Before and after the Revolution", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 3, July 1984, pp. 675-686

[802] Very much in the original sense of E. SAID, *Orientalism*, New York, Penguin Books, 2003

revolution), the military forces (purges and establishment of paramilitary forces); press (gradual limitation of permitted journals) and the social field (the imposing of Islamic morals). The infighting and internal strife so characteristic for clerical politics after the revolution already showed that notwithstanding the fact that the clergy seemed to have taken power, only a particular fraction of that clergy took power, in essence those that can be called "Khomeinists" or supporters of his concept of the Islamic state and more specifically *velayat-e faqih*.

When confronted with the clerical institution the new power in Teheran did different things. First of all it kept itself well away from Iran's religious establishment in Qom. Khomeini and his followers decided to reside in Tehran, political capital of the country. There was a good reason for that choice: the religious dignitaries in Qom had never totally accepted Khomeini's guardianship.[803] One of the main contradictions was the one between quietists on the one hand and revolutionaries on the other. Quietism should not be seen as a separation between religion and state. It is merely the clerical tendency not to take political power directly in their own hands, but to influence the political scene by asserting the superiority of religious values. This worked marvelously under the Safavid and even the Qajar dynasties, since both depended on the religious legitimacy offered by the clergy. The system went into profound crisis during the Pahlavi dynasty, who did not need (or at least thought so) the support of the clerical establishment. Yet although contemporary history saw an increase in activist and revolutionary tendencies among the Shi'i clergy, no unanimity was ever achieved.

Interestingly the reinvigoration of revolutionary and activist political tendencies within the clergy was a rather international phenomenon. In the 1960's Musa Al-Sadr advocated it in Lebanon, although he himself was of Iranian descent. In Iraq more than the coup of Qasem Abdel Karim, it was the huge popularity of the Iraqi communist party among

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[803] J.-P. DIGARD, B. HOURCADE & Y. RICHARD, *L'Iran au XXe siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 1996, p.200

the Shi'i population that sparked the clerical irruption in politics. In the country that hosts the most important Shi'i shrines, political quietism of the clergy had led to a decrease in their influence to such a degree that atheist ideology seemed to threaten clerical dominance in popular neighborhoods. The excommunication of communists by Muhsin (Mohsen) Al-Hakim and Mohammad Baqer Al-Sadr signed the emergence of a new activist generation of clerics.[804] In Iran, activist tendencies of clerics like Mirza Hasan Al-Shirazi (Tobacco Protest) and Kashani (Mossadegh) had always been present. Yet in the 1960's with Khomeini's (White Revolution), Taleqani and others activism gradually came to dominate quietist tendencies.

Yet even after the revolution, among those clerics that had willingly or unwillingly accepted their activist role, many disputes continued. In an interview with Ettela'at newspaper just after a trip that had forced him to leave the holy city of Mashad and come to Tehran to see Khomeini, ayatollah Hassan Qomi complained about the constitution and the censorship in newspapers.[805] He immediately received a public answer from regime loyal ayatollah Khakhali asking him if he favored American Islam or the Islam of Ali.[806] The case of Grand Ayatollah Shariatmadari offers another interesting and better known example. Based in Iranian Azerbaijan, Shariatmadari was a defender of the interests of the traditional right and director of the Madreseye Fatemeh in Qom, but opposed to theocracy.[807] Even before the revolution he had showed at some occasions opposition to Khomeini's plans. When on December 5th, 1979 Shariatmadari declares his opposition to the new Constitution, his residence is attacked by so-called Hezbollahi's. This

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[804] L. LOUER, *Chiisme et Politique au Moyen-Orient*, Paris, Editions Autrement, Collection Mondes et Nations, 2008, pp.17-22

[805] Newspaper Ettela'at, 12th Esfand 1358 (March 1980) as reproduced in D.A. BABA'I, *Bist-o panj sal dar Iran chi gozasht? Az Bazargan ta Khatami, Az Bani-Sadr ta Showraye Movaqqate Riasate Jomhoori*, Jelde dovvom, Tehran, Omide Farda, 1383, pp.113-124

[806] Newspaper Ettela'at, 26 Esfand 1358 (March 1980), as reproduced in D.A. BABA'I, *Bist-o panj sal dar Iran chi gozasht? Az Bazargan ta Khatami, Az Bani-Sadr ta Showraye Movaqqate Riasate Jomhoori*, Jelde dovvom , Tehran, Omide Farda, 1383, pp.125-138

[807] E. ROULEAU, "Aggravation des tensions en Iran", *Le Monde*, samedi 8 décembre 1979, pp.1&3

event illustrated the fragility of the new state and especially its lack of central control, since almost immediately local Azerbaijani sections of the Sepah-e Pasdaran and the Islamic *komitehs* rallied with Shariatmadari against the central power in Teheran. Khomeini immediately rushes to Tabriz, but can not avoid that Shariatmadari's supporters take control of the streets and the radio and television broadcasting services. In the end it will be the loyal sections of the Pasdaran that will reestablish rule and order. Shariatmadari's political party (The Republican Party of the Islamic People/ Hezb-e Jomhoori-e Khalq-e Mosalman) will be dissolved even before the presidential elections of January 1980 and the Grand Ayatollah himself will be placed under high-surveillance. But more interestingly, Shariatmadari, who also became allegedly involved in a coup plot[808], will be defrocked by Khomeini, whose religious authority was inferior to Shariatmadari's.[809] This was a clear and early sign that politics would dominate the clerical establishment and not the clerical establishment politics. A similar story could be told of the fate of ayatollah Qotbzadeh, former counselor of Khomeini and one of the highest religious dignitaries, his opposition to Khomeini's idea of government will cost him his life. He will be condemned and executed for trying to overthrow the government and attempting to assassinate Khomeini. Other *marja*'s were allowed to continue their activities in exchange for their relative silence. Examples of great *marja*'s as Khu'y, who died in Najaf (Iraq) in 1992 and Golpayegani who died a year later in Qom are striking.[810]

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[808] Something he himself initially denied, see for example : "Mosahebe Matbu'ati Farmandeye Sepah-e Pasdaran", *Etelaat,* 4 Ordibehesht, 1361, as republished in D.A. BABA'I, *Bist-o panj sal dar Iran chi gozasht? Az Bazargan ta Khatami, Edameye Riasate Jomhoorie Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamene'i va Nakhostvazirie Mir Hussein Mousavi,* Jeld-e Haftom, Tehran, Omide Farda, 1386, pp.103-108

[809] A. ANSARI, "La révolution iranienne, vingt ans après", *Politique étrangère,* No.1, 2000, pp.81-93 (87)

[810] J.-P. DIGARD, B. HOURCADE & Y. RICHARD, *L'Iran au XXe siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 1996, p.209

5.1.1.2. Integration of the Clergy in the State

After decapitating or silencing that part of the traditional clerical establishment that was overly unfavorable to it, the new regime went one step further by creating those institutions that would allow the clergy to integrate the state institutions. The creation of a parallel pillar, reserved almost entirely for the clergy with a strong bazaar presence, proved the solution. Obviously none of the actors realized what their contribution would lead to.

The Assembly of Experts, the Council of Guardians and the position of the Supreme Leader were seen by the activist revolutionary clergy as victories. Yet when in the first elections for the Assembly of Experts Khomeini's clerical allies obtain two-thirds of the seats, this is not as much a success for the clergy, as it was for the State. The latter succeeded in imposing its vision of clerical politics on the clerical institution. The clerical involvement in politics would from now on go through these state institutions.

Is it the clergy as a whole that is incorporated? No, but does the process involve members of the clergy as a corporation or an institution offering them the possibility to abandon their traditional power centers and obtain social or political promotion in a different way? Undoubtedly yes. Without being identical, the process bears some resemblance with what had happened to the French nobility before the revolution. Their incorporation in the absolutist state had transformed it from a powerful land-owning classes into a state-dependent social unit.[811]

At the same time however Khomeini opposes the candidacy of Ayatollah Beheshti, an important figure of the Islamic Republican Party

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[811] See the process described by A. DE TOCQUEVILLE, *The Old Regime and the Revolution,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2004 and F. FURET, M. OZOUF, A. GOLDHAMMER, *The French Revolution: A Critical Dictionary*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1989, p.626

(IRP), for the presidency.[812] This gesture should be interpreted as a tentative to avoid that the clerical institution would control all institution of the new state (and hence the state). When Bani Sadr is impeached by Khomeini, following a negative parliamentary vote of confidence, Mohamed Ali Reja'i, member of the royal air force before the revolution, but also active in anti-regime movements and reportedly close to ayatollah Taleqani and the Feda'iyan-e Eslam, had already passed through the Ministry of Education and Research and had been Prime Minister as well. Religiously conservative, he also favoured a strong state role in the economy and was hence rather popular among the Hezbollahi's. Nevertheless Reja'i was no a cleric either.[813] Moreover his career clearly showed a sign of rapid ascension through the civil institutions of the new regime. Other examples would be possible, like Mousavi, prime minister for about nine years and Ali Akbar Velayati, the candidate for prime minister of new elected president Khamene'i refused by Parliament, both not clerics. The vice-presidency of Habibi could be seen in the same light of avoiding clerical dominance of the democratic state pillar.

Such an exercise was obviously a difficult one and it was not uncommon for members of the clergy to enter high "non-parallel" positions. Mohammed Reza Mahdavi-Kani, who became Prime Minister after the death of Reja'i, was one of them, a more important example was the presidency of Khamene'i, who was elected in 1981. However the ascension of Khamene'i and Rafsanjani, who would become Speaker of Parliament in the same period, did not imply the

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[812] See D. BRUMBERG, *Reinventing Khomeini*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2001, p.112

[813] Although Reja'i was intimately linked to the bazaar through his father who had at his time in Qazvin used the bazaar networks to resist communist propaganda from the Soviets. See: Mohammed Ali Reja'i Ke bud? (Who was Mohammed Ali Reja'i?), Iarane Emam be raviat asnade Savak, Ketab 14, Markaze Barresi Asnade Tarikhi, Vezarate Ettela'at or for a panorama of his economic plans, consider his budget speech in the Majles from S. MIRTAVASI, *Shahid Mohammad Ali Reja'i*, Jelde Avval, Nehzate Zanane Mosalman as reproduced in D.A. BABA'I, *Bist-o panj sal dar Iran chi gozasht? Az Bazargan ta Khatami, Az riasate jomhoorie Reja'i ta riasate jomhoorie Khamene'i*, Jelde Panjom, Tehran, Omide Farda, 1384, pp.36-55 &56-76

take-over of state institutions by the clergy. Indeed, both of them were lower rank clerics, not even ayatollah's and far from *marja*'s. Those ayatollah's that were elected or appointed in different institutions, like Beheshti in the IRP or Mahdavi-Kani as prime minister were generally not *marja*'s either. In this way the state gave political power to intermediate echelons of the clerical institution, showing its disrespect for the clergy's internal procedures and order. Roy and Khosrokhavar correctly speak of the "statalization" of the clergy.[814] Both authors underline that the take-over by the state was also financial. One can say that this process of "statalization" was completed just before the death of Khomeini, when ayatollah Montazeri, one of the last clerical high, yet not undisputed, dignitaries present in Iranian politics lost his position as designated successor of Khomeini and was condemned to house arrest.[815] No surprise that he as well will be defrocked of his title of Grand Ayatollah, once again for political, not religious reasons.[816]

Because of their role in the disclosure of the Iran-Contra affair, close allies of Montazeri were executed, but a more interesting consequence of the Iran-contra affair was the instauration of a Special Clerical Court, which was a clear step in the development of state control on the clergy. In the first ten years of its existence the Court executed over 600 clerics and theological students from the Seminars and stripped around 2,000 of them of their religious qualifications. Another 4,000 clerics saw themselves condemned to beatings, fines and/or prison sentences.[817]

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[814] O. ROY & F. KHOSROKHAVAR, *Iran comment sortir d une révolution religieuse*, Paris, Seuil, 1999, p.58

[815] For the image of the Islamic Republic abroad Montazeri presented the advantage of an oeconemical vision of Shi'i and Sunni Islam. See "Mosahebe Montasher nashodei az Hazrat-e Ayatollah Montazeri", *Kayhan,* 22 Dey 1360, as republished in D.A. BABA'I, *Bist-o panj sal dar Iran chi gozasht? Az Bazargan ta Khatami, Riasat-e Jomhoori-ye Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamene'i va Nakhostvazirie Mir Hussein Mousavi*, Jeld-e Shishom, Tehran, Omide Farda, 1385, pp.122-126 & A.A. HASHEMI RAFSANJANI, *Obur az Bohran,* Tehran, Moaref-e Enghelab, 1386, pp.346-347

[816] His ascension to the grade of Grand Ayatollah had been interpreted from a similar political viewpoint

[817] W. BUCHTA, *Who Rules Iran?,* Washington, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001, p.97

5.1.1.3.   Completing the process

The above indicated results were facilitated by the migration towards Qom of much of the high-ranking Shi'i clergy, which facilitated national control over it.[818] The nationalization of the Iranian Shi'i clergy also became obvious on other domains. Shi'i clerics abroad now *"dissociate their political support for Tehran from their choices about who should be the marja'"*.[819] Olivier Roy enumerates three main reasons why the Shi'i clergy suddenly seemed unable to resist the state's growing influence. First of all since the revolution was done in their name they were forced to enter the arena of politics and support revolution, all the more so since the declared objective of it was imposing Islamic rule. Secondly, there was the objective strength of state bureaucracy, that had been continuously on the rise and now finally seemed able to absorb much of the clerical institution. A third reason was the tactical approach of the new revolutionary system that offered a system of social promotion to middle-rank clerics, which had little hope to attain higher prestige or positions within the clerical institution.[820]

However, notwithstanding the concrete results of these policies, an old institution as the clergy was not absorbed as easily. As will be seen later arguably these "statist" policies of the Iranian regime rather stimulated a rupture between "insider clerics" and "outsider clerics".[821] Yet the state did not calm down its attacks on the institution. Further steps concerned among other things Friday Prayers Leaders. The Friday Prayer is known not only the most important religious Prayer event in a common week, but also as a place where the leader of the Prayer

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[818] N.R. KEDDIE (Y. RICHARD), *Modern Iran, Roots and Results of Revolution*, London, Yale University Press, 2003, p.103 and A. MAHRDAD, *Iran auf dem Weg zur Diktatur – Militarisierung un Widerstand 1919-1925*, Hannover, SOAK Verlag, 1976, pp.96-97

[819] O. ROY, "The Crisis of Religious Legitimacy in Iran", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol.53, No.2, Spring 1999, pp.201-216 (211)

[820] O. ROY, "The Crisis of Religious Legitimacy in Iran", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol.53, No.2, Spring 1999, pp.201-216 (210)

[821] N. SCHAHGALDIAN, *The Clerical Establishment in Iran*, RAND National Defense Institute, June 1989, pp.45-46

offers political, economic and social insights in his sermon. No surprise hence that the Islamic Republic integrated these in its structure.[822] Indeed, from the revolution onwards, it would be the *faqih*'s or Supreme Leader's task to appoint them. Today, although most Friday prayers in Tehran are led by Ahmed Khatami, a conservative cleric not related in any way to the former reformist president, Khamenei (whose task it officially is), Rafsanjani and ayatollah Jannati all direct the prayers at the University of Tehran central campus. The first two at least are political rather than religious leaders. A nice illustration of the primacy of political on religious affairs can be found in the sermons on special holidays. In 2008 on Qods Day[823] Rafsanjani's speech at the Friday prayer was far more about the international economic crisis and American politics than it was about religion.

Even the selection of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic would prove to be a sign of the incorporation of clerical structures by the state and not vice-versa. The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, who is supposed to be a religious example for the global Shi'i community is elected by an Assembly of Experts (*Majles-e Khobregan*), although the Assembly has passed laws to make itself a "clergy only" institution, the Constitution does not require the Assembly to be made up of clergymen alone.[824] Consequently these laws have been questioned by reformists, which would only clarify even more that this institution is a political one and not a religious one. The election of the successor of Khomeini had been a intrinsic political and not a religious decision. The changes in the Constitution prepared the ground for this

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[822] This incorporation by the State of the *Imam-e Jommeh* was not new, already in the Qajar period two clerical hierarchies coexisted. One autonomous and one, including the Friday Prayer Leaders, governmental. What was new however was the prestige these FPL received. Under Qajar rule they had been seen as "governmental puppets" and had little or no real influence. In post-revolutionary Iran this was altered. See also N. KEDDIE, *Iran Religion, Politics and Society,* London, Frank Cass, 1980, p.143

[823] *Ruze Qods*, first introduced by Khomeini, the day, celebrated on the last Friday of the Arabic month of Ramezan, is supposed to express the solidarity of all Muslims with the Palestinian people and the unbreakable bond linking Muslims (and Iranians) to the city of Jerusalem.

[824] See articles 107-108 of the Constitution

shift from religious to political legitimacy. The succession of Khomeini became in this way the supreme example of how political power came to dominate religious power or how the state overtook the traditional clerical hierarchy. Renzo Guolo correctly asserts that by this constitutional reform: "*Khomeini opened up the 'conquest of the sky' of the Shi'i clergy to the militant clergy that until then had seen its access to the supreme revolutionary religious institution blocked by its lack of recognized theological and juridical wisdom.*"[825] Instead of asserting hence, as Haghayeghi does, that the regime has not succeeded in institutionalizing the principle of *velayat-e faqih*, it has to be underlined that the failure to institutionalize the concept religiously, has led the regime to institutionalize *velayat-e faqih* politically.[826]

Obviously the clergy's history and tradition as an autonomous institution did not allow the state to incorporate or absorb it completely in such a short period of time. Nevertheless, the presidency of Ahmadinejad did try to complete this movement by what some perceived as an assault on the religious education system. Much scholarly attention has gone to the increase of religious education in state universities since the revolution, the adaptation of the curricula and textbooks, the purging of not-sufficiently Islamic professors and so on. The so-called cultural revolution that followed the revolution and forced public universities to close down for a couple of years was indeed one of the more remarkable features of the first post-revolutionary years.

Unfortunately the role of the state in religious education has received less attention. Next to the ever further developing system of public and private secular universities, Iran also knows a system of religious, clerical, higher education, by the name of howzé (hawza). The Iranian clergy possesses about 230 howzé's and with the exception of the howzé of Isfahan and three howzé's in the province of Khorasan, the howzé system is dominated by the religious seminars of Qom and its

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[825] R. GUOLO, *La Via dell'Imam*, Bari, Editori Laterza, 2007, p.61

[826] M. HAGHAYEGHI, "Politics and Ideology in the Islamic Republic of Iran", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.29, No.1, January 1993, pp.36-52 (38)

central council.[827] Indeed, the Society of Seminar Teacher of Qom has proven an important centralized organ for the government to influence the seminars. Some would argue that influence is going the other way just as well. Nevertheless, discussion on if it would or not be beneficial for the religious seminars to be incorporated in a more centralized state structure have been going on for about 25 years now, which in 30 years of existence of the Islamic Republic is not a negligible period of time. Schirazi remarks: "*Criticism of the decentralized organization and administration of the academies comes chiefly from the ranks of the ruling clergy who advocate control over these institutions as a means of stopping there enemies from gaining greater power.*"[828]

The power and importance of this system of higher clerical education was exemplified by religious scholar Abdolkarim Soroush, an influential member of the intellectual opposition to the system, when in 2003 he denounced, in the article "*What the University Expects from the Hawzeh*", the monopoly the howzé was defending. He even asserted that the religious views emanating from this system of higher education were merely intended to consolidate its own monopoly. According to Soroush the seminars should therefore "*refrain from expedient speech and action that serves political power*" and "*renounce arbitrary selectiveness in the presentation of religion*", but also " *abstain from regarding human knowledge as superhuman*".[829] The latter statement being an obvious attack on the pretended monopoly of religious interpretation the howzé asserts since centuries.

Khamene'i's weaknesses from the viewpoint of the religious hierarchy led him to make the submission of these one of his priorities once he had been elected Supreme Guide. Khomeini as well had tried to do so, but even he had not succeeded completely. Indeed only some of Qom's

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[827] X., "Howzeye Elmie: Mostaqim ya Dowlati?", *Shahrvand-e Emrooz,* No.67, 21 Mehr 1387 (October 13, 2008), pp.62-63

[828] A. SCHIRAZI, *The Constitution of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1998, p.260

[829] A. SOROUSH, "What the University Expects from the Hawzeh", in M. SADRI & A. SADRI (eds.), *Reason, Freedom and Democracy in Islam: Essential Writings of Abdolkarim Soroush,* Oxford, Oxford UP, 2000, p.13 as quoted in A.M.ANSARI, *Iran, Islam and Democracy,* London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2000, p.71

religious seminars surrendered to Khomeini's Supreme Council.[830] Noticing what could almost be defined as despise of some if not all of the high clergy for him[831], Khamene'i increased the budget allocated to the clergy to about 72 million dollar. He even started offering specific jobs for howzé graduates in different government institutions just as in schools and enterprises.

Understanding the importance of these seminars and taking into account their critical attitude towards him, Ahmadinejad, the first non-cleric to ascend to the position of president of Iran since Bani-Sadr, has launched a campaign to limit the autonomy of the howzé and hence the clergy. Others, like Rafsanjani and Ali Mutahhari had been more prudent, by encouraging the seminars to favor intellect and interpretation over the letter of Islamic Law.[832]

Although the counselor on clerical affairs of the president, stated repeatedly that the "government's defense did not mean intermeddling"[833] many clerics remained skeptical. Hamid Parsania rhetorically asked what would happen if for some, improbable, reason the government would stray from the righteous path.[834] Officially Ahmadinejad offered only extra-funding and the installation of extra howzé in every region of the country, but underneath the government made clever use of the 3 decades old argument that although the independency of the clergy and its institutions had been essential to guarantee just government, such an independence lost all meaning in

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[830] W. BUCHTA, *Who Rules Iran?*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001, p.94

[831] W. BUCHTA, *o.c.*, p.94 mentions how grand ayatollahs as Shirazi, Sadeq and Mohammed Ruhani and less surprisingly Montazeri, even refused to meet with Khamene'i in 1995.

[832] A. MONTAJABI, "Valayat-e Faqih: Tatil-e Aqhl Nist", *Shahrvand-e Emrooz*, No.68, 28 Mehr 1387

X, "Fegh-e Aqhl-Gerai", *Shahrvand-e Emrooz*,No.57, 13 Mordad 1387, pp.110-114

[833] X.,"Howzeye Elmie: Mostaqim ya Dowlati?", *Shahrvand-e Emrooz*, No.67, 21 Mehr 1387 (October 13, 2008), p.62

[834] H. PARSANIA, "Howzé Didébane Nézam", *Shahrvand-e Emrooz*, No.67, 21 Mehr 1387 (October 13, 2008), p.69

an Islamic Republic where clerics (are supposed to) rule.[835] These measures might not seem as fundamental as other, it was nonetheless one of the reasons that made Rafsanjani warn repeatedly for some "currents" that, in his idea, wished to abolish the clergy. [836] A rather surprising thesis coming from a state that is, often by its own people, considered "the republic of the mullahs".

One of Ahmadinejad's most frontal attacks on the clergy went through revelations made by Abbas Palizdar. Palizdar, initially presented as a member of the Majles Research Committee[837], and offered a detailed act of accusation, including charges of corruption and mafia-practices. Ayatollah Emami Kashani, Ayatollah Hashemi-Shahroudi, acting Head of the Judiciary, Ayatollah Abbas Va'ez-Tabassi, and hojjat ol-eslam Nateq Nouri were explicitly indicated.[838] Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, former Head of the Judiciary; was supposedly involved in a fraudulent purchase of a tire company, obtaining a 50 million dollar discount on a total company value of 60 million dollar.[839]

5.1.1.4. Net Results of Incorporation Process

When considering the net results of the incorporation of the clergy in the state, this has to be done at a double level. First one has to consider

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[835] X., "Esteqal bi ma'na", *Shahrvand-e Emrooz,* No.67, 21 Mehr 1387 (October 13, 2008), p.70

[836] X., "Hoshdare Hashemi dar bareye hazf-e ruhaniat", *Etemaad*, Saturday 23 Shahrivar 1387 (September 13, 2008)

[837] Albeit this was later denied by the Majles, see Statement of Majles Research Center, "Mr. Abbas Palizdar's claim on cooperating with Majlis Research Center was denied", 21 Khordad 1387,
http://www.majlis.ir/mhtml/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=2203

[838] IPS, "The Accuser Is Accused, And Jailed", *Iran Press Service,* June 11, 2008 & A. TAHERI, "Jailed For Outing the Mullah Mafia", *New York Post,* June 13, 2008 & M. NIKNAHAD & S. HAERI, "Is Ali Khameneh'i 'Cleaning' His House?", *Rooz Online /Iran Press Service,* June 10, 2008

[839] M. KHALAJI, "Ahmadinezhad Deflects Criticism with Attacks on Clerics", *Policy Watch #1380,* The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 11, 2008

the influence of the clergy in the parallel state institutions. As has been illustrated above, the clergy as an institution has undoubtedly lost much of its leverage in those institutions. The best illustration has been the rise of Khamene'i and the evolution of the position of the Leader. Khamene'i is occupying a position the clerical hierarchy would not permit him to. Yet this is far from the only indication. The Assembly of Experts, that has to elect the Supreme Leader is now headed by Hashemi Rafsanjani, who has never religiously attained the grade of ayatollah. The Assembly itself is being elected and the criteria for its election are at least as political as they are religious. The electoral campaign for the fourth Assembly of Experts (2006-2007) was illustrative. The campaign saw a fierce opposition between those clerics defending and inspiring the president, notably Mesbah Yazdi, and the supporters of Hashemi Rafsanjani.[840] The now late Ayatollah Meshkini, then president of the Assembly tried to hold the middle between both. In essence all of the candidates clearly proposed themselves as political candidates, under a more or less religious veil. That all candidates nicely recovered three political tendencies of the regime was hence no coincidence. Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi represented the far-right, Hashemi Rafsanjani the modern right and Meshkini the traditional right. No surprise hence that the victory of Rafsanjani was considered a defeat for Ahmadinejad's policies, rather than a choice of religious preference.[841] From the Friday Prayers over the Assembly of Experts to the position of the Supreme Leader all parallel offices have clearly been politicized.

When looking at the democratic state institutions the collapse of the clergy as an institution becomes even clearer. Table 1 illustrates how between the first and the fifth Majles the presence of clergy-men collapsed in a rather impressive manner. While the clergy accounted for about half of the representatives in the first and second Majles, less than one fifth of all representatives for the fifth Majles were clergymen.

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[840] T. FOURQUET, "Iran: L'Enjeu politique de l'élection de l'Assemblée des experts", *Caucaz.com,* December 4, 2006, www.caucaz.com

[841] See for example S. HAERI, "Mr. Rafsanjani's Victory Is A Crushing Defeat for Ahmadi Nezhad", *Iran Press Service,* September 6, 2007
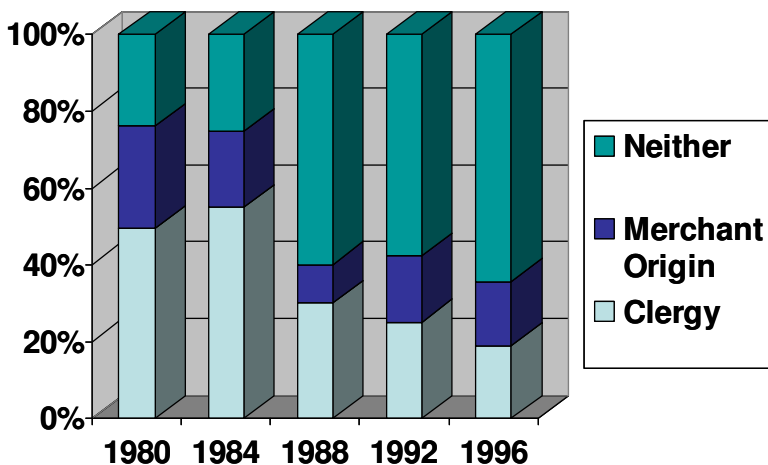
Graphic 2 illustrates how this number has since stabilized. Comparing the 2000 Majles, where reformists took 65% of the seats, with the 2004 and 2008 Majles, both with an important conservative majority, no significant rise in clerical representation is observed. The percentage of clerical representatives increased minimally from 12,77%, that is 35 out of 290 representatives in 2000, to 14,82%, or 43 out of 290 representatives.[842]

Table 1					
Majles	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996
Clergy	49,5	55	30	25	19
Merchant Origin	26,6	19,7	10,1	17,3	16,6
Neither	23,9	25,3	59,9	57,7	64,4

A similar evolution is noticeable for posts as Speaker of Parliament or President of the Republic. In 2005, Ahmadinejad became the first non-cleric since Bani Sadr to reach the highest secular position within the Islamic Republic and in the 2009 presidential campaign neither of the two main contenders, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Mir Hussein Mousavi, were clerics. The position of Speaker of Parliament had since the Revolution always been occupied by a cleric. Yet in 2004, and notwithstanding the "conservative backlash", the position went to Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adal and in 2008 after the eight parliamentary election to Ali Larijani. Neither of both were clerics.

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[842] Figures from Majles-e Showravi-ye Eslami, *Esami-e Nemaiandegan-e Majles-e Showravi-e Eslami,* Doreye Shishom, Sal-e chaharom, Tehran, Edareye Ravabet-e Omumi va Omu-e Ejtemahi, 1382; *Moarefi Nemaiandegan Majles-e Showravi-e Eslami: Az Aqaz-e Enqelab-e Eslami ta Paian-e Doreye Panjom Qavaningozari,* Tehran, Edareye Kol-e Farhangi, 1378, as systemized by A. AZGHANDI, *Dar Omad bar Jameh-e Shenasi-e Siasi-e Iran,* Tehran, Ghoomes Publishing, 1385, pp.169-173 & *Esami-e Montakhabin-e Doreye Hashtom Majles-e Showravi-e Eslami,* 1387, www.majles.ir See also R. ZIMMT, "Has the Status of Iranian Clerics Been Eroded", *Iran Pulse,* American Friends of Tel Aviv University, September 22, 2008, www.aftau.org

Graph.1 Clerical & Merchant
Representation from the 1° to the 5° Majles

Legend: Neither, Merchant Origin, Clergy

X-axis: 1980 1984 1988 1992 1996
Y-axis: 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Graph.2 Clerical Representation in the
Majles between Khatami and Ahmadinejad

Legend: Rest, Clergy

X-axis: 2000 2004 2008
Y-axis: 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
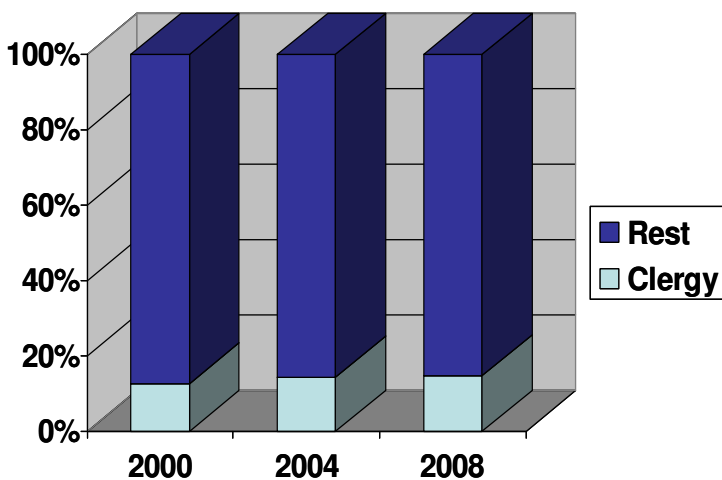
5.1.2. The Bazaar

Even though one should take into account the fact that the concept of "merchant" is slightly wider than "bazaari", Table 1 and Graphic 1 illustrate how the decrease in representation of the bazaar is less evident or at least less spectacular than that of the clergy. The diminishing importance of the traditional right faction, to which I will return hereunder, might be considered an additional indicator of such diminishing importance. This however does not suffice.

Considering that the bazaar was one of the major concentrations of private political and economic power under the Pahlavi-regime and one of the driving forces behind the 1979 Revolution. It was to be expected that it would durably influence political action in the Islamic Republic. To a certain level this has been the case, but the bazaar did not escape the drive for state development. When visiting the bazaar during his research for his 2007 book, Arang Keshavarzian was confronted with the remark: "*This bazaar doesn't need any analysis. It doesn't even exist any more; it's dead*".[843] Azam Khatam offers some demographic figures that exemplify one side of this sentence. Between 1359 (1980) and 1375 (1996) the population of the twelfth district of Tehran declined from 301,701 to 189,625 individuals. Over the same period housing units also declined, although for obvious reasons less spectacularly, from 43,453 to 39,245 units.[844]

During the revolution some of the leftist tendencies had threatened the *bazaar*. Not few *bazaaris* were executed immediately after the revolution.[845] Nonetheless according to Keshavarzian the *bazaar* "*exhibited loyalty to the Imam and the revolutionary cause by initially disbanding their independent organizations and joining the Islamic Republican Party. They were rewarded handsomely for their vigilance and*

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[843] A. KESHAVARZIAN, *Bazaar and State in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007, p.2

[844] A. KHATAM, "Bazaar and the City Center", *Goftogu,* No.41, Bahman 1383, pp.127-141 (129) [In Persian]

[845] M. PARSA, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution,* New Brunswick, Rutgers, 1989, pp.281-282

fidelity with positions in government ministries, the newly formed foundations (bonyads, and the Chamber of Commerce – they became part of the new ruling elite."[846] The revolution and the new order hence opened, in the eyes of the bazaaris, the boulevard to power to them. However, by accepting this inclusion, they also signed the beginning of their demise as an independent powerful socio-economic group.

Rather quickly indeed, favoritism, corruption and nepotism illustrated how these *bazaaris* absorbed by the state system started to look after their own needs rather than in the collective needs of the *bazaar.[847]* Although Keshavarzian argues that the *bazaar* does not recognize these new state functionaries as members of the bazaar, by dismissing them as "illiterate *meyduni*s"[848], links with the bazaar seems undeniable, if not with the high bazaar bourgeoisie, undeniably of the lower levels of the *bazaar*. Lower levels to whom the state now offered effective social promotion, with for example Mohsen Rafiqdust and Mohzen Rezai becoming Commander-in-Chief of the *Sepah* and the former later head of the *Bonyad-e Mostazafan*.[849] The *Bonyad*-system did come with a price however: it created a new large socio-economic sector that largely escaped public scrutiny.[850] Suzanne Maloney has also argued that these para-governmental foundations actually undermine the government's power to implement certain policies.[851] There is more than some truth in that argument, since the *bonyad*s are considered "public" entities rather than "private", as was the case of the *bazaar*, the demand for public accountability sounds more convincing in the case of the former. Hence, if *bonyad*s compare poorly to accountable state institutions, they compare rather favorably to the accountability of the traditional *bazaar*.

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[846] A. KESHAVARZIAN, *Bazaar and State in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007, p.102

[847] A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic Policy in Iran,* London, Zed Books, 1990, p.250

[848] M. NAFICY, *Klerus, Basar und die iranische Revolution,* Hamburg, Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1993, Mitteilungen 45, pp.37-43

[849] A. KESHAVARZIAN, *Bazaar and State in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007, p.102

[850] A.A. SAEIDI, "The Accountability of Para-Governmental Organizations (*bonyads*): The Case of Iranian Foundations", *Iranian Studies*, Vol.37, No.3, September 2004, pp.479-498

[851] S. MALONEY, "Parastatal Foundations and Challenges For Iranian Development", *Goftogu*, No.39, Esfand 1382, pp.7-38 [In Persian]

Other than political, mainly economic circumstances also altered the bazaar's traditional structure. Threatened by falling purchasing power, international sanctions, nationalizations and other economic adversities, many decided either to abandon the bazaar, sometimes to leave Iran altogether, or decided to invest in real estate or other supposedly more certain commodities.[852] Unemployment and lack of job opportunities in more traditional sectors like industry, made many *mostazafan* turn to the bazaar for jobs.[853] The *bazaar* became hence somewhat dislocated, at the very same time a new market (the black market emerged) new people entered the bazaar while familiar traders left.[854] Moreover the nationalization of foreign trade undermined one of the traditional sections of the bazaar's activities, sanctioning an ever greater role of the state at its expense.[855] The increasing role of the state in *bazaari* activities became even more obvious when export was regulated and a licensing system, favoring government linked associations of different sorts, was introduced. The Islamic Republic was succeeding where the Shah had failed. A symbolic shift was the newly established control on the Chamber of Guilds and the government controlled Islamic associations of the *bazaar*. [856] But the *bazaar*'s troubles did not end here, the rise of a strong black market for forbidden or rationed commodities also challenged the *bazaar*'s role.[857] The extension of the *bazaar*'s activities to the black market, necessary

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[852] A. KESHAVARZIAN, *Bazaar and State in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007, p.103-104

[853] On the difficulties of pre-revolutionary industrial development in Iran see M. KARSHENAS, *Oil, state and industrialization in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1990

[854] A. KESHAVARZIAN, *Bazaar and State in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007, p.105-106

[855] A. ASHRAF, "Bazaar and Mosque in Iran's Revolution", *MERIP Reports*, March-April 1983, p.17

[856] A. RASHIDI, "De-Privatisation Process of the Iranian Economy after the Revolution of 1979", *in* T.COVILLE (ed.), The Economy of Islamic Iran: Between State and Market, Tehran, IFRI, 1994, pp.37-67 (47)

[857] On the extent of the black market in Iran see A. ARAB MAZAR YAZDI, *Eqtesad-e Siah dar Iran,* Tehran, Moasese Tahqiqat- va Towse'e Olum-e Ensani, 1384, pp.173-216 & F. KHALATBARI, "Iran: A Unique Underground Economy", *in* T. COVILLE (ed.), The Economy of Islamic Iran: Between State and Market, Tehran, IFRI, 1994, pp.113-138

not be cut out from such a major economic sector, and the secrecy necessarily accompanying the activities of smuggling and illegal trading, undermined many of the personal contacts and interpersonal trust, both also a consequence of the renewal of "bazaar personnel".[858] In other words, the "alternative network of sociopolitical relations and communication"[859] which classically characterized the bazaar, was undermined by a republic that appeared to be "conservative". Such an accomplishment was a consequence of a careful and balanced policy. On the one hand the bazaaris were offered incentives to find socio-political and socio-economic resources outside the bazaar, on the other hand the role of the bazaar was revaluated at certain special occasions, like religious holidays, to make it seem as if it was still at the center of political and economic action as before.[860]

Nonetheless, although cohesion has diminished, three decades of Islamic Republic could not undermine its capability of collective action completely. President Ahmadinejad was confronted with it in September 2008, when he tried to impose a tax on added value. First the bazaar of Isfahan closed down,[861] followed by the bazaars of Tabriz and Mashhad and finally even parts of the Tehrani bazaar went on strike and this notwithstanding the calls of the government-related Islamic Organization of the Bazaar to reopen the shops. The government ended up withdrawing its proposal. A clear demonstration not only of the bazaar's capability of collective action, but also of the, albeit rapidly diminishing, power and influence it still holds in contemporary Iran.

Considering the above, and especially its relative unity of action, characterizing the bazaar as a social unit and arguably a corporation seems hardly an exaggeration. Saying it was rather successfully

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[858] A. KESHAVARZIAN, *Bazaar and State in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007, p.109

[859] S. MOBASSER, "Le Bazar: Un acteur principal dans le réseau alternative de relations et de communications sociales et politiques en Iran" in S. VANER, *Modernisation autoritaire en Turquie et en Iran,* Paris, L'Harmattan, 1991, pp.131-150

[860] J.-P.DIGARD, B. HOURCADE & Y. RICHARD, *L'Iran au XXe Siècle,* Paris, Fayard, 2007, p.330-331

[861] X., "Bazare Esfahan dar ruze panjome tahtili", *Kargozaaran,* Wednesday 17 Mehr 1387

incorporated in state structure even less. In as far as the *bazaar* still exists it is no longer a real competitor to the state nor the unique social base of the regime, "*but rather a group collaborating with the regime.*"[862]

5.1.3. Some Indications of Advances in Infrastructural Power since 1979

On a state level, there are remarkable continuities between pre- and post-revolutionary Iran. Even though revolutionary leaders officially despised bureaucracy, one can not go without noticing the continuing growth of the state.[863] From 145 government employees per 1000 households in 1972, state bureaucracy grew to 211 employees for the same number of households. Over 70,000 of government employees were employed by newly established revolutionary organizations and associations.[864]

Some examples illustrate how the state's infrastructural power increased exponentially. The Construction Jehad was responsible for over 37,000 ideology classes and 28,000 classes for teaching Arabic in rural areas. The same organization was in charge of the construction of 30,000 km roads; 12,000 bridges, electricity for over 5,000 and water for over 6,000 villages; not to mention 67,000 medical groups sent to villages by March 1985.[865]

As a consequence of state expansion, between 1970 and 2000 child mortality decreased from 122 to 28.6 per thousand. The figure for children under 5 years of age decreased from 191 to 35.6 per thousand.

[862] A. ASHRAF, "There is a feeling that the regime owes something to the people", *MERIP Reports*, Vol.19, No.1, January-February 1989, pp.13-25 (13)
[863] H. KUKLAN, "The Administrative System in the Islamic Republic of Iran: New Trends and Directions", *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol.47, No.3, 1981, pp.218-224 (220)
[864] S.A. ARJOMAND, *The Turban for the Crown*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 1988, p.173-174
[865] S.A. ARJOMAND, *The Turban for the Crown*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 1988, p.173-174

[866] A birth-control program caused the average number of children of an Iranian woman to decrease from 6.2 in 1986 to 2.1 today.[867] Alphabetization programs increased the degree of alphabetization for boys from 59% in 1976 to 81% in 1996 and for girls during the same period from 35% to 74,5%.[868] This is clearly higher than regional average. Today the Iranian youth between 15 and 25 years old is only 2.4% is illiterate, while the regional average is of 20.1%. This also illustrates a noteworthy improvement since 1991 when still 13% of the youth population was illiterate.[869] While Iran had, in 1996, less than one teacher for every 30 students, the number was of 1 teacher for 27.1 students in 1998[870] and to one teacher for every 19 students in primary education in 2006. [871]

Ten years after the revolution the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education[872] announced not without pride that Iran now possessed over 100 institutions for higher education of which 30 universities, opposing this figure with the only 16 pre-revolutionary universities.[873] Even though the part of education in the Iranian GNP declined from

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[866] UNICEF, *En Bref : Iran (République islamique d'Iran)*, accessed on 3 June 2008, http://www.unicef.org/french/infobycountry/iran.html

[867] Economic dismal was obviously helpful to government efforts to promote birth-control. H. AMIRAHMADI, "Iran's Development: Evaluation and Challenges", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 1, March 1996, pp. 123-147 (128)

[868] T. COVILLE, *Iran, La révolution invisible*, Paris, La Découverte, 2007, pp.130-132

[869] UNESCO Institute For Statistics, "Education in the Islamic Republic of Iran", *UIS Statistics in Brief*, 2008, http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=3640

[870] UNESCO, EFA 2000 Assessment, "Country Report : Iran", Part II, Analytic Section, , *UNESCO, World Education Forum*, http://www.unesco.org/education/wef/countryreports/iran/rapport_2_2.html , last accessed 4 July 2008,

[871] UNESCO Institute For Statistics, "Education in the Islamic Republic of Iran", *UIS Statistics in Brief*, 2008, http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=3640

[872] Now replaced by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology

[873] The Higher Education Advisory of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Canada, "Education System in Iran", *Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, Ottawa, Canada

2.7% in 1990 to 2% in 1995, it increased once again after 1996 to reach 2.6% in 1997.[874] The quantitative expansion of higher education became clear in the increase in university students from 167,971 in 1986 to 1.5 million in 2001.[875] In combination with the generalization of non-State universities (*Azad*), the debate on abolishing the "*konkour*" (the generalized entrance exam to university)[876] that blocked many high school graduates from pursuing the studies of their choice[877], and the law passed to that purpose in 2007[878] should reinforce this tendency.[879] But to guarantee that the means of an increase of infrastructural power, that is education, would also benefit real state power, and hence "to ensure the loyalty of professionals, technocrats, and bureaucrats, 40 percent of university slots were set aside for families of martyrs, Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards) and basij (war veterans and volunteer militia members). Most of these students came from lower class backgrounds and lacked the criteria conventionally required by highly competitive university entrance examinations."[880]

This massive increase of infrastructural power concisely illustrates how the Islamic Revolution succeeded in perfecting a process initiated one

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[874] UNESCO, EFA 2000 Assessment, "Country Report : Iran", Part II, Analytic Section, , *UNESCO, World Education Forum*,
http://www.unesco.org/education/wef/countryreports/iran/rapport_2_2.html, last accessed 4 July 2008
[875] T. COVILLE, *Iran, La révolution invisible*, Paris, La Découverte, 2007, pp.130-132
[876] For a discussion of its evolution see K. SAKURAI, "University Entrance Examination and the Making of an Islamic Society in Iran: A Study of the Post-Revolutionary Approach to 'Konkur'", *Iranian Studies*, Vol.37, No.3, September 2004, pp.385-406
[877] See S. KAMYAB, The University Entrance Exam Crisis in Iran , *BC Edu-Newsletter*, no.51, Spring 2008,
http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/newsletter/Number51/p22_Kamyab.htm
[878] D. SALEH-ISFAHANI, "On the Right Track? Iran Edges toward Education Reform", *The Brookings Institution*, 11 décembre 2007
[879] For more detailed discussions of the evolution of Iranian higher education, see M. BOTENGA, "Réformer l'enseignement supérieur", *La Revue de Téhéran,* September 2008 (Tir-Shahrivar 1387), pp.46-53 & M. FARASATKHAH, M. GHAZI & A. BAZARGAN, "Quality Challenge in Iran's Higher Education: A Historical Review", *Iranian Studies,* Vol.41, No.2, April 2008, pp.115-138
[880] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Political and Social Transformations in Post-Islamist Iran", *Middle East Report*, No. 212, Autumn 1999, pp. 12-16 (13)

hundred years earlier. Obviously the increase in for example state control on education was greatly helped by the incorporation of the clergy in the state.

5.2. *The Shift Towards Popular Sovereignty*

In identifying actors, one would be tempted to start from an analysis based on political parties and see how these interrelate with identified social forces. Yet unfortunately, Iran lacks formal political parties in a traditional liberal-democratic sense.[881] Looking at regime factionalism would be another way of proceeding. Factionalist analyses pretend to offer an answer to "*Who Rules?*" by stating that "this or that faction rules". They analyze how through different tactics and methods this faction ousts another and look at the role of certain particular political figures in factional infighting. Since the research is often done with much attention and care, it generally results in detailed accounts of public statements of certain actors or in press reviews and hence presents a formidable source of information. An information all the more valuable since it is often not self-evident to identify the changing positions of the Iranian elite.[882] For this reason this chapter is hugely indebted to some of the scholarly work on elite factionalism in Iran.

Yet at the same time, many of these analyses offer a vision diametrically opposed to mine. To be sure, two lines of thought underlie most factionalist approaches. A first one is the classic "liberal-

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[881] H. ESFANDIARI, "Is Iran Democratizing? Observations On Election Day", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol11, No.4, October 2000, pp.108-113

[882] Just after the revolution this difficulty was illustrated by the correspondent of the French daily *Le Monde* when mentioning ayatollah Shariatmadari. He was first portrayed as a " liberal" rising with "left-wing Muslims" against the clerical regime (E. ROULEAU, "Durcissement à Téhéran", *Le Monde*, 2-3 December 1979, pp.1&4). Some days later he was described by the same author as a "wholehearted monarchist with conservative tendencies" (E.ROULEAU, "Dans Tabriz, soulevé contre la dictature de Khomeiny", *Le Monde*, 7 December 1979, pp.1&4) , to become only a day later "the leader of the moderates" (E.ROULEAU, "Aggravation des tensions en Iran", *Le Monde*, 8 December 1979, pp.1&3). See also M.F. TOINET, "Quelques semaines de la révolution iranienne", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, April 1980, pp.6-7

pluralist" paradigm. Different groups are observed as struggling for power in a political arena. Not unsurprisingly, many of these analyses use an approach based on decision-making, which as we saw leads rather easily to a conclusion of pluralism. The inequalities between different groups are to different degrees taken for granted rather than explained.[883] By presenting competing factions as "factions of the regime", many of these approaches take a remarkable methodological shortcut. "The regime" is seen as a given, almost neutral, entity offering the framework for factions to compete. A very liberal vision of the regime, even though often instrumentalism is around the corner.

A second line of thought underlying many factional analyses consists in the idea that factionalism weakens and undermines the regime and its cohesiveness. One of the best accounts of factionalism in Iran, Mehdi Moslem's "*Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*" offers an excellent illustration. Comparing Iranian factionalism to similar political infighting after the Russian and Chinese revolutions, Moslem states "*the Iranian case has been different in one important aspect* […] *In contrast to the Russian and Chinese experiences, the ideological differences and bickering among pro-Khomeini forces have progressively increased rather than abating throughout postrevolutionary years.*"[884] Linking factionalism to the political-institutional aspect of the Iranian state, Moslem argues: "*the formation of an Islamic republic and the structural delineation of the three ideological dimensions of the postrevolutionary regime resulted in institutional contradictions and incompatibilities. In fact, if one uses Tilly's definition of a state (differentiation from other organizations in society, autonomy, centralization, and formal coordination of its parts) as a yardstick in Iran, one could argue that a state in its true sense does not exist in the Islamic Republic. Rather, one sees a collection of incoherent power structures that dispense power; enact, arbitrate, and execute rules; and allocate resources and values in*

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[883] A. VAN DEN BERG & T. JANOSKI, "Conflict Theories", *in* T. JANOSKI e.a., *The Handbook of Political Sociology*, New York, Cambridge UP, 2005, pp.72-95 (87)

[884] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.11

society. For the factions, this unique polity becomes a tool for pursuing factional interests clothed in ideological terms." [885]

This vision of factionalism bears resemblance with liberal-pluralist studies. At the same time however, it is not devoid of an instrumentalist vision of the polity either. From the perspective of this study, its major deficiency lies however in the fact that it fails to see the historical dimension of these "*institutional contradictions*". Undeniably, the state emerging from the Islamic revolution was less coherent than Tilly's definition of a modern state would require. Nevertheless as was seen in previous chapters both centralization and infrastructural state power indisputably progressed with the Islamic revolution.

Hence, while I will rely on the material produced by different scholars of the "factionalist school", the debate on factions and factionalism will be placed in a historical framework. Only such a historical framework permits a comparative and balanced view of the contemporary Iranian state. In line with previous chapters, it will be argued that infighting not so much increased (or decreased), as its bases fundamentally changed. By analyzing the evolution over time of autonomous power bases, understood as power concentrations outside the state, of factions, this chapter will illustrate how the former progressively eroded and were replaced by other resources. In essence if the revolution *per se* caused a transformation from proto-societal corporatism to state corporatism, the post-revolutionary dynamics will provoke a gradual erosion of corporatism.

Such an evolution will also be manifest in the shift in the type of legitimacy. In the previous chapter I underlined how the fundamental criterion of distinction between the state democratic pillar and the parallel pillar was that the former relied on civil or popular legitimacy while the latter was based on numinous or religious legitimacy.

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[885] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.42

The analysis of the dynamics of post-revolutionary Iran will follow the lines of three chronological decades. The first decade (1979-1989) can roughly be said to encompass the events from the election of the first Majles to the death of Khomeini and the election of the third Majles. Hence, a part from the guardianship of Khomeini it includes two terms in office of President Khamenei, of Prime Minister Mousavi and of the Majles. The second post-revolutionary decade (1989-1997) can be considered to cover the period from the death of Khomeini to the first election of Khatami, more or less coincided with the presidency of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani from 1989 to 1997, while including two parliamentary elections (1992 and 1996). The third and last post-revolutionary decade, roughly comprises the two terms in office of president Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005), the Majles elections of 2000 and 2004, the first term in office of president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the 2009 presidential elections.

Different authors underline how adjectives currently and commonly used to define different factions of the Iranian regime are misleading. Indeed what meaning can adjectives as "moderate" or "radical" have when used in an abstract way? The same is true for descriptive terms such as "reformers", "conservatives", "pragmatists", "hard-liners" and even for the very classical "left-wing" or "right-wing".[886] The trap of defining anti-Western politicians as radicals and pro-capitalist deputies as moderates is an easy one to fall victim to. In articles published between the end of 1994 and the first half of 1995 in the magazine "Asr-e Ma" (Our Times) Behzad Nabavi[887], extensively quoted by Moslem,[888]

[886] See for example. M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, pp.90-91 & S. SIAVOSHI, "Factionalism and Iranian Politics: The Post-Khomeini Experience", *Iranian Studies,* No.3-4, Vol.25, Summer-Fall 1992, pp.27-49 (27-28)

[887] Behzad Nabavi is the leader and representative of the Organization of the Mujahedin of the Islamic Revolution, which was part of the Second of Khordad Movement that brought reformist president Khatami, of who he became an advisor, to power in 1997. In the past the organization has been characterized by what could be called typical Islamic leftist points of view: anti-Western in the domain of foreign policy and a state-led economy.

[888] See M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, pp.92-94 and the references to the different relevant issues of *Asr-e Ma* in notes 43 and 44

divided Iranian factions in *grosso modo* four groups: the traditional right, the modern right, the left and the new left. An adapted version of this classification will be used hereunder.

5.2.1. The First Revolutionary Decade

5.2.1.1. The Forces Present

After the revolution one could distinguish *grosso modo* between three political tendencies. In essence appeared an Islamic alternative, incarnated by Khomeini and the IRP, a Marxist one, incarnated by different organizations as the Feda'i-e Khalq and the Hezb-e Tudeh and a liberal one, incarnated by Sanjabi and Bazargan of the Freedom Movement (and the National Front). The Mujahedin-e Khalq organization held the middle between the Islamic and Marxist alternative, but while it was organizationally distinct from both, its tactics copied the guerrilla activities of the Feda'i. As mentioned before the only of these three alternatives that succeeded in constructing a up-down pillar was the Islamic group, even though disagreements among them were probably as important as those haunting Marxist movements and a lot bigger than those found within liberal parties. The Islamic Republican Party was founded as some kind of a logical consequence of the different clerical committees founded to undermine the influence Marxists and Liberals had on society.[889] With all major clerical figures assembled in the IRP, "*non-IRP supported parties and organizations became synonymous with non-clerically approved parties.*"[890]

In two articles published in the reformist daily *Etemaad*, Reza Alijani develops how according to him contemporary factionalism on the right

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[889] A.A. HASHEMI RAFSANJANI, *Dorane Mobareze* [Years of Struggle], Tehran, Nashre Mo'aref Enqelab, 1386, p.320

[890] A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic Policy in Iran,* London, Zed Books, 1990,p.172

can be traced back to the Islamic Republican Party. [891] Alijani is linked to what are today called the "reformists", the "moderates", but would two decades ago probably have been defined as a "radicals. A member of the pro-Khatami coalition, Alijani was the director of "Iran-e Farda" (Iran Tomorrow) until this magazine was shut down by conservatives in the backlash after the 2000 parliamentary elections. He subsequently spent time in prison for his defense of human rights. He was arrested once more after the riots following the 2009 elections.

Although the IRP started incarnating the clerically-sanctioned party, this should not obscure contradictions within it.

According to Alijani, within the IRP three pivotal axes or pivots were present. The first one was the axis of the traditional right and its associates. This axis had become central during the revolution and just after the revolution. A predictable consequence, according to Alijani, because their ideas, views of politics and class-bases this wing had deeper roots than the other pivots. One of the more famous parts of this classic right axis became the *Motalefe*, mentioned earlier.[892] Ayatollah Motahhari, a cleric that developed the state vision of Iran's contemporary regime[893], was one of the leaders of this underground coalition. This group makes up the traditional right in Behzad Nabavi's classification. What became Khamene'i's faction, is composed of those that, rather unsurprisingly, favor a traditional reading of Islamic law, a market-oriented economy in which Iran would have a role of trade and distribution, compatible with the interests and traditional activities of the bazaar, not those of an industrial power. For the same reasons it opposes modern forms of social security, taxation and industrialization.

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[891] K. MEHREGAN, "Rishe haye daruni bohran dar jenahe rast", *Etemaad*, 4 Tir 1387 & K. MEHREGAN, "Raste Efrati be Saie miravad", *Etemaad*, 5 Tir 1387

[892] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.54

[893] M. DAVARI, *The Political Thought of Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari*, Oxon, RoutledgeCurzon, 2005 & V. MARTIN, *Creating an Islamic State*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2003

The second pivotal axis was formed by the so-called technocrats, a group that flourished since the revolution, but was especially active in Islamic associations abroad before it. It was ayatollah Beheshti that incorporated them into the IRP, Alijani asserts "*maybe people like Mister Velayati can be included in this category*". Ali-Akbar Velayati would be Minister of Foreign Affairs for an extended period both under Prime Minister Mousavi and President Rafsanjani, yet in the Mousavi period Velayati was, as we will see, considered more of a conservative than a technocrat. Hojjat-ol eslam Rafsanjani was to become the most famous member of this faction.

The third pivotal axis Alijani observes is formed by what he calls the "infantry" (*piade nezam*) of the IRP. This axis, attracting especially the so-called *mostazafan* was in reality the most outer axis, that is the farthest away from decision- and policy-making (*siasatgozari*). At the same time however this axis was the youngest one and hence the most active at universities and in revolutionary institutions or foundations (*nehad-ha*) in which one could include important sections as the Hezbollah, the Sepah or the Basij. Both Nabavi as Alijani describe it as part of the so-called Islamic, in essence non-Marxist, Left. To a different degree both also acknowledge how it recently became part of the far right.

Moslem asserts that the Left was traditionally "moderate or 'liberal' regarding sociocultural policies".[894] This implies a very limited vision of the Left, excluding for example the *mostazafan,* an important part of the Left's base. To categorize the Islamic Left a comparison with Third World liberation tendencies seems more adequate. A strong role for the state in the economy and development of the country is combined with nationalist or anti-imperialist mobilization. At the same time people as Mir-Hussein Mousavi always underlined the ideological and philosophical foundations of the economy. Mousavi once famously responded to his counselors who showed him economic statistics that

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[894] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.91

rather than paying so much attention to numbers: "*it would be better to go quickly towards the books of (poets) Molavi, Hafez, and..*"[895]

Alijani does in a first phase not consider the Left, yet he does explains how (part of) what was than the infantry was identified as the Islamic Left. The IRP "infantry" did indeed incarnate part of the social basis of the Islamic Left. The interesting part is that if one compares these three axes of the IRP to the different social entities or groups I identified earlier that would determine the post-revolutionary order, one sees that these can rather easily be integrated in this scheme. Landlords, bazaaris just as an important part of the clergy formed the social basis of the traditional right. The *mostazafan* formed the infantry. Even though it is less self-evident to see what social group formed the technocrats at that time, their existence can be traced back to the policies of the Shah.[896] If one equals these technocrats to what would become known as "the modern right", one can *a priori* consider that landlords or bazaaris that through the Shah's reforms became involved in the productive section of the economy formed an important part of it.[897]

The IRP was made up of different social groups, that coincided more or less with the political tendencies present in the IRP.

As mentioned the clergy and the bazaar found themselves at the very center of the IRP's decisional apparatus. Both bazaaris, as those clerics linked to them, favored a free-market economy, in which the Iranian economy would remain dependent on import of foreign goods, that is not implying national industrialization. This would permit bazaaris to maintain their prominence in the role of the economy, which was due to their control of the distribution channels of imported goods. An important part of the clergy agreed to such an economic vision, not

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[895] X., "Eqtesad-e siasi-e Mir Hussein Mousavi", *Radio Farda,* 18 Farvardin 1388
[896] R.E. LOONEY, *Economic Origins of the Iranian Revolution,* New York, Pergamon Press, 1982, p.261
[897] It was mentioned in the previous chapters how the Shah's reforms led parts of the landlords to become factory shareholders and leave the countryside. The same was true for certain bazaaris, that successfully left the traditional bazaar and became involved either in the modern shopping malls, or in the productive section of the economy.

only because of their socio-economic background and links to the bazaar, but also because of the Islamic pro-market vision on economic organization.[898] More or less on the same side could be found the traditional landlords that had not lost their power over the countryside. This essentially conservative group formed the vertebral column of the traditional right.

Mehdi Moslem calls the *Jame'eye Rouhaniyat-e Mobarez* (JRM, Society of Combatant Clergy) the "*backbone of the conservatives*".[899] More importantly however the JRM formed not only a link with the clergy in Qom, a link which was also guaranteed by the above mentioned Society of Seminars Teachers, but also an important way to pull clerics into a political organization. It hence served a double function, on the one hand it linked the political side of the regime to the religious part of it; on the other it allowed the regime to use the clergy for the transmittal of its message. The fact that this and not conservatism was the essence of the JRM is best illustrated by the presence in it of people as Mehdi Karrubi, who was then a "radical" and would later become a "reformist", and Hadi Ghaffari, a "radical" and leader of the *Hezbollah* militias.[900] In such a way the JRM hence partially doubled the function of the IRP. Something that became especially clear during the elections for the second Majles in 1984 when 25 out of 30 candidates of the list of the JRM were a copy conform of the IRP's candidates' list.[901] Part of the JRM would split of around the same time the IRP was dissolved officially to form the *Majma'e Rouhaniyioun-e Mobarez* (MRM, Association of Combatant Clerics) under the leadership of Mehdi Karroubi. Other prominent members were hojjat-ol eslam Mohammad

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[898] See an interesting analysis of this topic in M. RODINSON, *Islam et capitalisme,* Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1966 & *Marxisme et Monde musulman,* Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1972

[899] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.50

[900] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.50-51 & B. BAKTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran,* Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1996, p.111-112

[901] B. BAKTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran,* Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1996, p.112

Mousavi Khoiniha, Ali Akbar Mohtasami, Mohammad Khatami and Asadollah Bayat.[902]

The MRM brings us to what Alijani calls the "infantry" of the IRP. Rather than calling these people "radicals" we might refer to them as *maktabi*s, a name assumed by the parliamentary group representing their interests and meaning "doctrinals" or "ideologicals", or simply as the Islamic Left. The term Islamic left is justified by positions the wing held on revolutionizing state organization and a command economy. Admittedly however such a qualification is reductive. This wing will eventually break up in two very different wings: part of it will become the Left or "reformers", another part will form the social basis of the far right, of which Ahmadinejad were to become the indisputed leader.[903] The far right can be defined as a political group, emerging from the *Sepah*, which used populist discourses, often inspired by populist economics and nationalism, to attract especially impoverished masses towards an authoritarian project that all but involves or favors these masses. A clear example will be the struggle for a new labor law under Ahmadinejad's presidency. The far right, pretending to defend the Iranian "people" and "*mostazafan*", will try to undermine the, already rather limited, rights of the Iranian workers. At the same time Ahmadinejad will use a nationalist discourse to legitimize his crackdown on the opposition.[904] The break-up between the far right and the "reformers" will show very consistent with the different background of the components of this group. It was made up of middle-rank clerics, students, *mostazafan* and different militia-men.

Hadi Ghaffari was the "radical" leader of the Hezbollah. In the chapter on the pre-revolutionary landscape of the Iranian polity I mentioned how Islamic foundations, not unlike the 10 December Society of Louis

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[902] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.112

[903] K. MEHREGAN, "Raste Efrati be Saie miravad", *Etemaad*, 5 Tir 1387

[904] X., "Doshman-e Dakheli va Khareji alie Dolat Basij Shodean", *Jam-e Jam*, 5 Mordad 1387, p.1

Bonaparte,[905] succeeded in buying an efficient support for Khomeini.[906] This happened by mobilizing what Khosrokhavar[907] calls the "*plebs*", what Marx would have called the "*lumpen- proletariat*" and what Khomeini called the *mostazafan*. Different names that cover one single reality. In essence "*the history of Khomeinism is the history of the taking control of the disinherited by Hezbollah*".[908] Although the *Hezbollah* was at this stage no formal group, but rather a combination of vigilantes and violent mobs, it was very much a reality.[909] Every Iranian remembers how demonstrations of women and competing parties were attacked by it, how they forcibly made demonstrators change their slogans (generally from leftist socio-economic slogans to more "Islamic" ones). To give but some examples: 18 March 1979 women protesting the Islamic dress code are attacked by Hezbollahis, the same happens two months later to 100.000 demonstrators opposing the closure of the journal Ayandegan, on 22 June 1979 students asking a constitutional assembly rather than an Assembly of Experts. In August Hezbollahis attack another pro-Ayandegan demonstration and when Khomeini orders the closure of the publications of different movements the headquarters of the communist Tudeh party and of the nationalist National Democratic Front are occupied by Hezbollah. When in March 1981 supporters of Bani Sadr stage a rally at the university of Tehran, the *Mujahedin-e Khalq* organization clashes violently with *Hezbollah*.[910]

But it would be wrong to overstate the role of *Hezbollah.* Other organizations, like the *Sepah* and the *Basij* also permitted to enroll the

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[905] K. MARX, *Le 18 Brumaire,* in K. MARX, *Les luttes de classes en France*, Paris, Gallimard, FolioHistoire, 2002, p.244-245

[906] Something leftist intellectuals failed to do, see N. ALAOLMOLKI, "The New Iranian Left", *Middle East Journal,* Vol.41, No.2, Spring 1987, pp.218-233

[907] F. KHOSROKHAVAR, *L'Utopie sacrifiée,* Paris, Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1993, p.164

[908] F. KHOSROKHAVAR, *L'Utopie sacrifiée,* Paris, Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1993, p.154

[909] M.A. DAYEM, "Iran's Hardline Vigilantes and the Prospects for Reform", *Policy Watch #540: Special Forum Report,* The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 12 June 2001, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org

[910] For a more extensive chronological overview: M. BEHROOZ, *Rebels with a cause,* London, I.B.Tauris, 2000, pp.178-184

mostazafan and give them a stake in the Islamic state order. To complete the overview of this section of the IRP one should add radical students and certain intellectuals, inspired by either Navab Safavi or Ali Shariati, as for example the *Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat* (Office for Strengthening of Unity). The link between student activities and *bonyad*s is of some interest since it illustrates the rapid social promotion such activities could offer. A good example is offered by Sadeq Tabataba'i. Tabataba'i started his revolutionary "career" as a militant in student organizations, especially abroad during his period in Germany, where, studying the student protests against the Vietnam war, he developed a clearly anti-imperialist and anti-American view of international relations.[911] Due to his relentless efforts in the organization of Muslim students and his closeness to Khomeini, he would eventually become head of the *Bonyad-e Mostazafan*.

A part from groups as Hezbollah, "maktabis" were also organized in the *Mujahedin-e Enqelabe Eslami[912]*, a coalition of Islamic militia which shared with Marxist guerrillas the conviction that armed struggle was the only solution against the Shah. The groups was lead by among others Behzad Nabavi and Mohamad Salamati, who still play a dominant role in it. Other leaders of the group, like Mohsen Rezai would work themselves up in the *Sepah*.[913]

The background of these leaders illustrates how most of these groups were not dominated by clerics. They found themselves on the side of the traditionalist clerical establishment during the revolution and within the IRP, yet this alliance could and would not last forever. Somewhat in line with Shariati's distrust of the clergy, the *Mujahedin-e Enqelab-e Eslami* sometimes vehemently opposed the clerical approach

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[911] For an overview of his student activities see S. TABATABA'I, *Khaterat-e Siasi-e Ejtemahi: Jonbesh-e Daneshju'i-e Irani*, Jeld-e 3, Tehran, Oruj, 1387

[912] Not to be confused with the Mujahedin-e Khalq

[913] A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic Policy in Iran*, London, Zed Books, 1990, p.175

to politics.[914] Yet at the same time, because of their policies, these groups could truly be considered the infantry of the IRP.[915]

Scholars disagree whether factions were limited to the traditional right on the one hand and the Islamic left on the other. While Moslem and Behrooz see mostly "conservatives" versus "radicals" at this stage,[916] Baktiari and Alijani on the other hand stress the existence of a third faction of technocrats or "fence-sitters".[917] The central figure here is Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. There is no doubt that after the death of Khomeini his faction would develop as what is now generally called the "technocratic faction" incarnated by the *Kargozaaran-e sazandegi* (Servants of Re-Construction), although we prefer Moslem's terminology of the "modern right". This group will propose policies that differ in a significant way from the policies of the traditional right. At first sight the biggest difference between both rights seems cultural. The Modern Right's government favored civil society, while the traditional right preferred traditional clerical networks.[918] The *Kargozaaran* newspaper linked to the Modern Right even questioned the value of traditional Islamic-Iranian clothing as the chador, the incarnation of religiousness for the traditional right.[919]

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[914] B. BAKTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran,* Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1996, p.66-67

[915] A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic Policy in Iran,* London, Zed Books, 1990, p.173

[916] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.50-61 & M. BEHROOZ, "Factionalism in Iran under Khomeini", *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol.27, No.4, October 1991, pp.596-614, With this nuance that Moslem considers the "Rafsanjanites" as gradually emerging (p.48)

[917] K. MEHREGAN, *"Rishe haye daruni bohran dar jenahe rast",* *Etemaad,* 4 Tir 1387; B. BAKTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran,* Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1996, p.67 a.o.

[918] For the meaning of civil society in Iran consider: M. KAMRAVA, "The Civil Society Discourse in Iran", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol.28, No.2, November 2001, pp.165-185

[919] X., "Shahed-e Chadorihaye Hastim ke be khatere Iman Chador Sar Nemikonan", *Kargozaaran,* 25 Mehr 1387

In the field of economics both defend liberalization, the most notable point of divergence will be the drive for industrialization and attraction of foreign investment almost totally absent from the traditional right's economic program. On the one hand Rafsanjani differed (slightly) from many of the traditional right and the bazaaris because of the socio-economic background of his pistache producing family. He himself also became active in property development and Notwithstanding his strong affinity towards the bazaar, he was thus something more than just a "merchant". On the other hand his political maneuvering allowed him access to economic resources of the country and hence capital accumulation.[920] It is in this perspective not without importance to underline that modern capitalists were not totally absent from the Iranian socio-economic landscape just after the revolution. Behdad and Nomani calculate that capitalists made up about 3,5% of the employed urban workforce in 1976 and 41% of the urban workforce was employed in private capitalist relations. In the urban economy hence capitalism seemed the dominant mode of production even though it had to tolerate a strong state sector (34,2% of the urban work force) and petty economic activities (24,8%).[921] Although nationalizations and expropriations will cause a decrease in capitalist production relations after the revolution, many former big private entrepreneurs were faced with a rather simple choice: leave the country or integrate the state apparatus. By choosing the latter option they could continue to guarantee a certain degree of if not control over at least involvement in their now nationalized companies and justifiably hope to control more and more of the economic resources.

If one considers Rafsanjani's attitude towards the different factions during political disputes, "pragmatic" would be a good classification. He sided now with the Islamic left, then again with the traditional right. There are two, equally useful, ways to assess such a behavior. One is to consider it part of the tactics of politics, pragmatism to

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[920] A.M. ANSARI, *Iran, Islam and Democracy,* London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2000, pp.52-54

[921] F. NOMANI & S. BEHDAD, *Class and Labor in Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2006, p.157-158

guarantee personal gain by rising in the system. Another is to consider it the expression of real material interests.

Summarizing, a case can be made that the IRP was a useful alliance between those groups that had made the revolution, destined to deny other groups access to the newly conquered pie. Considering the differences in social and ideological background, it can be said that this was the only glue that kept the different groups of the IRP together under clerical leadership. What made it differ from Marxist and Liberals was that the IRP was a party that succeeded in coalescing the "essential" social groups into one socio-political actor. Marxists were focused mainly on either students, intellectuals or the working class, with the notable exception of the Tudeh that also saw the army as an important objective. Liberals, whose interests did not have to contradict those of the bazaar, opposed directly the *mostazafan* and did not seem to acknowledge any decisive role for the clergy in the new state order. Because of the alliance between different groups the IRP combined manpower with financial and ideological resources. The results of the clash between the IRP and Marxists and Liberals are history. Bazargan's government was paralyzed, groups as the Feda'i were violently defeated and the Tudeh was dismantled towards 1983 and many of its members executed, notwithstanding the party's formal adherence to *velayat-e faqih*.

The heterogeneous nature of the IRP is generally considered as the reason for its ultimate failure. When it was officially dissolved in 1987 it had indeed become the victim of infighting and arguably paralyzed by it. Yet, in our opinion this heterogeneous nature was also the fundamental reason of the IRP's success in eliminating Marxists and Liberals.

5.2.1.2. Policies, Tactics, Results

In the Assembly of Experts elected to design and develop a new Constitution resistance to *velayat-e faqih* was limited. This came as no

surprise after the elections for the Assembly had elected a council of 55 clergymen on a totality of 73 members. Over fifty of the members came directly from the list of the IRP. Shariatmadari's Republican Party of the Islamic People gathered no more than 4 seats, all regionally concentrated in Azerbaijan, while liberal nationalists including Bani Sadr obtained about 10 seats.[922] It did not come as a surprise that most of the controversial articles of the Constitution would be approved with 50 to 60 votes in favor.

The apparent unanimity on *velayat-e faqih* should not be interpreted as an unconditional support for the Khomeinist interpretation of this concept, that still had many opponents even among the clergy. The fundamental question concerned the domination of the clergy in the new state order, of which *velayat-e faqih* was the expression. In essence those that were to make up the IRP basically faced the very simple question: "Do you wish to rule?" The majority of the representatives of the Assembly of Experts would obviously agree.

The actual meaning and correct interpretation of the concept of *velayat-e faqih* remained open for dispute. The unanimity did hence not extend to "How do you wish to rule?". Something that became apparent when the role of the *faqih* was to be determined in practice, rather than in constitutional theory. Shortly before his assassination in April 1979, Mutahhari reportedly declared: "*the Faqih's role in an Islamic country is one of being an ideologue, not a ruler. The people's perception (..) is not that the fuqaha should rule and manage the administration of the state.*"[923] Shariatmadari, quite unsurprisingly considering his peripheral power base, asserted that the clergy and hence the central *faqih* should intervene in politics only "*during emergencies*".[924]

Considering both the opposition between Shariati's and Mutahhari's conception of the state on the one hand and the design of the new

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[922] S. BAKHASH, *The Reign of the Ayatollahs*, London, I.B. Tauris, 1985, p.80-81

[923] M. MONTAZERI, *Piramun-e Enqelab-e Eslami*, Tehran, n.d., pp.85-86 as quoted in M.M. MILANI, *The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution,* Boulder, Westview, 1988, p.267

[924] M.M. MILANI, *The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution,* Boulder, Westview, 1988, p.267

Islamic state and its dual structure on the other, it comes as no surprise that the fundamental question in the debate on the state became the relation and balance between these two pillars of state order, something which would have been impossible under the royal regime, where even the democratic pillar was disfunctional.[925] The debate will be conducted on the basis of the interpretation of what is the true "Islamic" state. It will obviously not be based on theoretical considerations alone, material and political interests will reveal at least as important.

After the first parliamentary elections, many leading members of the traditional right, like Mahdavi-Kani, Nateq-Noori, Bahonar, Beheshti, Velayati, Ahmed Tavakoli and Azari-Qomi, appeared to be members or sympathizers of the Hojjatiya, critical hence of *velayat-e faqih*.[926]

One can not attribute the traditional right's lack of enthusiasm for *velayat-e faqih* to mere ideological or religious convictions. In reality they had understood that the Islamic Left's constant solicitation of Khomeini to intervene in their favor had tilted Khomeini and hence the balance of power towards the Islamic Left.

The Islamic Left knew very well what it was doing. Different reasons pushed it to rely ever more on Khomeini and hence become ever stauncher supporters of *velayat-e faqih*. Three in particular can be mentioned. Firstly, the Islamic Left had been cut out of parallel institutions as the Guardian Council, so influence on the Supreme Leader was of the essence. Secondly, the effectiveness of its social base was dubious, since although workers considered they "made" the revolution[927] and the revolution was officially called that of the

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[925] Compare the very accurate pre-revolutionary description of democracy by Mostafa Rahimi which after an elaborate enumeration of fundamental liberties concludes with: "*but how these things were realized and put into practice is a very different matter*". M. RAHIMI, *Qanun-e Asasi-ye Iran va Osul-e Demokrasi*, Tehran, Sepehr, 1357, p.210

[926] B. BAKTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1996, p.81-82 and M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.59

[927] P. VIEILLE & F. KHOSROKHAVAR, *Le discours populaire de la révolution iranienne*, Paris, éd. Contemporanéité, 1990, Tome 2, p.139-184

"disinherited" their participation was not as massive at it could appear. A sociological study on the origins of the "martyrs of the revolution" and more specifically on the deaths on the Teheran streets between the end of August 1977 and the middle of February 1978, in the middle of revolutionary turmoil that is, counts only 9 disinherited and 96 workers (about 15%) for a total of 646 victims.[928] Thirdly, Khomeini seemed to have taken over at least parts of the discourse of Shariati and his recuperation of leftist slogans, a necessary tactical move to undermine communist influence, was used to Left's advantage.

The traditional right, although it had shown great loyalty to Khomeini, became increasingly worried over the role of the *faqih*. Even though the establishment of the Guardian Council had been a victory for the traditionalists, Khomeini progressively started to undermine its power and authority by overruling the Council and Islam in the name of emergency. The example of the land reform law is mentioned in the section on economic policy. It was a major example of Khomeini "overruling Islam" in name of "public order" and "emergency". After the Speaker of Parliament, Rafsanjani, asked him to intervene, Khomeini confirmed the Majles' right to enact a land reform law. But more importantly he ruled that the Guardian Council could not oppose parliamentary resolutions passed with a majority of two-thirds.[929] This was far from the only example, labor law was another.[930] Asghar Schirazi describes how laws of the *shari'a* were ever more weakened by "secondary contractual conditions", "emergency regulations" and "state ordinances". Towards the end of his life Khomeini bluntly stated that *velayat* was "*the most important of all God's ordinances*" and so-doing put "*the decisions of the state above all other Islamic ordinances, which were thus demoted to derivative status.*"[931] Moreover Khomeini established a new council, the Expediency Council, that would settle disputed

[928] AMRAAII, *Barrasi-ye Moqe'iyyat-i Ijtimai-ye Chohada-ye Inqilab-i Islami*, p.178-179, as quoted in A. BAYAT, *Street Politics, Poor people's movements in Iran*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997, p.39 &176

[929] A. SCHIRAZI, *The Constitution of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1998, p.176-182

[930] A. SCHIRAZI, *The Constitution of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1998, p.215

[931] A. SCHIRAZI, *The Constitution of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1998, p.230

between Islam (the Guardian Council) and the people (the Majles), aside from his successor Khamenei, important *maktabi*s, like Prime Minister Mousavi, Mousavi-Ardabili and Mousavi-Khoiniha, leading force behind the students occupying the US embassy, were elected in it.[932] In the same year 1988 he also frontally attacked Khamenei, his successor and part of the traditional right, who had given a different interpretation to a decree of Khomeini that enlarged the limits government could place on the private sector. Finally Khomeini openly sided with the Islamic Left in the 1988 parliamentary elections by encouraging citizens to vote for candidates defending the *mostazafan* and not for those "*adhering to capitalist Islam*".[933]

Since the most important socio-economic and socio-political groups were present within the IRP, the IRP proved a useful tool for these groups to take over state institutions. The elections for the first Majles, in essence the first post-revolutionary Islamic Majles, were held more or less a year after the revolution's final victory. Out of about 2,500 candidates 97 were elected in the first round, 145 in the second. Of these 131 went to the IRP, represented especially by clerics, bazaaris and technocrats.[934] The clergy fared well indeed: out of 264 representatives 131 were clerics. Almost half (49%) of the first Majles was hence dominated by the clergy.[935] The merchants had not performed badly either: 26,6% of the Majles' representatives came from a merchant family. Most of these had never exercised any post of government or administration before. The second Majles saw similar percentages. Although the percentage of Majles' members originating from merchant circles declined to 19,7% of all representatives, the proportion of clerics increased to 55%.[936]

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[932] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.59

[933] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, pp.73-78

[934] B. BAKTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1996, p.68-69

[935] A. AZGHANDI, *Dar Omad bar Jameh-e Shenasi-e Siasi-e Iran*, Tehran, Ghoomes Publishing, 1385, pp.169-173

[936] *Ibid.*

Even though Khomeini had previously declared the presidency should not be taken up by clerics,[937] hojjat-ol eslam Khamenei ended up dominating the presidential institution until 1989. His reelection on August 16, 1985 was a success for the institutionalization of the regime, which notwithstanding the war succeeded in organizing relatively normal presidential elections, widely covered by live television broadcastings.[938]

During the same period, the post of Prime Minister would be mainly in the hands of Mir Hussein Mousavi, an engineer, yet his two immediate predecessors Mohamed Javad Bahonar and Mahdavi Kani were clerics. The establishment of the first Guardian Council of the Islamic Republic, after the election for the Majles, further favored the clerical establishment, since at least half of the members had to be clerics.

The third parliamentary elections however turned things around, at least on a parliamentary level. Due to the electoral victory of the Islamic Left and the MRM, which had less ties with the bazaar and was as seen not that much clergy-dominated, the number of representatives with a merchant background reached a historic low in third (1988) elections, where they came to constitute a mere 10.1% of the total representatives. The percentage of clerics in the assembly also decreased from 55% to 30% of total representatives.[939]

What is very clearly observed during this first decade is the high degree of reliance of all factions on institutional support. The Islamic Left used its leverage in Parliament and constantly looked for support of the Leader, while the traditional right used especially the Guardian Council to defend its positions and further its interests.

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[937] *Keyhan,* 9 Dey 1357

[938] A.A. HASHEMI RAFSANJANI,*Omid va Delvapasi,* Tehran, Nashr-e Moaref-e Enqelab, 1387, pp.220-222

[939] A. AZGHANDI, *Dar Omad bar Jameh-e Shenasi-e Siasi-e Iran*, Tehran, Ghoomes Publishing, 1385, pp.173

5.2.2. The Second Revolutionary Decade (1989-1997)

5.2.2.1. The Forces Present

The second revolutionary decade inaugurated a new phase in the development of the Islamic Republic.[940] The death of Khomeini saw the emergence of the dual leadership of Rafsanjani and Khamenei. The former as president, the latter as Supreme Leader. Both shared quite some characteristics. Founding members of the IRP, both middle-ranked clerics had played an essential role during the first revolutionary decade where Khamenei had been president, while Rafsanjani occupied the position of Speaker of Parliament. The rise of both men to the leading positions in the Islamic Republic has been analyzed as the "ascendancy of the mercantile bourgeoisie" which allegedly transformed the Islamic Republic into a "mercantile bourgeois republic."[941] In this vision the so-called Rafsanjanites or technocrats used parastatal organizations as "*vehicles by which the bazaar and the broader revolutionary establishment gained access to the economic resources of the country*"[942]

As mentioned when discussing the constitutional-legal order of the new state, the disappearance of Khomeini sanctioned, but not initiated, a shift from religious legitimacy to political legitimacy of the Supreme Leader and hence of the entire system. Often is underlined how the replacement of Montazeri by Khamenei as a replacement for Khomeini illustrated this shift symbolically, since the latter became ayatollah overnight. What is underlined by few scholars however is that the position of the Leader would *de facto* have changed *even* if Montazeri had *not* been shifted aside. In the first place this would have been the

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[940] See also A. EHTESAMI, *After Khomeini, The Iranian Second Republic,* London, Routledge, 1995

[941] A.M. ANSARI, *Iran, Islam and Democracy,* London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2000, pp.52-

[942] *Ibid.*

case because Montazeri himself, in a comprehensive four-volume work on *velayat-e faqih* published as soon as 1988, insisted on the elective nature of the *faqih*.[943] But more importantly, as long as Khomeini filled the position he gave some kind of superior dimension to it. Khomeini was above the people, and above the system. No other individual could possibly have given that same extra dimension to the institution. Very similarly to what some observers considered was going to happen to the Cuban presidency after the resignation of Fidel Castro. As important as his brother Raul might be for the Cuban Republic and/or people, he is not Fidel. Montazeri would not have been Khomeini, Khamene'i certainly is not. This means that in our model the position of the Supreme Leader changes from a position above the system, like Hitler's in our scheme, to a position more within the system, much more like Stalin's in our initial model. Although Stalin's position was more important than other positions in the Soviet system, it still was not as untouchable as Lenin's had been. As I made clear in the first chapter, Stalin could be challenged. This underlines the two different positions of both leaders in their respective system: Stalin as an integral part of it, a *primus inter pares* and Hitler above it.

The ascension of Khamene'i, an exponent of the traditional right, to the position of *faqih* was a blow to the Islamic Left, yet the effect of that blow was somewhat limited because of the decrease in importance of the position. Moreover and notwithstanding his intimate relationship with Khomeini and his 1989-1992 alliance with Supreme Leader Khamenei, president Rafsanjani and the modern right did not appear convinced defenders of *velayat- faqih*.[944] Indeed under Rafsanjani the debate on the nature of *velayat-e faqih* was taken up again and the alternative of *vekalat* or delegation (from *vakil*, lawyer, advocate). This second option would reinforce the democratic character of the position of the *faqih*, against obviously the religious character of the position. *Hamshahri*, a newspaper linked at the time to the modern right,

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[943] S. AKHAVI, "Contending Discourses in Shi'i Law on the Doctrine of *Wilayat al-Faqih*", *Iranian Studies*, Vol.29, No.3-4, Summer-Fall 1996, pp.229-268 (253-259)

[944] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Les Enjeux des élections législatives et présidentielle", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, No.49, Premier Trimestre 1998, pp.31-49 (36)

published a series of articles on the issue, showing an inclination to *vekalat* rather than *velayat*. [945]

Khamene'i was very much aware of his weaknesses and try to compensate for them. On the one hand, to make up for his lack of charisma, Khamene'i formalized and institutionalized a series of procedures and interventions of the Leader.[946] On the other he brought the armed forces under his control, or rather, he kept the armed forces under his control. A prerogative of the presidency, Khamenei had been commander of the armed forces during most of the war. Now that he became the Leader he transferred the command of the armed forces to the office of the leadership.[947]

Rafsanjani and his faction of the Executives of (Re)-Construction (*Kargozaaran-e Sazandegi*) constituted the technocratic or modern right. The modern right, not fully unlike the late Shah, yet in a more independent way, seeks to guarantee Iran's future by developing it into a modern industrialized nation. This also implies integration in the world economic system, yet with a different role for Iran, based more on the models of the Asian tigers or China and Japan. They hence favor for example industrialization and certain level of centralized taxation. Their acceptance of the IMF has thus to be seen in this framework. Rafsanjani gained the presidency in 1989. Easing tensions with the West was a necessity since a "*prerequisite of developing the economy is acquiring industrial inputs (raw materials, intermediate goods, machinery and technology), a significant portion of which have to be imported. Iranian industries are dependent on international markets for about 65 per cent of their inputs*".[948]

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[945] F. ADELKHAH, *Etre moderne en Iran,* Paris, Karthala, 2006, p.147

[946] Compare A. SCHIRAZI, *The Constitution of Iran*, London, I.B.Tauris, 1998 on Khomeini's type of leadership with W. BUCHTA, *Who Rules Iran?*, Washington, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001 on the post-Khomeini rule of the Leader

[947] Vahede Pozhuhesh Maj, *Qanune Asasi Jomhooriye Eslamie Iran*, Tehran, Majmahe Elmi va Farhangi Maj, 1376 & A. GHEISSARI & V. NASR, *Democracy in Iran: history and the quest for liberty*, New York, Oxford UP, 2006, p.110

[948] H. AMIRAHMADI, "Economic Reconstruction of Iran: Costing the War Damage", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 1, January 1990, pp. 26-47 (33)

That the alliance of the traditional and modern right permitted victory of over what had until then been one of the dominant forces of the revolution, the Islamic Left, had different reasons. In essence the end of the war, the dead of Khomeini and the abolishing of the post of Prime Minister all weakened the Left. More importantly however were the global discredit collectivist or statist economic ideas suffered after the fall of the Soviet Union; the dire economic situation of many Iranians; and the urgent need for reconstruction after the war.[949] The long war had also negatively effected revolutionary fervor, a feeling the Islamic Left used to cash in on.

For the former radicals, who had sought and obtained Khomeini's support in their political struggle, the period after his disappearance meant crisis, on an ideological level as well. They had been the staunchest defenders of *velayat-e faqih*, but were now faced with a *faqih* that did not share their basic tenets. Some of them "now gravitated around ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri, who attacked economic reform as the brain-child of the 'satanic' International Monetary Fund."[950] Moreover they were also ousted from the executive, with Rafsanjani taking over the presidency and Mousavi losing his position.

5.2.2.2. Policies, Tactics, Results

When the traditional right – modern right alliance of Khamenei-Rafsanjani took over, the so-called Islamic Left still posed somewhat of a threat to their dominion. By eliminating the post of Prime Minister, a move that had important and unintended institutional consequences, the right-wing coalition successfully eliminated Mousavi from the political scene. On the other hand the Islamic Left still dominated the

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[949] See for example M SAGHAFI, "The Islamic Left and a New Test in Power", *Goftogou*, No.18, Winter 1376, pp.123-138 (130-131) [In Persian]
[950] D. HIRO, *Neighbors, Not Friends, Iraq and Iran after the Gulf Wars*, London, Routledge, 2001, p.199

Majles. Rafsanjani subsequently skillfully used his alliance with the traditional right and the institution of the Guardian Council to bar a considerable number of Islamic Left candidates from the elections. Among these were to be found at least 39 incumbents, like Hadi Ghaffari. The disqualification of three candidates that had been involved with those occupying the US embassy illustrated the seemingly new ways of the Republic.[951] Not unsurprisingly the 1992 parliamentary election saw the Left losing much of its support in the Majles.[952] On a tactical level it is interesting to observe that Rafsanjani did what the Left had done for the 1988 elections. The Left had then relied heavily on the support of the Leader, now the president used institutional support (Guardian Council) to defeat opponents.

Rafsanjani had a personal role in the political and institutional development of Iran. He rationalized quite some administrations that had been split or doubled after the revolution, integrating revolutionary courts in the Judiciary, promoting some of the parastatal organs, the Jehad-e Sazandegi and the Sepah to the rank of full-fetched state institutions. Forces as different as the national police, the gendarmerie and Islamic committees were merged, and the Minister of the Interior was allowed to personally lead all police forces.[953]

The undeniable competition between the *artesh* and the *Sepah* was recognized by Rafsanjani, who became commander-in-chief towards the end of the 1980-1988 war, as a major problem in the development of professional and efficient military structure.[954] The declaration in a 1986 interview with the French weekly *l'Express* by Moshen Rafiqdust, Minister of the *Sepah*, that: "*The mission of the army is the preservation of the territorial integrity of the country. The mission of the Guardians of the Revolution is to protect the Islamic Revolution, which may be from threats*

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[951] F. SARABI, "The Post-Khomeini Era in Iran: The Elections of the Fourth Islamic Majlis", *Middle East Journal*, Vol.48, No.1, pp.89-107 (96-97)

[952] A. AZGHANDI, *Dar Omad bar Jameh-e Shenasi-e Siasi-e Iran*, Tehran, Ghoomes Publishing, 1385, p.194

[953] M.M. MILANI, "Power Shifts in Revolutionary Iran", *Iranian Studies*, Vol.26, No.3-4, Summer-Fall 1993, pp.359-374 (372)

[954] It had undeniably proved to be so during the Iranian war effort.

other than those across its frontiers. In short, the army is not to be involved in the struggle against counter-revolution domestically while the Pasdar are" should not be taken at face value, since in reality the interpretation of "defense of the revolution" had become a rather broad one.[955] In such a way both external threats to the revolution, the Iraqi invasion, as internal threats to it, popular uprisings, have been considered belonging to the domain of the *Sepah*. It is interesting to notice that the Sepah have been notably more trustworthy on the first issue than on the second. A famous example of this were the events of August 1994 a local Sepah commander refused to quell riots, receiving the support of both *artesh* and *Sepah* commanders.[956]

Apart from offering the *Basij* the "*mantle of internal security force*"[957], Rafsanjani thought both problems (lack of control and competing armed forces) could be solved by adopting a single chain of command, which was realized after the death of Khomeini by the abolition of the Ministry for the Revolutionary Guard and the creation of the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics.[958] Rafsanjani wanted to make sure that his rise to political power, would not go without a military equivalent of that power. For this reason, just after he became president, he tried to increase his influence on the *Sepah*. Rafsanjani

Tehran to Shiraz and from Isfahan to Mashhad.[965] Moreover these female candidates diversified their political preference, illustrating the potential of true democratic pluralism.[966] However political development in general was severely criticized by the now modernized left that pretended, not without reason, that Rafsanjani had neglected the development of the political sphere and the protection of constitutional rights and liberties.[967]

Rafsanjani's victory would prove unexpectedly precarious. His alliance with the traditional right proved useful against the Islamic Left, yet the political projects of both factions were all but parallel on key issues. Rafsanjani favored civil society, the traditional right religious predominance; Rafsanjani wanted industrialization and structural adjustment policies, the traditional right opposed such; Rafsanjani permitted socio-cultural opening, the traditional right sacked his Minister of Culture, Khatami; and so on. Rafsanjani's opposition to the bazaar and the traditional right became clear also in the action of his ally Karbastchi, mayor of Tehran at the time. Karbastchi had become extremely poplar for his urbanization projects in the Isfahan region, before he was pulled to Tehran. Considered one of the best mayors of the city, he used his position to undermine the bazaar's role.[968]

This development and relative blooming of civil society under Rafsanjani, showed the former Islamic Left the way out of its internal crisis. One of its exponents, Mohammed Khatami occupied the post of Minister of Culture and was well placed to understand the potential of this emerging force. Since it had lost almost all influence in parallel institutions , the Left now turned to civil society, its valorization and the democratic pillar of the system. It had stressed the importance of parliament already during the discussions on a new constitution, but

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[965] F. ADELKHAH, *Etre moderne en Iran,* Paris, Karthala, 2006, p.138
[966] *Ibid.*
[967] Q. TAVASOLI, "Kamiabiha va Nakamihaye towze'ehye siasi", *Iran-e Farda,* No.37, Mehr 1376, pp.9-12
[968] F. ADELKHAH, "Les Elections legislatives en Iran: La Somme des Parti(e)s n'est pas égale au tout… ", *Les Etudes du CERI,* No.18, July 1996, p.1-35 (5)

these positions now acquired a totally different dimension. MP Ibrahim Asgharzadeh underlined this major shift in the Left's outlook on the state by stating "*next to Islamicity, republicanism is principle pillar of our system.*"[969] The traditional right quickly understood this shift towards republicanism and democratic representation at the expense of the authority of the *faqih* by the Left and a member of the editorial board of *Resalat* immediately tried to stigmatize it by asserting: "*the American brand of Islam is Islam minus velayat-e faqih.*"[970] Journals and magazines of the Modern Left on the other hand started ever more to discuss "democracy" (*mardomsalari* or *demokrasi*) and the "rule of law" (Rechtsstaat, *hakemiat-e qanun*).[971]

After the orchestrated defeat of the Islamic left in the 1992 parliamentary elections, the MRM had some difficulties in finding a political line, it would eventually decline to contend the 1996 parliamentary elections, since success was improbable.[972] However, considering the limited number of candidates the Left presented it did in the end not do too badly.

The traditional right on the contrary fared rather well, using the support of the *Bonyad-e Mostazafan*, under the direction of Mohsen Rafiqdoust, and the *Komitehye Emdad-e Emam* (The Imam's Assistance

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[969] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.163

[970] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.163

[971] See on this topic the issue of *Goftogu*, No.22, Spring 1999 dedicated to reformism which explicitly addresses the question of a parallel between Khatami and Gorbachev and, less explicitly, links the political situation in Iran to democratic transitions in South-America. Particularly Z. MER'AT, "Khatami, Gorbachev: Why One Should Not Fear a Comparison", *Goftogu*, No.22, Spring 1377, pp.17-31 [In Persian] & S. JOUINEAU, "Transition from Dictatorships in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay", *Goftogu*, No.22, Spring 1377, pp.41-67 [In Persian]

[972] S. FAIRBANKS, "Theocracy versus Democracy : Iran Considers Political Parties", in A. MOHAMMADI, *Iran encountering globalization: problems and prospects*, New York, RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, pp.212-227 (217)

Committee) to obtain new supporters.[973] In reality it started using these organizations to "buy" support from those that had previously supported the Islamic Left. Considering the traditional right's dominance in the Guardian Council, the disqualification of candidates and invalidation of Isfahani votes after the election, which touched most the modern right and the Islamic Left, did not come as a surprise. Moreover the traditional right confirmed its nearly monopolistic position in the countryside.[974]

The 1996 elections strengthened the Left's understanding that it had now lost considerable support of revolutionary institutions and the institutionalization of the participation of civil society seemed the only way forward for them to guarantee their continued influence within the political arena of the Islamic Republic. The desperate situation the Left was in during the Rafsanjani years forced it to look for a new resource that could prove useful in the battle for power. Ousted from the executive since 1989, from parliament since 1992, devoid of much influence in other councils where it was present and losing or lost many *Hezbollah*-type organizations to the traditional right, the Left was in more than just a electoral crisis. It had to look for a new electorate, a new ideology (Third-worldism and collectivism being discredited) and a way to gain ground against those forces that had successfully ousted it from power since 1989. Civil society would prove the answer.

Not surprisingly Mehdi Karrubi, ex-Speaker of Parliament and Ata'ollah Mohajerani, ex-Minister of Culture both members of the Islamic Left and Morteza Alviri, of the modern right started defending the official installation of political parties.[975] There reiterated demands for public accountability and transparency directed towards the *bonyad*s also has to be seen in this broader framework of attacks on the

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[973] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Les Enjeux des élections législatives et présidentielle", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, No.49, Premier Trimestre 1998, pp.31-49 (34)

[974] F. ADELKHAH, "Les Elections legislatives en Iran: La Somme des Parti(e)s n'est pas égale au tout… ", *Les Etudes du CERI*, No.18, July 1996, p.1-35 (8-9)

[975] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Les Enjeux des élections législatives et présidentielle", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, No.49, Premier Trimestre 1998, pp.31-49 (41)

parallel, in essence "Islamic-revolutionary", pillar of the regime.[976] It was the Left's luck that these demands turned out to parallel the necessities of the modern right's privatization policies.[977]

Towards the 1996 elections, the *Mujahedin of the Islamic Revolution* under the direction of Behzad Nabavi had been probably the first to succeed in "reforming". Adding to their traditional demands of social equity and the defense of the *mostazafan*, the demands of an increase in republicanism, institutionalization of freedom and liberties and the foundation of rule of law in Iran,[978] they moved away rather clearly from their standpoint under Khomeini which included defense of the *velayat-e faqih*.[979]

Such political positions were no longer in flagrant contradiction with the modern right's ideas. In Tehran the *Mujahedin* shared 6 candidates with the modern right and 6 with the new movement of Reyshahri, ex-Intelligence Minister. Kian-Thiébaut asserts that the latter's movement "*positioned itself between the traditional right, the modern right, and the Islamic left*" since it shared 16 candidates with the first faction, 11 with the second and as mentioned 6 with the third faction.[980] It should however be underlined that Reyshahri was very much intertwined with the security apparatus of the regime and not particularly famous for his democratic vision of society. Something that led some

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[976] A.A. SAEIDI, "The Accountability of Para-Governmental Organizations (*bonyads*): The Case of Iranian Foundations", *Iranian Studies,* Vol.37, No.3, September 2004, pp.479-498 (494-496)

[977] On the questions of the *Bonyad*s and privatization see: S. MALONEY, "The *Bonyads* and Privatization in Iran", *Goftogu,* No.28, Summer 1379, pp. 83-112 [In Persian]

[978] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Les Enjeux des élections législatives et présidentielle", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient,* No.49, Premier Trimestre 1998, pp.31-49 (35)

[979] Evolution described as well in M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002

[980] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Les Enjeux des élections législatives et présidentielle", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient,* No.49, Premier Trimestre 1998, pp.31-49 (38)

theologians, notwithstanding his religious education, to refer to him as "Colonel" Reyshahri.[981]

Even within the *Mujahedin-e Enqelab-e Eslami* not much enthusiasm existed for an alliance with the modern right. There was some kind of evolution visible though. An evolution perhaps best illustrated by articles published in that period by the organization's journal *Asr-e Ma*. First, the magazine had declared that "*an alliance between the left and the modern right was impossible and useless*",[982] yet less than two months later, the organization, answering critical questions on why it started defending Rafsanjani, felt obliged to underline that the real problem of Iran were not the adjustment policies of Rafsanjani, but the people looking to monopolize power.[983]

The ideological shift of the Left and the split between Rafsanjani and the traditional right, the impossibility for Rafsanjani to run for a third term in office, combined with the rising star of Mohammed Khatami would eventually lead to a new constellation within the Iranian polity. The modernized left and the modern right would rally against the traditional right and the parastatal revolutionary organizations it had recovered from the Islamic Left.

The second revolutionary decade hence sees an interesting evolution. The Islamic Left that had until the disappearance of Khomeini relied heavily on institutional support of the parallel pillar (Leader, paramilitary organizations) is forced to look for other, new, support. This support will eventually be found in the emerging civil society. The traditional right, although it still dominated the Guardian Council,

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[981] A. MOHAMMADI, "The Sixth Majles Elections and Prospects for Democracy in Iran", in A. MOHAMMADI, *Iran encountering globalization: problems and prospects*, New York, RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, pp.228-244 (231-232)

[982] "Naqd-e yek Nazargah : Etelaaf teif-e chap ba raste modern na momken ast va na mofid", *Asr-e Ma,* No.35, pp.2,7 as referred to by M. SAGHAFI, "The Islamic Left and a New Test in Power", *Goftogu,* No.18, Winter 1376, pp.123-138 (128) [In Persian]

[983] "*Aham-e mobahes-e akherin jalaseye porsesh o pasokh sazeman*", *Asr-e Ma,* No.49, p.3 as referred to by M. SAGHAFI, "The Islamic Left and a New Test in Power", *Goftogu,* No.18, Winter 1376, pp.123-138 (128) [In Persian]

clearly lost ground to the technocratic faction of Rafsanjani's modern right. It will hence also look for new resources and will find a powerful ally in those *mostazafan* disappointed by the modernization of the former Islamic Left. Some members of the Left will not follow the modernization process. Mir Hussein Mousavi for example will enter a period of "twenty years of silence".

5.2.3. The Third Revolutionary Decade

5.2.3.1. The Forces Present

Khatami's election was certainly both cause and consequence of a new positioning of different factions. What has been characterized as the "split of the two rights",[984] in essence the gradual emerging resistance of the traditional right to the policies of modern right government of Rafsanjani, led the latter to prefer an alliance with the modernized Left and the former to mobilize the so-called *mostazafan* and the organizations linked to them against the Rafsanjani government and the modernized Left. This recuperation of organizations as *Hezbollah* by the traditional right was undoubtedly facilitated by the reforms of the Islamic Left. The Islamic Left had turned towards more socio-cultural openness and the defending of republicanism if not against the *velayat-e faqih* than at least not in support of it. The Islamic Left had become a Modern Left, inspired more by the social-democratic ways than by Third-worldism.

Although the Iranian Thermidor had started with the death of Khomeini, Khatami's election was a novelty for the Islamic Republic.[985] Not that much because, he was not the favorite candidate before the elections, but rather because he drew his support from civil society

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[984] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, Chapter 5

[985] M.C. WELLS, "Thermidor in the Islamic Republic of Iran: The Rise of Muhammad Khatami", British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 26, No. 1, May 1999, pp. 27-39

against institutional and corporatist actors. This shift can not be overemphasized. The process of undermining the Supreme Leader's influence on the polity enabled Khatami to defeat Khamene'i's favorite. Elected with about 70% of the votes cast in an election that saw a degree of participation of over 80%, it was the mobilization of civil society that made the election of Khatami to the presidency in 1997 more than just noteworthy.[986] Arguably Khatami's election and the materialization of a critical civil society illustrated how "*the first essential precondition for the emergence of any form of institutionalized contestation is the consolidation of state power.*"[987]

Pushed to look for new resources the Left had understood the changes in Iranian society and capitalized on it. Iranian society had indeed evolved since 1979: "*There had been significant gains in literacy, women's participation in the economy had increased considerably, and growing urbanization of the population along with significant changes in the rural economy had changed the face of the Iranian population. It was apparent (..) that Iran needed an open political environment to encompass the diversity and complexity of Iranian society.*"[988]

The contrast with his opponent of the traditional right was nicely illustrated when Khatami granted an interview to *Zanan*, a feminist magazine, while Nateq-Nuri declined the invitation. The result was a smiling colorful Khatami on the cover of the magazine and a black-and-white Nateq-Nuri published next to a series of questions the candidate

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[986] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Les Enjeux des élections législatives et présidentielle", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient,* No.49, Premier Trimestre 1998, pp.31-49 (31)
[987] D. RUESCHEMEYER, E.H. STEPHENS & J.D. STEPHENS, *Capitalist Development and Democracy,* Oxford/Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992, p.159
[988] A. GHEISSARI & V. NASR, *Democracy in Iran: history and the quest for liberty,* New York, Oxford UP, 2006, p.129

of the traditional right had refused to answer.[989] In a way Khatami had found a way to construct his own charisma.[990]

The eruption of civil society inexorably weakened politically traditional power centers whose primacy had been undermined socially. This tendency was accentuated in the 2000 parliamentary elections. The lists of Modern Left candidates published by reformist newspapers contributed to a small parliamentary revolution and a victory of the 2nd Khordad Coalition.[991]

Out of 290 elected Majles representatives, only 35 individuals, a bit over 12% of total, were clerics.[992] An enormous contrast with the first Majles. The construction of civil society and the renewed independence of students at universities, both a consequence of the Rafsanjani era, were obviously not the only causes of such process. The regained importance of political and democratic legitimacy since 1989 has already been stressed, the fact that having the support of the Supreme Leader no longer sufficed to gain power was another illustration of it. but other factors were equally favoring the process. Internal divisions between traditional clerics and modernist ones, an inevitable consequence of politicization, played a role, as did the increasing complexity of political affairs, requiring "technocrats" or at the very least expert personnel. Another result of the development of civil society was the transversal tendency of the gradual emergence of political parties.[993]

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[989] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Women and the Making of Civil Society in Post-Islamist Iran", in E. HOOGLUND (ed.), *Twenty Years of the Islamic Revolution,* Syracuse, Syracuse UP, 2002, pp.56-73 (55)

[990] Consider the statements in G. ABDO, "The Fragility of Khatami's Revolution", *The Washington Quarterly,* Vol.23, No.4, Autumn 2000, pp.55-62

[991] S. GHAZI, "Analyse des élections législatives en Iran", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient,* No.60, 4° Trimestre 2000, pp.23-42 (25)

[992] A. AZGHANDI, *Dar Omad bar Jameh-e Shenasi-e Siasi-e Iran*, Tehran, Ghoomes Publishing, 1385, p.173

[993] S.C. FAIRBANKS, "Theocracy Versus Democracy : Iran Considers Political Parties", *The Middle East Journal,* Vol.52, No.1, Winter 1998, pp.17-31 & S. GHAZI, "Analyse des élections législatives en Iran", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient,* No.60, 4° Trimestre 2000, pp.23-42 (25-26)

5.2.3.2. Policies, Tactics and Results

Khatami's policy will unsurprisingly favor those his election had depended on. He asserts Eastern civil society is "fundamentally" different from civil society in the West, where it appeared in some way "against" religion or with the fall of religion from society. According to Khatam, contrary to what was the case in the West, in the East it was religion itself that had called for the involvement of civil society.[994] Notwithstanding such lip service to Islamic peculiarities, he also declared: "*liberal democracy, despite all its shortcomings, is one of the West's greatest achievements, and (..) its basic tenets must be warmly embraced by all modern societies*".[995] *Iran-e Farda* was one of the magazines promoting and debating most actively concepts of civil society, democracy and rule of law.[996]

The development of civil society under Khatami was indisputable. According to a speech in 2003 by Moussavi-Lari, Minister of the Interior, in a few years over 13,000 non-governmental organizations had been created.[997] Khatami also co-opted members of civil society in his cabinet, one of the more mediatic examples was Masumeh Ebtekar, one of the editors of the women's magazine, *Farzaneh*, and who became one of Khatami's vice-presidents.[998] The development of civil society endangered those interests that had been institutionalized since the

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[994] M. KHATAMI, "Emam Khomeini va Hokoumat-e Dini", in M. KHATAMI, *Eslam, Rouhaniat, va enqelab-e Eslami,* Tehran, Tarh-e No, 1379, pp.145-154 (148)

[995] M. MILANI, "Reform and Resistance in the Islamic Republic" in J. ESPOSITO & R.K. RAMAZANI (eds.), *Iran at the Crossroads*, New York, Palgrave, 2001 quoted by J. USMAN, "The Evolution of Iranian Islamism from the Revolution Through the Contemporary Reformers", *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, Vol.35, 2002, pp.1679-1730 (1718)

[996] See for example the issue *Iran-e Farda,* No.39 and No.40, dedicated in great part to the concept of civil society.

[997] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Les femmes et l'oligarchie politico-économique", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, No.79, Troisième trimestre 2005, pp.33-41 (40)

[998] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Women and the Making of Civil Society in Post-Islamist Iran", in E. HOOGLUND, *Twenty Years of the Islamic Revolution,* Syracuse, Syracuse UP, 2002, pp.56-73 (67)

revolution. Azadeh Kian-Thiébaut insists on a *"political-economical oligarchy"* dominated by conservatives and opposing reforms both economically as politically.[999] This is an indisputable fact, but the question is even more basic and profound at the same time. The institutionalization of parallel interests in a double form of state structure had been an inevitable consequence, as has been seen, of the nature of Iranian state formation. The emergence of civil society in this picture had to cause unrest in the pillar that supposed to draw least advantage from it.

One of Khatami's major accomplishments on this level was the holding of regular municipal elections.[1000] For the first time in the history of the Islamic Republic.[1001] One could speculate about the motives behind such a decision, true search for democracy on Khatami's side or rather a rational calculus that the mobilization of civil society at a local level would favor his faction,[1002] yet it was undeniably a step towards further institutionalization of the state. The fact that voting patterns in rural regions even after Khatami's term in office not rarely followed kinship and ethnic ties showed the limits of the dominant role of the state in these regions.[1003]Nevertheless a step towards the installation of such councils has not to be underestimated.

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[999] See for example: A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Iran : l'État islamique entre structures monopolistiques et modèle de l'État social", *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, No.105-106, January 2005, pp.175-198 & A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Les femmes et l'oligarchie politico-économique", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, No.79, Troisième trimestre 2005, pp.33-41

[1000] B. KHOSROZADEH, *Demokratie und Zivilgesellschaft in Okzident und Orient*, Berlin, Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 2003, p.239

[1001] If one does not consider a possible continuity with the Council system emerged just before the victory of the Revolution. M. SAGHAFI, "Establishment of Councils: An Unrealized Miracle", *Goftogu*, No.20, Summer 1377, pp.7-24 [In Persian]

[1002] See for example K. TAJBAKHSH, "De-Centralization and the Establishment of Local Governing Institutions: The Stabilization or the Transformation of the State", *Goftogu*, No.26, Winter 1976, pp.43-68 [In Persian]

[1003] F. SADEGI, "Reversion to Traditional Participation: An Analysis of Elections to the Third Islamic Councils", *Goftogu*, No.49, Mordad 1386, pp.41-60

The development of civil society under Khatami was very partial. It was more social than political.[1004] Khatami encouraged social participation without empowering NGO's politically which ultimately led to their depoliticization and the relative demobilization of civil society permitting Ahmadinejad and the Principalist-coalition to win following elections.[1005]

Another step forward of the Khatami administration was the strengthening of the state's monopoly on organized violence. Vigilantes and other kind of militia groups had flourished just after the revolution and many of them drew their legitimacy from Islam or the absence of the state. To be sure from our viewpoint a difference has to be made between semi-official organizations as *Ansar-e Hezbollah* on one side and informal terror networks of intimidation on the other. As its high-level sponsorship illustrates[1006] *Ansar-e Hezbollah* is an integral part of the system and its activities as such do not undermine the state monopoly of legitimate violence. Indeed, for the activities of the *Ansar-e Hezbollah* to be legitimate it depends on state sanctioning.[1007] A good example is offered by the attack of the *Ansar* on Tehran university in 1999, where on *Khiabun-e Kargar* (*Shomali*) several dozen students protesting were attacked by *Ansar*-militants. If obviously regrettable and condemnable from a "moral" point of view, the action was no counter-example to the state's monopoly of legitimate coercion, rather on the contrary. The *Ansar* militants arrived in government-owned busses and worked in cooperation with the *niruhaye entezami.* [1008] Today one can file a complaint against the *Ansar-e Hezbollah*, and the

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[1004] M. SAGHAFI, "Civil Society : The Beginning and the End", *Goftogu*, No.47, Dey 1385, pp.85-98 [In Persian]

[1005] F. SADEGHI, "Depoliticization of Civil Society: The Experience of Non Governmental Organizations under Khatami", *Goftogu*, No.47, Dey 1385, pp.45-60 [In Persian]

[1006] It is supported by among others the President of the Guardian Council, Ahmad Jannati.

[1007] The Supreme Leader has occasionally summoned them to stop violence at inconvenient times. See M. RUBIN, *Into the Shadows: Radical Vigilantes in Khatami's Iran*, Washington, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001, p.49

[1008] M. RUBIN, *Into the Shadows: Radical Vigilantes in Khatami's Iran*, Washington, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001, p.64

association can do so itself.[1009] The fact that Khatami refused to side with the violent uprisings of the students might illustrate a similar preoccupation with a state monopoly on organized violence, albeit the president was probably more preoccupied by the internal balance of power.[1010]

Khatami also took on existing informal networks, vigilantes that sometimes call themselves "*Hezbollahis*" and sometimes just remain in the shadows. These informal groups, existing informally and escaping sanctioning by the state were responsible for a series of political murders in the Khatami era, well-known reformist activists like Darius Foruhar and his wife, Majid Sharif, Mohamed Mokhtari and Mohamed Jafar Puyandeh.[1011] Khatami's role in forcing the state to intervene and investigate these networks led to the discovery of "rogue elements" within the Ministry of Intelligence. At the same time it was an affirmation of the state's desire not to permit violence outside its defined framework.[1012]

The opposition of the Modern Left and the so-called reformist movement to the parallel structures was also often expressed in criticism of the Guardian Council's role in disqualifying candidates or altering the results of votes.[1013]

The alliance of the Modern Right and Rafsanjani with the now Modern Left permitted the latter to continue much of his policies, especially on the economic level where the Modern Left lacked a coherent alternative. It was no coincidence that many executive responsibilities, like the governorship of the central bank, were given to exponents of

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[1009] X., "Qava'e- Qhazaii'e: Shekayat Iran-e Farda az Mohajoman, Shekayat-e Hezbollah az Iran-e Farda", *Iran-e Farda,* No.37, Mehr 1376, pp.4-5

[1010] G. ABDO, "Iran's Generation of Outsiders", *The Washington Quarterly* , Vol.24, No.4, Autumn 2001, pp. 163–171 (165-166)

[1011] M. RUBIN, *Into the Shadows: Radical Vigilantes in Khatami's Iran,* Washington, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001, p.90-91

[1012] G. ABDO, "From Revolution to Revelations: Khatami's Iran Struggles for Reform", *Middle East Report,* No.211, Summer 1999, pp.7-9 (7)

[1013] X., "Hozine kardan-e bihoudi ta key?", *Iran-e Farda,* No.46, Shahrivar 1377, pp.2-4

the modern right.[1014] Nonetheless, if it favored liberalization, the rise of civil society did not profit Rafsanjani personally. The former president *de facto* failed to be elected to the sixth Majles in the 2000 elections. Only a recount and the declaring void of a number of votes got him elected as the thirtieth and last Tehran representative in the Majles. He refused to take up the position and instead started using his chairmanship of the Expediency Council to further his interests.

If during most of the Rafsanjani years the Islamic Left had been on the defensive, its regaining of power briefly disorientated the traditional right. However very soon after the 2000 elections, the traditionalists regained determination. What has been called "the conservative backlash" since the 2000 parliamentary elections was until 2004 "limited" to the Islamic revolutionary pillar of the regime. After the February 2000 parliamentary elections, the traditional right used the judiciary to close down 17 reformist newspapers.[1015] Notwithstanding resistance from the executive and the state democratic pillar, the Guardian Council succeeded in establishing supervisory offices in the provinces so in vetting candidates it would not have to rely on information gathered by the police and the executive.[1016]

The Judiciary and Ansar-e Hezbollah had a major role in this so-called backlash. Challenged by the emergence of civil society and the loss of the relative monopoly the right had enjoyed throughout the nineties, Khamene'i reacted by trying to reinforce traditionally parallel structures. The *Sepah* received additional funding and benefits and the Leader reaffirmed his grip over other parastatal institutions. The mobilization of these parastatal organizations started under the second term in office of Rafsanjani. But Khamene'i went further. He expelled Azari-Qomi, a former ally, from the Society of Teachers of the Scientific

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[1014] M. SAGHAFI, "The Islamic Left and a New Test in Power", *Goftogu,* No.18, Winter 1376, pp.123-138 (123) [In Persian]

[1015] G. ABDO, "The Fragility of Khatami's Revolution", *The Washington Quarterly,* Vol.23, No.4, Autumn 2000, pp.55-62 (57)

[1016] A.W. SAMII, "Dissent in Iranian Elections: Reasons and Implications, *Middle East Journal,* Vol.58, No.1, Summer 2004, pp.403-423 (409-410)

Seminars of Qom and increased his leverage over the clergy with the establishment of special clerical courts.[1017]

The 2004 parliamentary elections showed the reflection of this tendency of conservative reemergence in the traditional democratic state structure. As had been the case in 1992 this was no coincidence. Disappointment after the near completion of two terms of modernist government on the effective and visible results had eroded much of the modernist coalition's popular support. Moreover the Modern Left had used civil society as a force, yet had started to overlook those that had been the power base of its predecessor, the Islamic Left, the so-called *mostazafan*. Reformists had focused on the "*educated society of students, intellectuals, and artists who were Khatami's principal allies. But throughout those years, civil society had obscured real society – that is, the majority of Iranians, who suffered most from the economic crisis and who were consistently ignored by those in power.*"[1018] If the 1997 presidential election had introduced a new actor into Iranian politics, this actor was civil society, not the people.[1019]

The traditional right caught the opportunity. Through the action of the Guardian Council, it massively disqualified modernist candidates for the 2004 election. Something it had not dared to do in the 2000 election because of the height of popular mobilization.[1020] The disqualification of candidates also reinforced the demobilization of the (modernist)

[1017] A. GHEISSARI & V. NASR, *Democracy in Iran: history and the quest for liberty*, New York, Oxford UP, 2006, p.137

[1018] F. TELLIER, "The Iranian Moment", *Policy Focus #52*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, February 2006, p.27

[1019] Contra R. TAKEYH, "Iran: From Reform To Revolution", *Survival*, Vol.46, No.1, Spring 2004, pp.131-144 (132) When Khatami presented his candidature for the 2009 presidential elections, the conservative journal Kayhan did not forget to underline that he received huge sums from (Westernized) Iranians abroad. X., "Shahed Az Rah Resid!", *Kayhan*, 27 Esfand 1387

[1020] A.R. ABOOTALEBI, "Iran's 2004 Parliamentary Election and the Question of Democracy ", *Iran Analysis Quarterly*, Vol.1, No.3, Winter 2004 (January-March), pp.2-6

electorate, the 2004 elections witnessed a turn-out of 51% nation-wide and 28% in Tehran.[1021]

Morad Saghafi, director of the journal *Goft-e Gou*, declared that the opposition of the right to Khatami as expressed in the rigging of the 2004 parliamentary elections were not so much a *coup d'état* as they were a *coup* against the state. If Tilly states that the fight against bandits is one of the main characterizations of the process of state formation, for Saghafi the rigging of the elections and the use of "coercive means" to make citizens vote, would imply "*the victory of bandits against bureaucrats*".[1022] Unfortunately, the examples he quotes include "television propaganda" and the "demand to keep ballot boxes open a bit longer", are less than convincing. All the less so since he considers that the occupation of Parliament by reformist deputies, not exactly a sign of great respect for the state's institutions and their regular functioning, a way of regaining credibility for the reformist movement after 4 years of compromise with conservatives. In reality the occupation of Parliament by reformist deputies illustrated how the combination of their abandoning of the *mostazafan* and the demobilization of civil society had left them without any support from below.[1023]

The recuperating of part of the popular electorate formerly linked to the Islamic Left, the strengthening of the parallel pillar and the use of parastatal organizations against first the modern right and then the modernized left, did not remain without consequences. All this was done by using not so much the traditional clerical networks, as the mostly non-clerical elements of the former IRP infantry. The Coalition of *Abadgaran* (Constructionists), that won the 2004 parliamentary elections, was an alliance of the traditional right and a considerable

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[1021] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *A History of Modern Iran*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2008, pp.193-194

[1022] M. SAGHAFI, "Les élections législatives en Iran : Fin de l'exception iranienne ?", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, No.79, Troisième trimestre 2005, pp.11-31 (29)

[1023] An observation acknowledged in M. SAGHAFI, "The Reform Nobody Wants Anymore", *ISIM Review*, No.15, Spring 2005, pp.42-43 (43)

part of the former IRP infantry, who in a not so faraway past had supported the Islamic Left. The alliance significantly elected Haddad-Adal as Speaker of Parliament. After Rafsanjani, Nateq-Noori, and Karroubi, Haddad-Adal became the first non-clerical Speaker since the revolution.[1024]

The 2005 presidential election results offered the most visible illustration of the new shift in Iranian politics: the traditional right could no longer do without the former IRP's infantry. It became clear that traditional right and *"the clerical establishment can no longer take for granted the allegiance of their client social strata."*[1025]

Many observers have stressed how Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's electoral victory constituted a victory for the "conservatives", in line with the 2004 election results.[1026] This is however just one part of the picture. Defining it as a conservative backlash could give the erroneous impression that old concentrations of power like the bazaar and the clergy regained momentum in these elections. As Graphic 2 showed such has not been the case. And indeed, the traditional right did not regain momentum. To be sure, the harshest defeat was suffered by the Left, but the modern right and the traditional right fared only slightly better. The modern right got its candidate, Rafsanjani, to the second round of the election, but lost without a chance to Ahmadinejad in that second round. The traditional right, which supported Ahmadinejad in the second round, did not fare much better though, since Ahmadinejad, unlike for example Nateq Noori, was all but "one of them".

Ahmadinejad was neither a cleric, nor directly linked to the bazaar. Rather he had made his way up through the post-revolutionary parallel

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[1024] Although even Karrubi's presidency of the Majles has been interpreted as a sign of transition from despotism to republicanism. B. HOURCADE & N. SCHWALLER, "Iran: entre consensus et rupture", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, No.60, 4° Trimestre 2000, pp.43-63 (43)
[1025] A. ADIB-MOGHADDAM, "The Pluralistic Momentum in Iran and the Future of the Reform Movement", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.27, No.6, 2006, pp. 665-674 (668)
[1026] See for example R. AMELI-TEHRANI, M- ENTESSAR, A. MILANI, B. KALBASI, T. PARSI, H. ZAMGANEH, B. RAJAEE & R. JAHANBEGLOO, "Iran's Conservative Triumph", *Multiple, Open Democracy*, June 2005, pp.1-7

organizations of the Islamic Republic.[1027] The only direct link with the clergy was his mentor ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi.[1028] Unsurprisingly parallel organizations as *Ansar-e Hezbollah* also repeatedly sent messages of affection to that particular ayatollah.[1029] The new president's rise was an indisputable consequence of the importation of liberal recipes in Iran, which had alienated specific social classes from government. These now turned back to the paternalist charity approach of politics, incarnated by foundations and the social policies of a rentier state.[1030] The sections of society that had in the eighties followed Mousavi and the Islamic Left, and had subsequently felt betrayed by the liberal and modernist policies of the Left during the nineties, had now found a new political expression.

In the previously quoted categorization, Behzad Nabavi called these the "New Left". Moslem reconceptualizes them as "Neo-Fundamentalists". The latter shift in terminology is useful, yet unsatisfactory. It is useful for two reasons. First of all because members of that tendency have in recent years started calling themselves *Osulgaran*, which translates as *principalists* or *fundamentalists*. It is also useful because identifying this groups as "New Left" means limiting at some points of view they have in common with the former Islamic Left, being mainly radicalism in foreign policy and a more important role of the state in the economy. Identifying them as on the other hand "Neo-fundamentalists" permits to reflect their ideological inclinations.[1031] Nevertheless, such a qualification is unsatisfactory because it does not show the fundamental differences between the former Islamic Left and

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[1027] R. TAIT, "A Humble Beginning Helped to Form Iran's New Hard Man", *The Guardian,* July 2, 2005

[1028] B. GANJI, *Iranian Strategy: Factionalism and Leadership Politics*, Middle East Series Conflict Studies Research Center, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, March 2007, pp.1-3

[1029] Statements of Member of the Ansar-e Hezbollah of Gorgan published on 25 Tir 1387, http://www.ansarehezbollah.org

[1030] M. MALJOO, "Political Economy of the Rise of Ahmadinejad's Government", *Goftogu,* No.49, Mordad 1386, pp.9-40 [In Persian]

[1031] Based on a mix of Navab Safavi, Morteza Mottahari and Ali Shariati, as underlined by M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.93

this group. Agreeing with Reza Alijani, I have identified this group earlier as the far right. At the time of the IRP no specific social group formed the "New Left" (Nabavi), "the Neo-Fundamentalists" (Moslem), the "Principalists" or the far right. This is not to say that these tendencies were altogether absent, yet they found their political expression in the Islamic Left, which incarnated their socio-political alternative. Ahmadinejad merely illustrated the completion of a process that alienated the Modern Left from the traditional electoral basis of the Islamic Left. Ahmadinejad did indeed wield some comparative advantage over the Modern Left. Through his denunciation of corruption, his social charity programs and economic populism he succeeded in seducing those Iranians, the Modern Left forgot about. Those Iranians whose daily concerns do not include Facebook and feel little for the long-term plans of the Modern Left. If the Modern Left has difficulties to present an economic recovery plan and has arguably not done a great job in satisfying immediate demands during its period in power.

Yet there was more to it. The use the traditional right had made of these groups in order to regain momentum first against Rafsanjani, then against Khatami, had given these groups the thrust and conviction that they could do it themselves. They now felt "politically enabled". The traditional right was to understand rapidly that Ahmadinejad was not just "one of them".

Notwithstanding his conservative outlook, Ahmadinejad's campaign had been characterized by an exemplary absence of Islam. To defend his nuclear stand he appealed to Iranian nationalism.[1032] A sign that nation-building got the upper hand even over those forces that previously were the driving forces behind the exportation of the

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[1032] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "L'élection présidentielle: la République islamique à l'épreuve", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, No.79, Troisième Trimestre 2005, pp.7-10 (9) On the ethnic question and the success of the Iranian state in affirming its territorial integrity see also : T. ATABAKI, "Ethnic Diversity and Territorial Integrity of Iran", *Goftogu*, No.42, Mehr 1384, pp.23-38 [In Persian]

Islamic revolution.[1033] The traditional right was especially shaken by the cabinet the new president proposed. Not only were Mohseni Eje'i at the Intelligence Ministry and Pour-Mohammadi at the Interior the only two clerics among them; more importantly nominees for the foreign, the justice and the agricultural *jehad* ministry came from the ranks of these ministries; the ministries of petroleum, welfare, education and cooperatives were offered to executives the president had relied on as mayor of Tehran or governor of Ardabil; and while the Ministry of Economy was presented to a liberal, Davoud Danesh-Jafari, at least seven other Ministers came directly from the *Sepah* or law enforcement organizations. [1034] Other sources went as far as linking 18 of the 21 new cabinet members to the security forces.[1035] That Pour-Mohammadi, deputy Minister of Intelligence at the time of Khatami, was suspected to have played a role in the political serial killings of Foruhar, Sharif, Mokhtari and Puyandeh, was no coincidence.[1036] Elliot Hen-Tov observed "*The defining nature of Ahmadinejad's administration is the intertwining of formal government decisionmaking with the revolutionary military-security complex.*"[1037] Those mobilized by the traditional right to block the Left, now took over.

The traditional right subsequently used to Majles to veto different proposed Ministers. For the Ministry of Petroleum Ahmadinejad had to propose no less than four different candidates, before the Majles finally

[1033] Compare *a contrario* K. BAYAT, "All Iranians for Iran", *Goftogu*, No.47, Dey 1385, pp.61-70 [In Persian], English Abstract. The author analyzes the positions of different factions on the issue of Iran's position as a nation-state from the starting point of the slogan "All Iranians for Iran" and concluded that "*both factions focus on a world view that gives priority to the interests of the Islamic world as opposed to Iran's national interests.*" However his thesis, partially based on a process of intention, does not seem very convincing when compared to the actual reality of Iranian foreign policy.
[1034] International Crisis Group, "Iran: Ahmadi-Nejad's Tumultuous Presidency", *Crisis Group Middle East Briefing,* No.21, February 6, 2007, p.3
[1035] Iran Focus, "Iran: 18 des 21 nouveaux ministres viennent des gardiens de la révolution et de la police secrète", *Iran Focus (français),* August 14, 2005, http://www.iranfocus.com
[1036] Human Rights Watch, "Ministers of Murder : Iran's New Security Cabinet", *Briefing Paper*, December 2005, http://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/mena/iran1205/, pp.8-9
[1037] E. HEN-TOV, "Understanding Iran's New Authoritarianism", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.30, No.1, Winter 2006-2007, pp.163-179 (166)

accepted his nominee.[1038] Throughout his presidency, Ahmadinejad witnessed over ten Ministers leave his cabinet. Some were impeached by the Majles, like Ali Kordan at the Interior, others, like Pour-Mohammadi or Central Bank Governor Gholam-Hussein Elham handed in their resignation.

Ahmadinejad did however not passively undergo the political obstruction from the traditional right. Logically he favored his allies in the competition for key positions. Not without success, Ahmadinejad succeeded in replacing nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani, close to the traditional right, with Saeed Jalili. Some consider Ahmadinejad used his credit within the *Sepah* to make Khamene'i appoint Mohammed Ali Jafari to replace Yahya Rahim Safavi at the head of the *Sepah.*[1039] It is more likely however to consider it a move against Ahmadinejad. Jafari was rather close to the ex-commander Mohsen Rezai, an ally of the traditional right, and often at odds with Ahmadinejad.[1040] The struggle between both is undeniable.

Where useful Ahmadinejad allied with forces of the traditional right, for instance all possible law enforcing assistance was given to the Special Clerical Courts to prosecute dissident clerics, as for example ayatollah Kazemeini Borujerdi.[1041] On the other hand moves were made to discredit the traditional right. The attacks on the clergy through Palizdar were one of those. Palizdar explicitly charged Asghar-Owladi, head of traditional right's coalition *Motalefe* as involved in a fraud concerning a Shiraz-based automobile company.[1042] Ahmadinejad also attacked the modern right, by closing down magazines as *Shahrvand-e*

[1038] BBC, "Iranian MPs approve oil minister", *BBC News,* December 11, 2005

[1039] See L. MAHNAIMI, "Hardliner takes over Revolutionary Guards", *The Sunday Times,* September 2, 2007 who mentions "unrest among high-ranking guards officers" who wanted to get rid of Khamene'i's trustee

[1040] P. CLAWSON & M. KHALAJI, "Ahmadi Nezhad's Power Slipping in Iran", *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy,* September 7, 2007

[1041] K. SANATI, "Intolerance of dissidence Covers Iranian Clerics", *Iran Press Service,* October 24, 2006

[1042] M. NIKNAHAD & S. HAERI, "Is Ali Khameneh'i 'Cleaning' His House?", *Rooz Online /Iran Press Service,* June 10, 2008

Emrooz, an Iranian version of The Economist, and the journal *Kargozaaran*.[1043]

The 2009 presidential campaign confirmed the form of the new emerging Iran. Of the four candidates only one, Karroubi was a cleric.[1044] Neither of the main candidates, Ahmadinejad and Mousavi, was a cleric. Neither of them was linked to one of the former concentrations of private power. Both were forced to woo the electorate and public opinion in a significant though different manner.[1045] Ahmadinejad continued to stress topics, as national pride and economic populism, similar to those that had offered him victory in the 2005 elections.[1046] Ahmadinejad thrived on nationalism with the national flag as a campaign symbol; populist economics in support of the poor and the *Sepah*'s military networks. That the "reformers" or the Modern Left now preferred Mousavi to Khatami, was intrinsically linked to their 2005 defeat. They realized that Mousavi would have more chances of recuperating votes of the *mostazafan* that had felt abandoned by the "modernization" of the Islamic Left. Unsurprisingly Mousavi immediately started to use the term *mostazafan* and refused to be called a "reformer". On the other hand he did promise to abolish the "*gasht-e ershad*" one of the main police forces, linked to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, guarding public morality.[1047] A promise clearly aimed at convincing Khatami's electorate to support Mousavi. Although somewhat less than Khatami in 1997, Mousavi used the mobilization of civil society, of which modern media like Facebook or

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[1043] M. KERAMI, "Sezavar-e Toqif Nabood", *Kargoozaran*, January, 2, 2009, www.kargozaaran.com

[1044] For Karroubi's ideas see: A. EBADI, "Karrubi: Sokout nemishavam, Ehteraz mikonam va Raizani", *Shahrvand-e Emrooz*, No.69, 5 Aban 1387

[1045] H.S. SEIFZADEH, "The Landscape of Factional Politics and Its Future in Iran", *Middle East Journal*, Vol.57, No.1, Winter 2003, pp.57-75 (57)

[1046] Something very clear in the different television appearances of the President and supported by positive balance sheets presented by members of his cabinet. See f.ex. X., "Ahmadinejad Kamelan Movafaq Boodeast", *Jam-e Jam*, 2 Shahrivar 1387, p.1

[1047] X.,"Gasht-e Ershad ro Jam mikonam", *Etemaad*, 18 Farvardin 1388, compare with X.,"Ehlam-e Mavaze Mousavi dar Avalin Konferense Matbuati", *Keyhan*, 18 Farvardin, 1388

Twitter, a proper newspaper The Green Word (*Kalameh-ye Sabz*) and his wife addressing the crowds were probably the most remarkable signs.

As mentioned before Ahmadinejad possesses some comparative advantage over his opponents. Nonetheless the official results of the presidential election of 12 June 2009 came as a surprise. Nobody really believed Ahmadinejad has more supporters today than Khatami in 1997. And still this is what the election results seem to show: 20 million votes for Khatami then, over 24 million for Ahmadinejad today. Mousavi denounced massive rigging and spoke of "a government of dictatorship". On Facebook and in the streets, his supporters dreamt of "a velvet revolution". The harshest accusation came from Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Iranian filmmaker and one of Mousavi's spokesmen. He denounced a *coup d'état* by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corpse (IRGC), who staunchly defended Ahmadinejad. A *coup* not only against Mousavi, but even against the Supreme Leader, ayatollah Khamenei. This is not improbable. In his first term Ahmadinejad and the *Sepah* repeatedly stated they were not ready to offer power to those "reformists" that would offer the country on a golden plate to "the enemies". The exclusion of observers from different candidates during the counting of the ballots and the role the *Sepah* played in "organizing" the elections all point in the direction of a possible electoral coup.

As it had been in 1999, the reaction of the security forces to the revolt of civil society was predictably extremely hard. Demonstrations and riots were aggressed, while security forces also invaded the dormitories of the universities of Isfahan and Tehran. In a first reaction Khamene'i merely confirmed the official results, while after two days of riots and pressure of Mousavi and Karroubi, he decided to accept an investigation.

These developments confirmed the fundamental dynamics I have illustrated in the preceding chapters. The traditionalist Khamene'i is no longer able to exercise his constitutional predominance, but has to balance between the forces of the *Sepah*-supported far right and the

forces of civil society. These two forces each have their social constituencies, yet their agenda does not always parallel the interests of these constituencies.

5.3. *Conclusion*

This chapter has illustrated not so much the high degree of complexity of the Iranian system and its functioning as it has tried to understand internal dynamics of the system from a state formation perspective. Different evolutions have been observed.

A first evolution seems to be the definitive victory of the state over traditional power concentrations, formerly out of the state's range. The state's victory, in combination with the development of new institutions and a mobilizing revolutionary ideology, has allowed it to increase its infrastructural power. After the tribes, defeated by the royal regime, the clergy and the bazaar have lost much of their respective prominence, or at the very least do no longer seem to pose an existential threat to the expansion of state power.

A second evolution has been the institutionalization of new actors and notably the armed forces. This is the state corporatist dimension of the Islamic Republic. If the traditional armed forces, the *artesh*, has to a significant degree, although not completely, been professionalized, the same does not go for the *Sepah*. The previous chapter had already mentioned how the *Sepah* had been institutionalized. This chapter showed its increasing political role, independent of the civilian structures, both parallel and state democratic.

A third evolution, a consequence of the erosion of the traditional power base of ruling elites, has been the emergence of popular sovereignty. This emergence of civil society illustrated the weaknesses of Islamic state corporatism and the potential strength of pluralism. The rising

importance of legitimacy based, not on religious principles, but on popular sovereignty is noticeable both in the state democratic structure as in the parallel institutions. However the presidential election of 2005 illustrated that it would be a grave mistake to limit possible resources in the struggle for power to "civil society". If democratization or anything similar is to occur, the process should include those formerly known as the *mostazafan* as well. The "people" might hence be a better, although still unsatisfactory, term. Rent-seeking elites have over time increasingly turned to the "people" as a useful resource in the struggle for power. While regime supporters exalt the democratic character of the elections and hence the regime, regime critics often reduce elections in the Islamic Republic to a "tool to sustain the theological power structure".[1048] In reality both forego the essence of the electoral process in the Islamic Republic. *Volenda nolenda* the existence of elections and the democratic dimension of the regime, independent of the will of any of the revolutionary actors, has prepared a framework for a revalorization of popular sovereignty and the will of the people. Obviously, this is but one dimension of the regime, yet it is very present and should, at the very least, be acknowledged.

This chapter and the previous one have offered a tentative and partial answer concerning possible centrifugal tendencies. Such tendencies would indicate that the different groups constituting the Islamic Republic by their action disintegrate rather reinforce the state. By demonstrating how old concentrations of private power were incorporated in the state, a centripetal process similar to Stalin's Soviet Union, it was suggested that the centrifugal tendencies resulting from Hitler's breaking up of the state are unlikely. Different institutions are highly interlinked, outbalance each other and, since the disappearance of Khomeini, obviously miss a mythical figure that could incite such a radicalization process. Nonetheless it has also become clear that competition among different parts of the system is very much a reality.

[1048] K. ALAMDARI, "Elections as a Tool to Sustain the Theological Power Structure", *The Iranian Revolution at 30,* Viewpoints Special Edition, Washington DC, The Middle East Institute, 2009, pp.109-112

Nonetheless considering the fundamental role of cumulative radicalization for our analysis such an assertion should be further clarified. Since until now the so to say institutional interdependency has been underlined, the existence of such interdependence and balancing equilibrium should now be considered on a policy level. The next chapter will try do to so. As it will try to model the main findings of this study.

6. Dynamics of the System and its Future

In previous chapters it was claimed that the development of the Islamic Republic and the way it was institutionalized rendered improbable any process of cumulative radicalization or self-destruction. Moreover, it was shown how rather than parallel structures emerging from a disintegrating state, the existing parallel structures were a consequence of centralization and increasing inclusiveness.

It remains undeniable however that the different pillars of the Iranian regime and their often different social and organizational bases possess sufficient autonomy to further their sectoral interest against those of the state when necessary. They hence have both the capacity to endanger the regime. They might also render difficult any coherent policy, which could on the long run undermine the system. Such a fear was illustrated by Mirdamadi of the Majles' National Security Committee when he declared in 2002 that no consensus existed whatsoever between the political groups in power on national security or the position of the country on the international chessboard.[1049]

Taking as a starting point two policy domains essential for any state, that is foreign policy and economic policy, the present chapter sets out to check if my hypothesis, deducted from the institutional development of the Islamic Republic, can be verified by the evolution of both foreign and economic policy. The analysis will especially focus on matters of coherence, radicalization and centrifugal-centripetal tendencies in policy-setting. Foreign policy is obviously especially interesting from the point of view of cumulative radicalization. Hitler and Stalin's foreign policy can be used once more as opposites. Hitler was pushed to military conquer ever more, while Stalin's priority was to build "socialism in one country". As mentioned before this does not mean that Stalin did not pursue expansionist policies, and indeed both

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[1049] *Hamshahri*, 23 April 2002, as quoted by A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, *La République islamique d'Iran, De la maison du Guide à la raison d'Etat*, Paris, Editions Michalon, 2005, p.80

Stalinist militants as anti-communists claim Stalin noticeably expanded Soviet influence. However Stalinist expansion was much more balanced and did not result in a process of falling forward. What about Iran? Is Iran radicalizing? Scholar Jack Goldstone argued that the coming to power of Ahmadinejad signified a return to radicalization and cast doubt over Crane Brinton's model of revolution.[1050]

Economic policy on the other hand will be especially interesting to test the coherence of policy-making. For a developing country as Iran a clear road to development in which all parts of the regime participate appears as a *conditio sine qua non* not only for the system's development but even for its survival. Those, and they are many, arguing that the regime is falling apart, because of factionalism or other forms of elite-divisions claim that Iran is unable today to formulate a coherent (economic) policy. Valibeigi states rather clearly: "*I argue that the conflicting views of the liberal and radical Muslim fundamentalists on the limits of private property and the economic role of the state in an Islamic economy undermined the formation of coherent economic policies in post-revolutionary Iran. Such inconsistencies were particularly notable in the areas of land reform and foreign trade.*"[1051] The author argues that factional disagreements on various aspects of economic policy making exist in any society, yet that "*such disagreements do not normally undermine the very fundamental consensus upon which the economic system is established.*"[1052] We will argue that since 1979 Iran has undeniably evolved in the direction of such a "*fundamental consensus*". This is not to claim that such consensus has been reached or perfected, but to illustrate that rather than to a centrifugal process of state disintegration, the evolution of policy making points in the direction of centripetal tendencies.

[1050] D. IGNATIUS, "Containing Tehran", *The Washington Post,* January 20, 2006

[1051] M. VALIBEIGI, "Islamic Economics and Economic Policy Formation in Post-Revolutionary Iran: A Critique**",** *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. 27, No. 3, September 1993, pp. 793-812 (794)

[1052] M. VALIBEIGI, "Islamic Economics and Economic Policy Formation in Post-Revolutionary Iran: A Critique**",** *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. 27, No. 3, September 1993, pp. 793-812 (808)

By adding the evaluation of policy-making to the institutional evolutions I hope this chapter will confirm the fundamental dynamics of the Islamic Republic. In order to present some possible future scenarios for the further development of the present regime, I will offer a tentative model. To be sure, no blueprint for the evolution of Iran could possibly be presented, yet that on the basis of the previous chapters and this one some probable scenarios can be individuated.

6.1.   *Economic Policy*

6.1.1.   **The Framework**

As complex as the analysis of economic policy may be, the theoretical framework in which to conduct the discussion seems rather clear. One either chooses a free market or a planned economic structure, a free trade or a protectionist approach, a liberal or collectivist philosophy and so on. These are the simplified extremes on a line of possible economic philosophies and policies, all others are mere adaptations or compromises between both. This goes for Neo-Liberalism as much as it goes for Rawls' Theory of Justice.[1053] It is as true for Von Hayek as it is for Keynes. Islamic economics are hence to be situated between one of these extremes or, more precisely, the interpretation one wishes to give to Islamic economics will have to be situated between one of these two extremes.[1054]

[1053] J. RAWLS, *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 1999, 560p.

[1054] I disagree with DAVIS AND ROBINSON on this issue. They consider that Islam might have a Third way because it could maintain private ownership and redistribution. I do not see in what this would justify qualifying Islamic economics as a Third way. Any European country has during the second half of the 20th century tried to combine both elements, yet they were distinctly capitalist economies with some state intervention. Some, like Sweden or French state capitalism went more in one direction than in another but the economic bases were never really questioned. They always stayed on the axis we defined earlier. See N. DAVIS & R. ROBINSON, "Islam and Economic Justice: A 'Third

Debates on what is "true" Islam, omnipresent during the first revolutionary decade, are probably useful for scholars of theology, but they should not here retain our attention.[1055] The eminent sociologist and scholar of the Orient, Maxime Rodinson puts the accent on the basic question: who will detain decisional power on economic policy?[1056] He sees three possibilities: the State, individuals (capitalists) or producers (productive units). Obviously they are not exclusive and the State can be dominated by one of both. This fundamental choice imposes itself on any country. For Rodinson Islam offers an answer on different levels. The Quran although it imposes alms (*zakat)* and forbids interests on loans (*riba*), says little or nothing on economics. The subsequent interpretations of the Quran have gone in different directions and have often developed very different visions and ideologies on the economics of Islam. The same is true for the application of these Islamic economic ideologies.

The Iranian constitution encloses all of Rodinson's possibilities and states that the Iranian economy is formed of three sectors, one public, one private and one cooperative.[1057] The economic ideology of the Iranian revolution can be summarized very accurately by the confrontation of the extremes mentioned in the first paragraph, the confrontation of two ideologies belonging to, at least, two different social groups during the revolution.

The reasons of the revolt of the *mostazafan* against the *ancien régime* were basically economic. Azadeh Kian-Thiébaut rightly states that their

Way' Between Capitalism and Socialism?", *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Hilton San Francisco & Renaissance Parc 55 Hotel, San Francisco, CA,,* Aug 14, 2004, *http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p108508_index.html*

[1055] Some analyses of Islamic economics in M. RODINSON, *Islam et capitalisme,* Paris, Editions du Seuil,1966, 304p. ; M. N. SIDDIQI, *Role of the State in the Economy: An Islamic Perspective,* Leicester, The Islamic Foundation, 1996; T. KURAN, *Islam and Mammon : The Economic Predicaments of Islamism*, Princeton UP, 2005, C. TRIPP, *Islam and the Moral Economy: The Challenge of Capitalism*, Cambridge UP, 2006

[1056] M. RODINSON, *Marxisme et Monde musulman,* Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1972, p.210

[1057] Article 44

economic demands were not shared by everyone, yet this is no reason to subscribe to her conclusion that these demands played only a marginal role in the revolution.[1058] Seen from the "working class" or "disinherited" perspective these demands were a vital and indispensable part of the revolution. Be it demands for housing close to the factory, complaints over increasing prices, over the exaggerated wages of CEO's or food-shortages, when analyzing interviews with workers during revolutionary times, the only possible conclusion is that their demands were bread-and-butter, merely covered by the flag of Islam. Even more so, when asked a specific question on the "Islamic dimension" of the economy, workers still fell back in material demands and necessities. This discussion with two workers illustrates this rather well.[1059]

[1058] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, *La République islamique d'Iran De la maison du Guide à la raison d'Etat*, Paris, Editions Michalon, 2005, p.18
[1059] Taken and translated from : P. VIEILLE & F. KHOSROKHAVAR, *Le discours populaire de la révolution iranienne*, Paris, éd. Contemporanéité, 1990, Tome 2, p.341-342

> *"Bahrâm: When queuing for two hours to buy bread, one loses faith (kofri mishé), one starts to curse and devour oneself (qhode-qhordane), one starts to skip (steal) working hours (az kâr bédozdé); someone who steals at work obviously does not follow Islam, but if, on the contrary, he would have a tranquil mind, a decent job, means to assure a decent life, then he will try to conform to Islam, he follows Islam (…)*
>
> *Djavâd: In an Islamic economy, according to the holy verse (in Arab): "Nothing is possible for man if not by his effort", everyone has to be paid according to his work and effort so that the workers is not exploited (estèssemâre naché) (…)*
>
> *Bahrâm: If he has time after work, after his eight hours of labor, then (the worker) will look himself for the doctrine of Islam (maktabe-ye eslâme)"*

An Iranian student of that time remembered how even at the holy shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad demands and prayers were mostly formulated as "Please find a better job for my husband" and "Please make it possible for us to feed ourselves decently".

A second group, the bazaar merchants, had quite different, arguably completely opposite, interests. The reasons of the bazaar's revolt against the royal autocracy were clearly multiple, on the whole it seems obvious that the bazaar was not tempted at all by measures the political left. Probably the most important scarecrow for this mercantile bourgeoisie was the leftists' defense of "nationalization" and more specifically the lack of respect for private property.

On the issue of property rights however, one could distinguish between at least three tendencies.[1060] The radical approach a mix of Islam and radical Marxist thought, based on the influential Ali Shariati, defended for example by the Mujahedin-e-Khalq, considered private property as the foundation of polytheism and opposed to the Islamic scope of a monotheistic classless society.[1061] In a pre-revolutionary pamphlet the Mujahedin pretended that scientific Marxism (i.e. its social thought and not its philosophy) was compatible with Islam. One of their philosophers even wrote that: "*To separate class struggle from Islam is to betray Islam*".[1062] A second tendency, called the populist-statist tendency by Behdad was incarnated especially by the Iraqi Muhammed Baqir Sadr and the extremely popular ayatollah Taleqani.[1063] This tendency favored an Islamic system based on mixed ownership, limited economic freedom and social justice.[1064] The state's role would be to limit excessive capital accumulation and guarantee "social balance". In a book, *Eqtesad-e Tawhidi* (Monotheistic Economics) that was supposed to mean for the economy of the Islamic republic what Khomeini's book on Islamic Government meant for its political system, Abolhassan Bani Sadr, future president of the Islamic Republic, developed this theory by highlighting that only labor can be the foundation of ownership. This approach was also favored by some liberal nationalists in the Bazargan government. A third approach to property rights brings us to the

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[1060] This paragraph is based on S. BEHDAD, "A Disputed Utopia: Islamic Economics in Revolutionary Iran", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.36, No.4, October 1994, pp.775-813 (784-800)

[1061] For an overview of Shariati's thought, consider: A. RAHNEMA, *An Islamic Utopian: A Political Biography of Ali Shariati*, London, I.B.Tauris, 1998

[1062] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Radical Islam, The Iranian Mojahedin*, I.B. Tauris, Londres, 1989, p.92-93

[1063] Taleqani's book "Islam and Ownership" (*Eslam va Malekiyyat*) was one of the first Iranian books on Islamic economics and explored thoroughly the possible limits on property rights. See also: S. BEHDAD, "Revolutionary Surge and Quiet Demise of Islamic Economics in Iran", preliminary draft served as the basis for Professor Behdad's Oct. 4, 2005, talk at UCLA, sponsored by the Center for Near Eastern Studies, http://www.international.ucla.edu/cms/files/behdadtxt.pdf

[1064] SADR, *Eqtesad-è Ma* (Our Economy), Vol.1, p.354 as quoted in S.BEHDAD, "A Disputed Utopia: Islamic Economics in Revolutionary Iran", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.36, No.4, October 1994, pp.775-813 (787)

capitalist extreme of our axis. The conservative view on economics came to the foreground especially when the Islamic cultural revolution, called for by among others Bani Sadr, at the universities started. A special center of Islamic universities and seminars was created which issued an *Introduction to Islamic Economics*.[1065] It proclaimed that maximum welfare ought to be the objective of an Islamic economy. Economic growth was considered more important than social equity and the quest for profit was labeled as a legitimate Islamic motive. Limits to capital accumulation were to be put aside, possible market imperfections ignored.[1066]

As Amuzegar states: "*broadly speaking these ideological divisions seem to have followed economic class lines*". Amuzegar however identifies the economic pragmatics as a separate economic group, which found its origins in people managing rather than owning national wealth.[1067] This group was more free-market oriented than the Taleqani supporters, yet less so than the real conservatives. It could be argued that they offered some kind of right-wing alternative to Taleqani's economic ideas.

This limited overview of specific tendencies already allows to intuitively understand the width of the playing field for competitors. A state where powerful concentrations of power would on the one hand try to impose some kind of Islamo-communism, while other forces would try to impose neo-liberal policies, will inevitably be confronted with policy-making difficulties.

6.1.2.   Economic policy during the first revolutionary decade

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[1065] S.BEHDAD, "A Disputed Utopia: Islamic Economics in Revolutionary Iran", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.36, No.4, October 1994, pp.775-813 (796)
[1066] S. BEHDAD, "Islamization of Economics in Iranian Universities", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.27, No.2, May 1995, pp.193-217 (202-203)
[1067] J.AMUZEGAR, *Iran's Economy under the Islamic Republic,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1997, p.32

Keeping in mind the devastating economic consequences of the war and the high degree of dependence of economic policy on charismatic authority,[1068] the first revolutionary decade was characterized by four key issues: a new labor law, the nationalization of foreign trade and of industry and, finally, land reform.[1069]

The nationalization of many private enterprises some months after the victory of the revolution seemed to extend the "ideology of Islam" to expropriation. In June 1979, 28 banks were nationalized and one month later car and basic metallurgic industries followed. Moreover the possessions of 51 of the most important Iranian industrialists, linked to the *ancien régime*, were turned over to the state.[1070] Considering nationalizations as the turning over of economic units to the state is only half correct. The picture was far more complex. Via the ordinances of the Revolutionary Council the state did take over banks and credit institutions on 7 June 1979 and through a decree of 18 June 1979 government came in control of around 1,000 corporations, grouped them in the Organization of National Industry (*Sazeman-e Sanay-ie Melli*).[1071] On 5 July 1979 three categories of enterprises were nationalized: strategic industries, those belonging to fifty-three individuals who had benefited illegally from the Pahlavi regime and deeply indebted industries.[1072] The decree of 16 July 1979 focused especially on large industries as mines, oil and gas, just as electricity,

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[1068] A.A. SAEIDI, "Charismatic Political Authority and Populist Economics in Post-Revolutionary Iran", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 2, April 2001, pp. 219-236

[1069] For an assessment of economic consequences of regional war, see A. ALNASRAWI, "Economic Consequences of the Iraq-Iran War", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 3, July 1986, pp. 869-895 & H. AMIRAHMADI, "Economic Reconstruction of Iran: Costing the War Damage", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 1, January 1990, pp. 26-47

[1070] S. BEHDAD, "Winners and Losers of the Iranian Revolution: A Study in Income Distribution", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.21, No.3, August 1989, pp.327-358 (328)

[1071] A. RASHIDI, "De-Privatisation Process of the Iranian Economy after the Revolution of 1979", *in* T. COVILLE (ed.), *The Economy of Islamic Iran: Between State and Market*, Tehran, IFRI, 1994, pp.37-67 (47-48)

[1072] A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic Policy in Iran*, London, Zed Books, 1990, p.241

fishery and railroads.[1073] Frequently however these newly nationalized industries did not go to the government as such but to Foundations (*bonyad*s), like the *Bonyad-e Mostazafan*, which were at the time totally exempted from public accountability.

It is important to notice that many of these measures were taken when other actors than the later institutionalized factions were still present on the playing field. Some saw Bani Sadr as one of the major forces pushing for nationalizations.[1074]

One of the more violent struggles concerned the land, a fight that was taken to Parliament by the different factions.[1075] After the revolution former landlords tried to recapture their lands, while often landless peasants tried to seize vacant (or not) lands.[1076] Ayatollahs as Khomeini[1077] but also Beheshti of the Islamic Republican Party or Bahonar of the Revolutionary Council defended land seizures by the poor and often landless peasants.[1078] The initial proposal for land reform by the provisional government of Bazargan was radicalized by the Revolutionary Council. Considering the alliance of classes the Council was composed of such a radicalization might seem awkward, yet in the context of radicalizing peasantry and regional tensions, it was all too logical.[1079] Those whose scope was not to deepen the revolution,

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[1073] A. RASHIDI, "De-Privatisation Process of the Iranian Economy after the Revolution of 1979", *in* T. COVILLE, *The Economy of Islamic Iran: Between State and Market*, Tehran, IFRI, 1994, pp.37-67 (46-47)

[1074] J.AMUZEGAR, *Iran's Economy under the Islamic Republic,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1997, p.37

[1075] K.V. FRINGS-HESSAMI, "The Islamic Debate about Land Reform in the Iranian Parliament, 1981-86", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 4, October 2001, pp. 136-181

[1076] H. AMIRAHMADI, *Revolution and Economic Transition,* Albany, State University of New York Press, 1990, p.27

[1077] See for example: J.S. ISMAEL & T.Y. ISMAEL, "Social Change in Islamic Society. The Political Thought of Ayatollah Khomeini", *Social Problems*, Vol.27, No.5, June 1980, pp.601-619 (617)

[1078] For an overview of the struggles consider M. MOADDEL, "Class Struggle in Post-Revolutionary Iran", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3., August 1991, pp. 317-343

[1079] A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic Policy in Iran,* London, Zed Books, 1990, p.243

feared instability, territorial integrity and greater radicalism if no concessions were done. The tactic worked. The inclusion of land reform in the "ideology of Islam" weakened the non-Islamic left, and permitted a mobilization against the conservative right-wing forces. Khomeini's populist discourse hence permitted to undermine the strength of conservative clerics and landowners and balance their huge economic importance with popular mobilization.[1080] The final law on land reform even included cooperatives, which Khomeini had previously denounced as "un-Islamic". One of the characteristics of land reform policies in this period were the Organizations for the Development of Land. These were established in rural areas and sometimes even in urban areas to accompany the transfer of ownership of abandoned or confiscated land to the landless.[1081]

Considering its close relationship with landowners and conservative clergymen, it was no surprise that the Guardian Council vetoed an already highly revised Land Reform bill. Khomeini's preoccupation with balance induced him in October 1981 to overrule this veto (and thus the new Constitution). Nonetheless the Guardian Council had fundamentally changed the bill and conserved the possibility to hinder its implementation. Rahnema and Nomani underline that in reality true land reform was "*shelved for good*".[1082] By naming opponents of the radical course in a new Council Khomeini and the IRP had effectively balanced the system and internalized contradictions that could have been life-threatening for the newborn republic.[1083]

[1080] *Ibid.*, p.321-322

[1081] A. RASHIDI, "De-Privatisation Process of the Iranian Economy after the Revolution of 1979", *in* T. COVILLE, *The Economy of Islamic Iran: Between State and Market*, Tehran, IFRI, 1994, pp.37-67 (51)

[1082] A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic Policy in Iran*, London, Zed Books, 1990, p.141

[1083] S. BEHDAD, "Revolutionary Surge and Quiet Demise of Islamic Economics in Iran", preliminary draft served as the basis for Professor Behdad's Oct. 4, 2005, talk at UCLA, sponsored by the Center for Near Eastern Studies, http://www.international.ucla.edu/cms/files/behdadtxt.pdf , p.12

A similar dynamic can be observed in the struggle for a new labor law.
[1084] The coming into existence of the new labor law can be divided in
three different stages: a first stage going from the victory of the
revolution to the first draft of the new labor law; a second stage going
from the provisionary government's proposal to the disagreements
between the Majles and the Guardian Council and a third phase,
during the second revolutionary decade, in which labor legislation was
finally issued by the Expediency Council.[1085] The first phase was
characterized by struggle. A workers' struggle which was very much
influenced by the consciousness of (especially) oil workers of their
indispensability to the regime. The gradually emerging class-
consciousness was also illustrated by the many revolutionary councils
(*showra*s) that saw the light. This struggle led to increased wages,
improved working conditions and the popular practice of workers' co-
management or self-management of factories. The emerging labor
struggle was in flagrant contradiction with the strict control the Pahlavi
regime had exerted over trade unions. [1086]

The traditionalists carefully avoided the redaction of a new labor law in
this period. It feared a new too radical labor law and started working to
undermine workers' potential. Based on articles of the journal of the
Feda'i-e Khalq, a leftist organization with particular attention for labor
struggles, Rahnema and Nomani underline how the Islamization of the
showra's was a first step in undermining the workers' movement
avoiding a too radical labor law.[1087] The Italian ambassador noted
already on June, 18, 1979 that the position of the Left was weakening,
especially among the oil workers.[1088] This was a direct consequence of

[1084] For an overview of contemporary Iranian labor law see: G.H. DAWANI, *Majmu'ehe
qavanin va moqararat kar va ta'mine ejtemahi*, Tehran, Entesharat-e Kayomart, 1381
[1085] A. RANJBARI, *Hoquqe Kar*, Tehran, Madjpub, 1382, p.49
[1086] See for example CARI, *The Iranian Working Class*, London, Committee Against
Repression in Iran, 1977, p.20 & F. HALLIDAY, "Iran : Trade Unions and The Working
Class Opposition", *MERIP Reports*, October 1978, pp.7-13 (11)
[1087] A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic
Policy in Iran*, London, Zed Books, 1990, p.249
[1088] G .TAMAGNINI, *La Caduta dello Scià, Diario dell'ambasciatore italiano a Teheran (1978-
1980),* Roma, Edizioni Associate, 1990, p.153

the extension of Islamic ideology leading to the inclusion of the workers' movement in the system. At the same time, after two years of discussions between 1983 and 1985, a new "final draft" was finally proposed by the Ministry of Labor and passed to Parliament. The draft was predictably blocked by the Guardian Council and sent back to the Majles, where the proposal reached the Commission on Labor and Social Affairs (*Komision-e Kar va Omur-e Ejtemahi*), to be sent to the Guardian Council once again in 1989.[1089] This process of obstruction on the part of the Guardian Council proved highly successful, because in the meanwhile the workers' movement was "Islamized", in essence destroyed. Since no agreement could be reached between the Majles and the Guardian Council, who continued to block the Labor law, it would finally be the Expediency Council that would legislate. By the time this happened however the balance of social forces had changed.

The nationalist undertone and anti-imperialist philosophy animating many of the revolutionaries influenced among other things by dependency theories,[1090] incited the new regime to push for the nationalization of foreign trade. According to article 44 of the Constitution foreign trade is part of the public sector of the economy. In April 1981, two months before the removal of Bani Sadr as president, a law designed to implement this constitutional provision was introduced to the Majles by the government. This law obviously went against the interests of the wealthy bazaaris. Through their influence in the Guardian Council, the latter succeeded in blocking the law as "un-Islamic". A revised version of the law, which limited government control of foreign trade to four fifths of 'essential' goods and installed a licensing system through the Minister of Commerce[1091], was approved by the Majles in 1984.[1092] The above process of economic centralization was predictably fortified and accentuated by the Iraq-Iran war which

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[1089] A. RANJBARI, *Hoquqe Kar,* Tehran, Madjpub, 1382, p.50-51

[1090] See for example the last chapter of E. REZAQI, *Ashna'i ba Eqtesad-e Iran,* Tehran, Nashrani, 1372

[1091] Also in contradiction with the *bazaari*s interests but in a less direct way. See chapter on post-revolutionary developments.

[1092] J.AMUZEGAR, *Iran's Economy under the Islamic Republic,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1997, pp.141-142

demanded that all essential national resources and economic units functioned in service of the nation's war effort.[1093]

A decade after the revolution the statists definitively had had the best of other tendencies: over 80% of the Iranian economy was dominated by the state. Yet this victory did not imply a huge "structural revolution" as more radical elements had favored before and during the revolution. The discussions between Prime Minister Mousavi and conservative opponents as Ashgar-Owladi did not concern decentralizing economic control to *showra*s, but the extent to which respectively the state and the private sector should be permitted to dominate the economy. More radical visions had been rapidly eliminated in the first two years following the revolution, contrary to what had been the case in the reign of foreign policy, where such visions only lost their dominance towards the end of the decade. The contradiction evolved to a simplistic question of liberalism versus statism, more or less state. Or even more basic: between the first and the second Majles, dominated by pro-statists and the Guardian Council, dominated by conservatives with a *laissez-faire* vision on the economy.[1094] As all simplifications however such a characterization erases part of the picture, in this case Rafsanjani's part, who already during the first revolutionary decade, defended a somewhere-in-between solution. The future president generally favored industrialization, without however subscribing to economic Leftism.

If on the one hand the options favoring radical transformation, mainly Marxist, had been eliminated, on the other hand the situation was all but ideal. Even the non-Marxist Left favored far going economic reforms and a socialization of the economy, while others preferred a minimal state. Both extremes of our initial axis controlled each one pillar of state institutions and were hence able to effectively undermine

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[1093] For an evaluation of the economic cost of the war see K. MOFID, *The Economic Consequences of the Gulf War,* London, Routledge, 1990

[1094] S. BEHDAD, "From Populism to Liberalism: The Iranian Predicament", in P. ALIZADEH (ed.), *The Economy of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 2000, pp.100-144 (104)

any form of economic policy.[1095] In essence economic interests were institutionalized in such a way that they formed both lobby- and veto-groups. A deadlock seemed inevitable.

6.1.3. Economic policy during the second revolutionary decade

Considering the above, it comes as no surprise that the economic results of the first revolutionary decade were, to say the least, not enchanting: a reduction of per capita income and an explosive growth of the inflation rate. Full recovery came only around 1992.[1096] Not all of these economic problems can be traced to mere economic policy choices, external factors as the war, the revolution in itself and political infighting also have to be considered.[1097] If one of the major consequences of the economic policy of the first decade was a decrease in capital accumulation, the economy was now dominated by the state on the one hand and parastatal foundations[1098] (*Bonyad*s) on the other.[1099] The Iranian economist Sohrab Behdad writes: "*The volume of transactions of the Foundation for the Oppressed (Bonyad-e Mostazafan) in 1994 was 6,000 billion rials (the total tax revenue of the government in that year was 5,500 billion rials). Through 400 companies, the Foundation for the Oppressed produces 70 per cent of glass containers, 53 per cent of motor oil, 43*

[1095] M. VALIBEIGI, "Islamic Economics and Economic Policy Formation in Post-Revolutionary Iran: A Critique", *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. 27, No. 3, September 1993, pp. 793-812

[1096] A. RASHIDI, "De-Privatisation Process of the Iranian Economy after the Revolution of 1979", *in* T. COVILLE (ed.), *The Economy of Islamic Iran: Between State and Market*, Tehran, IFRI, 1994, pp.37-67

[1097] In this context also consider: S. M. AFGHAH, "The effect of Non-Economic Factors in the Process of Production in Iran", in P. ALIZADEH (ed.), *The Economy of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 2000, pp.204-232

[1098] Consider also S. MALONEY, "Agents or Obstacles? Parastatal Foundations and Challenges for Iranian Development", in P. ALIZADEH, *The Economy of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 2000, p.145-176

[1099] S. BEHDAD, "From Populism to Liberalism: The Iranian Predicament", in P. ALIZADEH, *The Economy of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 2000, p.112 (100-144)

per cent of soft drinks, 27 per cent of synthetic fibre, 26 per cent of tires, 20 per cent of sugar, 20 per cent of textiles, and 30 per cent of dairy products in Iran."[1100] More importantly Rafsanjani realized that this situation could result in mass revolt: "*Do you think,* he asked during a sermon, *that we can continue to tell the people that have neither doctor nor school, that we had a revolution and keep it busy with slogans?*".[1101] Much of the bourgeoisie, both traditional as modern, now turned to economic liberalism to reinvigorate private capital accumulation and capitalist production relations.

When speaking of bourgeoisie, it is not self-evident to clearly define the social group one speaks of. One option is to follow the classification of the Iranian Statistical Center[1102] which includes in private companies only those companies run neither by the state, nor by the *bonyads*. At the same time however excluding state bourgeoisie from the picture one would limit the discussion to the 3% these private manufacturing enterprises contribute to the Iranian GDP.[1103] Obviously including so-called state bourgeoisie in the calculation is not without difficulties, yet it remains unthinkable to exclude them. Considering them to consist of "*those top-level managers and technocrats who are in direct control of the assets owned fully or partially by the state*", they will be part of the modern bourgeoisie insofar as they are considered having an interest in the industrial development of the country.[1104]

Wolfgang Lautenschlager[1105] underlined as soon as 1986 what the first policy focus of the modern bourgeoisie would be: namely the unification of exchange rates. Lautenschlager underlined that the

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[1100] S. BEHDAD, "From Populism to Liberalism: The Iranian Predicament", in P. ALIZADEH, *The Economy of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 2000, p.112 (100-144)

[1101] P. CLAWSON, "La situation économique: prospective et politique", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient,* No.18, Troisième Trimestre 1990, pp.59-70 (67)

[1102] http://www.sci.org.ir

[1103] As chooses to do K. SELVIK, "The Rise and Newfound Legitimacy of Iran's Industrial Bourgeoisie", *Gulf Studies,* University of Oslo, No.2, 2005

[1104] J. WATERBURY, "Twilight the State Bourgeoisie?", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1, February 1991, pp. 1-17 (2)

[1105] A pseudonym for P. CLAWSON

overvalued rial served the interest of the traditional bourgeoisie and the traditional right in that it allowed to maintain Iran's traditional economic position as a middleman for foreign goods.[1106] In other words it favored the classical economic structure of the bazaar, while limiting the possible market share of national industries. Behdad, partially challenging this reasoning, added to it that Iranian industry had suffered foremost from "*(1) the lack of security for capital and (2) the short supply of imported inputs, initially caused by an interruption in the relationship with Western economies and their multinational corporations, and later by the foreign exchange gap confronting the IRI*."[1107] Behdad also underlined the importance of this artificially high exchange rate for which allowed to "*minimize, at least in the short run, the deterioration of the standard of living of the Iranian population.*"[1108] Nonetheless a depreciation of the rial, to encourage national industries, was made first within a system of multiple exchange rates, for a brief period, starting in 1993, within the framework of a unified exchange rate, which created problems for public productive industries since these were suddenly confronted with higher prices for imported materials.[1109]

From the outset the traditional right and the modern right agreed on some measures, like privatizations, or attempted privatizations, and the easing of some import regulations. In January 1991 certain goods did no longer require a specific import license[1110], and in July of the same year private importations of "authorized" items, like cars, were liberalized.[1111] Still in 1991, foreign trade was encouraged by the

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[1106] W. LAUTENSCHLAGER, "The Effects of Overvalued Exchange Rate on the Iranian Economy, 1979-1984", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, No.18, February 1986, pp.31-52
[1107] S. BEHDAD, "Foreign Exchange Gap, Structural Constraints, and the Political Economy of Exchange Rate Determination in Iran", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* Vol. 20, No. 1., February 1988, pp. 1-21 (9)
[1108] S. BEHDAD, "From Populism to Liberalism: The Iranian Predicament", in P. ALIZADEH, *The Economy of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 2000, p.116 (100-144)
[1109] T. COVILLE, *L'Economie de l'Iran islamique,* Paris, L'Harmattan, 2002, p.178-180
[1110] Which did not mean that one did no longer need a general governmental authorization
[1111] J. AMUZEGAR, *Iran's Economy under the Islamic Republic,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1997, p.145

establishment of the *Bank-e Towse'e Saderat* (Export Development Bank).[1112] If on foreign trade a deliberate effort had been made in the first decade to direct it away from the US and towards Third World countries[1113], during the second revolutionary decade the government of the modern right tried to qualitatively change the structure of imports, by substituting the import of services by industrial imports.[1114] To guarantee such a substitution and favor industrialization a law was voted to protect domestic producers by forbidding the import of goods that were produced in sufficient quantities within the country.[1115] Something the traditional right understandably looked on with suspicion.

Other liberalizations (prices, wages,..) followed and an abolition of some of the subsidies for basic goods were established. Both rights also, silently, agreed on accepting foreign capital from the International Monetary Fund and other international institutions, which without being illegal, was not totally in line with the constitutional spirit.[1116] While the progression in GDP was of 8% on an annual basis, this expansion was characterized by a growing deficit in the country's trade balance that went from 367 million dollar in 1989 to 6,5 billion and 3,4 billion in 1991 and 1992 respectively.[1117] Confronted also with

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[1112] Q.A. MOSSALANEJAD, *Dowlat va Towze'eye Eqtesadi dar Iran* , Tehran, Ghoomes Publishing, 1384, p.242

[1113] J.AMUZEGAR, *Iran's Economy under the Islamic Republic,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1997, p.151-153

[1114] Q.A. MOSSALANEJAD, *Dowlat va Towze'eye Eqtesadi dar Iran,* Tehran, Ghoomes Publishing, 1384, p.242

[1115] B. KHAJEHPOUR, "Iran's Economy: Twenty Years after the Islamic Revolution", *in* J.L. ESPOSITO & R.K. RAMAZANI, *Iran at the Crossroads,* New York, Palgrave, 2001, pp.103-104 (93-122)

[1116] H. AMIRAHMADI, *Revolution and Economic Transition*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1990, p.277

[1117] T. COVILLE, "Entre Réforme et Gestion de Crise", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient,* No.49, Premier Trimestre 1998, pp.71-78 (72)

important budget deficiencies, the rationalization and development of the state's fiscal system were supposed to accommodate these.[1118]

Yet, when rising prices provoked public discontent,[1119] the traditional right, in its opposition to industrialization, tried to cash in, at the expense of the modern right faction, led by President Rafsanjani, which led to a renewed opposition between Majles, dominated by the traditional right, and the government, dominated by the modern right or technocrats.[1120]

While the process of liberalization, or "reconstruction" was one of careful balancing between different factions, popular discontent and the economic legacy of the first revolutionary decade, on the whole, the process of "liberalization" and "industrialization", had considerable socio-economic consequences. Between 1986 and 1996 the Iranian working class increased from 1,8 million to 4,5 million workers. Although it was still smaller than in 1976, the relative weight of salaried workers went from 24,6% to 31,1%.[1121] The number of modern capitalists increased from 22.000 to 75.000, while the class of modern capitalists increased by 54,8% to reach a total of 528.000 individuals.[1122] If a step forward in the direction of a liberal and industrialized economy had undeniably been put, one of the other main innovations was perhaps conceptual. Since Rafsanjani's period article 44 of the Constitution is being used as the ultimate justification for privatizations, while before the article was seen as a guarantee for the state sector of the economy.[1123]

[1118] M.R.GHASIMI, "The Iranian Economy after the Revolution: An Economic Appraisal of the Five-Year Plan", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4., November 1992, pp. 599-614 (603)

[1119] See also A. BAYAT, "Squatters and the State: Back Street Politics in the Islamic Republic", *Middle East Report*, No. 191, November - December, 1994, pp. 10-14

[1120] See the discussion on the split of the two rights in M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2002

[1121] F. NOMANI & S. BEHDAD, *Class and Labor in Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2006, p.109-110

[1122] F. NOMANI & S. BEHDAD, *Class and Labor in Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2006, p.114

[1123] See for example A.A. HASHEMI RAFSANJANI, "Dar hal-e dour shodan az siasathaye

"Rafsanjani's decade" undeniably saw an increase in coherence in economic policy. Liberal policies were generally accepted and the Islamic Left lost its dominance in the state democratic pillar and was effectively silenced. On the other hand however resistance to liberalization was all but absent. The *Bonyads* formed a formidable source of opposition to reforms, like to increasing price for foreign exchange or credit to their holdings, but at the same time defended pro-market reforms on labor.[1124] Rafsanjani's reforms were rather successful as long as he combined both popular support and his alliance with the traditional right. When on the other hand the two rights broke up, considering also that *Bonyads* answer only to Khamene'i, reforms slowed down. Two distinct periods hence clearly characterize the Rafsanjani decade, one from 1988 to 1992, the other from 1993 to 1996.[1125] Arguably one of the major changes brought about by the technocratic government was an ideological one, private and modern entrepreneurship won back a lot of legitimacy it had lost before the revolution and during the first post-revolutionary decade.[1126]

6.1.4. Economic policy during the third revolutionary decade

Khatami admittedly did not have a particular economic program. The reformist president was since the very beginning part of the Islamic Left. When this faction started to disintegrate in the second revolutionary decade, he gradually became the leader of the "modern left". Yet his alliance (2nd Khordad movement) was a coalition based on socio-cultural affinities between the *Kargozaaran* or modern right and

asle 44 hastim", *Khorasan Razavi Exporters' Union,* 28 Tir 1387

[1124] D. SALEHI-ISFAHANI, "Labor and the Challenge of Economic Restructuring in Iran", *Middle East Report*, No. 210, Spring 1999, pp. 34-37 (35)

[1125] K. EHSANI, ""Tilt but Don't Spill": Iran's Development and Reconstruction Dilemma", *Middle East Report*, No. 191, November-December 1994, pp. 16-21 (19-20)

[1126] K. SELVIK, "The Rise and Newfound Legitimacy of Iran's Industrial Bourgeoisie", *Gulf Studies*, University of Oslo, No.2, 2005, pp.10-11

the modern left. Socio-economic considerations were, at best, secondary. If the modern right included mostly partisans of a liberal economy, the modern left was still divided between the old statist tendencies, incarnated by Mousavi, and a more liberal approach to economics.[1127] Nonetheless they could have agreed on promoting a rule of law (*Rechtsstaat*) which offered legal certainty to private entrepreneurs. Khatami in fact declared: "*Production and security are inseparable. We have to guarantee the security and profits of Iranian and foreign investors*"[1128] Yet between rhetoric and reality the gap to bridge was rather big.

All this is however not to say that Khatami himself did not offer an economic outlook. When a member of what was then the Islamic Left, Khatami seemed in line with the statist tendencies dominating this faction and hence appears to have opposed Rafsanjani's economic liberalizations.[1129] In 1997, Khatami pointed out that although Iran now had an active population of 15 million, in order to have a healthy Iran this number would have to double in the next 25 years. And the only way of doing so according to Khatami was: industrialization.[1130] Industrialization was indeed one of the major points of agreement between the, at least two, pillars of his movement. If hence Khatami's (and the modern left's) cultural opposition to the traditional right was clear, the question of industrialization and national production, development of which was in Khatami's personal vision based on the development education, research and the development of civil society, was possibly equally important. Khatami, while demanding a more cost-efficient and rational government spending, also insisted on the responsibility of the private sector, especially the middlemen (*dallal*), in

[1127] S. BEHDAD, "From Populism to Liberalism: The Iranian Predicament", in P. ALIZADEH, *The Economy of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 2000, p.134 (100-144)

[1128] M. KHATAMI, 13 March 1998, as quoted in A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Entre développement stato-centré et democratisation politique", *Cahiers de l'Orient,* No.60, Quatrième Trimestre 2000, pp.65- 89 (70)

[1129] D. SALEHI-ISFAHANI, "Labor and the Challenge of Economic Restructuring in Iran", *Middle East Report,* No. 210, Spring, 1999, pp. 34-37

[1130] M. KHATAMI, "Towze'eye siasi va towze'eye sanati", in M.KHATAMI, *Towze'eye Siasi, Towze'eye Eqtesadi va Amniat,* Tehran, Tarh-e No, 1379, pp.141-149 (141-142)

inflation.[1131] These middlemen, in essence the bazaar and the tendencies incarnated by the traditional right, were repeatedly, although often indirectly targeted by Khatami when the latter insisted on increasing production in Iran.[1132] Although this seemed a point the modern left and the modern right could agree upon, part of the modern left coalition harshly criticized Rafsanjani's economic policy. *Iran-e Farda*, while underlining that petrol constituted the only part of Iranian production present on the world markets, underlined how national industry was sacrificed by the financial and fiscal policies of Minister Nourbakhsh, a trustee of Rafsanjani.[1133] It also heavily criticized the First Five Year Plan of Rafsanjani's government. Evaluating it as fruitless and deficient the magazine asked rhetorically: "*Do our hands always have to come in direct contact with the fire, before we realize the 'danger' of burning it represents?*"[1134]

The resistance of the traditional right was not easily overcome. On the other hand new industrialists complained that the urgent need of busses was met by importation and not by the development of internal production.[1135] Declaring the will and necessity to industrialize is one thing, doing so is altogether another. As Kanovsky lines out: " *The government is unable to raise sufficient capital (…) in part because so many resources are devoted to subsidies.*" These subsidies however spare economically weaker groups from the harsh economic reality and in so doing guarantee the government a certain degree of legitimacy. Hence what was true for the Rafsanjani period was at least as true for Khatami "*this is achievable at the cost of reducing the standard of living of the general*

[1131] M. KHATAMI, "Towze'eye siasi va towze'eye sanati", in M.KHATAMI, *Towze'eye Siasi, Towze'eye Eqtesadi va Amniat,* Tehran, Tarh-e No, 1379, pp.141-149 (146)

[1132] See for example M. KHATAMI, "Sakhtar-e Nasalem Eqtesadie Iran", in M.KHATAMI, *Towze'eye Siasi, Towze'eye Eqtesadi va Amniat,* Tehran, Tarh-e No, 1379, pp.191-204

[1133] M. TANHA, "San'at-e Melli, Qorbani-e Siasat-e Jadid-e Puli", *Iran-e Farda,*No.2, Farvardi-Ordibehesht 1372, pp.75-76 and Declarations of Nourbakhsh in *Salam,* 27/11/1371

[1134] X. , "Bohran-e Kanuni va Zarurat-e 'Jame'eh Siasi-e Mostaqel", *Iran-e Farda,* No.10, Azar-Dey 1372, pp.2-4

[1135] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Entre développement stato-centré et démocratisation politique", *Cahiers de l'Orient,* No.60, Quatrième Trimestre 2000, pp.65- 89 (88)

population", it would be "*the mass of the population that must pay the cost of increased investment today, in return for uncertain benefits for the wage earners of tomorrow.*"[1136]

Khatami's Economic Rehabilitation Plan foresaw the promotion of non-oil exports, although the proposed method was to continue "*policies already adopted*".[1137] His Five Year Economic Development Plan, the third one after the two plans of the Rafsanjani era, put the accent, rather than on trade liberalization, on market developments, reforming the public administration and the development of human resources and civil society.[1138] The latter objectives in combination with the development of "social justice" are interpreted by Amuzegar as a return of Khatami to his "*reputed old leftist bias*".[1139] Notwithstanding Khatami's personal preferences, they obviously reflected the internal contradictions of his coalition. Quantitatively the plan foresaw an increase in non-oil exports from less than 17 billion dollar to 34,5 billion dollar, an increase in imports from 82 billion dollar to 112,5 billion and a decrease of inflation by 11%.[1140]

Khatami copied some of Rafsanjani's policies and during his second term in office he went further with liberalizing trade, the unifying the exchange rate, eliminating exchange restrictions and attracting foreign direct investments. The IMF states: "*These efforts have culminated in Iran's acceptance of Article VII of the IMF's Articles of Agreement, in return to international financial markets from which it had been absent for almost three*

[1136] S. BEHDAD, "From Populism to Liberalism: The Iranian Predicament", in P. ALIZADEH, *The Economy of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 2000, p.122 (100-144)

[1137] J. AMUZEGAR, "Khatami and the Iranian Economic Policy at Mid-Term", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol.53, No. 4, Autumn 1999, pp.534-552 (537)

[1138] For an overview of the first four development plans of the Islamic Republic see M.A. MOTANI, *Majmu'eh-ye Qavanin-e Barname-ye Aval, Dovvom, Sevvom va Chaharom Towze'e-ye Eqtesadi, Ejtemahi va Farhangi-e Jomhooriye Eslami-e Iran,* Tehran, Entesharat-e Jangal, 1384

[1139] J. AMUZEGAR, "Khatami and the Iranian Economic Policy at Mid-Term", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol.53, no. 4, Autumn 1999, pp.534-552 (539)

[1140] B. KHAJEHPOUR, "Iran's Economy: Twenty Years after the Islamic Revolution", *in* J.L. ESPOSITO & R.K. RAMAZANI, *Iran at the Crossroads,* New York, Palgrave, 2001, pp.93-122 (117)

decades, and its application for membership in the World Trade Organization."[1141]

Not coincidentally President Khatami's greatest achievements are found in those areas that most of the factions could agree upon. Salehi-Isfahani underlines that most of Khatami's successes, as high economic growth, lower unemployment and higher wages, were especially due to the oil boom during Khatami's second term in office. On reducing subsidies Khatami has achieved little, even though it has been proven that some subsidies, like those for gasoline benefit not the *mostazafan* but rather the higher middle class, and could hence have been abolished without endangering the *mostazafan*.[1142]

President Ahmadinejad, notwithstanding (necessary) populist promises during his election campaign, was not elected as a leftist president. His membership of the far right was not merely "cultural". His constituency being the *mostazafan* and the Basij, he famously promised them to "bring the oil rents to their tables", which a part from being a populist promise, also underlined where Ahmadinejad's priorities would be situated, namely on redistribution and clientelism rather than on industrialization and modernization. An example of such clientelist logic was offered by the establishment of yet another charitable fund aimed this time at resolving problems of the youth, including unemployment, marriage and so on. [1143] The so-called *Mehr-e Emam Reza* Fund declared on July 8, 2008 that it had in two years time offered marriage loans to over 1.6 million people.[1144]

[1141] A. JBILI, V. KRAMARENKO & J. BAILEN, Islamic Republic of Iran: Managing the Transition to a Market Economy, Washington Dc, International Monetary Fund, 2007, p.xi

1142 B. SAMII, F. AMAN & M. AHMADI, "Iran: Khatami Receives Mixed Marks For His Economic And Political Legacies", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 4 August 2005

[1143] X, "Youth Problems", Afarinesh, as republished in "Persian Press Watch", *Iran Daily*, November 15, 2005

[1144] X., "1.6 miljun nafar vam-e ezdevaj gereftand", *Alef,* 18 Tir 1387, http://alef.ir//content/view/29085/

The new president's harsh rhetoric on foreign policy was useful to scare of investors and provoked new international sanctions, including especially trade restrictions.[1145] Although oil rents were invested in infrastructure projects, many of them have been criticized as reckless.[1146] In reality, this policy was rather unsurprising, since while in office as mayor of Tehran Ahmadinejad had already come under fire for a lack of transparency in the use of public funds and using infrastructure works to pass state money to groups supportive of him, as the *Sepah*. An employee of the Tehran city administration explained me how Ahmadinejad was now only doing at a national level, what he had been doing on a municipal level till then. Increasing the cash flow in the economy, Ahmadinejad also more than doubled inflation. When looking at the 2006-2007 budget, one sees a 217 billion dollar budget, of which 68 billion was allocated to the private sector and 149 billion to other state enterprises. Government spending was planned to increase by 27%.[1147]

On privatization, Ahmadinejad, while continuing the general move towards privatization, opposed the traditional way of privatization which implied "selling to the highest bidder", which he argued would only favor a small economic elite, often linked to state elites. The best incarnation of this privatization towards crony-capitalism are and remain the Rafsanjani family and their connections. Instead the new president tried to privatize companies by dividing shares with the people[1148], by dividing them in so-called *saham-e edalat* (justice shares). On the one hand the economic efficiency of such measures can be disputed, on the other hand it is incontestable that such measures are destined to avoid the emergence (or strengthening) of monopolies, an economic problem which emerged in post-Soviet countries and to

[1145] B. DARAGAHI, "Iran economists denounce Ahmadinejad's policies", *Los Angeles Times*, 10 November 2008

[1146] J.D. GOODMAN, "Ahmadinejad's Conundrum", *Middle East Times*,, 26 September 2008

[1147] K. SELVIK, "Neo-Cons in Power: Impacts on the Economy", *Gulf Studies,* University of Oslo, No.4, 2005, p.11

[1148] A. BAKHTIAR, "Ahmadinejad's Achilles Heel: The Iranian Economy", *Payvand,* 25 January 2007, http://www.payvand.com

which Khatami also repeatedly referred. In theory these measures were intended to favor the emergence of a more egalitarian market. Ahmadinejad did indeed seem to favor the distribution of resources to small-scale industry, how such had to happen however was less clear.[1149] All the more since Ahmadinejad all but escape nepotistic tendencies. Indeed, often the *Sepah* or other cronies of the president were attributed quite some advantages in the move towards privatization.

Notwithstanding its negative consequences, Ahmadinejad's populism did permit some measures of rationalization other governments lacked the courage or power for. The best example of it was offered by the rationing of fuel.[1150] The measure was heavily criticized, but it was far from irrational. As the future showed, the move was a clever way of undermining the subsidy system for fuel. First a rationing card was introduced, in a second time "free fuel" (*azad*) was sold for those needing extra fuel and capable of paying for it at market prices.[1151] In a third time and after extensive propaganda from the government side on how these subsidies did not favor the poor, fuel prices were steadily increased. Even some months before the presidential elections of 2009 the Majles' Special Commission on Economic Reform increased fuel (*benzin* and *gasoil*) prices. Hamid Reza Katouzian, president of the Majles Commission for Energy, added to this increase that "*This year the government imported 8 billion dollar worth of fuel from abroad. It got permission of the Majles for 3 billion of these. The rest was imported by the government itself. For the next year this money is absent. So we certainly have to go in the direction of bringing prices in touch with reality (vaghei kardan).*"[1152] This reduction in subsidies led to an increasing alienation of the middle classes, yet while this would have been a major problem

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[1149] K. SELVIK, "Neo-Cons in Power: Impacts on the Economy", *Gulf Studies,* University of Oslo, No.4, 2005, p.12

[1150] C. THERME, « L'Iran rationne sa consommation d'essence », *Caucaz.com*, 28.06.2007, http://www.caucaz.com/home/breve_contenu.php?id=446

[1151] T. ERDBRINK, "Iran Confronts an 'Economic Evolution", *The Washington Post,* 4 December 2008

[1152] X., "Komision-e vizhe tarahe tahavol-e eqtesadi-e majles baraye sal-e aiande tasvib kard: benzin 350 toman, gazoil 100 toman", *Etemaad,* 16 Bahman 1387

for the modern left and the modern right, Ahmadinejad himself was not elected by these groups, so he did not feel overly affected by their protests that sometimes went as far as setting fire to gas stations.[1153]

Another reform that had been defined as necessary to develop a liberal-capitalist state was the reform of the Labor Law, which some deemed too pro-worker.[1154] For obvious reasons it had been hard for the Left to tackle this issue, since the Labor Law had been a major symbol in its struggle with the traditional right during the first revolutionary decade. Ahmadinejad however succeeded in putting the issue on the table. And his proposed reform of the law was indeed in line with his affiliation to the far right.[1155] It abolished the legal minimum wage, replacing it with rates freely agreed upon between employers and workers; it generalized verbal employment contracts, diminished limitations on firing for employers and cancelled the automatic rights of workers on legal holidays, sick leave and pensions, organizing them instead on a case to case basis. To avoid excessive protests independent trade unions, that were already a marginal phenomenon, where banned in favor of Islamic Guidance Councils, very much on the model of the councils that Islamized factories after the revolution.[1156] The *saham-e edalat* mentioned above do also have to be seen in this perspective, linking the workers salary to the enterprises benefits, makes them less inclined to strike.

If the third revolutionary decade made one thing clear, it was clearly the huge evolution Iran had undergone since the first revolutionary decade. Since the first five-year plan of Rafsanjani the liberalizing trend in the economy has not been questioned. Even Ahmadinejad who

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[1153] N. BOGHRATI, "Two Years Into Term Ahmadinejad grapples with economy", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 31 July 2007
[1154] B. KHAJEHPOUR, "Iran's Economy: Twenty Years after the Islamic Revolution", *in* J.L. ESPOSITO & R.K. RAMAZANI, *Iran at the Crossroads*, New York, Palgrave, 2001, pp.93-122 (109)
[1155] F. RAISDANA & M. MALJOO, "Reflections on Draft Amendments of Iranian Labor Law", *Goftogu*, No.49, Mordad 1386, pp.73-82 [In Persian]
[1156] A. TAHERI, "Why Ahmadinejad Wants a New Labor Law for Iran", *Iran Press Service*, April 2007

misses no occasion to state that both liberalism and communism are dead, continues to defend (his version of) economic liberalization and privatization. Khatami's government demonstrated how even those that had been the staunchest devotees of a fundamental change in economic relations, that is the Islamic Left, had undergone an enormous ideological shift. The return to the front stage of politics of Mousavi in the 2009 presidential election should not alter this process fundamentally. Clearly formulating a coherent economic policy has become much more feasible, at the same time however the resistance to certain types of reforms, in essence those that would infringe on the privileges of the established classes, is still considerable. Understanding and acknowledging these still very present limits and disagreements is a necessity to overcome them.[1157] The presence of such limits on the other hand should not hide the undeniable increase in coherence in economic policy since 1979. Comparing to the unstable and populist economics under charismatic rule, Iran definitely rationalized its economic policy-making.[1158] The global evolution in economic policy, illustrated here in a very general overview of the main economic issues of the three revolutionary decades does show that at least from the point of view of economic policy, there is little or no sense in speaking of a "disintegrating Iranian state".

6.2.   *Foreign Policy*

6.2.1.   Foreign policy during the first revolutionary decade

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic states that it is the objective of the state to frame Iran's foreign policy on the basis of Islamic criteria,

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[1157] S. BEHDAD & F. NOMANI, "Workers, Peasants, and Peddlers: A Study of Labor Stratification in the Post-Revolutionary Iran", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4, November 2002, pp. 667-690 (688)

[1158] Compare A.A. SAEIDI, "Charismatic Political Authority and Populist Economics in Post-Revolutionary Iran", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 2, April 2001, pp. 219-236

fraternal commitment to all Muslims, and total support for the oppressed of the world.[1159] Article 152 of the Constitution elaborates on Khomeini's "Neither West, nor East"-slogan by stating that the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic is based on the banishment or rejection of all ways of domination and submission to domination, the preservation of the independence on all fronts and the territorial integrity of the country, the defence of the rights of all Muslims, an absence of commitment towards the dominant powers and mutually peaceful relations with all non-bellicose States. During early pre-revolutionary times four themes alternatively fuelled and fashioned this Khomeinist concept: Third World-solidarity, Pan-Islamism, Shi'i solidarity and Iranian nationalism.[1160] Article 154 offers a marvellous contradiction permitting the most opposing factions to remain within the framework of the constitution. Indeed it states: "*while totally refraining from any kind of intervention in the internal affairs of other nations, it* [the Islamic Republic] *defends the struggles for justice of the mostazafan against the oppressors (mostakbarin) in every corner of the world*". Both passive non-interventionism as active export of the revolution are thus totally constitutional. Both radicalization, possibly cumulative if both the *artesh* and the *Sepah* would compete, as the construction of "Islamism in one state" are hence totally constitutional. The same ambiguity could be found in Khomeini's doctrine of "export of revolution". Khomeini's distinction between the "greater jihad", which was a spiritual struggle, and the "smaller jihad", the one of armed struggle, inspired some, like occasionally prime minister Mousavi[1161], to propose a peaceful way of exporting revolution.[1162]

[1159] Article 3 of the Iranian Constitution. Vahede Pozhuhesh Maj, *Qanune Asasi Jomhooriye Eslamie Iran*, Tehran, Majmahe Elmi va Farhangi Maj, 1376

[1160] O. ROY, "Le Facteur chiite dans la Politique Extérieure de l'Iran ", *Central Asian Survey,* Vol.9, No.3, 1990, pp.57-75 (57)

[1161] *Foreign Broadcasting Information Service,* 30 October 1984 as referred to by G. SICK, "Iran's Foreign Policy: A Revolution in Transition", *in* N.R. KEDDIE & R. MATTHEE, *Iran and the Surrounding World,* Seattle/London, University of Washington Press, 2002, pp.355-374 (357)

[1162] M. KHADDURI, *The Gulf War, The Origins and Implications of the Iraq-Iran Conflict,* New York, Oxford UP, 1988, p.67

The first major event influencing hugely the future foreign policy of the Islamic Republic was obviously the occupation of the American embassy on 4 November 1979 and the hostage situation resulting from it. The United states predictably cut official diplomatic ties with the Islamic Republic. Yet at the same time the hostage crisis was also one of the first events during which factionalism even within the IRP became visible. The embassy was occupied by "Students following the Line of the Imam" (*khatt-e Emam*). The hostages were finally released the day Ronald Reagan became the new president of the United States. On the one hand this act was obviously a manifestation of radicalism and anti-Americanism, yet in the eyes of many the basis for the later developments and contacts between Iran and the Reagan-administration were to be found here. However it would be thoughtless to consider the hostage-taking an event with any resemblance to an international plot. It is much more reasonable to reframe it in the reality of internal Iranian politics of the time. Not only did the hostage-crisis allow to eliminate the government of Bazargan, but it moreover played an essential role in the elections for the first Majles. Since the documents in the embassy, baptized the "The Den of Spies" , were in the possession of a relatively small group of Islamic students, belonging to what was called the "infantry" of the IRP, the documents released, revealing who was or was not a spy or an "agent" of the United States, were undoubtedly carefully selected. By June 1980, with the elections for the first Majles being over and its result being more than satisfactory, the occupation of the embassy became a liability rather than an asset. From September 1980 on, the conciliatory camp, not surprisingly led by Rafsanjani, and the Foreign Minister of the time started to admit that not all hostages could be considered spies and that it might be time to solve the issue.[1163] This thesis was clearly not supported by radicals, whose concerns were voiced by among others middle-rank cleric Mohammad Mousavi Khoiniha. In the end the committee of the Majles, including Khoiniha, appointed to study the question, concluded that if some conditions were respected, the

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[1163] B. BAKTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran,* Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1996, p.71

hostages could be released.[1164] Not surprisingly the majority of this committee was made up of a majority of the traditional right: on seven members, at least four were prominent members of this faction. They were Ali Khamenei, Nateq-Nuri, Mohammed Yazdi and Ali Akbar Parvaresh.[1165] That the delegation that signed the agreement with the Americans in Algiers was led by a radical, Behzad Nabavi, was hence little representative of whose hands the final decision had been in.[1166]

This event already offers a first and limited view of the attitude towards foreign policy of different factions. The "infantry" of the IRP made up in this case mainly of students, supported by middle-rank clerics, wanted to radicalize by pushing the occupation of the embassy as far as possible. The traditional right and what would become Rafsanjani's group were not willing to do so, because not only did their economic plans in the end necessitate some kind of international appeasement, they also realized that the war with Iraq required a more pragmatic attitude. They hence used the actions of radicalizing factions for as long as useful, in essence until after the election of the first Majles and used then their leverage in the Majles to limit the effect of exaggeratedly radicalizing policies.

The factional alignments on the occupation of the embassy and the hostage-crisis opposed hence more or less what Alijani called the IRP infantry or what has been called *maktabis* to the rest, in essence the traditional right and what can in a somewhat anachronistic way be called the technocratic or modern right faction. A second crisis would make the factional alignment vis-à-vis foreign policy even clearer.

In 1982 Iran faced a crucial choice. After most of Iranian territory had been freed from Iraqi occupying troops, the question was now should the war be continued on Iraqi territory. In other words should Iran

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[1164] B. BAKTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran,* Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1996, p.72-73
[1165] B. BAKTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran,* Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1996, p.72
[1166] A. SCHIRAZI, *The Constitution of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1998, p.70

invade Iraq? History offers an affirmative answer to this question, yet not without nuance. When Basra, a Shi'i city in the Iraqi south is attacked, it are the *Sepah* and the *Basij* that try to take it, with less than minimal collaboration of the regular armed forces, the *artesh*.[1167] The greater enthusiasm of the parallel forces was not without reason. The military had seen one of its favorites, Bani Sadr, removed from power and was, notwithstanding the purges, not nearly as "Islamic" as its parallel institutions. As mentioned before the social composition of these forces also made that they were more inclined to fight, and die, for the export of the revolution. Simplifying it can be asserted that the *mostazafan* of the *Sepah* had more revolutionary fervor than the middle-class nationalists of the *Artesh*.[1168] After the demise of Bani Sadr the military had been relegated to a second place and the decision to continue the war on Iraqi territory was undoubtedly inspired more by the *Sepah* than by the regular army.[1169] In other words, those that formed the infantry linked to the IRP had won the competition concerning policy-decisions, but expecting enthusiastic cooperation from the defeated institution would have been too much to ask.

The same year witnessed another major event in Iranian foreign policy: the foundation of the Lebanese Hezbollah. The Lebanese Hezbollah was founded by a group of around 2000 members of the *Sepah* under the direct control of Mohtasami, member of the Islamic Left faction and future member of the MRM.[1170] Mohammed Montazeri, son of ayatollah Montazeri, too was involved in the process.[1171] Next to

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[1167] R. GUOLO, *La Via dell'Imam*, Bari, Editori Laterza, 2007, p.44 & E. KARSH, *The Iran-Iraq War: A Military Analysis,* Adelphi Papers 220, International Institute of Strategic Studies, 1987, p.26

[1168] A.S.HASHIM, "Civil-Military Relations in the Islamic Republic of Iran", in J.A. KECHICHIAN, *Iran, Iraq and the Arab Gulf States,* New York, Palgrave, 2001, pp.31-53 (39)

[1169] E. KARSH, *The Iran-Iraq War: A Military Analysis*, Adelphi Papers 220, International Institute of Strategic Studies, 1987, p.43

[1170] Hashemi Rafsanjani describes how he frequently discussed the operations in Lebanon with Mohsen Rezai, then commander-in-chief of the *Sepah*, see A.A. HASHEMI RAFSANJANI, *Aramesh va Chalesh,* Tehran, Nashr-e Moaref-e Enqelab, 1386

[1171] See S. MERVIN, *Le Hezbollah, état des lieux,* Paris, Sindbad/Actes Sud, 2008, pp.77-78 & R. SHAERY-EISENLOHR, "Postrevolutionary Iran and Shi'i Lebanon: contested histories

resistance to the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, export of the revolution was a direct goal. In the Lebanese case indeed *realpolitik*, in essence countering Israeli geopolitical advances, and ideology-driven policy coincided. In practice the accent was put on Shi'i resistance, of both military organizations Amal and Hezbollah, independent from Arab states and "communist" groups.[1172] Not only did the declaration of principles of Hezbollah stated its intent to establish an Islamic state in Lebanon, moreover its world vision seemed an exact copy of the one that had inspired Khomeini, it mentioned both the opposition between *mostazafan* and *mostakbaran* as *velayat-e faqih*.[1173] After the attack on French and US troops in Beirut on October 23, 1983,[1174] in 1985 the newly established Lebanese Hezbollah hijacked flight TWA 847 and took hostage crew and passengers, among which some American citizens.[1175] At the same time because of the war with Iraq, Iran was in desperate need of modern armaments. It is significant that it were Rafsanjani, at the time Speaker of Parliament, and the minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Akbar Velayati and not prime minister Mousavi, that ordered the Iranian ambassador in Syria to tell Hezbollah to release the hostages.[1176] Mousavi was a member of the *maktabi* faction, while Rafsanjani and Velayati, a member of the traditional right, defended a more "pragmatic" foreign policy, for the very same reasons that had led them to end the first hostage-crisis at the American embassy. Unfortunately for the traditional right and the future technocrats or modern right, Washington did not acknowledge the Iranian efforts and refused to engage in meaningful negotiations. Parsi describes how in the end the Iranians were forced to talk to Israel in

of Shi'i transnationalism", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.39, No.2, May 2007, pp.271-289

[1172] S. TABATABA'I, *Khaterat-e Siasi-e Ejtemahi: Lubnan, Emam Sadr va Enqelab-e Felestin*, Jeld-e 2, Tehran, Orouj, 1387, pp.308-310

[1173] J.E. ALAGHA, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology and Political Program*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2006, p.115

[1174] On how these attacks were seen among the Iranian elite see A.A. HASHEMI RAFSANJANI, *Aramesh va Chalesh*, Tehran, Nashr-e Moaref-e Enqelab, 1386, pp.265-266

[1175] T. PARSI, *Treacherous Alliance, The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the U.S.*, New Haven, Yale UP, 2007, p.115

[1176] T. PARSI, *Treacherous Alliance, The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the U.S.*, New Haven, Yale UP, 2007, p.115

order to obtain American weapons: "*This created a perfectly balanced triangular relationship – Washington wanted the release of the hostages, Tel Aviv wanted closer links with Iran, and Tehran wanted arms.*"[1177] However the discussions between Washington and Iran on an arms deal were not perceived as positive by all in Iran. Rather on the contrary, ayatollah Montazeri, officially appointed as successor to Khomeini, decided to make the dealings public through a Lebanese newspaper. The choice of Lebanon was linked clearly to his son's role in Hezbollah. Counting on the *maktabi* faction in Iran, Montazeri hoped to tilt the internal power balance in his favor. In the end it would be Mehdi Hashemi, linked to the Lebanese Hezbollah almost since the beginning and an Islamic Left member of the IRP who would expose the question inside Iran. Yet, Montazeri's gamble turned against Hashemi, who was charged with undermining Islamic unity and, a little ironically, executed for arms smuggle and kidnapping.[1178] That Rafsanjani proved to be the winner of an affair that could easily have signified his downfall, was in more than way the result of his carefully nurtured ties to Khomeini. When Rafsanjani becomes commander-in-chief of the armed forces in 1988,[1179] this is as much a sign of the growing weariness of a war that cannot be won (even among the most enthusiastic defenders of the war), as it is a reflection of the growing importance of the modern right within the regime, which in alliance with the traditional right that controlled the Foreign Ministry, increased its influence on foreign policy.

A similar movement can be seen in Afghanistan. The first Afghan war that started in 1979, the year of the Iranian revolution. Islamic fundamentalists, with Osama Bin Laden, opposed the pro-Soviet government and started armed struggle against it. Sunni-fundamentalists armed and organized by the US and Pakistan.[1180] Iran,

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[1177] T. PARSI, *Treacherous Alliance, The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the U.S.,* New Haven, Yale UP, 2007, p.116

[1178] B. BAKTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran,* Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1996, p.137-138

[1179] R. GUOLO, *La Via dell'Imam,* Bari, Editori Laterza, 2007, p.51

[1180] J. PRADOS (ed.), *The September 11th Sourcebooks, Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the Last War, U.S. Analysis Of The Soviet War In Afghanistan: Declassified*, 09.10.2001, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/us.html

and especially the Islamic Left, also supported the resistance against the atheist USSR, the "lesser Satan". As in Lebanon, the Iranians tried to organize the Shi'i population under Iranian leadership.[1181] Yet, due to the growing influence of the two factions opposed to the Islamic Left's maximalist approach to foreign policy, Iran eventually came to an unspoken agreement with the USSR, in exchange for political influence it calmed down the attacks of the Shi'i population against Soviet troops, a collaboration that was to continue after Soviet withdrawal.[1182] Iran's scope became political influence and stability, rather than terrorism and exportation of revolution.[1183] Even if total Shi'i unity was not achieved,[1184] the founding in 1989 of the *Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami Afghanistan* (Party of Islamic Unity of Afghanistan), an important Shi'i party led by clerics educated in Iran and overcoming some of the tribal divisions that had characterized the *Harekat-e Enqelab-e Eslami* (Movement for the Islamic Revolution)[1185], incarnated the relative success of this new approach.[1186]

Summarizing this first decade of foreign policy, it is undeniable that the interaction and dialectic relations between the different social forces composing the Islamic Republic and the institutions of the dual state order permitted both radicalization as the limiting of it. The radical Islamic Left, pushed forward by the *mostazafan*, were counterbalanced by mercantile or other bourgeois pragmatics. The actions of the *Sepah* and the *Basij* and the possibility for them to reach their objectives were

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[1181] O. ROY, "The Iranian Foreign Policy Toward Central Asia", s.d., http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/regional/royoniran.html

[1182] Rafsanjani promised the Soviets that Iran would help prevent a US dominated Afghanistan to emerge after Soviet withdrawal. H. EMADI, "Exporting Iran's Revolution: The Radicalization of the Shiite Movement in Afghanistan", *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol.31, No.1, January 1995, pp. 1-12 (8)

[1183] Compare *a contrario* H. EMADI, "Exporting Iran's Revolution: The Radicalization of the Shiite Movement in Afghanistan", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1, January 1995, pp. 1-12

[1184] See also M. URBAN, *War in Afghanistan,* London, MacMillan, 1990

[1185] A. RASHID, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia,* New Haven, Yale UP, 2001, p.70

[1186] O. ROY, "The Iranian Foreign Policy Toward Central Asia", http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/regional/royoniran.html

de facto limited by the lack of collaboration by the *artesh*, which shared neither the same objectives, nor the same social constituency.

6.2.2. Foreign policy during the second revolutionary decade

When Rafsanjani launches the slogan "reconstruction" (*sazandegi*), he is in the first place thinking of the economy. [1187] After the revolution the provisional and liberal government of Bazargan had launched a "Jehad-é Sazandegi", a crusade for reconstruction which led to a ministry of reconstruction in 1983.[1188] In reality, for Rafsanjani this policy of reconstruction mainly meant "liberalization" and "privatization". As mentioned before economic necessities had an important influence shifts in foreign policy since national "*Iranian industries depended on international markets for around 65 per cent of their input*".[1189]

Rafsanjani will indeed fundamentally change, or try to do so, the economic orientation ànd discourse of Iran. But it would be a mistake not to see the turn in foreign policy objectives. Reconstruction is arguably a poor match for "the construction of socialism in one country", yet some kind of parallel might not be as far-fetched as it would appear. It was Rafsanjani that had advised Khomeini to change slogans as "*War until victory*" or the even more maximalist "*The road to Jerusalem goes through Kerbala*", which incarnated the export of revolution and radicalization. The latter slogan came to mean no longer: "*Let's conquer Jerusalem*", rather it now incarnated moderation, Kerbala being much closer to Iran than Jerusalem. Rafsanjani wanted these slogans replaced with the image of "drinking the poison chalice"

[1187] E. FERDOWS, "The Reconstruction Crusade and Class Conflict in Iran", *MERIP Reports*, No.113, March-April 1983, pp.11-15

[1188] C. HAGHIGHAT, *La Révolution islamique*, Paris, Editions Complexe, 1979, pp.105-106

[1189] H. AMIRAHMADI, "Economic Reconstruction of Iran: Costing the War Damage", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 1, January 1990, pp. 26-47 (33)

of ending the war for the benefit of the Islamic republic".[1190] The change in slogans, inspired obviously by socio-economic necessities, *de facto* permitted to end the war with Iraq and accept the relative UN-resolution. Risen to the presidency Rafsanjani will then shift aside radicalism on a foreign policy level. Appeasement towards the West in function of national reconstruction will replace all ideas of radicalization or export of revolution. An evolution made possible by the crumbling of the Islamic Left.

Logically, the end of the Iraq war did not immediately imply an end to the hostility between Iraq and Iran. However Iraq's high debts towards other Arab states, which had rather generously funded Iraq during its war with Iran, forced Saddam Hussein to find a solution. The solution was quickly found in neighboring Kuwait. Kuwait had taken over much of the Iraqi debt and, in Iraqi eyes, refused to increase oil prices (by bringing down production) to allow Iraq to finance its reconstruction.[1191] Other points of disagreement among both states were easily found. One of these were lingering border disputes on the northern part of Kuwait, a consequence of British policy in 1923 which had given Kuwait more territory than it traditionally controlled to restrict Iraq's access to the Gulf.[1192] In a note addressed to the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States Tarek Aziz enumerated these grievances.[1193] Iraq felt especially betrayed because it had fought against Iran in defense of the Arab Nation and was now refused assistance by other members of this Nation.

However before he could possibly think of invading Kuwait, Saddam Hussein had to obtain security on its Iranian border. Therefore the Iraqi

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[1190] R. PEAR, "Khomeini accepts 'poison' of ending the war with Iraq; UN sending mission", *Special Report to the New York Times,* 21 July 1988

[1191] J. BULLOCK & H. MORRIS, *Saddam's War*, London, Faber and Faber, 1991, p.100

[1192] W.L. CLEVELAND, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, Boulder, Westview Press, 2000, p.463

[1193] T. AZIZ, "*Note addressee au secrétaire général de la Ligue des Etats arabes le 16 juillet 1990*", in P. SALINGER & E. LAURENT, *Guerre du Golfe, Le Dossier secret,* Paris, Olivier Orban, 1991, pp.279-288

government decided to accept a peace treaty[1194] that many Iranians perhaps unreasonably considered a recognition of Iranian victory. Nonetheless abandoning the Iraqi claims on the *Shatt-el Arab* was more than just a symbolic gesture,[1195] as Iranian scholar Ashgar Kazemi writes Saddam was "*speaking of peace with Iran while preparing for war against Kuwait.*"[1196]

When, after the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the United States made clear that they would not acquiesce, Iran faced a hard choice. On the one hand the United States were obviously the official main enemy of the revolution and Iranian independence and support for Western intervention in a Muslim country was ideologically difficult to justify for an Islamic Republic. On the other hand however, Saddam Hussein's popularity in Iran was understandably inexistent and the idea that Iraq would dominate the Kuwaiti oil fields did not enchant the Iranians. President Rafsanjani echoed Iran's official neutrality, which in practice meant that Iraq would not have to expect any Iranian support. This neutrality was officially pronounced by the Supreme Council for National Security.[1197] This council is, according to article 176 of the Iranian constitution, made up of among others the heads of three branches of the government, the head of the general command of the Armed Forces, two representatives of the Leader, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Interior and Intelligence, and the highest ranking officials from the *artesh* and the *Sepah*. Notwithstanding the presence of Mehdi Karroubi in his position as Speaker of Parliament, considering that at least the Leader and hence his representatives, Khamenei; the head of the Executive branch, Rafsanjani; the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Velayati belonged to either the traditional or the modern right,

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[1194] The initial proposition was made by Saddam Hussein to Rafsanjani, F.A. JABAR, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq*, London, Saqi, 2003, p.268

[1195] B. BAKTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1996, p.208

[1196] A. ASHGAR KAZEMI, "Peace through Deception: the Iran-Iraq Correspondence", in F. RAJAEE (ed.), *Iranian Perspectives on the Iraq-Iran War*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1997, pp.111-119 (115)

[1197] *Ettela'at*, 20 Januari 1991, as referred to in M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.178

it was difficult for the what used to be the IRP's infantry to weigh on decisions. Although Rafsanjani added to this that US forces should leave the area after the conflict was over, Keyhan expressed the Islamic Left's criticism of the Saudi decision to let American troops use Saudi bases. The Militant Clerics Association, still led by Karroubi, issued a statement in which they considered the turning to the West for help as "more shameful and irresponsible" than the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq.[1198] The opposition between the Islamic Left and Rafsanjani was obvious. The former wished to expel American forces from the region, the latter implicitly accepted them, thinking of credits and loans Iran needed for reconstruction. The traditional right criticized the American presence in the region, yet significantly did not side with the radical position to "expel" them. Rhetoric was preferred over action.[1199]

After the 1991 war one event made clear just how much ground the Islamic Left had lost. With the central government of Saddam Hussein weakened, Iraqi Shi'i's decided to revolt, hoping on American and Iranian support to overthrow the Baathist regime. They received neither.[1200] Iran did not even protest when the Iraqi army bombed the holy shrine of Najaf, where the tomb of Imam Ali, the first of the twelve Shi'i imams, is located.[1201] The Islamic Left had not been able to influence the Iranian position on the US war against Iraq and now it even proved incapable of aiding a religious rebellion in a neighboring country with which Iran has century-old ties.[1202] The latter failure

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[1198] *Foreign Broadcasting Information Service South-Asia*, 15 August 1990 as quoted by B. BAKTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran,* Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1996, p.209

[1199] B. BAKTIARI, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran,* Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1996, p.211

[1200] N. ABDEL MONEIM MOSS'AD, "Nouvelle Orientation de la deuxième république iranienne: priorités – instruments – contraintes" in M. CAMAU, A.E. HILAL DESSOUKI & J.-C. VATIN, *Crise du golfe et Ordre politique au Moyen-Orient,* Paris, CNRS Eds. 1993, pp.97-116 (97)

[1201] T. COVILLE, *Iran La Révolution invisible,* Paris, La Découverte, 2007, p.207

[1202] Important Shi'i pilgrimage sites and religious seminars are found in the Iraqi cities of Najaf and Kerbala. Many Iraqis in Southern Iraq share not only the Shi'i belief, but often also have family ties with Iran. Ayatollah Al-Sistani, the most important Shi'i cleric today personifies these ties. Born in Iran he has lived and worked in Iraq for over 50 years.

should not be exaggerated, because there were multiple reasons for the fiasco of the Shi'i rebellion[1203] as for the lack of Iranian support for it. [1204] Nonetheless, the difference in the internal balance of power with the beginning of the 1980's in Lebanon and even Afghanistan was noticeable. In Lebanon moreover Hezbollah gained some autonomy in the definition of its goals. None of the electoral programs of Hezbollah for the parliamentary and municipal elections from 1992 to 2005 referred to the establishment of an Islamic State.[1205] In Chechnya the Iranians did not even seriously consider intervening.

The beginning of the second revolutionary decade and the presidency of Rafsanjani were also characterized by what has become known as the Rushdie affair. When Salman Rushdie, an Indian born British author published his book "The Satanic Verses" during the second half of 1988, there was at first no direct reaction from Iran. This was only partially surprising. On the one hand Rushdie's book obviously attacked some of the main principals of Islam by stating that the prophet Mohammad would also have been inspired by Satan. On the other hand Rushdie's book was far from the only book challenging Islam's basic tenets and most of these books went rather unnoticed. Nonetheless, five months after the book had been published, four months after India banned the book and three months after it had been first discussed in the Iranian media, the now infamous *fatwa*[1206] was

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[1203] Notably a lack of coordination, centralization and strategic objectives. F.A. JABAR, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq*, London, Saqi, 2003, p.269-270

[1204] Like the fact that Iraqi Shi'i preferred to fight with the Iraqi regime against Iran during the Iraq-Iran war P. HARLING & H. YASIN, "Iraq's diverse Shia", *Le Monde diplomatique*, English Edition, September 2006, http://mondediplo.com/2006/09/05iraq & L. BEEHNER, "Iran's Involvement in Iraq", *Council on Foreign Relations*, 12.02.2007, http://www.cfr.org/publication/12521/irans_involvement_in_iraq.html

[1205] J.E. ALAGHA, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology and Political Program*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2006, p.183

[1206] Even if Khomeini's *fatwa* called for the death of Rushdie, a *fatwa* is in reality nothing more than the opinion of a religious jurist an a point of Islamic law. It is not, contrary to what many Western commentators insinuated, a death warrant. T.P. HUGHES, *A Dictionary of Islam*, New Delhi-Madras, Asian Educational Services, 2001,p.127

issued by Khomeini.[1207] While Daniel Pipes, true to his ideological inclination, asserts that mere religious motives were at the basis of the *fatwa*, William Waldegrave of the British Foreign Office attributed Khomeini's *fatwa* to the influence of radical elements within Iran.[1208] Pipes asserts that there was no time for a meeting between different factions in Iran. According to Pipes, Khomeini saw demonstrations against the book on television and then called his secretary to dictate the *fatwa*.[1209] In reality, as mentioned before, several months passed between the publication and review of the book on the one hand and the *fatwa* on the other. If time was not of the essence, timing was. Kamrane underlines that there does probably not exist a direct causal link between Rushdie's book, that is the actual text of it, and Khomeini's edict. According to Kamrane, Khomeini edicted the *fatwa* to take a leading role in the Islamic world.[1210] When Pakistanis started demonstrating and even a non-Muslim country as India had forbidden the book, the leading role of Iran's Islamic Republic seemed indeed threatened.

Concerning the timing of the *fatwa* another fact has to be stressed. The *fatwa* came at a time that the war against Iraq was over and no longer mobilized the people. The Islamic Left faction was rapidly losing ground to the right, both traditional and modern who wished a more "pragmatic" foreign policy.[1211] Khomeini had always been attentive to the balance between different factions, his *fatwa* should hence also be interpreted as an attempt to rebalance the system's factional game. Members of the two right-wings were quick to condemn Rushdie's

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[1207] D. PIPES, *The Rushdie Affaire,The Novel, The Ayatollah and the West,* London, Transaction Publishers, 2003, p.97 & D. WIGG, "Rushdie Novel banned in India", *The Independent,* 6 October 1988 as reproduced in L. APPIGNANESI & S. MAITLAND, *The Rushdie File,* Syracuse, Syracuse UP, 1990, pp.33-35

[1208] *The Wall Street Journal,* 22 February 1989 & D. PIPES, *The Rushdie Affaire, The Novel, The Ayatollah and the West,* London, Transaction Publishers, 2003, p.96

[1209] D. PIPES, *The Rushdie Affaire, The Novel, The Ayatollah and the West,* London, Transaction Publishers, 2003, p.97-99

[1210] R. KAMRANE, *La fatwa contre Rushdie,* Paris, Editions Kimé, 1997, p.108

[1211] For some observers the *fatwa* came hence as a bit of a surprise. R. AUBERT, *L'Affaire Rushdie,* Paris, Cerf/Fides, 1990, p.81

book in extremely violent words. For the modern right, Rafsanjani declared the publication of the book was worse than "*any officially declared war*".[1212] For the traditional right Khamenei's speech at the Friday prayer spoke of a "*cultural front*" of Great-Britain against Islam.[1213] This was an obvious tactic to avoid giving the monopoly of struggle against the West to the Islamic Left. Such a monopoly would indeed have allowed them to regain some strength. The use of such a tactic was simplified by the traditional right's reputation as extremely conservative in socio-cultural matters. However the traditional right also used the Rushdie-affair to attack the modern right's policies. Indeed, ayatollah Fazel-Lankarani, prominent member of the *Jame'eye Modaresin-e Howzeye Elmi-e Qom* (The Society of Teachers of the Scientific Seminars of Qom), sided with the traditional right against the modern right's attempts to accomplish some kind of détente with the West, both on an economic as on a socio-cultural level.[1214]

If some affinity existed between a branch of the Islamic Left and the traditional right on the Rushdie issue, and tactical considerations forced even the modern right to participate in the attacks on Rushdie, factionalism was no major factor in Iran's foreign policy on the Yugoslavian civil war. By 1996 it had become clear that notwithstanding an official arms embargo, both the Clinton administration and Iran had secretly sold weapons to Bosnian Muslims. Iranian involvement had become clear by 1994. Clinton had just helped establish a federation of Bosnian Croats and Muslims and when Croatian president Tudjman inquired about the possibility of organizing "a full-scale "pipeline" of arms from Iran to Bosnia",

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[1212] "Iran's Majlis Speaker says publication of the Satanic Verses was 'worse than any officially declared war' ", *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts,* 17 February 1989, in L. APPIGNANESI & S. MAITLAND, *The Rushdie File,* Syracuse, Syracuse UP, 1990, pp.68-71
[1213] "Iranian President's sermon at Friday prayers attacks British policy on the Satanic Verses Issue", *Tehran Home Service,* 17 February 1989, *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts,* 20 February 1989 in in L. APPIGNANESI & S. MAITLAND, *The Rushdie File*, Syracuse, Syracuse UP, 1990, pp.72-73
[1214] A. GHEISSARI V. NASR, *Democracy in Iran: history and the quest for liberty*, New York, Oxford UP, 2006, p.117

American ambassador Peter Galbraith made no objection.[1215] Time and again the Washington Post mentioned Iranian shipments to the Muslim government of Izetbegovic.[1216] Although on 9 July 1996 Clinton asserted that he had asked the Bosnian government to "terminate its intelligence cooperation with Iran",[1217] only a couple months prior to this statement Bosnia had sent soldiers to Iran for infantry training.[1218] In 1997 the Bosnian governing party openly admitted of receiving 500,000 US dollars from Iran.[1219] In Iran the almost total absence of factional discussions at this level was due to an almost coincidental convergence of interests. Obviously, the Islamic Republic was ideologically almost "forced" to help the Bosnian Muslims against the Serbs or others. Radicals and those organizations once representing the *infantry* of the IRP would not have stood for less. The *Sepah* beneficiated from the export of arms and the training of militants. At the same time however, the Yugoslavian civil war offered an excellent opportunity to collaborate with the United States, something especially the modern right was very keen on, hoping that these informal and often indirect contacts would be the beginning of a more general détente.

The second revolutionary decade, the Rafsanjani decade so to speak, hence clearly saw some kind of Thermidor in international politics. Acquiescence and dialogue with the "enemy" was preferred to radicalism. This did not imply however that Iran abandoned its autonomous foreign policy. Rafsanjani's government might have been pragmatic, it also showed very much able to maintain an independent course, siding with the West when useful, going against it when necessary. The change in foreign policy was reflected in some changes

[1215] M. DANNER, "Hypocrisy in Action: What's the Real Iran-Bosnia Scandal?", *The New Yorker*, 13 May 1996 [Mark Danner Publications, Institute of International Studies, UC Berkeley]

[1216] D. WILLIAMS & T.W. LIPPMAN, "U.S. Allowed Iran to Supply Bosnia Muslims with Arms", *The Washington Post* republished in *The Tech*, MIT, Vol.115, No.18, 14 April 1995

[1217] W. CLINTON, "Statement by the President: Training and Equipping the Bosnian Federation", *The White House, Office of the Press Secretary*, 9 July 1996

[1218] "The Bosnian government is sending soldiers to Iran for infantry training", *Reuter*, 3 March 1996

[1219] X., "Bosnian Party Confirms It Got Iran Money", *The New York Times*, 4 January 1997

in the composition of both the government and parliament. On the one hand the few members of the Rafsanjani (1993) cabinet that had received postgraduate education abroad were clearly incomparable to the 21st pre-revolutionary Majles (1963), of which one third of the members had received foreign high school degrees and with Prime Minister Hoveyda's cabinet (1965-1974) of which over 90% had been educated outside of Iran. On the other hand however comparing the First (1980) to the radical Third (1988) Islamic Majles one sees a relative increase not only in the number of deputies that enjoyed modern education, but also of those with at least some knowledge of English.[1220]

6.2.3. Foreign policy during the third revolutionary decade

Mohammad Khatami's election incarnated change on various levels. Rafsanjani's opening up to the world had been inspired mostly by economic necessities and linked to such incentives. Khatami based his policy on two major pillars, one was cultural liberalization, not without link with his background as Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance which he held from 1982 until the traditional right ousted him in 1992. The second pillar of Khatami's policy was *détente* in foreign policy. Khatami, as Trita Parsi words it, "*took former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's pragmatic streak to entirely new levels.*"[1221] Gary Sick puts it even more straightforwardly by underlining that in one year Khatami restored relations with Gulf neighbors, invigorated its role in the UN, hosted a successful summit of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Countries), restored relations with the European Community, Turkey,

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[1220] C. VAKILI-ZAD, "Conflict among the Ruling Revolutionary Elite in Iran", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.30, No.3, July 1994, pp.618-631 (625-626)

[1221] T. PARSI, *Treacherous Alliance, The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the U.S.*, New Haven, Yale UP, 2007, p.202

Bahrein and Saudi-Arabia.[1222] An impressive record inspired by his philosophy of "Dialogue among civilizations" (*gofteguye tamadonha*).[1223]

One of the main achievements of Khatami was the rapprochement with Saudi-Arabia. Being a relatively pro-Western Sunni monarchy rivaling over regional influence with a relatively autonomous Shi'i republic, it does indeed seem in every possible aspect an opponent to Iran. A painfully bloody illustration of rivalry had been given at the end of the eighties when Saudi police forces massacred hundred of Iranian pilgrims in Saudi-Arabia. Yet one decade later, Prince Abdallah was welcomed with all regards in Tehran by President Khatami, Supreme Leader Khamenei and President of the Expediency Council Rafsanjani.[1224]

Luck did also seem to side with Khatami, since the first major international crisis he was confronted with was Afghanistan, a terrain where, just as in Bosnia, Western and Iranian interests coincided. Iran had been at odds with the Taliban since their very appearance. One could find ideological reasons for such an opposition, Sunni fundamentalism opposing the Iranian Shi'i brand of revolutionary Islam, but the international component should not be obscured. Saudi-Arabia heavily sponsored the Taliban to increase its own influence in the region, notably via Turki Al-Faisal.[1225] The Taliban's project for Afghanistan also contradicted the Iranian idea of a friendly

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[1222] G. SICK, "Iran's Foreign Policy: A Revolution in Transition", *in* N.R. KEDDIE & R. MATTHEE, *Iran and the Surrounding World,* Seattle/London, University of Washington Press, 2002, pp.355-374 (358)

[1223] As opposed to Samuel HUNTINGTON's Clash of Civilizations, S. HUNTINGTON, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Reading/Berkshire, The Free Press, 2002 first published as an article. See also M. ELMANDJRA, *Première guerre civilisationnelle* , Paris, Sindbad, 1992 considered by some as a precursor to HUNTINGTON.

[1224] W. BUCHTA, "The Failed Pan-Islamic Program of the Islamic Republic: Views of Liberal Reformers of the Religious Semi-Opposition", in N.R. KEDDIE & R. MATTHEE, *Iran and the Surrounding World,* Seattle/London, University of Washington Press, 2002, pp.281-304 (281)

[1225] A. RASHID, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia,* New Haven, Yale UP, 2001, p. 72

Afghanistan, possibly under Iranian influence, which had been one of the scopes of the installation of the *Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami Afghanistan*.[1226] Clinton's initial sympathy for the movement, which had historical grounds, soon gave way to a strong anti-Taliban policy of the US. Iran sent weapons to Banniyan, a city belonging to the Shi'i Hazaara group, via Mashad. In collaboration with the US, Iran also sent weapons and material to opponents of the Taliban from southern Tajikistan.[1227] When Banniyan fell, the hostility was such that Iran even threatened to intervene militarily, considering also the massacre of Mazar-e Sharif in August 1988, where dozens were taken hostage at the Iranian consulate and at least 8 Iranian diplomats were killed.[1228] After September 11, Iran increased its help to the US in their war against the Taliban. The Iranian foreign ministry even offered highly valuable intelligence on the Taliban, proposed to help recover American pilots downed in Afghanistan, while sometimes themselves going after Al-Qaeda leaders on the run.[1229] In addition to the CIA's vision of Iran as a competitor in Afghanistan[1230], Gareth Porter and Trita Parsi underline how Israel and neo-conservatives within the US undermined these joint Iranian-American war efforts.[1231] If the inclusion of Iran in the Axis of Evil showed their attempts successful, the Iranians felt betrayed.[1232] In an attempt to cash in on this sentiment of betrayal and stop the process of détente, Mohsen Rezai, leader of the *Sepah* and a staunch opponent

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[1226] O. ROY, "The Iranian Foreign Policy Toward Central Asia",
http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/regional/royoniran.html
[1227] A. RASHID, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, New Haven, Yale UP, 2001, p.72-76
[1228] CNN, "Taliban, Iran hold talks", 03.02.1999,
http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/meast/9902/03/afghan.iran.01/index.html
[1229] For an overview of Iran-US collaboration on Afghanistan see also K. POLLACK, *The Persian Puzzle*, New York, Random House, 2004
[1230] B. SLAVIN, "Iran helped overthrow Taliban, candidate says", *USA Today*, June 9, 2005, http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-06-09-iran-taliban_x.htm
[1231] G. PORTER, "How Neocons Sabotaged Iran's Help on Al-Qaeda", *IPS*, 23 February 2006 & T. PARSI, *Treacherous Alliance, The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the U.S.*, New Haven, Yale UP, 2007, p.227-231
[1232] See for example: A. ANSARI, *Confronting Iran The Failure of American Foreign Policy and the Next Great Conflict in the Middle East*, New York, Basic Books, 2006, pp.186-187 & K. POLLACK, *The Persian Puzzle*, New York, Random House, 2004, p.353

to Khatami, declared that the US had missed an important opportunity by minimizing the role of Iran in Afghanistan.[1233]

Yet, after the fall of Bagdad and notwithstanding Rezai's declaration, the Iranian government once more tried to reach out to the US, a move that illustrated both the strength of Khatami's faction as the sense of opportunity and necessity due to the strength and closeness of the US Armed Forces. In a May 2003 proposal to the US Iran offered to stop all support to Palestinian opposition groups (Jihad, Hamas); help the US in stabilizing Iraq; full transparency on WMD and nuclear programs and incite the Lebanese Hezbollah to become a mere political organization.[1234] Analyzing the reasons for the US refusal of this more than generous Iranian proposal lies without the scope of this study, yet the very proposal and the stopping of the nuclear programs[1235], shows how far President Khatami's movement, admittedly in combination with other factors on the international scene, had pushed Iran in the direction of total reconciliation with the international community.

The failure to reach tangible results delegitimized on an internal level those favoring rapprochement. Although the evolution on the ground in Iraq[1236] would make talks between Iran and the US unavoidable[1237],

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[1233] B. SLAVIN, **"**Iran helped overthrow Taliban, candidate says", *USA Today*, 09.06.2005, http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-06-09-iran-taliban_x.htm

[1234] "Appendix A: Iran's May 2003 Negotiation Proposal to the United States" *in* T. PARSI, *Treacherous Alliance, The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the U.S.*, New Haven, Yale UP, 2007, pp.341-342

[1235] As acknowledged by the American National Intelligence Estimate of late 2007. See National Intelligence Estimate Summary, November 2007, http://i.a.cnn.net/cnn/2007/images/12/03/iran.nie.pdf

[1236] Again Iranian intelligence would prove more than useful J.S. YAPHE, "The United States and Iran in Iraq: Risks and Opportunities", in A. EHTESHAMI & M. ZWEIRI, *Iran's Foreign Policy*, Berkshire, Ithaqa Press, 2008, pp.37-54 (39) Moreover the first post-war Iraqi parliamentary elections showed the extent of Iranian influence. The elections were won by the pro-Iranian United Iraqi Alliance, which took 140 out of 275 seats. Quite some of the Kurdish representatives also had direct or indirect ties to Tehran. BBC, "Shia Majority for Iraqi Parliament", *BBC News*, February 17, 2005 & Iran Focus, "Iran hails "first Islamist Arab state" in Iraq", December 24, 2005, http://www.iranfocus.com/modules/news/article.php?storyid=5006

[1237] And indeed from the middle of 2007 such direct talks started

the Iranian approach to such talks would change considerably when Khatami's successor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad took the reigns of presidency. Ahmadinejad's background and his belonging to what Alijani called the far right made a shift in foreign policy appear unavoidable. The conservatives did seem to have a different view of US-Iranian relations.[1238] In a recent study Eva Rakel indeed asserts: "*Since Ahmadinejad's election foreign policy has again shifted.*"[1239]

Nevertheless, there has been far more continuity than actual policy change.

To be sure, the tone of both presidents has been fundamentally different, from the very reconciling tone of Khatami's dialogue among civilizations to Ahmadinejad's harsh anti-Zionist rhetoric. The actual content of Iranian foreign policy has hardly moved.

The clearest continuities in foreign policy between both presidents are found at the regional level. The reasons are quite simple. While regional integration and rapprochement was an integral part of a broader policy of détente for Khatami and regional stability was useful for Rafsanjani to attract investments to Iran, Ahmadinejad's faction always had had deep attentions for regional links. The same social groups that had at the time defended with fervor the export of the revolution and had been on the front-line in establishing for example the Lebanese Hezbollah. Moreover those groups that had been involved in the training of pro-Iranian militias and the smuggling of weapons, now, in addition to their traditional networks, found themselves in control of the presidency. Rafsanjani's and Khatami's presidency had allowed Iran to establish closer links with for example Hamas and Saudi-Arabia. The criticism of Ahmadinejad's faction on former foreign policy did not question this type of rapprochement, that would be continued.

[1238] H.S. SEIFZADEH, "The Landscape of Factional Politics and Its Future in Iran", *Middle East Journal,* Vol.57, No.1, Winter 2003, pp.57-75 (73)

[1239] E.P. RAKEL, *Power, Islam, and Political elite in Iran,* Leiden, Brill, 2009, p.199

US attempts to isolate Iran in the region have proven rather unsuccessful.[1240] Illustrative of the continuity between the governments of the modern right and the left on the one hand and the far right on the other was the meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council. After two years of Ahmadinejad's presidency, the council, traditionally antagonistic to Iran and uniting all Gulf countries with the notable exceptions of Iran, Iraq and Yemen, invited President Ahmadinejad to the summit. He entered the meeting while symbolically holding hands with the Saudi king. His participation to the *Hajj*, the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, was an extension of this GCC visit. [1241] Qatar openly defended the Iranian idea of regional integration, which in Ahmadinejad's idea excludes non-regional actors as the US.[1242]

Iran's real influence in Iraq is difficult to assess. On the one hand, although Iran imposed major changes to the agreement, it has been unable to block a controversial 2008 security agreement of Iraq with the US. On the other hand Kenneth Katzman offered in 2009 the following assessment to the US Congress: "*To the extent that Maliki is less pro-Iranian than is ISCI or Sadr, the January 31, 2009 elections represented a clear setback for Iran and its interests*."[1243] Discussing Iraqi politicians as more or less pro-Iranian is as statement *per se.* For some Iraq has offered a perfect illustration of Iranian factional policies in action. Indeed, while Khatami had searched for reconciliation with the Americans, other forces, especially the *Al-Qods* brigade of the *Sepah*, organized, trained and armed the Shi'i militias in the South that would come to challenge the new Iraqi government. Such a vision might actually overstate the independent action of the *Sepah* in foreign policy. Cordesman underlines in fact that the *Al Qods* force was empowered by the

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[1240] See for example: V. NASR & R. TAKEYH, "The Costs of Containing Iran", *Foreign Affairs,* Vol.87, No.1, January/February 2008, pp. 85-94

[1241] X., "Ahmadinejad takes part in the Hajj", *Al Jazeera,* December 19, 2007

[1242] E-news, "GCC Summit Opens With Appeal For Peace", December 3, 2007, http://www.enews20.com/news_GCC_Summit_Opens_With_Appeal_For_Peace_04157.html

[1243] K. KATZMAN, *Iran's Activities and Influence in Iraq,* Congressional Research Service, February 13, 2009, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22323.pdf , p.4

Supreme National Security Council to overview all Iraqi operations,[1244] while increasing its troop strength.[1245]

However reducing Iranian power in Iraq to military activities would be an error. Scholar of Iranian foreign policy Ramazani underlines: "*Iran has extended $500 million in aid for reconstruction in Afghanistan and maintains friendly relations with the government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai. It also has ties with Shia groups in western Afghanistan. In Iraq, Iran helps an estimated 1,500 Iranian pilgrims travel to Shia shrines every day, a significant source of income for Iraq. Iran exports electricity, refined oil products and Iranian-made cars to Iraq. It has extended a $1 billion line of credit to help Iraq with its reconstruction.*"[1246] As in other parts of the region, Iranian soft power in Iraq has both cultural, historical and religious roots.[1247] Major Shi'i religious shrines are situated in Najaf and Kerbala, many Iraqis in the South have Iranian relatives, one of most important contemporary Shi'i clerics, ayatollah Al-Sistani has been living in Iraq for over 50 years, not to mention the Iraqi origins of Shahroudi, chief of the Iranian judiciary. But the Iranian influence is not limited to religious sectarianism. It were arguably the ties between Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and Iran that caused Kurdish protest against the US arrest of some Iranian diplomats in 2007.[1248] Of the 75 Kurdish representatives in the first post-war Iraqi parliament quite some were at least slightly sympathetic to Iran.[1249] Moqtada Al-Sadr, sometimes considered a staunch "Arab nationalist", is studying in

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[1244] A.H. CORDESMAN, "Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and Other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces", *Rough Working Draft*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 16 August 2007, p.8

[1245] IntelligenceOnline.com, "Tehran targets Mediterranean", March 10, 2006 as quoted by A.H. CORDESMAN, "Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and Other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces", *Rough Working Draft*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 16 August 2007, p.8 (note 17)

[1246] R.K. RAMAZANI, "Wider Conflict Threatens", *The Daily Progress,* February 11, 2007 also quoted in E.P. RAKEL, *Power, Islam, and Political elite in Iran,* Leiden, Brill, 2009, p.192

[1247] Compare for example M. SARIOLGHALAM, "Justice For All", *The Washington Quarterly* , Vol.24, No.3, Summer 2001, pp. 113–125.

[1248] CNN, "U.S. raid on Iranian consulate angers Kurds", www.cnn.com, January 11, 2007

[1249] Iran Focus, "Iran hails "first Islamist Arab state" in Iraq", December 24, 2005, http://www.iranfocus.com/modules/news/article.php?storyid=5006

Qom since 2007.[1250] In April 2008, after it had brokered a deal between Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki and the Sadr-militias after the former tried but failed to crush the latter in Basra[1251], Iran and more particularly Brigadier-General Qassem Suleimani of the *Al Qods* force brought both Al-Sadr and Iraqi parliamentarians to Qom to seal a deal on the control of Sadr-city in Baghdad.[1252] The traditional Al-Sadr stronghold was to come under Maliki's, that is governmental control, while Al-Sadr's militants would enjoy immunity.[1253]

The continuity on the regional level apparently contrasts with Iranian policy towards the US, which was questioned by the new faction in power. In an address to a meeting named "One Step of the Devil" organized by the Basij students' section of the faculty of law and political science of the University of Tehran, Fatemeh Rajabi, wife of Ahmadinejad's government's spokesman for foreign affairs underlined that both Rafsanjani's and Khatami's government had excelled in secrecy and lack of transparency concerning their policies towards the US, because this policy was turning away from the principles of the first revolutionary decade.[1254] She underlined that both presidents were well aware that the people would not accept their insidious tactics. Moreover Rajabi underlined what were in her view the most important miscalculations of previous governments: the destruction of two neighboring countries, the establishment of American bases at Iran's borders and the uncertainty on the nuclear issue. The latter issue has since been at the center of almost apocalyptic previsions.[1255]

[1250] A.J. RUBIN, "Sadrists and Iraqi Government Reach Truce Deal", *The New York Times*, May 11, 2008; see also P. COCKBURN, *Muqtada: Muqtada al-Sadr, the Shia Revival, and the Struggle for Iraq*, New York, Scribner, 2008

[1251] J. HIDER, "Nouri al-Maliki humiliated as gamble to crush Shia militias fail", *The Times*, April 1, 2008, www.timesonline.co.uk

[1252] A.A. DAREINI, "Iran Confirms Role in Brokering Iraq Truce", *AP,* April 5, 2008

[1253] R. HARDY, "How Iran Pulls the Strings in Iraq", *BBC News,* May 15, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7401438.stm

[1254] X., "Enteqad Fatemeh Rajabi az siasathaye khareji dolathaye sazandegi va eslahat", *Etemaad*, 2 Aban 1387

[1255] Many of which of dubious analytical value A. JAFARZADEH, The Iran threat: President Ahmadinejad and the Coming Nuclear Crisis, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2008; Y. MELMAN & M. JAVEDANFAR, The Nuclear Sphinx of Tehran, New York, Basic

The conservatives did also seem to have a very different view of US-Iranian relations.[1256] Once again however, anti-American rhetoric has not been followed by shocking or revolutionary changes in policy. Under Ahmadinejad direct talks with the US have been held on Iraq. Under Bush the US has avoided referring to these talks as "negotiations". US ambassador to Iraq described them as "*chance to express concerns about what Washington and some in Iraq regard as Iran's alarming activities here.*"[1257] *Sepah* commander Jafari was even reported to have entered the US controlled green zone in January 2008 to discuss security issues.[1258] These talks were from the US side admission that Iran was needed to stabilize Iraq, yet also illustrated that even when so-called "radicals" held the reigns of power in Iran, Iranian foreign policy did not return to immediate post-revolutionary radicalism. In the second half of 2008 for the first time since 1979 a US administrative office was opened in Tehran, officially with the objective to facilitate contacts between the Iranian diaspora in the US and their country of origin. After the election of Barack Obama as the 44th US president these contacts continued. While Ahmadinejad congratulated Obama with his victory,[1259] Iran was invited to a conference on the future of Afghanistan in April 2009, where Iranian diplomats once again engaged in talks with US counterparts.[1260]

Books, 2007; A.J. VENTER, Iran's Nuclear Option: Tehran's Quest for the Atom Bomb, London, Casemate, 2005; K.R. TIMMERMAN, Countdown to Crisis: The Coming Nuclear Showdown with Iran, New York, Kindle Edition, 2005 & M.D. EVANS & J.R. CORSI, Showdown with Nuclear Iran: Radical Islam's Messianic Mission to Destroy Israel and Cripple the United States, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 2006

[1256] H.S. SEIFZADEH, "The Landscape of Factional Politics and Its Future in Iran", *Middle East Journal*, Vol.57, No.1, Winter 2003, pp.57-75 (73)

[1257] E. KNICKMEYER& W. BRANIGIN, "U.S., Iran Closer to Talks on Iraq", *The Washington Post*, March 18, 2006

[1258] M. COLVIN, "Iran's Revolutionary Guard in secret Iraq talks with US", *The Sunday Times*, January 13, 2008

[1259] X., "Ahmadinejad Congratulates Obama", *Tehran Times*, November 8, 2008

[1260] P. RICHTER, "U.S., Iran officials meet at conference on Afghanistan", *Los Angeles Times*, April 1, 2009

The most characteristic, yet not automatically the best-known, standpoint of the Iranian government under Ahmadinejad is related to the nuclear issue.[1261] Without addressing the issue too much in depth, it is important to line out that no excessive radicalization was noted under Ahmadinejad. The Iranian standpoint remained that Iran had the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and hence to enrich uranium on its own territory. In combination with rationing of petrol consumption, the development of nuclear technology is considered as a way of diminishing Iranian dependence on energy imports.[1262] For this reason it continued to defend its right to enrich uranium. A right recognized by the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The dispute with the West was at that level much more of a "process of intentions" than it was based on established facts.[1263] Although Kaveh Afrasiabi overstated the fact by speaking of the *"burning desire held by the Iranian population to 'go nuclear'"*, the nuclear program as an issue of national interest undeniably enjoys a very wide consensus in Iran.[1264] Factional criticism is directed at the confrontational policies of Ahmadinejad, not so much at the program itself.

What did change however were the modalities of the negotiations. On an internal level the *Sepah* had not felt very happy with Khatami's decision to suspend the nuclear program. This is not to say that the *Sepah* refused to collaborate or talk to the US, Afghanistan and Iraq proved to opposite. From a military logic however the *Sepah* saw the stopping of the nuclear program as a (temporary) weakening of the nation. They considered that Saddam Hussein had disarmed and had consequently proven unable to defend his country. The analysis was that what had happened to Iraq could happen to Iran.

[1261] S. CHUBIN, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions,* Washington, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006

[1262] K. SANATI, "Petrol-Rationing; Bumpy Ride", *IPS-News*, September 20, 2007 http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=39334

[1263] R. HOWARD, *Iran in Crisis: Nuclear Ambitions and the American Response,* London, Zed Books, 2004, pp.89-90

[1264] K.L. AFRASIABI, *Iran's Nuclear Program: Debating Facts Versus Fiction,* Booksurge Publishing, 2006, p.1

In a television debate with his Mir Hussein Mousavi, Ahmadinejad clarified the difference between IRGC guided foreign policy and reformist policy of appeasement: "*For three centrifuges how much did you*[reformists] *have to beg, today we have over 7,000 working centrifuges. After all our cooperation in Afghanistan and on the nuclear issue, Bush declared Iran part of the 'axis of evil.'*" The Iranian president boasted how his foreign policy had led the US to change course: "*For 27 years America wished the overthrow [of the regime], today they officially declare: 'we do not want the overthrow'. Which foreign policy was successful?*" This on the one hand illustrates how the *Sepah* usurps Iranian nationalism to justify its role in politics, but it also shows a genuine military reasoning, in which a nuclear program is the best guarantee for the nation's security.

The relative continuity in foreign policy between Khatami and Ahmadinejad is illustrative of two rather different evolutions in foreign policy-making. Firstly, it should be clear that no process of radicalization can be observed. Rhetoric varies sometimes heavily, policy hardly does. Secondly, policy coherence seems also to have increased since 1979 and especially since the Rushdie-affair. On major issues of foreign policy today, as there are Iraq, Afghanistan or the nuclear question a near consensus is achieved. Or at least such seems the case concerning the essential objectives of Iranian foreign policy. This is obviously linked to the process of state formation. Iranian professor Mahmood Sariolghalam writes "*some two million administrators and managers run the machinery of the state. Thousands of individuals work hard to advance Iranian national interest irrespective of what the top elites may wish or direct*" and although "*Iran has accumulated offensive military power over the years (..), the Iranian leadership has demonstrated no resolve to wield it because the dominant mood among the rank and file of the country's bureaucracy leans toward focusing on prosperity.*"[1265] This rationalization and relative moderation of foreign policy coupled to a string defense of Iranian interests does also seem to

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[1265] M. SARIOLGHALAM, "Understanding Iran: Getting Past Stereotypes and Mythology", *the Washington Quarterly*, Vol.26, No.4, Autumn 2003, pp.69-82 (74, 78)

be supported by the majority of the youth and students, in essence the future generation of policy-makers.[1266]

6.3.   *Conclusion*

This brief, and perhaps overly superficial, policy analysis strengthens my hypothesis. The hypothesis emerging from the institutional analysis, was that Iran was experiencing an integrative or centripetal evolution rather than a centrifugal or disintegrative one. The institutional analysis also illustrated that the interlinkage between different actors within the Iranian system could constitute a balancing factor, further limiting any probability of cumulative radicalization or centrifugal tendencies.

The undeniable increase in consensus on the main directions of economic policies since 1979 does not mean discussions are over, nor that resistance to the implementation of such policies has subsided. What it does mean however is that there are no longer two clearly opposing and contradictory poles that fundamentally oppose each other on nearly all topics. The dream of Shariati's classless Islamic society does no longer inspire policy-makers. Even a return to the more statist faction of the Modern Left with Mousavi would not signify a return to "Islamic socialism". Surely, Mousavi wants to give a more important role to the state in national development, but such a policy choice is far from any form of Islamic utopia. Even Ahmadinejad, as Mousavi a declared supporter of the *mostazafan*, and of the "fundamental principles of the Islamic Revolution", did not favor a disruption of the existent economic system. Of course, his privatization was different in nature from Rafsanjani's, he openly condemned liberalism and he asserted the Islamic Third Way as the solution for the *mostazafan*. In reality however, the reestablishment of workers' councils or decentralized factory control did not even cross his mind. His neo-

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[1266] K. SADJADPOUR, "How Relevant is the Iranian Street", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.30, No.1, Winter 2006-2007, pp. 151–162

conservatism made him prefer charity operations, like the *Mehr-e Emam Reza*, to the development of a national system of social security. Notwithstanding their sometimes profound differences, all the economic policy options on the table of Iranian policy-makers today draw from a similar register. Today something very similar to a "*very fundamental consensus upon which the economic system is established*" seems indeed a very realistic objective for the nearby future.[1267]

The relative increase in the coherence of foreign policy since 1979 was obviously due to a number of different factors, yet the redimensioning of ideology from the export of revolution to the reconstruction of the country was no coincidence. It was determined on the one hand by some objective military, political and socio-economic realities, and on the other hand by the actions of certain factions.

Nonetheless the previous chapters also underlined that the *Sepah* for one possessed a relatively high degree of autonomy. The present chapter illustrates how such autonomy does not forcibly lead to parallel policies. Rather on the contrary, through the incorporation of the *Sepah* in other structures some control on its activities has been achieved. Logically this control went initially through the parallel system, with Khomeini and the representatives of Khamene'i within the *Sepah.* Yet as indicated before, this system also had its limits. Previous chapters have shown cautious attempts to integrate the *Sepah* institutionally with for example the *artesh*. This chapter has shown how such integration is also being attempted on a decisional level. Obviously the handing over of most Iranian operations in Iraq to the *Sepah* can be double-edged. On the one hand it can be interpreted as a sign of the power the *Sepah* wields within the system. From such a point of view the *Sepah* convinced the SNSC to assign it the Iraqi operations.[1268] On the other hand an opposite interpretation would be that the *Sepah*

[1267] M. VALIBEIGI, "Islamic Economics and Economic Policy Formation in Post-Revolutionary Iran: A Critique**",** *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. 27, No. 3, September 1993, pp. 793-812 (808)

[1268] A point made by A. GHEISSARI & V. NASR, "The conservative consolidation in Iran", *Survival,* Vol.47, No.2, Summer 2005, pp.175-190 (179-181)

needed the SNSC to operate legitimately in Iraq. In such a viewpoint the SNSC's support to the *Sepah* seems indispensable. Reality is probably somewhere in between, the Sepah dominate some sections of the SNSC, but consider the regime's cover of legitimacy useful.

The second point of view "forgets" that the *Sepah* was active in Iraq well before the SNSC sanctioned its activities. The preexistence of such activities would hence credit the first thesis in supposing that the *Sepah* merely used the SNSC to get some official cover for its activities. The first thesis however disregards the question *why* the Sepah looked for the SNSC's support and sanctioning? The second viewpoint gives a partial answer to the question. The *Sepah*'s looking for SNSC support is indeed linked to the legitimacy of its actions, and hence of the benefits repatriated to Iran. It fails nonetheless to add that the lobbying of the *Sepah* within the SNSC also permitted it to increase the troop strength of the *Al-Qods* division. To be sure it appears to be a win-win situation. Both the SNSC, and hence the other Iranian actors active in Iranian policy, get a say in the *Sepah*'s activities and, at least, on a formal level seem to control the *Sepah*'s decisions. The *Sepah*'s gains, both material and reputational, are no less obvious.

On foreign policy as well hence a "fundamental consensus" seems if not totally acquired, at least a very realizable objective. Something rather unthinkable at the time of the revolution and during the first revolutionary decade. *A fortiori* such a consensus seemed hard under the royal regime, where many of the groups that have now be incorporated, were excluded from policy-making. Such an exclusion obviously greatly decreased the possibility to construct a consensus around foreign policy. The most obvious example of which was the denunciation by the conservative clergy and different Marxist groups of the Shah's alliance with Israel, his friendliness towards the US, or both. The Islamic Republic succeeded or, more prudently, seems to be succeeding in converging opposing tendencies, factions and interests towards a vision based very much on *realpolitik* and national Iranian interest.

6.4.   *The People against the Sepah?*

The post-revolutionary regime was that successful in establishing and institutionalizing a new military actor, that it quickly lost absolute control over it. A consequence of the fact that the *Sepah* institutionalized quite well.[1269] It now seems a coherent, but not monolithic organization, it is certainly adaptable, some new elites have emerged and the *Sepah* has evolved to a full-fledged military. It is equally autonomous and complex. If, as Carpenter affirms, the Weberian model of bureaucratization is extremely useful for the development of the US Army between 1898 and 1941[1270], the same can unquestionably be said of the *Sepah*. The complexity of the *Sepah* as an institution is evidently linked to its degree of bureaucratization. Already before the end of the war the *Sepah* had developed at least 15 specialized departments in Tehran alone![1271] These went from Women's Affairs and Cultural Activities over Religious and Ideological Training and Logistics and Support to Special Operations, Public Affairs, Research and Intelligence, Procurement, Reconstruction and so on.[1272] Buchta mentions special sections for personnel, operations, intelligence, judicial matters, security, reconstruction, disaster relief, training, weapons procurement, women, logistics, public relations, religious-ideological education.[1273]

During the presidency of Ahmadinejad the complexity of the organization and hence its institutional nature has only increased. Indeed in October 2007 Sepah Navy commander Morteza Safari

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[1269] In the mentioned texts KATZMAN tries to apply this model the Sepah, yet arguably the model is more effective today, notwithstanding its, in the eyes of J. BILL., *l.c,* ethnocentric and outdated nature.

[1270] D. CARPENTER, "The Applicability of Weberian and Behavioral-Cognitive Models to the Development of American Army Bureaucracy, 1898-1941", Paper, http://people.hmdc.harvard.edu/~dcarpent/burpols/burpols-paper1example1.pdf, p.2

[1271] N.B. SCHAHGALDIAN, *The Iranian Military Under the Islamic Republic*, Santa Monica, RAND, 1988, p.80

[1272] *Ibid.*

[1273] W. BUCHTA, *Who Rules Iran?,* Washington, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001, p.69

announced the installation of 31 extra sections of the *Sepah* in different regions, which would have defense functions that closely resembled those of the *Niruye Moqavemate Basij* (Mobilized Resistance Force).[1274] This seemed a logical consequence of Khamene'i's order that the *Sepah* should become *Basij*, which allowed in 2007 Aziz Jafari, new commander of the *Sepah* to take at the same time the leadership of the *Basij*.[1275] *Basij* in Persian means simply "mobilized", yet for many it has become the equivalent to an insult. It came to mean something very close to "*illiterate religious fanatic*" especially because of the role the *Basij* in the control of "Islamic morality". Institutionally the *Basij* have come under the command of the *Sepah* since its very inception, although it has for a long time enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy. They were responsible for the mobilization of the Iranian youth in the war effort against Iraq and specialized in human wave attacks on minefields.

Although the *Basij* have successfully been transformed in a militia guaranteeing domestic morality and order, their political influence is far from negligible. Mohammad Basharati, Minister of the Interior under the second presidency of Rafsanjani, even wanted to make it a separate pillar next to the *Sepah*.[1276] Although this option has today been abandoned, the weight of the *Basij* force was demonstrated once more when it decided to mobilize the "disinherited" for presidential candidate Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005, who had himself been a Basij and declared his satisfaction with seeing "*the culture of the Basij permeating all levels of government*".[1277]

The already mentioned example of the contradiction between the *Sepah* leadership and the founding father of the Islamic Republic at the end of the war with Iraq was a sign of just how far autonomy had developed

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[1274] Hamandishi, "Sazemandhaye jadide Sepah doshman ra az har eshtebahi pashimoon mikonand", 7 Aban 1387 (29 October 2008), www.hamandishi.com

[1275] Rouzonline, "Basij Leadership Subordinated to Revolutionary Guards", 2007.10.01, www.rouzonline.com

[1276] W. BUCHTA, *Who Rules Iran?*, Washington, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001, p.66

[1277] W. WAHDAT-HAGH, "Basij, The Revolutionary People's Militia of Iran", *MEMRI*, no.262, 1 February 2006, www.memri.org

after about seven years of existence. The *Sepah*'s institutional autonomy becomes even clearer when one considers what Katzman calls the "relative inability" of the post-revolutionary government(s) to penetrate it politically.[1278] Katzman[1279] gives the examples of Khamenei and Rafsanjani who repeatedly tried to control the *Sepah*, but failed to do so entirely because they were no part of the central core of the institution. The realization of this failure let to the development of the so-called "representatives of the supreme leader". These were appointed at all levels and sublevels of the organization, very much like communist commissars, to increase the government's grip on it. But even these either "*exercised limited influence*" or "*were ideologically and politically compatible with the Pasdaran leaders*"[1280]

Moreover its autonomy can not be fully appreciated without mentioning its economic independence. The *Sepah* controls its own arms production, owns not only hotel chains but also economic interests. On June 11, 2003 the Ministry of Defense called upon it to act as contractors in development schemes, it controls the most advanced technological undertakings and through GHORB[1281] it is involved in construction, pipelines, and general infrastructural networks.[1282] Adding to this the *Sepah*'s involvement in both the informal economy as the fight against it, one only starts to grasp the reality of the *Sepah*'s economic power.

The relative coherence of the *Sepah*'s actions, using its military power to defend its economic interests, is illustrated by the military seizing of an

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[1278] See K. KATZMAN, *Warriors of Islam: Iran's Revolutionary Guard,* Boulder Colorado, Westview Press, 1993 & for a short adaptation of it: K. KATZMAN, "The Pasdaran: Institutionalization of Revolutionary Armed Force", *Iranian Studies,* Vol.26, No.3-5, Summer/Fall 1993, pp.389-402

[1279] *Ibid.*

[1280] K. KATZMAN, "The Pasdaran: Institutionalization of Revolutionary Armed Force", *Iranian Studies,* Vol.26, Nos.3-5, Summer/Fall 1993, pp. 389-402 (393)

[1281] A Sepah-linked engineering company conceived during the war, www.khatam.com

[1282] A. ALFONEH, "How Intertwined Are the Revolutionary Guards in Iran's Economy", *Middle Eastern Outlook,* American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, No.3, October 2007, pp.2-3 www.aei.org

oil rig rented by Oriental Oil Kish, a private enterprise, just after the latter refused equal economic partnership to the *Sepah* in mid-2005. Or the closure of the new Imam Khomeini international airport of Tehran just after its opening, out of fear of losing the control of importations.[1283]

An example of this continued autonomy of the *Sepah* was that after the war with Iraq, notwithstanding great criticism, the regime dared to remove only one of the *Sepah* high-ranking officers (Rafiqdust) from his post. Moreover this removal did not happen through direct government intervention in the *Sepah* yet through a vote in the Majles, possible since Rafiqdust was member of Cabinet and as such responsible to Parliament.[1284] However Rafiqdust did not disappear entirely, he went from Rafsanjani's personal military advisor to the head of the powerful *Bonyad-e Mostazafan*, one of the biggest economic entities in the Middle East. In August 1993 The *Sepah* subsequently took the Defense department, with the appointment of their former Chief of Staff, Foruzandeh.[1285]

Therefore the undeniable shift towards popular sovereignty remains conditioned by one major aspect of the post-revolutionary state: the parallel security structure. If the parallel institutions, no matter how important they still are, have lost much of their non-popular legitimacy and mobilization capacity, the same can not be said for the *Sepah*. Rather on the contrary. Since the presidency of Khatami these have been so to speak "politically enabled" in a way unthinkable until then. Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri mention some examples of the militarization of politics under Khatami. Sepah Commander General Safavi declared in 1998 that some reformers were "hypocrites" and bragged about the *Sepah*'s success in eliminating the pro-Rafsanjani mayor of Tehran Karbatschi.[1286] At the same time the *Sepah*'s role, if not

[1283] M. KHALAJI, "Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps, Inc.", *Policy Watch 1273*, 17 August 2007, The Washington Center for Near East Policy, p.2

[1284] K. KATZMAN, "The Pasdaran: Institutionalization of Revolutionary Armed Force", *Iranian Studies*, Vol.26, Nos.3-5, Summer/Fall 1993, pp. 389-402 (394)

[1285] *Ibid.*

[1286] E. ROULEAU, "Un ex-mollah de choc", *Le Monde diplomatique*, June 1995

as an institution than at the very least through its leading members, in oppressing the reform movement and student mobilizations was undeniable.[1287]

Ahmadinejad's 2005 victory was heavily dependent on the mobilization of the *Basij* as well and as indicated above, many of Ahmadinejad's cabinet members had direct links with the *Sepah*. Moreover the 2009 electoral rigging in collaboration with the *Sepah* and the *Basij* confirms how fundamental their role has become. Considering also the role of the *Sepah* in the country's economy, some authors have indicated a militarization process of Iranian politics. William Samii underlined how Mohamed Baqer Qalibaf, mayor of Tehran and 2005 presidential candidate, has a background in the armed forces and that Ali Larijani, another 2005 presidential candidate, was supported by the military;[1288] Ehteshami and Zweiri underline how the militarization of the Iranian system started already during the Iraq war; [1289] while Ali Alfoneh claims that "*the Islamic Republic is gradually morphing into a military regime*".[1290] Such a vision is not new. As early as 1954 Barrington Moore already observed how "*It is often asserted that the Bolsheviks' increasing reliance on the instruments of violence will inevitably lead to a corresponding increase in their importance in the Soviet state culminating in the Party's loss of control over them and a consequent shift in the basic character of the regime.*"[1291]

When analyzing the Iranian polity, the claim seems not totally unfounded. In addition to the already mentioned activities of the *Sepah*,

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[1287] A. EHTESHAMI & M. ZWEIRI, *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives*, London, I.B.Tauris, 2007, pp.21-23

[1288] B. SAMII, "Iran: Observers Fear Militarization of Politics", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, April 11, 2005, http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1058378.html , last accessed on April 8, 2009

[1289] A. EHTESHAMI & M. ZWEIRI, *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives*, London, I.B.Tauris, 2007

[1290] A. ALFONEH, "Iran's Parliamentary Elections and the Revolutionary Guards' Creeping Coup d'Etat", *Middle Eastern Outlook*, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, No.2, February 2008, www.aei.org

[1291] B. MOORE, *Terror and Progress USSR*, New York, Harper & Row, 1954, p.24

it has increasingly become a major player in arguably all domains of the Iranian economy, while gaining considerable political influence. If one adds the rise of the parallel military structure to the relative decline of the traditional right in the civil component of the parallel structure, one might consider that the parallel military structure over the parallel civil structure. By stressing the role of the civil institutions of the parallel structure and the respective powers these possess, one could be tempted subsequently to conclude that the *Sepah* is indeed "taking over the State". In such a vision the emergence of civil society and the relative revalorization of popular sovereignty would appear rather futile and unimportant.

One should nevertheless be careful before deducting a shift in the nature of the regime from the mere observation that the *Sepah* has an important role in the country's economy and politics. Regimes as different as Turkey's relative democracy, China's communist government and different African, Latin- or South-American systems have been or are still characterized by a similar role for the armed forces. The outcomes of the role of the military in such different countries has often been very different and not at all led to one type of "*third world military regimes*"[1292] In Latin- and South-America for one, former military-led regimes have often evolved into more or less successful liberal democracies, without however always eliminating the military from the political scene.[1293] In Africa the risk of military coups is as tangible as ever.[1294] In Turkey the military has arguably been "*the*

[1292] A. ALFONEH, "Iran's Parliamentary Elections and the Revolutionary Guards' Creeping Coup d'Etat", *Middle Eastern Outlook,* American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, No.2, February 2008, p.5, www.aei.org

[1293] F. AGUERO, "Legacies of Transitions: Institutionalization, the Military, and Democracy in South-America", *Mershon International Studies Review,* Vol.42, No.2, November 1998, pp.383-404

[1294] For an assessment of African coups see S. DECALO, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa: Studies in Military Style,* New Haven, Yale Univeristy Press, 1977; T.H. JOHNSON, R.O. SLATER & P. MCGOWAN, "Explaining African Military Coups d'Etat, 1960-1982", *The American Political Science Review,* Vol.78, No.3, September 1984, pp.622-640; R.W. JACKMAN, R.H.T. O'KANE, T.H. JOHNSON, P. MCGOWAN & R.O. SLATER, "Explaining African Coups d'Etat", *The American Political Science Review,* Vol. 80, No. 1, March 1986, pp. 225-249 & P.J. MCGOWAN, "African Military Coups d'Etat, 1956-2001:

most important force behind the evolution of the social, economic and political structure of the [Turkish] state";[1295] it has had a role in the development of rural education[1296], had even after the ceding of power a central role in the selection of political personnel,[1297] intervened directly in politics and less than 10 years after the formal return to civilian rule in 1973 and is still deeply influential in society.[1298] Considering the high degree of autonomy of the Turkish army it is not even exaggerated to speak of a truly parallel military structure with its own economic interests.[1299] In China the struggle for civilian, or rather, party-domination of the armed forces has also been a constant issue at least since the Cultural Revolution. Until the Cultural Revolution the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had been the pillar of the system, the "*ultimate bulwark*", Mao sometimes reluctantly ended up using the PLA against the police organs.[1300] After the Cultural Revolution, as a direct consequence of the "*virtual destruction of the upper echelons of the Communist Party apparatus in the provinces*" a significant number of people joined the provincial Party secretaries from the ranks of the PLA.[1301] The PLA's autonomy has successfully resisted a maximalist interpretation of Mao's "The Party commands the gun", in carrying out his reform agenda Deng Xiaoping had to take into account harsh internal opposition from the

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frequency, trends and distribution", *Journal of Modern African Studies,* Vol.41, No.3, 2003, pp.339-370

[1295] G. KARABELIAS, "The Evolution of Civil-Military Relations in Post-war Turkey, 1980-1995", *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol.35, No.4, October 1999, pp.130-151 (130)

[1296] See for example the empirical study of L.L. ROOS Jr. & G.W. ANGELL, Jr., "New Teachers for Turkish Villages: A Military-Sponsored Educational Program", *The Journal of Developing Areas,* Vol.2, No.4, July 1968, pp.519-532

[1297] F. AHMAD, "The Transition to Democracy in Turkey, *Third World Quarterly,* Vol.7, No.2, April 1985, pp.211-226

[1298] J. BROWN, "The Military and Society: The Turkish Case", *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol.25, No.3, July 1989, pp.387-404

[1299] U. CIZRE-SAKALLIOGLU, "The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy", *Comparative Politics,* Vol.29, No.2, January 1997, pp.151-166

[1300] R.L. POWELL & C.-K. YOON, "Public Security and the PLA", *Asian Survey,* Vol.12, No.12, December 1972, pp.1082-1100 (1082, 1087)

[1301] P.H.B. GODWIN, "The PLA and Political Control in China's Provinces: A Structural Analysis", *Comparative Politics,* Vol.9, No.1, October 1976, pp.1-20

PLA.[1302] There was something unmistakably utopian in Deng's attempts to reform the PLA in such a sense that it would become "*politically dependent but militarily independent*". [1303] Jiang Zemin used the PLA to consolidate his political power,[1304] yet the PLA is not "*a Party stooge, because the professionalism of its officers has impelled them to question, and even resist, Party policies*".[1305] Military technology and industry have formed the basis of an integrated military-civilian defence scientific research and military-industrial production system, emerging since the 1990's.[1306] To its important, and often autonomous, role in foreign policy making,[1307] the PLA has more recently added a crucial role in the Chinese economy. The PLA has served as a model for Chinese economic development in the 1960's,[1308] but in more recent times become an entrepreneur and an engineer of its own. Especially since the nineties the PLA has come to rely ever more on its enterprises as a source of income, which "*shifted the nature of the enterprises from a source of military self-sufficiency to a means of participating in a much wider economy. To help the PLA, the Central Military Commission and the State council have changed the tax laws for military enterprises.*"[1309] The increasing militarization of the Chinese economy was a way for both Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin to keep the military happy while downsizing it considerably. Already in 1987 the value of the military's civilian production was higher than the value of its military

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[1302] A.I. JOHNNSTON, "Changing Party-Army Relations in China, 1979-1984", *Asian Survey.* Vol.24, No.10, October 1984, pp.1012-1039 (1012-1014)

[1303] A.I. JOHNNSTON, "Changing Party-Army Relations in China, 1979-1984", *Asian Survey.* Vol.24, No.10, October 1984, pp.1012-1039 (1015)

[1304] Y. JI, "Jiang Zemin's Command of the Military", *The China Journal,* No.45, January 2001, pp.131-138

[1305] E. JOFFE, "Party-Army Relations in China: Retrospect and Prospect", *The China Quarterly*, No.146, June 1996, pp.299-314 (300, 305-306)

[1306] M. GURTOV, "Swords into Market Shares: China's Conversion of Military Industry to Civilian Production", *The China Quarterly*, No.134, June 1993, pp.213-241 (213-214)

[1307] G. SEGAL, "The PLA and Chinese Foreign Policy Decision-Making", *International Affairs,* Vol.57, No.3, Summer 1981, pp.449-466

[1308] R.L. POWELL, "Commissars in the Economy: 'Learn from the PLA' Movement in China", *Asian Survey*, Vol.5, No.3, March 1965, pp.125-138

[1309] T.L. BICKFORD, "The Chinese Military and Its Business Operations: The PLA as Entrepreneur", *Asian Survey,* Vol.34, No.5, May 1994, pp.460-474 (464)

production. It is hardly an overstatement that members of the PLA have, sometimes illegally, diversified its economic activities "*from AK-47s to Call Girls*" covering everything in between as car smuggle.[1310] The future relationship between the Communist Party (Central Military Commission of the CCP) and the PLA or between the Chinese state (Central Military Commission of the State) and the PLA, could vary between the two classical extremes of military dominance or civilian dominance over a professional army.[1311]

The truth is that the relation between the military and the civil pillar of any governmental system is extremely complicated. Samuel Huntington has argued that even the American constitution was rather defective in guaranteeing civilian control over the military.[1312] The rise of France's De Gaulle showed that even in so-called long-established liberal democracies the question can indeed become unexpectedly relevant. In a 1962 study Samuel Finer underlined that "*of the 51 states existing in or before 1917, all but 19 have experienced such coups since 1917; while of the 28 created between 1917 and 1955 all but 15 have done so.*" Although the author underlined that for a country that was neither communist, nor liberal-democratic, military rule was very probable, he also noted that "*the armed forces have intervened in the politics of many and widely diverse countries; that they have done so continually in the past and are doing so today; that their intervention is usually politically decisive; and that, above all, they tend to intervene persistently, over and over again, in the same countries.* [1313] From such a perspective, and considering that Iran has a long history of military interventions in politics the Islamic Republic has arguably not done too badly.

[1310] S.M. KARMEL, "The Chinese Military's Hunt for Profits", *Foreign Policy,* No.107, Summer 1997, pp.102-113 (105,108)

[1311] See Chapter 4 and illustration p.112 in D. SHAMBAUGH, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects,* Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004

[1312] See Chapter 7 of S.P. HUNTINGTON, *The Soldier and the State,* Cambridge, Harvard UP, 2000 and S.P. HUNTINGTON, "Civilian Control and the Constitution", *The American Political Science Review,* Vol.50, No.3, September 1956, pp.676-699

[1313] S.E. FINER, *The Man on Horseback,* New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 2002 (1962), p.3

In my opinion, it would constitute an exaggeration to deduce from either economic activities, or the access of individual *Sepah* members to power positions, that the *Sepah* is taking over the state. The rising importance of the *Sepah* as both a political and economic actor is undeniable, but it is not without counterbalance. The rise of civil society and the increasing weight of the Expediency Council are only two examples.[1314] Moreover the forces of civil society were defeated only because they forgot about those formerly known as the *mostazafan*, in essence those underprivileged Iranians that did not follow the Left's modernization program.[1315] These are not fatalities. Not without reason all candidates feel the necessity to seduce the electorate.

The 2006 elections for the Assembly of Experts saw Rafsanjani prevail over far right forces. The appointment of Jafari as head of the *Sepah* by Khamene'i in September 2007 also indicated the attempt to regain control of the *Sepah*, in which he still has political commissars. Some indeed considered Jafari more of a military professional, than a politician[1316] whereas Safavi had been one of the main exponents of the *Sepah* involved in attacks on allies of Khatami.[1317] Moreover, both criticism from Parliament and the Expediency Council[1318] as the many cabinet changes imposed on Ahmadinejad by the Majles also show the real counterweight the democratic state structure can be to possible *Sepah* rule. Exponents of the traditional right, like Nateq-Noori have

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[1314] R. TAKEYH therefore, in my opinion correctly, underlines that "*the reform movement has not been defeated, but has embarked on a new and significant phase*" R. TAKEYH, "Iran at a Crossroads", *Middle East Journal*, Vol.57, No.1, Winter 2003, pp.42-56 (46) Contrary to C DE BELLAIGUE, who speaks of a "last chance for reform", C. DE BELLAIGUE, "Iran's Last Chance for Reform?", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.24, No.4, Autumn 2001, pp.71-80

[1315] F. TELLIER, "The Iranian Moment", *Policy Focus #52*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, February 2006, p.27

[1316] P. CLAWSON & M. KHALAJI, "Ahmadi Nezhad's Power Slipping in Iran", *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, September 7, 2007

[1317] Ali Alfoneh underlines how Jafari as well considered the *Sepah* as a "political and ideological organization", yet in our vision the difference with Safavi's practical experience and the contradictions between Jafari and Ahmadinejad can not be ignored. A. ALFONEH, "The Revolutionary Guards' Role in Iranian Politics", *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol.15, No.4, Fall 2008, pp.3-14

[1318] X., "Vakanesh Nemaiandegan-e Majles be Ezharat-e Ahmadinejad", *Hamshahri*, 13 Esfand 1386, pp.1-2

presented themselves as the axis suitable to "go beyond Ahmadinejad".[1319] Similarly, a government of national unity has been proposed in order to incorporate all actors in government without giving any of them absolute dominance.[1320] This proposition obviously resurged after the 2009 elections as a possible way out of the crisis.

There are other limits to the thesis of an "Islamic military regime". For one, the importance of the *Sepah* as a unified institutional actor should not be overestimated. At least five official command structures have the ability to compete for resources internally. Moreover quite some *Sepah* commanders have defected to the US, which might indicate a lack of internal coherence.[1321]

In the 2008 parliamentary elections, part of the Principalist coalition, for some a "tool" of *Sepah* emergence in politics, presented a slightly different list from Ahmadinejad's Principalists. This second (broader) Principalist list (*Etelaaf-e Faragir-e Osulgeraian*) comprised among others Mohsen Rezai, ex-head of the *Sepah*. The differences in opinion between both men, that is Ahmadinejad and Rezai can *mutatis mutandis* be traced back to the opposition far right versus traditional right. Rezai as seen was not without links with the latter, who enabled him to access the leadership of the *Sepah* in the first place. That Ali Larijani, also a notorious member of the traditional right also supported the Broader Principalists' list is another indication that the two lists, although allied present political differences that are retraceable to aforementioned factions. In such a perspective it can hardly be called a surprise that Reza'i and Ahmadinejad each entered the 2009 presidential contest seperately.

[1319] X., "Obour az Ahmadinejad ba Mehvariat-e Nateq-Noori", *Kargozaaran*, 28 Mehr 1387
[1320] See A. MONTAJABI, "Talash-e Nateq-Noori Baraye Dolat-e Vahdat-e Melli",
Shahrvand-e Emrooz, No.57, 13 Mordad 1387, p.12 & X., "Hemayat Vazir-e Sabeq-e Ettelaataz Tashkil-e Dolat-e Vahdat-e Melli", *Etemaad*, 21 Azar 1381
[1321] A. TAHERI, "Iran's Revolutionary Guard: Monolith or Jigsaw?, *Iran Press Service*, August 26, 2007

Stating that the *Sepah* "*have emerged as the most independent, and prevail over all other centers of power in Iran*" as do different authors appears a shortcut.[1322] One first has to consider possible paths to military hegemony that have characterized the world throughout the 20th century, like the failure of civilian institutions, disproportionate support given from abroad to military organizations or the lack of a process of negotiation with and containment of the military.[1323] None of such paths seem probable in the Iranian case.

However a major factor that might trigger, or might already have triggered, a gentle take-over by the *Sepah* is the issue of national security. As I mentioned earlier the *Sepah* considered the reformists' foreign policy agenda of appeasement as a national security risk. Over one year before the elections high-ranking officers of the *Sepah* had already stated they would not return the country to those that wanted to sell it out to the West. In such a way the nuclear program has become a major factor in the determination of the internal balance of power.

The Sepah's autonomy seems a major risk factor present in the contemporary Iranian state structure. And although even in this case one should remain very far from structural determinism, it is clear that one of the challenges for the Iranian state will be the establishment of control over it and the professionalization of the institution.[1324]

6.5.   *Modeling Iran*

[1322] A. EHTESHAMI & M. ZWEIRI, *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives,* London, I.B.Tauris, 2007, p.82 allegedly based on K.N. YASIN, "Iran's Revolutionary Guards making a bid for increased power", *Euro Asia Insight,* 19 May 2004, http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav051904a.shtml

[1323] C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1990*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990, p.218

[1324] Consider D. GOLDSWORTHY, "On the Structural Explanation of African Military Interventions", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, March 1986, pp. 179-185

The analysis of policy developments since 1979 and the dynamics of the system's functioning of this chapter, in combination with the institutional analysis of the two previous chapters should now permit us to attempt a tentative model of the Iranian system. Such a model will have to be positioned somewhere in between the Nazi and Stalinist models that were underlined in the first chapter. For this purpose it does seem useful to divide post-revolutionary Iran in two distinct periods. One Khomeinist-period and one post-Khomeinist.

In essence we separate the First Republic from the Second Republic. The First Republic is characterized by the special role of Khomeini. On the one hand Khomeini appears a bit of a Hitler-like "mythical dictator". Because of the religious and ideological Khomeini was more than just "Father of the nation", a title so often claimed by post-independent Third World-leaders. Khomeini also resembled Hitler in that he often allowed factional infighting, without too much intervention. On the other hand Ahmad Schirazi shows how Khomeini at other times intervened to direct policies in "his" sense, overruling Islam and the Constitution when necessary.[1325] Towards the end of his life, and notably in the campaign towards the 1988 parliamentary elections, Khomeini even intervened directly in favor of one faction. Like Hitler, Khomeini relied very intimately on a trusted circle constructed already in exile. Yet rather unlike Hitler, Khomeini was also in direct contact and intervened directly within many institutions, although perhaps less in for example the state democratic military component.

On an institutional level, and especially concerning concepts as autonomy, cumulative radicalization and competition, things are less clear. It is useful to keep in mind the operational definitions of these concepts that were offered in the first chapter. Autonomy means the capacity of a social unit or institution to defend its own sectoral or corporatist interests within or outside the system. Intra-systemic competition between different social units can be useful. Such becomes


[1325] A. SCHIRAZI, *The Constitution of Iran,* London, I.B. Tauris, 1998

a problem when their rent-seeking becomes excessive and unbalances the system. Interlinkage, or bureaucratic interdependence, is the exact opposite of autonomy. The more social units and institutions are interlinked, the less they are able to autonomously defend their corporatist interests. Political commissars or checks and balances are some examples of interlinkage. Cumulative radicalization was defined as the process of "falling forward". Such a process was considered the result of an excessive degree of autonomy of social units and institutions competing for their corporatist interests. The dynamics of the disintegrating Nazi-state illustrated how such a process is paralleled by a lack of institutional control and interlinkage.

Keeping in mind that schemes present necessary simplifications, one can admit that under the Iranian First Republic a certain degree of autonomy was present and did ignite some radicalization. Such was notably clear on the foreign policy level. On the other hand radicalization never got cumulative, because, notwithstanding the autonomy, interlinkage was also developed and different elites within the system, notably those controlling the parallel civil institutions, did not want a "radical revolution". The state democratic civil institutions on the other hand, dominated by the radical Islamic Left, and the parallel military institutions, as the Sepah, did want to push forward the revolution. Pre-existent elites that were not incorporated in the system generally left the country so they did not have a significant role in policy-making.

The system of the First Republic is hence already a mixed system. Undoubtedly closer to the Nazi regime type, but, due to a different genetic process, lacking much of its disintegrating characteristics. This slightly complicates the scheme. The scheme shows the radicalizing tendencies of both the civil component of the state democratic institutions (e.g. Majles) and the military component of the parallel institutions (Sepah). It also shows the absence of such tendencies in the military component of the state democratic institutions (*artesh*) and the civil component of the parallel institutions (e.g. Guardian Council). The scheme illustrates the interaction between Parliament, dominated by

the Islamic Left, and the *Sepah*, at that time socially and politically close to the Islamic Left. The scheme illustrates the role of Khomeini and the push towards the trusted circle of many institutions.
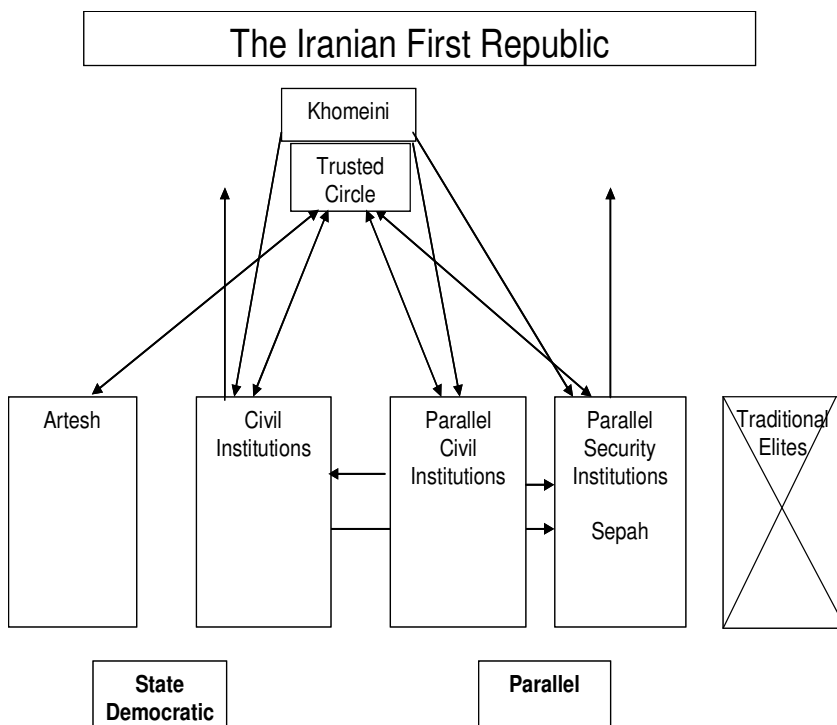
Although this was not obvious during the First Republic, its dynamics turned out to be fundamentally integrative. This permitted to, what has been called, institutionalize charisma and develop the state's coherence. The institutional design of the Second Republic would incarnate these evolutions.
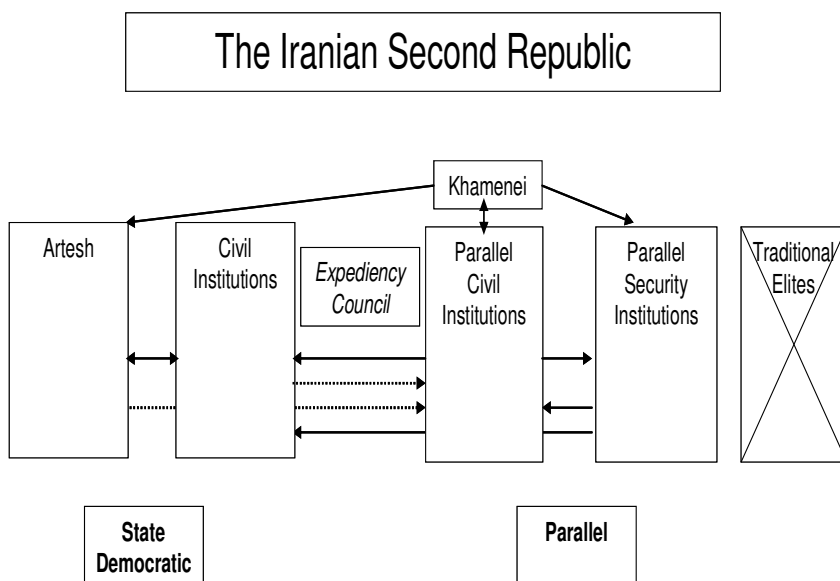
The Iranian Second Republic saw, as elaborated on earlier, rather important changes not only in its constitutional structure but also in its effective functioning. The most important change was obviously linked to the position of the Leader. The nearly transcendental figure of

Khomeini disappeared and was replaced by someone whose position was all but transcendental. Khamene'i became little more than the head of the civil parallel structure. At the same time however the new leader increased his grip, or tried to do so, on both military components, through "the Leader's representatives". Other attempts to integrate parallel and state democratic institutions also increased interdependence. The Sepah for one directly and indirectly intervened in the civil component of the state democratic structure. On the other hand the Leader's grip on the civil component of the state democratic pillar has undeniably decreased. The presidential elections since 1997 are the best illustration of this waning influence. Such has to be acknowledged. As has to be recognized that the civil component of the state democratic pillar possesses some kind of autonomy from the Leader's interventions. The scheme shows this reality by not indicating a direct arrow from the Leader to the civil component of the state democratic structure.

The establishment of the Expediency Council was clearly another attempt to avoid centrifugal tendencies and possibly integrate policy-making. The ever-increasing weight this council has obtained throughout the years can be interpreted as an amplification of the unification process between parallel and state democratic pillars.

Between the five different components of the contemporary Iranian state structure, that is the Expediency Council in addition to the two components of respectively the state democratic pillar and the parallel pillar a continuous line is drawn to illustrate the interlinkage between all of these institutions. This would be justified by the mere existence of the SNSC alone. The SNSC, in which all 4 main components are present, provides, as seen, a framework for competition, consensus-seeking and consultation. The *artesh* is represented in institutions of the democratic state pillar (Parliament, government) and, although under the formal control of the Leader, has some kind of autonomy and hence influence due to specialized information and know-how on the civil component of the parallel structure. Considering the limited nature of such influence we have opted for a dotted line. The civil component of

the state democratic structure, especially through the formulation of foreign policy by the president and the budget approval by Parliament, obviously influences the military forces. The influence of either Parliament or the President on the parallel structure seems less obvious. Such does not mean that it is inexistent however. The intervention of Ahmadinejad in the election for the Assembly of Experts is only one example. We have therefore chosen once more a dotted line.

The Iranian Second Republic

Khamenei

| Artesh | Civil Institutions | *Expediency Council* | Parallel Civil Institutions | Parallel Security Institutions | Traditional Elites |

State Democratic

Parallel

The integrative movement seems clear. As Chapter 4 illustrated these institutional evolutions have to be paralleled with the dynamics of changing bases of power. I have observed a triple evolution. The first one was the victory of the state and its increasing coherence. The second one has been the establishment of the *Sepah*'s, that is the parallel security institutions', as a strong base of power, especially in the mobilization of the *mostazafan*. A third evolution has been the emergence of civil society and, more generally, the rising importance of

416

legitimacy based on the people in all civilian components of the regime, going from the Supreme Leader, the paramount parallel institution, to the president, the highest state democratic institution. The three-fold evolution of the Iranian system confirms that the consolidation of the state is an indispensable requirement for institutionalized contestation.[1326]

I have demonstrated that today the struggle for the state is very much between civil society and the *Sepah*. The 2009 presidential election formed just another illustration of this. Three main scenarios for the future can be presumed. The first one would be a take-over of the state democratic pillar by the *Sepah* as an institution. This would establish a military dictatorship through a *coup*. Such is possible, yet would most probably lead to civil war. And the collapse of the system. The fact that the *Sepah* during the last presidential elections, although clearly not ready to return to country to *reformists* did prefer electoral rigging over a outright coup illustrated such.

The second possible scenario is the victory of civil society and the reemergence of the "pluralistic momentum" of 1997.[1327] This would imply a total professionalization of the *Sepah*, with their members running as individual candidates, rather than using the *Sepah*'s networks of mobilization for their campaign as Ahmadinejad has done. The example could be more Mohsen Reza'i's 2009 presidential campaign. Although he still enjoys much support, Rezai clearly was not the *Sepah*'s favorite and hence did not rely on the *Sepah*'s institutional networks as strongly as did Ahmadinejad.

A third possible scenario could be a middle-way and is, as often, the most probable one. In this third scenario Iran would slowly but certainly evolve to a binary system in which the distinction between parallel and state democratic institutions gradually vanishes. This

[1326] D. RUESCHEMEYER, E.H. STEPHENS & J.D. STEPHENS, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, Oxford/Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992, p.159
[1327] A. ADIB-MOGHADDAM, "The Pluralistic Momentum in Iran and the Future of the Reform Movement", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.27, No.6, 2006, pp. 665-674

would require on the one hand an integration of the parallel and state democratic civilian institutions and, on the other hand, of the *Sepah* and the *artesh*. Such is not wholly improbable. The continuous insisting of different forces on a government of national unity might be a sign in this direction All the more so since both the civilian component of the state democratic pillar as the civilian component of the parallel pillar increasingly share the same principle of legitimacy which is popular sovereignty. In this scenario the *Sepah* continues to be politically active in a corporative-like way. At the same time however it also slowly integrates with the traditional *artesh*. The latter evolution might on the one hand lead to a professionalization of the military component, yet might also lead to a civilian-military relationship which is similar to the Chinese or the Turkish model.

7. Conclusion

The conclusions of my study could be phrased in few words. The decades of durable dictatorship in Iran are linked to a process of state formation. This process of state formation has been predominantly an internal process. Its course has led to two revolutions. After the second revolution, the incorporation of traditional challengers to the state's infrastructural power caused a double system where state democratic institutions were paralleled by an Islamic government of control dominated by the newly incorporated social units. I have tentatively called this transformation an evolution from proto-societal corporatism to state corporatism. I have demonstrated how the legitimacy of these pillars was progressively unified. From a state democratic pillar, founded on civil or popular legitimacy, and a parallel pillar, based on numinous or religious legitimacy, the system evolved to a binary system were all civilian institutions rely on popular legitimacy. Even the *Sepah* now has to woo the people to justify its rule. Considering the victory of the State over the incorporated social units and the shift towards legitimacy based on popular sovereignty three future scenarios have been mentioned. These include outright military dictatorship or perhaps military dictatorship under an Islamic republican cloak; the instauration of pluralism; and the, more probable in the short-run, slow evolution to a binary system where civilian institutions and armed forces share power in the form of a government of national unity. The June 2009 presidential elections demonstrated the acuteness of this contradiction.

In the end what any study is judged on is its ability to answer the questions it set out to answer. Therefore it is important to underline what this study did not do, nor attempt to do. It did not try to qualify the Iranian regime. It offered no complete and extensive overview or analysis of Iranian history nor of the country's political system. Nor did it take the revolution as its main object of study. Many aspects of the revolution were omitted or understated. The dynamics of power

presented in this thesis do not offer a global picture of power relations in the Islamic Republic. Nor did this study attempt to identify those variables that could ignite a process of democratization. So what did it do?

Rather than looking for paths towards democracy in Iran, this study set out to understand the durability of dictatorship in the country and the consequences of this dictatorship. The short answer is: until now democracy was simply impossible, because no functioning, consolidated and modern state existed. In this sense the 1979 revolution and the Islamic Republic have brought democracy closer than ever.

Looking at transitology and elite theory, I claim that due to methodological imperfections most contemporary approaches proved unable to answer even the most basic question regarding any polity: Who Rules?

I first looked at traditional paradigms presenting some kind of answer to this question. These paradigms, often inspired directly or indirectly, by elitism were divided in basically two categories. A first category of pluralists which assert that "more than one" holds power and a second category of monists pretending that power is in the hands of "the one". A number of flaws within traditional paradigms were indicated. The qualification and classification of political regimes was shown to be dependent at least as much on so-called common sense as on social scientific research. A common sense bias was shown to influence judgment by categorizing certain countries as "similar" and others as "dissimilar".

When the country is considered similar scholars tends to accentuate the "fundamentally similar nature" between the polity under scrutiny and their, often implicit and unspecified, polity of reference. To this fundamentally nature are then added some "particularities" defining the polity and distinguishing it from other "similar" polities. These "particularities" are often supposed to find their origins in cultural or regional specificities. In those cases where on the contrary the analyzed

polity is supposed to be dissimilar, scholars accentuate the "fundamental distinction" between the implicit policy of reference and the polity under scrutiny. Occasionally some "apparent similarities" are acknowledged.

These two categories then heavily influenced the methodology used. Subsequently, tt was demonstrated how methodology often decisively influenced the result. When using a decisional method of analysis scholars often arrived at pluralist conclusions, while institutional analyses generally led to monist results. The few exceptions to this rule, found for example in Martin Broszat's scholarship, do little less than confirm it. This led me to observe that it is extremely difficult to find any scientific criterion that justifies a clear distinction between dictatorship and democracy. I demonstrated how these methodological imperfections led to a number of very regrettable consequences, like meaningless classifications, essentialism and a lack of situation in time and space. The inadequacy of labels and the proliferation of pseudo-qualifications led me to refute such a essentialist vision of the polity. I claimed that the concept of totalitarianism was arguably the best example of a combination of essentialism and a bias of dissimilarity. Scholars of totalitarianism set out to distinguish liberal democracy from other systems, not to understand fundamental differences between those "other" systems. The rebuttal of essentialism also led to a questioning of most transitological literature, which all too often implies a voluntary passage of one naturalized regime to another.

To avoid these traps I started from theories of state formation. State formation has the first very obvious advantage of bringing the state back in. Many of the elitist theories neglected the state. When using state formation theory one acknowledges that the state forms a legitimate object for study, can be an actor and certainly plays a fundamental role in the development of any polity. State formation theories also demonstrated a decisive advantage over the more voluntaristic and teleological transitology. I did refute the assumed deliberate effort to construct specific sorts of modern states, as democracies. This is not to say that my study ignored human action or

indeed human intentions. Rather than falling in a limited structuralism, I agreed with Norbert Elias that the interaction of uncountable often opposing ambitions and individual interests can create a phenomenon not explicitly wanted or planned for, but which nonetheless remains the result of the actions and aspirations of the many actors involved.[1328]

The study demonstrates how the system's contemporary dynamics are closely linked to its genesis, to such a degree even that the system's nature and its durability depend in a high degree of the characteristics of the genetic process. It is argued that depending on how the system was established and on what social units composed it, the internal forces and dynamics permit to predict in a rather reliable way the future of the system under consideration. This study opposes the genesis of the Nazi-system to the genesis of the Stalinist Soviet Union. Contemporary social science has the tendency of assimilating these two regimes under the label of "totalitarianism". I argue that such assimilation proves extremely harmful. I indicate fundamentally different dynamics leading to respectively centrifugal and centripetal tendencies within the Nazi and the Stalinist regimes. These two great dictatorships of the twentieth century are then considered opposites on an axis. The former incarnating a self-destructive and disintegrative form of dictatorship, which ultimately destroyed the German state, favoring the emergence of new social units, able to undermine the state's power. The Soviet regime on the contrary is claimed, expanded the range of the Soviet state and reinforced it by integrating or destroying all other social units and competitors to its infrastructural power. The former unmade the state, the latter made it.

State making is in essence the result of a competition between different social units.
In their struggle for the monopoly of the means of coercion, social units try to mobilize as many resources as possible. Such competition famously leads to Tilly's dictum that states make war and war makes

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[1328] N. ELIAS, *Über den Progress der Zivilisation,* tonne II, 1969 in its French translation N. ELIAS, *La Dynamique de l'Occident,* Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1975, pp.98

states. State power was therefore logically considered both from the point of view of despotic as of infrastructural state power.

The effective exercise of despotic power requires a monopoly on the means of coercion within a given territory. State formation implies that the emerging state step by step takes over, destroys or integrates other social units. Yet an absolute dominance of the means of coercion does not mean that the State effectively and totally annihilated these social units. Rather on the contrary many of the incorporated social units maintain autonomous, that is non-statal, power foundations even after their defeat by the state. The completion of the process of state formation, or rather the strengthening of the state then goes through the increase of its infrastructural power. What is contended is indeed not merely the control of the means of coercion, but the power to penetrate civil society and to implement policies, depending on different factors.

A bit arbitrarily perhaps, contemporary state formation in Iran was supposed to have started towards mid- or end-nineteenth century. I did clearly not claim that this were the very first steps in Iranian state formation. Rather on the contrary a brief reference to the Safavid past was explicitly made. Nonetheless the present study does assume that a fundamental new phase was initiated towards the mid-nineteenth century.

If the process was initiated under the Qajar dynasty, it was obviously not a conscious choice on the Qajar's part. The slowly crumbling dynasty saw its existence threatened by both the arrival of foreign competitors, in essence imperialist forces from mostly Russia and Britain, and a lack of hold on the provinces.

One of the elements characterizing the development of the state was the extension of its fiscal administration. The need of a bureaucracy to increase the government's income was felt ever more. To guarantee such the Shah increasingly needed coercion to extract tribute, yet only in the second half of the 19th century the Qajars slowly succeeded in

increasing government revenues by establishing custom rights and confiscating properties of those that failed to pay taxes. At the same time, some kind of patrimonial bureaucratic administration structured around the Shah's family emerged, the educational system, the administration were reformed and an attempt to keep the clergy out of politics was made. Tax collection however became increasingly complex and the armed forces remained under foreign control. The Qajar's attempts in the field of state making amounted to little less than utter failure.

The rise to power of Reza Khan, first Pahlavi Shah would have to set things straight.Reza Khan brought the national army to the center of the Iranian state. His *coup* marked the beginning of the unification of armed forces and the country. Both tribes and clergy quickly started opposing his reforms in the military domain. The former feared a decrease in their potential of military mobilization, the latter did not look favorably on the idea of seeing all young people pass two years in a secular institution. The unification of the army and its role at the center of the new Pahlavi state formed only one part of the state formation process under Reza Khan.

The task of developing a modern and unified army came in parallel with the urgent need for the establishment of control over the peripheral regions of Iran. Uprisings in Gilan and Khorasan, and revolts by the Kurds, the Qashqai and the Bakhtiyari were all defeated step by step. The state initiated with the sedentarization of the tribes. Combined with attempts to bring Baluchistan under national control these victories show the interaction between the development of the nation and the development of the new armed forces in the years immediately following the *coup*.

After establishing relative "despotic" control over the Iranian territory, the Iranian state also started to expand its infrastructural power. In this perspective Reza Khan launched some "totalitarian" measures. The new bureaucracy developed around two main pillars. The

424

establishment and development of Ministries was paralleled by the adoption of French inspired Codes of Law.

The increase in infrastructural state power was especially visible in the development of transportation infrastructure as railroads and roads. But also in the development of literacy programs and state education.

Increasing state influence had alienated the merchants from the Pahlavi monarchy. They strongly resented the monopolies the state was establishing in foreign and domestic trade The clergy felt rightly targeted by the educational reforms, the secularization process and some state control established over part of their real estate. Alienated from the major organized forces of society and left with the mere army as support, the quick defeat of the military in 1941 sealed Reza Khan's fate. The quest for the State continued.

The replacement of Reza Khan with his much weaker son had consequences. Old non-statal concentrations of power once again started to challenge the state. Ethnic tensions reemerged and the clergy quickly reaffirmed its role. Mohamed Reza, realizing his dependency on the military, erected a political police force and tried to modernize the army. The son continued his father's policies to develop the state's infrastructural power. Literacy and infrastructure came to dominate the policy agenda. The clergy understood it the danger and revolted in 1963. The results of Mohammed Reza's policies were disappointing . By 1974 the number of illiterates had actually and proportionately ever less high school graduated gained access to universities.

As mentioned in the first chapter, the Iranian revolution is not the object of my study. Any causal mechanisms of revolutions addressed in this study, are so in a larger historical perspective. I simplified approaches of revolution according to Goodwin's three macro-approaches: modernization theories, Marxist theories and state-centered theories.[1329] For Iran all three have a clear relevance.

[1329] J. GOODWIN, "Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements" in T. JANOSKI e.a., *The Handbook of Political Sociology*, New York, Cambridge UP, 2005, pp.404-422 see also

Modernization theories discuss if "*the revolution occurred because the shah modernized too much and too quickly*" or "*because the shah did not modernize fast enough and thoroughly.*"[1330] This approach was obviously credited with more than some relevance in this thesis. Marxist approaches of Third World revolutions on the other hand, stressing the transition from one mode of production to another, were considered less relevant for the explanation of the Iranian revolution. For this study the merit of Marxist theory is double. First of all Marxists continuously stress the influence of imperialism on the Iranian polity. Foreign pressure and indeed imperialism proved indeed decisive at different stages of Iranian state formation. Secondly, the Marxist paradigm, by insisting on the class bases of political systems and changes, downplays cultural and religious factors of revolution. In the Iranian case such a materialist bias is extremely helpful, since all too frequently culturalist approaches distort scholarship on the country and its revolution.

The approach of this study is clearly state-centered. Underlining both economic contradictions (between coexistent modes of productions) as political ones that saw powerful elites and their concentrations of power excluded from participation to the political arena. By using not only social classes, but also other concentrations of private power, that are not necessarily or exclusively economic, like the clergy, our approach lays the foundations for a similar look at post-revolutionary Iran.

I mentioned how even within state-centered approaches, controversies are many. Some scholars claim state weakness lies at the origin of its breakdown, others assert that reform strengthening and modernizing the state leads to revolution. I did not explicitly address the discussion if it is state strength or state weakness that leads to revolution. Rather I argued that it was state *development* that led to revolution. Arguably the incorporation of certain social units would have been undoable without the social transformations brought about by a revolution. Such a

J.GOODWIN & T. SKOCPOL, "Explaining Revolutions in the Contemporary Third World", *Politics and Society*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1989, pp. 489-509
[1330] E. ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two*…, p.426-427

statement does not imply a historical destiny in any way. If revolution was needed to complete state formation, this does not mean that state formation as such was or had to be Iran's destiny.

Much like Tocqueville, my study illustrates how: "*administrative centralization is an institution of the Old Regime, and not the work of either the Revolution or the Empire*". The Islamic Revolution started with the explicit objective of abolishing the old state and creating some kind of new form of Islamic rule. This objective soon disappeared and many of the institutions of the new Islamic Republic were merely revitalized versions of pre-revolutionary institutions. The construction of a parallel state structure next to the traditional state institutions can easily be misunderstood as a measure decreasing stateness and indicating the disintegration of the Iranian state. The historical dimension of this study permits however to avoid such an erroneous valuation. Much like the Soviet regime, the genesis of the Islamic Republic was basically a integrative process, as opposed to the disintegrative development characterizing the passage from the Weimar Republic to Nazi Germany.

The fact that the state survived in a rather easy, although not bloodless, way the revolutionary upheaval was an early sign that the Islamic Revolution was all but to abolish the State. The royalist Majles became an Islamic Majles, the secret police (SAVAK) became a Ministry (VEVAK), the literacy corpses were given an Islamic form and so on. To be sure, many things changed with the revolution, but the State's advance was only reinforced by it. Some scholars argued and continue to argue that the Islamic Revolution unmade the state, that it installed mere arbitrary rule or, frequently, that a clergy-bazaar alliance had taken over the state. I demonstrated that these claims, although apparently correct, were little more than optical illusions. Indeed, analyzing the Islamic Revolution in these terms proves once more the perils of what Tilly called "*abstracting social processes from the constraints*

of time and space, concretizing social research by aiming it at reliable observation of currently visible behavior."[1331]

During and arguably a bit before the revolution at least four different challenges to the state emerged. I summarized these in a parallel and a peripheral challenge, a challenge from below and a challenge from within.

The peripheral challenge came especially from regionalist insurgencies. Regionalist insurgencies were arguably the new form under which former tribal contestation presented itself. They contested one of the most fundamental aspects of the Iranian state: its territorial integrity. They were put down mostly militarily by the new state and especially its new military actor the *Sepah.* The process of putting down regionalist insurgencies was not without setbacks, yet *in globo* it permitted the central state to develop its domination over the peripheral regions. At the same time it was a formation process for the new military structure. The *Sepah* was constructed in a very grassroots manner. This allowed to permeate society on the one hand, but on the other rendered it vulnerable to societal divisions. The repression of regionalist insurgencies turned out to be a useful test. Those sections of the *Sepah* that chose the side of the insurgents were purged and subdued, while loyal members were offered social promotion by the center. This increased the link between central government and the *Sepah*, while the *Sepah* kept its qualitative advantage of infrastructural penetration.

The challenge from below was defeated in a similar yet different way of combining military action and societal penetration. Islamizing social and workers' councils while violently repressing those that continued to resist central control, proved an effective method. I demonstrated how the fundamental question concerning these councils was not if they were dominated by Islamic or Marxist tendencies and ideology. Rather on the contrary what mattered was their link with centralized

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[1331] C. TILLY, "Historical Sociology", *Current Perspectives in Social Theory*, Vol.1, 1980, pp.55-59 (55)

authority. Independency was not tolerated, divergent interpretations of Islam were less problematic.

The challenge from within was arguably more complex. I showed that all those eliminated from the system shared a similar institutional attitude. All of them directly or indirectly refuted the new institutional order. The liberal Bazargan and the Islamic-liberal Bani Sadr challenged the parallel institutions. Bani Sadr used his presidency to attack his Prime Minister while favoring the *artesh* against the *Sepah*. Guerrilla groups as the Mujahedin and Feda'i challenged the monopoly of violence of the new Republic. All those opposing the new parallel institutions were purged. The state was hence unsuccessful in avoiding the emergence of a parallel structure, quite as the Shah had been unsuccessful in destroying the concentrations of private power that now dominated the parallel structure. It would be a mistake to see all this from a functionalist perspective, yet denying the functionality of the new institutions and hence the importance of eliminating its opponents would be equally incorrect.

Unsurprisingly, in a first phase, those animating and structuring the parallel challenge were probably those that fared best. Emanating from those social units that had until then been excluded from the state, they succeeded in building a top-down parallel structure, intended to either replace or take over the state. Whatever their intentions might have been, they soon came to form the backbone of the new state, without however replacing it. The social units composing the parallel structure indeed paid a heavy tribute for their integration in the state. They lost autonomy and the ability to oppose the state. Insofar as the came to constitute Lenin's "government of control", the price they paid was their existence as corporatist entities.

This study showed how in reality the Islamic Revolution incorporated those social units that had been excluded from the Pahlavi state into the new so-called Islamic state. For different reasons different social units were unable to resist the infrastructural rise of the state. The clergy for one was forced to enter the arena of politics since its declared

objective was imposing Islamic rule. The increasing strength of state bureaucracy also made resistance difficult. Especially since the developing bureaucracy offered new possibilities to members of traditional concentrations of power. From competitors to the state they became competitors *within* the state. A convenient institutional setting emerged to make this possible. Arguably such a setting could not have been brought about in any other way than by revolution. The revolution created a double institutional structure of which at least one pillar offered nominal and face value domination to the groups that had to be incorporated. The construction of the new order and the continuity of the old order will permit the new regime to develop the infrastructural power of the state by incorporating traditional power groups that had until then impeded modernization by limiting state power. The bazaar and the clergy were to be the most impressive examples of these successes. Rather than affirming that the clergy took power in Iran, which is the dominant thesis, the study shows that power took the clergy in different steps. After decapitating the traditional clerical establishment, the new regime went one step further by creating those institutions that would allow the clergy to integrate the state institutions. The collapse of the clergy as an institution is demonstrated.

The progressive destruction of autonomous power bases of incorporated social units like the clergy, was shown to be part of the maturation of the state. Undermining the basis of these social units solidifies the state, insofar as it can recuperate their clientele. The social definition of subjects transforms from "*estates of the realm*" into terms of citizens, state and the connections between and through both political parties and the interest groups. In other words, civil society emancipates from the "corporatist complex" and acquires a role as a political subject. With Habermas I underline how through its articulation in political parties and interest groups conditioning the so-called *volonté générale,* civil society becomes the material constitution of the public sphere.

I underlined that Iranian revolutionaries lacked a clear program for societal transformation. I insisted on how ideology was much more shaped by reality than it itself shaped reality. At this level as well a comparison between Russian and Iranian revolutionaries proved useful. Just as the Russian Bolsheviks, Iranian revolutionaries possessed a useful revolutionary theory to take over power, but lacked a theory that could indicate the way in which the new system "should" be shaped.[1332] Unsurprisingly and notwithstanding passionate debates among different Islamic scholars, of which only a few were mentioned in this study, in the end all of them were adapted to the structural constraints and the conjuncture of revolution. Marxism's influence on Islamic thought was no coincidence, but a consequence of personal experiences of scholars as Mutahhari or Shariati and of the objective Iranian situation. In his so-called interpretation of Islamic thought Khomeini broke with century old Sh'i tradition and inserted both liberal and Marxist references. In power, Khomeini once again has to adapt his vision of *velayat-e faqih* according to the "needs of the age". What the great leader himself really thought proved almost irrelevant. The outcome was determined by the respective weight of different social units. Khomeini originally left no space for a republic, yet did not or could not prevent the establishment of it. I profoundly agreed with Parsa who emphasizes that "*to argue convincingly that an ideological shift towards a theocratic Islamic regime preceded its formation, the analysis would have to show that the Islamic movement's leadership was open about its ideology and goals, and that a majority of those who participated in the revolution supported such goals.*"[1333] This study argues that such has not been demonstrated. Khomeini did not interpret Islamic law or Shi'i jurisprudence, he adapted it to the needs of his time. No wonder that with the 1989 constitutional revision being aware of the circumstances of the time was given priority over religious qualifications even in the selection of the Supreme Leader. What looked like revolutionary ideology was not totally useless however. The banners of "holy

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[1332] D. LOSURDO, *Fuir l'Histoire : La Révolution russe et la Révolution chinoise Aujourd'hui,* Paris, Editions Delga/Temps des Cerises, 2007, p.67

[1333] M. PARSA, "Ideology and Revolution in Iran: Review" *Middle East Report,* No.196, September-October 1995, pp.30-32 (30)

defense" and "Islam" permitted the revolution's ideological mobilization, in combination with the war effort, made a exponential increase in the state's infrastructural power possible.

The 1982 decision of Iran to invade Iraq was considered from a viewpoint of state formation. By 1982 Iranian policy makers had seen already what "positive" results the war could bring domestically and the war permitted the regime to "*impose its control over State and society*" in a more efficient way.[1334] Consideration of domestic nature dominated war decisions. The Iranian qualitative military disadvantage in respect to Iraq, was balanced by a relative quantitative advantage in manpower. By the enforcement of Islamic conscription, rather than general mobilization, the State found yet another excuse to penetrate in the most remote zones of the country. Local clergymen became state recruiting agents. The extension of the state's penetration of civil society went further.

The state also started to look for different sources of finance. It started to exercise ever more influence on companies, developed a network for the collection of these voluntary contributions. Trade associations and distribution cooperatives were turned into a systematic source of finance. Membership of these conferred significant economic benefits yet in return so the state asked for a more significant contribution to its war effort.[1335] The state permeated civil society through rationing, voucher-systems, ration stamps and booklets distributed to households all over the country.

Through an analysis that is both institutional and decisional the fundamental dynamics of the post-revolutionary Iranian regime were illustrated. In a first phase the emergence of parallel structures, often

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[1334] J.-P.DIGARD, B. HOURCADE & Y. RICHARD, *L'Iran au XXe Siècle,* Paris, Fayard, 2007, p.184-185

[1335] V.F. NOWSHIRVANI & P.CLAWSON, "The State and Social Equity in Postrevolutionary Iran", in M. WEINER & A. BANUAZIZI, *The Politics of Social Transformation in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan,* Syracuse, Syracuse UP, 1994, pp. pp.228-269 (240-243)

representing incorporated social units, was indicated. Some of these social units, like the clergy, proved to be rather coherent corporation-like units. State-formation implied then not only their incorporation, but also a transformation from some kind of "proto-societal corporatism" to some kind of a state corporatism, with state-controlled and often state-dominated corporations. The "freely" constituted corporation of the clergy was gradually destroyed, while the state-initiated Sepah gained ever more importance.

Institutionally the increased interlinkage between different pillars of the system and the mergers between the parallel institutions with their state democratic counterparts are indicated. The decisional analysis is applied to the fundamental domains of foreign and economic policy. It is proven that Iran is animated by an integrative tendency, which has until now guaranteed autocratic rule and advanced the cause of the state.

Obviously on the long-term the integration of the two parallel pillars is to be considered the ultimate test of state formation. The system would have to integrate ever more, and evolve in the direction of "one chain of command". I underlined two different signs that such is effectively happening. On the one hand the state is evolving from the so-called corporatist complex to a state in where civil society takes over from traditional social units, the foundations of power used in the competition for power are no longer extra-statal but internal to the state. However the progressive end of the corporatist complex in Iran did not only see the rise of civil society, but also the rise of an important military actor. Used at first by one of the declining social units, it started intervening autonomously in politics. Nevertheless even this new actor is eminently a state-made actor, so its rise does not fundamentally question my assumption. It was underlined how in electoral competition the representatives of civil society should not forget those parts of society that do not feel represented by the new constitution of the public sphere. In other words those formerly known as the *mostazafan.*

433

Even so it has to be stressed that the parallel structure did not lead to any form of falling forward, cumulative radicalization or centrifugal tendencies. Neither did it provoke a stalemate in which different pillars, or at least one of them, might have lost interest in the competition because it felt if had nothing left to gain. Rather on the contrary, the fourth and fifth chapter illustrated how competition continued to animate the system, its elites and its institutions. Yet thanks to the socio-historical process that lay the foundations for the Islamic Republic, this competition never degenerated in a disintegrative and destructive force. Neither did it permit that one of the actors took over completely and so effectively destroyed competition.

I demonstrated how in recent years the centripetal tendencies in the regime increased. This was manifest in a domain as economic policy-making, yet also on foreign policy. From Rafsanjani to Ahmadinejad economic liberalization and privatization remained high on the agenda. Although this is not to say that these policies were always a huge success, indeed they were not, the basic direction of them was hardly contested. Even the staunchest aficionados of Leftist policies had followed the new consensus. Mousavi's return in the 2009 presidential election did not alter this in any significant way. At the same time however the resistance to certain types of reforms, in essence those that would infringe on the privileges of the established classes, is still considerable. The global evolution in economic policy during the three revolutionary decades illustrated there is little sense in speaking of a "disintegrating Iranian state". On foreign policy not only was there no process of radicalization, policy coherence also increased since the Rushdie-affair. On major issues and on the essential objectives of foreign policy a near consensus is achieved.

Institutionally similar tendencies were observed. In this context the increased grip of the Supreme Leader on certain subordinates through the Leader's representatives is only a minor indication. The attempted merger of different Ministries and their parallel equivalent seems a far more important evolution. As are the establishment of the Supreme

National Security Council and the Expediency council. The latter's function gradual transformation from a mere arbitrator to something some argue looks like a shadow government.

The analysis of integrative tendencies of Iranian state formation permits to say that the Islamic Revolution, considered retrograde, has been a progressive element in that it increased stateness. Contemporary Iranian history reads as a tale of state formation. In the sense that a state needs to be strong enough to democratize, the Iranian twentieth century reads as a long journey towards democracy. Yet this does not mean the system *has* to evolve further in this integrative sense. Rather on the contrary.

The 2009 presidential campaign was a reflection of the new Iran. Neither of the main candidates, Ahmadinejad nor Mousavi, was linked to one of the former concentrations of private power. Both relied on components of the new state. The progressive end of the corporatist complex in Iran saw the rise of civil society, and of an important new and parallel military actor (*Sepah*). Although even this new actor is eminently a state-made actor, it might endanger the system's coherence.

Political competition between both armed forces is relative. Considering that the *artesh* has been largely, but not totally, professionalized its political role was not overemphasized in this study. The forces of civil society might in case of a coup attempt be joined by the *artesh*, but this does not make the *artesh* the *Sepah*'s main competitor in the realm of politics. From my perspective the question is much more who will prevail between the *Sepah* and civil society. This was clearly the question in the latest presidential elections. The winner won a battle, not the war. It would be an illusion to think that the victory of one would totally erase the forces of the other.

Civilian dominance over the military does not automatically imply democracy. The opposite however can be said to imply more authoritarianism. The probability of a direct *Sepah* take-over is

impossible to measure or predict. However some circumstances could make it more or less probable. Considering that Iran has not abandoned what I have called the corporatist complex entirely yet, the *Sepah* has to be considered a rent-seeking corporation. The defense of the military's corporatist interests, depending on perceived necessities, such is done within the system, in a rent-seeking competition with other forces, or against it, by a coup. To avoid a coup the regime hence has to offer sufficient incentives to the Armed Forces for them to stay within the system. At the same time it has to increase the cost of a coup. So far there has been no lack of incentives. The Islamic Republic has served the *Sepah*'s corporatist interests well. The existence of a strong balancing force opposing the *Sepah*'s involvement in politics has caused a coup to be perceived as high-risk affair. To avoid such a risk, the *Sepah*'s intervention in politics has often taken the form of electoral competition.

The *Sepah*'s intervention in politics through electoral competition opens a window of opportunity for the civilian component. If individual candidates emanating from the *Sepah* can be progressively convinced to turn towards civil society and the electorate in a more general way, including also those formerly known as the *mostazafan*, the intervention in politics of the *Sepah* as a corporation would suffer from it. This is not as improbable as it might seem. Some candidates as for example ex-*Sepah* chief Reza'i already do so. Arguably even Ahmadinejad's wooing of the electorate, which is not limited to mobilization through the *Sepah* can be seen in this sense. However the rigging of the recent elections proved that a coup is also very much an option on the *Sepah*'s table.

Democratization in Iran will hence depend heavily on the evolution of civilian-military relations. Interestingly enough the survival of the Islamic Republic depends on the very same evolution, since a coup would annihilate it. The opposite of a *Sepah* take-over would be total civilian control over the military structure. This is from a democratic viewpoint clearly the preferable option. Yet it seems, al least in the short run, rather improbable.

A middle way between both is however possible. Both the civilian component of the state democratic pillar as the civilian component of the parallel pillar increasingly share the same principle of legitimacy which is popular sovereignty. Further integration of the civilian components of the regime combined with a unification of the armed forces, might lead to a Chinese or Turkish model of military-civilian relations. This is certainly no guarantee for democracy, but it would further strengthen the Iranian state and so doing consolidate a fundamental prerequisite of democracy. Although probably few actors or scholars understand this, democratization and the survival of the Islamic Republic are intrinsically linked to one another.

This is admittedly a challenging conclusion. Yet it is not a revolutionary one. My conclusion hardly required a revolution in social science. What did this thesis did was merely bring history and the State back in, while refusing methodological exceptionalism. It gives a place to authors as different as Charles Tilly, Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu in the analysis of dictatorship and its durability. It is arguably one of the few studies that starts from historical dynamics to understand not the mere emergence of the Islamic Republic, but its internal dynamics, its evolution and its future.

A part from a better understanding of the emergence, the functioning and evolution of the Islamic Republic, what kind of contribution, if any, to broader theoretical debates did this study generate? Some negative theoretical contributions have already been mentioned. More positively however I hope this study provided new theoretical insights in the domains of political and historical sociology and elite studies. Theoretical elements have been offered on the outcome of revolutions, the development of states, the study of democratization and the sustainability of dictatorship.

The outcome of revolutions has produced considerably less comparative literature than analyses of the causes of revolutions. The most classic exception to this is evidently Theda Skocpol's *States and*

Social Revolutions.[1336] Skocpol observed how the Chinese, the Russian and the French revolutions all saw the emergence of a more capable and developed state bureaucracy as a spectacular increase in the state's infrastructural power. Connecting state formation to the outcome of revolutions is indeed no invention of mine. On Iran such was also done by Farideh Farhi.[1337] Both of them underlined how the outcome of the revolution depends highly on *who* takes power and the struggle to preserve power. Other authors as John Foran, Jeff Goodwin and Jack Goldstone have underlined the importance of ideology in the outcome of revolutions, in that revolutionaries are not ready to do anything to maintain power.[1338] The first two authors also assert that the Iranian revolution is a defeated social revolution since it "*failed to transform economic and class structures radically.*"[1339]

This study presents rather different although possibly complementary findings. First of all it explained why military defeat at war was no precondition for revolution. The army, because of its internal structure, was simply unable to fulfill its tasks. The pre-revolutionary Iranian armed forces proved even less of an institution than the clergy. The armed forces did not have the capacity to function autonomously or coherently. Such was illustrated during both the major crises of the royal regime in respectively 1953 and 1979. Concerning ideology this study diverges from other accounts of revolution in that it shows how ideology as such played hardly any role in determining the final outcome of the revolution. Unless one wishes to naturalize the Quran or Islam as an ideology, which would bring us back in the meanders of essentialism, one might even state there was *hardly any* ideology of the Islamic Republic.

[1336] T. SKOCPOL, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1979

[1337] F. FARHI, *States and Urban-based Revolution: Iran and Nicaragua*, Urbana/Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1990

[1338] J. FORAN & J. GOODWIN, "Revolutionary Outcomes in Iran and Nicaragua: Coalition Fragmentations, War, and the Limits of Social Transformation", *Theory and Society,* Vol.22, No.2, April 1993, pp.209-247

[1339] *Ibid.,* p.235

From a perspective of state formation the Iranian revolution seems certainly more of a success than a failure. If the standard for failure is to be radical transformation of social revolutions is the radical transformation of economic and social structure the Iranian revolution appears admittedly less of a success. The question remains what touchstone is used. Since the Iranian revolution as such was not my main object of study, I did not verify to what degree the Iranian revolution was successful as a "true social revolution". This study preferred to consider the role of the revolution and its outcome in the perspective of historical developments and arguably modernization. From such a perspective the Iranian revolution did no better or worse than the three social revolutions Skocpol scrutinized. For Foran and Goodwin the fact that the Iranian revolution did not deregulated is a sign of failure of the revolution. From my perspective the outcome of the Iranian revolution was a success exactly *because* of this. All the more so since even from the viewpoint of many determinant actors a socialized economy was no real option.

In the formation of states and regimes the present study offered a perspective rather different from scholars of revolution. Crane Brinton's Anatomy of Revolution summarizes revolution in different stages going from the rule of the moderates, over the accession to power of extremists and the rule of terror to the stabilization in a revolutionary Thermidor, should arguably form the basis of any study of revolution.[1340] I preferred an approach of different regime types and states resulting from a longer historic evolution of which the revolution is but one, admittedly remarkable, episode.

Indeed, no sense in limiting the understanding of the present Iranian regime start in 1979, when for the analysis of contemporary Western European polities scholars have went back as far as 990. Skocpol's assertion that social revolutions have to produce some kind of authoritarian system disregards the obvious reality that most European countries, with or without revolution, have gone through a periods of

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[1340] C. BRINTON, *Anatomy of Revolution,* New York, Vintage-Prentice Hall, 1965

authoritarianism. State formation theorists acknowledge this. Be it with national particularities, in the end most Western European countries have bred some kind of liberal democratic system. The fundamental precondition for such a system was the formation of a strong and modern state.

This approach has resulted in some interesting findings. On the one hand it allowed to account for a number of similarities between state formation in Iran and state formation elsewhere, where most approaches until now had stressed "fundamental" differences.[1341] On the other hand it revealed a number of internal tendencies and evolutions since the Islamic Revolution. These tendencies, as there were among others the collapse of the politicized clergy and the emergence of civil society, would be difficult to detect in a Brinton-like analysis of revolution.

The post-revolutionary development of Iran illustrated one more flaw in the dissimilarity bias. Iran's revolution and dictatorship are surely particular, yet they differed no more from other processes of state formation than the Glorious Revolution differed from Prussian state formation. The Iranian system is certainly special, yet not incomparable to the evolution of the French or Russian polities.

What did this study clarify in the field of democratization? First of all that there is no sense in studying why Iran has not become a democracy. Until very recently, and perhaps still today, the most basic requirement for democracy, that is a state, was simply not present. Iranian history in the twentieth century has not proven that those advocating liberal democracy in Iran were wrong. Rather on the contrary, they were ahead of their time. The Iranian political system is ripening and liberal democracy truly is becoming an option. Yet it would be a mistake to consider history has to end there. Marx always acknowledged liberalism had had a progressive function in history. From a Marxian perspective the establishment of a modern state and

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[1341] To mention just one other example L. ANDERSON, "The State in the Middle East and North Africa", *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 20, No.1, October 1987, pp.1-18

liberal democracy in Iran can be considered a first but necessary step towards socialism. But the establishment of a strong state opens a window of opportunities not merely for liberals and Marxists, anarchistic and libertarian designs, from Buchanan to Nozick, as well might hope to wield some influence in the Iranian polity to come.

Secondly, this study underlined how studying democratization as a consequence of "elite" choices might be an interesting exercise, but makes hardly any sense at all. I demonstrated the impossibility for many elitist views, let alone for Game Theoretical approaches, to identify the actors of their "game". I also underlined the limits of considering "conscientious human agency" as a decisive factor in the evolution of the Iranian polity.

Thirdly, I have offered some elements of an answer to why elite fragmentation does not automatically have to lead to democratization or transition even if, to borrow the vocabulary of Game Theorists, the necessary incentives are present. What is decisive is not the elites as such, but their power base. As long as elites come from and rely on integrated corporations that see their interests well served by the system in place, there is no reason to believe in any transition to democracy. Arguably one even risks less democratic systems, as for example military dictatorship. Only the emergence of new power bases and the abandonment of the corporatist complex can lead to transition.

More specifically on the sustainability of dictatorship this study found a fundamental distinction between integrative and disintegrative dictatorships. Nazism was considered an example of the latter, while Stalinism was clearly integrative. If dictatorship is hence to be considered useful for state formation, that is if it is to have any progressive function, it has to be integrative. Most social revolutions have arguably been integrative. From a functionalist perspective this might lead us to conclude that revolutions have generally been progressive elements necessary for the accomplishment of a modern state and the establishment of its infrastructural power. It might also

inspire us to refuse the take-over of power by the Nazis the label of revolution.[1342]

Disintegrative dictatorships are by definition unsustainable, while integrative dictatorships can persist. This is not *per se* a surprising statement. However, this study demonstrated how a limited historical analysis can indicate what kind of dictatorship is at hand. Rather than falling in simplifications by claiming that a wave of democracy will automatically and rapidly overthrow all dictatorships or by asserting the exact opposite, that is that some dictatorships are immune to internal collapse, I hope to have demonstrated that "dictatorship" is merely one stage of a longer development. By refusing to naturalize any regime but stressing the dynamics animating it, I changed the question. It is no longer how to make a democracy out of a dictatorship, but to understand the dynamics of the system and possible directions of these dynamics. Only by taking into consideration these dynamics, one can avoid the pitfalls of traditional transitology and democratization theory.

Two simple examples illustrate these pitfalls. Different kind of promoters of democracy have underlined the importance of strengthening civil society in Iran. Although this is not wrong as such, I illustrated how it is the careful balance between two emerging social units, that is civil society and the parallel military *Sepah*, in combination with the gradual decline of traditional social units, that has permitted the increase of stateness in Iran and increased the possibility of democratization. By intervening in this delicate balance one might actually provoke a *Sepah* military coup. All the more so since few advocates of democracy seriously consider any form of expiatory sacrifice under the form of a nuclear weapon to buy off the parallel military component. A second and even more speaking example of risks of simplistic democratization theory is offered by those that have argued that military action or sanctions might incite the regime to democratize. This study has illustrated how such would only

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[1342] Contra J.L. SHELL [A. MITCHELL], *The Nazi Revolution: Hitler's Dictatorship and the German Nation*, Lexington, D.C. Heath & Co., 1973

strengthen the parallel military component of the regime and undermine the ongoing evolution.

Obviously all this is not to say that this study pretends to answer in any definitive way the above problems. One could probably argue that more than offering answers, I raised a number of questions. Interrogations that could incite a profound reflection on how we are used to look at systems and polities that are either geographically, culturally or apparently outside of our framework of reference. By challenging a number of public assumptions this text hopes to give rise to some debate. Scholars might find inspiration for a reconsideration of certain concepts. Policymakers on the other hand might be inspired to abandon decades of unfruitful "carrot and stick"-policies towards Iran.

8.   Post-Scriptum: One More Step to Democracy?

After the June 2009 election the harshest accusation came from Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Iranian filmmaker and one of Mousavi's spokesmen. He denounced a *coup d'état* by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corpse (IRGC), who staunchly defended Ahmadinejad. A *coup* not only against Mousavi, but even against the Supreme religious Leader, ayatollah Khamenei. What happened to the Republic of the ayatollahs? The West has consistently failed to see the Iranian revolution as a step towards the establishment of a modern democratic state. Nonetheless contemporary Iranian history reads as a tale of state formation in three stages. Since a state needs to be strong enough to democratize, the Iranian twentieth century reads as a long journey towards democracy. In a first phase the State prevailed over concentrations of private, non-statal power like the tribes, the clergy and the bazaar. In a second phase within the State new actors, like civil society or the Islamic armed forces, emerged on new foundations of power. In an ongoing third phase these new actors now battle for domination of the state. Democracy has never been closer. The nuclear issue could determine the outcome. The West might have an ace to play, by accepting Iran's nuclear destiny and a future of both deterrence and further democratization in the country and region.

8.1.   *Security Concerns*

A grave misconception has to be eliminated before presenting my main argument. An Iranian nuclear bomb is often considered an international security liability. If such were true, my argument would be all but senseless.

Let me be clear: nuclear proliferation is not the issue. If it were, the West should halt its support to the Indian nuclear program, pressure

Pakistan to put its nuclear weapons under international supervision and demand clarity on the Israeli nuclear arsenal.

Nonetheless, the mere idea that Iran might obtain a nuclear weapon has terrified commentators and governments alike. Uncountable publications have depicted apocalyptic scenarios.[1343] Winning the 2009 Israeli parliamentary elections, Benyamin Netanyahu declared in Davos that Iran's nuclear program "*ranks far above the global economy as a challenge facing world leaders*."[1344]

From a strategic point of view such a preoccupation is rather difficult to grasp. Kenneth Waltz underlined how nuclear weapons have been a force working for peace, because "*they make the cost of war seem frighteningly high and thus discourage states from starting any wars. Nuclear weapons have helped maintain peace between the great powers and have not led their few other possessors into military adventures. Their further spread, however, causes widespread fear. Much of the writing about the spread of nuclear weapons has this unusual trait: It tells us that what did not happen in the past is likely to happen in the future, that tomorrow's nuclear states are likely to do to one another what today's nuclear states have not done.*"[1345] Considering US and Israeli nuclear superiority, only an irrational urge to self-destruction on the part of Iranian policy-makers would make the perspective of an Iranian nuclear weapon a truly frightening one. An Iranian bomb would be offensively useless. At best it could have a deterring effect..

[1343] A. JAFARZADEH, *The Iran threat: President Ahmadinejad and the Coming Nuclear Crisis,* New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2008; Y. MELMAN & M. JAVEDANFAR, *The Nuclear Sphinx of Tehran,* New York, Basic Books, 2007; A.J. VENTER, *Iran's Nuclear Option: Tehran's Quest for the Atom Bomb,* London, Casemate, 2005; K.R. TIMMERMAN, *Countdown to Crisis: The Coming Nuclear Showdown with Iran,* New York, Kindle Edition, 2005 & M.D. EVANS & J.R. CORSI, *Showdown with Nuclear Iran: Radical Islam's Messianic Mission to Destroy Israel and Cripple the United States*, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 2006
[1344] S.M. WALT, "Is Iran a bigger challenge than the global economic crisis? Bibi thinks so", *Foreign Policy*, January 29, 2009, http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/
[1345] K. WALTZ, "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Better," *Adelphi Papers*, Number 171, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981

Truth be said, the fear for an Iranian bomb among Western policy-makers has very basic roots. The West does not thrust Iran. Efraim Inbar, professor at Bar-Ilan University and director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, nicely reassumes this view: "*the Islamic Republic of Iran has a jihadist foreign policy agenda.*"[1346] Iran seems ruled by fanatics.

Even if this were the case, such does not have to be problematic. History has known other fanatics. About 10 years before China successfully tested its nuclear weapon, Mao "*argued that China could survive a nuclear war in terms candidly based upon China's numerical advantage of population*"[1347] Notwithstanding these frightening comments on nuclear war, once China actually got control of nuclear weapons, the idea of using them was never seriously considered.[1348] Even verbally, Iran never threatened Israel, or any other country, with nuclear war.

In reality, few strategic analysts sincerely believe that the Iranian leadership stands ready to commit collective suicide. The US-based Council on Foreign Relations stated as soon as 2004 that "*Iran's foreign policy has gradually acceded to the exigencies of national interest, except in certain crucial areas where ideology remains paramount. As a result, Tehran has reestablished largely constructive relations with its neighbors and has expanded international trade links.*"[1349] Israeli strategic analyst Martin van Creveld claims an Iranian nuclear bomb would even enhance this process: "*in every place where nuclear weapons were introduced, large-scale*

[1346] E. INBAR, "The Iranian Bomb", *Transatlantic Issues* (Transatlantic Institute), No.7, November 2006, http://www.transatlanticinstitute.org/html/pu_articles.html?id=292

[1347] J. GITTINGS, "New Light on Mao 1. His View of the World", *The China Quarterly*, No. 60, December 1974, pp. 750-766 (759)

[1348] D. WILSON, *Mao: The People's Emperor,* London, Hutchinson., 1979, pp.326-328 and the review of it in S.R. SCHRAM, "Review: Mao Studies: Retrospect and Prospect", *The China Quarterly*, No. 97, March 1984, pp. 95-125 (98-99)

[1349] Z. BRZEZINSKI & R.M. GATES, "Iran: Time for a New Approach", *Council on Foreign Relations Press,* July 2004, http://www.cfr.org/publication/7194/ , pp.2-3 (Executive Summary)

wars between their owners have disappeared".[1350] Van Creveld has repeatedly underlined how policymakers evolve from radical and apocalyptic rhetoric to the realization that nuclear weapons are unusable "*paper tigers*".[1351]

A prominent Iranian analyst emphasizes how although "*Iran has accumulated offensive military power over the years (..)the Iranian leadership has demonstrated no resolve to wield it.*"[1352] There is a reason for this: "*some two million administrators and managers run the machinery of the state. Thousands of individuals work hard to advance Iranian national interest irrespective of what the top elites may wish or direct*".[1353]

8.2.   *A Quest for the State*

How did these two million rational administrators destitute the Islamic fanatics?

Iran's political system has proven hard to define. The main source of confusion in the debate on the Iranian political system has been its double nature. On the one hand a functioning democratic state structure exists, on the other hand these democratic state institutions are paralleled by a parallel Islamic structure. Analysts have struggled with the "*conflict between the three major elements – Islamic legalist, secular and democratic – of the 1979 Constitution*".[1354] The present regime's institutional development can only be understood through the Iranian state's socio-genesis. Understanding the system implies the necessity to retrace the genesis of its main institutions.

[1350] M. VAN CREVELD, "The World Can Live With a Nuclear Iran", *Forward*, September 28, 2007

[1351] See M. VAN CREVELD, *The Culture of War*, New York, Random House, 2008

[1352] M. SARIOLGHALAM, "Understanding Iran: Getting Past Stereotypes and Mythology", *the Washington Quarterly*, Vol.26, No.4, Autumn 2003, pp.69-82 (78)

[1353] M. SARIOLGHALAM, "Understanding Iran: Getting Past Stereotypes and Mythology", *the Washington Quarterly*, Vol.26, No.4, Autumn 2003, pp.69-82 (74)

[1354] A. SCHIRAZI, *The Constitution of Iran*, London, I.B. Tauris, 1998, p.8

Fortunately ever less authors claim Iran is a totalitarian dictatorship.[1355] In itself the concept of totalitarianism is already of dubious analytical value. Applied to Iran it makes hardly any sense at all.[1356] No single party rules the state, Islamic ideology has proven unable to direct state matters and the economy has never come under total state control.[1357]

In a recent *Foreign Affairs* article Iranian dissident Akbar Ganji asserted that Iran was a "neosultanate".[1358] Considering the, admittedly very extensive, powers of the Supreme Leader's Office, Ganji claims "*Weber might have been describing Khamenei*". If Weber might have been describing Khamenei, he was certainly not describing contemporary Iran.

Inspired by Weber, eminent social scientists as Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan consider regimes as those of Trujillo, Kim Il Sung or Mohammed Reza as "sultanist regimes".[1359] Sultanism differs from totalitarianism, it falls short of an elaborated ideology to which the policies of sultan can be compared, and it does not mobilize its citizens. Sultanism is characterized by a high fusion (in the person of the ruler) of private and public whereby the polity becomes the personal domain of the sultan. There exists no rule of law and only low institutionalization. Social and economic pluralism are possible, political pluralism is absent. No sphere of activities not subject to the will of the sultan is left for any opposition, for regime moderates or for civil society. It is an unrestrained personal leadership, free of any

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[1355] An exception R. KAMRANE & F. TELLIER, *Iran: Les Coulisses d'un Totalitarisme*, Paris, Flammarion, 2007

[1356] C.J. FRIEDRICH, M. CURTIS & B.R.BARBER, *Totalitarianism in Perspective: Three Views*, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1969

[1357] See for this definition C.J. FRIEDRICH & Z.K. BRZEZINSKI, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy,* Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1956, p.9

[1358] A. GANJI, "The Latter-Day Sultan", *Foreign Affairs,* November-December 2008, pp.45-66

[1359] J. LINZ & A. STEPAN, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, p.51 See also the essay of J. LINZ, "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes" in N. POLSBY & F. GREENSTEIN (eds.), *Handbook of Political Science*, vol.3, Reading, Addison-Wesley, 1975

ideological, organizational or social constraints. The Iranian polity does not remotely resemble such a model. Although Khamenei might have sultanic aspirations, he is not ruling a sultanate.

An influential line of thought on the Iranian revolution sees the current regime as a logical continuation of Iranian history.[1360] Proponents of this continuity thesis argue that the clergy has always had a prominent role in the Iranian polity. From this perspective it seems only logical that the clergy would take power.

Perhaps continuity rather than rupture did indeed form the basis of the Iranian revolution. Yet what was central was not the clergy but administrative centralization and "stateness". An attentive observer of the French revolution, Alexis De Tocqueville writes: "*administrative centralization is an institution of the Old Regime, and not the work of either the Revolution or the Empire*".[1361] Albeit differently something similar can be asserted for the Iranian revolution.

The basic quest for the State is one for social homogenous foundations on a limited territory.[1362] In this quest autonomous social units prove a major obstacle, both to state formation and to the extension of infrastructural state power. Charles Tilly's argument on state formation famously runs in the following way. In a specific territory different social units affront each other, none of them having the monopoly of legitimate violence. "*Men who controlled concentrated means of coercion (armies, navies, police forces, weapons, and their equivalent) ordinarily tried to use them to extend the range of population and resources over which they wielded power. When they encountered no one with comparable control of coercion, they conquered; when they met rivals, they made war.*"[1363]

[1360] For an overview see A. MOLAJANI, *Sociologie politique de la révolution iranienne*, Paris, l'Harmattan, 1999 who identifies especially N.R. KEDDIE as one of the main supporters of this thesis. N.R. KEDDIE, *Modern Iran*, New Haven, Yale UP, 2003

[1361] A. DE TOCQUEVILLE, *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2004, p.118

[1362] G. BURDEAU, *L'Etat*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1970, p.114

[1363] C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1990*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990, p.14

Norbert Elias observes how every social unit faces a choice either to be defeated which implies the loss of its independent autonomous existence, or to be victorious and extend its influence and power.[1364] Inexorably this competition between social units leads to an order of monopolization where competition without monopolies is substituted by competition organized by monopolies. During the same process private monopolies evolve to public monopolies, notably on the fiscal and the military level.[1365]

The originality of Elias' approach lies not in his underlining of the importance of war and armies in state formation. Rather, Elias understands that one of the fundamental questions of state formation is the transformation of concentrations of private power into state institutions *sensu largo.* The sociologist describes how private monopolies mutate into public monopolies. When concentrations of private power are transformed in state institutions, from competitors *to* the state they become competitors *in* the state.

The progressive destruction of the autonomous power bases of incorporated social units is undeniably part of the maturation of the state. Undermining the basis of these social units solidifies the state, insofar as it can recuperate their clientele. The autonomization of the state vis-à-vis the social units that compose it is one of the indicators of successful state formation. The social definition of subjects is no longer considered in terms of "*estates of the realm*".[1366] It starts to be defined in terms of citizens, state and the connections between and through both political parties and the interest groups.[1367] In other words, civil society emancipates from the "corporatist complex" and progressively acquires a role as a political subject. Habermas underlined how through its

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[1364] N. ELIAS, *Über den Progress der Zivilisation,* tonne II, 1969 in its French translation N. ELIAS, *La Dynamique de l'Occident,* Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1975, pp.84-88

[1365] N. ELIAS, *o.c.*, p.99

[1366] P. ANDERSON, *Lineages of the Absolutist State,* London, Verso, 1974 (1979), p.45

[1367] H.-P. KLINGEMANN & D. FUCHS, *Citizens and the State,* Oxford, Oxford UP, 1995 and P. FLORA, S. KUHNLE & D. URWIN, (eds.), *State Formation, Nation-Building, and Mass-Politics in Europe: The Theory of Stein Rokkan,* Oxford, Oxford UP, 1999

articulation in political parties and interest groups conditioning the so-called *volonté générale*, civil society becomes the material constitution of the public sphere.[1368]

8.3.   *A First Phase*

8.3.1.   **Tentative Beginnings**

Through the modernization of the Armed Forces, the Pahlavi shahs succeeded in eliminating the tribes as a major threat to the Iranian state and its monopoly of coercion. The 1960's White Revolution and its agricultural and educational modernization programs directly targeted the clergy both as a landowner and an educator. Yet with very limited success. Between mosques, religious schools and foundations, the clerical networks remained very much intact.

In addition, the Shah openly advocated the bazaar's destruction: " *I wanted a modern country. Moving against the bazaars was typical of the political and social risks I had to take.*"[1369] A campaign to fix prices was launched between 1975 and 1977 had for the bazaaris. During the first days 7,750 of them were arrested, as were some landlords. Between 1975 and 1977 109,800 and 200,00 shopkeepers had been under investigation for the violation of fixed prices. These policies made the bazaaris appear as criminal thieves, awaiting only the next occasion to rip of customers. [1370] A bazaar merchant claimed the bazaar would be flattened if the Shah was to get his way.[1371]

[1368] J. HABERMAS, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a category of Bourgeois Society*, Polity, Cambridge, 1962 as quoted in P.P. PORTINARO, *Stato,* Bologna, Il Mulino, 1999

[1369] M.R. PAHLAVI, *Answer to history,* New York, Stein & Day, 1980, p.156 as quoted in A. KESHAVARZIAN, *Bazaar and State in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007, p.1

[1370] M. PARSA, *o.c.*, p.103-104

[1371] B. SMITH, "Collective Action with and without Islam, mobilizing the bazaar in Iran" in Q. WIKTOROWICS, *Islamic Activism: a social movement theory approach*, Bloomington, Indiana UP, 2004, pp.185-204 (196)

Notwithstanding this, the quantitative decrease in importance of the bazaar was marginal, going from 16,09% of the urban workforce in 1966 to 13,13% in 1976.[1372] The bazaar "*continued to control as much as half of the country's handicraft production, two-thirds of its retail trade, and three-quarters of its wholesale trade"*, while the clergy "*was big enough to send preachers regularly into shanty towns and distant villages*".[1373]

No wonder hence that the bazaar started acting in close alliance with the clergy. Ashraf and Banuazizi show how 64% of 2.483 demonstrations during the revolution and half of the massive strikes between October and November 1978 were organized by the mosque-bazaar alliance.[1374] Paradoxically the so-called "modernization" of the state seemed to have reinforced both traditional groups.[1375]

8.3.2. The "Islamic" Republic

On the eve of the revolution, successes in state-building after two Pahlavi kings were not inexistent, yet hardly a huge success. The two main "*traditional power groups* [that] *consistently impeded modernization and circumscribed power to the center*" (the clergy and the bazaar) were very much alive.[1376] The Revolution would succeed where the Shah had failed.

The Islamic revolution permitted to incorporate into the state some of the old power concentrations, like the clergy and the bazaar. Through a process of mobilization and socio-political action, both social units structured themselves in a new and functioning power structure,

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[1372] Statistics SCI, table 4.1 in M. PARSA, *o.c.*, p.107

[1373] E.ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two,…*, p.433

[1374] A. ASHRAF & A. BANUAZIZI, "The State, classes and modes of mobilization in the Iranian revolution", *State, Culture and Society*, Vol.1, n.3, spring 1985, p.25 (3-40)

[1375] E.ABRAHAMIAN, *Iran between two,…*, p.433

[1376] D. MENASHRI, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran,* New York, Cornell UP, 1992, p.160

parallel to the democratic one. Next to Parliament appeared a Guardian Council and next to the President a Supreme Leader. Parallel institutions were added to major ministries and even to the military a new actor, the *Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enqelab-e Eslami*, the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution, was added.

The traditional power groups no longer competed with the state in fields as education or the economy, but defended their interests *within* the state. Some argued that the clergy-bazaar alliance had taken over the state. The Guardian Council was indeed dominated by conservative clerics, often closely linked to bazaar interests. But clerical dominance was all but limited to the parallel pillar. The clergy accounted for respectively 49,5% and 55% of total representatives in the first and second Parliament.[1377] When in 1981 the conservative cleric Khamenei became President of the Republic the clerical take-over seemed complete.

What fundamentally distinguished both pillars was not so much their members as their respective type of legitimacy. The state democratic pillar was largely founded on civil or popular legitimacy, while the parallel pillar relied on numinous legitimacy.

Time would show that the state took the clergy, not vice-versa. Since clergymen now managed state affairs, resistance to the overtake of many of their traditional assets was broken. Even religious education and religious lands were linked to the state, something the Pahlavi dynasty had only dreamt of.

The succession of Khomeini became the supreme example of how political power came to dominate religious power. An 1989 amendment

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[1377] Figures from *Esami-e Nemaiandegan-e Majles-e Showravi-e Eslami,* Doreye Shishom, Sal-e chaharom, Tehran, Edareye Ravabet-e Omumi va Omu-e Ejtemahi, 1382; *Moarefi Nemaiandegan Majles-e Showravi-e Eslami: Az Aqaz-e Enqelab-e Eslami ta Paian-e Doreye Panjom Qavaningozari,* Tehran, Edareye Kol-e Farhangi , 1387 as systemized by A. AZGHANDI, *Dar Omad bar Jameh-e Shenasi-e Siasi-e Iran*, Tehran, Ghoomes Publishing, 1375, pp.169-173& *Esami-e Montakhabin-e Doreye Hashtom Majles-e Showravi-e Eslami,* 1387, www.majles.ir

permitted lower or middle rank clerics to accede to the highest religious-political authority in the Islamic Republic. From now on "*being aware of the circumstances of the age*" became more important than religious qualification. Indeed, the new Supreme Leader Khamenei became ayatollah almost overnight.[1378] The parallel state structure no longer reflected clerical hierarchy. Khomeini had sanctioned such an evolution. Towards the end of his life the Father of the Revolution had bluntly stated that the ruling principle of the Islamic Republic was "*the most important of all God's ordinances*" and had so-doing put "*the decisions of the state above all other Islamic ordinances*".[1379] Both the state democratic and parallel pillar came to rely increasingly on civil or popular legitimacy.

The revenge of the state had only just begun. Gradually the old concentrations of power, so predominant during the revolution, lost prominence in the state democratic pillar. Table 1 illustrates how between the first and the fifth Majles the presence of clergy-men collapsed in a rather impressive manner. This number has since stabilized. Comparing the 2000 Majles, where reformists took 65% of the seats, with the 2004 and 2008 Majles, both with a conservative majority, no significant rise in clerical representation is observed. The percentage of clerical representatives increased only minimally from 12,77%, that is 35 out of 290 representatives in 2000, to 14,82%, or 43 out of 290 representatives.[1380]

[1378] For an original view see S. GIELING, "The "Marja'iya" in Iran and the Nomination of Khamanei in December 1994**,** *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 4, Oct., 1997, pp. 777-787

[1379] A. SCHIRAZI, *The Constitution of Iran*, London, I.B. Tauris, 1998, p.230

[1380] Figures from Majles-e Showravi-ye Eslami, *Esami-e Nemaiandegan-e Majles-e Showravi-e Eslami,* Doreye Shishom, Sal-e chaharom, Tehran, Edareye Ravabet-e Omumi va Omu-e Ejtemahi, 1382; *Moarefi Nemaiandegan Majles-e Showravi-e Eslami: Az Aqaz-e Enqelab-e Eslami ta Paian-e Doreye Panjom Qavaningozari,* Tehran, Edareye Kol-e Farhangi, 1378, as systemized by A. AZGHANDI, *Dar Omad bar Jameh-e Shenasi-e Siasi-e Iran*, Tehran, Ghoomes Publishing, 1385, pp.169-173 & *Esami-e Montakhabin-e Doreye Hashtom Majles-e Showravi-e Eslami*, 1387, www.majles.ir See also R. ZIMMT, "Has the Status of Iranian Clerics Been Eroded", *Iran Pulse*, American Friends of Tel Aviv University, September 22, 2008, www.aftau.org

A similar evolution is noticeable for posts as Speaker of Parliament or President of the Republic. In 2005, Ahmadinejad became the first non-cleric since Bani Sadr to reach the highest secular position within the Islamic Republic and in the 2009 presidential campaign neither of the two main contenders were clerics. The position of Speaker of Parliament had since the Revolution always been occupied by a cleric. Yet in 2004, and notwithstanding the "conservative backlash", the position went to Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adal and in 2008 after the eight parliamentary election to Ali Larijani. Neither of both were clerics.

Table 1					
Majles	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996
Clergy	49,5%	55%	30%	25%	19%
Merchant Origin	26,6%	19,7%	10,1%	17,3%	16,6%
Neither	23,9%	25,3%	59,9%	57,7%	64,4%

8.3.3. The Islamic Republic and the Bazaar

Even though one should take into account the fact that the concept of "merchant" is slightly wider than "bazaari", Table 1 illustrates how the decrease in representation of the bazaar is less evident or at least less spectacular than that of the clergy.

Yet the bazaar did not escape the state's expansion. A scholar visiting the Tehran bazaar was told: "*This bazaar doesn't need any analysis. It doesn't even exist any more; it's dead*".[1381] Between 1359 (1980) and 1375 (1996) the population of the twelfth district of Tehran declined from 301,701 to 189,625 individuals. Over the same period housing units also declined, although less spectacularly, from 43,453 to 39,245 units.[1382]

[1381] A. KESHAVARZIAN, *Bazaar and State in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007, p.2

[1382] A. KHATAM, "Bazaar and the City Center", *Goftogu,* No.41, Bahman 1383, pp.127-141 (129)

The *bazaar "exhibited loyalty to the Imam and the revolutionary cause by initially disbanding their independent organizations and joining the Islamic Republican Party. They were rewarded handsomely for their vigilance and fidelity with positions in government ministries, the newly formed foundations (bonyads, and the Chamber of Commerce – they became part of the new ruling elite."[1383]* By accepting their inclusion, the bazaaris also signed the beginning of their demise as an independent powerful socio-economic group.

Rapidly, favoritism, corruption and nepotism illustrated how *bazaaris* absorbed by the state system started to foresee in their own needs rather than in the collective needs of the *bazaar.[1384]* The state now offered effective social promotion to those linked in some way to it. Arguably through their bazaari-connections Mohsen Rafiqdust and Mohzen Rezai both became Commander-in-Chief of the *Sepah*. Rafiqdust even rose to the top of the *Bonyad-e Mostazafan*, one the most important economic entities in the region.[1385]

Economic circumstances also altered the bazaar's traditional structure. Threatened by falling purchasing power, international sanctions, nationalizations and other economic adversities, many left the bazaar, or decided to invest in real estate and other more secure commodities.[1386] Unemployment in sectors like industry, made parts of the urban subproletariat turn to the bazaar for jobs.[1387] In this way new people entered the bazaar, while familiar traders left. This left the social structure of the bazaar dislocated. The rise of a strong black market also

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[1383] A. KESHAVARZIAN, *Bazaar and State in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007, p.102

[1384] A. RAHNEMA & F. NOMANI, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics and Economic Policy in Iran,* London, Zed Books, 1990, p.250

[1385] A. KESHAVARZIAN, *Bazaar and State in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007, p.102

[1386] A. KESHAVARZIAN, *Bazaar and State in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007, p.103-104

[1387] On the difficulties of pre-revolutionary industrial development in Iran see M. KARSHENAS, *Oil, state and industrialization in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1990

challenged the bazaar's role.[1388] The extension of the bazaar's activities to the black market, and the secrecy accompanying it undermined interpersonal trust, already under pressure by the renewal of "*bazaar personnel*".[1389] The "*alternative network of sociopolitical relations and communication*"[1390] started to crumble.

The post-revolutionary nationalization of foreign trade undermined one of the traditional sections of the bazaar's activities, sanctioning an ever greater role of the state at its expense.[1391] The increasing role of the state in *bazaari* activities became obvious when export was regulated and a licensing system, favoring government-linked associations, was introduced. A symbolic shift was the establishment of government control on the Chamber of Guilds and the Islamic associations of the *bazaar*. [1392]

The state's expansion was the result of a balanced policy. On the one hand the bazaaris were offered incentives to find socio-political and socio-economic resources outside the bazaar, on the other hand the role of the bazaar was revaluated at certain special occasions, like religious holidays, to make it appear as if it was still at the center of political and economic action as before.[1393] Although a September 2008 strike against a tax on added value demonstrated that it remains a powerful actor,

[1388] On the extent of the black market in Iran see A. ARAB MAZAR YAZDI, *Eqtesad-e Siah dar Iran,* Tehran, Moasese Tahqiqat- va Towse'e Olum-e Ensani, 1384, pp.173-216 & F. KHALATBARI, "Iran: A Unique Underground Economy", *in* T.COVILLE, The Economy of Islamic Iran: Between State and Market, Tehran, IFRI, 1994, pp.113-138

[1389] A. KESHAVARZIAN, *Bazaar and State in Iran,* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007, p.105-109

[1390] S. MOBASSER, "Le Bazar: Un acteur principal dans le réseau alternative de relations et de communications sociales et politiques en Iran" in S. VANER, *Modernisation autoritaire en Turquie et en Iran,* Paris, L'Harmattan, 1991, pp.131-150

[1391] A. ASRAF, "Bazaar and Mosque in Iran's Revolution", *MERIP Reports*, March-April 1983, p.17

[1392] A. RASHIDI, "De-Privatisation Process of the Iranian Economy after the Revolution of 1979", *in* T.COVILLE, The Economy of Islamic Iran: Between State and Market, Tehran, IFRI, 1994, pp.37-67 (47)

[1393] J.-P.DIGARD, B. HOURCADE & Y. RICHARD, *L'Iran au XXe Siècle,* Nouvelle édition, Paris, Fayard, 2007, p.330-331

the contemporary bazaar is no longer a competitor to the state, nor the unique social base of the regime, "*but rather a group collaborating with the regime.*"[1394]

8.4. A Second Phase

8.4.1. From the "corporatist complex" to civil society

But the victory of the state over pre-revolutionary concentrations of private power is only one part of the story. The second part is characterized by a shift in the foundations of power. The state will no longer be dominated by corporatist-like social units, like clergy and bazaar with a power base outside the state, yet by new groups having their power base within the state. Civil society and the *Sepah* will replace bazaar and clergy as foundations of power. Which were the dynamics causing such an evolution?

From the very start three major political tendencies were present among the groups that "made" the revolution: the traditional right, the modern right or technocrats and the Islamic Left.[1395]

The traditional right had become central during the revolution and just after the revolution. A consequence of the deep roots the group's ideas, views of politics and social bases had in Iranian society. Supported by the traditionalist clergy and wealthy bazaaris, the group favored a traditional lecture of Islamic law, a market-oriented economy in which Iran would have a role of trade and distribution, compatible with the interests and activities of the bazaar. It obviously opposed modern forms of social security, taxation and industrialization. The so-called

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[1394] A. ASHRAF, "There is a feeling that the regime owes something to the people", *MERIP Reports*, No.1, Vol.19, January-February 1989, pp.13-25 (13)

[1395] K. MEHREGAN, "Rishe haye daruni bohran dar jenahe rast", *Etemaad*, 4 Tir 1387, K. MEHREGAN, "Raste Efrati be Saie miravad", *Etemaad*, 5 Tir 1387 & M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, New York, Syracuse UP, 2002

technocrats have flourished since the revolution, but was especially active in Islamic associations abroad before it. Rafsanjani gradually emerged as the most prominent member of this faction. The group was not without links with the bazaar or the clergy, but gradually started using state institutions to gain wealth and social promotion. Its policies significantly differed from those of the traditional right. It also favors liberalization, but coupled to a drive for industrialization and the attraction of foreign investment. The Islamic Left was made up by the "infantry" (*piade nezam*) of the IRP. This axis, attracting especially the urban subproletariat, the so-called *mostazafan*, formed the youngest and the most active group, especially at universities, in revolutionary institutions or foundations. Majoritarily non-clerical they dominated important associations as the Hezbollah, the Sepah or the Basij. They were animated by a typical Third-worldist ideology, a mix of nationalism, non-Marxist leftism and militant Islam.

The first revolutionary decade (1979-1989) witnessed a basic balance between the traditional right and the Islamic Left. However, the 1989 election of Rafsanjani to the presidency shifted the balance of power. The Islamic Left all but disappeared from the political scene. It was ousted from the executive in 1989, from Parliament in 1992. Devoid of much influence in other councils, it lost much of its weight in *Hezbollah*-type associations. The reasons for the Left's collapse were many. Among the most important ones were the dire economic situation of many Iranians, and the urgent need for reconstruction after the war.[1396] Rafsanjani's technocrats handily used the slogan of "reconstruction" to take over. While most institutions of the parallel pillar remained under the control of the traditional right, the state democratic pillar was taken over by a coalition of technocrats and traditionalists.

Yet on key issues political projects of technocrats and traditionalists were all but parallel. Rafsanjani's policies attempted to undermine the traditionalists' power base. Technocrats favored civil society, the traditional right religious predominance; Rafsanjani wanted

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[1396] See for example M SAGHAFI, "The Islamic Left and a New Test in Power", *Goftogou,* 18, Winter 1376, pp.123-138 (130-131) [In Persian]

industrialization and structural adjustment policies, the traditional right opposed such; Rafsanjani permitted socio-cultural opening, the traditional right sacked his Minister of Culture; and so on. Rafsanjani's opposition to the bazaar and the traditional right was also obvious in the action of his ally Karbastchi. Then mayor of Tehran, Karbastchi had become extremely popular for his urbanization projects in the Isfahan region. Brought to Tehran by Rafsanjani, Karbastchi used his position to undermine the bazaar's role.[1397]

The war over, Rafsanjani had to deal with the *Sepah* forces returning home. To facilitate civil control over the military he tried to integrate the traditional, and largely depoliticized, *artesh* with the *Sepah.* He abolished the Ministry for the Revolutionary Guard and created of the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics.[1398] He then offered the *Basij*, the Sepah-section which had provided young cannon flesh during the war, the "*mantle of internal security force*".[1399] Rafsanjani tried to push the merger further and appointed Husseyn Jalali, an *artesh* air force officer, to head the *Sepah* air force in 1992 and vice-versa, Ali Shamkhani, former Minister of the *Sepah* became, albeit already in 1989, commander of the *artesh*'s naval force.[1400] Shamkhani then chose his own deputy, Abbas Mohtaj, from the *Sepah* as well.[1401] He also appointed some of his close supporters to key positions. Unsurprisingly, Akbar Torkan became head of the new Ministry of Defense.[1402]

[1397] F. ADELKHAH, "Les Elections legislatives en Iran: La Somme des Parti(e)s n'est pas égale au tout… ", *Les Etudes du CERI,* No.18, July 1996, p.1-35 (5)

[1398] A. H. CORDESMAN, *Iran's Military Forces in Transition,* London, Praeger, 1999, p.32-34

[1399] A.S.HASHIM, "Civil-Military Relations in the Islamic Republic of Iran", in J.A. KECHICHIAN, *Iran, Iraq and the Arab Gulf States,* New York, Palgrave, 2001, pp.31-53 (42-43)

[1400] *Ibid.*

[1401] K. KATZMAN, "The Pasdaran: Institutionalization of Revolutionary Armed Force", *Iranian Studies,* Vol.26, Nos.3-5, Summer/Fall 1993, p.394

[1402] A. H. CORDESMAN, *Iran's Military Forces in Transition.* London, Praeger, 1999, p.34

Rafsanjani gave a stimulus to the development of civil society.[1403] Women's magazines as *Farzaneh* (1993) and *Zanan* (1991) were established, and others, like *Payam-e Hajar*, established since 1979, greatly increased in popularity. The blossom of this "female civil society" was not without political consequences. The 1996 parliamentary elections saw female candidates play a front role on many occasions. Rafsanjani's own daughter Fa'ezeh, Jamileh Khadivar, sister of the dissident cleric Mohsen Khadivar, Elaheh Rastgou, Nayyereh Akhavan-Bitaraf and Ahou Riya in cities ranging from Tehran to Shiraz and from Isfahan to Mashhad.[1404] Moreover these female candidates diversified their political preference, illustrating the potential of true democratic pluralism.[1405]

This development and relative blooming of civil society showed the former Islamic Left the way out of its internal crisis. Having lost almost all influence in parallel institutions, the Left now turned to civil society and the democratic pillar of the system. MP Ibrahim Asgharzadeh underlined this major shift in the Left's outlook on the state by stating "*next to Islamicity, republicanism is principle pillar of our system.*"[1406] Journals and magazines of the new Modern Left started ever more to discuss "democracy" (*mardomsalari* or *demokrasi*) and the "rule of law" (*hakemiat-e qanun*).[1407] Both technocrats and the modern left now chose the side of civil society. Both joined forces in favor of Khatami in the

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[1403] Although arguably the emergence of civil society in Iran can be traced back to pre-revolutionary times. S. FARKHONDEH, *Médias, Pouvoir et société civile en Iran*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2001, pp.30-32

[1404] F. ADELKHAH, *Etre moderne en Iran,* Paris, Karthala, 2006, p.138

[1405] *Ibid.*

[1406] M. MOSLEM, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran,* New York, Syracuse UP, 2002, p.163

[1407] See on this topic the issue of *Goftogu,* No.22, Spring 1999 dedicated to reformism which explicitly addresses the question of a parallel between Khatami and Gorbachev and, less explicitly, links the political situation in Iran to democratic transitions in South-America. Particularly Z. MER'AT, "Khatami, Gorbachev: Why One Should Not Fear a Comparison", *Goftogu,* No.22, Spring 1377, pp.17-31 [In Persian] & S. JOUINEAU, "Transition from Dictatorships in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay", *Goftogu,* No.22, Spring 1377, pp.41-67 [In Persian]

1997 presidential election. The traditionalists' candidate was overwhelmingly defeated.

Elected with about 70% of the votes cast in an election that saw a degree of participation of over 80%, it was the mobilization of civil society that made the election of Khatami to the presidency in 1997 more than just noteworthy.[1408] According Moussavi-Lari, Minister of the Interior, in a few years over 13,000 non-governmental organizations had been created.[1409] Khatami also co-opted members of civil society in his cabinet, one of the more mediatic examples was Masumeh Ebtekar, one of the editors of the women's magazine, *Farzaneh*, who became one of Khatami's vice-presidents.[1410] In the perspective of developing a democratic state, the instauration of regular municipal elections was another major accomplishment.[1411]

8.4.2.   The Sepah Against Civil Society

The election of Khatami signified a wake-up call for the traditionalists. Faced with a modernizing society, they realized that clerical networks no longer sufficed to hold power.[1412] As a reaction they turned to the parallel military structure of the *Sepah*. This permitted them to mobilize those *mostazafan* forgotten by Khatami's modernist government. Khatami's Modern Left had relied on civil society as a force, yet had started to overlook what had been the power base of its predecessor, the Islamic Left. Reformists had focused on the "*educated society of students, intellectuals, and artists (..). But throughout those years, civil*

[1408] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Les Enjeux des élections législatives et présidentielle", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, No.49, Premier Trimestre 1998, pp.31-49 (31)

[1409] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Les femmes et l'oligarchie politico-économique", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, No.79, Troisième trimestre 2005, pp.33-41 (40)

[1410] A. KIAN-THIEBAUT, "Women and the Making of Civil Society in Post-Islamist Iran", in E. HOOGLUND, *Twenty Years of the Islamic Revolution,* Syracuse, Syracuse UP, 2002, pp.56-73 (67)

[1411] B. KHOSROZADEH, *Demokratie und Zivilgesellschaft in Okzident und Orient*, Berlin, Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 2003, p.239

[1412] A. ADIB-MOGHADDAM, "The Pluralistic Momentum in Iran and the Future of the Reform Movement", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.27, No.6, 2006, pp. 665-674 (668)

society had obscured real society – that is, the majority of Iranians, who suffered most from the economic crisis and who were consistently ignored by those in power."[1413]

The mobilization was often violent. In 1999 several dozen students protesting were attacked by *Ansar*-militants near Tehran University. The *Ansar* militants arrived in government-owned busses and worked in cooperation with the *niruhaye entezami.* [1414] Informal networks were responsible for a series of political murders in the Khatami era. Well-known reformist activists like Darius Foruhar, Majid Sharif, Mohamed Mokhtari and Mohamed Jafar Puyandeh were brutally assassinated.[1415] In the meanwhile the *Sepah* received additional funding and benefits, and the Leader reaffirmed his grip over other parastatal institutions.[1416]

The 2004 parliamentary elections reflected conservative reemergence in the traditional democratic state structure. The Coalition of Constructionists that won the elections, was an alliance of the traditional right and a considerable part of the former IRP infantry.

The traditionalists had mobilized the military component of the parallel pillar, but were to pay a price: it could no longer do without the former IRP's infantry. And it was rapidly to understand that Ahmadinejad was not just "one of them". The new president was neither a cleric, nor directly linked to the bazaar. As so many of the revolutionary youth he had made his way up through the post-revolutionary parallel organizations of the Islamic Republic.[1417] Moreover he enjoyed the support of the *mostazafan.*

[1413] F. TELLIER, "The Iranian Moment", *Policy Focus #52,* The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, February 2006, p.27

[1414] M. RUBIN, *Into the Shadows: Radical Vigilantes in Khatami's Iran,* Washington, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Papers no.56, 2001, p.64

[1415] M. RUBIN, *Into the Shadows: Radical Vigilantes in Khatami's Iran,* Washington, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Papers no.56, 2001, p.90-91

[1416] See also A. GHEISSARI & V. NASR, *Democracy in Iran: history and the quest for liberty,* New York, Oxford UP, 2006, p.137

[1417] R. TAIT, "A Humble Beginning Helped to Form Iran's New Hard Man", *The Guardian,* July 2, 2005

The traditionalist faction was especially shaken by the cabinet the new president proposed. Not only were Mohseni Eje'i at the Intelligence Ministry and Pour-Mohammadi at the Interior the only two clerics among them; more importantly nominees for the foreign, the justice and the agricultural *jehad* ministry came from the ranks of these ministries; the ministries of petroleum, welfare, education and cooperatives were offered to executives the president had relied on as mayor of Tehran or governor of Ardabil; and while the Ministry of Economy was presented to a liberal, Davoud Danesh-Jafari, at least seven other Ministers came directly from the *Sepah* or law enforcement organizations. [1418] Other sources went as far as linking 18 of the 21 new cabinet members to the security forces.[1419] That Pour-Mohammadi was suspected to have played a role in the political assassinations was no coincidence.[1420] Throughout his presidency Ahmadinejad favored the Sepah. Financially as well as institutionally. In October 2007 Sepah Navy commander Morteza Safari announced the installation of 31 extra sections of the *Sepah* in different regions, which would have defense functions that closely resembled those of the *Niruye Moqavemate Basij* (Mobilized Resistance Force).[1421]

The traditional right tried to use the Majles to veto different proposed Ministers. For the Ministry of Petroleum Ahmadinejad had to propose no less than four different candidates, before the Majles finally accepted his nominee.[1422] Ahmadinejad reacted with moves to discredit the traditional right. In public speeches Abbas Palizdar, presented as a member of the Majles Research Committee, offered a detailed act of accusation against many traditionalist clerics. Ayatollah Emami

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[1418] International Crisis Group, "Iran: Ahmadi-Nejad's Tumultuous Presidency", *Crisis Group Middle East Briefing,* No.21, February 6, 2007, p.3

[1419] Iran Focus, "Iran: 18 des 21 nouveaux ministres viennent des gardiens de la révolution et de la police secrète", *Iran Focus (français),* August 14, 2005, http://www.iranfocus.com

[1420] Human Rights Watch, "Ministers of Murder : Iran's New Security Cabinet", *Briefing Paper,* December 2005, http://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/mena/iran1205/, pp.8-9

[1421] Hamandishi, "Sazemandhaye jadide Sepah doshman ra az har eshtebahi pashimoon mikonand", 7 Aban 1387 (29 October 2008), www.hamandishi.com

[1422] BBC, "Iranian MPs approve oil minister", *BBC News,* December 11, 2005

Kashani, ayatollah Hashemi-Shahroudi, acting Head of the Judiciary, ayatollah Abbas Va'ez-Tabassi, and hojjat ol-eslam Nateq Nouri were explicitly indicated.[1423] Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, former Head of the Judiciary; was supposedly involved in a fraudulent purchase of a tire company, obtaining a 50 million dollar discount on a total company value of 60 million dollar.[1424] Palizdar explicitly charged Asghar-Owladi, head of traditional right's coalition *Motalefe* as involved in a fraud concerning a Shiraz-based automobile company.[1425]

The 2009 presidential campaign showed the new emerging Iran. Neither of the main candidates, Ahmadinejad nor Mousavi, was linked to one of the former concentrations of private power. The traditionalist clergy was remarkably silent. Mousavi relied on civil society and civilian authority, Ahmadinejad saw things more in a military perspective. More importantly both wooed the electorate and public opinion in a significant though different manner. Ahmadinejad looked for support via networks linked to the *Sepah*. Mousavi promised to abolish the "*gasht-e ershad*" one of the main police forces, guarding public morality.[1426]

8.5.   *A Third Phase*

8.5.1.   Militarization or Democratization

[1423] IPS, "The Accuser Is Accused, And Jailed", *Iran Press Service,* June 11, 2008 & A. TAHERI, "Jailed For Outing the Mullah Mafia", *New York Post,* June 13, 2008 & M. NIKNAHAD & S. HAERI, "Is Ali Khameneh'i 'Cleaning' His House?", *Rooz Online /Iran Press Service,* June 10, 2008

[1424] M. KHALAJI, "Ahmadinezhad Deflects Criticism with Attacks on Clerics", *Policy Watch #1380,* The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 11, 2008

[1425] M. NIKNAHAD & S. HAERI, "Is Ali Khameneh'i 'Cleaning' His House?", *Rooz Online /Iran Press Service,* June 10, 2008

[1426] "Gasht-e Ershad ro Jam mikonam", *Etemaad,* 18 Farvardin 1388, compare with "Ehlam-e Mavaze Mousavi dar Avalin Konferense Matbuati", *Keyhan,* 18 Farvardin, 1388

The fundamental question in Iran today is who will prevail: the *Sepah* or civil society. Ahmadinejad's 2005 victory was heavily dependent on sections of the *Sepah*. Yet he was not the only candidate with links to the military. Qalibaf had a background in the armed forces and Ali Larijani was supported by the military.[1427] In the 2009 presidential election two out of four candidates came from the *Sepah*. In addition the *Sepah* has become a major player in most domains of the Iranian economy. Understandably some claim that "*the Islamic Republic is gradually morphing into a military regime*".[1428]

This is not improbable. In his first term Ahmadinejad and the *Sepah* repeatedly stated they were not ready to offer power to those "reformists" that would offer the country on a golden plate to "the enemies". The exclusion of observers from different candidates during the counting of the ballots and the role the *Sepah* played in "organizing" the elections all point in the direction of a possible electoral coup.

As it had been in 1999, the reaction of the security forces to the revolt of civil society was predictably extremely hard. Demonstrations and riots were aggressed, while security forces also invaded the dormitories of the universities of Isfahan and Tehran. In a first reaction Khamene'i merely confirmed the official results, while after two days of riots and pressure of Mousavi and Karroubi, he decided to accept an investigation.

However, the *Sepah*'s role in both the economy and politics says very little about the regime. Regimes as different as Turkey's relative democracy, China's communist government and different African, Latin- or South-American systems are or have been characterized by a

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[1427] B. SAMII, "Iran: Observers Fear Militarization of Politics", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, April 11, 2005, http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1058378.html , last accessed on April 8, 2009

[1428] A. ALFONEH, "Iran's Parliamentary Elections and the Revolutionary Guards' Creeping Coup d'Etat", *Middle Eastern Outlook,* American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, No.2, February 2008, www.aei.org

similar role for the armed forces. The outcomes of the role of the military in such different countries has often been very different and has not at all led to one type of "*third world military regimes*"[1429]

Though the rising importance of the *Sepah* as both a political and economic actor is undeniable, it is not without counterbalance. The rise of civil society is but one example. The 2006 elections for the Assembly of Experts saw Rafsanjani prevail over pro-*Sepah* forces. The appointment of Jafari as head of the *Sepah* by Khamene'i in September 2007 also indicated an attempt of the latter to regain control of the *Sepah*, in which he still has political commissars. The many cabinet changes imposed on Ahmadinejad by Parliament also show the real counterweight the democratic state structure can be to possible *Sepah* rule. Not without reason all 2009 presidential candidates, *Sepah*-linked or not, felt the necessity to seduce the electorate. That the Left preferred Mousavi over Khatami as a presidential candidate was intrinsically linked to electoral considerations. It realized that Mousavi had more chances of recuperating votes of those *mostazafan* that had felt abandoned by the "modernization" of the Islamic Left.

There are indeed reasons to question the thesis of a "Islamic military regime". For one, the importance of the *Sepah* as a unified institutional actor should not be overestimated. At least five official command structures have the ability to compete for resources internally. Moreover quite some *Sepah* commanders have defected to the US, which might indicate a lack of internal coherence.[1430]

In the 2008 parliamentary elections, part of the Principalist coalition, for some a "tool" of *Sepah* emergence in politics, presented a slightly different list from Ahmadinejad's Principalists. This second (broader) Principalist list (*Etelaaf-e Faragir-e Osulgeraian*) comprised among others

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[1429] A. ALFONEH, "Iran's Parliamentary Elections and the Revolutionary Guards' Creeping Coup d'Etat", *Middle Eastern Outlook,* American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, No.2, February 2008, p.5, www.aei.org

[1430] A. TAHERI, "Iran's Revolutionary Guard: Monolith or Jigsaw?", *Iran Press Service*, August 26, 2007

Mohsen Rezai, ex-head of the *Sepah*. During the 2009 presidential contest both men crossed swords again. The differences in opinion between both can arguably be traced back to the opposition far right versus traditional right. Ali Larijani, a notorious member of the traditional right, also supported the Broader Principalists' list is another indication that the two lists, although allied, present political differences that are retraceable to aforementioned factions. In the 2009 presidential elections Rezai was presented as an independent candidate.

The military can acceptably fulfill a double role in society. First and foremost the traditional role of defense against aggression and against external (and internal) enemies. Secondly, a variety of quasi- or non-military purposes, covering activities of civil engineering over education to road construction.[1431] None of these is incompatible with civilian rule.

The relation between the military and the civil pillar of any governmental system is extremely complicated. Samuel Huntington has argued that even the American constitution was rather defective in guaranteeing civilian control over the military.[1432] The rise of France's De Gaulle showed that even in so-called long-established liberal democracies the question can indeed become unexpectedly relevant. In a 1962 study Samuel Finer underlined that "*of the 51 states existing in or before 1917, all but 19 have experienced such coups since 1917; while of the 28 created between 1917 and 1955 all but 15 have done so.*" From such a perspective, and considering that Iran has a long history of military interventions in politics the Islamic Republic has not done too badly.

Different possible paths to military hegemony have characterized the 20th century. Among the most important ones are the failure of civilian

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[1431] R.P. LOWRY, "To Arms: Changing Military Roles and the Military-Industrial Complex", *Social Problems,* Vol.18, No.1, Summer 1970, pp.3-16 (3-4)

[1432] See Chapter 7 of S.P. HUNTINGTON, *The Soldier and the State,* Cambridge, Harvard UP, 2000 and S.P. HUNTINGTON, "Civilian Control and the Constitution", *The American Political Science Review,* Vol.50, No.3, September 1956, pp.676-699

institutions, disproportionate support given from abroad to military organizations or the lack of a process of negotiation with and containment of the military.[1433] None of these seem probable in Iran.

A major factor that might trigger a *Sepah* take-over is the issue of national security. The *Sepah* considered the reformists' foreign policy agenda of appeasement as a national security risk. Over one year before the elections high-ranking officers of the *Sepah* had already stated they would not return the country to those that wanted to sell it out to the West. In such a way the nuclear program has become a major factor in the determination of the internal balance of power.

8.5.2. The Bomb for Democracy ?

With two forces, civil society and the *Sepah*, contending state power, three possible scenarios for the future of the Islamic Republic can be identified. If the competition between civil society and the *Sepah* would be won by the former, one could imagine the emergence of a pluralist polity.[1434] If the *Sepah* were to triumph, military dictatorship might be the future. A third option, more probable in the short-run, would see a binary equilibrium with civilian institutions and armed forces sharing power, perhaps in the form of a government of national unity.

The 1997 and the 2009 presidential elections showed that both a pluralist polity as a binary equilibrium could be compatible with the institutional arrangement of the Islamic Republic. A military coup however would annihilate the Islamic Republic. Democratization and the survival of the Islamic Republic are intrinsically linked to one another. This is why the *Sepah* preferred rigging the 2009 elections, rather than immediately provoking an outright coup.

[1433] C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1990*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990, p.218

[1434] See also A. ADIB-MOGHADDAM, "The Pluralistic Momentum in Iran and the Future of the Reform Movement", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.27, No.6, 2006, pp. 665-674

In predicting under what circumstances the armed forces get involved into politics "*one motive* (..) *stands out for its simplicity and generality: the desire to increase the budget of the military*".[1435] The defense of the military's corporatist interests can be done within the system, in a rent-seeking competition with other forces, or against it, by a coup.

To avoid a coup the regime has to offer sufficient incentives to the Armed Forces for them to stay within the system, increase the cost of a coup and undermine the Armed Forces' rent-seeking capacities.

So far there has been no lack of incentives. The Islamic Republic has served the *Sepah*'s corporatist interests well. Additionally, the 1999 clashes between students and *Sepah* illustrated how a coup implies a high cost for the *Sepah*. It would probably provoke civil war and disintegration of a system that serves them well. To avoid such, the *Sepah*'s intervention in politics has often taken the form of electoral competition. In electoral competition it relies at least partially on popular mobilization and propaganda. The people have therefore become a major asset for the *Sepah* in the struggle for power. Spectacular missile tests about three weeks before a presidential election obviously try to stress the military's qualitative advantage.

Popular support is the highest in case of external aggression or a (perceived) direct threat against a country.[1436] Discussions at Iranian universities permit to confirm this image. Even among those students that despise the government, a solid majority declares they would immediately take up arms in case of a military aggression against their country. Such attitude would greatly favor the Sepah. Due to its performance in the war with Iraq, most consider the Sepah as the best

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[1435] R. WINTROBE, *The Political Economy of Dictatorship*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1998, p.57

[1436] B.W. JENTLESON, "The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 1, March 1992, pp. 49-73; B.W. JENTLESON & R.L. BRITTON, "Still Pretty Prudent: Post-Cold War American Public Opinion on the Use of Military Force", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 42, No. 4, August 1998, pp. 395-417 & R.C. EICHENBERG, "Victory Has Many Friends", *International Security*, Vol.30, No.1, Summer 2005, pp.140-177

guarantee for the country's independence. No wonder hence that Ahmadinejad made the Iranian flag the symbol of his 2009 campaign.

From such a perspective and in order to promote democracy in Iran, some policy recommendations can be formulated. Abstaining from military rhetoric to direct the Iranian people towards the civilian component of the regime would be the simplest policy recommendation. Yet its efficiency is questionable. In the first place because it might be out of the West's hands. Throughout recent years Israel has repeatedly uttered its readiness to unilaterally attack Iran. Preemptive attacks in Syria (September 6, 2007) and military exercises (June 2008) have been used to stress Israeli willingness to act.[1437] The new Israeli government seems even less inclined to cool down rhetoric. Secondly, the construction of an external enemy is something the Iranian regime has repeatedly capitalized on. Although helpful, it seems improbable that a mere change in rhetoric from the perceived enemy would change such.

There is another possibility however: accepting Iran's nuclear destiny and a future of both deterrence and further democratization in the country and region. The relationship between nuclear weapons and democracy is a barely researched field. The topic is generally approached by considering the possibilities for civilian and/or democratic control on nuclear weapons and the management of these. The limited number of actors making policy and controlling these weapons appears detrimental to democratic decision-making. The technicalities and the vital importance of such weapons for a state's security offer a small (military) elite an excuse to regard atomic energy as a situation "*for which the traditional democratic processes are rather unsuitable.*"[1438] Robert Dahl observed that "*the political processes of democracy do not operate with respect to atomic energy policy*", since "*the*

[1437] M.R. GORDON & E. SCHMITT, " U.S. Says Israeli Exercise Seemed Directed at Iran", *The New York Times,* June 20, 2008

[1438] R.A. DAHL, "Atomic Energy and the Democratic Process", *Annals of the AAPSS,* Vol.290, November 1953, pp.1-6 (6)

policy-making elite is significantly smaller" in this policy-domain.[1439] Although other authors have underlined the increasing role Parliament and civil society have conquered in the debate,[1440] Dahl remained skeptical.[1441]

Democratic control over nuclear weapons is only side of the medal however. The other side concerns the influence of nuclear weapons on the polity. The apparent contradiction between democracy and nuclear weapons has provoked radical statements as : "*the restoration of democratizing potential at the state level depends on the downgrading and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons as an element of international political life*."[1442]

The Pakistani 1999 military coup offers an example *a contrario* of this. Explaining the coup General Musharraf declared: "*the [civilian] government [..]tried to politicise the army, destabilise it, and tried to create dissension within its ranks*."[1443] In reality, the military had been upset by the lack of influence it was offered in policy concerning the 1998 acquired nuclear weapons. Indeed, less than four months after the Pakistani military took over power from the civilian authorities, Musharraf established a new National Command Authority and made it responsible for policy formulation, employment and development control over nuclear forces.[1444]

[1439] R.A. DAHL, "Atomic Energy and the Democratic Process", *Annals of the AAPSS,* Vol.290, November 1953, pp.1-6 (1-2)

[1440] H. BORN, 'Civilian Control and Democratic Accountability of Nuclear Weapons,' in H. HAENGGI & T.WINKLER (eds.), *The Challenges of Security Sector Governance: DCAF Yearbook 2003,*
Berlin/Brunswick, LIT Publishers/Transaction Publishers, 2003

[1441] R.A. DAHL, *Controlling Nuclear Weapons: Democracy versus Guardianship*, Syracuse**,** Syracuse University Press, 1985

[1442] R. FALK, "Nuclear Weapons and the End of Democracy", *Praxis International,* No.1, 1982, pp.1-12 (9)

[1443] G. P. MUSHARRAF, "Text of General Pervaiz Musharraf's address", October 1999, www.fas.org

[1444] X., "National Command Authority Established", *APP*, Islamabad, February 2000

The Iranian nuclear program is controlled by the *Sepah*. Debating on public television with Mousavi during the 2009 electoral campaign, Ahmadinejad clarified the *Sepah*'s vision. The acceptance of the additional protocol of the Non-Proliferation Treaty by Khatami had led to "*a complete shutdown of all our nuclear installations*" and had given the IAEA the right "*to expose Iran's defense structure to the country's enemies*". He added: "*For three centrifuges how much did you have to beg, today we have over 7,000 working centrifuges. After all our cooperation in Afghanistan and on the nuclear issue, Bush declared Iran part of the 'axis of evil.'*" Ahmadinejad observed how his policy had led both Bush and Obama to change course: "*For 27 years America wished the overthrow [of the regime], today they officially declare: 'we do not want the overthrow'. Which foreign policy was successful?*"

Ahmadinejad's discourse is but one example of how the *Sepah* usurps Iranian nationalism to promote its own agenda. By overstating the nuclear issue, the *Sepah* uses it to justify its role in politics. If Iran was to obtain a nuclear weapon, they would lose this argument. By increasing the feeling of national security, a nuclear weapon would decrease the attractiveness of one of the *Sepah*'s propaganda instruments. Rightly or wrongly a nuclear weapon gives a perception of security. All the more so in a region where all major powers possess nuclear weapons. Such a sense of security would decrease popular tendencies to rally the *Sepah*. It would remove a major propaganda instrument from the hands of the *Sepah*'s. In electoral competitions such could present a relative advantage for civilian candidates. All the more so since foreign policy is the only domain in which Ahmadinejad's policy was no total failure.

But a nuclear weapon could also prove an incentive for the *Sepah* as an institution to specialize in military affairs only. Indeed, the *Sepah* remains a military actor of which the first preoccupation is the safeguard of the Islamic Republic. With the bomb, they would gain control of what is perceived as the ultimate military deterrent. The *Sepah* would be offered an undisputed status of guardian of the nation, without having to risk a possibly self-destructive coup. This would not block individual members of the *Sepah* from political participation, but

it would appease the institution's appetite for political dominance. Dominating foreign policy appears less of a necessity when one controls the one weapon *par excellence* that safeguards the Islamic Republic. Reformist appeasement would no longer threaten national security. From this perspective too, a nuclear weapon would offer a helping hand for civilian dominance of the political arena. The only remaining question now seems: Is the West ready to accept a nuclear way to democracy in the Middle East?

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