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POLITICS AND CULTURE IN IRAN

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PREFACE

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Politics and Culture Series
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Politics and Culture in Iran is the eighth monograph to be completed in the series on the analysis of culture and politics in a variety of national settings. The series is designed to further understanding of how culture helps shape political systems and behavior in selected countries. The monographs should be useful to analysts, diplomats, and others with extensive knowledge of the particular country as well as to those seeking an introduction.

The Department of State selected the countries to be included in the series. As series editor, I chose the authors of individual monographs and prepared a set of guidelines developed in two conferences organized by the Office of Long-Range Assessments and Research at State and attended by government and academic specialists. The guidelines reflect my perspective on "Culture and Politics" as presented in a monograph with that title prepared as part of the project. That general work is available to those seeking more background on the topic.

Each country monograph was revised following a review session attended by academic and government specialists on the country. However, the country author bears final responsibility for the contents of the volume; it should not be interpreted as representing the official opinion or policy of the Department of State.

The country author also prepared the references and the annotated bibliography of the most important interpretations of culture and politics in the country. For statistical and other basic information on the country, readers should consult the latest issue of Background Notes, issued by the Bureau of Public Affairs of the Department of State.

I am indebted to many people for the success of this series. Dr. E. Raymond Platig, Director of the Office of Long-Range Assessments and Research at the Department, heads the list. This collaboration between government and the academy has been facilitated and enriched by his understanding of both cultures. He joins me in expressing appreciation to the many participants in our conferences on the conceptual monograph and on individual countries. Their collective experience is formidable. Their insights, criticisms, and advice have been invaluable.

Samuel H. Barnes
Ann Arbor, Michigan

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HIGHLIGHTS

Political action in Iranian society takes place in a cultural milieu that is rich, varied, and eclectic. Culture provides the underpinning for Iranian politics and social behavior. It is learned and transmitted through several important agents and institutions which have had to deal with three major political traditions emanating from monarchism, liberal nationalism, and Shi'ism. There is also a minor tradition associated with the left. The three major traditions can be best understood through three key individuals who have been their primary proponents in different periods: Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (1941-79), Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq (1951-53), and supreme religious leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1979-). Although the left has also had important leaders, it is not as a tradition identified with a single individual. The Iranians' perceptions of the three key leaders and their roles in Iranian politics at critical historical moments have greatly influenced the relative success of the ideas and institutions that they represent.

The three major traditions have co-existed in both high and popular culture in an uneasy relationship. The predominance of one tradition over the others at a particular time does not mean the final and complete demise of the other forces that have existed for generations in Iranian society and are part of the country's cultural legacy. Although it is highly unlikely that the monarchical tradition will reemerge in Iran as a dominant political force, its existence as a major element of past culture and history will continue to have some bearing on popular attitudes. The secular liberal nationalist tradition has a far greater chance than the monarchical one to reappear as the dominant political force once again in the future. This tradition, however, has to cope with the fact that secularism has been maligned and disgraced under the Islamic republic. The regime-controlled socialization agents reinforce these negative views about secularism. However, liberal nationalism is a strong force in Iranian culture and, assuming that it can accommodate moderate religious elements, it is not unreasonable to expect a significant role for this tradition in the future. The leftist tradition will continue as a force in Iranian politics but its chances of success are, at this point, limited.

The three major traditions have interacted with cultural legacies from both pre- and post-Islamic Iran. These legacies include emphasis on personalistic aspects of politics, dependence on family and group ties, and a continuing tradition of *patrimonialism*. The three traditions have also depended on a vast array of cultural symbols derived from Iranian Shi'ism. These symbols have been used to mobilize the masses during major political upheavals and are also part of the recurrent pattern of liberal-clerical alliance in Iranian politics. The revolution of 1978-79 is the most recent example that underlines the close relationship between politics and culture in Iran.

Iranian society has gone through several major jolts and upheavals since World War II. These include the oil nationalization of the Mosaddeq era and the foreign sponsored coup that toppled his regime, the upheavals of the early 1960s, the economic dislocation caused by the oil boom of the early 1970s, the Islamic revolution and the hostage crisis, and, finally, the non-ending and costly Iran-Iraq war. The Iranians have had to come to terms regularly and routinely with fundamental political, social, and economic transformations. These changes have been dramatic with lasting consequences for members of the political community. Immense cultural resources and traditions have sustained the Iranians, and these cultural resources have been reinforced by a long historical tradition and by the continuity of the Iranian state. If history is a guide, then it is clear that survival of Iran as nation-state is not at stake. The state should weather internal and external challenges to its continuity. What is less certain is the ultimate victory of one political tradition at the expense of other equally forceful traditions.

POLITICS AND CULTURE IN IRAN

INTRODUCTION

Since the time of the first Persian Empire, Iranian society has responded to, adopted, and modified a diverse set of cultural influences that have found their way inside the country's borders, hence, the phrase "crossroads of culture"—used by many observers in reference to Iran.

For analytical purposes, two major cultural themes can be delineated in the Iranian cultural context. The first one derives from the pre-Islamic Iranian past, its Zoroastrian heritage, and the heyday of Iran's monarchical tradition. The second theme is closely associated with Iran's Islamic tradition since the Arab conquest of the country in the seventh century. Religion plays a significant role in both of these traditions. In the first theme, Zoroastrianism as the religion of the ancient Achaemenian kings and later as the state religion of the Sassanians (the last pre-Islamic dynasty of Iran) serves as the basis of shared values and assumptions on what constitutes Iran. In the second area, it is Shi'i Islam that has given focus and direction as the country's dominant cultural tradition with a profound impact on Iranian politics.

The two major cultural themes are linked to one another through a vast array of artistic and creative traditions, the most notable of which is the epic poetry of Ferdowsi's Book of Kings, the *Shahnameh*. Steeped in history, legend, and mythology, the 60,000 verse *Shahnameh* (completed circa 1010) has served as a vivid reminder of the long cultural continuity of Iran. It has become the link that unites the high culture with that of the commoners as its legends are known and recited even by those not able to read or write. The *Shahnameh* also helped save Persian as the dominant language of the Iranians, in contrast with the situation in Egypt after the Islamic conquest.

Iranian national identity has also been affected profoundly by Shi'i Islam ever since the Safavids (1501-1722) made Shi'ism the state religion. Shi'ism emphasized the uniqueness of Iranians as it formally separated them from the vast majority of Sunni Muslims, especially those in the surrounding Arabic and Turkish speaking lands. It was this separation, as Minorsky points out, that helped forge a distinct Iranian consciousness and kept Iranians from complete assimilation into the larger Islamic world (Minorsky, 1955:195). The "We-They" distinctions, so central in nationalism, had ample room for growth given the political and doctrinal tensions that separated the Shi'is from the Sunnis.

To view the Iranian cultural heritage as the conflict between Iran and Islam, as is done by some observers, is quite misleading. Islam and Iran, as Bausani correctly points out, are not antithetical elements (1975:47). Both Sunni and Shi'i Islam have had a profound influence in shaping the Iranian culture. The Shi'i component has clearly been much more critical in the past few centuries and is the most significant basis for understanding the cultural dimension of modern day

Iranian politics. In the words of Bausani, it is Mohammad rather than Darius who serves as "one of the chief roots of post-Islamic Iranian culture" (Bausani, 1975:55). Return to the Iranian roots is more a reaffirmation of Shi'i Islamic roots than a rediscovery of pre-Islamic heritage.

The post World War II politics of Iran vividly demonstrates the interplay of cultural forces as outlined above. It is an arena where politics are played by religious and secular leaders and presented to the masses in a highly symbolic fashion. The key individual actors are the second and last Pahlavi monarch Mohammad Reza Shah, the secular nationalist prime minister Mohammad Mosaddeq, and the supreme religious leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Each one of them has had to respond in his own way to the cultural thrust of Shi'i religion and the forces of Iranian nationalism. They also have had to deal with the forces of the left, particularly the Tudeh (Masses) Party.

The Pahlavi monarchy, founded in 1925 by Reza Shah, attempted to integrate the pre-Islamic Iranian traditions more forcefully into modern politics and as the basis for Iranian nationalism. It deemphasized established religious tradition and attempted to control Shi'i institutions. It offered its own version of nationalism, labeled "positive nationalism" by Mohammad Reza Shah, to the Iranian masses. Premier Mossadeq was an independent, charismatic, and secular nationalist leader who recognized the political importance of the more religious segments of the population in his forceful nationalistic drives. Ayatollah Khomeini, yet another charismatic figure, used Islam and Shi'i religious institutions to topple the Pahlavi monarchy and to establish his version of a theocratic government in Iran.

These three remarkable figures offer three distinct examples of how culture and politics are forged and the mix is then used to establish claims to political legitimacy. The successes and failures of each one of these individuals were contingent on significant domestic and international factors that were directly relevant to the game of politics at the time. The complex and eclectic culture of Iran supplied the rules of the game and the boundaries of permissible political behavior. It also provided the ultimate judgment and criteria of evaluation of the success or failure of the three models of politics.

INTERPRETATIONS OF IRANIAN CULTURE

Many studies of Iran have attempted to understand the country's politics by analyzing its cultural orientation, values, and people's attitudes. These studies, as discussed by Banuazizi, are of two broad types (1977:210). The first involves writings by travellers, historians, and other such observers who describe Iranian character and culture on the basis of personal experiences. Although many of these are undoubtedly useful accounts of how Westerners saw the interplay of culture and politics in Iran, they have also perpetuated many unsubstantiated images of Iranian character and culture that have been difficult to put to rest.

In one account, for example, Persians were described as "unprincipled, deceitful, corrupt, rapacious," These traits were then counterbalanced by the

author's description of positive aspects of Persian character such as charm and hospitality (Fraser, 1843:276-277, quoted in Banuazizi, 1977:216). These or similar descriptions were often repeated by others either as accepted portrayals of a people or as a result of independent personal observations. On the whole, then, these presentations are not of great value in understanding the present culture of Iran. They tend to mix racial theories with beliefs in cultural superiority of the West in a manner congruent with the colonialist policies of the period.

The second type of studies are works of contemporary social scientists whose analyses of Iranian polity, society, or economy are largely based on their characterization of Iranian manifest cultural traits (Banuazizi, 1977:210). These range from specific studies of Iranian national character to works on the Iranian political elite under the Shah. Many of these studies use the tools of modern social sciences and employ empirical or quantitative measures to document those prevalent cultural traits that appear to have directly influenced political behavior, economic development, and modernization in Iran.

While many of these studies are still impressionistic descriptions of the Iranian cultural characteristics, a few are empirical investigations that shed light on the complex interplay of politics and culture in Iran. Marvin Zonis' *The Political Elite of Iran* (1971), a study of the elite under the Shah, clearly falls in the latter category. This elaborate study concludes, among other things, that four major character orientations of political cynicism, manifest insecurity, political mistrust, and interpersonal exploitation are significant intervening variables between the elite's social background and their attitudes and political behavior.

Other accounts of Iranian character discuss cultural traditions that are not entirely consistent with those described by Zonis. Beeman (1976), on the one hand, views national character as a reflection of communication systems and presents a list culled from such systems. The list includes the factors of uncertainty/insecurity, cleverness/wiliness, mistrust, emotionality, and the three status positions of authority/submission/autonomy. Limbert, on the other hand, dwells on the three themes of family solidarity, hospitality, and artistic creativity as central to the Iranian tradition (1987:35-38). He then elaborates on what the Iranians consider to be ideal personal and social traits. The list encompasses ritual courtesy (*ta'rof*), pride and honor (*ghairat*), withdrawal and reconciliation (*qahr va ashti*), and the willingness to forgive (*gozashi*). Bateson and her associates (1977) discuss the Iranian national character in terms of what they call "inner purity" (*safa-yi batin*). This is a valued trait that combines heroism and spirituality, emphasizes the absence of hypocrisy, and is based on a consistency between feeling and behavior. They maintain that the cultural image of this positive personality type is central to an appreciation of many other characteristics, both positive and negative, that are important cultural traits in Iran.

There are other studies that make similar observations on Iranian cultural traditions. It is rare, however, to find systematic attempts to connect these traits to political or economic behavior. The above authors, and others, mention the political factor but do not attempt to establish any direct relationship between

culture and politics or economics. One exception to this pattern is David McClelland's comparative study of national character and economic development in Turkey and Iran (1963). Using his theory of need-achievement, McClelland made a content analysis of children's stories in order to test the hypothesis that concern for achievement was associated with economic growth for Iran and Turkey during a period from the 1920s to the late 1950s. He concludes that Iran's lower economic growth during that period, compared to Turkey's, can be explained by the Iranians' lesser concern with achievement as demonstrated by the themes prevalent in children's stories. Although McClelland's hypothesis appeared to be borne out by his evidence in the early 1960s, Iran's economic upsurge in the following decade and a half "should probably prove embarrassing to the author's theory" (Banuazizi, 1977:230).

If there is any modicum of agreement among the authors discussed above, it is their emphasis on insecurity, cynicism, and mistrust as common traits in Iranian character. These aspects are most clearly stated in studies by Zonis, Beeman, and Westwood (1965) but others also refer to them. Since insecurity, cynicism, and mistrust are traits that have important political implications, it behooves the scholars to look upon the larger environment that produces such expressions. These traits cannot be viewed in isolation from the political, economic, and social environment. In assessing their importance one has to determine whether any of these traits have indeed been regular features of Iranian politics and, further, evaluate their relevance to the dominant politics of any given epoch.

The Study's Perspective

The major assumption of this study is that the relationship between politics and culture in Iran can be fruitfully investigated only in the broader context of the country's long-standing cultural traditions and contemporary political realities. Within this environment, the study will review the interplay between culture and politics in regard to three major and one minor political traditions that have existed in contemporary Iran: the monarchical model of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, the liberal nationalist model of Mohammad Mosaddeq, the theocratic model of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and the leftist model of the Tudeh Party. Tension, conflict, co-existence, and reconciliation have frequently played important roles in the relationship among the three major traditions. Rarely has any one tradition been pure and based completely on one element. More often than not, elements from the other two traditions have contributed to the forces that have made one tradition dominant at a particular time. The ascendancy of one tradition does not mean that the other two forces have permanently disappeared from the political scene.

The three key political players who are identified with these models relied on different institutional structures and mechanisms in their attempts to gain legitimacy and establish control. Every one of them, however, had to depend on the cultural environment of Iran for real and symbolic resources.

The Monarchical Tradition in Politics

The Pahlavi dynasty was founded in 1925 by Reza Shah, an officer in the Cossack Brigade, who became Iran's strongman after his coup d'etat of 1921. Reza Shah's effectiveness in bringing centrifugal forces under control and containing the system of tribal lordships was a significant factor in his initial success. He reestablished the primacy of the center over the periphery during a particularly difficult time in the nation's history. He succeeded in doing so by relying on the institution of the military as the essential backbone of his regime. He created a standing national army based on conscription, established military colleges and officer training schools, and made the armed forces the central institution of society (Kazemi, 1980a; Afshar, 1985). The intimate connection between the military and the Pahlavi dynasty remained a prominent feature of Iranian politics until the final collapse of the Pahlavis in 1979 during the revolutionary upheaval.

The Pahlavi dynasty also differed from previous Iranian monarchies in the fact that it was non-tribal. Lacking a tribal base of support, the Pahlavis needed the military institution to remain in power and to extend their control in the countryside.

Both Reza Shah, who was forced to abdicate by the Allies in 1941, and his son Mohammad Reza Shah relied on pre-Islamic Iranian symbols and practices to give focus and identity to their regimes. These encompassed a wide array of subjects from the architectural style of government buildings to emphasis on pre-Islamic Iranian cultural themes. More importantly, the institution of monarchy was put forth, particularly by Mohammad Reza Shah, as the principal cohesive force of the new social order. The monarchical emphasis reached new heights in the 1960 and 1970 decades where ostentatious international ceremonies were held to celebrate one aspect or another of the Iranian kingship. The last Pahlavi monarch went so far as to try to identify the monarchy with the Iranian nation as if they were two sides of the same coin. All other competing institutions were to be brought under the monarchy's control using the military as the principal instrument. The Shah ultimately failed to achieve his goals as the challenges from the Shi'i clerics eventually resulted in his downfall.

The Shah's personal ambitions and his desire to achieve regional superpower status for Iran was fully supported by the United States. The proclamation of the Nixon Doctrine and the availability of vast oil revenues provided the Shah with needed support and freedom to try to realize his personal and national dreams (Banuazizi, 1976). His rule, however, lacked legitimacy. He was put on the Peacock Throne by the Allies in 1941 and was brought back to power, after having fled the country, in a British and CIA sponsored coup in 1953. This was done at the expense of a popular and charismatic prime minister whose agenda was to wrest control of the oil industry from the British. In the popular mind, the Shah appeared to be doing the bidding of the foreign powers. These were the same people who banded together and eventually overthrew him from the throne. Neither the

monarchical institution nor the military were suitable matches for the combined forces of religious and nationalist elements.

The Liberal Nationalist Tradition in Politics

The Shah's greatest adversary before the emergence of Ayatollah Khomeini was Mohammad Mosaddeq, Iran's prime minister during 1951-53. Coming from an aristocratic landowning family related to the Qajar dynasty, Mosaddeq was educated initially in Iran and later in Switzerland where he received a doctorate in law. He was an elected member of the parliament in 1925 when a bill for the change of dynasty was introduced. Mosaddeq, along with three other deputies, opposed this bill and set himself up in opposition to the Pahlavi dynasty. He paid dearly for his opposition to Reza Shah with intermittent exile, house arrest, and imprisonment (see Diba, 1986).

With the outbreak of World War II and Reza Shah's abdication, Mosaddeq was once again able to freely participate in the nation's political life. He soon became identified as the chief proponent of the liberal nationalist tradition in Iranian politics. Liberal nationalism's historical roots in Iran can be traced to the nineteenth century reformist movements and the rise of the modern intelligentsia. Those who espoused liberal nationalist ideas were influenced by the European experience and had a strong desire to make use of some of its prominent features. Liberal nationalists played important roles in several major reform and oppositional movements that eventually culminated in the Constitutional Revolution at the turn of the century. Mosaddeq can be viewed as a more modern example of the liberal nationalist tradition in Iranian politics.

As a member of parliament, Mosaddeq expounded a doctrine of nonalignment which he labelled "negative equilibrium" (*siyasat-e movazeneh-ye manfi*). It was a doctrine that called for a policy of neutralism in Iran's dealings with the two traditional imperialist powers, Great Britain and the Soviet Union. He denounced the granting of concessions to these powers which he believed allowed them to control Iran's natural resources for their own benefit (see Abrahamian, 1982; Cottam, 1979; Zabih, 1982). The linchpin of Mosaddeq's negative equilibrium policy was to be the ability to take control of the Iranian oil industry from the British through nationalization.

Mosaddeq's institutional base of support was bolstered by the creation of the National Front, a loose coalition of diverse groups that had come together for the parliamentary elections of 1949, ranging ideologically from the social democratic left to the religious right. Its core support came primarily from the traditional middle class of the bazaar—small merchants, guild leaders, and clerics—and the modern middle class, the intelligentsia, composed of salaried personnel, professionals, and intellectuals (Abrahamian, 1982:259; Cottam, 1986:71). As Abrahamian points out, "these divergent forces came together in the National Front because of three common bonds: the joint struggle against the court-military

complex; the struggle against the British-owned oil company; and the political principles and charismatic personality of Mossadeq" (Abrahamian, 1982:260).

The oil nationalization bill was passed by the Iranian parliament and the Shah, seeing no other alternatives, named Mosaddeq prime minister in the spring of 1951. Riding high on a wave of popular support, Mosaddeq's government proceeded to implement the nationalization measures, which were highly popular throughout the country with active support coming from both religious and secular circles. Mosaddeq's struggles against the British government increased his domestic popularity. He became the symbol of Iranian nationalism, a man who could defy a Great Power for what he and his supporters believed to be just. Mosaddeq was adept in using actions and symbols that particularly appealed to the politically conscious Iranian urban middle class elements.

Mosaddeq's premiership was a period of intense turmoil. On the one hand, he was locked in a major conflict with a Great Power; on the other, he had to tackle a series of major domestic troubles, particularly his relationship with the royal court. His final overthrow was due to complex domestic and international factors. On the domestic side, Mosaddeq failed to create a viable political institution that would solidify his position. The National Front, as a loose coalition of diverse groups and organizations, could not perform such a role. The loss of support of major religious allies and organizations was a severe blow to his tenure. Although he dramatically reduced the Shah's power, he did not eliminate the monarchy as a significant institution. He was determined to break the symbiotic relationship between the military and the royal court and tried aggressively to purge the military of the Shah's supporters. In the end, however, it was the military officers who, with the support of foreign governments, succeeded in toppling his regime.

Mosaddeq lost in part because he failed to keep his coalition of religious and secular elements together. Characteristics of his regime, however, have certain important implications for understanding how politics and culture interact in Iran.

In the first place, Mosaddeq was a charismatic leader who became the symbol of the Iranian nationalist sentiments shared by the bulk of the middle classes. Where the Shah suffered from his intimate association with and dependence on foreign powers, Mosaddeq reaped benefits from his defiance of them. Where the Shah lacked legitimacy, Mosaddeq was the people's choice. The charismatic residue that Mosaddeq left after his downfall continued to haunt the Shah.

In the second place, Mosaddeq came to power on the crest of a grand coalition based on an alliance of clerics, secularists, and merchants, a sporadic alliance dating back to 1872 and tied to major common ongoing grievances against foreign powers and the court. The reigning monarch was blamed for being in collusion with foreign powers and for facilitating the country's economic impoverishment and cultural decline. These alliances lasted for the duration of various conflicts but fell apart soon after the opposition secured victory. The fundamentally different visions of society precluded a regular and lasting cooperation among the divergent elements that made up the alliance. The liberal

nationalist tradition that was so clearly articulated by Mosaddeq did not die out with his departure from the political scene. This tradition continued in a modified form in the ideas and activities of Mehdi Bazargan, the first head of Iran's provisional government after the revolution (Chehabi, 1985). Bazargan's Islamic liberalism is the most recent attempt to rekindle those forces that allowed for cooperation between religious and secular factions in Iranian nationalism.

The Religious Tradition in Politics

This same alliance, on a grander scale, sparked the revolution of 1978-79 and finally put an end to the Iranian monarchy. As in the Mosaddeq coalition, the grand alliance of 1978-79 was spearheaded by a highly popular charismatic figure who directed his rage at foreign, and specifically American, presence in Iran and held the Shah responsible for the state of affairs. In contrast to Mosaddeq, however, the leader of the Islamic revolution came from the clerical institution with a potent message that called for a radical reconstruction of society on the basis of Shi'i-Islamic religious dogmas and institutions. This tradition had received occasional forceful expression in the past but had never become dominant among the majority of the clerics.

It should be stressed that perhaps in no other major revolution have cultural factors, as expressed through religious institutions, played as important a role in mobilizing the masses (see Skocpol, 1982; Keddie, 1982). In some ways, the revolution can be seen as the ultimate clash of two cultures—the imported Western inspired culture of the Shah and the Shi'i-Islamic culture of Ayatollah Khomeini. In practically every respect, Ayatollah Khomeini can be properly regarded as the antithesis of the Shah. Khomeini's family background, theological education, and austere life style contrast sharply with the Shah's Western education and orientation, palace opulence, and the insatiable materialism of his followers.

Ruhollah Khomeini was educated primarily in the theological seminary at Qom. His life was basically confined to teaching at the theological center until 1961 when for the first time the larger public took notice of him. The occasion was the death of the most venerated Shi'i leader of the time, Ayatollah Hosayn Borujerdi, and the search for his successor. As a potential contender for the position, Khomeini issued several statements opposing the government's decisions on a number of issues including women's enfranchisement (Zonis, 1971:45). Although Khomeini was not named the top Shi'i theologian, his name gradually became known in a much wider circle. He was also recognized as a bold figure who clearly saw the intimate connection between religion and politics in Iran.

Khomeini gained prominence in 1963 when he led a series of major riots, directed primarily by the religious factions, against the Shah's government. The anti-government riots centered on several key cities of Tehran, Qom, Meshed, Shiraz, Kashan, and Isfahan. The riots were put down after a three-day bloody

clash with the Shah's military forces. Khomeini was initially detained but was eventually sent to exile first in Turkey and then in Iraq where he stayed until 1978.

The 1963 riots came on the heels of the 1960-61 economic and political crisis that had challenged the monarchical regime. Led by the National Front and the middle class elements in the educational institutions, the crisis of the early 1960s had put the Shah on the defensive for both his domestic and foreign policies and had paved the way for a more serious challenge to his rule. These riots served as a dress rehearsal for the 1978-79 revolution and had some of the ingredients of the previous liberal-clerical alliances in regard to the nature of the grievances and the form of the opposition to the reigning monarch. What they lacked was a close and systematic coordination of the liberal and religious factions. The 1963 riots, then, may be seen as an event that solidified the clergy's primacy in anti-government activities, a primacy that became firmly entrenched as the revolution of 1978-79 unfolded.

The 1978-79 revolution had five distinct mobilizational stages (see Ashraf and Banuazizi, 1985). The stages begin with the non-violent mobilization in the latter part of 1977, continue through cyclical urban riots, mass demonstrations, and mass strikes, and end with the demise of the period of dual sovereignty and Khomeini's dramatic victory on February 11, 1979. His grand coalition united disparate elements, including diverse religious groups with views that ranged from a radical to a conservative traditional Islam (Ashraf and Banuazizi, 1985). There are two factors relevant to this study's major focus. These relate to the institutional mechanisms used to give full ascendancy to the religious dimension of the revolution, and Khomeini's vision of a theocratic Iran.

The institutional base of the clerics' power has its roots in the beliefs and practices of Shi'i Islam and the long history of Shi'ism's organizational development in Iran. One interpretation of the Shi'i belief system, which did not become the dominant tradition among the clerics, maintains that the clergy have the collective right to rule in the absence of the twelfth and last Shi'i Imam until his final reappearance at the Day of Judgment. Many scholars maintain that this interpretation and Khomeini's particular use of the concept of rule by the jurispudent (*velayat-e faqih*) are innovations in Shi'ism. This is not the proper place to analyze these conflicting views. It is perhaps sufficient to point out that some clerics used the belief in their right to rule to rally the faithful behind their causes and against unpopular monarchs.

The Shi'i clergy's more sustained impact in Iranian politics is related to their ability to gain control over several key institutions. The most important of these are the major financial organization known as *waqf*, and religious taxation in the form of *khums* and *zakat*. *Waqf* is a pious foundation or endowment that was established to support religious institutions, public works, or the poor. It is a very significant and cherished Islamic philanthropic institution with a long history of economic and social activity. *Khums* and *zakat* are canonical payments and almsgivings required of the faithful and collected by the Shi'i clerics for religious works and for distribution among the needy. The cumulative impact of basic control of these

practices has given the Shi'i establishment in Iran a certain degree of financial health and, more importantly, independence from the central government that is not normally found among religious groups in other parts of the Islamic world.

This economic independence is reinforced by an elaborate institutional mechanism that ties a large number of mosques and shrines and thousands of lesser clerics to the religious establishment in Qom and other places. The network is controlled by the Grand Ayatollahs and other such religious luminaries who—by virtue of sitting at the apex of the clerical establishment—possess a great deal of personal power and institutional authority. The network in turn relates to the Iranian masses, and especially the poor, by its system of welfare distribution and through the masses' attendance at holy shrines and mosques and participation in a large number of regularly commemorated Shi'i festivals.

The most important of these festivals celebrates the martyrdom of the prophet's grandson and the third Shi'i Imam at the hands of the Umayyad Sunni Caliph Yazid in Karbala in 680 A.D. (Chelkowski, 1979; Fischer, 1980; Mottahedeh, 1985). The martyrdom of Imam Husayn, or in Fischer's words the "Karbala Paradigm," is reenacted annually in an elaborate and dramatic series of passion plays, processions, sermons, and organized acts of flagellation. Commemoration of these events is undertaken and directed by the clerics' institutional network. The network includes the bazaar merchants who have traditionally had strong economic, religious, and familial ties to the clerics. The primary participants in these festivals are the popular classes who are mobilized for the events through their associations with the mosques, shrines, and religious missions (*hay'ats*).

Participation in the Shi'i festivals, from the most elaborate "Karbala Paradigm" to the many lesser ones, reaffirms the religious hierarchy's ties to the masses and maintains a significant form of regular interaction between the two. These festivals provide the clergy with an ideal arena for reorienting the mourning sessions into anti-government political forums. In many cases, the clerics have used the occasion to attack political enemies and the government. During the revolution some of the largest mass demonstrations against the Shah occurred as part of these religious celebrations which presented the quest for justice against the evils of established authority as a powerful motivating force for political action. This Manichean dualism juxtaposing good and evil was evoked routinely and successfully by Ayatollah Khomeini in his attacks on the Shah.

He utilized the financial base, the elaborate network system of the mosque, and the mobilizational force of the Shi'i commemorative festivals to forge a powerful foundation for his political activities. He was able "to reinterpret the sacred symbols in such a way that they could be used to explain contemporary issues" (Sheikholeslami, 1986:247). The existence of widespread discontent among most elements of the social order extended Khomeini's appeal to circles far wider than the core support. Khomeini's appeal was also partially due to his call for the reconstruction of Iranian society and his vision of a Shi'i-Islamic order where religious values would reign supreme. The basic outline of this vision is presented

in his book on Islamic government (*Hukumat-e Islami*, 1977), which is based on a series of lectures that he had delivered to his theology students while in exile in Iraq. It was these same students, plus others who had studied with him previously, who came to dominate the clerical movement during the revolution (Hooglund and Royce, 1985:103).

Khomeini's treatise on Islam and politics puts forth in a fairly systematic way the fundamental principles of an Islamic government. The contents of Khomeini's treatise, as discussed and elaborated in the writings of his activist students and disseminated through mass media and other channels, delineate four major themes of the primacy of Islam, the political authority and guardianship of the Shi'i jurists, the supreme leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, and the special role of the revolutionary clergy as the vanguard of the revolution (Hooglund and Royce, 1985:104-109). They contain the essential blueprints for the Shi'i theocratic system of government that was later more fully developed with the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is a system in which religious norms of Shi'i Islam and clerical personalities and institutions dominate. Monarchy has no place in such a system and has to be eliminated.

Khomeini's Islamic republic is the realization of a vision that had been a part of the Iranian political culture. This vision had played some role in the consciousness of the Iranian clerics and in the several alliances they had forged with the secularists and merchants against both foreign intrusion and unpopular monarchs. In the previous alliances, the clerics were not able to reap the full benefits of their vision of the Shi'i theocracy. They were prevented from realizing their ultimate goal by a combination of factors including opposition from segments of the clerical establishment, the secularists, and the powerful central government. The revolution of 1978-79, the abolition of the Iranian monarchy, and the radical clerics' key role in its unfolding removed all barriers. The clergy under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini were the final victors. They succeeded in creating a modern version of Shi'i theocracy in Iran in the twentieth century.

The Islamic republic is also a conscious reassertion of Shi'i traditionalism. As defined by Banuazizi, traditionalism in this sense "represents a self-conscious ideologically fashioned embrace (or imposition) of beliefs, values, and symbolic structures—particularly when they are overwhelmed by competing values—that are deemed essential to the preservation of the integrity and coherence of a culture" (1987:299). The history of twentieth century Iran is replete with examples of such a quest for traditionalism (Arjomand, 1984), but it is only with Ayatollah Khomeini that traditionalism has become enshrined in the political and social system.

The Leftist Tradition in Politics

It can perhaps be argued that the leftist tradition has not been as central to Iranian politics as the other three traditions. The left has never formed a national government in Iran and has had a more limited social base than the others. The left,

however, is not unimportant. It has had government ministers and representatives in the parliament. It has organized industrial strikes and spearheaded major uprisings and autonomous drives in the north against the central government. The leftist forces were also engaged in important guerrilla combat with the Shah's government in the years preceding the revolution. Elements from the left continue to fight the Khomeini regime from both inside and outside of Iran. Because of its ideological appeal to important segments of the politically conscious population, the left is a force to reckon with in modern Iranian politics.

The earliest evidence of what may be called leftist consciousness among Iranians dates to the years immediately preceding the Russian Revolution. Individuals with radical ideas who had fought in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution and Social Democrats from Baku were among the first to espouse leftist notions (Abrahamian, 1982:103-104; Ladjevardi, 1985:4-5). The key activists among the Social Democrats established the first Iranian Communist oriented organization, Adalat (Justice), in Baku in 1916. Members of the Adalat Party and other Iranian Communists soon became involved in the uprising in the northern Gilan province and the proclamation of the Gilan Republic (Kazemi and Abrahamian, 1978; Zabih, 1966). Their activities in Gilan were greatly assisted by the presence of the Red Army in the province and the alliance forged with the Soviets. In June 1920 the Adalat Party held its first major congress at Anzali on the Iranian Caspian. The forty-eight delegates to the congress adopted the new title of Communist Party of Iran and elected the Iranian Communist theoretician Ahmad Sultanzadeh (Avetis Mikailian) as the party's first secretary (Chaqueri, 1984). This date marks the first formal creation of an Iranian Communist organization within the country's borders.

In the interwar period, a Socialist party was created by those who "retained the hope of mobilizing the middle and lower classes" (Abrahamian, 1982:126). The party was organized by important members of some of Iran's aristocratic families in Tehran and had a special appeal to the educated classes. It published a newspaper, advocated the creation of an egalitarian society, and advanced major socialist goals. The Socialists cooperated closely with the Communist Party and helped create a central trade union organization (Abrahamian, 1982:127-129). In spite of some of these gains the activities of the left were highly restricted in the interwar period since Reza Shah's policies prevented the left from making any significant inroads in the country. A 1931 law introduced by Reza Shah and swiftly passed by the parliament officially outlawed "all genuine or disguised political organizations engaged in Communist activity and propaganda" (Zabih, 1966:62).

The next major development for the left was when Reza Shah arrested and imprisoned a group of Western-educated intellectuals for promoting Marxist-Leninist ideology in 1937. The group known as the "Fifty-three" was led by Dr. Taqi Arani, a professor of physics at Tehran University. The jail experience increased the members' interaction, consciousness, and unity of purpose. After the 1941 Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran and release of the prisoners, the surviving members of the "Fifty-three" created the country's most important Communist

organization, the Tudeh (Masses) Party of Iran. Since that time, the Tudeh Party has remained as the major leftist political organization in Iranian politics.

The Tudeh Party was officially banned in 1949 after an unsuccessful assassination attempt was made on the Shah. The government produced no convincing evidence to link the would-be assassin to the Tudeh. It was clear, however, that like his father, Mohammad Reza Shah viewed the Tudeh Party as a major enemy with close ties to Iran's powerful northern neighbor. The party's fortunes took a turn for the better with the oil nationalization drive and during the relatively free period of Mosaddeq's government in the early 1950s. The Shah's return to Iran and the consolidation of his power once again created major burdens for the Tudeh. The discovery of the Tudeh Military Network in 1954 forced the party to go underground.

The situation changed with the revolution and the victory of the anti-Shah forces. The Tudeh's role in the revolution itself was inconsequential. The party was "virtually a spectator" throughout the revolutionary period (Chubin, 1980:4). The leaders, however, returned to Tehran and began to function openly.

The Tudeh's official policy was to support the clerics and those who clamored for the establishment of an Islamic republic. This tactical decision of the Tudeh was rewarded in the short-run. The party was allowed a fair degree of freedom of action. Tudeh publications including its newspaper appeared on the scene and many different forms of political activity were undertaken. However, the party's fortunes took a dramatic turn for the worse in May 1983 when its top leadership and over 1,000 members were arrested. The government formally banned the party and humiliated its top leaders with several highly charged televised broadcasts of their confessions and recantations (Zabih, 1986). Reasonably secure with the consolidation of power, the clerics had decided that they no longer needed the Tudeh Party. The party was also punished for its subservience to the Soviets at a time when the relationship between Iran and the Soviet Union had reached a very low ebb over differences on the Iran-Iraq war and other related issues. Similar to its fate under the Shah, the Tudeh Party was once again forced to go underground in order to survive within Iran's borders.

The Tudeh Party has been the major institutional expression of the leftist tradition in Iranian politics, but its claim to leftist supremacy has been challenged by other organizations that emerged on the Iranian political scene in the decade before the revolution. Detailed analysis of the role and place of these organizations is beyond the scope of this study. It is, however, important to note briefly two major leftist organizations that began as guerrilla movements during the Shah's reign.

The older of the two, the Islamic Mojahedin (Sazman-e Mojahedin-e Khlalq-e Iran) was formed in 1965. It developed from the Liberation Movement, the religious wing of the National Front. The Mojahedin began underground armed activities in 1971 to protest the 2,500th anniversary celebrations of the monarchy. The Mojahedin combined a strong Islamic ideology with revolutionary analysis and

ideas for the radical restructuring of Iranian society. The organization split into two separate groups in 1975 over the issue of formal incorporation of Marxist analysis into the Mojahedin ideology. The Islamic Mojahedin remained the principal organization after this split and bore the brunt of attacks levied against it by the government authorities. The process eventually culminated in heavy losses by the Mojahedin and the departure of their leader, Masud Rajavi, in July 1981 to new headquarters in Paris. The Mojahedin leaders have since resettled in Iraq and continue to fight the regime from Iraqi soil and occasionally from bases in Iranian Kurdistan.

The second major leftist guerrilla organization, the Fada'i guerrillas (Cherikha-ye Fada'i Khalq-e Iran), began in the early 1960s, but it was not formed officially until 1970 as a result of the merger of two separate Marxist-Leninist groups. It adopted its present name in 1971. The organization combined a strong Marxist orientation with belief in guerrilla warfare. It became more prominently known inside the country after its daring but unsuccessful attack in February 1971 on the gendarmerie post in the village of Siahkal in the Caspian. During the revolution, the Fada'i guerrillas made several important attacks on military barracks. As with the Mojahedin, the Fadi'i group soon found itself at odds with the Islamic republic. It was suppressed and forced to operate clandestinely from the outside and the organization itself split into two factions in 1980. The "majority" faction aligned itself with the Tudeh Party and is, for all practical purposes, indistinguishable from it. The "minority" faction has continued to hold an independent line and cooperates with the leftist groups in the Kurdistan province.

The leftist tradition in Iranian politics continues in these and other organizations. It is a tradition that has suffered fragmentation, disunity, and ideological tension. It has also been subjected once again to severe attacks by the ruling elite. Although the left is not allowed to engage in free political activity in Iran, it operates openly from abroad and remains a major thorn in the clerics' side.

GENERAL CULTURAL PATTERNS

Aside from the four contentious traditions in Iranian politics, there are other sources of potential tension and disunity in the social order which have an important impact on political behavior. A significant factor is the heterogeneity of the Iranian culture. Although certain themes connected with Shi'ism and some aspects of the Iranian pre-Islamic past predominate, the country is composed of diverse cultural units differentiated along ethno-linguistic and, to a lesser extent, religious lines. There are also regional distinctions as well as differences associated with urban/rural and even tribal patterns of life. This heterogeneity is counter-balanced by the continuity of the Iranian state which has existed for several centuries within relatively unchanged geographic boundaries. Continuity is further reinforced by the numerical majority of the Persians and, much more significantly, by their cultural domination of the country. The impact of cultural heterogeneity is therefore mitigated by the cultural predominance of certain groups. Although the cultural

setting is not uniform, it is reasonable to stress those cultural elements that are shared within the population.

Patrimonialism

Of critical importance in Iranian culture is the persistence of the patrimonial system. There are probably not many other places where Max Weber's description of patrimonialism has been so applicable for such a long time. Patrimonialism as a traditional system where authority is based on the extension of the ruler's household has existed in Iran since at least the time of the Safavids in the sixteenth century. Even though elaborate organizations and bureaucracies, with some specialization of roles, developed during the Qajar and Pahlavi periods, patrimonial leadership has remained the operative norm to the present time (Sheikholeslami, 1971, 1978; Ashraf, 1969 and 1971; Bill, 1975). It is also correct to assert that personalized patrimonial leadership is a key feature of the Islamic republic of Ayatollah Khomeini despite the elaborate paraphernalia of the government bureaucracy and its various ministries. The constitution of the Islamic republic (Chapter 1, Article 5) officially reaffirms the vast personal power bestowed to Khomeini, including the right to dismiss an elected president. It views the government as an emanation of religious authority; at the apex is the undisputed position held by Khomeini.

Whether viewed through officially sanctioned documents or through the way politics functions in reality, the Iranian political system has continued as a thinly disguised variation on the theme of patrimonialism. This pervasive and enduring theme is recreated and regenerated at the central level in the person of a Shah or a Khomeini and, at the local levels, through individual governors, lords, chieftains, and emissaries. It has been sustained through related institutions of family and kin, tribe, religious and secular patron-clientelism, informal group gatherings and social circles known as *dowreh*, and elaborate secret and semi-secret freemasonry. These institutions collectively form the basis of political groups and cliques that generate informal politics in the Iranian system. As Bill and Leiden have shown, "Middle Eastern societies contain a kaleidoscopic array of overlapping and interlocking groups in constant flux. Individuals maintain membership in a large number of groups. In so doing, they build webs of personal connections that constitute the basic sinews of the social system" (1984:74).

The institution of the family, both nuclear and extended, is a major source of social cohesion in Iranian society. Not only does the family act as the key agent of socialization, but it is also a highly significant part of a person's relationship to the larger society. As Limbert points out, "the Iranian family at its best gives its members the combined services of employment agency, welfare office, health insurance agency, family counselor, ward boss, and marriage broker" (1987:35). The family nurtures and protects the individual throughout his or her life. Family ties are maintained by regular contacts with blood relatives and by incorporation of new individuals through marriage (Bill and Leiden, 1984:90-94). The larger

kinship group then forms the basis for the individual's life-long protection and support.

Family ties have traditionally been of great importance in Iranian politics. Under the Pahlavis, the term "thousand families" was frequently used to refer to the top elite families of Iran. Even though the term may have been misleading since not all of these families maintained elite status over time, it is an accurate indication of how important family and familial ties have been in Iranian society (Bill, 1975:32). Intermarriage among these families, reinforced by similar class and status positions, was the norm and served as one of the ways to expand and maintain political power. The elite of post-revolutionary Iran finds itself in the same situation. The revolution dismantled the power of the old elite families of the Pahlavi era and replaced it with a new elite grouping of clerical families. As in the past, the new elite families also maintain close ties with their kin. The players have changed but the pattern continues unchanged.

In addition to the family, the tribe has served as another important patrimonial institution that reinforces primordial sentiments. Tribes have historically played critical roles in Iranian politics, at times serving as the main source and backbone of many dynasties. The importance of tribes gradually declined under the Pahlavis due both to the policies of the regime and to the socio-economic transformation of the countryside. The process of decline has clearly persisted under the Islamic republic. The attempt to assert central authority over the periphery and the continued process of state building of both the Pahlavis and the clerics of the Islamic republic have left very little room for tribal autonomy. Tribal assertion of autonomy has elicited harsh and sustained response from both governments (Beck, 1986; Garthwaite, 1983). Neither the revolutionary chaos nor the Iran-Iraq war prevented the Khomeini regime from responding directly and forcefully to Kurdish tribal unrest in the northwest areas of the country.

According to the most recent census data, tribes comprise less than five percent of the population. Their numerical weakness is in part compensated for by two factors. First, tribes tend to be concentrated in certain localities and regions that are politically and economically important. Second, tribal ethnic identity extends to the settled population of tribal origin in urban and rural areas.

Patrimonial authority patterns are also present in the various forms of patron-client relationships that have always marked Iranian politics. These informal hierarchical relationships connect the more powerful patron to the weaker client. Inequality in status is tempered by expectations of reciprocity and mutual obligations. The patron will help and assist the client with his socioeconomic needs in return for political support and loyalty. The pattern is informal and any one client may have more than one patron. The relationship cuts across both class and status lines, although it is possible to have a patron-client tie that falls within the same class position.

There are both religious and secular forms of patron-client relationships in Iran. There are also many situations in which the line between religious and non-

religious clientelist politics is blurred. The non-religious form of clientelism in Iran is similar to that found in many other societies. The powerful use extensive informal political networks to help their clients solve problems with government bureaucracies and in other areas. Economic assistance in the form of loans, or even outright gifts, is also extended on many occasions. The client incurs an obligation that must be paid back when the patron needs and requests it.

The religious form of clientelism centers on the mosques, religious seminaries, and the large network of relationships that clerics maintain with different segments of the population. The vast resources at the disposal of the top clerics allow them to assist their clients and sustain the relationships over an extended period of time. The clerics' personal ties with their followers are further augmented by the concept of imitation (*taqlid*) of the Shi'i belief system. According to this concept, unless a person has attained a level of religious learning that enables him to pass judgment on the fundamentals of faith, he must imitate a religious personage and follow his instructions in all religious matters.

The faithful consult their source of imitation on religious and other matters. In the absence of their guide, or if they live far away, their recourse is to consult treatises written by the ayatollah expounding his views. If the faithful cannot read or write, or are not able to understand the discourse in the treatise, then they can always contact a lesser cleric who is a follower of their chosen ayatollah for explanation and elaboration. Such a system perpetuates a clientelist network that recognizes hierarchy in religious matters on the basis of certain elements in the Shi'i belief system. The relationship is further sustained through financial and other forms of assistance that a needy client may expect from his source of imitation, the patron.

Religious and secular patrons have also used the services of professional mob leaders in the past in order to mobilize their clients for political purposes. These professional mob leaders are normally located in a modern version of a pre-Islamic institution known as the *zurkhaneh* (house of strength), which is an athletic club where ancient athletic practices and norms of brotherhood prevail. These clubs have also come to house a group known as *chaqu-keshan* or the "knife wielders." The tough "knife wielders" can round up supporters for religious and political leaders when needed for demonstrations or other political activities. The relative influence of the "knife wielders" has dramatically declined in recent years but during the Mosaddeq era and the following decade both religious leaders and right wing loyalist politicians were known to have used them (Cottam, 1979:37; Kazemi, 1980b:1). The institution of *hezbollah* (party of God) in the Islamic republic, and the *hezbollahis'* manner of dealing with regime opponents, are clearly reminiscent of the "knife wielders" tradition of Iranian politics.

There are two other institutions relating to the patrimonialism of the Iranian polity that need mentioning. The first is an informal, recurring small group gathering that builds, reinforces, and expands personal ties (Miller, 1969; Bill, 1975). Known as *dowreh* (circle), these groupings are normally restricted to individuals in similar class and status positions, although some of the larger

dowrehs have recruited members across class lines. The essence of dowreh is personal relationship between individuals of the group. The groups meet for social occasions, mostly in each other's houses, to renew ties and discuss common concerns. These gatherings are also major arenas for informal politics. These groups have at times expanded their base to become the nucleus for the development of political parties.

The second institution is that of secretive Iranian freemasonry. During the Pahlavi era, individual freemason lodges met secretly and regularly and developed their particular customs and rituals. These lodges also maintained ties with international freemason organizations. The Iranian freemason movement has been attacked by opponents who accuse its members of doing the bidding of foreign powers through their pledges and international ties. The revolutionary government of Ayatollah Khomeini has been especially vociferous in denouncing the movement and has even imprisoned individuals on the charge of freemason membership. Whatever else it may be, Iranian freemasonry is another example of highly personalized group relationships. Members of these fraternal organizations have helped each other in a variety of ways, most notably in politics. It is quite likely that many key political decisions were made at the intimate meetings of freemason lodges.

The above discussion makes clear that authority in Iranian society is more often than not exercised in a highly personalistic manner through a host of informal organizations and formal institutions. Some of the rigidly hierarchical elements of the social order are moderated by clientelist politics, informal small group activities, and the religious establishment.

Trust is much more readily forthcoming within one's family, cliques, and groups than within official institutions. Many governmental organizations and bureaucracies are perceived to be major barriers that must in some way be conquered if the individual is to accomplish his goals. Bribery is assumed to be a routine way to get results in bureaucracies. Corruption was perceived to be a pervasive feature of Iranian politics before and during the Pahlavi era. There is the widespread feeling that while high level official bribery may have declined since the revolution, corruption continues to remain a prominent aspect of Iranian political life.

Lobbying (partibazi) is another regular and established method used to overcome bureaucratic hurdles. This practice is basically different from the American lobbying process. It is much more akin to what is referred to colloquially as "pull" than formal lobbying. "It is directed at achieving restricted personal benefits or exceptions from general regulations" (Binder, 1962:255). Partibazi is achieved through the assistance of one's family, clique, patron, and other such groups. It is a direct and clear way of receiving personal benefits and preferential treatment over and above official regulations and professed bureaucratic norms.

It is evident that the nature of reality in Iranian society is well understood by the people. The continuation and persistence of certain personalistic and traditional

ways are proof that these behaviors have been largely functional for the individual in the system. One result of such a system is the persistence of a sense of cynicism, mistrust, and insecurity that pervades the polity. The existence of this syndrome has been documented for the Iranian elite under the Shah by Zonis (1968 and 1971). As discussed above, other observers have also commented on the prevalence of these attitudes among Iranians as a whole. Although evidence is not available, it is reasonable to assume that these attitudes have not disappeared in post-revolutionary Iran. It can be properly argued that these attitudes are rational responses to the realities of Iranian society. They are logical forms of adaptation that make sensible calculations of how things get done and who gets what, when, and how.

Tolerance and Violence

Historically and in comparison with other great religions, Islam has extended a fair degree of tolerance to the adherents of monotheistic religions living within the boundaries of an Islamic state. Those non-Muslim minorities who are monotheistic, and are designated as the People of the Book, are permitted to conduct their own affairs as long as they abide by the laws and regulations of the state and pay the various forms of taxation imposed upon them. The People of the Book have the legal status of protected minorities. They may adhere to their own religion or decide to convert to Islam. Conversion from Islam, however, is not acceptable. The Islamic view of history, and God's revelation in it, maintains that Islam is the final and complete revelation of God to mankind. Hence, from this perspective, conversion from Islam is not permissible.

With the onset of the Islamic republic in Iran and the renewed emphasis on religious exclusivity, all non-Shi'is naturally feel insecure and potentially threatened. The followers of the Baha'i faith have borne the brunt of religious discrimination in modern Iran. The Baha'i belief in progressive revelation, which rejects the finality of any one religious revelation, and other reasons specific to Iranian history and society, have made them a popular target of religious discrimination. There are innumerable examples of widespread discrimination and violence against the Baha'is in Qajar Iran (Momen, 1982). Even under the religiously tolerant Pahlavis, the Baha'is were not completely immune.

Much more so than the Pahlavis, the Islamic republic has established clear insider-outsider boundaries for the population. Full adherence to and practice of Shi'i Islam is the sole criterion for designation as an insider. The passage in 1981 of the Islamic code of retribution, known as the "Bill of Vengeance," formalizes the primacy of Shi'i law in all criminal matters. Based on the biblical concept of talion, this law views crime as a violation of private rights of the victim and institutes certain elaborate procedures for testimony of witnesses. Compensation can be in kind, including execution of a murderer by the victim's kin, or in monetary and other forms. Religious minorities are at a disadvantage under this law because of the testimony procedures and because of its heavily Islamic thrust. The "Bill of

Vengeance" also officially sanctions legal discrimination against women by maintaining that a man's testimony is worth twice that of a woman.

In the Islamic republic, women are technically part of the insider group. Women played a significant role in the revolution and in many massive demonstrations that took place in Tehran and other major cities. The framers of the Islamic republic view women as the essential force in the family and the primary agent of children's socialization. They are proclaimed to be the bastions of morality and the perpetuators of the Shi'i-Islamic system of ethics. Women are allowed representation in the parliament and can officially hold government positions. In spite of some of these actions and views, women's status has suffered enormously under the Islamic republic (see Nashat, 1980).

It is clear that women have not been rewarded for their active role in the revolution. In the basic structural changes that the Islamic republic has instituted in Iran, and particularly as part of the regime's cultural revolution, women have ended up being one of the prime losers. The ethos of the Islamic republic has formalized women's status as second class citizens (Sanasarian, 1982). Restrictions on employment and dress codes are further manifestations of women's relegation to lesser status roles. The younger generation also suffers from the "long-range psychological impact of being socialized in a system that both formally and in day-to-day life tells women that they are not equal to men due to their special creation" (Kazemi, 1987:18; see also Nashat, 1983). Women are told that, while they are part of the insider group, they are somehow prevented from enjoying some of the benefits that normally accrue to those with insider group membership. The action of the Islamic republic in regard to women is both atavistic and a dramatic reassertion of the patriarchal nature of the Iranian society.

Similar to the preceding regimes, the Islamic republic has used violence against outsider groups that are perceived to be threatening to the regime. The use of violence against enemies was most pronounced during a period known as the reign of terror which began in early summer 1981 and lasted for approximately 18 months (Bakhash, 1984). Organized systematic violence was inflicted on the regime's adversaries, particularly the leftist opponents. It is important to note that the opponents also resorted to violence and terror in their dealings with the regime. The reign of terror was an important high point in the regime's attempt to consolidate power and establish its authority. The reign of terror was officially terminated with the eight point declaration of Ayatollah Khomeini of December 1982 which eased the level of violence and the arbitrary exercise of political power. The declaration specified certain rights and privileges for the population at large and set limits on arrests and usurpation of property, among others. The declaration, however, made an important exception for those individuals who are involved in conspiracies against Islam or the Islamic republic of Iran. Such an exception allows the regime to continue to use indiscriminate violence against its perceived opponents, the outsider group.

Use of violence against enemies has been common in Iran as in all countries. There is no formal prohibition in either Islam or Iranian culture against using

violence on enemies when this is viewed to be just and legitimate. The doctrine of *jihad* (holy war) is an important part of the Islamic civilization. The history of Iran is replete with many major instances of both institutional and anomic violence. This is in addition to the major riots, uprisings, rebellions, and revolutions that have become part of Iranian history. The available quantitative evidence suggests that political violence does not increase on a yearly incremental basis: rather, it increases in bursts and explosions and then slows down for a few years (Kazemi, 1975). The Gandhian notion of non-violence has no counterpart in Iranian culture.

CULTURE, SUBCULTURES, AND POLITICS

The Islamic revolution has so thoroughly intertwined religion and politics that there is no escape from politics in everyday life. Since Islam is a comprehensive and all-encompassing religion, all aspects of behavior are integral to the political process. Involvement in politics is expressed on several different levels. First, there is regular attendance at the Friday prayer sessions which take place throughout the country. Led by the important personages of Friday Prayer Leaders (*Imam Jum'ehs*), these gatherings are significant indoctrination sessions in addition to having the purely religious value of group prayer and affirmation of faith. These are occasions for informing and explaining government directions and decisions to the masses, for rationalizing and justifying them by drawing parables from the lives of the prophet and Shi'i imams, or for denouncing foreign governments and world-wide imperialism. The United States and its supporters—"the Great Satan and its lackeys"—are frequently castigated in these Friday prayers as the incarnation of evil.

The messages in the Friday sermons about the enemies of Islam and the activities of Satan are also broadcast by the radio and television stations and reported in government controlled newspapers and journals. The Friday prayer sessions and the use of the pulpit are among the most effective means for raising the political consciousness of the masses in support of regime policies. The clerics are fully cognizant of the immense value of the pulpit for purposes of both indoctrination and mobilization. For generations the clerics have been recognized as the undisputed masters of the pulpit. They have used the pulpit as a forum for raising the faithful's level of political consciousness and for inciting the masses to action. They made exceptionally effective use of the pulpit during the revolution. What is different about the pulpit in the Islamic republic is the fact that the clerics have been given complete freedom, unburdened by the limitations imposed by past secular governments, to espouse their officially sanctioned interpretations of Shi'i politics.

Shi'i Islam is particularly rich in its use of symbols for religious or political purposes. Shi'ism with its several forms of expression has many symbolic structures. As Fischer (1980:4) maintains, "within this perspective Islam is not a set of doctrines that can be simply catalogued. It is a language, used in different ways by different actors in order to persuade their fellows, to manipulate situations, and to achieve mastery, control, or political position." The revolutionary process

can be properly viewed as a high drama replete with religious symbolism and expressions.

During the revolution, symbolic behavior took many different forms including an overwhelming emphasis on martyrdom, a profusion of colorful posters with heavy symbolism, regular anti-government processions during the high holy days of Shi'i Islam, and cycles of riots coinciding with the traditionally important fortieth day of mourning for the "martyrs of the revolution" (Chelkowski, 1980; Hanaway, 1985). Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers have been particularly adept at incorporating symbolic behavior into their style of leadership. Khomeini's first action after his triumphant return to Tehran was to visit Behesht Zahra, the burial site of those who died in the revolution. This public cemetery now also includes bodies of those who died in the Iran-Iraq war. To commemorate the dead, Behesht Zahra (literally the splendid paradise) has been adorned with a fountain that spouts red water, the martyrs' blood. The cemetery and the fountain are daily symbolic reminders of the regime's glorification of martyrdom.

Symbolic behavior so permeates Iranian society that it is difficult to be selective about it. All major events leading to the establishment of the Islamic republic are somehow related to certain important symbols in Iran's Islamic past. The various war offensives against the Iraqi forces are all given names that are reminiscent of events in Islamic history or Iranian Shi'ism. Many other events in the clerics' activities are also commemorated with religious symbolism. The most interesting of these symbolic expressions are evident in the use of stamps by the Islamic republic to convey its messages to both Iranians and those abroad (Chelkowski, 1987:558).

These stamps commemorate a series of events leading to the establishment of the Islamic republic, past leaders and martyrs of Islam, and special or holy days. They all carry powerful political messages of militant and resurgent Islam, expressed with force and color. These stamps never depict a living martyr. It is only when one has died, or has become a martyr for Islam, that a stamp celebrating him may be issued. Hence there are no stamps with pictures of Ayatollah Khomeini. Similar symbolic messages can also be found in Iranian bank notes. The bank notes, however, are not used as extensively or as effectively for political propaganda purposes.

A common feature of stamps, revolutionary posters, and other symbolic expressions in Iranian politics is careful use of the red tulip (*laleh*). "The tulip, indigenous to the country and often eulogized in Persian poetry, symbolizes love and sacrifice" (Chelkowski, 1987:559). The tulip also has a long connection to Iran's pre-Islamic past. In Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, blood of the legendary youth Siyavosh who was unjustly killed by Afrasiyab, the despised king of Turan, gave rise to a plant that bore the tulip flower (see Hanaway, 1985:38). The tulip has come to symbolize the blood of the martyrs. It is used as a powerful cultural tool to arouse emotions and to elicit affect. It is ultimately a means for judging right and wrong, good and evil.

Politics has also become an essential part of everyday life through the regime's emphasis and dependence on the neighborhood mosques for several different purposes. The mosque remains a major center for distribution of welfare to the poor, for rounding up recruits for the Iran-Iraq war effort, and for assisting families of those who lost their sons and husbands in the war. The mosque is also used by the regime for distribution of food rationing coupons to the population at large. The significance of the mosque for economic purposes, and hence for politics, has increased immensely. The neighborhood mosques now control an elaborate system of rewards (and punishment) critical to a person's daily existence. The rewards are dispensed by the clerics based on government regulations and for political loyalty and support. The neighborhood preacher is a constant and vivid reminder to all that politics is everywhere and everything is political. Politics simply cannot be ignored.

The massive intrusion of politics into daily life is not restricted to the cities alone. The countryside is also affected, though to a lesser degree, by the regime's mix of religion and politics (see Anonymous, 1983 and 1984). This is accomplished through the various measures of the ever-changing land reform laws and, more directly, through the activities of the Reconstruction Crusade (now a ministry). The need for recruits for the war is another regular activity of the government in the countryside. The arm of the regime, therefore, extends to all corners of the country even though the degree of the masses' political involvement is not as intense outside major urban centers. The momentous past decade—with the revolution, hostage crisis, and the war—has made Iran an intensely political society. Clearly not everyone feels the impact of politics to the same degree, but politics will remain an essential ingredient of people's lives for the foreseeable future.

Belief System and Ideology

Iranian domestic politics since the revolution has been strongly influenced by the Shi'i Islamic world view. This world view espouses belief in the supremacy of Shi'i law and in an ethical system based on the fundamental precepts of Islam. It is a belief system that emphasizes the activist element of the Islamic religion. It calls upon the faithful to act in order to create a moral society where the religious law reigns supreme. Sovereignty is proclaimed to be God's property, not the people's. Individuals are directed to seek guidance from those knowledgeable in religious law—the clergy—and attempt to act out what God expects of them.

The degree of constraint in such a broad and theocratic belief system cannot by definition be extensive. There is a strong element of constraint in the belief system of clerics who are members of the religious establishment, but like all belief systems based on religious dogma, there are significant contradictions that cannot be so easily resolved. The reality of running a complex society has frequently forced those clerics who are also high government officials to modify rigid positions and to make significant compromises. Arms deals with the Israelis and

the Americans, and the strong alliance with the secularist Syrian leaders who have been forcefully clamping down on their Muslim fundamentalists are notable examples of such compromises.

The dominant official ideology of the Iranian society is what Khomeini has espoused in his writing, speeches, and declarations. Broadly speaking, this ideology calls for (a) survival and prosperity of the Islamic revolution in Iran and destruction of its external and internal enemies; (b) export of the revolution to the dispossessed masses of the Third World and their unification against the Great Powers who are identified as the chief external enemies; (c) basing Iranian foreign policy on the maxim of "Neither East, Nor West, Only the Islamic Republic," which emphasizes Islamic self-reliance; and finally (d) the continuation of the "imposed war" with Iraq until the Iraqi leader is overthrown (Khomeini, 1981; Ramazani, 1986; Rubin, 1987; Menashri, 1987). On a high formal level, this ideological position exhibits a broad degree of constraint. The components hang together and have a certain degree of consistency. However, problems emerge in the actual implementation stage of the ideology where once again consistency is occasionally sacrificed or compromised.

Khomeini's ideology is not universally accepted and acknowledged. There are even some clerics who disagree with certain important aspects of Khomeini's vision including the belief in the clergy's right to rule. Expression of these disagreements has been muted due to Khomeini's special position and because of intimidation which has caused fear in his opponents. Those who offer competing ideologies have to do so mostly from outside the country's borders. The major exception to this pattern is the position of the first provisional prime minister, Mehdi Bazargan, and his supporters who on a regular basis criticize government policies and actions. Although the Bazargan group declares its loyalty to the Islamic revolution, its policy declarations and criticisms are reminiscent of the Mosaddeqist tradition of liberal nationalism. Harassed intermittently by the regime, the small Bazargan group operates openly inside the country and offers its vision of what the revolution could have become. The Khomeini regime has also had to deal with the oppositional position of the Kurdish minority in the northwest regions.

The opposition forces functioning outside the country are composed of diverse elements frequently in conflict with one another. The most prominent of these include groups who strive for the return of a modified monarchical regime under the Shah's son, social democrats and liberal nationalists who espouse primarily a secularist position, and various leftist oriented groups ranging from the Communist Party to the Mojahedin. Khomeini's regime has severely curtailed operations of these groups inside Iranian borders. For all practical purposes, supporters of the opposition forces have been silenced at home.

Vertically-Structured Subcultures

There are significant subcultures in Iran that are based on linguistic or religious differentiation. A diversity of cultural groupings is found in urban centers and rural areas alike. These subcultures are vertically structured, each group containing several different layers of social strata. They encompass, on the one hand, linguistic divisions of Persian, Turkish, Kurdish, Baluchi, Gilaki, Arabic, Armenian, and other smaller dialects; and on the other, religious divisions of Shi'i, Sunni, Christian, Baha'i, Jewish, Zoroastrian, and other denominations. At times linguistic and religious divisions coincide and are further buttressed by their concentration within a certain tribe. In these circumstances, the potential political impact of subcultural differentiation increases.

Shi'is make up the largest religious subculture comprising over 90 percent of the country's approximately 52 million people. Adding Sunnis to the Muslim population increases the total to about 98 percent. The non-Muslim population consists of four important groups: Baha'is, Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians. The approximately 400,000 Baha'is may in fact be the country's largest single non-Muslim religious minority (see Smith, 1984). Since they have not been historically recognized as a religious minority in Iran, and are under attack by the current regime, their actual number is not known. Christian denominations make up close to another 350,000. This is followed by about 35,000 Jews (which is less than half of their pre-revolution number), and finally, there are 30,000 Zoroastrians.

Subcultural divisions based on language show a somewhat different distribution (see Banuazizi and Weiner, 1986:3-4; Higgins, 1984:48). Persian speakers form approximately 55 percent of the population. The largest single linguistic minority is the Turkish speaking population consisting of close to 30 percent of the total. Kurdish, which is an Iranian dialect, is spoken by another 10 percent. There are also over a million Arabic speakers who had been residing in the Khuzestan province. A large portion of this group has been dispossessed and dispersed to other parts of the country because of the devastation caused by the Iran-Iraq war. Other smaller linguistic groups with both Iranian and non-Iranian dialects can also be found in various parts of the country.

The expression of attitudes of particularism by religious and linguistic subcultures has been traditionally resisted by the Iranian state. Weakness of the central state has inevitably resulted in demands for regional autonomy by some of the subcultures. Occasionally, these demands have escalated and have even received support from outside powers, most notably the Soviet Union.

As explained and analyzed by many authors, in the twentieth century the Iranian state has not tolerated autonomous activities by linguistic or religious subcultures (Akhavi, 1986a; Beck, 1986). The process of state building and the assertion of central authority have continued under both the Pahlavis and the clerics of the Islamic republic. None of the requirements and problems associated with the

post-revolutionary government, hostage crisis, or the Iran-Iraq war prevented the clerics from forcefully containing the Kurdish demands for regional autonomy.

The state assertion of central power in Iran has been helped by at least three important factors. First, there has been a fairly thorough assimilation of the country's largest single linguistic minority, the Turkish-speaking population of Azerbaijan, with the dominant Persian-speaking group. A combination of intermarriage and other relationships has made the Azeris a fully integrated linguistic minority (Higgins, 1984). The Azeris have been represented extensively in the elite structure of Iran under both the Shah and Khomeini. Second, Shi'ism is the religion of over 90 percent of the population. Its importance as one of the key forces of Iranian nationalism imposes a certain degree of unity within a culturally heterogeneous society. And, finally, in all the major nationalist events in Iran in the twentieth century and before, different linguistic and religious minorities have been regular and active participants (Kazemi, 1988). The recent revolution fully reconfirms this historical pattern.

It is clear that the importance of religious and ethnic differentiation in Iran does not center on the relevance of "objective" factors that distinguish one group from another. Its significance is based, rather, on the socially relevant factors that allow groups to view themselves as being different from others (see Barth, 1969:14-15; Kazemi, 1988; Higgins, 1984). What makes an ethnic group important politically is its maintenance of certain defined boundaries that serve as a source of identity for the members. Existence of such boundaries over an extended period of time has potential political implications. They can result in sentiments that emphasize regional rather than national concerns. For these sentiments to become a basis for political action, other domestic and international factors must also be present.

Horizontally-Structured Subcultures

In the initial period after the revolution, the Iranian elite was made up of a representative sample of those elements that were vital to the success of the revolution. Although representation in the Revolutionary Council was heavily clerical, those who fought in the revolution could easily point to many individuals in important decision-making positions who could, at least in principle, safely express their views. As the clerics established control and institutionalized power, the circle of elites became increasingly smaller. The clerics came to dominate the top decision-making apparatus in the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of the government. This was true even in areas where they did not necessarily make every decision but were in a position to approve recommendations for action.

Studies by Bill (1982), Akhavi (1986b, 1987b), and Hooglund (1986) document the increasing clerical make-up of the Iranian elite under the Islamic republic. The ruling elite are in many ways representatives of the over 40,000 to 50,000 individuals who are members of the clergy. A substantial number of these

come from petit bourgeois and peasant backgrounds from which come most theological seminary students as well (Fischer, 1980; Akhavi, 1987a, 1987b). Members of the clerical elite, like practically all members of the clergy, maintain strong economic and familial ties with various elements in the bazaar. The elite also represent those segments of the clergy who are members of the higher bourgeoisie. Different economic and political tendencies of the clergy are reflected in the views and attitudes of the ruling elite. In this context two broad and fluid factions representing contrasting economic attitudes can be delineated. The first faction supports a free enterprise system and opposes government intervention in the economy. The second faction is much more favorably disposed to direct government intervention in the economy and favors various nationalization efforts including nationalization of foreign trade. Both groups, however, act as integral parts of the Iranian clerical elite and are fully committed to the Islamic government. Their differences and similarities are acknowledged as normal developments in the Islamization process.

Those in the clerical ruling elite in Iran are trained in the country's religious seminaries and receive a specialized education centering on Islamic jurisprudence and related subjects. The data for the early 1960s (Akhavi, 1980:187) point to over 200 seminaries with about 13,000 students scattered in various cities. In 1975, the seminaries of the holy city of Qom supported 6,414 students who made up a large share of the country's total number of seminarians (Fischer, 1980:79). In the seminaries the students become, in effect, apprentices to major religious personages, the ayatollahs, who teach in their programs. Here important and lasting relationships are established between the key teachers and their students which continue indefinitely.

The educational system of the seminaries also creates a certain degree of cultural insularity among both students and faculty. This form of education is highly traditional with almost complete detachment from Western ideas. Although some of the seminarians are exposed to aspects of Western-style education through their earlier studies in state schools or later training at the university, the common norm is deep suspicion and rejection of Western pedagogy. This insularity is perpetuated through the elaborate financial and occupational relationships that tie all elements of the seminaries to one another for life. At the apex of the elite pyramid is the undisputed position of Ayatollah Khomeini, a position that is fully acknowledged by the elite and the masses alike. The constitution of the Islamic republic reaffirms Khomeini's special role and privileges in the political system. Immediately below Khomeini are a handful of grand ayatollahs who serve as the "sources of imitation" for others.

The clerical elite are dramatically different from the elite under the Shah. Differences can be seen in their social background, educational training, exposure to Western culture, socialization experience, and general life style. The culture of the clerical elite is in many ways a culture that is fundamentally opposed to that of the Shah's elite. Both of these cultures, however, were developed and nourished in the same society. In terms of conformity to the culture of the masses, the clerics can clearly claim more authentic roots. The culture of the Shah's elite also had

roots in the social system. What alienated the masses from the Shah's elite was the excessive materialism and conspicuous consumption of some of the elite members. This situation was exacerbated by an elite life style that tended to promote conditions that further accentuated the gap between the rich and the poor.

By contrast the clerical elite have championed the cause of the poor. Identified as the dispossessed (*mostazafan*), the masses of urban and rural poor have received special attention in the pronouncements of the regime. The fact that the poor urban dwellers and peasants suffered so enormously under the Shah has become an integral part of the regime's official ideology.

Although the regime has clearly succeeded in portraying itself as the champion of the poor, its actual performance record in bettering the lot of the underclass is uneven. In regard to land reform, all major attempts to transform the rural society have been stifled. However, the poor peasants and landless agricultural workers, who were ignored under the Shah, have received some benefits from the revolution and from the clerics' limited land reform measures. Problems of land and agriculture, nevertheless, remain a significant unresolved issue in the Islamic republic. Consequently cityward migration continues unabated.

Most of the poor migrants from the rural areas end up living in shanty towns and squatter settlements in Tehran and other major cities. Many of these people, along with other dispossessed elements, receive financial help through their long-established contacts with the clerics. Several institutions including the Foundation for the Poor (*Bonyad-e Mostazafan*) and Foundation for the Martyrs (*Bonyad-e Shohada*) provide employment and welfare assistance to the urban poor. These and other efforts have not, however, resulted in any long range and structural transformation of the urban poor's employment conditions.

Institutional Subcultures

Two categories of institutional subcultures in the Islamic republic merit attention. The first category involves civil and military bureaucracies and the dominant political party, the Islamic Republican Party (IRP). The second category is associated with business, educational, and workers organizations that have a special, albeit sometimes uneasy, relationship with the government. The civil bureaucracy in Iran is extensive, encompassing the administrative branches of the government, the judiciary, and the parliament. The common denominator among these institutions is the regime's attempt to Islamicize the work place as thoroughly as possible. The Islamization effort has been particularly forceful in the judicial institutions where the country's laws based on the Napoleonic code have been gradually replaced with Islamic laws and regulations. Islamic laws existed in modified form in such personal status areas as marriage, divorce, and inheritance even under the Pahlavis. The difference is that now Islamic law has become the dominant feature of the judiciary in practically all matters. Full enshrinement of Islamic law was achieved with the creation by the constitution of the Council of

Guardians and the parliamentary approval of the Law of Retribution (*laycha-ye qesas*). The twelve-man Council of Guardians is entrusted to veto all legislation that is in conflict with the basic precepts of Islamic law.

Islamization of every administrative organization of the government has proven to be somewhat more difficult. Although it is the Islamic norm that rules the day in all organizations, the time-honored tradition of bureaucratic inertia and various forms of passive resistance have prevented complete realization of the regime's goals. A large number of bureaucrats come from non-religious backgrounds, many of them with Western educational experiences, and do not share the regime's Islamization zeal. Since the bureaucrats' knowledge and skills are essential for running a complex society, they are tolerated so long as they are not perceived to be threats to regime survival.

The parliament (*Majles*) is dominated by the clergy and supporters of the Islamic republic. Its clerical speaker, Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, is a strong and astute political leader who knows how to deliver for the government. Even though the parliament is overwhelmingly supportive of the regime, important debates and differences of opinion have occurred in its chambers. Top government personnel, from prime minister down, have been subjected to intense questioning and occasional attacks by the deputies for their policies and actions. The parliament, however, is restricted in its ability to play an independent role by two significant limitations. First and foremost is Khomeini's intervention when in his view the deputies are overstepping their bounds. All it takes is a message from the Imam to put an end to questioning of the government officials or their policies. Khomeini's intervention during the growing acrimonious debate on the wisdom of the secret arms deal with the United States terminated the discussion immediately. The second limitation is the Council of Guardians' right to veto parliamentary legislation. No matter what the parliament decides, it is the Council's interpretation of Islamic law that serves as the final arbiter of any legislation. The Council has not been a rubber stamp. It has in fact vetoed several key attempts at economic and social legislation passed by the parliament including bills for nationalization of foreign trade and radical land reform. The Council has essentially functioned as a conservative body that has rejected or moderated radical legislative measures.

In a widely publicized decision in January 1988, Ayatollah Khomeini placed important restrictions on the Council's powers. He declared that under certain conditions the government has the right to even "destroy a mosque." In a subsequent clarification of his views, Khomeini called for the creation of a special new council to mediate and decide on disputes between the Council of Guardians and the parliament. The new council will be composed of all members of the Council of Guardians, the heads of the executive, judicial, and legislative branches, the prime minister, the chief justice, the head of Khomeini's office, and the Ayatollah's son. Creation of this new body is a momentous decision with significant potential impact. It will increase the power of the government at the expense of the Council of Guardians. It will most likely also result in an increase in the number of radical social and economic rulings that are made into law and implemented.

The most important political party in Iran since the revolution has been the Islamic Republican Party. The IRP was founded by Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti and other clerics of the Revolutionary Council in 1979. The party was created during the period of Bazargan's provisional government with an agenda to establish an Islamic government. Although there were several other parties that were in contention for power, the IRP succeeded in becoming the dominant political party in Iran with the goals of Islamization of the country and clerical ascendancy. With Khomeini's support, it succeeded in realizing these goals (Bakhash, 1984:244).

The IRP rode the crest of the revolution and managed to develop mass support for its policies and programs. However, it did not become a party with "card-carrying members, discipline, organizational coherence and institutional structure" (Akhavi, 1987b:183). Like most political parties of Iran in the twentieth century, it functioned as a loose coalition of individuals, groups, and factions. Its success was primarily due to strong leadership and to its ability to identify and further with revolutionary zeal the desires of Ayatollah Khomeini. Now that many of the plans for Iran's Islamization have been achieved, the IRP's usefulness to the regime has diminished considerably. The party's headquarters were formally closed in 1988.

Military and security bureaucracies present an interesting but different picture. The modern Iranian military has been closely identified with the two monarchs of the Pahlavi dynasty (Kazemi, 1980a; Afshar, 1985). Members of the officer corps, but not the conscripts, were for the most part viewed to be the enemy during the revolution. Upon Khomeini's return and the final victory of the revolution, the armed forces were extensively purged (Rose, 1984). Recent estimates indicate that "by early 1986 the total number of purged military personnel topped 23,000 of which close to 17,000 were officers, the remainder being mostly NCOs [non-commissioned officers], conscripts, and defense related civilians" (Schahgaldian, 1987:26).

The purge of the military and security forces was meant to eliminate a potential threat to the revolutionary regime's attempt to establish its authority. The onset of the Iran-Iraq war in September 1980 and the military's defense of the homeland exonerated the purged military. It has become much smaller, with an estimated size of 250,000 and more professional in its operations. It has also been fully subordinated to the will of the clergy. The degree of control that the clerics have established over the military is indeed extensive. Numerous checks and balances inform the clergy of the military's activities both on the war front and closer to home.

The clerics have created two other institutions to counterbalance the military's possible threat and to keep tabs on subversive activities in the armed forces and among civilians. The first is an organization known as SAVAMA which functions as the regime's secret police. Its operations are very similar to the Shah's secret police, SAVAK. This intelligence unit exists to uncover subversive activities and to eliminate opposition to the Islamic republic from within.

The second innovation is the creation of the Revolutionary Guards (*Pasdaran-e Enghelab*) through a decree issued by Khomeini in May 1979. The organization was created by the radical clerics as a counterweight to the army and as a way for the clerics to have their own organized armed forces (Bakhash, 1984:63). The Guards have expanded their organizational base and power to the point of becoming a separate ministry parallel to the Ministry of Defense. The organization operates separate division-size infantry units, armored and mechanized units, and naval and air elements (Schahgaldian, 1987:73). The Guards and these units are heavily involved in military activities on the war front, working side-by-side with, but separately from, the regular army. Some of the most daring and controversial operations in the war have been undertaken by the Guards or its important mobilization unit known as the *basij*. The Guards are viewed by the clerics as a vital force for the defense of the principles of the Islamic revolution. This has been the case even though the Guards are led and composed primarily of non-clerics.

Most observers agree that the most important and powerful single organization created by the clerics has been the Guards. The Guard members have had major experience on the war front, intense involvement in everyday politics, and an Islamic ideological orientation. There are also indications that the Guards are acquiring an "institutional consciousness" that seems to transcend the disputes and factionalisms of the current Iranian political scene. The Guards' future role in Iranian politics is unclear. It is certain that they will be loyal to the regime as long as Khomeini is alive and, most probably, for the duration of the war. In a post-Khomeini jockeying for power, however, the Guards—much more than the regular military—may turn out to be a major threat to Khomeini's successors.

Three other institutional subcultures, the educational system, the bazaar, and the working classes all merit brief discussion. Educational institutions have in many ways borne the brunt of the regime's Islamization effort. The universities were closed down for some time. When they reopened, gender segregation was enforced in the classroom. The sexes were not allowed to mix in secondary schools either. Non-Islamic and "counter-revolutionary" faculty and administrators were purged from both secondary schools and universities. There has also been an extensive Islamization of the curriculum at all levels. The process of ideological indoctrination has been very thorough. Watchdog committees of regime ideologues have jealously guarded the Islamization program. The overall quality of the educational institutions has declined due to loss of faculty and program reformulations. The regime correctly views the educational institutions as a major potential problem. Like the Shah, the clerics fear the students' power and impact on politics.

The working class organizations have also been brought under regime control. Soon after the Shah's departure, there was a period when the workers set up their own committees and attempted to manage and operate factories and industrial establishments. A substantial majority of these factories belonged to individuals who were accused of collaborating with the Shah's government. In due time, both these factories and larger state-run establishments were brought under the control of the government or of new institutions created by the government to

manage them. The war has prompted many of these establishments to gear their production to the needs of the war and the shortages that it has caused in the society at large. Union activities are not tolerated; grievances and other problems with management have to be addressed to special Islamic committees and agencies.

The bazaar is a very special subculture in Iranian society. It has always had a strong relationship with the clerics and the mosque. The bazaar's financial support of the clerics during the revolution was a highly significant factor in the Shah's downfall. The bazaar welcomed the return of the ayatollah and helped his regime's initial efforts to establish control. The relationship between the bazaar and the regime, however, has not been uniformly stable. Differences of opinion emerged when the former Khomeini lieutenant and director of the radio and television system, Sadeq Qotbzadeh, was arrested and charged with treason. The bazaar supporters of Qotbzadeh collected some 30,000 signatures demanding his release (Bakhash, 1984:138). Similar political tensions have occasionally recurred. The bazaar has also disagreed with certain proposed or approved economic policies of the regime. The most important of these disagreements concern issues that infringe on the bazaar's basic faith in the free enterprise system. For example, when the bill for nationalization of foreign trade was passed by the parliament in 1982, the bazaar was openly critical of its provisions. Their position was sustained when the Council of Guardians struck down the law for not being in conformity with Islamic notions of trade.

The bazaar remains an important institutional subculture within the Islamic republic. The bazaar's support of the government's policies in many areas does not make it a docile element in the political system. The bazaar has enormous economic power at its disposal. It also has a highly effective organizational capability and ties with many important elements in the social order including the clergy. It will support and sustain the regime as long as there is mutual understanding on economic policies and other issues central to the bazaar's interests.

CONCLUSION: CONTINUITY, CHANGE, AND IMPLICATIONS

Political action in Iran takes place in a rich and eclectic cultural environment. Culture provides the important foundation for Iranian politics and social behavior. Three major political traditions emanating from monarchism, liberal nationalism, and Shi'ism, and one minor tradition based on the left have co-existed in the Iranian cultural environment. These traditions have existed in both high and popular culture in an uneasy relationship. The monarchical tradition has in the past been able to tolerate the liberal nationalist and religious traditions even though it has been challenged by both. The victory of the Islamic revolution, however, has made it clear that the monarchical and religious traditions are viewed as incompatible forces and even archenemies. There are no longer any possibilities for a compromise between the two.

Liberal nationalism has been able to live with modified forms of both monarchical and religious traditions and can continue to do so. Liberal nationalists played an important role in the earlier stages of the revolution. Their role, however, has been severely challenged by the clerics. The liberal nationalists have had to cope with the fact that secularism has been maligned and disgraced under the Islamic republic. The regime-controlled socialization agents reinforce these negative views about secularism. But liberal nationalism is an important force in Iranian culture and, assuming that it can accommodate moderate religious elements, it is not unreasonable to expect a significant role for this tradition in the future.

A major problem for both the liberal nationalists and the monarchists has been their inability to create and sustain viable political institutions. The clerics have fared better in their attempts at institutionalization. They have had a major headstart because of the viability of the Shi'i clerical institutions. They have also created several major organizations ranging from numerous regime-controlled foundations to political parties. Although the IRP has ceased to exist as a functioning political party, other institutions, particularly the Revolutionary Guards, have survived and prospered. In comparison with other major traditions, the clerics have had a far better appreciation of the importance of institutional development for perpetuation of their rule. It remains to be seen whether these institutions will serve the functions for which they were created.

The minor tradition of the left has also established important institutions. In contrast to other traditions, the left has for the most part avoided the formation of the cult of personality. The exception to this pattern is the Mojahedin and their leader Masud Rajavi. The major organization of the left, the Tudeh Party, has survived as an institution in spite of internal divisions and significant clashes with both the monarchists and the clerics.

Foreign Policy Implications

It is difficult to assess future directions of Iranian foreign policy given the war with Iraq and the growing hostility between Iran and the United States in the Persian Gulf. There are many unpredictable forces and elements at work that can change the attitudes and behavior of policy makers in Iran. There are, however, several broad trends and issues relevant to Iran's foreign policy that can be delineated. These trends and issues are based both on an assessment of Iran's geopolitical position and on the cultural milieu of the Islamic republic.

The broad context for Iran's foreign policy behavior has three factors: Iran's geopolitical importance for both strategic and economic reasons; objectives and policies of the Great Powers; and the role that Iran plays in the politics of the Middle East. None of these factors are new or recent developments. First, the Iranians have responded to their country's economic and strategic importance by alternately allowing and rejecting foreign control over their resources. The history of granting concessions for exploitation of natural resources by the Iranian political

leaders goes back to the nineteenth century. There is a long list of concessions granted to a large number of foreign agents from many parts of the world. This history is also replete with instances of periodic popular uprisings against such concessions. The concern for national control of economic resources has been a persistent theme in Iranian politics. Those promoting this concern have been able to draw on a varied set of cultural symbols to mobilize popular forces against foreign domination. This process has helped to reinforce certain particularistic aspects of Iranian nationalism.

Second, and closely related to the above, is Iran's periodic attempt to pursue neutralist and non-aligned courses in foreign policy. The long established traditional policy of attempting to balance two or more Great Powers in order to allow for some independent behavior for the Iranians has served as the basis for occasional non-alignment in foreign policy orientation. This policy is counter-balanced by a policy of dependence on, or full alliance with, one Great Power. Both traditions exist side-by-side and have been employed by different political elites and factions. It is important to note that historically both liberal nationalists and clerics have also pursued policies that have strongly supported alliances with one Great Power. Alliance with a dominant external power is not necessarily and exclusively restricted to the monarchical tradition of Iranian politics.

The cultural dimensions of Iran's relationship with the West are indeed complex. Contradictory attitudes towards the West have always played a significant role in the minds of the Iranians. The West appears in a dualistic role of something to be admired for its achievements in the areas of science, technology, and the like, and yet disliked for exploitation and corruption of Iranian culture. There is an intellectual tradition that rejects the West for its corruption of authentic Iranian culture. By the same token, there is the counterweight pattern of admiration for the Western ways in areas such as democracy and human rights. This tradition is also alive and available to the masses. The Iranian view of the West is clearly not unidimensional.

The third factor related to the context of Iran's foreign policy is the country's relationship with the Middle Eastern nations and the larger Islamic world. In this area many opposing attitudes and forces also operate. Those historical and cultural factors that promote friendly relations are juxtaposed against certain attitudes of superiority and the requirements of power politics. Iran has maintained both friendly and hostile relationships with practically all Middle Eastern powers at one time or another. This is especially true of the Israelis and the Arabs and less so of the Turks where a sustained friendly relationship has been the norm for some time. It is clear, however, that Iran is increasingly drawn to play a central role in regional politics of the Middle East. This pattern was evident under the Shah with his assertion of Iranian regional supremacy as part of a firm alliance with the United States and with full cooperation of the Israelis. The pattern for reassertion of Iranian supremacy in the area continues with the Khomeini regime and its driving cultural force of Islamic militancy. The difference is that now Khomeini's actions are undertaken in spite of active opposition from the United States and its allies in the region.

The key question for the policy makers in the United States is how to accommodate Iran—given its important economic, strategic, and political value—while containing the destabilizing aspects of the regime's militant Islamic ideology. Two contributing factors make this dilemma more problematic. These are the continuation of the Iran-Iraq war, and the fact that for some time now, power has been fully institutionalized in Iranian society. The regime weathered several important crises, and, through the use of a combination of rewards and terror, succeeded in establishing control over the state apparatus. This process was facilitated by Khomeini's personal popularity and the militant Islamic ideology of his regime. Khomeini's authoritarian populist regime, to use Cottam's words (1986), is now firmly in control. It is also likely that the Islamic republic will continue in some form even after Khomeini's departure from the scene. Given the fact that in Iran (a) power has been institutionalized, (b) a tendency towards "moderation" in domestic politics has developed, and (c) the country's leaders have effectively kept their distance from the Soviet Union, logic dictates that there has to be a way for the United States and Iran to find some common grounds for mutually satisfactory interaction.

A major problem remains the continuation of the Iran-Iraq war. The war is the greatest destabilizing force in the area. It prevents development of mutually friendly, or at least beneficial, relationships among regional actors. It also drastically limits options and choices for the United States. The reflagging of Kuwaiti ships by the United States has only exacerbated the problem. This action has in effect prevented that superpower from potentially playing a mediating role in the conflict, no matter how remote that possibility may be. For the two belligerents it has clarified in a non-ambiguous way the lines of partnership and alliance. If the reflagging and protection of freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf had taken place under the auspices of the United Nations, the Iranian ruling might have perceived American intentions differently. The point is important because there are elements within the ruling elite in Iran who are not as dramatically opposed to the United States as Ayatollah Khomeini. However, for the sake of its propaganda machinery and for its constituencies at home and abroad, the regime will continue to chastise the United States as the chief culprit in the region.

In spite of important cultural differences and attitudes about politics, there are common grounds in the relationship between Iran and the United States. Iranian culture is too complex and multi-dimensional to allow it to permanently categorize the United States as the "Great Satan." This is a culture that has influenced and has been influenced by other civilizations. It is also a culture that has asserted its independence and identity many times historically. It has refused to be totally absorbed by a larger cultural entity, be it the traditional Islamic civilization or that of the West. History has also demonstrated that the Iranian culture sooner or later finds an acceptable way to accommodate larger cultural entities.

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