INFORMATION TO USERS

This was produced from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure you of complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark it is an indication that the film inspector noticed either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, or duplicate copy. Unless we meant to delete copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed, you will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed the photographer has followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. For any illustrations that cannot be reproduced satisfactorily by xerography, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and tipped into your xerographic copy. Requests can be made to our Dissertations Customer Services Department.

5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases we have filmed the best available copy.
MOAYED-AMINI, Soheyl

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION IN A REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION: THE CASE OF SHI'AH IRAN.

The Ohio State University Ph.D. 1980

University Microfilms International 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

© Copyright 1981 by

SOHEYL MOAYED-AMINI

All Rights Reserved
PLEASE NOTE:

In all cases this material has been filmed in the best possible way from the available copy. Problems encountered with this document have been identified here with a check mark √.

1. Glossy photographs or pages √
2. Colored illustrations, paper or print √
3. Photographs with dark background √
4. Illustrations are poor copy √
5. Pages with black marks, not original copy √
6. Print shows through as there is text on both sides of page √
7. Indistinct, broken or small print on several pages √
8. Print exceeds margin requirements √
9. Tightly bound copy with print lost in spine √
10. Computer printout pages with indistinct print √
11. Page(s) _______ lacking when material received, and not available from school or author.
12. Page(s) _______ seem to be missing in numbering only as text follows.
13. Two pages numbered ________. Text follows.
14. Curling and wrinkled pages √
15. Other ____________________________________________________________

University Microfilms International
RESOURCE MOBILIZATION IN A REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION:
THE CASE OF SHI'AH IRAN

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Soheyl Moayed-Amini, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1980

Reading Committee:
Professor Alfred Clarke
Professor Timothy Curry
Professor John Seidler

Approved By
Adviser
Department of Sociology
VITA

January 14, 1949 ........................................... Born - Tehran, Iran

1971 ........................................................ B.A., The National University of Iran, Tehran, Iran

1976 ........................................................ M.A., Ohio University, Athens, Ohio

1976-1980 ................................................... Teaching Associate, Department of Sociology, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Sociology

  Studies in Demography and Population Problems. Professor Yuan Tien

  Studies in Marriage and the Family. Professor Alfred Clarke

  Studies in Social Organizations and Stratification. Professor Russell Dynes
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of the Problem.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose of the Study and Its Significance to the Field.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Types of Data and Methodological Concerns.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outline of the Study.</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes on Chapter I.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>ON THE ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SHI'ISM AS A POLITICO-RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE IN IRAN.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Advent of Islam in the Persian Empire.</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shi'ism as a Politico-Religious Doctrine:</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historical Antecedents.</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes on Chapter II.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Institutionalization of the Twelver Shi'ism as the State Religion in Iran</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ulama and the State during the Qajars.</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active Participation of Ulama in Oppositional Political Groups.</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Pahlavi Rule and the Ulama Subjugation: A Period of Quietism?</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political Opposition in the Post-1963 Iran.</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes on Chapter III.</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>RESOURCE MOBILIZATION IN A REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION: THE CASE OF SHI'AH IRAN</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theoretical Assumptions.</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Causes of Social Conflicts in the Pre-Revolutionary Iran.</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Discontent</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes on Chapter IV</td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. UNIFORMITIES OF REVOLUTIONS AND THE PECULIARITIES OF THE IRANIAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Aspects and Peculiarities of the Iranian Revolution</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes on Chapter V</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS, FURTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>117</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPILOGUE</td>
<td>125</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

Introduction
Introduction

Statement of the Problem

In February of 1979 a coalition of the religious and the nationalist secular forces with apparent support from a majority of the Iranians succeeded in toppling a well entrenched regime; and subsequently thrust Iran into a new and uncertain post-revolutionary phase.

The fact that the major contributors to the final stages of successful mass demonstrations and country-wide strikes were those Iranians who were primarily acting under the revolutionary leadership of certain segments of the religious Shi'a community, has provided the Iranian revolution with an added dimension previously little known in major social revolutions in the recent past.

Major concern throughout the present study will focus on those aspects of the Iranian social structure that made such religious participation accessible to revolutionary movement. It is, therefore, the primary goal of this paper to systematically identify and analyze certain aspects of the socio-political, economic, and cultural contexts within which the Iranian revolution was materialized.

The assumption has repeatedly been made by the leading revolutionary figures on the Iranian political scene that the revolution has taken place "for Islam" and for the restoration of traditional Islamic principles. In other words, it has been claimed that Islam was sought by
the Iranian population as an end in itself; and that the revolution could be explained and thus its future course charted by a mere religious interpretation of its causes and consequences.

The major assumption in this research, to the contrary, will state that Islam in general, and its Shi'ite faith in particular, was used only as a means to reach more tangible, i.e., economic and political, needs and aspirations. Even though part of the population's grievances may have been realized through losses of their Irano-Islamic values and a drastic decline in social morality, it is at best a partial explanation for the mass protests and political strife that eventually led to the downfall of the dictatorial monarchy in Iran. The Iranian revolution will most likely prove to be a rather complex and multi-causal social phenomenon sharing many of the characteristics observed in other major world revolutions. Any attempt at explaining it through simplistic, uni-causal models will prove to be rather inadequate.

Furthermore, working under the assumption that no social action ever develops out of a vacuum, it is the intention here to treat the Iranian revolution as a process; whereby through a prolonged period of hostile confrontation and intimidation, the radical elements of the religio-nationalist origin finally were able to succeed in defeating the combined forces of the dictatorial monarchy and the bourgeoisie comprador. Even though the analysis of the origins of the historical antagonism between the institutions of monarchy and religion will require further study of the earlier phases of Iranian history, the primary interest here lies in the examination of the more recent history of Iran. The role of the high ulama of the Shi'a faith of Islam in various popular
uprisings that have taken place since the 1880s will therefore occupy a central position in this research.

It will further be argued—in an effort to explain the multi-dimensional nature of the revolution in Iran—that aside from internal (intra-national) constraints and endogenous popular grievances, the collapse of the old regime was further facilitated by fundamental structural changes that were imposed upon the Iranian society and at a rapid pace, through its peculiar position in the world economic order. The quadrupling of oil prices in 1973, for example, has had unquestionable effects in hastening the pace of social change and social disorganization. Although the Iranian society originally prospered for a relatively short period of time, namely its economic "boom" period, it was irreparably hurt through rapidly rising inflation rates and a hastily widening gap of economic inequality between the urban proletariat on one hand; and on the other, those who had had the most to gain from the oil "boom" economy, namely the royal family and the international bourgeoisie.

It seems at the outset that economic changes in Iran of the mid-1970s simply outpaced those alterations that were implemented at the superstructural levels, i.e., political reforms initiated from above, bureaucratic reforms that were hastily put together, etc. It now appears that these reform measures only acted as "catalysts"—to use Huntington analogy—to further spread revolutionary ideas and actions.

The fact that leaders of the revolution in Iran were radical ulama of Shi'a faith and not—as it might have been suggested by outside observers—representatives of the secular/leftist anti-monarchical
organizations, makes the primary task of the present study to explore
the historical antecedents of the revolutionary ideology and organi-
zational facilities that are found in the tenets of Shi'a Islam.

In doing so, one needs to analyze three component parts of the
institution of Shi'a Islam: 1) organization; 2) ideology, and 3)
leadership. It will further be argued that because of apparent strengths
in all three areas the institution of Shi'ism has become the main
driving force of the revolutionary apparatus.

It will also be argued that the secular opposition forces failed
to lead the revolution and subsequently emerged as the net losers of the
struggle to take over post-revolutionary Iran due, in part, to some
inherent structural weaknesses. These shortcomings that also included
the lack of a well-defined oppositional ideology, are demonstrable during
the past hundred years in Iranian history. These inadequacies have
thus sharply reduced the capacity of the secular opposition to organize
and mobilize the discontented masses in any large numbers over a long
period of time. A part of the present undertaking will be devoted to a
partial explanation of these structural inefficiencies.

Contrary to the weaknesses of the secular opposition, the institu-
tion of Shi'a Islam in Iran has had the capacity to rely on an already
well established, loosely structured, and properly funded organization
which consisted— at the time of revolution— of many thousands of active
clergymen operating out of many thousands of mosques, monasteries, and
religious schools. These centers throughout the history of Shi'a Islam
in Iran, have invariably been used for the dual functions of religious
indoctrination of the masses as well as oppositional political activities
shrouded in the religious rites and rituals.

The nature and form of the opposition could not be explained without a thorough examination of the structure of Shi'a Islam and its particular social philosophy and history. It must be mentioned here that in spite of the fact that the institution of State has had considerable degree of success in repressing religious opposition, there have been several occasions in the past 150 years where the Shi'a ulama in a leadership position has led popular uprisings against the excesses of the State.

There are three major historical periods that need further investigation insofar as the development of the Shi'a ideology is concerned. These periods are: (a) 750, A.D. to 1870s; a period that began with the takeover of Persia by Moslim Arabs from the Peninsula to the accession of the Shi'ite sect of Islam to the State religion of the Safavid Iran. It was during this time where the foundation for the religio-political ideology of Shi'ism was gradually materialized. (b) 1870s to 1970s, a period that witnessed the emergence for the first time of a Shi'ite religious caste with a loosely defined hierarchical order and with an increasing amount of popularity among the oppressed masses of Iran. With the exception of the earlier period of the Safavid rule where the actual power of the ulama declined, for the remainder of the Safavid as well as the Qajar rule, the power of the ulama increased substantially. And, (c) 1977-present, a period of revolutionary social change led in part by the Shi'a ulama. This period is of particular interest since many of Western assumptions and assertions about the causes and consequences of social conflict and social change could be reexamined in light of the Iranian evidence. Specifically, what is known as the resource
mobilization or resource management frame of reference in the social movements literature will be couched in an attempt to explain some of the revolutionary trends within the Iranian situation. In a certain way, one may find the 1978 revolution as only the final act in an ongoing historical conflict that seems to have dominated the Iranian society for many centuries. Having played the role of an opposition movement the institution of Shi'a Islam was finally in a position to take over the apparatus of the State when the monarchy was terminated in 1979.
Purpose of the Study and Its Significance to the Field

It is the objective of the present study to systematically collect and analyze data concerning the advent of the revolutionary ideology in Iran. There are numerous hypotheses and generalizations within the body of literature generally known as "social movements--social conflict." Some of these hypotheses could be re-examined in light of the Iranian situation. However, it may be found to be necessary to work out new sets of hypotheses and draw new typologies due to the fact that the case of the Iranian revolution may prove to be quite unique in some aspects of its development and final structure.

It is further hoped that the present study will help to broaden the perspective commonly used in the field of social movements. Certain aspects of hitherto accepted characteristics of religious movements, i.e., political conservatism, may also have to be reassessed. The fact that there exist few genuine sociological studies on Shi'ism at the present time—with the exception of the works of Ali Shari'ati—makes the present study somewhat original. Never before, as far as the available data show, has there been any attempt towards a systematic sociological analysis of Shi'ism as a, primarily, political social movement. The present effort, thus, will in part try to bridge this gap. Furthermore, it is hoped that the findings will provide some answers that have been raised by the Iranian revolution around the world.

It must be stressed here, nonetheless, that the present study is not designed to undertake any in-depth analysis of the structure of Islam—and particularly that of Shi'ism—from a purely religious standpoint.
Furthermore, there will be even less emphasis placed on an attempt to make a thorough comparison between the two major doctrines in Islam, i.e., Sunnism and Shi'ism. The only emphases of the above points would be for further analysis of the origins of the anti-secular authority stance that is taken by the followers of the Twelver Shi'ism.

It is thus the main objective of this undertaking to analyze the socio-historical contexts within which militant Shi'ism was possible. Of central importance to such an investigation is a socio-historical analysis of the mechanics underlying the revolutionary trends that have occurred in Iran, as well as those trends affecting the structural changes in the Iranian society as a whole.

The present regional instability brought to the area, in part, by the Iranian revolution has had far-reaching effects on, not only the political outlook of the immediate area, i.e., the Persian Gulf; but it also promises to contribute to the increasing political tension and class conflict around the globe. Thus a better and more objective understanding of the internal structure of revolutionary Iran will help the reader to foresee its regional and global consequences in a more realistic manner.

The unprecedented amount of publicity given to the Iranian revolution by the world media has also added to an already distorted picture concerning the genesis of this significant social event. One-sided and biased reports that are primarily geared into a Western frame of reference and its dominant value system, i.e., rationality, orderliness, predictability—in short, stability and equilibrium, have thus taken the Iranian revolution out of its historical context as well as its
cultural surroundings. It would therefore be appropriate to place the revolutionary process in its proper socio-historical framework according to dominant Irano-Islamic cultural patterns.
Types of Data and Methodological Concerns

The question of types of data and corresponding methodology should be treated as one. The nature of the available data, to an appreciable extent, determines the type of methodology that is going to be used by the researcher. It does not mean, however, that other types of methodology should be abandoned altogether. It is true, nevertheless, that there are certain methodological instruments that would be more amenable to certain types of data than others. The nature of our study is such that it lends itself much more readily to a, primarily, qualitative type of methodology. In a very fluid and rapidly changing social situation—such as revolutionary Iran—statistical and other quantitative measures prove to be of little use. Aside from lack of any reliable statistics, the pace of change is so rapid that even "reliable" statistical statements will tend to become outdated very quickly. Thus it becomes the intention here to employ a qualitative, longitudinal-historical model.

In order to have an objective understanding of this subject, it is necessary go gain access to the historical antecedents of the Shi'a faith in Iran. This makes the "development" model even more attractive for our purpose. In the meantime, one ought to be willing to accept certain shortcomings that are inherent within most socio-historical models. In order to answer the question as to why a socio-historical analysis suits the present study better than any other model, one needs to briefly discuss some of its advantages, as well as shortcomings.
The present study, it must be emphasized here, is not a historical analysis, per se; in that it does not set out to provide detailed, descriptive accounts of historical events on the individual level of analysis. Neither should it be considered as a strictly sociological undertaking, in that it does not limit its scope to studying those aspects of human behavior that take place at the macro, social level. It is, instead, an attempt that combines both levels of macro and micro analyses in the tradition of C. Wright Mills' *Sociological Imagination*. Thus an attempt will be made throughout this study to maintain "the capacity to shift from one perspective to another and in the process to build up an adequate view of a total society and of its components."²

The present study is further a socio-historical investigation, as it is explained by Roth and Wolfgang in their assessment of Max Weber's Vision of History. Socio-historical analysis, following Weber's footsteps, consists of three distinct phases. The first phase is what Roth and Wolfgang call "configurational." In a life-cycle methodology this phase will constitute the earlier stages whereby the inception of a certain structure--configuration--is described. The attempt in describing the genesis of Shi'ism in Iran will fall in this initial phase. Furthermore, it is during this initial phase of analysis that efforts in constructing certain "historically grounded sociological typologies" with regard to Shi'ism of the pre-revolutionary Iran, could be made.

It was during the second phase of our investigation that an effort was made to formulate "developmental," albeit non-evolutionary, "secular" theories. This process, it is hoped, will provide us with "the description of the course and explanation of the genesis and consequences of
particular historical phenomenon," i.e., the development of Shi'ah history.

The third phase of this research--what Roth and Wolfgang call "situational"--deals with the present dynamics of the Iranian revolution. So the general model of socio-historical quality will come to its final stage.

Further arguing the utilities of this model, Roth and Wolfgang continue:

"Socio-historical models...are useful insofar as they organize historical knowledge in a specifically sociological way, that is, in the form of generalizations that emphasize the general and repetitive side of history without assuming the existence of laws in any strict sense. Such models summarize empirically similar cases and extract typical features without presuming that any one type can in turn exhaustively describe an historical phenomenon...Sociological models thus provide us with generalized experience for the study of past, present, and future, while secular (developmental) theory attempts the explanation of the rise and fall of major historical configurations." 3

As one may deduce from the above statement, our major preoccupation throughout the coming pages will focus on the construction of typologies by studying events of historical quality. It is further hoped that our historically oriented typologies will enjoy an added dimension of sociological generalization.

Insofar as the problem of conceptualization and generalization are concerned, since many of the concepts in the present juncture must be viewed within a specifically historical context, i.e., martyrdom, injustice, migration, patience, etc., our attempt, to some degree, will be considered as "culturally specific." However, with regard to several other concepts such as revolution, rising expectations, conflict
resolution, etc., there are universal referents by which the present study will assume a cross-cultural comparative nature as well.

Thus, there will be some shifting throughout this study, between macro and micro levels of analyses within the Iranian society; and there will also be attempts to relate certain aspects of the revolutionary behavior to similar situations elsewhere, i.e., the French Revolution, the English Revolution, etc.

In attempting a comparative analysis of the available data, both inter, as well as intra-societal comparisons will be employed. The Iranian revolution will thus be compared with other revolutionary situations where there might exist a good deal of variations between these societies; but who may still share certain features with regard to their respective revolutionary experiences.

The recent "revival" of comparative and historical sociology in the U.S. has been noticed by Lipset. In a further attempt to reconcile the two areas Lipset suggests the interchange of concepts between sociology and history (as well as) the transference of methods. He further argues that:

"Basically, all social science is comparative. Social scientists, sociologists included, seek to formulate generalizations which apply to all human behavior; to do this, of course, involves specifying the conditions under which a given relationship among two or more variables holds true. And it may be that these conditions make a given proposition unique, it may occur only under conditions which rarely happen. The fact however, that a combination of circumstances occurs uniquely or rarely does not mean that its conditions cannot be presented in terms of general concepts or categories."

Thus one may realize that comparative and historical studies are closely interwoven. In the case of the present study it requires a
combination of both methods—historical as well as cross-cultural. It is only through this intricate mechanism that we may understand, among other things, variations in our conceptions; or what C. Wright Mills calls "historical transformation and/or fixation" of certain concepts.\(^5\)

The degree of "rigidity" or "continuity" in certain highly symbolic concepts can only be understood through the adoption of a sociohistorical model of analysis. Another advantage of this model lies in its dynamic nature. A purely ahistorical model, on the other hand, has the tendency of becoming static—time and space bound—with little consideration for those forces that may have given impetus to the present situation.

The historical past, in the case of Iran, is extremely relevant to understanding the present situation; and is quite reliable in making assertions about the future trends.

However, in utilizing a sociohistorical methodology, one is going to have to accept inherent shortcomings that will accompany it. There exists, for instance, an abundance of historical documents on the structure of Shi'a Islam. The nature of the present study is such that a good portion of these data are considered as purely historical and are, therefore, excluded from an in-depth analysis. The fact remains, however, that sifting and searching through a mass of documents may prove to be time-consuming.

The problem of "objectivity" on both the individual and societal levels is also raised in many studies of this nature. Similar to most other qualitative methodologies, historical documentation is subject to individual misinterpretation—on the part of the historian—as well as
to systematic distortion by the forces of the dominant culture. For instance, so far as the history of the Twelver Shi'ism in Iran is concerned, there are two distinctly opposite interpretations. The first, called here the "secular" approach, differs from the second, referred to as the "religious" interpretation of the history of the Twelver Shi'ism in Iran. While the latter treats virtually any "splinter" Shi'a groups as "infidels" and "heretics;" the former portrays them as "political opposition groups" to the institutional religion, i.e., the Twelver Shi'ism. Depending on which approach one finds more reliable, the final analysis and eventual findings may appear as distorted and biased towards the other.

Another problem with sociohistorical analyses is that they tend to confuse description with prediction. In addition, what may constitute the "whole" and its "parts" may vary from one person to another. In other words, historical accounts may be "misrepresented"—due to differences of methods and opinions among various historians—; and further, what has already been presented may be taken as an "explanation" of a certain event and thus be taken as a means to predict future trends. To avoid this pitfall, rather than explaining something as a "persistence from the past; we (will) ask: why has it persisted?" It is along the tradition of C. Wright Mills and his _Sociological Imagination_ that we set out to employ a sociohistorical frame of reference. As he succinctly put it:

"The problems of our time—which now include the problem of man's very nature—cannot be stated adequately without consistent practice of the view that history is the Shank of social study, and recognition of the need to develop further a psychology of man that is
sociologically grounded and historically relevant. Without use of history and without an historical sense of psychological matters, the social scientist cannot adequately state the kinds of problems that ought now to be the orienting points of his studies."
Outline of the Study

The present study consists, in addition to the present introductory chapter, of five additional sections. Chapter Two will undertake the task of historical analysis of the doctrine of Shi'ism as a politico-religious ideology. Chapter Three deals in specific terms with factors that have contributed to the active participation of the Shi'ah ulama in the Iranian political domain. It is in Chapter Four that applicability of some sociological models to the Iranian revolutionary movement is examined. Furthermore certain cases of social conflict in the pre-revolutionary Iran are explored. In Chapter Five a brief attempt has been made to compare the Iranian revolution to other major world revolutions. And finally Chapter Six will consist of some concluding remarks and possible future trends that the Iranian revolution may assume. Since the ascension of the Islamic government to power, certain patterns of conduct have been set for the revolutionary movement in Iran. Considering this episode of the Iranian revolution beyond the scope of this study, some apparent aspects of the Khomeini Movement will be spelled out in the Epilogue.
Notes On Chapter 1

2. Ibid., p. 211.
7. Ibid., p. 154.
8. Ibid., p. 143.
9. At the time when outlining and structuring of this study was underway, many of the recent publications on the Iranian revolution had not yet become available.
Chapter 2

On the Origins and Historical Development of

Shi'ism as a Politico-Religious Doctrine in Iran
The Advent of Islam in the Persian Empire

At the beginning of the seventh century, A.D., the Persian empire of the Sasanian Dynasty (224-641, A.D.) fell to the advancing forces of Muslim invaders of the Arabian Peninsula. The speed and swiftness at which the disintegration and eventual defeat of the mighty Persian forces took place was quite astonishing, especially to its outside adversaries. As a matter of fact, increasing social tensions and mounting political conflicts, coupled with economic hardships caused by prolonged wars had already worked to the detriment of the ruling aristocracy and had made the once powerful Persia vulnerable to any organized threat from outside. Arising conflicts between the ruling aristocracy and their large-landowner allies on one hand, and the smaller, independent land owners and peasants, on the other, had made the political stability of the empire ever more fragile. The internal political instability was further deteriorated by exhaustive and economically expensive wars with the Roman Empire (Bizantum); the net result of which was Persia's economic bankruptcy and its eventual political defeat in the hands of the Arab Moslems.

The complete defeat of the Sasanian by the Arabs officially terminated its reign over Persia in approximately around 651 A.D. It is believed, however, that aside from internal structural weaknesses, the collapse of the Sasanian was further enhanced by an overriding, albeit temporary, unity among the various tribes of the Arabian Peninsula.
The force around which these otherwise rival tribes were united was nothing but that of Islam's.3

The introduction of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula was said to have been an initial reaction to the weakening forces of the then dominant structure of the patriarchal-tribal order. Especially in the northern Peninsula--the Hejaz--newly structured elements of feudalism were beginning to take shape. The initial Islamic propaganda was thus leveled against the outmoded social relationships, values, and belief systems, i.e., paganism, that were prevalent among the primitive tribesmen of the pre-Islamic Arabia. Thus, it has been claimed that Islam initially represented the interests of the emerging feudalistic forces of production in the Peninsula.4

One of the distinctive features of the Islam of Mohammad was that it presented a close proximity and a strong linkage between the dual institutions of State/policy and religion. Mohammad the Prophet was at the same time the head of the Islamic community. It must be noted, nevertheless, that the overlap of the two institutions was to be short-lived. Soon after Mohammad's death the issue of his successor was moved to the forefront of the internal political disputes among his followers. Furthermore, the Umayyad rulers who were to eventually take over the Islamic Empire increasingly became political rulers delegating their religious functions to other individuals. An evidence of their secular tendencies is given in their removal of the capital from Medina to Damascus. While the former had retained its position as the center of religious activities, the latter assumed a status of a political decision making center. It was due to secularization attempts by the
Umayyads as well as the controversy over the issue of succession that gradually fueled public dissent and hastened the emergence of opposition groups, one of which was the Shi'ite.

Following Mohammad's death (632, A.D.) and the emergence of a powerful ruling aristocracy, the pursuit of the notions of "equality" and "fraternity" once so adamantly preached by the Prophet were soon to be overshadowed by increasing inequalities and mounting dissatisfaction among the Arab, as well as the non-Arab, masses. In fact one of the reasons given for the warm reception of Islam by the Persian masses is attributed to its calls for "fraternity," "equality," and above all its call for a "just distribution of wealth." There were many other internal and external factors that led to the defeat of Persia, as some of them have already been discussed.

Common to all opposition movements to the Umayyad rule was their acceptance of Mohammad's prophecy (Nabovvat) and his position as the "Seal of the Prophets." Beyond this point, however, they tended to differ sharply in their outlooks and their solutions to the problems of political and economic origin. Included among the opposition to the Umayyad were the Abbasid nobility. Coupled with increasing dissension among the rival tribes, the economic and political pressures eventually led to the eruption of a civil war whose result was the downfall of the Umayyad and the emergence of the Abbasid in 750, A.D.\(^5\) as the new rulers of the Islamic Empire.

While the help provided by the Persian and Arab masses was imperative in defeating the Umayyads, their ascension to the helm of power coupled with their aristocratic background made the Abbasids look
increasingly like their predecessors. The eventual outcome of this power transition further alienated the underprivileged masses in Persia as well as in the Peninsula. The Abbasids, nevertheless, made efforts towards the reunification of the institutions of religion and polity. Not only were these attempts short-lived, they also proved to be far from the ideal conception of the theocratic State that some of their fundamentalist opponents had in mind. The Abbasids were soon to face a variety of opposition groups who had set out to challenge their rule on various grounds. Some of these oppositional elements, for instance, maintained that the Abbasids had not been radical enough in their employing of more equalitarian policies for the underprivileged. Some others set out to attack them on yet other theoretical issues. The Shi'ahs, for instance, sought a transference of power to Mohammad's descendants through the lineage of his son-in-law Ali, while still others, namely the Khavarej, "rejected all forms of legitimism, and sought to establish a truly elective Khaliphate based on the voluntary and revocable consent of the ruled." The Shi'ahs further maintained that both the Umayyad and Abbasid Khaliphates were illegitimate in light of the fact that they did not represent Mohammad's true wishes. In particular the Shi'ites wanted to see that a descendant of Ali would rule the Muslim community; and that there would not be a separation of the institutions of religion and polity. For them the Medina period of Mohammad's rule (622-632, A.D.) was to become a model for an ideal society to be followed by all true Islamic governments.

Among the consequences of the Abbasid victory and their prolonged rule over the Islamic community (the Ummat) were: (a) A strengthening
of the political and economic bases of large-landownership; and further promotion of the feudalistic relationships. Increased taxation of the peasantry, in turn, gave rise to various rural uprisings throughout the Abbasid reign. Most of these movements took place under the guises of Shi'ism and other sectarian facades, especially throughout the eighth and ninth centuries. (b) A separation and demarcation, through more stringent definitions, of various religious branches and political groups, especially those of Shi'ism and of the State religion, Sunnism, which led to a clear separation of spheres between the two. (c) Persianization of the institution of the Khaliphate. The Abbasids secured their throne thanks to the Persian landlords whose financial and military support enabled them to undermine the rival ruling elites of the Umayyads. Thus for the first time since the introduction of Islam, the center of authority and decision making was to move into a territory, which at the time was considered a part of the old Persian Empire, namely Baghdad. (d) Henceforth, Sunnism was adopted as the official religion of the ruling feudals of the Abbasids and their Persian collaborators, while the smaller land holders and the peasantry increasingly identified themselves with the socio-political and religious doctrines of the minority faith of Shi'ism. The situation remained basically unchanged until the early sixteenth century when the ruling Safavids of Persia chose Shi'ism to be their State religion. (e) And most importantly, after an initial demonstration of their willingness to return to an "Islamic theocracy," the Abbasid resumed their predecessor's initiative towards further secularization of the State which put the institution of religion at an inferior position.
Shi'ism as a Politico-Religious Doctrine: Historical Antecedents

In the treatment of Shi'ism, the dual dimensions of religion and polity are intertwined to such a degree that one feels compelled to consider them as equally important components of the whole institution. Nonetheless there exist certain points that could be made separately about each one of these dimensions; particularly with regard to the historical development and evolution of each of them. Shi'ism—as a religious sect first and foremost—ought to be considered as one of the two major trends in the mainstream of Islam, albeit its minority position vis-a-vis that of Sunnism.

Shi'ism originated as a political movement first, one needs to remember; and only later was its sectarian structure developed to the point of making it a separate sect of Islam. The controversy over the succession to Mohammad actually gave birth to a small group of dissenters among Mohammad's close associates that subsequently chose to support the Prophet's son-in-law, Ali, to be the leader of the Islamic community in Medina. The question of succession (Vasayat) has remained a central point over which the two main branches of Islam remain at odds. Of all the Moslim countries, not surprisingly, it is Iran whose loyalties have gone to a Shi'ite interpretation of the history of Islam. And it is again in Iran where high ranking and popular religious figures—the ulama—have increasingly assumed formidable popular support and political leverage for the past two centuries.

As a distinct religious sect, Shi'ism had not assumed its widespread recognition until Imam Ja'far Al-Sadeg (d. 765, A.D.) set out to delineate its doctrinal parameters in such a way that it could be readily
differentiated from the dominant sect, i.e., Sunnism. Among various issues formulated by Ja'far, that was to become of particular interest to the Shi'ite sect, was the issue of **Imamate**. The issue of **Imamate** and the order of succession in turn gave rise to various smaller sects within the general body of Shi'ite Islam. The Twelver/Ja'fari Shi'ism therefore is only one of many various Shi'ite sects that was eventually chosen by the Safavid rulers to represent the State religion of Iran in the sixteenth century, A.D.

It is therefore only appropriate to claim that the Shi'ite movement whose emergence was originated by political rivalries and power struggles, was to only later assume its religious dimension. The two dimensions have invariably contributed to the dynamics of Persian/Iranian society. Considering the importance and vitality of both dimensions, it is appropriate to consider Shi'ism as an oppositional politico-religious party.

Perhaps among the more significant issues that are raised with respect to the doctrinal development of the Twelver Shi'ism is the question of its opposition and hostility towards all forms of secular rulership. It has been argued by many observers of the Iranian history that once the Ali's Shi'ahs realized that they had lost their struggle over the issue of Mohammad's successor, the denial of legitimacy became an instrument in their political opposition to the Umayyads. These arguments further contend that since the Shi'ahs had retained their minority oppositional position until the sixteenth century, it had further helped them maintain doctrinal justification for the denial of legitimacy in the absence of their Twelfth Imam, **Mahdi**.
There are those, on the contrary, who question the validity of doctrinal justification among the Shi'ahs for the denial of legitimacy to the secular rulers. The rivalry and animosity between the institutions of monarchy and religion particularly since the early nineteenth century has been attributed to a multitude of reasons. As Eliash puts it: "That there have existed tension and conflict between the political ruler and the mujtahid under the Qajars and ever since, and that the ulama have enjoyed considerable political power in Iran during the last two centuries at the expense of the ruler, often in spite of him, owes to the social, the political, the military, the economic, and the educational conditions of Iran, not to the twelver Shi'i doctrines of the Imamate."\[11\]

In spite of these varying statements it remains a historical fact that the Shi'ite ulama have indeed enjoyed a degree of popularity and thus political leverage unparalleled in other Islamic societies. Whether this political potential is induced and sustained through doctrinal reinterpretations or not remains peripheral to the main course of this study. What is central here is the fact that the question of succession (Vasayat) and the functions of the imam (Imamat) have provided the minority sect of Shi'ite with a potential to play--whenever socio-political and economic conditions permit--an active oppositional role vis-à-vis the State.

Theoretically, the orthodox Shi'ahs consider only permissible and legitimate the community of Medina during the period when it was ruled by Mohammad. It constitutes an ideal society for the orthodox Shi'ahs in the sense that the Prophet had assumed the dual functions of
Nabovvat (God's messenger) and Imamate (political leadership) over the Islamic community in Medina.

It was during Mohammad's stay in Medina when the structure of Islam as a social doctrine as well as a viable political and military force was systematically developed. The first mosque, for instance, was built at this time. The structure was a simple house with a courtyard and some adjacent buildings that were connected to the Prophet's living quarters. The mosque was not only the place for religious activities, but it was further used as a place for public gatherings and social and political meetings. It was in the mosque, for instance, where foreign dignitaries would present their credentials to the Prophet.\textsuperscript{12} So one may claim that the mosque has had the potential to play a multitude of functions, only one of which has been religious. The multi-functional nature of the mosque has been carried to the contemporary Moslim communities with varying degrees of importance being placed on its political/religious functions.

The religio-political community of Islam in the Mohammad's Medina consisted of those supporters of the Prophet who had accompanied him on his emigration (\textit{Hijrat}) from Mecca to Medina; and those already residing in Medina who had since joined his movement. The symbolic significance of Mohammad's forced departure from Mecca has given the concept Hijrat an added significance for the devout Moslim. That the "emigration" \textit{Hijrat} marked a turning point in the history of Islam was recognized by the first generation of Moslims who adopted the year 622, A.D., as the first "year of the new Mohammedan."\textsuperscript{13}
The small community of the "outcasts" in Medina had set out to reject all socio-economic relationships that were based on a tribal-consanguine structure culminating in paganism of the pre-feudalistic tribal-nomadic communities of the Peninsula. The call for "fraternity" and "equality" under the banner of the new socio-political and religious order, i.e., Islam, was thus heralded throughout the Peninsula.

Nevertheless, it is hard to envisage the implementation of a complete egalitarian ideology in the Islam of the seventh century where its roots were embedded in a social structure that tended to stress inequality in one form or another. Furthermore, there was no specific mention of utopian socialism as the newly unveiled doctrine of Islam was interpreted. The idea of "equality" among Muslim Arabs, more than anything else, was a politically unifying instrument devised to bring the ranks of badly divided rival tribes in line. Islam was thus used as an instrument to solidify the political and military ambitions of its leaders; rather than providing a permanent solution to economic injustices and political oppressions that had plagued various strata of the Arab population. Needless to say that like any other progressive ideology Islam has been the subject of conflicting interpretations throughout its history. Interpreted in a progressive manner, it could closely proximate an equitable and just social system. It could also, by the same token, be defined in such a manner that it would represent a non-egalitarian society associated with inequality and repression!

It was thus during the Medina period that the foundation of a new Islamic community (Ummat) with its own judiciary, economic, and governing organs was laid. It was around this novel social order that the foundation
of the tribal unity within the Peninsula was formed; and the blueprint for the expansion of Arab influence was drawn.

It now seems that Mohammad primarily set out to accomplish two major tasks. First, to unite the badly divided people and tribes of the Arabian Peninsula. And second, and more importantly, to accomplish his universal mission, i.e., to spread Islam and to convert all the "paganists, Christians, and Jews."\(^{15}\)

It is this notion of government and politico-religious structure that has constituted an ideal type for the orthodox Shi'ahs who have claimed that "true Islam" was practiced only during the period when Mohammad ruled in Medina. It is however not a particular type of religious indoctrination that these fundamentalists are yearning for. It is the whole of the socio-economic and politico-religious system that the orthodox Shi'ahs feel existed at the time of Mohammad; and it is this complete social system that they aspire. Thus, throughout the history of Islam there have been invariable calls for a return to the Mohammad's Islam (Sadr-e-Islam). Needless to say, that there have existed in the main body of Sunni Islam, those orthodox elements who have made similar quests for the unity of the two institutions. However, as will be briefly discussed in the coming pages, the religious leaders of Sunni Islam have not been nearly as effective in challenging the secular forces of the polity as their Shi'ite counterparts have been. There are obviously structural deficiencies that would explain the Sunni ulama's apolitical positions in their respective countries.

On the doctrinal front, it is with regard to the issue of Imanate and Vasayat, the manner in which the Prophet's successor was to be chosen,
that Sunnis and Shi'ites seem to differ markedly. Even the most "liberal-minded" of the Shi'ite ulama have given little hope for future reconciliation between the two sects over the issue of Vasayat. According to the politico-religious history of Shi'ism, aside from the initial rifts between the supporters of Ali and his opponents immediately following Mohammad's death, that had led to the election of Abu-Bakr; the major feud between the Shi'ites and Sunnis of the Peninsula began when Ali, after a short period of rulership as the Fourth Imam, was assassinated by a member of the radical Khavaredge splinter group. His supporters subsequently claimed that the position of Khaliphate should have been passed on to Ali's son, Hasan, who had become the second Imam for Shi'ites. This nucleous of Ali's supporters remained at odds with newly emerging power structures of the Umayyad family.

Such oppositional feelings were to be suppressed by the Umayyads who had already set out the course for further secularization of the institution of polity (Khaliphate). Throughout the Shi'ite history no other melodramatic incidence has ever arisen more public sentiment and outpour of affection as the events that led to the martyrdom of their third Imam, Hussein. This valient attempt at regaining the office of Khaliphate, so goes the Shi'ite history, from the "usurious" rulers of the Umayyads, which led to the martyrdom of Imam Hossein in the hands of the soldiers of the Khaliph Yazid-ibn-Mo'avieh had provided the Shi'ite philosophy with an example for self sacrifice and the preservation of the collective values.

Furthermore, the ideal—Medina—community of Islam (Ummat), could only be ruled by the Imam, directly descended from Ali. In all, there
have been twelve Imams; and the Twelfth Imam, Mahdi, has gone into hiding only to return at a later date to rule his Ummat. Mahdi in fact did rule his Ummat through a succession of four deputies, directly appointed by him, maintains the history of Shi'ism. This period constituted what is known as the "Lesser Occultation." However, upon the death of the fourth deputy, the Imam chose to go into permanent hiding and thus began the period of the "Great Occultation." It is during this period that the authority of the Imam had to be delegated to his "general deputies," presumably including a larger body of the learned men, to perform their duties in accordance with the wishes of the Imam. These agents were to continue with their duties until the Twelfth Imam, Mahdi, would once again choose to reveal himself. It is through the assumption of this intermediary position between the Imam and his Ummat that the Shi'ah ulama have acquired most of their political power and charisma. These pious deputies of the Imam, the Mujtahids, are selected on the basis of their wisdom and knowledge of the religious law (Shari'at), by the consensus of the community of Ummat and not through any electoral processes. Therefore, the degree of their popularity and political leverage is determined by the sheer number of their adherents.¹⁷

Nevertheless, when the time for Mahdi's return has arrived, he shall follow Prophet's path by reclaiming the leadership over the entire Ummat. His leadership will be legitimate—perhaps the only legitimate one since the Prophet's time in Medina—and justice will prevail throughout the Ummat. He shall therefore move to establish an Islamic order which will closely proximate that of the "Early Islam" "Sadr-e-Islam."¹⁸
The separation of the institutions of religion (Imamate) and polity (Khaliphat) has been much more successful in the Sunni communities. The division of the single office of the traditional Khaliphat into two somewhat separate offices of Khaliphat (religious leadership) and Sultanat (political rulership) has been achieved with a lesser degree of resistance from the religious sectors of Sunni communities. The net result of this secularization process has inevitably led to the curtailment of the Sunni ulama's political leverage.\(^{19}\)

The office of the religious leadership in Sunni Islam does not carry with it any elements pertaining to ultra-human attributes and God-given credentials; nor is it accurate to say that the office holder is considered infallible at all times. The Khaliph for Sunnis is an individual selected by the Moslims of his community (Ummat) and thus could, theoretically at least, be removed by them. In addition, through the institutionalization of the temporal office of the Sultanat, there has been a much greater emphasis towards the separation of the temporal and spiritual spheres of activities in the Sunni doctrine.

On the other hand, the Shi'ite Imam has vested in him certain attributes that resemble and represent God's will. The Imam/leader serves as the spiritual leader as well as the political ruler for the Shi'ahs. His status is somewhat above ordinary man and below saints. He further represents the only legitimate personage that could theoretically succeed Mohammad through the lineage of his son-in-law; and not as a prophet but instead as the guardian of the Ummat. In the absence of the Twelfth Imam the deputy imam is considered as the true representative of the Prophet and the one that comes closest to him and
As Nikki Keddi puts it:

According to Twelver Shi'a theory, legitimate religious and political power passed by heredity from Mohammad through his son-in-law, Ali and his descendants, called imams, until the Twelfth imam disappeared. Pending the return of the twelfth, hidden imam as the messiah, his will was supposed to be interpreted by the leading religious authorities, or mojtahids, while secular rulers should, strictly, be regarded as usurpers.

It must be remembered that the office of the deputy-imam performed by the mojtahids does not carry any degree of infallibility. While the mojtahid's position is considered very highly on certain attributes such as integrity and wisdom, notwithstanding piety and religious knowledge, it is not treated as that of an Imam. These characteristics however make his selection as a distinguished member of the religious community possible.

The question of succession (Vasayat) and the role of the Imam (Imamate) have thus made Shi'ism a rather unique opposition group throughout most of the Islamic history in Persia and elsewhere. The movement, however, gained its popularity only when it set out to challenge the increasingly unpopular rule of the Ummayads. Its distinctive doctrine also made it more appealing, as a religion, to the non-Arab Persians. It is nevertheless erroneous to consider the traditional pre-Safavid Shi'ism as a product of Persian nationalism. The movement was originally designed by the Arab rivals to the Ummayads along with its distinct ideology, albeit within the general context of Mohammad's Islam, to challenge the power structure that supported the Ummayads.
Shi'ism, as a religio-political doctrine has historically been altered and reinterpreted on various instances, so that it could meet the socio-political needs of the opposition to the ruling elites, be it the Ummayads, Abbasids; or the Mogul and Turk invaders of Persia. The fact that the Twelver Shi'ism retained its minority position until the early fifteenth century may have played an instrumental role in shaping its anti-secular authority organizational structure. 23
Notes On Chapter II

1. The name Persia was changed to Iran only after Reza Shah (the founder of the Pahlavi Dynasty) chose to do so in the early 1920s. However, the names of Persia and Iran will be used interchangeably throughout this study.

2. While the nobility and the high ranking Zoroastrian clergy were basically strengthening their own power bases and thus weakening the authority of the central government of the Sassanian, smaller landlords and bureaucratic bourgeoisie were in favor of a strong central government.

3. The migration (Hijirat) of Mohammad from Mecca to Medina had taken place, in part, for political pressures and restrictions imposed upon him and his handful of followers by the ruling families of Mecca. Tarikh-e-Iran (History of Iran). K. Keshavarz (ed.), Tehran: Payam Publishers, 1979 (translated from Russian), p. 150.


5. Ibid.


14. According to the Koran, for instance, the Warriors of Islam had the right to either kill the captured male and female civilians, or take them as their slaves. One-fifth of all their loot was considered the Imam's Share, while four-fifths was divided among the warriors. For each share taken by foot-soldiers, there were two for the cavalry. Jihad, or holy war, therefore had clear economic advantages for the Arab masses. The issue of death during the course of fighting, martyrdom, was glorified and regarded as a noble act.

15. At the time that Mohammad declared himself God's prophet there existed three major religious communities co-existing throughout the Arabian Peninsula. There were those who were considered followers of the Prophet Abrahim; the Christians; and the Jews; along with a considerable number of tribesmen who were considered as pagans.


19. On this and other related issues see Ann Lambton, *Op Cit*.


22. It has also been discussed that during the Medieval Period in Europe, opposition to the feudal regimes and their legitimizers in the dominant Church, tended to appear in the form of "deviant" sects and heresies. Keshavarz, *Op. Cit.*, p. 169.

23. Among prevalent concepts shared and promoted by various branches of Shi'ism—and perhaps the whole of Islam—was the call upon all "true" Muslims to obey the rules of a just "A'del" Caliph. However, the same rule implied that the orders of those who "usurp" their authority and run a tyrannical government must be disobeyed. More importantly, though, the Shi'ah mujtahid was placed in a position to make and pass judgement over the legitimacy of the ruler.
Chapter 3

The Institutionalization of the Twelver Shi'ism and
the Active Participation of the Ulama in the Affairs of the State
The Institutionalization of the Twelver Shi'ism as the State Religion in Iran

It was through the adoption of a peculiar value system and the exercise of certain beliefs that Shi'ism has been able—with the exception of a short period during the early Safavid rule—to maintain its potential hostility towards any secular form of authority in Iran. This minority, anti-secular authority position of Shi'ism was altered when, in the early fifteenth century, the Safavid Dynasty chose it as the official religion of Persia. In the earlier stages of the Safavid rule the Twelver Shi'ism was being used in the capacity of an oppositional minority ideology—whenever needed—to counter the remnants of the old Sunni feudal order. As the Safavids began to consolidate their power base and as they began to demonstrate their own feudalistic tendencies, the newly formed dominant and institutionalized sect set out to persecute other "deviant" religions, namely Sunnism as well as "heretical" Shi'ite sects.

Included among these otherwise rival groups to the politically moderate Twelver Shi'ites, were those branches of Shi'ism that were considered by the ruling Safavids to be politically radical; and thus they were discriminated against and even at times punished in a manner that was considered even harsher than the treatment received by the "minority" Sunnis. The radical branch of Shi'ism at this time—still known as the
Gholat—were particularly mistreated by the functionaries of the more moderate State religion.

As the new State religion was increasingly identified with the authoritarian rulers of the Safavid, it gradually lost its attractiveness to the masses in Persia; and as it began to justify and pay lip service to the dominant forces representing the feudalistic interests, there emerged a number of new oppositional movements. Not surprisingly, these oppositional groups chose to present their grievances through various religious facades. These movements, be it Sunni or various offshoots of the main stream Shi'ism, were universally condemned and persecuted by the authorities. Thus the more moderate branch of the Twelver Shi'ism was considered least threatening and thus retained as the State religion by the Safavids.

The Twelver Shi'ism of the later Safavid period, unlike the past, did not represent nor did it support the poor urbanites and underprivileged peasantry. Thus a movement that up to the early fifteenth century had been periodically used as an instrument for political mobilization of the masses had become an institutionalized body representing the interests of the ruling elites of the Safavid. 

The elevation of the Twelver Shi'ism to the ranks of the State religion by the ruling Safavids in the early fifteenth century resulted in the turning point of Shi'ite history. Finally and inalienably had it become associated with Persia, the homeland and stronghold of Shi'ism. It is also from this period onward that one may meaningfully talk about the materialization of a body of Shi'ah ulama.
In the early fifteenth century, there was a discernible shift
by the newly formed Safavid Dynasty towards the resumption of a peculiar
theocratic ideology that will also suit their political ambitions.
Their choice for the Twelver Shi'ism, aside from its moderate political
stand, may have arisen from the fact that their belligerent neighbors—
the Ottoman Empire—were adherents of the Sunni Faith! While the
Shi'ah ulama had been given a great deal of authority; and while at the
outset, Persia was supposed to be a theocracy, the embodiment of the
temporal government—the shah—maintained his superior position by
declaring himself as the "Shadow of God upon earth," and hence removing
the possibility of any arbitration/mediation by the religious institu-
tion of Shi'ism. The shah was therefore directly associated with the
Creator and placed at a superior position.

The arbitrary nature of the Safavid ruler was somewhat moderated
by their adoption of yet another theory which tended to link the royal
family, through a direct descent, to the Hidden Imam. This attempt, in
part, has been considered as a strategy "to secure succession to the
throne for the Safavid family."^5

The dual conceptions adopted by the Safavids as being "the Shadow
of God upon earth," and the "representative of the Hidden Imam" coupled
with the early Safavid ulama's dependence upon their rulers for sheer
economic survival, substantially reduced their power, vis-a-vis that of
the State's. ^6

To further reward the ulama's political inaction, the Safavids
gradually enhanced their economic power through donations or endowments—
the Vaghf property--; and by the "endorsement of ulama control over
religious taxes, and payments for their official and religious functions."

Even though this policy tended to make the ulama dependent on the Safavid shahs; the nature of ulama economic activity and the type of their resources helped them to eventually build a rather strong and somewhat semi-independent economic base. This was more so as the power of the "central" government began to disintegrate.

By the late seventeenth century, as the Safavid rulers began to demonstrate further signs of secularization, the orthodox ulama proceeded to question the legitimacy of the State. This was particularly true for those ulama who had maintained their independence from the State. These ulama seemed to have reasserted their earlier notion that only the "righteous ruler was the true vice-regent of God." However, since the "Hidden Imam and his true representatives were to be infallible, it was more difficult for the Shi'ahs to give recognition to an unrighteous ruler." Thus "awaiting the coming of the Mahdi they withdrew from active participation in the affairs of the State."

Whether it was the increasing measures of secularization of the State or the economic hardship and political oppression levied against the masses, the ulama decided to withdraw their support and began a period of inaction that at the outset indicated the ulama displeasure with the State. It seems that both secularization efforts as well as increasing repression of the masses by the tyrannical rulers have affected the behavior of the ulama throughout the history of Shi'ism in Iran.

The Safavid ruler, in the meantime, continued to perform his dual functions of the temporal as well as the spiritual leadership of the
country. The separation of the two institutions, at least theoretically, did not exist. However, "since in practice the religious functions of the Safavid ruler was subordinated to the political, the importance of the Qadis (the unofficial mujtahid) was reduced by the Sadr (the officially appointed cleric, i.e., the position of the Imam Jum'ah), who exercised control over the religious institution on behalf of the political institution."\(^\text{11}\)

As the power of the Safavids waned; and as the State chose to move towards further secularization of the political institution, the officially sustained religious body (the Sadr) began to lose some of its power and influence; while, in the meantime, the power of the mujtahid appeared to have been increased.\(^\text{12}\)

With the eventual disintegration of the Safavid kingdom and the invasion of Iran by the Sunni Afghans, the influence and actual political power of the unofficial body of the mujtahid steadily increased. Iran's subsequent defeats in the hands of the Russians during the earlier periods of the Qajar rule was a further contributing factor to the increase in the ulama's power. The only period where the Shi'ah ulama experienced a serious curtailment of their power coincided with the short reign of Nader Shah of the Afshar Dynasty. Having failed in his initial effort in bringing about a reconciliation of the feuding Sunni and Shi'ite doctrines in Iran, he later was to terrorize and intimidate the ulama. This period of active repression of the ulama's activity was to be replaced by one of the most active periods ever experienced by the Shi'ah ulama during the Qajars.
Another contributing factor to the increasing influence of the institution of religion has been attributed to significant doctrinal entries/clarifications within the general body of the Shi'ite religion. Of particular importance was the introduction to the Shi'ite doctrine of the position of the Mar'ja al Taqlid, presumed to be the highest position within the loosely structured religious hierarchy.

The Safavid period, it should be remembered, introduced some very significant changes to the overall structure of the institution of Shi'ism. Included among these changes were:

A) The emergence of a semi-autonomous religious caste with a growing economic independence from the State, primarily through the expansion of its endowments.

B) Nationalization of the Twelver Shi'ism in Persia.

C) Institutionalization of Shi'ism as the State religion to the extent that it lost its minority, anti-secular authority dimension, particularly during the earlier periods of the Safavid rule.

The increasing exploitation of the rural areas by the central government and their feudal surrogates in the meantime retarded the growth of agriculture and subsequently caused major disruptions that affected the overall development of the country's agricultural base. Persian history of the eighteenth century is therefore overwhelmed by numerous peasant uprisings and other regional challenges to the central government to be followed.

After centuries of internal class conflicts and external confrontations with its neighbors and various invaders, Persia in the late eighteenth century had become a weak and bankrupt country. The structural weaknesses further paved the way for the European imperialists (Britain and Russia in particular) to play a significant role in shaping
the future of the country.

The historical period that begins with the ascension of the Qajar family to the throne, thus occupies another segment of the present historical analysis. It is the analysis of the increasing significance of the ulama position in this time that will help to explain the greatest shift in their overall attitude towards the State. The major concern of the ulama during this period—late eighteenth and throughout nineteenth centuries—seems to have been shaped by the dual forces of the Qajar shahs as well as the increasing domination of foreign imperialist powers.
Ulama and the State during the Qajars

The apparent increase in the power of the Shi'ite ulama was more demonstrable when the Qajar rulers took over in the late eighteenth century after an interregnum period which saw the short reigns of the Afshar and Zand Dynasties. This recent surge in the influence of the institution of religion was best demonstrated during the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911; which was followed by a new phase of dormancy that lasted until the early 1960s.

By the time that the Qajars came to power (1785), a clear definition concerning the parameters of the institution of religion, especially with regards to their position as the intermediaries between the Imam and his Ummat (the community of the faithful), had already been delineated. It was this particular reconsideration that delimited the extension of similar bases of legitimacy to the Qajar ruler.13

Unlike the early Safavid period when the power of the ulama vis-a-vis that of the State's steadily declined, their power and public influence tended to surge throughout the nineteenth century. Thus the semblance of balance that seemed to have existed between the two institutions in the earlier stages of the Safavid rule gradually dissipated during the long reign of the Qajars. While the Safavids were able to gain certain amounts of legitimacy by associating themselves with the descendants of the Shi'ite Imams, the best that the Qajars could do was to call upon their temporal positions as the "Shadow of God upon earth," and thus create a much more abstract and hence contestable question of legitimacy.14 The result of this new strategy to gain legitimacy for their temporal offices through a direct linkage
to God was considered by the ulama as a further attempt in secularization of the State.

By detaching himself from the position of the representative of the Hidden Imam, the Qajar shah had opened the door for further separation of the institutions of religion and State. The Shi'ite mujtahid, in the meantime, had firmly assumed the intermediary position between the Imam and the people, thus adding to his political power and influence. As Algar puts it: "The fact that the religious institution no longer included, even in theory, the political institution, meant that it became to a greater extent than formerly the refuge and protector of the people against the arbitrary power of government." 15

On the theoretical origins of the hostility between State and ulama, Lambton argues that because of the occultation of the Twelfth Imam, the Shi'ite jurists did not feel compelled to justify the State. Furthermore, it was their firm conviction that any temporal government that was not "sanctioned" by the Imam was unrighteous. They also felt that "Adalat (justice) is the prerequisite of all Shari'a offices and that its negation, Zulm (injustice) is the characteristic of all temporal governments." 16 On a more mundane basis, the ulama found themselves in a competing position with secular governments. The more the administration chose to turn into secularism and modernism, the greater the rift and eventual surfacing of hostility between the two institutions became apparent. This was particularly evident as the Qajar rulers attempted further secularization of the State.

In general it is believed that the Shi'ite ulama in Iran have demonstrated a much greater ability in exercising political power than
their Sunni counterparts elsewhere in the Moslim world. Several observers have sought to explain these differences by referring to the structure of various Islamic countries and doctrinal differentiations that have existed in the Shi'ah Iran and the Sunni Arab world. It has been argued, for example, that the position of the ulama in Iran has not been challenged by the secular governments to the same extent that the Sunni ulama's authority has been curtailed. Much of this took place in light of certain doctrinal clarifications by the Sunni branch that has universally led to a clearer separation of the two institutions.\textsuperscript{17}

Furthermore, and perhaps as a direct result of increasing secularization, the Sunni religious institution has lost considerable control that it had traditionally held over the institutions of education and judiciary. In addition, as the result of the absence of an independent economic base, the Sunni ulama seemed to have been overly reliant on government financial assistance, thus further curtailing their potential political autonomy.\textsuperscript{18}

The Shi'ah ulama in Iran have invariably played a dual function: As a "pressure group" they have sought to control education, Waqfs (religious endowments); and more importantly the judicial system. They have further attempted to "prevent the trend to modernism and irreligion--including the suppression of the heretical movements--, to close the movie houses, to censor radio programs, to encourage attendance at mosques, to perpetuate the everlong list of religious holidays,..."\textsuperscript{19} As the individuals in control of the Islamic symbols, furthermore, the role of the Shi'ah ulama has been enhanced. In this capacity they
"legitimate the regime, some by their silence, and others by open affirmation. They also tend to legitimate traditional social origins."

As far as the ulama themselves are concerned, their silence at the times of oppression should be treated as a sign of their opposition and not neutrality to the regime. The concept of Taqieh for example has been translated by the ulama as "secretly conducted activities in place of open opposition to the State as an effective tool in undermining the regime. There are those who therefore feel that the ulama, upon their failure to "dissuade a ruler from an evil course of action" would tend to withdraw in order to "keep themselves free from contamination by association with an unrighteous government." Thus while some like Makdisi consider the practice of quietism and pacifism, i.e., Taqieh as a sign of tacit acquiescence; others yet maintain that this behavior should be taken in its symbolic/historical content that it carries for the populace; which indicates the ulama denial of legitimacy to the State.
Active Participation of Ulama in Oppositional Political Groups

By the late nineteenth century repeated military defeats of the Qajar Persia in the hands of the Czarist Russia and Great Britain further contributed to the deterioration of the politico-economic stability of Iran. Rampant corruption, severe economic hardship, repeated famines, chronic inflation, and the ever-present abuses of the government all helped to edge the country closer to the verge of total collapse.

Military setbacks, as well as the continuously weakening and dependent government gave further impetus to the penetration of foreign interests which had begun to exploit Iran's natural resources through acquisition of various concessions. Limited attempts at reforms had been half-heartedly exercised and ultimately had been all but abandoned. And the meager amount of capital brought into the country in the form of foreign loans was primarily allocated for the royal court consumption.

The consequent establishment of foreign economic influence in Iran coupled with the ever-increasing tyranny and oppression of the Qajar governments, was to be resisted by the ulama. In the meantime, other opposition elements had begun entertaining the thoughts of reform, modernization, and democracy. Albeit their latent secularist tendencies, these reformists had realized the significance of their association with the popular religious leaders. In the meantime, some of the "new ideas" brought in from the West found sympathetic ears among some members of the ulama. This close association of some of the secularist modernist mentality with certain members of the ulama stemmed from the fact that many of these reformists had been the products of the
institution of education which was under considerable influence of the Ulama: It is for this close association of the two elements that some have made the suggestion to translate the Ulama as "learned men" (sing. Alem), instead of "clergy." 

It is nonetheless erroneous to assume that the essentially traditionalist orthodox Shi'ah Ulama were embracing ideas that would have ultimately resulted in the promotion of secularism! It is for this reason that some have regarded the secularists/modernists as those individuals concealing their true intentions in a shroud of Islamic rhetoric; and thus having led their religious allies to perceive of their "new ideas" as nothing but a revival of the traditional Islamic social order! Yet some others blame this misjudgment on the part of the Ulama--of the true intentions of their lay allies--on their "confusion" and "shortsightedness" for accepting the alliance with the secular modernizers; an alliance that was to collapse shortly after their combined forces had successfully defeated the oppressive forces of the Qajar shahs.

A further and more convincing reason given for the Ulama's open opposition to the State rested in their belief that the defeat of the secularizing monarchy would further enhance their own power. This thesis is valid to the extent that the two institutions of monarchy and religion have been considered as rivals in the political arena. It has happened so that monarchy has maintained its control/domination over the institution of Shi'ite religion, throughout the long Islamic history of Iran. The revolutionary Islamic government of the Ayatollah Khomeini is the only true religious government ever established in Iran.
In general, one reason given for the reception of the modern Western ideas such as liberty, equality, and fraternity by the Persian ulama rested in their apparent compatibility with the Islamic doctrines. While calls by the secular-reformists for "law and order" was taken by the ulama as "adoption of Shari'a", their traditional opposition to notions of tyranny and oppression also helped them accept cooperation of the modernizers. However, it was only later that they realized strong and incompatible conceptual elements in the Western ideologies, such as secularism and liberalism. The break of the religious-secular alliance was to shortly follow. But before this break took place, the alliance had achieved a great deal of success in challenging the forces of monarchy. The Tobacco Revolts and the Constitutional Revolution are two prime examples of the cooperation of these opposition elements.

The Tobacco Revolt of 1890-91 is considered to be the manifestation of the first successful mass opposition movement in modern Iranian history. The varied composition of the opposition elements that made the revolt so successful was further responsible for laying the groundwork for a much more significant challenge yet to be made against the tyrannical forces of the Persian monarchy some fifteen years later.  

That the Tobacco Revolt was decisively led by the high ranking ulama in various parts of the country exhibited the vast potential held by this group for the mobilization of the masses through their access to historical-religious symbols; as well as their generally highly respected position within the Iranian population as a whole.

Success was further experienced in the unity of the ulama, the urbanites, the merchants, the artisans, and the masses that facilitated
the final defeat of the combined forces of monarchy and foreign imperialist powers, albeit temporarily. The immediate consequence of the Tobacco Revolt was reflected in an increase of the ulama power and influence which in turn put them in an undisputable leadership position during the Constitutional movement. The Tobacco movement also witnessed the successful, albeit temporary, alliance among various opposition groups who shared the common goal of opposition to the foreign domination of Iran. Beyond this primary goal, members within and between opposition groups differed markedly in their outlooks.

While the resistance of the ulama towards foreign investments and give-away concessions in Iran may have been triggered by their opposition to the penetration of "non-Muslim," i.e., Christian, cultural traits among the Shi'ah masses; the advancement of foreign capital posed a more objective and tangible, i.e., economic, threat to the very existence of the city merchants.

These two more or less independent institutions—the ulama and the bazaar laid the foundation for an alliance that later proved to be the most effective vehicle against the arbitrary and despotic rule of the State. It was later to form the basis for the opposition that made the Constitutional movement possible. It also recurred during the revolts of June, 1963; and culminated in the revolutionary movement that took over Iran in 1979!

Thus it is clear that Shi'ah ulama throughout the modern Iranian history have played a significant role in shaping up the political structure. This has been true, particularly with regard to their ability in mobilizing the masses in such great numbers denied to any
other political organization/group. Aside from their ability to control traditional Irano-Islamic symbols, the ulama have been considered by the poor and underprivileged as their protectors from the tyrannical rulers. Sanctuaries provided by the mosques and the residences of the high ulama resulted in refuge from State oppression; while the closure of the bazaar resulting in the temporary paralysis of urban life served as a powerful mechanism to pressure the State.  

While the majority of mujtahids maintained their autonomy and provided refuge for the opposition elements, there remained a few mujtahids who maintained cordial relationships with the State and thus provided it with some degree of legitimacy in exchange for economic favors. Both groups of ulama, namely the official, state-appointed as well as the more independent, unofficial mujtahids have been in existence since the early Safavid period. The heterogeneity of the religious strata in Iran is thus a known factor in its politico-religious composition. The official, government sponsored position of Sadr—later, the Imam Jum'eh—was originally created by the Safavid rulers. There also existed another body of ulama which retained its independence from the State—the Qadis—and which engaged in a rivalry with the government sponsored/appointed Sadr. 

The relative power of the two respective positions varied as the Safavid State became weak. Thus in the late Safavid period, the office of Qadis had gained substantial power at the expense of the loss of power by the Sadr officials. The rivalry between the two positions has been carried over into contemporary Iran. During the reign of the Pahlavis it was however the office of Sadr—the Imam Jum'eh—that enjoyed a
greater degree of influence—and not necessarily popularity—over the position of mujtahid. 27

By the mid-nineteenth century the ulama had gained a substantial amount of power over the Court. It has nevertheless been clearly demonstrated that the high ulama have seldom maintained a cohesive base among their own ranks in their conflicting position with the State. This inherent shortcoming—partly stemming from the Provincialism of the country in general—has been consistently exploited by despotic monarchs to promote their own political interests. Thus it may not be appropriate to speak of a monolithic religious cast in the Iranian context. However, their rivalries and competitions have always fallen short of completely undermining the interests of the religious caste as a whole. The resiliency of the religious structure towards total disintegration—caused by opposing viewpoints of various mujtahids—have seldom materialized. Ultimately, all influential members of the caste have held their ranks and have stopped short of undermining each other's authority.

The recurrence of the "uneasy" alliance between some of the high ranking ulama and the secular, liberal forces and its unusual nature has prompted some to call it a "unique situation" in the world politics. 28 It must also be stressed here that in spite of their opposition to the despotic monarchy, many of the ulama have retained their traditional conservative religious and political ideologies. It was on the issue of injustice (Zulm) that they particularly opposed the shah, while the real contributing factor to the collapse of their alliance with secularists stemmed from their conservative political as well as traditional
religious views.

The "secular reformists" perceived any acceptable reform in Iran of the early twentieth century as taking place through an Islamic guise provided by the popular religious figures to the general public. Thus it was through the promotion of panIslamic ideology--acceptable to the ulama--that the secularists were able to rally mass support for their anti-monarchy movement. The emergence of panIslamic sentiments in part was a product of delicate planning by various individuals who had realized the great potential of the Shi'ah ulama in the Iranian politics. These individuals particularly concerned with the rapid encroachment of foreign capital and foreign culture in various parts of the Islamic community (Ummat) found the Islamic ideology as a formidable weapon to check and confront these advances. Therefore, as Nikki Keddie puts it: "... it is no accident that the rise of panIslamic sentiment followed exactly the path of Western attacks on Islamic lands."29 In the case of Iran, the sentiment for a panIslamic movement spread particularly after increasing acquisition of concessions by Western powers and Western domination of the country in the late 1880s and the 1890s.

This entire process of mobilization of the opposition was further facilitated by increasing internal oppression and wide-spread corruption. The alliance of the ulama and the secularist liberal forces in the late nineteenth century was initiated and further eased through the activities of certain Persians. These individuals--the most prominent ones being Mirza Malkum Khan and Seyyed Jamal ud-Din Asadabadi--undertook the task of bringing about a coalition of these two forces by declaring statements that appeared favorable to both opposition groups. Of particular
importance were those declarations that could be found in general accord with the Islamic principles.  

The alliance of the modernizers and ulama was most successful during the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911. The Constitutional movement after its initial victories against the monarchy, faltered when its two major partners ceased to collaborate beyond the removal of the institution of despotic monarchy and the granting of the constitutional government by the Qajar shah. The break became more evident as the true intentions of the secular members of the first Iranian parliament were unveiled. It is clear now that the real expectation of the ulama from the Constitutional Revolution was to curtail the arbitrary power of the shah and to free the masses from tyranny (Zulm). This alteration in the political system, so they thought, was possible through the exercise of the "laws"—presumably the Shari'ah or the canon laws--; and through the dissemination of the "new learning," apparently devoid from those elements that may contradict the Islamic tradition, i.e., advancement of the non-parochial system of learning. Upon their realization of the country's move towards further secularization of, particularly, the judiciary and educational systems, the ulama ceased to maintain their alliance with the modernizers. In retrospect, it seems that the actual intention of the ulama in joining forces with the constitutional movement was to promote the "establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth."  

The ulama's traditional functions to exercise control over the educational institutions; and more importantly, their domination of the judiciary system had already been curtailed by the advancing forces
of secularization. It was thus the apparent hope of the orthodox religious institution to achieve a reversal of these measures.\textsuperscript{32}

One of the most important factors that has historically influenced the political behavior of the Iranian ulama should be sought in their anti-foreign outlooks. This factor alone has played a significant role in shaping the attitudes and reactions of the ulama towards the State. The Tobacco Revolts of 1891, as well as the Islamic Revolution of 1979, were in part charged with an acute anti-foreign sentiment among the general population. This feeling had been most intense whenever the foreign individuals have become in constant contact with the Iranian communities.

Due to the weakening position of the Qajar governments and their increasing reliance on the European support, the ulama found mobilization of the masses as a necessary step to check the rising influence of those "infidel aliens" who were determined to "divide the ummat."\textsuperscript{33} The election to the first Majlis (parliament) of a number of clergy also enhanced their political postures. Thus to sum up, the major sources of problems that the Qajar shahs had with the ulama were a general tendency towards secularization, demonstrated in the institution of the secular schools (dabestan); an increasing influence of the foreign governments and their cultures; territorial and economic concessions; and economic crises due to corruption and mismanagement of the officials; in addition to judiciary reforms in favor of the Urf (secularized laws) and at the expense of the Shari'ah (canon laws).
The Pahlavi Rule and the Ulama Subjugation: A Period of Quietism?

From the defeat of the Constitutional Movement in 1911 until the ascension of Reza Shah to the throne in 1925, the ulama did play a less-than-active and low-keyed role in the political arena of the unstable Iran. The reason most often given for this period of ulama inactiveness is their distaste for anarchy and chaos. Iran being in one of her most uncertain periods and ruled by the weak Qajar shah—and in accordance with the wishes of the major powers of Russia and Great Britain—was in desperate need of a strong ruler. Therefore, when, by the direct help of the British government, a colonel of the Cossack Brigade—originally established by the Russians to protect the Qajar monarchy and since under the control of the British—by the name of Reza Khan assumed power there was very little resistance on the part of the ulama.

Those few who opposed Reza Shah at the onset of his takeover, were later to be intimidated/sent to internal exiles. Thus began a dismal period in the modern history of Shi'ah ulama, where their traditional authority and cultural significance fell victim to the secularization and political monopolization efforts of the new shah. There were various attempts at further curtailment of the functions of the religious institution. Most importantly, secularization of the judiciary and educational systems were continued fervently by the State apparatus. In addition there appeared an increasing amount of State control/interference in those economic sources that had traditionally been under the domain of the ulama.
Reza Shah's control over/oppression of the religious institution was almost complete; and had it not been for his ouster from power in 1941, the damages to these institutions may have been irreversible. However, before final consolidation of his power, Reza Khan had well realized his need for the ulama support. It was only after he was assured of his total control over the State that he began repressing his religious backers! Nonetheless before Reza Shah's move to curtail their power, and especially during the earlier phases of Reza Khan's rule, the ulama still enjoyed a considerable amount of power. For instance, the clergy opposition to the idea of a "republic" proposed by Reza Khan had a major effect on the withdrawal of the idea by him.34

The traditional rivalry between the institutions of monarchy and religion has been tense particularly over their control of cultural/religious symbols. It has been after all through the ability to control these various historically significant symbols that the ulama have had such success in mass mobilization in Iran. Thus their strongest opposition to the government had coincided with the latter's intentions in controlling, manipulating, or even creating national symbols as means of popular support. The process of secularization as a whole could be interpreted by the ulama as contributing to the deterioration of cultural symbols; or their replacement by a new set of "imported" Western symbols, such as democracy, secularization of government (the institution of polity) and so on. Symbolic manipulation by the ulama during the Tobacco Revolts, Constitutional Revolution, and most recently the Islamic Revolution, has played a significant role in the rapid mobilization efforts by the ulama. And through a keen appreciation for detailed
history, Iranians have been able to relate their present grievances to historically specific instances. The religious institution has traditionally had control over these symbols; and has maintained their significance through religious rituals, processions and other activities related to the institution of mosque.

Reza Shah, soon after his ascension to power, set out to curb the ulama public functions. An all out assault had begun against the institution of religion. These measures led to a marked decline in traditional-religious symbolic manifestations. Furthermore, some of these symbols were substituted by new symbols depicting other aspects of the complex Iranian culture, particularly those representing a secular, imperial order. These measures severely hampered the ulama activity and confined them to their mosques. It is stressed, however, that despite their loss of political power, the ulama maintained their appeal to the lower and lower-middle classes in the Iranian cities, throughout this period.\(^{35}\) Reza Shah, by the time of his ouster, had achieved substantial success in further separating the religious and nationalistic symbols. In addition, he had assumed control over the nationalistic symbols while repressing manifestations of the religious symbols.

It was only after Reza Shah had left power that the ulama began to reassert some of their traditional functions. It has been suggested by some that there appeared a semblance of cooperation and coexistence between the State and Shi'ah leaders which lasted until the late 1950s.\(^{36}\) The obvious reason on the part of the State in its acquiescence and moderation with regard to the religious institutions could be sought
in its general weakness following the occupation of the country during
the Second World War by the allies and the ascension to power of the
young Shah, Mohammad Reza. This was not more evident than during the
turbulent years of the late forties and early fifties when the national
forces of Mohammad Mosaddegh had weakened the arbitrary power of the
Shah. The position of the highest Shi'ah leader at the time--the
Ayatollah Brujerdy--being one of passivity and political neutrality
denied the Mosaddegh movement, particularly during its final confron-
tations with the forces of the Court, a valuable opportunity. The
nationalist movement of the prime minister Mosaddegh was eventually
defeated after the ulama, particularly the Ayatollah Kashani, failed
to support it; and perhaps more importantly, after the royalists, with
close cooperation from the C.I.A., staged a successful coup d'etat in
toppling the populist premier.

Yet another major revelation in the modern Iranian history that
may have had profound effects on the behavior of the ulama has been
attributed to the emergence of a well organized communist movement in
Iran and its active participation in its politics during the forties.
The ulama resentment to any foreign ideology, particularly that of
the "atheist" communism has been paramount. Their non-challenging
behavior during this period may indicate their concerns over the pos-
sibility of a communist-socialist victory in the unstable Iran of the
post-World War II.

Nevertheless after the State had gained considerable strength and
self-confidence, on the wake of the nationalist defeat, it gradually
turned its attention once again to curbing the ulama power. The
secularization measures thus continued—after a period of relapse during the forties. There also began an increasingly open effort by the government to take over and ultimately control politically sensitive cultural symbols. These measures brought the two rival institutions into the brink of open confrontation by the late 1950s. The primary reason for this break should be sought in an ever-assertive and dictatorial monarchy that was in the making during the 1950s.

The climax of the State-clergy confrontation happened during the symbolically crucial month of Moharram (June of 1963) when urban riotings led into clashes that left hundreds dead. It was at this time that Ayatollah Khomeini with his open criticisms of the government gained national reputation. Khomeini's political behavior, however, should not be taken as representative of all ulama at this time. He perhaps represented a minority "radical" faction among the generally passive and conservative body of Shi'ah ulama that existed in Iran.

In Nationalism in Iran Cottam argues that the actual reason for the political confrontations in the early 1960s could be attributed to the "collapse of a financial boom" that had begun in the late 1950s. This in turn had caused public discontent—particularly among the lower and lower-middle classes. Still some others blame it on certain reform measures taken by the government that had aggravated the ulama. Specifically some religious opposition to the Land Reform measures are recalled. Khomeini has made it clear that he did not oppose those measures. Nevertheless some members of ulama openly opposed those measures and found them in contradiction to the religious laws (Shari'ah). Their position, however, towards the "emancipation of women" seemed to
be all but unanimous. 38

After the defeat of the first clergy-led uprising since the Constitutional Revolution, the institution of monarchy steadily consolidated its power base by: a) building a strong army and police and vastly expanding the authority of the dreaded secret police (the SAVAK); b) intimidating and coopting various members of the highly heterogeneous opposition gathered under the umbrella of the National Front. Subsequently, the Front and indigenous radical secular groups became the prime targets for government oppression. By the mid-1960s, the majority of these small, secular opposition groups had either been crushed or driven underground.

The position of the Shi'ah institution, especially after driving its most popular leader Ayatollah Khomeini, into exile, was somewhat different. While controlled for its political activities, the religious functions of the institution went on. The mosque was still a place for public gatherings, and occasionally, political activities. The economic foundation of the institution had also remained under the control of the ulama. More importantly, the ulama maintained their ties with their traditional allies: the lower classes and the bazaars. Weary of the government's economic policies, the bazaar—a major financial backer of the ulama—particularly since WW II, had pressured their powerful allies, the ulama, to air their grievances.

The alliance of the bazaar and ulama was conceived during the Tobacco Revolt and had since been repeated during the Constitutional Revolution; and more recently, in the course of recent revolutionary upheavals in Iran. The only time when a major section of the bazaar—
representing the interests of the petit-bourgeoisie of Iran--has backed a non-religious leader in its confrontation with the monarchy has been during the Nationalization of Oil which took place under the leadership of Dr. Mosaddegh.

Jazani, in his analysis of the modern Iranian history concludes that the religious caste in Iran had historically performed a dual role. One of these functions played by a minority of the ulama has been concerned with representing the interests of the national bourgeoisie, by opposing the penetration of the foreign "imperialist" interests into the unprotected Iranian market. The other role played by the majority of the ulama has consistently been performed in concert with the forces of "reaction and imperialism." The "progressive" front of the ulama, in the meantime has made numerous alterations in its stance to the State. As Jazani puts it:

"The religious caste as a whole has further played a dualistic role with regards to its position vis-a-vis that of the State's. While on the one hand it has represented the interests of various economic classes (particularly the lower and lower-middle classes) they have also had to safeguard their own interests as well. The religious leaders in Iran during its feudalistic history have been considered as political/judiciary authorities and have shared leadership and governing positions along with the Court and other feudals. In the past we have witnessed numerous conflicts occurring between the top echelons of the religious institution and the Court, over their respective share of power. In more recent times, and along with the penetration of colonialist forces and their respective cultures, the Iranian religious stratum has been faced with more serious threats to its integrity. And therefore, while the Iranian feudalism would not feel serious challenges by the incoming forces of colonialism; the ulama (whose very existence has been geared into their firm control of cultural symbols) would feel more threatened. In the meantime, with the continued sustained development of the forces of bourgeoisie--particularly those of the national
bourgeoisie of the bazaar--some segment of the ulama have increasingly allied their forces with them representing the interests of the bazaar vis-a-vis that of the Court as well as foreign interests.

This particular segment of the clergy (the nationalists) could not remain in its old, archaic, frame of mind and therefore it began demonstrating progressive signs in its political behavior.

On the other hand, the reactionary factions in the religious institution (which happened to be and still are in majority) maintained their alliance with the reactionary elements.

The Shah, representing the interests of the feudal-comprador elements and determined to expand the domination of his bureaucratic, military apparatus, set out to deal a serious blow to the traditional bases of authority still held by the religious institution. The ulama, brushing aside their political differences, decided to challenge the arbitrary and dictatorial authority of the Pahlavi Shahs. It was Reza Shah who accepted these challenges and brutally crushed the religious opposition... by undermining their resistance and attacking their religious strongholds in Qom and Mashad. The regime of Reza Shah seeking fundamental structural changes for Iran needed the subjugation of the religious institution; and thus attempted at turning it into an extension of government bureaucracy.

While it was the ulama who at the outset seemed to have been the losers, the repressive and dictatorial methods employed by the regime in undermining their authority, gained them wide public sympathy and support. This element of support became evident after Reza Shah was forced to abdicate in 1941. The full extent of the ulama-bazaar unity was put to test, for the first time when the government of Mohammad Reza Shah decided to abandon its conciliatory position along with its old economic base of the feudal power. A series of reform measures in the early 1960s were directly aimed at undermining this old politico-economic order. In the meantime they were to deprive the religious front from its traditional bastion. It was moreover assumed by the ulama that the reform measures will directly threaten their social position as the supervisors of the large endowment property.

In addition, the disenfranchisement of women (even though it did not mean freedom and equality for them) also seemed to have threatened the position of many fanatic religious elements... .

It was thus taken by the religious institution that the monarchy was, once again, determined to curtail their traditional functions and to make them subserviant to the State. There existed two main driving forces for the ulama to lead the uprisings of June 1963. First, the general
threat felt by the forces of feudalism. Second, threats felt by the institution of Shi'ite Islam (as the forces of reform, modernization, and secularization charged by government perogatives began to invade their traditional bastions).

The more "progressive" wing of the ulama had also two motives in allying their forces with the reactionary ulama. They had firstly, decided to resist the anti-nationalistic nature of the dictatorial monarchy. Secondly, they were only too well aware of the forces of modernization and reform and their possible takeover of their institution.

Therefore, the events that had begun in early 1963 and culminated in the bloody uprisings of June of that year were to have far reaching effects on the political fortunes of not only (the Ayatollah) Khomeini; but on the future activities of the majority of the ulama. The Ayatollah Khomeini, during this episode, was able to demonstrate a distinct character that earned him massive support. Khomeini did not remain a mere critic of the regime's "reform" measures. He directly attacked the dictatorship of the monarchy, and the Shah himself. It was his direct attacks on the Shah that got him fame and popularity. As he refused to abandon his radical views, he was arrested, and later sent to exile. This earned Khomeini the stature of a national hero. The rest of the ulama, however, were soon to acquiesce to the regime and virtually leave Khomeini alone in his opposition to the Pahlavi dictatorship.

The ulama, as usual, had religious influence over the bazaar. But at the time of the June clashes their position was in line with the interests of the remnants of the petit and national bourgeoisie. Their ability in mobilization of a great number of lower and lower-middle classes in Iran, once again proved unparalleled.

However, during these uprisings, there was an acute lack of leadership because the middle-class intellectuals did not participate in the uprisings. The factory workers and the working forces of the proletariat were also absent from the actual confrontations. It was the urban poor and underprivileged who spearheaded street clashes with the police. The South Tehranies, representing this class, supported the short-lived uprisings in large numbers. The uprisings of 1963 ought to be considered as spontaneous. The bloody demonstrations of June, 1963 had begun earlier in the shape of religious-political outbreaks that had taken place in the wake of the police attack on the Fayzia religious school in Qom. This incident was followed by the arrest of the defiant Khomeini. The uprisings of two days later which had coincided with the holy month of Moharram, were the climax of the confrontation which left thousands dead. While the bazaaries and other petit
bourgeoisie elements withdrew after the police brutally attacked the demonstrators, the underprivileged urban poor (the South Tehranies) and small shopkeepers, vendors, craftsmen, and a handful of intellectuals remained on the scene.

While the riots were swiftly and ruthlessly put down by the army (the whole episode not exceeding one week), and its instigators and leaders imprisoned or exiled, the June riots proved to be a turning point in modern Iranian political history. Perhaps the most important lesson that was learned from it was the extreme political potential that religion (the institution of Shi'ah Islam) had as a driving mechanism for the mobilization of disgruntled masses.

The ineffectiveness of the political apparatus of the secular National Front in the assumption of an active leadership position during the riots was a further testimony to its lack of organization, popular support, and a serious lack of leadership. And thus while the forces of national bourgeois had ceased confronting the regime openly, religious forces, under the leadership of Khomeini, had continued their struggles and have attracted many from among the ranks of the secular opposition groups. Politicization of religion has been one of the major contributors to the more recent exhibition of religious tendencies on the part of many oppositional elements within the Iranian political arena.

The necessary "missing" linkage between the radical-religious elements like Ayatollah Khomeini and the secular opposition was provided when a wing (faction) of the National Front was formed in 1961. The Freedom Movement, having its own factions, had as its prime objective the task of reconciliation and unification of various oppositional groups; and in particular those of the nationalist secular and religious opposition. Headed by some prominent National Front members like Taleghani and Bazargan, the religiously inclined Freedom Movement was to play a crucial intermediary role after the revolutionary forces came to power in 1979.
Political Opposition in the Post-1963 Iran

The post-1963 Iranian politics witnessed several major changes in its traditional posture. First, the ineffectiveness of the secular National Front during the politically opportune years of the early 1960s, and its inability to take advantage of the popular uprisings against the monarchy in 1963, decisively curtailed its future political activities. Various reasons may be given for the ineptitude of the National Front. Included among them is the harsh treatment that its members received after the defeat of the Mossadegh movement in 1953. During the decade of fifties the Front had to deal with various undemocratic and repressive governmental measures to stifle its activities. There is no doubt that the sharper edge of government repression was directed against the Left—in general—as well as some of the Nationalists. The majority of these secular forces were driven underground, or denied open political activities for over three decades!

Secondly, and in spite of the intimidation of the secular opposition, the same method could not be as successfully applied to the religious opposition. The regime's inability/unwillingness in completely curbing their religious gatherings may have had the most significant effect on their eventual resurgence as the only viable organization capable of "controlling" the revolutionary process in 1978. The fact that many of the high members of this institution maintained their political neutrality may have also affected the extent of the regime's repression of the ulama activity. After all, Khomeini and a handful of prominent religious figures like Ayatollah Taleghani, were in a minority among
the community of mujtahids. It may be appropriate to say that the
dictatorial monarchy on many occasions enjoyed a dialogue with the
reactionary mullahs.

With the increasing State power came the regime's unwillingness to
tolerate any form of political dissent. And thus many of the younger
members/sympathizers of the National Front and the communist party
(Tudeh) turned into more violent, i.e., armed struggles, methods of
resistance. Armed urban guerrilla groups of different political shades
began to challenge the regime, in spite of very limited success, during
the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Mostly members of the urban middle and lower-middle classes, these
guerrilla organizations subscribed to a variety of philosophical schools.
In general though there were two main guerrilla bodies. On the one
hand there emerged an indigenous leftist group independent of the pro-
Soviet Tudeh party. Even though its members included ex-members of
the Tudeh, they refused to pledge their loyalty to Moscow. They were
the new Left and were to be known as the Fadayan-e-Khalq in modern
Iranian political history.

The other mainstream that equally enjoyed popularity among the
young and intellectuals was the Mujahidin-e-Kalq organization. A non-
Marxist radical organization, it sought its ideological inspiration from
the interpretations of the Quran provided to them by Ali Shari'ati.
A devout Muslim by conviction, and a sociologist by education, Shari'ati
became intimately concerned with the socio-economic and political prob-
lems of Iran in particular and the entire world of Islam in general.
He felt that interpreted correctly, the Quran could provide the
ideological foundations for a new society in which liberty and equality would prevail.\textsuperscript{42}

It was Shari'ati's delicate synthesis of some of the Islamic notions that attracted Mujahidin and many other concerned individuals to Islam. A surge of public interest in Islamic studies and religious gatherings is testimony to Shari'ati's effectiveness in attracting those elements in the Iranian population that could provide and lead collective opposition to the dictatorial monarchy.

In the meantime, amidst increasing coercion by the State, its traditional adversaries, i.e., the ulama, the bazaar, and the aging members of Mosaddegh's National Front were keeping a low profile. Khomeini, in the meantime, had been spending a part of a 16-year exile in Iraq. These ulama increasingly realized the gradual disappearance of their economic base, i.e., their endowed lands, through various measures taken by the State. Their political activities already reduced, they began a period of serious reconsideration of their social functions in the Iranian society. It was still evident that they maintained a substantial number of sympathizers among the urban poor. Their primary concern at this time seemed to have been with the organizational problems and ideological/doctrinal issues.\textsuperscript{43} This strategy again proved to be well thought of when after the collapse of the monarchy, the Islamic ideology was provided to the populace as an alternative to the monarchical-imperial culture of the old regime.

In the meantime (following the increases in the oil prices) the government had become engaged in an ambitious economic plan: to promote significant social-structural changes. While the earlier phases of the
plan brought a great deal of capital, and considerable economic improvements did take place in a selective manner and in only particular segments of the economy, the latter phases witnessed considerable social, economic and political problems resulting from rapid change and lack of capital. Most seriously affected was the population composition and population distribution in Iran. Rapid population growth rates along with the neglect of agriculture had caused massive exodus of the poor rural unemployed to the major metropolitan areas, particularly the capital, Tehran. With half of its population below the age of 20, Iran's social structure began experiencing rapid changes. With the funneling of petro-dollars into the Iranian economy, and with an inherently corrupt-prone bureaucracy, a very definite class of the "nouveau riche" appeared in the Iranian society. The persistence of a Gesellschaft (communal, face-to-face, primary) type of relationship within the population enhanced the process of polarization and class awareness. Soon the ambitious economic plans were to fall victim to the country's inadequate infrastructural capacities. The economic boom of 1974-76 was soon to be replaced with the 1977-78 economic "bust." By this time a massive force of unskilled, newly migrated workers had comprised the populations of the "Tin Towns" that had mushroomed during the "boom" period. These groups were to play a significant role in the revolutionary period that began in the Summer of 1977.

Moreover, the ulama, having lost a major portion of their economic independence--through the control of the Vaqf (endowed property)--had to face the injection of "imperial" culture into the Iranian society. Aware of the importance of politico-religious symbols to their profession,
they bitterly resented the application of these symbols—which were all ultimately associated with the person of the Shah. With the help of their exiled prominent figure, Khomeini, they began a campaign for the return of the constitutional government.

The bazaar, the center of traditional economic activity and the home of the traditional middle classes, had been under constant pressure by the newly revived economic forces. The Court had become a decisive factor in the Iranian economic development; and, not surprisingly, the bazaar did not sufficiently reap the profits of the rapid economic growth. It was the dependent capitalist that along with the Court profited from the "boom." So, by 1976, the bazaaries were among the disgruntled Iranian population, actively—(financially)—supporting the opposition. Their successful attempts at paralyzing this vital economic institution during the decisive months of the revolution (by refusing to open their shops and other economic activities) in fact bankrolled the revolution of 1979!

The middle-class intellectuals, university students, government employees, housewives, all had many grievances of their own. The suppression of democratic activities and free and open exchanges of opinions; prevalence of a universal censorship, have all caused major grievances to accumulate for these individuals. Their inability to have established political organizations free from State interference would prove detrimental during the revolutionary uprisings. A lack of comprehensive and encompassing ideological bases also prevented the "secular" elements of the opposition to challenge the religious institution, once the collapse of the old regime became imminent.
It was a combination of varied causes within a rapidly changing social structure that made the revolution of 1979 possible. The Iranian revolution was the end result of a historical contradiction between the people and the monarchy. To call it a result of the Iranian people's desire for the restoration of a traditional Islamic society in accordance with the precepts of Quran and Shari'ah could not be taken very seriously. Even though the present situation in Iran may point to the contrary, it is the assumption here that the institution of Shi'ah Islam took over the revolutionary Iran because of the availability of: (a) an ideological base; (b) organizational capabilities; and (c) leadership.

It was true prudent utilization of the available resources that the Shi'ah ulama were able to mobilize vast resources, and eventually take over the political apparatus of the post-revolutionary Iran. The analyses of these measures will take place in the following chapters.
Notes on Chapter III

1. From 10th to 15th century, both Sunni and Shi'a factions of Islam were present in Iran. Major areas of Sunni concentration were to be found in the cities and among the ruling groups, thus making it the official religion of the country. The bulk of the Shi'as, on the other hand, were included among the peasantry and urban lower classes.

2. Social movements of the fifteenth century Persia differed from the previous movements in that there was an absence of a previously operative alliance between the urban poor and the peasantry on the one hand, and the small landowners and craftsmen on the other. This apparent split led to the emergence of yet more radical branches of Shi'ism. The poor masses thereafter increasingly identified themselves with the radical branches of Shi'ism, known as the Gholat—which attracted the underprivileged by proposing public ownership of land and asking for social equality among all Moslims. Keshavarz, Op. Cit., p. 436.

3. The early Safavid Shahs, thanks to the acquiescence of the ulama, were not only considered the political ruler, but they were in addition granted the spiritual leadership of the country.

4. During the 13th and 14th centuries, mass opposition movements in Persia adopted three major forms: (a) splinter Shi'a factions;
(b) mysticism, mostly in the form of Sufism; (c) armed uprisings and insurrections. Thus while the majority of Persians remained Sunnis until the early 15th century, the overwhelming number of political uprisings against the Mongol invaders and local feudals were staged by the Shi'as. Keshavarz, Op. Cit., p. 381.


7. Ibid., p. 221.


9. Ibid., p. 133.

10. Ibid., p. 133.

11. Ibid., p. 138.

12. Ibid., p. 142.

13. Algar on this issue further claims that "One might maintain that a Shi'a State itself is a contradiction in terms, since the essence of Shi'ism demands a minority status for its adherents, who are in opposition. Often quiescent, but unyielding, to de facto authority. The real triumph of Shi'ism is possible only through the return and manifestation of the Hidden Imam, when legitimacy will return to the world and be fulfilled." See, Hamid Algar, Religion and State in Iran: 1785-1906 The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period, University of California Press, 1969.

18. Ibid., p. 128.
19. Ibid., P. 139. Makdisi's hypotheses with regards to the greater exercise of power by the Shi'a clergy in Iran are as follows:

1) Shi'a Islam grants greater religious authority to the ulama than does Sunni Islam.
2) Chance historical events and other situational factors have determined that the Shi'a clergy are not so strongly challenged in their authority as are the Sunni ulama in neighboring countries.
3) The ulama of Iran are more centrally organized in terms of formal institutional status-role than are the Sunni ulama.
4) They have been far more effective at the level of primary group activity in maintaining the solidarity of their organization and their independence of government control, in eliminating or weakening competitors, and in satisfying their own demands as individuals.


20. Binder, Op. Cit., p. 139. Nikki Keddie has also come up with similar explanations for the unusual amount of power exercised by the Shi'a ulama in Iran. Among these causes were:

1) Twelver Shi'a theory, which considered all temporal rulers illegitimate and came increasingly to assert that legitimate guidance, pending the return of the "hidden" Twelfth Imam, is to be found in the Shi'a religious leaders, the mujtahids;
2) the independent and untouchable position of the main Shi'a leadership at the shrine cities of Ottoman Iraq, beyond the reach of the Iranian government;
3) the great veneration for the ulama leaders by most Iranians, along with the very close ties between the guilds and the ulama;
4) identification of the ulama with the popular anti-foreign cause ever since the first wars against Russia in the early nineteenth century; and
5) the material wealth of the ulama (as direct receivers of the
khums tax they were less dependent on the government for
wealth than in Sunni countries), and their control over the
law courts and education, which remained less disputed in
nineteenth century Iran than in most other Moslim countries.

In Nikki R. Keddi, "The Iranian Power Structure and Social Change
Studies #2, 1971, pp. 5-6.

Revolution in the Middle East. P. J. Vatikiotis (ed.), George Allen

22. Ibid., p. 175.

23. Ibid.


25. Nikki Keddie, Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest


27. James Bill, The Politics of Iran: Groups, Classes, and Moderniza-

28. Nikkie Keddie, "The Origins of the Religious-Radical Alliance in

29. Ibid., p. 74.

30. For more detailed analyses of these figures see, Nikki Keddie on
Seyyed Jamal and Hamid Algar on Malkum Khan (see Bibliography).
Morteza Motahhari has also treated the effects of Seyyed Jamal's
preachings on the Islamic communities. He feels, along with many
other thinkers on the Islamic history, that Seyyed Jamal was indeed
the first true panIslamist in modern Iran. His contributions to
the successful Tobacco Revolt of the 1880s and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911 (even though Seyyed Jamal was dead before it got underway) is also acknowledged. However, as far as Motahhari is concerned, Seyyed Jamal's foremost contribution resided in his analytical understanding of the problems of the Islamic community (ummat). The list of tentative solutions to the pressing problems of the ummat includes:

1) struggle against tyranny/despotism through a social realization that politics and religion could not be treated separately from one another. Once this task (of reunification of the two institutions is accomplished) Seyyed Jamal felt that the Muslim individual will realize the possibility/necessity of his active participation in the decision making processes in his country and in the Islamic community.

2) adoption of new scientific methods.

3) return to the tenants of the "Early Islam" (presumably to a society that would resemble "Mohammad's Medina."

4) treatment and acceptance of Islam as an ideological school that would terminate foreign domination as well as internal oppression. With the understanding that Moslim's don't need any other ideology since Islam is capable of providing adequate answers to the pressing social problems.


32. The disappointing outcome of the Constitutional Movement--which has been blamed on the secular opportunism and/or religious conserva-
tism and reaction, depending on whose version one is subscribing to, has made the present power structure in the revolutionary Iran criticize it on the pretext that the ulama did not carry their leadership position to the end and withdrew from the political activities too early in the game. An apparent evidence pointing to the disenchantment of the present Iranian regime under the
Ayatollah Khomeini with the outcome of the Constitutional Revolution is the removal from the Iranian calendar of the Annual Celebration of the date when the constitution was granted to the people of Iran by the Qajar Shah, Mohammad Ali.


34. See Richard Cottam, in *Nationalism in Iran*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980.

35. Ibid., p. 160.

36. Ibid. See also Akhavi, Op. Cit.


38. Ibid., p. 308.


40. Ibid., pp. 110-117.


Chapter 4

Resource Mobilization in a Revolutionary Situation:

The Case of Shi'ah Iran
Theoretical Assumptions

The resource mobilization or resource management (RM) perspective is relatively new to sociological literature on social movements. During the 1970s, the RM perspective has been elaborated upon and further developed by Gamson (1975), Leites and Wolf (1970), McCarthy and Zald (1973, 1977), Oberschall (1973, 1978), and Tilly (1975, 1978).

The RM perspective is seen by its proponents as a definite break with previous theoretical statements on social movements. Thus, a great deal of the space devoted to RM so far has focused upon contrasting this new perspective with older perspectives. For example, Leites and Wolf (1970) contrast their new "systems" approach with the old "hearts-and-minds-of-the-people" perspective; McCarthy and Zald (1973) contrast their "resource mobilization" approach with the older "classical" approach; and Oberschall (1978) and Tilly (1975) contrast the new "solidarity-mobilization" model perspective with the perennially popular "breakdown-deprivation" frameworks. The result of all these comparisons and contrasts is that the reader comes away knowing something about the RM model, but usually only how it differs from previous perspectives in certain key aspects.

The older perspectives to which RM theorists often refer are characterized by an emphasis on the building up of frustrations, tensions, or grievances of some kind. The usual scenario is that people
belonging to a specific social category (ethnic, racial, religious, cultural, or national) have been exposed to serious economic and/or political deprivations for some period of time. The experience of such feelings leads to the accumulation of frustration, tension, grievance, or anger on the part of the deprived. When these feelings become sufficiently widespread and intense, an explosion of collective animosity towards the present social system occurs in the form of social protest, or perhaps even a violent revolutionary overthrow of the present government. This scenario is simplistic, of course, but it does capture the essential elements of the more traditional theoretical approaches which purport to explain the emergence of social movements. As already indicated, the basic idea is that collective frustration builds to the point of an explosion of collective aggression towards the existing social order. The participants proceed to tear down the old order and build a new one which they believe will be more responsive to their needs and desires.

One of the problems with this traditional approach is that it fails to explain how a collection of frustrated, angry, deprived individuals become transformed into an acting unit which could be capable of rearranging the structure of a society. The absence of a historical dimension deprives these studies from necessary depth needed to explain any major social process. As Tilly further argues, there is a lack of appreciation for the structure; and in spite of various arguments by its proponents to the contrary, the perspective is incapable of providing adequate explanations for certain crucial questions raised by social movements (1978).
Concerned with the problem of structural changes the RM model may be willing to acknowledge that deprivations and frustrations play an important role as sources of or as the initial impetus to collective action (Oberschall, Tilly, McCarthy and Zald). In the meantime they contend that the emergence of an organized social movement is a complex process and should not be glossed over by referring to it as an explosion of hostile sentiment. The central question for RM theorists is therefore: how does a dissatisfied population become organized into a force for social change? RM theorists are still in the process of formulating an acceptable answer to this question. However, as the name of the perspective implies, the concepts of "resources" and "mobilization" are the two most important components of the answer.

Mobilization has been defined as the "process by which a group goes from being a passive collection of individuals to an active participation in public life."¹ For the advocates of the "structural" approach a resource is almost anything, material or nonmaterial, which can be used in furthering the goals of a social movement. These resources that people accumulate to achieve their objectives may include, "loyalties, knowledge, wealth, machines, communication lines, and any number of other things."² In addition, authority, leadership, legitimacy, charisma, and ideology are examples of non-material resources.

McCarthy and Zald outline the major points to differentiate the RM from the traditional (social-psychological) perspectives. Central to the RM perspective is the quest for an understanding of all the available resources, material as well as nonmaterial, to the social movement. More importantly, the "aggregation of resources" is crucial in the promotion
of the movement's goals. McCarthy and Zald feel the need of having
the presence of an organizational body for the purpose of managing the
available resources; and further coordinating them in such a fashion
that the collectivity will benefit from them the most, e.g., resource
management. Thirdly, since the participation of outside elements in
the activities of the movement will have definite effects on the outcome
of the struggle, one needs to recognize the presence of these inter-
connections between the movement and its surroundings. Fourthly,
McCarthy and Zald employ a cost-reward model to measure degrees of
individual involvement in the movement. The notion of the "pre-existing
organization" has also been treated by McCarthy and Zald; particularly
with regards to its potential in attracting individuals for collective
action towards a common goal. 3

For McCarthy and Zald the RM perspective "emphasizes both social
support and constraint of social movement phenomena. It examines the
variety of resources that must be mobilized, the linkage of social move-
ments to other groups, the dependence of movement on external support
for success, and the tactics used by authorities to control or incor-
porate movements." 4

There is no single generally agreed upon statement of RM perspec-
tive in social movement literature. Each author or group of authors
approaches the topic differently and provides unique contributions to
the perspective. For example, Tilly is primarily concerned with violent
social conflict, which he regards as a direct outgrowth of struggles for
political power. He therefore examines historical European data for
long-term relationships between fluctuations in certain types of political
activity and violent social protest. Oberschall focuses upon "substantial group conflict" which includes riots and strikes as well as rebellions and revolutions. The RM perspective for Oberschall primarily focuses on the manner in which pre-existing organization and leadership structures facilitate the formation of conflict groups.5

The lack of unified RM perspective presents a dilemma to anyone who wishes to apply this approach to a particular social movement. One must choose from among the several theoretical statements that presently exist or come up with some sort of hybrid variation formulated by combining elements from several of the perspectives. I have selected the latter course of action. I will combine some of the ideas from the work of Oberschall and from that of McCarthy and Zald, in attempting to understand the present revolutionary situation in Iran. There are yet others who may not consider themselves as advocates of the RM perspective in their efforts, but nonetheless consider structural analyses of social movements imperative. Skocpol's States and Social Revolutions provides an example of a structural analysis of world revolutions. In her cross-cultural comparative analysis of major world revolutions, she considers social revolutions swift and spontaneous behaviors with great potential to trigger "basic transformation of a society's state and class structures" that are, in many instances, "accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below."

The State, in her treatment of revolution, has been given an independent self-preserving function that makes it short of representing interests of a sole class! While acknowledging the importance of structural models for the analysis of social movements, she further suggests special care
be given to "international contexts and to developments at home and abroad that affect the breakdown of the state organizations of old regimes and build up of new, revolutionary state organization." It seems that any analysis of the Iranian revolution would require adequate consideration of its position within the international community in general, and the world capitalist system in particular.

Moreover, the revolutionary process in Iran holds many common characteristics with other major world revolutions. A historical, cross-cultural model will certainly provide a more adequate explanation of the revolutionary movement in Iran. The lack of a clear-cut class formation and the apparent overlapping nature of social classes in Iran, as well as the absence of a "vanguard" class to form a "class-for-itself" makes the application of a classical Marxist class analysis and the build up of revolutionary process rather complicated. Nevertheless, some Marxist hypotheses, particularly those concerning political violence, process of conflict formation, causes and consequences of political violence may fit the Iranian situation.

The primary concern here is with Oberschall's assessment of the mobilization of resources. Along with it and in addition, some of his relevant hypotheses may be tested. There is no intention however to test any of these hypotheses in a rigorous; i.e., quantitative fashion in this essay. Rather, the goal here is essentially twofold. On the one hand, I am applying the concepts and hypotheses of the RM perspective to Iran in order to provide a better sociological understanding of the events taking place there. This is true, particularly with regards to the mobilization of resources prior to the downfall of the old regime.
This process precludes the second phase of the revolutionary process that began subsequent to this period. In essence, it is the initial phase of the revolutionary build-up and formation of conflict groups that is of primary concern here. Its later phases—the post-February 1979—will be discussed only briefly. On the other hand, I am using the Iranian situation to evaluate some of the notions of the RM model in the hope of contributing to the emerging perspective for the study of social movements.

It may be useful at this point to briefly discuss Oberschall’s statements on the general background conditions or what he calls "sources" of social conflict. He says that social conflict is a built-in condition of social order because of existing structural arrangements for the distribution of scarce resources; those in control of scarce resources want to maintain their position while others in a disadvantageous position want to get more of resources (classical conflict theory notion). Various types of economic discontent may arise from shortages of essential products of commodities like food or sudden increases in their price; shortages of land or attempts by landlords to extract increased economic surpluses by means that violate traditional norms of equity and distribution; loss of employment through competition from new methods of production; and depressions.

Various forms of discontent also constitute a source of social conflict. Political discontent may arise from the imposition of an alien, superior, outside authority upon a people depriving them of their autonomy; illegitimate exercise of power by ruling groups; inability of ruling groups to solve persistent social problems; contest for power
among different factions within the ruling group. Oberschall also says that "political discontent is also engendered by those regimes that have achieved power by illegitimate means, maintain themselves in power by relying on coercion, superior force, and often foreign protectors, exercise power arbitrarily and harshly, and do not defend the national interest as the ordinary citizen defines it because they are subservient to a foreign power." ⁹

Oberschall also provides some implicitly stated hypotheses about structural conditions which are conducive to social movement activity. For example, societies that are heterogeneous from the point of view of ethnic, racial, religious, linguistics, cultural, and similar divisions, are more likely to be the locus of all manner of discontents and conflicts, and these conflicts are more difficult to pursue in a nonviolent and institutionalized manner than in homogeneous societies. He also says that in authoritarian political systems, many conflicts fester for years below the surface for the simple reason that the mobilization of discontented groups is a difficult and risky undertaking. Therefore, while the recurrence of serious political conflicts is limited by the virtue of their being repressed, when they do take place the intensity and depth of the protest may be to the level that it may lead to fundamental changes in the political, economic and cultural structures of the society, i.e., a social revolution may take place.

It seems that many of these conditions did exist in the Iranian society for many years. The lack of adequate institutional channels for monitoring and airing these grievances ran a parallel course with
the increasing dictatorial authority. An almost exclusive control over all aspects of political and economic lives of the citizens had prevented the adequate establishment of democratic institutions for the regulation of conflicts.
The Causes of Social Conflicts in the Pre-Revolutionary Iran

From the outset, a variety of political, economic, and cultural causes could be attributed to the advancement of the revolutionary situation in Iran. Social conflict is defined as "a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflict groups are not only to gain the desired values, but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rivals."\(^1\) Taken in its broadest definition, social conflict (in its more open, and violent, form) has been an integral part of human society. Geo-political position and demographic composition of the Middle East in general and Iran in particular has made conflict regulation difficult; and thus its recurrence more likely.

Since the purpose of this study is the examination of the revolutionary process in Iran, major structural variations in its recent history would help to explain some of the prevalent causes of conflict. It has been assumed, throughout the present effort, that the institution of polity, represented by the Court, has sustained its repressive function for centuries. In the meantime, it has been argued that the institution of religion has assumed the role of the rival organization in challenging the legitimacy of the secular monarchies. Its peculiar organizational structure, along with its widely comprehended ideological base, has enabled the traditional leaders, the ulama, to assume a popular base of authority. By the end of the nineteenth century a coalition of the Iranian national bourgeoisie--represented by the bazaar--and the high ulama successfully staged the Tobacco Revolt. The Constitutional
Revolution of 1905-1911 saw the climax of this alliance which brought, albeit for a short period, the constitutional government to Iran. The ulama of Shi'ah Islam played a decisive role in these confrontations. Their popularity with the lower classes enabled them to draw upon a vast resource composed of the underprivileged masses and the bazaars financial support. Each component part of this historic coalition in the meantime has had its own grievances against their common enemy, the monarchy.

For the majority of ulama, the threats posed by the advancement of alien (Western) cultural patterns--leading to the "corruption" of the Irano-Islamic culture--had been joined with a serious threat to their traditional functions. The advancing forces of modernization and development embodied in the concept of secularization had been gradually eroding many of the ulamas' traditional functions. Considering Islam as a complete socio-political and economic doctrine, many of the ulama have found modern secularizing trends in education, judiciary, traditional (Shi'ite) beliefs, etc., as threats to their very survival.

The major source of grievance for the secular opposition, on the other hand, has been its inability to share political power with the ruling groups. In recent times, the curtailment by the government of basic human rights, i.e., freedom of speech and press, freedom of association, etc., have all contributed to the furtherance of the secular opposition to the monarchy. The formation of these conflict groups has been in the makings for over a century in Iran. It has been the authoritarian nature of the State that had, until recently, allowed only a very small portion of the conflict to surface. The intensity
and speed of the earlier stages of revolutionary process may be attributed to the explosive potential of the conflict that had been subdued by the coercion of the State. The fact that the conflict between the opposition and the State was over symbolic as well as concrete issues; the highly effective strategy of the application of Islamic concepts and values, i.e., martyrdom, self-sacrifice, salvation, and altruism made the overall posture of the conflict much more intense; and hence its regulation became more difficult. Thus while the formation of conflict groups may have been hastened immediately before the revolutionary outbreaks, their inception in the Iranian political arena took place long ago. What is of significance, and in line with the assumptions made by the RM model, is the persistence of certain traditional (communal) patterns of organization that proved so crucial in the process of resource mobilization. In specific, the continuity of the Shi'ah cultural patterns and organizational capabilities are of importance, since it is purported to the eventual takeover of the revolutionary Iran by the members of clergy.

The economic causes of the social conflict in Iran are varied and deeply rooted in the politico-economic structure of the country. Both de Tocqueville and Marx have discussed the relative prosperity of economic institutions prior to the outbreak of major world revolutions. There is very little doubt that Iran experienced one of its fastest economic growths ever in the early 1970s. Subsequent to the quadrupling of oil prices in 1973, for almost three years Iran went through a very rapid period of structural transformation and social change. What is crucial is to identify and explain relationships between economic
development and social change. The rapid pace of economic growth has already been identified as a major contributing factor to political destabilization, particularly at the earlier phases of economic growth.\footnote{13}

There are those who also believe that rapid economic change tends to disrupt cultural integrity and threaten traditional value systems which in turn may increase alienation and disenchantment with the existing system. That indeed could be taken as a cause for further grievances.

What seems to be more important though are the structural dislocations produced by the rapid pace of economic change which may further hurt the unprepared infrastructural organs. For instance, permanent population dislocations--primarily in the form of rural-urban exodus--and the rapid emergence of a nouveau-riche speculator class, coupled with an unexpected deterioration of the economic development plans were all among the contributing factors to the furtherance of polarization and class antagonism in Iran.

Massive numbers of rural unemployed labor force--primarily in the unskilled/semi-skilled categories--confronted high inflation rates which consumed a major portion of their income. Problems of housing for the poor and rural migrants became intense resulting in various confrontations with the government. As already discussed by Oberschall:

"The initial period of economic development is accompanied by direct and indirect forms of coercion to make labor available for new enterprises. . . . Crafts and village production decline under the impact of imported manufactures, and land for cultivation and grazing may be alienated."\footnote{14}

In the course of recent Iranian history, the bazaar has played a symbolic as well as objective (economic) role in the opposition to the
monarchy. Its closure, for example, would have significant effects on the nature and intensity of the oppositional confrontation with government policies. Rumors such as: "The bazaar is closed today" would carry similar definition for the majority of the Iranian population. The symbolic meaning of it would indicate some kind of political problem which involves the government! Even for the uneducated and politically unsophisticated masses it would mean imminent conflict which involves government. The response of the bazaar institutions to the calls—often made by the ulama—for its closure has been generally favorable. The extent of its involvement, however, may include certain consideration for the economic integrity of the bazaar. Too much of a continuous chaos will undoubtedly interrupt normal functions and may jeopardize its necessary functions. For that reason, the bazaar has not welcomed instability and prolonged economic disruptions. In the case of the Iranian revolution of 1979, the bazaar had found itself in a traditional alliance with the ulama. The bazaaries in the meantime maintain close kinship ties with the ulama; and particularly in the case of the older-generation bazaaries, their "leisure-time activities" are religiously oriented. Religious rites and rituals have become an integral part of Iranian Islamic culture. The repressive nature of the polity has helped to intensify the political interpretation of religious symbols.

The bazaar, in the meantime, has sponsored large scale processions to commemorate significant religious events in the Shi'ite history. Informal associations between the bazaar and the mosque have provided the devout Moslim (mostly members of lower classes) a way to maintain
his ties with his guild/profession on the one hand; and with the organization of the mosque and its leaders, ulama, on the other. 17

The institution of the bazaar has historically had two major reasons for its opposition to the State. First, with the advancement of the world capitalist interest, the Iranian national bourgeoisie has been threatened by the growth of a dependent (comprador) bourgeoisie in close association with the Court. The second reason stems from the bazaar's close association—filial as well as financial—with the religious institution. 18
Political Discontent

The authoritarian nature of the State in Iran for the past decades had made democratic processes ineffective. The increasing authority of the State's controlling organs, i.e., the secret police, SAVAK, had eroded the State's legitimacy in the eyes of many. By excluding political competition and rivalry, and by disbanding free political associations, the old regime had maintained an exclusive claim over the political machinery. The improper exercises of power by the ruling groups in general and the Shah in particular were considered illegitimate since they consistently violated the spirit of the 1906 constitution. In theory, Iran was to be a constitutional monarchy. In practice, though, it had increasingly become a "dictatorial monarchy," further throwing the issue of "legitimacy" to the forefront of political dispute.

In the international political arena, the old regime's intimate relationships with certain foreign interests, particularly the U.S., at the expense of its own national well being had aggravated many nationalist/leftist groups. The trend of its economic development was taken as a further sign of its dependency to the world capitalist system. Nevertheless, it has been strongly suggested that the promotion and implementation of certain policies within the world capitalist system, in particular President Carter's Human Rights Policy, may have contributed to the build-up and further strengthening of conflict groups in Iran. An often mentioned reason for the government's ineptitude in dealing with the opposition—particularly during the earlier phases of the revolutionary movement—has been attributed to the lack of
adequate support of (the dictatorial monarchy by) the U.S. government during the crucial stages of the revolutionary process.

On the theoretical level it seems that while the country had made substantial economic improvements, a parallel effort in building adequate political organizations never took hold. Political conflicts tend to occur, according to Oberschall's theory of mobilization and social conflict, "frequently but with greater intensity and destructive potential in authoritarian than in democratic systems." Furthermore, "the dominance of political over all other institutions politicize all manner of conflicts. Where strikes are outlawed and other forms of public opposition prohibited, a strike for higher wages must appear as a political challenge, not simply as a means of gaining economic improvement." The authoritarian nature of the Iranian monarchy had denied the Iranian society adequate outlets for the expression of its grievances. This factor may have contributed more than any other single issue to the building up of the frustrations and grievances of the middle-class intelligentsia. So as the old regime began its "liberalization" policies in the mid-70s, the old and long-awaited grievances surfaced at an alarming rate and intensity. As stated by Oberschall, "A period of liberalization after a long period of oppression allows the surfacing of long-dormant grievances and demands going far beyond those initially voiced and anticipated by the authorities; the mobilization of discontented groups and the anticipation of reforms that cannot be realistically instituted in a short time." Among the other "accelerating" factors in the Iranian context one may point to the "erratic" reforms that were staged by the government
in a state of desperation. The granting of freedom of the press, arrests
of unpopular officials, and adherence to Islamic principles were among
some of the conciliatory moves by the government. Nevertheless, certain
other gestures were directed towards repressing the opposition's politi-
cal activities through brutal measures. As Huntington would indicate,
the State-initiated reforms in Iran, like in any other similar situation,
tended to play the role of a "catalyst instead of substituting for
revolution."\footnote{23}

In sum, the Iranian revolution of 1979 was a result of a combina-
tion of political, economic, and cultural factors that throughout cen-
turies have helped to shape the contour of the highly complex and
heterogeneous Iranian society. In order to have an adequate under-
standing of the causes of the revolution one needs to acquire a keen
understanding of the nature and forms of all these forces.

Symbolic manifestations of the political conflict in Iran have
played an instrumental role in the mobilization of the resources for
the revolutionary movement. A variety of revolutionary posters have
become parts of a major campaign by the present power structure to
promote its own objectives in the post-Shah Iran. The effectiveness
and appeal of such imagery on the population as a whole, and the unedu-
cated masses in particular, has provided the revolutionary government
with a powerful instrument for mass mobilization. Considering the sig-
nificance of the formation of large crowds and massive demonstration in
the Iranian politics, such ability in the manipulation of widely com-
prehended symbols have proven invaluable to the preservation and promo-
tion of revolutionary ideology.
Plate I

Poster Depicting Demise of the Shah
And The Rise of Khomeini to Prominence

In this Post-Shah revolutionary poster, the major themes are religious involving the Shah entering Hell while being welcomed by the Devil and a band of already executed officials of his regime. Being dressed in his official uniform and surrounded by snakes and scorpions, he is carrying along a bagful of U.S. currency (depicting his corruption as well as his intimate ties with the U.S. government). The Star of David on his shoe is a further indication of his betrayal of Islam by backing Israel. The Shah's resources such as money and authority (symbolized by the falling crown) are about to disappear in the eternal flames of Hell. Khomeini, situated in the serene environment resembling the Garden of Eden, is depicted as an entity elevated to a point just below the Heavenly angels. The rising sun promises the dawn of a new era of prosperity and hope.
Notes on Chapter IV


4. Ibid., p. 1213.


7. Ibid., p. 5.

8. A number of these propositions have been outlined in Jonathan Turner's *The Structure of Sociological Theory* (Revised Edition), Dorsey Press, 1978.


10. Ibid., p. 30.


16. The martyrdom of the Shi'a Third Imam, Hossein, has provided the Irano-Islamic culture with a role model signifying piety, nobility, justice, and self-sacrifice.


18. It is erroneous to consider the bazaar as a homogeneous entity. Even though its economic function is considered imperative for its survival, there exists a variety of other functions that together comprise its heterogeneous structure.

19. With regards to the issue of Human Rights, it should be stated that its initial effects were at best limited to a small segment of the Iranian population. A number of Iranian middle- and upper-middle class intellectuals were among the few who raised this issue and encouraged the government to implement policies compatible with the Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations. As a whole, though, Carter's Human Rights Policy could be taken as yet another "accelerating" factor that along with other grievances helped to undermine the authority of the old regime.


21. Ibid., p. 70.
22. Ibid., p. 77.

Chapter 5

Uniformities of Revolutions and the Peculiarities of the Iranian Revolutionary Movement
Change and conflict to many social scientists constitute endemic and ubiquitous social processes. A society deprived of political discontent and, occasionally, major structural dislocations is inconceivable. With increasing communications among societies and attempts at modernization the pace of respective change tends to intensify and be hastened. The very nature of the institution of polity, and its treatment/appreciation of these rapid changes plays an important part in shaping the process of conflict formation and its subsequent resolution. Many of the societies that have had major social upheavals in their history of development had had considerable economic difficulties in the years preceding the revolution. Ironically it has been the government and not the individual who had to experience fiscal crises. Thus considerations like "the rising expectations" have been born out of this observation. The examples of the middle-class participation in the revolutionary process (or at least its non-involved posture during the crises) have further been given as the primary driving forces behind the revolutionary mobilization.¹

Also common to major revolutions are the presence of popular slogans that appeal to the poor and underprivileged, who have been hurt the most from rapid structural changes and worsening economic situations. This had either taken place in the shape of economic hardship or political repression; and in many cases, both. Iran, as a matter of fact,
stands as an appropriate example of rapid polarization due to rapid and uneven economic growth. Embedded in the dominant revolutionary ideology are frequently heralded calls for "justice" and "equality," even if it will have to take an overtly fundamentalist form. Very heavy emphasis on the ability of the Islamic ideology in providing the underprivileged with a more "just" and "equal" system, has had great appeal to the masses. The ability of the Shi'ah ulama in exploiting historically significant symbols towards their own political goals is a further proof to the intensity of those conflicts that are symbolically charged.

The inability and inefficiency of the Iranian government in implementing its widely advertised socio-economic programs was particularly felt by the under-privileged lower classes. However, unlike other major world revolutions, the inefficiency of the State apparatus in Iran was not a result of its defeats in foreign wars, or the lack of subsistence staples. Its major problem instead stemmed from a chronic ineptitude on the part of its whole bureaucratic system. Marred by favoritism and corruption; and ill-equipped to deal with emerging social problems--due to rapid social change--the bureaucratic system in Iran had long ceased to be an effective instrument in the application of social programs that would help ease social conflict, and ultimately help to maintain the State intact!

The presence of discriminatory and unequal systems of rewards has led to a lack of enthusiasm and dedication among many middle-class, and traditional middle-class. The State, in the meantime, had realized the need for proper social institutions to accommodate the rapid pace of its
economic growth. Nonetheless, its autocratic nature had delayed development of democratic organizations where political/economic conflicts could be regulated. All the previous efforts by concerned Iranians had ended in failure. The absence of independent popular political organizations was particularly felt when the process of conflict formation had gotten under way (Summer 1978). The only organization acceptable to the masses that had been able to retain its relative independence had been that of religion.

Religion, as a social institution, has been known to have a stabilizing if not pacifying effect on the radicalization of political institutions, in the advanced Western industrialized societies, where the separation of "Church" and "State," at least theoretically, has been accomplished.

It is further argued that religion, as an effective means of social control, has persistently played as a "cushion" to soften the effects of radical political ideologies, i.e., Marxism, that are attracting working classes. The major point of reference in most of these faiths is their emphasis on man's reconciliation with his environment by "lowering his/her this-worldly expectations, i.e., objective and material instead of heightening them, as one would find its included in a radical political organization's slogans."² Along with the classical Marxist analysis religion is considered to support the status quo. It has been symbolic and not objective transformation of the world that has concerned the religious institutions. The ruling classes, in the meantime, tend to extend their control over to the religious institutions.
In those societies where a single major faith is absent from its structure; and instead it is replaced by a number of smaller denominations, the upper classes tend to control the major faith. Furthermore, lower and working classes in these societies tend to be less religious (church attendance), than the middle and upper classes. The element of religion in the majority of Western studies has been considered as "counter-revolutionary" in the political lives of modern societies. It seems that religion and political ideologies of the left compete for the same resources, i.e., the economically deprived individual. However, adequately established labor movements in the West with their clear material objectives for the underprivileged labor has had more success in their recruitment efforts. De-politicization of the church has also worked to the advantage of the secular political organizations.

The very structure of today's developing, Third World country, i.e., the lack of adequately established and democratically administered labor and other political movements, has provided the religious institutions in many of these countries with the impetus to assume a more appealing socio-political position to attract the unorganized and oppressed lower and working classes. As demonstrated by the historical development of the colonialized Asian, African, and Latin American countries, political uprisings against the colonialists at times had assumed religious intona-

Aside from structural inadequacies of political institutions, the separation of "Church" and "State" has not been universal. In the case of the two main branches of Islam, namely Sunnism and Shi'ism, it is
evident that the former had become much more de-politicized than the latter. Thus, for example, the institution of Shi'ah Islam has been considered as a rival to the monarchy in the Iranian political history. Even though a substantial portion of the religious community had been brought under the State control/domination, there still remained those members of the ulama who maintained their opposition to the State. There is, in contrast to the prevailing patterns of religious behavior in the West, close association between the poor, lower-classes, and their religion. The case of the Shi'ah Islam is a further proof to the existence of strong ties between religion and underprivileged. It has been because of this association that the ulama had been able to periodically challenge the monarchy. However, as it had been previously discussed, the Shi'ah institution should be taken as a unique situation whereby its emergence had originally been for political reasons. Its religious dimension was to be added later. So if one considers this institution as a politico-religious opposition movement, many of its behaviors would be explained with more ease. Having its own version of "radicals," "moderates," and "conservatives," the Shi'ah institution had played a variety of roles in the political arena. The majority of its members could, at the time of the revolution, be considered as "conservatives." This was with regards to their positions on various socio-political issues and their position vis-a-vis the Shah, that they would be considered (by the Western standards) as belonging to one or the other political tendencies. It was a particular "radical" segment of the institution of Shi'ah that had opposed the State consistently.
Moreover, in the case of Iran, its ruling elite did not have full control over its religious-nationalistic symbols. The historical challenge between the two institutions has centered around the control of those symbols.

It is evident by now that most major world revolutions started rather spontaneously. Sometimes a single event is taken as the first serious signal announcing the beginning of revolutionary activities. The street riots in Petrograd in March of 1917 are considered as a sign of revolutionary process. In the case of Iran some point to the slum riots in the Summer of 1977, while others consider the Qom riots of January 1978 as the starting point for the revolutionary movement. At the outset, it seems that the Qom riots comply with other historical revolutionary outbreaks that led to the downfall of the old regimes. What makes the Qom riots significant does not lie in its immediate accomplishments. It is, rather, the pattern that was set after those riots that thrust the country into a revolutionary phase. The traditional Moslim observance of the fortieth-Jay-of-the-dead gave the movement more rhythm. The Tabriz riots, following the Qom riots, gave a definite military/revolutionary overtone to the hitherto sporadic and unorganized riots of a small scale. The organizational machinery was a combination of various oppositional groups. But very rapidly it became apparent that the religious opposition was in control of the organization of the movement. Equipped with a record of historical animosity with the regime, and backed by the financial aid of the bazaar and the support of lower and working classes, the ulama soon took over the management of the resources that had become available.
The incompatibility of religious and nationalist forces has already been observed. As Smith observes:

"So long as nationalism meant only anti-imperialism there was no conflict, but sharp ideological cleavages developed over the compatibility of Islam with nationalism when nationalism was defined as the major principle for ordering political loyalties. The whole Islamic tradition of the supra-national ummah ("Community of Believers") came into conflict with modern nationalism based on linguistic and ethnic group identity."4

Perhaps the most pressing issue of the post-Shah Iran stems from the inherent incompatibility of the secular and religious forces. And so long as there remains a lack of understanding of the full participation of all varied political entities in the decision-making process, Iran will remain in a state of turmoil and internal instability.
Notes on Chapter V


Chapter 6

Concluding Remarks, Further Research Prospects
Conclusion

The Iranian revolution of 1979 has generated a considerable amount of interest and scientific curiosity around the globe. The geo-political position of Iran and the ever-increasing significance of the Persian Gulf area to the industrialized West has created a peculiar situation whereby an unusually large number of studies have been designed to explain the Islamic movement that toppled the dictatorial monarchy. Yet it seems that the majority of these interpretations of the revolutionary situation fall short of an adequate understanding that would help to explain the evolution of indigenous social forces within the Iranian society that gave rise to the emergence of the unique revolutionary movement that swept aside the powerful monarchy.

This study is an attempt to shed some light on the process of conflict formation with a particular emphasis on the institution of Shi'ah Islam. The adoption of a historical, comparative methodology was deemed necessary for adequate explanation of the emergence of the revolutionary movement in Iran. It has been the intention of this study not to include later phases of the revolutionary movement in Iran. Therefore the major emphasis has been placed on the historical development of the institution of Shi'ah Islam in Iran. One aim has been to analyze organizational and ideological capabilities of the Shi'ah institution that helped place it in a favorable position after the downfall of the old regime.
The Shi'ah movement was first conceived as the result of political conflicts and power struggles primarily stemming from the issue of Mohammad's succession—Vasayat. Having felt that the role of Imamate (political rulership) should have gone to Mohammad's son-in-law; and their subsequent failure in achieving this objective, these individuals formed the nucleus of a movement that was called the "Ali's Shi'ahs" or Ali's Party. It was not until later in the Shi'ah history (and at the time of the Shi'ah Imam Jafar Sadeq) that further doctrinal differentiations—particularly on the concepts of Imamate and Vasayat gave birth to the Shi'ah sect. The politico-religious opposition party of Shi'ah maintained its minority, anti-secular authority nature in the Arabian Peninsula and Iran. It was the latter country that chose a moderate branch of Shi'ism—the Twelvers—as its State religion when the Safavid rulers came to power in the early sixteenth century. The minority, anti-secular authority position of the Shi'ah leaders was changed during the earlier phases of the supposedly theocratic Safavid rule. As the power of the Shi'ah ulama (the learned men) increased—concurrently with secularization of the Safavid government—they were further able to form—for the first time—a caste representing their own profession's interests. Acquisition of vast religious endowments—mostly in the form of land (Vaqf) provided the ulama with a viable economic resource which in turn brought them a certain degree of independence.

The ulama's social position had traditionally been one of arbitrating the Twelfth Imam's authority, as well as protecting Iranian masses from the excesses of the State. By the time that the Qajars came
to power, the ulama had gained substantial economic and political leverage in the feudal Iran. On behalf of the Shi'ah Imam, the ulama were the protectors of the Iranian masses from the shah's injustices (Zulm) and tyranny (Setam).

The active participation of the Shi'ah institution in the political affairs of the country on a larger scale initially took place during the latter part of the 19th century. The Tobacco Revolts of 1891-2 and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911 saw the formation of an alliance that included the discontented members of the national bourgeoisie (represented by the institution of bazaar), some members of the ulama, and certain secular intellectuals. While proven effective in its challenges to the forces of monarchy and foreign interests, the alliance has demonstrated an inherent lack of sustained cohesion. The separation of the opposition forces (after their initial gains) has frequently occurred along the secular-religious lines.

An inverse relationship between the power of the institutions of monarchy and religion has historically determined the amount of influence exerted by their respective members. Since the ascension of the Pahlavis to power in Iran, the social influence of the Shi'ah institution has been under constant scrutiny. Reza Shah, the founder of the Pahlavi Dynasty, posed serious challenges that jeopardized the integrity of the Shi'ah institution. Certain attempts towards further economic development necessitated the adoption of secular concepts that threatened the monopoly of the Shi'ah institution over the Irano-Islamic cultural symbols. A major part of discontent was aggravated when the monarchy sought to replace a number of traditional symbols with those of the
"imperial" Persia. On the non-symbolic, more objective grounds, further secularization of judiciary and educational institutions (traditionally under the control of the Shi'ah institution) had substantially curtailed the ulama's social influence; and increasing government interference in the management of the Vaqf (endowed) properties had jeopardized their financial autonomy.

The secularist opposition movement of Mohammad Mosaddeq in the late 1940s and early 1950s was the first and perhaps the last serious challenge posed to the monarchy which did not include the ulama among its leadership. Even then the influence of the Shi'ah institution, and particularly its ability in mass mobilization, proved to be a crucial factor in the final defeat of the nationalist movement. The clergy defection to the Court's anti-Mosaddeq camp may have substantially contributed to the downfall of Mosaddeq. It was not, however, until the 1963 uprisings that the Shi'ah institution (a minority of the ulama, to be sure) asserted itself as a viable political opposition to the State. While the June riots of 1963 were ruthlessly crushed and its provocators imprisoned or exiled, they nevertheless marked the beginning of a new phase in the evolution of the Iranian political history.

In the meantime, the ever-repressive and authoritarian monarchy had begun a systematic stifling of the secular oppositional elements. This included members of Mosaddegh's National Front (an umbrella group containing a variety of oppositional ideologies), as well as the radical Left. Representing the interests of the middle class bourgeoisie, the National Front has consistently demonstrated a lack of unity among its member groups, though the lack of cohesion and consensus is highly
visible among the heterogeneous populations in Iran as a whole. In the meantime, unsuccessful in their attempts in propagating their ideology, the indigenous Left had been unable to move effectively beyond the intellectual circles. The lack of a well-developed industrialized labor force had also worked to the detriment of the secular Leftist organizations. The Shi'ah institution, on the other hand, having enjoyed a relatively unobstructed role in the public life, i.e., the mosque gatherings, religious processions, religious publications, etc., was able to attract large sectors of the discontented Iranians. Through an increasingly popular movement many Iranians sought the Shi'ah institution as a viable force to contest the excesses of the dictatorial monarchy. The role of the Shi'ah theoretician, Ali Shari'ati, at this juncture was significant. A substantial number of middle and lower-middle class intellectuals in concurrence with Shari'ati's interpretations of the Shi'ah ideology chose to resist foreign economic and political domination as well as domestic repression. The "Islamization" of many otherwise liberal, left-leaning intellectuals also tended to strengthen the foundation of the newly emerging Islamic movement during the 1970s.

As has been the case with the previous occasions, the alliance between the religious and secular opposition groups was severed once the former had realized that it had a chance to manipulate power in its own hands. Needless to say the nature and composition of the revolutionary Islamic movement at the present time is radically different from the coalition opposition that toppled the monarchy during the upheavals of 1978-1979.
Once the economic crises of late 1976 and early 1977 began to demonstrate its effects in Iran; and once it became apparent that the State's authoritarian structure could be challenged (due primarily to its ineffectiveness in repressing the dissent), anti-government demonstrations spread across the country and took an increasingly religious form. Religious holidays, the seventh-day and fortieth-day mourning of the dead, and even the highly emotional burial ceremonies for the victims of street demonstrations all became as instruments in the hands of the opposition to mobilize the masses in large numbers throughout the country. The State's inability to repress the opposition was also due, in part, to the propagation and adoption of certain Shi'ah concepts by the members of the opposition. In particular the concept of martyrdom was among the most instrumental tools in the hands of the religious leadership. The Ayatollah Khomeini, having asserted his leadership position abroad called upon the populace to sacrifice their lives for the noble causes of the revolutionary movement. The old organization of the "mosque-bazaar" was once again put into action to finance and lead the popular movement. Mass demonstrations and public protests, initially spontaneous and unstructured, gradually evolved into an Islamic-Shi'ah mold around which a variety of oppositional groups chose to gather. Their initial aim (as late as a few months before the downfall of the monarchy) was to return Islam into a constitutional government.

However, the movement was to become rather quickly radicalized to a point where it began demanding the termination of the monarchy as a condition for truce. The lack of popular support coupled with its
inability to effectively coerce the opposition caused the monarchy to disintegrate very rapidly. Plagued by internal conflict and unable to mobilize its own resources the ruling elite of the Pahlavi's and their close associates chose to flee the country. Perhaps the most decisive move that put a speedy end to the old regime was the departure of the Shah in January of 1979. The disintegration of the monarchy was to begin almost immediately after the Shah chose to leave the country. Having been the sole decision maker in almost all important matters of security, including the army, his exclusion from the decision making processes left his successors incapable of mobilizing their rapidly depleting resources. The collapse and eventual disintegration of the Iranian security forces should only be studied in light of the fact that for so long it had been under the exclusive command of the Shah. His removal from Iran dealt a severe blow to its structural integrity.

This study has been an effort to shed some light on the structural variations as well as cultural fixations that together have made the emergence of the "Caste of Ayatollahs" in Iran a reality. Whether the present power structure in Iran could have assumed a different posture remains a hypothetical question. Throughout this study it has become apparent that the religious institution of Shi'ah Islam was indeed in a more favorable position to take over the State apparatus. This has been possible for several reasons. The presence for several centuries of a well-developed organization has provided the Shi'ah institution with an essential element for the mobilization of various resources. Its semi-autonomous economic base has also helped the organization to respond more to its public donars' grievances. The government, being the major
contributor to public discontent, has been criticized and at times challenged by the Shi'ah institution. Equally important to the success of the movement has been the availability of a popular Shi'ah doctrine translated over a long period of time into a language comprehended by the majority of the Iranian population. In particular the lower-classes and underprivileged masses have incorporated the religio-cultural concepts and symbols into their daily lives. The political overtone of many of these concepts has provided the movement with a valuable instrument for mass mobilization. And finally, the availability of charismatic leadership, particularly the one with a long history of opposition to the State and capable of criticizing it from outside the country, provided the movement with a figure that could bring the heterogeneous oppositional groups together.

Having accepted the legitimacy of the revolutionary movement at the time of its initial victory, its ability in governing the country under the banners of Shi'ah Islam is debatable. But since the primary objective of this study has been the analysis of the antecedents to the revolutionary movement, a brief discussion of the post-Shah Iran will appear in the Epilogue.
Epilogue
Epilogue

In retrospect, the Iranian revolution of 1979 should be considered as a positive and progressive movement in that it terminated the rule of a repressive and unpopular monarchy. In line with other major world revolutions it initially provided the Iranian people with an opportunity to combat those elements in their society that had historically denied them an equal and just socio-political and economic order. The revolution of 1979 was only possible because a majority of the population representing a variety of ethnic and religious entities staged a successful struggle to regain their long-awaited freedom.

Unfortunately and in part due to fundamental structural inadequacies, the Iranian revolution has failed to represent the interests of its components in a meaningful fashion. The religious faction of the opposition to the monarchy, having found its potential secular rivals in a disadvantageous position (ideological as well as organizational), has moved to further exploit the situation to its own advantage. Even before the downfall of the old regime the religious faction had begun to isolate and thwart the political activities of the secular factions. The closure of numerous opposition papers; persecution of the prominent members of the secular National Front; and the passage of a constitution tailored to suit a traditional Islamic ideology have all worked to supposedly strengthen the socio-political functions of the
religious caste in Iran.

All this has taken place at the expense of relinquishing freedom (supposedly guaranteed by the Islamic constitution) to a large number of the Iranian population. Almost from the very beginning of its ascension to power, the Islamic revolution has persistently moved to alienate all those who have not approved of its proposed vision for an Islamic Iran. The non-compromising and authoritarian nature of its dominant ideology, i.e., the revolutionary Shi'ism, has excluded a great number of significant political groups that would have otherwise contributed to the restructuring of an order which would have been more representative of the varied Iranian population. The net result of this intransigent behavior has contributed to an increasing atmosphere of distrust and rising social conflict.

While its challenges (as a minority, anti-monarchical movement) had provided the Shi'ah ideology a prominent place among the opposition in the pre-revolutionary Iran, its repressive and exclusivist position of the post-Shah era (demonstrated by the activities of the Islamic Republican Party) has given the Islamic revolutionary movement a counter-revolutionary posture!

The immediate threat that faces Iran lies in the continuation of an "order" that has proven itself incapable of solving complex socio-economic and political problems of the post-Shah Iran. The danger particularly arises from the unjustified claims of the newly formed clergy-dominated power elite for its competency to rule Iran; and to eventually lead it to a more equitable social order dictated by the tenents of the Mohammad's Islam.
It seems increasingly the case that a genuinely popular, anti-authoritarian movement which had the support of a cross-section of Iranian population has been exploited by a certain sector of its membership to solely promote its own interests. Having established itself as the sole authority of the revolution, the caste of clergy has moved to consolidate its power bases by eliminating its potential adversaries as well as abandoning its old friends. The clerical power has been particularly enhanced through the establishment of coercive Islamic organizations such as the revolutionary committees (Komiteh) and the revolutionary Guards. The degree of the new form of theocratic oppression has reached a point that even the spirit and content of the newly formulated Islamic Constitution has not escaped the arbitrary rule of its initiators!

What lies ahead for Iran is a prolonged stage of rising tensions and mounting social conflicts. Deteriorating economy, massive unemployment, curtailment of free political activities will all help to undermine the authority of the present power structure as Iran moves closer to the next phase of its revolutionary process. It is increasingly apparent that the same basic socio-political and economic grievances (unfulfilled by the caste of clergy), albeit under different circumstances, will once again be the determinant factors in further shaping the future of Iran.

So long as the forces of repression and oppression maintain their prevalence (no matter under what ideological banner!) in the Iranian society, any meaningful solution to the overriding problems of the heterogeneous and complex Iranian society will be unattainable.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Jazani, Bijhan. Tarikh-e-Sisaleh Iran (in Persian), two volumes, Payam Publishers, (no date).


Lipset, Seymour Martin, et. al. (eds.). Sociology and History: Methods basic Books, 1968.


