

Arts, Research, Innovation and Society

Ali Pirzadeh

Iran Revisited

Exploring the Historical Roots of Culture,
Economics, and Society

 Springer

Arts, Research, Innovation and Society

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Series Foreword

Creativity in general and the arts in particular are increasingly recognized as drivers of cultural, economic, political, social, and scientific innovation and development. In art and research (see Bast 2013; Ritterman et al. 2011), some of the principal questions to be explored by the **ARIS (Arts, Research, Innovation, and Society)** project are outlined (Bast et al. 2015):

1. Could and should artists be researchers?
2. How are the systems of the arts and the sciences connected and/or disconnected?
3. What is the position and status of the arts in defining the terms “progress” and “development”?

Other key questions that the **ARIS** project aims to focus on are (these are clearly indicative and not all-inclusive or exclusive of additional issues, themes, and questions that may arise in the context of the **ARIS** theory, policy, and practice discourse):

1. What is the impact of the arts in societal development?
2. How are the arts interrelated with the mechanisms of generating social, scientific, and economic innovation?
3. What is, could be, and should be the nature, dynamics, and role of the arts in shaping the research and innovation theories, policies, and practices such as the New Growth Theory?
4. In the same context, what could and should be a new understanding of the support for funding of the arts as a stand-alone pillar with its own merit, value, and potential along with research and innovation of smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth that is socially embedded and cohesive development and progress?
5. What are the socioeconomic, sociopolitical, and socio-technical implications for society from the answers to any and all of these questions?
 - 5.1. For instance, what are the particular implications for sectors such as politics, education, health, manufacturing, and others?

- 5.2. How can the New Growth Theory be understood in the context of creative economies, societies, and democracies?
- 5.3. Are there limits to growth in the traditional economy and what is the role of artistic research and arts-based innovations in redefining growth, development, and progress?
- 5.4. What are the role, interdependencies, and dynamics of arts versus research versus innovation versus society as catalysts, drivers, and accelerators of smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth?
- 5.5. What is the relationship of arts to “quality of democracy” in theory and practice?

In particular and based on this context, Creativity, Invention, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (CI2E, see also the Springer Encyclopedia of CI2E, edited by Carayannis 2013) are key drivers of smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth that are both enhanced and constrained by financial as well as social and environmental considerations and trade-offs. In this context, **Arts, Research, Innovation, and Society (ARIS)** are four vantage points from which one could derive and develop insights as to how best to drive cultural, economic, political, social, and scientific development and progress.

The Springer **ARIS** series explores (at the macro, meso, and micro levels and in terms of qualitative as well as quantitative studies) theories, policies, and practices about the contributions of artistic research and innovations towards defining new forms of knowledge, knowledge production (see Mode 3 Knowledge Production Systems by Carayannis and Campbell 2006, 2009, 2012), as well as knowledge diffusion, absorption, and use. Artistic research, artistic innovations, and arts-based innovations have been major transformers as well as disruptors of the ways in which societies, economies, and political systems perform. Ramifications here refer to the epistemic socioeconomic, sociopolitical and socio-technical base, and esthetic considerations on the one hand as well as to strategies, policies, and practices on the other, including sustainable enterprise excellence considerations in the context of knowledge economies, societies, and democracies (see also Quadruple and Quintuple Helix innovation systems concepts by Carayannis and Campbell 2009 and 2010).

The series features research monographs, edited volumes, proceedings, briefs, and textbooks and may also include handbooks and reference works, and in-print as well online rich media encapsulations of ideas and insights, representing cutting-edge research and the synthesis of a body of work in the field.

ARIS book series: <http://www.springer.com/series/11902>

Gerald Bast
Elias G. Carayannis
David F.J. Campbell

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Foreword

The Springer ARIS book on Iran is NOT about theology, politics, or regime critiques.

This book aims to serve as a conceptual guide and preamble into Iran's present and explore its potential future developmental pathways starting with a multifaceted, multilayered, and multimodal approach—it aims in effect to be a prospective retrospective of and about the Iranian society and economy.

The vision and aspiration of the author are to serve as a launch pad and platform for appreciating the rich fabric of the Iranian culture, history, and intellectual tradition for audiences around the world.

In so doing, however, it does NOT aim to inject itself into the current ongoing geostrategic, geo-technological, geoeconomic, and geopolitical (GEO-STEP) dynamics—(Carayannis, Invited Lecture, EU-US Dialog for Growth, Vienna, Austria, 2011)—despite the fact that the release of the book in May 2016 is concurrent with major changes in the ways and means Iran engages with the rest of the world (the nuclear deal with Iran and the end of sanctions).

In fact, this book has been in the making for several years now and long before any expectation or anticipation of such developments was in the offing.

In short, the book aims to enlighten individual readers from around the world and contribute to some measure to improve the understanding and appreciation of the Iranian society, economy, and culture on a temporal and spatial foundation that spans millennia and not days or decades.

In that sense, it aspires and to some measure achieves to be time, culture, and border-transcending and in that regard universal.

- What is this book about?
 - It is a multifaceted, multilayered, and multimodal prospective retrospective of the condition of the Iranian people and their society and economy.
- What this book is not about?
 - This book is not critique/treatise of political, religious, and ideological issues.

This book is not meant to be part of the geostrategic, geo-technological, geoeconomic, and geopolitical (GEO-STEP) discourse going on right now and in the context of recent developments. Rather, it is meant to be time, culture, and border-transcending.

This book has been in making for some time and overlap with current events is purely conjectural and unintended.

- Who is this book for?
 - Citizens around the world to better understand the Iranian people and their history, culture, and socioeconomic fabric.

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Elias G. Carayannis

Preface

*In this our round of coming and of going
Beginning and conclusion pass all knowing;
No wight in all the world can tell us truly
Whence we have come and whither we are going.¹*

(Omar Khayyam)

Society is perceived in this study as an enduring social group whose members have developed, organized, and institutionalized patterns of relationships through interaction with one another, and who act under the structural constraints of the state in which they live. This delineation differentiates the concept of “society” from that of “nation,” which roughly can be defined as a community of people who share history and belief in common traditions, interests, and purpose. This is an important distinction because conceptualization of societal responsibility that involves responsibility of citizens on the basis of citizenship and social membership, and not based on their national identity or other kinds of entrenched cultural affinities. In this context, the responsibility of individual members of society is derived from an obligation to act for the benefit of society at large.

This book argues that individuals should be held accountable as the primary agent in shaping his/her life and such accountability needs to be explicitly acknowledged in order to matter. This is social responsibility, which is the missing pillar in the current conceptualization of Iran. The main predicament in Iran does not lie in polity or economics, but rather in the fact that Iranians repeatedly have evaded responsibility for their own deeds. It is imperative for us to come to a realization that the nature of the State anywhere is to a great extent the product of its social environment and context. In other words, a State is more or less a reflection of its citizens.

¹Whinfield EH (1901) (trans) The Quatrains of Omar Khayyam: the Persian. K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, 2nd edition, p 340, versus 508. The text is available at: <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044096173026;view=1up;seq=403>. Also see <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/umar-khayyam/>

This book subscribes to the notion that masses are the most important factors in the overall scheme of a nation. As a result, it critically reviews some orthodox and popular perceptions of Iranian history, both inside and outside Iran that hindered any meaningful betterment of the society. For instance, beliefs that hold the imperial countries and their agents responsible for the state of affairs in Iran have constituted an image of Iranians as passive bystanders with no power to change their destiny, despite the fact that the popularly backed 1978 Islamic Revolution has overturned the entire social, economic, and political fabric of the country. In short, such popular narratives have portrayed Iranians as subjugated masses throughout history. The standard paradigm in these sorts of inferences resembles a fast-food advertisement: within one minute the story of an entire drama unfolds.

Corollary to the above observations, **this book asserts that the appropriation of extrinsic notions such as democracy without critical narrative/thinking only serves as a slogan, symbol, and deception, and to a great extent prevarication, which provides no fresh air to breathe and no vacant place to build.**² What is not clear is why we should want to pursue such democratic notions that Schumpeter³ defines as a system in which rulers are selected by competitive election, and Popper⁴ defends it as a system of control, an instruction if you would, to determine what the winners and losers should and should not do; the only system in which citizens can get rid of government without bloodshed. One of the major problems in such an appropriation is that it is inevitable not to differentiate between an adopted idea (medium) from its intent (message), and hence devalue the message while celebrating the medium.⁵

This book is also highly attentive to the various roles our actions play in determining our being throughout our finite lives. This conviction lies in the belief that nothing could be more contradictory in life than an essential being that has been inactive; a being that has fashioned nothing, particularly his own life. Such sedentary life would resemble an existence of a mere lifeless entity that is deprived of will. **Throughout this book, I, as a witness observer, intend to underline that our chosen paths, as Iranians, to elevate ourselves above our condition have perpetually failed due to our habitual aspiration that forms based on wishful thinking;** an informal cognitive fallacy that assumes that a desire for something is adequate to attain it, irrespective of existing conditions. This deficit has indeed allowed us to embark on a course of action that at first seems to be the “dream stage,” but soon it becomes clear that such make-believe can never be reconciled with our cultural reality. These daydreams have always culminated in bewildering outcomes, which have indeed inflicted irreversible harm to Iran and Iranians’ aspirations.

²See Kuttner R (2003) The Ideological Imposter. In Flippin R (ed) The Best American Political Writing, Thunder’s Mouth Press, p 65.

³Schumpeter JA (1942) Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy. Harper & Brothers.

⁴Popper K (1962) The Open Society and Its Enemies. Routledge and Paul Kegan. Paul PLC.

⁵For instance, in envisioned state corporatism, property would not be seen as private booty, but as a procuration of the entire community, not as an expression and means of personal power, but as a trust or fief for which the proprietor owed accountability to the state as well as public.

The 1906 Constitutional movement is an ample example of this phenomenon. The dominant thoughts in the pre-constitutional era were generally pegged to extrinsic political/philosophical developments. Among them, French ideas were a dominant penetrating factor in intellectual life in Iran.⁶ For one thing, many intellectuals as well as clergies⁷ who participated in the constitutional movement, according to Laetitia Nanquette, belonged to French-style Freemason Lodges, allegedly defending progress and modernism under eye-catching mottos like “the Awakening Iran” (Bedari-ye Iran), recognized by the Grant Orient of France.⁸ Most notable among them was Mīrzā Malkom Khan, an ardent constitutionalist who was “credited” with the introduction of freemasonry in Iran.⁹ In fact, Mīrzā’s essay, *Ketābča-ye ḡaybī yā daftar-e tanzīmāt* (Booklet inspired by the unseen, or the book of reforms), is the earliest known systematic exposition in Persian of a constitutional system.¹⁰ The essay was the first Persian text to introduce key terms such as *qānūn* (codified law and, later, constitution), *eṣlāḥāt* (reforms), *majles-e sūrā* (consultative council), *mellat* (nation), *mellī* (national), and *ḥoqūq-e mellat* (rights of the people), and it is the earliest known systematic exposition in Persian of a constitutional system.¹¹

In retrospect, it is not surprising that the attempt to convert Iran into a modern version of a French nation-state did not succeed. This is mainly due, I contend, to the fact that change (reform or progress) cannot be attained by standing on ostentatious intellectual ground and lecturing laymen about notions that are utterly extrinsic and irrelevant to their daily lives. More to the point, I argue that ideological mimicry, no matter how novel the assumed ideas may seem, has limited contemporary Iranians’

⁶For the impact of the French Revolution on development of Constitutional discourse in Iran, see Tavakoli-Targhi M (1990) *Asar-e Agahi az Enqelab-e Faranseh dar Shekl-giri-ye Engalab-ye Masrutiyat dar Iran* (Age of Awareness of French Revolution in forming Constitutional Revolution in Iran). *Iran Nameh* 8 (3) (Summer 1360/1990), p 411–439; Tavakoli-Targh M (1990) *Refashioning Iran: Language and Culture During the Constitutional Revolution*. *Islamic Study* 23 (1–4), p 77–101; Tavakoli-Targh M (2000) *Persia and the French Revolution*. In: Yarshater E (ed) *Encyclopedia Iranica*; Keddie NR (1995). *The French Revolution and the Middle East*. In: Kiddie NR (ed) *Iran and the Muslim World; Resistance and Revolution*, Macmillan; Mohammadi M (2003) *Enqelab-e eslami dar moqayesseh ba enqelab-ha-ye Faranseh va Russieh* (Islamic Revolution in comparison to French and Russian Revolutions). Ma’aref.

⁷For instance, according to Janet Afary, Shaikh Ibrahim Zanjani, son of a leading theologian and a member of the first Majlis, was a member of Freemasonry. He was also the prosecutor in the special tribunal that sentenced Shaikh Fazlollah Nouri. (Afary J (1996) *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906–1911: Grassroots Democracy, Social Democracy & the Origins of Feminism*. Columbia University Press, p 265).

⁸See Nanquette L (2013) *Orientalism Versus Occidentalism: Literary and Cultural Imaging Between France and Iran Since the Islamic Revolution*. I. B. Tauris, p 207, footnote 19.

⁹Algar H (1970) *An Introduction to the History of Freemasonry in Iran*. *Middle Eastern Studies* 6(3), p 276.

¹⁰See Amanat A (2011) *Constitutional Revolution i. Intellectual background*. *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Available at: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/constitutional-revolution-i>.

¹¹*Ibid*.

ability to think of ideas that are pertinent to our own lives.¹² And yet, for more than 200 years, protagonists of these sort of ideological mimicries have insisted upon such mimicry as the essential ingredient for “progress” in Iran. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt,¹³ in his book *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*, recalls a remarkable conversation he had with “a little old man with a long nose and very black eyes [Mirza] Malkum Khan, the Persian Ambassador [to Britain],” who was in the company of Philip Currie (British Ambassador to the Ottoman). According to Blunt, Mirza Malkum revealed to him, “...Europe, indeed, is incapable of inventing a real religion, one which shall take possession of the souls of men; as incapable as Asia is of inventing a system of politics. The mind of Asia is speculative, of Europe practical. In Persia we every day produce ‘new Christs.’ We have ‘Sons of God’ in every village, martyrs for their faith in every town.... I went to Europe and studied there the religious, social, and political systems of the West. I learned the spirit of the various sects of Christendom, and the organization of the secret societies and freemasonries, and I conceived a plan, which should incorporate the political wisdom of Europe with the religious wisdom of Asia. I knew that it was useless to attempt a remodelling of Persia in European forms, and I was determined to clothe my material reformation in a garb which my people would understand, the garb of religion.”¹⁴ Blunt ended the paragraph by observing, “It was strange to hear this little old man, in European clothes and talking very good French, recounting a tale so purely Oriental.”¹⁵

This book neither rejects novelty nor denies the emancipating power of Western ideas, but rather suggests that to attain possible benefits of these notions entails far more than a mere expression of intent. To proclaim that, for instance, “Iran must become Europeanized” only serves, at best, as a cosmetic purpose and nothing else. There is no doubt that effects of notions like liberty, democracy, rule of law, free general election, etc. had led to prosperity in the West. However, presenting them as solutions to our problems without taking into consid-

¹²To eliminate misinterpretation of this observation, some key clarifications are in order. First, my concern about mimicry is not absolute. In fact, it must be obvious that certain types of problems can and should be addressed in this manner. If a cure for cancer or a lost-cost procedure for desalinating water is ever invented, the more rapidly it can be emulated, given it is made available to everyone, the better. Second, history of social, economic, and political development in contemporary Iran clearly illustrated the fact that the quest for the solution is itself the problem. This is especially so in matter pertaining to conceptualization, policy-making, and institutional setting in the country. See, for instance, Pritchett L, Woolcock M (2004) Solutions when the Solution is the Problem: Arraying the Disarray in Development. *World Development* 32(2), p 191–212.

¹³Was an English poet and writer, who allegedly had anti-imperialist sentiment, and was a believer in an Islamic renaissance. According to Hamid Algar, “Blunt was an early British proponent of Arab separatism and of the establishment of an Arab pseudo-caliphate under British tutelage.” (See Algar H (1973) *Mirza Malkum Khan: A Study in the History of Iranian Modernism*. University of California Press, p 11, footnote 40).

¹⁴Blunt WS (1922) *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*. Alfred. A. Knopf, p 62 and 63. Blunt later stated that based on Mirza’s observation, “if I was to effect anything either for the Arabs or any other of the Moslem peoples....I must first make myself thoroughly acquainted with their religious ideas.” *Ibid*.

¹⁵*Ibid*, p 63–64.

eration the eighteenth century Europe social, economic, and political circumstances under which these concepts were thought of, formed, and prevailed in addition to the time required for these notions to bear fruits, is an absolute travesty. The consequences of such mimicries have not only ravaged immense resources and valuable time but have also created a bewildering condition that drove the country into a delusional mindset, and hence hemmed in any meaningful progress in Iran¹⁶. The gravity of this condition can be illustrated by the fact that while it took England almost 500 years from the declaration of the Magna Carta, a document that is considered a cornerstone of individual liberties of British society and presents an ongoing challenge to arbitrary rule, in 1215 to hold the first general election in 1708, the Iranian first direct public election occurred only 5 years after the *supplementary fundamental laws were enacted*.

The only viable lesson we can learn from others is that we must realize that we have been left with no choice but to ascertain a base that tolerates and encourages ideas that would reflect our own condition. The necessary condition to achieve this stage, first and most, **requires the bond of a common unity, or togetherness for a better word, among inhabitants of this ancient land. In this book, I assert that such common bounding is absent.** In this context, I argue in this book that our Iranian national identity, unlike European's nationalism that is based on ethnicity and "blood-kinship,"¹⁷ is founded on cohabitation and history of the ancient land. In short, Iranian nationalism is a phenomenon that rests in the historical conscious of Iranian people. A better understanding of Iranian nationalism can only be attained when one takes into consideration the ethnic diversity of the inhabitants that have coexisted for more than a millennium; the complex and nuanced relationship between Islam and nationalism; the manner in which non-Iranian scholars have reconstructed the history of this ancient civilization according to their own modern perspectives; arrays of local/regional uprisings for self-autonomy from the eleventh century onward, which have invalidated the application of conventional categorizations, e.g., ethno nationalism, civic (as opposed to ethnic) nationalism, peripheral

¹⁶Or better said in the eloquent words of Rumi, a 13th-century Persian poet: "khalq ra taqlideshan bar baad daad ae do sad laanat bar in taqlid baad". (People had been destroyed by mimicry I thousand curse this mimicry). (see Molana (Rumi), Masnavi, Daftar Dovom (Second Volume). Available at: <http://ganjooor.net/moulavi/masnavi/daftar2/sh15/>).

¹⁷For instance, Germans and Frenchmen considered themselves as constituting nations by a blood relationship; that they were, in some sense, natural races, nations by birth. However, Asian countries like Chinese nationalism or Japanese nationalism also share the similar claim. For instance, Sun underlined his rationale for a Han-centered nationalism, "The Chinese race totals four hundred million people; of mingled race there are only a few million Mongolian, a million or so Manchus, a few million Tibetans, and over a million Mohammedan Turks...for the most part, the Chinese people are of the Han or Chinese race with common blood, common language, common religion, and common custom-a single, pure race (See Zheng Y (1999) *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China: Modernization, Identity, and International Relations*. Cambridge University Press, p 68). It is however noted that for those who are particularly concerned about the biological purity of their breed should be reminded of the witty remark made by R. Linton: "It has been said that the only group which would have any chance of maintaining absolute purity of blood would be one all of whose women were too hideous to attract the men of any other tribe and all of whose men were too cowardly to steal the women of any other tribe." (See Linton R (1936) *The study of man: An introduction*, Student's Edition, Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc, p 34).

nationalism, irredentist nationalism, unification nationalism; and domination of the ancient rituals such as Nouroz (the Iranian New Years) over the Iranian Plateau. **In this context, nationalism in Iran has diverged instead of converging into a modern sense of the word.**

Unfortunately, in search for causes of our perpetual failures to attain desirable progress, nothing is ever exposed except that for certain occasions (periods) one group has always been singled out as the perpetrator, i.e., Arabs in the Middle Ages, British and Americans in the contemporary period. In addition, there is an irresistible impulse among Iranians to blame *a state* for almost everything that is wrong at home. Instead of looking inward, we, as a people, persistently seek to uphold the perfect image of ourselves as innocent victims, which suggests not only that we have done no wrong but nothing at all was done which might possibly connect us with the predicament at hand.

The above arguments may be interpreted as the insidious suggestion that it is within the power of Iranians not to *suffer*, and that they only continue to do so because they are *unwilling* to give up their benighted way. In response, I would like to point out that while it is possible that the overall effects of scapegoating may have escaped peoples' attention, such lack of awareness, nonetheless, should not be considered as a validation of their deed. To this point, Foucault's observation is illuminating: "People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does."¹⁸

I am hoping that this book opens the dialog about Iranians and students of Iranian studies to take into consideration that the most important aspect of a country is its people. What has been said in this book is nothing more than our philosophers, our thinkers keep telling us that we should do, from the ancient times to present, and somehow we manage to ignore them:

*"Know yourself; for if you know yourself
you will also know the difference between good and evil.
First become intimate with your own inner being,
then become the commander of the whole company.
When you know yourself, you know everything;
when you know that, you have escaped from all evil."*¹⁹

(Nasir-i Khusrau)

Washington, DC

Ali Pirzadeh Ph.D.

¹⁸Dreyfus HL, Rabinow P (1983) Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics. University of Chicago, p 187.

¹⁹Arberry AJ (1958) Classical Persian Literature. George Allen & Unwin LTD, London, p 67.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In 1886, Nietzsche wrote *Beyond Good and Evil*, which consisted of 296 aphorisms, ranging in length from a few sentences to a few pages. However, in one of those axioms (No. 146) he wrote, if you gaze long enough into an abyss the abyss also gazes into you. My take on Nietzsche's observation is that if you stay long enough on the edge of history (abyss), the history would eventually catch-up with you. This realization occurred when Iran came face-to-face with the Western advancements (military might), which imposed an existential threat to the permanency of the ruling Qajar family. Indeed, our backwardness compelled us to endure successions of defeats and humiliations, in which Iranian rulers were forced to realize that time has run out and there is no more room for a status quo oblivion. In the aftermath of horrendous routs at the hand of foreign powers, the Qajar Crown Prince, Abbas Mirza (1789–1833), in his address to a French Diplomat has stated:

“People are proud of me here, but only because they are not aware of my weakness, honestly what have I done to be considered at the level western warriors? What city did I conquer or what revenge could I take after our tribes have been plundered? . . . I now realized that the French warfare skills are so developed that Russians are nothing compare to them and yet my whole army strived to deal with a few Russian soldiers and they could not. I don't know what this power that makes you superior is. The thing that caused your progress and our weakness. You are the masters of military skills, fighting, conquest and also application of reason in practice and we still are floating in the sea of ignorance and corruption and rarely think of our future. Is population, fertility or riches of the East is less than the West? Or is the sun that rises on us before you has less beneficial qualities than when it rises on Europe? Or does the God who his favors and blessings are bestowed upon every single particle on earth equally wants you to be superior? I don't think so. Foreigner! Talk to me. Tell to me what I should do *to wake Iranians up*. Should I act like the Russian Tsar who left his thorn, so he could observe your cities, I too should leave

Iran... Or I should appeal to a Wiseman and learn about what a Prince needs to know ...”¹

While his sincerity and integrity has been well acknowledged by the friends and foes,² his appeal reveals the desperation of the future king who still failed to see the glaring reality. Nothing could have awoken Iranians but Iranian themselves. This is the reason why all efforts have failed and will continue in vain to guide Iran out of its deadlock until the people stand up and declared themselves, and act as, in Heidegger’s word, “being rather than nothing”.³ Act of being, in the context of present discussion, is what no nation can afford if it intends to be accounted for, and in this we have failed. It is truly a cumbersome task, if all not impossible, to point to a single innovative contribution that we have contributed to the human civilization for more than 600 years.⁴ If Edward Shils is right (when he reiterated Alexander von Rüstow’s view) that, *no generation creates most of what it uses, believes, and practices*,⁵ then this frozen period is the result of cumulative effects of generations that created no substantive consequences. Assuming, the conventional generational interval is about 25 years, in the course of 600 years there have been 24 generations who have been integral part of this unprecedented drought of novelty. This simple arithmetic, perhaps metaphorically, reveals a passage to our *historical oblivion*, to which the present generation is held responsible to redeem itself by grasping the prevailing condition in light of what has transpired in the past.

¹ Jaubert A (1821) Voyage en Arménie et en Perse fait dans les années 1805 et 1806. Félicier et Nepveu. (1943) Mosaferrat be Iran va Armanestan (trans:Mahmoud Hedayat). Tehran, pp. 94–95. Emphasis added. See also Adamiyat F (1969) Amir Kabir and Iran [in Persian]. 3rd edition, Karazmi Publisher, Tehran, pp. 161–2.

² For instance, one Russian Diplomat called the prince [Abbas Mirza] Iran’s Peter the great, while the other express his astonishment to see Crown Prince in that part of the world...is aware of political affairs and military advancement of the West in the last 10 years...his presence indicates a new chapter in the national Iranian history with undeniable affects...Morier observed Great Mirza is greater than anyone I met in Iran, and as Fraser stated, “if all the world gathered around, they neither can bring him, nor force him to betray his country.”(see Adamiyat F (1969) Amir Kabir and Iran [in Persian]. 3rd edition, Karazmi Publisher, Tehran, pp. 161–2).

³ Martin Heidegger on question of being once wrote, “the wonder that a world is worlding around us at all, that there are beings rather than nothing. That things are and we ourselves are in their midst, that we ourselves are and yet barely know who we are, and barely know that we do not know all this.” (See Polt R (2013) Heidegger: an introduction. Routledge, p. 1). I used Heidegger since he is well known and has quite few followers in Iran for his alleged anti-Western view, hoping that one can pass a noun “nothing” and see the intended meaning.

⁴ However, few start to notice this frozen period. For instance, Mahnaz Shirali questioned the ‘dogmatic closing’ that, since the thirteenth century, has frozen the Islamic civilization (see Shirali M (2014) The Mystery of Contemporary Iran. Transaction Publishers); Seyf A (2011) Despotism Mind, Despotism Culture: The Case of Iran (Iran: Estebdad-e Zehn Va Farhang-e Estebdadi). H & S Media; and Azari KY (2014) Axis of Hope: A Prospective for Community Centeric Government for Iran & Other MENA Countries. Luuma Press, pp. 14–17.

⁵ See Shils E (2008) Tradition. Reprint edition. University of Chicago Press, p. 37, footnote 5.

Perhaps one could point out that no parallel analysis can be drawn between the past and the present because we have changed and continue to change. However, the point is we have changed along lines laid down by the past, to which some features have not changed relative to others. It is neither a foreign hand, nor Islam per se that aided this dead-end circumstance but our insistence to call upon anything but ourselves to resolve the problems of our lives all together. Despite many changes, our society today resembles the past that lacked sustainable institutions. Just like the past, today we have in our possession no stocks of our own knowledge that could help us to guide the country, and no ownership from our own creation, of intellectual works, philosophical ideas that can help us comprehend our own reality. In short, the reason we have failed today to attain what we need is our inability as well as perpetual reluctance to realize what constitute these needs, something which must be sought within ourselves and what occurred before.⁶

There is another issue, which is relevant to the present discussion, that is, the imprecise nature of our collective memory. Every society, even the most fragmented or ethnically diverse, needs a *sense of sameness* and continuity with what went on in the past. Emil Durkheim helps us to understand the properties of this memory by delineating the concept, “the totality of beliefs and sentiments to the average members of a society forms a determinate system of a life of its own. It can be termed the collective or common consciousness . . . By definition it is diffused over society as a whole, but nonetheless possesses specific characteristics that make it a distinctive reality. In fact it is independent of the particular conditions in which individuals find themselves. Individuals pass on, but it abides. It is the same in north and south, in large towns and in small, and in different professions. Likewise it does not change with every generation but, on the contrary, links successive generations to one another. Thus it is something totally different from the consciousnesses of individuals, although it is only realized in individuals.”⁷ My read from Durkheim’s explanation is that a society changes constantly, but the collective consciousness endures unchanged across generations as it links successive generations to one another.

⁶This, however, does not mean that the present generation is cleared. On the contrary, we have immense responsibility to come to grip of our situation and seek a suitable way out of our gridlock that has been hemmed in our progress for centuries. Other nations, of course, are not trouble free, but their predicaments are not the same. For instance, William F. Ogburn theory of *cultural lag* suggests that in the West there is a gap between the technical development of a society and its moral and legal institutions. The failure of the latter to keep pace with the former is said, in more advanced societies, to explain (at least conceptually) social conflicts and problems. In 1935, Karl Mannheim in *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* characterized the transformation of Western Society as a “crisis of liberalism and democracy” in a highly organized mass society, and suggests that newly emergent ideas were incompatible with already established notions, e.g., laissez fair would lead necessarily to maladjustments (see Porter T, Ross D (2004). The Cambridge History of Science, Volume 7: The Modern Social Sciences. Cambridge University Press, p. 603).

⁷Durkheim E (1984) The division of labor in society. In: Giddens A (ed). Macmillan Press Ltd, pp. 38–9).

In this light, and taken into consideration the diversity of the Iran's population, one can conceptualize a national narrative, e.g., Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, in order to account for the production and proliferation of different forms of collective memory among the various ethnic nationals. However, as one decomposes the national narratives of the competing ethnic versions, the limits of the unifying narrative and its possible biases would eventually prevail. Consequently, this book addresses the issue of collective memory among Iranians by seeking the main domain in which such power of remembrance is either totally absent or indefinitely presented.⁸

Without a doubt, one place that such galvanizing force is missing can be traced to our contemporarily political realm, in which our common political practice is to bewilderingly browse for suitable ideological garments that have not been tailor-made for the Iranian masses. As a result, the ensued effects have been polarization rather than union of the people for a common end. This outcome is easily observable in one's gaze back to the start of the twentieth-century Iran. At first, we tried the eighteenth century *legal pose* of Western nations by putting together the patched document called *constitution*, so that day-to-day power came to be exercised by Ministers in Cabinet, and by Parliaments elected by a steadily-widening electorate.⁹

However, as the country fell into a complete chaos we came to dire but obvious realization that "the emperor has no cloths," to which Morgan Shuster outlined the causes by stating, "The people themselves were, to a very large extent, too ignorant to realize the duties which devolved upon them as subjects of a constitutional monarchy, or to feel the responsibility which rests always upon those who would maintain a free and democratic form of government... A most heavy responsibility, therefore, rested upon the more intelligent and enlightened Persians who, during the 18 months that followed the deposition of the ex-Shah, had succeeded to power and places of influence in the new regime. And it is not strange that true to the traditions of their past, these men at first regarded their newly acquired positions quite as much as a means to self-advancement as a sacred trust to be administered for those who looked to them to uphold and protect their interests."¹⁰

In our next attempt, we found in an illiterate man a forthright leader determine to end chaos and save the country from total economic and financial breakdown, exac-

⁸A comprehensive examination of power of remembrance in Iran is behind the scope and more importantly, the intent of the present study, and hence the outlined approach, given the present limitation, is perceived to be the second best line of inquiry.

⁹If we would have listened to one of the most important writers on the subject of constitution monarchy, a Victorian economist water Bagehot, we could have saved ourselves from many troubles, as he stated, "The great difficulty [of establishing constitutional monarchy] which history records is not that of the first step, but that of the second step. What is most evident is not the difficulty of getting a fixed law, but getting out of a fixed law; not of cementing (as upon a former occasion I phrased it) a cake of custom, but of breaking the cake of custom; not of making the first preservative habit, but of breaking through it, and reaching something better.... This is the precise case with the whole family of arrested civilization." Bagehot W (2001) *Physics and Politics*. Batoche Books Limited (originally published by Henry S. King & Co, 1872), p. 33.

¹⁰Shuster WM (1912) *The Strangling of Persia: A Personal Narrative*. The Century Company, New York, pp. li–lii.

erbated by constant pity bickering and betrayals.¹¹ However, as WWII broke out because of Queen Victoria's offspring family feud that engulfed Europe, resulted Iran once again retreated to a familiar servitude cultural mood. In the aftermath of mass slaughter by civilized European, on 16 September 1941 we consented to abdication of an untutored man by those (allied forced) whom we seemed took oath to blame for our everlasting misfortunes. Learned from our past mistakes, our awakening accompanied with the sudden ethos of modernity that swept across the Iranian landscape, led us to quite dissimilar arrangements. One of the political parties that sprung up as a result called itself "Tudeh" (or Masses), as an open branch of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic's internationalism, to whom we owned a great gratitude for our country annexation, occupations, and finally subjection of the entire country as its own province.¹² The other, "Jebhey-e Meli" (or National Front), which was conceived more or less by nostalgic Iranian students who returned to Iran from France in 1940s and a noble statesman with a Doctorate of Laws from the University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland. Marked by foes and friends for its nationalism sentiments, it rose to power on various populism platforms,¹³ e.g., "Majlis is where the people are present," the movement was destined to fall in the obscurity of history, and it has.¹⁴

¹¹ An example of this situation is outlined by Garvin Hambly; "Riza Khan [Reza Shah] wanted to have a bill passed to establish mandatory national service for 2 years. This proposal was strongly opposed by the landlords, since such a measure would reduce their workforce, and weaken the traditional dependency of cultivators in landlord-owned villages towards their *agha*. The *ulama* objected equally strongly, fearing a measure which would expose the entire male population to a way of life and an ethos essentially foreign, Western and secular." (Hambly GR (1991) *The Pahlavi Autocracy: Riza Shah, 1921–1941*. In: *The Cambridge History Iran Vol. 7, From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 223, 213–243).

¹² In fact, Soviet policies, which pertained to take advantage of utter chaotic situation of Iran aimed to eliminate the Persian historical and linguistic legacy, which were dated back to before the Communist era of 1917–1990. They are in fact dated back to the Czarist era, around the 1830s, right after the conclusion of the disastrous Russo-Iranian war in which Iran was forced to cede her will in the Caucasus (everything above the Araxes River just above the Iranian province of Azarbaijan) to Russia. According to C. W. Hostler, the Russians, despite their victory in the Caucasus, were highly apprehensive of the power and hold of the Persian language and culture over Arran (present-day Republic of Azerbaijan), as he has observed, "This cultural link between the newly conquered country [modern-day Republic of Azerbaijan, historically known as Arran until May 1918] and its still strong Persian neighbor annoyed Russia who tried to destroy it by supporting local Turkish cultural developments" (Hostler CW (1957) *Turkism and Soviets*. George Allen & Unwin, p. 22). The map of Iranian territorial losses during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (losses to Czarist Russia in Central Asia and the Caucasus) can be accessed at: <http://kavehfarokh.com/articles/iranian-anti-persianism/the-iranian-left-and-tudeh-communist-party/>.

¹³ Here a populism platform meant to imply to those politicians who developing the interests of the public, providing attractive, but empty, setting of the political agenda. And in doing so perceived the masses as a homogenous group of similar interests. They appear temporarily successful often during or after failed experiences, in which the public is ready to embrace any idea as long as it is different from the past experiences, regardless of possible cost. In our contemporary era, populism platform began by the *tobacco uprising*.

¹⁴ For a quite unorthodox, in respect to Iranian common view, analysis of the background of events at the time see, Tetlock PE, Belkin A (1996) *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics*. Princeton University Press, pp. 157–162.

The significance of these movements is twofold. First, they had no nationwide support bases because what they patronage were borrowed ideas. Their portrayed fames, therefore, were an exclusive right secured by nothing more than impulsive *reactions*, which was far removed from the overall conditions of the country at the time. The spontaneous and temporary nature of these reactions is ample illustrations that their undertakings were all products of unfamiliar imaginations that did not fit into people's state of mind, which is why they all failed. Combining reactions resulted in a typology of liberals, reactionaries, skeptics, and the compliant, which led to further polarization than unity of the society.¹⁵ This epitomized various political movements in Iran, which is inherited in our cultural attitude that patronage political dualism (e.g., we are right and others are utterly wrong), and religion monism, which emphasizes on a unified view of the world.

Second, almost all political parties in Iran are cadre parties¹⁶ rather than Mass-based, and hence they have been imprisoned by their preoccupation to capture the power for their own. This is the main reason why political parties in Iran were/are laggards rather than parties that are committed to resolve the country's fundamental

¹⁵Two examples come to mind. First, Mossadegh decision to dissolve the Parliament, which set in motion a chain of events leading to his downfall. The second the lawlessness that was promoted by both Tudeh party's supporters and nationalists significantly contributed to the weakening of the Mosaddegh government, which possibly aimed to boots support for adversities of the Monarch as well as marginalized other opponents. Here are excerpts from NY times in August 18 and 23 of 1958 respectively: "Mobs threw down from their pedestals today the statues of Iran's two Kings of the Pahlevi line, the late Riza Shah and Shah Mohammed Riza," (see <http://partners.nytimes.com/library/world/mideast/081853iran-statues.html>); and "Communist and nationalist mobs raced through the Teheran streets screaming "Death to the Shah!" Statues of the monarch and his father were pelted and desecrated, then toppled from their pedestals. The Mossadegh press screamed for 'revenge' and the 'gallows'." (see <http://partners.nytimes.com/library/world/mideast/082353iran-reversal.html>).

In addition, one cannot overlook the internal opposition to both the Tudeh party and Nation Front among the major mercantilist class, landlords, and more importantly among religious leaders. This last observation may provide an attractive plot for those who claimed Mossadegh's legitimacy. However, what is often disregarded in such narratives is that legitimacy established only by the people. As a direct result of the absence of mass support, his regime was outset, allegedly, by small hired mobs. In short, Mossadegh could not have been removed if a significant segment of population had supported his regime and his leadership, as no one could have preserved Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in 1978.

¹⁶Cadre party is generally organized by relatively small elite groups of activists, who are detached from the reality of daily lives of ordinary people. This is due to the fact that as a political party it mainly attempts to gather influential individuals, well-known intellectuals or those who represent the interest of ruling apparatus, which often manifest by particular agenda, regardless of the national interest. For instance, the national front's agenda of the oil nationalization to curtail British influence is far removed from any attempt for institutionalization of system of government as well as economic and social reforms. A similar analogy can be said about Tudeh party's anti-imperialist stand. Neither party had ever addressed the disaster consequences of closing down of many industrial plans that were initiated by Reza Shah but forced to shut down during the WWII as a result of the shortage of spare parts or raw materials (see Baldwin GB (1967) *Planning and Development in Iran*. John Hopkins Press, p. 24). In short, these parties have their own agendas to pursue and were completely indifferent and totally inattentive to the urgent needs of the country at the crucial time in our history. Politics in Iran means settling score, rather than art of governing.

malaises.¹⁷ In another way, a political party (or activism) in Iran is perceived as a replacement for the state. They exist and thrive on empty slogans, personal vendetta and cinematic secrecy and infiltration.¹⁸ And as such, the main instrument of self-legitimatization of an Iranian political party has been *demonization* of others, which in effect ends any further debates on the merit of its own agenda.¹⁹ Furthermore, and to the best of my knowledge, not a single political party has ever been known to offer any concerted plan of action, and none is ever demanded by the public, as to how they actually intend to govern and run the country that is different from the status quo (traditional) blueprint.²⁰ And no intellectual effort is being spent on the most fundamental questions such as “how to make representative government work in Iran.”²¹ Perhaps it is easier, but nevertheless vain, to be limited to mouthful mottos like “freedom” and “workers’ rights” than to advocate investment in education, train teachers and doctors, and build schools and hospitals.

¹⁷The maple illustration of the farce nature of political parties in Iran is the fact that the most effective political movements in the country prevailed among students in higher educational institutions, which coherency has already established by mere association.

¹⁸For instance, the Military wing of the Tudeh Party of Iran (sazman-e nizami-yi hizb-i Tudeh-ye Iran), which also known as the Officers Organization (sazman-i afsaran), was created in 1944, 3 years after allied invasion of the country. It included a secret network of military officers, a cell if you would, to operate against the Iranian national armed forces. According to Maziar Behrooz, there were two episodes that signify this aim; first, in August 1944, around twenty army personnel in the Khurasan division of the army rebelled and attempted to reach the Turkman areas of west Khurasan and east Mazandaran in order to stage war against the central government. The rebellion was led by Major Eskandani and Col. Azar. Many of the personnel involved in this venture, including Eskandani, were killed before they reached their destination and others, such as Azar fled to the Soviet Union; second, the Military Organization sent aid and officers to Azarbaijan at a time when the province was rebelling against the central government (see Behrooz M (2000) *Rebels with a Cause: The Failure of the left in Iran*, 2nd edition. I. Bo. Tauris, p. 13). The question is what purpose does it serve for a political party to plan plots against the state and national army, while the country was under occupation?

¹⁹Here, I do not use the verb “to demonize” in a classic descriptive sense of denoting how someone becomes demonic, but to describe and hold responsible those who cast the aspersion of being demonic, or simply being accused of wrong doing or inappropriate thoughts, on others regularly and too easily and without proper due process. To demonize, according to De Luca and Buell, “is to use language or other symbols in ways that meet two requirements. First, to strongly imply or directly suggest that others have very bad, immoral, or evil qualities, and often that they are capable of quite immoral deeds; or to directly suggest that they have done reprehensible deeds. Second, to do so without sufficient evidence, inquiry, justification, or consideration of the consequences.” (see Tom de Luca and John Buell, *Liars! Cheaters! Evildoers! : Demonization and the End of Civil Debate in American Politics*, NYU Press, 2005, p. 4). Having said that, I also recognize accusing others of demonizing is a strong charge to the extent that my own claimed that political parties in Iran were/are engaging in demonization, can be characterized as such. Therefore, I further note that a demonization label used here to underline a blending of tactical, strategic, and tool for politics of demagoguery.

²⁰This tendency is not limited to the political parties but extends to every aspect of government in Iran. For instance, Plan Organization (OP) never bothered to prepare a transparent step-by-step plan, not a slogan, until the summer of 1946 when International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) forced the organization, as a part of a loan conditionality, to prepare a concert step-by-step plan to explain as to how OP plans to use the money. (see Baldwin GB (1967) *Planning and Development in Iran*. John Hopkins Press, p. 25–7).

²¹Leonard Binder, *Iran: Political development in Changing Society*, University of California Press, 1962, p. 85.

However, where pseudo politics failed to strike a core with masses, Islam has always been the dominating force for at least the past 600 years in Iran. Islam, more precisely Shi'it, and its guardians are not only able to galvanize masses, but also guide them toward specific objective with unprecedented successes. Whether it was the tobacco monopoly by the Empire subject, Tsar's invading army, the king who habitually broke his promises and oaths, a left-behind prince and his liberal French educated crew, or the naïve Swiss-educated sovereign, all fell to the power of Islam and its custodians. For more than 600 years, Iranians unequivocally responded to calls of their religious leaders and utterly surrendered themselves to Islam to the extent that martyrdom (*shahadat*) is perceived as the source of pride²². Where all other unfamiliar ideas failed, Islam succeeds because its subjects regarded it as the core purpose of their existences, the dominant inner voice to turn the world into the heaven-like realm, to which martyrdom is the ultimate passage—the martyrs preferred to face death rather than abandon their faith.²³

In this light, not only subjects' day-to-day experiences are affected, but also the specific character and subjects' life such as opinions, perceptions, and interpretations are influenced. The delineation offered by Allamah Tabatabai (1892–1981), one of the greatest and the most original thinkers of the contemporary Muslims is revealing, as he has stated, “[Man] cannot perform just any act in any place or after any other act. There is an order [religion], which must be observed. There is, therefore, an order which governs the actions man performs in the journey of this life, an order against which his actions cannot rebel . . . Islam etymologically means surrender and obedience. The Holy Quran calls the religion which invites men toward this end “Islam” since its general purpose is the surrender of man to the laws governing the Universe and men, with the result that through this surrender he worships only the One God and obeys only His commands . . . Shi'ah, which means literally partisan or follower, refers to those who consider the succession to the Prophet-may God's peace and benediction be upon him, to be the special right of the family of the Prophet and who in the field of the Islamic sciences and culture follow the school of the Household of the Prophet.”²⁴

The order and the faith that Tabatabai underlined can easily be observed in our cultural trails, folk tales, and religious rituals. Many scholars and students of Iranian

²² Within this context, I argue that Iranian view of world is a religious view of world that basically means that God creates us and therefore, throughout our life, everything that happens is by God's will and thus God is the main factor in determining our life.

²³ According to Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, “Foucault wasintrigued by the relationship between the discourse of martyrdom and the new form of political spirituality to which the Islamists aspired. He held that the Western world had abandoned this form of spirituality ever since the French Revolution.” They further observed, “To Foucault, it seemed that Shi'ism had a different approach to death. It was not seen as the end but simply one more stage in the drama of life. In an imaginary conversation with an Iranian sociologist, he summarized this worldview: ‘What preoccupies you, you Westerners, is *death*. You ask her to detach you from life and she teaches you how to give up. As for us, we care about the *dead*, because they attach us to life. We hold out our hands to them in order for them to link us to the permanent obligation of justice. They speak to us of right and of the struggle that is necessary for right to triumph.’” (see Afary J, Anderson KB (2005) Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism. University of Chicago Press, p. 50).

²⁴ Ṭabāṭaba'ī SMḤ (1975) Shi'ite Islam (No. 5). State University of New York Press, p. 29, 31.

history have already underlined these instances by outlining a variety of emotionally laden devotional practices, and hence repeating the similar issues is an unnecessary replication of what has been already established.²⁵ Nevertheless, few telling instances are underlined here to reaffirm these findings and marked widespread loyalty of the masses to their religious principles.

First, one of the common prevalent of Iranian religious life, which is dated back to the seventeenth century, is visiting (*ziyarat*) the shrines of the Imam and their relatives, whether the well-known sacred centers of pilgrimage at Qum and Mashhad, or the great numbers of more modest *imamzadeh*²⁶ located in every corner of the country.²⁷ The second is telling story of how our life and history is regulated to the extent that on a normal day Iranians can perceive themselves living their lives in three concurrent chronological spaces, namely *the Islamic calendar*, *Jalali calendar* based on the ancient Persian solar Calendar, and the Western Calendar known as the *Gregorian calendar* that is used nearly everywhere in the world.²⁸ Correspondingly,

²⁵For instance, see Dabashi H (1993). *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*. Transaction Publishers; Algar H (1991) *Religious Forces in Twentieth-Century Iran*. In: *The Cambridge History Iran Vol. 7, From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*. Chapter 22. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 732–764; Afary J, Anderson KB (2005) *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism*. University of Chicago Press; Dabashi H (2008) *Islamic liberation theology: Resisting the empire*. Routledge; Chelkowski PJ, Dabashi H (2000) *Staging a revolution: The art of persuasion in the Islamic Republic of Iran*. Booth-Clibborn.

²⁶Literary means descendent of an imam, is also a term for a shrine-tomb of the descendants of Imams, who are directly related to the Prophet Mohammad.

²⁷It should be noted that these centers of pilgrimage and imamzadeh are considered to be scared ground, and hence often were used as sanctuaries by many political dissents, to which the 1907 constitutional revolution was an ample example.

²⁸In the ancient Iran, calendar was solar based, commonly known as the “New Avestan Calendar, that was closely tied to the beliefs and practices of the Zoroastrian religion. The year began at the moment of the vernal (spring) equinox, and consisted of 12 equal months of 30 days. There were no weeks, and each day had its own name.” Farvardin, Ordibehesht, Xordad; Tir, Mordad, Shahrvivar; Mehr, Aban, Azar; Dey, Bahman, and Esfand, and each month was 30 days. There were no week, and each day had its name.” (see Daniel EL, Mahdī AA (2006). *Culture and customs of Iran*. Greenwood Publishing Group, p. 178). In the aftermath of Arab invasion, the lunar calendar (12 lunar months in a year of about 354 days because a lunar cycle takes just over 29.5 days. This means, lunar calendar is 11 days shorter than the other standard calendar) was introduced in Iran and for many years it was the only calendar in general use and serves as the only system for festivities and mourning according to events in Islamic history. The Islamic Calendar (*Hijri Calendar*) begins by the Prophet Mohammad relocation (Hijrat) from Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E. The current Islamic year is 1436 Hijri. However, in the eleventh century, when Jalal-ed-din Malek, the king of Seljuq dynasty in Iran commissioned a panel of scientists, the most prominent among the scientists was Omar Khayyām, to create a calendar more accurate than the lunar calendar use at the time. As a result, the Old Persian solar system was improved and advanced to the widely accepted solar system called *Jalali calendar* (a year begins, as the ancient time on the first day of spring. The Jalali calendar consists of 12 months: the first 6 months are each 31 days, the next five 30 days, and the last 29, except in leap years, when it is 30 days. See <http://scienceworld.wolfram.com/astronomy/IranianCalendar.html>. Almost, nine centuries later, the jalali calendar was adopted as the official calendar of Iran by the second Persian parliament in 1911, and remained in use until 1925. Under Pahlavi monarchy, the present Iranian calendar was legally adopted on 31 March 1925. The first day of the year by decree became the first day of spring “as it has been” ever so. The current Iranian year is 1394.

we celebrate our new year based on a holy day for Zoroastrians, and continue our daily functions in accordance to how others operate around the world. This puzzling behavior often explained by the following observation: “Nowruz survived because it was so profoundly engrained in Iranian traditions, history, and cultural memory that Iranian identity and Nowruz mutually buttressed each other, and the emergence of a distinctly *Persian Muslim society*—and later the emergence of a nation-state with the advent of the Safavids—legitimized the ancient national festival and allowed it to flourish with slight modifications or elaborations.”²⁹ Needless to say, the Islamic Revolution appeared to invalidate these sorts of statements as the mass-based religious nationalism replaced the other narrative of nationalism that of positive nationalism based on the ancient habits and traditions. On this note, Shahrokh Meskoob’s observation is illuminating as he stated, “from a historical perspective Irani and Mussulman, and from sociological view Mussulman and Irani, depends on your point of views, one is preeminent and the other is posterior.”³⁰

However, the essence of our collective *power* of recollection (power of remembrance) through which the masses political power as well as manifestation of our sense of dissent, rage, and indignation is utterly Islamic. The first month of the Islamic calendar, Muharram³¹ signifies this observation. It is a month rich in emotive and historical associations, inaugurated as the significant ritual during the Shah Abbas I in the sixteenth century. By the time of Shah Suleiman I in seventeenth century, spectacular features of Muharram ceremonies reached the point where the “participation in Muharram . . . tended to shift from pure devotional assemblies to public entertainments in which displays of social influence were part of the show”³² In this period, Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, a leading theologian of the time, sought to establish Shi’ism firmly in the minds and hearts of the people. And in doing so, according to Moojan Momen, Majlisi attained three main objectives, “Firstly, he encourages many specifically Shi’i rituals such as mourning for the Imam Husayn and visitation (*ziyarat*) of the tombs of the Imams and *Imamzadas* (descendants of the Imams).

²⁹ A. Shapur Shahbazi, Nowruz ii: In the Islamic Period” at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/nowruz-ii>. Emphasis added. For a more recent discussion of the *Islamiyat* and *Iraniyat*, see Shabnam J Holliday, *Defining Iran: Politics of Resistance*, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2013.

³⁰ Shahrokh Meskoob, *Iranian Identity and Farsi language*, Farzon Publisher, 5th edition, 1391 (2011), p. 28. Translated by the author.

³¹ In this month, Shi’i begins mourning from the first night of Muharram and continue for ten nights, climaxing on the 10th of Muharram, known as the Day of Ashura. The last few days up until and including the Day of Ashura are the most important because these were the days in which Imam Hussein and his family and followers (including women, children, and elderly people) were deprived of water from the 7th onward and on the 10th, Imam Hussain and 72 of his followers were martyred by the army of Yazid I (the second Caliph of the Umayyad Caliphate and the first one through inheritance) at the Battle of Karbala on Yazid’s orders. The surviving members of Imam Hussein’s family and those of his followers were taken captive, marched to Damascus, and imprisoned there. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muharram>.

³² Calmard J (1996) Shici Rituals and Power II. The Consolidation of Safavid Shicism: Folklore and Popular Religion. In: Melville C (ed) *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*. I. B. Tauris, p. 158.

Second, he emphasizes the soteriological aspect of Shi'ism, stressing the concept of the Imams as mediators and intercessors for man with God. Thirdly, he wrote a large number of books on theology, history, and manuals of ritual in Persian, thus bringing this knowledge to the level of understanding ordinary Iranians."³³ The month of Muharram retains its significance and its power of remembrance among contemporary Iranians as well in a sense that it still inflames and harnesses religious zeal for political ends, to which Ayatollah Khomeini described the month as "the month of the triumph of blood over the sword".³⁴ In the recent period, two distinct instances come to mind about a month of Muharram's political significance; first is the December (Moharram) 1978 in which various mass demonstrations³⁵ in Tehran that sealed the end of the Pahlavi reign; and the other is the 1980s war between Iran and Iraq.³⁶

³³Momen M (1985) *An introduction to Shi'i Islam: the history and doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*. Yale University Press, p. 116. According Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, the result of Majlisi works led to 1695 edict, which "prohibited all activities not approved by the *shariat*. Wine from the royal court cellars was destroyed, and coffeehouses shut down. Music, dance, gambling, backgammon, chess, opium, and herbs that induced hallucinations became illegal. The shah also banned many previously acceptable social practices for women. Henceforth, for example, women could not go on the streets unless they had a valid and legitimate reason" (see Afary J, Anderson KB (2005) *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism*. University of Chicago Press, p. 43).

³⁴Algar H (1981) *Islam and revolution: Writings and declarations of Imam Khomeini*. Mizan Press, Berkeley, California, p. 242.

³⁵According to Hamid Algar, "As soon as Muharram began, demonstrators wrapped in shrouds unhesitatingly defied the government-imposed curfew. On the ninth day of the month, as many as a million people marched through Tehran to Shahyad Square—a monument to monarchy that now ironically became a focal point of the revolution and was renamed Maidan-i Azadi (Freedom Square). The following day, some two million demonstrators, led by Ayatullah Talaqani (who had been released from his final imprisonment on 30 October), again converged on the square, and approved by acclamation a seventeen-point charter that called for the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of an Islamic government under the leadership of Imam Khumaini." (see Algar H (1991) *Religious Forces in Twentieth Century Iran*. *The Cambridge History of Iran*, pp. 7, 732–764).

³⁶As Faegheh Shirazi has observed, "In Iran, the Iran–Iraq war was pitched in Shiite terms as the revived Battle of Karbala, while Ashura ceremonies became consecrated arenas for public mourning. By drawing upon the analogical maxim that "all battlefields were Karbala, all months were Muharram, and all days were Ashura," the war gained meta-history proportions. Such associations are clearly transferred through the mirror's main inscription, which similarly states that "every earth is Karbala and every month is Muharram"(See Shirazi F (2013) *Death, the Great Equalizer: Memorializing Martyred (Shahid) Women in the Islamic Republic of Iran*. In: Khosronejad P (Ed) (2013) *Unburied Memories: The Politics of Bodies of Sacred Defense Martyrs in Iran*. Routledge, p. 87).

The third example is related to popular literary works and poetries in the commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Husain, the ground son of the Prophets, at Karbala (a city in the present Iraq), as a form of sentimental religiosity that particularly thrived during the Qajar reign.³⁷ The significance of this remembrance lies in manifestations of processions called *dasteh*, which constitute major Muharram observances. The power of a *dasteh* transpired in several fronts.³⁸ First, its most important attribute is the *discharge*; people in a *dasteh* already got rid of their differences, e.g., status, economic class, and hence feel equal. Second, a *dasteh* endowed with innate power of crowd is easily evoked because “in the crowd the individual feels that he is transcending the limits of his own person ... To the crowd in its nakedness everything seems a Bastille.”³⁹ Third, a *dasteh* has an immense potential for sudden eruption because its size is undetermined. At any time, a *dasteh* can erupt from small number of individuals into overflow of hundreds or even thousands into squares and streets of a village, town, or a city. Finally, the key characteristic of a *dasteh* is a peculiar irritability and rage towards those “it has once and forever nominated as enemies.”⁴⁰ These are attributes that none of political parties in Iran can claim but are the intrinsic part of Iranian religious rituals.

I end here by noting a striking difference between how Iranians, regardless of their religious affiliations, start a new year and how a year began for Iranian Muslim Shi'its. According to the Iranian Calendar (Jalali Calendar) the first day of Spring is the first day of New Year, which Iranians considered the most blissful occasion of the incoming year, which they celebrate for days. For Iranian Muslim Shi'its, the year starts with the first day of Muharram, in which the commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn Ibn Ali begins. As the tragedy Imam is recounted, a rhythmic listener sustained by the emotion of the lament, which reminds us what Dostoyevsky once said, “Lamentations are simply the need to constantly irritate the

³⁷The work that enjoyed most popularity throughout the period was the Husain ibn All Kashifi's *Rauzat al-Shuhada*, published in 1875 in Bombay, India. The work is a combination of formal Shi'i doctrine and oral lore, which later became the master text of Shi'i ceremonies commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Husain and his entire family in the battle of Karbala. According to Azfar Moin, “Kashifi wrote voluminously, producing, for example, a mystical exegesis of the Quran based on the inner symbolism of its letters and word, a famous work of chivalry (*futuwwa*) laying out the mystical code of conduct for artisanal fraternities, and a rendition of Indian animal fables entitled *Anwar-i Suhayli*.” (See Moin A A (2012) *The millennial sovereign: sacred kingship and sainthood in Islam*. Columbia University Press, p. 225). For an overview of Kashifi, see Subtelny ME (2003) *Husayn Vaciz-i Kashifi: polymath, popularizer, and preserver*. *The Society for Iranian Studies* 36(4):463–467.

³⁸See Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, translated by Carol Stewart, Continuum, 1973, p. 17–22.

³⁹*Ibid.* p. 20. The Bastille was a fortress in Paris, known formally as the Bastille Saint-Antoine. It played an important role in the internal conflicts of France and for most of its history was used as a state prison by the kings of France. It was stormed by a crowd on 14 July 1789 in the French Revolution, becoming an important symbol for the French Republican movement, and was later demolished and replaced by the Place de la Bastill.

⁴⁰*Ibid.* p. 22.

wound.”⁴¹ On this note, Hamid Dabashi, one of the prominent Iranian scholar of today, observed, “Imam al-Husayn and his tragic martyrdom in Karbala have always been a symbolically charged moment in the [Iranian] Shi’i collective memory.”⁴²

Thus, I conclude that Islam has been the politically charged factor of resistance among Iranians for more than 1000 years. As such, it has deeply penetrated into the psyche of inhabitants of this ancient land to the extent that one cannot deny its domination in forming our awareness and perceptions of our self, our surrounding, and the world. Therefore, it is quite plausible to perceived Islam, and more precisely Shi’ism, as a monolithic and unifying principle that has played a vital role in shaping our history, particularly in the contemporary Iran. This determining development could not have occurred if Islam and its guardians did not reflect the public’s values and aspirations in the political realm of the country. In other words, Islamic principles and clerics have played the key role in guiding (inciting popular) uprisings against the state (and not the structure of power), and determining the future path of the country in more than a century despite and the fact that the country was broken into pieces by Imperial Russia and was on the verge of losing its sovereignty by the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. This observation is readily marked by the 1906 Constitutional Revolution and the 1978 Islamic Revolution. The former manifested a burning desire to turn things around and depart from the past failures, while retained the Islamic identity. The latter, however, revealed to the world as well as to those zealous Iranians who possess a label of “intellectual” as their own, “who we are” as a nation in which Islam is deeply embedded into our mindset and consciousness.

The book is divided into eight chapters beginning with the introductory chapter. This chapter has introduced the topic of the book, followed by an overview of the core arguments developed in this book. In the second chapter, I begin with a rich discussion covering Iranian national character attributes, determine what constitute Iranian Mind-set and how they have been affected by historical events in Iran. This chapter also discusses the lack of cohesiveness in Iranian society, namely, the absence of togetherness in relation to nation-state building and emphasizes the essential role of Islam in revealing the national consciousness of Iranians. In the third chapter, we discuss the claim that Iranians have failed to learn from past events and hardships and continue to endure same flaws, and also conclude that Iran has repeatedly borrowed notions and ideas from the West that are unrelated to local conditions. These ideas may have worked in other areas of the world, but do not necessarily apply to the culture and environment of Iran. Finally, the chapter discusses the importance of education and literacy among the general Iranian population. In Chapter 4, we provide an analysis of the Iranian Cultural Identity from an historical perspective. In the fifth chapter, we provide an historical analysis of the Persian resistance to the Arab

⁴¹Dostoevsky F (1991) *The Brothers Karamazov*. Trans: Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. Vintage Books, New York, p. 48. For a fascinating discussion of lament tradition in Shi’it tradition see Rahimi B (2011) *Theater State and the Formation of Early Modern Public Sphere in Iran: Studies on Safavid Muharram Rituals, 1590–1641 CE* (Vol. 5). Brill, p. 203–5.

⁴²Dabashi H (1993) *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*. Transaction Publishers, p. 175.

Invasion, and conversely, the impact of Persian language and culture on Islamic civilization. The chapter also emphasizes the importance of language as a resistance tool, particularly as a resistance to the Arab Invasion. Chapter 6 commences with a detailed discussion on the Qajar period, followed by the Constitutional Revolution from a historical point of view. This chapter also highlights recurring themes throughout Iranian history like servitude to power, among others. Chapter 7 contains an overview of contemporary Iranian economy, and it describes the nature of the Iranian economy in terms of already recognized economic system categorizations, a market, and planned economic system. This chapter also takes an in-depth look at the characteristics of policymaking in contemporary Iran. The concluding chapter closes this book with conclusions and final remarks and draws implications for the Iranian society as a whole.

Chapter 2

Rethinking Iranian National Character

2.1 Iranian National Characteristics

Three main cultural groups inhabit the present terrestrial boundaries of Western Asia, commonly referred to as Near East: The Iranians, the inhabitants of Arabian Peninsula, and the Turks (the Ottoman founded in 1299). The Turks are the unseasoned of the three and geographically closest to Europe, which perhaps why they are generally perceived as less unreceptive (most open) to Western Influence. The Arab world, including the *British Protectorate Islands* in Persian Gulf (also known as Pirate Coast), is utter creation of its religion conviction created by the dynasty of caliphs of the Umayyad House as well as the post-WWII international political inventions. Iran, the oldest among the three, depicts a totally different picture in a sense that its civilization¹ is not based on ethnicity, or delineate simple as the kinship in blood, like the Turks and the Arabs but rather upon the terrain. Although in the present-day culture, the dominant formative agent is Islam, some elements of what was a uniquely Iranian civilization go back to pre-Islamic history and still have persisted today. For instance, language, mythology, and historical identity all preserve something of the pre-Islamic past that makes up the characteristics of the Iranian (National) Character.

Throughout this book there are many references to what is labeled Iranian characters and attributions. Here, I provided a framework as to what they are perceived and signify. These days, in daily newspapers' analyses, radio, and TV broadcastings, we often come across statements that start with, "If the market does not feel

¹In this book, civilization is considered as an encompassing term that represents the cumulative intellectuals, culture, and social achievements that have evolved over a considerable period and whose norms are practiced by a group of people. Similarly, a society is a more tangible term that can be viewed as a collection of people that are subject to and work under the rules of authority—A Muslim society implies that the majority of the population is living under Islamic rules.

that its needs are being met, then it will look elsewhere,” “The market behaves at All-Time High,” and “The market isn’t crazy and it’s not irrationally exuberant, it’s just happy.” I presumed no one would think that market is a living thing that either feels or behaves in a certain manner, so what all these mean? Without oversimplifying, our understanding of the so-called market is demarcated as a place in which “people” characteristically pursue their own interests. In this sense, when we say a market behaves or feels, we really mean to say people behave or feel. In the same vein, when we say that a country feels or acts in a certain manner, we do insinuate the people rather than a specific geographical territory. National characters², therefore, exhibit a way to illustrate how people feel or act as members of a historical, cultural, and political grouping of a nation. They are, therefore, subject to at least some common influences which justify the common cultural implications of the term “nation,” a real, viable, social unit. People do act as members of a particular grouping (nation), but not necessarily in the whole of their lives, not always consistently, but frequently and regularly enough to make the society and culture of the nation (or state). It should also be noted that this study neither claimed, nor should be perceived, as a study of national culture or character, but rather reiterates observations, as what they perceived by Iranian and non-national scholars who either traveled to Iran or used to work and live in the country for sometime, as well as rich Iranian literarily sources. These opinions are used to map regularities of psychological process, which sometimes inelegantly termed psyche, as characterization of Iranian as a whole.³ National characters outlined here are assumed as one kind of cultural personality that are distinguished by the fact that the group observed, Iranian, is defined by shared history and political sovereignty.⁴

Like all studies of the similar approach, I assumed that there are elements held, but not exclusively, in common by members of a particular group (Iranian), which can be traced more or less to the relatively persisting telling affects of the cultural character

²It should be noted that the notion of national character is quite different than ethnicity. Ethnic groups are not a fact of nature, like species, and cannot be defined by objective physiological attributes. They have been socially constructed throughout history, as the French historian Ernest Renan pointed out in his pioneer lecture on the origin of nation at the Sorbonne I 1882, “Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?” (What is a nation?): “A Frenchman is neither Gaul, nor a Frank, nor a Burgundian. Rather he is what has emerged from the cauldron in which, presided over by the Kings of France, the most diverse elements have together been simmering... A Englishman is... neither the Briton of Julius Caesar’s time, the Anglo-Saxon of Hengist’s time, nor the Dane of Canut’s time, nor the Norman of William the Conqueror’s time, it is rather the result of all these... Is German an exception?... That is a complete illusion. The whole of the South was once Gallic; the whole of the east... Slavic... what is the defining features of these states? It is the fusion of their component populations.” (See Oberschall A (2007) Conflict and peace building in divided societies: Responses to ethnic violence. Routledge, p. 4.)

³For a rich literature review of the topic, see Inkeles A (2014) National character: A psycho-social perspective. Transaction Publishers.

⁴This statement is made known too well that the political sovereignty of Iranian had been broken by Russian annexations in the early nineteenth century. However, since the present study emphasis is on the contemporary period, the twentieth century onward, the issue is excluded, but not ignored.

of the group. It is further assumed that common experiences have a central effect that outweighs the centrifugal effects of all other individuals' idiosyncratic qualities. In short, I assumed collective behavior dominates individual behavior. The underlying objective is a desire to make the perception of national qualities more apparently comprehensible in light of a national cultural evolutionary process. The variables, or better to say characteristics that are taken into consideration in this study, are not selected by the author but as mentioned above are selections of commonly perceived qualities outlined by Iranians, Iranian literarily sources, and non-national scholars.

There are those who may object to either the specificity of national character or apparent generalization of these attributes, and hence reject ensued inferences. In reply, I must underline few points in the defense. First, without a generalization, all theories, notions, and observations in social science disciplines would disappear, since everything we are engaged, for instance, in economics, political science, sociology, etc. is based on ad hoc generalization. Second, while other nations may share the similar trials, inferences in this book is formed based on collection of attributes. For instance, two nations may have same characteristic X that impend their progress, but one's economy is developed and the other still struggling to step out of its backwardness. In this respect, the common trial of X must be seen in combination with others' qualities that are not common between them. Moreover, attributes per se do not bear any weight, but their perpetual presence does have direct impact on a society. For instance, Iran is certainly not the only country with extended and enduring history. However, there are obvious differences between Iranians and let us say, Greeks, Egyptians, and Chinese. The main emphasis in this study is on these distinctive differences that distinguish one group from all others. While a wide range of similarities among various cultures and histories can easily detected, one must also admit that they do not render a universal outcome due to specificity of intrinsic cultural attributes, values, and norms in which people retain as well as adhere to. Finally, prevalence of detrimental traits in a community is one thing; persistence denials and general indifferences about them imply these attributes would exist indefinitely because there are no wills, on part of the society, to eradicate them.⁵ In short, the point is one should view this approach not as a contest that one fact counter the other but rather call attention to elements that have grounded us.

The importance of national characteristic is an obvious factor in a wide range of disciplines and school of thoughts. John Stuart Mill, the classical individualist, once wrote, "Men, however, in a state society are still men; their actions and passion are obedient to the laws of individual human nature. Men are not, when brought

⁵For instance, like many capitals of compatible countries, Tehran suffers from population extreme density, which has led to similar dire circumstances such as degradation of environment including quality of potable water and air, extreme pressure on municipality services, rapid deterioration of public services and goods, etc. And yet, and to the best of my knowledge, there is not a single plan to neither reverse, nor stop the phenomenon (except the proposal to move the capital elsewhere). Worse, the trend shows no signs of slowing down as permits for constructions continue to be issued. This sort of issues, I argue, is utterly related to cultural qualities.

together, converted into another kind of substance, with different properties.”⁶ The fallacy of Mill is where he thinks that men had any kind of substance before being “brought together.” Society and the individual are inseparable to the extent that they are necessary and complementary to each other. The corollary to this statement implies that people are distinctively different as acquisitive species, a reminiscence of John Locke’s *tabula rasa*—we are born with blank slate minds—and then molded by our surroundings.

Edward Hallett Carr shared a similar sentiment as he states, “as soon as we are born, the world gets to work on us and transform us from merely biological into social units. Every human being at every stage of history or pre-history is born into a society and from his earliest years is molded by that society. The language which he speaks is not an individual inheritance, but a social acquisition from the group in which he grows up.”⁷ Come to think of it, when the conventional wisdom intends to hammer in its logic, it usually appeals to Mill’s observation. The lasting fascination of the Robinson Crusoe [a famous character of almost all conventional intermediary economic textbooks] myth is due to its attempt to imagine an individual independent of society. The attempt breaks down once we realize Crusoe is not an abstract figure, but an English man from New York, who carries his Bible with him everywhere. However, one perhaps can erroneously follow Mill’s observation and think he can be free of society like Kirillov in Dostoyevsky’s *Devil*, who killed himself to prove his total freedom from his society.⁸

However, there are differences that accentuate who we are in a sense that they are distinctive. This statement may seem to some as assault on common sense as well as certainty that science has established for some time. In science, when attention turns to people, it always implies the entire human race or individual human being, two categories of the same realm. The scientific discoveries about all are findings about each. However, science also demonstrates that circumstances change individuals’ behaviors. Philip Zimbardo and his colleagues’ tryout in the early

⁶Mill JS (1906) *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive: Boeving a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation*. Accessed 12 Nov 2014 at The Project Gutenberg, Ebook 27942, p. 1066.

⁷Carr EH (1961) *What is history?* Vintage Books, pp. 36–37

⁸Emile Durkheim, in relation to suicide, coined the word *anomie* to denote the individual isolation from his society, but also underlined that suicide should be viewed as a means of independent social condition. There are also other studies that shows a human society is an *Empathic* society to which people endowed with great affection and caring for each. In fact, Jeremy Rifkin used various developmental psychologists to prove this point: “infants as young as 1 or 2 days old are able to identify the cries of other newborns and will cry in return, in what is called rudimentary empathic distress... But the real sense of empathic extension doesn’t begin to appear until the age of 18 months to two and half years... when the infant is able to understand that someone else exist [sense of others] as a separate being from himself that he is able to experience the others’ condition as if it were himself and respond with the appropriate comfort.” (See Rifkin J (2009) *The empathic civilization: The race to global consciousness in a world in crisis*. Penguin, pp. 8–9.)

1970s at Stanford University provides an ample instance.⁹ The point of contention is that we are infinitely divisible: examine one group, and you find its inner character traits, and the more you search the more subcategories you will find. Military personnel, for instance, exhibit different attributes from those who are not in military service. Regarding children, motherhood has furnished women with the privilege and insights that men can only wish for.

In a broader perspective, George Dalton, in discussing how a nation's history, culture, and political tradition shape its policy goals and basic economic institution, has observed, "in 1950 it seemed to us (and them) that the Russian did what they did because they were communist following some iron law of socialist development. There are now dozen communists' economies. It sees clear to the Chinese, the Yugoslavs and the Cubans that the Russian did what they did between 1928 and 1953, not because they were communists, but because they were Russian."¹⁰ In Robert and Helen Lynd excellent study of personality in a typical American community of the twenties, *Middletown: Study in Modern American Culture*, we learn that earning a living is the dominant preoccupation of Americans, "both business men and working men seem to be running for dear life in this business of making the money they earn keep pace with the even more rapid growth of their subjective wants."¹¹ They further underlined that the similar tendency is a similar cultural and economic setting by stating, "The French economist Say when he revisited England at the close of the Napoleonic Wars [observed]: everyone seemed to run intent upon his business as though fearing to stop lest those behind trample him down."¹²

Out of these conglomerated observations, we can say that *national character* is not illusion, as some insist, but reality. Shirley Lawrence brilliantly underlines this point when she suggests that national character is a composite reflection of those

⁹"The Stanford prison experiment (SPE) was a study of the psychological effects of becoming a prisoner or prison guard. The experiment was conducted at Stanford University on August 14–20, 1971, by a team of researchers led by psychology professor Philip Zimbardo. It was funded by the U.S. Office of Naval Research and was of interest to both the US Navy and Marine Corps as an investigation into the causes of conflict between military guards and prisoners. The experiment is a classic study on the psychology of imprisonment and is a topic covered in most introductory psychology textbooks. The participants adapted to their roles well beyond Zimbardo's expectations, as the guards enforced authoritarian measures and ultimately subjected some of the prisoners to psychological torture. Many of the prisoners passively accepted psychological abuse and, at the request of the guards, readily harassed other prisoners who attempted to prevent it. The experiment even affected Zimbardo himself, who, in his role as the superintendent, permitted the abuse to continue. Two of the prisoners quit the experiment early, and the entire experiment was abruptly stopped after only 6 days, to an extent because of the objections of Christina Maslach. Certain portions of the experiment were filmed, and excerpts of footage are publicly available." (See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanford_prison_experiment.)

¹⁰Dalton G (1974) *Economic systems and society: capitalism, communism and the Third World* (Vol. 2). Penguin books, p. 21.

¹¹Lynd RS, Lynd HM (1956) *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture*. 1929. Reprint. Harcourt Brace, New York, p. 87.

¹²Ibid.

factors embodied in the total development of each nation, and stated, “Individuals are born into a particular society which has institutions, customs, norms and cultural patterns which are transmitted by the family and by others in authority, which the individual internalizes but upon which he can also react, or rather, can change. This cultural heritage consists of the dominant modes of reacting over a long period of time in a dynamic continuum and includes the historical, productive and social forces in a country. National character can change with social change; therefore in some respects it is transient. Other factors, which determine national character besides the social structure, such as language, geography and various cultural traditions, can be said to be less susceptible to change and would probably continue after social changes took place. Thus there may be certain dominant social traits in the folkways of a nation, but they are never homogeneous. Inherent in the concept of national character is variation.”¹³

For example, in formation of Chinese Marxism, Mao’s January 1940 essay *On New Democracy* wrote, “in applying Marxism to China, Chinese communists must fully and properly integrate the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution or, in other words, the universal truth of Marxism must be combined with specific *national characteristics* and acquire a definite national form.”¹⁴ Elsewhere, Mao also stated, “Another task of study is to study our historical legacy, and to evaluate it critically using Marxist methods. A great nation such as ours with several thousand years of history has its own developmental laws, its own *national characteristics*, its own precious things.”¹⁵

Four decades ago, Arnold Heidenheimer posed a fundamental question of comparative policy analysis. He noted that there are many discrete differences in the way nations handle the various challenges facing them, but asked to what extent these habits and experiences can be subsumed under consistent models of policy making.¹⁶ Therefore, rather than addressing the question of the differences in the politics produced by different types of policies, “it is more important for the study of comparative public policy to ask whether it is possible to identify *national char-*

¹³Lawrence S (1974) Origins of German national Traits: Historic Roots of National Peculiarities. The New International XIII(1), January 1947. Accessed 15 May 2015 at: <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspaper/ni/issue3.htm>.

¹⁴Published originally as ‘Xin minzhu zhuyide zhengzhi yu xin minzhu zhuyide wenhua’ (‘The politics and culture of New Democracy’), *Zhongguo wenhua* (Chinese Culture) 1 (January 1940). An English translation is available in Mao TT, Mao Z (1977) *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung: Vol II*. Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, pp. 380–381. See also Carr B, Mahalingam I (eds) (2002) *Companion encyclopedia of Asian philosophy*. Routledge, p. 541.

¹⁵Zedong M (1938) *Lun xin jieduan* (On the new stage). Speech to the Enlarged Plenary Session of the Sixty Central Committee (12–14 October 1938). In Minoru T(ed) (1976) *Mao Zedong ji: Collected Works of Mao Zedong*. PoWen Book Co., vol. 6, pp. 260–261. See also Carr B, Mahalingam I (eds) (2002) *Companion encyclopedia of Asian philosophy*. Routledge, p. 541.

¹⁶Adams CT, Hecllo H (1975) *Comparative public policy: the politics of social choice in Europe and America*. St. Martin’s Press, New York.

acteristics of policy processes.”¹⁷ Similarly, in his landmark text, *The Competitive Advantage of Nations*, Michael Porter emphasizes that nations and national character remain of prime importance, even in the age of globalization: “My theory highlights and reinforces the importance of differences in nations and of differences in national character. Many contemporary discussions of international competition stress global homogenization and a diminished role for nations. But, in truth, national differences are at the heart of competitive success.”¹⁸ Hans Kohan suggested with the Greeks and the Jew, to which I would also add ancient Iranians, it was the national character and the spiritual creative energy of the people, which endured, “The Jews and Greeks were held together, not only by the racial bond, but by their national idea and a cultural consciousness common to all. Their political bond, on the other hand, was either very weak or nonexistence.”¹⁹ And in 1932, Cumberland Clark wrote a book on how Shakespeare characterizes the national characteristics of closer to 30 nationalities including Persian.²⁰ Behavior, a social phenomenon, is not only interhuman but it also bears profound intrinsic meanings, which make one culture distinct from another.

In 1911, Max Weber described Western music, in a complete familiar western discipline of thought, as rationalized harmony that rests upon the octave (a series of eight notes occupying the interval between [and including] two notes, one having twice or half the frequency of vibration of the other) and formulated its subsequent successive subdivisions expressed by the formula $n/(n+1)$.²¹ Teaching a seminar on Persian music at the University of Illinois, one of the prominent Masters of Persian classic Music, the late Nour Ali Boroumand stated, “To understand Persian Music you must know the singing of the nightingale, because it does not repeat itself, and

¹⁷ Bevir M (ed) (2010) *The SAGE handbook of governance*. Sage, p. 702.

¹⁸ Porter ME (1990) *The competitive advantage of nations*. Free Press, New York, p. 735.

¹⁹ Kohn H (1961) *The idea of nationalism: A study in its origins and background*. Transaction Publishers, p. 28.

²⁰ As Clark explained, “There are few scattered allusion in the plays of Shakespeare to the ancient Persian race, who were united with the Medes by Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon and founder of the Medo-Persian Empire. The poet obtained his knowledge of these early civilizations in Mesopotamia from the Bible.” (See Clark C (1932) *Shakespeare and national character: a study of Shakespeare’s knowledge and dramatic and literary use of the distinctive racial characteristics of the different peoples of the world* (No. 24). Haskell House Pub Ltd, p. 289.)

²¹ The direct Weber quote is, “ALL rationalized harmonic music rests upon the octave (vibration ratio of 1:2) and its division into the fifth (2:3) and fourth (3:4) and the successive subdivisions in terms of the formula $n/(n+1)$ for all intervals smaller than the fifth. If one ascends or descends from a tonic in circles first in the octave followed by fifths, fourths, or other successively determined relations, the powers of these divisions can never meet on one ‘and the same tone no matter how long the procedure be continued. The twelfth perfect fifth (2/3) 12 is larger by the Pythagorean comma than the seventh octave equaling (1/2) 7. This unalterable state of affairs together with the further fact that the octave is successively divisible only into two unequal intervals, forms the fundamental core of facts for all musical rationalizations.” (See Weber M (1958) *The Rational and Social Foundations of Music*. Translated and Edited by Don Martindale, Johannes Riedel and Gertrude Neuwirth. Southern Illinois UP, Carbondale, p. 3.)

Persian musicians are not supposed to repeat themselves.”²² What Nour Ali Boroumand underscores, in direct contrast to the Western music, is the essence of Persian music that lives through the more or less *spontaneous* recreation of the traditional repertoire in performance; the music is often described as improvised. The musicians themselves talk freely of improvisation, or *bedaheh navazi* (literally means “spontaneous playing”), a term borrowed from the realm of oral poetry and which has been applied to Persian classical music since the early years of the twentieth century.²³ In short, the existing differences are reflective of who we are, a profound sense of our identity, and hence should be sustained and behold rather than tarnished, denied, and belittled. Now, let us return to Iran and Iranian ethos.

In 1908, Napier Malcolm wrote, “There is in Persian Hospitality a great deal more than the observance of etiquette. [Yet] Most Europeans who lived in Persia find it rather difficult to explain why they like the people ... A people who are open-handed, good-natured, affectionate, not always extravagantly conceited, and above all, intensely human, are a people one cannot help getting to like when one lives among them for any time. At the same time, their inquisitiveness, unpunctuality, intense dishonesty, frequent ingratitude, and absolute want of principle in everything, are, to say the least of it, very trying.”²⁴ Similarly, sometimes in the seventeenth century, a French traveler and merchant Jean Chardin wrote, “Persian are the most civilized of all the people of the east and the most falterers in the world.”²⁵

To understand the depth of Iranian characters, I have no choice but to consider the 1965 pioneer work of Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh on Iranian ethos and characters, *Our Iranian Character Traits*.²⁶ Jamalzadeh, which often compared to Dickens in England, was an Iranian critic and lucid writer who tried to change the adverse condition of his native land by using unsophisticated everyday language. He is an unorthodox figure in Iranian literally world, which spent all but his childhood and early youth outside Iran. Nevertheless, he remained deeply involved in Iranian affairs, cultural transformation and national consciousness of Iranians in the contemporary period. In his first short story “Farsi Shekar ast” (Farsi is sugar), Jamalzadeh ridiculed those who persist to “enriched” or “corrupt,” Persian language by loanwords. In doing so, he invited his readers to protect their identity by using their own sweet language. A year later, Jamalzadeh wrote the essay *Our Iranian Character Traits*, which neither followed nor taken seriously, and opened a Pandora

²² Nettl B (2013) *Becoming an Ethnomusicologist: A Miscellany of Influences*. Scarecrow Press, p. 116.

²³ See http://calperformances.org/learn/program_notes/2009/pn_masters.pdf.

²⁴ Malcolm N (1908) *Five years in a Persian town*. John Murray, pp. 185–186.

²⁵ Ferrier RW (1996) *A journey to Persia: Jean Chardin’s portrait of a seventeenth-century empire*. New Age International, p. 112. The same appears in baron de Montesquieu CDS, Mauldon M, Kahn A (2008) *Persian letters*. Oxford University Press, p. 238.

²⁶ The essay first appeared in a not well-known magazine *Masa’el-e Iran* (Iran’s Problem) in 1965 (1344), and later published as a book.

box of the salient features of Iranian culture and underlined Iranian's inadequacies that are revolved around peculiarities that besieged the Iranian culture for centuries.²⁷ He starts his introduction with Saadi's verse:

If Mirror reflects your flaws
break yourself, breaking the mirror is miscue

He based his discourse on account of both non-national and Iranian over the course of history, which provide us with a rich blend of the descriptive and expressive dialog that allow a reader to ease through the book. At the outset, he stated that whatever has been said or written about Iranians of "yesterday" and "day before yesterday" can be applied to Iran today.²⁸ For Jamalzadeh, this is obvious as one follows Molavi's critical approach in examining the causes of our backwardness, which is no more than our ethos that like "a hard piece of rock and painful invaders' thorns step-by-step hindered us in our path to development and prosperity,"²⁹ and has retained us back to the current state. We cannot, he warned, cure our malaises if we continue denying the cause. He then mentioned other Iranian writers like Sadegh Hedayat, Mohammed Hejazi, Ali Dashti, Bozurg Alavi, Sadegh Chubak, who also outlined our harmful characters (as the cause of our dire conditions) in their works, but to no avail.³⁰

Knowing too well how Iranians would respond to his criticism, which usually goes as follows: "almost all people in the world have the same attributes and if effects of wise and continues upbringing is absence and if fear of law and consequences were removed perhaps people's wicked mask would drop and they show they true nature,"³¹ Jamalzadeh opted a different approach and turned the tables on his compatriots. Reiterating Sir John Malcolm (which according to Jamalzadeh comprehended Iranians and Iran better than anyone) who has observed "... seldom you see a country full of beggars than Iran,"³² Jamalzadeh asked, "how is it possible that the affairs of Iranians, who think so highly of themselves and believed they can hoodwink everybody in the world, reached the point that outsiders [Malcolm] say today that in the world you can rarely find the country that has as many beggars and

²⁷ But, he also made an attempt by reminding his reader about virtues of the Iranian culture, and hence evoked we should not be dismayed and anxious about the future since "Iranian people endowed with talent and civility, affectionate and caring about others" to which others often admired and revered.

²⁸ Jamalzadeh MA (1966) *Our Iranian Character Traits*. Sharg Publisher (Fravardin 1345), p. 10. The terms "yesterday" and "a day before yesterday," we learned in the next paragraph, are references to the time frame that goes far back as Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon, all others who wrote about Iranians and their attributes.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

famished individuals as Iran has.”³³ The answer is obvious as Jamalzadeh contends, “without a debut, as long as we remained witless with wobbly moral, the whole world continues to perceive us witless and wobbly moral.”³⁴

For Jamalzadeh, the main reason as to why we collectively failed to measure up to higher standards or moral and ethos is the precarious instability between our keen sense of pride and toxic aptitude and tenacity to overlook our own flaws. The evidence to support this observation is abundant in our literature and works of our most celebrated poets and thinkers.³⁵ For instance, Attar, a prominent Muslim poet and scholar of Saljug period (860–928), rhetorically asks in the following verses:

How will anyone criticizing others’ faults ever find delight in divine love?
 You seek for faults to censure and suppress
 And have no time for inward happiness—
 How can you know God’s secret majesty
 If you look out for sin incessantly?
 To share His hidden glory you must learn
 That others’ errors are not your concern—
 When someone else’s failings are defined
 What hairs you split—but to your own you’re blind!³⁶

Another prominent poet, Hafiz is well known for scorning ascetic (*zahid*), a hypocrite pious rake (*rind*) who is condescending and overcritical toward anyone whom he considers to be less devoted to which is Hafiz sarcastically warns the puritan ascetic:

Don’t worry so much about the rogues and rakes,
 You high-minded Puritans. You know the sins of others
 Will not appear written on your own foreheads anyway.³⁷

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Iranian literature, as Claus V. Pedersen described, “is often inspired by and reflects abstract philosophies, and in addition, expresses man’s experiences of life and his interpretations thereof. By doing so, literature bridge the gap between theory and practice, conceptions and experience in a way that most other texts do not.” (See Pedersen CV (2002) World View in Pre-Revolutionary Iran: Literary Analysis of Five Iranian Authors in the Context of the History of Ideas (Vol. 10). Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, p. viii.)

³⁶ Lewisohn L (Ed) (2010) Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry (Vol. 25). IB Tauris, p. 165. In another story told by Aṭṭār, “a drunkard finds fault with the conduct of another drunk, counselling him to drink fewer glasses of wine, so that ‘you will be able to walk in a straight line like me without following anyone else’. The first drunkard, meanwhile, is unaware that he himself is blind drunk and being carried in a sack on the back of his mate. From the tale, ‘Aṭṭār draws the moral that this type of cavilling arises from not being a lover, for the lover always sees all the Beloved’s blemishes as indicative of her beauty and virtue.’ (Ibid.)

³⁷ Lewisohn L (Ed) (2010) Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry (Vol. 25). IB Tauris, p. 163. Lewisohn also elaborates on this note and points out, “Writing in Shīrāz a century before Ḥāfīz, Sa’dī [another renowned poet] relates the story of an ascetic who was invited to be the guest of a prince. At the royal banqueting table he ate less than was his custom, and after the meal he recited public prayers longer than was his habit at home. Upon returning home, the ‘ascetic’ asked his son to bring him something to eat ‘I had supposed you had eaten to satiety already at the King’s table’, the boy wondered aloud. ‘Well, it seemed more to my benefit to curb my appetite there’, his father prevaricated. Discerning that his father’s hypocritical pretence to abstention had

Lewisohn reminded us, “Ḥāfiz’s condemnation of fault-finding is not his own personal idiosyncrasy, but is exactly in line with the teachings of the Persian *futuwwat* [roughly speaking, it means generosity and manliness] tradition, where this vice is consistently condemned by most of its foremost thinkers, and also echoes a number of verses in Rūmī’s *Mathnawī* revealing the evils of exposing the flaws of one’s neighbour (‘*ayb-jū*’). The key verse that best encapsulates Ḥāfiz’s teaching on the vice or virtue of fault-finding is:

I said to the master of the tavern
Which road is The road of salvation?
He lifted his wine and said
Not revealing the faults of other people.³⁸

Had we listened to the voice of these enlighten men and were true to our own *futuwwat*³⁹ tradition, we could perhaps have avoided falling into a bewildering state, and hence end chasing irrelevant thoughts. The result of this obstinacy has been nothing but mediocrities at every layer of our social and intellectual lives. And if we will continue on the same path, Jamalzadeh warned, “not only we hurt and harm ourselves but we also inflict great cruelty to our children, the country and the nation.”⁴⁰ And yet, Jamalzadeh’s message fell on deaf ears, not only in the past but even today and most likely in the future as we consciously chose to be our most potent enemy and refused to do the right things. Perhaps, this is the reason why our ancient King Darius the Great on the Bisotun Inscription⁴¹ stated, “You who shall be king hereafter, protect yourself vigorously from the Lie; the man who shall be a Lie-follower, him do you punish well, if thus you shall think, *May my country be secure!*”⁴² This is the message that has been kept repeating throughout our history by our most precious teachers, poets, writers, etc., but no one seems to hear it. In 1963 (1342), one of the two main Iranian newspapers, Ettelaat, published an article that hinted at the

eradicated all his claim to ascetic virtue, the lad quipped: “Then recite your prayers over again as well for your good works up to now have also reaped no benefit for you.” (Ibid.).

³⁸Lewisohn L (Ed) (2010) *Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry* (Vol. 25). IB Tauris, p. 164.

³⁹According to Lloyd Ridgeon, Farsi equivalent of the term “futuwwat” is *Jawanmardi* which has been an integral part of our folklore literature like *Shahnameh* by Ferdowsi and “in the hagiographies and legends of the Shi’ite Imam [Ali] and in Sufi poetry and prose.” (See Ridgeon L (2010) *Morals and mysticism in Persian sufism: a history of Sufi-futuwwat in Iran*. Routledge, p. 1.) Literally it could be translated “manliness”; some scholars have suggested “chivalry” or “Islamic chivalry” as translations. Both of those get at some of the aspects of this term, but hardly explain it. To put it briefly (see Cahen C, Taeschner F (1965) *Futuwwa*. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 961-969), the concept of futuwwat embodies a social ethic and set of practices informed by a rigorous morality, Sufic ascetic and mystical concepts and practices, and ideas on appropriate social behavior. See <https://thicketandthorp.wordpress.com/2012/08/25/a-beginners-guide-to-futuwwat/>.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 26.

⁴¹It is a multilingual inscription located on Mount Behistun in the Kermanshah Province of Iran, near the city of Kermanshah in western Iran.

⁴²See line 55 (4.36-40), at: http://realhistoryww.com/world_history/ancient/Misc/Elam/Darius_beh.htm. Emphasis origin. It is noteworthy that all earlier studies of inscriptions had been conducted by non-Iranian. For more information, see <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bisotun-iii>.

ancient king's advice and cynically stated, "perhaps you have seen, and if not, have heard that Darius the Great on the Bisotun Inscription prayed to God to keep his country safe from lies. It is not clear, however, what the late king had done that God reversed his wish and brought the most awful plague of lie to his nation ... in short, lies, lies and lies covered us from head to toe, we are a nation that lied to our state so that the state left with no choice but to lie to us ..."⁴³

So, what do we mean by a lie? The discussion of lying to others and others' deception (interpersonal deceiving) may be divided into two kinds. First, related to definitional (or conceptual), which comprises the questions of how lying is to be defined, how deceiving is to be defined, and whether lying is always a form of deceiving. Second is more normative (more precisely, moral) that includes the questions of whether lying and deceiving are either morally defensible or not, whether lying is morally worse than deceiving, and whether lying and deception are merely morally optional on certain occasions, or are sometimes morally obligatory like *taqiye* (dissimulation) in Islam.⁴⁴ In this study, it is sufficient to offer two reasonable definitions of lying: "A lie is a statement made by one who does not believe it with the intention that someone else shall be led to believe it,"⁴⁵ and "[lying is] making a statement believed to be false, with the intention of getting another to accept it as true."⁴⁶ What I would like to emphasize in these two statements is that both underlined an *intentional purpose* in which one tells a lie.

The ambiguity of the notion is also prevalent among the most influential thinkers. Montaigne in his classic work *Essays* stated, "If, like truth, the lie had one face, we would be on better terms. For we would accept as certain the opposite of what the liar would say. But the reverse of truth has a hundred thousand faces and

⁴³Jamalzadeh MA (1966) *Our Iranian Character Traits*. Sharg Publisher (Fravardin 1345), p 34.

⁴⁴Christian theologian St. Augustine (354–430) taught that lying was always wrong, but accepted that this would be very difficult to live up to and that in real life people needed a get-out clause. According to St Augustine, God gave human beings speech so that they could make their thoughts known to each other; therefore, using speech to deceive people is a sin, because it's using speech to do the opposite of what God intended. The true sin of lying is contained in the desire to deceive. Augustine believed that some lies could be pardoned, and that there were in fact occasions when lying would be the right thing to do. He grouped lies into eight classes, depending on how difficult it was to pardon them. Here's his list, with the least forgivable is: (1) Lies told in teaching religion; (2) Lies which hurt someone and help nobody; (3) Lies which hurt someone but benefit someone else; (4) Lies told for the pleasure of deceiving someone; (5) Lies told to please others in conversation; (6) Lies which hurt nobody and benefit someone; (7) Lies which hurt nobody and benefit someone by keeping open the possibility of their repentance; and (8) Lies which hurt nobody and protect a person from physical "defilement". See "Lying and Truth Telling" at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/lying/lying_1.shtml.

⁴⁵Isenberg A (1988) *Aesthetics and the theory of criticism: Selected essays of Arnold Isenberg*. University of Chicago Press, p. 248.

⁴⁶Primoratz I (1984) Lying and the "Methods of Ethics." *International Studies in Philosophy*. 16(3):35–57, p. 54, see footnote 2 in Chap. 1.

an infinite field.”⁴⁷ Nietzsche once has observed, “There is only one world, and that world is false, cruel, contradictory, misleading, senseless ... *We have need for lies* in order to conquer this reality, this ‘truth,’ that is, in order to *live*—That lies are necessary in order to live is itself part of the terrifying and questionable character of existence.”⁴⁸ Kant, however, points to different direction and believed that it is possible to tell an “internal lie” or “inner lie” to lie to one’s “inner judge, who is thought of as another person.”⁴⁹ Since in the case of an “internal” lie, one lies to one’s “inner judge,” who is “thought of as another person,” but who is not another person, an internal lie is understood by Kant to be a lie to oneself, which like all other types of lies and insincerities caused by “mere lack of consciousness.”⁵⁰ In short, an internal lie is a lie to oneself about the motivation for one’s action, which he also considers to be a form of hypocrisy. More to the point, Kant appears to be referring to the tendency to believe that one is acting out of respect for the moral law, when one is in fact following mere inclination.⁵¹ That this is how he sees the matter is made evident by the following passage: “All homage paid to the moral law is an act of hypocrisy, if, in one’s maxim, ascendancy is not at the same time granted to the law as an incentive sufficient in itself and higher than all other determining grounds of the will. The propensity to do this is inward deceit, i.e., a tendency to deceive oneself in the interpretation of the moral law to its detriment.”⁵² In this content, it is easy to see how internal lying is an instance of heinous moral wrong.

Nevertheless, we cannot escape the fact that lying has always been ubiquitous. All you need is to open Encyclopedia of Deception and under the heading of “lie acceptability” it is said, “Many studies suggest that lying is a communication tool that is adaptive and crucial for social life... the acceptability of laying is often defined as one’s attitude toward the practice of lying. If a person considered it acceptable to lie (given specific situation), he or she tends to view the act of lying as one of several options for achieving a social or personal goal.”⁵³ In a broader perspective, we should not be surprised to be victims of falsification since we are

⁴⁷de Montaigne M, Cohen JM (1993) *Essays*. Translated with an introduction by JM Cohen. Penguin Books, London, p. 7.

⁴⁸Nietzsche FW, Kaufmann, WA, Hollingdale RJ (1968) *The Will to Power* [by] Friedrich Nietzsche. A New Translation by Walter Kaufmann and RJ Hollingdale. Edited, with Commentary, by Walter Kaufmann, with Fascism of the Original Manuscript. Random House, New York, p. 446. Emphasis origin.

⁴⁹Kant I (1996) *The metaphysics of morals*. Gregor M (ed). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, p. 183.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

⁵¹See Szabados B, Soifer E (2004) *Hypocrisy: ethical investigations*. Broadview Press, p. 133.

⁵²Kant I (2008) *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. HarperOne, p. 37.

⁵³Levine TR (ed) (2014) *Encyclopedia of Deception*. SAGE Publications, pp. 596–597.

all biologically vulnerable to deception, self-delusion, and bias of every kind through our senses all the time. However, as Sissela Bok points out, “We often know when we mean to be honest or dishonest. Whatever the essence of truth and falsity, and whatever the sources of error in our lives, one such source is surely the human agent, receiving and giving out information, intentionally deflecting, withholding, even distorting it at times. Human beings, after all, provide for each other the most ingenious obstacles to what partial knowledge and minimal rationality they can hope to command.”⁵⁴

In this respect, we all are familiar with falsehood: a “false argument,” a “false friend,” a “false economy,” and a “false witness” all of which apply directly to persons. We also know many other uses of false which means deceitful that apply directly to what persons have intended to be misleading, like a “false trail,” a “false clue,” a “false guidance,” etc. However, a “false person” is not a product of temporary lapse of judgment or merely inadvertent wrong or mistaken deed, or incorrectness, but rather one who is intentionally and characteristically untrustworthy, disloyal, and treacherous. A false person is the one we know well in Iran, and so when the ancient king warned us “[To] protect yourself vigorously from the Lie,” and a newspaperman writes about “lies, lies and lies,” they do not mean the act of lying but drawing attention to a false person.

The presence of a false person in Iran has been acknowledged through enormous literary works, poetries (ancient and modern), indigenous figures, satirical plays, and anecdotes.⁵⁵ However, nowhere it prevails more visibly than in Iranian’s communication principle, which does not meet the standard and fixed traditional linguistic thinking on the subject of meaning.⁵⁶ In this respect, Iranian interpersonal communication is quite different in a sense that when one is placed in a given environment, his chosen mode of communication is often “chameleon-like,” in word of Beeman, which allows him to adjust appropriately to the given surrounding.⁵⁷ Therefore, a function of all parties involved in the conversation is to figure out the correct interpretation of what is being said. As Beeman makes it plain, there is always some tension between what is said and intended by a speaker and what is

⁵⁴ Bok S (2011) *Lying: Moral choice in public and private life*. Vintage, p. 8.

⁵⁵ For instance, James Morier’s *Hajji Baba* provides many precedents of Iranian a false person. Although the book is a creation of Englishman, it has been translated and a well-known work in Iran to the extent that Muhammad Ali Jamalzadeh called it a master piece and Professor Menavi called it “must read book in Persian literature.” (see Nateg H (1975) *Aaz Ma-st ki Bar Ma-st*. Aghah Publisher, p. 95). Another example is Bijian Mofid’s *City of Tales*, which the most popular play was ever written in Persian, running for 7 years in Tehran, depicted various Iranian false persons in different occupations and social status.

⁵⁶ In a standard tradition, the element of language be assigned fixed relationships to each other and hence a speaker has no choice of alternative possibilities in speech, and hence bounded to his contextual environment. For instance, a fixed response to a question of “Where are you?” is either “here” or “there” and not “here and there.” See De Saussure F, Baskin W (2011) *Course in general linguistics*. Columbia University Press.

⁵⁷ Beeman WO (1986) *Language, status, and power in Iran*. Indiana University Press, p. 6.

heard and understood by the listener that permits the more adroit speakers, in Beeman word, to exploit that tension and make use of ambiguity to get the better of others in day-to-day interaction among Iranians.⁵⁸

The Iranian notion of *zerang* (cunning, slickness) is an ample example of an adroit speaker, or as I argue a false person, to which one can effectively control an interpretation of message for one's own advantage. As Beeman observed: "[O]ne important principle of communication in Iran is that the relationship between message form (what is said) and message content (what the message is about) cannot be interpreted by a single set of criteria, then an important tension is set up between the person initiating communicative behavior and the person interpreting it... Furthermore, adroit individuals should be able to know how to *supply* those elements that create the scenes that they wish to have operative in their interaction with others. The art of counseling, the ability to be an adequate hostess, the developing of a good bedside manner for a doctor, all require communication skills that contribute to the establishment of believable and effective scenes."⁵⁹ In a more crude term, *zerang* is a crafty person who seeks to deceive another whom he gained his/her full trust just to take advantage of him/her and get what he wants. On a similar note, but in a quite different tune, Lord Curzon in 1892 has observed, "*Splendide mendax* might be taken as the motto of Persian character. The finest domestic virtues co-exist with barbarity and supreme indifference to suffering. Elegance of deportment is compatible with a coarseness amounting to bestiality. The same individual is at different moment haughty and cringing. A creditable acquaintance with the standards of civilization does not prevent gross fanaticisms and superstition. Accomplished manners and a more than Parisian polish cover a truly superb faculty for lying and almost scientific imposture. The most scandalous corruption is combined with a scrupulous regard for specific precepts of the moral law."⁶⁰

In reference to trait of *zerang*, two more features must be noted. First, Iranians highly value a *zerang* person (a false person) to the extent that they commonly equaled it to intelligence and cleverness (*ba housh*), which slick through life with-

⁵⁸It should be noted that Beemans' *Language, Status, and Power in Iran Advances in Semiotics* has been subject of intense scrutiny and criticism to which I feel oblique to reiterate. One of the contemporary brilliant scholars of Iranian study who has earned my most respect is Hamid Dabasi. Dabasi in *Corpus Anarchicum* expressed his view on Beeman's work and stated, "This [Beemans' book] analytical ludicrous, thinly disguised racist reading of Iranian architectural practices of *biruni/anadaruni*, which are also linked to the Islamic mystical notions of *zahar* and *batan*, inevitably distorts the untheorized historical practices into substanding old-fashion Oriental reading of the Oriental as insidious, beguiling, and corrupt." (See Dabashi H (2012) *Corpus anarchicum: political protest, suicidal violence, and the making of the posthuman body*. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 98.) And yet, none of these derogatory adjectives undermined Beemans' observation, in that "It is the *birun* or *biruni*, the public reception areas of the household where strangers may be entertained without endangering the private space of the family. The *aendærun* and *birun* of the household are, to a degree, portable." (See Beeman WO (1986) *Language, status, and power in Iran*. Indiana University Press, p. 11.)

⁵⁹Beeman WO (1986) *Language, status, and power in Iran*. Indiana University Press, p. 27 and 66 respectively.

⁶⁰Curzon GNC (1892) *Persia and the Persian question* (Vol. 2). Longmans, Green & Co, p. 15.

out a trace. Second is an odd but recognized phenomenon that participants in this false creation, or as Ervin Goffman called it “framing,”⁶¹ are often realized the ongoing alterations, but almost always refuse to openly acknowledge it. This is perhaps due to the basic quality of Iranian society that frequently endorses “protect external appearances” (*Zaher-ra hez kardan*), so that one does not offend, and hence remains immune from possible harms of acknowledging the false that one knows.

In retrospect, a society that its principle of interpersonal communication is to shade truth and values a false person is a society that endures distrust and Janus-faced duplicity. The prerequisite to functions is insincerity.⁶² As a result, only a few in Iran believed that the concept of government exists to serve the public. Members of the public in Iran, as Baldwin points out, “... do not approach officials brandishing rights which they may expect to exercise and have acknowledged. They come as supplicants for favors which they expect to buy or to have granted.”⁶³ Perhaps now we can explain why decoding of power in Iran mainly involved individual leaders and their personalities instead of the institution of government as the primary targets of examination. On these points, Taysi and Preston stated, “In Iranian politics, nothing is as it seems. Improvisation, role-playing, and deception are key to any Iranian politicians.⁶⁴ Layer upon layer of meaning is attached to every word, every action. As a result, it is imperative for anyone hoping to be successful in Iranian politics to be a chameleon, never showing his or her true intention.”⁶⁵ Others also considered the role of personality but on a much broader scope and interests. For instance, Leonard Binder underlined, “In Iran, one of the primary political issues is precisely that of given of the administrative apparatus, from cabinet on down, a personality of its own, separate from that of the groups or interests with which its members are unofficially associated. This ‘personality’ needs to have two characteristic: the first is the obvious one of articulating the interests of bureaucrats as a class, and the second is that of identifying goals of the bureaucracy with some conception of the general welfare.”⁶⁶

I, therefore, argue that the key to understand Iranian social fabric rests in an understanding of the dynamic of interpersonal behavior. William Beeman alluded to this observation when he underlines, “It is through the intricacies of face-to-face

⁶¹ Goffman E (1969) *Strategic interaction*. University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 9.

⁶² Others, however, believed that the tendency to lie in Iran should be viewed in terms of insecurity and vulnerability that has been imposed on people through enduring history. In his pioneer and highly enlightening study of the Iranian political elite, Marvin Zonis’s cites numerous Western writers, who point out the pervasive, manifest insecurity of the Iranian citizenry. See Zonis M (2015) *Political Elite of Iran*. Princeton University Press, pp. 268–283, 295–298, and 272–279.

⁶³ Baldwin GB (1967) *Planning and development in Iran*. John Hopkins University, p. 18.

⁶⁴ In fact, it has been suggested that many political developments in the contemporary Iran are caused by personal rivalries, animosities, and power ambitions. For instance, see Hunter S (2010) *Iran’s foreign policy in the post-Soviet era: resisting the new international order*. ABC-CLIO, p. 28.

⁶⁵ Taysi T, Preston T (2001) *The personality and leadership style of President Khatami: Implications for the future of Iranian political reform*. In: Feldman O, Valenty LO (ed) (2001). *Profiling political leaders: A cross-cultural studies of personality and behavior*. Praeger, pp. 57–77, p. 72. See also Dal Seung Yu (2002) *The Role of Political Culture in Iranian Political Development*. Ashgate Publishing Group.

⁶⁶ Binder L (1962) *Iran: political development in a changing society*. Univ of California Press, p. 152.

interaction that power is negotiated, alliances are made, action is made incumbent on individuals, and choices of strategy are decided.”⁶⁷ This is where the notion of interpersonal relations, pigeonholed by mistrust, manifests itself on the larger spectrum and illustrates why in Iran we have collectively failed to build meaningful and lasting social cooperation and integration as a concomitant of nation-state in a contemporary sense of the word. Let me explain in the section below.

2.2 Lack of Togetherness in Nation-State Building

In this context, one of our most damaging attributes transpired, which is the absence of *togetherness* that weakens our unity (of purpose) and fragments our people to which the *nation*-element of the nation-state is absent.⁶⁸ This is easily observable in our persistent attempts, particularly during the contemporary period, to construct our “ideal” around a state (*doulat*) building⁶⁹ rather than a national (*mellat*) building, in which various ethnic groups are integrated into the national body in order to establish national cohesion.⁷⁰ Even when an attempt is made toward uniting the nation, as Reza Shah declared Farsi and the national language, the manner in which it is implemented resembles many other Iranian recipes that orbit around the same principle: to pursue the masses to see things as they were told, which reminds me

⁶⁷ Beeman WO (1986) Language, status, and power in Iran. Indiana University Press, p. 1.

⁶⁸ Kenneth Dyson underlined the concept of nation-state and wrote, “One major product of the late eighteenth-and nineteenth-century concern with the sense of community and solidarity was the conception of the *nation-state*. This idea was the result of marrying a new culture concept of the nation to an older legal and political concept of the state: the nation referred to a unity of culture that was based typically on common language and literature and a feeling of loyalty for a common land, the state to a unity of legal and political authority... The modern sense of nation was unleashed by the French Revolution and by the intense awareness that Revolution produced of the need to base the state on a more closely knit sense of community... In France the state was concerned to shape a nation out of an extraordinarily diverse society. Conversely, in Germany and Italy a particularistic, patchwork structure of states appeared to stand in sharp contrast to an emerging consciousness of a share culture based above all on language.” (Dyson K (2010) The state tradition in Western Europe. ECPR Press, pp. 129–130).

⁶⁹ A distinction is made here between government and state to which the latter conveys no substantial significance in Iran. Without getting involved in more detailed analysis of both notions, it is sufficient to underline their differences by stating the State has four elements like population, territory, government, and sovereignty. Government is rather a narrow concept, as an element of the State. In short, the State is an organic concept in which the government is a part. W. W. Willoughby writes. “By the term ‘Government’ is designated the organization of the State—the machinery through which its purposes are formulated and executed” (see Willoughby WW (1896) An Examination of the Nature of the State: A Study in Political Philosophy. Macmillan and Company, p. 8). In this respect, Government is an agent of the State.

⁷⁰ In respect to linguistic and ethnic diversity, “Iran is ranked sixteenth in the world with 24 % similarity, where Tanzania is ranked first, with 7 % similarity and North and South Korea have 100 % similarity.” While Persian speakers comprised of 60 % of the population in Iran, there are six major ethnic groups within the national boundary of Iran. They are: Turks, Kurds, Lurs, Baluchis, Arabs, and Turkmen. There are also others tribes (sometimes refer to as nomads) in Iran such as Qashqai, Bakhitiari, and Haft Lang. See Madadi AA (2015) The Relationship between Ethnicity and National Security in Iran. Journal of Political & Social Sciences 2(4):73–81.

that “if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.”⁷¹ It is however ironic that our disunity prevented the country from disintegrating and has made us survive so many calamities. George Simmel conceptualizes this observation in his brilliant work *Conflict* by stating, “A hostility must excite consciousness the more deeply and violently, the greater the parties’ similarity against the background of which the hostility rises... People who have many common features often do one another worse or ‘wronger’ wrong than complete stranger do... We confront the stranger, with whom we share neither characteristics nor broader interests, objectively; we hold our personalities in reserve; and thus a particular difference does not involve us in our totalities... The more we have in common with another as whole persons, however, the more easily will our totality be involved in every single to him.”⁷² Lucian Pye underlined the significance of such cohesiveness when he stated, “The art of modern government and politics requires that people work together in ways that will maximize the forcefulness of collective effort, while preserving the necessary flexibility to give scope for change and innovation.”⁷³ Indeed, Frederick Douglass, an American civil right activist who was born into slavery, signified the point of contention when he spoke of the United State as “this great nation,” in which he did not think of the ethnic group to which he belongs, nor of the variety of culture and nation that created the American nation. Instead, he thought of the country as a whole, in which collection of individuals or multiple communities live together in an imagined community of the citizens of the United State.⁷⁴

The absence of togetherness also adversely affects the rule of law in a nation. For instance, in Western legal traditions the key assumption behind the concept of rule of law, and hence legal responsibility, is of equality before the law.⁷⁵ This is due to

⁷¹ In fact, Reza Shah undertook a massive social-engineering project to turn Iran into a united Persian state, as he closed down minority schools and printing presses, outlawed traditional ethnic clothing, etc.

⁷² Simmel G (1964). *Conflict*: Translated by Kurt H. Wolff. The Web of Group-affiliations. Translated by Reinhard Bendix. Free Press, p 43-44.

⁷³ Pye LW (1966) *Aspects of political development*. Little Brown and Co., p 100.

⁷⁴ Having said that, one must admit that the absence of collectiveness (togetherness) among Iranians is rather a surprising development given the strength of Islam in the country. As Lucian Pye explained, “The collectivist ideals of the Islamic ‘brotherhood,’ which compel both reformists and orthodox to value a sense of togetherness, produces an inescapable tension for those who would stand out as leaders.” (See Pye LW (1985) *Asian Power and Politics. The Cultural Dimensions of Authority*. Harvard University Press, pp. 273–274.)

⁷⁵ One can also find the similar parity in Islam, in which “social hierarchies existed, and disparity of wealth was considerable, but, apart from a limited internal autonomy enjoyed by the whole body of the Prophet’s kin, the ‘Alids’ and ‘Abbasids,’ the Law did not recognize any legal privilege on the part of any individuals or groups; theoretically, all individuals were equal, and between them and the community as a whole the only body to be interposed was that of the family, as a result of which, by a kind of compensation, *there was often a strong though unorganized feeling of solidarity between believers (and, where relevant, between members of the same tribe)* which the historian Ibn Khaldun was to study under the name of ‘*asabiyya*.’” (See Cahen C (1970) *Economy, society, institutions*. In: Holt PM, Lambton AKS, Lewis B (eds) (2000) *The Cambridge History of Islam*, volume 2B. Cambridge University Press, p. 515. Emphasis added.)

the fact that all legal persons have the same responsibilities to each other under the law. Responsibility, therefore, is a social relationship in which individuals recognize each other's rights. In this content, the basis of rule of law and responsibility are reciprocal (reciprocity), and the defense of the rights of legal persons through practices that establish accountability for actions. Consequently, only individuals can recognize each other's rights and exercise their own. However, in the case that togetherness is absence (*vis-à-vis* each other), the role of law as well as legal responsibility and respect for each other's right cannot be retained. On this note, Guy Debord in *Society of the Spectacle* reminded us that a spectacle society is originated in the loss of the unity, "The spectacle is nothing more than the common language of... separation. What binds the spectators together is no more than an irreversible relation at the very center which maintains their isolation. The spectacle reunites the separate, but reunites it as separate."⁷⁶

In the section below, I will review some of the key historical phases with the purpose of explaining why the national element of the nation-state building is missing in the case of Iran.

There is no doubt that the enduring history of Iran had compelled people to develop a profound sense of how world operates in economic and political realm, and in the process learned ways of managing and manipulating the games basic to superior-subordinate relationships.⁷⁷ This social learning prevailed in Iran through three distinctive historical phases, namely, the ancient kingdom, Islamic civilization and its aftermaths, and the contemporary era of despotism. In the ancient time, power in Persia was generally associated with beliefs on the role of authority in upholding the cosmic order.⁷⁸ At the time, there was no boarder lines, or as Karl Jasper labeled *encompassing*, to control people in order to seize economic interests. The Achaemenian kings were not considered and worshiped as gods, unlike the Roman emperors, who throughout the empire had built temples to house their images. "Nowhere among their [Achaemenian kings] manifold titles in the inscriptions do they glory in their divine nature, they only assert that they have been invested by Ahuramazda [God] with the supreme power to achieve the rule of the God on earth. The divine mission of the king distinguishes the Achaemenian Empire from the Roman, which was based on the secular idea the world into one order."⁷⁹ There was no formal structure imposed on individuals to restrain their freedom and no powerful apparatus in the service of particular social groups and vested economic

⁷⁶Debord G (1983) *The society of the spectacle*. Black and Red, Detroit, note no. 29.

⁷⁷This observation is in direct contrast to today's populist political views of people like Charles Merriam, Robert Dahl, and Samuel Huntington who perceived power as a universal phenomenon, operating under the same laws from ancient Greece to today's system of states.

⁷⁸This order was so important to Persians that when Alexander conquered Persia, he reassured the Persian that: "if Dara [Darius III] is no more, I am here and Iran will remain the same as it has always been since it beginning." Mojtahed-Zadeh P (2007) *Boundary Politics and International Boundaries of Iran: A Study of the Origin, Evolution, and Implications of the Boundaries of Modern Iran*. Universal-Publishers, p. 15). Emphasis origin.

⁷⁹Haas WS (1946) *Iran*. Columbia University Press, pp. 10–11.

interests.⁸⁰ As the ancient Empire came to an end and reached an advanced stage in its downward path, Persians deviated from their old culture as they were subjected to the new power, and their expertise flowed into the Arab territory to build the Islamic Empire.

The Arab invasion had led to alteration of Iranians' cultural tendencies by the ways in which divine powers instruct people in understanding what is involved in a culture's rules about the relationships between guardian leaders and loyal followers.⁸¹ As Edward Mortimer has noted, "By the eleventh century A.D., most of the *ulama* were teaching that obedience was an absolute duty, even to an unjust ruler, since an unjust ruler was better than none at all."⁸² Moreover, as Lucian Pye explained, "The image of the Prophet and of those who spread the Word of Allah by the sword suggests that the deeds of the individual should command admiration and respect; yet the culture also accentuates the communal values of a brotherhood in which no one person's views should be imposed arbitrarily. The standards of personal conduct set by the Koran and the Hadith are severe in the extreme, and much is forbidden declared to be *haram* [forbidden]. Hence he who is seen as exemplary is likely to command instant deference. At the same time, however, immediate access to Paradise is given to one who sacrifices his life for the brotherhood, for *ummat* Islam."⁸³ However, as political unity of Islam began to crumble and Arab's hold on the mainland of Iranian plateau loosens, patch tribal dynasties rose that resembled musical chair of reign where one dynasty replaces another, only to be replaced by yet another tribal family. On this note, Nikki Keddie has observed, "Nearly all the dynasties that ruled Iran from the eleventh centuries to the twentieth century have been tribal in origin, and even the Safavids (1501–1722), who originated in a Sufi order, not a tribe, came to power due to tribal military forces. The tribes have had a profound impact on the nature of Iranian social structure and development. With the growth in the tribal element of the Iranian population, beginning in the eleventh century, there was a rapid spread of military-feudal forms of landholding, in which large holding were given over tax free by the government in return for military or other service... It might be possible to dub the Iranian polity from the eleventh

⁸⁰This inclination was not particular to Persia as Karl Jasper stated, "In China the small States and cities had achieved sovereign life under the powerless imperial rulers of the Chou dynasty; the political process consisted of the enlargement of small units through the subjection of other small units. In Hellas and the Near East small territorial units even, to some extent, those subjected by Persia enjoyed an independent existence." (See Jaspers K (1965) *The origin and goal of history*. Yale University Press, p. 4.)

⁸¹However, gradually Islam, as a political phenomenon, was associated with the sultans and local rulers, some of whom in time became partners of the British and Dutch in a system of indirect rule. With remarkable ease, such rulers sought out their assigned niches in the hierarchies of Europe's aristocratic rankings. As individuals, the sultans, nizams, and princes took on a form of upper class Westernization which suggested that they, but not their subjects people, were "modernists," fitting comfortably into Europe's class-ridden society.

⁸²Mortimer E (1982) *Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam*. Random House, p. 37.

⁸³Pye LW (1985) *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimension of Authority*. Harvard University Press, p. 273. Emphasis origin.

through the nineteenth century as one of *tribal feudalism*—a system which had a feudal type of service fief, even it lacked a feudal hierarchy—but was strongly colored by powerful and essential autonomous tribal enclave within the polity.”⁸⁴

The significance of tribal⁸⁵ rule in Iran cannot be overlooked or underestimated in a sense that the most persistent elements in Persian society have been the villages and tribes, as Ann Lambton states, “The most widespread group organization in time and place are the tribal group and the village group, both of which have played an immensely important role in Persian history.”⁸⁶ For one thing, the tribal interventions (invasions) explained the dynastic cycle in Iran in the post-Arab period to which Reza Arasteh claimed, “Tribal groups were responsible for all major invasions of Iran, except for the Greek conquest.”⁸⁷ Their successes, however, rarely reached beyond the military phase due to their inadequacies to control and manage vast territories with a relatively highly structured society like Iran, and the fact that their primary objective was revenue rather than governing.⁸⁸ Moreover, they lived separately from the rest of the population, and hence have trivial consideration for the rest of the population of the country. William Haas reiterated his conversation with a Lur [a man from the Lur tribe] in city of Khoramabad who “proudly asserted that he had killed fifteen Persian ... Now that such deed are no longer possible, he had taken to be more peaceful profession of dallal, an agent for everything, with which he was apparently well satisfied.”⁸⁹ In not so distant past, it is not uncommon in Iran that defenseless villagers suffered dreadfully from tribal raids. For instance, Richard Cottam states, “In 1907 the Turkoman tribe broke into revolt and engage in orgy of raiding and depredation ... After the Majlis had been close in 1908, the absolutist government of Mohammad Ali suffered the same tribal lawlessness that had been oppressed the earlier constitutional regime.”⁹⁰ On a similar note, Charles

⁸⁴ Keddie NR (2013) *Iran: Religion, Politics and Society: Collected Essays*. Rutledge, pp. 140–141.

⁸⁵ According to *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, “There is no agreement, even today, on the precise criteria to define tribes and distinguish them from other groups. The effort to find a definition began long ago. One of the first thinkers to discuss the social characteristics of bedouin was the historian Ebn Ḳaldūn (732/1332-808/1406). In his analysis, they are ‘people who make their living by rearing animals ... and are obliged to move and roam in search of pastures ... and water.’ The cement which holds such people together in a tribe is the *‘aşabīya* (communal pride) which springs from shared ancestry (*elتهām*) and affinity (*şela-ye raḥem*) and finds expression in confederacy (*walā’*) or alliance (*ḥelf*). Consequently these peoples, unlike sedentary peoples, attach more importance to descent than to domicile.” See <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/asayer-tribes>. Also see Tapper R (1991) *The tribes in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Iran*. In: Avery P, Hambly G, Melville C (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Iran Vol. 7*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Nevertheless, it has been suggested that one-sixth to one-fourth of the Iranian population in 1950 were members of tribes. (See Murray J (1950) *Iran today. An economic and descriptive survey*. Teheran, 57-60, p. 29.)

⁸⁶ Arasteh AR (1964) *Man and society in Iran*. Brill Archive, p. 12.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁸⁸ Jamalzadeh MA 1333 (1954) *Sar va Tahe yek Karbas*.

⁸⁹ Haas WS (1946) *Iran*. Columbia University Press, p. 55.

⁹⁰ Cottam RW (1979) *Nationalism in Iran*. University of Pittsburgh Press, p. 53.

Issawi noted that tribes in the highland like “Kurds, Lurs and Turkomans and others—who until recently defied the strongest governments in their mountain fastnesses and could usually raid at will and with impunity.”⁹¹

Another significance of tribal role in this book is related to the notion of as *Muluk Al Tawaif*, or roughly translated as Party Kings (kings of the factions) to imply the multitude of patch kingdoms that sprang up by the Abbasids’ dynastic policy to distinguish themselves from their predecessor (Umayyads).⁹² In doing so, they posed as the protagonists of Islam that manifests itself in the development of office of *qadi* (*qazi* in Farsi; a judge who investigates complaints and rule in accordance with Islamic law [sharia], which was the adoption of the Sassanian “investigation of complaints” by Islamic law).⁹³ This office evolved into one of the most forceful institutions of Islamic society. As J. Schacht noted, “*Qadis* were often made military commanders, and examples are particularly numerous in Muslim Spain and in the Maghrib [East] in general. They often played important political parts ... They even became heads of principalities and founders of small dynasties from the fifth/eleventh century onwards, when the central power had disintegrated.”⁹⁴ Indeed, *Muluk Al Tawaif* is one of the vigorous outcomes of this development, which more distinctly prevailed in the Persian provinces around the ninth century that lasted until twentieth century Iran.⁹⁵ However, as a result of history (Arab subjectification of Iranian) as well as composition of the population, *Muluk Al Tawaif* took on a tribal (or kinship) form of autonomous governing entity that opposed the Caliphate authorities. For instance, in the ninth century, the Saffarid

⁹¹ Issawi C (ed) (1971) *The Economic History on Iran 1800–1914*. University of Chicago Press, p. 4.

⁹² Schacht J (2000) *Law and Justice*. In: Holt PM, Lambton AKS, Lewis B (eds) (2000) *The Cambridge History of Islam*, volume 2B. Cambridge University Press, p. 555.

⁹³ According to Schacht, “The *qadi* was not any more the legal secretary of the governor [like the Umayyads’ era]; he was normally appointed by the caliph, and until relieved of his office, he must apply nothing but the sacred law, without interference from the government. But theoretically independent though they were, the *qadis* had to rely on the political authorities for the execution of their judgments, and being bound by the formal rules of the Islamic law of evidence, their inability to deal with criminal cases became apparent. (Under the Umayyads, they or the governors themselves had exercised whatever criminal justice came within their competence.) Therefore the administration of the greater part of criminal justice was taken over by the police, and it remained outside the sphere of practical application of Islamic law.” (Schacht J (2000) *Law and Justice*. In: Holt PM, Lambton AKS, Lewis B (eds) (2000) *The Cambridge History of Islam*, volume 2B. Cambridge University Press, p 556). In term of “the adoption of the Sasanian ‘investigation of complaints’ by Islamic law” see *Ibid.*, p. 558.

⁹⁴ See Schacht J (2000) *Law and Justice*. In: Holt PM, Lambton AKS, Lewis B (eds) (2000) *The Cambridge History of Islam*, volume 2B. Cambridge University Press, p. 558.

⁹⁵ Others provided a different perspective. For instance, Homa Katouzian suggests that *Muluk Al Tawaif* could be described as, “any multiethnic or multi-national state or empire, although the decentralized character of the Arsacid state may have something to do with it.” (Katouzian H (2006) *State and Society in Iran: The Eclipse of the Qajar and the Emergence of the Pahlavis*. I. B. Tauris, p. 16).

reign, founded by Yaqub b. al-Laith (the son of a coppersmith in Sijistan [Sistan in Farsi]), “openly contested the political supremacy of the Abbasid Caliphate in Persia.”⁹⁶ From a broader historical perspective, since the death of the last king of the Sassanid Yazdgerd until the downfall of Qajar, Iran endured more than 150 families of independent or semi-independent reign. Overall, there were only five clans who ruled Iran, namely: Seljuq (1050–1199) and Ilkhanid (1200–1375), Safavid (1499–1736, a only native dynasty that ruled the country in eighth centuries), Afshar (1736–1750), and Qajar (1789–1925). It should be noted that while the development of office of qadi eventually had led to the fragmentation of the Islamized Iranian territories, in Spain such development produced utterly different outcome called *reconquista*, which implies a conquest of Islamic Spain by the Christians.⁹⁷ It is therefore not surprising that As J. Schacht noted, “Islamic law and justice as applied in Spain should have diverged in some respects (not very essential ones, it is true) from their counterparts in the East. Whereas the *qadi* was always in principle a single judge, it was taken for granted in Spain that he should sit ‘in council’ (*shura*).”⁹⁸

The historically rooted tribal role and development of Muluk Al Tawaif in polity of Iran underlined significant issues. For one thing, tribal role in Iranian polity is reminiscence of the two edged sword metaphor. On the one hand, various dynasties have come to power by tribal supports to which “all except the strongest government have delegated responsibility in the tribal areas to the tribal chiefs.”⁹⁹ On the other hand, the tribes intrinsically are inept in organization of governing, e.g., various administrative tasks, and hence proven an unstable basis on which to build a stable governmental institutions. In addition, the tribesman’s being orbits around his tribe and its vicinity that he had daily contact. In this respect, it is plausible to assume that his loyalty is, first and foremost belong to his clan, which is the major obstacle to the acquisition of a higher loyalty to either the nation or the state.

Furthermore, the prevalence of Muluk Al Tawaif conveys a clear signal of instability of Iranian monarchs, in which a success ascent to throne formula comprises the following; be from the family of a dominant tribal leader and value power above all and retain it with vengeance; mobilize your tribal fighting forces to subdue rival tribes or make alliance with them to establish your power over them; and finally, run

⁹⁶Siddiqi AH (1942) Caliphate and kingship in mediaeval Persia. Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, p. 30. Siddiqi elaborated on this point and stated, when Yaqub was asked by Muhammad b. Tahir [a messenger of the Abbasid Caliphate] for a deed of investiture from the Caliph at the time of his conquest of Khurasan, Yaqub drew his sword under his prayer mat and told the messenger that was his deed and authority. (Ibid., p. 32).

⁹⁷For instance, see Wasserstein D (1985) The Rise and Fall of the Party Kings. Princeton.

⁹⁸See Cambridge History of Islam, volume 2B. Cambridge University Press, p. 558.

⁹⁹Ann K. S. Lambton, *Islamic society in Persia*; an inaugural lecture delivered on 9 March 1954, p. 6.

over as many provinces as you can and then decline to acknowledge legitimacy of the incumbent ruler.¹⁰⁰ This is a scenario that occurred and reoccurred repeatedly in Persian history from the medieval time onward; in every instance ousting one tribal dynasty replaced by another tribal dynasty only to be replaced by other. Therefore, our kings, particularly in the post-Arab invasion period, were mere tribal men of dominant status, in which credentials were hereditary. The bonds between the king and his subjects were personal and based on exchange—the granting of favor, land, title, etc. by the king against the performance of services by the *subject*. In Persia, wrote Jean Cardin in his travel account, “Nothing is done without advantage being taken that is to say without expectation or fear.”¹⁰¹ Here lies a foundation of a servitude to power in Iran in which panegyrics prevailed and manifested in prevalence of a false person quality. Moreover, since hereditary often used to seal ineptness, Iranian monarchs through history were often instructed by numbers of genre of advice literature, or in Louise Marlow word *andarz* literature.¹⁰²

Moreover, Muluk Al Tawaif does not only convey a clear signal of dire status of monarchs, but it also illustrates a damaged configuration of Iranian nationhood. On the former, Adnan Mazarei claimed, “Ongoing struggles between central authorities and tribal powers was one of the key historical, political and sociological attribute in the post-Islam in Iran. Manners as well as ranges of struggles often determined the faith of various central government.”¹⁰³ Manifestation of the latter can be traced back to tendencies of some Iranian sovereigns who decided to hire “private army” in order to keep the country intact (as well as defend the country or conquer new territories). For instance, Jonas Hanway suggested that the 200,000

¹⁰⁰ Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar, the founder of Qajar dynasty, followed this recipe down to its smallest details. As an eldest son of the Qajar chieftain, Muhammad Husain Khan, Agha Muhammad came under protection of the Lur chieftain, Karim Khan Zand, founder of Zand dynasty who married Agha Muhammad’s aunt. As rumors of Lur chief death spread, Agha Muhammad fled to his tribal grounds, where he assembled an army of his kinsmen. He killed his own half-brother and then went on to take control of the vicinity provinces and soon ascended the throne.

¹⁰¹ Ferrier RW (1996) *A Journey to Persia: Jean Chardin’s portrait of a Seventeenth-Century Empire*. I. B. Tauris, p. 113.

¹⁰² See Marlow L (2009) *Surveying Recent Literature on the Arabic and Persian Mirrors for Princes Genre*. *History Compass* 7(2):523–538. An ample example of such literature is the eleventh century *Qabus Nama* (Qabus’s treatise) of Kai Ka’us Ibn Iskandar, who was a prince of the Ziyarid dynasty in the South Caspian provinces. In the preface, the author has begun with a fatherly advice with these words: “Be quick of understanding therefore, my son to appreciate the value of your birth and not to disgrace it. Know then this world is plough land; as you sow, be it good or ill, you reap... now in this present world virtuous men are imbued with the spirit lions, where wicked men have the spirit of dogs, for while the dog consumes his prey where he sizes it the lion takes it elsewhere. Your hunting-ground is in this fleeting world and your quarry is knowledge and virtues conduct. Carry through your pursuit to the end here, so that when the time comes for enjoyment in the everlasting Adobe it may be with the greater degree of pleasure.” (See Arasteh AR (1964) *Man and society in Iran*. Brill Archive, p. 17.)

¹⁰³ Mazarei A 1348 (1969) *Economic and Social History of Iran and Iranian: From beginning to Safavi*. Dehkhoda Publisher, p. 289.

standing forces of Nader Shah¹⁰⁴, the founder of Afshar Dynasty, comprised mercenaries from different tribes including Abdalis (50,000) Afshar (20,000), Uzbek Tartars (6000), Turkmen (6000), and Baluch (6000).¹⁰⁵

As we arrived at the age of enlightenment, Iranian rulers in one way or another were forced to make attempts to move slowly out of the country's prolonged hibernation that lasted 600 years to which schooling and institutional organization were most notable among them. And so, a search for way out inevitably led us to the West and its development path. Fereydoun Adamiyat in the opening of the first chapter titled "Subjective evolution: rational theory" of his book *Andish-ye taraqqi va hokumat-e qanun: Asar'i Sepahsala* (the Notion of Progress and Role of Law: Sepahsalar era) reflected this sentiment as he wrote, "The new history of Asia, is the history of Western civilization's domination over the ancient Eastern land, whether we perceived it as productive or destructive factor makes no difference in the presence discourse. The point is, recognition of one of the profound historical phenomenon. The history of evolution of the West to the modern era began by its subjective (rational) evolution. Its main course was scientific certainty of knowledge and originality of mind; its subject was search in Natural law and Human endower in conquering nature; its goal was betterment of life."¹⁰⁶ This phase (or the contemporary period) will be examined briefly on two fronts, namely individualism of modern man and Oriental despotism (*mostabdeh-i sharqi* in Farsi).

The distinction between the object and subject (or awareness and appearance) that German transcendental philosophy fully puts into place has assisted our foresight and ends our cognitive seclusion, even though momentarily. Our sages finally recognized that the trembling ground in which we were standing is the outcome of our own doing, and hence come to realization that we have placed ourselves outside the history. The distinction between awareness and appearance also underlined the need for *self-knowledge*, which allowed people to see themselves not as a subject but rather by their proper name, citizens (figures in a political realm of the state). After all, Eric Hobsbawm reminds us that traditions are made: they are discovered and constructed.¹⁰⁷ The modern era changed our traditional perception of king in a sense that we

¹⁰⁴ Nader Shah is a controversial figure in contemporary Iranian history. It has been suggested that he was a mere bandit who took control of the country. Nevertheless, as observed, "The mere fact that the dynasty he founded and the country managed to survive into the twentieth century free of official colonial status say something of his ability." (See Ghani C (2000) *Iran and the Rise of Reza Shah: From Qajar Collapse to Pahlavi Rule*. I. B. Tauris, p. 2.)

¹⁰⁵ Potts DT (2014) *Nomadism in Iran: From Antiquity to the Modern Era*. Oxford University Press, p. 256. Also see Hanway J (1753) an historical account of the British trade over the Caspian Sea: With a journal of travels from London through Russia into Persia; and back again through Russia, Germany, and Holland to which are added the revolutions of Persia during the present century, with the particular history of the great usurper Nader Kouli. London. Another example is Karim Khan Zand, of Zand Dynasty, "who was able to weld together an army from the different Iranian pastoral tribes of the Zagros." See <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/zand-dynasty>.

¹⁰⁶ Adamiyat F 1351(1970) *Andish-ye taraqqi va hokumat-e qanun: Asar'i Sepahsala* (The Politics of Reform in Iran 1858–1880). Karazme publication, p. 13. Translation by the author.

¹⁰⁷ Hobsbawm E, Ranger T (Eds) (2012) *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–14.

were no longer his subjects as his *children*. Fatherhood was different for a modern Western bourgeois society, which rose to power and recognition in the second half of the eighteenth century. A male citizen of early-nineteenth-century Western society would have recognized the ruling sovereign as his *Landesvater* but still insisted on his own ruling power at home. Speechless and subjectified Iranian individual has learned a power that enables him to either question or confirm as he sees fit.

The idea of the empowered *individual* is a contradictory offspring of both Enlightenment and romantic thought. Still a subject of the absolutist Brandenburg-Prussia king Fredrick II, “Immanuel Kant declared that each person was free to express himself and decide on his action—within limit, of course.”¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, Western writers began to explore these limits as part of their inner life. To understand who and what each person was, individuals had to extend their being and reflect their past as a fictional continuity of self. This is the main reason why flourished autobiographical writings of late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the West were more about imagining of one’s self than customary accounts of famous kings or illustrious family. For instance, Jean-Jacques Rousseau declared his independence in *Confession*, in which he considered himself neither famous nor important, but simply as different from any other man. In a similar vein, from the nineteenth century onward writing an autobiography thrive and signified local imagined self-knowledge and individual’s self-realization in Iran.¹⁰⁹ Jalal Al-e Ahmad, a well-known novelist, expressed a similar sentiment when he stated, “my intention in writing ethnography was to achieve a self-realization and a new evaluation of the native environment according to our own measures.”¹¹⁰

And yet, Iranian individualism appears quite different than those transpired in the West. This is mainly due to the fact that the notion of individual self-knowledge transpired in the West as cultural enlightenment to which its essence lay in a unity of community that formed consciousness of social relations among individual members. To clarify the point let considered, for instance, one of the celebrated notions of eighteenth century, namely individual pursuit of self-interest. Adam Smith, a key figure in the eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment, was able to demonstrate the condition under which the common good would prevail in a society of individu-

¹⁰⁸ Ben-Amos D, Weissberg L (Eds) (1999) Cultural memory and the construction of identity. Wayne State University Press, p. 9. It should also be noted that when Fredrick II ascended to the throne of Brandenburg-Prussia in 1740, he immediately announced that every subject might now “seek his salvation after own fashion,” lifted all censorship of newspapers in Berlin, and recalled Christian Wolf from exile. (See Jones D (2015) Censorship: A world encyclopedia. Routledge, p. 1084.)

¹⁰⁹ In this study, I am mainly pointing to autobiography (*zendeginameh* in Farsi), rather than other types of ethnography writings like travel accounts (*safarnameh*), chronicles (*vaqayehnameh*), or written documents based on scholarly trends such as Abu Reihan Biruni’s studies of India and Iran, which is dated back to the eleventh century. For an excellent and informative study of ethnography writings in Iran and self-knowledge aspect of such writings, see Fazel N (2006) Politics of Culture in Iran: Anthropology, politics and society in the twentieth century. Routledge.

¹¹⁰ Fazel N (2006) Politics of Culture in Iran: Anthropology, politics and society in the twentieth century. Routledge, p. 116.

als pursuing their own interests centered around the limits of behavior considered legitimates by those actors. Converted (viewed) in term of “enlightened self-interest,” these limits have been accepted as the basis for retaining a social optimum from individuals attempting to maximize their own interests. From this example, one can outline a vivid picture that is missing in Iranian individualism, namely, the absence of greater sense of social optimal and civic virtue, which cannot be planted through borrowed notions but rather must prevail and establish in men’s hearts.

On this note, Alexis de Tocqueville had much to say on the relevancy of these absences in the pre-Revolutionary France than any fashionable Western notions such as freedom and democracy, or teaching of Marxism, Leninism, Stalinism, Maoism, etc. For instance, in case of individuals’ self-interest, Tocqueville identifies a crucial difference between the citizens of the United State and those of his own France: “I do not think, on the whole, that there is more egotism (selfishness) among us than in America; the only difference is that there it is enlightened—here it is not. Every American knows when to sacrifice some of his private interests to save the rest; we want to save everything, and often we lose it all. Everybody I see about me seems bent on teaching his contemporaries, by precept and example, that what is useful is never wrong.”¹¹¹ To attain the spirit of this sacrifice, we must collectively realize that our future can no longer be sustained by the memories and narratives of the past, but through liberated grandchildren from the condition of over-administrated society that mutated all of us into a vindictive community with bizarre whims.

The second point which I would emphasize in the phase III is the notion of Oriental despotism (*mostabdeh-i sharqi*).¹¹² Let us begin from the time that the French gazed

¹¹¹ Tocqueville AD (1990) Democracy in America: vol. 2. Vintage Books, p. 67. Prior to that, Tocqueville explained, “The principle of self-interest rightly understood produces no great acts of self-sacrifice, but it suggests daily small acts of self-denial. By itself it cannot suffice to make a man virtuous; but it disciplines a number of persons in habits of regularity, temperance, moderation, foresight, self-command; and if it does not lead men straight to virtue by the will, it gradually draws them in that direction by their habits. If the principle of interest rightly understood were to sway the whole moral world, extraordinary virtues would doubtless be more rare; but I think that gross depravity would then also be less common. The principle of interest rightly understood perhaps prevents men from rising far above the level of mankind, but a great number of other men, who were falling far below it, are caught and restrained by it. Observe some few individuals, they are lowered by it; survey mankind, they are raised!” The page that contained both passages is accessible at: http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/ch2_08.htm.

¹¹² My position is that the term Oriental is pseudo-concept that was popularized by European discourse (e.g., traveler accounts) about “the East” especially those concerned with such sweeping concepts as “oriental despotism,” and hence did not respond to a desire to understand Eastern. They were mainly concerned with European issues and debates, i.e., the monarchy of France under Louis XIV. Nevertheless, I am also convinced that a sheer belief that these impulses were formed for purpose within a purely European domestic context does not necessarily discredit various explanations and analyses as long as they convey issues that are *compatible* to those in the East. In fact, by assessing, for instance the way travel accounts, helped transform the concept from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, of which I argue that oriental despotism is rather a compelling tool for interpreting information gathered about the orient, one which served a common intellectual purpose, despite important differences of opinion in Europe, about the nature of royal power and the way in which it had transformed into a decadent order in the East.

toward the turqueries and the menace of Oriental despotism was irritating political idea in Europe, as Alain Grosrichard has noted.¹¹³ At the time, the term Oriental despotism, as a system of total domination and political brutality was a standard theme in the French Jansenist-constitutionalist discourse.¹¹⁴ The core philosophical debate on French monarchy was centered on the notion of despotism, as thinkers like Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Voltaire made use of the concept in promoting their own distinct version of a monarchy. For instance, for Montesquieu, the idea of despotism is “When the savage of Louisiana are desirous of fruit, they cut the tree to the root and gather the fruit.”¹¹⁵ It is important to note that while Orient is geographically far removed from the continent, its attraction for Europeans can be explained by Freud’s words, “That class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar.”¹¹⁶

To understand the concept of despotism, one must first recognize its common form, namely a regime. If Montesquieu’s vision is taken as the premise, then all governments may be reduced to three kinds: (a) republican, in which the people, or part of the people, possesses sovereign power; (b) monarchic, or the government by one person by fixed and established law; and (c) despotic, in which the ruler is unrestrained by any other law than of his own will.¹¹⁷ Within these categories, the fundamental laws of democracy chiefly lie in ancient Greece to which the rights and methods of suffrage establish. In short, the people should make the laws and elect its magistrates, but should not govern. They should leave the execution of the laws to their representatives. Based on this delineation, Iranians never experienced these rights since for a majority of the history, the country had been ruled by some sort of monarchial state, be it an ancient nobility (but not in a sense of European aristocracy)¹¹⁸, Caliph’s

¹¹³ Grosrichard A (1998) *The Sultan’s court: European fantasies of the east*. Verso, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ For French perceptions of the Ottoman Empire as the realm of Oriental despotism and for the use of this image in French Politics of the Period. (See Kaiser T (2006) *The Evil Empire? The Debate on Turkish Despotism in Eighteenth-Century French Political Culture*, in *Early Modern Europe: Issues and Interpretations*. In: J. B. Collins and K. L. Taylor (eds). Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Oxford.) Moreover, Jansenism was a Catholic theological movement, founded by Dutch theologian Cornelius Jansen. It primarily prevailed in France and emphasized on original sin, human depravity, the necessity of divine grace, and predestination.

¹¹⁵ de Secondat C baron de Montesquieu (2011) *The Spirit of the Laws*. (Trans: Thomas Nugent). Cosimo Classics, p. 66. See also de Secondat C baron de Montesquieu (2011) *The Spirit of the Laws*. (Trans: Thomas Nugent). Cosimo Classics, p. 70.

¹¹⁶ Royle N (2003) *The Uncanny*. Manchester University Press, p. 41.

¹¹⁷ de Secondat C baron de Montesquieu (2011) *The Spirit of the Laws*. (Trans: Thomas Nugent). Cosimo Classics, pp. 30–35. See also http://www.constitution.org/cm/sol_03.htm.

¹¹⁸ According to Encyclopaedia Iranica, a class of Iranian nobility called Azad, which rooted back to the “Aryan conquerors, who adapted the term to distinguish themselves from the indigenous population. The Fourfold division of the nobility is attested in inscriptions from the Sasanian period, which show that in Sasanian times the *azāds* constituted the fourth and last rank of nobles. They were preceded by the *šahryārs* (Mid. Pers. *šhrd’r*, Parth. *hštrdr*) ‘kings’ or ‘dynasts,’ the *wispuhrs* (*BRBYTA[n]*) ‘princes of the royal blood, members of the great families,’ and the *wuzurgs* (*LBA[n]*, *RBA[n]*, Mid. Pers. plur. obl. also *wclk’n*) ‘grandees’ (qq. v).” See <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/azad-older-azad>. While Queen Victoria also known as the Grandmother of Europe since her offspring ruled the continent exemplifies the European aristocracy.

appointees, clam rulers, etc. In fact, throughout the history, the country has continually reasserted itself, and hence has acquired distinct political and cultural characters. This is the main reason why a emergence of despotism in Iran appeared to be solidified when Iranians, unlike Europeans, e.g., British, have failed to remove all the intermediate, subordinate, and dependent powers that formed their monarchy, and hence have failed to break out of the stereotyped Iranian monarchy.¹¹⁹ Moreover, in Europe and unlike Iran, the leaning in favor of as large a measure of popular control as possible appeared in the remarks on the aristocratic form of government, of which Venice furnishes an ample example.¹²⁰ However, a most compatible European monarch to that of Iran was in Poland, which according to James Mackinnon, “the greater part of the people was in a state of slavery to those who rule.”¹²¹ Ironically, it has been suggested that the absolute Polish monarchical power was a precursor to modern concepts of democracy,¹²² constitutional monarchy,¹²³ and federalism.¹²⁴

The next step to understand despotism is an answer to the following question: how a monarchical system turns into despotism? Among a few responses to this question, Montesquieu’s reply is more revealing in the content of the present discussion since he begins with how a democracy is undermined: “... democracies are subverted when the people despoil the senate, the magistrates, the judges of their functions, so monarchies are corrupted when the prince insensibly deprives societies or cities of their privileges. In the former case the multitude usurp the power, in the latter it is usurped by a single person. ‘The destruction of the dynasties of Ts’in and Soui,’ says a Chinese author, ‘was owing to this: the princes, instead of confining themselves, like their ancestors, to a general inspection, the only one worthy of

¹¹⁹For instance, by the eighteenth century, the new position of prime minister in England began to assume greater power while the monarchy represented by the most influential European aristocrat, Queen Victoria, sank into a largely ceremonial role. (Chilcoat L, Acciano R (2005) *Western Europe*. Lonely Planet, p. 132).

¹²⁰For instance, the Great Council of Venice, a political organ of the Republic of Venice between 1172 and 1797, was anything, but a primitive institution composed of the prince on the one side and the people on the other. Its members “were each of them the assembly of a privileged class, an assembly in which every member of that class had a right to a place, an assembly which might be called popular as far as the privileged class was concerned though rigidity oligarchic as regarded the excluded classes... The nobility which thus formed at Venice is very model of a civic nobility, a nobility which is also an aristocracy.” (See *The Britannica E* (1890) *A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Miscellaneous Literature* Vol. 17. R. S. Peale & Company, p. 528.)

¹²¹Mackinnon J (1902) *The growth and decline of the French monarchy*. Longmans, Green, and Company. New York and Bombay, p. 705.

¹²²Janowski M (2001) *Polish Liberal Thought*. Central European University Press, p. 3.

¹²³Schroeder PW (1996) *The Transformation of European Politics 1763–1848*. Oxford University Press, p. 84; Ludwikowski RR (1997) *Constitution-Making in the Region of Former Soviet Dominance*. Duke University Press, p. 34; Sanford G (2002) *Democratic Government in Poland: Constitutional Politics Since 1989*. Palgrave, p. 11.

¹²⁴Gella A (1998) *Development of Class Structure in Eastern Europe: Poland and Her Southern Neighbors*. SUNY Press, p. 13.

a sovereign, wanted to govern everything immediately by themselves' ... Monarchy is destroyed when a prince thinks he shows a greater exertion of power in changing than in conforming to the order of things; when he deprives some of his subjects of their hereditary employments to bestow them arbitrarily upon others; and when he is fonder of being guided by fancy than judgment. Again, it is destroyed when the prince, directing everything entirely to himself, calls the state to his capital, the capital to his court, and the court to his own person. It is destroyed, in fine, when the prince mistakes his authority, his situation and the love of his people, and when he is not fully persuaded that a monarch ought to think himself secure, as a despotic prince ought to think himself in danger."¹²⁵

This observation outlines an account of Iranian despotic monarchies. The government of Persia wrote Jean Chardin almost 300 years ago, "is a monarchy—despotic and absolute, since it is entirely in the hands of a single man who is the sovereign chief both in spiritual as well as in worldly affairs; the complete master of the life and goods of his subjects. There is certainly no other sovereign in the world who is as absolute as the king of Persia; for one completely and faithfully heeds his orders without examining his reasons or the circumstances, even when one sees as plainly as day that there is rarely any sense of justice in his injunctions and that they often lack even common sense ... Nothing can hinder the extravagant nature of his capriciousness—not honesty, not merit, not devotion, not past service. It takes nothing more than a change in his fancies, suggested by a single word from his mouth, to overthrow in a second people who are well established and most deserving of their status; to deprive them of their possessions and their life; and all of this can occur without any type of trial and without an obligation to verify the crime of which they are accused."¹²⁶

Montesquieu's remark appears to be based mainly on Oriental history, and hence his diagnosis of despotism rooted in the ancient Orient, and to some extent by the medieval Europe, e.g., monarchy of mediaeval France. And yet, Joan-Pau Rubies claimed, "Few examples within the history of ideas seem as likely to fit within the controversial 'orientalist' thesis popular in post-colonial historiography as the concept of 'oriental despotism,' especially as it was famously formulated by Montesquieu (albeit ultimately on the basis of Aristotle) as central to the political thought of the Enlightenment."¹²⁷ Montesquieu's interpretation of the term is therefore formed as a distinction between European monarchy, e.g., the Petrine reforms in Russia, and an intact status quo Oriental despotism.¹²⁸ In this sense, despotism is

¹²⁵ de Secondat C baron de Montesquieu (2011) *The Spirit of the Laws*. (Trans: Thomas Nugent). Cosimo Classics, pp. 125–226. The quotation can also be access at: http://www.constitution.org/cm/sol_08.htm.

¹²⁶ de Secondat CL, de Montesquieu B (2008) *Persian Letters* (trans: Margareta Mauldon). Oxford University Press, p. 238. The similar quote appears in Ferrier RW (1996) *A journey to Persia: Jean Chardin's portrait of a seventeenth-century empire*. New Age International, p. 70.

¹²⁷ Rubiés JP (2005) Oriental despotism and European Orientalism: Botero to Montesquieu. *Journal of Early Modern History: Contacts, Comparisons*. *Contrasts* 9(1-2), p. 109.

¹²⁸ Ram H (2006) *The Imperial Sublime: A Russian Poetics of Empire*. University of Wisconsin Press, p. 103.

merely an abuse of monarchy, “as demagogy is of democracy, and oligarchy of aristocracy.”¹²⁹ In its most organic form, and unlike its European counterpart, an Oriental despotic state refers to the entity in which all subjects of the empire serve to the *pleasure* of a single person, the ruler.¹³⁰ The Oriental despot, observed Alain Grosrichard, “does not experience *jouissance* of power. He has *jouissance* only on condition that his power is exercised by someone else, and he hands over this exercise of power only because he gives all his time to his *jouissance*.”¹³¹ This is a state in which education (not schooling) hardly exists because knowledge jeopardizes a despot and ignorance sustains him. The primary purpose of an Oriental despotic state is to have an oblivion subject, and hence men are thought to be “good slaves,” as Jean Chardin observed, [in Persia] “Bodies and fortunes are complete slaves to a despotic and arbitrary power, as are spirit and courage also.”¹³²

An Oriental despotic state is a form of government, abandoned to the vicious caprice of a lazy, hedonistic, and decadent ruler, who is himself the slave of his realm, while loading millions with no care other than that of gratification of vulgar self-well, and without a council to enlighten him in affairs. In contrast with the majority of European monarchies, Oriental despots restrain their confines, so Chinese built the wall; Ottomans sanctioned public clock because “the authority of their muezzins [a man who calls Muslims to prayer from the minaret of a mosque] and their ancient rites would thereby impaired.”¹³³; and Iranian suspicious of all European infidels whom “they look upon to be some little island in the North Sea, where there is nothing to be found that is either good or handsome; this explains why, they say, the Europeans travel all over the world in search of fine things, and of those which are necessary, since they are destitute of them.”¹³⁴ They tighten their grip over power in concentric and centralized space, in which “All the wealth the country contains flows towards the despotic City, which will swallow it up in its

¹²⁹ Mackinnon J (1902) *The Growth and Decline of the French Monarchy*. Longman, Green & Company, p. 711.

¹³⁰ Another example that outlined the difference between these two of system has been noted by X. DE Planhol: “The system of state ownership [in oriental system] was accompanied by the organization of the land into *iqta*’ [a practice of tax farming concessions granted to soldier-officials in return for military service. The peculiarity of the *iqta*’ is that the grant is practically detached from the land, which owes no duty in service or labour, but merely a fixed payment determined by the central authority. Thus the possessor has no real interest in the improvement of the working of the soil; the Oriental system of lordship displays hardly any of those personal bonds which constitute the better feature of the Western feudal system, the lord’s interest in his vassal, and use of him as a worker and not simply as a payer of taxes. On the other hand, the system of inheritance does not recognize primogeniture, another guarantee against state absolutism.” See de Planhol X (2000) *The Geographical Setting [of Islamic Society and Civilization]*. In: Holt PM, Lambton AKS, Lewis B (eds) (2000) *The Cambridge History of Islam*, volume 2B. Cambridge University Press, p. 460.

¹³¹ Grosrichard A (1998) *The Sultan’s court: European fantasies of the east*. Verso, p. 76.

¹³² Ferrier RW (1996) *A journey to Persia: Jean Chardin’s portrait of a seventeenth-century empire*. New Age International, p. 113.

¹³³ Lewis B (2001) *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. Oxford University Press, p. 41.

¹³⁴ Montesquieu reiterating Jean Chardin’s comment. (See de Secondat CL, de Montesquieu B (2008) *Persian Letters* (trans: Margareta Mauldon). Oxford University Press, p. 238.)

center, from where it will never emerge. This is an absurd economy, its only goal the *jouissance* of the One, not the country's enrichment; its principle is *coupure*, the cutting-off of all that circulates (blood, merchandise, currency)."¹³⁵ Referring to the King of Persia's treasure, Jean Chardin states that it is "a true abyss, for everything in it is lost, and very few things come out of it."¹³⁶

In closing comment, the reader should note that I am well aware that uncovering the history of the idea of despotism, and its application to Iranian history entails going beyond European travelers' accounts or related political and philosophical thoughts in Europe since various sources, e.g., empirical or theoretical, may have related to different kind of objectives. Having said that, one must also admit that discussing the extent to which oriental despotism was anything other than a European pretense is extremely telling in respect to the European political thoughts and ideas to which Iranian zealously pursue, on the one hand, and observations of foreign travel of what were most observable, on the other hand. In this content, my examination presented above is that while it is accurate that much of what was written about the despotism of oriental monarchies was ill-informed and trapped within an internal European perception at the time, and while much was also vulnerable to political manipulation and demagoguery, there are abundant lessons to be learned about ourselves. This is due, first, to the fact that the eighteenth-century Europeans were often genuinely concerned with understanding their world, including East; second, they developed empirical methods to which the interaction between direct observation and conceptual development was the primary key of investigation in addition to intellectual and practical discourses; third, and as a consequence, notions such as the "oriental despotism" were not imagination bounded to their pretend, but rather, convincing methodology for interpreting the observation collected about the orient lands. The point is not that the Ottoman, Persian (as well as Mughal, and Chinese) states *were* despotisms at the time, but rather that it *made sense* to define them as such, and hence the definition was not always, nor even primarily, arbitrary.¹³⁷ Various accounts of Iranian's attributions that presented above reaffirmed this claim. As a corollary, what is most important about the concept is not precise and formalized formulation given by Montesquieu or any other observers, but rather the existing condition in which the people tolerated, endured, and most importantly perpetuated.

In retrospect, we are inheritors of the splendid civilization in the world that none but Italy "can pretend to have been so deeply interlaced with the fate of humanity ... never ceased to be *dramatis personate*, important participants of the world drama whatever their role, actor or spectator, agent or victim."¹³⁸ We are successors

¹³⁵ Grosrichard A (1998) *The Sultan's court: European fantasies of the east*. Verso, p. 68.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ See Rubiés JP (2005) Oriental despotism and European Orientalism: Botero to Montesquieu. *Journal of Early Modern History: Contacts, Comparisons*. *Contrasts* 9(1-2), p. 113.

¹³⁸ Haas WS (1946) *Iran*. Columbia University Press, p. 1.

of disciples that regarded obedience of the Prophet message as absolute duty, but disunited in our national unity that manifests in our pluralistic union in which “All” is periphery and margin, and “We” are held together by that absence. And finally, sponsors of the divine mission of despot that endure paternalistic reigns (which once was prevailed in medieval European thought) in a sense that “Iranians passively endured or actively avoided and manipulated *doulat*’s [government’s] intrusions, rather than questioning them.”¹³⁹ In this light, one can plausibly assert that we have a history in which one could draw valuable lessons and form ones’ whereabouts in human civilization.

However, this is as far as the role of history can take us mainly due to the fact that we failed to attain what our history offered. Iranian history made its mark on the notion of gratification in which people justifiably tend to see themselves as a *proud people*; the sentiment that is generally shared by the rest of the world.¹⁴⁰

This, nonetheless, does not explain how Iranians have come into “being” as “We” are today. For one thing, in Iran, the pronoun “we” conveys a rather vague connotation in that it has no direct guidance as to whom the reference is made. “We” can be assigned referential meaning only when one knows who is using it. More precisely, the referential meaning of “We” is different for every speaker of a different clan background such as Kurds, Turks, Fars, and Baloch. This outcome, as mentioned before, is mainly due to the fact that Iranians have failed to form a united and cohesive nation in a sense of a contemporary formalization of nation-state.

Moreover, “We” failed to constitute a united stand against threats to our nationhood, and precariously averted facing them. For instance, the Qajar concessions, which acknowledged Russian sovereignty over the entire area north of the Aras River (territory comprising present-day Armenia and Republic of Azerbaijan) as well as the 1857 Treaty of Paris, are indications of how the public remained indifferent.¹⁴¹ There was neither recorded resistance in annexed territories, nor any uproar or indignation in the country as a whole against these humiliating

¹³⁹De Groot J (2000) Religion, culture and politics in Iran: From the Qajars to Khomeini. IB Tauris, p. 141.

¹⁴⁰Perhaps this may provide a reason that some of us deal with our past history through what Svetlana Boym calls *restorative nostalgia*, in which “stresses *nostos* (home) and attempts a trans-historical reconstruction of the lost home... [It] does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition.” (Boym S (2001) *The future of nostalgia* Basic Books. New York, p. xviii).

¹⁴¹It should be noted that a lack of resistance against occupation also prevails in other countries. For instance, “In highly nationalistic France, resistance to the German occupation [during the WWII] developed late, grew slowly, and was never a threat to German aims. French patriots voluntarily led Vichy France into collaboration with Germany... Collaboration with Germany was widely supported by French elites and passively accommodated by the mass of nationalistic Frenchmen.” (Kocher MA, Lawrence A, Monteiro NP (2013). *The Rabbit in the Hat: Nationalism and Resistance to Foreign Occupation*. APSA 2013 Annual Meeting Paper). The difference between us and majority of others, however, appears when one intends to open the discussion of the topic!

surrendering.¹⁴² And yet, in approximately the same period, we witnessed the tobacco uprising (1891–1892), in which the monarch was forced to revert his position and complied with the popular demand. Indeed, Iranians seldom engaged in ventures that encompassed the whole, and instead they often valued novellas that painted with flavor that only resemble such undertaking. Thus, permanently remained in the stigma of our own doing to which proclaimed utopia-like fables turned into dystopian experiences. To confirm this observation, we do not even need to search hard through history since the ample proof stands tall in our recent past.

At the dawn of constitutional revolution of 1906–1907, as the ancient structure fall “without a voice being raised on its behalf,”¹⁴³ Iran allegedly broke away from the yoke of despotism and subjectification, to the extent that Edward Browne described the Constitutionalist “party” as one that stood for progress, freedom, tolerance, and above all for national independence insisted and “Persia for the Persians.”¹⁴⁴ Yet, there are evidences that refute this century old claim. First, the country was still largely run by landlords, merchant guilds, and aristocrats as the makeup of the first Majlis (assembly—the term took on the meaning of an elected, representative legislature, not simply a traditional advisory council¹⁴⁵) clearly indicated.¹⁴⁶ In fact, during the first decade of constitutional era the government had changed 36 times and only in 1 year the executive power (cabinet) hanged from one group to another 6 times. Second, and despite the fact that almost all of the constitutional text was formed on borrowed ideas from secular constitutions elsewhere, the adopted text was far from being secular. This clear contradiction begs the question

¹⁴² Another example of a nationwide lack of response was during the last year of occupation of the country by the Soviet Union and Britain, in which the Soviet provided support to the autonomists Democratic Party of Azerbaijan and helped to create the Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan in 1945. However, the episode ended as the Soviet conceded the United Nations Security Council demand, and pulled its troops out on May 6, 1946. On the similar note, Shahrokh Meskoob claimed that “after the World War II ended, even before the allies armies existed Iran, several provinces and eras declared their independence. Khuzestan, Kurdistan, Luristan, Azerbaijan, Khorasan and Baluchistan declared their independence. At every opportunity, Bakhtiaris and Qashqais moved toward Isfahan and Shiraz and Nuyib Hussian in Kashan begun looting and slaughter. Near Tehran in Zargandeh and Qholhak the national government had no power, Russian embassy and British Embassy has appointed their own personal in order to take care of daily work and no one have security over his lives or properties.” (See Meskoob S 1386(2007) Tales of Literature and Social Story. Farzan Publisher, p. 7. Translated by the author.)

¹⁴³ I borrowed the phrase from Louis Francis Salzman. (See Salzman LF (1901) The History of the Parish of Hailsham: The Abbey of Otham and the Priory of Michlham. Farncombe, p. 9.)

¹⁴⁴ Brown E (1910) The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909. Cambridge University Press, p. xx.

¹⁴⁵ Thompson EF (2013) Justice Interrupted. Harvard University Press, p. 79.

¹⁴⁶ According to Reza Arasteh, the members of Majlis in 1906–1907 comprised merchant guild, aristocrats, landlords, and clerics. It is noteworthy that many in the first Majlis affixed titles like *Haji* or *Sayyad* to their name, which indicated their religiosity and social distinction. In direct contrast, many delegates of the national assembly in 1947–1948 were designated the title *Doctor*, which illustrates they were most likely the product of Western higher education. (See Araste R (1962) Education and Social Awakening in Iran: 1850–1960. E. J. Brill, p. 32.)

of how do the religious laws coexist and be compatible with the laws opted by the people representatives.¹⁴⁷

Moreover, the text is clearly a manifestation of the conflict of interest between the role of the monarchy, government, parliament, political factions and their vested interests, and the role of the Shi'it authorities.¹⁴⁸ For instance, the first Article of the supplementary law of 1906 confirmed that the Shi'i character of the nation was accentuated over and above the diverse national characters of the Iranian people by stating, "The official religion of Persia is Islam, according to the orthodox Ja'fari doctrine of the *Ithna Ashariyya* (Church of the Twelve Imams), which faith the Shah of Persia must profess and promote."¹⁴⁹ The second Article follows by calling for creation of a permanent council of ulama with veto power over the legislative body, Majlis. According to this Article, laws ratified by the Majlis must be in accordance with Shati'a.¹⁵⁰ The end outcome, the supplement of the 1906 Constitution, appeared

¹⁴⁷For an informative and a critical review of the 1907 constitution, see Bakhtiari B (1996) Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran: The Institutionalization of Factional Politics. University Press of Florida, Chapter one. For an excellent comparative discussion of the 1907 constitution, see Afary J (2013) The place of Shi'i clerics in the first Iranian Constitution. Critical Research on Religion 1(3):327–346, December 2013.

¹⁴⁸Of course this contradiction was not hidden from those who campaigned for secular reforms. The paper *Sur-i Israfil* instigated a major scandal by suggesting that the "ulama" should keep their hands out of politics and by satirizing the mullas as "money grabbers" who concealed their slimy interests with sublime sermons. "This was the first anticlerical article to be published in Iran, but it was not to be the last. *Habl alMalin* [newspaper published in Calcutta, Tehran and Rast] ridiculed the authors of the constitution for having instituted a supreme committee to judge the religious legitimacy of all bills introduced into the National Assembly: "This makes as little sense as having a supreme committee of five merchants to scrutinize the commercial validity of all laws deliberated by the people's representatives." The same paper started uproar when it placed the whole blame for the decline of the Middle East on clerical ignorance, superstitions, petty-mindedness, obscurantism, dogmatism, and insistent meddling in politics." (See Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, p. 92.)

¹⁴⁹Brown E (1910) *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*. Cambridge University Press, p. 372.

¹⁵⁰Here is the entire Article 2, "At no time must any legal enactment of the Sacred National Consultative Assembly, established by the favour and assistance of His Holiness the Imam of the Age [the Messiah] (may God hasten his glad Advent!), the favour of His Majesty the Shahinshah of Islam (may God immortalize his reign!), the care of the Proofs of Islam (may God multiply the like of them!), and the whole people of the Persian nation, be at variance with the sacred principles of Islam or the laws established by His Holiness the Best of Mankind (on whom and on whose household be the Blessing of God and His Peace!) It is hereby declared that it is for the learned doctors of theology (the '*ulama*')—may God prolong the blessing of their existence!—to determine whether such laws as may be proposed are or are not conformable to the principles of Islam; and it is therefore officially enacted that there shall at all times exist a Committee composed of not less than five mujtahids or other devout theologians, cognizant also of the requirements of the age, [which committee shall be elected] in this manner. The ulama and Proofs of Islam shall present to the National Consultative Assembly the names of twenty of the '*ulama*' possessing the attributes mentioned above; and the Members of the National Consultative Assembly shall, either by unanimous acclamation, or by vote, designate five or more of these, according to the exigencies of the time, and recognize these as Members, so that they may carefully discuss and consider all matters proposed in the Assembly, and reject and repudiate, wholly or in part, any such proposal which is at variance with the Sacred Laws of Islam, so that it shall not obtain the title of legality. In such matters the decision of this Ecclesiastical Committee shall be followed and obeyed, and this article shall continue unchanged until the appearance of His Holiness the Proof of the Age (may God hasten his glad Advent!)." *Ibid.*, pp. 372-373.

to endorse two separated sets of law, one of which is “institutionalized clerical authority,” while the other restrained clerics influence in daily operation of governing the county.¹⁵¹ Mangol Bayat also noted the similar observation when he states, “per-modern Shia Iran witnessed the gradual emergence of two distinct but interdependent centers of legitimate authority, religion (*din*) and temporal (*daulat*).”¹⁵²

The 1979 Iranian revolution shared some commonality with the Constitutional Revolution as it officially disclosed Shi’ism as the collective national ideology. The main principle of 1979 revolution, its declaration if you would, was to end Monarchy in Iran. It was a precarious objective but nonetheless accurate. Precarious because it is easier to denounce the past (history) than it is to do without it; accurate because the Pahlavi monarch has been drifted for some time into oblivion and seemed out of touch with the reality. In addition, Iranians appeared to perceive monarchical mechanism of governance historically obsolete and irrelevant. The revolution declaration was characterized as precarious because it was conceived by a *system of alliances*¹⁵³ with incompatible interests framed into ambivalence. It was divided along dichotomous axes such as modernity/tradition, nationality/religiosity, and petty-bourgeoisie/left ideologues, and hence did not exceed beyond a mere coalition in a sense that there was no genuine unifying ideology¹⁵⁴ to constitute a coherent force—those who wanted to establish Islam as the pillar of a national government and those who had come to nurture a certain desire for an idol, or sought neither absolutism nor national despotism but a certain series of righteousness fetishized by “Western thoughts.”

It is obvious now, as it was then, that such divided coalition is doomed to fail at its inception because it erroneously presupposes the absolute unity among those who constituted it. More importantly, the absence of unifying ideology compounded by conflicting interests has driven the coalition into irredeemable division. As a result, one group became dominant over all others because of two distinct but inter-related factors: (a) the dominant group was able to mobilize and reach the masses to gain legitimacy and support; and (b) others, the petty bourgeoisie intellectuals most notably among them, discovered that their connections to the mass was either non-existence or extremely thin, at best.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ For instance, the article 46 of supplementary laws stated, “The appointment and dismissal of Minister is effected by virtue of the Royal Decree of the King,” and subsequent articles granted the king the right to grant “military rank, decoration and other honorary distinction” (Art. 47), “the choice of officials as heads of various government department, whether internal or foreign” (Art. 48), “The supreme command of all the forces” (Art. 50).

¹⁵² Bayat M (1991) *Iran’s first revolution: Shi’ism and the constitutional revolution of 1905–1909*. Oxford University Press, p. 5.

¹⁵³ A *system of alliances* is a term proposed by Gramsci for a coalition with an aim to mobilize masses against the ruling state (capitalism and the bourgeois state). In Gramsci thoughts such a coalition succeeds in gaining consent of the board masses of who might have been adversaries and have conflicting interests but joined forces to dispose of the despotic establishment.

¹⁵⁴ In this study, an ideology is perceived as a doctrine with two dimensions: (a) objectives: how society should be organized and (b) methods: the most appropriate way to obtain such objectives.

¹⁵⁵ Domination, in this study, perceived both as a process and an idea—as one of the most intrinsic attributes of human to politics and political philosophy, and hence conveys no negative insinuation to it.

And yet, like everything in life, domination is finite and therefore bears on time itself in a sense that the time of imposing one's will is not permanent, but rather in an immobile time. This is due to the fact that domination is only possible for what *is* rather than what *becoming*. This static attribution, therefore, transforms politics into planning schemes for short, medium, and long terms. Occasionally, these may appear as tacit collusion between various groups, or manifest in the form of a coercive measure, and yet there are times when innovative approaches are needed to *meet* new and unpredictable challenges. In this context, the post-1979 Iran is an intriguing showcase that fits well in all of the above. Proponents of Islamic principles, as the dominant group, have retained, rather successfully, their position of domination. In the early years of 1980s, they were able to establish their domination over others with blessing of the overwhelming majority of population through various referendums and endorsements to create Islamic Republic.¹⁵⁶ Consequently, preservation of Islamic identity (consolidated by widespread disapproval the state of the contemporary West) has been recognized as the central ideological principles of Islamic Republic State. Around the same time, astonishing 98 % of population approved the new constitution, in which its Article 4 declared: all laws and regulations in civil, criminal, political, and other aspects shall be based on Islamic Principles.¹⁵⁷

As concluding remarks to this section, I argue that inhabitants of Iran do not share a distinctive national consciousness or the politicization of that consciousness as related to the nation-state. However, Iranians have been put to test by various external threats and perpetual subjugations (repression) over the course of its enduring history, and when it succeeded, I argue, it was a result of innate religion solidarity rather than specific integrity attached to a particular piece of territory, or tribal pledges.¹⁵⁸

Thus, this book argues that Islam, and to the great extent Shi'ism, should be viewed as the main component in shaping of extraordinary political events in the nation's contemporary era, and hence the crucial factor in revealing the national consciousness of Iranians. In short, *Iraniyat* (being Iranian) and *Islamiyat* (being Musalman)¹⁵⁹, in word of Shabnam Holiday¹⁶⁰, are one and the same—two adverbs that describe a single noun, an identity, or more precisely the Iranian national identity.

¹⁵⁶ This, however, should not be viewed as a patronage of the incumbent government in a sense that supports were aimed at Islamization rather than democratization of the Iranian society.

¹⁵⁷ Some may dispute such a high approval rate; nevertheless, for those who lived in Iran during that time this rate seems still low!

¹⁵⁸ By "tribal pelages" I mean to imply for instance, that Safavi Dynasty kept the country intact not as a result of their Iranianness attributes but rather as an imperative to retain its power over the territory.

¹⁵⁹ It is extremely important to note that the adherent of Islam, among Arabs, is usually designated by the corresponding adjective Muslim (of which Moslem is a Western adaptation). The Iranians adopted a different adjective Musalman, which is derived from the Anglo-Indian *Mussulman* and French *Musulman*. See Gibb HAR (1970) Mohammedanism. Oxford University Press.

¹⁶⁰ Holliday SJ (2013) Defining Iran: politics of resistance. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., p. 54 and 79. Relevant to the issue of identity, Holiday also, correctly, points to the prevailing confusion among contemporary Iranian intellectuals like Al-I Ahmad in which he, on the one hand, described Alexander as the Great, who represents the manifestation of occidentosis that razed Persepolis and on the other hand accused Muhammad Reza Shah, who often perceived as modern patron of Iranian historically identity of the similar misdeed (Ibid., p. 57). Of course, bewildering of contemporary Iranian intellectuals does not end here, which I will come back to when it is required throughout this book.

Chapter 3

The Role of Ideas and Education in Iranian Society

The last 100 years show a blatant oblivion among modern age Iranians, who have not sought nor cared to understand their national history and have failed to learn from their enriched past and hence continued on an erroneous path of borrowing notions that are utterly unrelated to the reality of our own state of affairs.

In my view, one of the main causes of this mistreatment of history is our lack of understanding, or better to say our illiteracy, concerning our own history and pensive teachings. Let's consider, for instance, the teaching of Abu Nasr Farabi, one of the great Persian Islamic thinkers of the ninth century, who were instrumental in transmitting the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle to the Muslim world, had a considerable influence on the later Islamic philosophers such as Avicenna. In Farabi *Virtuous City*, "justice is the base of the perfect state, and it is defined as 'proportionate equality, everybody fulfilling the task which he is able to fulfill, thanks to his natural endowment and occupying the rank which he deserves according to his performance.' The disturbance of equality, Farabi believes, will lead to dystopia."¹ The solution Farabi proposes for such faulty state is "education through philosophy." Only through education one can attain the capacity to learn from the history. Omid Bakhsh in his study of Farabi observed, "He [Farabi] rejects every form of violence as he does not believe political reform can be achieved through political uprising. For him [Farabi], there are four main kinds of dystopia: (1) the ignorant state, (2) the criminal state, (3) the changing state or the state of change, and (4) the erring or misguided state ... What they all have in common is the lack of true education. The ignorant states are ignorant of "true felicity" that is "the most important aim of life," as Farabi believes."² This does not undermine the value of ideas elsewhere but

¹Bakhsh AO (2009) The roots of Dystopia in Iran. In: Russell E (ed). *Trans/Forming Utopia: The "small thin story"* (Vol. 2). Peter Lan, p. 113.

²Ibid., p. 114.

underlined the notion that in order to resolve a problem in hand, one must first (a necessary condition) determine the problem instead of applying a ready-made solution that for certain does not fit the frame of predicament.³

Thus, in this chapter, I will underline what I perceive as the shortfall of the intellectual development in Iran. These different aspects are the very definition of the concept and its connotation and how it is different from the Western History of Enlightenment. The fact that Iran's intellectual tradition has chosen a history of emulation over an authentic process of evolution is one of the most significant points that shall be raised. It is an elaborate discussion in which to only illustrate its framework, I shall start with mentioning the absence of critical thinking⁴ as the main reason why the intellectual trend in Iran assumed such a pathologically wrong path over decades. The argument is that Iranian intellectual movement lacks the very essential ingredient of a natural evolutionary process in which the formation of idea is part of creative cognitive process of development of ideas which is the quality of critical thinking. Let me explain.

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, two giant thinkers of today, in *Dialectic Of Enlightenment* provided us with an insight that should usher us for the rest of this book as they wrote, "We have no doubt—and herein lies our *petitio principii*—that freedom in society is inseparable from enlightenment thinking. We believe we have perceived with equal clarity, however, that the very concept of that thinking, no less than the concrete historical forms, the institutions of society with which it is intertwined, already contains the germ of the regression which is taking place everywhere today. If enlightenment⁵ does not assimilate reflection on this regressive moment, it seals its own fate. By leaving consideration of the destructive side of progress to its enemies, thought in its headlong rush into pragmatism is forfeiting its sublimating character, and therefore its relation to truth."⁶ In this respect, I would agree with a sentiment that the West, as an ideal civilization module to follow is a futile endeavor since the European Enlightenment has self-destructed to the extent that now-a-days it is decoded as postmodernity. Nevertheless, I also submit to the idea that a society cannot free itself from the bondage of stagnation and backwardness without enlightenment thinking as is true today as it was in the eighteenth century.

In greater scope of things, the history of East and West is quite a different history, and hence has produced dissimilar and to some extent contradictory consciousness. Having said that few points must be clarified at the outset, first, I am not subscribed to the notion that the history of a specific nation, region, or continent, is the separated

³Aside from the common sense, this approach is conceptually based on the following: (a) as a member of community, man's action is a form of social action; (b) his action, therefore, is socially situated; and (c) prevailing institutions are socially constructed.

⁴A common practice among Iran's intellectualists criticizing each other without reading and understanding each other's works—this is not critical thinking.

⁵The philosophical debates about enlightenment are intentionally excluded. Those who are interested in this topic are invited to see a fascination book by Cascardi AJ (1999) *Consequences of Enlightenment* (Vol. 30). Cambridge University Press.

⁶Horkheimer M, Adorno TW, Noerr GS (2002) *Dialectic of enlightenment: Philosophical fragments*. Stanford University Press, p. xvi.

and independent story. Instead, I view a history of each civilization as a part of larger whole, the human civilization. In this respect, I see Western civilization not as a new member of the family of civilizations, but just an extension of an older civilization. This does not mean the Western, or any other civilization, could not have its own separate and distinct existence or follows the law of its own being. But what is certain is an upsurge of new civilization is necessarily a result of the past foundation. For instance, in 1987 Martin Bernal in his *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* asserts that the Greek culture of the Bronze Age arose as a result of colonization by Egyptians and Phoenicians.⁷ He further argues that Herodotus and Classical Greece through the eighteenth century had their origin in the civilization of Egyptians and Phoenicians.⁸ Alexis de Tocqueville's observation of what constitutes Anglo-American societies offers another instance as he stated, "It was religion that gave birth to the Anglo-American societies [a new civilization]. This must always be borne in mind. Hence religion [old foundation] in the United States is inextricably intertwined with all the national habits and all the feeling to which the fatherland gives rise. This gives it a peculiar force."⁹ Second, I also do not patronage the notion that since sun rises in the East and sets in the West we must, therefore, attach a certain supremacy or inferiority to this natural phenomenon! In my mind, there is none. Nevertheless, in history there are lessons worth noting and learning, which enable us today to avert past mistakes and improve earlier novelties.

When we look back, one difference that grabs our attention is how the East declared itself. All prehistory religions like Taoism, Hinduism, and Buddhism as well as religions of antiquity, Abrahamic religions, formed in the East.¹⁰ This does not imply that the East has any moral leverage over the West, but rather indicates that people's awareness through thousands of years had been entrenched with spirituality, mythology, and the divine truth. As such, truths provide a comfort of a mind when the mind seems has been perpetually subjected to various chaos and turbulences through time. Truth, in this sense, turns into a place of sanctuary, where *rest* is the most sought after.

Just like the East, Western refinements started gradually and suffered from similar struggles among men for pursuit of power and wealth. However, in direct contrast to the East, the West elevation (beyond the level reached by others) prevailed

⁷The main proposal of Martin Bernal is that the Greek culture has been misrepresented as Indo-European in origin when in fact it is largely African and Semitic. For fascinating discussion of Martin Bernal book and related issue see Fritze RH (2009) *Invented knowledge: false history, fake science, and pseudo-religions*. Reaktion Books, Chapter 6. However, Bernal was not the first to propose this thesis. The idea was first presented in G. James' *Stolen Legacy* in which James proposes that Plato, Aristotle, and other major Greek philosophers "stole" their ideas from Egypt.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Tocqueville AD (2004) *Democracy in America*. Trans: Arthur Goldhammer. Library of America, p. 486.

¹⁰See Wikipedians (ed) (2011) *Library of Classification*. Pedia Press, p. 44, under subtitle "Religion: Theology". While, all prophets of monolithic religion originated in East, the West, during the enlightenment, was a place for different kinds of messengers, unholy but nevertheless not conformed, thinkers as sort of intellectual prophets whose work Audacity pursued as God Book. Most notable among them are Sturat Milles, Thoams Hobbes, John Lock, Voltair, and Karl Marx.

as doubt and mistrust about “absolute truth” began to surface among men of reasons as well as men of faith. The thinkers in the West were endowed with audacity of questioning, which makes possible the very enterprise of philosophy established in Athena. It calls itself to account, and hence opens itself to be *ungrounded*, the audacious impudence that served men well in their quest for betterment of their lives.

Men of faith were also not immune from this development to the extent that the traditional realm of saintly, e.g., absolute authority of Pope, was challenged by clerics themselves.¹¹ Men like Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Colet, and Thomas More were instrumental in confronting the spiritual awakening that emerged in the East and evolved into absolute domination in the West.¹² These oppositions were also mainly

¹¹On a related issue, Anthony Giddens points out, “Judaism and Christianity rest on the tension between sin and salvation and that gives them a basic transformative capacity which the Far Eastern religions lack, being more contemplative in orientation. The opposition between the imperfections of the world and the perfection of God, in Christian theodicy, enjoins the believer to achieve his salvation through refashioning the world in accordance with the Divine purpose (See Anthony Giddens, “Introduction” in Weber M (1992) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: and other writings*. Trans: Talcott Parsons, p. xvi).

¹²The enlightenment in religion, however, was the followup of centuries of transformation and restructuring of the Roman Church. Here, few selected outcomes are depicted. I began in eleventh century when papacy, “assumed a greater role in the direction of both church and society. The popes continued to exert their traditional authority over matters of doctrine and faith and presided over councils that ordered religious life and practice. The papal court became the court of last appeal, and the assertion of papal jurisdiction even into secular matters “by reason of sin” (ratio peccati) greatly expanded papal authority and sometimes led to conflicts with secular powers... The twelfth century was a period in which there arose new institutions of higher education, innovative techniques of thought and speech, and fresh approaches to ancient problems of philosophy and theology, all of which profoundly influenced the development of Christian belief and practice... philosophy was revived through the development of logic and dialectic and their application to doctrines of the faith in formal exercises, in Augustinian speculation, and in critical reformulation... The first handbook of theology was composed by Abelard, a provocative and brilliant thinker who used Aristotle’s logic in his explorations of the faith. In his *Sic et non* (Yes and No), he compiled 158 questions, together with contradictory answers found in the works of earlier theologians. He refused to provide resolutions to the opposing points of view, forcing readers to think for themselves but also emphasizing the ultimate authority of the Bible over human thought... The thirteenth century in Europe as a whole was a time of pastoral activity in which bishops and university-trained clergy perfected the diocesan and parish organization and reformed many abuses... but clashes soon occurred; the papacy gave the friars exemptions and privileges so wide that the basic rights of the secular clergy were threatened. An academic “war of pamphlets” led to an attack on the vocation and work of the friars... As the fourteenth century proceeded, the so-called medieval synthesis of the Scholastic theologians was undone by the works of Ockham and John Duns Scotus, and nominalism captured the universities. In England, John Wycliffe challenged the papacy and the teachings of the church, prefiguring the attacks of the Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century. Although condemned by the church, Wycliffe influenced the thought of Jan Hus and, especially, the Lollards of England. The church also suffered from the destruction of the Hundred Years’ War (1337–1453) between England and France and the devastation of the Black Death (1348–1349), which decimated the population of Europe and inspired both orthodox and heterodox religious movements.” See The Rev. Michael David Knowles, O. S. B., *Catholicism R* (2009) *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Available at: <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Roman-Catholicism>. Accessed 9 October 2014.

due to a time of awakening national consciousness in the fifteenth century, whose particularity and regionalism often run against the universalism of the orthodoxy of Roman Catholicism at the time. For instance, in the English Protestant Reform of the sixteenth century, the prevailing opposition between the church and nation led Roman Catholicism to a rift as the Church of England broke ties with Rome. As the protestant reform gathered momentum, no stone was left unturned to the extent that indulgences (the Roman Catholic church power that granted full or partial remission of the punishment of sin), clerical power, the use of Latin in church worship, the seven sacraments, transubstantiation, were all confronted by none other than the clerics themselves.¹³ In all that, one of the underlying factors that made these developments successful was the effectiveness of widespread pamphleteers, as one wrote, “This whole reformation, the introduction of toleration, would never have been brought to pass so easily if the pamphleteers hadn’t bombarded the people’s mind with so many booklets, and said ... exactly what the people needed to know.”¹⁴ The significance of pamphleteers is related to the presence of liberated people in the West at the time.

And so, believe and subsequently trust in purities and truths became temporary phenomenon. Everything that gives us a sense of “being” in the East, had gradually vanished in the West. Perhaps this is why in 1882 Friedrich Nietzsche told a story of madman who ran into the marketplace one morning, crying, “I seek God! I seek God!” when the patronizing bystander asked where he thinks God has gone, has he run away, or perhaps hidden, the madman glared at them. “Where has God Gone?” He calls out. “I mean to tell you. We have killed him [God], you and I! We are all his murderers!,” the madman’s declaration is that “society has stopped believing in God and that this has left us an empty space of meaning yet to be fulfilled. Nietzsche’s point is not that only madman can come to the conclusion that God is dead, but rather that the realization that religion no longer provides meaning to social life will produce a society of mad people. Life will be characterized by chaos and uncertainty without the functions of religion.”¹⁵ The security of a mind, therefore, sacrificed for sake of infringing on the area that once scared and dominated by certainty of absolutism, as Hannah Arendt in her characterization of the era observed, “I can know only what I myself make.”¹⁶

¹³ It should be noted that many other factors contributed to the reform: the decline of feudalism and the rise of nationalism, the rise of the common law (also known as case law or precedent, is law developed by judges through decisions of courts and similar tribunals that decide individual cases, as opposed to statutes adopted through the legislative process or regulations issued by the executive branch), the invention of the printing press and increased circulation of the Bible, as a result of its translations, etc.

¹⁴ Beales D (2005) *Enlightenment and reform in eighteenth-century Europe* (Vol. 29). IB Tauris, p. 16.

¹⁵ Kirby M (2000). *Sociology in perspective*. Heinemann, p. 413.

¹⁶ Arendt H (1978) *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1. Thinking, 2. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, p. 7.

The result was quite unexpected. Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, and Halley radically changed the Christian worldview.¹⁷ What people used to hold dear as permanent and absolute, has been replaced by temporality and doubt. This is, more or less, called enlightenment. However, this illumination came with a price tag. John Locke, one of the major influential philosophers of the enlightenment period, underlined this cost when he declared that “man’s ultimate mission is to be productive.” In short, the message of enlightenment was nothing but, “no pain no gain”, so to speak.¹⁸ The reason for man’s existence on Earth, he stated, “The property of labor should be able to overbalance the community of land; for it is labor indeed that puts the difference of value in everything; and let anyone consider what the difference is between an acre of land planted with tobacco or sugar, sown with wheat or barley, and an acre of the same land lying in common, without any husbandry upon it, and he will find that the improvement of labor makes the far greater part of the value ... Land that if left wholly to nature, that hath no improvement of pasturage, tillage, or planting, is called, as indeed it is, waste; and we shall find the benefit of it amounts to little more than nothing.”¹⁹ The negation of nature, therefore as Locke perceived, is the way to move forward in the enlightened era.

On a broader and more societal aspect, however, enlightenment has come about a profound change in the Western world mindset. Reason, instead of trusting and submitting, become the pillars of new rising Empire to the extent that *philosophie* replaced traditional Christianity. For instance, in the eighteenth century French Philosopher Diderot’s version, “Reason is in respect to *philosophie* what Grace is in

¹⁷The story goes as follows; Aristotle taught that the Earth was the center of the Universe, in which the Sun, the Moon, and the planets orbited the Earth (known as geocentric theory). Later Claudius Ptolemy wrote that the Earth was motionless because constant gales would sweep across it if it were in motion. In his system, each planet revolved around the earth in a large circle by making a series of small circles, to account for this effect. The Roman Catholic Church adopted the theories of Aristotle and Ptolemy, perhaps because the Church leaders felt that they had the duty of teaching the people about the universe, which declared the glory of God. Their teaching, nevertheless, played an important role in presenting these theories to the Europeans. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), a priest and reformer, used the writings of these men to show that the heavens were “God-ordained and man-centered.” Nicholas Copernicus, in the fifteenth century, who studied to become a priest set out to improve the system devised by Ptolemy. However, he realized that the rising and setting of the Sun, Moon, and Stars could be accounted for by a daily revolution of the Earth. His idea that the Earth and planets orbited about the sun became known as the “heliocentric theory.” He wrote about it in his book “De Revolutionibus,” which translates to “Concerning the Revolutions.” Copernicus defended his placement of the Sun at the center of the Universe by asking, “For who would place this lamp of a very beautiful temple in another or better place than this, wherefrom it can illuminate everything at the same time?” In sixteenth century, Galileo Galilei supported Copernicus’ heliocentric theory and in doing so angered the Roman Catholic Church. He was arrested and later forced to kneel before the tribunal of the Church (the Inquisition) and confess that heliocentric theory was False. And the rest is history. However, it is noteworthy that it took the Roman Catholic Church more than 400 years to repeal the inquisition against Galileo in 1992. See <http://www.vibrationdata.com/space/helio.html>.

¹⁸Way back in the eleventh century, Saadi Shirazi also echoes a similar message as he has observed, “*Naborde ranj ganj moyassar nemishavad, Mozd on kreft John-i brader ki kar kard* (in the absence of toil, a treasure is unattainable, reward goes to those who labor”).

¹⁹Locke J (1690) Second treatise of government. Digitized by Dave Gowan, dgowan@freenet.scri.fsu.edu. Sec. 40 and sec. 42, respectively.

respect to Christian ... Civil Society is, so to speak, a divinity on earth for [the philosophe]; he worships it.”²⁰ The life of reason, therefore, becomes a political life in a sense that a purpose of law and governance was grounded in reason. Does this mean that reason, which dated back to Greek philosophical tradition, grounded itself in the West. Hegel would say yes and so Edmund Husserl and many others. And yet, Greek thought observes E. Gilson in his lecture on the spirit of medieval philosophy, “did not attain to that essential truth which is struck out at one blow, and without a shadow of proof”.²¹ So the question is: can “faith” be replaced with “reason” without reservation? The root of this twofold dichotomy goes back to the medieval period. In the whole course of scholastic philosophical debates we always meet the same struggle between “faith” and “reason” or more precisely between the “theologians” and the “dialecticians”. For the latter group, the answer is obvious, “Truth is the measure of itself and falsity, said Spinoza, and thus expressed the widespread view that reason is ultimately self-validating; reason ground itself.”²²

Theologians, however, utterly reject reason and all related activities. An outspoken theologian opponent of “reason” by the name of Petrus Daminai, in the eleventh century, condemned reason not only as philosophical discourse but also as an integral part of the liberal arts and secular knowledge. “He spoke of an inflation of science. Not only dialectic but also grammar was declared to be one of the most dangerous enemies of true religion. According to Petrus Damiani the devil was the inventor of grammar and the first grammarian. The first lesson of grammar was, at the same time, a lesson in polytheism; for the grammarians were the first to speak of “Gods” in the plural forms. If reason to be admitted at all, it has to be obeyed blindly; it has to submit to the command of faith. For even if our logic were complete and faultless, it would apply only to human beings and not to divine things. We cannot attain the knowledge of God by syllogism; and God is not bound to the petty rules of our human logic. It is only the saintly simplicity, the simplicity of faith, that can save us from the snares and fallacies of reason ... *One does not kindle a candle, says Pentrus Damiani, in order to see the sun.*”²³

These sentiments should not be viewed as the implausible thinking of a single man, but rather a striking contrast between two traditions, namely theologians and dialecticians conception of the world, which have challenged each other in relatively

²⁰ Beales D (2005) Enlightenment and reform in eighteenth-century Europe (Vol. 29). IB Tauris, p. 62.

²¹ Cassirer E (1972) An essay on man: An introduction to a philosophy of human culture (Vol. 52). Yale University Press, p. 92.

²² Desmond W (1995) Perplexity and ultimacy: metaphysical thoughts from the middle. SUNY Press, p. 179.

²³ Cassirer E (1972) An essay on man: An introduction to a philosophy of human culture (Vol. 52). Yale University Press, pp. 93–94. Emphasis Origin. It should be noted that Petrus Damiani’s sentiments should not be viewed as an extreme orthodoxy. For one thing, they resonated with many in our world today, due to the fact that many faithful today, and in my humble opinion correctly, do not over intellectualize their religion conviction, and perceived the only way of being close to God is by the fulfillment of his demand; not by interpreting or reforming his words, as some do in Iran and elsewhere, but by obedience to his will and commands, as the scripture said “if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant you shall ... which knows nothing of repentance (Exodus 19:5). This is the essence of the monolithic religion that is why they are called monolithic.

open forums since St. Augustan and Thomas Aquinas to the present time, and perhaps in Hellenic culture before that. One sees man as the highest form of existence in the universe. The other sees man and his culture as linked to Transcendent Divine Realities. Similar debates, approximately around the same period, also took place among Islamic Philosophers.²⁴ However, there is distinct and revealing differences between what occurred in the West relative to what took place in the East. The ample example of this difference is when Ibn Rushd's negation of Ghazzali, theologically based refutation of philosophy fell on deaf ears of the Muslim, and instead "the work of Ghazzālī played a major role in curtailing the power of rationalism and indirectly prepared the ground for the spread of the teachings of the school of illumination (ishrāq) associated with Suhrawardī."²⁵ Meanwhile, in the West, Ibn Rushd's writings, and above all his commentaries on Aristotle and dismissal of theological philosophy, were taken with the utmost seriousness to the extent that W. M. Watt stated, "Though the work of Averroes was known in the east, its outlook was so foreign to these men that it had nothing to say to them."²⁶

²⁴Most notable among them were three Islamic philosophers of Iranian decent: Al-Farabi (870–930), Ibn Sina or Avicenna (980–1037) and Al-Gazali (1058–1111), and Spanish born Averroes or Ibn Rushd (1126–1198). Before going further, it must be noted that the emphasis on the nationality of these thinkers is not intended to indicate superiority of one nation over others, since without the accumulated wealth in the Islamic Empire, none of them could have existed. The point is to underline the Iranian inclination to pursue knowledge at the time. Now, back to our topic, Farabi primarily significant is related to the fact that he is a pioneer in the invocation of Aristotle as a philosophical authority, which in later years paved the way for the Golden Age of Muslim Aristotelianism. In Avicenna's thoughts, however, we find the development of a philosophy more independent of theological constraints who rejects the conception of a divine creation of the world in time, in that God is contemporaneous with the world. As an Aristotelian, he was also less apologetic to assumed Platonic doctrine (that we are born possessing all knowledge and our realization of that knowledge is contingent on our discovery of it). Ghazali had an important influence on the use of logic in theology. In his celebrated text *Tahāfut al-falāsifah* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers) he attacks the inconsistency of the philosophical positions of Alfarabi and Avicenna with orthodox Koranic interpretation. Finally, Rushd is generally regarded in the West as the greatest of the Islamic philosophers of the Medieval period and indeed one of the greatest Medieval philosophers. Nicknamed "The Commentator" (because of his incisive commentaries on Aristotle), one of Rushd's major work is called *Tahāfut al-tahāfut* (the Incoherence of Incoherence) he refutes Gazali's the Incoherence of Philosophy and defends a consistent Aristotelianism, and in doing so he is critical of the philosophical compromises made in the name of theological orthodoxy. He grounds this conviction in a three-tiered conception of truth, which privileges what he terms "demonstrative truth" (i.e., philosophical truth) over what he terms "dialectical" and "rhetorical" truth (see Jones Irwin, "Averroes's Reason: A Medieval Tale of Christianity and Islam", at: <http://www.the-philosopher.co.uk/averroes.htm>). For more discussions on these topics see Nasr SH, Aminrazavi M (2007) *Anthology of Philosophy in Persia: From Zoroaster to Omar Khayyam*. IB Tauris.

²⁵Nasr SH (2007) Abū Hāmid Muḥammad Ghazzālī. In: Nasr SH, Aminrazavi M (2007) *Anthology of Philosophy in Persia: From Zoroaster to Omar Khayyam*. IB Tauris, p. 86.

²⁶Huff TE (2003) *The rise of early modern science: Islam, China, and the West*. Cambridge University Press, p. 214. Huff elaborates further on the East' indifference toward Ibs Rushs by stating, "it must be remembered that Arabic-Islamic civilization without Spain (effectively after the fall of Seville in 1248, and definitively after 1492) continued on, largely undisturbed (despite the Mongols' invasion) until the incursions of Napoleon into Egypt in 1798." Ibid.

The point is, while Persian philosophers in Islamic civilization had been deeply influenced by the Greek thinking and assumed Platonic doctrine, they were held back and did not find the inspiration that the West thinkers, e.g., theologian William of St-Thierry or a scholastic philosopher William of Conches, found in Plato's *Timaeus*, in which the universe perceived as "the product of rational purposive, and beneficent agency."²⁷ And unlike their western counterparts they could not bear to explain events in the Holy Qur'an by real-life and materialistic accounts. Perhaps this is a main reason why John Barton, among many, underscored that the tradition of biblical criticism as the distinctively Western religious tradition, rooted back to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which was further developed during the enlightenment.²⁸ The absence of Greek rationalism (Platonic rationalism), which regards the physical universe as a rational and coherent whole, prevailed even among the Islamic scientists. For instance, and yet another celebrated Persian mathematician and astronomer of Islamic period, Muhammad ibn Hasan Tūsī in his spiritual autobiography avers that to attain truth what is vital is a faultless teacher to reveal the source of truth, "It thus becomes clear that without the instruction (ta'lim) of teacher (mu'allim), and the bringing to perfection (ikmal) by an agent of perfection (mukammil), the attainment of truth is not possible; that mankind, with its great number and differences of opinion, is mistaken in its claim that the truth can be reached solely through the intellect and reason; and that the believes in instruction (Ta'limiyan) and therefore correct."²⁹ This state of mind, as I argue throughout this study, is the ample indication of the strength of Islam in forming our consciousness for more or less since the eleventh century.

Now, let's go back to the concept of enlightenment and the 1784 Kant's delineation of it, to which he stated, "the human being's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. *Immaturity* is the inability to use one's understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is self-incurred if its cause lies not in lack of

²⁷ According to Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "In the *Timaeus* Plato presents an elaborately wrought account of the formation of the universe. Plato is deeply impressed with the order and beauty he observes in the universe, and his project in the dialogue is to explain that order and beauty. *The universe, he proposes, is the product of rational, purposive, and beneficent agency.* It is the handiwork of a divine Craftsman ("Demiurge," *demiourgos*, 28a6), who, imitating an unchanging and eternal model, imposes mathematical order on a preexistent chaos to generate the ordered universe (*kosmos*)." See <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-timaeus/>. Emphasis added. Moreover, what I mean by holding back is the fact that they did not elaborate the rationalistic or mechanistic worldview (closely linked with the early version of materialism) that the Western thinkers of the twelfth century built on Plato's edifice.

²⁸ Barton J (2007) *The nature of biblical criticism*. Presbyterian Publishing Corp. See also Cohen HF (1994) *The scientific revolution: a historiographical inquiry*. University of Chicago Press, pp. 310–314; Holbert JC, McKenzie AM (2011) *What Not to Say: Avoiding the Common Mistakes That Can Sink Your Sermon*. Presbyterian Publishing Corp; Smalley B (1952) *Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*. Oxford University Press; Hoskyns SEC, Davey FN (1958). *The riddle of the New Testament*. Faber & Faber Limited; and Popkin R (1974) *Bible Criticism and Social Science*. In: Cohen RS, Wartofsky MW (ed) (1974). *Methodological and Historical Essays in the Natural and Social Sciences*. Reidel, pp. 339–360.

²⁹ *Autobiography of a Muslim Scholar*. IB Tauris, London & New York, 30.

understanding, but in lack of resolution and lack of courage to use it without the guidance of another. *Sapere aude* [Dare to be wise!] Have courage to use your own understanding! Is therefore the motto of enlightenment. Laziness and cowardice are the reasons why such large portions of humankind, after nature has long declared them free from guidance (*naturaliter maioreness*), nevertheless gladly remains immature for life; and why it becomes so easy for others to appoint themselves as their guardians.”³⁰ My interpretation of these passages is that liberty of mind comes before liberation of the community and as long as the former is absent the latter cannot occur. In short, if liberty you desired is perceived not within your reach, what is lacking is not liberty but your incapacity to liberate your mind.

In the retrospect, it must be obvious that if change, e.g., enlightenment-like, is desired and sought after in Iran, it has to be a part of the wider and continues inner undertaking that exemplified in the Western world between thirteenth to eighteenth century. First, we must realize it is a gradual course and cannot be summarized in a cut-and-paste process, that is, a usual cheery picking, in which we select what we like and disregard the rest. Moreover, a new order must be imposed in the place of old tradition of contemplation, e.g., the metaphysics, the mystic, the spirituality, etc., to which a self-examination (self-critic) should be the objective as a whole. Audacity of questioning must substitute for a submission to the higher authority, so that the transcendent persuasion guides itself out and replaced by foresight and discernment of independent thinking. This is, however, an unfamiliar menu in Iran, which cannot be fitted into the familiar ethic and the status quo frame of mind in the Iran. This does not imply that change, as such, is either unsuitable or impossible but rather underlined the requirements needed to achieve it. The point I am trying to make out is that a customary pursuit of the ideas, which once emerged in the West, cannot be attained because of a mere desire for their alleged benefits.³¹ We must, as our legendary poet recognized, strike open the ceiling of the sky and declare new arrangement. In short, transformation of the West transpired not by spouse ideas but when social experiences were subjected to new set of cultural codes and algorithms that altered the West awareness.

³⁰ Kant I (2005) *Groundwork for Metaphysic of Moral*. Edited by Lara Denis. Broadview Press Ltd, p. 119.

³¹ Some in Iran, like elsewhere outside the Western world, relentlessly suggest that we should pursue Western novelties by mere imitation. Beside the fact that a process of duplication of ideas is a total insanity, cherry picking is doomed to fail at its conception because these novelties are an integral part of a whole process of change. The fact is, rewards go only to those who carry the water on their shoulder instead of waiting for an opportune time to drink it. Moreover, these ideas must be correctly comprehended. It is imperative to understand that freedom without equality is farce, and equality cannot last if it is not accompanied by equity. This is why the declaration of independence in United State had to be changed from “in pursuit of life, liberty, and property” to “in pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness”, because Samuel Adams correctly realized that liberty couldn’t be pursued when there is no equality. Mind you that happiness does not necessarily lead us to equality, however, it does not contradict it either. For an informative discussion of this topic, see Allan Danielle Allen’s *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality*, Liveright, 2014.

It is not surprising that Abbas Mirza's personal plea to a French subject has become the motto of enthusiast men with alleged functioning faculty: "Tell to me what I should do to wake Iranians up".³² Mirza's bewildering, instead of provoking critical thoughts, laid the ground for a *montage workshop*, in which clever Iranians read dead Western men's ideas only to recite them at home as ideal ways (expression of knowledge) for their own people. This comes closer to what Max Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno called "the culture industries" or what global intellect coined "the knowledge industry."³³ Under this circumstance, it is not surprising that no one in Iran minded the fact that the enigma of the "success" in the West (or conversely the riddle of disappointments in non-Western terrains) can only be explained in the domains of culture transformation that tolerates dissents and differences of opinion as the core of philosophy, science, literature, etc.³⁴ Walter Bagehot said it best when he stated, "Tolerance... is learned in discussion, and, as history shows, is only so learned. In all customary societies bigotry is the ruling principle. In rude places to this day any one who says anything new is looked on with suspicion, and is persecuted by opinion if not injured by penalty. One of the greatest pains to human nature is the pain of a new idea. It is, as common people say, so "upsetting;" it makes you think that, after all, your favorite notions may be wrong, your firmest beliefs ill-founded; it is certain that till now there was no place allotted in your mind to the new and startling inhabitant, and now that it has conquered an entrance, you do not at once see which of your old ideas it will or will not turn out, with which of them it can be reconciled, and with which it is at essential enmity. Naturally, therefore, common men hate a new idea, and are disposed more or less to ill-treat the original man who brings it. Even nations with long habits of discussion are intolerant enough."³⁵

It may seem paradoxical, but none-the-less accurate, to say that the foundation of contemporary Westerners' well-being is to be found not in the scientific realm but in those eras where individuals were free to wonder about life, universe, and everything in between, where people allow to perpetually enjoy "neutral space" in words of Toby Huff, free from constant reminder, incursions, and imposition as to what

³² According to Nezam-Mafi, "The death of Abbas Mirza has been rightly considered by historians as a disaster from Iran. His plan for reform and modernization we forgot, or the little effect they had had was soon obliterated." (See Nezam-Mafi ME (2012) Qajar Iran (1795–1921). In: Daryae T (ed) (2012). The Oxford handbook of Iranian history. Oxford University Press, p. 327). However, it should be noted that the idea of his [Abbas Mirza] plan is not clear as to what was exactly the nature of the plan.

³³ Horkheimer M, Adorno TW, Noerr GS (2002) Dialectic of enlightenment: philosophical fragments. Stanford University Press, Stanford.

³⁴ I said consciously because they must have realized that these verbs have far reaching consequences that they neither can tolerate, nor accept since they run against the East celebrated absolutisms and divine righteousness.

³⁵ Bagehot W (2001) Physics and Politics. Batoche Books Limited (originally published by Henry S. King & Co, 1872), p. 92.

truth is supposed to be.³⁶ In the West, and during enlightenment, it finally become apparent that the way out of socioeconomic and political deadlocks entail the presence of cultural that inclined to search for novelties by eliminating error first and most by admitting that they are made the endeavor that did not develop in the contemporary Iran as well as significant number of nations outside of the Western landscape. However, what often assumed as given in analytical examinations of the West during the era is that the population was relatively literate. In an absence of such a condition, Huff's neutral space would be completely irrelevant, except for small portions of population, namely elites and aristocrats. The presence of literacy as the necessary condition for raising a country out of socioeconomic stagnation and narrowing the gulf between potentialities and actualities has been well-documented.³⁷ By the same token, in the presence of illiteracy, not a single step can be taken forward without taking two steps backwards. The worse type of poverty is poverty in the state of mind that is when there is lack of education, understanding, and hope.

A classic example is John Kenneth Galbraith's *Economic Development in Perspective*, in which he underlines, "... education releases the energies not of few but for many. And it opens the way to technical knowledge. Literate people will see the need for getting machines. It is not clear that machines will see the need for getting literate people... education will have a priority over the dams, factories, and other furniture of capital development."³⁸ This open secret was realized long time ago in the West. According to Douglass North and Robert Paul Thomas, "Much of the body of commercial law which now evolved had its origins in the customs of

³⁶Max Weber in 1904 wrote, "The 'objective' validity of all empirical knowledge rests exclusively upon the ordering of the given reality according to categories which are 'subjective' in a specific sense, namely, in that they present the 'presuppositions' of our knowledge and are based on the presupposition of the 'value' of those 'truths' which empirical knowledge alone is able to give us. The means available to our science offer nothing to those persons to whom this truth is of no value. It should be remembered that the belief in the value of scientific truth is *the product of certain cultures and is not a product of man's original nature*. Those for whom scientific truth is of no value will seek in vain for other truth to take the place of since". (see Weber M (1949) *The Methodology of The Social Science*. Trans: Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch. Free Press, pp. 110–111. Italic added.) In 1938, Robert K. Merton added to Weber's observation by stating, "This belief [in scientific truth] is readily transmitted into doubt and disbelief. The persistent development of science occurs in societies of a certain order, subject to a peculiar complex of tacit presuppositions and institutional constraints. What is for us a phenomenon which demands no explain and secures many self-evident cultural values, has been in other times and still is in many places abnormal and infrequent. The continuity of science requires the active participation of interested and capable persons in scientific pursuits. But this support of science is assured only by [the presence of] appropriate cultural conditions." (see Merton RK (1973) *The sociology of science: Theoretical and empirical investigations*. University of Chicago Press, p. 254).

³⁷For reading on this topic see Anderson CA, Bowman MJ (eds) (1965) *Education and economic development*. Aldine Publishing Company, Chicago; Graff HJ (1981) *Literacy and social development in the West: A reader* (No. 3). CUP Archive; de Oliveira MK, Valsiner J (1998) *Literacy in human development*. Greenwood Publishing Group; Szirmai A (2005) *The dynamics of socioeconomic development: an introduction*. Cambridge University Press, Chapter 7; Graff HJ (2007) *Literacy and Historical Development*. SIU Press.

³⁸Galbraith JK (1963) *Economic Development in Perspective*. Harvard University Press, pp. 8–9.

merchants, and it was only gradually codified as a result of increasing literacy during the century [fifteenth century].”³⁹ In the same period, Johannes Gutenberg’s Bible, the first mass produced printed work, disseminated the words of God on mass level and allowed the public to have their own interpretation of it. The point is, while transformation of the West occurred gradually, it has led to an astonishing result to the extent that, “Around 1900... many parts of Europe had achieved mass literacy. Perhaps 85–90% of adults were deemed to be literate in Britain, France, Germany, and much of Scandinavia.”⁴⁰

Similarly, a widespread illiteracy has been the glaring reality in Iran for centuries. This deficiency, more than many other factors hampered in the country’s progress all spheres, but conspicuously overlooked by scholars of Iranian affairs.⁴¹ Without a doubt, such national inadequacy caused by various factors, however, most notably among them is our lack of a coherent principle as to “who we are” and “who we want to be”, which has led to a clear confusion between our Iranianness that intertwined with our religion leadership’s instructions and convictions and our own inspiration to pursue the Westerners’ road map to reach a compatible prosperity and development. The vivid instance of this paradox is distinctly manifested in the Revolution of 1906, in which we made an attempt to establish a nationwide public education. In drawing up the Constitution of 1907, the delegates to the first Majlis made certain comprehensive provisions for education, but in the confinement of ecclesiastical law; they endorsed free expression of thought, but within conformity. Article XVIII states, “The acquisitions and study of all science, arts, and crafts are free [but then added] except in the case of that which is forbidden by ecclesiastical law [not based on Korean text but according to Shariat.”⁴² In Article XX also states, “All publication, except heretical books and matters hurtful to the perspicuous religion [of Islam] are free, and are exempt from censorship.”⁴³ The noteworthy aspect of this inconsistency is that the text written by conscious rather than uninformed delegates, who were clearly aware of the content in which they patronage. In another word, they knew the obvious contradictions, and still

³⁹North DC, Thomas RP (1973) *The rise of the western world: A new economic history*. Cambridge University Press, p. 56.

⁴⁰Houston RA (2001) Literacy. In: Stearns PN (ed) (2001) *Encyclopedia of European social history from 1350 to 2000* (Vol. 6). Scribner Book Company, p. 85.

⁴¹To the best of my knowledge, a discussion on Iranian illiteracy has been curiously absent in almost all studies about Iran, including analyses as well as analytical examination of socioeconomic development, economics as well as political discourse on the importance of Western notions such as democracy, civil society, etc. No one seem to note about the fact that if people are encouraged to embrace an idea they should first understand it and such understanding cannot be possible if they cannot read!

⁴²Brown E (1910) *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*. Cambridge University Press, p. 374.

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 375. To make the matter even more senseless, to put it mildly, the same article continues, “If, however, anything should be discovered in them contrary to the Press law, the publisher or writer is liable to punishment according to that law. If the writer be known, and is resident in Persia, then the publisher, printer, and distributor shall not be liable to prosecution.”

insert them into the text of Constitution due to our innate attributes that marching forward, facing backwards.⁴⁴

To confirm this observation, one only needs to see the composition of legislators in the first Majlis between 1906 and 1907, in which majority carried the titles *haji* (an Arabic term of respect for someone who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca) and *Sayyad* (a descendent of Prophet Mohammad), both of which indicated social distinctions, religious devotion, and middle-class background. The other members were aristocrats and the landlords, and tribal chieftains.⁴⁵ Another proof in support of the argument is related to our embedded religiosity of our consciousness due to the significant role of religious teaching in our traditional educational setting (school) called *madrassah*. They introduced in cities throughout the Persia in the eleventh century by Zesam-al-molk (which means Order of the Realm), a highly ranked Sunni Wazir (Minister or a close confidant of a sovereign) in the Seljuq Empire.⁴⁶ In this context, *madrassah*, as an educational institution, bears a great significance in the formation of Iranian mindset and shaping the Iranian cultural evolution since eleventh century. Soon after its establishment, Shi'ite *madrassah* also had founded in Iran (as well as and Iraq).⁴⁷ As a direct consequence, *madrassah* gradually ascertained and perpetuated the religious traditions of Si'ism throughout Iran. It reached its pick at the beginning of the sixteenth century during Safavi Dynasty as Shi'ism was declared as the official religion of the Country. And yet, as

⁴⁴Earlier in the paragraph I said "a clear confusion" and I ended the section by stating "the text written by conscious rather than uninformed delegates". There is no contradiction here since what is a clear confusion is habitually perceived as lucidity in Iran. What I am underlying here is that our alleged astuteness that often appears as we choose to attain many objectives, regardless of their contradictory nature, in one attempt. Although, often than not, we have failed to achieve anything except feeling good about ourselves at the moment. Moreover, there were some outcomes that could not be foreseen by legislators. For instance, Soli Shahvar, underlined the fact that permitting the private sector entrance in promotion of contemporary education in the country has led to establishment of the first Baha'i school in Tehran in 1899 (and by the 1930s there were dozens of Baha'i schools), which was obviously perceived against the ecclesiastical law (see Shahvar S (2009) *The Forgotten Schools: The Baha'is and Modern Education in Iran, 1899–1934*. I. B. Tauris).

⁴⁵See Araste R (1962) *Education and Social Awakening in Iran: 1850–1960*. E. J. Brill, p. 32. Edward Beown also made a illuminating and relevant observation when he noted, "*in Persia (unlike England, perhaps) in nobility, attainments, virtue, knowledge, and culture the middle classes are infinitely superior to the upper classes*" who, he [Brown's informant] considered, were hopelessly rotten and should be displaced to make room for their less aristocratic but infinitely more capable and virtuous countrymen (See Brown E (1910) *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*. Cambridge University Press, p. 432. Emphasis original).

⁴⁶At the time, *Madressah* were also known as *nezamiyeh* in honor of its founder. The Saljuq ruled Iran in the eleventh century when the Persia was in a state of anarchy. Saljuq governing method was based on the tribal organization common in Turkic and Mongol nomads and resembled a "family federation" or "appanage state" (For detailed analyses of Saljuq Governing organization see *Project Gutenberg* at http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/great_seljuq_empire).

⁴⁷For instance there were eight *madrassah* in the city of Qom, one in the city of Qazvini called Modarresi Tabataba-I, seven in the city of Ray, four in Ka'shan, etc. (see Zaryab A (1997) *Education v. The Madrasa in Shi'ite Persia*. Encyclopaedia Iranica. Available at: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/education-v-the-madrasa-in-shiite-persia>).

an institution, madrassahs did not constitute unitary system of education, and therefore they were neither evaluated nor supposed to be accredited.⁴⁸ Instead, they served as a continuation of the traditional educational system known as *maktab* (or literary “place of writing”), in which until the early twentieth century pupils received their intermediate education under tutelage clerical instructor with emphasis on Shi’a theology philosophy, literature, and Arabic. Religious foundations provided for the maintenance of both students and faculty.⁴⁹

Another significant issue, related to illiteracy in Iran, appears as one scratch the surface seeking better understanding of issues at hand. For one thing, there is no doubt that Iran suffers a widespread illiteracy over centuries. Beside all obvious ramifications of this silent epidemic, e.g., self-perpetuation, there is a telling implication in that illiterate people believed in the said things easily. In another word, illiteracy makes its victims vulnerable to oral narrating that almost always constructed.⁵⁰ To quote Alessandro Portelli, one of oral history’s most thoughtful practitioners, “Oral history . . . refers [to] what the source [i.e., the narrator] and the historian [i.e., the interviewer] do together at the moment of their encounter in the interview.”⁵¹

Indeed, until the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century before printed newspaper became mundane, the population’s main sources of information and the government’s main channel of dissemination of it was a *jar’chi*⁵² (herald) a man who had a courtier and official position and often travel from one side of the city to another spreading, or better to say announce the news in a loud voice (*jar*); the action is called *jar zadan* and the head of jarchi was called *Jarchibashi*. The significance of jarchi noted by Peter Avery as a signifier of the oral tradition in Iran,

⁴⁸ According to Reza Arasteh, the author of one and only comprehensive education system in Iran, “Each master [instructor] had his own group of pupils and when he felt that they had mastered a particular course of study he gave them a certificate of completion. There was no fixed term of study. Some acquired a basic background in a few years and went out into the world to become clergymen or maktab-dars; others continued their work, and the most scholarly then went on to institutions of higher learning at Qom, Meshhad, Isfahan, or to Karbala and Najaf in Iraq. There was considerable prestige attached to the scholarly education of the *madrasseh*.” (See Araste R (1962) *Education and Social Awakening in Iran: 1850–1960*. E. J. Brill, pp. 61–62).

⁴⁹ Some idea of the expenses and organization of madrasseh is given by Rochechouart CJ (1867) *Souvenirs d’un Voyage en Persee en 1867*. Challemeil Aine Editeur, Paris, pp. 110–111.

⁵⁰ See Tonkin E (1995) *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History*. Cambridge University Press.

⁵¹ Portelli A (1997) *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue*. University of Wisconsin Press, p. 3. My interpretation of Portelli’s observation is that oral history might be understood as a self-conscious, constructed conversation between a historian (interviewer) and a narrator. The questions of the historian deriving from a particular frame of references or particular interest, elicit certain responses from the narrator, extracting from the narrator’s frame of references, sense of what is crucial or what the narrator perceived to be crucial.

⁵² For a description of the term see Bradly DL (2015) *Dictionary of Iran: A Shorter Encyclopedia*. Lulu.com, p. 351. For its historical analysis see Mostofi A (1997) *The Administrative and Social History of the Qajar Period*. Mazda Publisher.

to the extent that hearing, rather than reading is the dominant practice among Iranian, at the time.⁵³

There are other traditions that strengthen this observation, for instance, the role of epic in our history, and more importantly the manner in which epics are presented and accessible to the masses via storytelling, oral mode of communication, in our culture.⁵⁴ Without a doubt, Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* is the most celebrated Iranian epic to the extent that almost every Iranian knows the main theme of the stories, parts of stories, or some fragments of poems, or sections of tales because it passed down from chest to chest, as the Iranian saying. It is part of the Iranian culture, particularly, where there is fluidity between history and oral modes of communication such as poetry.⁵⁵ However, since these accounts are constructed they are vulnerable. For instance, general attitudes towards the *Shahnameh* have been subjected to mistreatments and misinterpretations according to each generation's frame of mind and its moods, in addition to the government's and the political dispositions of a time. The text itself might remain unchanged, but its connotations and people relationship about them might dramatically change. It has been praised as truly Persian masterpiece; scorned as the propaganda to glorify the imperial past; used by state to promote literacy programs; and cast as what is truly the Persian story of unbroken social harmony.

This is the direct result of our inclination toward oral narratives, and drives from our illiterate masses, which often are imperiled by narrators of the stories, e.g., *Shahnameh*'s tales. Skilled storytellers whose life's work was to recite and perform the whole of the *Shahname*. They are called *Naqqal*, a "transmitter": the one who passes on, transmits the tale.⁵⁶ The significance of a *naqqal* to the subject under

⁵³For instance, the *Ta'ziyeh* and its main plot, *Karbala* tragedy has been handed down as part of Iran's verbalized, rather than written tradition.

⁵⁴Some may argue that other nations, Western or non-Western, also share some or all of these traditions as well, and hence their population as well as their cultures should be viewed as illiterate. Not quite for the following reason. First, some of these traditions, e.g., storytelling in Iran, go back to pre-Islamic period. Second, the illiteracy conclusion was drawn based on published data and direct observation from printed texts on the subjects and related issues. The traditions that have been noted as examples, therefore, are used to illustrate their roots in the traditional Iranian culture, and hence reinforced their intrinsic ascriptions.

⁵⁵It should also be noted that throughout the Islamic world, the *Qur'an*'s oral role is as important as its written form. In fact, the word "*Qur'an*" derives from the root *qar'a* (to recite). See <http://poetryprayer.thewalters.org/recitation/>.

⁵⁶Niloufar Talebi also provides us with a brief history on the storytelling tradition in Iran and how it has evolved: *Naghali*, *Pardeh-dari*, *Pardeh-khaani*, *Ghavali* (minstrelsy), *Shahnameh-khaani*, are Iranian storytelling traditions, practiced usually in the streets and coffee houses, storyteller titles varying according to their style of storytelling and the subject matter of the stories told. *Pardeh-dari* and *Pardeh-khaani* are visual forms of storytelling done before a big cloth or canvas (*pardeh*) hung in a square, or the walls of a tea or coffee house, painted on which are the events of the story being told, which the storyteller would refer to during their recounting. (See Talebi T (2009) "Memory of a Phoenix Feather": Iranian Storytelling Traditions and Contemporary Theater. *World Literature Today*, 49–53). Jamshid Malik'pur in *The Islamic Drama* tell us, "For hundreds of years, there have been solo performers in Iran known as *naghals* or storytellers. According to the style of storytelling and the subject, every storyteller had one goal: to give life to a story and its characters for an audience. In the pre-Islamic period, the story telling was known as *ghavali* or minstrelsy, and involved telling a story accompanied by song and music." (See Malik'pur J (2004) *The Islamic Drama*. Psychology Press, p. 60).

discussion, illiteracy, is related to the way in which ordinary Iranians gather around mainly in coffee houses used to find out about their own country's history as naqqal re-enacts the tales in rather a dramatic fashion. In short, public entertainments often prevailed as history lesson of the masses. Sir Arnold who served as a young officer in South West Persia between 1907 and 1914 vividly described in his journal a storyteller telling Shahname:

He had an unailing memory and a voice like a bell. One night he recited the story of Sohrab and Rostam in its original form as told by Firdawsi, it moved me almost to tears. Speaking nearly in the dark as we sat round the small charcoal fire he relied entirely on modulations of his voice to give dramatic effects to the successive speeches of the boy Sohrab and his old father Rostam. He held us spell bound for nearly two hours, then tea was served and water pipes passed round. He took a little food, and began a fresh.⁵⁷

However, one can easily detect a problem here, to which epic tells can change their shape and their meaning according to the way storytellers use them on their tongues, and the way listeners receive them in their ears. Genres are consequently elusive, and a story can shift genre according to both performance and context. This underlined one of the major problems in an illiterate culture in which sources of information are often unreliable, and hence open to subjective interpretations.

Let us now return to Avery's observation on the significance of oral tradition in Iran. Aside from his remark stated above, he also pointed out that as censorship was first introduced during Masir- al-Din Shah's reign, its pretexts referred to readers (*khwanadagan*) as well as listeners (*shibavandagan*). This signifies how illiteracy in Iran is perceived because, "while it would be legitimate to ask how newspapers might have such a dangerous influence in a land where the majority of people were illiterate, features of that land were declamation, song, recitation, and reading aloud. These were the natural concomitants of widespread illiteracy and more than a palliative to a lack of literacy which was not necessarily regarded as disastrous or unnatural. It was probably one reason why illiteracy for all but a few persisted; the popularity of poetry, which has permeated the Iranian society in a manner characteristic of few others, can also be related to widespread illiteracy."⁵⁸ He then proceeded the underlying issue that is extremely relevant in this study. It is important to the matter at hand is not its content but rather the implication of his statement, to which he stated, "The power of the spoken word remained sufficiently influential, when credited, for Ayatullah Khumaini's use of exhortatory cassettes when he was in exile in the period leading up to 1979, to be important in mobilizing the crowds who made the Iranian Revolution."⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Quoted in Marzolph U, Radhayrapetian J (1994) Iranian Folk Narrative. A Survey of Scholarship. The Garland Folklore Library 1.

⁵⁸ Avery P (1991) Printing, The Press and Literature in Modern Iran. In: The Cambridge History Iran Vol. 7, From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic. Chapter 22. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 829.

⁵⁹ Ibid., Majd Nasser, as quoted in "Iran Helping Turkey Organize Rumi Confab", Iran Daily (17 March 2007), also observed, "I come from the noble land of Iran, representing a great and renowned nation . . . a nation which carries the torch of its popular revolution, not won by force of arms or a coup, but by dethroning of the regime of coup d'etat through the power of "word" and "enlightenment".

The Avery's statement conveys an important message, that is, a deep understanding of "who we are", as a nation, relative to other groups in Iran, utterly remain with men of faith. It is so, because they always have been a part of the Iranian masses.

This, however, should not be taken as an absence of contemplating, to which we (Iranian) learned too well from the mystical traditions that readily evidence in our past literary works. Thinking is rather a reference to what Greek thinkers established. According to Plato, observed Arndt thinking is, "the soundless dialogue we carry on with ourselves—serve only to open the eyes of the mind, and even the Aristotelian *nous* is an organ for seeing and beholding the truth. In other words, thinking aims at and ends in contemplating, and contemplating is not an activity but a passivity; it is the point where mental activity comes to rest. According to traditions of Christian time, when philosophy had become the handmaiden of theology, thinking becomes meditation, and meditation again ended in contemplation, a kind of blessed state of the soul where mind was no longer stretching out to know the truth but, in anticipation of a future state, received it temporarily in intuition."⁶⁰

Except for few exceptions, a similar subservient trend also occurred in Iran in which philosophy restrained by a prohibition of denial, where the divine law was the proper province for jurisprudence. In another way, the canon of philosophy and thinking process remain restricted by the imposing sanctity of the divinity, which in turn levying of individual thinker to belittle himself relative to the perfection of divine.⁶¹ An affirmation of this observation can be found in Persian Islamic polymath and jurist Ibn Sina's the peripatetic approach to scientific theory. Here, however, we limit ourselves to Ibn Sina's elegy in which he has stated:

Dil garcheh dar in badiyah bisyar shitaft
However much my heart raced through this wasteland

Yek mui nadanist vali mui shikaft
And not a hair missed splitting, yet nary a hair did it know

Andar dil-I man hizar khushid bitaft
A thousand suns glow in my heart

Likan bin kamal-I zarrah's rah nayaft
Yet it could not find its way into the heart of an atom⁶²

A lack of presence of thinking often manifests itself in Iran in most peculiar manner. For one thinks, it has been fully institutionalized in the contemporary Iran through schooling and educational institutions. The ordeal began as Qajar Monarch in the early nineteenth century, where education was perceived as part of a package to

⁶⁰ Arendt H (1978) *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1. Thinking, 2. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, p. 6.

⁶¹ In a sense of holding the standard of perfection of Divinity relative to earthly imperfections of all creatures, beginning with your triviality. You don't belittle a toddler for not being an adult, but must submit your being and thoughts to oblivion relative to the divine truth for lasting vitality.

⁶² See Jamsihdpour H (1985) *Abu-Rayha Biruni inductive Methodological Approach to the Examination of Objective Material Phenomena*. Ph.D. Dissertation, King's College, p. iii. This work also provides an excellent and informative discussion on the cosmological theoretical positions of Persian Islamic polymath and scholar, Abu Rayhan Biruni and Persian Islamic polymath and jurist, Ibn Sina's prime exponent of the peripatetic approach to scientific theory, a millennium ago.

encounter the country's backwardness by sending students to the West to gain knowledge of Military and technical subjects that were useful in battles such as artillery, engineering, chemistry, etc. While a plan certainly has its own merit, it should be viewed as a complementary part of larger endeavor that forms solely to fight illiteracy at the national level. In doing so, the first step is to train teachers for elementary education. The scheme to send off few Iranians to the West lie in the skewed foundation that primary emphasis on retaining skills via instruction (schooling) rather than learning by understanding (education).⁶³ The Contemporary view of Education in Iran has not diverged from what the Qajar monarchy envisioned.⁶⁴ Today's pupils, just like decades ago, are encouraged to memorize the sum of all "absolute" knowledge (*ilm*), which constitute the standardized, static, and finite prevailing explanations.⁶⁵ In short, geared to learning by rote there is no possibility that our education system encourages independency of mind, and hence condemned to fail to develop analytical (critical) and creative thinking in students. And yet, since the dawn of twentieth century, we persistently yearn for independency of the nation falling to realize that such novelty only adhered among independent minds.⁶⁶

⁶³ In Farsi we have two nouns for education, *Amoozesh va Parvaresh*, which can be either translated as "education and training" or "teaching and learning", both of which conveys a very different connotation.

⁶⁴ After Iran was defeated by Russia in 1828, the government realized "the need for a bureaucratic administration, which in turn required a system of higher education geared to the production of trained government personnel, who lacked, however, research or professional aims." (See Arasteh AR (1964) *Man and society in Iran*. Brill Archive, p. 20) Amir Kabi, the Prime Minister in the Nasir al-Din Shah reign in the mid-nineteenth century, in the process of reorganizing the army, realized the value of developing well-trained officers and administrators. He envisioned an institution of higher learning in Tehran, and he succeeded in setting up a polytechnic school, *Dar al-Funun*, completed just forty days before his dismissal in 1851. He not only supervised the construction of the building but personally made arrangements for the employment of a teaching staff and the course of study. Because of the Anglo-Russian rivalry of interests in Iran, Amir Kabir sought educational assistance from Austria. He gave his Austrian envoy authority to make contracts with the Austrian professors for a period of four to six years The professors, selected with the help of the Emperor, represented a variety of disciplines: artillery, infantry, cavalry, military engineering, medicine, surgery, physics, mathematics, mineralogy and chemistry . . . the first-class 105 students, who enrolled in the following fields; army science (61), engineering and mining (12), medicine (20), chemistry and pharmacy (7) and mineralogy (5). Tuition was free and students received a small stipend plus their meals . . . In 1864 one of the teachers with the help of a student set up the first telegraph wire in Iran: it ran from the central office of the school to the main garden in the middle of the city (Baq-e laazar). The following year a graduate of the college was put in charge of extending the telegraph from Tehran to the West of Iran and also toward the Caspian Sea." (Ibid., pp. 20–21).

⁶⁵ The finite attributes of this knowledge appears more readily once we come across social science subjects such as a historical *ilm*, which are notorious to turn upside down or utterly excluded as regime changes, minister replaced, or years of schooling altered according to a new central planning scheme. In this respect, *ilm* has been forged and deluded by various narratives, and hence instructions turned into cookbook-recipes that mainly put emphasis on the fixed content of true *ilm*—recipes ready to be memorized for generations.

⁶⁶ In the same manner, we relentlessly fought for democracy, but to no avail mainly because we always neglect its complementary element, equality.

It should be noted, however, the contradictory views of what education implies are not particular to Iran. Most countries, including the United States, have been victims of schooling, or more precisely instruction, rather than education, which generally implies learning through critical thinking. Having said that, in a country like United States, the debates about the merit of schooling have already started, while in Iran the main debate is about schooling and not education, which mostly emphasizes on how to best replicate Western schooling, which neglects the fact that the gap between us and them is as wide as it ever has been. Recently, Lant Pritchett in *The Rebirth of Education* underlined the prevailing concept of *isomorphic mimicry* in non-Western countries as one major impediment to development. According to Pritchett, schooling (and not education) in these countries superficially imitate Western ideas that often than not inappropriate and to a great extent counterproductive, much like, a nonpoisonous snake mimics the look of a venomous one.⁶⁷ In Iran, *isomorphic mimicry* phenomenon is readily observable, particularly within higher education since the opening door of the first Western style University in Tehran (Tehran University) during the Reza Shah reign.

The issue concerned in this book is not so much of the style but rather mindless emulation of Western schooling, particularly in various social science disciplines like philosophy, economics, political science, etc., as the blue prints to follow.⁶⁸ The point of contention is ideas, no matter how novel they may seem, they are more often than not remain ineffective relative to Iranian situation. More precisely, it is erroneous to view Western schooling as an ideal model for a country like Iran due to the following facts. Firstly, there is no compatibility between any Western country and Iran in terms of the structure of production; the country's needs in terms of human capital; the availability and types of resources used; the type of productive sectors; political structure; composition of the population; the level of institutional

⁶⁷Pritchett L (2013) *The Rebirth of Education: Schooling Ain't Learning*. CGD Books, p. 121. One of the stunning Pritchett's findings is the change in schooling has been so rapid that the average Haitian or Bangladeshi in 2010 had more years of schooling than the average French or Italian person did in 1960. (That data looks at average years of schooling for people 15 and older, by the way.) Even repressive and nondemocratic countries have seen tremendous gains. "Good governments do schooling, but nearly all bad governments do it, too," Mr. Pritchett writes. See http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/10/18/the-gap-between-schooling-and-education/?_r=0.

⁶⁸There is no doubt that these fields and contents in which they present must be taught and used to enlarge a horizon of our understanding of respective fields. Nevertheless, the point of contention is two-folded here. First, whether these notions should be taught alongside alternative/critical views as well as their histories in order to illuminate the evolutionary process, e.g., the required necessary and sufficient condition needed for these ideas to be affective; the specific problems that evoked the formulation of ideas; the original text by author if ideas instead of interpretation of others, etc. (To address some of these issues in economics, for instance, candidate text books can be Alfred Marshall's *Principles of Economics*; John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory*, as well as *Essay in Persuasion*; Joan Robinson, *What are the Questions And Other Essays*; and Mark Blaug's *Economic Theory in Retrospect*). Second, these ideas, should not be idealized to the extent in which viewed as antidotes that fit anywhere as well, they are not.

development; the share of labor productivity and technology in Gross National Product; the type of income generated by the production process, i.e., wages and salaries, corporate profits, rental income, interest income, etc. Secondly, all Western affluent economies have already passed the stage of development, e.g., highly coherent tax system, banking, and financial intermediaries; basic infrastructure as well as social safety net, that we have a long way to go to reach, Thirdly, a link between productivity and a national currency. The list goes on and on.

As a result, what we do not need is a schooled task-oriented population, but educated population with an independent mind that is inclined to generate rather than replicate. In this context, the essence of the critical thinking is its criticism of ideology. Ideology “is what prevents the agents in the society from correctly perceiving their true situation and real interests; if they are to free themselves from social repression, the agents must rid themselves of ideological illusion”⁶⁹. This, one thinks, should not be hard to attain especially in a country like Iran in which everyone desires independence of the country, as if independence is possible without the independent mind.

⁶⁹ See Geuss R (1981) *The Idea of Critical Theory; Habermas and the Frankfurt School*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 2–3.

Chapter 4

Historical Perspectives on Iranian Cultural Identity

Safura Borumand

4.1 Defining Cultural Identity

In its most general sense, culture is “the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions, and beliefs.”¹ It is through culture that one recognizes and expresses her/himself. This is the point that the issue of “Identity,” “Cultural Identity,” and also “National Identity” forms and matters, for “every culture represents a unique and irreplaceable body of values since each people’s tradition and forms of expression are its most effective means of demonstrating its presence in the world.”² As Craig Calhoun, sociologist mentions: “We know of no people without names, no languages or cultures in which some manner of distinctions between self and other, we and they, are not made.”³ Identity leads an individual or a group to the certain position in the social world. It defines that one/group belongs to what, whom, when, and where,⁴ while designates what is not. Through identity people define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture.⁵ Identity, therefore, is a concept

¹ UNESCO (1982) Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies World Conference on Cultural Policies. Mexico City, 26 July–6 August 1982. http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/files/12762/11295421661mexico_en.pdf/mexico_en.pdf. Accessed 24 October 2014.

² Ibid.

³ Calhoun C (eds) (1994) *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*. Blackwell, Oxford.

⁴ Hogg M, Abrams D (1988) *Social Identification, A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes*. Routledge, London, p. 2.

⁵ Deng FM (1995) *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan*. Brookings, Washington, DC, p. 1.

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which combines the inner or personal world with collective space of cultural forms and social relationships. In other words, and from a sociological point of view, although identity is something foundational and essential,⁶ “all identities are constructed.”⁷ Various causes and backgrounds are involved in constructing identity which poses several arguments depending on each person or nation. Identity can be produced through assembling various memories, experiences, episodes, etc. The permanence and revival of all these issues depend on their process of narration. “Identity produced through the narratives people use to explain and understand their lives.”⁸ Thus identity is made up through making *a story out of a life* and the way it is interpreted continually.⁹ According to philosopher Paul Ricoeur:

[T]he self does not know itself immediately but only indirectly by the detour of the cultural signs of all sorts which are articulated on the symbolic mediations which always already articulate action and, among them, the narratives of everyday life. Narrative mediation underlines this remarkable characteristic of self-knowledge – that it is self-interpretation.¹⁰

Persistence of narration depends on memory which itself is a social product and consist in its social context. “We constitute our souls by making up our lives, that is, by weaving stories about our past, by what we call memories.”¹¹ Memory is the inseparable elements of people’s lives by which they recall, retell and revoke the past. As philosopher Ian Hacking mentions, it is a process by which the past is interpreted in the light of knowledge and understanding of the subject’s “present.”¹² When people have common memory, representation, and narration of their past, “collective memory” emerges.¹³ Each memory gives one a sense of where he/she has come from and who he/she is. Collective memory works much the same way by defining and encouraging peoples’ identities through telling them where they have come from, who they are, and how they should act in the present and future.¹⁴

Varieties of collective memory create “Communicative Memory,” which is based on everyday communications and refers to daily modes of communication in which the past is discussed, debated, and given meaning. Indeed, “every individual has a memory which is socially mediated and relates to a group who conceive their unity and peculiarity through a common image of their past.”¹⁵ The most important characteristic

⁶Lawler S (2008) *Identity Sociological Perspectives*. Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 17.

⁷Castells M (2010) *The Power of Identity*, Second Edition (with a new preface). Wiley-Blackwell, UK, p. 7.

⁸Lawler S (2008) *Identity Sociological Perspectives*. Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 17.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 11, 17.

¹⁰Ricoeur P (1991) *Narrative Identity*. In Wood D (eds) (1991), *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation* (trans: D. Wood). Routledge, London, p. 198.

¹¹Hacking I (1995) *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Science of Memory*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, p. 251.

¹²Hacking I (1994) *Memoro-politics, trauma and the soul*. *History of the Human Sciences* 7(2): 29–52.

¹³Kanteiner W (2002) *Finding meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies*. *History and Theory* 41: 179–197, p. 180

¹⁴Gillis J (1994) *Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship*. In Gillis J (eds) (1994) *Commemorations*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 7.

¹⁵Assmann J, Czaplicka J (1995) *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*. *New German Critique* 65: 125–133, (Spring—Summer 1995), p.127.

of communicative memory is its limited temporal horizon, which at its maximum point is about 80–100 years into the past.¹⁶ Therefore, communicative memories are often short-lived, limited to three generations, proximate to everyday life, and the meanings ascribed to historical events are based on the accounts of individuals who were alive at the time.¹⁷ In the case of memories that are distant from the everyday world and are far beyond communicative ones, “cultural memory” emerges. People’s sense of belonging to a distinct society and culture is the result of cultural memory which emerges from socialization and custom. Cultural memory has a fixed horizon which does not change through time and includes fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through epics, festivals, rites, poems, texts, monuments, images, practice, and traditions which are designed to memorialize important events called “figures of memory.” They are collective experience which have been objectified and can become accessible across centuries and are generally sanctioned by both government and community citizens. Cultural memory relates memory, culture, and people to each other while preserving the origins of knowledge about the unity and characteristics of a group and distinct those who are different. This knowledge is transmitted by a need for shared history and identity. In other word, cultural memory exists through preservation and reconstruction of materials and objectification of its meaning into the culturally institutionalized heritage of a society.¹⁸ Through its cultural heritage a society becomes visible to itself and to others.

Cultural memory cultivates in a system of values and important forms such as symbols and rituals which stabilize and convey the society’s self-image and identity which is the soul of nations who eager to stabilize their position in the globalized world, especially those who privilege an endless background, ancient and continuous history. The issue is that only those can play an important and dominant role in globalized world who know who they are, where they come from, and where is their destination.¹⁹ Therefore, as the first step towards entering the age of globalization the issue of identity and cultural identity propounds.

4.2 The Issue of Iranian Identity and Its Cultural Consequences

[T]he study of Iranian identity poses considerable challenges ranging from the complex legacy of the pre-modern past to the diversity of ethnic and religious population, from the history of encounters with multiple imperial powers to the long shadow cast by nationalist ideologies.²⁰

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Kanteiner W (2002) Finding meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies. *History and Theory* 41: 179–197, p. 182.

¹⁸Assmann J, Czaplicka J (1995) Collective Memory and Cultural Identity. *New German Critique* 65: 125–133, (Spring—Summer 1995), p. 130.

¹⁹Rajaei F (2003) *Moshkele-ye Howiat-e Iranian-e Emrooz, Eefay-e Naghsh dar Assr-e Yek Tamaddon wa Chand Frahang*. Nashre Nay, Tehran, p. 12.

²⁰Vejdani F (2012) Preface. In Amanat A, Vejdani F (eds) (2012) *Iran Facing Others. Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, p. ix.

Similarly, another challenge is the differing knowledge and opinions of scholars and the general public about the history of Iran, which culminates in drawing different conclusions about the character and concept of Iranian identity. One of the main reasons for the misinterpretation of Iranian history is the lack of documents related to the social, cultural, and political situation of the Iranian general public. As a result, the general public reflects and introduces their collective and communicative memories that last only for few decades based off of limited historical knowledge and documentation.

Indeed, the tradition of oral narrative, which was used for telling history in Iran from ancient times, is still used today. Today, as in old days, history passes to the next generation by telling stories that are influenced by the experience and taste of the narrator. This process only happens when there is an audience to hear the narration, and when there is no interested listener to listen to these stories, historical events are forgotten. With no memory of the past there can be no values, rituals, traditions, and epics, which are the main pillars of cultural memory and cultural identity.²¹

Further adding to the threat of a loss of Iranian identity is the fact that the most significant academic works related to the History of Iran, which have been used as documented and reliable sources in Iranian studies, have been written by non-Iranians such as James Darmesteter, Edward Granville Browne, Arthur Christiansen, Jan Rypka, Vladimir Minorsky, Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskai, Ann Katharine Swynford Lambton, Mary Boyce, Arthur Upham Pope, Adrian David Hugh Bivar, Lawrence Lockhart, Clifford Edmund Bosworth, Roger Savory, and Peter Avery.²² These scholars describe and interpret Iranian history and its characteristics from their own point of view and experiences. Therefore, not all of their interpretations and descriptions of Iran correspond with reality. As a result, the issue of Iranian identity has been the subject of different discourses and has had various interpretations over the years. But still, the majority of the non-Iranian scholars' findings are acceptable.²³

²¹ Most of the new generation in Iran has no mentality about or no sympathy for what had happened during the previous decades which had influenced their today's situation. Although their parents and grandparents have experienced the Iran–Iraq war (1980–1988) and especially their fathers had participated and injured in that war, they are not interested in knowing anything about their parents' experience. On the other hand, there are few proper books or data to encourage or persuade them to gain some knowledge about their history of about 3 decades ago and in case of those who are eager to know their recent past, available information are insufficient.

²² It has to be mentioned that the main reason for foreign scholars' interest in Iranian studies such as Iranian language and civilization is related to the studies in Indo-European linguistics and the translation of the Avesta in the late eighteenth century in France and Germany, Britain's domination on India and the importance of Persian (Farsi) as the administrative language in that country during nineteenth century, and the issue of Aryan race and Aryanism in the early decades of the twentieth century and the intention made by German scholars into the importance of Iran in the history of Aryan civilization.

²³ There are over 50 centers and institutes worldwide in 76 countries, which related to the Iranian Studies. There are few centers in Iran focused on the study of Iranian culture and civilization. Bonyad-e Farhang-e Iran (Institute for the Culture of Iran) was one of the first centers in Iran established in 1964. The aim of this institute was to promote Iranian culture, preserve and further Iran's cultural heritage, make efforts to refine, develop, and disseminate the Persian language, and introduce Iranian culture to other nations. It was only in the 1997 that Bonyad-e Iranshenasi (Iranology Foundation) had established. For more information see, Tafazzoli A (1990) Bonyad-e Farhang-e Iran. *Encyclopædia Iranica* IV(4): 358–359. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bonyad-farhang-iran>. Accessed 6 May 2015.

It is only in the first decades of the twentieth century that an Iranian effort to document Iranian historical narratives and traditions began to take hold. Iranian scholars such as Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, Ebrāhim Poordāwood, Hassan Peernia, and Badi'ozzamān Foruzānfar have researched and recorded different aspects of Iranian history and characteristics.

Ahmad Ashraf, sociologist and social historian, is amongst those scholars who define a comprehensive definition of "Iranian Identity." He emphasizes "three main perspectives, as ideal types or "pure types" that may be distinguished as the answer to the issue of Iranian identity.²⁴ Ashraf summarizes these as (1) Romantic Nationalistic, (2) Modernist or Post-modernist, and (3) Historicizing perspective.²⁵

The origin of the Romantic Nationalistic perspective is rooted in the importance of the past and its glory. This approach to defining identity is mostly adopted when people who originated from an ancient civilization need to have and find a way to cope with their present woeful and pitiful situation. They retire to their glorious past and regret the splendid ancient days while honoring their own distinct culture and identity. As Polish journalists and Noble prize candidate Ryszard Kapuscinski describes,

Societies with historical mentality are directed toward the past. All their energies, their feelings, their passions are dedicated to greater times already gone by. They live in the realm of legend and founding lineages. Historical societies are unable to speak about the future because their future doesn't arouse in them the same passion as their history. They are like an old war veteran. All he wants to talk about is reliving the war which carries such a deep emotion he has never been able to forget it.²⁶

Iran, with its long history and immemorial past, is a proper example of a nation whose people emphasize the Romantic Nationalistic perspective. As Ashraf mentions, "What had been a mythical and historical consciousness was transformed into a modern conception of national identity."²⁷ During the nineteenth century, known in Iran as the age of nation-building and nationalism, Iran increased its interaction with the world beyond its borders for many reasons, including its political situation; its continuous foreign relationship with France, Russia, and Britain;²⁸ it was the first time that Iranian students went studying in Europe; the introduction of modern education and schools; the foundation of Dār al-Fonun (Polytechnic School), and a few years later, Madreseh Ulomeh Siyasi (School of Political Science); and finally,

²⁴Ahmand A (2006) Iranian Identity i. Perspectives. *Encyclopædia Iranica* XIII(5): 501–504. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/iranian-identity-i-perspectives>. Accessed 17 August 2014.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Boroujerdi M (1998) Contesting National Constructions of Iranian Identity. *Journal for Critical Studies of the Middle East* 12 (spring). <http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/mborouje/Documents/English/Iranian%20Identity.htm>. Accessed 18 August 2014.

²⁷Ashraf A (1993) The Crisis of National and Ethnic Identities in Contemporary Iran. *Iranian Studies* 26(½) (Winter-Spring): 159–164, p. 160.

²⁸From the early years of nineteenth century, Iran occupied with the issue of Napoleonic policy in the East which resulted in Russo-Persian Wars as territorial disputes (1804–1818/1826–1828), vicissitudinous relationship with Britain due to British competition with France and Russia for interests in India and the Persian Gulf. For more information see, Avery P, Hambly G, Melville C (eds.) (1991) *The Cambridge History Iran Vol. 7, From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 314–425.

the creation of printing press houses, which resulted in the emergence of knowledge about sociopolitical events in European countries. During this time, those who had experienced western culture introduced concepts such as nation, nationalism, and national identity to Persian literati society. These intellectuals—*Roshanfekran*—such as Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadeh,²⁹ Jalal al-Din Mirza,³⁰ and Mirza Agha Khan Kermani³¹ who were aware of cultural and historical memories of Iran concentrated on introducing the concept of Iranian identity through the western definition of nation and nationalism by emphasizing the glory of Iran during the pre-Islamic period. Some scholars believe that,

Iranian Archaist nationalists treasured ancient history more than all elements which are essential in formation of a united nation such as race, language, faith, history and mutual feelings, cultural unification and collaborative fate. They ignored other elements such as religion, culture, etc. instead seeking the constituent elements of the nation in actual society they burrowed it from two thousand years ago.³²

The revision of works written by nationalist intellectuals such as Jalal al-Din Mirzah, Mirza Agha Khan Kermani, and few years later, Hassan Taghi Zadeh reveals that most of them have somehow been influenced by both Orientalism viewpoints and archeological discoveries in Iran during the late nineteenth century.³³

Another example of the Romantic Nationalistic perspective as a part of Iranian identity is the purification of the Persian language by removing all foreign words. Influenced by an invented language in apocryphal and pseudo-Zoroastrian books called *Dabestān-e Mazaheb* and *Dasātir* that belong to the Āzar Keyvāni religious and literary movement, some intellectuals such as Reza Quli Khan Hedāyat,

²⁹Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadeh (1812–1878), born in Azarbaijan and spent most of his life in Tiflis, was the playwright and propagator of alphabet reform. He was proud of being from Persian stock (*nežād-e Irāni*), belonging to the nation of Iran (*mellat-e Irān*) and to the Iranian homeland (*waṭan*). For more information see, Algar H. Akundzada. *Encyclopædia Iranica* 1/7: 735–740. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/akundzada-playwright>. Accessed 17 August 2014.

³⁰Jalal al-Din Mirza (1827–1872) born as prince at the court of Tehran as one of Fath Ali Shah Qajar son who influenced by European culture, became a historian and freethinker, critic of the Qajar government. He wrote a history textbook called *Nāma-ye Khosravān* (Book of the Monarchs), as the first history textbook for Dār-al-Fonun about the Iranian pre-Islamic past, written in “pure Persian” prose shorn of Arabic loanwords with the aim of restoring their greatness. He had been in correspondence with Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadeh. For more information see, Amanat A, Vejdani F (2008) JALĀL-AL-DIN MIRZĀ. *Encyclopædia Iranica* XIV(4): 405–410. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jalal-al-din-mirza>. Accessed 17 August 2014.

³¹Mirzā Āqā Khan Kermāni (1854–1896), writer, intellectual and an outstanding example of a first-generation secular nationalist who wrote articles and books such as *Ā'ina-ye Eskandarī*, which its subject extends from the mythological past to the Qajar era, to compare and contrast Iran’s glorious past with its present plight. For more information see, Bayat M (1987) ĀQĀ KHAN KERMĀNĪ. *Encyclopædia Iranica* II(2): 175–177. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/aqa-khan-kermani-iranian-writer-and-intellectual-d-1896>. Accessed 17 August 2014; Mirzā Āqā Khan Kermāni (1906–1908) *Ā'ina-ye sekandari*. Tehran; Ādamiyat F (1967) *Andīshā-ye Mirzā Āqā Khan Kermāni*. Tehran.

³²Bigdeloo R (2001) *Bastangaraee dar Tarikh-e Moaser-e*. Nashr-e Markaz, Tehran, p. 90.

³³*Ibid.*, pp. 118–131.

Yāqmaye Jandaqi, Ahmad Divānbayqi, Forsate Shirazi, and Adib al-Mamālek Farāhāni wrote texts and composed poems according to words invented or attributed to the old Persian language. A few years later, literatis and intellectuals such as Zabih Behrooz, Ahmad Kassravi, and Arbab Kaykhossro Shahrukh followed in their footsteps. In some newspapers such as *Sharaf* and *Sherāfat* articles with an archaism point of view had also been published. At this stage, the emergence of Constitutional Revolution influenced the idea of Iranian identity. As Ashraf mentions,

The awareness of the mythical past gained further popularity among intellectuals with different orientations during the last decades of the nineteenth century, when new ideas of nationality and nationhood began to spread over the Orient and what had been a mythical and historical consciousness was transformed into a modern conception of national identity. The new idea of national identity became more popular in the course of the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1911.³⁴

A nostalgic view towards Iranian identity with an emphasis on its archaistic aspects and Farsi as the national language of the country was the main tool for Iranian nationalist and expansionist elites during the Constitutional period and onwards. Their main aim was to compare the fatal situation of Iran in nineteenth century with the glory of ancient Iran as a cautionary tale for Iranians in order to guide them toward development and improvement.³⁵

The Romantic Nationalistic view on Iranian identity continued through the Constitutional Revolution through newspapers such as *Iran-e Nu* (New Iran), which emphasized archaism by supporting Parsis (Zoroastrian community in India), Zoroastrians of Iran and purifying writing. The outbreak of World War I extended the idea of archaism. *Kāveh*, whose name resembled the myth of *Kāveh Āhangar*, was amongst newspapers published by Taghi Zadeh during 1916–1928. A more archaistic approach was reflected in *Irānshahr*, a newspaper published in Berlin at *Matba'e Kāviāni* (attributed to the myth of Kāveh) by Hossein Kāzemzādeh Irānshahr with a logo resembling Persepolis columns. On the whole, introducing “Ancient history of Iran as an ideal model for the public”³⁶ was the main aim of this newspaper. The nationalistic and archaistic approach of Kāzemzādeh was also reflected in his book *Tajalliyāt-e Ruh-e Irāni* (The Manifestation of Iranian Spirit) with an emphasis on “*nejādeh nuzādeh Irani*/Newborn Iranian Race.”³⁷ Ebrāhim Poordāwood, Sādegh Hedāyat, aforementioned Zabih Behrooz and Ahmad Kassravi were amongst other nationalists who were influenced by the archaistic point of view and further defined it in their books, novels, and articles. Moreover, poets such as Muhammad Taghi Malek ul-Sho'arā Bahar, 'Āref Ghazvinia, Farrokhi Yāzdi, and Mirzādeh Eshghi composed poems with a glance at mythical glory of ancient Iran

³⁴Ashraf A (1993) The Crisis of National and Ethnic Identities in Contemporary Iran. *Iranian Studies* 26(½) (Winter-Spring): 159–164, p. 160.

³⁵Ahmadi H (2011) *Bonyadhay-e Howiat-e Melli-e Irani*. Pajoheshkadeh Motaleat-e Farhangi wa Ejtemaee, Tehran, p. 167.

³⁶*Irānshahr* 1340/192 (2):18.

³⁷Kāzemzādeh H (1917) *Tajalliyāt-e ruh-e irāni*. Eghbāl Publication, Tehran, pp. 3–85.

while supporting a hybrid religio-national point of view honoring and respecting Islamic heritage.³⁸ *Some articles in Āyanda*, a journal which had been published by Mahmud Afshār Yazdi during the last years of Qajar rule, last years of World War II, and a decade later (1925, 1944–1945, and 1955), were another example of the Romantic Nationalistic perspective of Iranian identity. Some of these articles also approached the idea of Pan-Iranism.³⁹

Some historical novels inclined to the glory of the ancient past had been published during the last years of the Qajar period such as *Eshgh wa Slatanat ya Fotuhāt-e Koorush Kabir* by Shaikh Musā Kabudarāhangī (1916) and *Dāmgostarān yā Enteghāmkhāhān-e Mazdak* by Mirza Abdul-Hosseini Sana'tizadeh Kermāni (1921). The common characteristics of these books are their emphasis on the pre-Islamic period; a hyperbole characterization based on a historical character, i.e., heroes who brought peace and stability to the country after a fatal period and fiasco;⁴⁰ and ethnocentrism and antagonism towards Arabs.

This process of novel writing continued in the first decade of the Pahlavi period in works such *Parvin Dokhtar-e Sāsān* by Sādegh Hedāyat (1928). The difference was the theme of historical novels that were influenced by factual events related to the ancient history of Iran. Archaism was the official propaganda during the Pahlavi period. The first classes for teaching ancient languages were also established in this period, such as Ernst Emil Herzfeld's⁴¹ class, who counted Ahmad Kassravi among his students. Additionally, the importance of ancient Iran emerged in the books and research of Hassan Peerniā⁴² and Ebrāhim Poordāwud.⁴³ In brief,

Celebration and commemoration of the collective historical memory through symbols and myths, rituals and ceremonies, museums and archeological sites, Achaemenid architectural design for public edifices, nationalistic music, and a national dress code became its hallmark.⁴⁴

The climax of archaism during the Pahlavi period was the assumption of the title Āryāmehṛ (1965) by Muhammad Rezā Pahlavi, the celebration of 2500 year celebration of Persian Empire (1971) and using the Shāhanshāhi calendar as the formal

³⁸ Shafiee Kadkani MR (1973) *Talaqqi-e Qodamā az Watan*. Alefbā 2:1-26, pp. 22–23.

³⁹ Afshār M (1989) *Melliyyat o Wahdat-e Melli*. Ganjine-ye Maghāghālāt I: Maghālāt-e Siyāsi yā Siāsat-Nāme-ye Jadid, Tehran, p. 187.

⁴⁰ Ābedinee H (1990) *Sad Sāl Dāstān Nevisee dar Iran*. Tondar, Tehran, p. 29.

⁴¹ German archeologist and Iranologist.

⁴² Peerniā H (1928) *Khotot-e Barjesteh Dāstānhā-ye Iran-e Ghadeem bā Zekr-e Madārek wa Natijeh Sanjesh wa Estenbātāt*. Majlis, Tehran; Idem (1934) *Iran-e Bāstān yā Tārikh-e Mofassal-e Iran-e Ghadeem*. Vol. 3, Majlis, Tehran.

⁴³ He had translated various parts of Avestā. Some of his other works on Ancient Iran are as follows: *Irānshāh, Tārikhcheh Mohā jerat-e Zartoshtian be Hendoostān, Anjoman-e Zartoshtiān-e Irani-e Bambai* (1916); *Khoramshāh, Anjoman-e Zartoshtiān-e Irani* (1927); *Frahang-e Iran-e Bāstān, Anjoman-e Iranshenashi* (1947); *Ānāhitā, Pnajāh Gofṭār-e Poordāwud* (1964); *Bijan wa Manijeh* (1965).

⁴⁴ Ashraf A (2006) *Iranian Identity iv. 19th–20th centuries*. *Encyclopædia Iranica* XIII(5): 501–504. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/iranian-identity-iv-19th-20th-centuries>. Accessed 17 August 2014.

and national calendar (1975). The Nostalgic view towards ancient Iran became the legitimate ideology of the government in the Pahlavi period, which emerged as the state nationalism in Iran.⁴⁵

The second perspective on Iranian identity focused on the concept of a nation as a phenomenon of eighteenth century onward, when the idea of nation was invented or imagined in Europe. Those who follow this perspective are influenced by the idea of nation based on Western examples. Bert Fragner, Iranologist influenced by Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, hypothesizes a gap between historical past of Iran and modern Iranian national identity.⁴⁶ Another approach towards the origin of Iranian identity as a modern phenomenon is based on the idea of "imagined communities" suggested by Benedict Anderson⁴⁷ and misinterpreted by some scholars who ignored the role of administrative language as an important element of national cohesion.⁴⁸ Hamid Ahmadi mentioned that modern views on Iranian identity that have emerged during the recent decade are influenced by the idea of some social science theoreticians such as Gellner, Aderson, and Hobsbawm and are based on three approaches: (1) theoretical discourse about nationality, nationalism, identity, and ethnicity, (2) various viewpoints on post-modernism, and (3) the theory of globalization.⁴⁹

Ahmadi also introduces other modern viewpoints on Iranian Identity and divided them as (1) critical views towards national identity in Iran, such as the hypothesis of Mehrzad Boroujerdi,⁵⁰ Mehrdad Mashayekhee,⁵¹ Hossein Bashiriyeh,⁵² and Muhammad Reza Tajik,⁵³ (2) denialism views which can be divided into two

⁴⁵Ahmadi H (2011) *Bonyadhay-e Howiat-e Melli-e Irani*. Pajoheshkadeh Motaleat-e Farhangi wa Ejtemaee, Tehran, pp. 167–168.

⁴⁶His viewpoint will be discussed below. For more information see, Fragner BG (1999) *Die "Persophonie": Regionalität, Identität und Sprachkontakt in der Geschichte Asiens (Persophonia—regionalism, identity, and language contacts in the history of Asia)*. Halle an der Saale.

⁴⁷For more information see, Anderson B (1991) *Imagined Communities*. Verso, London.

⁴⁸Ashraf A (2006) Iranian Identity iv. 19th–20th centuries. *Encyclopædia Iranica* XIII(5): 501–504. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/iranian-identity-iv-19th-20th-centuries>. Accessed 17 August 2014.

⁴⁹Ahmadi H (2011) *Bonyadhay-e Howiat-e Melli-e Irani*. Pajoheshkadeh Motaleat-e Farhangi wa Ejtemaee, Tehran, pp. 197–199.

⁵⁰Broujerdi divides the viewpoints on Iranian identity as religious view concentrated on Shiism and Non-religious focused on language and history. For more information see, Boroujerdi M (1988) *Contesting Nationalist Construction of Iranian Identity*. *Critique: Journal for Critical Studies of the Middle East* 12 (Spring 1998).

⁵¹Mashayekhi who has been influenced by Gellner thesis determines that nationalism is a new phenomena and what had been mentioned in old texts referring to Iran and Iranian had nothing to do with nationalism. Mashayekhi M (2007) *Nahal-e Melligarae dar Khak-e Ch*. *Baaztaab-e Andeesheh* 89–90: 22–30.

⁵²Bashiriyeh mentions that the main problem of Iranian national identity is its being ideological and using it by political regimes. Bashiriyeh H (2004) *Ideology Siyasi wa Howiat-e Ejtemaee dar Iran*. In Ahmadi H (eds), *Iran: Howiat-e Mellat wa Ghomiat*. Moassesseh Tosseeh Ulom-e Enssani, Tehran.

⁵³Tajik has influenced by post-modern discourses and somehow the theory of globalization. Tajik MR (2004) *Jahani Shodan wa Howiat*. *Howiat Melli wa Jahani Shodan*, Moassesseh Tahghighat wa Tosseeh Ulom-e Enssani, Tehran.

branches: (a) Religious-based denialism which is determined by scholars from a religious perspective who propound that Iran as a nation is an imaginary issue created by nationalists, Pahlavi government, and Orientalists. Mostafa Vaziri⁵⁴ and Hossein Kachoian⁵⁵ are amongst these researchers. (b) Ethnic-based denialism, which emphasizes the multiplicity of ethnic groups in Iran. Zeeya Sadr⁵⁶ and Ali Altaee⁵⁷ are amongst those who propound this idea. (3) Quasi Modern-Quasi denialism viewpoint of Muhammad Ali Akbari⁵⁸ which propounds the issue that Iran has no cohesive identity and what is mentioned today as Iranian identity is a spurious and modern phenomena made up by the Pahlavi government.⁵⁹

Contrary to modernist or post-modernist ideas, historicizing perspective is the third approach towards defining Iranian identity. This view emphasizes the role of historical forces such as myths, symbols, memories, and values in the formation of a modern nation. Due to its moderate and pragmatistic point of view, many Iranologists have approved this approach. As Ahmad Ashraf mentioned Ehsan Yarshater, Gherardo Gnoli, Ann Lambton, Alessandro Bausani, Roy Mottahedeh, David Morgan, Fraydoon Ādamiyat, Shahrokh Meskoob, Mortaza Motahari, Muhammad Rezā Shafiee Kadkani, Muhammad Tavakoli-Targhi, and Hamid Ahmadi are amongst those who emphasize the historicizing perspective in different versions.⁶⁰

Scholars such as Yarshater⁶¹ and Gnoli⁶² who were inspired by Hobsbawm's idea of the "invention of tradition" suggest that ethno-national identity in Iran had formed during Sassanian era, continued to existence during Islamic period, and shaped the Iranian identity through modern time. Ann Lambton emphasized the existing and continuous concept of being a Persian as the sign of identity in medieval Persia, which had been defined historically and geographically according to a common historical experience and a common cultural and literary medium.⁶³ Bausani underlined the Islamic heritage of Iran as a historical context which had a role in the formation of modern Iranian national identity.⁶⁴ Mottahedeh determines the role of educated Iranians who had a collective feeling of sharing the notion of

⁵⁴Vaziri M (1993) *Iran as an Imagined National: the Construction of National Identity*. Paragon House, New York

⁵⁵Kachoian H (2007) *Tataworat-e Goftemanhay-e Howiati-e Iran: Irani dar Keshakhesh ba Tajadod wa Mabaád-e Tajadod*. Nashr-e Nay, Tehran.

⁵⁶Sadr Z (1998) *Kessrat-e Ghumi wa Howiat-e Melli-e Iranian*. Andisheh Sara, Tehran.

⁵⁷Altaee A (1999) *Bohran-e Howiat-e Qawmi dar Iran*. Shadegan, Tehran.

⁵⁸Akbari MA (2009) *Tabarshenassi-e Howiat-e Jadid-e Irani, Assr-e Qajariyeh wa Pahlavi-e Avval*. Elmi wa Farhangi, Tehran.

⁵⁹For glance at all these approaches see: Ahmadi H (2011) *Bonyadhay-e Howiat-e Melli-e Irani*. Pajoheshkadeh Motaleat-e Farhangi wa Ejtemaee, Tehran, pp. 214–238.

⁶⁰Ahmand A (2006) Iranian Identity i. Perspectives. *Encyclopædia Iranica* XIII(5): 501–504. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/iranian-identity-i-perspectives>. Accessed 17 August 2014.

⁶¹Yarshater E (1983) *Iranian National History*. *Cambridge History of Iran* III(1): 359–477.

⁶²Gnoli G (1989) *The Idea of Iran: An Essay on Its Origin*. SOR, LXII, Rome.

⁶³Lambton AKS (1978) *Āwamiyya iii: in Persia*. *EI* ² IV: 785–790.

⁶⁴Bausani A (1971) *The Persians: from the earliest days to twentieth century*. Elek Books Limited.

Iran-zamin as a concept of national identity and relates it to the idea of modern European nationalism.⁶⁵ Morgan's view on Iranian history from eleventh to eighteenth century suggests that without an understanding of the confused legacy of these centuries, no one can hope to understand the complexities and dynamism of modern Iran.⁶⁶ Ādamiyat propounded the elements such as the concept of Iranian land and people, common language, cohesive culture, common historical consciousness, and national pride as signs of recognizing Iranian identity long before the modern era.⁶⁷ Meskoob had the same idea and regarded these elements⁶⁸, as did Shafiee Kadkani.⁶⁹ Tavakoli-Targh emphasizes the role of pre-Islamic and Islamic elements in the formation of a national identity in the Qajar period.

Historical research and the ensuing reconstruction of the pre-Islamic past helped to craft a distinctly nationalist memory and identity. With the rise of Iranian nationalism, pre-Islamic names lost their predominantly Zoroastrian connotations and were adopted as proper names by Muslim Iranians. Likewise, Zoroastrian mythologies were cast as quintessentially Iranian. By anthropomorphizing the Iranian homeland (*watan*), these mythologies were constituted as the nation's spirit and character."⁷⁰

Jalal Sattari, mythologist and Iranologist, mentions that the concept of cultural identity which is sometimes used to describe national identity is a reality which is rooted in the spirit and soul of the nation and is so stable that it seems to become their alternative nature.⁷¹ He believes that there is something more conscientious and empathetic that makes Iranians feel kinship not only with their compatriots but also with the people of their neighboring countries, namely the commonality in religious and worldly myths, their lifestyles, and viable secrets.⁷² He emphasizes that this is the enjoyment derived from an oftentimes unconscious general treasure that appears once in critical situations such as the outbreak of war or the threat of foreign invasion. Therefore, Sattari concludes that the commonality in myths as a cultural heritage is the most important element for stabilization of national identity and he recognizes myths as the institutor of cultural identity.⁷³

⁶⁵ Mottahedeh RP (1976) The Shoubiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran. *IJMES* 7/2: 161–182.

⁶⁶ Morgan D (1992) *Medieval Persia, 1040–1797*. Longman, London and New York.

⁶⁷ Ādamiyat F (1967) Ideoloji-e Nāšionālism. In *Andishahā-ye Mirzā Āqā Khān-e Kermāni*. Tahoori, Tehran, pp. 246–268.

⁶⁸ Meskoob S (1994) Melligarāee, Tamarkoz wa Farhang dar Ghorooob-e Qajariyeh wa Tolou-e Pahlavi. *Iran- Nameh* 12(3): 479–508.

⁶⁹ Shafiee Kadkani MR (1973) Talaqqi-e Qodamā az Watan. *Alefbā* 2: 1–26.

⁷⁰ Tavakoli-Targhi M (2001). *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism and Historiography*. Palgrave, New York, pp. 100–101.

⁷¹ Sattari J (2001). *Howiat-e Melli wa Howiat-e Farhangi: Bist Maghaleh dar Ghalamro-e Tarikh wa Farhang*. Nashr-e Markaz, Tehran, pp. 108–109.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

Historian Aman Allah Qarshi was amongst other researchers who emphasized the commonality of history, religion, rite, culture, national and common creed, commonality in language and land and a collective sense as the substratum of nation, nationhood, and identity.⁷⁴ Massoud Jafary,⁷⁵ literate, Muhammad Reza Dehshiri, political scientist,⁷⁶ Ali Yosufi,⁷⁷ Davoud Mir Muhammadi,⁷⁸ and Hossein Goodarzi,⁷⁹ sociologists, also emphasize a sense of commonality towards the importance of same land or geography, history, and culture for the formation of identity.

Rasool Jafarian, clergyman and historian, is amongst researchers who have historicized perspective towards the issue of Iranian identity. He recognizes identity and aspects of its formation as a current and relative fact. Jafarian propounds that identity should be determined in comparison with what is around it, in comparison with the circle of circles of which identity is the focal point. He mentions that to understand the collective identity one should emphasize various important and fundamental aspects which play the main role in formation of identity. Jafarian introduces these aspects as geographical, racial, ethnical, cultural, lingual, mental, moral, and social dependencies.⁸⁰ Reviewing the history of Iran, Jafarian explains that due to its geographical location, Iran has always been subjected to invasions and the domination of non-Iranians. This condition has influenced elements of Iranian identity. He emphasizes that there have been three common stable and continuous elements that should be considered in the issue of Iranian identity which are the geography of Iran, Farsi (Persian) language, and Islam, regardless of its sect.⁸¹ Also, in Jafarian's point of view eight layers have influenced the formation of contemporary identity of Iran. These include traces of ancient Iran, Arabic-Islamic, Shiit, Sunni, Turkic, Sufism, Western, and Imperialism elements.⁸²

Ahmad Ashraf also writes that "the long and eventful history of Iran has seen recurrent constructions, transformations, eclipses, and resurgences of Iranian images of its history and identity—interpreted on the basis of a number of contentious notions of ethnic and national identities."⁸³ He has divided the history of Iran into the six distinctive ages:

⁷⁴Qarshi AA (2001) *Iran Namak*. Hermes, Tehran, pp. 368–376, 370–372.

⁷⁵Jafary M (2007) *Sayr-e Romantisism dar Iran*. Nashr-e Markaz, Tehran.

⁷⁶Dehshiri MR (2001) *Tassir-e Tahawolat-e Siaysi-Ejtema'ee bar Howiat-e Farhangi-ye Iran-e Moaset*. *Nameh-ye Pejohesh-e Farhangi* 22–23: 152–178.

⁷⁷Yosufi A (2001) *Rawabet-e Beyn-e Ghomi wa Tassir-e an bar Howiat-e Melli Aghwam dar Iran*. *Fasslnameh Motalea't-e Melli* 8: 11–42.

⁷⁸Mir Muhammadi D (2004) *Howiat-e Melli dar Iran*. *Moassesseh Motalea't-e Melli*, Tehran.

⁷⁹Goodarzi H (2005) *Goftarhaee Darbare-ye Jamea Shenassi-e Howiat dar Iran*. *Tamadon-e Irani*, Tehran.

⁸⁰Jafarian R (2002) *Howiat-e Irani dar Keshakesh-e Tahawolat-e Siaysee-ye Iran dar Chahar Gham-e Akheer*. *Moa'lefeha-ye Howiat-e Melli dar Iran*. *Pajoheshgah-e Olum-e Enssani wa Motalea't-e Frahangi*, Tehran, pp. 5–7.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁸²*Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁸³Available online. <http://cfis.columbia.edu/iranian-studies-seminars/fall-2011-seminars?page=1>.

1. *The Age of Construction*: Constructing a proto ethno-national identity during the late Sasanian era.
2. *The Age of Nostalgia and Boasting*: The Construction of New Iranian “Cultural Identity” Under the Iranian Regional Dynasties.
3. *The Age of the “Eclipse of Iran” and “Rise of Islam”*: The Eclipse of Iranian identity during the Saljuq era.
4. *The Age of Recovery*: The Mongol and Timurid Eras.
5. *The Age of Resurgence*: The Reconstruction of a Hybrid Iranian-Shi’ite identity during the Safavid era.
6. *The Age of Modern Nationalism and Rise of National Identity*: During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁸⁴

Various approaches and different viewpoints on Iranian identity, its entity, history, and existence or in other words, “the identity of Iranian Identity,” raises the issue that there is no accurate and complete knowledge regarding various aspects of Iran’s history and its historical vicissitude.⁸⁵ This is one of the main issues that Iranian society had met in every juncture of its history, especially when subjected to foreign threat.

Iranologist Richard Nelson Frye mentioned the lack of native written sources as a problematic issue for researching the background related to the notion of identity in Iran.⁸⁶ Identity is a result of the self-awareness of peoples and nations about their historical accumulation of cultural experiences over time.⁸⁷ In other words, history is one of the main building blocks for constructing identity, along with geography, biology, collective memory, etc. It is through history and the passing of time that cultural and national identities form and become accepted.⁸⁸

As some Iranologists propound, in regard to Iran, history is the predominant and fundamental building block. Iranian identity has evolved from a common historical experience and cultural tradition among peoples with a collective feeling about ancient and Old Iranian narratives that have been manifested through myths and legends as well as in history. This feeling is compounded and accentuated by geographical regions and boundaries called *Irānzamin* (Land of Iran) which defines the gray area between Iranians and “others” that have been identified as Iran vs.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵As Seyed Sadegh Haghighat, the political scientist has mentioned “the Iranian identity has generated much controversy among the successive generations of modern intellectuals in Iran, particularly since the last decades of the nineteenth century when the question of national identity moved to the center stage of political discourse.” Available online. <http://s-haghighat.ir/en/articles/art/1.pdf>. Accessed 17 August 2014.

⁸⁶Frye, RN (1993) Iranian Identity in Ancient Times. *Iranian Studies*. 26(½)(Winter-Spring): 143–146.

⁸⁷Ashna, H, Roohani MR (2011) Howiat-e Farhangi-e Iranian az Roykardha-ye Nazare taa Moalefeha-ye Bonyadee. *Fasnameh Tahgheeghaat-e Farhangee* 3(12): 157–185, p. 161.

⁸⁸Zahed S (2005) Howiat-e Melli-e Iranian. *Rahbord Yas* 1(4): 129–138, p. 129.

Anērān,⁸⁹ Turān,⁹⁰ Rum⁹¹ and Farag,⁹² Ajam⁹³ versus Arab, Tājik⁹⁴ versus Turk. Persian literature is fraught with representations and personifications of this reciprocity and contrast whose origin is traceable through national narratives, collective memories, ancient texts, and reliefs. Archeological discoveries and decoding Elamite cuneiform tablets provide a new view on the notion of identity in Elamite era, the oldest period during which writing had been invented in the Iranian Plateau (2200 B.C.).

But as linguist experts in ancient Persian languages indicate, one of the oldest signs of Iranian identity appears in the Avesta which uses *airya* as an ethnic name⁹⁵ or *airyō.šayanəm* as the “land inhabited by Iranians.”⁹⁶ Therefore, experts such as Émile Benveniste, linguist and semiotician, have no doubt about the ethnic value of Old Iran.⁹⁷ Frye, who had the same idea, has mentioned that the concept of “Aryan” has a very ancient history “for the Vedic and the Avestan people both called themselves by that name.”⁹⁸ He noticed the way Darius I declared himself as “an Achaemenid, a Persian and an Aryan.”⁹⁹ It should be mentioned that in the tomb relief of Darius I (c. 522–486 B.C.), he emphasizes belonging to the lineage of *ariya*¹⁰⁰ and introduces himself as “Great King, King of Kings, King of countries containing all kinds of men, King in this great earth far and wide, son of Hystaspes, an Achaemenian, a Persian, son of a Persian, an Aryan [=Iranian], having Aryan lineage.”¹⁰¹ Greek and Armenian sources have the same narrative and interpretation

⁸⁹ Non-Iranian Lands.

⁹⁰ Turkic Lands.

⁹¹ Greece, Rome, Byzantium and Ottoman Empire Lands.

⁹² European and Western Countries.

⁹³ The name given in medieval Arabic literature to the non-Arabs of the Islamic empire, but applied especially to the Persians. For more information see, Bosworth CE (1985) Ajam, Encyclopædia Iranica. I: 700–701. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ajam-the-name-given-in-medieval-arabic-literature-to-the-non-arabs-of-the-islamic-empire-but-applied-especially-to-the-per>. Accessed 25 April 2014.

⁹⁴ The name refers to those who speak Persian (Farsi). For more information see, Moheat TM (1986) Tahgheghat-e Irani: Darbare-ye Lafz-e Tājik wa Taat. Ayandeh 12(7-8): 343–349.

⁹⁵ *Vendidād* 1. *Yasht*. 13.143–44.

⁹⁶ *Yasht*. 10.13, refers to the original territory of Aryans. For more information see, MacKenzie DN (1998) ĒRĀN-WĒZ’, Encyclopædia Iranica. VIII(5): 536. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/eran-wez>. Accessed 17 August 2014.

⁹⁷ Benveniste É (1969) *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes*. Vol. I, Paris, p. 369.

⁹⁸ R Frye RN (2002) Ethnic Identity in Iran. *JSAI*: 78–83.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁰ For more information on Arya and Aryans see, Bailey HW (1987) Arya. Encyclopædia Iranica II(7): 681–683. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/arya-an-ethnic-epithet>. Accessed 17 August 2014; Schmitt R (1987) Aryans. Encyclopædia Iranica II(7): 684–687. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/aryans>. Accessed 17 August 2014.

¹⁰¹ Kent RG (1953) *Old Persian Grammar, Texts, Lexicon*. American Oriental Society, New Haven, Connecticut, pp. 137–138.

of *arya* as a collective definition denoting Iranians.¹⁰² Therefore, Frye suggested that the idea of *Eran* as a territorial boundary had emerged during the Achaemenid period. Frye propounded that,

When Reza Shah ordered foreign government to use the name Iran instead of Persia, many in the West thought he had created a new name for country, not realizing that the name “Iran” was ancient and was the native name for the country. It is well known that this name is derived from the ancient designation “Aryan” related to Eire.¹⁰³

Ali Reza Shapur Shahbazi, archeologist and expert in the Achaemenid period, has made observations on the usage of term “Iran” and “Iranian” during the Achaemenid period.¹⁰⁴ As he mentioned “early European scholars followed the biblical and Classical tradition of referring to Iran as Le Perse, Persien, and Persia.”¹⁰⁵ He also noted that travelers to the region remarked that Iranians “from remotest antiquity” called their country Iran and further noted that a number of nineteenth century Orientalists did the same and used the terms Iran and Iranian. Shapur Shahbazi introduced Friederich Spiegel’s *Eranische Altertumskunde* as a monumental work about Iranian Antiquity from the Avestan period to the Arab conquest. He mentioned that the idea about using the term Iran from ancient times was criticized by Paulus Cassel (1821–1892), the German missionary, who maintained that Classical or Hebrew sources did not attest the name “Iran” as the designation of the entire Achaemenid Empire.¹⁰⁶ Nearly, 90 years later, in 1989, the Italian scholar, Gherardo Gnoli, Iraniologist, proposed this issue and argued the notion of Iran and its emergence at the Sasanian era as an appeal to Achaemenid origin.¹⁰⁷ He mentioned that the epithet *Shahan-shah Eran* and the Idea of *Eran-shahr*, “the domain of realm of Iranians,” used as a legend on coins minted by Ardashir, the founder of Sasanian dynasty, is a sign of this issue.

This new title had a very important value insofar as, in its adoption by Ardashir and his successors, we can actually detect the birth of the very idea of Iran in its political, cultural and religious meaning. He who coined that title wanted to refer to the *aryai* and Zoroastrian tradition so as to cement his politics and to differentiate them from those of his hated predecessors.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Herodotus (7.62), Eratosthenes apud Strabo (15.2.8), Diodorus Siculus (1.94.2), Agathangelos (sec. 127).

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Shapur Shahbazi A (2005) The history of the Idea of Iran. In Sarkhosh Curtis V, Stewart S (eds) (2005) The Birth of the Persian Empire. I.B. Tauris, London, pp. 100–111.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 100. For more information see, Cassel P (1896) Zoroaster: Seine Name und seine Zeit (Berliner Studien für classischen Philologie und Archeologie IV/1). Berlin.

¹⁰⁷ Gnoli G (1989) The Idea of Iran: An Essay on Its Origin. Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Rome, p. 178; also see, Gnoli G (2005) Further Notes in Avestan Geography. In Weber D(ed). Language of Iran: Past and Present, Iranian. Studies in memoriam David Neil MacKenzie, Iranica 8, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co., Wiesbaden, pp. 43–50.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 138.

Gnoli believed that Sasanians had formed a territory called *Eran-shahr*, i.e., the territory or realm of Aryans/Iranians which is “something new, though in the guise of a venerable tradition.”¹⁰⁹ Choosing *Eran* as part of personal names can be attributed to the importance and position of Iran in the cultural background of Iranians during the Sasanian era.¹¹⁰ Therefore, Gnoli adopted the notion of the invention of tradition¹¹¹ introduced by Eric Hobsbawm and Terene Ranger.¹¹² As Touraj Daryaee suggests,

If we are to follow Gnoli’s conception, the Sasanians reached into their religious tradition and transposed the mythical Iranian religious tradition homeland into the Iranian Plateau in Late Antiquity.¹¹³

Though scholars such as Touraj Daryaee, Sassanian era expert, and Ahmad Ashraf, socialist and social historian, concur with Gnoli’s definition of using Iran as an essential feature of Sasanian propaganda and the first sign of referring to Iranian identity, some scholars rejected this hypothesis. Shapur Shabazi is amongst those who criticized Gnoli’s conception and all scholars who have been swayed by his idea¹¹⁴ such as B. Fragner.¹¹⁵

Apart from all discourses, it has to be mentioned that emphasizing identity bequeathed to Parthian era (248 B.C.–226 A.D.) through oral narratives and epics or sagas has strengthened during Sasanian period in the concept of *Ērān-šāhr* “Kingdom of Iranians.¹¹⁶ As previously mentioned, on his coins and investiture relief at Naqš-e Rostam in Fārs, Ardašīr I, the founder of Sasanian dynasty, referred to himself as *šāhān šāh ērān*, “King of Kings of Iran.” Iranian identity found a supplementary concept during the reign of Šāpūr I, son of Ardašīr, who entitled himself as *šāhān šāh ērān ud anērān*, “King of Kings of the Iranians and non-Iranians.” The same form was used by later kings, until the late fourth century AD.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹¹⁰ Christensen A (1936) *L’Iran sous les Sassanides*. Levin & Munksgaard, Copenhagen, p. 108, 214–215, 416, 513.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹¹² Hobsbawm EJ, Ranger TO (1983) *The Invention of tradition*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

¹¹³ Daryaee T (2010) *The Idea of Eransahr: Jewish, Christian and Manichaean Views*. In Iranian Identity in the Course of History, & Cereti CG (2010). *Iranian Identity in the Course of History: Proceedings of the conference held in Rome, 21–24 September 2005*. Istituto italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente. 91.

¹¹⁴ Shapur Shahbazi A (2005) *The history of the Idea of Iran*. In Sarkhosh Curtis V, Stewart S (eds) (2005) *The Birth of the Persian Empire*. I.B. Tauris, London, p. 101; Matini J (1992) *Iran dar dowran-e Eslami*. *Majallay-e Iranshenasi* IV/2 (Summer): 243–268.

¹¹⁵ Fragner BG (1999) *Der politische Begriff ‘Iran’ in der Neuzeit und seine historischen Wurzeln*. In Gnoli G, Paniano A (eds) *Proceedings of the First International Conference of Iranian Studies*, 365–376, Rome; Shapur Shabazi also complained of those who “find a fertile ground to belittle Iranian nationalism in general by dismissing the idea of Iran as an invention of western scholars” and their ultra-nationalism Iranian followers.

¹¹⁶ MacKenzie DN (1998) *ĒRĀN, ĒRĀNŠĀHR*. *Encyclopædia Iranica* VIII(5): 534. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/eran-eransah>. Accessed online 17 August 2014.

Another aspect of Iranian identity had revived during the Sasanian era and was based on epico-legendary narration and religious—Avestan and Zoroastrian—tradition in *Khwadāy-nāmag*, “*Book of Kings*.” This book, which is the main source for Iranian national history, was translated into Arabic and influenced Islamic historians, literates, and poets. Its most celebrated and impressive accomplishment is *Shāh-nāma* by Ferdowsī.

After the fall of Sasanian dynasty and at the eve of the Islamic era, another epoch had begun which influenced the notion of Iranian identity. Most scholars agree that the three main and fundamental pillars of Iranian national identity are: (1) Geography of this land, (2) Persian language, and (3) Muslim faith as the element that induced the spiritual and physical unification of Iranian historical identity.¹¹⁷ Some researchers, such as Hamid Ahmadi, introduced ancient political heritage of kingship as another pillar which created the Iranian identity.¹¹⁸ Some scholars such as Alessandro Bausani propounds that medieval Iranian Islamic period should be recognized as the foundation of Iranian Identity.¹¹⁹ Morteza Motahari¹²⁰ and Ali Shari’ati¹²¹ are amongst other researchers who emphasized this idea.

Muslim Arabs, who conquered Iran, brought new religion and settled adjacent to or in the cities of *Iranzamin*. Therefore the idea of *Irani* versus *Arab* rose. Although some people had been able to solve the problem and chose to be Muslim, some others struggled to find a solution. Therefore, the process of Islamization had taken place gradually during over two centuries.¹²² Northern provinces of Iran on the Caspian coast resisted for about 200 years and were not conquered until the ninth century AD. On the other hand, for at least one century, Arab rulers, who were proud of their race, swaggered about showing off their “Arabness” and mistreating Iranians—as well as also their other subordinates in Islamic territory—as second class citizens who had no privileges and were downgraded by Arabs. Thus, non-Arabs were made to associate themselves with Arab families and were known as *Mawali*. This situation ended with movements against Umayyad rulers which can be identified as Khavarej and Shiism religious-based movements as well as anti-Arab or anti-religious movements with a taste of pre-Islamic ideas such as those who had been known as *Mazdaki* or *Zandik*. During this time, some opponents tried to introduce integrative sects which were a combination of pre-Islamic Iranian sects and Islamic ideas. A combination of anti-Arab and religious-based attitude towards

¹¹⁷ Saghebar M (2000) *Shahnameh wa Falsafeh-ye Tarikh-e Iran*. Ghatreh Mo’een, Tehran.

¹¹⁸ Ahmadi H (2007) *Ghomiyat va Ghom- garaaee dar Iran, Afssaneh va Vagheyyat*. Nashreh Nay, Tehran.

¹¹⁹ Bausani A (1971) *The Persians, from the earliest days to the Twentieth Century*. Elek, London.

¹²⁰ Motahari M (1978) *Khadamateh Moteghabeleh Eslam va Iran*. Sadra, Tehran.

¹²¹ Shari’ati A (1992) *Bazshenasiyeh Howiateh Irani-Eslami*. Elham, Tehran.

¹²² For more information see: Zarrin-Kub AH (1975) *Du Qarn Sokut*, Tehran; Spuler B (1998). *Tarikh-e Iran dar Qorun-e Nakhostin-e Eslami, Vol. I*, translated by Jabad Falatori. Elmi Farhangi, Tehran.

Arab rulers¹²³ in Iran caused the fall of the Umayyad Caliphate and the rise of Abbasids with the assistance and support of Abu-Muslim Khorasani and his mostly Iranian adherents.¹²⁴ Abbasid Caliphs who gradually became Kings than religious rulers tended to apply Iranian costumes and traditions to the society. The city of Baghdad had been established near to the ruins of Ctesiphon, the late Sasanian capital and the Abbasid court was administrated by Iranian literatis¹²⁵ and officials such as Barmaki family.¹²⁶ Some aspects of the Shoubiya literary movement, which introduced the Iranian ethnic capacity and the aim of Iranian scholars to translate literari and scientific texts of pre-Islamic period into Arabic, had an important role in emphasizing the advantages of being an Iranian.¹²⁷

The establishment of Iranian regional dynasties which emerged from the first decades of the ninth century AD can be assigned as another phase for propounding Iranian identity. Inventing genealogies which attributed dynasties such as Safarid, Samanid, Gaznavid, and Buyyid to pre-Islamic myths and kings; celebrating ancient festivals such as Nowrooz; and choosing pre-Islamic rituals for their coronation, for instance, in the case of Mardawij-e Ziyari and Emad al-dawleh Buyyid, are all indicators of a trend toward the revival of Iranian identity. However, as Professor Ehssan Eshraghi has mentioned these so-called semi-independent dynasties actually were not governments, and one can describe them as local rulers who had gained the opportunity to release themselves from the proximate domination of the Abbasid Chalipahte.¹²⁸

Besides a tendency to celebrate ancient Iranian traditions, there has also been a tendency to write historical books that mention pre-Islamic era¹²⁹ through creating genealogical links between Iranian kings and religious stories mostly related to the history of prophets or *Tarikh-e Anbiya*. The heritage of traditional narratives of

¹²³For more information see, Sadighi GH (1938) Les mouvements religieux iraniens au IIe et au IIIe siècle de l'hégire. Les Presses modern, Paris; Yusofi GH (1990) Behafarid. Encyclopædia Iranica IV: 88–90. Available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/behafarid-zoroastrian-here-siarch-and-self-styled-prophet-killed-131-748-49>; Yusofi GH (1989) Babak Khorrami. Encyclopædia Iranica III: 299–306. Available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/babak-korrami>; Zarrinkub A (2006) Eshaq Tork. Encyclopædia Iranica VIII:598. Available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/eshaq-tork>; Crone P (2012) Moqanna. Available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/moqanna>; Bosworth CE (1985) Afšin. Encyclopædia Iranica I:589-591. Available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/afsin-princely-title>.

¹²⁴Yusofi GH (1983) Abu Moslem Korasani. Encyclopædia Iranica I: 341–344. Available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abu-moslem-abd-al-rahman-b>.

¹²⁵For more information see: Sajadi S (2004) Barmakian. Daerato al-Maâref Bororg-e Eslami 12: 1–17.

¹²⁶For more information on this impact see: Malayeri MM (1976) Estemrar-e Farhang-e Sasani dar Duran-e Eslami wa Elal wa Avamele An. Shorayeh Aleyeh FARhang wa Honar. Tehran.

¹²⁷For more information on Shoubiya see: Momtahn HA (1975) Nehzat-e Shoubiya, Jonbesh-e Melli-e Iranian dar Barabar-e Khelafat-e Umawi wa Abbassi. Frankline, Tehran.

¹²⁸Quoted from his speech in 31 May 2015.

¹²⁹For a review on Iranian themes on Islamic historiography during ninth to eleventh century AD see: Ashraf (2006) Iranian Identity iii. Medieval Islamic Period Encyclopædia Iranica XIII: 507–522. Available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/iranian-identity-iii-medieval-islamic-period>.

ancient Iran is reflected in *Khwadāy-nāmag*, “*Book of Kings*” revived and in books such as *Shah-Nameh* by *Masudi Marwzi*, *Abu Mansur*, and *Daqiqi*, all of which belong to tenth century AD, as well as *Shah-Nameh* by Ferdowsi which was completed in the first decade of eleventh century AD and became the main representation of Iranian pride and identity until now. Reviewing the poems of this era shows some signs of emphasizing the importance of Iranian territory and being Iranian.¹³⁰ Another aspect of portraying the importance of Iran as an individual entity was to emphasize the centrality of Iran in geographic works where Iran became part of the center of Islamic territory, while the first books written in the Islamic period was on Mecca as the heart of Islamic territory.¹³¹

The main questions to ask as a result of this analysis are: After approximately four centuries of being as the subjects of Islamic territory, what was the general public idea of being Iranian? How much did they know about their pasts, most of which had been narrated to them through oral tradition? In the case of not having an independent government, did they still introduce themselves as Iranian? What did they do in the period of competition between regional dynasties which lasted over two centuries? And how did they describe citizens or inhabitants who were subjects of these dynasties?

Although scholars and literati who lived in ninth and eleventh century AD such as Ebn Moqafa’, Ebn Qotayba’, Dinavari, Tabari, Esfahani, Ebn Meskawayeh, Ta’lābi, Maqdesi, Masudi, and Yaqubi wrote history books which mention stories about ancient Iran, there is no evidence to indicate who the audiences and readers of these books were and how many people had the chance to learn about their past by reading these books or hearing their narratives. It has to be mentioned that, although some of these authors had the chance to extract some subjects from rare books belonging to the Sasanian era, there are some mistakes and misinterpretations in their books regarding the narrations about ancient Iran. It shows that parts of the narratives that the authors had gathered are amongst the tales and stories transmitted through generations as oral history. These narratives also emphasize Iran when Iranian myths were consolidated with Islamic characters in order to save the core of the pre-Islamic traditions. Also history books written in Farsi such as *Tarikh-e Bala’mi* (963), *Zain al-Akhhbar* (1051), and *Mojmal al-Tawarikh* (1126) are examples of the tendency to mix Iranian narratives with Islamic concepts.

The continuous usage of Persian or Farsi language implies that Iranian identity has been mingled with the existence of language.¹³² It should be mentioned that all Iranian scholars had written their scientific achievements in Arabic language, which

¹³⁰ For more information see, Anwari H (2013) *Iran wa Jahan-e Irani*. Bokhara 94.

¹³¹ For more information see, Krachkovski I (2000) *Istoriia arabskoi geograficheskoi literatury*. *Tarikh Newshtehay-e Joghrafiya-ee dar Jahan-e Eslami* (trans: by Abul-Qasem Payahdeh). Elmi wa Farhangi, Tehran

¹³² For more information on the capacity of Persian literature in retrieving Iranian identity see, Ghobadi HA, Ghyass al-din M (2007) *Zarfeeyathaye Adabiyat-e Farsi dar Baazyabeeye Howiat-e Irani*. *Howwiat dar Iran: Rooykard-e Siyasi, Ejtmaee, Farhane wa Adadabee be Howwiat wa Bohran-e Howwiat dar Iran*, Pajooheshgah-e Ulome Ensaani, Farhang wa Motalea’-e Ejtemae’i Jahad-e Daneshgahi, Tehran, pp. 143–163.

contributed to the most glorious era in the history of Islam. The fact is, when Iranians were acquainted with the Quran and Islam doctrine, they differentiated Islam from Arabs. They became the leaders in science of discourse or *Ilm-e Kalam*, and religious jurisprudence or *Fiqh*. In the metaphoric description of Mahmud Reza Eftekhari Zadeh, contemporary researcher, the strategy of Iranians was to be added to Islam but subtracted from Arab.¹³³ In other words, Iranians became Muslim but not Arab.¹³⁴ Although Arabic became the *lingua franca* of the entire Muslim world, Iranians retained and safeguarded Farsi (Persian) language as their main pillar of being Iranian. As Shahrokh Meskoob, writer and researcher emphasized, Iranians had maintained their national identity and Iranianhood through the blessing of language.¹³⁵ Thus Seyed Sadegh Haghghat, political scientist, propounds that,

Language plays a pivotal role within the discourse of Iranian cultural heritage. Many of Iran's cultural historians and literary critics start with the premise that the Iranian nation is defined primarily by the Persian language. For these scholars, language is the manifestation of a nation's thoughts, experiences, and ambitions.¹³⁶

For the four centuries after Arab conquests, Iranian officials played an important role in the administrative system of Islamic territory and also in the foundation of many sciences such as Mathematics and its branches, Astronomy, Medicine, Chemistry, Physics, and Philosophy. As Toby E. Huff, sociologist, emphasizes, the scientific and cultural renaissance in Europe would not have been possible without the transfer of knowledge from the Iranian-Islamic heritage that developed during eight to the end of fourteenth century AD.¹³⁷

Parts of these achievements gained traction during the period in which Iranians and other inhabitants of the Islamic world experienced the emergence of a new element in the Caliphate's territory. The infiltration of Turk tribesmen in Iran and Abbasid court which began in the ninth century AD resulted in establishing Turkic origin dynasties in *Iran-zamin*.¹³⁸ It was the beginning of the period that C.E.

¹³³Eftekhari Zadeh MR (1988) *Islam wa Iran: Mazhab wa Melliat-e Irani*. Ressalt-e Qum, Tehran, p. 118.

¹³⁴In comparison with other ancient civilizations in Mesopotamia (today Iraq, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon) and Egypt and also lands in North of Africa (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia) which their language had changed into Arabic and now are recognized as Arabic World or Arab league, Iran which had been known as the territory of the Eastern Caliphate and was adjacent to the Baghdad, capital of Abbasids, conserved its language and embellished it by using some aspects of Arabic language. Even nowadays the revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protest which began from 18 December 2010 in Arab World is known as the Arab Spring while the main issue of these demonstrations had Islamic aspects.

¹³⁵Meskoob S (1997) *Iranian Nationality and Persian Language*. Mage, Odenton.

¹³⁶Haghghat SS. Iranian Identity in the West: A Discursive Approach. Available at <http://s-haghghat.ir/en/articles/art/1.pdf>. Accessed 17 August 2014.

¹³⁷For more information see, Huff TE (2003) *The rise of early modern science: Islam, China and the West*. Cambridge University Press.

¹³⁸Bosworth CE (1968) *The Political and Dynastic History of the Iranian World (A.D. 1000–1217)*. In: Boyle JA (eds) *The Cambridge History of Iran Vol. 5, The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 1–203.

Bosworth defined as nearly a thousand years of non-Persian dynasties' domination of Iran.

This domination at the highest level has had less effect on Iranian national psychology and literary consciousness than might be expected, for all of the alien ruling dynasties have come from races of low cultural development, and thus they have lacked the administrative expertise necessary for ruling a land of ancient settlement and civilization. Whether consciously or unconsciously, they have adopted Iranian culture at their courts and they have been compelled to employ Iranian officials to administer the country and collect taxes.¹³⁹

One of its consequences was the issue of Tajik vs. Turks which, as Bosworth mentioned, the result was the ascendancy of Iranian characteristics. Moreover, Saljuq dynasty reunified Iran after the Arab conquest and,

Iranian identity underwent a period of complex mutations with mixed consequences under the Saljuqids. In this period, the decline of Persian epic and the less frequent usage of the term "Iran" in Persian poetry and historiography coincided with the flourishing of Persian literature and spread of Persian hegemony in Islamic societies.¹⁴⁰

The establishment of the Saljuq dynasty had its consequences in terms of Iranian identity. During this period, Iran for the first time in post-Islamic history had been ruled by centralized government which extended beyond Iran's border to the political geography of Sasanian era. Saljuqs became firm Sunnis once they entered the Islamic world and their period had become an important era in the religious history and also the most formative epoch in cultural history of Iran¹⁴¹ which,

Lies in its formative richness, expressed in various directions of thought: first, Ash'ari Sunnism reached its final systematization in the great synthesis of Ghazali. Secondly, Sufism was first organized into great brotherhoods, and important schools were created. Thirdly, the philosophy of Suhrawardi Maqatl opened up new paths to Iranian theosophical speculation. And fourthly, Shi'i ferment pullulated in Iran in the double aspect of Isma'ism, with its highly interesting esoteric theology, and Twelver Imamism, which, though now comparatively, weak, created a wide network of propaganda centres, during the Saljuq period.¹⁴²

Although Saljuqs were orthodox Muslims and served as the vassal of Abbasid Caliphate, the usage of Farsi or Persian language stabilized in their courts and territory which spread from Transoxiana to Asia Minor, and this language was finally used for official epistles during the Khwarazmshahid period.¹⁴³ With the Mongol invasion towards Transoxiana followed by the conquest of Iran and the fall of Abbasid Caliphate, which was the claimants of Islamic government for over seven centuries, Orthodox, i.e., Sunni sect, lost its patron. Ilkanid rulers with their

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Bausani A (2007) Religion in the Saljuq Period. In: Boyle JA (eds) The Cambridge History Iran Vol. 5, The Saljuq and Mongol Periods. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 283.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 302.

¹⁴³ For more information on the history of Persian of Farsi language in official correspondence see: Ramezani A (2014) Peesheene Tarassol wa Namehnegari dar Iran az Aghaz ta Qarn-e Sheshom-e Hejri. Zaban wa Adabe Faris 15(14), pp. 108–130.

paganism background practiced the religious policy of tolerance towards religions and sects. Therefore, their policy paved the way for the emergence of a new phase in generating Iranian identity through Shiism which became a characteristic of being Iranian in the next centuries. Shiism was one of the main issues of the Sabedaran (1336–1381) movement and rebellion against the Ilkhanids.¹⁴⁴ Mongols and Ilkhanids were also influenced by the richness of Iranian culture, as they, too, had been absorbed in the various aspects of Iranianness which had led to the creation and emergence of some of the best samples of Iran's art and architecture.

Despite some positive issues resulting from the Ilkhanid era, the *Trauma Hypothesis* has been developed in recent years by Abbas Edalat, professor of Computer Science and Mathematics who studies the traumatic impact of the Mongol invasions, Ilkhanid rule and Timur's conquests on Iran on the basis of modern psychological understanding of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). He examined the long-term consequences and reenactments of these events on the political, social, and scientific history of Iran in later periods.¹⁴⁵ This hypothesis, which it should be noted has yet to be examined in terms of validness, concludes that,

Residual characteristics from each of Narcissistic, Borderline, Paranoid and Antisocial disorders, have survived in the social behavior and attitudes of the Iranian people. Prominent example of which include mistrust, inner insecurity, meekness, feeling of weakness and helplessness in the face of adversity, as well as intense sensitivity, black and white (binary) thinking, narcissism, impulsiveness, belligerence and a tendency to bear grudges. Over time, these psychological dysfunctions have become embedded across social, political and family confines where they have fermented turmoil and disorder and created noxious problems in not only the realms of interpersonal and social relationships but also those of social harmony and co-operation.¹⁴⁶

Regarding signs of identity, the frequency of the usage of *Iran* and *Iranzanim* "Land of Iran," *keshtar-e Iran* "Country of Iran," *ahāli-e* or *Khalāyeh-e Irānzamin* "citizenry of Iran," *mamālek-e Irānzamin* "State of Iran," *Moluk-e Iran* "sovereigns of Iran" in historiography and literature of Ilkhanid period is remarkable. Meanwhile, the domination of Turkic tribes still influenced the sociopolitical situation of Iran until the emergence of Safavid era. The main elements characterized Safavid era as

¹⁴⁴ For more information on Sabedaran see Smith JM (1971) *The History of the Sarbadar Dynasty 1336–1381 A.D. and its Sources*. Near and Middle East Studies.

¹⁴⁵ By reviewing the documents in accordance with hypothesis regarding trauma, Edalat concludes that, "The psychological trauma experienced by the people of Iran through the Mongol catastrophe and its subsequent reenactments has caused damage to the social fabric of Iran which has proved to be the main obstacle to nurturing science. The prevalence of mistrust and instability in people's emotions and the primacy of black and white thinking in their responses to nearly all matters not only instigated religious conflicts and incited clashes between opposing social groups such as the Ni'matis and Haydaris, but also fundamentally hindered moves towards scientific creativity and innovation." For more information see, Edalat A (2010) *Farziye-e Fajea'zadegi: Taseer-e Paydaar-e Fajea'-ye Moghol dar Tarikh-e Siyasi, Ejtamaee wa Elmi-ye Iran*. Bokhara 77–78: 227–262. Trans: *Trauma Hypothesis: The enduring legacy of the Mongol Catastrophe on the Political, Social and Scientific History of Iran*. Available at <http://www.doc.ic.ac.uk/~ae/papers/Mongols-8-3-13.pdf>.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

the determinative factor in revival of Irano-Islamic Identity can be defined as: (1) ancient Iranian monarchical tradition, the divine right of the Iranian kings derived from their possession of “Kingly glory” (Farreh); (2) Iran’s territorial integrity; and (3) Ithna ‘Ashari Shiism as the most important element in Safavid religious propaganda and political ideology.¹⁴⁷

During the Safavid period, Shiism became the official state religion. Although the process of Shiization had taken shape gradually, with the rise of Sunnite governments of Uzbek on the Northeastern border and the Ottoman Empire to the West, Iran had entered a new phase of reconstructing ethno-religious identity based on traditional Iranian identity and Shiism ideology.¹⁴⁸ As it has been mentioned above, Rasool Jafarian speaks of layers which influenced the formation of contemporary Iranian identity, and he maintains that the Safavid-Shiism layer, which had an important role in the formation of culture and religious identify due to the stabilization of Iran’s border and the resurgence of Shiism religion and rituals, is the most contiguous layer to contemporary Iran.¹⁴⁹

One of the distinctive roles of Shiism in the formation of Iranian identity during the Safavid era appeared during the sixteenth century AD in the policy of Safavid kings regarding the transplantation and habitation of Turkish tribes across the aforementioned borders. Turkish tribes, such as Afshars and Qajars, “were not remote in speech or habits from the major Turkmen threat on the frontiers which they were transplanted to guard. They were, however, considered loyal to the Safavids and counted within the fold of the Safavid Shi’i sect, unlike the Sunni Turkmen across the border.”¹⁵⁰ Continuous struggle and war with Sunni Ottoman Empire was also a determinative factor that affirmed the role of Shiism in Iranian identity. Only on one occasion did a pro-Sunni policy emerge, and this was during the brief reign of Ismail II (1576–1577) under the influence of a pro-Sunni clergyman, Mirza Makhdum Sharifi,¹⁵¹ which was Ismail II’s new Sadr, Minister. Ismail II planned to conclude a peace treaty with Ottoman Empire, weaken the influence of Shi’it clergymen and their Qizelbash fellows and omit the name of Shi’it Imams and Shi’it mottos on the region’s coins. Mirza Makhdum also encouraged him to do this. But the growing opposition of courtiers, clergymen, and Qizilbash prevented him until

¹⁴⁷ Savory R (1980) *Iran Under the Safavids*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 27.

¹⁴⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, historian, had emphasized on the role of Shiism in formation of the Iranian ethno-national identification. For more information see, Hobsbawm EJ (1992) *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge, p. 69, 137.

¹⁴⁹ Jafarian R (2002) *Howiat-e Irani dar Keshakesh-e Tahawolat-e Siaysee-ye Iran dar Chahar Gharn-e Akheer. Moa’lefeha-ye Howiat-e Melli dar Iran. Pajoheshgah-e Olum-e Enssani wa Motalea’-e Frahangi*, Tehran, p. 10.

¹⁵⁰ Avery P, Hambly G, Melville C (eds.) (1991) *The Cambridge History Iran Vol. 7, From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 4.

¹⁵¹ For more information on Miraza Makhdum Sahrifi see, Stanfeild-Jonson R (1993) *Mirza Makhdum Sharifi: a 16th Century Sunni Sadr at the Safavid Court*. Ph.D. Diss, New York University; Golsorkhi S (1994) *Ismail II and Mirza Makhdum Sharifi: an Interlude in Safavid History*. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, pp. 477–488.

he suddenly died from an overdose. After a few struggles for power in between Safavid princes and officials, Muhammad Khodabandeh was crowned as the next Safavid king. His blindness and other characteristics prevented him from being a proper king and finally his son, Abbas I, rose to power, and a new era had begun, which also influenced the issue of Iranian identity.

Expansion of foreign relationships with European countries, along with the various visits of commercial, political, and religious European representatives and Indian emissaries and merchants to Safavid Iran promoted the idea of “others” versus “Iranianness.” Therefore, as some scholars such as Muhammad Rezā Shafiee Kadkani and Ahmad Ashraf had noticed, there was a tendency towards the love of “homeland/*Watan*” during the Safavid era which might have emerged through the *Hadith* or prophetic tradition of *Hobb al-watan menā’l imān* (Love of homeland is from faithfulness).¹⁵² Apart from political and cultural diplomacy of the Safavid government, traditions and ceremonies such as *Nowruz* (as an ancient and pre-Islamic tradition) and *Āšurā*¹⁵³ (as one of the main motives of Shiite thought) were both preserved in the collective memory and ethno-national identity of Iran and had an important role in cementing a permanent Iranian identity; while *Naqqali*, “Iranian dramatic story-telling” and *Šāh-nāma khāni*, “Reading Shahnameh” in coffeehouses and fairs for the public, both revived Iranian identity from an Islamic point of view.

Safavid rule in Iran lasted over two decades and shaped the main aspects of Iranian ethno-national identity which lasted over five centuries until present day. During the Safavid period, a cultural convergence emerged as a result of the reciprocity between ancient tradition and religion. As Shariati mentioned, during Shah Abbas I, *Ashura* and *Nowrooz* were celebrated on the same day. Therefore, they commemorated Ashura and the next day celebrated Nowrooz. Shariati concluded that Safavids didn’t want to sacrifice neither nationality nor religion.¹⁵⁴ As Ahmad Ashraf mentions, the basis of ascertaining identity of the Iranian masses was Islam, Shiism, and small local tribal societies.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, the study of the concept of “Iran” was primarily the apprehension of Militaries and Literary persons and was not something on which the general society was focused. As Jafarian describes, Safavid government with its geographic and cultural expansion did not seek to generate a powerful political and cultural integrity throughout Iranian territory, or at least the government did not have a specific program to achieve this.¹⁵⁶ For example, there were people who, due to their sectarian diversity, preferred not to be included in the fold of Shi’i Safavid government. Included among these diverse groups were Afghans who were disaffected by the acts of their newly appointed Safavid local ruler. Mir Vais was one of their leaders who went to Isfahan, the Safavid capital, to

¹⁵² Shafiee Kadkani MR (1973) Talaqqi-e Qodamā az Watan. Alefbā 2: 1–26, p. 12; Ashraf (2006) Iranian Identity iii. Medieval Islamic Period Encyclopædia Iranica XIII: 507–522. Available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/iranian-identity-iii-medieval-islamic-period>.

¹⁵³ The commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Hossein (as) the Third Shiite Imam.

¹⁵⁴ Shariati A (1970) Kaveer. Tehran, p. 264.

¹⁵⁵ Ashraf A (1994) Bohran-e Howiat-e Melli wa Ghomi dar Iran. Iran Nameh 47, p. 539.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 12.

complain, and due to the misconduct of the court, he went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. "From there, [he] returned directly to Qandahar armed with a *fatva*, a canon-law decree, from the Sunni religious authorities in the Holy City, that sanctioned his throwing off Shi'i-Safavid dominion exercised through an immoral governor of dubious credentials as a Muslim."¹⁵⁷ The result was a rebellion by Afghans which ended in the 6 month siege of Isfahan, and finally, the Safavid throne was relinquished to Mahmud Ghalzi.

The reign of Afghans in Iran lasted only 7 years. This incident had its own distasteful consequences. Iran, as the main forerunner of Shi'ism, was subordinated to the Sunni Afghans; the Ottoman Empire and Russia conquered most of the cities and areas in the north and west of Iran. Thus, Iran had to cope with the crisis of its new national identity. Finally, the Afghan's reign in Iran ended with the concerted efforts of Nader (1736–1747), who became the next ruler of Iran. His principal goal was to make a new Iranian empire which would spread from Mesopotamia to far beyond the Transoxania and Indus. However, he had many obstacles in his way.

With the fall of the Safavid, their sacred aura remained in people's minds, and during the disorderly years after their fall which lasted more than 50 years, those that try to come to power associated themselves to the Safavid house in order to receive people support. Nader, who didn't have the privilege of being related to the Safavid, or come from a populous family had to make a connection with Safavid house. His son married a Safavid princess, and it was his child (Nader's grandchild) who "continued a greatly reduced and weakened Afsharid rule for some forty-six years [and was] owed the possibility of doing so not least to Safavid descent through is mother."¹⁵⁸

Another obstacle in Nader Shah's career was the presence of Sunni penitent Afghans and Uzbeks in his army. People distrusted his army and when he tried to reconcile Shi'ism with Sunni schools and conditions worsened when he attempted to negotiate with Sunni clergymen in Atabat. There were rumors that Nader had become Sunni. When he decided to prohibit clergymen from reckoning of religious endowments, it ended with the migration of some Shi'i clergymen to Atabat, Najaf, and Karbala. The ambitious rule of Nader Shah lasted about 11 years, at which time he was assassinated by his most trusted officials. Local disorder, pretenders, factions in various parts of the country, the independent rule of Nader's grandchild in Mashhad, disputes between tribal leaders and local rulers around Iran raise the question: What was the impact of these rebellions on people's personal and collective identity?

The local rivalry ended when Karim Khan Zand (1751–1779) rose to power. His 28-year reign brought temporary stabilization to Iran, but his death was the beginning of a new era of rivalry and local anarchy. The definitive encounter happened between Zands and Qajars, which resulted in the victory of Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar (1789–1797). He, like Nader, tried to reconstruct Iran as it was in the Safavid era. His ambitious campaign in Caucasus was due to this goal and is regarded as one of the last attempts to revive the geographical identity of Iran.

¹⁵⁷ Avery P, Hambly G, Melville C (eds) (1991) *The Cambridge History Iran Vol. 7, From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 12.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

International relations in Europe, Russia's constant interest in Iran, Britain and France policies in the East and their aim for total domination over India were amongst elements which influenced the issue of Iranian identity at the eve of the nineteenth century. Synoptically, policy and deployment of Qajar rulers against this situation, and on the other hand, the presence of foreign political representatives and agents in Iran raise the issue of *Irani* versus *Farangi* (foreign) as one of the determinative elements of Iranian identity in the nineteenth century. Those foreigners who came to Iran and stayed there made direct connections with the general masses and, based on their capacity and familiarity with Persian language and Iranian tradition, communicated with Iranians. The impressions of these communications were reflected in reports, memoirs, travel literatures, notes, and letters of these foreigners and generated the Iranian identity through the eyes of Europeans, Americans, and all who had the chance to visit Iran during the nineteenth century. These foreign visits were the result of influences from the Safavid era centuries ago that paved the way for foreigners to experience Iranian society and culture directly or indirectly through the eighteenth and nineteenth century. There is no doubt that those who visited Iran had their own perception of Iranianness. However, reviewing their notes shows that there are some similarities in their definition of an Iranian as someone who is emotional, hospitable, voluptuary, boastful, disingenuous, lawless, disloyal, flatterer, affable with his equal fellow, obedient in front of sovereign, and tyrant against the inferior.

While the ebb of the Ottoman Empire as a representative of Sunni sect had lessened, the increasing effect of Shi'i elements on the political structure of that era, new situation of Shi'i clergymen and their close relation with the general public once again settled the role of Shi'ism in the structure of Iranian identity. The second half of the eighteenth century until the beginning of the nineteenth century saw a period of economic and ideological alliance between Shi'i clergymen and the urbanized class and merchants. This means that, during this time, Shi'ism had been organized as a self-regulating power. Shi'ism identity had been stabilized by the emergence and puissance of Osuli's branch of Shi'i sect who maintained that there should be a Mujtahid for interpretation of religion, and Shi'it clergymen had been popularized. Their role on announcing the crusade (Jihad) against the Russian invasion, boycotting smoking tobacco, and the presence of clergymen as leaders in Constitutional revolution were amongst the signs that indicated the importance of their role in the social and cultural structure of Iranian society.

As it has been mentioned previously, Iran's relations with European countries, dispatching students to Europe, the introduction of modern education and schools, the foundation of Dār al-Fonun (Polytechnic School), Madreseyeh Ulomeh Siyasi (School of Political Science) and also printing press houses were apertures that introduced the European world to Iranians. This was another stage for the issue of Iranian identity, and it raised questions about the definition of the Iranian nation, nationalism and the issue of being Iranian versus non-Iranian or *Farangis*. Although nationalism was not the dominant idea of the Constitutional Revolution, there were intellectuals who had been influenced by nationalism.¹⁵⁹ Their main goal was the

¹⁵⁹ Bigdeloo R (2001) Bastangaraee dar Tarikh-e Moaser-e. Nashr-e Markaz, Tehran, p. 153.

creation of an autonomous “modern nation-state” with citizens who participate in their sociopolitical situation and with the capacity to mutually communicate with foreign powers. The usage of words *mellat-e Iran* (nation of Iran), *Majles-e Shuray-e Melli* (National Congress) is a sign of the importance of the issue of nation and nationality in the discourse of the Constitutional revolution.

A few decades later, as a result of this process, Reza Shah (1925–1941) changed the International name of the country from *Persia* to *Iran*. This name acted as ribbon that gathered together the whole population of Iran regardless of their ethnic and religious differences. The name *Iran* did not emphasize any specific region, ethnic group, or sect. It is an important issue in comparison with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s policy, who changed the name of country once known as *Ottoman Empire* to *Turkey*. This name emphasized “Turks,” while the new-called *Turkey* still included a population of different ethnic groups who apparently were not a priority in this country. This is an important issue which still incites opposition from ethnic groups in Turkey. Thus, “Comparative historians of nationalism acknowledge that Iran was among the few nations that experienced the era of nationalism with a deep historical root and experience of recurrent construction of its own pre-modern identity.”¹⁶⁰

As it has been mentioned before, one of the consequences of the identity issue in Iran during the Qajar period was the trend towards ancient Iran. It influenced the Reza Shah Period, and the society experienced two different cultural policies: first, the modernity and modernism policy; second, archaism policy. In both approaches there was a tendency to limit religion. Preventing the performance of some religious ceremonies and the abolishment of the veil (*Kashf-e Hijab*) were amongst the issues that threatened the religious and Shi’it aspects of Iranian identity, and according to the act of government, it was mandatory to obey these roles. As usual and based on a historical experience, Iranians found a way to unravel this tangled affair. Some compromised on the roles and whether obligatory, desperately or voluntarily, accepted the change, while others resisted with acuity until the passage of time solved the problem.

Reviewing the vicissitude of sociopolitical history of Iran, especially through the last three centuries, indicates that severe political upheaval, instability in governmental structure, several obstructions in social and economic activities, anarchy and irresponsibility, ineligibility of governors and local rulers, lawlessness, and lack of safety all had an abiding impact on the characteristics of Iranians. Therefore some researchers propound that Iranian identity has been influenced by five negative characteristics: (1) complexity of character, which includes seven features: absolutism, dictatorialism (referring to raising dictators and having a tendency to create dictators), expediency and the priority of benefit of an individual rather than the society, opportunism and the priority of immediate benefit rather than the long-term one,

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.; also see, Hugh Seton-Watson (1977), *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*, Boulder, Colo., pp. 243–248, 251–255; Seton-Watson H (1977) *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*. Boulder, Colorado, p. 69, 137; Smith AD (2004) *The Antiquity of Nations*. Cambridge, p. 218–219, 229, 130, 186.

sensitiveness and its tendency to overpower rationality, flattering and adulation, and exhibitionism; (2) the debility of knowledge; (3) evanescence of current knowledge; (4) purging the eminent; and (5) escapism and lawlessness.¹⁶¹

Regarding Iran in a context of 7000 years and a history of vicissitudes events, faced by many foreign invasions, comprising of multiple societies with various ethnic groups, different accents, brogues and languages, varied geographical tracts which emerged various communities, there are two essential elements which have been formed and preserved its cultural identity: Persian language (Farsi) and Islam in its Shiite interpretation. Oral narratives, ancient rituals, and traditions such as *Nowruz* and *Shahnameh* have preserved parts of the Iranian past and its ancient heritage, while Iranian tendency towards cultural co-existence and convergence paved the way for preserving their entity. Furthermore, the religion of Islam had flourished new aspects of Iranian capacity in forming its identity in a new phase and as the time went by Shiism had played an important role in forming Iranian characteristics.

¹⁶¹ Alikhani AA (1386). *Howwiat-e Farhangi-e Iranian wa Aghabmandegi, Yek Barrassi-e Elli. Howwiat dar Iran: Rooykard-e Siyasi, Ejtmaee, Farhaneh wa Adadabee be Howwiat wa Bohran-e Howwiat dar Iran*, Tehran: Pajooeshgah-e Ulum-e Enssani, Farhang wa Motaleaat-e Ejtmaee-ye Jahad-e Daneshgahi, p. 102.

Chapter 5

Islamization of Iranian Society

5.1 Persian Resistance Movement and the Islamic Civilization

I began this section with two distinctive observations that were made centuries apart, however both are extremely revealing. First, Ibn Khaldun offers a reason as to why Persians plunged into disintegration:

A nation that has been defeated and come under the rule of another nation will quickly perish. The reason for this may possibly lie in the apathy that comes over people when they lose control of their own affairs and, through enslavement, become the instrument of others and dependent upon them. Hope diminishes and weakens. Now, propagation and an increase in civilization (population) take place only as the result of strong hope and of the energy that hope creates in the animal powers (of man). When hope and the things it stimulates are gone through apathy, and when group feeling has disappeared under the impact of defeat, civilization decreases and business and other activities stop. With their strength dwindling under the impact of defeat, people become unable to defend themselves. They become the victims of anyone who tries to dominate them, and a prey to anyone who has the appetite. It makes no difference whether they have already reached the limit of their royal authority or not ... The group that has lost control of its own affairs thus continues to weaken and to disintegrate until it perishes. Duration belongs to God alone. This may be illustrated by the Persian nation. In the past, the Persians filled the world with their great numbers. When their military force was annihilated in the days of the Arabs, they were still very numerous. It is said that Sa'd (b. AbiWaqqas) counted (the population) beyond Ctesiphon. It numbered 137,000 (individuals), with 37,000 heads of families. But when the Persians came under the rule of the Arabs and were made subject to (oppression by) force, they lasted only a short while and were wiped out as if they had never been. One should not think that this was the result of some (specific) persecution or aggression perpetrated against them. The rule of Islam is known for its justice. Such (disintegration as befell the Persians) is in human nature. It happens when people lose control of their own affairs and become the instrument of someone else ... Or, there are those who by accepting slavery hope to obtain high rank or to get money or power. This was the case with the Turks in the East, and with the Galician infidels and European Christians in

Spain. Such people are customarily claimed by the dynasty for itself. Thus, they are not ashamed to be slaves, because they hope to be chosen for high position by the dynasty. And God knows better.¹

In 1981, Ann Lambton, a distinguished scholar, in describing the Arab culture and their drives to success and the consequence of such ambition during the invasion of Persia, wrote: “Primitive culture is driven towards civilization by the desire for power, riches, and leisure. Its members are able to conquer an existing civilized state, or to create one, because they have strength, courage, endurance, and above all, inner cohesion and solidarity. These virtues are necessary for the new adventure. Yet, it is not always easy for a primitive group to travel the road to civilization. The virtues of its members can be a source of new dissensions and conflicts. Its solidarity is not stable, and once its members have achieved certain objectives, they may resist further demand from their ruler. They may then be dominated by a strong civilized state, lured by its ways, and become content with small remuneration for serving it as mercenaries. Further, their primitive mode of life was such that they have acquired habits contrary to the ways of civilization; and these habits may have become second nature. They may have developed social and psychological attitudes preventing them from creating a civilization and driving them to destroy the civilization they may dominate (emulate). This is particularly true of nomadic primitive cultures like those of the Berber and Arab nomadic tribes. Nomadic life engender the love of personal feuds and indifferences to authority, the habit of continuous movement and lack of attachment to certain regions, and the habit of appropriating whatever is in sight regardless of the rights of others; and civilization cannot exist without respect for authority, attachment to a certain locality, and deference to the rights of others. The virtues of primitive culture are thus counterbalanced by shortcomings that diminish the ability of many primitive people to found a new civilization, and handicap them when attempting to wrest the dominions of a civilized state [from it]. Such primitive people may create the rudiments of civilization in a restricted region or conquer a weak civilized state. But usually the civilization they found does not last long and the state they conquer decays.”²

I must admit that any discussion of history bears the uncanny sense of vulnerability when a debate is about interpretations, which often falls short of neutral/objective analysis. In short, there is no “unposition position”³ in almost all disciplines of social science. To minimize this real deficit all I can do is alert and keep on alerting “readers” of the position I am interpreting from, rather than inventing or imagining that interpretations spring from nowhere or they are not interpretive at all but the truth. As Dean MacCannell has observed, “Everything written in the ‘objective

¹ Khaldun I (1967) *The Muqaddimah*. Trans. Franz Rosenthal, p. 197.

² Lambton AKS (1981) *State and government in Medieval Islam: an introduction to the study of Islamic political theory: The Jurists*. Routledge, London.

³ Jenkins K (2005) On “What is History?”: From Carr and Elton to Rorty and White. Taylor & Francis, p. 13. He further explained that no discourse and interpretation as well as no contribution to, and/or comment on, aspect of an existing discourse can be considered impartial (*ibid*, p. 15).

style' ... now risks being read as a kind of political cover-up; hidden complicity ... Interestingly, the one path that still leads to scholarly objectivity, detachment, and neutrality is exactly the one originally thought to lead away from these classic virtues: that is, an openly auto-biographical style in which the subjective position of the author, especially on political matters, is presented in a clear and straightforward fashion. At least this enables the reader to review his or her own position to make the adjustments necessary for dialog."⁴

Accordingly, first, let me begin by underlying the difference between Arab Muslim and Iranian perception and writing of History (historiography). Tamim Ansary has accurately observed that Islamic history is religious in nature.⁵ This is readily observable in the early historical narratives in which they considered history for one reason: only to be recited as it appeared in the eyes of beholder, namely Arab Muslims. In fact, the founding narrative of early orthodox Islamic history consists of the life of the prophet and his successors, which mainly consisted of the caliphate and Islamic institutions.⁶ In doing so, they had no choice but to disregard and hence erase the history of others, since pre-Islam history was irrelevant and meaningless for Arab collectors and reciters. This is clearly evident as invading Arabs saw libraries as idolatrous. According to John Farndon, "The caliph Umar issued an edict: *If the books agree with Islam, then we don't need them. And if they don't, they are haram, forbidden.* ... [consequently] all the libraries [in Iran] were ransacked and their precious contents burned- all the libraries, that is, but one. In the far south of the Fars region, at Jundi Shapur."⁷ This confirmed what Tamim Ansary notes, that Muslims "don't care if the *story* [of history] is true; we want the *lesson* to be true. The Muslim [Arab] stories don't encapsulate lessons of that sort: they're not stories about ideal people in an ideal realm. They come to us, rather, as accounts of real people wrestling with practical issues in the mud and murk of actual history, and we take from them what lessons we will."⁸

⁴MacCannell D (1992) Empty meeting grounds: The tourist papers. Psychology Press, p. 9–10.

⁵Ansary T (2009) *Destiny Disrupted: A history of the world through Islamic eyes*. PublicAffairs, xxi. The term "early" referred to the pre-Abbasid period.

⁶In Ibn Khaldun's view of history, "according to which the whole world and everything in it depends upon man, there is no room for an abstract concept of "the state." A state exists only in so far as it is held together and ruled by individuals and the group which they constitute, that is, the dynasty. When the dynasty disappears, the state, being identical with it, also comes to an end." (Khaldun I (1967) *The muqaddimah*. In: Franz Rosenthal (trans), p. 852).

⁷Farndon J (2006) *Bird Flu: Everything you need to know*. Red Wheel Weiser, p. 40. Emphasis origin.

⁸Ansary T (2009) *Destiny Disrupted: A history of the world through Islamic eyes*. Public Affairs, p. xxii. Emphasis origin. It should be noted that I added Arab to the term Muslims to underlined diversities among Muslims, and also noted that such approach during Islamic Empire was altered in a sense that more comprehensive narratives of History were written as a result of various Islamic courts funding and patronage.

I presume that such inclination is due to the Arabs' common sense of identity and pride documented through tribal genealogies and cultivated and confirmed as the Prophet rose among them. A profound sense of such identity is reflected in the statement of al-Jahiz, "Since the Arabs are all one tribe, having the same country and language and characteristics and pride and patriotism and temperament and disposition, and were cast [in] one mold and after one pattern, the sections are all alike and the elements resemble each other, so that this became a greater similarity than certain forms of blood-relationship in respect of general and particular and agreement and disagreement: so that they are judged to be essentially alike in style."⁹ As for Arabs' sense of pride, Sir John Malcolm made the following observation, "The inhabitants of the peninsula are an original and unmixed race. They boast that their country never been conquered; and we have no record of the whole being subject to a foreign yoke: but the Romans, at one period, possessed a part of Arabia; and Yemen and some adjoining provinces have been often overrun, and at times been tributary to Persia. That the monarch of that country, and the emperors of Rome, did not pursue their conquests till they subdued the deserts of Arabia, may have arisen from other causes than a dread of courage of its roving inhabitants. Independence is the certain and just reward of all who consent to a life of privation and hardship. Deserts and mountains have ever been the sanctuaries of the free and brave; and those who are content to inhabit them, are seldom exposed to attack: for ambition only greedy of wealth and grandeur, could derive little gratification from the possession of a country, where no labor could render the fields fruitful, and no time could make the inhabitants slaves."¹⁰ In a similar vein, Ibn Khaldun also stated, "Most of the Arabs who settled in those cities [al-Basrah and al-Kufah, part of Sassanian territories] were uncivilized. They had made little use of the Prophet's company and had not been improved by his way of life and manners, nor had they been trained in his qualities of character."¹¹

In direct contrast, Iranian history, that is to say its significant non-academic history, means a written history of 3000 plus years. And of the events in the history of Iran, the most meaningful anecdotes that affected the memories of the general public were those of the antiquity and medieval times, the life of Empires that constitutes the national collective consciousness. One might even say the salvation history of Iran is the core of the historic self-awareness of the distant past that Iranians all over the world identify with. There are many dividing factors that cause a rift among Iranians, such as linguistic differences and diversified ethnicity, but "the people's awareness of and tremendous pride in Iran's great history serve as strong cohesive forces to help counter many divisive factors... In their [Iranian] eyes the days of Iranian national greatness have long since passed, and if the nation is to be seen in true perspective, a description of its present humble position of the society of

⁹ Savant SB (2013) *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran: Tradition, Memory, and Conversion*. Cambridge University Press, p. 51.

¹⁰ Malcolm J (1829) *The history of Persia: from the most early period to the present time* (Vol. 2). Murray, p. 133–134.

¹¹ Khaldun I (1967) *The muqaddimah*. In: Franz Rosenthal (trans), p. 285.

nations must be balanced by an account of its past imperial greatness, under the Achaemenid, Sassanid, and Safavid dynasties and under Nader Shah.”¹²

In retrospect, I questioned the merit of the all too common perception in Iran that “Islam” is either credited or blamed for what occurred in Iran during the post-Sassanian era. In turn, I argue that such characterization is *inaccurate* and *misleading* because it is made as a result of a value-laden interpretation of history. Its inaccuracy is related to the fact that in the ancient history we never have an occasion in which a civilization and its contributions are typified by a particular religion.¹³ For instance, it is unprecedented that paganism was used instead of Babylonians; the Sassanian were called Zoroastrian Dynasty; Greeks be regarded as the cult of Olympian’s Gods; Mediterranean were called as ancestor worshippers; Egyptians as well as Romans were described as Polytheistic; Mongols were seen as infidel nomads (or even the British Empire considered as Christian). The proposition that Islam, as a religious ideology, has either harmed or revived Iranian civilization is completely constructed out of context, and hence false. For instance, no one can dispute the tremendous impact of Islamic civilization not only on Iran but also on human history in its entirety. But, these effects prevailed not as a result of the Islamic ideology, but rather, are based on immense accumulated wealth from the subject provinces during the rise of the Islamic empire that allowed its civilization, like all other empires before and after. In addition, no ideology has ever been credited or accused of promoting distinctive social characteristics that lead to a change in the host nation’s cultural texture. An ideology is effective only when it is compatible with its host cultural attributes. This is also a main reason why I argue that adopting an ideology, thought, or notion that does not resemble native cultural traits, in our case Iran, has been nothing but a total failure. In short, wealth and patronage knowledge creation, but not ideology, facilitate the rise of a civilization.

I used the term misleading because there is an inclination to perceive Islam as the force that led to the downfall of Sassanian Dynasty. This is a gross misreading of the history, which is one of most acute cultural tendencies among Iranians. It constructs a “condemnation plot,” which has been culturally imbedded in the characteristic of Iranians who insist on invention of precarious falsifications to evade reality and avoid responsibilities for our own misdeeds.

In Iran, history is often seen in light of legends, and legends too often turned to mythical narratives. This is the main reason why no lessons from history have been learned by Iranians, so that blunder after blunder, bearing grave consequences, has occurred throughout the perpetual orbit of Iran’s seasons of history. On this note, I will briefly review a segment of a history of the era without imposing subjective values or projecting present-day understanding back into the past.

¹²Cottam RW (1979) Nationalism in Iran: updated through 1978 (Vol. 145). University of Pittsburgh Press, p. 26.

¹³Similar erroneous categorization applied to today’s events. For instance, terrorism takes on religious face only in case Muslim without ever mentioning the nationality of those who commits terrorism. For an interesting discussion of the topic see <https://consortiumnews.com/2011/07/27/who-commits-terrorism/>.

The rise of Qubad I's sovereignty (who came to throne in 499 AD) was accompanied by a new religion, led by the mysterious fellow named Mazdak.¹⁴ The new doctrine, like most creeds of a similar nature, had been constructed to address societal malaises of the time.¹⁵ In a nutshell, Mazdak teaching was leaning toward proto-socialism, in a contemporary sense, with a similar flavor that protect masses against the wickedness of the rich and powerful, which included courtier Zoroastrian clergies who often sided with power elite against the masses.¹⁶ By most accounts, Qubad I was swayed by Mazdak's social-oriented message and as Sir John Malcolm, who labeled Mazdak *the religious imposter*, noted the king "continued through life to believe in the doctrine of Mazdak, whose followers greatly increased the reign of his royal convert."¹⁷

In addition, Mazdakism, like the religious oriented Manichaeism before it, allowed their followers a certain degree of freedom to "openly proclaim themselves." This practice spread widely in Iran and was considered heresy (heterodoxy) by Zoroastrian clergy men, particularly after the fall of Sassanian Empire.¹⁸ As Abd Al-Husain Zarrinkub has observed, "The Zoroastrians themselves strove harder than the Muslim against these heresies as is shown by the manner in which they rejected Bihafarid b. Mahfurudln, who was in reality the apostle of reform in Zoroastrianism since he apparently wished to remove from it those aspects which struck the Muslims most forcibly and cleanse it of accretions and superfluities. It was the Zoroastrian priests themselves who supported Abu Muslim and the newly arisen 'Abbasid regime, because both offered them help against heretics."¹⁹

The attraction of Mazdakian ideology for the King was soon replaced by resentment and suspicion, and so Qubad handed over Mazdak and some of his adherents

¹⁴ According to Richard Foltz, "All the surviving textual evidence about Mazdak's movement is from external, antagonistic, mainly later Muslim and Zoroastrian ones but also a number of six-century Christian texts in Greek and Syriac. A Middle Persian *Book of Mazdak* was apparently translated by Ebn Mugaffa' but has not survived" (Foltz R (2013) *Religions of Iran: From Prehistory to the Present*. Oneworld Publications, p. 155).

¹⁵ For instance see the excellent work by Foltz R (2013) *Religions of Iran: From Prehistory to the Present*. Oneworld Publications, Chapter 11 "Undercurrent of Resistance: Mazdak and His Successor" provides thought-provoking discussions on Mazdak and his thoughts. See also J. S. Taraprewala notes, "Mazdakism may be viewed as a symptom which indicated a deep-seated cancer in the body-politic of Sasanian Iran." See Taraprewala IJS. *The Religion of Mazdak*. The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies (CAIS).

¹⁶ According to the poetically embellished tenth-century account in the *Shah-Nameh* of Ferdowsi, "Mazdak original held a government post as keeper of the treasury. Seeing that many of society's ill were due to people being in want, he ordered the granaries opened and their content freely distributed." See Foltz R (2013) *Religions of Iran: From Prehistory to the Present*. Oneworld Publications, p. 155.

¹⁷ Sir Malcolm J (1829) *The history of Persia: from the most early period to the present time* (Vol. 1). Murray, p. 105.

¹⁸ See Zarrinkub AA (2007) *The Arab Conquest of Iran and Its Aftermath*. In: Frye RN (ed) *Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 4., p. 32.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

to his son Khosrow, who buried them upside down in his garden, “with their feet in the air, like a tree.”²⁰

Soon after, in 531 Khosrow succeeded his father and named himself Khosrow I. He then fought and defeated the north rebellion and subjugated the wandering nomads to defend the north frontier of Empire. He also initiated the reform (e.g., taxation) that earned him the title of Anoshirwan (of immortal spirit) and marked him as the last noble king of the Sassanian dynasty.

In 579 AD, Anoshirwan’s grandson, Khosrow II, proclaimed the kingship and launched a lengthy campaign against Byzantine Rome. He subsequently captured the rich Roman provinces of Palestine and Egypt and reasserted Sassanian authority as far as the gate of the capital of Byzantine Rome, Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul). He, therefore, gained the title of “Pervaz” (the victorious), for which the curved splendor grotto, located along an historic Silk Road caravan route named Taq-e-Bostan (arch of the garden) in the heart of the Zagros mountains and depicting his coming to the throne and epitomizing his title, was created. However, history proceeds on its path and Khosrow suffered a humiliating defeat by the hand of the Roman Empire, and was consequently killed by his angry generals in 628 AD.

There is a consensus among historians that the last decades of Sassanian rule can only be described as chaotic. The saga reached its pick during four bewildering years, in which the territory under Sassanian control was in constant turmoil.²¹ Muhammad ibn al-Tabari indicated that there were a total of eight kings and two queens in the period of four years.²² Parvaneh Pourshariati also wrote, “It has been suggested that some of these ruled simultaneously.”²³ Without the doubt, this dire state had an adverse impact on the inhabitants, to which Sir John Malcolm noted that the people attributed the state of affairs of the country to the incompetency of their sovereigns, and as a result “Rulers after ruler was dethroned and murdered, until the elevation of Yazdijird.”²⁴

²⁰ Foltz R (2013) *Religions of Iran: From Prehistory to the Present*. Oneworld Publications, p. 156. According to the story told much later by Ferdowsi, Khosraw “invited Mazdak to view his garden, telling him, *You will find trees there that no-one has ever seen and no-one ever heard of even from the mouth of the ancient sages* ... Mazdak went to the garden and opened the gate, but when he saw the kind of trees that were planted in Khosraw’s garden he gave a loud cry, and fainted. Khosraw had him strung up by the feet from a gallows, then killed him with volleys of arrows.” (Axworthy M (2008) *The History of Iran: Empire of the Mind*. Basic Book p. 60. Emphasis added).

²¹ The period between Khosrow death and crowning the Yazdijird III who began his rule in 632 AD at the age of 21.

²² ibn al-Tabari M (2009) *The Sasanids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids, and Yemen*, vol. V of *The History of Tabari*. State University of New York Press, p. 381–409. Meena Lyer also listed their names: Kobad, Ardashir III, Shahrbaraz, Queen Purandokht [a daughter of the *Khosrow III*], Zuvanshah Gushnabad, Queen Azarmidokht, Farrokhzad, Peroz II, Khurzad Khusrow, and Hormazd V (See Lyer M (2009) *Faith and Philosophy of Zoroastrianism*. Kalpaz Publication, p. 39).

²³ Pourshariati P (2008) *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: The Sasanian–Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran*. IB Tauris, p. 161.

²⁴ Malcolm J (1829) *The history of Persia: from the most early period to the present time* (Vol. 1, 2). Murray, p. 137.

A widely cited al-Buhturi's poem (or *qasideh* in Arabic) epitomized two parallel developments: the crumbling clan of Sasan and the rise of Arab Empire:

Worries were at my stopping place, so I turned
 my sturdy she-camel toward the White Palace of al-Mada'in [Madain in Farsi]
 Consoling myself with good fortune, and sorrowing
 at the traces of the camp of the clan of Sasan.
 Successive afflictions reminded me of them;
 incidents make one remember, make one forget.²⁵

To better understand this period, we look at the time when the last Sassanian king, Yazdijird III, decided to send an envoy to Saad-ben-Wakass, the leader whom the caliph had appointed to the chief command of his forces against Persia. Wakass responded and sent a deputation of three Arab chiefs to Ctesiphon (Tisfun in Farsi, the imperial capital of the Parthian Empire and the Sassanian Empire). What follows illustrates two parallel developments: the beginning of the crumbling dynasty and the emerging Arab Empire. As the Arab delegation was seated in the presence of the sovereign, Yazdijird addressed Shaikh Maghurah, the principle person among them, in the following words:

We [Iranian] have always held you [Arabs] in the lowest estimation. Arabs hitherto have been only known in Persia in two characters: as merchants and as beggars. Your food is green lizard; your drink, salt water; your covering, garments made of coarse hair. But of late you have come in number to Persia; you have eaten of good food, you have drunk of sweet water, and have enjoyed the luxury of soft raiment. You have reported these enjoyments to your brethren, and they are flocking to partake of them. But not satisfied with all the good things you have thus obtained, your desire to impose a new religion on us, who are unwilling to receive it. You appear to me like the fox of our fable, who went into a garden where he found plenty of grapes. The generous gardener would not disturb him. The produce of his abundant vineyard would, he thought, be little diminished by a poor hungry fox enjoying himself; but the animal non content with his good fortune, went and informed all his tribe of the excellence of the grapes, and the good nature of the gardener. The garden was filled with foxes; and its indulgent master was forced to bar the gates, and kill all the intruders to save himself from ruin. However, as I am satisfied you have been compelled to the conduct which you have pursued from absolute want, I will not only pardon you, but load your camels with wheat and dates, that, when you return to your native land, you may feast your countrymen. But be assured, if you are insensible to my generosity, and remain in Persia, you shall not escape my just vengeance.

Considering that the king's speech took place almost 1500 years ago, it still conveys a brilliant mixture of pride and exquisite metaphorical flavor, which is imbedded in Persian linguistic style and structure and is seldom matched elsewhere in the world. But, it also exposed an extraordinary ability to live in total denial, a faculty that Iranians have mastered and possessed. And so, the unyielding envoy replies:

Whatever thou has said concerning the former condition of the Arabs, is true. Their food was green lizards; they buried their infant daughters alive; nay, some of them feasted on dead and drank blood; while others slew their relations, and thought themselves great and valiant, when by such a act they became possessed of more property; they Went clothed with hair garments; knew not good from evil; and made no distinction between that which is lawful and that which is unlawful. Such was our state. But God in his mercy has sent us,

²⁵ Savant SB (2013) *The New Muslim of Post-Conquest Iran: Tradition, Memory and Conversion*. Cambridge University Press, p. 1.

by a holy prophet, a sacred volume which teaches us the true faith. By it we are commanded to war against infidels, and to exchange our poor and miserable condition for wealth and power. We now solemnly desire you to receive our religion. If you consent, not an Arab shall enter Persia without your permission; and our leaders will only demand the established taxes which all believers are bound to pay. If you do not accept our religion, you are required to pay the tribute fixed for infidels [35% was the tax paid for infidel and collected on their property]; should you reject both of these propositions, you must prepare for war.

The Shaikh's less cordial comments were dismissed, and soon after the war renewed and the war-weary Persian population had no choice but to endure, which resulted in the inhabitants of the deserts winning, in 656 AD, to the end of 400 years of Sassanian rule in Persia.

Remarkably, this crucial time has been left in the dark side of Iranian history.²⁶ This is mainly due to the fact that the Arabs invaders destroyed almost all Persian written artifacts, including books, documents, literary works, etc., of the era. This action by itself was the main reason for a *superficial* understanding of history of Persian antiquity that undermined the prominent role of Persia in development of Islamic civilization. The history we know today has been inferred mainly from Arabic sources, namely the *futuh*²⁷ narratives, written by Arab historians who may have interpreted history in their own terms, and therefore, they presented distorted versions of history.²⁸

²⁶ As Parvaneh Pourshariati has observed, "Exasperation has been voiced over how little we know of these rulers. There is a similar unsubstantiated consensus that these ephemeral monarchs were put on the throne by various factions of the nobility, a nobility that was created in the wake of Khusrow I's reforms. Which were the factions who spearheaded the candidacy of these monarchs, however? To date, no systematic effort in elucidating the tangled web of Sasanian history at this crucial juncture has been undertaken. The picture has been deemed too chaotic to be amenable to any logical disentanglement." (See Pourshariati P (2008) *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: The Sasanian-Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran*. IB Tauris, p. 161).

²⁷ According to Noth, the "great majority of the traditions which deal with the time of the first four caliphs is concerned with the first large-scale conquests of the Muslims outside the Arabian peninsula... These are designated over all as *futuh*... *Futuh* thus constituted a—if not the—principal historical rubric under which the early traditionalists considered the first decades of history after the death of [prophet] Muhammad." (Pourshariati P (2008) *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: The Sasanian-Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran*. IB Tauris, p. 162, note, 869).

²⁸ For instance, Mohammad Ali Movahed noted that up until the end of seventh century of Hijri, there were neither mentioned of Omar Khayyam as one of the major a Persian-speaking mathematicians and astronomers the period nor stating his collection of poems *Rubāiyāt* in Arabic sources. (See Movahed MA (1986) *Kayyham in Early of Seventh Century*. In: *Guidance Book (Rahnamai Katab)* no. 3-4. Tehran, p. 204). Similar observation is made elsewhere. For instance, in *The Sufistic Quatrains of Omar Khayyam*, Robert Arnot has noted, "The earliest reference to Omar Khayyam dates from the middle of the seventh century of the Hijra. Mohammad Shahrazuri, author of a little-used history of learned men, bearing the title of *Nazhet-ul-Arwah* devotes to Khayyam the following passage: 'Omar Al-Khayyami was a Nishapuri by birth and extraction. He [may be regarded as] the successor of Abu 'Ali (Avicenna) in the various branches of philosophic learning; but he was a man of reserved character and disliked entertaining (sayyik al-'atan). While he was in Ispahan he perused a certain book seven times and then he knew it by heart. On his return to Nishapur he dictated it [from memory] and on comparing it with the original copy, it was found that the difference between them was but slight. He was averse both to composition and to teaching.'" (see Khayyam O (1903). *The Sufistic Quatrains of Omar Khayyam*. M. Walter Dunne, p. xi).

Parvaneh Pourshariati noted this point, as she has observed, “The Arab bias inherent in this genre of Islamic histories [futih], one of the avowed purposes of which was to highlight the meritocracy of the Arab generals and tribes who undertook the Islamic conquests and established the Muslim polity, dominated the historiography of the early Islamic period and possibly even constructed the Arabist bias that dominates contemporary scholarship. As a result, while modern scholarship has been busy researching which Arab tribe at which juncture and for what purpose chose to participate—or did not actually participate—in which battles under the command of which Arab general, it has practically all but written off any effort in reconstructing some of the same, potentially analogous, variables for this period of Sasanian history from an Iranian perspective.”²⁹ The tendency of *Arabization* of Iranian history is also underlined by Sarah Bowen Savant as a systematic and crevice theme, in which the Arab-ness often espoused as a “missionary sense of chosenness.”³⁰

In a similar vein, I. P. Petrushevskii also has stated, “information about the Zoroastrians is almost non-existent in literature from then on [Eighth century onward]. Ibn al-Balkhi, author of an historical geography in Persian entitled *Fars nama* written in the second decade of the twelfth century, makes no mention of them in Fars.”³¹ Richard Frye also alluded the point that the Arabic translation of the Sassanian’s literature that survived the onslaught of invasion, called *andarz* ‘advice’ literature (also known as mirror for princes), did not escape the Arab’s suppression, and “favorable references to the Zoroastrian religion have been deleted.”³²

In the Introduction of *The Persian Presence in the Islamic World*, Amin Banani underlined another factor that diluted evidence of Persian contribution of how a lot of societies didn’t really know a lot about Persians and when he wrote, “The ebb and flow of underlying ideological currents in Western orientalism had its backlash against the prominence of Persia in the make-up of Islamic civilization. Few European Islamic paid attention to the world of Islam beyond the Arab land and Byzantine dynasty.”³³ Thus, Persia and her presence in the world of Islamic culture

²⁹ Pourshariati P (2008) *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: The Sasanian–Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran*. IB Tauris, p. 164.

³⁰ Savant SB (2013) *The New Muslim of Post-Conquest Iran: Tradition, Memory and Conversion*. Cambridge University Press, p. 50. Savant elaborate on this topic and stated, “Arabic literature is filled with claims representing them as a people of religion, set apart from others... Persians were given a share in the Arabs’ ethnic election through reference to the most antique source of this chosenness, Abraham. As Jarir said: ‘Our father is the father of Isaac; A father guided [by God] and a purified prophet unites us.’ The idea may well have originated in pre-Islamic times, as extensions to Abraham’s genealogy were made by eastern Jews, who were also Isaac’s descendants.” (Ibid., p. 51).

³¹ Petrushevskii IP (1985) *Islam in Iran*. State University of New York Press, p. 29.

³² Frye RN (2000) *The Golden Age of Persia*. Phoenix Press, p. 154.

³³ As Parvaneh Pourshariati noted, “For, at the very least during the past half century, the late antique and early medieval history of Iran has found itself in a paradigmatic quagmire of research, where the parameters of the field have been set by Byzantinists and Arabists. While a host of erudite scholars continue to exert their efforts in disentangling the perplexing questions surrounding the nature and rise of the Arabo-Islamic polity and its dizzying successes, and while a number of erudite works have addressed aspects of Sasanian history, except for general observations and artificial asides, no one has bothered to address the Arab conquest of Iran and its aftermath from a Sasanian perspective.” (see Pourshariati P (2008) *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: The Sasanian–Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran*. IB Tauris, p. 7).

became a double victim of European racialist tendency and the subsequent neglect of Arabist and Islamist orientalism.”³⁴ However, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Western Scholars came to realize this shortfall and bemoan the exclusion of Persia, as the anthropologist Berthold Laufer did in the first paragraph of the introduction of his book *Sino-Iranica*, where he has observed, “If we knew as much about the culture of ancient Iran as about ancient Egypt or Babylonia or even as much as about India or China, our notions of cultural development in Asia would probably be widely different from what they are at the present.”³⁵ He later elaborates and states, “We now know that Iranian . . . were the great mediator between the West and the east, conveying the heritage of Hellenistic ideas to central and eastern Asia and transmitting valuable plants and goods of China to the Mediterranean area. Their activity is of world-historical significance, but without the records of the Chinese we should be unable to grasp the situation thoroughly.”³⁶

Bernard Lewis also points out the prevailing of a similar awareness among Muslim historians in recent years, which traditionally perceived the history only in light of the history of Islam that began with the life of the Prophet and his immediate successors.³⁷ Historically, what was belittled in Islamic teaching and outlined as vain and worldly, i.e., monarchy, was either totally excluded or received limited consideration. For instance “The crown and the throne, surely the most familiar emblems and metaphors of royal power in the Christian world, are of limited significance in Islamic political symbolism and discourse, and even that little can be attributed to extraneous, usually Persian influence.”³⁸ However, as Lewis suggests, by taking into consideration the history of others, e.g., ancient Persia, the Islamic sacred history could have been enriched “through teaching and texts, but also through statuary, through pictures, through stained-glass windows, through music. Apart from certain deviant groups, Islam has none of these.”³⁹

³⁴Hovannisian RG, Sabagh G (eds) (1998). *The Persian presence in the Islamic world* (Vol. 13). Cambridge University Press, p. 3.

³⁵Laufer B (1919) *Sino-Iranica: Chinese Contribution too the History of Civilization in Ancient Iran*. Anthropological series 15(3). Field Museum of Natural History, p. 185.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Lewis B (1988) *The Political language of Islam*. University of Chicago Press, p. 9.

³⁸Ibid., p. 22. The reason, more or less, is explained by Ibn Khaldun, “It is the custom of the Pope with respect to the European Christians to urge them [the Christian subjects] to submit to one ruler and have recourse to him in their disagreements and agreements, in order to avoid the dissolution of the whole thing. His purpose is to have the group feeling that is the strongest among them (concentrated upon one ruler), so that (this ruler) has power over all of them. The ruler is called “Emperor” (*Emperador*), . . . (The Pope) personally places the crown upon the head of (the emperor), in order to let him have the blessing implied (in that ceremony). The emperor, therefore, is called “the crowned one.” (See Khaldun I (1967) *The Muqaddimah*, p. 307).

³⁹Ibid., p. 10. Lewis further explained, “The ban on images has effectively precluded any development of religious representational art, while the Islamic mistrust of music inhibited the development of liturgy. Islam has no hymns, no fugues, no icons. The interior decoration of the mosque consists of texts, mostly from the Quran. In Islamic lands the art of calligraphy, in particular the writing of sacred texts, attained the level of a major votive art, of great depth and subtlety. In a profound sense, the Quranic and other texts that adorn the walls and pillars of Muslim mosques are the hymns and fugues and icons of Islam.” Ibid.

The propensity to rewrite history is one of the main attributes of imperial conquerors, as we can readily observe today in Middle East and North Africa by the slaughtering of innocent people that is quite vulgarly portrayed and explained as tribal conflicts “rooted in their history.” While one can only speculate about the Arab historians’ motives behind erasing a significant part of history, it is plausible that the Arab refashioning of history was the typical conduct of an empire that intended to establish an entirely new system of governance by erasing the past and delegitimizing its pre-history.⁴⁰ Therefore, it was not Islam teaching that “made them do it” but rather the innate tendency of the conqueror to wipe out the past to legitimize its present. However, such tendency should not be taken as validation of history.

Moreover, the tragedy lies in the fact that there has never been an organized and serious effort on the part of contemporary Iranians to redeem their history of this period from such deficit and search for possible historical records, i.e., through archaeological excavations or careful examination of various non-Arab sources, in order to reconstruct the Sassanian history from an Iranian perspective.⁴¹ What further contributes to exacerbating this situation is rampant extraction (looting) and in some cases outright sales of our precise cultural heritage and precise texts to the extent that the editorial of *Asnayi Ba Katab (acquaintance with book)*, a well-known Iranian magazine in 1970s, warned that “the two third of all hand-written historical and literarily books were taken outside Iran.”⁴² In the same publication, another article reiterated Dr. Hossein Nasr’s claim, “[I]n the last ten years [1964–1974], close to 10,000 of our most precise books have gone to Harvard University. These books were part of our national cultural heritage, which has been lost forever, regardless if they were sold or taken.”⁴³ These trends, and the fact that they invoked no official response or even popular outrage, illustrate nothing more

⁴⁰ Such endeavor requires a total replacement of the past ideal with the new one and since Persian political culture of the time was perceived an ideal, its history must be seized. On this point Hamid Dabashi stated, “Although increasingly demoralized and delegitimized in modern history, monarchy has been the institutional expression of Iranian political culture. Its pre-Islamic roots extend far beyond the Iranian plateau. As the shadow of God on earth, the Shah exercised universal authority. As the terrestrial expression of the Zoroastrian cosmological order, the kingdom, headed by one king, was providentially preordained.” (See Dabashi H (1993). *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*. Transaction Publishers, p. 8).

⁴¹ For review of a gloomy history of Archaeology in Iran, its monopolization by Westerners and widespread indifference among Iranians, see Silberman NA (2012) *The Oxford Companion to Archaeology*. Oxford University Press, p. 115–125. The reader should also note that the first Iranian sovereign who made an effort to patron archaeology in Modern Iran was the Qajar king, Naser al-Din Shah. He also created the Ministry of Science (*Vezerat-e ‘Olum*) as far back as the summer of 1866 (see Devos B, Werner C (2013) *Culture and Cultural Politics Under Reza Shah: The Pahlavi State, New Bourgeoisie and the Creation of a Modern Society in Iran* (Vol. 18). Routledge, p. 124); for an informative discussion on Archaeology in Iran see also Chapter 6, “Archaeology and The Iranian National Museum”).

The National Museum was created by Reza Shah (between 1936–1937) and modeled on the pre-Islamic Persian palace at ancient Ctesiphon (six century BCE, now in Iraq).

⁴² *Ashnaie Ba katab 1353* (1974) Selection from the news. Tear mahe, p. 49.

⁴³ *Us and Publication*, *Ibid.*, p. 53. It should be noted that Dr. Nasr graduated from Harvard University in 1956.

than a palpable (blatant) oblivion among modern age Iranians, who have not sought nor cared to understand and cherish the national heritage and have rather adapted and followed already-made interpretations of their own history by others.⁴⁴ This absence should be considered an ample indication of modern age Iranians' indifference toward their historical national identity.⁴⁵

As result of this indifference, we (Iranians) have surrounded ourselves with a thick-walled cocoon, which is detached from reality and has no connection to the real world, instead crafting a world of invented fairy tales. The outcome of isolating ourselves from reality is nothing more than drying up inside. This contemporary cultural trait is particularly disturbing when one considers the importance of History, which is the major element in creating or pollinating one's identity. Mohammad Ismail Rezvani brilliantly underlines the importance of history as "the deed of ownership" that secures the survival and independence of a nation.⁴⁶ The delight one feels for one's heritage is a path to realization of one's identity. However, if such affection is diverted to inane narratives, the path is paved to attach to whatever comes in one's way, which in no doubt results in bewilderment and puts one at risk of tumbling in the rabbit hole with no end in sight.

Today, in the face of historical reality, we must adhere to Charles Taylor's formula, according to which "man is a self-interpreting animal."⁴⁷ These days, we are left with no choice but to know ourselves and realize who we really are, which can only be reached by understanding the past that revels in our virtues as well as our faults. Reiterating Paul Ricoeur, Laleh Shahideh hinted at a similar notion when she wrote,

⁴⁴One can also point to the dire conditions of various historical sites, e.g., Pasargadae, Persepolis, Shushtar Hydraulic System, and Tchogha Zanbil, which are on verge of complete ruin, and no one seem to mind.

⁴⁵This observation can be confirmed by simply looking at countless history textbooks of various periods of the last hundred years, in which the history is presented in fragmented and fabricated segments that in most part resemble fictional narratives formed according to the flavor of the day. In a similar vein, Farsin Vejdani underlined parallel notion as he observed "By the mid-nineteenth century, the Qajar king Nasir al-Din Shah employed a growing number of historians at his court. Having been established only in the closing years of the eighth century, the Qajar dynasty felt the need to display its legitimacy through a number of cultural activities, not the least of which was history Much like poets who wrote panegyrics for the sovereign, historians at the court glorified the reigning dynasty in exchange for an official title, a steady stipend, and continuing imperial largesse." (Vejdani F (2014) *Making History of Iran: Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture*, Stanford University Press, p. 1). However, I extend the argument to the wider domain and argue that falsification of history in the culture that is proud of its heritage can only occur as a direct result of the consent of the public. The reason simply can be illustrated by a rational of demand and supply mechanism in a sense that falsification would be seized if it is not consumed. Interestingly, David C. Reisman has noted the similarity between falsification and plagiarism, in that both pre-supposed occurrence or existence of an actual history and work, meddling with the history or stealing the work "outright present little distinction." (See Reisman DC (2004) *The Pseudo-Avicennan Corpus, I: Methodological Considerations*. In: McGinnis J (2004) *Interpreting Avicenna: Science And Philosophy In Medieval Islam-Proceedings Of The Second Conference Of The Avicenna Study Group*. Brill Academic Publisher, p. 7).

⁴⁶Rezvani MA (1969) *Affect and Benefit of Study History*. The First Conference of History in Iran, Ministry of Culture and Art, Tehran, p. 67.

⁴⁷Taylor C (1985). *Human agency and language*. Cambridge University Press, p. 47, 72.

“It is our lack of understanding of self which leads to our lack of action, participation, and powerfulness.”⁴⁸ Indeed, we need to start dealing with our self-defeating sense of inadequacy and look at ourselves through our own deeds rather than deeds of others and stop living in a world that is limited either to amused pride or self-pity.

One of the important lessons from the history that as much as Arab civilization and Islam has influenced the Persians, the opposite effect also happened in which one can argue that Persian resistance movement increased the prominence of Persia in the make-up of Islamic Civilization as a whole.

Prior to the Arab invasion, the Persian Empires bear several instinctive and highly progressive, even by today’s standard, attributes. First, Persians ruled their vast realm by embracing multiculturalism. They controlled their enormous domain by allowing all of their various subjects to live their own lives according to their own traditions and mores, under the control of their own leaders as long as they paid their taxes and submitted to the crown mandate and demand. Unlike Assyrians who largely uprooted the whole population under their control in order to divide and rule, the Persian main strategy was conciliatory towards their subject population as the Cyrus Cylinder reads; *a declaration that Cyrus has enabled the people to live in peace and has increased the offerings made to the gods.*⁴⁹ Tamim Ansary alluded to these qualities of Persian kings and observed that the Persian sovereigns “pursued a multicultural, many-people-under-one-big-tent strategy.”⁵⁰

Second, the Persians were among visionaries of their time in the sense that they controlled their vast kingdom through communication. They built immense network roads with designated hostels for travelers; they issued a single currency to facilitate communication in business and they promulgated a coherent set of tax laws; and they created the first mail service delivering messages, an ancient version of pony express across their realm.⁵¹

⁴⁸Shahideh L (2004) *The Power of Iranian Narrative: A Thousand Years of Healing*. University Press of America, p. 56.

⁴⁹The Cylinder is made in the name of Persia’s Achaemenid king Cyrus (Persian, “Kurush”; Babylonian and Susian, “Kurash”; Masoretic, “Koresh”; Greek, Kappa) the Great and was discovered by The Assyro-British archaeologist Hormuzd Rassam in March 1879 during a lengthy program of excavations in Mesopotamia sponsored by the British Museum. A 2500-year-old cuneiform document is displayed in a glass case at the United Nations in New York is revered as an “ancient declaration of human rights.” However, Hanspeter Schaudig, an Assyriologist at the University of Heidelberg in the southwestern Germany, says that he would be hard-pressed to see the ancient king as a pioneer when it comes to equality and human dignity, given the allegation that the ruler was engaged for a 30-year war during which many of his enemies were tortured. Meanwhile, another German scholar Wiesehöfer calls Cyrus deeds “military strokes of genius,” in which Cyrus advanced with his armies to India and to the Egyptian border. He is considered the creator of a new kind of country. At the height of his power, he was the ruler of a magnificent empire bursting with prosperity. On the both accounts see Schulz M (2008) *Falling for Ancient Propaganda: UN Treasure Honors Persian Despot*. Spiegel Online International, July 15, 2008.

⁵⁰Ansary T (2009) *Destiny Disrupted: A history of the world through Islamic eyes*. PublicAffairs, p. 8.

⁵¹For a description of the first postal system in ancient Persia see Fuller WE (1972) *The American Mail: Enlarger of the Common Life*. University of Chicago Press. See also Melius L (1917) *The American Postal Service: History of the Postal Service from the Earliest Times*, National Capital Press Incorporated, Chapter one.

Third, in contrast to Egyptian pantheon mystical Gods like *Maahes* with a lion head or Greek Gods like the *Drakaina* female creature with dragon features or Roman paganism, Persians, to a great extent, limited their religious universe to Zoroastrianism, whose origin goes back about a thousand years, or perhaps more, before Christ. The founder of Zoroastrianism, Zoroaster, was neither a messenger of God nor a divine ideal, but rather a philosopher and seeker who perceived life as a conflict between the forces of darkness and the forces the light—a universe split between good and evil at the moment of creation and a world locked in struggle ever after. Therefore, there is no harm in interpreting the symbols of Zoroastrian faith and calling them metaphors instead of facts. You are free to make choices, which constitute your destiny. You can choose good and promote the forces of light or chose evil and strengthen the forces of darkness. Persians of the time rejected religious eminenes and icons, since they sought nothing more than a purity of imagination.

Finally, Persian kings also made sure their mandates were disseminated throughout their territories. For instance, Darius the Great, “who brought the Persian Empire to one of its several peaks, had his life story carved into a rock at a place called Behistun. He had it inscribed in three languages: Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian, 15,000 characters devoted to Darius’s deeds and conquests, detailing the rebels who had tried and failed to topple him and the punishments he had meted out to them.”⁵²

In retrospect, it is extremely difficult to explain the extraordinary success of the Arab invasion of Persia, which still today baffles and astonishes contemporary scholars and continues to evoke lively debates. However, an explanation that seems more realistic and often passes historical scrutiny from early periods of human civilization to the present is made by Theodor Noldeke in 1908, who stated, “The Roman and Persian armies included irregular troops of various kinds, but they certainly consist largely of disciplined soldiers under experienced officers. The Persians brought elephants into the field, as well as their dreaded mounted cuirassiers.⁵³ Among Arabs there was no purely military order of battle; they fought in order to of their clans and tribes. This, though it probably insured a strong feeling of comradeship, was by no

⁵² Ansary T (2009) *Destiny Disrupted: A history of the world through Islamic eyes*. PublicAffairs, p. 8.

⁵³ On related issue, and discussing the Aristotle’s argument of a significance to frighten the enemy in was, Ibn Kahldon offers his insight and states, “In the Book on Politics ascribed to Aristotle, Aristotle mentioned that its real significance is to frighten the enemy in war. Frightful sounds do have the psychological effect of causing terror. Indeed, as everyone knows from his own (experience), this is an emotional element that plays a role on battlefields. The explanation given by Aristotle—if it was he who gave it—is correct in some respects. But the truth is that listening to music and sounds no doubt causes pleasure and emotion in the soul. The spiritual temper of man is thereby affected by a kind of drunkenness, which causes him to make light of difficulties and to be willing to die in the very condition in which he finds himself. This (state of affairs) exists even in dumb animals. Camels are influenced by the driver’s call, and horses are influenced by whistling and shouting, as everyone knows. The effect is greater when the sounds are harmonious ones, as in the instance of music. It is known what happens to people who listen to music. The non-Arabs, therefore, take musical instruments, drums or trumpets, onto the battlefield with them. Singers with instruments surround the cavalcade of the ruler and sing. Thus, they move the souls of brave men emotionally and cause them to be willing to die.” (See Khaldun I (1967) *The muqaddimah*. In: Franz Rosenthal (trans), p. 330).

means an adequate equivalent for regular military units . . . the main factor [of Arab strength] was their powerful feeling of the Muslim, the ever increasing enthusiasm for the faith in those who had at first been indifferent, and the firm conviction that the warriors for the holy cause, though death in the field would prevent them from taking a share in the spoils of victory on earth, would yet partake of the most delightful of terrestrial joys in heaven. Thus the masterless Arabs, who, for all their turn for boasting, had but little stomach for heroic deeds, were transformed into the irresistible warriors of Allah."⁵⁴

Nevertheless, it is certain that the Persian army was totally overwhelmed by the much smaller and relatively ill-equipped Arab invaders during the battle of Qadisiyya in 636, at which point the Persians relinquished control over Mesopotamia (Iraq) for good.⁵⁵ Subsequently, the Arabs succeeded in breaking and subjugating one of the most powerful empires of the day, which at the time, seized large provinces from its Byzantine adversary (Eastern Roman Empire).

The Arabs' accomplishments are not limited to their conquest of Iran and in fact within six years of the Prophet's passing, all Syria (and Mesopotamia) were tributaries of Medina, and in four years more Egypt was added to the New Arab Empire.⁵⁶ These astonishing victories and still wider conquests that expanded the Empire's frontiers into Morocco, Spain, and France, to the gates of Constantinople and far across Central Asia up to the Indus river in less than a century, confirmed the quality of the Arabs as a force to be reckoned with, unmatched by all other great neighboring dynasties. This attribute, on the one hand, was typified by the Arab Muslims' unyielding stance toward everything that lay in their path, and more importantly, by their

⁵⁴Noldeke T (1908) Introductory Essay: The Scope and Influence of Arabic History. In: Williams HS (ed) Parthians, Sassanids, and Arabs, The Crusades and The Papacy, Vol. VIII. Hooper & Jackson, p. 14.

⁵⁵For a less academic analysis of the battle see: <http://dglnotes.com/notes/qadisiyyah.htm>.

⁵⁶By most conventional accounts, which are over-simplification, the Arab conquest of Persia was aided by both external and internal factors. The external element is mainly related to the collective conscious of the Arab, which was consolidated in the fate through prophecy of the prophet Mohammad. The internal elements, however, were many, most significant among them are: long neighboring wars exhausted the country in addition to sociopolitical bankruptcy of the Sassanians; the dishearten native populations who had little to lose by cooperating with the conquering power; Persian Feudal lords' lack of support for the last Sassanian King, Yazdigird, to which Petrushevskii wrote, "the Shahinshah [the King] repaired to Khurasan (650). His situation was now tragic, for after the battle of Nahawand he had neither troops nor power. He passed from one district to the next with a small band and his retinue, hoping for the support of the vassal potentates and princes of whom there were so many in east Iran. But these saw no sense in bolstering up a King of Kings shorn of authority; each one made haste to be rid of him, and passed him on to the next, obtaining a receipt that he had handed him over alive and unharmed and was therefore without further responsibility. The separatist behavior of these feudal lords, it will be remembered, was one reason why Iran lost its independence." (See Petrushevskii IP (1985) Islam in Iran. State University of New York Press, pp. 25–26); and finally unfamiliarity of Persians with Arabs neighbor, which is inaccurate since Sassanian King, Shapur I, had already experienced a defeat in Hand of Arab at Palmyra, which surprisingly overlooked by significant analysis of Iranian History at the time (see Shahid I (1984) Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century. Dumbarton Oaks, p. 472).

capacity to act as a conquering force. According to Ibn Khaldun, “The Arabs . . . enslaved the people of the former dynasties [Persia and Byzantine] and employed them in their occupations and their household needs. From among them, they selected skilled masters of the various (crafts), and were in turn taught by them to handle, master, and develop them for themselves.”⁵⁷ On the other hand, their faith compelled them to embrace a different path, to which H. A. R. Gibb wrote, “its [Islam] record of broad tolerance of diversity within its own community, refusal to persecute those other communities, and the dignity with which it has endured moments of eclipse.”⁵⁸ From this comes a perception of *Islam as a moral force* that promotes installation of a system of collective societal representation, a coherent doctrine that commands parity. Islam, as such, presented a significant challenge to the Zoroastrianism on its own turf, to which Zoroastrian failed to counter and Persia became Islamitized.

The transformation of Persia from a Zoroastrian nation to one of Islam, a transformation in which Persians themselves played a major part, is a unique development in the sense that never before had an early resistance of a population utterly altered into a surrendering through adoption of new religion on the one side and transforming it based on their values and culture (Shr’a Islam) on the other side. In a relatively short span, Persians abandoned the *dualistic* Zoroastrian features in favor of a monotheistic Islam faith and offered their lore and learning, their political experiences, and their cultural traditions. The Persian metamorphosis was not temporary, but rather an inner morphosis with distinctive complexities of its own that altered eclectic Islamic civilization and culture, “one of whose fundamental features is the Iranian element.”⁵⁹ Ehsan Yarsharter, a prominent Iranian historian, confirmed this observation as he underlined Persia as one of the three main pillars of the Islamic civilization.⁶⁰ According to Richard Frye, Ibn Khaldun also reaffirmed this observation when he claimed, “It is remarkable fact that, with few exception, most Muslim scholars both in the religious and intellectual science have been non-Arabs [Persian]. The founders of grammar . . . were [all] of Persian descent . . . Most of the *hadith*⁶¹ scholars, who preserved tradition of the Prophets for the Muslims also were Persian . . . all the great jurists were Persian . . . the same applies to speculative theologians and to most of the Qur’an commentators. Only Persians engaged in the task of preserving knowledge and writing systematic scholarly works. Thus, the truth of the statement of the Prophet becomes apparent, “*If learning were suspended at the highest parts of heaven the Persian would attain it.*”⁶²

⁵⁷ Khaldun I (1967) *The Muqaddimah*. Trans. Franz Rosenthal, p. 229.

⁵⁸ Gibb HAR (1970) *Mohammedanism*. Oxford University Press, p. 3.

⁵⁹ Bausani A (1971) *The Persians: from the earliest days to twentieth century*. Elek Books Limited, p. 71.

⁶⁰ Yarsharter E (1998) *The Persian presence in the Islamic world*. In: Hovannisian RG, Sabagh G (eds) *The Persian Presence in the Islamic World*. Cambridge University Press, p. 4.

⁶¹ A collection of traditions containing sayings of the prophet Muhammad that, with accounts of his daily practice known as the Sunna, which constitute the major source of guidance for Muslims apart from the Koran.

⁶² Frye RN (2000) *The Golden Age of Persia*. Phoenix Press, p. 150. Emphasis added.

This is not a surprising argument, especially when one considers that it was only *after* Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Egypt had been conquered and *after* Hellenistic influence had taken effect (through translations) that Islam rose as an empire that was to endure for centuries. In this context, I reiterate Bausani's insight and argument that "it is quite unreal to equate the Arabs with Islam and the Iranian with non-Islam."⁶³

This thesis, however, does not imply that the Arab conquest of Persia led to a total refurbishing of the Persian political structure in late antiquity. This is mainly due to the fact that, "the Parthians had not disappeared with the advent of the Sasanians in the third century, neither did they leave the scene after the Arab conquest of Iran in the middle of the seventh century, their polities and cultural traditions long outliving the demise of the Sasanian dynasty."⁶⁴ Indeed, and despite many attempts on part of the Arabs to lure Persians into their political campaign, Persians neither ascribed to an outright rejection of Royal authority, nor embraced the group feeling that united Arab tribes. As Sarah Savant has highlighted, "As their [Arab] kinsfolk, Persians were given a share in the Arabs' ethnic election through reference to the most antique source of this chosenness, Abraham. As Jar'ir said: 'Our father is the father of Isaac; A father guided [by God] and a purified prophet unites us.'" The idea may well have originated in pre-Islamic times, as extensions to Abraham's genealogy were made by eastern Jews, who were also Isaac's descendants."⁶⁵

The Persian's refusal to submit to Arabs' political ideals lasted for centuries. For one thing, the Arabs were met with strong resistance in the mountainous regions of Tabaristan, Daylam, and Gilan on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea. In addition, "Balkh, Ghur, Zabulistan and Kabul remained independent . . . These areas resisted stubbornly and Daylam, Ghur and Kabul never fell to the Arabs."⁶⁶

However, it should be noted that significant parts of the population of these regions or cities, particularly in the mountainous area, consisted of tribes. The most notable among them were the ancient Cadussis, who had obstinately refused to be subjects of any central power, be it Medes, Achaemenids, the Macedonians, Arab Muslims, or Dailamities. In this light, we must not misinterpret uncoordinated tribal resistances in seventh century AD Persia with a nineteenth century notion of

⁶³ Bausani A (1971) *The Persians: from the earliest days to twentieth century*. Elek Books Limited, p. 71.

⁶⁴ Pourshariati P (2008) *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: The Sasanian-Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran*. IB Tauris, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Savant SB (2013) *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran: Tradition, Memory, and Conversion*. Cambridge University Press, p. 51. She continues by stating "In any event, by 'Abbasid times, the view was credible to Arabs because they knew it to have been voiced by earlier Arabs, who claimed kinship with Persians as a point of pride. The Arab tribal context for such claims is alluded to by al-Mas'u'd'i and other traditionists. Al-Mas'u'd'i explains to his readers that Jar'ir was directing his poem against Qah.t'an, the name given to the southern Arabian tribal alliance. Jar'ir, as a "northern" Arab, thus boasted of his noble kinsmen against a southerner." (Ibid).

⁶⁶ Petrushevskii IP (1985) *Islam in Iran*. State University of New York Press, p. 26.

nationalism as well as patriotism. Moreover, and regarding the overall Persian political structure and developments at the time, which again, should not be considered or used as narratives of national solidarity, one can also point to various movements that were religious-based but opposed to Arab occupation.⁶⁷ However, the one that stands out was the Abu Muslim led revolt, also known as the Iran-based Abbasid revolution, which brought down the Arab State of Umayyads.⁶⁸

Nasr b. Sayyar, an Arab general and the last Umayyad governor of Khurasan (738–748), wrote telling verses that described the Persian/Arab conflict at the time, in which he urges his Arab kin to join his army and fight against Abu Muslim, as follows:

Go tell both the Rabi'ha in Marw and the Yamanis;
 Arouse yourselves, before it will be no avail;
 What are you thinking of, to enkindle the feud between you
 As if men of wit were absent from your counsels?
 You neglect an enemy who has surrounded you,
 A rabble of no religion or consequences,
 Not Arabs like those among men you would you,
 Nor yet true mawlas, if their origins be reckoned;
 Who would you ask about the root of their religion?
 Truly, their religion is that Arab should perish
 A sect professing doctrines you never hear of
 From the Prophet, nor brought by the Scriptures.⁶⁹

According to Clifford Edmund Bosworth, “we can discern that [in the ninth century] there was a marked increase in an important sector of Arabic prose literature, that of *adab* (Politeness, decorum), and it is not too much to say that it was primarily the influence of Persia that molded this very characteristic and influential genre of Arabic literature thereby providing a channel of entry for many of the older Persian political and ethical beliefs into Islamic civilization as a whole.”⁷⁰ Elsewhere, Bosworth claimed, “A Persian secretary of al-Mamun is quoted to have said to the caliph on the nature of *adab*: ‘The arts of refined culture are ten: three are Shahrajani, three are Anushirvani, three are Arabic and one exceeds them all. The Shahrajani [belonging to Persian nobility] arts are lute-playing, chess, and polo; the Anushirvani

⁶⁷ Such as: *shu'ubiyya*—the title refers to a verse from the forty-ninth Sura of the holy Quran, in which God demands mutual respect between different peoples or *shu'ub*, *Sarbadar*—the Sarbadarids established a small Shi'i state which existed from 1337 to 1386; *khurramiyyah*—in Persian *Khorrām-Dīnān*, meaning “those of the Joyful Religion,” they were adherents of a religions and political sect combining Shi'i and Zoroastrian elements.

⁶⁸ According to Encyclopedia of Islam, Umayyads were considered “The quasi-hereditary dynasty that followed the death of 'Alī B. Abī TA lib in 41-AH/661-AD [the First Imam of Shi'it]. They ruled until their overthrow by the Abbasids in 132 AH/750 AD, and longer in the Iberian Peninsula. Some later histories have condemned them for secularism and failure to implement fully the rule of Islam, yet many later Islamic institutions saw their first development under 'Umayyad rule.” (Newby GD (2002) A Concise Encyclopedia of Islam. Oneworld Publication, p. 207).

⁶⁹ Williams JA (1990) The History of al-Tabari Vol. 27: The 'Abbasid Revolution (743–750 A.D./126-132 A.H). SUNY Press, p. 77, footnote 206.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 80.

ones are medicine, mathematics and equestrian skill; the Arabic ones are poetry, genealogy, and historical knowledge; but the one which exceeds them all in value is the retelling of stories and evening conversation which people indulge in at their convivial gathering.”⁷¹

And yet, one point is often overlooked in discussions of history between Persians and Arabs, and that is the striking cultural incompatibilities between them, which quite naturally had either hindered successful adoptions of some Persians’ qualities or created various anomalies among the Arabs and exposed the limits of their absorptive capacity. For instance, Ibn Kaldun has observed, “The camphor they found in the treasuries of the Persian king was used by them as salt in their dough.”⁷² Or when one prominent Arab courtier by the name al-Hajjaj “gave a banquet on the occasion of the circumcision of one of his sons. He had one of the Persian landowners brought to him and asked him about the banquets the Persians had given (in former times). He asked him to tell him about the most lavish banquet he had ever attended. The reply was: ‘Yes, my Lord, I attended the banquet of one of the provincial governors (*marzbans*) of the Persian king, given for the inhabitants of Firs. He used golden plates on tables of silver, four (plates) to each (table). Each (table) was carried by four maid servants, and four persons were seated at each. After they had eaten, the four of them left with the table, the plates on it, and the maidservants.’ (When he heard that.) al-Hajjaj merely said, ‘Boy! Have some camels slaughtered and give the people to eat.’ He realized that he could not afford such sumptuousness as had once actually existed.”⁷³

This limitation is also evidenced in the Arabs’ adoption of Persian establishment despite the fact that “only in Iran did they [Arabs] find the complete blueprint of an imperial establishment, and so no matter how much the Abbasid caliphs might harken back to the first four caliphs, the new caliphate was an empire with imperial needs and manifestations. The Sasanian bureaucracy was taken by the Arabs in *toto*, certainly modified, but basically a continuation of the pre-Islamic past.”⁷⁴

However, the Persian imperial way of life has presented profound contradictions to Arab rulers who insisted on mimicking deeds of the past Persian sovereigns. This contradiction is evidenced by one interpretation into the Prophet’s teaching. Again, as Ibn Khaldun stated when the prophet “censures royal authority, he does not censure it for gaining superiority through truth, for forcing the great mass to accept the faith, nor for looking after the (public) interests. He censures royal authority for achieving superiority through worthless means and for employing human beings for indulgence in (selfish) purposes and desires, as we have stated. If royal authority would sincerely exercise its superiority over men for the sake of God and so as

⁷¹ Bosworth CE (2012) The Persian impact on Arabic literature. In: Beeston AFL, Johnstone TM, Serjeant RB, Smith GR (eds) *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*. Cambridge University Press, p. 495.

⁷² Khaldun I (1967) *The Muqaddimah*. Trans. Franz Rosenthal, p. 229.

⁷³ Khaldun I (1967) *The Muqaddimah*. Trans. Franz Rosenthal, p. 230.

⁷⁴ Frye RN (2000) *The Golden Age of Persia*. Phoenix Press, p. 151.

to cause those men to worship God and to wage war against His enemies, there would not be anything reprehensible in it. Solomon said: ‘O my Lord ... give me royal authority, such as will not fit anyone after me.’ He was sure of himself. (He knew) that, as prophet and king, he would have nothing to do with anything worthless.”⁷⁵ In a similar vein, a statement attributed to the first Caliph Abu Bakr asserts, “God has left people to manage their own affairs so that they will choose a leader who will serve their interests.”⁷⁶ In short, God is the only sovereign and the ultimate source of legitimate law in Islam, and hence no king can rule the Muslim community. Yet, the essence of the caliph’s sources of legitimacy and parameters of his power remained obscured.

On the issue of Islamization of Iran, there is no doubt that converted Persian Muslims were not merely turned into Muslims in Persia, but rather Persian Muslims who retained their own identity. In another way, Persian Muslims were not Muslims who resided in Persia but Persians who converted to Islam and evaded adopting the imposed Arab way of life.⁷⁷ Perhaps this is the reason why the Shiite faith is considered to be a religious of opposition. This characterization of Persian by itself is the most significant indication of a profound sense of defiance among Persians of the time. The unprecedented resilience of Persians is noted and interpreted by Henry Corbin, the well-known French Heideggerian scholar of Islam,⁷⁸ to the extent that he characterized Shiism as Iranian Islam when he stated, “To speak of Iranian Islam

⁷⁵ Khaldun I (1967) *The Muqaddimah*. Trans. Franz Rosenthal, p. 272. Kaldun later elaborate on this point as he wrote, “When ‘Umar b. al-Khattib went to Syria and was met by Mu’awiyah in full royal splendor as exhibited both in the number (of Mu’awiyah’s retinue) and his equipment, he disapproved of it and said: ‘Are these royal Persian manners(kisrawiyah), O Mu’awiyah?’ Mu’awiyah replied: ‘O Commander of the Faithful, I am in a border region facing the enemy. It is necessary for us to vie with (the enemy) in military equipment.’ Umar was silent and did not consider Mu’awiyah to be wrong. He had used an argument that was in agreement with the intentions of the truth and of Islam. If the intention (implied in ‘Umar’s remark) had been to eradicate royal authority as such, ‘Umar would not have been silenced by the answer with which Mu’awiyah (excused) his assumption of royal Persian manners. He would have insisted that Mu’awiyah give them up altogether. ‘Umar meant by “royal Persian manners” the attitude of the Persian rulers, which consisted in doing worthless things, constantly practicing oppression, and neglecting God. Mu’awiyah replied that he was not interested in royal Persian manners as such, or in the worthlessness connected with them, but his intention was to serve God. Therefore, (‘Umar) was silent.” Ibid.

⁷⁶ See Abd Allah b. Muslim b. Qutayba (1967). *al-Imama wa al-Siyasa*. Zini Taha (Cairo: Mu’assasat al-Halabi), p. 21. This book is traditionally known as *Ta’rikh al-Khulafa’*. See also About El Fadl K (2004) *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy*. Princeton University Press, p. 10.

⁷⁷ There are wealth of literature and scholarly works on this subject alone. For instance, see Frye RN (2008) *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 4. *The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*. Cambridge University Press, Vol. 4. pp. 33–36.

⁷⁸ On this note, Ali Mirsepassi claimed, “It is within the context of the Corbin-Iran link that we may fully appreciate the meaning and contribution of the three most significant Iranian intellectuals of the 1960s and 1970s, Ahmad Fardid, Jalal Al-e Ahmad, and Ali Shari’ati, and their role in intellectually shaping the Islamic Revolution of 1979.” (See Mirsepassi A (2010) *Political Islam, Iran, and the Enlightenment: Philosophies of Hope and Despair*. Cambridge University Press, p. 1).

is in fact to speak of Shiite Islam.”⁷⁹ Elsewhere, Corbin also observed, “Down to our time his [Mulla Sadra]⁸⁰ thought has left a personal stamp on all Iranian philosophy or, more broadly speaking, on Shiite consciousness at the level of its philosophical expression.”⁸¹ In short, Corbin has claimed that ancient Persians actually revived Islam and emphasized the Persian role in the development of Islamic thought.

In addition, what distinguishes Corbin’s understanding of Islam and Iran from any other contemporary Orientalists is related to his contention that the evolution of Islamic philosophy did not die with the twelfth century Northwest African Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd. Rather, it continued to flourish in greater Iran and Central Asia where philosophers and metaphysicians formed an unbroken chain of theosophy that united Zoroastrian, Neo-Platonic, and Islamic Influences.⁸² In this content, it is worth noting that in contrast to Edward Said’s notion of the “Oriental encounter” with the “East,” Corbin and his Iranian colleagues, e.g., Hossein Nasr, contributed to an emergent discourse of *reverse orientalism*,⁸³ in which the “West” served as the imperial, cultural, and profane “others” to a petrified and traditional Iran.

Moreover, the birthplace of the early Shiite revolts movements was Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) which was part of the Sassanian Empire and, in fact, the city of Ctesiphon in Iraq was the imperial capital of the Parthian and the Sassanian Empire. In addition, the initial Shiite revolts at the time (which were ideologically premature in a sense) lacked a grand theological principle relative to the Sunni, and hence cannot really be viewed as religious revolts, but rather as revolts against the subjection of people to imposed primacy of the Arab conquerors. For instance, during the Umayyad Caliphate (ruled from 661 to 750), Persians were harshly treated. This was also the time in which anti-Arabs sentiments were mounting, to which Persians have contributed the internal conflict among the Arabs, and among Muslims in general. Abu Al-Husain Zarrinkub noted the role Persians played in these affairs, as he wrote, “Generally, in order to show their hatred for the Umayyad regime the Iranians supported the Shi’a, which had the best organized platform against the Umayyads,

⁷⁹ Corbin H (1998) *The Voyage and the Messenger: Iran and Philosophy*. North Atlantic Books, p. 93.

⁸⁰ Mulla Sadra, or Sadr al-Din Muhammad Shirazi, was a prominent Iranian Islamic Philosopher who was born in 1571–1572.

⁸¹ Corbin H (2014) *History of Islamic Philosophy*. Routledge, p. 342.

⁸² See Corbin H (1991) *EN ISLAM IRANIEN (Tome 1): ASPECTS SPIRITUELS ET PHILOSOPHIQUES*. Gallimard. For a brief analysis of the book in English see <http://www.iraniconline.org/articles/en-islam-iranien>.

⁸³ To the best of my knowledge, the term “reverse orientalism” was introduced by al-Azm S (1981) *Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse*. *Khamsin* 8: 5–26. Available at: <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article20360>. Mehrzad Boroujerdi also defines the term as: “A discourse used by oriental intellectuals and political elites to lay claim to, recaptured, and finally inappropriate their ‘true’ and ‘authentic’ identity. This self-appropriation is almost invariably presented as a counter-knowledge to Europe narrative . . . First and foremost, orientalism in reverse uncritically embraced orientalism’s assumption of a fundamental ontological difference separating the natures, people, and cultural of the Orient and the Occident.” (See Boroujerdi M (1996) *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism*. Syracuse University Press, pp. 11–12.)

besides being in accord with the Iranians' own sentiments."⁸⁴ Finally, "religious enthusiasm of the early period frequently embodied itself in a person, usually the *imam* in the case of Shi'ites, whom the people who followed this line of thought at time even deified."⁸⁵

However, the Arabs could not bring far-flung corners of the Sassanid Empire under their control and uncoordinated *resistance* to the occupation persisted for a long time after the fall of the Sassanians. Nevertheless, the occupation and forced integration of Persia into the Caliphate form of government bearded consequences for the occupier. For one thing, various regional resistance movements formed against the occupation of the country, the most notable among them being the *Shu'ubiyya* movement in the ninth and tenth centuries. Additionally, the Sarbadar centuries began as a response to the growing attempt to Arabize the country, as conquerors continued to insist that they enjoyed a privileged racial status over Iranians, which led to discrimination against non-Arab Persians.⁸⁶

5.2 Language as a Tool of Resistance

Language is one of the principal conduits of communication. It is a unified system that connects Man to his roots and to his community, or as Marshall McLuhan noted, language is a manuscript of culture.⁸⁷ Language, as well as actions, utterances, and reactions, is a way for man to express his individuality and a means by which man asserts himself. In this context, people use language to reveal who they are, how they feel, and what they value. It is an identity. It defines 'the being' of an individual in an historical, social, and political sense. "The language variation that is demonstrated in phonological, phonetic, morphological, syntactical, and semantic levels highlights the fact that every variation has features which deserve to be respected."⁸⁸ The term variation present among various speakers of the same language implies distinctive manifestations within the same structure and dialect.

The distinctive resistance to Arab propagation that the Iranians displayed demonstrated one of the profound and imbedded attributes of Iranians of the era. As Negin Yavari noted, "unlike other conquered peoples who played a significant role

⁸⁴Zarinkub A (2008) The Arab Conquest of Iran and Its Aftermath. In: Frye RN (ed) The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 4. The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs. Cambridge University Press, p. 34.

⁸⁵Frye RN (2000) The Golden Age of Persia. Phoenix Press, p. 156.

⁸⁶It should be noted that such Arab propagation violated the principle enunciated by the Prophet of equality of all Muslim irrespective of origin, but nevertheless continued (See Petrushevskii IP (1985) Islam in Iran. State University of New York Press, p. 28).

⁸⁷McLuhan M (1994) Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man; Critical Edition. MIT press, p. 325.

⁸⁸Thameemul Ansari SA (2013) A Study on 'the Language' of Resistance and Rebellion. Xilbris Corporation, p. 12.

in the evolution of Muslim societies, like the Egyptians-the people of Iran maintained a specific form of national consciousness, exemplified in the uninterrupted use of the Persian language as the spoken *lingua franca* of the eastern part of the empire and beyond, and the periodic revitalization of a national Iranian past to influence and modify political and theological discourse in the Islamic context.”⁸⁹

For the Ancient Iranian, language was an instrument of the soul and therefore could not be debased. Persian, as a language of literary composition, had been used at least twelve hundred years before the rise of Arab empire.⁹⁰ The intellect, the seat of language, was Iranian’s driving force, a vessel if you would, to retain their divine providence. For them, the concept of life was inextricably linked to that spiritual essence expressed in language.

In this way, despaired by occupation, they came to a realization that Arab intruders could not be fought off the land, and hence their Divine Providence should decide whether the invader is to triumph or not. They chose language as the instrument for a resistance and replaced the sword (the military) with the pen (civil power).⁹¹ The consequence of this strategy extended to the level that the sword and the pen were perceived as two things that ruled the world, which are often juxtaposed in Arabic literature. For instance, Asadi in his *Monazarat* (debates), and one debate in particular titled *Arab o ‘Ajam* (the Arab and the Iranian), called his patron a Man of the Pen and the Sword:

A nobleman whose courage increased danger [for enemies] and justice
By means of a shining sword and a golden-scattering pen⁹²

The gradual metamorphosis of the Persian dialog during the time contradicts the common notion of “Arab domination” of the ancient Iranian culture.⁹³ Marshall Hodgson underlined a similar sentiment as he has observed, “Most of the more local languages of high culture that later emerged among Muslims likewise depended upon Persian wholly or in part for their prime literary inspiration. We may call all these cultural traditions, carried in Persian or reflecting Persian inspiration, ‘Persianate’ by extension.”⁹⁴ He later wrote, “In the wide highland north and east of

⁸⁹Yavari N (2012) Medieval Iran. In: Daryaei T (ed) The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History. Oxford University Press, p. 227.

⁹⁰Mottaheadeh R (1985) The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran. Simon & Schuster, p. 156.

⁹¹The Shahnameh (the Book of Kings) of Ferdowsi signifies this inclination, in which the language of the stories avoids all but a very few of the Arabic loan words that at the time were vital in daily usage, especially in written tradition. Moreover, this turn-around is particularly significant for the civilization that is known to invent a sword called the *akinaka* (acinaces), which allegedly attributed to its many conquests.

⁹²See Gohrab AA (ed) Metaphor and Imagery in Persian Poetry. Brill, p. 269.

⁹³For extensive bibliography of the Persian language see Ahadi S (2002) New Persian Language and Linguistics: A Selected Bibliography Up to 2001. Otto Harrassowitz Verlag.

⁹⁴Hodgson MGS (1974) The Venture of Islam; Conscience and History in World Civilization, Vol. 2. University of Chicago Press, p. 293.

the Tigris [Dejleh] ... , Arabic never replaced the local tongues [i.e., Pahlavi] in any large area. At best it became a second tongue in cities. Most of the population here were Iranian, ... the most important language, Pahlavi, had a well-developed literary tradition dating from Sasanian times, which (Arabized) even enjoyed a certain respect under the Baghdad caliphs."⁹⁵

Nevertheless, the fact is that Arabic remained the main language for scholarly pursuits as a direct result of the Arabic occupation and Arab court patronage. History reaffirmed this observation since once the Arab's imposition was removed, e.g., during the Mongol Il-khanids, Persian language again became the pillar of education and administration.⁹⁶ Indeed, and despite the fact that Iran endured great hardships through the conquest, the period of thirteenth and fourteenth century is considered to be climax of Persian literature and the capital of Fars, Shiraz, witnessed a new rise in the development of Iranian culture.⁹⁷

With the decline of the caliphate as the religiously sanctioned system of government, the rise of independent dynasties was the impetus for the growth of distinctively Persian adab culture. The ethnically Iranian local dynasties encourage the use of the Persian language as the language of the court and high culture. However the greater appreciation of the Persian language and culture was not manifested in anti-Islamic policies, on the contrary, the Persian language was used as a vehicle to spread Islamic values to the far flung corners of the eastern part of the Islamic Empire. As Richard Fry carefully argues:

The Iranian dynasties were rather the instrument of Internationalization of Islam, pointing the way for the spread of Islam anywhere in the world, without the native people given up their language or culture for Arabic. Language was recognized only as the primary, but not the exclusive, vehicle of Islam in all its facets. Those who accepted Islam and learned Arabic did not become Arabs. Such was one contribution of Iranians to the building of Islamic culture.

The rise of new Persian language and culture played a crucial role in the development of new form of Islamic culture in India and Inner Asia. But undoubtedly, the most enduring influence of Persian culture and language remained at the heart of Iranian world, as recognized today.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

⁹⁶ Gazsi D (2011) Arabic-Persian language Contact. In: Weninger S (ed) *The Semitic languages: An International Handbook*. Walter de Gruyter, p. 1018.

⁹⁷ The thirteenth century saw the creation of great works by Saadi, the author of the famous "Bustan" and "Golestan." Golestan is a collection of moralizing and entertaining anecdotes and proverbs written in elegant rhymed prose, and at intervals, with fitting lines of verse. Bustan is a didactic poem, lyrical in tone and anecdotal in composition. It is considered to be one of the masterpieces of Persian literature. In the fourteenth century, there were enlightening and romantic works by Amir Khosroe Dehlavi, Khajoo Kermani, Hafez, and Kamal Khodjandi. While the fifteenth century was the time for the many faceted poet Jami, who wrote the seven epic poems called "Haft Owrang" (The Seven Thrones or Urza Major). His poetry embraced all the different categories of preceding literature. See Katy Kianush at: http://www.iranchamber.com/art/articles/history_iranian_miniature.php. For in-depth analysis of Persian literature of this period see Brown E (1956) *A Literary History of Persia*; From Firdawsi to Sa'di, Vol. II. Cambridge University Press.

And so, Persian language prevailed to the extent that the Persian colloquial language (*Dari*) emerged in a new form in the middle of ninth century onward, and in due course it reemerged as a written language of the ancient land and beyond.⁹⁸ As Brain Spooner and William L. Hanaway observed, Persian has been one of the oldest written languages comparable only to Chinese, Greek, and Latin in term of histories of literacy. It was the primary language of administration and belles-lettres from the Balkans under the earlier Ottoman Empire to Central China under the Mongols, and from the northern branches of the Silk Road in Central Asia to southern India under the Mughal Empire.⁹⁹ On the same note, David Morgan also claimed that Persian was an important *lingua franca* (dialect) in the Yuan Empire.¹⁰⁰ The tale of Persian language after the fall of the Sassanians exemplifies what Claire Kramersch declared *language expresses cultural reality*, in a sense that through its usage, speakers identify themselves and others because it (language) signifies their social identity, norms, and values.¹⁰¹ This is the main reason why “The prohibition of its [language] use is often perceived by its speakers as a rejection of their social group and their culture.”¹⁰²

In retrospect, the evolution of Persian language (emerging from new Persian) facilitated the formation of the new Persianate ‘self’ through an expression of singularity of “group’s language” and a facet of “literary culture” in which a cultural identity usually manifests. Nothing reflects our inner spirit, and hence illustrates our becoming more effectively than our literature and poetry of the past. According to Ehsan Yarshater, one of Iran’s eminent historians, “Poetry is the most significant artistic achievement of Persia, and, as an art with wide scope, sustained energy and universals appeal, provides the broadest stage for artistic and intellectual expression.”

⁹⁸ Even today, in an adapted form of the Arabic script, and with a large quantity of Arabic vocabulary, Persian is still considered as an Indo-European language in its *grammatical structure* rather than the Semitic language. The reader should note that the question of the difference between the Semitic and Indo-European language is point of structure is comprehensively treated first by Ernest Renan, *Histoire general et systeme compare des Language Semitiques*, in which he has observed, “The criterion of the distinction of families in language is to be found in the impossibility of driving one from another. Thus he says, it is quite intelligible how, notwithstanding their differences, all the Indo-European tongues may be related to the same type, and have sprung from the same primitive idiom ... [yet] it is generally recognized that there is a wide distinction between the grammatical system of the Semitic language and that of the Indo-European tongues, and that the one system could not be derived from the other by any procedure known to comparative philology.” (See Muir J (1873) Original Sanskrit texts on the origin and history of the people of India, their religions and institutions. Trübner & Company, p. 218, footnote 7).

⁹⁹ See Spooner B, Hanaway WL (eds) (2012) *Literacy in the Persianate World: Writing and the Social Order* (Vol. 4). University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. ix-xiv.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. David. O. Morgan, ‘Persian as a *Lingua Franca* in the Mongol Empire,’ pp. 160–70. However, Stephen. G. Haw Disputes Morgan’s claim and asserts that the Persian language was in most likelihood confined to a section of Muslim community in China and Mongolia and its use probably limited to commercial and official circles. (See Haw SG (2014) *The Persian language in Yuan-Dynasty China: A Reappraisal*. East Asian History 39, December 2014, pp. 5–32.

¹⁰¹ Kramersch C (1998) *Language and Culture*. Oxford University Press, p. 3.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Indeed, Persian literature, “the most glittering jewel in the crown of Iranian history and culture” in the words of Homa Katouzian, is the realm in which the classical characteristics of Persians prevail and their resilience is revealed in a most vivid manifestation. In another way, there is much to learn about Persians and how they perceived themselves and feel about their homeland (vatan) through the literally works of the post-Arab invasion period. For one thing, and despite much turmoil, many invasions, and in spite of enduring immense brutal treatments, neither the people of the Persian plateau nor their spirits fade into oblivion. H. R. Roemer captures this essence when he states, “It is typical of Persia that in spite of the troubles of the decades between the end of the Il-Khanid empire and the appearance on the scene of Timur [Fourteenth century], Persian culture was not submerged, as one might have expected, but achieved, in its intellectual life, for example in the sphere of poetry, a distinction hardly equalled in any other period ... In marked contrast, public life and political affairs were throughout most of this period in a sorry state.”

Hafiz of Shiraz signifies such cultural history of the timeformer point. His allegedly last ghazal (Iranian distinctive prose of lyric writing), according to A. J. Arberry, was made when Timur (Tamerlane) cruelty begun to spread across the land, to which Hafez wrote:

Again the times are out of joint; and again
 For wine and the Beloved's languid glance I am fain.
 The wheel of fortune is a marvellous thing:
 What next proud head to the lowly dust will it bring?
 Or if my Magian elder kindle the light,
 'Tis a famous tale, the deceitfulness of earth;
 The night is pregnant: what will dawn bring to birth?
 Tumult and bloody battle rage in the plain:
 Bring blood-red wine, and fill the goblet again!

Iranian poetry survived in our minds and memories because it is reflective of our reality. Its poetic philosophy maintains and connects us with our historical past and our present everyday lives. It is a privileged discourse that prevails as a communication conduit that divulges our eloquent sense of being in the world.

Our epic poet Ferdowsi's work epitomizes this claim. As a Muslim, his unmistakably Persianate “self” prevailed in his sixty-thousand-odd lines of *the Book of Kings* (*Shah'نامه*, which took more than two decades and was completed by about 1010) which celebrates the history of Iran before Islam and the heroism of non-royal champions of good, in which “kings are sometimes as troublesome to these champions as Agamemnon was to Achills.”¹⁰³ Despite various shortsighted criticisms of Ferdowsi, it is undeniable that Ferdowsi not only provided the terms of reference for a distinct national memory, but an effective means for its social absorption and dissemination. This matter is of great importance particularly when one realizes that the revitalization of Iranian identity under occupation was essentially

¹⁰³ Mottaheadeh R (1985) *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran*. Simon & Schuster, p. 158.

cultural rather than political, and that the absence of the latter facilitated a cultural diffusion beyond the recognized ethnic parameters of the “Iranians.” On this note, Richard Frye points out, “He [Firdowsi] not only feared the loss of old traditions in Iran, in the face of massive conversions to Islam by his time, but he also sought to preserve the very language which was threatened by permanent change from the use of Arabic, as the language of Islam *par excellence*.”¹⁰⁴

Understanding Ferdowsi’s message through poetry becomes less problematic when one, as I do, sees poetry, at its best moments, as a harvest of longing and nostalgia, or an aspiration by an individual dreamer to reenact an ancestral legacy, to recapture the quintessence, the inner morphosis of Persian vision.¹⁰⁵

The late Shahrok Meskoob, one of our contemporary renowned Iranian authors and literary critics, perceived Ferdowsi’s work not as a historical record but as a cultural manifestation of the failed Iranian wishes and aspirations, which still persist today. In the introduction of *Mourning of Siavosh* (Soog-e Sivavosh), Meskoob noted that thousand of years have passed since the Ferdowsi era, and our ungrateful and self-nourish (*sefleparver*) history has been anything but kind to him. “In this congregation (crowd) of clowns,” as he has observed, “no one cares for the essence of Ferdowsi’s work, and hence the wonder world of Shah’nameh remained closed and unknown to the Lord of grace in Iran.”¹⁰⁶ He brilliantly described the mystical figures, the myths, and the narratives in Shah’nameh as “a revelation of the deep distant past that reflects in today’s world, to which the battle between Rostam and Esfandera is not about struggle between the “Ahura” (goodness) and the “Ahriman” (wickedness) but the fight of righteous”¹⁰⁷

In this light, an argument has been made in which the new Persian language, *enriched* by Arabic vocabularies, “became a marvelous instrument of poetry and literature, similar to the English language, which developed from a simple Anglo-Saxon tongue to one enriched by Latin and French usage after the Norman conquest.”¹⁰⁸

A comparison between the Medieval Europe and the early post-Sassanian era is illuminating in more than one respect. In both instances the rise of a new literary language went together with a manifestation of political resistance and a longing for a greater autonomy of national entities. However, unlike Europe, this

¹⁰⁴ Frye RN (2008) *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 4. The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs. Cambridge University Press, p. xi.

¹⁰⁵ See Osofisan F (1975) *The Nostalgic Drum: Essays on Literature, Drama and Culture*. Africa World Press, p. 125.

¹⁰⁶ See http://www.bbc.com/persian/arts/story/2005/04/printable/050413_pm-cy-meskoob.shtml.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁸ Frye RN (2008) *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 4. The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs. Cambridge University Press, p. xi. However, unlike the early Arabic, Latin and French, relative to a simple Anglo-Saxon tongue, were historically and culturally fertile enough to enriched other-like language. In this respect, this is a difficult argument unless one asserts that richness of Arabic vocabularies prevailed a much later after the fall of Sassanian and only when Arab courts patronage pursue of knowledge through translation of earlier works of Greek, Romans, Egyptians, Syrians, and Persian.

development in Persia did involve the disruption of a unified religious community. An interesting parallel is also the appearance of royal courts with strikingly similar traditions. The appearance of several courts where the works of poets, historians, literary writers as well as philosophers and scientific inquires were appreciated denoted that there was fertile soil for the growth of culture in the shadow of the patronage that the European feudal lords and the courtiers of various Arab as well as ethnic dynasties in Iran had provided.

Aside from richness of Persian culture of the time, one can only postulate in terms of the motives behind the Persian resistance. The question is did Iranians resisted Arab because of a natural inclination against the invader, or did they hoped to regain their past glories empire and protect their portion of the plateau by either opposing or transforming the empire of Muslim caliphs?

Perhaps, the most obvious cause is due to the natural inclination of any nation to opposed aggression against itself. One can argue, as Alessandro Bausani contends, that one significant motive was economic since “non-converts had to pay higher taxes, many of the great landowners become Muslim.”¹⁰⁹

Another possible explanation for the Persian resistance is the notion that a transformation from a status of superiority (inhabitants in an Empire) to a condition of submission to occupation (as the Persians experienced under the rule of the Arab Empire) is extremely difficult to cope with. One can assume that men will go to great lengths to preserve a highly valued status (in this case, belonging to an empire), and this reflex can explain why the Persian character is often perceived as full of inconsistencies. While such characterization is an accurate delineation, the phenomenon must be understood in the context of the perpetual consistency of the Persian history and civilization.¹¹⁰ Unlike its regional neighbors, Persia was never swallowed up and dissolved into something else. Instead, it retained its “distinctiveness,” so that “Persians remained Persians” mainly because of historical consciousness of its inhabitants.¹¹¹ This observation is strengthening when one considers that

¹⁰⁹ Bausani A (1971) *The Persians, from the earliest days to the twentieth century*. Elek, London, p. 73.

¹¹⁰ The term civilization is described by Hannah Arendt as “the product of human work and human thought” (Arendt H (1994) *Essays in Understanding*. Schocken Books, p. 207.

¹¹¹ For instance the Iraqis, the Syrians, and the Egyptians, not only (eventually) became Sunni Muslims, but adopted the Arabic language. They became Arabs, in fact, in every meaningful way except that of their ultimate descent. This statement is neither insinuates negativity nor intended as derogatory or belligerence, but rather reiterates what the author has learned from various experts’ analysis of the region. For instance, according to Bernard Lewis, “other countries of ancient civilization, Iraq, Syria and Egypt, North Africa were Islamized and Arabized in a remarkably short time. Their old religions were either abandoned entirely or dwindled into small minorities; their old language almost disappeared . . . identities expressed in those languages were replaced, and the ancient civilization of Iraq, Syria, and Egypt gave away to what we nowadays call the Arab world. Iran was indeed Islamized, but it was not Arabized. Persians remained Persian” (See Lewis B (2004) *From Babel to Dragomans; Interpreting the Middle East*. Oxford University Press, p. 43). For more detailed study of the subject see: Essid Y (1995) *A Critique of the Origins of Islamic Economic Thought*. EJ Brill; Al-Hassan AY (ed) (2001) *Science and Technology in Islam: The exact and natural science*. UNESCO Publishing, p. 59.

for the majority of its written 3000 plus years of history, Persia has been ruled by non-Persians.¹¹² To this point A. J. Arberry has superbly observed, “Conflict within the Persian soul has saved the Persian mind from ever becoming sterile If the Greeks were seekers and the Roman rulers, the Persian have long since felt at home in the world; they are sure in their experience of it, immune against its shocks and sudden surprises. The world is to be organized and can be controlled or, where it resist control, endured and in the end overcome.”¹¹³

There is no doubt that the rise of Iranian dynasties such as Tahirids, Saffarids, or Samanids in the Eastern part of Abbasid caliph took on many different complexions at that time. Some scholars, as noted by Richard Frye, described the Iranian upsurge as “the political manifestation of the *Shu’ubiyya* movement” or simply as “anti Islamic Iranian nationalism.”¹¹⁴ Frye, however, rejects both claims on the ground that these dynasties were “strong supporters of Sunni Islam, expect possibly for one Samanid monarch, and they have all strove to strengthen or extend Islam in their domains.”¹¹⁵ Moreover, it is also plausible to assume that there was widespread resentment between the subjects of early Muslim government and their Arab conquerors. For instance, there are numerous discussions that lizards were the ancient Arab favorite food or Persians were perceived as fire-worshippers (*ātašparast*) and called *najes* (unclean), as well as many similar anecdotes and insults that would delight most diehard ethnic nationalists in today’s world. However, there is no evidence that Persians were primarily concerned with the creation of new national government.¹¹⁶ In this context, two classic essays in Near East studies come to mind. First, Ignaz Goldziher’s *Muslim Studies* outlines the reaction and the attitude of converted people, e.g., Persians, toward the ideals of Arab tribal society and the idea of Arab superiority.¹¹⁷ According to Goldziher, “The Persian retained great pride in their glorious past long after they were conquered and guarded zealously the traditions of this past, so that they would not, and could not, give up such tradition by deliberately wiping out their glorious memories.”¹¹⁸ Taken into consideration these manifestations of ethnic pride, Goldziher revealed that the prevailed cultural

¹¹² Around 3200 BC the first United Kingdom, the Elamite Nation, was created in the Persian Plateau. Its Capital was Shusha (Sush) located near Andimesk is mentioned in Biblical Book of Esther, as well as in Nehemiah 1:1 and Daniel 8: 2. According to Eteocle Lorini the duration of ruling Persia by different ethnic groups are as follows: Turanian 633 years; Iranian ‘Aryan’ 1020 years; Greeks 75 years; Arab 230 years; and Trucks and Mongols 568 years. (See Jamalzadeh MA (ed) (1947) *Hezar Beshe: yek hazar matlab khandani*. Elme and Za-var Publisher, p. 80.) Jamalzadeh was referring to Lorini’s book *La Persia economica contemporanea e la sua questione monetaria: Monografia fatta per incarico del Ministero del tesoro (1897–1898)*, Rome, 1900; Pahlavi commemorative reprint series, Tehran, 1976.

¹¹³ Arberry AJ (ed) (1989) *The Legacy of Persia*. Oxford University Press, p. vi.

¹¹⁴ Frye RN (2000) *The Golden Age of Persia*. Phoenix Press, p. 186.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Mottahedeh RP (1976) *The Shoubiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran*. *IJMES* 7/2:161–82, p. 162.

¹¹⁷ Goldziher I (1971) *Muslim Studies* vol. I. Trans: Stern SM, Barber CR. Aldine Transaction.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

conflicts were mainly caused by the assimilation of diverse people into a single community, the Islamic community.

Second, H. A. R. Gibb in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam* basically argues that the issue at stake was the “whole culture orientation of the new Islamic society—whether it was to become a re-embodiment of the old Perso-Aramaean culture in which the Arabic and Islamic elements would be absorbed or a culture in which the Perso-Aramaean contributions would be subordinated to the Arab tradition and the Islamic values.”¹¹⁹ He further claimed, “during the second half of the second (eighth) century, Persian resistance (if nationalism is too strong or misleading a term) had repeatedly displayed itself in Khurasan and the northern provinces on Iran in risings which were not only anti-Arab but also anti-Islam ... Their aim was not to destroy the Islamic empire, but to remold its political and social institutions and the inner spirit of Islamic culture on the model of the Sasanian institutions and values, which represented in their eyes the highest political wisdom.”¹²⁰

Respectively, both observations reaffirmed the notion that subjected Persians did not pursue the idea of establishing their own national state (self-determination), as long as an existing government did not deliberately intend to wipe out their glorious memories, and safeguard their a slice of *Iran-zamin* (Land of Iran). Here, Edmund Burke question of “What is it we mean when we say the PEOPLE,” bears significant in the context of the present study. “In a state of rude nature” Burke wrote, “there is no such thing as a people. A number of men in themselves have no collective capacity. The idea of a people is the idea of a corporation. It is wholly artificial; and made like all other legal fictions by *common agreement*. What the particular nature of that agreement was, is collected from *the form* into which the particular society has been cast. Any other is not their covenant.”¹²¹ In this context, the form, or more precisely the social form (social coded identity) in which Iranian society was cast, or in Burke’s word the common agreement, was highly hierarchical, so Arab and Persian ruling

¹¹⁹ Gibb HAR (2014) *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*. Princeton University Press. p. 66. Gibb, however, made an illuminating analysis of Islam and states, “For power, once created and embodied in an institution, is a gain which cannot be controlled by its own creator, but rather controls him and follows the laws of its own being. There is only one thing that can control power, namely, an equal or superior power. It is one of the principle factors which has differentiated the history of Christendom from that of Islam that a Christian political situation began to be established only after three centuries from the foundation of Christianity, and that the political situation was form the first confronted by an ecclesiastical institution which had acquired from its leadership during the two preceding centuries a powerful authority over the wills and actions of its adherents. But in early Islamic history, so long as the expansive energies of the new ideology were flowing into its instrument of aggressive expansion, there was no internal organism of equal to counterbalance it.” *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Burke E. (1791) An appeal from the new to the old Whigs, in consequence of some late discussions in Parliament, relative to the Reflections on the French Revolution (Vol. 1). Printed for J. Dodsley, p. 103. Emphasis added. What follows this passage is even more reveling: “When men, therefore, break up the original compact or agreement which gives its corporate form and capacity to the slate, they are no longer a people; they have no longer a legal coactive force to bind within, nor a claim to be recognized aboard. They are a number of vague loose individuals, and nothing more. Alas, they little know how many a weary step is to be taken before they can form themselves into a mass, which has a true politics personality.” *Ibid.*

class converged into a new ruling class with shared similar privileges against their lower ranked subordinates.¹²² On the one hand, this common agreement was quite compatible with a prevailed society of degrees at the time (i.e., Persian model of kingship or the caliphate hierarchical society), in which through points of honor provided individuals ranks on the scale that extended from rootless wanderers to blue-blooded men, so individuals can identify themselves when they come in contact with each other.¹²³ On the other hand, while the Persian adopted the Arabic script, they mainly though continued to speak in their own vernacular.¹²⁴ However, by the mid-fourth (tenth) century the Iranian¹²⁵ in the plateau were writing popular literature in their own language in order to safeguarded their cultural heritages to the extend that ethical thinkers like Ghazzali included a story of about a Sassanian nobleman, Bozorgmehr, in his secular master piece *Nashat al-Muluk* (Book of Counsel for Kings).

In this context, and take into consideration Burke's notion of form (or the nature of the agreement) into which Iranian society cast itself, we can now claim that Iranians regarded themselves as a people unified only by their common tie to the heartland, *Iran-zamin*. Correspondingly, they accepted all inhabitants who assumed the similar tie regardless of their genealogical and ancestral roots.¹²⁶ Therefore, *Iran-zamin* inhabited by various distinctive groups, in which the inhabitants of each region regarded themselves as distinct people. This development perhaps explains why Iranians, as a group, in the tenth and eleventh centuries were receptive and felt

¹²² See Mottahedeh RP (1976) *The Shoubiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran*. *IJMES* 7/2:161–82, p. 177. Similarly, Louise Marlow stated, “On occasion a small number of Muslim groups may have hoped for an egalitarian social structure in which their own members would be equally entitled to the available resources; but with these exceptions it seems that few Muslims of the classical and early medieval periods could envisage a society that was organized other than as a hierarchy of degrees.” (Marlow L (2002) *Hierarchy and egalitarianism in Islamic thought*. Cambridge University Press, p. 117). See also Tor DG (2011) *The Islamisation of Iranian Kingly Ideals in the Persianate Fürstenspiegel*. *Iran* 49: 115–122.

¹²³ In this respect, privileges of the ruling class remain intact. For more information of the Persian hierarchical society; see Denton JH (1999) *Orders and hierarchies in late medieval and renaissance Europe*. University of Toronto Press, p. 29; Frye RN (2008) *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 4. *The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*. Cambridge University Press, p. 147; Marlow L (2002) *Hierarchy and egalitarianism in Islamic thought*. Cambridge University Press, p. 62. For Islamic hierarchical society see: McKay JP, Hill BD, Buckler J, Ebrej PB, Beck RB, Crowston CH (2011) *A History of World Societies, Combined Volume*. Macmillan, p. 264; Lapidus IM (2014) *A History of Islamic Societies*. Cambridge University Press.

¹²⁴ See Bausani A (1975) *The Persian: from the earliest days to the twentieth century*: Trans: Donne JB. Elek Books Limited, p. 76.

¹²⁵ Here the term Iranians imply those who could express their opinions such as eminent poets, thinkers, vizier, rather than those like lower ranked peasants whose opinion and identities were lost to history.

¹²⁶ In direct contrast, in the sixteenth century Europe “The essence of the state and the nation seemed to find almost total expression in the August dignity of the blood royal. The policy on the sixteenth-century rulers was above all a dynastic policy.” (See Huizinga J (2014) *Men and ideas: history, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance*. Princeton University Press, p. 128).

oblivion to see *Iran-zamin* partitioned between different rulers, whose reigns were based on the prevailing sentiments in the territories they ruled. In another word, their rise to power was mainly due to the group aspirations for regionalism, rather than nationalism. This tendency bears profound consequences, one of which can be readily observed as the pattern of history in Iran, in which chaos turned into subjection with a remarkable speed. On this note, Homa Katouzian stated, “It had been a feature of Iran’s arbitrary society that an arbitrary regime which one day seemed to be eternal could be overthrown the next day, if for some reason the public felt that it had lost its grip. By the same logic, a state of chaos that might have persisted even for decades could be ended almost abruptly, once the will was there to end it. Shah Isma‘il I, Shah Abbas I, Nadir Shah and Aqa Muhammad Khan were welcomed when they stamped out chaos, at least for a time.”¹²⁷ Another consequence is that the prevailed regionalism among inhabitants of Iran, as Kalimi and Richardson has noted, was while accentuated *asabiyya*,¹²⁸ undermined the universalism of the ummah of Islam (total community of Believers).¹²⁹

In retrospect, Iranians at the time were only sought to retain various provincial terrains rather than defending the Iranian nationhood, which illustrated them as a distinct group. We find indications of this observation in the Persian epic, the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi, which was completed in 1010. The *Shahnameh* has commonly been perceived as the ample evidence for Iranian *national* sentiment. It is a first major literacy work of the Islamic period in Iran as well as the major means by which the mythology and history of pre-Islamic Iran entered the national consciousness.¹³⁰ In fact, as Dick Davis has observed, “it does not seem too exaggerated a claim, to say that the *Shahnameh* is popularly seen as the repository of a quintessential ‘Iranian-ness’ or ‘Persian-ness,’ which cannot be found elsewhere.”¹³¹

¹²⁷ Katouzian H (2005) Reza Shah’ political legitimacy and social based, 1921–1941. In: Cronin S (ed) *The Making of Modern Iran: State and society under Riza Shah, 1921–1941*. Taylor & Francis e-library, p. 18.

¹²⁸ `Asabiyya or asabiyah refers to social solidarity with an emphasis on unity, group consciousness and sense of shared purpose, and social cohesion, originally in a context of “tribalism” and “clanism.” It was a familiar term in the pre-Islamic era, but became popularized in Ibn Khaldun’s *Muqaddimah* where it is described as the fundamental bond of human society and the basic motive force of history. `Asabiyya is neither necessarily nomadic nor based on blood relations; rather, it resembles philosophy of classical republicanism. In the modern period, the term is generally analogous to solidarity. However, it is often negatively associated because it can sometimes suggest loyalty to one’s group regardless of circumstances, or partisanship (Islamic Terminology at: <http://islamic-dictionary.tumblr.com/post/7289080705/asabiyya-or-asabiyah-arabic-%D8%B9%D8%B5%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-refers>). See also Halim AA, Nor MRM, Ibrahim A ZB, Hamid FAFA (2012) Ibn Khaldun’s Theory of ‘Asabiyyah and its Application in Modern Muslim Society. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research* 11(9):1232–1237.

¹²⁹ Kalimi I, Richardson S (2014) *Sennacherib at the gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography*. Brill, p. 456.

¹³⁰ Davis D (2012) Iran and Aniran: The Shaping of a Legend. In: Amanat A, Vajdani F (eds) *Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective*. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 37.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

And yet, it is seldom examined in term of the tie that the Iranian had with each other and which made them a distinct people. Using Fritz Wolff remarkable glossary of Shahnameh and emphasizing only on the vocabulary that Firdausi uses in his mythological narratives promptly reveals that several words used to described nation and nationalism in contemporary Persian, which incidentally have Arabic roots, like *millat* (nation), *qaum* (people), and *vatan* (motherland) never appeared in the Shahnameh. The word *mihan* (native land) “occurs three times, twice in the sense of house, and once in the sense of extended family ... the territorial concept of Iran ... *Iran-zamin* (or ‘the land of Iran’) and *shahr-i Iran* (‘the city, i.e., land of Iran’) occur with great frequency.”¹³² However, we never learn the name of the capital of Iran, but we are told the name of capital of Turan, Iran’s enemy, which was called in Pahlavi language “Gang Dezh Hukht” where the demon-king Zahhak had built his palace. Finally, and despite of genealogical terms such as *gowhar* (roughly speaking essence) and *nezhad* (descent) occur throughout the work, “the details of the Shahnameh legendary narratives quickly dispose of any notion of ethnic purity as being a prerequisite of an Iranian identity. A glance at the most admired king and the most admired hero [Kay Khosrow] of the poem’s mythological and legendary sections is enough to confirm this.”¹³³ And yet, it is irrefutable the manner in which Ferdowsi treated Arabs invaders unsympathetically to the extent that the demon-king Zahhak, as Ferdowsi informed us, is an Arab.

¹³² Mottahedeh RP (1976) The Shoubiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran. *IJMES* 7/2:161–82, p. 172.

¹³³ Davis D (2012) Iran and Aniran: The Shaping of a Legend. In: Amanat A, Vejdani F (eds) *Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective*. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 39.

Chapter 6

Qajar Period and the Constitutional Revolution

There is one element in the history of Iran that I continue to find particularly intriguing. This has to do with the relationship between intellectual impartial analysis and political conviction. How is a scholar (or the work of a social scientist or philosopher) affected by his or her political convictions? Intellectual sincerity seems like a straightforward thing: scholars should pursue their findings as the facts and inferences guide them and provide a better understanding of how the world works, based on their best reading of the evidence. This means to avoid “spinning” events or processes into alignment with subscribed political ideologies or commitments.

In the following, I do not claim to furnish the reader with ultimate history, but to make a conscious attempt to dispose of a conventional approach and avoid the near universal/popular portrayal of the Modern Iranian, which often consists of (1) Qajar sovereigns were unanimously corrupted; (2) external influences are mainly responsible for the state of affairs in Iran; (3) the sovereigns were always foreign puppets; (4) Iranians were innocent and passive bystanders with no power to change their destiny; etc. In addition, the appetite to gather facts to form opinions will not be pursued here because I neither perceived history as a corpus of ascertained facts nor entertained an approach that, as described by Talcott Parson, is “a selective system of cognitive orientation of reality.”¹ In defense of this stance, and in spite of C. P. Scott’s maxim: “Facts are sacred, opinion is Free,” I contend that historical facts speak (bear value) only when they are called upon to sustain an argument. Therefore, what the facts retain depends on their selection and in what order and context they

¹Parsons T, Shils EA (eds) (1954) *Toward a General Theory of Action*, Harvard University Press., p. 167.

are presented.² Edward Hallett Carr, one of the great British historians, underlined a similar notion when he noted, “a [historical] fact is like a sack—it won’t stand up till you’ve put something in it.”³ Nevertheless, while we can describe what happened in the past, and even in the recent past, the present needs to be constantly reassessed in light of the past.

Let us start with the obvious: history doesn’t just happen; it is made, but made by people who lived in their own present, not ours. As David McCullough observed, “They were caught up in the living moment exactly as we are, and with no more certainty of how things would turn out than we have.”⁴ In this context, past conducts, events, and conditions are perceived here as benchmarks to develop better understanding of the past, which aids us to assess the present state of affairs. Unlike the popular portrayal of the Modern Iranian that often makes history more palatable for laymen, an analysis of the present only makes sense when the past is taken into consideration as a point of reference, the point which is brilliantly underlined by E. H. Carr when he described history as “a dialogue between the past and the present.” In short, in recognition of where we (Iranians) are today, we must walk outside our comfortable dwelling and accept one inescapable fact, that is, much of the past is still with us today.

This supposition does not imply determinism, but rather suggests that a significant make up of who we are is still connected to who we were. Accordingly, to evaluate the present we must endorse relativism instead of embracing absolute standards that often indulged with (reflected by) subscribed political ideologies or commitments.⁵ In short, to understand occurrences/experiences that beset us we must look not to the actual events, which we see, but to their history. Moreover, this approach also provides a comparable point of reference across ideological stands and over time in the sense that a progression or a regression of the present day, for instance, can be better understood relative to the prior period.⁶ To reject this proposal, however, means today’s reality is only confined to the now and here: a reduced form to a point without parts or magnitude with no continuity between present and past, in which this study would avoid. What follows, therefore, is a brief

² Selection, as such, often leads to what is known as *selection bias*.

³ Carr EH (1961) *What is history?* Vintage Books, p. 9. He further clarified his stand on historical facts by stating, “No [historical] document can tell us more than what the author of the document thought—what he thought had happen, what he thought ought or would happen, or perhaps only what he wanted others to think he thought, or even only what he himself thought he thought.” *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁴ McCullough D (2009) *The Course of Human Events*. Simon & Schuster. Excerpt, including the quote, is available at <http://www.neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture/david-mccullough-lecture>.

⁵ It does however evoke the core essence of determinism, which teaches that consequences are made inevitable by conduct as truly as actions are made inevitable by the past deeds.

⁶ This is not a post hoc analysis since the objective is not to determine causality but rather develop a better understanding of the present in light of the past (or understand the past relative to the present).

analysis of Iran during which history is rather constructed by national affairs as well as the regional developments in which the modern imperial power began to swallow the ancient fading empires.⁷

6.1 Qajar Period

In discussing the various stages of Modern Iran, the most appropriate place to start is with the early nineteenth century of the Qajar Monarchy. The Qajar dynasty came about as a result of the sequential tribal-based domination of Iranian politics since the Sunni Muslim Saljuq incursion into mainland Iran in the eleventh century.⁸ Indeed, prior to the Pahlavi dynasty of the twentieth century, “practically all the Persian dynasties were also furnished by Turkish speaking nomads.”⁹ This historical fact, however, may be interpreted differently in the sense that one might regard it as an ample illustration of the acute division of the population in Iranian Plateau (or *Iran Zamin*), while others may consider it as an example of the rich diversity of the plateau. Nevertheless, the Qajar clan is one of seven Turkish tribes that endorsed the rise of power of Shah Isma’ il, the first Safavid ruler who reestablished Iran as an independent polity in 1501.¹⁰ The Qajar Tribe’s misfortunes soon turned for better after Nadir Shah’s death, when they discovered their leader in the Agha Muhammed Khan, who rose to power in 1779 and united the branches of the tribe and progressed by manner of violence and slaughter.¹¹ His nephew and successor, Fath’ Ali

⁷In fact, the entire ancient East was acquainted with liberalism of the modern Imperial powers through invasions and assaults that begun in 1798 Napoleon occupation of Egypt. In the West, however, the grant narrative of such liberal militarism formed when Napoleon’s defeat of the Prussian monarchy at the Battle of Jena in 1806, which according to Hegel, was the turning point in humanity’s struggle for freedom, as he remarked in a letter to Niethammer, “I saw the Emperor—this world-soul—riding of the city on reconnaissance. It is indeed a wonderful sensation to see such an individual, who, concentrated here at a single point, astride a horse, reaches out over the world and masters it . . . this extraordinary man, whom it is impossible not to admire.” (See Pinkard T (2001) *Hegel: A Biography*. Cambridge University Press, p. 228.) Moreover, “England’s imperialism,” noted the Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises in his 1929 work *Liberalism*, “was primarily directed not so much toward the incorporation of new territories as toward the creation of an area of uniform commercial policy out of the various possessions subject to the King of England.” (See von Mises L (1985) *Liberalism*. Trans: Ralph Raico. Cobden Press, p. 124.)

⁸In fact, the nomadic power was the main reason why “Several of Iran’s royal house, including the Saljuqid, Il-Khan, Timurid, Safavi, Zand and Qajar, were carried to the throne.” See Issawi C (ed) (1971) *The Economic History on Iran 1800–1914*. University of Chicago Press, p. 4.

⁹de Planhol X (2000) *The Geographical Setting [of Islamic Society and Civilization]*. In: Holt PM, Lambton AKS, Lewis B (eds) (2000) *The Cambridge History of Islam*, volume 2B. Cambridge University Press, pp. 463–464.

¹⁰Prior to the Safavid dynasty and since the fall of Sasanian Empire, Iran did not exist as an independent country for more than 800 years.

¹¹For instance, he ordered putting out the eyes of 20,000 inhabitants of city of Kermon because they allowed his predecessor (Lotf Ali the fifth of the Zand Dynasty line to succeed Karim Khan) to refuge in their city.

Shah came to power during the time in which Iran was the target of two Imperial powers, Russia and Britain. This conspicuous arrangement, as well as the manner in which Napoleon's army effortlessly captured the province of Egypt in 1798 coupled with the disastrous neighboring Ottoman defeats on the European front in the late eighteenth century, shook the leadership in Iran and caused them to arrive at the painful realization that the balance of power had tipped definitely in favor of European Imperial Powers. Under these circumstances, Fath'Ali Shah sought a strong ally for protection and hence initiated the first joined treaty between the modern nineteenth-century police state of Napoleonic France¹² and Iran in 1807, known as The Treaty of Finkenstein.¹³

The Treaty of Finkenstein was followed by sequential and disastrous aftermaths. From 1813 to 1828, Iran suffered stern defeats by the hand of Russia and lost much of its territorial claims over the Caucasus, and hence Iran began to lose its independence for all practical purposes. During this period, Russia extended its domination to both sides of the Caspian Sea and engulfed almost all the territory that had been periodically under Iranian rule. Desperate to save face, the Iranian army invaded Herat in 1856, allegedly to repel the rebellion against Iranian control. In the following month, the governor-general of India declared war on Iran, for the seize of Heart.¹⁴ Subsequently, "British troops were at the landed at the head of the Persian Gulf, Russian failed to support Iran and Nasr ad-din Shah [the Qajar monarch] capitulated."¹⁵

Clements R. Markham described the British invasion of Iran and underlined the deliberate punishment of Iranians by the British army as he wrote, "On the 7th [1856] the troops, General Stalker, were landed at Hallah Bay, near Bushire, and the position of the Persians, in the ruined fort of Beshir, near the sea, was carried after 2 h hard fighting, on the 9th. The Persians retreated into the town of Bushire; and

¹²Some readers may object to such characterization of France. In this case, I refer them to the newly published book by Adam Zamoyski and William Collin's work entitled *Phantom Terror: The Threat of Revolution and the Repression of Liberty 1789–1848*, published by Basic Book, 2015.

¹³The Treaty of Finkenstein acknowledged, "the territorial integrity of Iran and her historic claims of Georgia[annexed by Russia in 1801]; promised to make every effort to obtain the Russian evacuation of that province, and to bring about a peace between Iran and Russia; and meanwhile, to assist the Iranian army with weapons and military advisors. Iran, in turn, undertook to declare war on Great Britain; to expel British citizens from Iranian territory; to work with the Afghans and Marathas to attack the British possessions in India; and, should napoleon embark upon the invasion of India, to give the French army passage across the country." (See Graves R (1991) Iranian Relations with Great Britain and British India, 1798–1921. See Graves R (1991) Iranian Relations with Great Britain and British India, p. 374.)

¹⁴Which was apparently in direct violation of the treaty signed between Iranian government and British Army Colonel Sheil on January 25, 1853, in respect to the honoring of the Afghanistan sovereignty. (See Markham CR (1874) *A General Sketch of the History of Persia*, Longmans. Green and Co, p. 499.) In regard to capturing Heart by the Iranian army, Markham also wrote, "The Persian General could never taken the place by force, his officers were cowards, and the besieged [Afghans] were fighting with heroic bravery; but famine did its work, and on October 26, 1856, the Persian took possession of Heart" (Ibid., p. 504).

¹⁵Wilber DN (1976) *Iran: Past and Present*. Princeton University Press, p. 67.

when the English troops had advanced to within a thousand yards of the walls, the Governor hauled down his flag, and surrendered. But the meanwhile *the fleet had been bombarding the town for nearly 4 hours.*¹⁶ The defeat of the Iranian army ended with the Treaty of Paris signed in 1857, in which Iran surrendered any claim to the territory of Afghanistan, who declared its independence from Iran only to fight British occupation a few years later.

At this point, an observation is worth noting before going forward. The first direct contact between the Qajar monarchy and Europeans, the Treaty of Finkenstein, in which the Qajar ruler pursued France's assistance to vacate the presence of foreign troops, namely, Russian, and to shield Iran's borders, reveals the severe sense of insecurity that had sunk into the psyche of the Qajar ruler. It is also plausible to argue that the king may have considered obtaining a relative military parity with the Europeans by adopting Western military tactics and expertise, with which he could safeguard his regime. In short, military strength of one sort or another was perceived as the best means to protect against the Western imperial powers. In this context, a sense of insecurity and apprehension drove Iran into the wonders of the modern world and laid the foundation for development of the country through modern military hardware and skills.¹⁷ Therefore, an argument can be made that a desire for development disembarked in Iran not as a result of social and intellectual evolutions (maturity) but rather via external threats (imposed by the more powerful and aggressive Europe). In fact, at the time, the writing on the wall was for everybody to see, not only in Iran but also in the region. Abraham Marcus underlined this observation as he wrote, "Alarmed by the counting European threat, rulers in the region [Middle East] moved to shore up their defenses by reorganizing their armies, administration, and societies along Western Model, now seen as the proven paths to success. With their sponsorship, and independency of it, Europe penetrated the region as never before. European ideas, manners, advisors, investors, goods, capital, armies, and diplomatic intervention now shaped increasingly the world of Middle East."¹⁸

While Middle Eastern countries faced the common threat of imperial might, the consequences of their struggles were quite different. These distinctions can be best observed in terms of relative economic progress, or lack thereof. For instance, the particular features of Iranian economy in the nineteenth century can be best understood by contrasting its evolution with the rest of the countries in the region. In countries like Turkey, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and Egypt, "The direction and pace

¹⁶Markham CR (1874) *A General Sketch of the History of Persia*, Longmans. Green and Co, p. 505. Emphasis added.

¹⁷There is a wealth of search on this topic that underlined the exact conclusion. For instance, see Farrokh K (2011) *Iran at War: 1500–1988*. Osprey Publishing, p. 181; Mehr F (1997) *A Colonial Legacy: The Dispute Over the Islands of Abu Musa, and the Greater and Lesser Tumbs*. University Press of America, pp. 101–102; Garhwaite GR (2008) *The Persian*. John Wiley & Son, p. 193; and Ward SR (2014) *Immortal, Updated Edition: A Military History of Iran and Its Armed Forces*. Georgetown University Press, pp. 63–67.

¹⁸Marcus A (1989) *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century*, Columbia University Press, p. 1

of economic development were largely determined by a set of forces which, in Iran, were either absent or much less powerful.”¹⁹ For instance, while the regular steamship lines in the Mediterranean and Red Sea were established in the 1830s, Egypt constructed its railway line in the 1850s. By 1914, “there was 10,300 km of railway line in the Ottoman Empire. Egypt, and Sudan, and work was proceeding rapidly on such important project as the Baghdad Railway. Several modern port had been built, notably those of Alexandria [in 1820], Beirut [open in 1887], Constantinople, and Port of Sudan, and steamer were sailing on the Nile and the Tigris.”²⁰

Meanwhile, In Iran, throughout the same period, “the government enjoyed less authority than did those of Turkey and Egypt, and was far less able to enforce its will on recalcitrant subjects . . . its military forces were far weaker, its administration less efficient, its fiscal system much more archaic, and its educational institutions far less developed.”²¹ Even when the king, Naser al-Din Shah, granted a concession for railroad construction and other economic projects to a British subject in 1872, “Opposition from bureaucratic factions hostile to the prime minister and from clerical leaders who feared *foreign influence*, however, forced the shah to dismiss his prime minister and to cancel the concession.”²² These evaluations highlighted two major points. First, the inability of central government to restrain “recalcitrant subjects” is contrary to typical characterization a despotic regime, but inherent in a weak, self-indulging, and inept regime. Second, they illuminated, to a large extent, Iran’s social and political structure as the cause of its stagnation, which frustrates “the efforts of such early modernizers and reformers as Prince Abbas Mirza and Amir-i Kabir and allowed them far less success than was achieved by Muhammad Ali in Egypt or even Mahmud II in Turkey.”²³

And yet, a common practice when describing Iran’s cruel fate during the Qajar reign among a significant portion of analysts of Iranian affairs is to introduce the notion of “fear” as the major explanatory factor of Iranian conduct at the time. Statements like “Many ulama feared the railway and the influx of foreigners,”²⁴ “fear became second nature to the Iranian people,”²⁵ and “The transition from the formation of the historical memory based on negative and exaggerated fear of foreigners”²⁶ are easily made to explain Iranians’ conducts during this era and thereafter.

¹⁹ Issawi C (ed) (1971) *The Economic History on Iran 1800–1914*. University of Chicago Press, p. 14.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²² Curtis GE, Hooglund E (ed) (2008) *Iran: a country study*. Federal Research Division Library of Congress, p. 24. Emphasis added.

²³ Issawi C (ed) (1971) *The Economic History on Iran 1800–1914*. University of Chicago Press, p. 15.

²⁴ Avery P, Hambly G, Melville C (eds) (1991) *The Cambridge History Iran Vol. 7, From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 188.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

²⁶ Farsoun SK, Mashayekhi M (eds) (2005) *Iran: political culture in the Islamic republic*. Routledge, p. 58.

Of course, I do not deny a presence of fear, but various factors may incite fear in people, such as fear of losing, say, pecuniary rewards or advantages that one perceives as his/her own to others. And as long as such factors are not underlined, these haphazard and oversimplified statements about fear should be rejected on the grounds that fear suggests the notion of phobia, which is generally considered a symptom, rather than a cause.²⁷

In this light, this book considered the less colorful, but by no means trivial, profit-seeking merchants (Tujjar in Farsi) and guilds, which were the bastion of mercantilism in Iran, as the factor that had major impact on the social life of Modern Iran and its developments. To safeguard their economic interests, the mercantilist group on certain occasions chose to retain status quo apparatus, knowing too well that their economic interests were intertwined in such tradition (in which the country has been ruled and managed for decades, if not for centuries). Equally, when these economic interests are at risk or subjected to a threat, the structure of economic power tends to be vulnerable, and hence calling for social change pursued as an optimal mechanism of choice to eliminate the threat.

Gustave Le Bon correctly claimed that “organized crowds” have constituted an integral part of modern human community in which the thought of mankind is undergoing process of transformation.²⁸ The transformation of the conscious activity of individual to the unconscious action of crowds is one of the principle characteristics of the modern age. This is mostly due to the fact that modern men are governed by ideas, emotions, and conventions. And no doubt, such control prevailed only as a result of the dazzling might of crowds, in which it furnished the fertile ground by thousands of grains of sands so that Power sprung up. The enigma of the crowds, the secret strengths if you would, is their unconsciousness that gives the preponderant voice to the masses. It is this innate unconsciousness that commands obedience of rulers and coerces them to be attentive of the voice of the

²⁷This type of sweeping statement may bear an intoxicated appeal (an irresistible attraction) by transforming real-world occurrences into simple images, so that simple images seem real, but nevertheless fail to convey any substantive meaning because real social reflections (and their relations to other factors) are reduced to a mere form of an anxiety disorder, which is quite misleading and erroneous. For instance, if certain groups or segments of a society worry about losing their grip over power, economic interests, etc., in face of a challenge, then fear is not a trigger factor, and instead the focus must be on the challenge as an underlying element.

²⁸In its most general form, the word “crowd” implies a gathering of individuals regardless of cause or causes that have brought them together. However, the significance of the notion of crowd in this study is related to the psychological aspects of the expression, to which Le Bon stated, “Under certain given circumstances, and only under those circumstances, an agglomeration of men presents new characteristics very different from those of the individuals composing it. The sentiments and ideas of all the persons in the gathering take one and the same direction, and their conscious personality vanishes. *A collective mind is formed, doubtless transitory, but presenting very clearly defined characteristics.* The gathering has thus become what, in the absence of a better expression, I will call an organized crowd, or, if the term is considered preferable, a psychological crowd. *It forms a single being, and is subjected to the law of the mental unity of crowds.*” (See Le Bon G (2001) *The Crowds: A Study of The popular Mind*, Batoche Books, p. 13.) Emphasis added.

masses. As Le Bon brilliantly wrote, “The destinies of nations are elaborated at present in the heart of the masses, and no longer in the councils of princes.”²⁹

And yet, civilizations have only been created, sustained, and directed by small groups of elites, never by crowds. This is mostly due to the fact that the main power of crowds is destruction, often indistinguishable from crude (loutish) phase in a sense that when a structure of society is rotten, masses are the forefront of its demolition.³⁰ This is the main mission of crowds, the formidable philosophy of numbers that concurs with that of history, and to which all world’s masters, all the founders of empires, the apostles of all convictions, eminent leaders, and affluences are subscribed. In this light, crowds have consistently shown themselves inept of recognition of all conditions that are retained by civilizations such as rules, disciplines, role of law, stable state, etc., all of which are necessary to achieve an elevated degree of culture.

The significant feature of all crowds is a collective mind; the mental unity of crowds, which is acquired when certain predisposing cause(s), turns conscious personality into oblivion, but puts the emotions and thoughts of thousands on a definite path from which the crowds begins to solidify and organize. This is where “a heterogeneous crowd—that is, a crowd composed of dissimilar elements—presents certain characteristics in common with homogeneous crowds—that is, with crowds composed of elements more or less akin (sects, castes, and classes)—and side by side with these common characteristics particularities which permit of the two kinds of crowds being differentiated.”³¹ This is when the collective mind becomes common property, in which the conscious personality entirely disappears; will and judgment are paralyzed, and all emotions and conviction are bowed to captivation by the crowd. The crowd turns into a creature of instincts, possessing thoughtlessness, violence, and strength as well as the passion and “heroism of primitive beings.” In the crowd, as such, “It is stupidity and not mother-wit that is accumulated.”³²

Astonishingly, in describing almost all mass upheavals, including both revolutions in twentieth-century Iran, the role of crowds is *conspicuously* absent, and hence significant knowledge of their origins, motivational factors, and their most vivid implications in terms of their historical, social, and economic effects are totally incomprehensible. In this study, observing the notion of organized crowds, or the psychology of crowds, can merely be a brief synthesis, a small part of greater investigations. Nothing more is claimed.

In the modern era of Iran, provocations (incitements) of crowds have been used as the most effective means for social changes as well as to tackle and remove perceived threats. More precisely, instigating public emotions and sentiments has been used as an effective mechanism to protect economic interests of a small mercantilist

²⁹Ibid., p. 8.

³⁰For a detailed discussion of the destructive attribute of crowds, see Canetti C (1973) *Crowds and Power*. Trans: Carol Stewart. Continuum Publishing Company, pp. 19–20.

³¹Le Bon G (2001) *The Crowds: A Study of The popular Mind*, Batoche Books, p. 14.

³²Ibid.

group, and hence strengthen the traditional power structure in Iran.³³ The premise on which such an observation is made is twofold. First, organized (incited) crowds are perceived as unconscious forces in a sense that the unconscious consistently acts like a manipulated force. Second, organized crowds are the only sovereign force of Modern Iran that stands on the ruins of so many political thoughts and concepts and that have decayed (and are still decaying) so many sources of authority and declined so many beliefs that the successive revolutions have tried to establish. In short, the power of crowds in Iran is the only might that nothing menaces, and their prestige is steadily on the rise. The relevancy of this power to the present study is mainly due to the fact that it underlines the notion that public opinion is a rare feature in Modern Iran, and hence public emotion has been certified as an element (an agency) of social change.³⁴ The major pitfall of this formidable might, public emotion, is that it oozes away from time to time and disappears into oblivion.³⁵

Respectively, I argue that the Tobacco Protest of 1890–1891 epitomized an instance in which merchants, trade guilds, and local business ventures were the main force behind spearheading nationwide protests.³⁶ Although the specific form

³³ Conceptually, the revealing observation has been put forward by Oliver and Marwell to which they found that an increase in resource heterogeneity reduces organization cost through the selectivity effect, which means a mass can be mobilized by a small group of individuals with high resource endowment. See Oliver P, Marwell G (1998) *The Paradox of Group Size in Collective Action: the theory of the critical mass II*. *American Sociological Review* 53(1), pp. 1–8. Also see Oliver P, Marwell G (1998) *The Critical Mass in Collective Action*, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

³⁴ This tendency can be explained by what Gustave Le Bon reasoned as the imagination of crowd, in which “Appearances have always played a much more important part than reality in history, where the unreal is always of greater moment than the real. Crowds being only capable of thinking in images are only to be impressed by images. It is only images that terrify or attract them and become motives of action. ... Nothing has a greater effect on the imagination of crowds of every category than theatrical representations. The entire audience experiences at the same time the same emotions, and if these emotions are not at once transformed into acts, it is because the most unconscious spectator cannot ignore that he is the victim of illusions, and that he has laughed or wept over imaginary adventures.” (See Le Bon G (2001) *The Crowds: A Study of The popular Mind*, Batoche Books, pp. 40–41.)

³⁵ Perhaps this is a reason why collective actions seem abrupt and there are random anomalies in the Modern Iranian political realm. It also renders an ample rationale as to why organizers as well as organized crowds in the aftermath of events demand rapid and often thoughtless harvesting of fruits of their labor since they know that affects are always temporary. See Kurzman C (2005) *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran*. Harvard University Press. The “Conclusion” chapter provides thought-provoking discussions for many Iranians, particularly in terms of the free rider problem in reaping the benefits of collective action.

³⁶ The granted concession basically stated that, “all producers were required to inform the concessionaires of the amount of crop that they produced annually and then sell their entire crop to the British company. All tobacco merchants were required to seek permits from the concessionaires and immediately pay, in cash, for all tobacco they obtained ... Basically, the arrangement would have interjected the British company into the traditional relationship between individual producers and regional sellers of tobacco. In effect, it was a scheme to replace the [Iranian] traders who bought the crop with a British interest.” (See Gilbar GG (2008) *The Rise and fall of the Tujjar Councils of Representatives in Iran, 1884–1885*. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 51, p. 640.)

of protest varied from city to city, “there were certain common features in all cities. Everywhere it was the merchants, many of whom could expect to lose their income from the tobacco trade if the concession came into force, who were the most directly affected and who took a leading part in the opposition movement.”³⁷ However, the instigation by merchants seems peculiar at a time when influence of the mercantile group was rising due to the Qajar Monarch, Nasir al-Din Shah, having issued an unprecedented decree in Iranian history instructing that “councils of representative of the big merchants were to be established in the major cities and commercial centers of Iran. At special assemblies the merchants were to elect the representative who constitute their local council (*majlis-i wukala-yi tujjar*).”³⁸

While the Tobacco Protest has been described as “the first genuinely nationalist movement”³⁹ in Iran that led to “the national awakening,”⁴⁰ I argue that the protests should be valued and understood as the first contemporary nationwide effort to retain commercial interests of the traditional sector of the national economy, namely, the mercantile group. The motives behind the Tobacco Protest were the realistic fear that if the granted concession comes into force, they would lose all future profits from the sale of tobacco, which was one of the major cash crops in Iran at the time.⁴¹ In this context, the protests were organized neither against foreign involvement in domestic affairs (i.e., foreign monopoly, cordiality of the Qajar toward foreign states, etc.) nor nationalist sentiments (i.e., loss of the country’s economic sovereignty to foreign imperial power) but rather based on a purely commercial interest. In fact, the editors of *Akhtar*, an Istanbul-based Persian newspaper, some of whom merchants by profession, printed an article on January 20, 1891 articulating this view by stating, “It is clear enough that the concessionaire will commence the [required] work with a small capital and will purchase tobacco from cultivators and sell it to merchants and manufacturers for higher prices. [In this way,] all the profit

³⁷ Keddie NR (1966) *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891–1892*. Psychology Press, p. 65.

³⁸ Gilbar GG (2008) The Rise and fall of the Tujjar Councils of Representative in Iran, 1884–1885. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 51, p. 640.

³⁹ Lewis B, Lambton AK, Holt PM (eds) (1977) *The Cambridge History of Islam: The Central Islamic Land Since 1918*, volume 1B. Cambridge University Press, p. 619.

⁴⁰ In describing the Tobacco affair, Edward Brown noted, “Only one great and good thing came out of all this wretched business. The Persian people, led by their spiritual guides, and led, moreover, on the whole with wonderful wisdom and self-restraint, had shown that there was a limit to what they would endure, that they were not the spiritless creatures which they had been supposed to be, and that henceforth they would have to be reckoned with. From that time especially, as I believe, dates *the national awakening* of which we are still watching the development.” (See Brown E (1910) *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*. Cambridge University Press, p. 57. Emphasis added.)

⁴¹ Silk cocoons, wheat, rice, cotton, and opium were the other main cash crops of that time. There were various advantages attached to the cultivation of opium. It yielded higher returns in cash than wheat and barley as it was of higher value per pound. It was easily transportable in cases on the backs of pack animals, as there were no roads in the country. Consequently, former wheat lands were turned over to the cultivation of opium. Amin al-Zarb became aware, early on in his commercial career, of the advantages of exporting opium and became a major exporter of that product, making an enormous profit from it. (See Mahdavi S (2000) *For God, Mammon, and Country: A Nineteenth-Century Persian Merchant*, Haj Muhammad Hassan Amin Al-Zarb. Westview Press, p. 11.)

will remain in the purse of the English. As the Iranian merchants [will] have no right to export tobacco from Iran, those who were formerly engaged in this trade are now obliged to give up their businesses and find some other work for themselves.”⁴²

Contemporary observers also shared this sentiment. For instance, Nikki R. Keddie claimed, “The tobacco concession brought far more protest than any other because it did not, like the others, deal with spheres that were unexploited, or only slightly exploited, by Iranian businessmen, [i.e., mineral resources] but rather with a product already widely grown throughout Iran, and profiting many landholders, large and small merchants, shopkeepers and exporters.”⁴³ In her book, *For God, Mammon, and Country*, Shireen Mahdavi also underlined a similar notion and stated, “[Tobacco] concession adversely affected the economic position of various groups of tobacco merchants and cultivators, who up to the time of the concession had been dealing among themselves but now had to deal directly with the Regie (i.e., the monopoly), at whatever prices it fixed. Had the Regie been able to exercise its rights, the wholesale tobacco merchants and exporters would have suffered the most, as they would not have been permitted to buy tobacco directly from the cultivators or to export it... The execution of the monopoly would have meant that he [Amin al-Zarb, a major Iranian merchant] and the other tobacco merchants would have to go out of business.”⁴⁴ In addition, Mansoor Moaddel noted that “The [tobacco] concession was particularly damaging to the merchants and retail traders whose income depended on this profitable tobacco trade.”⁴⁵

The apprehension regarding future lost profits was so overwhelming that it compelled the Iranian mercantile class to appeal to public religious sentiments to preserve their economic interests.⁴⁶ For instance, an Iranian merchant was quoted as saying, “According to the Holy Law of Islam and the law of all States, *commercial transactions* are the rightful property of the people of this country [Iran]... How do they dare to sell to unbelievers the *means of livelihood* of the Muslim?”⁴⁷ Quoting French doctor Feuvrier’s record, Edward Brown reiterated, “They [Iranian] will

⁴²Kazemi R (2014) The Tobacco Protest in Nineteenth-Century Iran: The View from a Provincial Town. *Journal of Persianate Studies* 7(2):251–295, p. 254.

⁴³Keddie NR (1991) Iran Under The later Qajars, 1848–1922. In: Avery P, Hambly GR, Melville C (eds) *The Cambridge history of Iran*. Cambridge University Press, p. 195. She also underlined similar insight in her early book, Keddie NR (2003) *Modern Iran: Roots and Result of Revolution*. Yale University Press, p. 61.

⁴⁴Mahdavi S (2000) *For God, Mammon, and Country: A Nineteenth-Century Persian Merchant*, Haj Muhammad Hassan Amin Al-Zarb. Westview Press, p. 95.

⁴⁵Moaddel M (2005) *Islamic modernism, nationalism, and fundamentalism: episode and discourse*. University of Chicago Press, p. 41.

⁴⁶The general consensus among experts is that the nullification of the Tobacco concession was successful as a result of the issued fatwā. For instance, see Keddie NR (1966) *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891–1892*. Psychology Press. However, Mangol Bayat discussing Fereydu Adamiyat suggests, “He [Adamiyat] recognizes the contribution of Ashtiani and Shirazi [two clergymen/olama who issued fatwa] but insists the olama were not the leader. Merely the followers of the merchant and then ‘people.’” (See Bayat M (1991) *Iran’s First Revolution: Shi’ism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1909*. Oxford University Press, p. 19.)

⁴⁷Brown E (1910) *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*. Cambridge University Press, p. 41.

never reconcile themselves to the idea that their tobacco should pass through the hands of Christians, who, in their eyes, render impure what they touch.”⁴⁸ Predictably, Iranian sources mostly do not corroborate the mercantile class role in evoking the rites and instead claim that the *real cause* lied in the Anglo-Russian rivalry and Russian opposition to the concession.⁴⁹ However, these sorts of allegations often remained as unsubstantiated assertions that are made solely to exonerate our own deeds by blaming others.

To reaffirm my contention, let us start with a year prior to Tobacco Concession, which also is, if not more, the revealing period.⁵⁰ In January of 1889, Qajar’s Ruler (Nasiru’d-Din) granted a concession for the creation of a first Iranian State Bank under the title of the Imperial Bank of Persia that was established by the British Royal Charter, to the British citizen Baron Julius de Router with exclusive rights of issuing bank notes and exploiting the mineral resources of the country.⁵¹ The implication of this concession was basically transferring the economic sovereignty of the country to British subjects. This privilege was unprecedented in the region, especially at that time when the Imperial Ottoman Bank was founded in 1863 and the National Bank of Egypt introduced notes in 1899. Feuvrier also described the Imperial Bank of Persia’s concession as “De concession en concession” and predicted, “la ‘Perse sera bientôt tout entiere entre les mains des etrangers.’ or ‘Persia will soon be wholly in the hands of foreigners.’⁵² Edward Brown also noted, “The Imperial Bank of Persia took up the scheme of constructing a carriage-road from Ahwz to Tihrdn, and ceded its mineral rights to a new company called the ‘Persian Bank Mining Corporation,’ ... placing [the country] in foreign hands, *for a relatively small immediate benefit to the Shah and his courtiers, and to the great detriment of the Persian people.*”⁵³

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁴⁹ Bayat M (1991) *Iran’s First Revolution: Shi’ism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1909*. Oxford University Press, p. 21.

⁵⁰ The reader should note that the sequential concessions in Qajar’s era actually begun in 1872, when special commercial privileges granted to a Baron de Reuter, comprised of “a comprehensive country-wide monopoly, which included railway construction, mining [mineral and oil], and banking.” (See Upton JM (1968) *The History of Modern Iran An Interpretation*. Harvard University Press, p. 8.) Few years later in 1879, Qajar king (Nasir al-din Shah) agreed to the creation of a brigade of Persian Cossacks, which was instructed and commended by Russian officers. In 1888, a Russian subject gained a comprehensive concession covering fishing rights in the Caspian and the Discount Bank of Persia, a Russian institution, was open at Tehran in 1891. According to Wilber, between 1855 and 1900, “at least 15 foreign countries gained capitulation right for their subject residing in Iran.” (See Wilber DN (1976) *Iran: Past and Present*. Princeton University Press, p. 68.)

⁵¹ Conceptually, Lomborg observed, “the national currency has symbolic value matched only by the national flag.” (See Lomborg B (2004) *Global Crises, Global Solution*. Cambridge University Press, p. 269.)

⁵² Brown E (1910) *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*. Cambridge University Press, p. 32.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Emphasis added.

While scattered and small protests were sighted against the granted concession, the main complaint of these protests was still the economic interest of the mercantile class and directed toward, “the customs reforms and the new 5 % duty.”⁵⁴ This lack of meaningful and serious resistance among the Iranians for such a wholesale of the country’s sovereignty is reminiscent of the time when the Russians carved the country into pieces, i.e., the *Treaty of Gulistan (1813)* and the *Treaty of Turkmenchay (1828)*.⁵⁵ These documents are not only a clear indication of Iran’s consent to the annexation of their land but also marked the institution of extraterritoriality.⁵⁶ As Marvin Zonis points out, “these capitulations [*Gulistan and Turkmenchay*] marked the end of an entirely independent Persia, an end that was dramatized by the increasing intervention of the British and Russian in) the internal affairs of Iran.”⁵⁷ The reader should note that these capitulations were enforced until their unilateral revocation by Reza Shah on May 10, 1928.

In the following year, on March 20, 1890, the king granted yet another concession (also known as the Tobacco Régie, which is a contract made by and for the Government) to yet another British subject, Major G. F. Talbot. The Concession of the Tobacco in Persia began by stating, “The Monopoly of buying, selling, and manufacturing all the tootoon and tobacco in the interior or exterior of the Kingdom of Persia is granted to Major Talbot by us for 50 years from the date of the signing

⁵⁴Martin V (2013) *Iran Between Islamic Nationalism and Secularism: The Constitutional Revolution of 1906*. British Academic Press, p. 68.

⁵⁵An argument may put forward to refute this observation by claiming that the lack of care among Iranians is related to the fact that Iranians occupied these lands, and hence people were not sympathetic because we (Iranian) had no right to them. Be as they were, the argument is not about origin of tenures, but rather once the ownership was established, their annexation implies that such ownership has been revoked without the due process. Indeed, the ownership was not challenged; instead, the territories were simply confiscated. No doubt, no one suggests, certainly I don’t, that these territories are God-given properties of Iran. However, I contend that their ownership, not their deed of trust, was held by Iranian government, and hence their seizure should be considered as loss of ownership. Indeed, the manner in which such revocation occurred confirmed the argument.

⁵⁶These treaties re-delineated, to use a *politically correct term*, the borders between Iran and Russia as part of the conditions to end each of the successive wars between them. “Under the Gulistan Treaty, Iran lost most of Azerbaijan to Russia. In the Treaty of Turkmenchay it lost the rest of the Caucasus, including Armenia and all of Azerbaijan north of the Araz River.” (See Gammer M (ed) (2004) *The Caspian Region, Volume 1: A Re-Emerging Region*. Routledge, p. 139.) It is noteworthy that Article 1 of the Treaty of Gulistan reads “enmity and disputes between the Russian Empire and the Persian State shall end once and for all.” However, Russia did not cease its ambition to capture more Iranian territories because its enactment did not balance the legal standing of the two countries. Article 5 stipulated that “except for the Russian State, no other state may have a military flag on the Caspian Sea.” Article 8 of the Treaty of Turkmenchay (also states, “regarding naval vessels, since ancient times some naval vessels under the Russian military flag could sail the Caspian Sea, for this reason this prior exclusive right is granted to it and affirmed so that, except for Russia, no other power may have naval ships on the Caspian Sea.” See IBP Inc. (2012) *Turkmenistan Business Law Handbook: Strategic Information and Laws*. International Business Publications, pp. 218–219.

⁵⁷Zonis M (2015) *Political Elite of Iran*. Princeton University Press, p. 165.

of this Concession.”⁵⁸ The Concession was later that year registered at the British Legation at Tehran on May 9.⁵⁹ In exchange, Article 1 of the Concession stated “the *cessionnaires* will have to pay £15,000 per annum to the exalted Imperial Treasury whether they benefit or lose by this business and this money shall be paid every year, five months after the beginning of the years.”⁶⁰ In addition, as stated in Article 3, one quarter of the annual net profits “will yearly be paid to the exalted Imperial Treasury, and the Persian Government will have a right to inspect their (the concessionaires’) yearly book.”⁶¹ Moreover, the proprietors of the concession were instructed to purchase all the produced tootoon and tobacco with cash, and the price would be determined in an uncompetitive manner,⁶² and in the case of disagreement between parties, “the case will be referred to an Arbitrator accepted by both sides, and decision of the Arbitrator will be final and will be carried out.”⁶³ Finally, Article 8 of the concession explicitly threatens all those who may evade, directly or otherwise, the rules set by the concession with severe punishment by the government.⁶⁴

Soon after the Régie was signed, the concession was sold to what Nikki Keddie regards “a dummy syndicate of Talbots” until the autumn of 1890 when it was sold again to a group of English speculators calling itself the Imperial Tobacco Corporation of Persia. Keddie further claimed, “various rather convincing charges were later made in British parliamentary debates and newspapers that the corporation [the Imperial Tobacco Corporation of Persia] was essentially Talbot himself, who then went about promoting shares in his new corporation.”⁶⁵ In this light,

⁵⁸ Hershlag ZY (1964) Introduction to The Modern Economic History of The Middle East. Brill Archive, p. 344. For the entire text of concession, see pp. 344–345.

⁵⁹ The Concession was later that year registered at the British Legation at Tehran on May 9, 1890. (See Brown E (1910) The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909. Cambridge University Press, p. 35.)

⁶⁰ Hershlag ZY (1964) Introduction to The Modern Economic History of The Middle East. Brill Archive, p. 344.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² As Article 6 stated, the price “is to be given to the owner, or to the producer will be settle in a friendly manner between the producer or the owner and the proprietors of this concession.” Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ To assess the Iranian Tobacco Régie, one must make a comparative judgment. In doing so, an evaluator would see astonishing irregularities. As *cessionnaire* clearly indicated “in the prospectus,” the total net annual profits to the Imperial Tobacco Corporation of Persia was estimated to be around £371,875, which was more than half of its total capitalization, which consisted of £650,000. In short, the company would regain more than half of its start-up capital in one year. The main cause of this peculiar term was noted by, “the experience gained in the working and administration of the Turkish Tobacco Régie... established in the year 1884... , and inasmuch as the rent payable by them (i.e., the Persian Tobacco Corporation) is only £15,000 per annum, as against £630,000 per annum payable by the Turkish Régie, and the term of their concession is for 50 years as against the term of only 30 years in the case of the Turkish Concession, their business will be entered on under much more favorable conditions.” (See Brown E (1910) The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909. Cambridge University Press, p. 33.)

⁶⁵ Keddie NR (1966) Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891–1892. Psychology Press, p. 38.

Keddie's observation suggests that Tobacco Concession, like the crisis that pursued it in Iran, was also a product of economic interests.

There are other elements that further strengthen my argument. First, the trouble of the tobacco trade continued even after the Concession was repealed. According to Vanessa Martin, the Ottoman Empire, the main market for Iranian tobacco, placed restraints on its import by granting a monopoly to the *Societe de Tombac*, which greatly reduced the purchase of Iranian tobacco mainly due to *Iranian merchants hoarding it*, as the Ottoman company complained to the shah.⁶⁶ The tobacco farmers were also displaced and suspected that the whole episode was a monopoly initiated by Premier Amin Sultan who had close ties with the national merchants.⁶⁷ Martin concluded, "Whilst the [Ottoman] company drew together unlikely collaborators in the national interest, its struggle to survive demonstrates the skein of problems faced by local commercial ventures."⁶⁸

Secondly, it has been well documented that after the campaign against the Tobacco Concession, merchants became increasingly involved in political affairs of the country and strengthened their grip over economic affairs as well as institutional settings. In fact, as Martin observed, "they [merchants] had a highly significant role in the movement that brought about the Constitutional Revolution. The campaign, in effect, actually built upon the pressure created by foreign entrepreneurial forces, which it seemingly opposed, to seriously undermine the Qajar regime."⁶⁹ In fact, one can claim that the Tobacco spectacle was in many respects, "a dress rehearsal for the Constitutional Revolution."⁷⁰

Mansoor Moaddel also similarly observed that, "After the approval of the new constitution by Mozaffar ad-Din Shah in 1906, the merchants and guilds played an influential role in the first parliament. The merchants and the guilds together made up 41 % of the representative in the first Majles, while the guilds alone constituted the largest single group (26 % of the representative)."⁷¹

Third, the Tobacco Protest not only failed to curb the foreign strangulation of the Iranian economy, but in effect it augmented Russian influence, so that Iran was never released from pressures imposed by the two main imperial powers' economic and political interests. A similar observation is made by Janet Afary, in which she noted, "The Tobacco Protest also brought about a major shift in Iran's foreign

⁶⁶Martin V (2013) *Iran Between Islamic Nationalism and Secularism: The Constitutional Revolution of 1906*. British Academic Press, p. 85.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 23.

⁷⁰Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, p. 39.

⁷¹Moaddel M (1993) *Class, Politics, and Ideology in the Iranian Revolution*. Columbia University Press, p. 114. However, Moaddel further explained, "[T]he influence of the guilds began to decline and by 1909, when they were barred from representation in the Majles, the guilds completely lost power. Never again did they acquire the same political influence. The guilds produced no important political leader. They acted cohesively in politics only as long as their political patrons had a common basis for cooperation." Ibid., pp. 114–15.

policy. Overnight Premier Amin al-Sultan, who had... facilitated the tobacco concession, made another 180-degree shift in policy and move closer to Russia."⁷² Later in the early stages of the Constitutional Revolution, Russia and Britain traded places and British interests replaced Russian importance. However, in the international arena, the consequence of repealed concessions manifested itself in the attempt to partition Iran, as Haddad and Rostam-Kolayi stated, "This episode [revoking Tobacco concession] marked a shift in British-Russian relations concerning Iran, encouraging a rapprochement leading to the 1907 agreement partitioning Iran into two zones of influence, with the Russian sphere in the north and the British in the south."⁷³ Nikki Keddie also concurred with this observation and noted that the Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1907 divided the country into three spheres, "with northern and central Iran, including Tehran and Isfahan, in the Russian sphere; south-east Iran in the British sphere; and an area in between (ironically including the area where oil was first found in 1908) in the neutral zone."⁷⁴

Finally, the repeal of concession turned out to be the major cause of failure of the Qajar regime, as it was unable to meet incurred financial obligations and consequently contributed to the country's chronic *indebtedness*, *one of the major known sources of danger to a country's independence and safety, which lasted way after the fall of Qajar dynasty.*⁷⁵ Had anyone read the Tobacco Régie agreement document, according to Ibrahim Safai, he could have realized that, in a case of unilateral nullification of the contract, the initiating party is obligated to make a payment of £500,000 as the cancelation fee.⁷⁶ Struggling to find financial resources to meet such an obligation, the Iranian government was ultimately forced to borrow at 6% from the Imperial Bank of Persia on April 27, 1892. This means an additional yearly expenditure of £30,000 was added to an already cash-strapped government. In addition, the customs of the Persian Gulf "were pledged as a guarantee for the payment of this interest, and the capital was repayable at the end of 40 years."⁷⁷ From a financial standpoint, cancelation of the Tobacco Régie brought nothing more than insolvency to the state/country and the enrichment of a few English speculators known as the Imperial Tobacco Corporation of Persia.

I conclude this discussion of the tobacco affair with an article that appeared on Saturday, May 21, 1892, in the British *Tablet* under the headline "The Persian Loan," which began, "It is satisfactory to be able to record that the Persian Government has thought twice over the proposal to borrow half a million sterling

⁷² Afary J (1996) *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906–1911*. Columbia University Press, p. 33.

⁷³ Haddad WW, Rostam-Kolayi J (2014) Imperialism and its manifestation in the Middle East. In: Ismael TY, Perry GE (eds) *The International Relations of the Contemporary Middle East: Subordination and Beyond*. Routledge, p. 67.

⁷⁴ See Keddie NR (1991) *Iran Under The later Qajars, 1848–1922*. In: Avery P, Hambly GR, Melville C (eds) *The Cambridge history of Iran*. Cambridge University Press, p. 205.

⁷⁵ Oddly, this issue has not been examined by many Iranian and non-Iranian scholars and totally left outside the mainstream history of Modern Iran.

⁷⁶ Safai S (1973) *Mirror of History*. Ministry of Art and Culture Publication, p. 13.

⁷⁷ Brown E (1910) *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*. Cambridge University Press, p. 57.

from the Government of the Tsar. She has preferred to owe the money she is called upon to pay as an indemnity to the Tobacco Corporation to British capitalists. A loan is to be raised in the London market and brought out by the Imperial Bank of Persia. This happy ending of the negotiations carried on by Sir Frank Lascelles, our representative at Teheran, releases the Shah from what promised to be a very embarrassing situation, whether regarded financially or politically. The terms of the loan have not yet been made public, but it is satisfactory to learn that payment is to be secured on the customs duties of South Persia and the Persian Gulf. This arrangement may be pretty confidently relied upon to extend the area over which British commerce is supreme. Most satisfactory advances have been made by British traders in recent years throughout the whole of Southern Persia. From Ispahan to the sea the British merchant is the dominant factor in the commercial world; while the great ports of the Persian Gulf, Bandar-i-'Abbas, Linga, and Bushire, are almost wholly supplied by vessels either from England or Bombay."⁷⁸

As a result of this analysis, the following question remains: How did the major nationwide revolt that delineated an awakening of the nation's consciousness, that was spearheaded by the economic interests of a small mercantile group instead of national sentiments pave the path for only members of the mercantile group to play a highly significant role in the affairs of the country; enrich a small number of English speculators at the expense of insolvency of the country; and almost break up the country by the hand of traditional adversaries?

6.2 The Constitutional Revolution⁷⁹

Anecdotally speaking, identified factors that contributed to the Qajar's bewildering state of affairs have been generously open-ended matters, which fluctuate from one extreme, e.g., the conspiracy to put down Iran, to another, e.g., the natural resource curse. However, the less complex and the most popular views are either utterly blamed on Qajar rulers, or hold the formation of international imperial politics of the time liable for the misfortunates of the country. Both descriptions have merits, and therefore, are considered as explanations of past history among ordinary Iranians. And yet, these descriptions outrightly excluded the most important determining factor of history, the people themselves.

For one thing, proponents of these views never bothered to establish a point of reference, according to which their evaluations are formed.⁸⁰ This lack of effort to substantiate an argument, particularly a populist view, is not only limited to the Qajar era and has become almost a tradition to review the history as a mouthpiece

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 58.

⁷⁹ Mashrooteh Revolution.

⁸⁰ Such a point of reference would make us understand what the Qajar rulers should have done under the given circumstances and relative to comparable conducts elsewhere (instead of evaluating how they encounter the situations at the time and what they did, or did not do, to overcome them).

of ideologues.⁸¹ In this context, for instance, deeds of Qajar rulers must be examined relative to their counterparts at the time, such as Ottoman Sultans or the Muhammad Ali Pasha dynasty in Egypt, all of which were men who thought, in face of defeat, granting concessions to imperial powers (and their subjects) could save their country. In the case of Qajar, Vanessa Martin underlined this point and maintains that Iranian rulers attempted to retain the country's independence and to keep foreign power out because of their ability "to balance the rivalries and interests of the British and Russians in its role as a buffer state. From the early nineteenth century, Iranian rulers and governments became adept at playing one power off against the other Iran was also able to resist foreign conquest because it devised methods of bargaining to keep external power at bay."⁸² Donald Wilber also points out, "Nasir an-din [Shah] did the best he could for his country, but circumstances were too strong to be effectively countered."⁸³

Vindication of the Qajar rulers, regarding the granted controversial concessions to the British as well as the Russians, become more apparent when one considers the peculiar and precarious circumstances under which they occurred. Indeed, the Iranian state was given neither choice for the terms of agreements nor an opportunity to refuse granting the concessions. Of course, minimum compensations were made, but these arrangements were made by intimidation tactics, i.e., imperialist aggressions toward Iran, or as a part of conditionality package for economic and technical assistances. On this note, Clements Markham explicitly stated that the Treaty of 1853 between Britain's representative and the Iranian government, in which Iran

⁸¹ For instance, various analyses of the so-called D'Arcy concession are made by ignoring many significant factors such as the fact that the Anglo-Persian Oil Company—an organization which has great financial strength and which possesses extraordinarily rich petroleum deposits, a worldwide marketing system, and strong alliances—ranks at the time in the 1930s among the leading petroleum companies of the world. In this respect, an ability of a country such as Iran to impose new conditions, which were utterly just, cannot be examined as if the parties engaged in the negotiating both started on an equal footing.

⁸² Martin V (2005) *The Qajar pact: bargaining, protest and the state in nineteenth-century Persia* (Vol. 4). IB Tauris, p. 1. In response, however, one may point to several shortcomings of such conclusion. First, a complete breakup of Iran did not happen because of the rejection of the treaty by then Bolshevik government and Lenin rejection of its imperial content. Although, the same government had attempted to establish the first Soviet-style Persian Socialist Republic of Gilan, but failed (for more detail analysis, see, for instance, Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press). Second, as long as the Qajar rulers were willing to grant concessions at almost no cost to their counterpart, breaking up the country made no sense since both Russia and Britain needed the stable Iran to reap benefits that they could easily secure (or were already given to them). Finally, a plausible reason why a full-scale invasion of Iran was considered imprudent by either Russia or Britain is related to the presence of each imperial power that deterred others to the incursion of Iran and risked a full military engagement with its mighty rival.

⁸³ Wilber DN (1976) *Iran: Past and Present*. Princeton University Press, p. 68. However, Wilber's reasoning for Shah's lack of success is quite different than mine, as he further elaborates, "Although the [Nasir an-din] shah made a serious attempt to improve the system of justice and the public administration, his efforts were not crowned with lasting success and the country came increasingly under the influence of the clergy." *Ibid.*, p. 69.

relinquished its claim over Afghanistan's territory, was acquired as a direct result of "threat" by British rather than Iran's "willingness."⁸⁴ Morgan Shuster, regarding the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1907, also described similar circumstances.⁸⁵

Moreover, Qajar rulers neither could be branded despotic nor can *all* be considered as naïve and plain men. They were not despotic kings in the sense that they were unable to exercise control over their various subjects, e.g., mercantile groups, tribes, member of their own clan and court, etc. As a result, nobles and courtiers amassed fortunes, a select few merchants and guilds monopolized the national economy, a handful of landlords acquired tremendous holdings, and tribes ruled territories as they wished. To confirm this observation one can only refer to the fact that one of the first mandates of the Constitutional Assembly was to ensure that disproportionate wealth did not remain in the hands of few, and where this was the case present, it should be redistributed. Likewise, a claim can be made that a small number among the Qajar rulers were prominent figures in Iranian history, men like Agha Muhammed Khan or Nasir al-din Shah. It has been documented, for instance, that Nasir al-din Shah during his visit to Europe had the opportunity to watch a demonstration of English firepower and made the brilliant and thoughtful observation, as he wrote, "[T]he wonder is in this, that on the one hand, they take such trouble for the salvation of men from death, when on the other hand, in the armories

⁸⁴ Markham CR (1874) *A General Sketch of the History of Persia*, Longmans. Green and Co, p. 499.

⁸⁵ As Shuster states, "According to the Convention of 1907 between Russia and Britain, which both parties are so fond of quoting to Persia, the latter's complete independence and sovereignty are fully recognized, although the need for such avowal is not apparent. Yet in the face of that document Russia has put forward and still maintains, under the name of 'Protégé-ship,' the most novel and remarkable theory ever heard of in international relations. The Russian Legation and Consulates not only claim absolute rights in Persia over all Russian subjects, 'legal or illegal,' but they claim a species of protectorate over another class of persons, chiefly well-known reactionaries and traitors, who are admittedly Persian subjects, yet against whom Russia will not permit the simplest governmental step to be taken, under penalty of incurring her anger and her vengeance. This Protégé-ship is likewise used to shield these persons from paying their taxes to the Persian Government, and, as most of them are rich through methods well known in the former regime, there is not only a decided financial loss, but the loss of prestige to the Government and the encouragement thus given others to rebel against the payment of their just dues are even worse. In many instances the Russian authorities do not even claim that the 'Protégé' is anything but a Persian subject; in others, some of the pretexts alleged for claiming for them Russian nationality are bizarre beyond the wildest dreams. Ask the Russian Legation to explain seriously, for instance, why the Princess Banou Uzma, of Isfahan, should not pay the Persian Government the thousands of tumans of taxes which she has been owing for the past few years, and you will be unable to restrain a smile at the answer. Or the famous Kamran Mirza, uncle of the ex-Shah. Or why the Russian Legation interfered recently when the tax collector of Teheran seized the horse of Prince Ezted Dawla for failure to pay his contributions to the Government under which he lives. Beyond all this, of course, is the trifling fact that *even foreign subjects in Persia are not exempt from paying their local taxes, despite the truly absurd claims as to the meaning of Article IV of the Customs Convention between Persia and Russia.*" (See Shuster WM (1912) *The Strangling of Persia: A Personal Narrative*. The Century Company, New York, pp. 364–365. Emphasis added.) The underlined section should be viewed as an attempt by the national government to protect its interest whenever it could, and hence ease the agitation among many who received the Qajar rulers as traitorous sovereigns.

and workshops they contrive fresh engines for the quicker and more multitudinous slaughter of the human race. He whose invention destroyed men more surly and expeditiously prides himself thereon, and obtains decorations of honor.”⁸⁶

In addition, both autocracy and foreign incursions have played integral parts in Iranian history, and therefore, delineating either (or both) as the cause of the country’s dire state during the Qajar region is to fall victim to populism of the worse kind. Come to think of it, our cordial perception of a domestic version of despotism is a reminder of Hobbes’ observation, in which he claimed “our ability to reason is both a mask for and a slave to our passions, our religions arise purely from fear, and theories about our divinity must be subordinate to the reality of how we behave. Enlightened despotism [also called benevolent despotism] is thus preferable to democracy: the mass require protection from themselves.”⁸⁷ Simin Behbahani, a prominent member of the Modern Iranian literary circle, perfectly captured the essence of this point as she wrote these verses:

If the snake is domestic,
I will give it shelter.
I will be fond of it still,
Even if it does cruel things.

Ali Ansari also points out that “The rise of Reza Khan and the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty are often regarded as signaling not only the end but the failure of the constitutional Revolution. Yet at the time, Reza Khan was hailed by intellectuals and those of a progressive persuasion as the savior of the nation and the individual most likely to provide the secure political framework for the pursuit of reforms and the cultivation of a reinvigorated ‘nation state.’ For the enlightened elite, he represented the ‘enlightened despot,’ constrained by a constitution, legally minded, but essential nonetheless to drag an otherwise reactionary and inherently conservative people into the modern age.”⁸⁸ In short, the point that I am trying to convey is that the strength and greatness of a nation is not related to its history, which may or may not be filled with exuberant antiquity or tragic misfortunes, but rather to its determination as a nation, and particularly its inhabitants, to accept responsibility for its blunders and failures.

In this context, contrasting opinions are emerging that are radically different from the populist convictions. For instance, Mehdi Moslem argues that major events in the modern era of Iran, e.g., the Constitutional Revolutions, overwhelmingly

⁸⁶ Wilber DN (1976) *Iran: Past and Present*. Princeton University Press, p. 82. A savvy reader would notice here that I used Wilber’s book that was published in 1950, instead of the eight editions of 1976. The reason is that this quotation has been mysteriously omitted in the eight editions and instead the author stated, “While in Europe he [the shah] had been unfavorably impressed by the military reviews and continual preparations for war made by each nation.” *Ibid.*, pp. 68–69.

⁸⁷ Kaplan RD (1997) *Was Democracy Just a Moment?*. *The Atlantic*, December 1997. Available at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1997/12/was-democracy-just-a-moment/306022/>

⁸⁸ Ansari AM (2012) *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 64–65.

reflected the attributes of existing society instead of a conscious platform chosen by Qajar rulers.⁸⁹

All things considered, popular reviews of history often bear no value except to provide an excuse to the public to live in a certain psychological climate that erases painful memories. The bait, therefore, is appealing as well as intoxicating, but for a nation like Iran that had felt at home in the world long before the Greeks became seekers and the Roman rulers,⁹⁰ nothing is more damaging and destructive than to believe in our own fabricated and unsubstantiated narratives. To me these stories are like music we dance to when we cannot name the tune. No doubt, a sequence of a popular narrative and reflex can only be created with public consensus, otherwise the people should be perceived neutral and their homeland as an empty ground on which anything could be manufactured. Moreover, popular narrative cannot make people take on beliefs that they are uncertain about. In fact, that is why popular versions of reality are built on popular inclinations, so that they can be utilized (rather than contradicted) by already established tendencies or attitudes stemming from the cultural norms and values and expressing the fundamental currents in a society.

The 1906 constitutional revolution and the subsequent “constitutional law” have been presented by foes and friends as the cornerstone of Iranian desire to free themselves from the yoke of despotism and their aspiration to embark of modernity and democratic system of government.⁹¹ However, as Mohammad Ali Shah had finally sworn to accept Auguste Comte, whose “alienation from the post-revolutionary political and social forms in France was profound and bitter,”⁹² alleged notions of “equality, fraternity, legality, and modernity,”⁹³ two major occurrences had profoundly changed Iran. First, the ancient regime ended “without a voice being raised on its behalf.”⁹⁴ This happened as quite diverse groups of Iranians joined together to batter down the traditional power structure.⁹⁵ Second, and more importantly, the

⁸⁹Moslem M (1995) *The Making of A Weak State*. University of Westminster.

⁹⁰I borrow the thought from A. J. Arberry. (See Arberry AJ (ed) (1989) *The Legacy of Persia*. Oxford University Press, p. vi.)

⁹¹Fakhreddin Azimi stated, “In 1906 Iran became a pioneer in the nonwestern world in seeking to establish a constitutional representative democracy of citizens.” (Fakhreddin Azimi, *Quest for Democracy in Iran*, p. x): “The Constitutional Revolution of the early twentieth century was intended to establish government based in law as well as modernize the country along European lines.” (See Katouzian H (2013) *Iran: Politics, History and Literature*. Routledge, p. xiv.) However, in fairness, Katouzian also followed his observation by stating, “But the fall of the arbitrary state resulted in chaos rather than democracy, as it had done throughout Iranian history” (Ibid.).

⁹²Gane M (2006) *Auguste Comte*. Routledge, p. 76.

⁹³Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, p. 92.

⁹⁴I borrowed the phrase from Louis Francis Salzman. (See Salzman LF (1901) *The History of the Parish of Hailsham: The Abbey of Otham and the Priory of Michlham*. Farncombe, p. 9.)

⁹⁵According to Abrahamian, these groups were, “Wealthy merchants and street peddlers, wholesale dealers and small shopkeepers, seminary students and Dar al-Fonun graduates, clergymen and civil servants, rising commercial companies and declining craft guilds, Muslims and non-Muslims, Persians and non-Persians, Haydaris and Ni’ matis, Shaykhis and Mutashar’is, Sunnis and Shi’ is, bazaaris in the capital and bazaaris in the provinces.” (See Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, p. 92.)

1906 constitutional Revolution finally legitimized (recognized) the main power based (domination force) on Iranian's political history, which begun with the uprising of Sarbedaran in the early fourteenth century and continued onward. The revolution disclosed Shi'ism as the collective national ideology and Shi'i ulama as its custodians. The Shi'i religion was officially declared, by the constitutional document, as the main pillar of a government body in Iran, and hence formalized bounding between the politics and Shi'i ideology.⁹⁶

<>For instance, in May 28, 1907, the Tabriz Council (Anjuman) declared, "We want a constitution that will determine the limits of a constitutional monarchy and the rights of the nation. For its part the shari'at of Muhammad (that will remain until the day of Judgment) is protected and in place and everyone knows his religious duties."⁹⁷

The constitutional revolution should be perceived as a religious-nationalist movement, in which Shi'ism declared itself as the national consciousness. This observation is clearly apparent in the first Article of the supplementary law of 1906, in which the Shi'i character of the nation was accentuated over and above the national character of the Iranian people by stating, "The official religion of Persia is Islam, according to the orthodox Ja'fari doctrine of the Ithna Ashariyya (Church of the Twelve Imams), which faith the Shah of Persia must profess and promote."⁹⁸ The second Article follows by calling for creation of a permanent council of ulama with veto power over the legislative body, Majlis. According to this Article, laws ratified by the Majlis must be in accordance with Shati'a.⁹⁹ Finally, while the Article

⁹⁶Here, formalization intends to imply what has been inscribed in the original constitutional laws or, more precisely, the origin Fundamental Law, containing 51 articles, promulgated on December 30, 1906, by Mozaffar ad-Din Shah and the following supplementary laws that were ratified by his successor, Mohammad Ali Shah on October 7, 1907.

⁹⁷Afary J (1996) *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906–1911*. Columbia University Press, p. 89.

⁹⁸Brown E (1910) *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*. Cambridge University Press, p. 372.

⁹⁹Here is the entire Article 2: "At no time must any legal enactment of the Sacred National Consultative Assembly, established by the favor and assistance of His Holiness the Imam of the Age [the Messiah] (may God hasten his glad Advent!), the favor of His Majesty the Shahinshah of Islam (may God immortalize his reign!), the care of the Proofs of Islam (may God multiply the like of them!), and the whole people of the Persian nation, be at variance with the sacred principles of Islam or the laws established by His Holiness the Best of Mankind (on whom and on whose household be the Blessing of God and His Peace!) It is hereby declared that it is for the learned doctors of theology (the '*ulama*')—may God prolong the blessing of their existence!—to determine whether such laws as may be proposed are or are not conformable to the principles of Islam; and it is therefore officially enacted that there shall at all times exist a Committee composed of not less than five mujtahids or other devout theologians, cognizant also of the requirements of the age, [which committee shall be elected] in this manner.

The ulama and Proofs of Islam shall present to the National Consultative Assembly the names of 20 of the '*ulama*' possessing the attributes mentioned above; and the Members of the National Consultative Assembly shall, either by unanimous acclamation, or by vote, designate five or more of these, according to the exigencies of the time, and recognize these as Members, so that they may carefully discuss and consider all matters proposed in the Assembly, and reject and repudiate, wholly or in part, any such proposal which is at variance with the Sacred Laws of Islam, so that it shall not obtain the title of legality. In such matters the decision of this Ecclesiastical Committee shall be followed and obeyed, and this article shall continue unchanged until the appearance of His Holiness the Proof of the Age (may God hasten his glad Advent!)." *Ibid.*, pp. 372–373.

26 confirmed, “The powers of the realm are derived from the people,” Article 57 limits this power by one’s religion conviction and states, “No one can attain the rank of Minister unless he [not her] be a Musulman.” In another way, power vested in people goes as far as one’s religion takes it.¹⁰⁰ Everything else seems had to take a backseat to Islam.¹⁰¹

Similar arguments have been presented by prominent Western scholars of Iranian culture and history, e.g., Edward Browne, Ann Lambton, and Janet Afary, as well as renowned contemporary Iranians, e.g., Ervand Abrahamian and Mangol Bayat. However, most works have stayed away from linking Islam and Iranian national identity. While Browne was a believer in the novel objective of the constitutional revolution, he never underlined the role that Islam and Shi’ism played in forming the identity of Iranians during the era (footnote on Persia for Persian). However, translator Sayyid Muhammad Rashid, the editor of *al-Manar*, who published three letters of Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (also known as Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn Asadābādī) whose identity intertwined with Islam, expressed his uncertainty and doubt about the 1906 Constitutional Movement. For instance, in the letter Afghani wrote to Hajji Mirza Hasan-i-Shirazi, the mujtahids that issued fatwa in the tobacco episode, Afghani wrote, “the Home of Religion (Baytu’d-Din) [was] sold to and overrun by foreigners and unbelievers” (Brown, p. 16), in criticism of the Shah, he wrote, “he has similarly disposed of the grapes used for making wine.”

¹⁰⁰ Here is the entire Article 2, “At no time must any legal enactment of the Sacred National Consultative Assembly, established by the favor and assistance of His Holiness the Imam of the Age [the Messiah] (may God hasten his glad Advent!), the favor of His Majesty the Shahinshah of Islam (may God immortalize his reign!), the care of the Proofs of Islam (may God multiply the like of them!), and the whole people of the Persian nation, be at variance with the sacred principles of Islam or the laws established by His Holiness the Best of Mankind (on whom and on whose household be the Blessing of God and His Peace!) It is hereby declared that it is for the learned doctors of theology (the ‘*ulama*’)—may God prolong the blessing of their existence!—to determine whether such laws as may be proposed are or are not conformable to the principles of Islam; and it is therefore officially enacted that there shall at all times exist a Committee composed of not less than five mujtahids or other devout theologians, cognizant also of the requirements of the age, [which committee shall be elected] in this manner. The *ulama* and Proofs of Islam shall present to the National Consultative Assembly the names of 20 of the ‘*ulama*’ possessing the attributes mentioned above; and the Members of the National Consultative Assembly shall, either by unanimous acclamation, or by vote, designate five or more of these, according to the exigencies of the time, and recognize these as Members, so that they may carefully discuss and consider all matters proposed in the Assembly, and reject and repudiate, wholly or in part, any such proposal which is at variance with the Sacred Laws of Islam, so that it shall not obtain the title of legality. In such matters the decision of this Ecclesiastical Committee shall be followed and obeyed, and this article shall continue unchanged until the appearance of His Holiness the Proof of the Age (may God hasten his glad Advent!).” *Ibid.*, pp. 372–373.

¹⁰¹ It is therefore quite surprising to see Edward Brown observe, “. . . the popular or constitutional party may very properly be termed *Nationalism* . . . I wish to insist that in Persia the party which is variously termed *Nationalist*, *Constitutionalist* and *Popular* is essentially the patriotic party, which stand for progress, freedom, tolerance, and above all for national independence and *Persia for the Persian*, and that it was primarily called into existence” (Brown E (1910) *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*. Cambridge University Press, p. xx, *Emphasis origin*).

One may point to the *precarious nature*¹⁰² of the 1906 Iranian Constitution Law, which had set the standard for the future Iranian generations to follow and hence dismiss the national consciousness contention. Such argument, however, is totally irrelevant and missed the essence of the argument mentioned above. The point is that Islam, and in particular Shi'ism, has been embedded into the document of law.

At the time, the country was ruled and managed by two complementary sets of laws: Shir'a religious law and Urf customary law administrated by the state, both of which assumed the new mandate in the post-revolution era wherein the former gained further strength, while the latter downgraded.¹⁰³ At first, however, this paradigm shift led to some anxiety among clerics who realized a constitutional order could make over both the judicial system and established social and religious hierarchies. Many clerics began to resist the reform of the 1906 Constitution, which in some respects seemed "progressive," but failed to advance their grievances.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²In which I mean that it is a common knowledge that the 1906 Constitution Laws modeled after the Belgian Constitution of 1831 and borrowed elements from the Bulgarian and Ottoman laws, and by some account, "Germany, Japan, and Russia in reducing monarchical powers. (See Afary J (2013) The place of Shi'i clerics in the first Iranian Constitution. *Critical Research on Religion* 1(3):327–346, December 2013.) Add to this bewildering situation, "While in exile in London, Hasan Taqizadeh gave a speech to the Central Asian Society on November 11, 1908, where he explained that he and his colleagues had based the Supplementary Constitutional Laws 'largely on the Belgian (Constitutional) laws, partly on the French, and partly on the laws prevalent in Bulgaria.' We are unaware of the language in which the Bulgarian law was initially examined." (Ibid., p. 71, Footnote 15)

¹⁰³Of course, this school of thought faced various resistances. However, the hostility was not directed toward Islam, but the disagreement was about the means to achieve desired outcomes. The opponent mainly came from deputies, journalists, and intellectuals of the time. Most notable among them was Sayyid Hasan Taqizadeh, a son of Seyyed Taqi Ordubadi, a clergyman and a celebrated and articulated member of the parliament (Majlis), who took off his garment in pursuit of left nationalism, liberalism, and social democratic ideas. His position was a quite unorthodox, as a man of faith, as he stated, "Fanaticism is dead in Persia. The reactionary *mullas*, with Shaykh Fazlullah at their head, raised the cry of 'Babi'ism,' 'Islam in danger,' 'Infidels,' etc." However, as mentioned earlier, the debate was about the means and not Islam, as Taqizadeh told his audience, "We had forgotten a word of the prophet, namely, that '*the Hand of God is with the multitude.*' And, glory be to God, we have seen that the union of the people made the whole world tremble. Now I will remind the people that a year ago they had not one by one this strength, and were under the yoke of tyranny and despotism. But from the time that they gave each other the hand and united, they have seized o their rights; and we hope that this unity may last until the coming of the Twelfth Imam (may God hasten his glad advent!)." (Remark [Brown noted] this quaint touch at the end of this so western speech. It may not inaptly be compared to the cock which Socrates ordered his disciples to sacrifice on the day of his death.)" See Brown E (1956) *A Literary History of Persia; From Firdawsi to Sa'di*, Vol. II. Cambridge University Press, p. 168 and 167, respectively. After Reza Shah and his Cossack Brigade took over the government in June 1908, Taqizadeh (along with some others) sought asylum and took refuge at the British legation, which he was unjustly subjected to severe criticisms by none but his compatriots who were innately endowed with the natural talent of scorning their fellow citizens but never themselves.

¹⁰⁴For instance, the original document substantially curtailed the authority of the shah. While he remained the head of state, his ministers were accountable to the Majlis and could be dismissed; Majlis was given the right to ratify all major financial transactions as well as concessions with foreign power; freedom of press was guaranteed and Majlis secessions were open to the public.

The end outcome, the supplement of the 1906 Constitution, appeared to endorse two separated sets of law, one of which “institutionalized clerical authority,” while the other restrained clerics’ influence in daily operations of governing the county.¹⁰⁵ And so, the emerging consensus among scholars of Iranian history is, “pre-modern Shia Iran witnessed the gradual emergence of two distinct but interdependent centers of legitimate authority, religion (*din*) and temporal (*daulat*).”¹⁰⁶

Nevertheless, this change in paradigm in Iran remained intact despite the fact that Shi’i leadership was far from united, but almost could interpret laws at will. Nevertheless, they retained moral authority over the people, the legislative branch of the government, as well as the king himself. There are vivid examples of such authority in our history. One, for instance, is the correspondence between crown prince Ahmad Mirza and Agha Sayyid Abdullah, a mujtahid (an Islamic scholar who is competent in interpreting Shari’a by diligence, or as in Farsi *ijtihad*), in which the prince wholeheartedly (desperately) tried to convince the Agha Sayyid that he [the prince] was falsely accused of being against the constitutional movement, as he wrote: “from what I heard, a letter from Tabriz address to you claimed that the crown prince opposes the nation (*Melat*) wishes [constitutional Monarchy] and rejects the establishment of *Majlis*. First, I sworn to God al mighty that this claim is utterly untrue and I wish to God that the nation prosper and be free from all these despairs. Second, I swore to the dignity of your family, that I have not diverged from the path chosen by the nation. Why should I have? . . . you know well those mendacious individuals who’s main is to disdained others and disseminate false accusation, . . . don’t you? I beg of you to inform others [mujtahids] that the accusation is not true. I wait for respond, if it is not too much to ask.”¹⁰⁷ The other example is when in protest to Mozaffar ad-Din Shah’s action against discontent *ulama*, a group of women gathered around the royal carriage on its way to the holy shrine and cried out: “we want our leaders and guardians of our religion, we are Muslim, and hence their guidance is imperative. They [*ulama*] married us, rented our houses. We were and are utterly in their hand. How can we consent that *ulama* be punished or forced to an exile. You, the shah of Muslim, respect their command. You, the shah of Muslim, don’t belittle and condemned Muslim *ulama*. Be aware that when Russian and British faced you, it is their call for Jihad that rescues you.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ For instance, the Article 46 of supplementary laws stated, “The appointment and dismissal of Minister is effected by virtue of the Royal Decree of the King,” and subsequent articles granted the king the right to grant “military rank, decoration and other honorary distinction” (Art. 47), “the choice of officials as heads of various government department, whether internal or foreign” (Art. 48), “The supreme command of all the forces” (Art. 50), and convoke.

¹⁰⁶ Bayat M (1991) *Iran’s first revolution: Shi’ism and the constitutional revolution of 1905–1909*. Oxford University Press, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ Kermani N (1969) *History of Iranian Awakening (Tarik-i Bidari-i Iranian)*. Cultural Foundation of Iran, 1969 (1349), vol. IV, p. 21. Translation by the author of the present study.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 121. Translation by the author of the present study.

6.3 Servitude to Power

The Qajar's concession affairs resonate with what Iranian history has persistently revealed: *the servitude to power* facilitates both self-interest and endurance of self-preservation. As one acquaints oneself with the past several hundred years of history of this ancient land, particularly since the Safavid region, one cannot help but notice the way in which deliberate subjectification to Power grows into a unique segment of Iranian psyche.¹⁰⁹ This observation is merely confirmed by our frantic denial of it, which takes different forms and rationalizations. For instance, there is a common assertion that the strength and attractiveness of Iranian culture endowed us with the supernatural ability to turn a humiliation of defeat into a dignity by overpowering barbarian foreign invaders so that they enthusiastically adapt our mores, values, and way of life.¹¹⁰ This supposition, in turn, has been a mechanism of general passivity¹¹¹ that allowed us to consider our oblivion toward occupations as a "savvy" practice that regularly fooled no one but ourselves.¹¹² Étienne Mallarmé's description of this epoch signifies this point as he reminded us, "There is no Present, no, a present does not exist. *Unless the Crowd declares itself*."¹¹³

¹⁰⁹The intention here is not to outline a comprehensive Iranian psychological profile, but rather to identify, as Jahangir Amuzegar observed, "certain features of the Persian psyche, embedded in the Iranian culture, are distinctly recognizable; and despite essential human similarities, some of these archetypical traits are different from other cultures... The objective is merely to pinpoint certain salient features of the Persian personality that guide the sociopolitical attitude and behavior among the politically active." (See Amuzegar J (1991) *The Dynamic of the Iranian revolution; The Pahlavis' Triumph and Tragedy*, State University of New York Press, pp. 99–100.)

¹¹⁰The tendency to deny reality is also dominant among our academicians and scholars, whom sometimes sound desperate to reject what is staring at them. For instance, Shapour Suren-Pahlav observed, "The period after the Islamic conquest is described by Iranian scholars as the 'Two Centuries of Silence.' *There is no inscriptional or textual evidence for New Persian and only very scanty indications for the continuing use of Middle Persian. However scholars consider it unlikely that Iranians deserted their mother tongue and only cultivated Arabic. The lack of any literary evidence from this period will certainly have been compounded by the destruction of Iranian libraries by the Mongols under Genghis Khan and his successors—and there may also be other reasons unknown to us.*" (See Suren-Pahlav S (2007) *Persian Not Farsi: Iranian Identity Under Fire*. The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies, p. 3. Emphasis added.)

¹¹¹Passivity according to Levinas (1989) refers to the ethical obligation of the self toward the other. For the topic of passivity and servitude, see Biceaga V (2010) *The Concept of Passivity in Husserl's Phenomenology* (Vol. 60). Springer Science & Business Media.

¹¹²A compatible case can be drawn to illustrate this tendency, e.g., the relationship between pain and the brain. When you whack yourself with a hammer, it feels like the pain is in your thumb. But really it's in your brain. That is because our perception of pain is shaped by brain circuits that are constantly filtering and interpreting the information coming from our sensory nerves.

¹¹³Badiou A, Toscano A (2005) *Handbook of inaeesthetics*. Stanford University Press, p. 31. The original of the passage is 'Il n'est pas de Présent, non—un présent n'existe pas... Faute que se déclare la Foule, faute—de tout.

The statement “deliberate subjectification to Power” is a loaded expression with magical capture that needs to be explained bit by bit to understand the implication of each word. In the sphere of the present discussion, the word “deliberate” implies conflating passivity with inertia, impotence, and submissiveness, which conceives of a plurality of values that are often exhibited by cultural sayings (idiom, aphorism, dictum, motto, epigram) that contain a general, observational reality, a pity expression of embedded “wisdom” such as one hand does not make sound; the house of Power was there before us; we do no more than use of it; the giant despot was already up and about; and we do no more harm by milking it. As a conduct, however, it may be perceived as a code of behavior, e.g., a patriarchy, which requires conscious submissiveness.

Subjection commonly means we are moved by the irresistible will of others or that we become a mere passive object. However, it turns into subjectification (of servitude) when someone is determined by other and endures others with respect of what determines him.¹¹⁴ Pure and simple causal determinism¹¹⁵ is not servitude for any of its terms (either cause or effect), because it occurs as the unity of order (effect follows cause). Moreover, for the determined to follow obediently the footsteps of the other, it has to be free (not coerced). The capacity of freedom to choose, therefore, is what one will have to escape determination, but once the choice is forgone, a state of servitude prevails. As a mere passive object, subjection is when we act on the basis of rules and principles whose interpretations are predetermined at first, but a choice to submit to these interpretations ultimately lies with us: we have no choice but to make a choice, in which we are utterly free.¹¹⁶ Therefore, a notion of servitude under consideration here is not that of intemperance but rather a conscious indulgence. In short, servitude is a consequence of a conscious decision (to submit) at a certain point in time. I further contend that such a conscious decision would eventually turn into a behavioral pattern, a culturally produced strategy if you would, that produces a mechanism of enslavement (an apparatus of capture), or Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari claimed the paradigm of the bond and the knot.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴Levinas E (1987) Collected philosophical papers (Vol. 100). Springer Science & Business Media, p. 134.

¹¹⁵According to Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Causal determinism is, roughly speaking, the idea that every event is necessitated by antecedent events and conditions together with the laws of nature. The idea is ancient, but first became subject to clarification and mathematical analysis in the eighteenth century. Determinism is deeply connected with our understanding of the physical sciences and their explanatory ambitions, on the one hand, and with our views about human free action on the other. In both of these general areas there is no agreement over whether determinism is true (or even whether it can be known true or false), and what the import for human agency would be in either case.” See <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/determinism-causal/>.

¹¹⁶Mainly because, as Hannah Arendt observed, “we are of the world and not merely in it.”

¹¹⁷Deleuze G, Félix G (2005) A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Trans: Brian Massumi. University of Minnesota Press, p. 428. However, the authors later stated that such machinic enslavement “is no more *voluntary* than it is *forced*.” Ibid., p. 460. Emphasis original.

Power is the next notion. We often think of power as an extrinsically subordinating force that relegates those subjected to it to a lesser order. However, Foucault helped us to understand power as forming the subject as well. Power, therefore, not only constitutes what we often oppose but also “what we harbor and preserve in the being that we are.”¹¹⁸ In this respect, we choose to accept the terms power imposes on us because we are inclined to bind our welfare to those terms. In other words, I subordinate to the terms (imposed by power) so I can be a subject benefactor. In fact, Power, in its Iranian context, does not bear any negative connotations, repressive suggestions, or even wicked intents, as it is possibly perceived in other parts of the world. On the contrary, Power is looked upon with the utmost respect to lead, to guide, and eventually to provide prosperity and security. Jahangir Amuzegar underlined a similar sentiment by observing, “Dynastic rulers, military heroes, spiritual leaders, faith healers, and even neighborhood bullies always evoke extraordinary awe, respect, and admiration in the Persian Mind.”¹¹⁹

Our description of the term “deliberate subjectification to Power” is complemented by Judith Butler, who made an acute observation by connecting subjection and power in a circular flow, as she declared subjection “signifies the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject.”¹²⁰ The other side of this process reveals that power is no more than a product of its subject, albeit one that dominates its own maker. Max Stirner characterized this interdependency, or more precisely two-way-ness, by appealing to Hegel’s dialectic of *Herrschaft* and *Knechtschaft* in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.¹²¹ However, the matter of the two-way-ness between subjectification and power finds its original expression in proto-anarchist¹²² Étienne de La Boétie’s *Discourse on Voluntary*

¹¹⁸ Butler J (1991) *The Psychic Life of Power*. Stanford University Press, p. 2.

¹¹⁹ Amuzegar J (1991) *The Dynamic of the Iranian revolution; The Pahlavis’ Triumph and Tragedy*, State University of New York Press, p. 102.

¹²⁰ Butler J (1991) *The Psychic Life of Power*. Stanford University Press, p. 2. Anecdotally, the first man we meet on the street in Iran is immediately ready to share his displeasure for injustice, oppression, and brutality in the current institutional practices. It is a fraternity in the bitterness of servitude.

¹²¹ And stated, “He who, to hold his own, must count on the absence of will in others is a thing made by these others, as the master is a thing made by the servant. If submissiveness ceased, it would be all over with lordship.” (See Stirner M (2000) *The Ego and Its Own*, Cambridge University Press, p. 175.) For Stirner, subordination to Power is nothing but foolishness and weakness irrespective of circumstances. In Stirner’s eyes, for instance, Socrates’ refusal to escape punishment or even (earlier) to request exclusion was a clear indication of Socrates’ lack of commitment to weaken the community by undermining Power, e.g., the system of law, which is utterly condemned by Stirner. Stirner sees Socrates as a “fool” to concede to the Athenians the right to condemn him; his failure to escape was a “weakness,” a product of his “delusion” that he was a member of a community rather than an individual, and of his failure to understand that the Athenians were his “enemies,” that he himself and no one else could be his only judge. (Ibid., p. xxvii).

¹²² Contrary to some who considered the anarchism as a political notion and ideology, it is rooted in discipline of philosophy. In fact, Kant is also known as a proto-anarchist philosopher. (See May T (1990) *Kant the Liberal, Kant the Anarchist: Rawls and Lyotard on Kantian Justice*. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 28 (4), pp. 535–538.)

Servitude, written sometime between 1552 and 1553.¹²³ Reiterating the central thesis of La Boétie, Rothbard notes in his introduction, "... every tyranny must necessarily be grounded upon general popular acceptance. In short, the people themselves, for whatever reason, acquiesce in their own subjection. If this were not the case, no tyranny, indeed, no government, could long endure ... The tyrant is but one person, and could scarcely command the obedience of another person, much less of an entire country, if most of the subjects did not grant their obedience by their own consent."¹²⁴

In another way, Power does not reside and succeed if the subjects refuse to grant their submission by their own accord.¹²⁵ The tyrant, observed Bertrand De Jouvenel, "would not derive legitimacy from the plebiscite if the general will had not already been proclaimed the sufficient source of authority."¹²⁶ Bruno Latour brilliantly underlined the essence of this argument and declared, "society is not what holds us together, it is what held together,"¹²⁷ And therefore, power is an outcome, not a cause.

¹²³de la Boétie E (1942) *The Discours sur la servitude volontaire*. Trans: Harry Kurz. Columbia University Press.

¹²⁴de la Boétie E (1975) *The Politics of Obedience: The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude*. Free Life Editions, p. 13. This issue was also raised in various disciplines. For instance, Dostoevsky's "the Grand Inquisitor," is a critical satire on modern theological rationalism and *authoritarianism* in general and Roman Catholicism in particular. The idea is that Christ revisits earth, coming to Spain at the period of the Inquisition, and is at once arrested as a heretic by the Grand Inquisitor. The imposed question is why is Christ's message transformed into a practice of submission? The Inquisitor responds that people do not want freedom and truth, which only caused them deprivation and suffering; they want miracles, eternal salvation, and authority. The pain that accompanies compliance is preferable to the pain that attends freedom.

¹²⁵Century later, Thomas Hobbes underlined exactly the opposite notion his most celebrated work *Leviathan* when he stated, "And commonly they [men] that live under a monarch, think it the fault of monarchy; and they that live under the government of democracy, or other sovereign assembly, attribute all the inconvenience to that form of commonwealth; whereas the power in all forms, if they be perfect enough to protect them, is the same; not considering that the state of man can never be without some incommodity or other; and that the greatest, that in any form of government can possibly happen to the people in general, is scarce sensible, in respect of the miseries, and horrible calamities, that accompany a civil war; or that dissolute condition of masterless men, without subjection to laws, and a coercive power to tie their hands from rapine and revenge." (See Hobbes T (1998) *Leviathan*. Oxford University Press, p. 122.) David Hume, however, concurred Boétie's principle 200 years later, as he lucidly stated, "Nothing appears more surprising to those who consider human affairs with a philosophical eye, than the easiness with which the many are governed by the few; and the implicit submission, with which men resign their own sentiments and passions to those of their rulers. When we enquire by what means this wonder is effected, we shall find, that, as Force is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is, therefore, on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to the most free and most popular. The sultan of Egypt, or the emperor of Rome, might drive his harmless subjects, like brute beasts, against their sentiments and inclination. But he must, at least, have led his *mamalukes* or *praetorian* bands, like men, by their opinion." (See Hume D (2011) *Essays*. Available at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/36120/36120-h/36120-h.htm>.)

¹²⁶De Jouvenel B (1993) *On Power: The Natural History of Its Growth*, Liberty Fund, p. 15.

¹²⁷Latour B (1986) *The Power of Association*. In: Law J (ed) *Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge*. Routledge Kegan & Paul, p. 276.

As Latour later has noted, “No matter how much power one appears to accumulate, it is always necessary to obtain it from others who are doing the action thus it is always necessary to redefine who is acting, why it is necessary to act together, what are the boundaries of the collective, how responsibility should be allocated”¹²⁸ The reason, therefore, that we are what we are, is because of our reverence to Power. In this context, all governments, all states, and regimes stand unless the public proclaims itself as free from power. To deny this obvious fact is to deny what history can best offer to a country like Iran, to which we are conspicuously oblivious. Robert Michels was much harsher in his description of society’s rank-and-file members as he once said “The incompetence of the masses, which is in the last analysis always recognized by the leaders, serves to provide a theoretical justification for the domination of these.”¹²⁹ Perhaps that is the main reason why under a despotic regime, indifference, deception, and disassociation become the basis of citizenry, particularly for those who skilled at evading responsibility.

Boétie’s core quest was to understand, “how it happens that so many men, so many villages, so many cities, so many nations, sometimes suffer under a single tyrant who has no other power than the power they give him; who is able to harm them only to the extent to which they have the willingness to bear with him; who could do them absolutely no injury unless they preferred to put up with him rather than contradict him. Surely a striking situation! Yet it is so common that one must grieve the more and wonder the less at the spectacle of a million men serving in wretchedness, their necks under the yoke, not constrained by a greater multitude than themselves”¹³⁰ Nevertheless, Boétie concurred that this mass submission must be out of consent rather than simply out of cowardice.¹³¹ In a sense, Boétie’s discourse neutralized the conventional wisdom of political theory, e.g., classical liberalism, whereby men are submissive by their own accord. The question is why, or more precisely how, the subject is formed in subordination.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Michels R (1915) *Political parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*. Hearst’s International Library Company, p. 88.

¹³⁰ de La Boétie E (1975) *The Politics of Obedience: The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude*. Free Life Editions, p. 46.

¹³¹ As Boétie stated, “Shall we call subjection to such a leader cowardice? . . . If a hundred, if a thousand endure the caprice of a single man, should we not rather say that they lack not the courage but the desire to rise against him, and that such an attitude indicates indifference rather than cowardice? When not a hundred, not a thousand men, but a hundred provinces, a thousand cities, a million men, refuse to assail a single man from whom the kindest treatment received is the infliction of serfdom and slavery, what shall we call that? Is it cowardice? . . . When a thousand, a million men, a thousand cities, fail to protect themselves against the domination of one man, this cannot be called cowardly, for cowardice does not sink to such a depth What monstrous vice, then, is this which does not even deserve to be called cowardice, a vice for which no term can be found vile enough.?” (See de la Boétie E (1975) *The Politics of Obedience: The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude*. Free Life Editions, p. 48.)

Many attempts were made to address this question. For instance, in philosophical debates, one can point to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in which the precipitating condition of subject formation, or better yet a primary longing in recoil prevails in his view of the "unhappy consciousness."¹³² Another similar debate appears in the Nietzsche's account of master and slave morality in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, in which Nietzsche provides us with a stunning critique of Judeo-Christian moralization. He sees no master and slave but rather, "a *master morality* and a *slave morality*." While the contrast is unambiguous, he states at the outset, "I add at once, that in all higher and more mixed cultures attempts to mediate between the two moralities also appear, even more often a confusion of the same and mutual misunderstanding, even, on occasion, their harsh juxtaposition—indeed, in the same person, within one soul. The moral value distinctions—have either arisen among a ruling section that was pleasurable aware of being different from the ruled, or among the ruled, the slave and dependents of every degree."¹³³ Therefore, the moral conflict appears, as Nietzsche perceived, between these contrasting stances. In this context, conflating them into one soul/person is what Nietzsche criticized and refuted as cherished compulsions that may be sought to make all men equal, and hence make all men slaves.¹³⁴

Another collection of thoughts as to why people submit to Power by their own accord appears in unorthodox political literatures. For instance, anarchist thinkers are generally more aware of the danger of political power and the potential authoritarianism and domination over a public sphere and any political arrangement. That is why they are particularly wary of the bonds through which people are tied to Power.¹³⁵ In a more formal tune, Wilhelm Reich's Marxist-Freudian analysis of the

¹³²For Hegel, unhappy consciousness is torn between a yearning for "what could be" and a disappointment with "what is." In this respect, Pinkard observed, "The slave begins to realize the slave has consciousness; thus, the slave is free in his head but not in reality. The slave must either rebel against the master or live a life that does not align with the slave's conception of itself. This is significant; Hegel called this mindset 'slave consciousness,' and many people have interpreted his work to mean that no one is a slave who did not both voluntarily become one and continue to be one by virtue of their choice not to rebel." (See Pinkard T (1996) Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason. Cambridge University Press, pp. 53–63.)

¹³³Nietzsche F, Person KA, Diethel C (eds) (2006) *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Cambridge University Press, p. 154.

¹³⁴See Kaufmann WA (1964) *Religion from Tolstoy to Camus: Basic Writings on Religious Truth and Morals. A Companion Vol. to Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*. Harper & Row, pp. 191–200. It is noteworthy that both Hegel and Nietzsche, in their accounts of master-slave relationship, describe the slave as the historical figure. However, for Hegel, this symbolized an early advance in history, while for Nietzsche it represented a treat, because he believes that slave morality in modern society sets a dangerous precedence.

¹³⁵Perhaps that is why, unlike the Marxist-Leninists, "anarchists insisted that the state must be abolished in the first stages of the revolution: if, on the other hand, state power was seized by a vanguard and used—under the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'—to revolutionize society, it will, rather than eventually 'withering away,' expand in size and power, engendering new class contradictions and antagonisms." (See Newman S (2010) *Voluntary Servitude Reconsidered: Radical Politics and the Problem of Self-Domination. Anarchist Development in Cultural Studies* 1, p. 36.)

mass psychology of fascism pointed to a desire for domination and authority based on the Marxist category of ideological false consciousness.¹³⁶ Following Reich, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari stated that fascism is dangerous because of “its molecular or micropolitical power, for it is a mass movement: a cancerous body rather than a totalitarian organism . . . only microfascism provides an answer to . . . Why does desire its own repression, how can it desire its own repression?”¹³⁷ They reject all together the notion that people passively submit to power and add, “nor do they want to be repressed; nor are they tricked by an ideological lure.”¹³⁸ Instead, they note that people are generally victimized by a highly developed and engineered process of “segmentarity” (calculated arrangement) to ensure and control the identity of each agency, so that we have future but no “becoming” in Heidegger’s perception of the word!¹³⁹ However, in terms of Boétie’s discourse of servitude to power, their analysis offers even less clear insight, which bewilders the reader.¹⁴⁰

The most relevant conceptualization of this study, however, is Pierre Clusters’ account that voluntary servitude is the outcome of a misfortune of history. In discussing Boétie’s discourse, Clusters stated, “What he [Boétie] discovers, by slipping

¹³⁶ Riech W, Wolef TP (1946) *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*. Orgone Institute Press. It should be noted, however, while Riech failed to provide a convincing argument to build his thesis, the Marx’s notion has some merit in explaining why people inclined to servitude to Power. According to Warren Frederick Morris, “Marx ideology is motivated by a conflict of material interests between competing social classes. Resolution is attempted by ideas of the dominant class that constitute an ideology claimed as universal truth. Ideological beliefs conceal and suppress the true interest of a subservient class by substituting a false consciousness of social reality. Socialization of the whole society proceeds with an unconscious general acceptance of ideology. A Marxist ideological false consciousness has psychological parallels with Freudian conceived neurosis: conflicting class interest with an interpersonal conflict of instinctual needs; ideological false ideas with neurotic symptoms; suppression of subservient class interest with a repression of instinctual gratification; a dominating social class with a dominating authority figure; ideological socialization with ego ideals introjected [as the process where the subject replicates in itself behaviors, attributes, or other fragments of the surrounding world, especially of other subjects] from a paternal (patriarchal) authority figure; ideological concealment of dominant motivating class interest with disguised desire wrought by repression.” (See Morris WF (2010) *Understanding Ideology*. University Press of America, p. 99.)

¹³⁷ Deleuze G, Felix G (2005) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans: Brian Massumi. University of Minnesota Press, p. 215.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ In discussing Heidegger’s notion of becoming, Maturana and Varela explained, “our becoming is an expression of our manner of being autonomous living.” (See Maturana HR, Varela FJ (1992) *The tree of Knowledge: The Biological Roots of Human Understanding*. Shambala, p. 241.)

¹⁴⁰ As they observed, “The knot, bond, capture, . . . travel a long history: first, the objective, imperial collective bond; then all of the forms of subjective personal bonds; finally, the Subject that binds itself, and in so doing renews the most magical operation, ‘a cosmopolitan, universal energy which overflows every restriction and bond so as to establish itself instead as the sole bond.’ Even subjection is only a relay for the fundamental moment of the State, namely, civil capture or machinic enslavement. The State is assuredly not the locus of liberty, nor the agent of a forced servitude or war capture. Should we then speak of ‘voluntary servitude’? This is like the expression ‘magical capture’: its only merit is to underline the apparent mystery” (Deleuze G, Felix G (2005) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans: Brian Massumi. University of Minnesota Press, p. 460).

outside of History, is precisely that the society in which people want to serve the tyrant is historical, that it is not eternal and has not always existed, that it has a date of birth and that something must have happened, necessarily, for men to fall from freedom into servitude: ‘... what misfortune so denatured man, only born in truth to live freely, to make him lose the memory of his first existence and the desire to retrieve it?’ Misfortune: tragic accident, bad luck, the effects of which grow to the point of abolishing previous memory, to the point of substituting the love of servitude for the desire for freedom.... What is designated here is indeed this historical moment of the birth of History, this fatal rupture which should never have happened, this irrational event which we moderns call the birth of the State.”¹⁴¹ In the Clusters’ dialog of the misfortune of history, he tries to explain people’s servitude to Power as a result of past troubling experiences in addition to present threats.

However, narratives of world history convey almost no inclination to fall (have sympathy) for a notion of misfortune as a determining factor for human’s regression *over time*. Tales of history have often been saturated with victors vanquishing victims, which more closely resembles eating frenzies between predators and prey than civility. Conquerors exist to tear apart others only to become extinct.¹⁴² Domination, however, has never been a lasting notion since subjects never cease to fight against aggressors and aggressions.

On this count, Hippolyte A. Taine provided us with a revealing description of the condition of French peasants in 1789.¹⁴³ Quoting Governor Restif de la Bretonne, Taine wrote, “No doubt whatever existed in my mind of the power of the king to compel any man to bestow his wife or daughter on me, and my village (Sacy, in Burgundy) thought as I did. The mass of the people have no religion but that of their priests, no law but that of those above them, no morality but that of Self-interest.”¹⁴⁴ In the same breath, Taine also observed that the same people instigated the revolt that resulted in downfall of French Monarchy as the voluntary servitude to Power ceased, which began with the refusal of several communities to pay tax, and as Taine writes, “Others do better: on pillaging the strong-box of the receiver of the tax on leather at Brignolles, they shut out *Vive le Roi*.... The scope of their imagination is proportionate to their shortsightedness. ‘Bread, no more rents, no more taxes!’ is the sole cry, the cry of want, while exasperated want plunges ahead like a famished bull. Down with the monopolist!—storehouses are forced open, convoys of grain are stopped, markets are pillaged, bakers are hung, and the price of bread is fixed so that none is to be had or concealed.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Clastres P (1994) *Archaeology of Violence*. Trans: Jeanine Herman. Semiotext (e), New York, p. 94.

¹⁴² Here, I am talking about conquerors as individuals and not a system.

¹⁴³ It should also be noted that 1789 bears a particular importance since some historians have argued that crop failure in 1788 and cold weather in the winter of 1788/1789 led to peasant revolts in various parts of France, which resulted to the French Revolution.

¹⁴⁴ Taine HA (2001) *The Origins of Contemporary France: The Ancient Regime*. Trans: John Durand. Blackmask Online, p. 225.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 226–227.

History, particularly since the rise of bourgeois society in the eighteenth century onward, is indeed flooded with profuse accounts of similar resurrections, in which the population who had been for years slaves to Power realized their collective power and transformed from a subservient mass to a Powerful one, thereby gaining liberty.¹⁴⁶ However, the determinants of a success or a failure of a popular renaissance within a particular national context are utterly dependant on two interrelated key conditions.¹⁴⁷ First, (the necessary condition) requires a presence of the shared critical consciousness that inspires a collective understanding of tensions, contradictions, fears, doubts, hopes, and deferred dreams that are part and parcel of living under the yoke of Power. Second (the sufficient condition) entails a collective inclination to acknowledge the subservient mind-set to Power. When these conditions are absent, efforts to gain liberty (or liberation) are mostly futile, as illustrated in the case of Iran. Ironically, rather than examining our failures to liberate ourselves from such servitude and seeking reasons for the lack of prevalence of these conditions, Iranians often conceal or deny their submission with pretentious diction of political slogans that are deceitful but superficially attractive.¹⁴⁸ Collaborations with invaders and conquerors are depicted as noble conducts, rather than betrayal, and are often viewed as brilliant acts that save Iranian heritage and cultural attributes. Be that as it may, however, what has been regularly overlooked and neglected is the fact that alliances with the aggressors turned our mind-set into submission and servitude to Power that has gradually altered what we ought to protect: our identity. In other words, our common evasions to take stands against aggressions that allegedly safeguarded our heritage resulted in a loss of our own distinctiveness. This turned us into a faceless and bewildered people. As one of our most celebrated literary figures, Hakim Abul-Qasim Mansur (known as Ferdowsi Tusi)¹⁴⁹ declared:

Ze Iran, ze turk,¹⁵⁰ ze tazian
nejadi padid ayad ander meyan
na dehqan, na turk, na tazi bovvad
sokanha be kerdar bazi bovvad.

From Iranians and Turks and Arabs,
A race will come to existence,
Which shall be neither pure Iranian nor Turk nor Arab,
And all its words and manners will prove worthless.

¹⁴⁶ Paulo Freire brilliantly used the metaphor of Hunger to delineate such realization, as he writes, "... our hunger was of the type that arrives unannounced and unauthorized, making itself at home without an end in sight." (See Freire PRN (1996) *Letters to Cristina*. Routledge, p. 15.)

¹⁴⁷ From the contemporary perspectives, scholars like Paulo Reglus Neves Freire and Peter McLaren should be used as reference for theoretical ground (critical cultural pedagogy) of both conditions.

¹⁴⁸ The implication of such convergence is obvious: liberty could never be achieved since the underlying problem is denied, and hence status quo remain as is!

¹⁴⁹ Ferdowsi means "from paradise," and is derived from the name Ferdous (cf. Avestan pairi-daeza, later para-diz then par-des or par-dos, arabized to fer-dos). Tusi means "from Tus." In the poet's case, the name Ferdowsi Tusi became a name and a title: The Tusi Poet from Paradise (see <http://www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/shahnameh/>).

¹⁵⁰ The term *Turk* is referring to the Turkmen tribe, one of descendants of the Moghuls that invaded Persia.

In this context, the dialog of “misfortune of history” can be rationalized as a notion of servitude to Power as a *transitory* passive submission, rather than a reason for its perpetuation. This interpretation is compatible with the usage of reason as a verb, which means, “to use the faculty of reason so as to arrive at conclusions.” A reason is not a rationalization, in the sense that it (reasoning) does not reflect our motives.¹⁵¹ Accordingly, a manthat delineates people as a *victim* of circumstance, which often intends to exempt them from taking any responsibility for their conduct, is total banality.¹⁵² However, Clasters’ rationalization is revealing in terms of the distinction between a mistake and a choice. A mistake, as an error of judgment, is susceptible to circumstances and therefore inevitable. A choice implies existence of selection that reflects our motives. It is made when options are available, and hence it is the innate part of conscious (and can be controlled) because of the presence of awareness.¹⁵³ In this respect, a mistake can be prevented by prior experience(s) that familiarizes one to the prevailing/possible circumstances, while a choice is rather based on “faculty of judgment,” in the words of Hannah Arendt, and hence requires an individual to exercise judgment in accordance to ones’ own values and principles.

And so I contend that Iranians persisting as subservient to Power is not caused by a temporary misfortune of history, and it can only be considered as a choice rather than a mistake made in the heat of the moment of misfortune.¹⁵⁴ This observation is made despite John Stuart Mill’s warning, “The human faculties of perception, judgment, discriminative feeling, mental activity, and even moral preference, are exercised only in making a choice. “He who does anything because it is

¹⁵¹ In this study, reasoning is perceived to construct a logical structure that facilitates our understanding of an event, a necessary precondition that provides a target for criticism.

¹⁵² For one thing, it denies history as a social phenomenon. Moreover, there is always Marx, who convinced almost everybody that “Men make their own history,” which corresponds to Edward Hallett Carr’s proclamation, “history is made above and beyond.”

¹⁵³ In the simplest form, for instance, if you pour salt into your coffee because you thought it was sugar, you made a mistake, while to commit and conceal fraudulent conduct or embezzlement is a choice.

¹⁵⁴ At this juncture, it is important to delineate further the nature of servitude to Power under consideration here, which is an inclination for possible material and “worldly” rewards. In this respect, servitude to higher power, God, or the obligations that are demanded under the national legal system are not under the consideration. The reason for this exclusion, particularly on the first type of submission is related to what Elias Canetti called “religious submission,” in which he observed, “The distinction between force and power can be seen in another quite different sphere, that of the varying degrees of religious submission. Everyone who believes in God believes that he is continuously in His power and, in his own way, has come to terms with it. But there are those for whom this is not enough. They await some sharp intervention, some direct act of divine force, which they can recognize and feel as such. They live in expectation of God’s commands; for them He has the cruder features of a ruler. His active will and their active and explicit submission in each particular case become the core of their religion. Religions of this kind incline to the doctrine of predestination; their adherents are always able to feel that everything which happens to them is a direct expression of God’s will. Thus, all their lives, they find fresh occasions to submit. It is as though they were already in God’s mouth, to be crushed in the next instant. But they have to live their whole lives in this terrible place, undaunted by it and still striving to do right.” (See Canetti E (1960) *Crowds And Power*. Trans: Carol Stewart. Continuum, p. 282.)

the custom, makes no choice.”¹⁵⁵ The neglect of Mill’s cautionary comment is not due, however, to mere obliviousness on my part but rather related to a difference in the content of argument. Mills warning, perhaps, is more relevant in light of the following question: why are there instances of societies in which people cooperate with authority¹⁵⁶ as well as others for betterment of the whole? Tönnies, Durkheim, and Weber all investigated such situations in which people were willing submit to the rules and restraints that make social life possible.¹⁵⁷ For instance, Tönnies claimed, “Traditional authority is embedded in personal relationships: people feel respect for the people in positions of authority; they owe loyalty and obedience to them, and in return can expect protection and guidance from them.”¹⁵⁸ In this case, for instance, individuals’ yielding to authority is in accordance to the *custom/tradition*, e.g., patriarchy.

In contrast, my contention is a corollary to the Boétie thesis; being mindful of the fact that Power gains strength and becomes mightier through perpetual servitude to it, individuals make deliberate/calculated choices to submit with a hope to negotiate special or opportunistic conditions for their subjections (their servitude).¹⁵⁹ One vital outcome of this mind-set is the widespread prevalence of mistrust and pretentiousness within a culture, since everyone thinks others are also engaged in a similar attempt to gain favorable stands with Power, which creates a socioeconomic

¹⁵⁵ Mill JS (2002) *On Liberty*. Dover Publication, p. 48. Emphasis added.

¹⁵⁶ Here, authority refers to the structure or the inner order of an association, whether this be political, religious, or cultural, and is given legitimacy by its roots in social function, tradition, or allegiance.

¹⁵⁷ See Tönnies F, Harris J (2001) *Tönnies: Community and Civil society*. Cambridge University Press; Weber M, Parsons T, Henderson AM (1947) *The theory of social and economic organization*. Free Press; and Durkheim E (1951/1897) *Suicide*. Trans: John A. Spaulding and George Simpson. Free Press, pp. 328–359.

¹⁵⁸ Haidt J, Graham J (2009) Planet of the Durkheimians, Where Community, Authority, and Sacredness Are Foundations of Morality. In: Jost JT, Kay AC, Thorisdottir H (eds) *Social and Psychological Bases of Ideology and System Justification*. Oxford University Press, p. 377. Nevertheless, Tönnies’ also described mutually beneficial relationship is often threaten and susceptible to collapse when authority become distance from the population. In this case, the public must still make a choice as a best way to secure benefit from the authority.

¹⁵⁹ A similar instances with totally different outcomes occurred elsewhere. For instance, Farley Grubb observed, “Throughout the colonial period many of these emigrants [Germans] purchased passage to America by voluntary selling some of their future labor, this being the only other asset at their disposal. Some emigrants became indenture servants by signing fixed-term future labor agreements before embarkation, exchange this contract for transportation. Others borrowed the passage fare from their respective shippers pledging to sell themselves as servants in America, if necessary, to repay the loan. This process was known as redemptioner servitude. These institutions of immigrant servitude were the private market’s solution to financing the voyage of those who could not pay in advance. It gave the poorer part of the population the ability to finance moving from low-productivity areas to high-productivity areas, thereby improving their own welfare as well as the overall welfare of society.” (See Grubb F (2013) *German Immigration and Servitude in America, 1709–1914*. Routledge, p. 159.)

environment of *the race for servitude*.¹⁶⁰ In 1912, Morgan Shuster noted such a tendency as he observed, “Nearly every one with whom I talked brought out, at some point in the conversation, the word ‘intrigues.’ ‘The Cabinet is making intrigues against you.’ ‘The Belgian Customs officials are intriguing against the Americans.’ ‘This is a terrible place, Mr. Shuster, for intrigues.’ ‘Persia is the land of *blague* and *intrigues*.’ In sheer self-defense I was compelled to tell every one that Americans thrived on intrigues and rather liked to see them going on.”¹⁶¹ More than half of century later, Marvin Zonis also reflects on a similar observation as he quotes a referent that claims, “Ideas and words in Iranian society are primary weapons in a persons’ efforts to reach power. Not one person in a thousand believes what he says [except] as a means for achieving success.”¹⁶²

Peculiar manifestations of submission to Power signify certain symbolic actions, tactics if you would, that are anchored to existing cultural norms and values. The most noted among them is the act of asking for sanctuary, called *bast*, which is a conduct or a “sit-in” where individuals or a group of individuals take refuge by occupying a place, e.g., in foreign embassies, mosques, shrines as well as residences of mujtahids (an authoritative interpreter of the religious law of Islam), Sovereign’s palaces, the parliament, a telegraph stations, etc., to protest the behavior of the state and as a means of publicizing their grievances and demand. From sheer cultural perspectives, *bast* sitting is a practice with some history and folklores that consist of unsound beliefs (superstitions). Hamid Algar, in discussing the *lutis*¹⁶³ around 1838 in Isfahan, stated, “At night the *lutis* would emerge from *bast* [which they took at prominent religious leader’s residence] and engage in murder, robbery, and rape with impunity. The next day, they would wash their swords, which were red with the blood of Muslim, in the water-tank of the mosques.”¹⁶⁴ Another well-known *bast* affair took place in the early summer of 1850 in the city

¹⁶⁰ Mistrust has often been cited as a widespread and important feature of Iranian society, see for instance: Westwood AF (1965) Politics of Distrust in Iran. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, p. 123–135; Ajami I (1970) *Shishdangi, puzhuhishi dar zaminah-‘i jami’ah-shinasi-yi rusta’i*, Danishghai-i Pahlavi Shiraz, Ch. 9; Zonis M (1971) *The Political Elite of Iran*. Princeton University Press; Beeman WO (1976) What Is (Iranian) National Character? A So-ciolinguistic Approach. *Iranian Studies* 9(1):37–39.

¹⁶¹ Shuster WM (1912) *The Strangling of Persia: A Personal Narrative*. The Century Company, New York, p. 22.

¹⁶² Zonis M (1971) *The Political Elite of Iran*. Princeton University Press, p. 276.

¹⁶³ The term *Luti* in Farsi insinuates a wide range of meanings, with both positive (a person of generous disposition) and negative (rogue) connotations. In the content of this study, the term applied to an individual who deliberately uses intimidations and threats to influence the opinion and actions of others toward some specific end. In short, he is a predator that is bullying people. Because of their fighting skills and local connections, *lutis* were often utilized by secular and religious leaders in their towns. For an interesting discussion of the term, see <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/luti>.

¹⁶⁴ Algar H (1980) *Religion and State in Iran 1785–1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period*. University of California Press, p. 112. The author also noted that “in 1839–1840, an army under Manuchir Khan Mu’tamad ud-Daula was dispatched to put a definite end to the chaos in Isfahan. More than 150 of the *lutis* were executed, and a similar number banished to Ardabil.” *Ibid*.

of Tabriz, when “a cow being conducted to the slaughter house in passing by the noted shrine . . . twice took refuge in the holy spot. On the third repetition of the disregard of this appeal to the power of the defunct saint, the butcher was struck dead. Miracles followed, and the hairs of the cow were plucked out by the eager Tabrizis on the sacred character that the beast’s anatomy had acquired. The imam jum’a [leader of Friday led prayers] delivered a fatwa [decree or ruling issued by religious leader] to the effect that anyone found drinking or gambling in the vicinity of the shrine would be executed . . . he British consul, Stevens, endowed the shrine with a crystal candelabra. Significant rumors arose that Tabriz has become the property of the Hidden Imam, and is *exempt from taxation and rule by governors*. This spectacular attempt to draw attention to bast failed, and the immediate instigators were brought to Tehran, and Imam Jum’a was expelled.”¹⁶⁵

In the realm of political culture of Iran, however, bast sitting in foreign embassies conveys a different tone and narrative, one which insinuates various embedded cultural attributes. As already noted, bast sitting is generally described as intents to protest against the state, particularly during the Qajar monarchy. However, during the same period, the administration of justice was divided between Islamic *Sharia* [Islamic religious law that governs not only religious rituals but all aspects of day-to-day life in Islam. *Sharia*, literally translated, means *the way*], courts run by the ulama, and the courts of *urf* or “customary law,” presided over by the Shah, the governors, and their representatives.¹⁶⁶ This is a peculiar situation especially when some of the individuals who took bast were among ulama corps and considered highly qualified Islamic clergymen. More to the point, when the administration of justice that presided over the crown and the country was in control of ulama, why does the protest against the state must take on bast sit-in form? The answer, I argue, partly lies in the fact that the bast sit-in was commonly utilized as a short-term calculated tactic to legitimize one’s desire or inspiration to gain power and control rather than a long-term strategy that is concerned with future steps.¹⁶⁷ In a political situation, tactics involve action(s) for asserting influence not in the future but at the present.¹⁶⁸ In fact, as Algar pointed out and Nikki Keddie reiterated, occasionally an

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 134. Emphasis is added. In the same passage, in reciting Nadir Mirza, the author noted, “Stevens policy appears to have consonant with Sheil’s attempts to maintain bast at the Masjid-i-Shah (Royal Mosque) in Tehran, and Amir Kabir complained in the letter to Sheil. Although the implication is clear that the British wished for some kind of popular base that might be made use of in later contingencies. (*Ibid.*, Footnote 51).

¹⁶⁶ Keddie NR (1991) *Iran Under The later Qajars, 1848–1922*. In: Avery P, Hambly GR, Melville C (eds) *The Cambridge history of Iran*. Cambridge University Press, p. 178.

¹⁶⁷ While both tactic and strategy are often used interchangeably, each refers to separate and distinct functions and applications. Generally, strategy involves planning, a next move so the speak, in which the future path of possible actions is determined. Tactics, however, are not planning since they involve short-term actions. They are rather the action steps that must be taken to obtain certain predetermined objectives. (See for instance Paquett L (2002) *Political Strategy and Tactics: A Practical Guide*. Nova Publishers. For an illuminating discussion of topic see Tso-Peng L (1966) *Strategy: One Against Ten Tactics: Ten Against One*. Foreign language Press.)

¹⁶⁸ For instance, a strategy may take forms like censorship, discrediting, glorification, fear mongering, lying, etc., to gain or secure position of power, while a tactic may composed of collaboration with power, evading, rational persuasion, inspirational appeal, force to gain legitimacy.

entire neighborhood in Iran falls under control of various groups as an area of bast.¹⁶⁹ The problem with this course of action is that a subject of manipulation often realizes the main objective and hence is under no illusion about his position as a subject. For instance, as Daniel O'Quinn noted, the nature of allegiance of Britain and Iran (as well as the Ottomans) against the French, and consequently, Russians in 1807 was clear since Iran had sided with the French prior to the alignment with Britain and "the [British] Foreign Office could not have any illusion about their [Iran and Ottoman] motivations."¹⁷⁰ Consequently, these sorts of alliances often lead to far less desired outcomes, and even counterproductive results.

However, when the stakes were high, such assertions were not sufficient, and the legitimacy of the demands was secured by the ultimate imperial powers, such as Russia or Britain.¹⁷¹ Astonishing as it may be, the most notable example that signifies such a tendency is the bast set-in in the British Embassy in Tehran that led to the triumph of the Constitutional Revolution.

¹⁶⁹ Algar H (1980) *Religion and State in Iran 1785–1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period*. University of California Press, p. 113; and Keddie NR (1991) *Iran Under The later Qajars, 1848–1922*. In: Avery P, Hambly GR, Melville C (eds) *The Cambridge history of Iran*. Cambridge University Press, p. 179, Footnote 5. In fact, according to Algar, Amir Kabir (who served as Prime Minister under Naser al-Din Shah Qajar) attempted to restrict bast in shrines in large cities like Isfahan, Tabriz, and Tehran, as he has seen mosques sheltering the armed followers of the ulama as a constant attempt to gain control and power, and hence endangered government authority. Amir Kabir also sought to obtain clerical sanction, notably that of the imam jum'a of Tehran to strengthening his hand. (Algar H (1980) *Religion and State in Iran 1785–1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period*. University of California Press, p. 133). This is due to that fact that some of the ulama, as Nikki Keddie observed "the government-appointed imam junta's of the cities, tended to side with the government, and others might hoard, cheat, extort, or take bribes, in general they were thought to do this less than government officials." (Keddie NR (1991) *Iran Under The later Qajars, 1848–1922*. In: Avery P, Hambly GR, Melville C (eds) *The Cambridge history of Iran*. Cambridge University Press, p. 179).

¹⁷⁰ O'Quinn D (2012) *Tears in Tehran/Laughter in London: James Morier, Mirza Abul Hassa Khan, and the Geopolitics of Emotion*. *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 25(1), p. 87.

¹⁷¹ This is particularly true in the Qajar period, in which we have "witnessed the growing power of a new, non-indigenous group who profoundly affected Iranian history: the foreigners. Although foreign nationals did not overrun Iran to the same extent as they did Egypt, the Levant, or Turkey, Iran was nearly as much affected as they were by the policies of foreign governments and of a small number of foreign businessmen. Beginning with the strategic involvement of France, Great Britain, and Russia with Iran during the Napoleonic Wars, Iran came to be affected particularly by the policies of Great Britain and Russia. In addition to their economic interest in Iranian trade, and later in concessions, Great Britain and Russia had strong political and strategic interests in Iran. The former was concerned to keep control of the Persian Gulf, to keep other powers out of it, and to safeguard southern and eastern Iran for the defense of India. Russia, after taking some Transcaucasian territory from Iran in two wars in the early nineteenth century, wished to make northern Iran an area of overwhelming Russian influence, and tried, as did Britain, to be the paramount influence over the Iranian government." (See Avery P, Hambly G, Melville C (eds) (1991) *The Cambridge History Iran Vol. 7, From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 179–180.)

The Iranian Constitutional Revolution dated back to 1905, when widespread resentments¹⁷² reached a boiling point as the governor of Tehran, Aynu'd-Dawla,¹⁷³ bastinadoed a group of sugar merchants for not lowering their raised sugar prices. As a result, a large number of merchants took bast in Masjud-i-Shah, where they were shortly joined by many of the principal clergymen.¹⁷⁴ However, the general consensus is that, at this time, "there was no talk of Constitution of a national Assembly, but only of the dismissal of the obnoxious Aynu'd-Damala."¹⁷⁵ However, as Shah met the demands of protestors on July 23 and the Teheran Government was arrested, "the British Minister immediately interfered in his behalf; as a result, he was released and immediately took bast in the Russian Legation. The effect produced on the excited minds of the Persians at this time was that both Britain and Russia were siding with Muhammad Ali [shah] and the reactionaries."¹⁷⁶

And so we arrive at the monumental date, August first, when according to Edward Browne, "the number of refugees at the British Legation was stated in the Times to amount to 13,000 souls, and, on the same authority, to have reached within the next few days the enormous total of 16,000, though this estimate appears to be excessive, 12,000 or 14,000 being probably nearer the truth. Finally on August 5 (14 Jumada ii, which happened to be the Shah's birthday) Muzafifar'u'd-Din granted all the demands of the bastis, who thereupon quitted the Legation."¹⁷⁷ Browne later elaborates on that time and reflects the popular mood among Iranians as he stated, "The popularity of Great Britain amongst the Persian people was, indeed, [early twenty century] now at its zenith, and to her representatives they instinctively turned for help, protection and counsel."¹⁷⁸ Anecdotally, Vanessa Martin's description of the crowd that gathered outside of the British Consulate in the city of Shiraz on 22 November 1905 asking the Consul to become British subjects reaffirm this tendency.¹⁷⁹ In this context, the legation of Imperial Britain was one of the main means of the revolution that constructed the pillars of Modern Iran. This opinion by no means implies or

¹⁷² As a result of oppressive conducts of the rulers in the Fars province as well as firing on a crowd of people in the holy city of Mashhad, the bastinado of clergymen in cities like Qazwin and Kirman, and mocking of clergymen by Belgian Monsieur Naus of Iran custom offices who by the appearance in a photo dressed as mulla. (See Browne EG (1910) *Persian Revolution of 1905–1909* Cambridge University Press, p. 112.)

¹⁷³ Who described to Edward Browne as "an old-fashioned Persian Nobleman, arrogant, ignorant, hating foreigners and at first but little susceptible to their advances." *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Including the afterward celebrated leaders "Sayyid" Abdu'llah Bahbahani and Sayyid Muhammad Tabataba'i and the orator Aqd Sayyid Jamal'u'd-Din, who was one of the chief promoters of the Revolution, and who was among those who perished after the coup d'état of June, 1908." (*Ibid.*, pp. 112–113).

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 113. See also Keddie NR (1991) *Iran Under The later Qajars, 1848–1922*. In: Avery P, Hambly GR, Melville C (eds) *The Cambridge history of Iran*. Cambridge University Press, p. 202 and Upton JM (1968) *The History of Modern Iran An Interpretation*. Harvard University Press, pp. 12–15.

¹⁷⁶ Shuster WM (1912) *The Strangling of Persia: A Personal Narrative*. The Century Company, New York, p. 364.

¹⁷⁷ Browne EG (1910) *Persian Revolution of 1905–1909* Cambridge University Press, p. 119.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹⁷⁹ Martin V (2013) *Iran Between Islamic Nationalism and Secularism: The Constitutional Revolution of 1906*. British Academic Press, pp. 73–74. Evidently, The Consul responded to such request was, "they [people gathered outside the consular] need five years' residence in Britain." *Ibid.*, p. 74.

insinuates either the invisible hand or conspiratorial involvements of foreign powers, but rather it stated the fact that the bast that took place in the British Embassy was the fundamental part of the constitutional movement, by which on August 5, 1906, “an almost bloodless revolution, the centuries-old absolutism of the Persian monarchs had been legally modified by constitutional reform.”¹⁸⁰

And yet, the most valuable document produced by the Revolution, the first draft of the constitution of Modern Iran known as the Fundamental Law (*Qanun-i Asasi*) resembled, fully or in part, articles in the Belgian Constitution of 1831, which was largely borrowed from the French and Dutch constitutional texts that existed at the time, and at least five articles (13, 18, 23, 25, 42) corresponded to provisions in the Bulgarian Constitution of 1879.¹⁸¹ This is truly a bewildering choice, particularly when considering:

1. The main attractiveness of the Belgian Constitution laid in organizing new rights without abolishing the old structure, which was exactly the opposite of what advocates of the constitution intended.
2. The idea of a bicameral legislature, consisting of a chamber of deputies (Majles) and a senate, was taken from the Belgian Constitution, though the requirement that half the Senate was to be appointed by the shah suggests some influence from the Russian Constitution proclaimed by the czar earlier in 1906.¹⁸²
3. Either Bulgaria or Belgium had no historical, geographical, cultural, political, and institutional commonalities with Iran (except for a few Iranians, who happened to be part of the constitutional framers, had commercial and political ties with Belgium).¹⁸³
4. The cause of the revolution in Belgium that led to the 1831 Constitution was utterly different than the one in Iran.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Shuster WM (1912) *The Strangling of Persia: A Personal Narrative*. The Century Company, New York, p. xviii. Evidently, the Consul responded to the crowd request by stating, “they would need five years’ residence in Britain.” (Ibid., p. 74). As noted by others, there were many factors that may also have had some bearing on how revolution was conceived in Iran such as the failed Russian revolution of 1905. Moreover, the constitutional movement may also contributed to several events in the region such as, The Young Turk Revolution of 1908–1909 and the abdication of Sultan ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd II in Istanbul, shortly before the overthrow of Moḥammad-‘Alī Shah.

¹⁸¹ See Arjomand A (1992) *Constitutional Revolution* iii. The Constitution. December 15, 1992.

¹⁸² Blaustein AP (1988) *Constitutions That Made History*. Paragon House, p. 270.

¹⁸³ As Janet Afary stated, “Though the men responsible for creation of the Iranian Constitutional laws of 1906–1907 looked for guidance in a number of other constitutions, their most important model was the Belgian Constitution of 1831. *Along with the commercial and political ties that several of Iran’s framers had to Belgium*, the success of the Belgian Constitution in codifying new rights without creating an entirely new social structure attracted Iranian reformers confronted with a conservative and powerful Islamic clergy.” (See Afary J *Civil Liberties and Iran’s First Constitution*. Foundation for Iranian Studies It is also noteworthy that M. Hennibicq, a Belgian citizen, was a legal adviser the Persian Government for four years. (See Browne EG (1910) *Persian Revolution of 1905–1909* Cambridge University Press, p. 110.)

¹⁸⁴ “The main cause of the Belgian Revolution was the domination of the Dutch over the economic, political, and social institutions of the Kingdom (although at that time the Belgian population was larger than the Dutch). Catholic bishops in the south had forbidden working for the new government. This rule, originated in 1815 by Maurice-Jean de Broglie, the French nobleman who was bishop of Ghent, caused an underrepresentation of Southerners in government and the army.” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgian_Revolution).

As a result, on the one hand, quite a few components of contemporary Western political thought were integrated into the Iranian social structure, e.g., all Iranians were declared equal before the state law (Art. 8), or their lives, property, honor, and domiciles were protected (Art.9, 13–17). On the other hand, the document (the constitutional law) that intended to guide Iran and Iranians into the modern sphere was composed by borrowed notions that have no grounds or resemblance to Iran's history and traditions.¹⁸⁵ The moderate-minded Sayyid Muhammad Tabatabai reaffirmed this observation when he admitted, "Although we had no experience of constitutional monarchy, from what we had heard and all those who had seen it, constitutionalism bring security and prosperity to the country. Consequently, we developed some enthusiasm and yearning of our own to establish a constitutional monarchy in the country."¹⁸⁶ In short, the security and prosperity that prevailed over centuries in the West was perceived to take place in Iran over a few years as a result of a mere document that was neither original nor a completed replication.¹⁸⁷

This sort of wishful thinking resembles a fantasy cycle, in word of Christopher Booker,¹⁸⁸ which has been quite prevalent in Modern Iran, particularly when distance and unfamiliar notions were sought to attain noble aspirations, but only to see them collapse later when reality sank in. When we embark on a course of action that is driven by wishful thinking, all may seem well for a time, in what may be called the "dream stage." However, since this make-believe stage is incompatible with reality, it soon leads to a "frustration stage" as things begin to fall apart, prompting a more determined effort to keep the fantasy alive. As reality replaces fantasy and everything goes wrong, our dream turn into a nightmare, culminating in an "explosion into reality," when the fantasy finally falls apart." Appealing to imported ideas¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ Indeed, and according to Amir Arjomand, even the term for "constitution" (in Persia, *qānūn-e asāsī*, which means literary "fundamental law"), was borrowed from the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. Arjomand further observed, "Throughout the earlier Islamic period *qānūn* had been the common term for financial and administrative regulations laid down by the ruler independent of the religious law (*Šarī'a*) of Islam. This notion of independent state law culminated in the great *qānūns* of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, notably that of Uzun Ḥasan in Persia and those of Moḥammad (Mehmed) the Conqueror, Bāyazīd II, and Solaymān Qānūnī (Lawgiver) in the Ottoman empire (Inalcik, IVa, pp. 558–559; idem, IVb, p. 566). Probably owing to the establishment of Shī'ism as the state religion in Persia at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the *qānūn* did not become institutionalized there as it had done in the Ottoman empire; Shah Tahmāsb I (930-84/1524-76) did, however, issue a decree on the 'law of monarchy' (*Ā'in-e Šāh Tahmāsb*). From the beginning of modernization in the Middle East, therefore, *qānūn*, conceived as state law, constituted the precedent for adoption of legal codes in the Western sense. In Persia, too, the term came to denote codes inspired by European legislation and introduced by the state. The constitution, as the foundation of public law, was naturally regarded as 'the fundamental *qānūn*.'" See Arjomand A (1992) *Constitutional Revolution* iii. *The Constitution*. December 15, 1992.

¹⁸⁶ Baktiari B (1996) *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran: The Institutionalization of Factional Politics*. University Press of Florida, p. 10.

¹⁸⁷ For instance Arjomand stated, "five (Arts. 13, 18, 23, 25, 42) corresponded to provisions in the Bulgarian Constitution of 1879, though none was a verbatim translation." See Arjomand A (1992) *Constitutional Revolution* iii. *The Constitution*. December 15, 1992.

¹⁸⁸ Booker C (2015) What happens when the great fantasies, like wind power or European Union, collide with reality?. *The Telegraph*, Thursday 16, April 2015.

¹⁸⁹ The term imported ideas is used here not as an insinuation of cultural imperialism but rather to emphasize the on unfamiliarity of concepts in the host culture.

to reach our longing aspirations or to resolve our predicaments has proven erroneous, not that these ideas are not sound but because they require certain social roots that are absent in Iran. The approach to seek (borrowed) notions that are formed elsewhere in distant lands has been proven time and time again as a mistake, and indeed contributed to our failures, as well as to our stagnation, in both socio-economic and political developments.¹⁹⁰ In short, a window-shopping approach for ideas almost always bears disastrous consequences.

Not surprisingly, the opposition against the new constitution appeared not among masses but rather within the circle of influential religious clergymen, most notably Shaykh Fazlu'llah Nouri, who eventually paid for it with his life.¹⁹¹ In the end,

¹⁹⁰ Ayatollah Beheshti also underlined this point. According to Arjomand, "In an important lecture delivered on the eve of the referendum on the 1979 Constitution at the birthplace of Islamic ideology in Iran, Tehran's famous Hossaynia Ersha'd, its chief architect, Ayatollah Beheshti, reflected on the theoretical foundations of the proposed Constitution. He disclosed the true character of the political regime that the Constitution was designed to create as the 'regime of the umma [the community of believers] and Imamate [umma divine leadership].' The fundamental error of Iran's first revolution, the Constitutional Revolution, he argued, was to call the new order it created 'constitutional' (mashruta), a concept that was 'borrowed and did not pertain to the Islamic culture.'" (See Arjomand SA (2009) *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*. Oxford University Press, p. 29. For more comprehensive explanations of terms umma and imamate see p. 220.)

¹⁹¹ It should be noted that Shaykh Fazlu'llah was indeed among those who took bast in the Masjid-i Shah, and according to Edward Browne "[he] was at that time regarded by the people as one of the 'three Proofs' or 'Founder' of the Constitutional Movement, the other two being Sayyid 'Abdullah and Sayyid Muhammad Tabatabai, to whom in point of learning he was greatly superior." (See Browne EG (1910) *Persian Revolution of 1905–1909* Cambridge University Press, p. 113.) So the question of why the Shaykh defected from the constitutional movement and support Mohammad Ali Shah's reactionary has been controversial. Browne suggested that his "defection" is related to jealousy at Sayyid Abdullah and Sayyid Muhammad Tabatabai's superior influence over the movement. (see *Ibid.*) According to Ali Jan Moradi Ju, "one of his causes related to the fact that he [the Shaykh] realized some of the laws of the constitutional government opposed religious rules. On this basis, first religious-orientation thought was presented in the movement, and then some principles of Mashrooteh [Constitutional Movement], including advisory council, freedom of speech, equality, and the right of majority were challenged." (See JanMoradiju A (2011) *Why Did Sheikh Fazlollah Noori Opposed The Constitutional Movement*. *Islamic Revolution and the Holy Defence Studies* 3(11), abstract.) However, Hadi Enayat seems to offer the most accurate account of the Shaykh's reason when he stated, "Shaykh Fazlollah understood, perhaps more clearly than most of his contemporaries, that constitutionalism posed a threat to the shari'a. One of his main arguments was that legislation was forbidden in Islam. A national assembly was not only illegitimate, but it had also created a conflicting source of authority that undermined the shari'a." (See Enayat H (2013) *Law, State, and Society in Modern Iran: Constitutionalism, Autocracy, and Legal Reform, 1906–1941*. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 57.) It should be noted that there was another faction that identifies with the liberal constitutionalist led by Mirza Mohammad Hosein Na'ini. According to Houchang Chehabi, Na'ini, like most other constitutionalist ulema, was as confused as to the meaning and implication of Western-Style parliamentarism. He wanted to total ulema control over the judiciary and legislative branches of government and would not admit complete equality of Muslim and non-Muslim subjects, positions not compatible with our modern notion of democracy: he nevertheless argued that a constitutional government with an elected assembly was preferable to a despotic regime. According to Na'ini a despotic regime usurped the legitimate rights of God, the twelfth Imam, and the people, whereas a constitutional regime usurped only the right of the Imam." (See Chehabi HE (1990) *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism: The Liberation Movement of Iran Under the Shah and Khomeini*. I.B. Tauris, p. 44.)

however, the struggle between various factions of Iranian politics, including the liberal, clerical faction and royalists, manifested itself in a watered-down, compromised document that was neither compatible with Iranian societal norms and values nor provided an effective legal text to transform the national institutional setting in accordance with the promoted outlines in the West, e.g., democracy, secularism, civil liberty, etc.¹⁹²

The responsibility for this (negotiated) outcome must solely lie, I assert, with the general public who remained obliviously disengaged in political affairs, and hence removed themselves, rather than being removed by “others” as is often claimed,

¹⁹²On the former, the incompatibility issue, Sheikh Fazlollah provided the revealing argument as he stated, “During the Revolution some naturalist intellectuals presented concepts such as constitutionalism, the legitimacy of the opinion of the majority, and so on, and because of supporting social justice, I tolerated them. But afterwards when they came to write the Constitution I felt that there was a heresy there; otherwise, what does a deputy [of the Majles] mean? What is a parliamentary system? . . . If it aims to codify law, there is no need of such a system; if it aims to interfere in religious affairs; such deputies are not entitled to interfere in this area. In the period of the Occultation this right belongs only to the ulama, not to people like grocers or cloth-sellers.” (See Enayat H (2013) *Law, State, and Society in Modern Iran: Constitutionalism, Autocracy, and Legal Reform, 1906–1941*. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 57.) Under this condition, the text was prepared. Article 1 of the constitution stated that Islam (the orthodox Ja’fari doctrine of the Ithna ‘Ashari branch) was the official religion of the country and that the shah was obligated to “profess and promote” Islam. Article 2 stated that the laws of the Majlis (Parliament) could not be at variance with the principle of Islam or those set forth by the prophet Muhammad. In return for these religious items, article 15 underscored the liberal notion and sates: “The National Consultative Assembly is founded and established in conformity with the Farman, Founded on justice . . . the National Consultative Assembly represents the whole of the people of Persia, who thus participate in economic and political affairs of the country . . . [The assembly has] the right in all questions to propose any measure that it regards as conducive to the well-being of the Government and The People.” Finally, as a concession to the court [royalists], Article 43 gives the king authority to nominate thirty senators to an upper house of sixty senators. However, Bahman Baktiari points out that this article nullified by the next article 44 (the Regulation of the State) “had to be approved by the national consultative assembly.” (See Baktiari B (1996) *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran: The Institutionalization of Factional Politics*. University Press of Florida, pp. 7–8.) According to Baktiari, Sheikh Fazlollah’s objection began with Article 35, that declared, “The sovereign is a trust confided (as a Divine Gift) by the people to the person of the King.” (Ibid.) In direct contrast, the Belgian Constitution, by decree, is subject to constant scrutiny and possible alteration. For instance, the 1831 centralized unitary state changed into a federal state in 1917. A more striking difference, relative to the Iranian constitution, is Article 2 which divides Belgium into three communities: the Flemish Community, the French Community, and the German-speaking Community, whereas Article 3 divides Belgium into three regions: the Flemish Region, the Walloon Region, and the Brussels Region. Article 4 divides Belgium into four language areas: The Dutch language area, the French language area, the bilingual (French and Dutch) area of Brussels-Capital and the German language area. Moreover, while the Constitution speaks of the rights of the Belgians, in principle they apply to all persons on Belgian soil. The point is: diversities are celebrated in Belgium, while uniformity was the principle pillar of Iranian constitution.

from the process that had indeed determined their fate ever since.¹⁹³ What has tainted the constitutional movement more than anything else is the fact that the general public remained static, inactive, and silent.¹⁹⁴ This quiescence of ours was not a new thing, but the newly rising Power was grateful for the smokescreen in which it had enclosed itself. This quiescent state confirmed the notion that as long as people remain passive subjects, their servitude to Power is sustained through a political and fictitious battle for the banner of *national will*. However, as Leon Duguit brilliantly noted, “The national will is the merest fiction. In reality, all we have is the will of some individuals and that will, even if it be unanimous, is still only the will of a sum of individuals, that is to say, an individual will with no right to impose on any one who resist it.”¹⁹⁵ It is, therefore, clear that “unless the Crowd declares itself,” no man (or group of men) would be able to secure the national will simply because he is restrained by his single being (be that a single entity or a group).¹⁹⁶

From a broader perspective, the constitutional revolution also reveals different aspects of the endeavor on which Iran has embarked. For one thing, its proponents were, and still are, perceived as followers of modern European thought that offered viable answers to a quest of new modes of being and thinking in an outmoded nation. Modernity captured the imagination and aspiration of those who reject

¹⁹³ Some may oppose this conclusion on the ground that such opinion excludes the crucial part played by the Caucasian émigré constituency, including a large body of Iranian oil workers in Baku, in backing the Iranian constitutionalists through financial, moral, and ideological support, and later by joining the Iranian Constitutionalists during the 1908–1909 civil war which included Azarbaijani Muslim, Armenian and Georgian volunteers.” (See Amanat A (2009) *Memory and Amnesia in the Historiography of the Constitutional Revolution*. In Atabaki T (ed) *Iran in the Twentieth Century: Historiography and Political Culture*. I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, p. 25.) For one thing, the point that I was making related to lack of public participation in the constitutional movement and not the civil war, which occurred few years later, and hence a direct link between the events around 1905 and civil war of 1908–1909 is hard to establish. Second, the drama of the civil war took place mostly in Tabriz. (See Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, p. 97), while the rest of the country were in deep hibernation. Third, as Kasravi, an eyewitness of the civil war in Tabriz, observed, “The driving forces of these men [in Tabriz] was toward anarchy. First to overthrow the despotic power of the court [in Tabriz], then to turn against the rich and the propertied classes.” Which indicates embracing the constitution objectives was the least people of Tbariz were concern about. (Ibid., p. 98).

¹⁹⁴ Again, this observation does not mean that the revolution has failed, but rather it is the people who failed it.

¹⁹⁵ Duguit L (1921) *Law In The Modern State* (1919). Trans: Frida And Harold Laski. Allen & Unwin, p. xii.

¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless, one must admit that Shaykh Fazlu’llah, as a representative of his social/intellectual environment, had done remarkable service for his constituents by forcing the compromised, and eventually altered the content of the draft constitution.

traditional sociointellectual norms. In this respect, modernity indeed began in Iran with the common modern convention coined by Spinoza: “everything goes.”¹⁹⁷ This tendency generally intends to discount and dismiss any possible resistance, and hence legitimizes an ideology that is made to be idealized. The ideological battle between the modern forces and the custodians of tradition in Iran is nowhere more apparent than in the conversation between Shaykh Fazlu’llah Nouri and Sayyid Muhammad Tabatabai, in which Tabatabai observed “our desire for creation of the constitution is based on restriction of Shah’s power so he cannot spend the country’s wealth on wasteful occasions ... constitution is the thing that releases the God’s creations (people) from 1000 years of despotic rule ... constitution is the thing that allows people to enjoy freedom, men of pen would be free to express their opinions, people would be united and equity would be created in the country,”¹⁹⁸ to which Shaykh Fazlu’llah responded, “this idea that you [Tabatabai] mentioned about limiting Shah and Ministries is good, correct and right. No one has any objection, but your statement in terms of absolute freedom is utterly wrong and in Islam is totally unlawful ... our laws have been written and formed closed to 1300 years ago, let supposed that today a new laws would be written, surely it has to be according to Mohammadian Koran and Ahmady religious law [Sari’at). Take it from me, delete the term freedom because such notions have nothing but disgraced consequences.”¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ In the short Treaties, Part 2, Ch. 26) Spinoza observed, “It is not the case as is commonly represented that we must first subdue our passion before we can attain to the knowledge, and thereby to the love of God. This would be like saying that a man who is ignorant must first get rid of his ignorance before he can attain to knowledge. But just as knowledge alone is the cause of the destruction of ignorance, so too without *virtue*, or (to express it better) without the guidance of the intelligence, everything goes amiss.” (See Duff RA (1903) Spinoza’s political and ethical philosophy. J. Maclehose and Sons, pp. 13–14.) The reader should note that my intention is not philosophical but rather a casual characterization of general tendency in which there is not clear distinction between what we hold as the ideal and what there is as the actual. However, philosophy is relevant here in a sense of how Hegel follows Spinoza in regarding consciousness, and the activities of thinking and understanding, as he observed, “*if thinking stops with substance, there is no development, no life, no spirituality or activity*. So we can say that with Spinozism everything goes into the abyss but nothing emerges from it ... what differentiated and forms the particular is said to be just a modification of the absolute and nothing absolute in its own self ... this is what is unsatisfying in Spinoza.” See Hegel GWF (1892). Lectures on the History of Philosophy, vol. 3. Trans: ES Haldane. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner. pp. 154–155. Emphasis added.

¹⁹⁸ Zargarinejad G (1386) Constitution Tracts. Institute for Development and Research for Humanities, p. 29.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 31. This debate that epitomized the difference between the Musrutih (constitution) and *mashru’at* (literary means conditional governance), in which the latter term implies a new socio-political order of modernity.

In a modern society, in direct contrast to the pre-modern era, anyone has the potential to be a head of state, and hence no one minded to dethrone a throne for a palace to which “he aspires one day for himself, or to put sand in a machine which he means to use for himself when his turn comes.”²⁰⁰ However, a crucial point that is often overlooked in enthusiasm of the moment is the fact that a modern state is just the sovereign of other days but with more efficiency in the sense that its house of power has improved its control over moral as well as material things. Of course, the nature of authority demands its continuous growth, as it is well documented from the twelfth to the eighteenth century, but such growth and its extension in modern time have manifested at an accelerated pace and “efficiency.” In fact, it is impossible to find a kingdom in the pre-modern period that ever had “police force” compatible to those of a modern state. The past tyrants hardly knew of such potent power and could never dream of such domination that is prevailing in today’s *surveillance state*.²⁰¹

This extreme supremacy can be well illustrated in every part of the world, including Iran. From the nineteenth to early twentieth century, the Iranian political system has been characterized by that dominant trait of traditional society: minimal government and afterward the main attributes of a modern state prevail. Two examples illustrate this point: First, “modern governments [from early twentieth century onward] appropriate as national revenue a large percentage of national income: in 1900 the Iranian government took only 2%. Second, the ultimate guarantee of a state’s authority is its army; the only existing version of an ‘army’ in Iran in 1900 was the Persian Cossack Brigade, a force of 1500 men which had been founded in 1879 and which employed Russian officers.”²⁰²

It is clear now that the modern era is the time for *tyranny incubation*, in the words of De Jouvenel, in which general opinion has been conditioned and prepared for a total seizure.²⁰³ This is, perhaps, one reason why no one opposes Power and its structure but everybody is keen to play a pseudo-political game by chasing a despot out of town (a structure always remains while the head will roll). Here, one can readily recognize the essence of political development of modernity in which servitude to Power has become an innate norm in the extension of Power, in the sense

²⁰⁰ De Jouvenel B (1993) *On Power: The Natural History of Its Growth*, Liberty Fund, p. 13. The difference between now and then is that in the ancient regime, Bertrand De Jouvenel explained, “society’s moving spirits [resistance to power], who had, as they knew, no chance of a share of Power, were quick to denounce its smallest encroachment. Now, on the other hand, when everyone is potentially a minister, no one is concerned to cut down an office to which he aspired one day for himself, or to put sand in a machine which he means to use for himself when his turn comes.”

²⁰¹ Schneier B (2015) *Data and Goliath: The Hidden Battles to Collect Your Data and Control Your World*. W. W. Norton.

²⁰² Baktiari B (1996) *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran: The Institutionalization of Factional Politics*. University Press of Florida, p. 1.

²⁰³ For a contemporary debate on this subject see James Bovard, who diagnoses a national malady called “Attention Deficit Democracy,” characterized by a citizenry that seems to be paying less attention to facts, and is less capable of judging when their rights and liberties are under attack (Bovard J (2005) *Attention Deficit Democracy*. Palgrave Macmillan).

that the effect of challenges to Power has been merely to improve it rather than to dismantle it. Challengers always regard themselves as the next in line, so they always oppose the elimination of Power and gently treat the property, which soon become theirs.²⁰⁴ Ahmad Kasravi appropriately noted the presence of this tendency in Iran some time ago when he criticized the constitutional revolution for lack of authentic leadership to guide the movement.²⁰⁵

In addition, the role of foreign powers is shaping and facilitating events of immense political proportions in Iran that have created a malaise that incapacitates us. It bewilders our perception of reality to the extent that, to draw a line between foreign interference (as unwelcome meddling) and foreign influence (as accepted or approved meddling), is often difficult in Iran. On this note, Joseph Upton observed, “It is not surprising that foreign activities in Iran are described simultaneously by some Iranian as ‘interference’ and by others as ‘influence.’ Most Iranians would deplore and denounce foreign interference as an affront to the national dignity; and, indeed, all nations tend to proclaim that whatever they may do in another country is not ‘interference.’ On the other hand, many Iranian would welcome and accept foreign influence, even though they might view it from the point of view of personal, rather than national interest.”²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ To reaffirm this observation, one only needs to recognize that majority of political-men, in Iran and elsewhere, who fought for *liberty* also sought domination and endorsed some kind of obedience, while knowing too well that disobedience is the pillar of such noble notion. In response, a plausible argument may put forward that follows, more or less, this line of rationale, in country like Iran, a concurrent prevalence of obedience and domination is inevitable due to the absence of nationally established norms (that prescribed command and obedience). Indeed, Weber also points to the same direction when he notes that the existence of legal authority requires the prior existence of a legal code consisting of a system of abstract rules which regulates the command-obedience relationship, so that both acts of obedience and of command constitute forms of adherence to a norm rather than acts of personal devotion or an arbitrary freedom. (See Weber M, Parsons T, Henderson AM (1947) *The theory of social and economic organization*. Free Press, pp. 329–330.) Nevertheless, such a rationalization, while it explained the phenomenon it does not deny its occurrence, which is the point of my contention.

²⁰⁵ As Kasravi wrote, “As in the French revolution, a group of propertyless and barefoot people had come forward and were gradually prevailing. This was the sign that the revolt had grown roots and was now finding its ‘character.’ It is a character of revolte that the masses first join hands to free themselves from the self-indulgent and the countries and then the propertyless and the oppressed come forward to seek revenge on the wealthy and affluent. In Paris, Danton and Robespierre and Hebert led this group and it was with support that they accomplished a series of fearsome historic deeds. In Tabriz there were no leader such as Danton and Robespierre or else ‘terror’ would rule here as well.” (Afary J (1996) *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906–1911*. Columbia University Press, p. 107, Footnote 60).

²⁰⁶ Upton JM (1968) *The History of Modern Iran An Interpretation*. Harvard University Press, p. 31.

Chapter 7

Contemporary Iran and the Iranian Economy

Whether they like it or not, those who seek to understand and ultimately to influence the political economy must become political economists. Analysis divorced from institutional reality is, at best, interesting intellectual exercise. Policy principles based on such analysis may be applied perversely to a world that may not resemble the one postulated by the theorists. Serious and possibly irreversible damage may be done to the institutions of the political economy by teaching irrelevant principles to generations of potential decision makers. Has the teaching of Western economics had this effect? The question is at least worthy of consideration.

James M. Buchanan, Collected Works of James M. Buchanan¹

To comprehend the magnitude of change and economic development of any country, we have no choice but to revert to history and culture and examine the past and intrinsic attributes to understand present and prevailing norms and traditions. As a noun, development means betterment, a progression of sorts, and as such it is inherently part of evolution of the human community. Although there are different perspectives on what development is², the common element that these views all share is the notion of improvement, be it in the form of an increase in wealth/income for a portion of the population, secure and sufficient resources for living, or alteration of social conducts. However, it is utterly erroneous to believe that development as such can be attained without overall alteration of structures of power relationships in a country. This is mainly because wealth cannot be increased and more evenly distributed without affecting the existing structures of power relationships in the country. More to the point, economic development cannot be thought of as an enterprise separate from politics, as conventional wisdom would have it, but rather as the most significant source of politics.

¹Buchanan JM (1977) *The Collected Works of James M. Buchanan*, Foreword by Robert D. Tollison, 20 vols. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1999–2002). Vol. 8 *Democracy in Deficit: The Political Legacy of Lord Keynes*, Chap. 7, Introduction.

²See Appendix on Development.

In Iran, as with many other developing economies, the inclination for betterment of a society has been well documented. There is a sort of progression from the economic, the political, and the military reforms of the Shah Abbas to determination of the first Majlis (Iranian Parliament) to force the sovereign to substitute rule of law for unlimited monarchical power and the triumph of Reza Shah for establishment of a creditable government authority, unimaginable at the beginning of the twentieth century, with no pretense of any devotion to Western democratic processes.³

I begin in the early years of the twentieth century. The years 1905–1911 witnessed the construction of modern Iran in which the centuries-old absolutism of the Qajar monarchy had been legally modified, and hence legitimized, by the constitutional document. Despite its imperfections, it led the people to realize that real power lies with them. The principle modification in the sovereign's absolute power retained by this revolutionary movement was the right of the people to have a national elective assembly (Majlis), which should reflect a public voice in the forming of laws intended to govern their lives. The first prime minister of the post-constitutional era, Aminu's-Sultan (also known as Atabaki-i-Azam), a member of the minuscule minority of European-schooled individuals at the time, was asked to return to Iran and take on the premiership responsibility and deal with "a state of disorder and chaos in every department of the government."⁴

To deal with such a dire situation, the new post-constitutional government chose a shortcut and sought to obtain loans from the Russian and British Governments, which they failed to secure because the Majlis rejected the imposed conditions. Nevertheless, as the economic situation deteriorated, the government began to negotiate with a private banking house in London for a loan, which it also failed to obtain because of interference by the British Government, working in harmony with Russia to prevent the country access to financial assistance, despite the fact that both governments knew very well that the Government of Iran was ready to pledge the Crown jewels to secure the loan⁵. By 1914, "Iran's debt [as a result of foreign issued loans] stood at £6,754,000, with a service charge of £537,000. Although Iran's debt per capita... and as a proportion of GNP was far lower than those of Turkey and Egypt, it was a heavy burden: service charge absorbed a quarter of government revenues and 6 to 7 percent of export proceeds."⁶

³This characterization may offend some who believed that the democratic process is a universal notion. Similarly, there are those who view Reza Shah as a dictator and hence dismiss his achievements. Elsewhere in this study I have presented my reasons for rejecting the notion of universality of democracy. However, in the case of Reza Shah's dictatorial style of governance, I find myself in complete agreement with such sentiment. In fact, I believe Reza Shah, in the end, became one of his own victims, a classical case of progressive corruption by absolute power, which is almost the norm in our history and that of many others. Having said that, his achievements, considering the short time-span of his power, are unmatched in our history and hence must be acknowledged.

⁴Shuster WM (1912) *The Strangling of Persia: A Personal Narrative*. The Century Company, New York, p. xxiii.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. iii.

⁶Issawi C (ed) (1971) *The Economic History on Iran 1800–1914*. University of Chicago Press, p. 67.

As did other governments in a comparable situation at the time, the Iranian government borrowed through foreign financiers and banks rather than from the public, i.e., by issuing bonds. This is because “Great Britain and, at times, France and the United States, were the only countries that sold their securities by public subscription to the highest bidders. It was enough to blast the credit of any ordinary government for it to be known that it had shopped around London with its bonds in search of better prices. By control of maturing coupons or short-term notes, by favorable position for making remittance, by some sort of preferential intimacy with powers authorized to borrow money for their government, one firm or group of bankers usually had the inside track in any loan negotiation. And if they were busy or disobliging, a government dealt somewhere else at even greater disadvantage.”⁷ These circumstances help to explain why, once their credit began to deteriorate or access to capital limited, the Iranian government, similar to most others, had no choice but to accept highly unfavorable terms for its loans. In this context, the country’s indebtedness was mostly caused by the financial structure of the world at that time rather than incompetence of the national government. Political affairs in the country, however, were a different story, as the ex-treasurer-general of the country W. Morgan Shuster observed, “conducted very much as a well-staged drama,” in which “Cabinets are formed and dissolve with unreal rapidity. Men high in the councils of the nation sink in a day into perfect obscurity—only to emerge again as the ceaseless whirl of intrigue drags them into public favor.”⁸

More than 10 years after the Iranian Constitution was signed, the 1917 October Revolution meant that Russian occupation of Azerbaijan, which started in 1909, finally ended. However, the departure of Russian troops “left a political void in Azerbaijan which the Tehran regime lacked the energy even to attempt to fill.”⁹ In the absence of directives from central government in Tehran, Shekh Mohammad Khibani, a member of the liberal nationalist minority faction in the new parliament (Majlis), assumed leadership in the capital of Azerbaijan, Tabriz, and called his domain Azadistan (land of freedom). Two years later, in 1920, he broke ties with central government over the Anglo-Persian Treaty, which was signed in 1919. Around the same time, in the state of Gilan, “Red Army troops landed at Anzall [port] in the Spring of 1920, to chase out White Russian forces, and there ensued a temporary coalition between Kuchik Khan and the newly formed Communist Party of Iran, a coalition which in June declared a Soviet Socialist Republic [1920–1921], even though no socialist measures were taken.”¹⁰

Meanwhile, Thomas Edward Lawrence’s campaign against Ottoman succeeded in late 1918 as Faisal’s army entered Damascus, which led to a short-lived

⁷Jenks L (1927) *The Migration of British Capital*. Knopf, p. 273. For a more detailed discussion of this topic, see Chap. 9.

⁸Shuster WM (1912) *The Strangling of Persia: A Personal Narrative*. The Century Company, New York, p. xv.

⁹Richard W. Cottom, *Nationalism in Iran*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1979, p. 122.

¹⁰Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly, and Charles Melville edited *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VII, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 209.

installation of Faisal as monarch and inspired many Arab nationalists. This induction antagonized the French, who, according to the Sykes–Picot agreement, were prepared to recognize and protect an independent Arab state, or states, in their areas. Less than 6 months after Faisal’s victory, French forces crushed the independent movement and with it the aspiration to Arab nationalism. After the Cairo Conference of 1921, in which the so-called “new” British policy was formulated for democratization of Arab societies by installation or support of monarchies in these communities, imperial power sowed the seeds of future events in the region. According to James DeFraonzo, “The French ousting of Sharif Hussein’s son Faisal from Syria made him available for the creation of pro-British Hashemite monarchy in Iraq as King Faisal ... The British also installed Faisal’s brother, Abdullah, as the emir of Transjordan (later King of Jordan).”¹¹ In 1922, the British–Iraq Treaty was signed, which, according to treaty Article IV, “His Majesty the King of Iraq agrees to be guided by the advice of His Britannic Majesty tendered through the (British) High Commissioners on all matters affecting the international and financial obligations and interest of His Britannic Majesty for the whole period of this treaty.”¹² The treaty has been described, not surprisingly, as “the backbone of Britain’s indirect rule”¹³ of Iraq, in which British officials oversee administration of all Iraq’s provinces. Meanwhile, after defeat of Ottoman, the country was partitioned. The national Campaign, 1919–1923, was fought between Turkish nationalist and the peculiar combination of Greece on the Western front, Armenia on the Eastern, France on the Southern, and support from British and Italy.¹⁴ Similarly, from 1920 to 1923, Turkey faced several governing bodies until 29 October, 1923.

As the war in Turkey ended, Reza Khan became Prime Minister, and a few months later the last Qajar monarch, Ahmad Shah, left Iran for good. In 1925 a special Constituent Assembly chose Reza Shah as Shah of Iran, and he was crowned in the spring of 1926. The dramatic changes that preceded his abdication in 1941 have been evaluated many times, all of which have had a trivial effect upon history. His son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, succeeded him as Russian forces, or more accurately the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic, once again entered Iran from the northwest and the British landed at the head of the Persian Gulf. More than 800 books and numerous articles have examined his reign and personality to the extent there is almost nothing to be added of any value. Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, however, was an anomaly in the history of Iran from the beginning to the present in that he was the only sovereign among Iranian kings who was highly educated and schooled outside the country and in an entirely different setting from his native land and culture. As a result, he was fluent in several foreign languages, well versed in

¹¹ deFronzo J (2010) *The Iraq War: Origins and Consequences*, p. 15.

¹² Bourdillon BH (1924) *The Political Situation in Iraq*. *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 3(6), p. 281.

¹³ Marr P (2004) *The Modern History of Iraq*. Westview Press, p. 26.

¹⁴ In some sources the war refer to the Turkish-Armenian, Franco-Turkish, Greco-Turkish wars, but also denote as the Eastern Front, the Southern Front, and the Western Front of the war, respectively.

the art of politics and the nuts and bolts of modern economics, knew history well, and could even fly a modern fighter jet. What he lacked, in contrast to his father, was most essential for a leader, a comprehensive grasp of his own people and the country he intended to lead.

The Pahlavi dynasty, I argue, should be viewed as a total anomaly in Iranian history. For one thing, its founder, Reza Khan, was a complete outlier relative to other Iranian kings in the sense that he was neither a clan leader nor part of any powerful tribal community in Iran. In short, he was not qualified to be a king because he did not fit into the Iranian tradition of a king-like image; he was not a member of a powerful tribe and hence did not possess a clan's genealogical distinction. However, he was a self-made man who rose to kingship, which is a rarity among prominent political leaders in Iran and a definite exception among Iranian sovereigns from past centuries. However, Reza Khan's humble background has provided an attractive cause that even prominent Iranian scholars could not ignore. For instance, Ervand Abrahamian in *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, was lured by such populism as he states: "Reza Shah, the son of a small landowner, and the former colonel who had lived on a modest salary in 1921, accumulated enough wealth during his reign to become the richest man in Iran."¹⁵ Abrahamian's emphasis of Reza Shah's "modest background" gives an impression that Shah's lust for accumulation of wealth, which is a very common attribute of whoever ruled Iran, is somehow related to his family background.¹⁶ In this light, we should perhaps start with the question "Who was Reza Kahn?"

Reza Khan was born in 1878 in the village of *Alasht* in the province of Mazandaran (Caspian Sea region) to an army officer (known as Dadash Beg) Abbas Ali Khan and Persian-speaking Nousafarin Ayromlou whose father had come to Iran from Erivan. Abbas Ali Khan abruptly died the same year and Reza Khan's mother moved to Tehran in search of her brothers. Years later, Reza Khan followed his uncle's footsteps and joined the Cossack Brigade at age 16.¹⁷ At age 40, because of his diligence and military service, he became the only Iranian promoted to Brigadier General (*mirpanj*) in the Persian Cossack Brigade.¹⁸ It should be noted that the

¹⁵ Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, p. 137.

¹⁶ For one thing, Shah's family status does not convey any historical significance; it neither adds to our understanding of the era nor justifies his unlawful conduct. While Shah's conduct must be condemned, his childhood socioeconomic status has no relevance to any discussions of his rule, except an over-the-counter psychoanalysis of the man.

¹⁷ According to Cyrus and Sirus Ghani, "there is no existing or available record of Reza's [Khan] service until 1911. There are references by several Iranian writers to Reza Khan having served as a guard at either the Dutch, Belgian, or German Legation. Although there is no convincing evidence of such service it should not be entirely discounted. In 1911, serving under the overall command of Farmanfarma, Reza Khan took part in a battle against Salar al Dowleh who was attempting to topple the government in Tehran and reinstate his brother Mohammad Ali on the throne. Reza [Khan] gave a good account of himself in that campaign and was promoted to First Lieutenant." (Ghani C, Ghani S (2000) *Iran and the Rise of the Reza Shah: From Qajar Collapse to Pahlavi Power*, I. B. Tauris, p. 162–163).

¹⁸ Adel GH, Elmi MJ, Taromi-Rad H (eds) (2012) *The Pahlavi Dynasty: An Entry from Encyclopedia of the World Islam*. EWI Press, p. 4.

period between 1909 and 1921 in Iran is known as *the period of chaos and disintegration*. It started as the Second National Assembly opened its door, which reaffirmed that the constitutional revolution was here to stay; Russians were finally convinced to withdraw its troops from Iran; and foreign advisors, 11 Swedish officers and 16 American financial experts, headed by Morgan Shuster, were recruited to give the impression that “the age of reform had dawned at last.”¹⁹ However, as 1911 ended, “British and Russian troops were moving into the main [Iranian] northern and southern cities. By 1915, Ottoman contingents had invaded the western regions and German agents were smuggling arms to the southern tribes. ‘The central government’ in the words of the British minister ‘had ceased to exist outside the capital.’ The deterioration proceeded apace.”²⁰ Nine months after the central government signed the Anglo-Iranian Agreement in 1919, the Red Army landed in Enzeli (port in the Caspian Sea Province of Gilan), apparently to deter the British from meddling in the Caucasus and also bringing attention to what the Bolsheviks perceived as the Anglophile government in Tehran.²¹ Finally, in 1921, Seyyed Zia Tabataba’i, the last prime minister under Qajar Monarch and the most obvious and open anglophile politician in modern Iran, together with couple of Gendarme officers, collaborated with British general Ironside, and together with a couple of other British officers and diplomats they organized a “coup by bringing 2000 Cossacks from Qazvin to Tehran. They chose Reza Khan as their commander, although at least one other candidate had been approached before him and had turned it down.”²²

Reza Khan further boosted his military credentials by defeating widespread insurgencies, in which few at the time were critical of the underlying approach.²³ For instance, he had overcome the Jangali (the men of Jangle) movement in the Caspian Sea region, Kurdish rebel Semko in Azerbaijan, and the southern tribe of Bakhtiaries. He also subdued Sheik Khazal in the Southern Province of Khuzistan, with whom the British made a treaty to secure stability of the oil fields for some

¹⁹ Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, p. 102.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p 114.

²² Katouzian H (2004) *State and Society under Reza Shah*. In: Atabaki T, Zürcher EJ (eds) *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Ataturk and Reza Shah*. I. B. Tauris & Co, p. 17. For similar observations, see *Encyclopaedia Britannica* at <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Sayyid-Zia-od-Din-Tabatabai> as well as *Islamic Revolution Document Center in Iran* at <http://www.ircd.ir/en/content/24457/print.aspx>.

²³ According to Ali Ansari, “Antipathy towards the tribes was fuelled not only by anxieties about internal security and a determination to monopolise the means of coercion but also by their increasing characterization as being beyond the pale of normative civilisation, not only by European standards but also by Iranian standards which identified them with the traditional enemy of the Iranians, the Turanians. This center-vs-periphery argument was furthermore to be increasingly defined in racial terms such that the ‘tribes’ were frequently, if incorrectly characterised as ‘Turkic’ (for all practical purposes and common usage, Turks). Such views were reinforced by the Qashqai revolts in the early 1930s, and of course the association with the Qajars who were likewise ‘tribal’ and ‘Turkic’.” (Ansari AM (2012) *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*. Cambridge University Press, p. 85).

annual stipend, as if the Sheik was the regional sovereign.²⁴ Indeed, military force was the only effective means Reza Shah ever knew, which he effectively used to attain popularity and occasionally to score points against his adversaries ranging from tribal warlords and marauding bandits to members of the Qajar family. Without doubt, his various military successes earned him the constitutional title of commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces from Majlis, which eventually landed him on the imperial throne.

Considering the history of Iran, none of these developments were rare. However, what was uncommon in the Iranian political realm is the fact that *before he ascended the throne*, Reza Khan was praised and admired by friends and foes alike. In 1922, some 200 merchants expressed their gratitude to Reza Khan in an open letter: “Before our beloved commander saved us, the Islamic Empire of Iran was fast disintegrating. The army had collapsed, the tribes were looting, and the country was the laughing stock of the world. Thanks to the army commander, we now travel without fear, admire our country, and enjoy the fruits of law and order.”²⁵ A few years later, in the constituent assembly of December 1925 that offered the throne to Reza Khan, “Sulayman Mirza, the Socialist leader, mentioned Riza Khan’s ‘services in stamping out the *Muluk al-Tavayifi* system, his centralization of power, destruction of rebels and those who did not recognise the central power’.”²⁶ Earlier, “Taqizadeh [a converted clergy who favored Persianization of Azerbaijan and all Iran in the words of Nikki Keddie]—in his speech in the Majlis against the motion for making Riza Khan temporary head of state—had said that his most important reason for supporting Riza Khan as prime minister was ‘the security which he has created’. However, Musaddiq, who delivered the longest and most impassioned speech against Riza Khan becoming Shah (arguing that it would result in dictatorship), went much further: “I doubt if there is anyone who is unaware of the services that [Riza Khan] has rendered to the country. The situation in this country was such that, as we all know, if someone wished to travel he did not have security, and if someone was a landlord he had no security, and if he had an estate, he had to employ a few riflemen to protect his produce... And, for the sake of protecting my own home, my own family and my own people, I naturally wish to see the man called Riza Khan Pahlavi be prime minister in this country. Because I wish to see security and stability; and it is true that—in the past couple of years—because of that man we have had such a thing, and so we have been able to get on with public works, and serving the interest of the society... And thank God that, due to the blessing of his being, we would now like to get on with some fundamental work.”²⁷ Finally, in a

²⁴In fact, as the British envoy in Iran, Sir Percy Loraine, stated: “With Sardar Sepah [Reza Khan] out of the picture, the risk of conflict with Bakhtiari and Sheikh Khazal would disappear... [and his plan] to dominate the south will disappear.” (Ghani C, Ghani S (2000) *Iran and the Rise of the Reza Shah: From Qajar Collapse to Pahlavi Power*, I. B. Tauris, p 261).

²⁵Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, p. 131.

²⁶Katouzian H (2005) Reza Shah’s political legitimacy and social based, 1921–1941. In: Cronin S (ed) *The Making of Modern Iran: State and society under Riza Shah, 1921–1941*. Taylor & Francis e-library, p. 18–19.

²⁷Katouzian H (2004) *State and Society under Reza Shah*. In: Atabaki T, Zu’rcher EJ (eds) *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Ataturk and Reza Shah*. I. B. Tauris & Co, p. 17–18.

1928 diary entry, the key supporter of the Shah, Jafar Quli Khan Sardar As'ad Bakhtiari, had noted: “[in describing Reza Khan] when the people are endowed with knowledge, maturity, and patriotism, imposed deputies will surely be abandoned. An informed nation needs no guardian [*qayyem*], but a nation like Iran does; the Iranians need a tough and unyielding guardian.”²⁸

In recent years, however, we have witnessed the surge of analyses of Reza Shah's reign and his personality, most of which are based either on personal vendetta against the man or more or less related to political affinity for the Pahlavi family.²⁹ Some portrayed his rule as despotic and labeled him an outright dictator who accumulated wealth, as if despotism and accumulation of wealth by Iranian kings and political leaders are unusual in our nation. In fact, we do not know anything else but despotic rules and appropriation of property throughout millennia. Others underlined deficiencies in a nationwide provision of basic needs³⁰; in doing so they disregarded the overall existing dire condition of the country at that time.³¹ Moreover, during Reza Shah's reign (1925–1941), oil revenues were modest, and most of the

²⁸ Azimi F (2008) *The Quest for Democracy in Iran: A Century of Struggle against Authoritarian Rule*. Harvard University Press, p. 82–83. For an informative analysis of Sardar Asad's life see Cronin S (2005), *Reza Shah, the Fall of Sardar Asad, and the 'Bakhtiari Plot'*. *Iranian Studies*. 38(2):211–245.

²⁹ For instance, Mohammad Gholi Majd, *Great Britain and Reza Shah. The Plunder of Iran 1921–1941* is a typical straight condemnation of Reza Shah that lacks any nuance in its verdict. This book, according to Yann Richard, “contains no sentence in which Reza Shah's actions come off as simply neutral or as having entailed any positive consequences for Iran's economy or society. All is bad and destructive.” (See Richard Y (2006) *Reviewed Work: Great Britain and Reza Shah. The Plunder of Iran, 1921–1941*. *Iranian Studies* 39(2), p. 278).

³⁰ For instance, Ervand Abrahamian stated “The regime failed in one major area: public health. With the exception of Abadan, an oil company town, other cities saw little of modern medicine and sanitation in terms of sewage, piped water, or medical facilities.” (Abrahamian E (2008) *A History of Modern Iran*. Cambridge University Press, p. 90).

³¹ The point is that expectations of what Reza Shah could have achieved within the 15 years of his reign must be made in light of the existing condition, to which Morgan Shuster had observed: “There had never been any attempt made [a decade prior to Reza Khan descending from the throne] at centralizing the revenues in order that the Government might know just what it should receive from its various taxes and what it did not receive; nor was there any attempt to control the expenditure of such funds ... I soon learned that no budget existed ... It is enough to state at this time that the Minister of Finance found it much easier to draw warrants or checks addressed to these different financial agents or tax collectors and thus to happily honor the requisitions made upon him by his colleagues of the Ministries of War, Justice, Public Instruction, Interior, and Foreign Affairs, than ever have any dealings with vulgar cash ... Central Government knows nothing as to the sources of the revenue which it is supposed to receive. Its sole connecting link with the taxpayers of the province of Azerbaijan is through the chief collector at Tabriz. The latter official, in turn, knows how much money and produce should be furnished by each of the sub-collectors under him within the province, but he has no official knowledge of the sources from which these sub-collectors derive the taxes, which they deliver to him. The chief collector has in his possession what is termed the *kitabche* [little book] of the province, and each of the sub-collectors has the *kitabcha* of his particular district. These little books are written in a peculiar Persian style, on very small pieces of paper, unbound, and are usually carried in the pocket, or at least kept in the personal possession of the tax-collector.” (See Shuster M (1912) *The Strangling of Persia*. The Century Co, p. 41–42, 280–281).

proceeds from oil went to Britain through the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), which was formed shortly after oil was discovered in 1908.³² As a result, the government sought alternative sources of finance for its development programs, one of which was state appropriation of holy sites' disposed incomes from landed property and real estate for its own aims. For instance, "in Meshed the revenues connected so far with the sanctuary of Iman Reza now served to build and maintain a modern hospital, to improve the water supply of the city, to finance industrial enterprises, and for similar purposes in the public interest."³³

A more constructive and revealing approach in evaluating and understanding the overall government's performance is to take into consideration the fundamental predicaments it faced at the time. For one thing, although Iran was never colonized, its sovereignty had been subjected via capitulation by the colonial states, first to Russia and thereafter to England and other European countries.³⁴ To encounter and eventually eradicate such coloniality states, the government engaged in both internal and external fronts. Internally, it attempted to pull down the structure of traditional society, with which the solidity of the social edifice had greatly suffered from the vicissitudes of the proceeding decades, if not centuries. The Shah, therefore, chose to abolish titles of nobilities, prohibited creation of new ones, and eliminate all the old divisions of a few large provinces (*ayalat*) and innumerable small districts (*vilayat*).³⁵ Gradually the members of elite families were removed from their

³² IBP Inc., *Iran Mining Laws and Regulations Handbook*, Volume 1 Strategic Information and Basic Laws. Lulu.com, p. 217. Some scholars, however, offered the opposite observation. For instance, Mehrzad Boroujerd has stated "Riza Shah's regime benefited from oil revenues that increased more than sixfold from £600,000 in 1921 to £4 million in 1940." (See Boroujerd M (2005) *Triumphs and Traivails of Authoritarian Modernisation in Iran*. In: Cronin S (ed) *The Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Reza Shah, 1921–1941*. Taylor & Francis e-Library, p. 154). However, no references were cited to validate the source of observation. Moreover, even if he's correct in his observation, the fact is, "Iran originally received only a small share of its oil wealth, as the royalties paid to the government of Iran by the British holder of the oil concession amounted to barely 8% of the value of the oil exports. After the concession had been renegotiated by Reza Shah's government in the early 1930s [in which the Iranian government defied the British by canceling the concession for the Anglo-Iranian (formerly Persian) Oil Company], Iran's share rose to about 15%." See Jos Raadschelders and Eran Vigoda-Gado, *Global Dimensions of Public Administration and Governance: A Comparative Voyage*, John Wiley & Son, 2015, p. 287).

³³ Haas WS (1946) *Iran*. Columbia University Press, p. 157

³⁴ According to *Islamic Revolution Document Center* in Iran, "Although observed as an unwritten law towards European merchants and nationals since the Safavid dynasty, Capitulation was enforced as a law subsequent to Russo-Iran Wars during Qajars. It was first imposed on Iran by Tsarist Russia in 1828 according to the Treaty of *Turkmenchay*. Thereafter, England and other European countries enjoyed the same rights in Iran. Chapters 7–9 of the Treaty of *Turkmenchay*, which dealt with legal and criminal issues of Russian nationals in Iran were its main content; with enforcement of these chapters, capitulation regime was established in favor of the Russians. Although in 1921, a day prior to the coup conducted by Seyyed Zia, the Soviet Russia unilaterally cancelled capitulation as a Tsarist colonial institution, the capitulation treaty concluded with Tsars was valid for 99 years and Reza Khan's decree on revocation of it (1927) was issued right at the end of treaty period." (<http://www.irdc.ir/en/content/24457/print.aspx>).

³⁵ Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, p. 137

purchased governmental positions. In short, the traditional network of influence was to be obliterated, the new elite were to be handpicked, and the new order would be installed.

However, the first step backward was Reza Khan's acceptance of the crown—the new order never came into being, and subsequently many titled Qajars crawled back to serve the new ruler.³⁶ Although the Shah never entertained the notion of trusting the ousted clans, many members, strangely enough, returned to the Majlis and hold important administrative and ministerial positions. Similarly, because some of the wealthy landowners were victims of Shah's early reform and many more were excluded from public life, the old ruling class could not forget and forgive Shah for the way he humiliated them.

On the international front, in 1927 the Iranian government declared it would abolish the capitulation within a year, and, with the consent of all nations concerned, the capitulation was revoked in 1928. More importantly, the right to print money was moved from the British Imperial Bank to the National Bank of Iran (Bank-i Melli Iran). This is the greatest economic achievement of Reza Shah, which, strangely, has been ignored by many scholars and students of Iranian study.³⁷ Lots has been said in term of the nationalization of oil, but I argue the right to print

³⁶ As Abrahamian noted, "Reza Khan's path to the throne, in short, was paved not simply by violence, armed force, terror, and military conspiracies, but by open alliances with diverse groups inside and outside the Fourth and Fifth National Assemblies. These groups were formed from four political parties: the conservatives of the misnamed Reformers' party (Hizb-i Eslah Taleban); the reformers of the Revival party (Hizb-i Tajadod); the radicals of the Socialist party (Hizbi Sosiyalist); and the revolutionaries of the Communist party." (See Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, p. 102).

³⁷ Those few scholars who were attentive enough to note this transfer of the right failed to see the significance of such right for the country. For instance, while Ervan Abrahamian mentioned, "The National Bank took over the British Imperial Bank the right to print money," in the following sentence, he astonishingly offered a most peculiar observation: "This came in handy when paper money helped finance industrialization in the late 1930s. This fueled a 54 percent rise in basic prices." (See Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, p. 102). Now, of all miserable social, political, and economic conditions such as wide spread civil unrests, the dire consequences of famine of 1917–1919, foreign occupation, disintegration of the central government, state's financial bankruptcy, blotting foreign debt, etc., Abrahamian pulled out "money supply" out of a hat as the cause of inflation. More significantly, the precision of the percent rise in basic prices, with no references cited, is bewildering. Unless, the author estimated the inflation rate based on either cross-sectional or time series data. On this account, and to the best of my knowledge, neither Iranian government publication nor any international agencies offered such database about inflation in Iran as far back as 1930s. Yet, more puzzling is the fact that the author not only ignored the tremendous advantage of the transfer of the right to the nation, but in one sentence, he turns significant benefits into extreme disadvantage. In another way, it could have been better if the right to print money was remained with the Imperial Bank! Finally, and from purely conceptual term, if printed money, as Abrahamian claimed, used to finance industrialization in that printed money directly linked to production, the result would be "monetization of output" in word of Alvaro Cencini, which is not inflationary. (See Cencini A (1995) *Monetary Theory: National and International*. Rutledge, p. 21.) I would suggest to all those who subscribed to the universal notion that inflation is a monetary phenomena to read Cencini's book, particularly the Chaps. 1 and 2.

national money is by far more significant for Iran and the Iranian economy. I do not know of any sovereign country which does not retain the right to print its own national currency. The reason is obvious. Money is what makes an economy function, and hence retaining the right to print it means the holder of such right has a firm grip on the function of economy; a right to print national currency is the clear manifestation of ownership of the entire economy. This is the main reason why the domination of the dollar at an international level transformed the role the United State to bank of the world and, subsequently, the dollar as a currency used internationally as a banking *I owe you* (IOU)³⁸; none of the members of the European Union has a right to print the euro except for the European National Bank, which is mainly governed by the European economic powerhouse Germany³⁹; finally, a national currency is a symbol of national independence in that it provides a measure of independence in national monetary and exchange rate policy, and hence the national currency is commonly treated with the same passion as the national flag.⁴⁰ On this last note, Cencini stated, “What determines the nationality of a production is the money used to convey it. British production is such because it is monetized in pounds; if it were monetized in marks it would be become a German production from the Great Britain region.”⁴¹ Therefore, it is no surprise that around the same time the Iranian government regained its complete autonomy in matters of customs and tariffs, and hence strengthened its command over the national economy.

³⁸ As Kindleberger and Shonfield stated, “If the dollar is a world money, the United States is a bank and not a firm as other countries are. The difference between a firm and a bank, of course, is that the liabilities of the former are expected to be paid off at regular intervals, while those of the latter are passed from hand to hand as money, and tend to be permanent in fact, despite being of ‘demand’ in form. To the extent that a country is a bank and not a firm, its balance of payments must be viewed from a different perspective, with equilibrium, deficits and surplus measured on a different basis.” See Cencini A (1995) *Monetary Theory: National and International*. Rutledge, p. 21.

³⁹ Similarly, during the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, one of the major sticking points of negotiation between those regions who sought independence and Russia was the right to print a national currency in each state. See Brzezinski Z, Sullivan P (1997) *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: Documents, Data, and Analysis*. M. E. Sharp.

⁴⁰ Dobeck MF, Elliott E (2007) *Money*. Greenwood Publishing Group, p. 67. In addition, Dorothee Bohle and Béla Greskovits have observed that the single most important policy choice in respect to economic transition [in Baltic states] was the rapid introduction of a national currency as a foundation for economic independence, powerful symbols of national identity and sovereignty, and the related institutionalization of the independent central bank. (See Bohle D, Greskovits B (2012) *Capitalist Diversity on Europe’s Periphery*. Cornell University Press, p. 104.) In our own history, this observation can also be confirmed. As C. E. Bosworth noted, “The coins of the Tahirids are little different from those of other ‘Abbasid governors [indicates that they were not independent of their Caliphate].” (See Bosworth CE (2008) *The Thairids and Saffarids*. In: Frye N (ed) *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, Cambridge University Press, p. 103). However, the Saffarid reign opposed Caliphate and fought for their independent, and hence they minted their own silver coins, as an indication of their autonomy from Caliphate in Bagdad.

⁴¹ Cencini A (1995) *Monetary Theory: National and International*. Rutledge, p. 249.

The second obstacle in the path of Reza Shah Government was mass illiteracy.⁴² This national pledge was not an isolated fact, and hence must be viewed in relation to the country's overall condition, which also included educational standards and systems.⁴³ There are, however, two things to be considered with regard to any reform scheme. In the first place, "Is it good in itself," and second, "Can it be easily put into practice?" With regard to the first, a scheme should be feasible in itself in that it should be tailored to the nature of things. In the case of Iran, for instance, the purpose of education reform should be seen in light of *suitability* to the overall needs of the country and *adaptability* to the Iranian culture. In this respect, Reza Shah's educational reform should be viewed as a positive experience relative to what existed prior to it and in a sense that the plan built a viable and solid educational system compatible with the forthcoming development of the twentieth century. This assertion, however, does not mean that the reform successfully led to betterment of society as a whole—responsibility accompanied citizenry and education replaced traditional schooling.

For one thing, private and community-based initiatives⁴⁴ were neither supported nor encouraged because the plan followed a typical harmonization process aimed at establishing a *uniform framework* for education in Iran, which marked a drastic

⁴²The issue of illiteracy has been noted as the major predicament in development since the constitution of 1907. For instance, the delegates to the first Majlis made broad provision for education, to which article 18 of the Constitution states, "The acquisition and study of all sciences, arts and crafts is free, except in the case of that which is forbidden by ecclesiastical (Shariat) law." The following article declared, "The foundation of schools at the expense of the government and the nation, and compulsory instruction, must be regulated by the Ministry of Sciences and Arts, and all schools and colleges must be under the supreme control and supervision of that Ministry." Various governments in the post-constitutional era still failed to concur and meet its obligations until the Reza Shah reign.

⁴³Two books that stirred controversies on the latter point, and in Kasravi's words caused "the Iranian awakening," were Talebof's *The Book of Ahmad* and Zayn ol-Abidin Marraghe's *The Travel Diary of Ebrahim Beg*. The variety of topics in *The Book of Ahmad*, for instance, reflected the lively curiosity of Talebof's young imaginary son. Similar to Rousseau in his *Emile*, Talebof explained how he undertook to educate a seven-year-old child. Among other things, he asked his father about prayer; how pencils, paper, and ink were made; the construction of the pyramids in Egypt; growing of tea; bees and their organization; and the geographical location of Washington, D.C., Japan, and other places, all of which are ample indications of natural inquisitiveness that was absent in traditional education in Iran. (See Arasteh R (1962) *Education and Social Awakening in Iran, 1850–1968*. Leiden E. J. Brill, p. 50. See also Kasravi A (2006) *History of Iranian Constitutional Revolution (Tarikh-e Mashrute-ye Iran)*. Trans: Evan Siegal. Mazda Publisher, p. 54–56).

⁴⁴For instance, in the port of Bushire, around 1925, Mirza Ahmad Kazeruni, with help from local merchants, established Madresseh Ferdowsi. The school's curriculum also included football (American soccer) and hockey (See Iran Shahr [an educational journal] Tehran 11, p. 675). In the City of Isfahan, about 1923, the philanthropist Mokhtari set up two elementary schools, one for boys and the other for girls. The pupils received clothing and school supplies. The same benefactor established a boarding elementary school, organized social clubs for adults, and introduced adult education.

break with the past.⁴⁵ This also followed the role of government in the prevailing era, in which education became a state function, signaling Iran's entry into the "modern world."⁴⁶ To guide education to this end, the State set up a Department of Public Education within the Ministry of Education. By early 1934, it assumed "supervision of elementary, secondary and adult education, including traditional schooling; it directed teacher recruitment, developed text books and collected statistical data. Another of its tasks was to develop a six-year elementary school program for the urban areas and a four-year course for the villages."⁴⁷ These developments, I argue, were extremely beneficial because, until that time, none of these functions existed in Iran. In addition, one of the unintended outcomes of centralization of education and subsequent standardization of nationwide schooling was the fact that the great extent of illiteracy in the country became more apparent.

The plan was also suited to Iranian culture. In a hierarchical and patriarchal Iranian society in which spheres of authority had always been highly valued, changes have always been made with approval from above. Unlike predecessors, particularly Qajar rulers, the Reza Shah Government undertook to initiate as well as control. In fact, his inclination to control was extended to the level that he regularly appeared at "the office of some government department at the opening hour to make sure that the functionaries were arriving punctually."⁴⁸ This highly unusual behavior for Iranian Kings perhaps indicates his deep suspicion, as a man with a dull family background, about the Iranian's lack of work ethic and a tendency to evade responsibility. It may also illustrate his awareness of the devastation wrought on the morale of country and the government since the early days of the twentieth century.

The second consideration depends upon certain given conditions in particular cases, and may indeed vary indefinitely. For instance, if one kind of education system is possible in Turkey, it does not mean it is conceivable in Iran. Similarly, if one concentrates on the urban population, rural areas most likely suffer as a result. In this respect, the scheme carried out in Reza Shah's era must be examined in the light of a multitude of existed circumstances, and its outcome can only be assessed by what it has achieved given these circumstances at the time. In this context, and given the benefit of historical hindsight, Reza Shah's educational reform was an achievement in that it ascertained the school institution, which even today is

⁴⁵ Another example of an inclination for uniformity in Reza Shah reign is the dress code for men. As Ali Ansari noted, the concern for uniformity for the Shah seems to have been motivated by the appearance of civility as well as appeal of military discipline. An example of the latter is "the engagement of drill for students, the development scouting, and a regimen of public physical exercise." (See Ansari AM (2012) *The politics of nationalism in modern Iran*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 84.)

⁴⁶ For a comprehensive study of the role of the government in national education around the world in the twentieth century, see Cubberley EP (1922) *Edward Charles Elliott, State and Country School Administration*. Macmillan, particularly Chap. 1, "Education as a state Function." For a critical review of the topic, see Mulhern J (1959) *A history of education: a social interpretation*. Ronald Press Co.

⁴⁷ Arasteh R (1962) *Education and Social Awakening in Iran, 1850–1968*. Leiden E. J. Brill, p. 55

⁴⁸ See Haas WS (1946) *Iran*. Columbia University Press, New York, p. 146.

perceived as a necessary step toward achieving economic growth.⁴⁹ However, the educational planning of the post-allied occupation of Iran had failed to augment the quality of education nationwide.⁵⁰ This is mostly because of the government's erroneous perception of what constitutes education their retaining the earlier vision of reform in which pupils were regarded as human capital, instructed to be absorbed by the national economy rather than future citizens responsible for elevating the nation from its primitive state.⁵¹

Rudi Matthee argues that statistics suggest "that modern education, starting from a virtual position of nonexistence, made great strides under Reza Shah."⁵² However, beyond this quantitative progress is the fact that, for the first time in Iran, children in different regions and of varying ethnic and social backgrounds attended the same schools and were exposed to similar instruction in classrooms. Furthermore, and unlike traditional schools, elementary education became compulsory for both male and female students, and a national public education system was established. Finally, in 1934 and almost a century after the founder of the French Lazariste mission in Iran, Eugène Boré, wished to set up a university where Persian youth could study the science of the West, Tehran University opened its doors to both male and female students.⁵³ Around the same period, the state also began the annual financing of some 100 student to study abroad, among them being Mehdi Bazargan who

⁴⁹Schooling constitutes an institution in the same sense as the corporation, the government, and the mosque. The structure of the school institution is age/grade and subject/discipline based. There are differences between institutions within each of the divisions (i.e., elementary, high school), but the differences between the divisions are much larger, for example, whether, a high school is public, private, rural, urban, etc.

⁵⁰I, therefore, reject the notion that the new school system in the Reza Shah era was designed primarily to provide the regime with trained labor. While I have no dispute with the merit of argument, one must take into consideration the overall existing conditions of the country and circumstances under which the reform took place. Moreover, I do not know of any education reform anywhere in the world that attained a multitude of objectives under the similar political and economic state of the country, embedded cultural qualities that go back millennia, and were totally alien to the notion of schooling/education and a time interval that did not exceeded 15 years.

⁵¹This is mostly related to the mindset that still exists today, which endorses the false myth that instructional accomplishments are the focus of education. As a matter of fact, these standardized instructions should be viewed as the weakest societal service the institution provides. What they mainly lack is the objective of education, that is, learning, or, for a better phrase, learning through questioning. This "glitch" is naturally impinging on the "accountability" and "responsibility" of those who attend school institutions, who should first be regarded as citizens and then as future labor. Citizenry is the necessary obligation that must be taught; labor is a category that must be filled. Marshall McLuhan's aphorism, "The medium is the message" perhaps sums up the essence of the glitch. That is, the medium (schooling) transformed how the message (learning) is perceived. To endorse schooling instead of education is to perpetuate an artificial conformity and ruin our life without ever knowing why.

⁵²Matthee R (2005) Transforming dangerous Nomads into Useful Artisans, Technicians, Agriculturalists: Education in the Reza Shah period: In: Cronin S (ed) *The making of modern Iran: State and society under Riza Shah, 1921–1941*. Taylor & Francis e-library, p. 145

⁵³Chatelet A (1936) *La mission Lazariste en Perse*. *Revue d'Histoire des Missions*. 13E Année 4, December 1936, p. 501. See also Matthee R (2005) Transforming dangerous Nomads into Useful Artisans, Technicians, Agriculturalists: Education in the Reza Shah period: In: Cronin S (ed) *The making of modern Iran: State and society under Riza Shah, 1921–1941*. Taylor & Francis e-library, p. 134.

served as head of the National Oil Company during the time of Prime Minister Mossadegh, co-founder of the *Liberation Movement of Iran* in 1961, and was the first prime minister of the Islamic Republic Government.

Despite these advances, in addition to dramatic increase in school attendance around the country and the obligatory nature of elementary school, the educational reform resulted in “only 1 per cent of the entire population [who] attended elementary school at the time of Reza Shah abdication.”⁵⁴ This outcome is even more revealing when one considers that the educational budget at the height of his reign had risen almost 11-fold from almost 8 million rials in 1925–1926 to 83 million in 1938–1939.⁵⁵ Given the significant increase in allocation of financial resources to education, particularly during the period in which oil revenues were “modest,” the astonishing nationwide school attendance showed the drastic affect that widespread illiteracy had on the Iranian society. In this context, Reza Shah’s educational scheme should be acknowledged as the major step forward to progress Iran into the twentieth century. As a minimum, his education reform should be viewed as a choice between status quo that hoped for miracles to elevate Iran from its total literacy stagnation or to pursue an option of overall reconstruction that goes against traditional norms and values of the society and would create preconditions for the rise of opposition.

Finally, the third major obstacle that Reza Shah attempted to resolve was the building of a nationalist state on the decayed body of Qajar state and its decadent patronage.⁵⁶ Considering secularism as the necessary centerpiece to his envisaged nationalism, Reza Shah embarked on an assertive secular state-building model that aimed to exclude religion from the public sphere and had been the dominant ideology in France and Turkey.⁵⁷ This was an easy decision for him. For one thing, his admiration for Atatürk is well documented. Moreover, the model perfectly tailored

⁵⁴Matthee R (2005) Transforming dangerous Nomads into Useful Artisans, Technicians, Agriculturalists: Education in the Reza Shah period: In: Cronin S (ed) *The making of modern Iran: State and society under Riza Shah, 1921–1941*. Taylor & Francis e-library, p. 146.

⁵⁵Arasteh R (1962) *Education and Social Awakening in Iran, 1850–1968*. Leiden E. J. Brill, p. 57.

⁵⁶It should be noted that, because the notion of nationalism is not a total ideology, it often manifests by a variety of ideological flags in Iran. For instance, *liberal-nationalism* originated in the works of Mirza Malkom Khan and Hassan Taqizadeh; *Persian-nationalism* traced back to thinking of people like Aga Khan Kermani, Mirza Fatali Akhundzadeh, and Zain al-Abedin-e Maraghehi; *Islamic (and Pan-Islamic) nationalism* associated with Jamal al-Din Assad-Abadi and Sayyed has-san Modarres; and *Socialist-nationalism* begun by activists such as Talebov, Haydar Amu-Oghli, and Ali-Akbar Dehkhoda. (See Farsoun SK, Mashayekhi M (eds) (2005) *Iran: political culture in the Islamic Republic*. Routledge, London, p. 58–59).

⁵⁷However, there is a great difference in the manner in which each country established it. From the secular state building in the late nineteenth century to the present, assertive secularism in France has coexisted with multiparty democracy and has gained substantial popular support. In Turkey, by contrast, assertive secularism was established by an authoritarian single-party rule in the early twentieth century and had been vigorously defended until the 2000s when Islamist Justice and Development Party won the election and form the Islamic government. (See Kuru A, Stepan A (eds) (2012) *Democracy, Islam, & Secularism in Turkey*. Columbia University Press, p. 104.)

with his militaristic philosophy of discipline and power.⁵⁸ In fact, it was Reza Shah who introduced a bill to the Fourth National Assembly for compulsory military conscription.⁵⁹ However, secularization of society prevails when daily behavior of the faithful diverges from the moral principles established by ecclesiastical authority. The role of individual conscience, therefore, becomes unbounded by differentiating between religious frameworks and individual secular experiences.⁶⁰ Creating such separation while building a nationalist state was proven to be an impossible task in Iran and a mistake by both the parliamentary majority and the Shah.⁶¹

The intellectual support of secularism was rooted back to reformers who had campaigned for mass mobilization in 1906 and in later years embraced the notion of a republic. In 1923, the working majority of the Socialists and members of the Revival party in the parliament initiated broad reforms. Reza Khan was promoted to prime ministership; Mohammad Ali Foroughi, the leader of Revival party, to foreign minister; and Socialist Sulayman Iskandari to education minister. Most significantly, a bill was introduced that called for the thousand-year monarchical system to be abolished in favor of republicanism in Iran.⁶² Faced with majority

⁵⁸ As Mehrzad Boroujerdi informed us, "In his travelogues to Khuzistan and Mazandaran, written in 1924 and 1926, he reveals his respect for predecessors who sought to make Persia a stable and prosperous empire—Shah Isma'il (r. 1501–1524), Shah Abbas (r. 1587–1629), Nader Shah (r. 1729–1747) and Karim Khan Zand (r. 1747–1779). Yet Riza Khan/Shah denounces the founder of the Safavid dynasty, Shah Isma'il, for yielding too easily to Shi'i groups and Shi'ite sentiments. He criticizes another Safavid ruler, Shah Abbas, for the 'unforgivable mistake' of mixing politics with religion... Riza Shah's strong preference for a secular system of government is clear: 'There is no doubt that religion and politics are two holy principles whose precise details should be known and observed by all enlightened leaders. However, the mixing of these two is neither advantageous to religion nor to administrative politics because such a fusion weakens religion and leads to the decline of politics.'" (See Boroujerdi M (2005) *Triumphs and Travails of Authoritarian Modernisation in Iran*. In: Cronin S (ed) *The Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Reza Shah, 1921–1941*. Taylor & Francis e-Library, p. 153.)

⁵⁹ See Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, p. 131.

⁶⁰ However, formalization of secularism is also problematic. As Mark Juergensmeyer noted, "much has been written about the religious fear of secularism, but relatively little about the sometimes irrational hatred some secularists harbor against the potency of Religion." (See Juergensmeyer M (1995) *Antifundamentalism*. In: Marty ME, Appleby RS (eds) *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*. University of Chicago Press, p. 353). He cites a number of examples where "secular governments have taken abnormal liberties with the democratic process as a way of countering what they perceived to be fundamentalist threat" (Ibid., p. 354).

⁶¹ See Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, p. 132–133.

⁶² The journal *Iranshahr* summed up the views of the parliamentary majority in an editorial on "Republicanism and Social Revolution": "Today almost all of Europe, including Russia, has adopted the republican system of government. There is no doubt in our minds that in the modern age the republican form of government is the best system of government. However, while we have no doubts on the merits of republicanism, we must admit that republicanism is not an end in itself but only a means to a higher end, that of destroying royal and clerical despotism in order to lead the masses toward a social revolution. You will understand the need for such a revolution if you look at the minority party in the Majles. These clerical deputies have been elected by exploiting public ignorance, fears, backwardness, and superstition. It is high time we eliminated the power of the monarchy. Once we have done so, we can turn our attention to the more reactionary power of the parasitical clergy" (Ibid., p. 133).

domination, the traditionally minded deputies took the issue to the public, resulting in a mass demonstration and a general strike in the Tehran bazaar.⁶³ Subsequently, the bill was withdrawn and the parliamentary majority decided not to pursue the matter further. However, the compromise did not last long, and again the reformers introduced a bill to oust the Qajar monarch and “entrust the state to Reza Pahlavi until the convening of a Constitutional Assembly.”⁶⁴ Among 115 deputies, only 5 opposed the bill, including Mohammad Mosaddeq, who has stated, “Every honorable person, insofar as he is able, must defend his country on the basis of two principles and not submit himself to any power. One of those two principles is being Muslim, the other is nationalism.”⁶⁵ He correctly realized that such concession serves neither the country nor the prime minister himself.⁶⁶ As Reza Khan became

⁶³ According to Abrahamian, the gathered protestors demanded: “We want to keep the religion of our fathers, we don’t want a republic. We are the people of the Koran, we don’t want a republic.” (See *Ibid.*, p. 134.)

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

⁶⁵ According to Ali Ansari, “Mosaddeq above all objected to the concentration of power in the hands of a single individual, noting that in elevating Reza Khan to the throne, the Majlis was effectively combining the office of monarch with that of Prime Minister, and importantly confusing the Constitutional responsibility of ministers with that of the Shah, who by law was not meant to interfere in politics.” (See Ansari AM (2012) *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*. Cambridge University Press, p. 81.) Ansari further stated, “The noted cleric Mudarris absented himself from the debate because he considered the entire discussion illegal ... One notable vote against the change in dynasty came from Hasan Taqizadeh, who argued against the vote on procedural grounds. This would after all be a Constitutional change, and the Constitution as granted had invested the crown in the Qajar family. It was not for the Majlis to single-handedly deliver such a significant change to the Constitution. Taqizadeh argued that for future stability and legitimacy it would better if a special Constitutional Commission were established to study the matter and make recommendations” (*Ibid.*, pp. 81–82).

⁶⁶ At the time, the most logical candidate for kingship who saved the monarchy was perhaps Mohammad Mossadegh, whose attitude to religious authorities was as pragmatic as his attitude toward Islam. More importantly, he also had a firm position within the Iranian traditional oligarchy and blood tie with the Qajar dynasty. Decades later, however, Mossadegh changed his position. Understanding the power of the pragmatic populism that had made the whole constitutional experiment worthwhile, he addressed the Parliament on April 12, 1952, in which he claimed: “Among my professors in Switzerland there was one, who, from the standpoint of education, had divided the nations of the world into three groups: learned, ignorant, and mediocre nations. He applied the term *learned* to a nation that is capable of discerning good from bad, and has the will-power to carry out its discernments, *ignorant* to a nation easily misguided by individuals or other nations, and, finally, *mediocre* to a nation who possesses the ability to discern but lacks the will-power to carry it out. At the beginning of the establishment of Constitutionalism, a few well-wishing people guided the nation in the direction they believed to be to their benefit; as a result, despotism was abolished and a constitutional regime was adopted. During the term of the third parliament, when after graduation I return from Switzerland, I found a good example for the professor’s hypothesis; the people were neither wanting in discernment (so as to be guided by others) nor were they powerful in will so as to carry out their discernment. However, before the election for the 16th parliament began, it became obvious, when I called my dear fellow countrymen to submit a supplication to the Imperial Court, that the people possess an excellent ability to discern. From these premises I wish to infer that you are elected by a people who can discern good from bad, and that you represent a nation whose acumen no one can challenge. Accordingly, you can see the difficulties and can easily procure means to remove them” (Mottaheadeh R (1985) *The mantle of the prophet: religion and politics in Iran*. Simon & Schuster, New York, p. 129).

Reza Shah, knowing too well that his reign has been *legislated* into office and hence his given status lacked legitimacy, his first actions were his most populist policies. He “banned all sale of alcohol, reduced bread prices, outlaw gambling, exhorted women to uphold *national honor* and promised to enforce moral conduct.”⁶⁷ Nevertheless, he remained true to his convictions to elevate the country from the prolonged wicked backwardness that had tarnished every aspect of Iranian culture, established law and order in the country that had been allegedly governed by the “thousand-family” formula,⁶⁸ and secured stability in the country via subduing tribal particularism. Attaining these goals and cultivating a sense of order so the country might in due course reap the harvest it had sown, as he correctly perceived, were only possible with an uncompromised authoritarian leader at the helm.⁶⁹

However, to establish a secular nation-state, an authoritarian recipe is not only viable—it can also, as has been shown, be counterproductive. This is mainly because of the incompatibility of secularism with an Islamic society such as Iran. For one thing, secularism in an invention of the Christian West, “like that unmarked race, which, in the related discourse of racism, became invisible or white, Christianity invented the distinction religious and secular and thus made religion. It made religion the problem – rather than itself. And it made it into an object of criticism that needed to be no less than transcended . . . Secularism is part of a discourse of institutions that are bent on making us *invest* religion, making us *cathect* it . . . In doing so, [it] became one of the means by which Christianity failed to criticize itself, the means by which Christianity *forgot and forgave* itself.”⁷⁰ Moreover, in the West,

⁶⁷ Abrahamian E (1982) *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, p. 135.

⁶⁸ It is certainly true that a great deal of governing of the country and of political influence were wielded by a few families, while many more who have some wealth and notoriety were treated with great deference. (See Binder L (1962) *Iran: political development in a changing society*. University of California Press, Los Angeles, p. 66.)

⁶⁹ For illuminating discussions on the difference between despotism and the rule of law, See Kriegel B (1995) *The State and the Rule of Law*. Trans: Lepain MA, Cohen JC. Princeton University Press. Kriegel argues that the most essential advantage liberty is refusing to distinguish between the notion of despotism and the concept of lawful state.

⁷⁰ Anidjar G (2006) *Secularism*. *Critical Inquiry* 33, Autumn 2006, p. 62–63. *Italic origin*. This observation is a radical divergence from the older generation of theorists who delineated secularism as a product of modernity. For instance, Hannah Arendt thought, “what was at stake in modernity was leaving religion behind, at least as the foundation of public coexistence.” (See Moyn S (2008) *Hannah Arendt on the Secular*. *New German Critique* 105, fall 2008, p. 71.) And yet, a new perspective put forward by a new group of theorists, such as Asad T (1993) *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Islam and Christianity*. John Hopkins University Press, see also Asad T (2003) *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford University Press, and Taylor C (2007) *A Secular Age*. Harvard University Press, has come to see secularism as a special discourse of Christianity (particularly Protestantism). Their main argument, to which this study also subscribed, is that Western Christianity and the Enlightenment produced a set of binary oppositions between the religious and the secular, Church and state, which then attempted to impose things globally, producing “religions” at the colonial periphery where it encountered resistance. Looked at one way, Christianity produced its own existing form in the political order and then tried to take the rest of the world with it. Looked at another way, the project of modernity embodied in the nation-state resulted in the construction of “religion” as a marked category from which the “secular” appeared to be the neutral or unmarked background. This pro-

Christianity, established as the religion of the Roman Empire, is surrounded by an elaborate code of secular law, covering the entire realm of human existence, individual and collective.⁷¹ In fact, according to Peter Stein, what welded the Bible, Christian church councils, and papal decisions into a single whole was the Roman secular law, from which the church lawyers derived their basic categories.⁷² The unfolding canon law, therefore, had to transcend and secure its place in close association with the secular power, which was not always friendly.⁷³ Indeed, the founder of the Christian faith himself had clearly recognized the existence and the legitimacy of two separate spheres of jurisdiction, without defining their boundaries in the synoptic gospels that read, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.”⁷⁴

This sort of separation does not appear in Islam. Quran is not only the revelation of God’s will and the moral guide to salvation but also the sole code of law and the guide to all social, political, and international relations.⁷⁵ This absorption of secular law by religious law prevailed under any circumstances and throughout Islamic history. Even in early periods of the Islamic Empire when the Arabs had been exposed to the higher standards of the conquered people, the Quran and the Hadith remained the sources from which any law or judicial decisions had to be derived through the interpretations by authoritative theological scholars. This whole body of law constitutes the shari’a, which by origin and evolution is religious law. Therefore, the rela-

cess was founded on a contradiction, because even while the churches were losing power (unlike Iran), certain Christian theological concepts and symbols were still being embedded in the state but in a new configuration. Hence, the categories “secular” and “religious” are fundamentally entangled: secularization is religious in several registers and the construction of religions can be seen as secularizing. (See Josephson JA (2012) *The Invention of Religion in Japan*. University of Chicago Press, p. 135) For informative discussions of this and similar topics, see Mason E (2015) *Reading the Abrahamic Faiths: Rethinking Religion and Literature*. Bloomsbury Academic.

⁷¹ As F. W. Maitland observed, “Men would never have become enthusiastic students of another book... the man who first reaches the Digest [The Digest, also known as the Pandects, is a name given to a compendium or digest of Roman law compiled by order of the emperor Justinian I in the 6th century] is the man who first teaches what the modern world has meant by Roman law... it was only in the Digest that men could get any notion of keen and exact legal argument, precise definition etc.” See Stein P (1999) *Roman Law in European History*. Cambridge University Press, p. 44).

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 30

⁷³ In fact, the Roman emperor Constantine, the son of Constantius and Helena, is a well-known hero of Christianity, who claimed to see visions from God, in which he heard (or saw) in *hoc signo vince* (in this sign conquer), which results in Constantine ordering his commanders to put on their shields the Greek letter *chi* and *rho* (the first two letters in the Greek name for Christ).

⁷⁴ The original message, coming in response to a question of whether it was lawful for Jews to pay taxes to Caesar, gives rise to multiple possible interpretations about the circumstances under which it is desirable for the Christian to submit to earthly authority (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Render_onto_Caesar).

⁷⁵ However, as John Turner has noted, “Islamic International Relations is non-Western discourse containing a concept of sovereignty not necessarily amenable to orthodox International Relations theory and Western concepts of the nation state.” (See Turner J (2012) “Uncovering an Islamic paradigm of International Relation. In: Flood C, Hutchings S, Miazhevich G, Nickels H (eds) *Political and Cultural Representations of Muslim: Islam in the Plural*, Brill, p. 16.)

tion of secular law to religious law in Islam is utterly contrary to what had prevailed in the Christian West. Christianity begins not as a religion but rather as the movement of people around a mere fisherman, and hence his disciples had to build their houses of faith against the potent and perfectly organized Roman secular law. In the realm of Islam, we find religious law grounded in divine words of God, a supreme authority from which secular law has to wrest its legitimacy and power. This task, however, turns into an importability drive when one recognizes that secularism has no ideological significance of its own, other than often being inferred as an absence or obsolescence of religion.⁷⁶

In retrospect, Reza Shah's attempt to build a secular nation-state in Iran, in which the unifying principle of nationhood has been predominantly grounded in Islam, was his greatest error. Nevertheless, his achievements should not be overlooked, particularly when one considered not only the overall dire condition of the country at the beginning of twentieth century but also the world in which World War I reminded us that there is no limit to the barbarism of civilized warfare, in which, as Eric Hobsbawm noted, "most Europeans have lived in societies where the state enjoyed a monopoly of legitimate violence."⁷⁷ In this context, Mohammad Ali Foroughi's remark is the most appropriate: "it was impossible to understand or judge Reza Shah without having lived through the events that produced him. The subordination to foreign interest, poverty, insecurity, factionalism, and disorder rampant during the late Qajar period profoundly shaped his view of the world."⁷⁸

In a nutshell, at the beginning of twentieth century Iran appeared to be sliding toward complete chaos. However, there is little evidence that Iranians were apprehensive about the dire state of affairs in the country. Various tribes continued their usual business of revolts and raids, and petty rows and backstabbing of politicians seemed to be a never-ending saga. Looking back, the period conveys a dreadful development in which enthusiasm of the 1907 constitutional had transformed into apathy that reflected the frightening reality of the country. In this context, Reza Khan's rise could be seen as a reaction not only to the dire economic and political state of the country but also as a response to tribal turmoil. Indeed, no single aspect of Reza Shah's programs had more appeal for nationalists than his policy of putting down tribes.⁷⁹ In this light, the foundation of contemporary Iran was built as an attempt to attain security and stability rather than as a conscious attempt to implement modernization programs. Perhaps this explains why, during the 1940–1960s, modernity in Iran was generally perceived as a necessity to leave the past behind, a prescriptive impulse to wipe out completely what lies beyond. Let me explain.

I am part of the generation that grew up in the post-World War II period in Iran which, if I attempt to find a simple adjective to describe it that conveys its fullness,

⁷⁶Calhoun C, Juergensmeyer M, VanAntwerpen J (2011) *Rethinking Secularism*, Oxford University Press, p. 3.

⁷⁷Hobsbawm E (2002) *On History*. The New Press, p. 254.

⁷⁸Daniel EL (2012) *The History of Iran*. ABC-CLIO, p. 140

⁷⁹See Cottam RW (1979) *Nationalism in Iran*. University of Pittsburgh Press, pp. 59–62.

must be called The Age of Confidence when everything in our ancient land seemed assured and the State itself was the chief guarantor of this stability. However, its *faith* was not without a sense of irony, which this book makes an attempt to underline.

Looking back, my childhood is full of reminiscences of morphosis of the city. At night in the capital Tehran, the dim streetlights of former times were replaced in 1954 by electric lights.⁸⁰ In the same year, with the creation of the Organization of Tehran Water, it was no longer necessary to wait for *meer'ab* (a man responsible for delivering water with a carriage) to fill the city streets' channels with water or fetch water from the designated public pumps.⁸¹ Hygiene spread, and endemic diseases such as cholera, trachoma, tuberculosis typhoid fever, dysentery, and malaria began to disappear.⁸² Progress was also made in social matters; justice was administrated more benignly and humanely, so that flogging feet and backs, hanging men from poles, etc., were no longer carried out in public squares and the poverty of the great masses no longer seemed insurmountable. The right to vote was being accorded to a wider circle in 1963 and with it the possibility of legally protecting their interests, although the rights of each citizen were neither confirmed nor secured. Our fathers' generation, molded by painful experiences of widespread destitution, economic insolvency, the Russian-British annexation plan of the country, two World Wars and occupation, were comfortably overwritten with confidence in the great civilization. People easily abandoned the memory of our enduring history for the sweet taste of temporality and convinced themselves that common sense and sensibility had finally arrived.

At first it was only the prosperous that enjoyed the fruit of the prevailing affluence, but gradually the great masses forced their way toward it. The national economy grew rapidly to the extent that it was among the fastest growing economies in

⁸⁰ Cyrus Schayegh claimed, "Iran's first two electric power plants were erected in 1900 and 1902 in the northeastern city of Mashhad to illuminate the famous shrine of Emam Reza." He further stated, "In Tehran, the first (300 kW German imported) plant was constructed by the merchant Mohammad Hossein Amin al-Zarb. (See Schayegh C (2009) *Who is Knowledgeable Is Strong: Science, Class, and the Formation of Modern Iranian Society, 1900–1950*. University of California Press, p. 253). According to Mohammad Hejazi, however, the first time the whole of Tehran was covered dated back to 1954 (1333/7/3), when the Tehran municipality purchased four electric turbines 1(600 kW each) for 91,890 British pounds on an installment plan. (Hejazi M (1959) *Mehan Ma (Our Country)*. Ministry of Culture Publication, Tehran, 1959 (1338), p. 617).

⁸¹ Hejazi M (1959) *Mehan Ma (Our Country)*. Ministry of Culture Publication, Tehran, 1959 (1338), p. 624.

⁸² According to Amin Banani, "On June 1, 1941, a milestone was reached in the government's efforts to promote public health when the Majlis approved a law for the prevention and combating of infectious diseases. This law made the treatment of venereal diseases compulsory; made free medication available for needy patients; made willful, knowing, or negligent transfer of such diseases, as well as fraudulent promises of a cure, subject to punishment; and provided for periodic inspection and certification of brothels. It also required compulsory vaccination against smallpox at the ages of 2 months, and 7, 13, and 21 years, as well as additional vaccination in times of epidemic." (See Banani A (1961) *The Modernization of Iran, 1921–1942*. Stanford University Press, p. 65). It should be noted that the organization of public health services in Iran dates back to the time of Reza Shah .

the world, and our currency enjoyed relative strength compared to other major foreign currencies, an assurance of its immutability.⁸³ He who had money could accurately compute his annual interest and enjoyed the present. A public employee could confidently predict the calendar year in which he would be pensioned. Each family, more or less, had its fixed budget and knew well how much could be spent for living expenses, for vacations, and for amusements. Whoever owned a house considered it to be a secure dwelling for his children and their children, and so estates or businesses were handed down from generation to generation.

Earlier eras, with their wars, famine, revolts, and occupations, were deprecated by many generations of Iranians. However, various worries of the past such as security and the country's sovereignty have no longer been preoccupying our bards, writers, educators, etc. The time was right, they thought, to demand the same benefits as those in the affluent West. A yearning for social and political betterment (progress), which began at the start of the century, yielded an enormous enthusiasm that paralyzed our ability to think things through. Folks closed their eyes and opened their mouths, "demanding" irrespective of history. Notions such as freedom and democracy were perceived and showcased as icons that ought to be captured, adopted, and retained as our own, rather than planted, nurtured, and harvest as a testament of our deeds. Had these zealous patrons listened to the brilliant Diogenes, they would have learned that democracy merely implies "listen more and talk less." The mere practice of selection of "ideas" because it suits our attributes and aspiration is not only delusional but also profoundly detrimental because it is the ultimate swindler of our own making (a conscious product of our own merits). As W. G. Summer so brilliantly explained, every group, in every age, has had its *ideals* for

⁸³"During the period 1960–1976, Iran enjoyed one of the fastest growth rates in the world: the economy grew at an average rate of 9.8 percent in real terms, and real per capita income grew by 7 percent on average. As a result, GDP at constant prices was almost 5 times higher in 1976 than in 1960. This stellar performance took place in an environment of relative domestic political stability, low inflation, and improved terms of trade, as evidenced by the rising oil price relative to import prices. Both oil output and oil prices increased significantly during the period: oil production grew at an annual average rate of 10 percent while oil prices relative to import prices increased by 214 percent during the sub-period". (See Jbili A, Kramarenko V, Bailén J (2004). Islamic Republic of Iran-Selected Issues. IMF Country Report 04/308. International Monetary Fund, p. 7). In a detailed analytical article by Hadi Salehi-Esfahani and Hashem Pesaran, (Salehi-Esfahani H, Pesaran H (2009) The Iranian Economy in the Twentieth Century: A Global Perspective. *Iranian Studies* 42(2) 2009, pp. 177–211), the authors also make the point that the only period of sustained and stable economic growth in Iran's twentieth century history was between the early 1960s and the mid-1970s—true enough. Furthermore, they state that Iran was catching up with the wealthy Western states by the 1970s. The authors rightly assume that the goal of "development," as it was argued in the 1950s and afterwards, meant "catching up" to the First World/North, and not simply increasing the absolute size of the economy. Wealth (or its numerical proxy, Gross Domestic Product) is understood and shown as a relative measure. Using per capita GDP figures adjusted for purchasing power parity (GDPpc PPP), the authors note that at the end of this rapid period of growth in 1976, "per capita income in Iran had reached about 64 percent of the average for 12 Western European countries." For a critical review of the paper see <http://kevanharris.princeton.edu/blog/2013/03/did-iran-lose-its-chance-catching-west>.

which it has striven, as if men had blown bubbles into the air, and then, entranced by their beautiful colors, had leapt to catch them, only to see them burst.⁸⁴

Once more, our persistence in disregarding the reality of our state and our overall condition illustrates how a struggling culture willfully creates circumstances that make it possible for unfamiliar and imported ideas to capture the public imagination. Worse still, these ideas often have their own local enchanted entourages, whose main objective is to sustain the prevailing of mediocrity. Poets, writers, novelists, etc., in a highly artificial and grotesque manner, played the role of patronage, surging forward not as a liberating force endowed with genuine intellect but rather as pseudo-intellectuals who much prefer to celebrate the liberty of others than to liberate themselves from a colonial mentality.⁸⁵ It is easier still to defend someone else's idea than to have something to say now and be willing to defend it later. That is why those who would most willingly subvert individual rights and liberties usually do so not in their own names but in the names of others.

Under these circumstances, it seems quite implausible to compare ourselves with others, who in our eyes have achieved what we desire, e.g., respect for rights of individual citizen, role of law, a united nation, etc. As a *corollary*, questions such as "why can't we achieve what they have?" or "why can't we be like them?" appear fairly audacious and uninformed queries⁸⁶ because the desired achievements such as liberty and freedom entail action on behalf of the whole of society, and if the action is not within our power, what we lack is not freedom but the ability to act.⁸⁷ This in turn means that it makes no sense to speak of being coerced into submission against our will, because the will behind our actions is always revealed by the actions themselves.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, I beg to differ with the premise which claims that we can enjoy similar rights and privileges as "they" do. This is not to say that we do not have either the right or the capacity to achieve these benefits as they have. No doubt we can and should reach for these necessities which any civilized nation such as our inherently merits. However, what is abundantly clear, but apparently remains an enigma in Iran, is that men create ideas and not the other way around. Development

⁸⁴Summer WG (1906) *Folkways: A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usage, Manners, Customs Mores, and Morals*. The New American Library, p. 44.

⁸⁵See Wright Mills C (2008) *The Politics of Truth Selected Writings of C. Wright Mills*. Oxford University Press, pp. 127–128.

⁸⁶This is not to say that we do not have either the right or the capacity to attain similar goals and inspiration. No doubt, as one of distinct ancient civilized cultures, we can and should reach our aspirations.

⁸⁷Here, the notion of action is not what we, Iranians, usually perceived it to be in that it satisfies a need for revenge, gratification, devotion, contemplative bliss, or for working off emotional tensions, but rather "the action of persons who, regardless of possible cost to themselves, act to put into practice their conviction of what seems to them to be required by duty, honor, the pursuit of beauty, a religious call, personal loyalty, or the importance of some "cause" no matter what it consists". (see Weber M (1978) *Economy and Society: An outline of Interpretive Sociology*. University of California Press, p. 25).

⁸⁸Skinner Q (2004) *Liberty Before Liberalism*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 7–8.

at the national level, which necessarily comprises the minimum requirements underlined above, is a long and continued process that cannot be forged either by pretentious efforts such as a cut-and-paste exercise or by empty proliferation of claims and calling it planning. It entails, first and foremost, determination of the gap between the present and an ideal state by taking into consideration the role of culture and history in shaping who we are and where we stand in relation to the world around us. However, determining the latter is less problematic than the former.

Consider the last 200 years select a year at random and then casually examine an event that occurred in Iran at that year relative to a randomly picked country. The result is revealing. For instance, in 1927, Werner Heisenberg, a young German physicist, introduced matrix equations that removed the Newtonian elements of space and time from any underlying reality.⁸⁹ In the same year, and thousands of miles away from Belgium, during the Reza Shah reign, the state-sponsored Boys' Technical School was founded.⁹⁰ In addition, the first Ministry of Justice was created, a new national bank was established, the plan for the establishment of the railway begun, and the Shah finally terminated the capitulatory rights, which had been enjoyed for 100 years by the Russians as well as other foreign nationals, including Belgians.⁹¹

On this note, what is abundantly clear, but apparently remains an enigma in Iran, is that men create ideas and not the other way around. Betterment of a society is a long and continued process that cannot be forged by either pretentious efforts such as a cut-and-paste exercise or empty proliferations of claims and call it planning. It entails, first and most, determining the gap between the present and an ideal state by taking into consideration the role of culture and history in shaping who we are and where we stand in relation to the world around us.⁹²

The fact of the matter is that any country in the world bears no significance without its people, its culture, its politics, and its history. It is here, within these domains that one recognizes Iran's most distinctive vitality and dynamism, and where one can clearly observe the country's most valuable resources and wealth. And yet, by

⁸⁹This happened despite the fact that at the time and among all fields of science, Newtonian physics was perceived more firm, coherent, and methodologically certain to the extent that only a fool would dare to claim that flight by birds or butterflies negated the laws of gravity. Perhaps that is why Einstein rejected Heisenberg's interpretation and wrote: "I, at any rate, am convinced that He [God] does not throw dice." I supposed Einstein meant that the world did not get here *accidentally*, which is precisely what all monolithic *scriptures* teach. The world must have a structure, and that structure is harmonious, and it is harmonious because God created it.

⁹⁰In addition, in the same year, a first Ministry of Justice was created, a new national bank was established, the plan for the establishment of the railway begun, and the Shah finally terminated the capitulatory rights, which had been enjoyed for 100 years by the Russians as well as other foreign nationals, including Belgians.

⁹¹It should be noted that Mosaddeq had been the first Iranian to advocate the abolition of capitulations, in a widely circulated pamphlet in 1914 (Mosaddeq M (2003) *Kapitolasion va Iran* (November 1914). In: Afshar I (ed) *Mosaddeq va masa'el-e hoquq va siyasat*. Tehran, 39–78).

⁹²By no means do I intend to imply that the West is the model to pursue in Iran. However, and to the best of my knowledge, there are no successful models existing today that at least resemble and are compatible with what the Western model, at least theoretically, can offer.

all accounts, the Iranian economy is an enigma in the sense that the country's potentials has never been effectively realized or utilized, which has always resulted in persisting futilities and frustration. The irony is not quite complete unless one considered various progress that has been made during the last 100 years to transform this ancient land from total stagnancy into a spirited state.

In this context, the quality of our understanding of the problems depends largely on the broadness of our frame of reference, for insularity is a limitation on comprehension. The main benefit of the suggestions underlined in this study is in pointing at plausible relevant factors and at plausible significant combinations among them, which are often overlooked within a more limited sphere of a single discipline and experience of contemporary economics. Most importantly, however, such a broad perspective highlights the urgent need for fundamental change in the present perspective of the economy. We must abandon our pursuit of popular economics (as well as utilization of its policy toolkits) and settle the matter by recognizing that such a paradigm formed around certain conditions that prevailed in the nineteenth century in more affluent Western economies but never existed in Iran. We have to consider tailor-made ideas that are compatible with our economic system and reject conventional premade diagnoses and prescriptions that are incompatible with the structure of our economy. Unless we address these issues and face them head on, the economic condition would retain its status quo, and the nature of policy making continues to be a berating ground for redundancy in which no one is willing to take any responsibility for constant failures which they are part of.⁹³

In addressing these issues, it is imperative to acknowledge that the prevailing economic malaises in Iran are neither temporary nor caused by extrinsic factors or foes, but rather the result of an incoherent and an erroneous view of the national economy. On a similar note, Alexander Gerschenkron pointed out, "As likely as not the period of stagnation ... can be terminated and industrialization processes begun only if the industrialization movement can proceed, as it were, along a broad front, starting simultaneously along many lines of economic activities. This is partly the result of the existence of complementarity and indivisibilities in economic processes. Railroads cannot be built unless coal mines are opened up at the same time; building half a railroad does not do if an inland center is to be connected with a port

⁹³ It is astonishing, given the history of economic malaise, that Abolhassan Ebtehaj was the only leading economic policymakers who resigned from his post as head of Planning Organization in 1959. In his obituary, the British Newspaper *The Independent* wrote, "In resisting political interference and the diversion of oil revenues to the military he made enemies once again and lost the all-important support of the Shah... In November 1961 Ebtehaj was arrested on trumped-up charges of acting illegally in signing a contract while head of the Plan Organisation with a well-known American firm of consultants. He spent seven months in prison before adverse publicity in the United States and the UK caused the Shah to order his release without trial. Before this he had ... founded his own Iranians Bank ... In 1974 Ebtehaj established as a joint venture with a leading American insurance company the Iran-America International Insurance Co. Both institutions prospered. In 1977, in what proved to be a very lucky decision, Ebtehaj sold out his interest in the bank very profitably." See <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/obituary-abolhassan-ebtehaj-1079753.html>.

city.”⁹⁴ The key to stop this confusion is in Toynbee’s relation between challenge and response. Toynbee believed that major threats to any society and its well-being always lie in “self-inflicted wounds.”⁹⁵ In this respect, the challenge, or a problem if you would, must be defined *accurately* before a response is taken out of a hat. In Iran, this procedure (normality) is a most common anomaly in the sense that a problem always seemed defined already by irrelevances outside the frame of popular thoughts, and hence responses (solution) are constantly forced-fed.

Today it must be obvious that the past failures are urging us to take a different path, in which the existing structure, historical inheritance, and embedded traditional institutions, e.g., Owqaf, and informal network settings, e.g., Bazaar, ought to play a vital role in shaping. It is the sole obligation of the living generation of Iranians to embark on the different tasks of finding our own answers and shaping their own future. The following remarks, therefore, purport to do no more than suggest the basic steps needed to resolve the most persistent problems in hand and then point in the direction of ideas and settings, which this study perceived as significant. We need to build an economy based on an already existing foundation; the makeup of such an economy must first and foremost be in accordance with abundantly available capital, namely, the people and natural resources, as well as hand structures and institutions. In this content, economic development and its subsequent prosperity is primarily the result of endogenous foundations.

All of these, however, depend on what sort of discipline we perceive economics to be and what merit should be accorded to its explanatory and prescriptive claims. These critical questions are of more than casual interest at present for millions of Iranian who are beset by economic problems of perpetual persistence and incredible complexity. Many have, understandably, grown cynical about the received wisdom of contemporary economists being relevant to the issues that need to be addressed. There is even greater skepticism that the discipline of modern economics is likely to provide answers to the perpetual predicaments that have hemmed Iranians in for decades, if not centuries. These failures, I argue, are because, in a conventional economic analysis, a peculiar perception has formed which has totally excluded the fact that economic action, as all other forms of social action, always originates from *collective representation*. The notion of monetary value is an sufficient example of collective representation or, more precisely, a social contract. Respectively, one cannot deny the fact that an economy constitutes a major source of power in a society and is oriented toward much border boundaries that has been drawn by conventional wisdom. This means that an economy, particularly in a country such as Iran, has been embedded in social, historical, and political processes, by which phenomena such as trade, money, and markets were inspired by motives beyond conventional vision, e.g., profit making. In this context, I began laying down the notion of social construction of the economy.

⁹⁴Gerschenkron A (1962) *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective: A Book of Essays*. Fredrick A. Praeger Publishers, p. 5.

⁹⁵Toynbee AJ (1947) *A Study of History: Abridgement of Volumes I to VI*. Oxford University Press, p. 161 and 273.

7.1 Social Construction of the Economy and Iranian Economic System

From Plato to Adam Smith, economics is mainly perceived in relation to the material wealth of societies. This description, in part, relates to the structure of the real world, which is why Karl Polanyi calls it *substantive*, as he states “The substantive meaning of economics derives from man’s dependence for his living upon nature and his fellows. It refers to the interchange with his natural and social environment, insofar as this results in supplying him with the means for material want satisfaction.”⁹⁶ In short, substantive economics refers to the provision of material goods, which satisfy biological and social wants, and hence the broad agencies of material-means provision are universal. On this note, Herskovits has observed, “The basic problem is universal: not only to have enough to eat to keep alive, but also to satisfy the demands of personal tastes, religious rules and a multitude of social obligations, all as important to the life of the group as mere subsistence is to the life of the organism.”⁹⁷ This unambiguous delineation, therefore, implies nothing more than the organizational structures and processes through which material goods are provided, and so one does not assume anything in advance in terms of necessary technique, motivation, or specific types of economic organization. The presence of some kind of *organized* economic structure is mainly because the exploitation of natural resources necessarily demands the use of techniques for the attainment or creation of material goods, such as farming, manufacturing, etc. The use of technique and of natural resources, in addition to the need for distributing material goods among the inhabitants, requires some kind of institutional arrangements to assure continuity in production (supply) or, as George Dalton puts it, “to assure repetition of performance.”⁹⁸ Respectively, the participants are mutually dependent because economic processes occur within a social community, requiring utilization of some pattern of recognized rights and obligations requisite for all involved (participants).

The contemporary (as opposed to primitive) mainstream description of economics based on the ideology that rules the thinking of conventional economics, in the English-speaking world at least, is that a well-functioning *capitalist* economy is a *market* economy.⁹⁹ For instance, Alfred Marshal claimed that “Economics is a study of men as they live and move and think in the ordinary business of life. But it concerns itself chiefly with those motives which affect, most powerfully and most

⁹⁶ Polanyi K (1957) The Economy as Instituted Process. In: Polanyi K, Arensberg CM, Pearson HW (eds) Trade and Market in Early Empires: Economies in History and Theory. The Falcon’s Wing Press, p. 243.

⁹⁷ Herskovits MJ (1952) Economic Anthropology: A Study in Comparative Economics. Alfred A. Knopf, p. 294.

⁹⁸ Dalton G (1961) Economic Theory and Primitive Society. American Anthropologist 63(1), p. 6.

⁹⁹ See Lazonick W (1991) Business organization and the myth of the market economy. Cambridge University Press, p. 16.

steadily, man's conduct in the business parts of his life."¹⁰⁰ This description denotes certain terms, or a set of rules if you would, such as "economical" and "economizing" that primarily concerns maximizing achievement of some end or minimizing the expenditure of some means.¹⁰¹ Contemporary economics also bears certain qualities; for instance, it has no necessary connection with the substantive meaning of economics, and economizing calculation by no means needs to be confined to the creation, distribution, or use of a material link, and instead it functions mainly by logic of "rational action" which is appropriate to significant theoretical and experiential situations, which have common explicit ends, enclosed means, and definite rules of alternative choices for the attainment of ends according to the stated means.¹⁰² Polanyi calls this description the *formal* meaning of economics, which "... derives from the logical character of the means-ends relationship, as apparent in such words as 'economical' or 'economizing'. It refers to a definite situation of choice, namely, that between the different uses of means induced by an insufficiency of those means. If we call the rules governing choice of means the logic of rational action, then we may denote this variant of logic, with an improvised term, as formal economics."¹⁰³ We are, therefore, given two distinct and independent meanings, both in common use, but differing essentially to the extent to which each had been commonly applied to a real world. Although neither view is fully useful in defining an economic system per se, they provide distinct foundations in which one can underline the *economic* aspect of a society.

In this context, I suggest that the economic aspect of Iranian society (the realm of activity in which certain values, norms, and behaviors are inherent) can be categorized as *substantive* as defined above by Polanyi, or in George Dalton words, a *primitive society*, where the general/main economic incentives, organizational requirements, and institutional settings exist to sustain and fulfill the provision of material goods.¹⁰⁴ This claim, I assert, is because of the archaic qualities of Iranian culture which do not have social, political, and economic foundations and organizations to permit the national economy to be either effective in production processes needed in the contemporary world or to function according to a systematic interdependence—a price mechanism that *accurately reflects* market conditions and

¹⁰⁰ Marshall A (1990) *Principle of Economics: An introductory volume*, eighth edition. Porcupine Press, p. 12.

¹⁰¹ George Dalton underlined three aspect of such economy: (1) it has no necessary connection with the substantive meaning of economic; (2) economizing calculation by no means need be confined to the creation, distribution, or use of material goods; and (3) a primary field of Western economic analysis, price and distribution theory, is an application of the formal meaning of economic. (See Dalton G (1961) *Economic Theory and Primitive Society*. *American Anthropologist* 63(1), p. 7).

¹⁰² For more detail see Dalton G (1961) *Economic Theory and Primitive Society*. *American Anthropologist* 63(1), p. 7.

¹⁰³ Polanyi K (1957) *The Economy as Instituted Process*. In: Polanyi K, Arensberg CM, Person HW (eds) *Trade and Market in Early Empires: Economies in History and Theory*. The Falcon's Wing Press, p. 243.

¹⁰⁴ Dalton G (1961) *Economic Theory and Primitive Society*. *American Anthropologist* 63(1), p. 6.

resources allocation to operate.¹⁰⁵ The main objective in this type of economy is to ensure a continuity of substantive operations of daily life (e.g., extract oil, sell it, and use the revenue to satisfy biological and social desires).

So how can we delineate a *system* within common framework of a national economic system? Following Maurice Godelier's claim that "no society exists without organizing its different activities in accordance with the principle and logic of certain willed order,"¹⁰⁶ a *system* (and/or structure)¹⁰⁷ can be defined as a group of objects¹⁰⁸ interlinked by certain rules (laws) which pave the way for objectives to be attainable. More to the point, rules imply "explicit principles whereby the elements of a system are combined and related, the norms *intentionally* created and applied in order to 'organize' social life; rules of kinship, technical rules of industrial production, legal rules of land-tenure, rules of monastic life, and so on willed."¹⁰⁹ In this study, an economic system is perceived as a component of the social system or, as Parson expressed, a *subsystem* of the social system.¹¹⁰

In this content, two main economic systems, namely, a market-oriented economy and a planned economy, are taken into consideration as the benchmarks, to which the Iranian economic system can be compared.

7.1.1 Market Economic System

By all accounts, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nation* is the first systematic treaty that lays the foundation of a market-oriented economic system. The most important aspect of this system is the fact that its social characteristic of a market is defined by

¹⁰⁵ See Appendix on Economic of Development.

¹⁰⁶ Godelier M (1972) Rationality and Irrationality in Economics. Trans: Brian Pearce. Monthly Review Press, p. 258.

¹⁰⁷ In their most primitive forms, both notions refer to combinations of objects in accordance with rules.

¹⁰⁸ Here, objects can take on various real forms. In certain content, for instance, this proposition implies that it is possible to think of polity as capable of setting the goal-states of the social system (see Talcott Parson and Neil Smelser. *Economy and Society: A Study of Economic and Social Theory*, Routledge, reprint 2001, pp. 48–50). This goal-setting process is conceived in terms of objects capable of "realization," "gratification," and "recognition" of the societal will, and hence is not limited to any specific formal organization such as political parties, government cabinet offices, etc. In short, polity is a system limited to goal-setting according to rules that are created by the structure in which it operates.

¹⁰⁹ Godelier M (1972) Rationality and Irrationality in Economics. Trans: Brian Pearce. Monthly Review Press, p. 258.

¹¹⁰ A crude example is today's global economic system, where energy is treated as a commodity that benefits energy-producing enterprises (according to already established rules of *Commodification*), while in another type of an economic system, energy may be treated as a social necessity that benefits those who lack purchasing power.

the impersonal relationship between buyer and seller. In perfect conditions, both sides pursue their self-interest independent of one another, and both are specifying their goals and engaging in activities to attain those goals. The impersonality of the market is manifested by "... the willingness of sellers of goods and services to enter into exchange with the highest bidder. As long as a buyer has the purchasing power to pay the highest price, his or her identity is of no concern to the seller."¹¹¹ A market-oriented system, generally, is characterized by the notion of *laissez faire*, which originates from Smith's well-known example of the division of labor in pin manufacture a capitalist employer, not the market, coordinating the specialized division of labor.¹¹² Moreover, a market system exists because of rights to private ownership of property, to which a state is responsible to guarantee and protect these rights.¹¹³

According to Barbara Lawrence, "Historical perspective differs from history in that the object of historical perspective is to sharpen one's vision of the present, not the past."¹¹⁴ Following her thought, a notion of market-oriented economy in this study primarily deals with ideas that were formed from the eighteenth century onward in Europe.¹¹⁵ A distinction is also made here between a *general* (daily life) and *abstract* (conceptualized) view of what constitutes economy to accentuate the important relevancy of historical, cultural, and cognitive aspects of an economy.

¹¹¹ Lazonick W (1991) *Business organization and the myth of the market economy*. Cambridge University Press, p. 59.

¹¹² Smith's arguments for *laissez-faire* had to do with eradicating legislated barriers to the mobility of capital into those uses in which its owners deemed it most profitable to employ—that is, into those uses that offered the most scope for specialized divisions of labor. If the barriers to entry into productive activity and product markets were broken down, Smith argued, the invisible hand of self-interest would guide capital into those uses in which the division of labor could be carried the furthest. For an informative and detailed analysis of the topic see William Lazonick, 1991, Chap. 8.

¹¹³ So when, for instance, Viet Nam embarked in transition to a market-oriented economic system, the government's first task was primary focused on reform of land property in which private properties and property rights are protected by the state. (See Barker R (ed) (1994) *Agricultural Policy Analysis for Transition to a Market-Oriented Economy in Viet Nam: Selected Issues*. Economic and Social Development Paper 123. Food & Agriculture Organization, pp. 8–10.)

¹¹⁴ Lawrence BS (1984) *Historical Perspective: Using the Past to Study the Present*. *The Academy of Management Review* 9(2), p. 307.

¹¹⁵ Prior to the modern market economy, there was no economic principle. As Moses Finely in *The Ancient Economy* explains, "[Alfred] Marshall's title [The Principles of Economics] cannot be translated into Greek or Latin. Neither can the basic terms, such as labour, production, capital, investment, income, circulation, demand, entrepreneur, utility, at least not in the abstract form required for economic analysis. In stressing this I am suggesting not that the ancients were like Moliere's M. Jourdain, who spoke prose without knowing it, but that they in fact lacked the concept of an 'economy' and, a fortiori, that they lacked the conceptual elements which together constitute what we call 'the economy.' Of course they farmed, traded, manufactured, mined, taxed, coined, deposited and loaned money, made profits or failed in their enterprises. And they discussed these activities in their talk and their writing. What they did not do, however, was to combine these particular activities conceptually into a unit, in Parsonian terms [Talcott Parsons' term] into a 'differentiated sub-system of society.' Hence Aristotle, whose programme was to codify the branches of knowledge, wrote no Economics. Hence, too, the perennial complaints about the paucity and mediocrity of ancient 'economic' writing rest on a fundamental misconception of what these writings were about." (Finely MI (1999) *The Ancient Economy*. University of California Press, p. 21).

This does not imply that economic theories are not used here, but rather an economy is viewed outside the conventional framework that limits one's visions of it as a broader part of human life and community.

The general consensus is that an economy consists of two key areas, production and consumption, which are generally depicted as a circular flow. In a society where the division of labor prevails, each productive unit and each sector of activity requires means of subsistence and means of production provided by the other units and other sectors in exchange for their own requirement. In short, one area creates and renews; the other is responsible for starting afresh. Marx captured this essence by observing, "Whatever the social form of the production process, it has to be continuous, it must periodically repeat the same phases. A society can no more cease to produce than it can cease to consume. When viewed, therefore, as a connected whole, and in the constant flux of its incessant renewal, every social process of production is at the same time a process of reproduction."¹¹⁶ Pierre Proudhon, a nineteenth century French politician and philosopher, reiterated a similar notion when he asserted that "working and eating are the two apparent purposes of man's existence."¹¹⁷ However, the single notion that denotes any meaning to production and consumption, working and eating, is the market, where exchange and trade take place. The overall structure of the market constitutes a persistent inclination towards a recurring balance, or what Marx called the *sphere of circulation*, where commodities are bought with money and sold for money, the money-capital (M-C) period.¹¹⁸ In short, the essence of economic activities consists of three interrelated elements: production, consumption, and circulation.

Markets form regardless of geographic specifications and irrespective of ideological stands or civilizations. In this respect, markets are commonplaces. According to Israel Kirzner, "A market exists whenever the individual members of a society are in sufficiently close contact to one another to be aware of numerous such opportunities for exchange and, in addition, are free to take advantage of them."¹¹⁹ The prevailing principle in the conventional modern market system, therefore, is based on consumer's sovereignty in the sense that individuals are generally free to act as they choose, and hence what is to be produced is determined by the aggregate decision of participants (individuals and household as consumers). However, Joan Robinson noted that "No-one who has lived in the capitalist world is deceived by the pretense that the market system ensures consumer's sovereignty. It is up to the socialist economies to find some way of giving it reality."¹²⁰ Nevertheless, any orthodox description of market activity means the description of individual activity that is

¹¹⁶ Marx K (1976) Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I. Penguin Books, p. 711.

¹¹⁷ Braudel F (1982) The Wheels of Commerce: Civilization and Capitalism 15th-18th Century, Volume II. Trans: Sian Reynolds. Harper & Row, p. 25.

¹¹⁸ See Marx K (1976) Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I. Penguin Books, Chap. 6-The Sale and Purchase of Labour-Power.

¹¹⁹ Kirzner IM (1963) Market Theory and the Price System. Princeton, p. 2. Emphasis added.

¹²⁰ Robinson J (1965) Consumer's sovereignty in a Planned Economy. On Political Economy and Econometrics, Essay in Honour of Oskar Lange. Polish Scientific Publishers, p. 521.

simultaneously conditioned by the actions of other participants in the market. Perhaps now, we can roughly delineate a market as a network of various decisions. Here lies the spirit of a market in which “*the decisions of different individuals (who may be quite unknown to one another) tend to be brought progressively into greater consistency with each other.*”¹²¹ The real significance of this seemingly chaotic network of decisions is the presumed order, a routine consistency of discipline.¹²² In this light, a market can be conceived as an organization. “The Organization is usually informal and unconscious, but it may become conscious and formal.”¹²³ And yet, as Bertrand Russell noted, “While economics is about how people make choice, sociology is about how they don’t have any choice to make.”¹²⁴

It is generally argued that, for a market system to prevail, individuals must be free to act as they choose to better their welfare. That is, in a market economy, an individual is generally at liberty to take advantage of any opportunities to improve his position. As the necessary corollary, a market system ceases to function when such freedom is absent. This line of thinking may be rooted in the classical teachings of the distant past, but it is formally conceptualized by Ludwig von Mises in *Human Action: Treatise on Economics*. Mises’ core contribution appeared in the first part of the book, called *Human Action*, in which the categories necessary for the study of any human action are established. Accordingly, a man’s behavior in a market, or *homo economicus*, is a valuable unified framework, observed Nobel laureate Becker, “for understanding *all* human behavior.”¹²⁵ The value of such a

¹²¹ Kirzner IM (1963) *Market Theory and the Price System*. Princeton, p. 3. Emphasis origin.

¹²² In this light, Daniel Bell in *Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* points out, “It is important to realize that the market economy, though it is associated historically with the rise of modern private capitalism, is *as a mechanism* not necessarily limited to that system. Such writers as Enrico Barone and, later, Oskar Lange argued that a socialist market economy was entirely possible, and that the market would operate more efficiently under socialism than under modern capitalism, where its operations were consistently distorted by monopoly or oligopoly.” (See Bell D (2008) *The cultural contradictions of capitalism*. Basic Books, p. 223).

¹²³ Hass GC (1922) *Sale Prices as a Basis for Farm Land Appraisal*, Technical Bulletin 9. University of Minnesota Agriculture Experiment Station, p. 4.

¹²⁴ Relevant to this observation, is a distinction between *needs* and *wants* which must be clarify here. Needs are what is sustaining us as members of the “species” e.g., clean water, nutritious food intake, shelter, etc. Wants are wide ranging desires of individuals in accordance with their own preferences and idiosyncrasies. In the market system, needs are excluded and wants take on further modification in respect of what individuals can pay for (afford). In general, there is an established economic view to belittle the notion of needs in conventional economics on the ground of its ambiguity, as Keynes once wrote: “it is true that the needs of human beings may seem to be insatiable. But they fall into two classes—those needs which are absolute in the sense that we feel them whatever the situation of our fellow human beings may be, and those which are relative in the sense that we feel them only if their satisfaction lifts us above, makes us feel superior to, our fellows. Needs of the second class, those which satisfy the desire for superiority, may indeed be insatiable; for the higher the general level, the higher still are they. But this is not so true of the absolute needs” (Keynes JM (1963) *Essays in Persuasion* (No. 190). WW Norton & Company, p. 365).

¹²⁵ Becker G (1976) *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior*. University of Chicago Press, p. 14.

framework lies in various conventional economic claims, for example, that perceived competition among market participants is a civilized act of self-interest by gentlemen, instead of more realistic interpretations.¹²⁶ Joan Robinson eloquently underlined this point when she stated, “when he [Adam Smith] speaks of appealing to the self-interest of the butcher, the brewer, and the baker to get us dinner, he is evidently thinking of a gentleman with independent means spending money on the tradesmen, rather than of their competitive struggle to make a living.”¹²⁷ Robinson’s cynicism is directed at the conviction that homo economicus interactions (interaction among economic men) are always given opportunities for material gain between interactive parties. In fact, we are told by conventional wisdom that such “Interactions seem always to exert a ‘positive’ effect at the collective level. They produce ‘efficient’ situations and are therefore socially desirable.”¹²⁸

Assuming a validity of conventional framework described above, in the realm of economics, everything occurs in the market to the extent that Krizner declared, “Outside the market context we have nothing.”¹²⁹ And yet, unlike most essential notions in conventional economics, there is no well-rounded definition of a market that takes into account social and historical aspects. In fact, a clear description is absent in major works such as Adam Smith’s *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* or John Maynard Keynes’ *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. Even Alfred Marshall, who designated a chapter “On Market” in his *Principles of Economics*, ungenerously described markets only in provisional terms by either outlining the boundaries of a market or describing instances of very wide types of markets. Nevertheless, William Stanley Jevons in *A General Mathematical Theory of Political Economy* offers an intriguing definition of a market, as he says, “By a *Market* I shall mean much what commercial men use it to express. Originally a market was a public place in a town where provisions and other objects were exposed for sale; but the word has been generalised, so as to

¹²⁶ To quote Oskar Morgenstern when he considered the meaning of competition, “the common sense meaning is one of struggle with others, of fight, of attempting to get ahead, or at least to hold one’s place. It suffices to consult any dictionary of any language to find that it describes rivalry, fight, struggle, etc. Why this word should be used in economic theory in a way that contradicts ordinary language is difficult to see. No reasonable case can be made for this absurd usage which may confuse and must repel any intelligent novice. In current equilibrium theory, there is nothing of this true kind of competition: there are only individuals, firms or consumers, facing given prices, fixed conditions, each firm or consumer for convenience insignificantly small and having no influence whatsoever upon the existing conditions of the market (rather mysteriously formed by tatonnement (cf. point 4 below) and therefore solely concerned with maximizing sure utility or profit, the latter then being exactly zero. The contrast with reality is striking; the time has come for economic theory to turn around and to “face the music.”” (see Morgenstern O (1972) *Critical Points in Contemporary Economic Theory: An Interpretation*. Journal of Economic Literature 10(4): 1163–1189, p. 1164.

¹²⁷ Robinson J (1980) *What are the Questions: And Other Essays*. M. E. Sharpe, p. 7.

¹²⁸ Saint-Jean IT (2009) Is Homo economicus a ‘bad guy’?. In: Arena R, Dow S, Klaes M (eds) *Open Economics: Economics in relation to other disciplines*. Routledge, p. 262.

¹²⁹ Krizner IM (2000) *The Driving Force of The Market: Essay in Austrian Economics*. Routledge, p. 256.

mean any body of persons who are in intimate business relations and carry on extensive transactions in any commodity.”¹³⁰ Next to Jevons, R. H. Coase’s definition offers illuminating description: “Markets are institutions that exist to facilitate exchange, that is, they exist in order to reduce the cost of carrying out exchange transactions. In an economic theory which assumed that transaction costs are non-existent, markets have no function to perform.”¹³¹ On the latter point, Stigler implicitly agrees and restates the Coase theorem as “under perfect competition private and social cost will be equal.”¹³² Stigler also asserts that in a world of zero transaction cost, “monopolies would be induced to act like competitors,” and consequently, as Coase claims, Stigler’s proposition should be reduced to “with zero transaction cost, private and social cost will be equal,” deleting the requirement of perfect competition as redundant.¹³³ Coase and Stigler underlined an issue that bears significant consequences which ought to be taken into consideration if one insists on applicability of a market as the mechanism of a national economic system.

Unlike the conventional conceptual view of an economy, the exchange transactions that take place through the price mechanism are far from homogenous. In fact, nothing could be more diverse than actual transactions which take place in the world.¹³⁴ Using Coase’s definition of a market, given the impossibility of a perfect world in which transaction cost is absent, various transaction costs are incurred

¹³⁰Jevons WS (1866) Brief Account of a General Mathematical Theory of Political Economy. Journal of the Royal Statistical Society 29: 282–287. In the footnote of the paragraph Jevons noted Cournot defined the economical use of the word *market*: “On sait que les économistes entendent par *marché*, non pas un lieu déterminé ou se consomment les achats et les ventes, mais tout un territoire dont les parties sont unies par des rapports de libre commerce, en sorte que les prix s’y nivellent avec facilité et promptitude.” It is also noteworthy that Alfred Marshal in *the Principle* used the translation of exact quotation when he paraphrased Cournot and stated, “Economists understand by the term *Markets*, not any particular market place in which things are bought and sold, but the whole of any region in which buyers and sellers are in such free intercourse with one another that the prices of the same goods tend to equality easily and quickly.” (Marshal A (1990) *Principle of Economics* (eighth edition). Porcupine Press, p. 270).

¹³¹ Coase RH (1990) *The Firm, The Market and The Law*. University of Chicago Press, p. 7. On this note, Stigler implicitly agrees. He restates the Coase theorem as “under perfect competition private and social cost will be equal.” (Stigler GJ (1987) *The Theory of Price* 4rd ed. University of Chicago Press). However, Stigler also asserts that in a world of zero transaction cost “monopolies would be induced to ‘act as competitors’” (Stigler GJ (1972) *Law and Economics of Public Policy: A Plea to the Scholars*. The. J. Legal Stud. 1(1)). Consequently, as Coase realizes, Stigler’s proposition should be reduced to “with zero transaction cost, private and social cost will be equal” deleting the requirement of perfect competition as redundant. Putting it another way, in the perfect markets all prices are set so that all parties are price takers. Thus, “The centralization of commercial networks in the physical setting of the bazaar was bolstered by the morphology of the bazaar, which grouped sectors together in particular groups. Localization reduced the costs of searching for sellers and facilitated the exchange of information about price, quality, and supply between sellers, buyers, and exchange partners”. (Keshavarzian A (2007) *Bazaar and State in Iran: The Politics of the Tehran Marketplace*. Cambridge University Press, p. 141).

¹³² Stigler GJ (1987) *The Theory of Price* 4rd ed. University of Chicago Press, p. 120.

¹³³ See Schroeder JL (2004) *The Triumph of Venus: The Erotics of the Market*, University of California Press, p. 112.

¹³⁴ In the real world, therefore, policies to contain cost are necessarily heterogeneous.

according to attributes of different markets.¹³⁵ Therefore, it is not unusual for a government to propose policies to reduce specific costs because of the theory of second best.¹³⁶ However, because transaction costs always exist, Coase asserts that policy-makers should ponder on the real-world cost, which entails an appropriate definition of cost with an achievable and viable alternative, “A better approach would seem to be to start our analysis with a situation approximating that which actually exists, to examine the effects of a proposed policy change and to attempt to decide whether the new situation would be, in total, better or worse than the original one. In this way, conclusions for policy would have some relevance to the actual situation.”¹³⁷ Thus Kenneth Arrow described transaction cost as “cost of running the economic system,”¹³⁸ and Oliver Williamson noted that transaction costs are “the cost of planning, adapting, and monitoring.”¹³⁹ Hence, there is an advantage in either containing or lowering the cost, for which some may design a whole new market device, whereas others may decide to use devices from the conventional economic toolkits.

In Iran, however, we are often inclined to pursue paved paths or to use a better phrase and ready-made policies to resolve our endemic economic problems, mainly because these problems are perceived as universally uniform and therefore their solutions must be compatible with those applied elsewhere. I argue that not only has this approach been proven erroneous, based on decades of failures, but also it is counterproductive because it deprives us from utilization of already existing local devices and institutions to resolve these problems, to which transaction costs are relevant. The argument here is that leveraging local institutions such as the bazaar would lead to lower transaction costs. Let me explain.

To contain transaction costs, we need to consider its three broad forms: (1) search and information cost, (2) bargaining cost, and (3) policing and enforcement cost. In this respect, I suggest bazaar, as an informal institution, provides one of the most viable approaches, if not the only sustainable, to control the first two categories of this type of cost in Iran. For one thing, in an incoherent and disjointed Iranian economic system, where market-oriented practices are often used in economic policy-making processes, planning and control regularly exercised by the state, and traditional institutions and organization are an embedded part of the national

¹³⁵ For instance, some literature looks at the impact of transaction cost associated with bid reduction and zero quantity spread. Bid reduction represents a transaction cost that varies according to the size of the order. On the dealer market, the larger the order, the lower the bid will be, as the market maker is able to reduce the cost of trading per share, while still covering his costs. In this light, traders with larger trades favor the dealer market (see Vulkan N, Roth AE, Neeman Z (eds) (2013) *The Handbook of Market Design*. OUP Oxford, p. 631).

¹³⁶ According to this theory, if we cannot eliminate *all* imperfections, we cannot predict a priori whether the elimination of any one cost will have a positive or negative effect.

¹³⁷ Coase RH (1960) *The Problem of Social Cost*. *The Journal of law and Economics*, Vol. III, p. 43.

¹³⁸ Arrow KE (1974) *The Limits of Organization*. Fels Lectures on Public Policy Analysis. W. W. Norton & Company, p. 48.

¹³⁹ Williamson OE (1999) *The Mechanisms of Governance*. Oxford University Press, p. 58.

economic structure, an achievable and a sustainable policy to contain costs of running the economic system is most important. On this point, Mohammad Reza Hosseini, from Tehran Islamic Azad University, has observed, “After 60 years, Iran does not yet know whether, similar to Brazil, it is going to follow a replacement strategy of industrial goods import or follow an industrial independence strategy similar to India or follow the programmed development of industrial export similar to South Korea or strategy of free economy or freedom in economic function. Using only one ministry and an organization and a program, South Korea enriched itself. But Iran using 20 ministries, 83 operational offices with 60 years of economic programming [planning] has not yet been able to give a program to the government and control it.”¹⁴⁰

Yet, bazaar, despite its *institutional setting of networks* and *value chain* intrinsic features and the fact that it has been the most stable informal institutions in Iranian history, not only has been disregarded through the years as a vital part of national economic plans, but it has been weakened in recent years by populist policies such as nationalization of the banking system and foreign trade, elimination of brokerage junction [i.e., functions that the broker made available to its client] through the development of cooperative societies.¹⁴¹ In the only comprehensive study of bazaar in Iran, Arang Keshavarzian highlighted the potential of bazaar in curtailing transaction cost. For instance, in terms of standardized goods, such as manufactured shoes, textile, clothing, etc., prevailing prices in bazaar may be unstable, but because quantity and quality are defined, price dispersion and transaction costs (information cost) would tend to decline.¹⁴² Bargaining cost also tends to be reduced in bazaar as long relationships among the bazaar merchants would naturally reduce uncertainty about the preferences of others, and so “the accumulation of precedents helps diminish bargaining cost associated with transaction.”¹⁴³ Bazaari merchants also guard against potential defaults in that their crosscutting ties “facilitate exchange of information about potential trade partners within the group. They are the relations that bridge networks or connect members of the same level in a given group. Gossiping allows for public shaming and champion making. Someone who cheats can be betrayed to the community, although a reputation for honesty can be identified and reinforced. Thus, crosscutting ties help reduce monitoring and enforcement costs in situations where third-party appraisal and records are absent (e.g., consumer reports, law merchants, better business bureaux).”¹⁴⁴ Finally, and from a cul-

¹⁴⁰ Hosseini SMR (2008) The Investigation of the Role of Institutions in the Process of Growth and Development of Economy. *International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering* 2(3): 159–161, p. 160.

¹⁴¹ See Ashraf A (1988) Bazaar-Mosque Alliance: The Social Basis of Revolts and Revolutions. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 1(4): 538–567, p. 564. See also Keshavarzian A (2007) Bazaar and State in Iran: The Politics of the Tehran Marketplace, Cambridge University Press, p. 111.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 216.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

tural perspective, bazaar intrinsic practices and traditions alleviate imperfect outcomes associated with transaction cost. Here Roy Mottahedeh in his brilliant *The Mantle of the Prophet* offers telling clues: “two men meeting on the street meet merely as two men, but for over a thousand years the bazaar has been recognized by Islamic law as a special arena of human life, and in law as well as in common understanding two men meet there as ‘two men in the bazaar.’ As such, they share certain moral and even legal obligations, for example, to buy and sell with a shared knowledge of the current market price. Information about prices is, in fact, the quickening breath that sustains the life of the bazaar, and the mechanism by which these prices adjust to new information on supply and demand is so refined as to seem almost divine. Not only prices but men’s reputation are set, reset, and continually adjusted in the bazaar information flowing through networks of reliable friend. All society is a catchment area for the information to which the unofficial brokerage of a mosque and the bazaar will ultimately give a common market price.”¹⁴⁵ Mottahedeh also elaborates on the significance of the bazaar in Iranian political life: “When political life comes to the boil, the bazaar is not just the public assessor of values—it becomes a direct arena for political expression. At such time, in the classic Persian expression, the bazaar is ‘disorder,’ which means that people come and go in an agitated way and seem close to violence and riot. When bazaar boils over, it simply shuts.”¹⁴⁶

I end this part by reminding the reader that the prominence of internal organization in the development and operation of a market-oriented economy does not contradict the orthodoxy of the convention. In Iran, the analysis of markets, not organizations, holds center stage of economic thinking. The so-called reform platform mainly empathizes with less state organization of production processes and more non-state (private sector) involvement. In a nutshell, the optimal way out of the economic deadlock is when market forces determine the nature of the organization, rather than organizations determining the nature of markets. Anecdotally, the story is directed by market prices and constrained by available technology, private firms’ combined productive resources, in the most efficient manner. The economic message is that the “invisible hand” of the market ensures that resources are allocated to their most productive uses, with the net satisfaction, or utility, that individuals derive from producing and consuming marketable commodities serving as

¹⁴⁵Mottaheadeh R (1985) *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran*. Pantheon, pp. 34–35.

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 35. On bazaar shut down Mottahedeh offers the following, “Moments at which the Tehran bazaar closed punctuate the last two centuries of Iranian history.” (*Ibid.*). He underlined two example, one is during December of 1905 when many merchants and mullahs took sanctuary in protest to the manner in which the Tehran municipality treated the sugar merchants, which ultimately began the constitutional revolution. The second, and more relevant to this study, is in the summer of 1960 the government announced the results of elections to the parliament: “A completely honest election to the parliament was a fond dream, never yet experience by any generation of Iranians. But the election of 1960 were so blatantly rigged that even some of the winners were embarrassed, and an unusual season of limited freedom or expression allowed a few elder statesmen to say that the government had insulted the electorate. The bazaar closed. The elections were canceled.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 35–36).

the ultimate measures of productivity. If we let impersonal market forces direct the allocation of resources and the distribution of income, so the narrative goes, individual freedom and economic well-being go hand in hand.¹⁴⁷

Had the market-oriented reformers in Iran paid attention to the teaching of prominent market economists, they would have understood the relation between a state organization (i.e., interventions) and market is central to the realization of the value-creating potential of productive resources. Frank H. Knight, the founder of the *Chicago school* and Nobel laureate who taught Milton Friedman, George Stigler, and James M. Buchanan described a machine-like operation of the market economy in his most celebrated book, *The Economic Organization*, first published in 1933.¹⁴⁸ In this book, Knight began with a critique of definitions of many standard economic textbooks of “what is economics” and labeled them as “useless and misleading.” He points out, “economizing, even in [the] broad sense of rational activity, or the intelligent use of given means in achieving given ends, does not include all human interests.”¹⁴⁹ He turns against prevailing orthodoxy and described those who subscribed to it as falling off from the other side of the rooftop of extremism, “in its reaction from the futility of medievalism and mystical speculation, the modern Western world has gone far to the other extreme.”¹⁵⁰ Conceptually, Knight believed that the actual subject matter of economics deals with “the *social organization* of economic activity.”¹⁵¹

To underline the need for organization of economic activity, Knight draws an analogy between a living body and the modern economic system; “the human body shows organization in the true sense, since the various *organs* not only perform different functions, but all act in a substantially continuous manner and in proper adjustment to each other.”¹⁵² Therefore, the problem of organization “deals with the concrete means or mechanism for dividing the general function of making a living for the people into parts and bringing about the performance of these parts in due

¹⁴⁷ Friedman M (1962) *Capitalism and Freedom*. University of Chicago Press.

¹⁴⁸ In fact, an advocate of both market-based economy and socialism found the Knight exposition of economic organization (EO) beneficial. “Milton Friedman and George Stigler built their price theory books on the base set by Knight, Paul Samuelson borrowed from EO in creating his famous textbook, and both the essays by Fred Taylor and Oskar Lange in *On the Economic Theory of Socialism* adopted Knight’s statement of the operation of the price system in free enterprise as the basis for their advocacy of market socialism.” (Emmett RB (2010) *Economic Organization*, by Frank Knight: a reader’s guide. In: Emmett RB (ed) *The Elgar Companion to the Chicago School of Economics*. Edward Elgar, p. 56).

¹⁴⁹ Knight FH (1965) *The Economic Organization*. Harper & Row Publishers, p. 4.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6

¹⁵² *Ibid.* It is noteworthy that deduction based on resemblance of the human body and an economic system is by no means an analytical novelty. The physiocrats of the eighteenth century were also making similar analogies between blood circulation and a circular flow of income throughout the economy. Francois Quesnay and his *Tableau Economique* (1759) are a good example of this trend.

proportion and harmony.”¹⁵³ So organization means *ordering of the social machinery* in Knight’s words, which is divided into five interconnected and overlapping functions, three of which are most relevant to the content of the present study.¹⁵⁴

The first of these functions is what Knight called *the notion of efficacy*. Its role is only to establish a common standard as a measure of usefulness of value. This function would settle “the question of *whose* wants and the wants of *which* are to be given preference, and in what measure.”¹⁵⁵ The first function, therefore, is to decide what is to be produced and who gets what is produced. In doing so, it delineates norms of the social scale of value, e.g., efficiency, or “the function of social choice.” Here, Knight clarified, “the correct definition of efficiency is not the ratio between ‘output’ and ‘input’ but between *useful* output and total output or input... In any attempt to understand economic efficiency, the notion of value is more obviously crucial since most economic problems are concerned with a number of kinds of both outlay and return, and there is no conceivable way of making comparisons without first reducing all the factors to terms of common measure.”¹⁵⁶ This is the paradigm on which the foundation of a market economy formed.

The second function deals with *organizing production*, in the strict sense of getting things done according to established standards and values.¹⁵⁷ This step tends to guide a process of production through allocation and coordination of all available materials and means of production. The third function is distribution. The significance of this function is twofold. On the one hand, there is a close link between distribution and control of production in that the decision of what to produce is closely linked to the decision for whom to produce.¹⁵⁸ On the other hand, a market economy is a system based on efficiency and ownership of private property, in

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁵⁴ The last two are basically a group of functions that are responsible for maintaining and improving the social structure, promoting social progress, and adjustments to retain short-term equilibrium. They are: economic maintenance and progress; and to adjust consumption to production within a very short period.

¹⁵⁵ From a social point of view, Knight declared, “this process may be viewed under two aspects, (a) the assignment or *allocation* of available productive forces and materials among the various lines of industry, and (b) the effective *coordination* of the various means of production in each industry into such grouping as will produce the greatest result.” (Ibid., p. 8. Emphasis original).

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 10. Emphasis original.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁵⁸ The reader should note that the question of “for whom to produce” is related to income distribution; how to divide the national product? Jahangir Amuzegar underlined this point when he stated, “An aristocratic or a feudal society would naturally have a different distribution pattern than an egalitarian or a rural community. A developing countries bent on rapid economic development would have a different distribution scheme to a developed, mature, affluent nation. The choice of alternative distribution patterns depends upon the nature of national objectives and social-welfare consideration.” (See Amuzegar J (1981) Comparative economics: national priorities, policies, and performance. Winthrop Publisher, pp. 15–16).

which “every productive resource including labor power, typically ‘belongs’ to some person who is free with the legal condition of marketing, to get what he can out of its use. It is assumed . . . that there is in some effective sense a real positive connection between the productive contribution made by any productive agent and the remuneration which its ‘owner’ can secure for its use.”¹⁵⁹

In Knight’s view, a market economy is the function of distribution which guarantees in a sense that those who own private property receive remuneration.¹⁶⁰ Remarkably, Knight never mentioned the concept of unearned income in his analysis of the social organization of economic activity, and to the best of my knowledge his only recognition of the notion occurred elsewhere when he claimed, “. . . taking property rights for granted in the case of inherited personal power and stigmatizing the yield of inherited material goods as ‘unearned income’ seems to be quite *inexplicable*. Society always has to find some way to encourage the development and serious, interested use of productive capacities of all sorts (as it may always have to recognize family relationship in *securing continuity of control from one generation to another*).”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Knight FH (1965) *The Economic Organization*. Harper & Row Publishers, p. 11. However, it should be noted that a portion of the remuneration (received income) is also composed of “unearned income”, *irrespective of their contribution* to the total output of the economy (social product), which is often undetected by orthodox analysts.

¹⁶⁰ It should be noted that unearned income is also called “property income” and refers to income received, not earned, by virtue of owning property. According to Phillip O’Hara, “Property income is, by definition, received by virtue of owning property. Rent is received from the ownership of land or natural resources; interest is received by virtue of owning financial assets; and profit is received from the ownership of production capital. Property income is not received in return for any productive activity performed by its recipients.” (See O’Hara P (2003) *Encyclopedia of Political Economy*, Volume 2. Routledge, p. 1135). It should be noted that unearned income is also called “property income” and refers to income received, not earned, by virtue of owning property.

¹⁶¹ Knight FH (1921) *Risk, Uncertainty, and Profit*. Houghton Mifflin Co, Boston, pp. 170–171. Emphasis added. This, however, is more or less an irrelevant issue within an income distribution scheme in other economic systems. For instance, a distributional principle of *to each according to his contribution* is considered to be one of the defining features of the socialism economic system. This is because, as Gregory and Stuart stated, “The state owns the means of production as well as rights to surplus value. Under socialism, each individual would be expected to contribute according to capability, and rewards would be distributed in proportion to that contribution. Subsequently, under communism, the basis of reward would be need. However, need would presumably have a meaning rather different from the one assigned to it under capitalism, where wants are continually expanding.” (See Gregory PR, Stuart RC (2004). *Comparing economic systems in the twenty-first century*. Houghton Mifflin, p. 119). The account that “in communism the basis of reward would be need” is a bit of a simplification that conceals the essence of this statement and the controversies that pursued it. The complete phrase is “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need” that was apparently used first by Louis Blanc, the French orthodox republican in the eighteenth century, who opposed Rousseau’s idea of a system of direct democracy on the ground that such an idea “could be only applied to societies characterized by ‘a very small state, a people that was easy to bring together, citizens who knew each other, a pronounced simplicity of morals, high levels of equality in both rank and fortune, little or no luxury.’” (See Jennings J (2011) *Revolution and the republic: A history of political thought in France since the eighteenth century*.

In retrospect, the point I am trying to make here is that in Iran we have developed a peculiar view of a market economy, which neither resembles the original version nor is fashioned to needs and the structure of national economy. As a result, economic policies of the State had been turned into unforeseen dogmas that often undermine the national economy, legitimacy of the State's agendas, and those policymakers who initiated them. This type of misunderstanding reminds me of a passage about the architecture of the site of Khurha in western Iran written by Ernst Herzfeld in 1941: "When the Iranians attempted to accept everything Greek, as they do with everything European, they did not grasp the significance and proportion, but were entirely satisfied with semblance. The depth of things remained hidden to them. The result is a hybrid art, if art it can be called, which is neither Greek nor Iranian; it is of no inner or aesthetic value, and is worthy of study only for historical or psychological interest ... It is amazing to see how quickly, in not more than two or three generations, a handicraft of unlimited power can be completely lost, and with the mere technical skill the artistic judgment also."¹⁶²

7.1.2 *Planned Economic System*

The expression planned economy covers a variety of meanings. For the sake of clarity, planned economy is assumed to be a product of economic decisions that are predominantly embodied in a predetermined blueprint formulated by a state. Furthermore, in this study, a planned economy is perceived in contrast to a market economy. This difference was brilliantly noted in 1948, when Nobel laureate Paul Samuelson wrote his widely used textbook, *Economics*, in which he claimed, "Any society, whether it consists of a totally collectivized communistic state, a tribe of South Sea Islanders, a capitalistic industrial nation, a Swiss Family Robinson or

Oxford University Press, p. 129). Blanc's proposition was later adopted by Marx and used in *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, in which he declared "In a higher phase of communist society ... [when] the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be fully left behind and society inscribe on its banners: from each according to his ability, to each according to his need!" (See Marx K (1986) *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. In: Dutt CP (ed). International Publishers, p. 10). To understand what "a higher phase of communist society" means, one must be attentive to a Lenin observation made in December 1919, "If we were to ask ourselves is what way communism differs from socialism, we would have a reply that socialism is the society which grows directly out of capitalism, that it is the first form of the new society. Communism, on the other hand, is a higher form of society, which can develop only when socialism has taken firm hold ... [in communism] people become accustomed to the performance of public duties without any specific machinery of compulsion, when unpaid work for the common good becomes the general phenomenon." (Ibid., p. 97). Marx's use of Blanc's proposition does not imply that "the individual must lend his ability to the community for the sake of equality of condition", observed G. A. Cohen (see Cohen GA (1995). *Self-ownership, freedom and equality*. Cambridge University Press, p. 126). However, Lenin seems utterly to suggest otherwise.

¹⁶² Herzfeld E (1941) *Iran in the Ancient East*. Oxford University Press, pp. 286–287.

Robinson Crusoe, and one might almost add, a colony of bees, must somehow meet three fundamental economic problems. (1) *What* commodities shall be produced and in what quantities? That is, how much and which of many alternative goods and services shall be produced? (2) *How* shall they be produced? That is by whom and with what resources and in what technological manner are they to be produced? (3) *For whom* are they to be produced? That is, who is to enjoy and get the benefit of the goods and services provided? Or, to put the same thing in another way, how is the total of national product to be distributed among different individuals and families?"¹⁶³ Samuelson's concern with the fundamental problem of economics was what should be produced in the economy, how within the existing factors of production (land, labor, capital, and technology) should it be produced, and for whom should the output be produced. In short, who does what to whom and who must pay for it?¹⁶⁴ On a different note, Friedrich Pollock underlined what he perceived as the genuine problem of a planned society, which "does not lie in the economic but in the political sphere, in the principles to be applied in deciding what needs shall have preference, how much time shall be spent on work, how much of the social product shall be consumed, and how much used for expansion, etc. Obviously, such decisions cannot be completely arbitrary but are to a wide degree dependent upon the available resources."¹⁶⁵

By its organic definition, a planned economy is commonly perceived as an economy in which the state makes all decisions regarding production, distribution, and consumption. To control, therefore, is an integral part of this decision-making process. The notion of economic control, in a contemporary historical perspective, can be traced back to an attempt by the Weimar Republic in the early twentieth century during World War I, in which tensions emerged in Germany between the wars, manifested between the state as the site of civic law and the nation as supreme ideological form. These tensions provided the sacred charge of communal identification to the extent that agonistic expenditure was abandoned in favor of an acquisitive sense of exchange in interest of more stable form of communality. On the whole, the aim was to contain the national bourgeois discharges of wealth by careful control of consumption to retain "... the minimum necessary for conservation of life and the continuation of individual's productive activity" rather than "represented by so-called unproductive expenditures: luxury, mourning, war, cult, the construction of sumptuous monuments, games, spectacles, arts, perverse sexual activity. All of these represent activities which, at least in primitive circumstances, have no end

¹⁶³ Samuelson P (1997) *Economics: The Original 1948 Edition*, first edition. McGraw-Hill/Irwin, pp. 12–13.

¹⁶⁴ It should be noted that the interpretation of these issues is a matter of expertise and field studies. For instance, in political science the issue concerns for whom deals with whose interest are being served (through policy decisions and formulation) and whose welfare is being ignored. (See Benvenisti E, Nolte G (eds) (2007) *The Welfare State, Globalization, and International Law*. Springer-Verlag; and Whitfield D (2001) *Public Services or Corporate Welfare: Rethinking the Nation State in the Global Economy*. Pluto Press).

¹⁶⁵ Pollock F (1982) *State Capitalism: Its Possibilities and Limitation*. In: Arato A, Gebhardt E (eds) *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*. Continuum Publishing Company, p. 75.

beyond themselves.”¹⁶⁶ The core idea was both to preserve life and retain individual productive activity during hardship.

Later, however, the notion was colored with a political dye and was popularized by the Russian Bolsheviks’ five-year plans in 1928. E. H. Carr, in discussing the first 5-year plan, points out, “Now planning was to become comprehensive, for the economy as a whole ... the question was no longer whether to industrialize, but how to industrialize ... the idea of planning for a five-year period caught the imagination, and stimulate the ambitions, of the planner. It compelled them to confine vague and remote prospects within the term of a fixed period. It was easier to produce optimistic estimates which were to be realized five years ahead than limit oneself to the prospect of a single year.”¹⁶⁷ Economic planning in the USSR, therefore, became a method in the hands of the party’s elite and remained central to the party’s ideology until it collapsed by its innate farce in the 1980s.¹⁶⁸ Ironically, planning, as such, was also a significant departure from the anti-utopian socialism stance of Marx and Engle, which saw attempts to arrange and organize the future socialist order as futile, given the fact that such order was nothing but an inevitable product of historical forces. This is mainly because when socialism is achieved in a country, there is no need to guide the present into the future because socialism provides such guidelines. Therefore, and to the best of my knowledge, neither Marx nor Engle had ever envisioned such a future.¹⁶⁹ In addition, for military reasons, Soviet economic policy was largely concerned with catching up. This claim was reaffirmed by Stalin at the very beginning of the country’s planning. In a well-known speech delivered in 1931,

¹⁶⁶ Bataille G (1986) *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*. Trans: Mary Dalwood. San Francisco.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 109–110.

¹⁶⁸ It is very common to view planning as a socialist instrument of economic management. However, as Stevenson points out, “during the inter-war years socialist writers such as G. D. H. Cole advocated planning in contradiction to the chaos, irrationality and waste of the capitalist system. Capitalism was indicted as a gigantic muddle, whereas socialism stood for rationality and a co-ordinated approach to economic and social question—planning was the practical expression of socialism. Thus in 1934 Barbara Wootton in *Plan or no Plan* advocated the advantages of economic planning and central, public management in promoting equality, fairness and a reduction in unemployment, while Douglas Jay in *The Socialist Case* in 1938 argued that collectivist planning was the only way to achieve a just and fair society. But while socialist concerns for planning was important ... the most significant feature of the inter-war years was the acceptance by middle opinion of the need for planning without the destruction of the capitalist system. Hence planning was not a uniquely left-or-right-wing cause between the wars, it was a response from progressive capitalists, professional people, academics, centrist politicians and socialists who found in it a means of advance over a wide range of social and economic problems.” (See Stevenson J (1986) ‘Planner’s moon? The Second World War and the planning movement’. In: Smith HL (ed) *War and social change: British society in the Second World War*. Manchester, p. 66.)

¹⁶⁹ Milovan Djilas also underlined a similar notion when he wrote, “In [former] Yugoslavia, it has been officially declared that planning is conducted according to Marx; but Marx was neither a planner nor a planning expert. In practice, nothing is done according to Marx. However, the claim that planning is conducted according to Marx satisfies people’s consciences and is used to justify tyranny and economic domination for ‘ideal’ aims and according to ‘scientific’ discoveries.” (See Djilas M (1957) *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System*. Frederick A. Praeger Publisher, p. 104).

he explained the imperative need to press on with rapid industrialization regardless of obstacles.¹⁷⁰

In retrospect, and in the light of the fact that since its inception the Russian Bolsheviks' planned economy was diagnosed as an erroneous scheme by friends and foes, several alternative delineations of planned economy have emerged.¹⁷¹ The most relevant explanation of this study is presented by Frederick Pollack's analysis of the transformation of capitalism. Pollack's analysis indicates that the abolition of the market mechanism and private property is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition to construct any viable economic system.¹⁷² Although he admits that a market economic system is inherently incapable of development for the benefit of all, he suggests that such a system can be transformed and give rise to the possibility of a new order that resolves this deficiency. In this respect, instead of identifying a planned economy with socialism, Pollock distinguishes two main types of planned economic systems: "a capitalist planned economy on the basis of private ownership of the means of production, and a Socialist planned economy on the basis of socialized ownership of the means of production."¹⁷³ Pollock's distinction, therefore, is made based on the ownership of property in a sense that, when social ownership is absent, we have a capitalist planned economy.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ In that speech, Stalin reiterated the main aim of planning as he said. "It is sometimes asked whether it is possible to slow down the tempo somewhat, to put a check on the movement [industrialization]. No Comrades, it is not possible! The tempo must not be reduced! On the contrary, we must increase it as much as is within our power and possibilities... To slacken the tempo would mean falling behind. And those who fall behind get beaten... one feature of the history of old Russia was the continued beatings she suffered because of her backwardness... All [countries, e.g., Poland, Japan, British, France, etc.] beat her because of her backwardness, because of her military backwardness". See Ellman M (1989) *Socialist planning*, 2nd edition. Cambridge University Press, pp. 12–13.

¹⁷¹ See von Mises L (1981) *Socialism: An Economic and Sociology Analysis*. Trans: Kahane J. Liberty Classic, pp. 520–522; and Trotsky L (2004) *The Revolution Betrayed*. Dover Publication.

¹⁷² Rush F (2004) *The Cambridge Companion to Critical Thinking*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 180–182.

¹⁷³ Horkheimer M, Adorno TW, Noeri G (2002) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Stanford University Press, p. 249.

¹⁷⁴ In another way, in an absence of social ownership, what prevails is a capitalist planned economy. While this distinction is far from flawless, it provides a sufficient foundation to continue the present discussion. This is because of the importance of *social ownership*, which cannot be overemphasized. The principle function of social ownership is to create the economic basis for the autonomous organization of society because social ownership, by definition, denotes property that is owned by *those who operate and use it* (for an illuminating analysis of the subject, see Cocutz JT (1953) Does Social Ownership Have Any Meaning? *Ethics* 64(1), pp. 46–50). Moreover, many prominent proponents of a socialist planned economy also explicitly underlined the significance of social ownership. For instance, Lenin observes, "And given social ownership of the means of production, given the class victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, the system of civilized cooperators is the system of socialism." (See Lenin, "On Co-operation," at: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1923/jan/06.htm>).

Later, in 1941, Pollock refined his theoretical foundation and effectively developed an understanding of the newly emergent social order as state capitalism.¹⁷⁵ In his essays, *State Capitalism* and *Is National Socialism a New Order*, Pollock's analyses evolved to oppose totalitarianism, whereas earlier he opposed a socialist to a capitalist planned economy, in which he describes the Soviet Union as a state capitalist society. Accordingly, he defined state capitalism in the light of two opposing forms, namely totalitarian and democratic. Furthermore, Pollock differentiates a state capitalism on three points from a private capitalism. He outlined these points as follows. (1) The market is deposed from its controlling function to coordinate production and distribution. This function has been taken over by a system of direct controls. Freedom of trade, enterprise, and labor are subject to governmental interference to such a degree that they are practically abolished. With the autonomous market, the so-called economic laws disappear. (2) These controls are vested in the state which uses a combination of old and new devices, including a "pseudo-market," for regulating and expanding production and coordinating it with consumption. (3) Under a totalitarian form of state capitalism, the state is the power instrument of a new ruling group, which has resulted from the merger of the most powerful vested interests, the top-ranking personnel in industrial and business management, the higher strata of the state bureaucracy (including the military), and the leading figures of the victorious party's bureaucracy. Everybody who does not belong to this group is a mere object of domination. [Whereas] under a democratic form of state capitalism, the state has the same controlling functions but is itself controlled by the people [i.e., via election]. It is based on institutions, which prevent the bureaucracy from transforming its administrative position into an instrument of power and thus laying the basis for trans-shaping the democratic system into a totalitarian one.¹⁷⁶ For Pollock, therefore, state capitalism prevails when the political sphere has superseded the economic sphere.¹⁷⁷

Many prominent scholars either followed Pollock's notion of state capitalism or expanded it to cover wider domains.¹⁷⁸ For instance, Jürgen Habermas emphasizes the primacy of the political over the economic in "Technology and Science as

¹⁷⁵ It should be noted, "the term state capitalism was first coined by Wilhelm Liebknecht, founder of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. The phrase was later used by Lenin, to indicate what he perceived to be a positive direction of progress for the fledgling Soviet economy. However, neither of these early usages corresponds to the nature of state capitalism as we see it today. The socialist thinkers at the time of Liebknecht generally used the phrase to criticize an "incomplete" transition towards capitalism and a betrayal of its ideals. Lenin emphasized that state capitalism is only a temporary interim placeholder for full socialism, and in any case it should be a small part of his new economy. State capitalism as it exists today only began to take shape during the middle of the last century." (See Li J (2015) *State capitalism: Leviathan Economics of the Future*. Yale Economic Review, Feb 13, 2015).

¹⁷⁶ Pollock F (1982) *State Capitalism: Its Possibilities and Limitation*. In: Arato A, Gebhardt E (eds) *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*. Continuum Publishing Company, pp. 72–73.

¹⁷⁷ Postone M (2003) *Time, labor, and social domination: A reinterpretation of Marx's critical theory*. Cambridge University Press, p. 90.

¹⁷⁸ For an example of the former see James CLR (1986) *State Capitalism and World Revolution*. Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, pp. 53–56.

Ideology,” in *Towards a Rational Society*, and insists on unavoidable gaps in democratic legitimacy concerning the use of public intervention for private ends given shirking resources.¹⁷⁹ He further developed his idea in the content of legitimization of state apparatus, and he noted, “The state can avoid legitimation problems to the extent that it can manage to make the administrative system independent of the formation of legitimating will. To that end, it can, say, separate expressive symbols (which create a universal willingness to follow) from the instrumental function of administration. Well known strategies of this sort are the personalizing of objective issues, the symbolic use of inquires, expert opinion, legal incantations, etc.”¹⁸⁰

All things considered, Iran planned an economy for which a plan according to some specific interval (i.e., 7 or 5 years) had been constructed for achieving, on a national scale, certain chosen ends that greatly resemble Pollock’s state capitalism.¹⁸¹ This analogy between Iran’s planned economy and what is described by Pollock as state capitalism is an obviously imperfect one, and certainly I do not intend to draw an identical parallel between them. However, the point is that the link between what has transpired in Iran’s planned economy in approximately 70 years and the main features of state capitalism underlined by Pollock is hard to refute (undeniable). When they do diverge, it is because of cultural peculiarities. The first shared quality in both cases is the fact that the state formulates a general plan and indulges its fulfillment. The central characteristic of both orders (the state capitalist and Iran planned economy) is the supersession of the economic sphere by the political realm. Balancing production and distribution has become a function of the state rather than of the market. Although a market, a price system, and wages may remain in existence, they no longer serve to regulate the economic process [see [Appendix B](#): on Rent-seeking vs. rent creation].

The second common quality is related to private property. Regardless of a presence or an absence of the legal institution of private property, its private economic (self-interest) usage has been effectively either impeded or abolished altogether.¹⁸² This, however, does not necessarily mean that there are no individual owners of capital, but ownership cannot be guaranteed against confiscation, or individual owners are deprived from exercising power and hence have been transformed into a

¹⁷⁹ See Habermas J (1971) *Toward a rational Society: Student Protest, Science and Politics* Vol. 404. Beacon Press.

¹⁸⁰ Habermas J, Seidman S (1989) *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics: A Reader*. Beacon Press, p. 275.

¹⁸¹ This does not mean, as Pollock noted, “all details are planned in advanced or that no freedom of choice at all is given to the consumer. But it contrasts sharply to the market system inasmuch as the final word on what needs shall be satisfied, and how, is not left to the anonymous and unreliable poll of the market, carried through *post festum* [not comparable], but to a conscious decision on ends and means at least in a broad outline and before production starts.” (Pollock F (1982) *State Capitalism: Its Possibilities and Limitation*. In: Arato A, Gebhardt E (eds) *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*. Continuum Publishing Company, p. 75).

¹⁸² Many economists stress the importance of property rights in contemporary economics. For instance, Ronald. H. Coase conceives economics as “the study of property rights over scarce resources. The question of economics, or of how prices should be determined, is the question of how property rights should be defined and exchange, and on what terms.” (see Coase RH (1960) *The Problem of Social Cost*. *The Journal of law and Economics*, Vol. III, pp. 1–44).

mere rentier.¹⁸³ On this note, Pollock observed, “Even the mightiest combines have been deprived of the right to establish a new business where the highest profits can be expected; or to discontinue production where it becomes unprofitable. These rights have been transferred to the ruling groups as a whole. It is the compromise between the controlling groups which decides on the scope and direction of the productive process; against such decision the property title is powerless even if it is derived from ownership of an overwhelming majority of a stock, not to speak of a minority stock owner.”¹⁸⁴ This explains why no autonomous economic spheres can exist in either mechanism (state capitalism and Iran’s planned economy). Skeptics, however, may refute this observation and point to various local entrepreneurs and financiers in Iran who were and still are playing major roles in the national economy.¹⁸⁵ In response, one must acknowledge that these individuals’ investments and ventures were solely dependent upon the consent of the state rather than the mere availability of internal funds. This is so because national institutionalized means (i.e., law) have been either abolished or transformed into subservience to the state. As Pollock points out, “If the expansion of an enterprise does not fit into the general program of the government, the utilization of the accumulated reserves for plant expansion is prohibited and the accumulated funds must then be used otherwise, perhaps compulsorily invested in government bonds.”¹⁸⁶

This development takes us to the third shared attribute which has profound social implications. The customary “X” year plan is basically patchwork formulated to cope with administrative tasks rather than the process of economic exchange, and hence formal and statutory measures carry through the specific plan’s years as if the economic system would last forever. On this note, Pollock observed, “... there is no

¹⁸³ It should be noted that while in The Iranian Supplementary Fundamental Laws (constitution) of October 7, 1907, the notion of ownership was never even mentioned, in the 1979 Iranian constitution Article 46 clearly states that, “Everyone is the owner of the fruits of his legitimate business and labor,” and Article 47, which confirms that, “Private ownership, legitimately acquired, is to be respected”. And yet the term that must be noted is “legitimately”, to which no clear definition was given. Indeed, for patronage of private property ownership, the notion of security and protection were the equivalent of private ownership rights. For the founder of the American constitution, for instance, one central objective of the government was urgency of “personal protection and security of property.” (See Alexander Hamilton, quoted in Farrand M (ed) (1911) *The records of the federal convention of 1787* (Vol. 1) at p. 534; Laitos J (1998) *Law of Property Right protection: Limitations on Government Powers*. Aspen Publishers, pp. 3–43). For an informative discussion of this topic see Ehsani K (2014) *The Politics of Property in The Islamic Republic of Iran*. In: Arjomand SA, Brown NJ (eds) *The Rule of Law, Islam, and Constitutional Politics in Egypt and Iran*. State University of New York Press, pp. 153–177. For a in-depth analysis of property and ownership see Rose CM (1994) *Property and Persuasion*. Westview Press.

¹⁸⁴ Pollock F (1941) *Is National Socialism a New Order?* *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung/Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* IX, p. 442.

¹⁸⁵ For instance, in the pre-1978 revolution individuals like Sabet, Akhvan, Farmanfarmayan, Rezaei brothers, Khayami, etc, were major asset holders in various industries. By the same token, those who step outside the drawn boundaries will be punished. For instance, Putin’s imprisonment of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, formerly the richest man in Russia, shows the measures to which state capitalist Russia will resort to nullify disobedience from its economic aristocracy.

¹⁸⁶ Pollock F (1941) *Is National Socialism a New Order?*. *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung/Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* IX, pp. 442–443.

general plan, and no intention of establishing a planned economy.”¹⁸⁷ In this respect, and despite the fact that plans in both cases regularly contain a good deal of rhetoric (some of which is without practical meaning), planning per se is not intended to establish appropriate guidance in which the whole economic life would operate and performed towards some specific, coherent, and attainable goals.¹⁸⁸ And yet, as the state becomes the determining entity of the whole sphere of social life, the hierarchy of bureaucratic political structures occupies the center of social existence. Personal relations form in a command pyramid in which a preapproved vision rules in the place of common sense. In effect, the majority is commonly employed by the state, which is less concerned with incentive, sense of autonomy, and novelties. The impetus to work is effected by imposition on the one hand and lack of opportunities on the other. Individuals and groups are no longer autonomous, but rather an integral part of the whole; because of this, productivity becomes an economic enigma, as people are treated as a means rather than a most valuable national asset.

As mentioned above, the compatibility analysis between state capitalism and Iran’s planned economy is not a perfect one because it disregards history and cultural attributes. For instance, a state’s claim of property in Iran is neither a matter of state capitalism nor related to presence of the legal institution of private property, but rather correlated to prolonged absence of rule of law in Iran. To confirm this observation, one needs to look no further than embedded cultural institutions, where the *shari’a* and the *Shi’a* Jurisprudence are firmly entrenched and committed to preservation of private property, but execution of law is often impeded. This is because, historically, those in a position of power often view laws as mere texts and hence subject to their own interpretations and according to their own interests. As a result, laws are nullified, and the role of law has never been upheld in Iran in the sense that intrusions upon the rights of individual property owners by those who rule occurred regularly and with complete impunity. Indeed, this major flaw has been the most vivid quality of national polity, to which Ayatollah Khomeini in his delineation of the form of Islamic Government as the alternative to a *status quo* form of government in Iran stated, “Islamic government does not correspond to any of the existing forms of government. For example, it is not a tyranny, where the head of state can deal arbitrarily with the property and lives of the people, making use of them as he wills, putting to death anyone he wishes, and enriching anyone he wishes by granting landed estates and distributing the property and holdings of the people. The Most Noble Messenger (peace be upon him), and the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him), and other caliphs did not have such powers. Islamic government is neither tyrannical nor absolute, but constitutional. It is not constitutional in

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 444–445.

¹⁸⁸ In contrast, one can point to the successful Japan Economic Planning Agency (see Ikeo A (2002) *Japanese Economics and Economists Since 1945*. Routledge); South Korea state economic planning (see Kim KJ (2007) *The Development of Modern South Korea: State Formation, Capitalist Development and National Identity*. Routledge); or Malaysia State Planning ministries and agencies (see Khoo BT (2012) *Policy Regimes and the Political Economy of Poverty Reduction in Malaysia*. Palgrave Macmillan). It should be noted that none of these countries’ economic planning model, and not piecemeal policies, was ever considered as a viable alternative in Iran.

the current sense of the word, i.e., based on the approval of laws in accordance with the opinion of the majority. It is constitutional in the sense that the rulers are subject to a certain set of conditions in governing and administering the country, conditions that are set forth in the Noble Qur'an and the Sunna of the most Noble Messenger. It is the laws and ordinance of Islam comprising this set of conditions that must be observed and practice. Islamic government may therefore be defined as the rule of divine law over men."¹⁸⁹ Unlike most contemporary political leaders in Iran, the founder of the Islamic Revolution in this passage alluded to one of the most destructive aspects of Iranian political culture and assured the people that the Islamic government protects them against the usual arbitral tyrannies of the state.

Iranian economic organization, in the post-1978 revolution, seemed most compatible with the principle of social justice, which all Islamic inclinations advocate, and yet it was not based on social ownership of means of production, on whose rejections there was broad agreement.¹⁹⁰ During the reconstruction of the post Iran-Iraq war, it becomes more apparent that although Islam does not favor the concentration of wealth, the decision to encourage private initiatives was inevitable.¹⁹¹ This noticeable contradiction, it was thought, could be resolved through cooperative production. The constitution of the Islamic republic stipulates that the cooperative sector is to have a prominent role in the national economy.¹⁹² It does not, however, specify what constitutes a cooperative. Various attempts to promote verities of cooperative, such as the distribution of public land for joint farming and the provi-

¹⁸⁹ Khomeini I (1981) *Islam and Revolution: Writing and Declarations of Imam Khomeini (1941–1980)*. Trans: Algar H. Mizan Press, p. 55.

¹⁹⁰ Weiner M, Banuazizi A (1994) *The Politics of Social Transformation in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*. Syracuse University Press, p. 261. From an economic perspective, it is obvious why the government refused to grant or even entertain the notion of social ownership. Social ownership awards autonomy by granting two major rights to those who operate and use a property. The first is related to the notion of right to property (property right) including: (1) freedom of choice in the use of property; and (2) freedom to buy and sell property. Second is an ability to set the price of a product and the ability to self-manage. Therefore, when such autonomy is conceded, an enterprise (owned and operated by the workers) gains a right to own a property, and hence is enabled to buy and sell inputs and products; and is also enabled to set the prices of the products, and therefore empowered to capture earned income. As a result, wholesale and retail trade/exchange cannot be monopolized by the state. For a detailed analysis see Gaidar Y (ed) (2003) *The Economics of Transition*. MIT press.

¹⁹¹ For instance, the revolutionary Council approved the Law for the Protection and Expansion of Iranian Industries, to deal with the prevailing difficulties in the industrial sector. (See Amid J, Hadjikhani A (2005) *Trade, Industrialization and the Firm in Iran: The Impact of Government Policy on Business*. I. B. Tauris, p. 69).

¹⁹² For instance, Article 44 of the 1979 constitution envisaged three economic sectors: state, cooperative and private. See <http://www.en.ipo.ir/index.aspx?siteid=83&pageid=822>. The constitution, however, was subjected to intense scrutiny and criticism because it did not reflect the revolutionary spirit of the time: "in the economic articles of the new constitution, there is no mention of the struggle against imperialism and its local base... they say that as it is not capitalism and it is not socialism, it must be Islamic... but there is no talk of an Islamic society". (See Pesaran E (2011) *Iran's Struggle for Economic Independence: Reform and Counter-Reform in the Post Revolutionary Era*. Routledge, p. 45).

sion of credit for groups manufacturing, failed to produce desirable outcomes. The government even gestured to revive the past program for distribution of stocks to workers in large firms, or the scheme was considered to return a number of government-managed factories to their original owners.¹⁹³ However, no consideration was given to existing national formal and informal institutions, organizations such as *Waqf* and *Bazaar*, to strengthen cooperative productions. One can only speculate that perhaps inclinations to pursue intrinsic ideas had indeed overshadowed viable alternatives at home.¹⁹⁴

The institution (boniyad) of *Waqf* or the pious foundation *Oqaf* is an ancient tradition in the Islamic world.¹⁹⁵ *Waqf* means that ownership of a property converts from private ownership to social ownership by allocating a property together with its own income to a beneficial service. As the major institutional setting in Iran, *waqf* consisted of religious foundations set up in principle for the benefit of an institution of public interest, as Claude Cahen has observed, “[*waqf*] consisted of a religious foundation set up in principle for the benefit of a group of ‘poor men’ or of an institution of public interest.”¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, the resilience of the institution is second to none in Iran. It has survived for longer than a half a millennium or, as some claimed, even more than a millennium.¹⁹⁷ This illustrated its remarkable stability considering Iranian history. From purely economic points of view, the *waqf* mechanism signifies one of the most efficient institutional setting manifested by the fact that a myriad of essential services, e.g., health, education, municipal, etc., was provided with no cost incurred to the government. This is because *waqf* revenues cannot be treated as general revenues for the state budget, but, similar to *zakat* (revenue assigned by the Islamic law for special objective), they must fulfill some of the welfare functions, which is outlined by the person who donated the *waqf*. More importantly, the *waqf* can in principle not only solve the problem of the undersupply of public goods, as noted in conventional economies,¹⁹⁸ but it also provides property

¹⁹³ Weiner M, Banuazizi A (1994) *The Politics of Social Transformation in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*. Syracuse University Press, p. 262.

¹⁹⁴ For a cooperative nature of bazaar in Iran see Keshavarzian A (2007) *Bazaar and State in Iran: The Politics of the Tehran Marketplace*, Cambridge University Press.

¹⁹⁵ According to X. de Planhol, “The origins of this system do not go back to the Prophet, who gave land to his warriors, but traditionally to ‘Umar who reverted to the old principle of collective tribal property under the form of appropriation to the central authority – the original meaning of the word *waqf* before it took on that of mortmain or religious trust.” (de Planhol X (2000) *The Geographical Setting [of Islamic Society and Civilization]*. In: Holt PM, Lambton AKS, Lewis B (eds) (2000) *The Cambridge History of Islam*, volume 2B. Cambridge University Press, p. 459–460).

¹⁹⁶ Cahen C (1970) *Economy, society, institutions*. In: Holt PM, Lambton AKS, Lewis B (eds) (2000) *The Cambridge History of Islam*, volume 2B. Cambridge University Press, p. 519.

¹⁹⁷ Crecelius D (1995) Introduction. *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*. 38(3): 247–261, p. 260.

¹⁹⁸ In the conventional economic theory, rational consumers of public goods would tend to look for a free ride, and hence they would fail to contribute to the costs of creating these goods. Consequently, under the conditions of rational behavior, public goods would tend to be under-produced (See Bates RH (1997) *Social Dilemmas and Rational Individuals: An Assessment of the New*

owners with vital security for their properties in return for social services.¹⁹⁹ For instance, the pious foundation *Oqaf* excludes the state from ownership of some factors of production, e.g., land, and utilizes a used value of such means by capturing rents from available capital (land, buildings, etc.). In this respect, waqf not only helps to reduce government expenditure and consequently the rate of interest, it also establishes an entrenched security for private property owners and a better (less controlled) distribution of income in the economy.²⁰⁰ In retrospect, it is truly bewildering that both waqf and bazaar, as viable economic alternatives, have received trivial scholarly attention and almost no consideration in national policymaking processes.

7.2 Characteristics of Policymaking in Iran

There are certainly no shortages of conceptualization of how policy is, or ought, to be made, ranging from various models of rational or incremental behavior to different forms of organizational and top-to-bottom approaches. As a result, although some concentrate on the political impetus, others empathize on the decision-making processes and effective policy implementation. Nevertheless, the point of departure in any discussion about policymaking starts with a question: what is a policy? In its generic form, a policy is perceived in this book as a course of action that the government/state undertakes, a deliberate decision to resolve perceived problems. In short, policy can be interpreted as a problem-solving activity²⁰¹. In general, an appropriate epistemic community is presumably given the responsibility of generating ideas/policy choices to resolve problems. Furthermore, in a democratic system of government, it is presumed that an incumbent won the office of government because of a certain set of ideas and values, its principle philosophy. The government policies are, therefore, assumed to reflect such principles.

This claim, however, was thrown under the wheel by Finn Kydland and Edward Prescott in 1977²⁰². Kydland and Prescott's concern was with "time inconsistency": is there an optimal decision for a government at one point in time that might subse-

Institutionalism. In: Harriss J, Hunter J, Lewis CM (eds) *The New Institutional Economics and Third World Development*. Routledge).

¹⁹⁹ See Kuran T (2001) *The Provision of Public Goods under Islamic Law: Origins, Impact, and Limitations of the Waqf System*. *Law & Society Review* 35(4): 841–898. See also Hassan MK, Lewis MK (eds) (2014) *Handbook of Islam and Economic Life*. Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 542–543.

²⁰⁰ Cizakca M (1998) *Awqaf in History and Its Implications for Modern Islamic Economies*. *Islamic Economic Studies* 6(1), p. 45.

²⁰¹ For those who may be dissatisfied with this description, I suggest John Dewey's book, *How we think*, in which decision-making is broken up into several steps: problem identification, research of solutions, decision, implementation, and evaluation. (See Dewey J (2008) *How we think*. Cosimo).

²⁰² Kydland F, Prescott E (1977) *Rules Rather than Discretion: the Inconsistency of Optimal Plans*. *Journal of Political Economy* 83(3): 473–491.

quently cease to be the best and most rational course of action. The answer was a resounding NO. It is obvious that any administration might reorientate its trajectory away from its original commitments. The significance of Kydland and Prescott's argument is related to the impact of such realignment on other actors in the economy to sustain structures of power relationships. For example, a government that promised to fight inflation before entering office might then relax its commitment to price stability post-election to secure the endorsement of certain interest groups to ensure their support. The point is, governments almost never formulate policy on a clean slate, and hence policies are often shaped according to special interests, which often do not align with the interests of the general public. Although, conceptually, policymaking is a public activity in the sense that it is exposed to the rest of society, in practice it is always sealed from general public inference and alterations to maintain the status quo and structures of power relationship. This is not a new development, as John Stuart Mill wrote more than a century ago, "The pure idea of democracy, according to its definition, is the government of the whole people by the whole people, equally represented. Democracy as commonly conceived and hitherto practiced is the government of the whole people by a mere majority of the people, exclusively represented. The former is synonymous with the equality of all citizens; the latter, strangely confounded with it, is a government of privilege, in favor of the numerical majority, who alone possess practically any voice in the State. This is the inevitable consequence of the manner in which the votes are now taken, to the complete disfranchisement of minorities."²⁰³ In this context, policymaking is a conventional process that is more or less practiced around the world.

However, there is a peculiar form of policymaking, which is characterized in the relevant literature as the "garbage can" model. In contrast to the conventional conceptualizations, this model disconnects problems, solutions, and decision makers from each other. As Richard Daft stated, "Specific decisions do not follow an orderly process from problem to solution, but are outcomes of several relatively independent streams of events within the organization."²⁰⁴ A policy (a choice or a solution) in this model has a life of its own in the sense that a formulated solution is an answer looking for an appropriate question to be fitted in a similar way to how an econometrician sets up a model and then looks for, or defines, the problem that fits the model; the reality is defined to fit the supposition rather than the policy solution to reflect the reality. Of course, decision makers may have some idea about what solutions they may like, or they may have subscribed to specific ideology that prescribed a specific solution, but solutions are often formed in the garbage can without any accurate knowledge of the problems. This is because all choices that may or may not have any relevance to the problems are thrown into the can and the policymakers decide which bits to retrieve as and when they see fit. In such a decision-making setting the results of any round of choices are hardly effective and definitely not objective or neutral.

²⁰³ See Mill JS (1991) *Consideration of Representative Government*. Prometheus Book, p. 145.

²⁰⁴ Daft RL (1982) *Bureaucratic Versus Nonbureaucratic Structure and the Process of Innovation and Change*. *Research in the Sociology of Organization* 1: 129–166, p. 139.

The garbage can policy, I argue, resonates what has been the dominant approach in the policymaking community in Iran, where a bits-and-pieces solution with no relevance to the problems in hand is quite often prescribed at well. Perhaps an example would clarify the point. In Iran, the economic tradition of state has mainly been inclined to control and determine the price of money, namely the interest rate. Consequently, a market mechanism becomes irrelevant, and hence plays no role in reflecting the exchange value of money, namely price. However, thanks to the garbage can model, the popular market economy diagnostic standard has been persistently applied to resolve the prevailing economic malaise. For instance, there is a long history in Iran that concurs with the perception that inflation is a monetary phenomenon, and hence orthodox tools such as contractionary fiscal or monetary instruments are indiscriminately used to curb it. The result of these efforts, expectedly, has been total failure for the following reasons. First, it is obvious that the conventional market diagnostic is an erroneous method because interest rate as the determinant of value of money (price of money) is controlled. In this respect, the value of money is artificially determined, not by a market mechanism in Iran. To confirm this observation, all one needs to consider is the effect of money supply on interest rate. If the hypothetical effect of money supply on price levels is considered a valid observation, then an increase in the quantity of money should push interest rates downward. As more money is pumped into the economy, its price, the interest rate, should decline accordingly, but this never occurred in Iran. Second, contrary to prevailing belief in Iran, there are various types of inflation, e.g., demand pulled, cost pushed, profit motivated, etc., and hence to formulate any effective policy to fight inflation we must first define its type, which has never happened in Iran. Third, to claim that money supply is the main cause of inflation suggests that a prescribed remedy should eliminate inflation quickly. This is, however, false and misleading, as any Iranian can vouch for. Fourth, implementing a market-based remedy to curb inflation is not only a meaningless policy but can exacerbate the situation because these policies produce a marked retardation in the expansion and growth of the national economy, which leads to shortages of goods and increases in demand and inflation. So, why does the policymaking community in Iran insist on pursuing the path that not only produces trivial results at immense cost but to a great extent exacerbates an already dire situation. The answer can be traced back to the dominant role of ideology in policymaking, which is manifest in mimetic isomorphism. The essence of mimetic isomorphism resembles Ali Mazuri's description of modernization. It is a notion that gives postcolonial people "a capacity to emulate without permitting [them] a capacity to create"²⁰⁵.

The other view is related to the endemic absence of accountability. In Iran, who makes policy decisions is open-ended question. More importantly, however, theories and relevant literature all point to the single most essential part of any policy-making process, that is, a policymaker obligation to assume responsibility for policy choices. And yet, this fundamental prerequisite is totally absent in policymaking processes in Iran. This is mostly because of the general attributes of Iranian political

²⁰⁵ Mazuri AA (1968) From Social Darwinism to Current Theories of Modernization: A Tradition of Analysis. *World Politics* 21(1), p. 76.

culture, one of which is an acute inclination to “save-face” at any cost and regardless of ensuing circumstances. As a result of such self-indulgence, it is extremely difficult to identify an elected official who takes responsibility for a decision he made or an action he took. No one, to the best of my knowledge, has ever admitted a mistake or a wrongdoing while holding a position, and, more astonishing, has ever resigned (and apologized) for failing to meet his responsibilities.

A slightly longer answer is related to a prevailing ritual, a pattern if you would, that assures general praise as long as the claim to have the answer is declared. The conformity of rapid and painless solutions is subject to public admiration in Iran, which mostly is because of the collective amnesia. However, as we scratch the surface and look a bit deeper, the answer appears in the culture of Iranian policymaking, the mindset that refuses to see, or is unwilling to accept, what reality holds. Not in a philosophical realm, or even in a metaphysical sense, but rather in the basic teachings of economics: an economy does not grow because no incentives are provided for economic initiative; a deficiency of conditions of access to capital could be overcome only through institutional arrangements; the necessary condition for industrialization is not only physical implantation such as building factories but more importantly rest on independent and competent management, and securing access to low cost input materials, low production costs, earnings adequate for future maintenance and expansion, and a labor force willing to embrace the hardships of industrial work; economies of scale, education, capital accumulation are not driving forces of growth, but rather they are foundations which make growth possible, as noted by Douglas North and Robert Thomas.²⁰⁶ Furthermore, it is imperative for the policymaking apparatus in Iran to understand the common fallacy that industrially developed economies provide a road to development, and hence the main task is to emulate. Economics is not a fashion design business that can be subjected to tailoring. In corollary, therefore, what is really needed is an independent mind, a creativity that abandons any replication of either diagnostic schemes or prescribed solutions, and instead concentrates on recognizing the innate structural predicaments of the country. This point was underlined by Alexander Gerschenkron when he observed, “No past experience, however rich, and no historical research, however thorough, can save the living generation the creative task of finding their own answers and shaping their own future.”²⁰⁷

Having said that, however, a policymaking process as a non-traditional and rational system is a relatively new phenomenon in Iran.²⁰⁸ In fact, what has prevailed in

²⁰⁶ North DC, Thomas RP (1973) *The Rise of the Western World: A New Economic History*. Cambridge University Press.

²⁰⁷ Gerschenkron A (1962) *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective: A Book of Essays*. Fredrick A. Praeger, p. 6.

²⁰⁸ A rational system in general composed of (1) efficiency criteria with optimization as its main objective, (2) development of general guidelines of how to formalize organizational structure and relationship, (3) *bureaucratization*, that is, administrative structure through rational-legal authority as the primary organizational structure of a society, and (4) rational decision making, in which goal specificity and formalization contribute to rational conduct in an organizational setting. However, as Binder noted, “The rational systems usually pay lip service to democratic ideas, but they shun the democratic conventions.” (See Binder L (1962) *Iran: political development in a changing society*. Univ of California Press, p. 45).

Iran since the middle of the twentieth century resembles the conventional system, in which deliberative bodies, instead of a sovereign, were given the responsibility to make policy. I used the verb resemble because there are major differences, as well as commonalities, between what is assembled as a rational system in Iran and what is defined as the conventional system.²⁰⁹ One major characteristic of the conventional system is that, unlike the Iranian case, a group's attributes and the standing between the government and the individual do not define all the power relationship. Moreover, unlike the conventional system, it is not clear in the Iranian system when power and legitimacy do not coincide, or, more precisely, when unauthorized power is asserted. The main commonality between these systems is that legitimization follows the standard patterns of legislation, adjudication, and administrative decisions, which also include consultation.²¹⁰

In Iran, "tradition has been rationalized by the close subordination of aristocracy and corporative concessions to the personalized source of legitimacy, and by the identification of that source with a more logically ordered set of value than that of the existing order."²¹¹ The modern (formal) history of policymaking began in 1948, when sentiment for the nationalization of the oil industry grew. That year, the Majlis²¹² approved the First Economic Development Plan, also known as the Seven Years Development Plan, which had been drawn up in cooperation with the American consulting firm Morrison Knudsen and Overseas Consultant Incorporated (OCI). The goal was to secure oil revenue from budgetary demands by creating an independent body empowered to invest in the capital and infrastructure projects needed for the mechanization of the agriculture sector and industrial development.²¹³ This was mostly because a much higher share of the population in Iran used to live in rural areas, and hence a shift from domination of agriculture to industrial-

²⁰⁹ It is noteworthy that even the Western conventional system is changing rapidly in the sense that economic, political and social decision-making has increasingly been transferred beyond the direct control of head of state or national assemblies, e.g., parliaments: globalization, Europeanization and the growth of non-majoritarian institutions impact the way in which national authorities can decide on policies. In many ways their hands are tied by the European Union, central banks, and legal authorities. The margins of decision-making are getting smaller and decision-making increasingly involves regulation. In particular, politicians create institutions and rules that limit their freedom to act later on.

²¹⁰ In contrast, in the pre-constitutional Iran, legitimization was delegated of authority, contractual agreements, granting noble titles, marriages, and the like.

²¹¹ Binder L (1962) *Iran: political development in a changing society*. Univ of California Press, p. 45.

²¹² In contrast, in the pre-constitutional Iran, legitimization was delegated of authority, contractual agreements, granting noble titles, marriages, and the like.

²¹³ According to Glenn E. Curtis and Eric Hoogland, "Iran's economic development plans have been of varying lengths and have had various nomenclature. Under Mohammad Reza Shah, five plans were completed, and a sixth was in progress at the time of the Islamic Revolution of 1978–79. The Islamic Republic has had formal five-year economic development plans since 1990, the fourth of which began in March 2005. The plans begin and end in March in accordance with Iran's fiscal year (*q.v.*) and the Iranian calendar year." (See Curtis GE, Hoogland E (2008) *Iran: A Country Study*. Area handbook series, Federal Research Division. In Library of Congress, p. 327).

ization was perceived as step in the right direction.²¹⁴ The backward characteristic of the national economy arose from lack of the basic infrastructural necessities for a contemporary economy to function: the productive and organizational structures of industry; the presence of institutional obstacles, e.g., the serfdom of the peasantry; the absence of a coherent health and education system that covers the entire country; non-existent financial intermediary mechanism, e.g., banking structure, to facilitate production; and total disregard of civil rights. In addition, various socio-economic conditions of the country, at the time, also confirmed the backward characterization.²¹⁵

In this regard, the PO was established to manage the programs with the intention of furnishing the economy with the physical structure (components) that was perceived most needed to create interrelated systems for providing commodities and services essential to enable, sustain, or enhance societal living conditions. In short, the nation was given the first blueprint for development programs, which were supposed to be financed in large part by oil revenues.²¹⁶

Plan Organization (Sāzmān-e Barnāma) was established in 1949, which coincided with the Constituent Assembly convening and granting the Shah power to dissolve the Parliament (Majlis), assassination of Abd-al-Ḥosayn Ḥāẓir, court minister and former prime minister, and the first piped water system in Iran being set up in Shiraz, sponsored by Moḥammad Nemāzi. The Organization declared its pres-

²¹⁴“According to a study conducted by Iran’s central bank in 1937–1938, of the 14.9 million population of Iran, 83 percent lived in rural areas”. See Sharifi M (2013) *Imagining Iran: The Tragedy of Subaltern Nationalism*. Lexington Books, p. 77.

²¹⁵For instance, prevalence of infectious diseases such as typhus and cholera were common in Iran up to the 1930s, mostly because of the lack of adequate sewerage systems in both rural and urban areas, public water supply and sanitation services, and national and local inoculation programs, etc. In fact, according to Cyrus Schayegh, a debate over eugenic issues at the national level was only initiated in the middle of the twentieth century. (See Schayegh C (2010) *Eugenics in Interwar Iran*. In: Bashford A, Levine P (2010) *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*. Oxford University Press).

²¹⁶However, “General Ali Razmara, who became prime minister in June 1950, failed to convince the oil company of the strength of nationalist feeling in the country and in the Majlis. By the time the AIOC finally offered 50–50 profit sharing in February 1951, sentiment for nationalization of the oil industry had become widespread. Razmara advised against nationalization on technical grounds and was assassinated in March 1951 by a member of the militant Islamic Warriors (Fedayan-e Islami). On March 15, the Majlis voted to nationalize the oil industry. In April the Shah [Mohammad Reza Pahlavi] yielded to Majlis pressure and demonstrations in the streets by naming Mossadeq prime minister. Oil production came to a virtual standstill as British technicians left the country, and Britain imposed a worldwide embargo on the purchase of Iranian oil. In September 1951, Britain froze Iran’s sterling assets and banned the export of goods to Iran. It also challenged the legality of the oil nationalization, taking its case against Iran to the International Court of Justice at The Hague. The court found in Iran’s favor, but the dispute between Iran and the AIOC remained unsettled. Under U.S. pressure, the AIOC improved its offer to Iran. The excitement generated by the nationalization issue, anti-British feeling, agitation by radical elements, and the conviction among Mossadeq’s advisers that Iran’s maximum demands would, in the end, be met, however, led the government to reject all offers. The economy began to suffer from the loss of foreign exchange and oil revenues.” Curtis GE, Hoogland E (2008) *Iran: A Country Study*. Area handbook series, Federal Research Division. In Library of Congress, p. 33.

ence as the main arm of national government to manage and stimulate the economy that epitomized the policymaking body with the enactment of the first Seven Year Plan Law. This Law was the outcome of a few years' negotiation, and preparation that began at the end of World War II. The leading part in PO initiation was played by Abol Hassan Ebtehaj, for many years Governor of National Bank (Bank Melli), who exercised a major influence on the development of the Iranian banking system, and hence was destined to become managing director of PO during the years of its great success following the fall of Mossadegh's government in 1953²¹⁷. Ebtehaj's tenure was mainly to preside over the implementation of much of the Second Development Plan (1956–1962) and directed the formulation of the Third Development Plan (1963–1967). By all account, these plans should be considered the Pahlavi state's most rigorous effort (until its downfall in 1978) to revive the national economy through central planning schemes in which the state assumed ownership and possession of a means of material production. A political administrator in highly volatile political circumstance, Ebtehaj set forth the counterintuitive tradition that emphasized rapid growth policies at the expense of a comprehensive development program, and hence favored a rapid transition to a more gradual transformation, and as a result drastically altered the socioeconomic fabric of the country in the 1960s and 1970s.

Therefore, what has followed has been because economic development policies were neither exclusively methodical, economically speaking, nor wholly politically disciplined but rather resembled more or less cut-and-paste ideas and strategies that had trivial relevance to the character and the structure of the national economy. Strings of trendy ideas were conveniently adopted one after another to leapfrog the economy into higher stages of development, only to end up with growing bewilderment. The ease with which policies were picked up, in a wholesale manner, is a more troubling issue, particularly when no ingenuity or creativity was applied either to adjust or to alter selected policies according to the national economic condition. In this context, what has taken place in Iran is not policymaking because the process is devoid of any analytical/diagnostic efforts. The majority of economic development decisions, mostly on the part of PO, have led to: (1) a handful of people commonly benefitting from the regularly produced welfare value, be it preferential treatment, improved infrastructure, etc.; (2) ever-present nepotism, leading to lucrative contracts, etc.; (3) excessive wastefulness of resources that turns the national economy into an entropic economic system.

²¹⁷ Internationally, one of most significant of Ebtehaj's achievements was when "he concluded an agreement with Great Britain and Russia to pay back 60% of the amount of currency they received for their expenses during the War by gold, and 40% by gold guaranteed Pounds Sterling and dollars. This saved Iran's assets from the drastic devaluation of the Pound Sterling in 1949. Ebtehaj was also instrumental in placing Iran's currency on the gold standard by changing the official currency from dual silver- and gold-based rials to gold-based rials; it later contributed to maintaining Iran's currency parity vis-à-vis foreign currencies." See <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ebtehaj-abolhassan>. See also Bostock F, Jones G (1989) Planning and Power in Iran. Ebtehaj and Economic Development under the Shah. Routledge, pp, 45–48, 63–68.

The First Development Plan resembled more a wish list than economic planning. Its core measures included betterment of public health, lowering the cost of living, development of agriculture and industry, etc.²¹⁸ However, the National Front became the governing coalition headed with the first democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh.²¹⁹ The inaugural Mossadegh premiership was pursued by political turmoil in the country to the extent that, on August 3, 1953, the prime minister organized a plebiscite for the dissolution of the Majlis, counting on popular support in favor of his government, and dissolved the legislative body.²²⁰ The whole episode of the National Front governing coalition and the Mossadegh premiership epitomized the notion that those who live in an autocratic environment and rise against it often fall prey to the very notion that they fight against, perhaps because they know no other way but to be despotic. As a result, however, the first development plan in Iranian history ended up as the first economic policy debacle because priorities in Iran always lie anywhere else but where they should.

The technocratization of policymaking in Iran begins in the aftermath of Mossadegh's fall. As the US administration poured aid dollars into the country, the second Development Plan largely reflected the vision of Prebisch and friends who were troubled by the fact that economic growth in the advanced industrialized countries did not necessarily lead to growth in the poorer countries. Their solution was similarly straightforward: "poorer countries should embark on programs of import substitution so that they need not purchase manufactured products from the richer countries."²²¹ Respectively, Iran's industrialization, which was initiated in 1955, has mainly concentrated on import substitution not only "in the already established area of consumer goods under Reza Shah, but also in the intermediate and

²¹⁸ See Zonouz BH (2010) *The Study of Economic Planning System in Iran (Pre-Islamic Revolutionary Period)*. The Office of Plan and Budget Studies of Majlis Research Centre (MRC).

²¹⁹ Mohammed Mossadegh is an immense historical figure in Modern Iranian History. Born to an elite and wealthy family in Tehran, Mirza Mohammed Khan received his law degree from Neuchatel University in Switzerland. Upon his return to Iran in 1914, and in recognition of his late father's service to the Qajar crown, the monarch Nasir al-Din Shah gave him the noble title of "Mossadegh al-Saltaneh". In 1929 Mohammed Khan Mossadegh al-Saltaneh was appointed to the governorship of Fars Province, but after the coup of 1921, led by Seyyed Zia'eddin Tabatabaee (the last prime minister of Iran under Ahmad Shah, the last Shah of Gajar dynasty), he resigned. Later, Mossadegh was appointed as Iran's minister of finance during Qavām os-Saltaneh (also known as Ahamd Qavām) who was jailed by Tabatabaee in 1921 but soon after the fall of Tabatabaee government appointed as prime minister of Iran. In later years Mossadegh opposed the elevation of Reza Khan Mirpanj to the status of Reza Shah in 1925. As result, he was forced out of public life until Reza Shah was forced by England and the Soviet Union to abdicate in favor of his son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and the rest, as they say, is history. It should also be noted that Mossadegh was not the exception and there were many who occupied important positions in the Pahlavi government that have ties with the Qajar monarchy. For instance, Ali Amini, hand picked by Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as a minister and prime minister, was the offspring of wealthy and aristocratic family that had served the Qajar dynasty.

²²⁰ Iran Chamber Society (2015) *History of Iran: Oil Nationalization*. Available at: http://www.iranchamber.com/history/oil_nationalization/oil_nationalization.php.

²²¹ Ferraro V (2008) *Dependency Theory: An Introduction*. In: Secondi G (ed) *The Development Economics Reader*. Routledge, p. 58.

capital goods area (steel, aluminum, fertilizers, paper, rubber, transport machinery, construction materials, electronic equipment, etc.)”²²² Still, there was no clearly defined and coherently constructed development policy.

The first two plans, 1949–1962, were more a list of incoherent public investment projects than a consistent development approach, in which most faced substantial cost overruns that could not be covered. In 1957, devaluation of the national currency, from 32.25 to 76.5 rials per US dollar, combined with an overexpansion of domestic credits to the private sector, led to a demand-pulled inflation as production stagnated and eventually resulted in recession.²²³ These adversities had quite different effects on both traditional and modern sectors of the economy. According to Amuzegar, “it was particularly hard on bazaar merchants, day laborers, small farmers, and the petite bourgeoisie. The lesson was never forgotten.”²²⁴

As President Kennedy took office in 1961, Keynesianism dominated economics and expansionary policies were pursued in the US. Subsequently, the third plan of 1962 begun with emphasis on “expansion” on government programs and support to augment the private sector’s economic activity.²²⁵ With no limit to cheap credit, “government programs also included a wide range of incentives to encourage investment in new industries by both Iranian and foreign businesses. Most new investment was a joint effort between either the public sector and foreign investors or private businesses and foreign corporations. Investment in roads, highways, dams, bridges, and seaports also increased. With government support, part of the agricultural sector also attracted significant investment. Many large-scale agricultural operations in meat, dairy products, and fruit production were established. Small-scale farmers, however, did not benefit from the new investment opportunities.”²²⁶ Coinciding with the Third Plan, an independent set of socioeconomic reforms was suggested by the Kennedy administration as a condition of US aid, and announced by the sovereign under the banner of White Revolution. In fact, some segment of it was the exact replica of Kennedy’s invented Peace Corp, namely, Literacy Corps (Sepāh-e dāneš) and Health Corps (Sepāh-e behdaš). As a result, the country embarked on a mission to redress its backward legacy in an eclectic way toward what was later dubbed as the Great Civilization, through a wholesale restruc-

²²² Amuzegar J (1991) *Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution: The Pahlavis’ Triumph and Tragedy*. SUNY Press, p. 181.

²²³ Inflation occurred as the injected domestic credit increased aggregate demand but production did not rise to meet the growing demand.

²²⁴ Amuzegar J (1991) *Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution: The Pahlavis’ Triumph and Tragedy*. SUNY Press, p. 174.

²²⁵ This era corresponded to the rise of Ali Amini, a French educated PhD economist. Amini’s major achievement was to keep the economy functioning despite a severe lack of revenue and savings at the time. He is also credited with over reform of the tax machinery and institutions to implement the country’s first comprehensive progressive tax structure. (See Sadr EI (2013) *To Whisper in the King’s Ear: Economists in Pahlavi and Islamic Iran*, PhD Dissertation. University of Maryland, College Park, pp. 47–49).

²²⁶ Curtis GE, Hoogland E (2008) *Iran: A Country Study*. Area handbook series, Federal Research Division. In Library of Congress, p. 147.

turing of Iran's developmental agenda, including ideological, political, social, and economic institutions. Out of its six core points of reform programs, four measures—land reform, the nationalization of forest, sale of state-owned enterprises to the public, and workers' profit sharing (as well as workers' rights to own shares in the industrial complexes)—were essentially economic in nature, and yet all left out of the Third Plan. This exclusion underlined what has been a common trend in Iran, that is, formulating policies and setting agendas often proceed hastily and without any consideration given to relevance, scope, and methods of implementation, as well as institutional capacity to administer and finance the plans. The results, therefore, are hardly surprising.

The white revolution and its corps provide a real-life experience of how out-of-touch policymaking has been in Iran. Let us consider the Literacy Corps, which was comprised of high school graduates who for various reasons could not be drafted into the armed forces but instead trained in military facilities as educators. Groomed by the Iranian army, they were particularly suited for the Iranian society because nothing could “get Iranians to help their fellow man or participate in any sort of Peace Corps activity except force or the threat of force”.²²⁷ The main objective of the Corps was to educate Iranians who had no access to educational facilities. However, the underlying proposal was allegedly to assist the regime in establishing a modern nation-state on a basis different from religion. To facilitate this aim, Farsi was selected as a common language and the history of the Persian Empire was taught so as to make ordinary citizens feel proud to be part of the nation. Ironically, “In 1966 some corpsmen were involved in political activity within the Islamic Nations Party. Arrested in the autumn of 1965, 55 members of this organization were sentenced in March 1966. Three of them were literacy corpsmen, and their leader had just ended a tour with the corps a few months before his arrest. In addition, there are also indications that the Government, concerned over reports that corpsmen wittingly and unwittingly had spread anti-regime propaganda in the villages (often as a result of communist radio broadcasts), is moving to counter this situation. In an operation as large as the Literacy Corps and in a country like Iran, some activity of this sort is to be expected”.²²⁸

Then came 1980s frenzy of neo-liberalism and the first Five-Year Plan of the post-revolution era, once again rushed to duplicate the promoted framework that guided the government to embark on a program of structural reform and economic liberalization. The government adopted a series of policies, as part of economic reform, to privatize state-owned enterprises, cutting government subsidies, and encouraging foreign investment. However, according to Massoud Karshenas and Hashem M. Pesaran, “the quantitative targets envisaged in the plan were ambitious and could be achieved on a sustained basis only under very optimistic scenarios.”²²⁹ The second and third development plans (1995–2000 and 2000–2005) were enacted

²²⁷ <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/literacy-corps-1>.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ Karshenas M, Pesaran HM (1995) Economic Reform and the Reconstruction of the Iranian Economy. *The Middle East Journal* 49(1), p. 89.

on similar ideological ground, but once again disassociated with the current state of the national economy.²³⁰ This sort of effect is present when policymaking is sunk into ideological beliefs, restricting their plan to respond to the current state of the national economy. In other words, once they engaged in irrelevant ideological discourse, they began to give up, at a bewilderingly rapid pace, the very policy potential of problem solving that often exacerbated the malady in hand. For instance, nationalization of the banks in Iran after the 1978 revolution led to nationalization of banks debts, which strangled the government fiscal planning for years after. Worse still, this policy obliged the post-revolutionary government to rescue many insolvent banks, one of which, Cooperative Rural Bank, was owned by the notorious British agents, the Rashidian brothers, who were allegedly involved in the removal of Mossadegh from power.²³¹

One can only speculate as to why policymaking in Iran has seemingly always been in this dire state, the undeniable fact being that economic policymaking in general, and development planning in particular exhibited nothing more than management schemes endowed with abundant financial resources (oil revenue), which left no choice for control but to support the status quo. Observations such as infighting, barking, and immature self-indulgence, as noted earlier, cannot solely explain this sorry state. Some, such as the former managing director of PBO, Masoud Roghani Zanjani, noted that the majority of economic policymakers did not have a degree in Economics.²³² This suggestion also falls short of explaining various failures of economic policymaking in Iran because academic training, although providing some insight, does not guarantee success but rather perhaps a delusion of self-righteousness that can be detected easily among those western-trained economists who appear and disappear regularly in charge of policymaking in Iran for years.

To get a proper answer, one must look at the historical context to shed light to the question.

At the end of World War II, Iran suffered a humiliating experience as its sovereignty once again was violated by the victors of the war, the so-called Allied forces, which resulted in forced abdication of the monarch Reza Shah in 1941²³³. Five years

²³⁰ For instance, the second plan outlined: the need for utilization of monetary instruments such as issuing treasury bonds; the importance of a positive level of interest rates on deposits to encourage saving as well as providing more resources for financing; the need to preserve the value of the national currency by measures such as revision of banking regulations. These selected agendas and instruments, however, clearly underlined what has been absent in Iran for more than a hundred years, that is, a polity that will enact and enforce the necessary rules as well as institutional settings to attain them.

²³¹ Amoe BA (2005) *Political Economy of Islamic Republic.*, Gum-e nu Publisher, p. 31.

²³² *Ibid.*, pp. 142–144.

²³³ The overthrow of Reza Shah by the Allies, I argue, is a telling explanation of how deep passivity run in the Iranian public mindset. This significant development in our modern history since nationalism was a product of the era. And yet, not a single voice was raised against replacement of the sovereign by the Allies, which is a revealing narrative of how the Iranians perceived their sovereignty and their servitude to power.

later, in the summer of 1946, during Prime Minister Qavam's government, the draft plan²³⁴ was produced for "Iran's Reconstruction and Development," a title that closely resembled the newly established International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), of which Iran was one of the original members and Ebtehaj its representative in the Bretton Wood meeting of 1944. The plan, however, was badly in need of financing, for which Iran informally asked for a loan of \$650 million but was only offered \$250 million from IBRD. The bank's response to the Iran request was that "it would entertain no formal application except for an individual project whose validity had been established by competent technical studies. This was the first instance of what has since become (on occasion) a major influence on Iranian planning"²³⁵. It was also the first time a standard instruction entailed the necessity of technical standard procedures.

This instruction began a mimetic isomorphism in Iran by which Plan Organization, and in particular its Technical Bureau, was obliged to emulate the forms and practices suggest by IBRD to secure financial assistance from the international organization. It is quite plausible to suggest that such standardization allowed Western trained economists to gain influence in the national arena because of their advantages in delivering international assistance in a sense that political leadership of a country can turn to these technocrats for delivering relatively easy access to finance. In this respect, the elite ruling class of a country becomes responsive to the interest of the group, and hence willing to embrace policy options that they frame as viable with an understanding on both sides that presenting/selecting policy does not mean willingness to implement them. Indeed, this is well-known collusion between the power and the Western trained technocrat group in Iran, as well as most developing economies I assumed, based on loyalty as the condition of entrance into the circle of policymaking, or better to say office holder technocrats. Marvin Zonis underlined this phenomenon in Iran by pointing out a recycling of technocrats during the life span of each government during Pahlavi's regime as one of the most common features of the Iranian political domain at the time.²³⁶

Without a doubt, both the elite and the technocrats are aware of this tacit agreement and its consequences, because it is one of the main culturally embedded attributes. The former is well aware that such loyalty lacks satisfactory operational meaning in the sense that it can be and is turned upside down as conditions change. The latter also understood the requirement to retain the post is to remain what he is, a servant of a government [nowkar-e dowlat]. Zonis elaborated on this point by recapping the conversation between Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and one of his confidantes: "I told His Imperial Majesty that his sacrifice ... was insane. The Shah asked why I talked that way. 'Because a sane person pursues his selfish interests and I do not.' The Shah agreed and asked why I did not do so. 'Well', I replied, 'the only way to achieve one's interest in this country is to agree with whatever you say. To

²³⁴ The original document that later turns into the Seven Year Plan Law.

²³⁵ Baldwin GB (1967) *Planning and Development in Iran*. Johns Hopkins Press, p. 26.

²³⁶ Zonis M (2015) *Political Elite of Iran*. Princeton University Press, pp. 228–233.

do so one must be without personal scruples. I am not and so cannot and do not do so.' Since then, I have retired."²³⁷

The more cordial and the less cynical view, however, would suggest that such royalty should be viewed in a sense of "efficiency" in implementing the objectives of a government. In another way, royalty, as such, can and would minimize any possible resistance. Sebastian de Grazia sees the value of formal office holding in similar terms, as he argues, "The ruler by his presumed regulation of the environment is held responsible for the provision of status position, namely, the approved occupations in a community. Without one of these occupations, the person is without status, namely the approval of the community for his activities. The loss of primary status is equated with loss of the affection of attendance and brings on anomic anxiety"²³⁸. On the similar topic but with a slightly different tune, Leonard Binder has suggested, "Holding some sort of government position is ... a means of institutionalizing access and influence"²³⁹.

National as well as international critiques of PO often questioned relevancy and legitimacy of policies formed within PO because almost all higher managements of PO are too close to Western views to the extent that they are described as Westernized elites which seem to perceived others official organizations and ministries outside the PO in a condescending fashion.²⁴⁰ Of course, this is not peculiar to Iran but rather a common trait in most developing economies. For instance, Sarah Babb has illustrated how US-trained economists came to dominate the policymaking process in Mexico, which, according to her, was mostly to reassure international investors and financial institutions that the Mexico national economy is in good hands.²⁴¹ Ben Schneider, in a study of Latin American technocrats in the 1980s, also underlined similar reasoning for such inclination among national technocrat decision makers. However, he posed a different and broader question, "what are the sources of the power technocrats wield?" The essence of it, according to Schneider, consists of four areas: "First, traditional theories of technocracy make functionalist arguments that modernizing societies "require" technically trained personnel in the state. Second, more pluralist theories conceive of technocrats as social groups or networks that deploy the same resources as other groups and networks in their struggles to gain power. These arguments are 'endogenous' in that the motor force driving technocrats into power is the technocrats themselves. Third, others have

²³⁷ Ibid., p. 231. It should be noted that Zonis did not used any references or name for this quotation, which perhaps insinuates a fear for the safety of the individual as a possible reason.

²³⁸ de Grazia S (1963) *The Political Community: A Study of Anime*. University of Chicago Press, pp. 239–240.

²³⁹ Binder L (1962) *Iran: political development in a changing society*. Univ of California Press, p. 69.

²⁴⁰ For instance, see McLeod TH (1964) *National Planning in Iran: A Report Based on the Experiences of the Harvard Advisory Group in Iran*. December 31, 1964, p. 70. See also Nemchenok VV (2009) *That So Fair a Thing Should Be So Frail: The Ford Foundation and the Failure of Rural Development in Iran, 1953–1964*. *The Middle East Journal* 63(2), pp. 261–284.

²⁴¹ Babb S (2001) *Managing Mexico: Economists from Nationalism to Neoliberalism*. Princeton University Press.

argued that political leaders delegate power to technocrats in order to control changing sources of political uncertainty. Lastly, a related line of explanation claims that political leaders seek out technocrats in order to signal government commitment to economic reform and thereby restore investor confidence.”²⁴²

However, there is a less complicated and disentangled face of this sort of Westernization. For instance, Western alignment of PO’s policies, I argue, is mainly because almost all economic policies around the world, are more or less thought of and formulated in the West. Indeed, only a handful of individuals from the developing economies have engaged in such affairs, but they are still educated and reside in the West.²⁴³ Moreover, such inclination is quite the expected outcome when almost all high-ranking directors in PO were Western trained, and hence dominated by Western perspectives.²⁴⁴ Therefore, if there is criticism of sorts, it must be toward the inability of Western-trained policymakers to adapt economic ideas with existing local institutional settings as well as cultural norms and values. In this context, Japan provides an excellent instance in which such adaptation has succeeded and it has greatly contributed to Japan’s economic success and political stability. And yet no one in Iran ever formally suggested using Japan as an economic model worth following and learning from.

Instead, there was a constant battle between experts working in the PO who were categorized commonly as young, foreign trained, and somewhat snobbish, and the more traditional technocrat groups employed in executive sectors of government such as the Ministry of Economic Affairs. One of the main sources of this constant bickering was the common attitude of “we work better than you” that dominated among the former group and it was clearly manifested in their decisions regarding

²⁴² Schneider BR (1998) *The Material Bases of Technocracy: Investor Confidence and NeoLiberalism in Latin America*. In: Centeno MA, Silva P (ed) *The Politics of Expertise in Latin America*. St. Martin’s Press, p. 78.

²⁴³ To the best of my knowledge there is not a single idea in contemporary economics as a discipline that has either been formally formulated or been conceptualized by a man educated and living in the third world (the term used here, despite my utterly rejection of it, is to simply convey the point). A broader perspective of this lack of initiative can be traced back in history. According to Abraham Marcus, “modernization or Westernization did not grow organically from within the Middle East. The stimulus came from outside, from the pressures posed by the encounter with a more powerful and aggressive Europe. Disastrous Ottoman defeats on the European front in the late eighteenth century shook the leadership in Istanbul into the painful realization that the balance of power had tipped definitely in favor of Europe. The lesson sank deeper when Napoleon’s army easily captured the province of Egypt in 1798. Alarmed by the mounting European threat, rulers in the region moved to shore up their defenses by reorganizing their armies, administration, and societies along the lines of a Western Model, now seen as the proven path to success. With their sponsorship and independence, Europe penetrated the region as never before. European ideas, manners, advisors, investors, goods, capital, armies, and diplomatic intervention now shaped increasingly the world of the Middle Easterners”. (Marcus A (1989) *The Middle East on the eve of modernity: Aleppo in the eighteenth century*. Columbia University Press, p. 1).

²⁴⁴ With all due respect to Western diploma holders, including myself, there must be a distinction between Western educated and Western trained, where the former implies embeddedness of “critical thinking”, and hence rejection of conformity, while the latter simply connotes qualification to advocate certain topics or do certain tasks.

taking the responsibility for executing the planned projects themselves.²⁴⁵ These sorts of pitiful quarreling may also convey a deeper and a more cynical view which formed over time and reveals culturally entrenched feeling of mistrust toward the outside, and the West in particular. In discussing orientalism and the state of Iranianness, Majid Sharifi captured the essence of these sentiments as he described a Western oriented idea (policy) as “production of imperially produced knowledge, which is more about imperializers than the imperialized, whose bodies are the localized site of a global body of knowledge. It is globally available but locally understood and practiced”²⁴⁶. Nevertheless, Western-trained technocrats seemed convinced that they were saving the government from itself although, on the other hand, the government was annoyed about words in the media about “a government within the government”. The end result was wasting a large amount of energy on proving the other party wrong, a common practice among Iran’s economic organizations, which prevented them from working in unity and for one purpose. Multiplicity of organizations in charge of economic affairs was one of the causes of such problems.

Although the opposition to the Western-trained group may reflect popular sentiment, it was, and still is, utterly misplaced and misguided. For one thing, prior to the 1978 revolution, every major figure in Iran’s modern history, with the noted exception of Reza Shah, was educated in Europe and/or the United States, including Mohammed Mossadegh and Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. In fact, the Islamic Modernist Movement of the late nineteenth century, the Constitutional Revolution of 1905, the National Front movement of the 1950s, and the White Revolution of the 1960s grew mostly on notions that were formed outside Iran. The exception to this trend is the Islamic Revolution, which mostly relied on, and succeeded as a direct result of, the Islamic identity of the population. However, even among the leading political figures of the 1978 Revolution, one comes across individuals such as Mehdi Bazargan, the first head of the pre-revolutionary government, who were among a few selected student to study abroad, sent by Reza Shah. According to Houchang E. Chehabi, “Sometime in September 1928 Reza Shah granted an audience to the chosen students, and of all the things he [Reza Shah] said, the following words engraved themselves on Mehdi Bazargan’s memory: ‘You must be wondering why we are sending you to a country which differs from ours. There, they have freedom and a republic, but they are also patriots. What you do bring back when you return is not only arts and science, but also patriotism.’”²⁴⁷

Accordingly, men who were armed with extrinsic ideas have played the major role in the transformation of the modern Iran, but without having taken into consideration either the absorptive capacity of the bureaucratic body or overall national sentiments, cognitions, and values. The effects of this sort of leadership, particu-

²⁴⁵ It has been suggested that Ebtehaj was one of the promoters of such a mentality. However, it should be noted that, in Iran, competence is sometime perceived as arrogance, particularly by those who lack it.

²⁴⁶ Sharifi M (2013) *Imagining Iran: The Tragedy of Subaltern Nationalism*. Lexington Books, p. 9.

²⁴⁷ Chehabi HE(1990) *Iranian politics and religious modernism: the liberation movement of Iran under the Shah and Khomeini*. Cornell University Press, p. 107.

larly in a country such as Iran in which major objectives and agendas are always formed on the national political sphere, perhaps offer a clue as to why various Iranian governments since the start of twentieth century always seemed to live on the edge and had a fragile lifespan that abruptly ended as the erosions of their ideological legitimacy came to the surface.²⁴⁸ These effects can be examined on two fronts: an organization level and a national level.

From an organizational perspective, running a policymaking organization such as PO that is responsible for initiating a major transition (covering a wide range of domains such as social, economic, and political) requires, first and foremost, a know-how administrative structure, a bureaucratic body capable of trickling down selected policy choices. By all accounts, Iran at the time lacked such a bureaucratic structure. The magnitude of this deficiency becomes more apparent with appreciation of the fact that the first modern educational institution, the University of Tehran, was established by Reza Shah in 1935 and the first Faculty of Economics opened its door in 1967.²⁴⁹ Moreover, the number of graduates of higher education in Iran during 1851–1958 (107 years) was only 14,663, or about 137 graduates per year.²⁵⁰ If it is assumed that state and government are created enterprises that reflect not only prevalent convictions and norms but also existing socioeconomic conditions of the time, then it is obvious the bureaucratic body of PO, the arms of transition, at the time was unable to meet the necessarily requirements to carry on the transition agendas. Under these circumstances, it is quite plausible that any unfamiliar notion that formed outside the realm of their understanding, norms, and values could inevitably face resistance and eventually outright rejection by the bewildered bureaucrats. This outcome, I argue, has partly caused the endemic crisis of legitimacy²⁵¹ of the system of governing (government) in modern Iran, and hence should be considered as one of the main organizational reason for the fragility of various governing mechanism, which rose only to fall.

Furthermore, this crisis was exacerbated by contradictory but competing legitimizing formulas, in the words of Leonard Binder, which were intended to lay out

²⁴⁸ It should be noted that this erosion of legitimacy was less rampant during the constitutionalist movement but more prevalent during the Pahlavi Monarchy.

²⁴⁹ Until then “there were a number of higher institutions already existing, they functioned independently of one another, some attached to the Ministry of Education and the rest to other ministries. By 1927 there were seven such colleges (or faculties), namely: Law, Medicine, Arts and Science (included in the Teachers Training College), Theology, War, Agriculture, and Veterinary Medicine.” (See Araste R (1962) *Education and Social Awakening in Iran: 1850–1960*. E. J. Brill, pp. 25–26).

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, table. 1, p. 28. Furthermore, during the interwar period (1930s), as Arasteh observed, “about 700 high school and college graduates accepted government employment. The best jobs went to those who had been educated abroad.” (*Ibid.*, p. 31) He also underlined, “of the forty-six minister of education who served from 1860–1940, only one had been trained as an educator; the rest were lawyers, scholars, medical doctors, etc.” (*Ibid.*, footnote no. 20 in Chap. 1).

²⁵¹ For a brief but informative discussion of the topic of legitimacy see “political legitimacy” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/legitimacy/>.

what the system of governing ought to be.²⁵² Each formula was fashioned according to the subscribed ideology, but was not compatible with the reality of the country at the time, and hence ended unsuccessfully because it failed to see obvious glaring incompatibilities. George B. Baldwin underlined these sentiments when he wrote, “Reza’s [Shah Pahlavi] economic accomplishments read well. He did little, however, that made any lasting impact on the style of Iranian politics and administration, a style whose influence on economic planning is almost entirely negative. For decades the government of Iran has suffered from a degree of inefficiency, instability, and corruption that raises eyebrows even among those who know how imperfect men and governments around the world are. Over the years, there have been many able and dedicated Iranian leaders who have attempted to reduce these liabilities to reasonable levels. The lack of significant progress over the past two generations shows how deeply rooted these symptoms are in Iranian institutions and folkways. The economic achievements of Reza Shah and the surge of development activity after 1955 appear to have had little effect on the country’s traditional political style.”²⁵³ However, Reza Shah thought that his greatest contribution had been to make the people of Iran aware that in “work” lay the bright future of Iran, as he stated “I have made Iranians realize that when they get up in the morning they must go to work and work hard all day long.”²⁵⁴

On a national level, the inclination that favored Western-trained to those who were educated inside the country has been an integral part of the conscious arrangement to endorse “modernity” in Iran.²⁵⁵ Instead of a gradual approach in step with the overall transformation of society, modernity landed on Iranians and Iranian culture with vengeance. The rise of a secular ideological state clearly occurs where the

²⁵² According to Binder, these formulas comprised five platforms: (1) Aristocracy of Qajari tribalism; (2) Constitutionalism with Majlis as its Symbol; (3) Monarchical declaration of the Pahlavi Dynasty; (4) Theocracy that rose against constitutional revolution; and (5) Nationalism of Mosaddegh and rise of the religious nationalism group (see Binder L (1962) *Iran: political development in a changing society*. Univ of California Press, p. 62).

²⁵³ Baldwin GB (1967) *Planning and Development in Iran*. John Hopkins University Press, pp. 14–15.

²⁵⁴ Wilber DN (2014) *Iran Past and Present: from Monarchy to Islamic Republic*. Princeton University Press, p. 130.

²⁵⁵ In this study, the word modernity simply means “what leaves or struggles to leave the past behind ... a prescriptive rallying call to where we ought to be, the over determining adverb expressive of the desire to wipe out the past completely”. (See Prendergast C (2003) *Codeword Modernity*. *New Left Review* 24, Nov/Dec 2003, p. 99). Having said that, there is no doubt that modernity, modernization, and modernism are all part of a more or less similar transition. The link between them can be realized by identifying modernization as the process whereby we get there, and modernism as a reaction to that situation. Therefore, modernity can be tied to a situation of unfinished modernization, or as Prendergast noted, “It is a structure of hope, fear, and fantasy invested in an emergent formation and a possible future.” (Ibid.) Also Matthew K. Shannon stated, “Overseas Consultants, Inc. (OCI), the most influential of the Shah’s army of Western advisers, determined in its multi-volume 1949 report that overseas training was “highly desirable” and ‘assures the latest and best technical training and provides valuable contacts with foreign societies.’” (see Shannon MK (2014) *American-Iranian Alliance: International Education, Modernization, and Human Rights during the Pahlavi Era*. *Diplomatic History*, July 31, 2014, p. 5).

ruling elite derive their politics from certain ideological blueprints, i.e., Europe-centered secularism and Iranian nationalism, placing trivial emphasis on the tradition discourse for the construction of a modern society. Centuries of isolation and destitution in addition to stagnation and even retrogression that hammered the country into total hibernation were required to be revised in haste. However, no one thought that modernization is a systemic process in which the demographic, economic, political, and cultural “sectors” grow simultaneously, and this joint growth happens in a regular/gradual phase. In the absence of such a process, modernization becomes disjoined with dire consequences. One significant consequence of such modernization is the excess supply, or as Daniel Lerner called it, “over-production,” that often leads to further imbalances along the continuum of economic as well as psych cultural development and modernization. For instance, educated and skilled individuals come out of higher educational institutions with an imprinted desire to excel and a chance for a better life, only to realize the reality of the national economy is insufficient to meet such expectations. This imbalance is an endemic problem of Iran that is not only unresolvable, as long as the status quo continues, but is also economically bewildering, politically undesirable, and, more importantly, demoralizing for the group who is soon responsible for guiding the country in the future.

The formal deliberate scheme of modernity began in the early 1960s when Hasan Ali Mansur was appointed prime minister. Mansur apparently was given a mandate to attract Western-trained classes in order to strengthen the modern minded technocratic elite who could administer the economy.²⁵⁶ The consensus that led to such an arrangement was based on the notion that the agent of change, those locals who trained abroad and return home, would be the best suited and most effective mediators to transform the traditional Iran into a modern nation.²⁵⁷ In other words, when a new set people came along to challenge the dominance of others, new mediation was required. In a series of essays with titles such as “Today Responsibility Must Lie with the Technocrats” and “There Are Not Enough Technocrats,” Amir Abbas Hoveyda, who replaced Mansur after his assassination, underlined the urgent need for the government to train, recruit, and promote much-needed technocrats to positions of power.²⁵⁸ However, what Hoveyda overlooked, Leonard Binder underlined in 1962 when he noted change, would only occur in Iran “through administrative

²⁵⁶ According to Hamid Algar, Mansur, the prime minister, was also responsible for the exiling of Ayatollah Khomeini. (See Hamid Algar, “Religious Forces in Twentieth Century Iran” in Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly, and Charles Melville, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 7, 2008, p. 755.

²⁵⁷ In fact, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was also a change agent: a product of Switzerland’s LeRosey boarding school, and his view of progress start modernity, as he stated, “Today, Tehran has the most modern milk-pasteurization factory ... in the streets of Tehran double decker buses, similar to those in London, are in used ... today peasants like to drive jeep vehicles, so we start up jeep manufacturing ... in the past people and governmental offices communicated through sending letters or asked the servants to take messages, today they can do it by telephone ...” (See Pahlavi MR (1961) *Mission for My Country*. Amir Kabeer Publisher, Tehran, pp. 178–179). (Excerpt translated by the author).

²⁵⁸ Milani A (2001) *The Persian Sphinx: Amir Abbas Hoveyda and the Riddle of the Iranian Revolution*. Mage Publishers, pp. 141–142.

apparatus” to which “its personnel must be independent of their social and cultural environment. They must be separately educated, economically independent, and responsive only to the objectives of their organization.”²⁵⁹ The problem in Iran is that these objectives are regularly imagined and formulated irrespective of any organization structure and national needs.

Moreover, this artificial construction of technocratic paradigm created a paradox. On the one hand, most attracted technocrats were men representing modernity that gained legitimacy by discarding the status quo and rejecting the allegedly clueless tradition.²⁶⁰ On the other hand, their traditional opponents also legitimized themselves by considering these trained technocrats as perilously Western avant-gardes replete with extrinsic values and norms unsuited for the country. In this context, episodes of legitimization (based on subscribed ideological platforms) turns into circular patterns, characterized in large part by each episode’s opposition to its rivals (the previous one). Each episode “targets” the ideology of its contender (predecessor), and in so doing it is shaped by its contender. As an interaction without hope of synthesis, each legitimizing episode yields to the antithesis that it helped to form.²⁶¹ As it turns out, however, this paradox was the detrimental factor for the Western-trained group in the sense that, although a rejection of tradition resonated with the eager public and strengthened their conviction of self-righteousness, they persistently failed to deliver tangible results, repeating past disappointments and leading to their dismissal without warning. In short, things have total failed in the sense that success was manifested in a discontinuous (disjointed) pattern.

This observation can be rejected on the grounds that the lack of steady success in their work should be examined not in term of their competencies, but in light of the absence of power to make decisions and implement fully what they perceived as necessary for a successful preprogram. In short, politics, rather than rational economic decision-making, is to blame. For instance, in 1947, a report was prepared by Mosharef Naficy, member of the Supreme Planning Board in cooperation with the American consulting firm Morrison-Knudsen International, which provided the Iranian government with a choice between three plans, ranging from 234 projects at the cost of \$1.4 billion to 24 projects with costs of \$260,000 million. The decision was left to Iranian officials to decide, “how large a program the country could afford and how any plan might be financed.”²⁶² Indeed, the Seven Year Plan Law was based on the Naficy report. There were various attempts to change the entire concept by the cabinet at the time which would have meant delegating the independent author-

²⁵⁹ Binder L (1962) *Iran: political development in a changing society*. Univ of California Press, p. 92.

²⁶⁰ In a sense, it offers no justification for legitimization of power relations except for reiterating that people have faith in a particular order because it has been there for a long time (tradition).

²⁶¹ Mansoor Moaddel also underlined a similar pattern of discourse between traditionalists and competitors (see Moaddel M (2005) *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse*. University of Chicago Press).

²⁶² Baldwin GB (1967) *Planning and Development in Iran*. Johns Hopkins Press, p. 28.

ity over the Plan to a kind of Supervising Board (or decentralization among ministries). With the support of Shah, the decentralization attempt failed and the Plan, with independent central authority, became Law in 1949, assuming that “execution [of the Plan] would be through the existing ministry and other agencies of government In actual fact, Plan Organization reversed the intention of the law by carrying out directly the larger part of the Plan, spending only a minority through the ministries.”²⁶³ In short, the Naficy report and its components ended in vain and even its watered-down version was overturned and abused. If this case is an indication of the inability of outside trained technocrats, and technocracy in general to make any meaning impact, then neither the disappointments nor the success stories of the Iranian economy can be linked to their influence and expertise. In this light, we can draw the conclusion that they have not been a total failure, but rather utterly irrelevant. Indeed, in recent years this observation had been validated as President Ahmadinejad closed down the Plan Organization, despite numerous predictions ranging from total collapse of the national economy to bankruptcy of the state, without any significant effects.²⁶⁴

The failures to face our challenges is the result of many factors, one of which is the fact that the prescribed “way-out” as well as the tools necessary to secure this solution were, and still are, formed outside the national context. This conscious construction under patronage of modernization is nothing more than conformity, in which we immaturely embarked, resulting in incompatible technocracy that is overwhelmingly inept. It also splits political economy into politics and economics so that the structure of power relationships remain intact although the economy undergoes mindless changes, according to whoever landed in office (holds office), so that politics need not intrude upon economic and economy functions without affecting structures of power relationships, as if “there is only a conceptual difference between economic decision and political decision.”²⁶⁵ Robert Lynd reminds us of the dire circumstance of such a condition, which “goes hand in hand with the development

²⁶³ For more in-depth narrative of this case see *Ibid.*, pp. 27–31.

²⁶⁴ This observation is made knowing only too well that it is against significant sentiment inside and outside Iran. However, before making a hastily and outright rejection, I suggest the following. (1) During the 8 years of Mr. Ahmadinejad’s government, various economic problems were exacerbated but none was created. In other words, his government did not add new problems to the existing ones. (2) A claim has been made to suggest that a significant portion of economic as well as social problems could have been solved during these 8 years, mainly because the government revenue from oil exports had reached an unprecedented level in history. Another way of saying the same thing is that money can solve our problems. It cannot. Indeed, one of our main problems is the fact that oil revenue plays an important role in our economy. (3) Some also point to various corruption and embezzlement cases in which members of the government were either directly involved or looked the other way. If these cases prove to be accurate, the problem is not the amount involved but rather the occurrences of corruption and its extent, all of which are neither new phenomena, nor new developments in our country.

²⁶⁵ Binder L (1962) *Iran: political development in a changing society*. Univ of California Press, p. 315.

of appropriate inhibitions.”²⁶⁶ In this context, the emerging outcome is not meritocracy, as Michael Young envisioned, but rather a society dominated by mediocrity.²⁶⁷

To summarize my argument, this book views a country’s economy as part of its socio-cultural system; it is formed by this system and operates within the framework of this system. In this chapter, I intended to demonstrate that the major obstacle in the Iranian economy is an erroneous identity in the sense that its function and operation are based on the wrong traditions (paradigm) that is neither *laissez-fair* capitalism nor planned economy but is rather embedded in the historical, cultural, and societal development of Iran. Indeed, and to the best of our knowledge, there is not a single study in which this question is even taken into consideration because such identity is either implicitly assumed or overtly validated. This book argues that such unfounded characterization has led to an immense waste of resources as well as flawed policy prescriptions, all of which prevented the country from reaching its potential, and why can’t the enormous resources produce value beyond their “natural” state.

Considering twentieth century Iran, it is difficult to deny the striking changes in the country’s physical infrastructure, sociocultural development, and productivity growth in the Pahlavi era. The improvements in national wealth, productive capacity, industrial advances, external trade, as well as labor diversification as an essential of human development, adult schooling, life expectancy, food security and agriculture self-sufficiency through fiscal stimulations of demand for farm products/food-stuffs, and other basic indicators of welfare have been acknowledged by various sources and international agencies. In fact, Fred Holliday, one of the prominent critics of the Pahlavi reign, points out, “Iran’s [economic] record is both a substantial one and, in any comparative sense, exceptional. During 1977–1978, Iran had

²⁶⁶ See Lynd RS (1948) *Knowledge For What?* Princeton University Press, p. 44. On a similar note, writing on German history in the 1920, Weimar culture has come to be regarded as the similar embodiment of conscious construction, which ended disastrously wrong. See, for instance, Lamb S, Phelan A (1995) *Weimar Culture; the Birth of Modernism*. In: Burns R (ed) *German Culture Studies: An introduction*. Oxford University Press, pp. 53–99; and Peukert DJK (1993) *The Weimer Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*. Hill and Wang.

²⁶⁷ Michael Young who first coined the term, meritocracy, defined the term, in an administrative sense of the word, as a system of government (or other administration apparatus) in which appointments and responsibilities are assigned to individuals as a result of their “merits” (including intelligence, credentials, and education) that are determined through various assessments and evaluations. (See Young MD (1961) *The rise of the meritocracy, 1870–2033: An essay on education and inequality*. Penguin). In this light, meritocracy measures progress, as Young insinuates, in the sense that Western advanced societies are held to be those that are more meritocratic. For instance, in these societies fewer decisions are made based on self-interest and opportunism. Ansgar Allen also noted, “Meritocracy is sometimes used as a measure of corruption, where corrupt societies or corrupt institutions are thought to be those that disobey the formula: merit = ability + effort. Meritocratic societies are open and fair, non-meritocratic ones are obscure and underhand. Justice, social cohesion, progress, fairness, and transparency; these are the timeless ideas upon which meritocracy is presumed to rest.” (See Ansgar A (2011) *Michael Young’s The Rise of the Meritocracy: A Philosophical Critique*. *British Journal of Educational Studies* 59(6), p. 368).

one of the highest sustained growth rates of any third-world country, capitalist or communist.”²⁶⁸ Even a post-revolution *Majles* deputy, Abbas Sheibani, referred to the overall economic condition of the country in the pre-revolution period in a positive manner as he stated, “if the goal was economic prosperity or material welfare, there was no need for a revolution because these were already achieved during the Shah’s regime”.

However, when the era came to end, Iran was left in a turbulent state, as if no progress had ever been made. What accounts for such a vivid contradiction is always subject to a wide spectrum of speculation and assertion. Having said that, I argue that one major contributing factor lies in the manner in which economics is perceived in Iran. More to the point, economic programs and policies in Iran often embrace various Western versions, not only as a matter of strategy, but also ideologically²⁶⁹. As a result, they regularly failed to have any lasting effect on the national economy. Economic policymakers got an awful lot of economics wrong simply because they always seem to cope with momentary circumstances. They often look at just a small piece of the puzzle, what is going on surrounding them, and hence neglect the big picture. Consequently, at best, they achieved temporary successes, but failed to address deeply flawed structural problems. To detect these structural flaws requires neither training in economics nor a sophisticated mind but a simple appeal to common sense. An example as such is when one realizes that the cost of a meal for two people in 2015 in an uptown restaurant in Tehran is the same as the price of a 2000 square foot apartment in a good neighborhood in Tehran in 1976.

This wholesale pursuit of a liberal economic model in a tradition society routinely dismissed or underestimated some of the significant cultural and psychologi-

²⁶⁸ Holliday F (1979) Iran: Dictatorship and Development. Pelican Book, p. 138.

²⁶⁹ Interestingly enough, in 1973 the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci conducted an interview with Mohammad Riza Pahlavi in which the Shah questioned the relevance of Western political values to the Iranian society (see Fallaci O (1976) Interview with History. Liveright Publishing Corporation, pp. 274–275):

OF: Maybe I explained myself badly, Majesty. I meant democracy as we understand in the West, namely a regime that permits anyone to think as he likes and is based on a parliament when even minorities are represented...

MRP: But I don’t want that kind of democracy! Don’t you understand? I wouldn’t know what to do with such a democracy! It’s all yours, you can have it! Your wonderful democracy! You’ll see, in few years, where your wonderful democracy leads.

OF: Well, maybe it’s a little chaotic. But it’s the only thing possible if you respect man and his freedom of thought.

MRP: Freedom of thought, freedom of thought! Democracy, democracy! With five-year-old children going on strike and parading through the streets. That’s democracy? That’s freedom?

OF: Yes, Majesty.

MRP: Well, not to me. And let me add: how much studying have you done in the last few years in your universities? And if you go on not studying in your universities, how will you be able to keep up with the needs of technology? Won’t you become servants of the Americans thanks to your lack of preparation, won’t you become third- or even fourth-rate countries? Democracy, freedom, democracy? But what do these words mean?

cal aspects of national development. Although the Iranian economy is neither planned nor unplanned, it features vertical integration of economic policy and decision making in an office-holder-governing body, an absence of clear structure of ownership, a clear distinction between possessing and owning enforced by law, and an independent, private commercial sector (Bazaar) and non-governmental segment (Ogaph). Thus, instead of taking into consideration the stable and culturally embedded formal and informal institutional settings such as bazaar and waqf as indispensable participants and powerful promoters of economic activities, policymakers regularly chose to exclude them in their economic scheme as if they do not exist. It seems that we can't comprehend that, in pursuing a new path, the traditional elements and established institutions have a significant effect on the national economy. Thus, we must consider non-ideological factors in our policymaking if there is any chance of success. Close attention must be paid to the Law (independent institutional setting for enforcing it), property rights, institutional setting (necessary for monitoring and enforcing "contract"). Having said that, I am well aware of the fact that we must distinguish between the demand for institutions and the capacity to establish these institutions. What I am suggesting is, when setting up the necessary institutions, policy should take into consideration the smoothness of implementation, which without the above-mentioned is not possible.

Moreover, this deficiency in policymaking also manifests itself in slogan-like economic agendas that often prevailed in Iran; for instance, the nagging clash between a nationalistic desire for independence and self-reliance and a government's dependence on oil revenue, or persist discontent between the national economy and the global economy.²⁷⁰ Thus I argue that economic policies do not need to be based on populism, or trendy notions, but rather on the relevance to the national economic environment. The effectiveness of policies rests on the conviction of their makers rather than the popular inclinations of the day. This observation was confirmed in this chapter by a brief review of the history of Iranian economic policies that were saturated with incoherent plans that often missed intended policy goals, and the policy tools that neither matched the outlined objectives nor the reality of the national economy. I contend that one major persistence predicament in policymaking in Iran is lack of recognizing who we are as a nation bounded by history and constrained by a geographical boundary. We often seek what other sought and hence regularly overlook what we have endowed.

²⁷⁰ On the latter point an example may clarify the point. Joining the global economy and financial market for Iran at this time is utterly useless on simple grounds. In Iran, Thursday and Friday are considered the weekend while the rest of the world, the end of a week is Saturday and Sunday. Iran, therefore, can only link to the global economy on three (out of seven) days per week.

Chapter 8

Concluding Remarks

Sometime between 1003 and 1060 AD, one of our most celebrated poets, Nasir Khusraw, composed a collection of poems in the Valley of Yumgan, a remote mountainous region in Badakhshan (a present-day Afghanistan), called the *Divan*.¹ One of the poems in this collection is called *Eagle*, a splendid narrative that still resonates today. The poem tells the narrative of how, one day, an eagle rose up from its rock perch, circling in the air full with self-pride and lavishly extending its wings and feathers. While soaring at great heights, the eagle marveled at his superior aptitude, his eyesight so keen he could even discern a tiny hair at the bottom of the sea or an insect on a twig. He boasted, “Who is a better creature than I, anywhere on earth or sky?” But suddenly, in the midst of this reverie of self-adoring, he is struck by a terrible pain and falls to the ground. In despair, he looks around to see the cause of his pain and spots an arrow wedged deep within him. In disbelief, he cannot fathom how an earthbound element such as an arrow, made of wood and metal, could strike a superior creature like him, a creature of the sky with power so superior that man only wishes to possess. It is only when his eye catches the arrow fletched with eagle feathers at its end that he realizes the source of his downfall (the arrow’s power). The recognition deeply affects his soul, and the eagle cries out:

Zi tir nigah kard o par-I khwish baru did,
(Casting a glimpse at the penetrated arrow in his wing),
Gufta: zi ki nalam? Ki az ma-st ki bar ma-st!
(To whom shall I grieve? What comes from us returns to us).

¹Nasir Khusraw is considered one of the greatest Persian poets. A Shi’i by upbringing, he later converted to the Ismaili sect. He was employed in the Saljuq government (of Turkish descent), but unlike his predecessors who employed lengthy odes to play elaborate paeans to kings and princes, “his panegyric was directed towards the unity and majesty of God, the religious life, the pursuit of virtue, the praise of good leaning and good doing” (Arberry AJ (1958). *Classical Persian Literature*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd, p. 66). According to Arberry, “The technical virtuosity of Nasir Khusraw is dazzling in the extreme; no other poet has shown a greater rhyming dexterity, none has written clear, richer or purer Persian” (Ibid., p. 67).

These few brilliant words, “az mast ki bar mast,” which figuratively means “we have within ourselves the very quality that will about both our rise and downfall,”² describe a self-adoring eagle that sees his life abruptly ended by the arrow winged with his own feather and is doomed by his own vanity. This is Nasir Khusrau’s consolation advice for Iranians enduring history and is not only considered as one of the most popular axioms in Iran, but they also convey the message better than any philosophical notions.

Almost 1000 years later, yet another widely known poet, scholar, politician, journalist, historian, and professor of literature, Mohammad-Taqi Bahar (also known as Malek o-Sho’ara Bahar or literally the king of poets), wrote a poem in 1949 called, “az aa-st ki bar ma-st” for the nation, which according to Yahiya Arianpour, “still were fearful of culture of civilized world and owners of modern thoughts [and] were in conflict with pseudo-cleric tugs, composed in Mashhad and published in Noubahar newspaper,”³ which began by the following:

This dark cloud fume that rises from my country (Vatan)
 Az ma-st ki bar ma-st
 This rising burning flame from left and right
 Az ma-st ki bar ma-st
 As excruciating anguish become unbearable, don’t blame other
 Az ma-st ki bar ma-st
 Groan for ourselves as the essence lie within
 Az ma-st ki bar ma-st...
 I have no quarrel on an untarnished matter
 az ma-st ki bar ma-st

Finally, a historian professor at Tehran University, Homa Nategh, a student of Fereydoon Adamiyat who in my opinion has been one of the most distinguished scholars in contemporary Iran, published collections of her papers, titled “az ma-st ki bar ma-st” in 1975, two years before she was arrested as a leftist political activist.⁴ She starts her book by describing why contemporary Iranian scholars regularly misinterpreted the history of Iran. She states that it was a result of either excessive (exaggerated) but so typical panegyric among Iranian scholars or an innate apprehension of telling the truth. Nevertheless, she reiterated Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani’s conclusion that “anarchist, socialist and communist in Europe and United States finally reached to the level of knowledgeable Mazdak, while our Iran has taken the reverse course and steadily declined.”⁵

²Schadi M (2009) The Shrine of Nasir Khusraw: Imprisoned Deep in the Valley of Yumgan. In: Necipoglu G, Leal KA (2009) Muqarnas; An Annual On the Visual Cultures of The Islamic World, Volume XXVI. Koninklijke Brill, p. 77.

³Arianpour Y (2007) Az Saba ta Nima: Azade va Tajadood (from Saba to Nima; Freedom and Modernity), Vol. II, 9th edition, pp. 133–134. Translation by the author.

⁴Parsa M (1989) Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution. Rutgers University Press, p. 179.

⁵Nateg H (1975) Aaz Ma-st ki Bar Ma-st. Aghah Publisher, p. 242. According to Peter Marshall, “Mazdak appeared around AD 487 in Persia. Retaining Zoroaster’s concepts of light and darkness, Mazdak preached a dualistic religion, but with socialist principle. He believed that all men are born equal but suffer from the unequal distribution of wealth and women, and since most fighting is

In retrospect, the theme in this book is based on the eloquent words of Nasir Khusrau, one of the greatest of the Persian poets, *az ma-st ki bar ma-st*. The closest interpretation of this idiom in Western Christian culture is “you reap what you sow,” which conveys a similar message that underlines one’s responsibility in a sense that, sooner or later, we must face the choices we make. This should not be interpreted as implying that we, the Iranian people, should be blamed for our shortfalls (viewed as the caused), but rather our shortages must be seen as inner deficiencies, e.g., refusal to take responsibility for our own detrimental deeds, rather than some extrinsic elements.⁶ Moreover, the reference to *ma* (we) should be read not in terms of the present generation but rather successive generations that go back for centuries. The one-thousand-plus-years-old exquisite ode by Nasir Khusrau depicts, better than any intellectual discourse, this argument by depicting the self-admiring eagle was brought down by an arrow fletched with his own feathers. This narrative riding in front of the symbolism and mythology helps us to engage in a critical analysis of contemporary Iranian culture.

To some, this may seem to be a harsh assessment of a nation with the history that seldom is matched in its totality by other civilizations. Moreover, there is no doubt that Iranians, despite all of their achievements, have been subjected to a wide variety of cruel treatment, invasions, lootings, etc. However, the emphasis in this book is more related to our inner attributes, which are identified as the main reason for perpetual failures to improve the overall condition of the country over centuries. The customary interpretations of past disappointments that often vindicated us, as victims of circumstances and convicted others, as predators feeding on prey, could not be further from truth.

This does not imply that we were not victims, or that there were no predators, but rather in a sense that such accusations commit the classical error of not being able to see the forest for the trees. In short, the reason for absence of progress in Iran must be seen in light of persistent collective conduct rather than erratic historical occurrences. If we are victims, which I am not convinced we are, it must be seen, first and foremost, in our own actions, which is the predominant emphasis of this book. Let me explain.

The Iranian Plateau, according to Habibollah Ayatollahi, “is bounded on the south by the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman; on the west by the plains of Transoxiana and western foothills of Zagros mountains, on the north by the Oxus river, the Caspian Sea, Turkmen Steppes and Kora (Korosh) river; and on the east

caused by them, he proscribed private property and marriage. People should share their good and women like water, fire and grazing. They should also maintain respect for animals, thereby putting an end to slaughter. Mazdak’s ideal was a stoical and simple life, and he urged contentment and austerity...Thousand joined the movement but in AD 523 King Qobath arranged a massacre. Mazak was arrested and executed in AD 528 or 529.” (See Marshall P (2009) *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*. PM Press, p. 86.)

⁶Perhaps an analogy would make the point more apparent. When someone said he has a cold, he means he has a cold virus in his body that makes him ill. Therefore, he should not look elsewhere to treat his cold but seek treatment for the virus that lay within his body and no one else.

by the plains of the Indus and Pamir mountains...The geographic limits of present-day Iran are part of the Iranian Plateau with an area of 1, 633, 189 sq.km (or 62.8% of the total plateau).⁷ Iran is, therefore, located at the center of ancient civilization. Her central position between the important seats of civilization such as the Chinese and the Indus civilization in the east and Transoxiana⁸ Nile valley civilization in the west and the links resulting from her relations with these centers have contributed to her prominent position during the changes of the history of mankind civilization.

The question is why such a civilization that was cradle of all others that precedes it is seen as remote to the rest of world as the brightest star Sirius. Part of the reason consists of its early history, which is restricted to those occasions when it formed in light of other civilizations like Greece. Indeed, interests and sympathies are evoked only on behalf of the drama of Greco-Persian war (Marathon and Thermopylae), the March of the Ten Thousand in which a group of mercenary units, mainly Greek, was drawn up by Cyrus the Younger to attempt to wrest the throne of the Persian Empire from his brother Artaxerxes II, or Alexander's dramatic venture on the way to India. Moreover, J. H. Iliffe notes that unfamiliarity with Persian antiquity period is due to the fact that "Persia has lacked a chronicler of its own. No Herodotus or Xenophon has risen (or survived) from amongst the Persian themselves; the advocates are all on the Greek. Our information, all too scanty as it is, derives from foreigners.... the national enemies of Persia."⁹ Recently, Savant underlined the similar sentiment and states, "Traditionalists [Arab] approached antique history in a variety of ways. They chose their material, gave it structure, and inserted it into wider accounts of the origin and progress of humanity in ways that diminished the autonomy of Persia's history. They omitted past knowledge, but also reduced its autonomy through editorial choices that restructured and reframed their material."¹⁰

Nevertheless, the state of Iranian history is mostly due to our utter lack of interest, curiosity, and most importantly national passion about our own extraordinary past, to which we are not shy to showboat. As a direct result, we have persistently-inflicted irreversible damage upon ourselves with no end at sights. This is a sad state of affairs that the history of this ancient land must mostly "rely" on sources written by non-Iranian, who had to rely heavily on documentation and information, e.g., memories, personal journals and traveling logs, monograph, etc., which were also

⁷ Ayatollahi H (2003) *The Book of Iran: The History of Iranian Art*. Alhoda, p. iii.

⁸ Known in Persian as F-raw-rood in Arabic Ma'wara'o'nahr (beyond the Oxus river) is the ancient name used for the portion of Central Asia corresponding approximately with modern-day Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, southern Kyrgyzstan, and southwest Kazakhstan. As Ferdowsi writes:

A'gar Pahlevani nedani zabon Farawrood ra Ma'wara'o'nahr Bekhan

If a Chivalry does not know the language (Farsi) call F-raw-rood the Ma'wara'o'nahr

⁹ Iliffe JH (1989) *Persia and the Ancient World*. In: Arberry AJ (ed) *The Legacy of Persia*. Oxford University Press, p. 1.

¹⁰ Savant SB (2013) *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran: Tradition, Memory, and Conversion*. Cambridge University Press, p. 136.

written by none other than non-Iranians. This is despite the fact that non-Iranian scholars must master several languages, namely, Old and New Persian as well as Arabic, to work effectively. Even the most significant and academic works related to the history of Iran, which have been used as the documented and reliable sources in Iranian studies, have been written by non-Iranians.

Under these circumstances, we have only ourselves to blame when specialists write and present our history whose main interest or training is on language, literature, or theology. This specialized written history perhaps is one of the main reasons why “history had passed the Persian by, such that in the contemporary period they effectively had no history.”¹¹ More than 50 years ago, Nikki R. Keddie also underlined the urgency of this situation and wrote, “All sorts of things have been considered peculiarly Islamic or peculiarly Iranian that a comparative study would show were really typical of many traditional or feudal societies. ‘Islam’ or ‘the Iranian Spirit’ thus become the putative source of a whole range of happenings, faults, and virtues, on the basis of very little of a comparative knowledge that might weaken or destroy the author’s hypothesis, or, in some rare cases, help to prove it.”¹²

In addition, almost all of our beloved poetic works by geniuses like Ferdowsi, Hafiz, Sa’di, Mo’lana, Attar, Ghazali, Naser Khosrow, etc., are translated into other languages, mostly English, by Western scholars, particularly English men. They are the ones that introduced and familiarized the world with one of the richest heritage human civilization had ever known while we sat bewildered and amused by such sad spectacles. Even more astonishing, while we demonized works of prodigies like Ferdowsi as a servant of his master king and dismissed his generous gift *Shahnameh* as a eulogy, A. J. Arberry, an English man, sees himself left with no choice but to compare him with Geoffrey Chaucer whose work *Canterbury Tales* is considered one of the greatest poetic works in English language, or Hafiz called “incomparable” with any others in the history, while Hafiz’s work perceived in Iran among some modern circle of intellectuals as poetry that has led “to nothing but laziness, animalistic sluggishness... lyrics about roses and nightingales have encourage the youth to pursue pederasty and booze.”¹³

Aside from history, and despite of all invasions and destructions that this ancient land and its inhabitants endured, the present Iran remains one of the most diverse nations in the world, a culture that profoundly marks the distinct qualities of all Iranian people. These attributions must be examined in light of the fact that the

¹¹ Ansari AM (ed) (2014) *Perceptions of Iran: History, Myths and Nationalism from Medieval Persia to the Islamic Republic*. I.B. Tauris, p. 6.

¹² Keddie NR (1973) *An Assessment of American, British, and French Work since 1940 on Modern Iranian History*. *Iranian Studies* 6(2/3), p. 153.

¹³ Parsinejad I (2003) *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran (1866–1951)*. IBEX Publishers, p. 76. To minimize any risk of being labeled impartial, here is the entire quotation: “Their mystical and Sufi poetry has led to nothing but laziness, animalistic sluggishness, and the production of beggars and vagabonds. Their lyrics about roses and nightingales have encouraged the youth to pursue pederasty and booze. Their facetiae and drollery have caused the spread of debauchery, prostitutions and vice.” *Ibid*.

glory of ancient Persia has not been recaptured in recent history and Iranians have been unable to measure up to their own past. The prevailing interpretations, which I am not subscribed to, often underlined the notion that Iran and Iranians never fully recovered from destruction wrought by the Arabs tribes, the Turkish tribes, and the Mongols, not to mention the Portuguese, British, and Russian, which left their marks in our historical memory. This observation in a pure balanced perspective of the world may prevail, but it would fail in tranches of real-life experiences. There is no doubt that the unmet yearnings are still burning in our souls, but the weight of past hammed “us” in, as we hopelessly remained passive by standards of History.

While I have no doubt that the past bears profound effects, either positively, or adversely, or combination of both, on the present, the question, however, is not possible impacts but rather its nature and forms in which they may manifest. In this context, I concurred that the past memories have conveyed valuable lessons for Iranians and made us value the merit of “resilience” and the virtue of “survival,” both of which seemed inserted the “will” in our culture body to resist extinction and remain present. However, this “will,” I argue, is a manifestation of a conscious choice rather than a natural development as it appears. The Iranians, A. J. Arberry observes, “have long since appreciated of being *jahan-dida* (‘one who seen the world’); the contrast between the sage who is *pukhta* (‘cooked’) and the simpleton who is *kham* (‘raw’) has been by no other people more subtly and more shrewdly drawn.”¹⁴ However, there are two sides to this wisdom. On the one hand, the past prevails as conscious choice that allowed us to assume the rule of “advocatus diaboli” and succeed by default in a sense that we have often succeeded in facing challenges imposed on us by various intruders through *passive coexistence*, equating survival with security. Some time, as Edward Brown candidly observed, “The old Persian aristocracy and landed proprietors (*dihqan*) did, it is true, succeed in preserving much of their power and wealth by embracing Islam and throwing in their lot with the conquerors, to whom their services were needful and their local influence and knowledge indispensable, but *for the humbler classes it was not so*, for, as Van Vloten remarks, ‘the ambition and racial pride of the Arabs, combined with their greed, offered an insuperable obstacle to the amelioration of their lot.’”¹⁵ On other occupations, we patiently postpone to express our resentments and surrender to the point in which an aggressor’s zealotry turned into acceptance and its’ resources are exhausted. A succeder by default, therefore, implies to achieve the intended objective when the aggressor can no longer exercise its power of subjection. This approach underlined one of the significant Persian attributes of the time, which is less materialistic and more cosmological, and hence can be seen as a reflection of *Zoroastrian* faith that had some affinity with the Indo-Aryan Vedic religion, i.e., ancient Hinduism as well as Buddhism and Taoism in entrancement of harmony.

¹⁴ Arberry AJ (ed) (1989) *The Legacy of Persia*. Oxford University Press, p. v.

¹⁵ Brown E (1956) *A Literary History of Persia; From Firdawsi to Sa’di*, Vol. II. Cambridge University Press, p. 23.3.

On the other hand, any spectator of history can vouch to the fact that passive coexistence traits have been a valuable Iranian inheritance that disseminated through generations allegedly for preservation of our identity. However, it also handicapped and tamed, gradual as it may seem, our sense of resistance and “literally” disfigured our sense of identity, which enforced a peculiar state of cultural breach where “kinship” across frontiers loses meaning, and hence *cultural vagrancy* replaced a collective identity. Strange as it may seem, some may view these features as a desirable and revered privilege of the free and freed from artificial limitations (e.g., nation bounding), connoting a transfer of a real state of nation into a realm of unlimited possibilities, one of which is the sense of belonging to a much familiar, confined, and compatible communal value such as a clan and clanships. However, such privilege also blocks consanguinity/inheritance, the quality of being descended from the past that bears clear identity and sense of belonging. Halleh Ghorashi stressed the similar sentiments when she observed, “when the past is not actually present it cannot serve to stimulate the sense of the belonging in the present. Instead, it fuels nostalgic feeling toward another place and another time.”¹⁶ So the question is, what held the “fragmented us” together? Behrooz Moazami in *State, Religion, and Revolution in Iran, 1796 to Present*, offered a clue as he states, “the richness of the Persian language and literature, oral and written, formed a common bond among all Iranian, and that a dynamic social reality persisted and even flourished in the absence of a Iranian state. Iranian cultural identity evolved through a long history without any independent territorial or political bound, and provided grounds to imagine belonging to a common past and destiny.”¹⁷ While Moazami’s observation is accurate as far as the Persian language and literature inspired commonality that closed the gap between various local/tribal identities, the fact still remains: no nation has prevailed without a collective identity.¹⁸ Gordon Betts highlighted this issue as he declared, “If the nations lose their sense of identity, they lose their self-confidence, their self-esteem, pride in their culture—and become destabilized.”¹⁹

¹⁶Ghorashi H (2003) *Ways to Survive, Battle to Win*. Nova Publishers, p. 208.

¹⁷Moazami B (2013) *State, Religion, and Revolution in Iran, 1796 to the Present*. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 24.

¹⁸Having said that, one must also admit that the concept of collective identity is notoriously “slippery,” to the extent that there is no consensual definition. Nevertheless, this study, rather than forge a definition, assumed a general form in which an identity can be perceived as a cognitive framework. This means that members of the community do not necessarily have to be in complete agreement on ideologies, beliefs, interests, or goals in order to come together and generate collective action, an assertion that counters more structural understandings of what brings and keeps movement actors together (e.g., the concept of class consciousness in the Marxist tradition). Georg Simmel’s work in 1955 signified this approach as he explored the dynamics of group formation and highlighted elements that help us to understand formation of group cohesion during tension and conflict in specific historic contexts. See Simmel G (1955) *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations*. Free Press.

¹⁹Betts GG (2002) *The Twilight of Britain: Cultural Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and the Politics of Toleration*. Transaction Publishers, p. 101.

To develop a better understanding of the issue underlined above, one must understand what constitutes a nation. However, this is neither the place nor the time to discuss the notion of nation at any length except to underline briefly what a nation is supposed to imply. It is given that at the core of social consciousness of any community of men lies a compelling, inclusive image of its inhabitants, referred to as the “nation.” In this light, nation is no more than “an image of a sovereign community of fundamentally equal members.”²⁰ Therefore, a nation is sovereign entity as long as the people who composed it are equal and free. Anything less than this minimum delineation is not worth debating about.

This takes us to one of the signifying periods in Iranian history in which Persian detached themselves from the imperial norms and values they lived under for centuries. Prior to the Arab invasion and its consequential Islamization of Persians, the prevalence mode of religiosity among patrimonial monarchs during antiquity period was not prayed to their God for “personal benefit or salvation; rather, they prayed for the welfare of their country and for the well-being of the Iranian people as a whole, amongst whom they were of necessity included.”²¹ Inscription of Darius tomb at *Naqush-i-Rustam* (Rustam inscription) signifies this observation:

May Ahuramazda [God of Zoroastrian faith] bear me [Darius] aid, with the spirits of the royal house; and may Ahuramazda protect this country from a [hostile] army, from famine, from the fib! Upon this country may there not come an army, neither famine, nor the fib; this I pray as a boon from Ahuramazda, together with the spirits of the royal house. This boon may Ahuramazda, together with the spirits of the royal house give to me.²²

Moreover, and in contrast to Arab Caliphs reigns, the *Achaemenid as well as Sassanian States were not founded on religion principles*, and the sovereigns exalted to the throne by the will of God and not by his decree. This is a significant difference as one considered the notion of nation after the Arab invasion. In Islam, nationhood, as a theoretical platform that was conceived in the late nineteenth century designed to legitimize the political order of a day rather connecting the past, is considered irrelevant.²³ Instead, the term *ummat* is traditionally used to signify the community (followers) of the Prophet.²⁴ In this light, inhabitant of Islamic state is a synonym with *ummat-e-Islami*, (Muslim followers) which implies the collective community

²⁰Greenfeld L (2003) *The Spirit of Capitalism: Nationalism and Economic Growth*. Harvard University Press, p. 2.

²¹Sadri F (2010) *How Early Muslim Scholars Assimilated Aristotle and Made Iran the Intellectual Center of the Islamic World: A Study of Falsafah [philosophy]*. Edwin Mellen Prints, p. 163.

²²Ibid.

²³As renowned Ernest Renan’s sentence underlined, “Forgetfulness, and I would even say historical error, are essential in the creation of a nation.” See Cabell KR (2013) *Jaan Valsiner, The Catalyzing Mind: Beyond Models of Causality*. Springer, p. 212.

²⁴According to Encyclopedia of Islam, “Collectively, Muslims understand themselves ideally to be members of a single community of believers, known as the umma.” (See Campo JE (ed) (2009) *Encyclopedia of Islam. Facts on File, Inc.*, p. xxv.) Moreover, the word umma is derived from the Arabic word for mother (umm) and literally has other meanings, which vary according to the context. For various uses, see <http://muftionline.co.za/node/2848>.

of Muslims, specifically those that are the objects of a divine plan of salvation since Islam. This inclination may in part be related to the egalitarian principle in Islam and permeated as a collective political ideology. Michael Freeden underlined this point by stating, “Political Islam possesses the functions of an ideology in that it provides a collective political agenda, while maintaining a substantial overlap, even identity, between religion and politics. However, it does not possess the *specificity* of contemporary [Western] ideologies—distinct, reified, systems of ideas that exist as quasi-autonomous features of our world and can studied independently. Since the nineteenth century, the major political ideology [in the west] have evolve to become systems of ideas detached from our [Western] religious beliefs—just as our [Western] ideas about art and about economics now display a considerable degree of autonomy—even though Western political thought itself used to be much more heavily interfused with religious conviction.”²⁵

The main reason for *ummat-e-Islami*, however, is due to the fact that history for Muslims began when the journey of Prophet Mohammad and his disciples started in Mecca and ended at Medina, which is called Hajrat (and Hijra in Arabic) and marked the Islamic Calendar. For Muslim, therefore, there was no culmination of the long past, no glory, and no ancestral trail for legitimization. In short, and unlike Persians, there was no social capital upon which they could build upon a national idea. This all changed as a result of inception of history by the Prophet, as they perceived it. And soon after, Muslim endeavored and sacrificed with utmost devotions to establish *their* history upon their faith, which allowed a common possession of a rich legacy of collective memories—so that they could now adhere to the concept of Ummat.²⁶ This observation is strengthened by Renan’s conceptualization of what constitutes a nation as he brilliantly wrote, “A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy

²⁵Freeden M (2003) Ideology: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press, pp. 101–102. However, an inconsistency can be detected between Western liberal democracy, as integral part of egalitarian principle, and the notion of nationhood. The question that remained unanswered is, can we find a theoretical justification, consisting of liberal egalitarianism, for the practice of privileging national identities, national cultures, and national communities in decisions about the location (boundaries) and function of territorial boundaries?

²⁶It should be noted that similar terms have been used in other monolithic religion to galvanize believers for political purposes. For instance, as English King Henry VIII broke from Rome (Catholic Church) in the middle of the sixteenth century, the door opened wide to Protestantism, which perhaps was the most significant factor that furthered the development of the *English national consciousness*. One of the first protestant act, according to Liah Greenfeld, was to insist on the *priesthood of all believers*, which is based on suggestions in the Old Testament like “a chosen, godly people, a people which was an elite and a light to the world because everyone of its members was a party to the covenant with God. This message was not lost on England, and it is not coincidental that in the years of the great upheaval that brought Englishmen to assert themselves as a nation in the Puritan Rebellion, they believed themselves to be the second Israel, constantly returning to this metaphor in parliamentary speeches and pamphlets, as well as sermons” (Greenfeld L (1993) Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity. Harvard University Press, p. 52). Yet, and Unlike the Qu’ran, “there are no exact equivalents of the word ‘nation’ (especially in its modern sense) in either Biblical Hebrew or Greek. Yet all the English Bibles use the word” (Ibid.).

of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form.”²⁷

Persian conversion to Islam (Islamization), unlike the invasion, was a gradual process but covered the entire plateau except for few regions that remained stubbornly independent. For all practical purposes, the Arab rulers granted certain degree of autonomy to regions under their control.²⁸ In this respect, it is conceivable to infer that these rulers were among the first to present a notion of autonomy, a self-rule, as a possible mode of governance in the plateau (in a sense that sovereignty can be obtained without a fight with a central state).²⁹ The problems, however, appeared in the ninth and tenth centuries. First, under the Umayyad rule, “with its strong racial prejudices and aggressive imperialism, wars and invasions originally undertaken, in part at least, for the propagation of Islam degenerated into mere predatory raids, of which booty was the principal if not the sole aim.”³⁰ Second, as a result of in-migration, many communities in the plateau had changed enormously both in size and in composition, and hence tensions between diverse populations of these communities, which comprised of converted Persians, Arabs Muslims, as well as Christians and Jews, naturally rose. Therefore, the old submission had come to end. Persians converted, like all people under similar condition, “could not, nor did they wish to, forget the conquest.”³¹ However, enlightened by *egalitarian* message of Islam, they adopted Islam as their faith but separated themselves from Arab Muslims by decoding the narrative of conquest in a sense that Islam was separated from the Arab. While Islam remained the pillar of their living consciousness, its Arab messengers were placed into their memory repository. This internalization also entailed reconstruction of “self,” and so the catalogs of kings were perceived as a means of orientation and placements rather than a meaningful point of reference, to which they used to identify themselves. The past, over relatively short period, hence striped of any semiotic value, as if Persian attempted to eliminate their past or when it is possible integrating it with the new version.

²⁷ Renan E (1996) What is Nation. In: Eley G, Suny RG (eds) *Becoming national: A Reader*, Oxford University Press, p. 52.

²⁸ According to Caleb Elfenbein, “Historically, in most cases only members of the umma [ummat] were subject to Islamic law, even if non-Muslims—or *dhimmis*—lived in areas ruled by Muslim leaders. Otherwise, non-Muslims, and particularly Jews, Christians, and in some cases Hindus, lived according to their own legal traditions. Although a territorial element can be found in the Islamic legal designations dar al-Islam (abode of Islam) and dar al-harb (abode of war), these came into effect only when Muslims came into contact with large non-Muslim populations, such as occurred through conquest or trade.” (See Elfenbein C (2009). *Citizenship*. In: Campo JE (ed) *Encyclopedia of Islam*. Facts on File Inc., p. 152.)

²⁹ This progressive approach, ironically, copied from Persian. For instance, under Parthian rulers, the Greek settlers in cities founded by Seleucid Empire enjoyed considerable autonomy. See Daryaei T (ed) (2012) *The Oxford handbook of Iranian*. Oxford University Press, p. 180.

³⁰ Brown E (1956) *A Literary History of Persia*; from Firdawsi to Sa’di, Vol. II. Cambridge University Press, pp. 232–233.

³¹ Savant SB (2013) *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran: Tradition, Memory, and Conversion*. Cambridge University Press, p. 213.

At this point, Levi-Strauss's distinction, however clumsy in his own word, between "cold" and "hot" society, provides a conceptual framework, which helps to build my argument from ground up. He began to make distinction between "cold" and "hot" societies by stating, "the former seeking, by the institutions they give themselves, to annul the possible effects of historical factors on their equilibrium and continuity in a quasi-automatic fashion; the latter resolutely internalizing the historical process and making it the moving power of their development."³² The object of "cold" society, he further elaborates, "is to make it the case that the order of temporal succession should have as little influence as possible on their content. No doubt they do not succeed perfectly; but this is the norm they set themselves."³³ In plain English, he maintained that the structure of the human mind was more easily elicited in "cold" traditional societies, where the existing way of life was not questioned, than in the "hot" societies of the modern era, where the pursuit of progress undermined stability.³⁴ In a way, cold society perceived to be "outside of history," hence remaining static and unchanging because they lack all consciousness of history, for history would change their perception of themselves and their past. By contrast, the "hot" societies were driven by time; they cultivate change and adopt rapidly because change is perceived positively, and hence inevitably they have a history that is dynamic.

In this context, Iranian society can be seen as a cold society in a sense that we habitually place ourselves outside the history by interpreting it according to our propensity to deny reality and retain the past in our imagination. In doing so, the order of temporal succession has become irrelevant since an Iranian does not do much of historical thinking. In addition, Iranians do "internalize past" but in terms of mythical and not historical time. This is mainly due to the fact that only the mythical age is the age of "becoming," whereas historical time is no more than the extension of what has already become—in history what is done is done, while myth allows for reconstruction of what is yearning.³⁵ Consequently, we tend to remain stagnant rather than progress. Nevertheless, it should be noted that mythical Iranian tales have very specific meanings, both in oral presentation such as Taziyeh (passion play) and written versions in which Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* signified. Indeed, Ferdowsi finished his epic book with these words:

I've reached the end of this great history.
 And all the land will fill with talk of me
 I shall not die, these seeds I've sown will save
 My name and reputation from the grave
 And men of sense and wisdom will proclaim,
 When I have gone, my praises and my fame.³⁶

³²Ibid., pp. 233–234.

³³Ibid.

³⁴It is important to note that though comprehensiveness was the very essence of Lévi-Strauss's approach, his researches were concentrated chiefly on various *tribes* of Amerindians in Guyana.

³⁵See Assmann J (2011) *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*. Cambridge University Press, p. 59.

³⁶Ferdowsi A (2006) *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings*. Penguin, p. xi.

It is important to understand that myths are rarely told for their own sake, and in Iran a myth is always told to support practical arguments. In other words, the telling of a myth, whether oral or written, may in fact be governed by political or religious intentions. For instance, Kamran Talattof in *the Politics of Writing in Iran* argues that in repressive society, literature—with its capacity for metaphorical encoding—offers a singular venue for public expression of social and political criticism.³⁷ By the same token, telling a myth is allegorical function, and in the storytellers of traditional society like Iran, myths are often manipulated to suit particular memories or imaginations. For this reason, a-told-myth is rarely if ever compatible with the original, undiluted, and pure form. In other words and according to Bernhard Lang, “a myth is generally transmitted in a specific context and with a specific intention in mind.”³⁸ This explains why we constantly seek to recapture what we had once abandoned and in the process lose sight of what we have become, a community of vagabonds (*awara*) that routinely symbolize and idealize to no avail.

This failure is obviously due to the fact that ideas alone cannot constitute deeds, no matter how noble and profound they may be seemed. We cannot conceive an idea in our conceptual frame of mind and then expect its materialization without any effort to apply it to our own life. An idea becomes animated when one lives it. For instance, this might come as a surprise to some reader that a word “vagabond” bears a positive connotation in Iranian literature and literally works. For majority of Iranians, particularly those who are all too well acquainted with a mystical world, vagabond and vagabondism connote humility and unpretentiousness. This is readily evidenced through the extraordinary and incomparable Hafiz’s work in which he praises the rite of the spiritual vagabonds (*qalandari*),³⁹ as he notes in a celebrated verse:

³⁷Talattof K (2000) *The politics of writing in Iran: a history of modern Persian literature*. Syracuse University Press, pp. 1–2.

³⁸Lang B (2008) *Hebrew Life and Literature: Selected Essays of Bernhard Lang*. Ashgate Publishing Ltd, p. 123.

³⁹According to Leonard Lewisohn, “The Islamic counterpart of the Hindu *saddhu*, the *qalandar* was a religious mendicant, a holy vagabond or faqir [deprived] who attired himself in outlandish garb and often shaved all facial hair save the mustache, traveling from town to town occupied in devotional practices in order to mortify his soul and disengage himself from worldly concerns. The Sufi theoreticians of medieval Persia inform us that the difference between the *malāmatī* (literarily means blame and *malamat* denotes reproach] and *qalandar* mystics was that the former sought to conceal his acts of devotion and piety, whereas the latter endeavored to overturn and destroy established customs. In Ḥāfiz’s poetry both tendencies are visible. As an institution, the *qalandariyya* was closely connected with the early *malāmatī* tradition in tenth-/eleventh-century Nishapur in Khurāsān, 295 which later, under the leadership of Jamāl al-Dīn Sāwī (d. circa 630/1232), developed into separate orders with their own Khānaqāhs scattered all over Egypt, Libya, Turkey, Persia and India. 296 Historically speaking, the *qalandariyya* movement represented a sort of mass institutionalization of the high principles of the *malāmatī* moral philosophy. In Ḥāfiz’s poetry the *qalandar* libertine (*rind-i qalandar*) stands at the summit of the spiritual hierarchy. The *qalandar* is the supreme mystical monarch before whom even the prince must bend his knee to receive his crown:

Around the tavern door

The reprobates of God—qalandars—swarm

They withdraw and they bestow

The diadems of Empire.” (See Lewisohn L (Ed) (2010) *Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry* (Vol. 25). IB Tauris, p. 37.)

I serve the will and esprit of that one
 Who commits to flames his own security,
 Who wears the rags of beggary, yet knows the lore of alchemy.
 A thousand enigmas subtler, finer spun than
 A strand of hair her—Not everyone
 Who shaves his scalp can understand the qalandar.⁴⁰

To a certain extent, the essence of all compatible Islamic ideas and enlightened movements that appeared in the ninth and the tenth century in the plateau, as products of Islamic civilization, lies in the value of self-criticism, and that fault should be known by reminding one owns imperfection. In fact, all of the great men from early antiquity to the present warned “us” about the hazard of hypocrisy, vanity, self-righteousness, and being roguery (*rinde*), which is a telling anecdote of how they perceived their patriots. The merging of *malamati* ethical doctrine into the repertoire of the Persian poetry is an ample evidence of conscious awareness of these attributes as vulgar that bear negative social values. For instance, our epic poet Mawlana [literary means our master] in *Diwan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* seeks a man free who denies himself of an entrance upon the arena of worldly indulgences, as he wrote:

Last night the shaikh went all about the city, lamp in hand,
 crying, “I am weary of beast and devil, a man is my desire.”
 They said, “He is not to be found, we too have searched.”
 He answered, “He who is not to be found is my desire.”
 Though I am penniless, I will not accept a small carnelian,
 for that rare, precious carnelian is my desire.⁴¹

Elsewhere he stated:

When we are dead, seek for our
 resting-place
 Not in the earth, but in the
 hearts of men.⁴²

In a similar breath, another imminence poet, Attar, invites us to abandon pretension-ness and free ourselves from vanity by ripping old thoughts:

How long I endure boaster by pretense?
 How long I endure egocentricity by thought
 A curtain of thought must be tear
 Break repentance of ascetic
 ... How long I live like a captive?

⁴⁰Lewisohn L (Ed) (2010) *Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry* (Vol. 25). IB Tauris, p. 38. The hint at shaves his scalp suggests renouncing the world for the love of God. And it's more or less the same for all religious practice of shaving the head, including Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, etc.

⁴¹Yarshater E (ed) (2009) *Mystical poems of Rumi*. Trans: Arberry AJ. University of Chicago Press, p. 80.

⁴²EJW Gibb Memorial Series (1907), vol. IV. Trans: Margoliouth DS. E. J. Brill, p. v.

Or, in his book *Musibatnamih* (The Book of Suffering), Attar underlined how Muslims diverged from the teaching of Prophets and Imam Ali and how the true faith of Islam has been infected by pity indulgences, as he wrote:

You have castles like those of kings,
 You live like Khosrow [king], not in poverty of [Imam] Ali ...
 You are captives to custom, dignity and office, by day or by night
 There is only one thing you lack: the faith of [Prophet] Mohammed.⁴³

For certain, there has been enough blame tossed around in our history, which all comes to no avail. And yet, when justice and liberty were demanded, kings were guilty of charge and brought down only to replace by others because in a land of despot, despotism will always prevail. It is an attribute that could not evade Nietzsche's sense of irony, as he wrote, "He who fights with monster should be careful lest he thereby become a monster."⁴⁴ Or George Orwell's astute conclusion, "The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which."⁴⁵ And so, saviors rose only to be deserted (and even hanged) by the popular indifference since longevity of popularity, particularly in the contemporary Iran, only endorses temporality impermanence.

In all, the foundations of power of a state [not an individual] always remain in the hands of people. This is the lesson of history, nothing lasts unless conforms to the people's values and beliefs.⁴⁶ Max Stirner underlined this observation when he sees the state as a human product, which ultimately dominates its own creators. According to Stirner, the only factor that generates and sustains the state is *the willingness of individuals to subordinate their own will to the will of their own creation*,⁴⁷ as he states, "He who, to hold his own, must count on the absence of will in others is a thing made by these others, as the master is a thing made by the servant. If submissiveness ceased, it would be all over with lordship."⁴⁸ Therefore, the state ceases to exist when individuals refuse to devalue themselves.⁴⁹

⁴³Kermani N (2011) *The Terror of God: Attar, Job and the Metaphysical Revolt*. Polity, p. 61.

⁴⁴Nietzsche F (1997) *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy*. Dover Publication, p. 75 (section 146).

⁴⁵George Orwell (1945) *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story*. Available at qutenberg.net.au, p. 131. Orwell ends his book by the sentence. One may note that such characterization is nothing new to men, which I concurred. However, the point is, if so, then we should have courage to admit it.

⁴⁶Unless one believed that there are other factors at work such as national vested interest, external influence, and conspiracy, the world affairs, etc., to which I would point out that these examples are all, if assumed, valid, should be considered as instruments of provocation rather than the agent of change and in absence of people they are ineffective.

⁴⁷Stirner M, Leopold D (1995) *Stirner: The Ego and Its Own*. Cambridge University Press, p. xxvi.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. xxvii and 175.

⁴⁹On this note, Leopold reiterates Stirner's brief and contrasting accounts of Socrates and Alcibiades (prominent Athenian statesman), by stating, "Socrates' refusal to escape punishment, or even (earlier) to request banishment, was clearly grounded in a commitment not to weaken the community by undermining the system of law, and is roundly condemned by Stirner. Socrates was a 'fool' to concede to the Athenians the right to condemn him; his failure to escape was a 'weakness,' a product of his 'delusion' that he was a member of a community rather than an individual, and of his failure to understand that the Athenians were his 'enemies,' that he himself and no one else could be his only judge." (See *Ibid.*, p. xxvii and 191.)

Throughout Iranian history, the State has always been the *persona* of the people. This is the main reason why the present book sought to examine the perpetual and consistent attributes of the nation, which comprise all motions and signals that compel to observe Iranians *as we are* rather than an erroneous vision that portrays us as inept spectators.

It is certainly impossible to identify what flaws of culture, politics, or historical events explain the various dire conditions that Iranians have endured throughout their civilization. Today, the reality of our situation seems to remain intact mainly because we have not changed for the past few centuries, although we are resourceful enough to get through rough patches, but incapable to break through the impediments that had pinned us down at the fort. Despite our best efforts to change our situation, we walk the path up and down, insisting they are not one and the same. Among us, fault always lies elsewhere and never within. We curse destiny for heavy misfortunes that have befallen us and overlooked the fact that *the fault lies not in the stars but in ourselves for we are underlings*.⁵⁰ Of course, this does not imply that the world is not a profoundly unjust place in which suffering is unfairly distributed. And yet, this wrong did not appear out of blue but prevailed as a product of our deeds and complacency.

Our state of being, I sustain throughout this study, is largely reflective of an arrangement that has been established, sustained, and perpetuated within a hegemonic social order, which is strongly favoring servitude to power over all others. However, today, more than anytime in a human history, everyone is forced to be witness of the reality of our own deeds. There is no escape for our generation to stand aside as in time of past. There is no protection, no immunity against being constantly made aware of the truth staring directly at us. Therefore, an old evasion of reality is not only ineffective and outright dishonest but more and more seems like an assumed conscious pervasiveness to abandon our fundamental responsibility to acknowledge fault.

The picture present in this book is neither comforting nor pertained to usual sentiments that often blamed foreign dominations nor the zeal with which condemn the heads of state for *everything* that is missing, faulty, or destructive particularly in contemporary Iran, which makes it impossible to draw any consensual lessons from their reigns and rules.

The customary sentiment of blaming others for our dreadful condition cannot be taken seriously since many other nations, even in Asia such as Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, China, etc., were more severely subjected to outside powers, and yet today the difference between them and us is striking. The latter, however, is part of a common delusional thinking that has been predominant in Iranians' perception of their national politics. Nevertheless, it must be rejected on an obvious ground that no leader is monolithic. If we are to make any sense of how power is established

⁵⁰ Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, act I, scene 2. As Brutus states, "There is a tide in the affairs of men which, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune, omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallow and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat, And we must take the current when it serves, Or lose our venture." Cassius replied, "The fault lies not in the stars, but in ourselves for we are underlings."

and how it works and sustains, we must stop thinking that those in position of power can do anything as well. We must also realize no leader is in sole control of his country, that is, no emperor, no king, no tyrant, no tribal chief, no head of a family, and no leaders whatsoever can govern alone in a vacuum. As Mesquita and Smith observed, “No leader, no matter how August or how revered, no matter how cruel or vindictive, ever stand alone.”⁵¹ From this point, one can conclude that either successes or failures of any nation should not be viewed as a result of an individual leader’s conduct alone but as a product of a community.⁵²

My observations, therefore, formed around a conviction that our present state could only be improved if first we understand how it came about and why. My accounts are mainly about what *is* and why what is. Let me explain.

Ann Lambton once observed, “When Persia adopted Shi’ism with the rise of the Safavids in the eighteenth century she became sharply distinguished from the Sunni part of the Muslim world . . . She became, for the first time since the Muslim conquest in the seventh century, a political unit; in other words she became territorial segregated from the rest of the Muslim world, and a sense of separateness and, to some extent, a national unity was created.”⁵³ In the autumn of 1978, once again Iranians distinguished themselves from the Muslim world and marched to depose Pahlavi’s reign in favor of their Islamic identity. In doing so, they have clearly abandoned their past infatuation with ambiguity of all other *isms* by establishing the Islamic Republic of Iran. Finally, Iranians were able to attain the cultural goods and values that they have been longing for more than a millennium in a new and unambiguous definition of the Islamic Republic. They saw, as Roy Mottahedeh brilliantly described, “their past in the lines of Mowlana in which he described people seeking for the *qebleh*, the direction of the Kaaba of Mecca and focus of prayer, in the dark of night;

Like people who diligently search about
Turning every which way they fancy the qebleh to be;
When at dawn the Kabba appears,
It is reveled who has actually lost his way.
Or, like divers under the depth of the sea’s water,
Each one picking something in haste
When they come from the bottom of the deep sea
It is revealed who now owns the exquisite pearl
And who has brought the little pearls
And who the tiny stones and worthless shells.”⁵⁴

⁵¹De Mesquita BB, Smith A (2011) The dictator’s handbook: why bad behavior is almost always good politics. PublicAffairs, p. 2. Indeed, the recent so-called Greek state’s bankruptcy confirmed the argument as it was first labeled a debt crisis but soon branded a political crisis, even by George Papandreou government, not because provision of public goods was significantly curtailed but rather the fact that the government runs out of the resources necessary to purchase political loyalty of its patrons including the national technocrats and lower bureaucrats.

⁵²For instance, the most celebrated type of governing body these days is called a representative democracy in which people’s participation in general election to select their leaders is perceived as an ideal feature of democracy. And yet, no attention is given to a number of people necessary to keep the government (as well as a leader) in an office, whom in fact are not elected by people.

⁵³Lambton AKS (1957) The Impact of the West on Persia. International Affairs 33, p. 12.

⁵⁴Mottaheadeh R (1985) The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran. Simon & Schuster, pp. 379–380.

In 1978, Iranians had attained the exquisite pearl they sought for decades if not for centuries. The Islamic Revolution prevailed, however, as the result of sequential developments that rooted back to the middle of nineteenth century with Mirza Taghi Khan Farahani's (also known as Amir Kabir, a prime minister of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar) unusually attentive attempts to reform the internal affairs of the country.⁵⁵ Amir Kabir (literarily means great prince) occupied significant place in the history of reform in Iran, but not without an irony. His reform, emulated perhaps by most reform-minded Iranians perhaps not in content but by its pose, was mainly intended to transform the state into an effective entity, so that existing administrative organisms better control the nation's life, instead of changing their overall structures or replacing them with new arrangements. As a result, while his reign was short and his achievements immense, the ultimate effect of his policies was in many respects tainted. For instance, as Hamid Algar noted, Amir Kabir's policy toward the ulama, "was not based on any ideal conception of their role in affairs but evolved according to his [Amir Kabir] concern with asserting the power of the state wherever possible. Thus he attempted to abolish certain aspects of the power of the ulama, such as the right to grant asylum, and to weaken their juridical function by expanding the rage of 'urf jurisdiction and at the same time established a loose control over the shar' court. Even though is doing so he sought the sanction and cooperation of the leading ulama, there can be little doubt that his aim was to break clerical power, or at least reduce it to a point where it was no longer able to challenge the state."⁵⁶

Another example was his government's decision in 1851 to house the study of European Science under one roof, the Polytechnic College (Dar ol-Fonun), which was the first academic unit not administrated by ecclesiastics establishment in Iran. This decision was also consistent with Abbas Mirza's persuasion to modernize the nation military, presumably enabling the state to defend its territorial integrity against foreign aggression, e.g., Russians, at the time. However, the graduates of the college neither help to defend the country nor defeat Russia. Instead, Dar ol-Fonun graduates, who were mainly from the aristocracy, landlord, and influential families led by its erudite principal Reza Qoli Khan Hedayat, helped to shape the new structure of government.⁵⁷ They were instrumental in the centralization of the government: a new effective apparatus by which the state could more effectively dominate and tax the country. Moreover, the new-schooled Iranian learned more about conception

⁵⁵ According to *Fereyduun Adamiyat*, Amir Kabir was curiously a powerful prime minister to the extent that he took upon himself to determine the Shah's monthly stipend. (See Adamiyat F (1969) Amir Kabir and Iran [in Persian]. 3rd edition, Karazmi Publisher, Tehran, p. 265.)

⁵⁶ Algar H (1980) Religion and State in Iran 1785–1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period. University of California Press, p. 129.

⁵⁷ On the culture front, they also helped to reshape part of the literary tradition of Iranian critics and authors. For instance, the works of the "king of Poets," Bahar, though highly classical in form, were great influence as they dealt with contemporary events and appealed to a wide public. Indeed, "one branch of modern Persian Literature is closely connected with a group of Persian who lived in Berlin after the First World War. There they established the Kaviani Press, and among the poems they printed were several by *Aref Qazvini* (died 1934), one of the first genuinely modern writers." (The Britannica Guides: Britannica Guide to the Islamic World (2009) Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. Chicago, p. 331).

of law on legacies of the French Revolution than the calculation of cannonball of trajectories and double-entry bookkeeping.⁵⁸ In short, the agents of progress were subjects of their own advocacy.⁵⁹ Charles Kurzman sums up the state of affairs in Iran at the time and observed, “the discourse of modernization in Iran, as elsewhere, was thoroughly Eurocentric—embarrassingly so to twenty first-century sensibilities. Not all went as far as the leftist intellectual Muhammad Amin Rasulzadah, who argued that ‘our sole solution is to accept European principles willingly . . . since the house of Iran is too old and decayed to be repaired and would otherwise be rebuilt by foreign conquerors’; or Hasan Taqizādeh, the nationalist intellectual who paradoxically urged ‘the adoption and promotion, without condition or reservation, of European civilization, absolute submission to Europe, and the assimilation of the culture, customs, practices, organization, sciences, arts, life, and the whole attitude of Europe, without any exception save language; and the putting aside of every kind of self-satisfaction, and such senseless objections as arise from a mistaken, or, as we prefer to call it, a false patriotism.’”⁶⁰

Ulama, however, were well aware of these developments from the beginning and put up stiff resistances against what they correctly perceived the advent of Western wave of modernity. For one thing, they saw the European ideas, e.g., secularism, as a direct rejection of the Islamic tradition in which they were given sole responsibility to preserve for centuries. Moreover, the shah’s concession to Major G. F. Talbot in 1890 exacerbated the already tense state of affairs, which was particularly damaging to the merchants and retail traders whose income depended on their own monopoly power. Finally, it became apparent that reform-minded and Western-inclined individuals like Mirza Malkum Khan and Sayyid Jamalū’d-Din Asadabadi gained momentum during Nasirū’d-Din Shah’s last years.⁶¹ All things considered, ulama felt that the government’s weakness in managing the country’s affairs, in addition to a rise of Western-oriented elite that tirelessly promote modernity and foreign infiltration inside the country, has presented direct challenges to Iran’s future as an Islamic state and their traditional role as the guardian of Islamic values and moral.

⁵⁸Mottaheadeh R (1985) *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran*. Simon & Schuster, p. 51.

⁵⁹Ali Gheissari also alluded to the similar direction when he wrote that the advocates “to purify the Persian language from Arabic words fell prey to another extreme, namely, the excessive use of European, mainly French terms.” (See Gheissari A (1998) *Iranian Intellectuals in the Twentieth Century*. University of Texas Press p. 24.)

⁶⁰Kurzman C (2005) Weaving Iran into The Three of Nations. *Int. J. Middle East Stud.* 37:147–148. However, I would like to point to a distinct difference between Rasulzadeh who, at least, underlined the noun “willingness” as a precondition and Taqizadeh who utterly accepted the notion of cut-and-paste as a reliable approach to move the country forward.

⁶¹For instance, Malkum Khan introduced words loaded with European influence and political and social concepts. One such was *qanun*, an Arabic word which Mirza Malkum Khan adopted to mean law—in contrast to the word Sahri’a. (See Avery P (1965) *Modern Iran*. Fredrick A. Praeger, p. 116.)

Even pro-constitutionalist clerics frequently held up Islam as a model for the contemporary Iranian nation. Mirza Muhammad Husayn Naini,⁶² a prominent mujtahid of his time in his well-known treatises, stated, “So they [European] appropriated the principles of civilization and politics implicit in the Islamic holy books and traditions, and in the edicts of ‘Ali [son-in-law and fourth successor of the Prophet] and other early leaders of Islam, as they have justly acknowledged in their earlier histories, as they have admitted that learning such principles and sciences conducive to such spectacular advances in such a short period of time would be impossible for unaided human reason. Therefore the progress and perseverance of the West in translation, interpretation, and application of these principles on the one hand, and the concomitant regression of the people of Islam and their subjugation at the hands of unbelievers [the Mongol conquerors] resulted in such a state that Muslims gradually forgot the principles of their own historical origins and even supposed that abject subordination is a necessity of Islamic life. Therefore they thought that the commandments of Islam are contrary to civilization, reason, and justice—the fountainhead of progress—and as such, they equated Islam with slavery and savagery.”⁶³ According to Abdul-Hadi Hairi, “Naini and other constitutional ulama of Iran spoke of constitutionalism within the framework of the Shi’i system of government.”⁶⁴ For instance, Ayatollah ‘Abdullah Bihbihani, one of the leading ulama in the Constitution movement, claimed that what Europeans have achieved is derived from Shari’a and advised Parliament only to be subtle about isomorphism: “I have a request to make. Never argue that in such and such a country they have done this or that, so let us do likewise! For the common people would not understand, and we would be offended. We now have laws, and we have the Qur’an. I do not mean that you should not mention this; you certainly should. But if you analyze the matter, you will find that what they [the foreigner] have done is based on wisdom and derived from the laws of the *shari’a*.”⁶⁵ Elsewhere, the Ayatollah stated his concerns about endangered Islamic Iran and that Iran is falling into the hand of the foreigners, “Iran is my country; whatever reputation I have belong to this country; my service to Islam is in this place; the respect I enjoy depends on the existence of this state. But unfortunately, I see it falling into the hands of foreigners. Therefore, as long as I am alive I will make my efforts to protect it and, if necessary, I will

⁶²Oxford Dictionary of Islam described Naini as, “Iraqi Shii cleric. Leading theoretician of the 1905–1911 Constitutional Revolution in Iran. Led Iraqi nationalists in an independent movement against the British. Depicted those opposing Reza Shah Pahlavi’s rule as enemies of Islam, opening the door to the deposing of the Qajar dynasty.” (See Esposito JL (2003) *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. Oxford University Press, p. 228.)

⁶³Naini MH (2002) *Government from the Perspective of Islam*. In: Kurzman C (ed) *Modernist Islam, 1840–1940: A SourceBook*. Oxford University Press, p. 116.

⁶⁴Hairi AH (1977) *Shi’ism and Constitutionalism in Iran*. E. J. Brill, p. 4.

⁶⁵See Bagley FRC (1983) *New Light on the Iranian Constitutional Movement*. In: Bosworth E, Hillebrand C (eds) *Qajar Iran: Political, Social and Cultural Change 1800–1925*. Edinburgh University Press, p. 54.

sacrifice my life for it.”⁶⁶ Under these circumstances, it is far easier plausible to comprehend why the constitutional revolution prevailed than why the Qajar monarchs lost the throne.

Iran entered the twentieth century convulsed by peculiar events. While rampant tribal feud with the central government was at its peak, the king signed the constitutional decree that led to the establishment of a first parliament while he was laying in his deathbed. Soon after, the Parliament deposed Muhammad Ali Shah, the son of the deceased sovereign and the country’s first constitutional monarch who after a year of his descent to the throne shelled the very legislative body that was responsible for his legitimacy, in favor of his *twelve-year-old son*.⁶⁷ In particular, the period between 1905 and 1911 witnessed the obliteration of an ancient monarchial system under which kings ruled as the Shadow of God on Earth and replaced by the new order that generates series of complex sociopolitical transformations culminating in the popular Islamic revolution of 1978.⁶⁸ This age also began an odd trend in that since Muhammad Ali Shah’s accession to Iranian throne on December 31, 1906, every Iranian sovereign has abdicated and died in exile.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, and by most account, the term “constitution” was (and still) an enigma in Iran. Ahmad Kasravi, a prominent historian who lived in Iran during the era, offers his explanation: “The mass of people did not know what a constitution was and were obviously not demanding it... they [ulama] did not understand the Constitution as they were later to see it and understand it and did not want it in the European sense. They were far removed from the ideas about how to run the country, the people’s progress, or such ideas. The other fraction had no understanding of the Constitution at all... This was the state of the leadership. The mass of people was completely unaware of what a constitution was or what it meant and only became excited and went into action to follow its leaders.”⁷⁰ Kasravi’s observation is confirmed by Ayatollah Muhammad Tabataba’i, one the leading pro-constitutional ulama, who told the first session of the Iranian Parliament that, “I’d never seen the constitutional countries myself. But what I’d heard, and those who had seen the

⁶⁶Hairi AH (1977) Shi’ism and Constitutionalism in Iran. E. J. Brill, p. 84.

⁶⁷This action by itself says much about ineptness of Iranian political leadership at the time.

⁶⁸Indeed there are noticeable similarities between 1905 Constitutional Revolution and 1978 Islamic Revolution, the effective coalition among opposition with dissimilar and to a certain extent contradictory interests, the vast numbers of intellectuals were among his Majesty’s opponents, the clerics role as the catalyst against the state, and resemblance of main themes such as despotic and decadent monarchy, un-Islamic, and anti-Western sentiments.

⁶⁹Muhammad Ali Shah is known to identify himself with a 6000-year tradition of Iranian monarchy, 3500 years more than Muhammad Riza Shah later claimed during his celebration at Persepolis/ Shiraz in 1971. “Disorder, Muhammad Ali Shah declared in 1908, ‘is weakening the foundations of the 6000-year-old Iranian monarchy, and on the basis of extensive personal duty I do not consider it permissible to endure this in silence.’” (See Kurzman C (2005) Weaving Iran into The Three of Nations. *Int. J. Middle East Stud.* 37:147–148, p. 150.)

⁷⁰Kasravi A (2006) *History of Iranian Constitutional Revolution (Tarikh-e Mashrute-ye Iran)* vol. I, trans. Evan Siegel, Mazda Publishers, pp. 295–296.

constitutional countries told me, the constitution is the cause of the security and flourishing of the country.”⁷¹

Other observers of the event also express the similar sentiment. For instance, US ambassador in Tehran, Richmond Pearson, offered his view of the constitution movement by stating, “The great body of the Shah’s subjects have no idea of the meaning of ‘Constitutional Government’; the Persian language contains no equivalent of ‘Constitution’ as we understand the term. The mass of the people are illiterate; not one in a thousand can read and not one in ten thousand can write the Persian language, if we except the city of Tehran. There is no middle class, whose intelligence and interests would form the basis and the guaranty of constitutional government. Outside the cities not one person in a thousand is a freeholder, and it is estimated, in the total of statistics, that 3000 persons, including the Shah, own three-fourth of all the land in the kingdom and virtually all the productive agriculture land. History does not accord a single instance of successful constitutional government in a country where the Mussulman [Muslim] religion is the state religion.”⁷² A closer and a more tuned analogy with the theme of the present study is observation by Edouard Valmont, a French diplomat in Tehran around the time when a constitutionalist movement erupted and came to power in 1906. According to Valmont, Iranians suffer from “lack of real understanding of the spirit of the Constitution.”⁷³ He also scorned Iranian constitutionalists’ conspicuous pretentiousness and wrote, “Harun-ar-Rashid is one of the few Liberals I know who insists upon remaining picturesquely Persian, and who does not imagine that the whole of civilisation lies in the use of chairs and the wearing of hideous clothing two things which were, for many

⁷¹ See Adamiyat F (1975) *Social Democratic Thought in the Constitutionalist Movement* (Fikr-i dimukrasi-yi ijtimai_ dar nahzat-i mashrutiyat-i Iran). Intisharat-i Payam, p. 4.

⁷² See United States Dept. of State (1909) *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, part 2, U.S. Government Printing Office, p. 1217.

⁷³ de Lorey E, Sladen D (1910) *The Moon of the Fourteenth Night: Being the Private Life of an Unmarried Diplomat in Persia during the Revolution*. Hurst & Blackett, p. 156. “Valmont” was a pseudonym; his entire observation was: “If I had not applied the brake, Allah alone knows how far the eloquence of this true son of Persia would have carried him. So long as he was not pinned down to the description of precise details, so long as he was allowed to reel off the visionary mirages of his own brain, he was never at a loss; but when I approached him with concrete questions born of my European and positive need of the actual truth, he became disconcerted, irritated, and absolutely incapable of giving any clear answer. And this is typical of the state of mind of the greater number of Persians. From one point of view it is an enviable condition, since it is pleasant to be able to lull oneself with illusions and dreams; but it explains the slow growth here of progress, and *the lack of real comprehension of the spirit of the Constitution.*” Italic added. It should be noted that as evidence of the difficulty modern institutions faced in an Islamic country, Valmont’s memoir included a cartoon, reproduced at left, showing a clerical figure pointing with one hand to the Qur’an and holding up his other hand to block curious onlookers from peering. The caption reads: “Finding reasons for the constitution in the Koran (from ‘Mulla Nasir-ud-din[,]’ the Persian ‘Punch’).” The message seems clear: Muslims may claim that Islam supports constitutionalism, but such claims don’t bear close scrutiny. (See Kurzman C (2005) *Weaving Iran into The Three of Nations*. *Int. J. Middle East Stud.* 37:147–148, p. 3.)

of those present, the most conspicuous reforms of the new regime. It is thus that the wearing of a starched collar has come to be the mark of the Constitutionals, gaming for them, among the Reactionaries, the nickname of *Starched-Collarites*.⁷⁴

Constitutional movement in Iran coincided with similar political transitions in Tunisia, Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, and Japan around the second half of nineteenth century. By most accounts, they were all inspired by the early European constitutional models,⁷⁵ particularly by the Belgian Constitution of 1831.⁷⁶ However, unlike other reformist movements,⁷⁷ the Iranian constitutional revolution led to the establishment of a constitutional monarchy through the adaptation of the Fundamental Law (*Qanun-i Asasi*) of December 30, 1906, which was later ratified

⁷⁴Ibid. pp. 117–118.

⁷⁵Particularly influential in disseminating European and in particular French ideas on constitutional government in Egypt and in the Arab-speaking world was the book by Rifa al-Tahtawi, *Tahhliis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Baris*, published in 1834 in Arabic and subsequently translated into Turkish. The book contained an Arabic translation of the 1814 French Constitution, the *Charte Constitutionnelle*, a detailed analysis of its main provision, and an extended account of the July Revolution, which put an end to the attempt of the Bourbon king Charles X to restore the absolute monarchy of the pre-1789 period. Al-Tahtawi, who had studied Arabic and Islamic theology in his native Egypt, was a member of the first Egyptian delegation sent to Europe by Muhammad 'Ali in 1826. On his contribution to the birth of a constitutional reform movement in the different parts of the Ottoman Empire, see E. Rogan, *The Arabs—A History*, Allen Lane, 2009, pp. 85–88. (See Grote R, Röder T (2012) *Constitutionalism in Islamic Countries: Between Upheaval and Continuity*. Oxford University Press, p. 4, Footnote 10.)

⁷⁶Arjomand SA (1992) *Constitutions and the Struggle for Political Order*. *European Journal of Sociology*, 33 (01), June 1992. It is note worthy that the Belgian Constitution of 1931 owed its influence mainly to the fact that it was the first coherent codification of the principles of liberal constitutionalism in Europe. The different French constitutional texts, notably the Constitution of 1793 and the *Charte Constitutionnelle* of 1814, reflected radically different ideologies and either were never applied or soon lost their relevance. Other early liberal constitutions, like the Spanish Constitutions of Cadiz of 1812 or Norwegian Constitution of 1814, were much less accessible. (See Grote R, Röder T (2012) *Constitutionalism in Islamic Countries: Between Upheaval and Continuity*. Oxford University Press, pp. 4–5, Footnote 11.)

⁷⁷For instance, in 1857, the Tunisian bey (hereditary governor) declared a Fundamental Pact, which included basic rights which guarantee, e.g., the right to property and freedom of religion. This was followed four years later by a constitution that limited the power of the monarchial ruler and provided for the creation of an appointed body, the Grand Council, which had to approve new laws and changes in expenditure (Grote R, Röder T (2012) *Constitutionalism in Islamic Countries: Between Upheaval and Continuity*. Oxford University Press, p. 5. See also Brown NJ (2002) *Constitutions in a Nonconstitutional World: Arab Basic Laws and the Prospects for Accountable Government*. State University of New York Press. About the same time, the reform movement of the Young Ottoman in Istanbul had been rewarded with the promulgation of the Ottoman Basic Law (*Kanun-i Esasi*) of 1876 and the convening of the first Ottoman Parliament. Six years later, the reform movement made progress in Egypt as well, leading to the establishment of a Consultative Assembly of Deputies. The reform debate culminated in the adoption of the Fundamental Law of February 1882, which provided for the election of the member of Assembly of Deputies instead of their appointment by the viceroy (Ottoman Turkish: *Hidiv*) and gave the Assembly the right to convene on its own accord, to determine taxes, and to review the state's budget (Grote R, Röder T (2012) *Constitutionalism in Islamic Countries: Between Upheaval and Continuity*. Oxford University Press, p. 5).

by Muhammad Ali Shah of Qajar on October 7, 1907, which in 1909 joined the long list of deposed king.⁷⁸ And so, while a constitution monarchy was formed, constitutionalism—“the desirability of the rule of law as opposed to rule by the arbitrary interpretation, judgment or mere fiat of public officials”⁷⁹—never prevailed in Iran.⁸⁰ This is not a surprising outcome since constitutional scholars, such as Walter Bagehot and A. V. Dicey, have often stressed that a mere act of writing a constitution is hardly a sufficient (or even necessary) condition for the emergences of constitutionalism.⁸¹ Indeed, in the absence of the political, ideological, and cultural prerequisites for constitutional life, no country to date has achieved a secular constitutionalism. Peter Avery, however, points to telling observation, in which he noted secular aspirations of constitutional movement were only supplanted in Iran (as well as Turkey) when the dictatorship of Reza Shah prevailed. It was only during

⁷⁸Brown EG (1910) *Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*. Cambridge University Press, p. 372. Here are names of some deposed kings around the same period: Morocco Sultan Abdelaziz was deposed in 1908; Turkey Sultan Abdul Hamid II was deposed by Young Turks in 1909; Portugal King Manuel II fled his native land following a 1910 revolution after which Portugal became a Republic; Korea Emperor Sunjong abdicated in 1910 by the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty; Austria-Hungary Emperor-King Charles I and IV was deposed in 1918; Bulgaria Tsar Ferdinand I abdicated in 1918 in favor of his son Tsar Boris III; China Xuantong Emperor (Puyi) was forced to abdicate in 1912 following a Republican revolution; Ethiopia Emperor, the future Iyasu V, was deposed in 1916 for suspected conversion to the Muslim faith; Finland Grand Prince Nicholas II abdicated in March 1917; Greece King Constantine I was deposed in 1917; Russia Emperor Nicholas II abdicated after the February Revolution of 1917; German Emperor Wilhelm II abdicated in 1918 following Germany's defeat in World War I; Prince William fled Albania in 1914 following the outbreak of World War I and was formally deposed in 1925; and Afghan King Amānullāh Khān abdicated in 1929.

⁷⁹Fellman D (1968–1973) *Constitutionalism*. In: Wiener PP (ed) *Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas*, vol 1, pp. 491–492.

⁸⁰Ali Gheissari offers an interesting argument about the term constitutionalism (*Mashrutiyyat*), which is indicative of what the constitutional movement was all about. He first alluded to an ambiguity of the term, and once he established its total fabrication, he then turned his own argument into a “whatever it means,” which makes one wonder why he even offer an explanation. Here is his explanation: “Where the term *Mashrutiyyat* comes from is unclear. Many authors contemporary to the movement used the term in its literal sense of ‘conditional’; others argue that it derives not from the Arabic word *shart* (condition) but from the French word *le charte* (charter), which had entered Iran via Ottoman Turks. In his *Persian Lexicon*, Ali-Akbar Dehkhoda [a prominent Iranian linguist, and author of the most extensive dictionary of the Persian language ever published]... writes ‘the term *mashrutiyyat* was used neither in Arabic nor in Persian... [T]his word came into the Persian language via the Ottoman Turks, and indicates the rule of law; it is synonymous with the French word ‘constitution.’ Still other objected to the term *mashruteh* being identified with the French word *constitution*, maintain that the former was a mistaken translation of the latter, and that the term *constitution* should have been retained in its original French form in order to prevent intentional misinterpretation by the reactionaries... Whatever it means, the idea behind it was to challenged *motlaqiyat* (absolutism) and *estebdad* (despotism) and for that reason it was a fundamental element in reformist consciousness as a whole.” (See Gheissari A (1998) *Iranian Intellectuals in the Twentieth Century*. University of Texas Press, p. 24.)

⁸¹Brown NJ (2002) *Constitutions in a Nonconstitutional World: Arab Basic Laws and the Prospects for Accountable Government*. State University of New York Press, p. 161.

this period that “the attack on religion became overt. Then the population could be coerced into accepting the displacement of religion in area of human activity that spread a long way beyond the walls of the Mosque.”⁸² This observation, perhaps, provides an ample indication that Iranian masses were (and still are) put off by a contemporary ideology such as secularism. Even among pro-constitution clergies, persuasions were not about reconstruction of power based on the country but a desire to preserve and sustain Islamic values and principles through representative institution, a power-legitimizing vehicle fitted for the modern era.

In Iran, the defining feature of the *Qanun-i Asasi* bore the distinctive mark of Shi’ism, which was occasioned by the relentless efforts of the high-ranking mujtahid of Tehran, Sheikh Fazlollah Nouri. The counter secular-minded constitutionalists (most notable among them were converted Muslim Mirza Malkam Khan Nazim al-Dawlah and resigned clergy Seyyed Hasan Taqizadeh) Sheik and his faction (commonly known as the traditional camp) proposed the concept constitutionalism that conforms to the Sacred Law, or Shari’a-permissible constitutionalism (in Farsi *mashruteh-ye mashruhe*), which was quickly incorporated into the Fundamental Law.⁸³ In this context, the traditionalist segments as well as segment of the pro-constitutionalist ecclesiastics were successful in imposing their key demand and in particular the principle that all legislation by parliament (Majlis) should be subject to the ratification of a committee of five Islamic jurists (*mojtahedin*) of the highest rank.⁸⁴ At the end, the 1907 constitution turned up to be a patchwork constitution, but a constitution nonetheless. Having said that, as such, it reminded me of Jacques Derrida, who once wrote, “We must begin *wherever we are* and the thought of the trace, which cannot not take the scent into account, has already taught us that it was

⁸² Avery P (1965) *Modern Iran*. Fredrick A. Praeger, p. 117.

⁸³ See Arjomand SE (2012) *The Kingdom of Jurists: Constitutionalism and the Legal Order in Iran*. In Grote R, Röder T (eds) *Constitutionalism in Islamic Countries: Between Upheaval and Continuity*. Oxford University Press, pp. 149–150.

⁸⁴ According to Article 2 of the Fundamental Law of 1907, “It is hereby declared that it is for the learned doctors of theology (the ‘ulama’)—may God prolong the blessing of their existence—to determine whether such laws as may be proposed are or are not conformable to the principles of Islam; and it is therefore officially enacted that there shall at all times exist a Committee composed of not less than *five mujtahids* or other devout theologians, cognizant also of the requirements of the age, [which committee shall be elected] in this manner. The ‘ulama’ and Proofs of Islam shall present to the National Consultative Assembly the names of twenty of the ‘ulama’ possessing the attributes mentioned above; and the Members of the National Consultative Assembly shall, either by unanimous acclamation, or by vote, designate five or more of these, according to the exigencies of the time, and recognize these as Members, so that they may carefully discuss and consider all matters proposed in the Assembly, and reject and repudiate, wholly or in part, any such proposal which is at variance with the Sacred Laws of Islam, so that it shall not obtain the title of legality. In such matters the decision of this Ecclesiastical Committee shall be followed and obeyed, and this article shall continue unchanged until the appearance of His Holiness the Proof of the Age.” (See Brown EG (1910) *Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*. Cambridge University Press, p. 373.) Italic added.

impossible to justify a point of departure absolutely. *Wherever we are: in a text where we already believe ourselves to be.*"⁸⁵

My contention is, the 1907 *Qanun-i Asasi* was never meant to be a viable document to institute the separation of religion and state.⁸⁶ Quite contrary, it was written to formally strengthen the position of ecclesiastic's guardianship, which paved the way for the arrival of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1978. This is clearly observable in the content of text itself, which illustrates how far it is detached from supposed secular philosophical basis than was generally imagined.⁸⁷ For one thing, the obstacles to constitutionalism in Iran lied partly in the constitutional text that incorporated the Shari'a law. Unlike standard legislation,⁸⁸ the Shari'a law is not decreed or codified, but rather is a jurists' law⁸⁹ "derived from the *fiqh* (understanding of Islamic law or Islamic jurisprudence) developed by the Islamic jurists (*faqeh* or *mujtahidūn*) based on their understanding of the religious texts and sources. In that context, Islamic Shari'ah—especially as it has come to be understood in recent

⁸⁵Derrida J (1997) *Of Grammatology*, trans, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The John Hopkins University Press, p. 162.

⁸⁶Others also underlined a similar observation. For instance, Said Amir Arjomand consented there was a shift from a constitutionalism based on civil liberty to a constitutionalism that mainly intends to protect ideologies (including religion) in Iran, but he argues that such an alteration was not a unique outcome in Iran and in fact should be considered as a common phenomenon during the time. (See Arjomand SA (ed) (2007) *Constitutionalism and Political Reconstruction*. Brill.) Janet Afary, however, argues that "this shift to a constitution that safeguards religions doctrines was not a routine outcomes of the Constitutional Revolution but one that was confronted and challenged by progressive constitutionalists every step of the way." (See Afary J (1996) *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906–1911*. Columbia University Press, p. 356, Footnote 1.)

⁸⁷This claim can easily be noted by several articles in *Qanun-i Asasi*, which are contrary to the principle of secularism in its bill of rights; the freedom to publish idea (Art.20), to form associations [*anjumans* and *ijtima'at*] (Art. 21), and study of sciences, arts, and crafts were made contingent to being in conformity with the interest of the established religion (Art. 18). However, Art. 79 concerning "political and press misdemeanor [*taqsirat*]", which presumably covers cases relating to Art. 18 and 20, requires a trial by jury and not by any *Shari'a* court". It is note worthy that in the United States some of the secular principles also were not honored until the middle of twentieth century. For instance, the government-endorsed prayer in public school was only banned by the US Supreme Court decision (*Angel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421) on June 25, 1962, which for the first time confirmed the separation of church and state.

⁸⁸Which is traditionally associated with a body of legal rules produced by a legislative authority within specific formalities and procedures.

⁸⁹It is important to note that Shari'a law and Islamic law are often used interchangeably. Affirming the difference, as Aharon Layish points, stresses that codification of the Shari'a (since the middle of nineteenth century) has "brought about the transformation if the shari'a from jurists's law, that is, a law created by independent legal experts, to statutory law, in other word, a law promulgated by a national-territorial legislature. (See Layish A (2004) *The Transformation of the Shari'a from Jurists' Law to Statutory Law in the Contemporary Muslim World*. *Die Welt des Islam* 44(1), p. 86; and Lee JCH (2010) *Islamization and Activism in Malaysia*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, p. 81.) Moreover, Layish points out that "shari'a is not a positive law" (Ibid.). Instead, "it is first and foremost a system of religious ethical commandments and percepts some of which were translated over the years into legal terms with specified sanctions (as in the case of usury)" (Ibid., p. 87). He further stated, "legislative authority is alien to Islam" (Ibid., p. 88).

years—entails not merely general principles, but also very specific rules.”⁹⁰ In addition, the text itself manifests a paradox when it indicates not only that the Shari’a law (or *shar’iyyat*) must guide interpretation, but that it surpasses all other legal rules, including the constitution itself.⁹¹ The paradox exists between the legal orders devised by legislative body and that derived from the divine source, namely, the Qur’an.⁹² This distinctive difference suggests that Shari’a law on the one hand and state-enacted legislation (or secular law) on the other reflect two different autonomous and frequently contradictory legal orders.⁹³

Furthermore, the function of Majlis as the legislative body was rejected when it is characterized as a meaningless entity, to which Sheik Fazlollah Nouri and his supporters effectively argued, “[L]egislation is forbidden in Islam, Islam, they held, is already perfect and does not need to be perfected by new legislation.”⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Sherif AO (2012) The Relationship between the Constitution and the Shari’ah in Egypt. In Grote R, Röder T (eds) *Constitutionalism in Islamic Countries: Between Upheaval and Continuity*. Oxford University Press, p. 126. *Italic added*. In a similar content but quite different tune, Erwin Fahlbushch has observed, “The Koran, sunna, and jurisprudence constitute Islamic Law or Shari’a (shari’a, ‘path’), which no longer has the original sense of the divinity revealed religion but now denotes the divinely willed earthly legal and social order embracing every sphere of life. The Shari’a is handed down by a professional class that, since Islam neither a hierarchical priesthood nor a central teaching office, acts as the collective guardian of tradition and the bearer of authority. This group is the class of jurists (*fuqaha*, sing. *faqih*) or scholars (*ulama*, sing. *alim*). The traditional place for these professional jurists is the madrasa (madrasah, ‘place of study’), a kind of legal and theological seminary... developed in eastern Iran in the tenth century and spread to the whole Islamic world (e.g., reaching Egypt by the twelfth cent).” (See Fahlbushch E (1999) *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, Vol II, trans by Geoffrey William Bromiley. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, p. 753.)

⁹¹ For instance, Article 27 divided the power of the Realm into three categories, the legislative, the executive, and the judicial, “by which is meant the determining of rights. This power belongs exclusively to the ecclesiastical tribunals in matters connected with the ecclesiastical law, and to the civil tribunals in matters connected with ordinary law.” (See Brown EG (1910) *Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*. Cambridge University Press, p. 376.) Article 71 made the administration of justice in matters of the Sacred Law and the privilege of the “just mujtahids” as it states, “The Supreme Ministry of Justice and the judicial tribunals are the places officially destined for the redress of public grievances, while judgment in all matters falling within the scope of the Ecclesiastical Law is vested in just mujtahids possessing the necessary qualifications” (Ibid., p. 381).

⁹² It is important to note that for all Muslims around the world, the essential article of Islam is that Qur’an is the absolute Word of God and delivered to Prophet Muhammad by the Angel Gabriel and revealed in stages over a period of 23 years. This means all Muslim accept Qur’an as a divine scriptural text free of human error. This, however, does not mean that a believer can attain the true meaning of the Qurans’ verses by going directly to the essential text, a notion that had been put forward by members of Akhbari school of theology founded by Shaik Muhammad Sharif Astarabadi (d. 1624). (See Bayat M (1982) *Mysticism and Dissent: Socioreligious Thought in Qajar Iran*. Syracuse University Press, p. 21.)

⁹³ Sherif AO (2012) The Relationship between the Constitution and Shari’a and Constitutional Interpretation in Egypt. In: Grote R, Röder T (2012) *Constitutionalism in Islamic Countries: Between Upheaval and Continuity*. Oxford University Press, p. 126.

⁹⁴ Hairy AH (1977) *Shi’ism and Constitutionalism in Iran*. E. J. Brill, p. 209.

In fact, even those who are given authority to deal with the affairs of the Muslims like *mujtahid* and *ulama* can only excerpt relevant provisions from the holy Quran and *sunna*⁹⁵ but cannot make their own laws. Also, “the idea of changing law was rejected by Shaykh Fazl Allah. He ask, *Does change mean [a deviation] from Islam to infidelity, or from infidelity to Islam. The falsity of both [alternative] is evident.*”⁹⁶ Sheiks’ view is an ample example of a devoted Muslim in Iran who believed Islam as the absolute truth, and hence any deviation from Islam is impermissible. Similarly, deviation from infidelity to Islam is also a false provision, because Iran is a Muslim country, and hence such divergence is absurd. It should be noted that the failure of 1907 constitutionalism was not so much related to the Islamic Shari’a per se but must be linked to its zealous persuasion of set of ideas and practices such as liberty and equality that were considered by *mojtahed* like Sheik Fazlollah as utterly un-Islamic.⁹⁷

All things considered, the 1907 constitutional text has been written primarily to enable, organize, and justify authority of ecclesiastic establishment. It has rendered a basis for a religious order through which power of legislation body is regulated and contained within predetermined and well-defined limits. For the first time in Iran, an ecclesiastic guardianship, “a Committee composed of not less than five *mujtahids*,” was officially given mandate in 1907 to review “all matters proposed in the Assembly, and reject and repudiate, wholly or in part, any such proposal which is at variance with the Sacred Laws of Islam, so that it shall not obtain the title of legality.”⁹⁸ In other word, Jurists and *ulama* were designated by decree to determine appropriateness of law “as may be proposed.” In this respect, the constitutional

⁹⁵ Accounts of the prophet Muhammad daily practices.

⁹⁶ Hairi AH (1977) Shi’ism and Constitutionalism in Iran. E. J. Brill, p. 209. Italic added.

⁹⁷ According to Abdul-Hadi Hairi, “Shaykh Fazl Allah said that the freedom was guaranteed in the Constitution was against Islam... He noted that the article [Article 20, which states ‘All publication, except heretical books and matters hurtful to the perspicuous religion of Islam are free, and are exempted from censorship.’] is against Islam because it rules that only two things, i.e., the publication of ‘heretical books’ and ‘matter hurtful to Islam,’ are not allowed. However, by limiting this restriction to two, other things are permitted, such as malicious accusation (*iftira*), back-biting (*ghaybat*), slander, harm, obsession, abusive language, insult, threatening and the like, all of which are indisputably forbidden in Islam.” (See Hairi AH (1977) Shi’ism and Constitutionalism in Iran. E. J. Brill, pp. 217–218). Some observers may perceive the Sheiks’ reasoning as a bit unconvincing and implausible. However, I argue that his insight is absolutely correct, not in a sense that freedom is un-Islamic but rather in context of what John Searle called *Speech Acts*. (See John Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge University Press, 1969). In a nut shell, when we defend the notion of free-speech, we conventionally assumed that “what ought to be meant by ‘speech,’ in the context ‘free speech,’ is whatever it is that a correct justification of the right to free speech justifies one in protecting.” (See Langton R, Hornsby J (1998) Free speech and Illocution. *Legal Theory*, 4(1), March 1998, pp. 21–37.) The Sheiks’ point of contention is directed to what we *assumed* when we defend the notion of free speech.

⁹⁸ Brown EG (1910) *Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*. Cambridge University Press, p. 373.

movement of the early twentieth century laid the ground to which the Islamic government of Iran prevailed.⁹⁹

In retrospect, this book neither claims nor offers an infallible means to resolve what we are facing as a nation but, rather, offers a quite sensible desire of how to improve our lives—the urge that seems to never go away because it is rested in our destitute living condition as well as insolvency of our mind that not only is apparent today but has accompanied us for over centuries. This is due mostly, as I perceive it, to the fact that the main problem, which has been staring at us for ages, has not been accurately identified. This, in fact, is the main reason why the array of practices, ideas, and planning schemes that were derived from various coercions to popular persuasions have all but failed. What I hope to offer here, however, is as uncommon as it is unpopular: a first step toward recognition that has been past due and, instead of searching in a blue-sky, points to what I profess as *the source*. As a noun, the word *source* conveys various connotations; however, in the content of this study, it expresses the point in which the problem originated, namely, the people. In defense of this claim, I only appeal to mere common sense that says, if we treat a problem through various means but fail to resolve it, what we have is not a wrong treatment but rather a wrong diagnosis of the problem.

The first step toward identifying the problem, I argue, resides in the static elements of our own heritage. It is these static elements that dispossessed us of the creative capacity that would have allowed us to improve our lives and establish a viable society. This incapacity, indeed, gradually drove us outside the mainstream world and, ultimately, the history. To redeem this dire straits, we must engage in exploring, analyzing, and criticizing the status quo of Iranian culture, with the goal of *transforming* it in a way that will help it not only *survive* but also contribute effectively to the building of human civilization, as we were known to do up to the fifteenth century.¹⁰⁰ The concept of transformation is not subsumable under the concept of reconstruction. Reconstruction, as a noun, is a metaphor and used synonymously with *fabrication*, *invention*, *representation*, and *framing*, often designed

⁹⁹ Imam Khomeini, the founder of Islamic Republic of Iran, delineated an Islamic government as follows: “**ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT** does not correspond to any of the existing forms of government . . . The fundamental difference between Islamic government, on the one hand, and constitutional monarchies and republics, on the other, is this: whereas the representatives of the people or the monarch in such regimes engage in legislation, in Islam the legislative power and competence to establish laws belongs exclusively to God Almighty. The Sacred Legislator of Islam is the sole legislative power. No one has the right to legislate and no law may be executed except the law of the Divine Legislator . . . In this form of government, sovereignty belongs to God alone and law is His decree and command. The law of Islam, divine command, has absolute authority over all individuals and the Islamic government. Everyone, including the Most Noble Messenger (s) and his successors, is subject to law and will remain so for all eternity—the law that has been revealed by God, Almighty and Exalted, and expounded by the tongue of the Qur’an and the Most Noble Messenger(s).” (See Khomeini I, Algar H (2002) *Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist*. Alhoda UK.)

¹⁰⁰ As our beloved poet Hakim Sanai once said: “Khofte ra khofte key konad bidar.” (Unaware cannot be awoken by unaware). (See <https://dl.wdl.org/11962/service/11962.pdf>).

for the process of reinterpretation. Transformation requires inner alteration, inspired and facilitated by critical thinking that allows us to be constructive and evade conformity. In short, in order to be free, one needs to liberate himself as the master of the Persian poetry clearly stated: “A pedestrian, naked from head to foot, left Cufah [a city in Iraq] with the caravan of pilgrim for Hijaz or Mecca, and came along with us. I looked at and saw him destitute of every necessary for the journey; yet he was cheerful pushing on, and bravely remarking: I am neither mounted on a camel, nor a mule under a burthen: I am neither the lord of vassals, nor the vassal of a lord: I think not of present sorrows or passed vanities; but breath the breath of ease, and live the life of freedom!”¹⁰¹

In this respect, I occasionally asserted possible ways out of predicaments. In this book, my hope is to illustrate less prescriptive explanations for the way we are and in the process provide a possible avenue to think about the world in which we have endured and our struggle to attain what we all desired. And maybe, just maybe, from time to time, we will see paths to betterment.

¹⁰¹ Sa'di (1823) *The Gulistan, of flower-garden of Shaikh Sadi of Shiraz: Together with an essay on Sadi's life and genius*. Trans: James Ross. Richardson. Apologue 16, p. 206. Italic added.

Appendix A

Economic of Development

As a noun, development means betterment, a progression of sort, and as such it is inherently part of evolution of the human community. Development is a direct result of social activities, which once they formed become permanent. This permanency of human activities makes the broad distinction between animal and human societies. It is clearly illustrated by the process by which the natural world transforms the animal, while man transforms the natural world. As Lester Ward observed, “the organic world is passive. It is acted upon by the environment and adapted to it.” Man, however, as a being, is active that assumed the initiative for molding the nature to his own need. This is owed not to strong muscle, keener vision, sharp teeth and claws, but rather to man’s drive for a betterment of a community in which he belong. Therefore, development is an innate part of who we are. And yet, once it is conceived with economics prefix, it turns into an open-ended notion that is vulnerable to various interpretations and conceptualizations. From the orthodox economic view, the central theme of economic development “is rapid capital accumulation (including knowledge and skills with capital),” as noted by Arthur Lewis.¹ The instruction to achieve this feat is to use the traditional rural/agriculture sector to fuel the modern industrial one, which requires moving “the rural underemployed,” who, because of their large numbers, can be removed from the countryside without reducing agricultural output (in the economist’s jargon, this can be done because the marginal productivity of labor in agriculture is negligible or zero). This “surplus labor” would be hired at near-subsistence wages by the new industries set up with additional savings and foreign capital. What happened to rural people did not matter. From an economic perspective, these people simply did not count, as Lewis states, “We [orthodox economists] are interested not in the people in general, but only say in the 10% of them with the largest incomes, who in countries with surplus labor receive up to 40% of the national income... The remaining 90%

¹Lewis WA (1958) Economic Development with Unlimited Supply of Labor. In: Agarwala AN, Singh SP (eds) *The Economics of Underdevelopment*. Oxford University Press, p. 416.

of the people never manage to save a significant fraction of their income. The important question is why does the top 10% save more? ... The explanation is ... likely to be that saving increases relatively to national income because the incomes of the savers increase relatively to the national income. The central fact of economic development is that the distribution of incomes is altered in favor of the saving class.”²

In a more tamed economic view, a basic function of all economic activity is “to provide as many people as possible with the means of overcoming the helplessness and misery arising from a lack of food, shelter, health, and protection. To this extent, we may claim that economic development is a necessary condition for the improvement in the quality of life that is development. Without sustained and continuous economic progress at the individual as well as the societal level, the realization of the human potential would not be possible.”³ This sentiment was also reflected in Denis Goulet’s novel ideas about economic development. Following Erich Fromm’s distinction between *having* and *being*, Goulet argues that the possession of certain material goods is indispensable to human well-being because one clearly has to “have enough in order to be more.”⁴ Goulet also rejects the idea of “materialism that makes material things and consumerism the be-all and end-all of life. Goulet endorses John Kenneth Gailbraith’s call for a new theory of consumption that does not invert material means into the end of human existence, but provides a basis for deciding on how much and what kind of consumption is conducive to human well-being.”⁵

Recently, economic development has broadened its perspective to cover a more comprehensive view of development and in doing so it finally underlined the need for overall change that included socioeconomic factors and cultural elements. In this context, some merging consensus indicates that a country venture in development would inevitably lead to elimination of ceremonialism in the country.⁶ According to one of the leading proponents of an American school of institutional economics, Clarence Ayres, economic development is the consequence of the successful overcoming ceremonial behaviors and structure, which assign privileges to some classes,

²Ibid., pp. 416–17.

³Todaro MP, Smith SC (2012) *Economic Development*, 11th edition. Addison-Wesley, p. 21.

⁴Goulet D (1985) *The Cruel Choice: A New Concept in the Theory of Development*. University Press of America, p. 128.

⁵Goulet D (2006) *Development Ethics at Work: Exploration 1960–2002*. Routledge, p. xxii.

⁶Ceremonialism imposes a curb on human creativity; in its essence, it is any past-binding behavior that tends to thwart the forward progress that technology imparts. There are five ways in which ceremonialism intrudes on any society, according to Ayres: (1) the nature of social stratification or class structures; (2) via social mores or conventions of what is acceptable behavior; (3) ideology which justifies the existing social stratification and mores and which further attempts to emphasize the negative consequences of changing either the social strata or the mores; (4) a social system of indoctrination which emotionally conditions individuals to accept the dominant ideology, mores, and class and social stratification; and (5) social patterns of ceremonial behavior designed to reinforce the first four factors. (See Cypher JM, Dietz JL (2009) *The Process of Economic Development*. Routledge, p. 181.) For a mathematical treatment of the subject see Wood JC (ed) (1993) *Thorstein Veblen: Critical Assessments*. Psychology Press.

while they condition the population to resist social and economic change. Successful development, in the Ayresian view, thus requires a revamping of those institutions, and the behavioral patterns that accompany them, which continue to be detrimental to the creation of an indigenous technological capacity.⁷ Moreover, and on a broader institutionalism's view, economic development is seen not as simply a matter of amassing economic resources in the form of physical and human capital but a matter of "institution building" so as to reduce information imperfections, maximize economic incentives, and reduce transaction costs. Included in this institution building are the laws and political and social rules and conventions that are the basis for successful market production and exchange. Most relevant consideration, in the context of the present study, is "culture" or the way of doing things in society, which forms in North's analysis one of the "informal" constraints on human interaction.⁸

⁷ Clarence A (1995) *Economic Development: An Institutionalist Perspective*. In Dietz JL (ed) *Latin America's Economic Development*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 89–97.

⁸ North DC (1990) *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge University Press; and North DC (1991) *Institutions*. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5:97–112.

Appendix B

Rent-Seeking Versus Rent Creation

Frequently, many experts erroneously receive one of the main adverse affects of an endemic inflation as economic rents. The flaw of such characterizations can be easily traced back to misunderstanding the notions of rent-seeking and rent creation. Economic rent is, to put it simply, receipt in excess of opportunity cost. It is, as Biplab Dasgupta observed, “a genuine social surplus, over and above what would have attracted that particular factor in any case, and plays a dynamic role in the economy ... [E]conomic rent creates added value in the economy, rather than diverting the value that already exist.”⁹ In this light, rent-seeking in a sense of seeking quasi- or temporary rent is nothing more than the normal profit-seeking incentive that motivates economic behavior in a market system. In fact, as James M. Buchanan argues, such behavior is healthy for a market-based economy: it allocates resources to their most highly valued uses, and creates new products and values. Economic rent, therefore, should be seen as positive.¹⁰

The general view of rent-seeking, however, is negative because it is often considered inefficient and wasteful (rather than socially undesirable or even harmful) and because individuals divert resources from other productive activities they could have been engaged in. This is due to the fact that rent-seeking arises where output is given (fixed), and hence resources can be exploited for personal gain, as in case of monopoly rents. As Robert D. Tollison states, “Output cannot be augmented by definition, so expenditure to capture monopoly or contrived rents do not yield any additional products for the economy.”¹¹ Rent-seeking, in this respect, uses resources

⁹Dasgupta B (1998) *Structural Adjustment, Global Trade and the New Political Economy of Development*. Zed Books, pp. 26–7.

¹⁰Buchanan JM (1980) *Rent Seeking and Profit seeking*. In: Buchanan JM, Tollison M, Tullock RD (eds) (1980) *Towards a Theory of Rent Seeking Society*. Texas A and M University Press. Chapter 1, pp. 3–15.

¹¹Tollison, RD (2004) *Is the Theory of Rent-Seeking Here to Stay?* In: Heckelman JC (ed) *Reading in Public Choice Economics*. University of Michigan Press, p. 26. Tollison elaborates on this point, “Perhaps the most useful way to think about rent-seeking is in terms of using real resources to capture a pure transfer. Since expenditures to take a dollar from *A* and give it to *B* produce nothing, they are wasted from the point of view of the economy at large; they are zero-sum at best and are probably negative-sum.” *Ibid*.

to redistribute previously created wealth, rather than applying resources to the creation of new wealth.

In the context of the present book, what is most important to note is the fact that the incentive to engage in rent-seeking is directly proportional to either the absence of clear and transparent property rights or the ease with which these rights are regularly altered and used to transfer income. In other words, rent-seeking is unattractive when the law of the land makes it difficult to take the property of others or prevent monopolization of resources by the few.¹²

Nevertheless, rent-seeking can be explained by a number of multifaceted factors. For one thing, it appears as a particular (and, one could say, perverted) economy–society relation, a cultural product if you would, which often results in nepotism and networking (as the remnants of the diehard traditions; or as the outcome of an inclination to protect *inner circle* against *nonlocal circle*—us against them). In this light, many have conflated rent-seeking with corruption, which can tell us as much about the power configuration within the culture of the market. If such observation is considered as given, we must then primarily go beyond the economic concerns and look at the broader processes associated with rent-seeking such as, “bureaucratic fiefdoms using policies as instruments of rent creation, political contention between rent seekers, . . . and the broader historical and institutional context which shapes or constraints such terms of exchange.”¹³ This broader idea facilitates a better understanding of the fabric of the society, in which corruption is considered endemic.¹⁴

¹²James Gwartney and Ricahrd E. Wanger also underlined the significant role of government in promotion of rent-seeking behavior when they point out, “[W]hen government becomes more involved in transfer activities and when it fails to link its expenditures with taxes, the payoff to rent-seeking expands and rent-seeking attracts resources away from socially productive activities. When government gets more involved in doing good things for some people (for example, providing them with direct transfers or favored programs) by imposing bad things on others (forcing them to pay for benefits supplied to others), individuals and groups will invest more resources into efforts designed to shape political outcomes to their advantage. Resources that otherwise would be used to create wealth and generate income will be “invested” in rent-seeking.” See Gwartney J, Wanger RE (ed) (2004) *The Public Choice Revolution*. In: Heckelman JC (ed) *Reading in Public Choice Economics*. University of Michigan Press, p. 8.

¹³Ngo T (2009) *The politics of rent production*. In: Ngo T, Wu Y (eds) *Rent Seeking in China*. Routledge, p. 1.

¹⁴A more politically oriented view of corruption has been developed based on the orthodox political science notion of authoritarianism called the *theory of extractive corruption*, in which the state perceived not only as the dominant force in society, but also a ruling elite has developed into the strongest force and ruling class in control of the power of the state. According to this theory, “the corrupted (the state or some state agent) benefits the most from corruption and the corrupter is more or less a passive player. Essentially, the ruling elite is the strongest force in society, this elite or class uses the state apparatus as its instrument to extract resources from society, and it does so for the benefit of the rulers. This theory is partly based on the operation of authoritarian countries in general, and on the experience of the neo-patrimonial states in particular. . . . The theory also emphasises the well-known remark that *all power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely*. That is, the more political power is concentrated exclusively in the hands of a few individuals, the greater the temptation for power abuse, selfish wealth-seeking and primitive extraction.” See Amundsen I (1999) *Political Corruption: An Introduction to the Issue*. Chr. Michelsen Institute, Working Paper no. 7, pp. 7–8. A very preliminary version of this paper was presented at the conference “The many faces of corruption: Comparative approaches to the theory and practice”, organized by Muwatin, the Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy in Ramallah, Palestine, April 1999. The entire article is available at: <http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/1040-political-corruption.pdf>.

Appendix C

The Theory of Price

Nobel laureate, George J. Stigler, famously stated, “no society is rich enough to satisfy its needs. Indeed it is a paradox that wealthy nations seem more concerned than poor with the efficiency of their economic organization.”¹⁵ In *The Theory of Price*, Stigler began by explaining that the task of an economic system is to bring about a society’s desires (wants), resources and technologies, in as efficiently as possible. He characterized the structure of an economic system as follows: “the owners of productive resources (laborers, capitalists, and landlords) sell the services of their resources to entrepreneurs (usually organized on a corporate basis) for money and then spend the money to buy the products of the entrepreneurs.”¹⁶ This circular flow of income becomes discontinuous as soon as monopolization of ownership prevails, in which “the owner of the productive resources produces and sells the complete product.”¹⁷

Stigler also observed that an enterprise system is frequently affected by the notion of consumer sovereignty as he writes, “Within the limits set by law and custom, consumers may spend their income as they wish ... they [consumers] will offer high price for things they desire and low price for the thing they desire less. Since entrepreneurs are chiefly motivated by the desire for profits ... they [entrepreneurs] devote their productive efforts to those commodities whose prices are high ... i.e., those commodities that are most urgently desire.”¹⁸ He further observed, “The composition of the annual output of the society is therefore determined in part by the distribution of ownership of resources”¹⁹ mainly because a dollar spent on goods and services by each individual is a signal to entrepreneurs to produce what the

¹⁵ Stigler GJ (1987) *The Theory of Price* 4th ed. University of Chicago Press, p. 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

individual desired.²⁰ From these propositions, one can detect a circular logic.²¹ David M. Kreps points this out when he writes, “The potential of circularity is this: prices constrain the choices of individual consumers, and those choices simultaneously determine prices.”²²

Moreover, Stigler noted that in a non-market-based economy, e.g., socialist economy, prices play a similar role in economic calculations of efficiency (formally known as the Socialist calculation debate).²³ Prices, in this context, represent, above all, information about market conditions, and are thus necessary, given the absence of relative-value of those resources used in production by money-price. It is, therefore, obvious that a non-market-based economy like a socialist economy would also require a price system that *accurately reflects* market conditions and resources allocation in order to operate. Similarly, in an economy where a prices mechanism is not used as the main device to allocate resources or its operation is regularly compromised, e.g., price control schemes, its mobilization efficacy becomes impaired and eventually null.

The contrast between a market-based and a non-market-based economy appears when attempts are made to eliminate or reduce well-known distortions in prices, e.g., monopoly pricing. Conventional market-based economists, particularly neo-classical, assumed that *getting the prices right* could only be achieved by eliminating exchange and price control. They either ignored or treated social institutions, such as property rights, the state, and the firm, as exogenously given. Under these assumed conditions, getting the price right, according to Douglass C. North, “only has the desired consequences when agents already have in place a set of property rights and enforcement that will then produce the competitive market conditions.”²⁴

²⁰ Beside this over simplification disingenuous pseudo-logic, Stigler made the matter worse by offering rather a bizarre justification for unequal distribution of income in an enterprise system by paraphrasing Adam Smith’s observation, as he writes, “...in the field of consumption goods inequality is not so influential as much discussion implies; Adam Smith observed that ‘the desire of food is limited in every man by the narrow capacity of the human stomach.’” (Ibid.). Stigler’s conclusion from Smith’s observation is rather insincere and gave a misleading account of what Smith really meant, in which Smith stated, “The desire of food is limited in every man by the narrow capacity of the human stomach; but the desire of the conveniences and ornaments of building, dress, equipage, and household furniture, seems to have no limit or certain boundary. Those, therefore, who have the command of more food than they themselves can consume, are always willing to exchange the surplus, or, what is the same thing, the price of it, for gratifications of this other kind.” (See Smith S (1976) *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. In: Campbell RH, Skinner AS, Todd WB (eds), p. 168.)

²¹ Circular reasoning (Latin: *circulus in probando*, “circle in proving”; also known as circular logic) is a logical fallacy in which the reasoner begins with what they are trying to end with (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circular_reasoning).

²² Kreps DM (1990) *A course in Microeconomic Theory*. Princeton University Press, p. 5.

²³ See Stigler GJ (1975), *The Citizen and the State*. University of Chicago Press, pp. 1–13. In this book Stigler stated that arguments between the socialist and the capitalist are unjoined.

²⁴ North DC (1997) *The New Institutional Economics And Third World Development*. In: Harriss J, Hunter J, Lewis CM (eds) *The New Institutional Economics and Third World Development*. Routledge, p. 23.

However, many prominent unorthodox economists also believed that the cost of formal price stabilization in a market-based economy, as John Kenneth Galbraith wrote, “would be a malfunctioning economy and perhaps even chaos.”²⁵

Another notable distinction between these two economic systems is related to the theory of value. Market-based economies today regard value as being synonymous with the price of a commodity. In a non-market-based economy, however, prices conceptually reflect *the value in use*. To this point, Walter Nicholson observed that Adam Smith and his successor, David Ricardo, made a distinction between value and price in a sense that for Smith, “the value of a commodity meant its *value in used*, whereas the price represent its *value in exchange* One obvious possible explanation [between use and exchange value] is that exchange values of goods are determined by what it costs to produce them.”²⁶ In this light, prices must reflect either the used or exchange value of a commodity, and hence in an economy that violates this role the effectiveness of a price mechanism, allocation of resources cannot fully be realized.

What are those costs of production? Following Marshal and Keynes’ proposition that prices of commodities are primarily governed by the cost of production, Stigler observed, “Costs [of production] are merely the amounts the productive services would produce if they were transferred to some other use.”²⁷ Stigler ends his introductory chapter on the theory of price by making two distinct inferences: “Prices govern the allocation of resources among industries, among firms, and within firms” and “A competitive enterprise system allocates resources with maximum efficiency.”

The emphasis on cost as a determining factor in price formation also draws attention to the fact that when commodities are produced and appear in the market, society has already incurred costs in terms of resources used in production processes and disposable time. In this respect, they must bear values, which are not yet identified by market prices. Maurice Godelier underlined this important issue when he writes, “[T]he process of price formation is not the process whereby value is *formed* but that whereby value is *realized*.”²⁸ In this context, one can conceive a devastating and uncoverable cost incurred by society in an economy that suffers from endemic entropy. In this case, the cost associated with resource use in daily production far exceeds the realized value that is reflected in market prices.

Stigler also mentions the importance of the institutional setting when he points out, “To provide an increase in income [to boost demand] through time the enterprise system relies more upon institutional setting than upon the price mechanism itself.”²⁹ Put it in another way, supplies alone in a market-based economy do not

²⁵Galbraith JK (1946) Reflections on Price Control. The Quarterly Journal of Economics 60(4), p. 477.

²⁶Nicholson W (1995) Microeconomic Theory: basic principles and Extensions, 6th edition. Dryden Press, p. 10.

²⁷Stigler GJ (1987) The Theory of Price 4th ed. University of Chicago Press, p. 8.

²⁸Godelier M (1972) Rationality and Irrationality in Economics. Trans: Brian Pearce. Monthly Review Press, p. 62.

²⁹Ibid., p. 10.

determine demand if consumers lack sufficient income to consume commodities in the market. More importantly, such income must be linked to production activities and not through emission of *fiat money*, that is to say wage paid to labors for their production of goods and services, which distinguishes commodity money from fiat money; otherwise the desired effect cannot prevail.³⁰

The central methodological ground of Stigler's presentation of the theory of price is the notion of equilibrium. According to Stigler, "An equilibrium is a position from which there is no net tendency to move. We say 'net' tendency to emphasize the fact that it is not necessarily a state of sodden inertia, but may instead represent the cancellation of powerful forces. From its very definition, it is apparent that the notion of equilibrium should play a prominent role in economics".³¹ However, this is one of the most controversial notions in modern economics. A well-known negation of the subject is offered by Joan Robinson reiterating John Hicks' comment, "[T]he very concept of equilibrium arose from a misleading analogy with movement in space, which cannot be applied to movement in time. In space, it is possible to go to and fro, but time goes only one way: there is no going back to correct a mistake; equilibrium cannot be reached by a process of trial and error. Since all individual choices are based upon more or less independent and inaccurate judgment about what outcomes will be, it is impossible that they should be consistent with each other."³²

I end this section by clarifying that the conventional approach of Stigler fails to explain *where prices come from*. Stigler's views, and those of almost all orthodox including neo-classical economists, formed around the notion that individual consumers or firms respond to market signals. These signals, in turn, often depend on other individuals' actions—a firm or consumer's behavior depends on what other

³⁰This is one of the most important issues in economic policy-making that is often neglected because it is convenient to do so. The most comprehensive treatment of this subject can be found in Alvaro Cencini brilliant work, *Monetary Theory: National and International*, particularly Chaps. 1 and 2. However, for our purpose, it is suffice to recall Sergio Rossi observation, "Wage-earners produce real goods and services as a result of their efforts, and their wages are the result of an emission on which both firms and banks concur together: firms decide and organize production activities, while banks 'monetize' them, the banking system providing the unit of account and means of payment needed to measure output objectively as well as to settle the firms' debt towards their workers. The payment of wages is an emission: this means that . . . workers receive their own product, in money. This transaction does not merely define equivalence but an identity: every worker gets a sum of money that, because of it being issued in the payment of wages, identifies itself with the real product of this same worker. Within the same transaction, the firm gives and receives the same object, which shows that the exchange is indeed absolute." (See Rossi S (2006) *The Theory of money emission*. In: Arestis P, Sawyer M (eds) *A Handbook of Alternative Monetary Economics*. Edward Elgar, p. 126.)

³¹Stigler GJ (1987) *The Theory of Price* 4th ed. University of Chicago Press, p. 15.

³²Robinson J (1980) *What are the Question: And Other Essays*. M. E. Sharpe, p. 8. To read Hicks original work see Hicks J (1976) *Some Question of Times in Economics*. In: Georgescu-Roegen N, Tang AM, Westfield FM, Worley JS (1976) *Evolution, welfare, and time in economics: essays in honor of Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen*. Lexington Book, pp. 135–57.

firms and/or consumers do. However, in these approaches, there is no explanation of how a perceived objective price turns into an expectation in the consumer mind (subjective).³³ However, this issue is resolved once the social side is injected into the economics debate. Nobel laureate Kenneth Arrow addressed this when he wrote, ‘what individual has chosen prices?’ The answer is none. But according to Arrow, ‘They [prices] are determined on (not by) social institutions known as market, which equate supply and demand’.³⁴ Following are two interpretation of Arrows’ statement.

One can interpret Arrows’ observation as if he conceives that prices make up a social institution. If this is the case, similar sentiments have been made as far back as 1909 when Schumpeter notably wrote, ‘‘Many writers call production, distribution, and exchange social processes, meaning thereby that nobody can perform them In this sense, prices are obviously social phenomena.’’³⁵ David Kreps also reiterated this opinion recently in his well-known work, *A Course in Microeconomic Theory*, ‘‘In the traditional models of microeconomics, *prices in an impersonal marketplace* constitute the institutional framework; consumer can choose any bundle they can afford, where what is affordable is determined by prices.’’³⁶ Kreps clarifies the term institutional framework by two features, as he describes, ‘‘(a) the general nature of options that an individual has and (b) the options available to and outcomes ensuing for each individual, as a function of other individuals’ actions.’’³⁷ In this light, the institutional framework is made up of formal and informal institutions governing individual and firm behavior. Formal institutions are laws, regulations, and rules while informal institutions are norms, cultures, and ethics.³⁸

³³ Robert Murphy, an associated scholar of the Mises Institute and author of several books including, *The politically Incorrect Guide to Capitalism* and *Study Guide to Man, Economy and State with Power and Market*, provided an illuminating respond to this question as he stated, ‘‘The actual process through which subjective valuations lead to objective market prices is complicated. *The average person doesn’t need to understand it.*’’ See <http://mises.org/daily/4907/Subjective-Value-and-Market-Prices>.

³⁴ Arrow KJ (1994) Methodological Individualism and Social Knowledge. *The American Economic Review* 84(2), Papers and Proceedings of the Hundred and Sixth Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association, p. 4. Priors to this remark, Arrow wrote, ‘‘It is a touchstone of accepted economics that all explanations must run in terms of the actions and reactions of individuals. Our behavior in judging economic research, in peer review of papers and research, and in promotions, includes the criterion that in principle the behavior we explain and the policies we propose are explicable in terms of individuals, not of other social categories. I want to argue today that a close examination of even the most standard economic analysis shows that social categories are in fact used in economic analysis all the time and that they appear to be absolute necessities of the analysis, not just figures of speech that can be eliminated if need be.’’ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³⁵ Schumpeter J (1909) On the Concept of Social Value. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 23(2), February 1909, p. 217.

³⁶ Kreps DM (1990) *A course in Microeconomic Theory*. Princeton University Press, p. 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ See Peng MW (2009) *Global*. Cengage Learning, pp. 20–3.

The other interpretation of Arrow's statement is that prices are presupposed by social institutions³⁹ such as governments, legal systems, and ruling elites. This interpretation is shared and validated by New Institutional Economics (NIE) school, in which the state is perceived to bear "a particular importance in enacting or enforcing the rules of the game, the institutional framework in [Douglass] North's sense."⁴⁰ North argues that institutions, "are not necessarily or even usually created to be socially efficient; rather they, or at least the formal rules, are created to serve the interests of those with the bargaining power to create new rules."⁴¹ The reason is obvious: institutional frameworks retain and strengthen the interests of all those who have bargaining power, which in turn gives significant incentive to individuals or organizations to preserve, regardless of overall cost to a society, an economic system.⁴² This inclusive cost can be detected in incidents of various social, political, and economic distortions that are responsible for sustaining the system. In this context, it is not a mystery to observe a steady rise in widespread corruption within such a system. In this case, corruption is mere symptom of a much deeper disorder, and hence treating it in isolation by neglecting a wider institutional framework would certainly be ineffective. In the West, the effects of similar institutional frameworks are perfectly exhibited in fraudulent conducts that led to the 2007 financial debacle.

³⁹The term "social institution" is somewhat ambiguous unclear both in ordinary language and in the philosophical literature. Nevertheless, ambiguities of concepts never stop scholars from attempts to explain them. Here, I will present few definitions that are presented in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. According to Jonathan Turner, social institution is "a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organising relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment." Anthony Giddens stated: "Institutions by definition are the more enduring features of social life." He goes on to list as institutional orders, modes of discourse, political institutions, economic institutions, and legal institutions. Rom Harre offers the following definition: "An institution was defined as an interlocking double-structure of persons-as-role-holders or office-bearers and the like, and of social practices involving both expressive and practical aims and outcomes." As examples he gives the following: schools, shops, post offices, police forces, asylums, and the British monarchy. See <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/social-institutions/>.

⁴⁰Harriss J, Hunter J, Lewis CM (eds) (1997) *The New Institutional Economics and Third World Development*. Routledge, p. 9.

⁴¹North DC (1997) *The New Institutional Economics And Third World Development*. In: Harriss J, Hunter J, Lewis CM (eds) *The New Institutional Economics and Third World Development*. Routledge, p. 20.

⁴²However, according to North this sort of inclination can be reverse, "But reversal is a difficult process about which we know all too little [reference to various economic transitions in Central and Eastern Europe in 1980s]". Ibid.

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