A Review on the recognized elements of Shiite political culture in the Iranian Revolution

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ABSTRACT

Repetitive and various reviews of Iranian 1979 Revolution conditions have been undertaken from different perspectives. Employing Crane Brinton's Theory of Revolution and adopting a comparative analysis, the present study attempts to address the issue of the main elements of Shiite political culture as well as the emergence of these elements in the 1979 Revolution. Brinton thinks of revolutions as a kind of fever, whose symptoms begin to emerge in the pre-revolutionary regime. However, the symptoms are not reliable signs and the disease will not emerge unless its symptoms are adequately expanded. At the outset, the present study addresses and recounts elements of Shiite political culture, explicates the concept of revolution and its effective factors through a documentary method as well as a comparative approach. Moreover, the present research conducts an analysis of the characteristics which reinforce, increase and overlap with Shiite political culture during the Iranian 1979 Revolution.

Keywords: Shiite, political, culture, Revolution.

Introduction

The fact that, during the Iranian Revolution, what factors have been effective and also what social forces emerged is a subject about to be examined. However, of socio-cultural factors, not only has Shiism always come under constant scrutiny but it has also exercised influence, whether intentionally or unintentionally, on other factors. The present study attempts to investigate the degree of the impact of Shiism as well as the role of its political culture. In case Shiite effectiveness or ineffectiveness on the Iranian Revolution is addressed without any investigation and scrutiny of its juridical and cultural elements, the revolution cannot be accepted or rejected with certainty. Such disagreements over the quality of and the reasons for the Iranian Revolution are abundant in scientific and political comments presented by Marxist analysts and political activists, Muslim activists as well as those belonging to capitalist discourse. Consequently, the present study seeks to figure out: Whether or not Shiite political culture possesses certain kinds of characteristics which can conform to or reinforce elements leading to revolution?

In doing so, at first the revolution and how it occurs in the context of a pre-revolution society is addressed. Then Shiite jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) as well as political culture, derived from its practices and precepts, is taken into consideration. It can be said that such a political culture distances itself from policies belonging to Islamic radical militants including Taliban, Islamic State (ISIS) and Boko Haram. It is because the basis for a revolutionary act is not provided by common excommunication. Rather it is the social situations and the need for change in status quo in accordance with principle of "Enjoining what is right and Forbidding what is wrong" that forms the basis for a revolutionary act.

Theoretical Foundations

In "The Anatomy of A Revolution", Crane Brinton (1938) outlines the uniformities in the revolutions occurred in

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countries including England, America, France, and Russia. According to his examinations, all the pre-revolution societies enjoyed economic growth in general, showing rather than a feeling of severe oppression, revolutionary movements were rooted in a sense of commitment and aversion. From Brinton's point of view, revolutions do not occur when social classes are taken apart and/or in conflict. Rather, they mostly arise as people come together to a considerable extent.

According to Brinton, in pre-revolutionary communities, a kind of situation arises called "the transfer of allegiance of intellectuals", which means all micro and macro intellectuals, under pre-revolutionary conditions, are unanimous in a certain idea, the need to rebuild the society, regarded as one of the most significant preliminary signs of revolution in itself.

As a result of negligence, failure to transform former institutes as well as confrontation with new conditions, the government proves inefficient, the governing social class doubts itself and turns to militant groups with a humanitarian approach. In all of the four above-mentioned cases, their dissidents' skill at using force outperforms the governments' failure to exert pressure and power.

Nonetheless, Brinton believes that the uniformities cannot be quantitatively stated or be employed in predicting and developing a comprehensive formula. Moreover, he holds that such a theoretical basis can be used to identify the grounds which lead to revolution:

"Undoubtedly, it is unlikely that, in all examinations, a clear-cut and ubiquitous sign can be found which indicates whenever X or Y appears in a society, there will be a revolution in the next month, year, decade, or in the future. Contrarily, revolution signs are so numerous and varied that they simply can never be integrated into a pattern" [1].

Accordingly, revolutions are conceived of as a fever, the indicators of which emerge in the former regime, that is, at the time of the generation living before the outbreak of revolution. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that the signs are not complete and that the disease appears when they are sufficiently expanded. Thus, it is safe to call them preliminary signs of revolution, after which symptoms appear and the revolution fever is begun.

The movement gradually and with a series of advances and retreats turns into a crisis accompanied with strong emotions, during which the most rebellious revolutionaries take hold of the government, leading to unity of revolution. From Brinton's perspective, in four revolutions he investigated, the power was transmitted from right-wing to left-wing through violence or at least by unconventional methods up until the critical period when hardliner fundamentalists seized power.

A strong force to establish a powerful centralized government, which moderates cannot build, helps radicals rise to power. It is in such a way that due to their discipline, hatred of half measures, desire for taking decisive decisions, and sense of dissociation from liberalist temptations, radicals are deserving and desirous of centralization.

A small group of violent revolutionaries, who form the core of imposing terror period, behave as people did under the influence of the trust of a religious activist.

Review of the Literature

The issue of the effect of Shiite culture on the Iranian Revolution has often been investigated in most research and scientific literature scrutinizing the revolution. The studies include Nikki R. Keddie, Abrahamian, Katuzian, Zanjanie and other researchers who addressed the reasons for the Iranian Revolution.

Marxist analysis approaches, generally presented through explaining the phenomenon of the Iranian Revolution on the basis of social class struggle and the emergence of a wide middle class, similar functionalist and structuralist analyses, and/or descriptions introduced in accordance with analysis of Iran's political economy during Pahlavi period, although varied and numerous, each sheds light on different angles of Iran's social, economic, and political situation. Such analyses are of high importance in the present study as they reflect pre-revolution conditions and preliminary signs.

A plethora of studies such as Mahdi Hasani, Hossein Hosseini, and Hossein Bashariye have investigated the relationship between Shiite culture and the Iranian Revolution. Accordingly, the previously mentioned researches help us match common elements of Shiite political culture with factors forming the Iranian Revolution.

What is Revolution?

Revolution refers to a violent fight for taking hold of government power, a process that generally occurs in a long period of time. In case a revolution succeeds, power structure, political institutions, and authority undergo major changes. Hence, relative lengthy violence and struggle is of characteristics of the revolution procedure, the result of which would be seizure of government power if it accomplishes its objectives.

According to Brinton, revolution is a series of crisis advances and retreats accompanied by severe frenzies, during which power is transmitted from right wing to left wing through violence and/or at least unconventional methods.

Violence and coercion during revolution is a two-way process. That is, neither government yields to rebel forces without resistance nor the latter avoid necessary violence. The most significant difference between revolutionary conflicts and other kinds of rebellions, in which distinct groups, dependent on power structure, engage in struggle with each other or army takes measures to seize power, is that in revolutionary conflicts a major part of population is explicitly and effectively mobilized.

However, inevitable mass involvement necessitates a kind of organization, leader and common ideology. Mass refers to all groups, spectra and classes of society which are not regarded as the governing authority and/or pose no political power [2].

Shiite Political Jurisprudence (Fiqh) and Elements Representing or Intensifying Preliminary Signs of Revolution

In Shiite jurisprudence, there are pillars (*Uṣūl ad-Dīn*) and ancillaries (*Furū' ad-Dīn*) which are inherently in conformity with idealism and revolutionary fights as well as emotions, or in other words, preliminary signs of revolution. Accordingly, the following make up the elements effective in this area of Shiite practices and precepts:

1-   Imamah and its Difference with Caliphate

"Caliphate, as defined by Sunnis, refers to public leadership over people's religious and worldly affairs on behalf of the Prophet Muhammad. According to Ibn Khadlun, "Caliphate is in fact representing Shari'a leader in guarding people's religion and political life". However, Imamah, as believed by Shiites, refers to "religious, spiritual and political leadership over Ummah on behalf of God and His Prophet towards achieving religious ideal. Imamah organizes religion and Ummah [3].

2-   Jihad and Its Types

Jihad has always been a completely dynamic concept compatible with conditions. During early years of Islam when the Prophet Muhammad was politically weak, the message of jihad was introduced so as to expand Islam against idolatry and heresy. Therefore, the first Meccan verses were allocated to moderate definitions of jihad which emphasized passive resistance. After the Prophet and his followers migrated (*Hijrah*) in 622 CE, the Islamic community of believers was reinforced, focusing more on defending religious practices. During the next phase in Medina, it was assumed that violent evasion of religious practices is declaration of war. Accordingly, Medinan verses tended to highlight the type of jihad which mostly placed emphasis on defense against invasion and sometimes granted consent for it [4].

From the perspective of Sunni jurists (*Fuqaha*), jihad is conceived of as one of the greatest and mandatory religious duties. As an example, Ahmad Ibn Hambal regards jihad as the most important mandatory practical duty. From their perspective, there is no difference between preemptive and defensive jihad. On the basis of Sunni intellectual principles, jihad is conducted in accordance with the Ummah caliph and no specified framework can be identified for it whereas in Shiite culture there are various types of jihad and in some cases there is even no need for the religious ruler's consent. The categorization includes:

-   Jihad conducted to preserve the existence of Islam
-   Jihad conducted to protect Muslims' life and property
-   Jihad conducted to help other Muslim groups
-   Jihad conducted to restore Islamic rule
-   Jihad conducted as an invitation to Islam, only with permission of the Immaculate [3].

3-   Justice

Muslims, both Sunni and Shiite, require justice for taking on social responsibilities. Shiite teachings, particularly short-term experience of Imam Ali Caliphate, his thoughts, and justice-seeking behaviors, are of the factors injecting justice in Shiite culture. Accepting this principle, i.e. justice, has always paved the way for Shiite justice-seeking movements and, moreover, Shiites owe their spontaneity, mobility, willingness to sacrifice and idealism to this special characteristic.

4-   Enjoining the Right and Avoiding the Wrong

On the basis of interpretations presented about this principle, varied political and behavioral cultures have been formed among different Muslim sects. Kharijites and followers of Zaidiyyah depicted a cruel picture of themselves by commitment to this principle whereas Murjites were labeled as conservative by denying it.

In Shiism great emphasis is placed on this principle both in citations from Koran as well as those concerning narratives. In his will and even at the time of his martyrdom, Imam Ali holds that evading this principle results in domination of criminals and bandits. Likewise, Imam Husayn declares that the goal of his rise is to restore the principle. Furthermore, the narratives show that political involvement in government and collective supervision of state is achieved by resorting to this principle in Shiite political culture [5].

5-   Tabarra (Dissociation) and Tawalla (Adoration)

The principle means to adore those who love God and to dissociate with those who are enemies of God. That is, associating with the right and dissociating with the wrong. These emotions and feelings, being on the basis of loving Ahl Al-Bayt (family of the Islamic prophet Muhammad) and hating enemies of God, have always acted as stimulation for movements [5].

Shiite Political Culture and its Revolutionary Elements

As previously mentioned belief principles and practices show, this collection establishes a certain political culture, whose symbols of theoretical foundation and tradition are based on resistance against oppression, involvement, and sense of responsibility and fight. Basic elements of this culture include:

-   Martyrdom

This element has always appealed to all the Shiite movements which have often challenged the governing system. According to Petrushevsky, martyrdom for the cause of religion, purification and tragic fate of Ahl Al-Bayt have always been one of the leading and major beliefs among Twelver or Imammiyyah followers who have often been oppressed and maintained their existence covertly.

Martyrdom, a driving force, plays a crucial role in inspiring Shiite masses to enter the realm of sacrifice and to establish political and revolutionary movements against oppressing systems. It has also preserved Shiite historical identity [5].

- Ashura and Imam Husayn Epic

Karbala event, a watershed in the Shiite history, not only has broadened the spirit of fighting against oppression but it has also inspired martyrdom. On the other hand, annual commemoration of the Day of Ashura is a highly influential force, whose movement and flow through Shiite history has been of great significance.

Ever since that fateful Ashura, the martyrdom of Hussein at Karbala has become a central component of Shi'a identity, and has bestowed an emotive notion of martyrdom upon Shi'a awareness. Yann Richard remarked that the martyrdom of Hussein—the only living grandson of the Prophet has become the prototype of every struggle for justice, every suffering. That is where the heart of Shi'ism lies, in this agony which is at one and the same time a revolt and a sign of hope [6]".

Similarly, Karan Armstrong holds that so much like Ali's martyrdom, Karbala tragedy has become a symbol of old injustice for Shiite Muslims, seeming to have permeated human's life [6].

Navid Kermanie provides a full explanation of the effect of Husayn's martyrdom on Shiite Muslims. He refers to early Islamic narratives (Islamic Preliminary narratives), which describe how Husayn, a young child, plays with his grandfather in Mecca as he is on shoulders of his father Ali. He juxtaposes these compassionate and lively images with his ruthlessly being martyred and desecration of his body [6].

- Mahdism, the Awaiting Doctrine

"Occultation" is a belief, held by some of Shiite sects, that a savior called Mahdi will one day return and fill the world with justice. In accordance with Twelver Shiite beliefs, the major goal of the Savior, Mahdi, is to establish an Islamic state and exercise Islamic law, revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad [7].

A plethora of rises in Shiite Islam are attributed to the cause of Mahdi including the Kaysanites, Zaidism, Nafs-e-Zakiyyah, Tabataba Hassanie, and even Abbasyds. In addition, the hope of Coming and fundamental reforms urge Shiites to establish movements.

According to Shiite Islam, the Hidden Imam is alive and will one day reappear by the name of Mahdie, meaning the one guided by God. He will emerge on the Day of Judgment to fill the world with justice and equity. In Shiite Islam, it is the Hidden Imam who possesses the competence for the real leadership over the whole world. Nonetheless, during Occultation, Ulama, recognized as scholars or authorities in Islamic religious hierarchy, take on this responsibility until the Imam emerges (Return concept) [6].

Not only has Husayn's martyrdom played a crucial role in forming Shiism in a broad scale but it also has helped widen Shiite perception of jihad. The Hidden Imam's (Mahdi) Occultation is another factor in Shiite doctrine which has had a direct impact on how Shiites think of jihad [6].

- Negative Attitude towards the Power of Rulers:

In Travels In Persia, Jean Chardin mentions that "all the Iranian people of mosque and "minbar" as well as all the believers hold that the rule of non-clergymen is deterministic and usury and, moreover, that civil government is the right of "Sadr" and "Minbar". The reason for this trust is based upon the fact that the Prophet Muhammad was simultaneously a prophet and a ruler as well whom God appointed as responsible for people's spiritual and worldly affairs". In addition, they held the belief that the rightful successor of the Prophet Muhammad was Ali, a precept accounting for the power of Mujtahids and Wilayat al Faqihs (Guardianship of the Jurists) [8].

- Historical Idealism

In Shiite thought, particularly the Iranian Shiite mores, the only time period to have seen a just government dated back to Imam Ali's rule after the Prophet Muhammad. The period will reappear at the time of Coming when justice, welfare and spirituality are expanded. Accordingly, the ideal Alavi justice is what Shiism has always been looking for.

The History of the Establishment of Shiism in Iran

Since the beginning of Abbasid caliphate, which sought religious legitimacy by attributing themselves to the Prophet Muhammad, Khorasan has always been one of the most important centers supporting them. People drawn to the supporters, who claimed the Abbasids are descendents of the Prophet, were called Shiites of Muhammad. Thus, those who claimed Abbasids descended from Muhammad and resorted to the issue of the Prophet's family being oppressed as well, invited people to endorse them.

On the other hand, as the strangling atmosphere of Ummayads was done away with, Imams seized the opportunity to establish Shiite jurisprudence and theology, as a result of which the principles entered a new phase of stabilization and promulgation.

In addition to the above-mentioned cases, some of the factors leading to Shiite stabilization in Iran include:

- Mawalis: new Iranian converts to Islam who migrated to Kufa and participated in Al Mukhtar's rising.
- The Shiites migration to Qum (like Asha'ris)
- The presence of Imam Reza in Iran
- Buyids' supporting of scientists such as Kulayni, Al Sheykh Al Mufid, and Seyyed Morteza
- Alawids' rule over Tabaristan
  However, Shiism did not possess the opportunity of pervasive appearance and stabilization until the Safavid dynasty when religious developments occurred in Iran including propagation of Sufism and Shiite Islam.

After Safavids took hold of the power, a variety of reasons led them to institutionalize Shiite Islam as a reliable religion. The reasons include:

a- Reclusion, i.e. Resistance against Politics and Worldly Life

As Sheikh Safi al-Din's fights began, it became clear that Sufism cannot be considered exemplary merely through "Murid" and "Murad" method. It was because Sufism was established with an aim of accomplishing the final goal of reclusion and personal growth. Accordingly, the time was ripe for it to appear alongside an ideology which was related to political-worldly power. Therefore, Shiism found a solid place for itself next to Sufism.

b- The Need for a Codified and Written Law

To a political government, which gained worldly power by ruling over Muslims, the need for mores and jurisprudence laws was extremely felt. All the people were not Sufis so as not to require such rules and regulations. On the contrary, most people worked on farms and in bazaars, carrying on their businesses. So, when conflicts and struggles arose, they required jurists and judges which were out of Sufism's reach. Hence, already making its way in Sheikh Safi al-Din's descendents, Shiism gained great and public recognition.

c- Presence and Migration of Shiite Jurists

What in the course of time has affected the transition from Sufism to Shiism has been the presence of Shiite jurists and scholars, who promulgated Shiism without it being mixed with Sufism, in Safavid governmental organizations. Inviting Jabal Amil's religious scholars by Safavid rulers as well as clergies' empowerment in society and their dominance over people's thought and belief-oriented affairs made Sufism be retained among a limited number of classes, leading to the society's thought administration slipping out of their hands. Nonetheless, at the outset, Sufis were respected by religious scholars and clergymen but finally, owing to the attempts made by Shiite scholars, they lost their power as an influential force in the government and society and were restricted to monasteries and desserts. Moreover, the development was accelerated as a group of jurists like Ali ibn Abdul Ali, known as Karaki Researcher, entered Iran from Lebanon and Bahrain [8].

The Predominance of "Usuli School of Thought"

During Qajar ruling, another determining event occurred. At the end of Fath-Ali Shah's reign, Usulis gained dominance and power over Akhbaris, in return empowering the institution of marjaʿiyah (religious reference) and powerful group of mujtahids, which is in fact one of the major roots of the Iranian Islamic Revolution. It is because people should obey mujtahids as jurisprudence scholars on the basis of Jaʿfarī school of thought derived from Ahl Al Bayts' teachings.

Increase in Power of the Iranian Shiite Clergymen

During Qajar reign, the presence of Mujtahids in political scene considerably increased, from sanctioning tobacco to "Minor Tyranny" and Constitutional movement etc.

From Constitutional Revolution victory onwards, three political reformist trends can be recognized in society of that time, one growing of which was clergymen's trend. They include:

Trend 1: the followers of this trend were pertinacious, newfangled, and impatient nationalists who extremely longed for ancient imperial glory of Iran; that is, pre-Islamic Iran. They involved Aref Qazvini, Abdolhossein Teymourtash and Reza Shah.

Trend 2: or liberalist trend was crystallized as a relatively original combination of anti-tyranny fights and Western pluralism which longed for individual liberty, criminal justice and distribution of political power. The trend lacked a dominant or marking religious nature. However, its followers well knew that launching attacks, under those conditions, on religion and its historical roots as well as social traditions contradicted institutional frameworks it tended to maintain for the society's political structure. The followers of liberalist trend included Mostowfi ol-Mamalek and Mohammad Mosaddegh.

Trend 3: its followers were nationalists, religious, radical, and even more inflexible and stubborn than those of the previous trends. They had deeper roots in ancient Iran's religious and civil culture. The followers were less affected by Europe and so showed greater sensitivity to the Iranian society rather than Iranian nationality. However, they were not religious obscurantist tending to return to the social-cultural conditions of early or middle Qajar period. Rather, they were uncompromising in terms of defending parliament-based government and the need for power distribution. In fact, as regards political skill, some of them should be considered as the greatest parliament men ever seen in the history if Iran. They were the exemplary Shiites opposing centralized political power. Furthermore, they recognized that the closest thing to the Shiite political school was to object to authoritarian power, to be bound to defend individual freedoms as well as to have an independent judicial system. Some of the followers include: Modarres and Malek o-Sho'arā Bahār.

Development of Political Ideology Based on Shiism

During this period, though sparsely, Shiite political approach effectively opposed the ruling government not as an ideological movement, rather with emergence of certain figures. Events such as 1935 Goharshad Mosque massacre, Kashfe Hijab (Unveiling), and banning Mourning of Muharram were cases, against which Shiite opposition was leveled. Gradually, as Pahlavi period started, distinct tendencies arose in clergymen and believers which can be seen, as a political ideology, only in one of the following trends.

The first one, or maybe the greatest trend, was a group of non-political clergies who were under leadership of Ayatollah Khoei Najafi, Ayatollah Ali Ahmadi Khorasani (Khansar) and Ayatollah

Marashi Najafi. The group held the belief that clergies should avoid political works, deemed to be evil. Instead, they should address spiritual issues, preach the word of God, educate in theological college (*Hawza*) and train future clergymen.

Nevertheless, in spite of their reclusion, the same non-political clergies were drawn to politics when government attacked bazaar and theological colleges (*Hawza*). Due to inability or unwillingness of the regime authorities to combat people's severe ethical collapse, the emotions of these clergies were hurt as well.

Furthermore, wide immigration of the rural youth to cities, scattered shacks and slums in suburbs has brought about certain social problems which caused concerns for this group like all clergies over the world. They believed that such social issues were the result of moral turpitude and that the sole solution was to exercise religious practices and precepts.

The second trend can be called dissident moderate clergies. Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Golpayegani, Ayatollah Mohammad Hadi Milani in Mashhad and Ayatollah Kazem Shariatmadari, the great Marja' in Qom as well as an Azeri Mujtahid and unofficial spokesperson of Azerbaijan clergies, were the main leaders of this trend. In Tehran, Ayatollah Zanjani, who supported both Mossadegh and National Resistance Movement (NRM) and had also close ties with the Iranian National Front and the Freedom Movement, was associated with this group.

Though the group expressed its opposition to the regime in cases such as Land Reforms Program and women's suffrage, it preferred to keep lines of communication with Shah open. Some of their measures involve maintaining vital interests of religious organizations, full implementation of the 1906-1910 constitution, and putting into action the Constitutional monarchy.

However, in the end, when Shah closed all doors for negotiation, gave the order to launch attack on bazaar and theological school (*Hawza*), and also posed threat to all religious organizations through Rastakhiz Party (Resurgence party), the attitude of dissident moderate clergies during 1976-1978 was unjustifiable.

The third trend was, in a sense, cleric combatants, who were under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, who was living in exile in Iraq and France at that time. In Iran, the group had a secret unofficial network comprised of some influential figures in subsequent decades. Almost all leaders were from cities other than Tehran and were commonly Ayatollah Khomeini's students. Hence, they played a crucial role in the revolution:

Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, the group's political figure, was one of the Ayatollah Khomeini's students and had close ties with him when learning foreign languages in Europe. Alongside revolutionary combats, he wrote and compiled textbooks for the Ministry of Education and was in charge of Hamburg Mosque, whose costs were covered by the government.

Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari, the group's ideologist member, was of former Ayatollah Khomeini's students. Alongside educating in Qom, he taught theology at Tehran University. Of his measures was helping in the establishment of Hosseinieh

Ershad, which had an active role in propagating revolutionary thoughts among the youth, particularly students. He wrote books which were, in terms of methodology, an updated explanation of Islam in order for it to communicate with society of its time.

Hujjat al-Islam Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was another student of Ayatollah Khomeini. He was imprisoned for some time for his activities. During this period, he was interested in drawing financial supports and organizing dissident groups such as People's Mujahedin of Iran.

Hujjat al-Islam Ali Khamenei was the youngest member organizing the group who taught at Feyziyeh School and was student of Ayatollah Milani in Mashhad and Ayatollah Boroujerdi and Khomeini in Qom. He wrote a number of books about the threat presented by West to the Islamic World and was many times held prisoner for his revolutionary activities.

Ayatollah Khomeini's group can be regarded as the most radical and dissident one for some reasons: firstly, in contrast to members of the second group, Ayatollah Khomeini was in exile. Thus, in his statements about and criticisms of Shah, he was practically free from domestic restrictions and considerations. So, there was no reason for him to oppose the regime in a moderate or secret way. Furthermore, urging people to overthrow Pahlavi regime, Ayatollah Khomeini officially and publically condemned Shah and equated him with Yazid, the murderer of Husayn ibn Ali. In addition, contrary to the second group, Ayatollah Khomeini didn't tend to restore constitutional monarchy. Rather, he intended to establish a new kind of Islamic state, whose theoretical background he had previously published [4].

Gaining historic opportunities and situations, the third group managed to stabilize itself as the most influential social force of the Iranian Islamic Revolution.

Pre-revolutionary Society and the Absolute Governing Power

In spring of 1962 when it was hoped that socioeconomic conditions would improve, Shah was in a sensitive situation for some reasons. They include:

- Shah made serious attempts to expand his own power and diminish that of Amini when he was prime minister.
- National Front had gained popularity and was at its peak.
- He doubted that America would lend complete support to him.
- The Soviet was holding hostile attitudes.
- Teymur Bakhtiar, powerful head of Organization of Intelligence and National Security (SAVAK), who was dismissed in March 1961, had begun to recognize merits of "freedom" and, "Constitutional Monarchy".

Aminie's plan was crystal clear; that is, he was prepared to grant considerable concessions to the National Front, provided they would never oppose him. This measure implicitly allowed him to exert their power and presence against Shah and large

landowners. An example of such measures taken against Shah was that when he left Iran heading to Norway for the first time after 1953 Iranian coup d'état, National Front seized the opportunity to hold a meeting in an open environment where an estimated number of 80.000 individuals took part. The country's press, which until then avoided and were prohibited from making any reference to the National Front, competed for publishing their comments and news of their conventions.

However, despite of all these measures, the National Front launched massive attacks on Aminie's cabinet. The National Front's motto, technique, strategy, and objective were summarized in "instant election". Their slogan, when they organized and held consecutive demonstrations in Tehran, was "Aminie, Resign!"

In fact, had the Shah been in charge of the Front's activities, he could not have taken advantage of it for himself as well as against all the opposition (including the Front itself) so well. The National Front's approaching to some figures, regarded as deliberate violation of existence of the Front, was sometimes so astounding that Amir Timur Kalali granted supreme council membership to one of the conservative large landowners in exchange for 200.000 riyals financial help to the Front.

On the other hand, the Front leaders' stances on Land Reforms Program presented by Aminie were only silence, regarding it as deception. Instead, the National Front's public propagation was focused on mounting personal attacks on Aminie for his role in signing the Consortium Contract and also Arsanjanie for his previous links with Qavām o-Saltaneh. Why the National Front carried out such self-destruct measures has a multifaceted response: analytical weakness, lack of decisive leadership, paucity of domestic democracy and finally organizational chaos.

As a result of this serious confrontation, the political institute, inherited from Mossadegh and the National Movement, was expecting a completely inevitable defeat, leading to retrogression and Shah's personal tyranny.

The conditions had previously been predicted by Khalil Malekie and community of sociologists; that is, from the very beginning, they held that not only would Aminie's defeat by Shah lead to destruction of democratic opposition but it also would result in establishment of a "fascist dictatorship", never seen in the country [7].

Sociopolitical Backgrounds for Manifestation of Shiism as the Leader of Revolutionary Force

After Mohammad Reza Shah strongly regained power in 1963, almost all opposition forces had been eliminated and so he no longer took them seriously. The reality was the National Front's attenuation and weakness as a result of becoming entangled in Shah's political trap and/or resorting to the order prohibiting common principle as regards Iran's Party, the main pillar of the National Front. Tudeh Party of Iran (Party of the Masses of Iran), which had 3000 and 40 of its members imprisoned and executed, respectively, from 1952 to 1957, was

completely stagnated. Liberals, equated with West, were weakened as a result of American Republicans coming to power and Shah's conflicts with them. Among all these events, however, revolutionary Shiism, with its unique characteristics, on the one hand, had expanded the area of its influence and on the other hand, Shah did not take it seriously [9].

Likewise, Shah in an interview with Oliver Warin (French reporter) issued some statements in that times which reflects his opinions:

"Reporter: Have you still got problems with mullahs?

Shah: Today, I don't think we could really talk about issues with mullahs. It's likely that they might sometimes whisper but it has no effect on us.

Reporter: How about the Ayatollah who is in exile in Iraq?

Shah: We exiled him there on purpose.

Reporter: Do you think that no part of the Iranian community of clergies backs him?

Shah: No [!]. Here no one has anything to do with him except "Terrorists" [!], or so-called "Islamic Marxists" who sometimes say his name. Just this!

Reporter: Aside from this issue, do you have a good relationship with Shiite community of clergies in Iran?

Shah: Honestly, here there is no Shiite community of clergies and religious hierarchies [!]. In general, here there are a bunch of clergies. That's it! … And my ties with real clergymen is very favorable [!]. And they are numerous in Iran. And that the tradition that mullahs allocated knowledge to themselves to seize power is now completely abolished and except for a memory, nothing is left of it [10]."

Conclusion

At the beginning, it was said that in order for a revolution to occur, several signs should emerge in a society, leading to the appearance of characteristics called revolution preliminary sings. According to this expression, elements of revolution can be listed on the basis of definitions previously presented. They will be explained in the Pre-Iranian Revolution society as follows:

Violent and Nearly Long-term Fighting

Fighting needs rational justification or emotional stimulation. How did Shiism manage to persuade the public to continue fighting from 1963 when it was at the forefront of opposition to 1978; rational justifications, likewise, were provided through launching direct attacks on government in cultural, economic, and social areas. Similarly, whenever the government adopted a new decision, which could be exploited, it met objection whether it was correct or not. Examples include White Revolution, Capitulation and etc. It should be borne in mind that even Daylight saving time (DST) attracted criticism and opposition at that time.

It should be noted, moreover, that given previously mentioned description, Shiite jurisprudence was in charge of rational and Kalami (religious discourse) justification for jihad. Likewise, as

initially mentioned, mutual violence of the government against people established the slogan "I will kill who killed my brother", providing the justification for violent fights.

Emotional stimulation and its expansion required a great wave, which Imam Khomeini called it "Create an Ashura". If one is aware of the role of "martyrdom" in Shiite religion, he/she would well know that the martyred gains by far more power than the murderer. As put forth by André Glucksmann, contemporary French philosopher, in an article in Le Nouvel Observateur (11 June, 1979), "contrary to popular belief, it is not gun barrel that brings about power. Rather, the power belongs to one who is prepared to be killed... [10]."

The wave originated from Husayn's Ashura should be multiplied by new Ashuras. To create a new one, making use of enemy's mistakes is the simplest way as Pahlavi regime provided them in Qom and Feyziyya School. Feyziyya Ashura was the result of that historic mistake and as advised by Imam Khomeini, mourning became common at the school and integrated with Husayn's Ashura, creating a new wave.

Imam Khomeini and organizers of struggles and fights planned a series of growing demonstrations during the sacred month of Muharram, aiming to reach their apex at Days of Ashura and Tasu'a. When army prohibited street demonstrations and extended curfew times, Shah faced with deep concerns as regards potential violence. On 2 December 1978, Muharram demonstrations, which were effectively great and pivotal, began. Nearly 2 million dissident youths, most of whom were adolescents organized by clergies of South Tehran mosques, filled the streets and gathered at Shahyad square (English Wikipedia)

Seizure of State Power

As mentioned before, among the Iranian Shiite clergies' attitudes, the third trend neither rationally nor ideologically agreed with existence of Pahlavi regime. Naturally, the only alternative solution was to seize the incumbent power.

Accordingly, by using Shiite teachings and expanding it to Guardianship of the Jurist (Wilayat al Faqih), the alternative plan was to substitute Islamic Government for Pahlavi state.

A kind of Organization and Leadership

Though Shiite thought lacked a united and organized institution, when organization and movement is not powerful and extensive, placing emphasis on ideology compensates organizational weakness. Furthermore, the more radical the revolutionary movement, meaning it aims at replacing the status quo with a whole different one, the more specified and richer the mobilization movement will be. Basically, revolutionary ideologies mainly deem themselves to be absolutely rightful, which is the conception giving certainty to revolutionaries' activities.

Mobilization Ideology

The extent, to which a revolution yields social results, is reflected in its ideology. The initial ideology of a revolution implies the type of developments to come even though

subsequent procedures are not necessarily subservient to the ideology, which itself might evolve under sociopolitical influences. Similarly, the depth of post-revolution social evolutions relies on the degree of the interference in revolution on the part of both revolutionary group and former governing one.

Revolution, a Response to Shiite Ideal Demands and Beliefs

Negative attitudes held towards power of rulers
Ashura and Husayn's epic rising
Mahdiism, Mahdi-oriented thoughts and awaiting
Historical idealism

These are four elements which were at the beginning of our discussion introduced as Shiite culture beliefs and characteristics, for which the revolution, as a fundamental transformation, could find a way.

Revolution seizes shah's centralized illegitimate power and bestows it upon jurists, the heirs of the Prophet Muhammad as presented in Wilayat al Faqih teachings. Revolution provides a path to epic, martyrdom, fighting oppression and following the path Imam Husayn did. It also paves the way for the Coming (When Hidden Imam reappears) and stepping towards Imam Ali's just government if Islamic Government is established.

It is inferable from what has so far been presented how Shiite culture, by using its domestic capacities and historical opportunities, managed not only to increase the degree of its influence as well as to create revolutionary situations but it also succeeded in affecting other social forces to the extent that Mohammad Reza Shah himself states revelation about Shiite religious scholars.

The fact is that after events on 5 June 1963, most of the regime dissidents recognized the importance of Shiite social and cultural elements in such a way that those who wished to overthrow the government resorted to Ayatollah Khomeini.

Subsequently, it was why Teymour Bakhtiar went to Iraq to meet the ayatollah in 1967. In doing so, he gained the help of Iraqi officials, who had hostile relationships with the Shah.

In general, it has been accepted and confirmed that continuation of religious uprising led to the demise of Pahlavi regime. During this period, having come together under the Shiite banner, people managed to obtain the force and unity needed for ousting one of the most powerful dictatorships in the history of Iran. Moreover, it was religion that gave leaders the power to persuade people to set aside their routine lives, go on strikes for months and tolerate the adversities of revolution.

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