State Power and Revolution: Toward a Strategic-Relational Analysis of the 1979 Revolution in Iran

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To the past, present and future

freedom and equality

fighters

به همه مبارزان دیروز، امروز و فردای

آزادی و برابری

Declaration

This thesis has not been submitted in support of an application for another degree at this or any other university. It is the result of my own work and includes nothing that is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated. Many of the ideas in this thesis were the product of discussion with my supervisor Prof Bob Jessop. Apart from the front matter, abstract, acknowledgments, and references (860 + 5261 words), this thesis has 81317 words, which reflects cuts for the sake of concision as well as additions to respond to the comments of my examiners.

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to understand how Islamists, especially a significant part of the Shi'a clergy, become the dominant political force in Iran in the 1970s, which was a decade of state transformation. Employing a conceptual toolbox and methods of investigation based on the Strategic-Relational Approach and Cultural Political Economy, this study introduces fresh perspectives, concerns, and concepts to reconstruct the key features of the complex revolutionary moment in 1979 and provide a periodisation of state (trans-)formations in Iran. It identifies two main periods: national state building (1848-1970) and expansion (1970-). By exploring the recontexualization and changing articulation of three discursive formations and taking note of different temporalities, this study identifies a 'holy triad' (justice, progress and independence) that sheds light on the development of the national state in Iran. I argue that justice is the master frame for conceptualising the changing significance of the other two. The thesis also argues that the political economy of oil became the triad's primary point of crystallisation in the 1970s. Thus, an economic crisis that followed the collapse of the oil boom in the mid-1970s profoundly disoriented the state's political and cultural legitimacy. This crisis created the setting for the rise and dominance of an innovative, Shi'ite messianic narrative. This was embodied in Khomeini's role in Iranian politics. Therefore, this study explores the history of Shi'ism and the Shi'a messianic movements to identify the resources and capacities available to Khomeini to promote his counter-hegemonic visions. A further factor favouring Khomeini's messianic movement was the history of (semi-)colonialism in the region and the intensifying Arab-Israeli conflict, which tended to confirm Khomeini's narrative rather than the ideas of his rivals. In short, rather than re-interpreting the 1979 Revolution in the light of new historical findings, this study provides a spatio-temporally sensitive strategic-relational

account of revolutionary conjuncture and historical specificity of the background to the revolution and its path-shaping impact on the present moment.

Acknowledgements

Finally, I want to thank my partner, friend and comrade, and the love of my life, Firoozeh Farvardin. I was lucky to meet her and have the opportunity of learning from her vast knowledge. She has generously introduced me to many new concepts, fresh perspectives and alternative approaches. As with my master thesis, I cannot imagine finishing this study without her support, assistance and honest feedback.

Nader Talebi

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AD	**Anno Domini**
AIOC	**Anglo-Iranian Oil Company**
APOC	**Anglo-Persian Oil Company**
BC	**Before Christ**
CKD	**Completely Knocked Down**
CPE	**Cultural Political Economy**
MNC	**Multi-national Corporation**
IMF	**International Monetary Fund**
ISI	**Import-Substitution Industrialisation**
SAVAK	**Organization of Intelligence and National Security**
SRA	**Strategic Relational Approach**
UK	**United Kingdom**
US	**United States**
USSR	**Soviet Union**

Preface

I was born into a family that has had political affiliations for more than 40 years. When my mother was born, my grandfather was in jail for his membership of the communist Tudeh party (the first modern mass party in Iran)[1] and participation in opposing the 1953 coup in Iran. My parents met while my father was in the hospital after being shot during a demonstration against the Shah in 1978. My mother was a nurse and belonged to an unofficial medical group that supported leftist revolutionaries who had been injured when struggling against the regime. Within three years, my family, like many others, was accused of hostility to the revolution for supporting the leftist

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[1] The Tudeh Party of Iran (حزب توده ایران), literally 'Party of the Masses of Iran', was formed soon after the Anglo-Soviet invasion and the abdication of Reza Shah in 1941, by a circle of young Marxist intellectuals in Tehran. It grew into a pro-Soviet national movement, against fascism with considerable following among the intelligentsia and the working class, particularly in the more industrialised regions (Abrahamian, 1970). It introduced 'the notion of mass politics, mass participation, and mass organizations with party cells and branches, party conferences and congresses, and party newspapers, politburos, and central committees' (Abrahamian, 2008, p. 112). Although the party almost disappeared from public life and suffered from the executions and imprisonment after the coup, it deeply affected the cultural and political atmosphere. In the post-1979 revolution, the revived Tudeh Party supported Khomeini, considering him as progressive and anti-imperialist petty-bourgeois figure, until it was banned four years after revolution. Many members were jailed and then executed in 1988.

opposition rather than the Islamic regime. We all faced the consequences of the Islamists' iron fist in Iran in different ways. My father spent some years in jail as a political prisoner, and I am named after my uncle, who was arrested and executed aged only 19 years. Considering this background, living with 'counter-revolutionary' revolutionaries, I have carried the 1979 Revolution, as a problem, all my life. This is why I changed disciplines after graduation from software engineering to sociology, searching for an answer for myself and for the broader left movement in Iran.

I started this project in October 2012. It was the first time I had lived abroad. My personal experience as a migrant has affected my thesis in many ways. The major effect was to rethink it in the light of what I have learned in theoretical, strategic and everyday dialogues with people with different histories and from different places and spaces. The first trigger was meeting an old Iranian friend in London at the time of my arrival. He organised a short welcome tour of the city. Walking and talking about our life, I asked about his feelings about being a migrant in London. His answer moved me and made me rethink my project. He said that the UK is great because it is in the 'centre' of everything, referring to the country's place on the world map. I was surprised by the strange imaginative geography that we take for granted in everyday life. I asked myself why wanted to study the 1979 revolution in Iran? Is it related to my obsession with my home country that I always imagine it to be the centre of attention and debates? I realised that an obsession with personal experiences can hide other issues and result in temporal and spatial ignorance. This explains the subject of the study and the chosen perspective for defining, interpreting and explaining it.

There is no such thing as value-free or innocent knowledge. My very short personal and intellectual history can help clarify what Weber calls 'value-relevance'. This refers 'to the philosophical interpretation of that specifically scientific "interest" which determines the selection of a given subject-matter and the problems of an empirical

analysis' (Weber, 1949, p. 22). In other words, these brief personal narratives can explain why I chose the 1979 revolution as my problem and, more importantly, my specific focus and perspective. A grand theme such as revolution can be studied in many ways. Being a Farsi-speaking middle-class male might explain my taking the Islamist character and dominant social imaginaries of the 1979 revolution as my entry-point rather than its gender, racial or some other aspect.

However, I would add that its Islamist character also explains some of the revolution's most distinctive features, its genealogy, and its effects. Asef Bayat famously argues that the 1979 revolution was not the outcome of a strong Islamic movement. Indeed, compared with Egypt, which had a strong Islamic movement but no revolution, Iran had a revolution without a movement (Bayat, 1998). I suggest that focusing on the dominant social imaginaries in the pre-revolutionary era can help to reconstruct the revolutionary moment and explain the collective actions of a non-collective. In other words, the Islamic character of the revolution was expressed through shared identification with specific social imaginaries – which provided a shared framework that enabled unorganised people to act as if in concert against the Shah. Considering this distinctive feature, a more meso-level approach to the 1979 revolution than classic studies of social movements tend to adopt is likely to pay off heuristically. Nonetheless, no research can offer a comprehensive account of 1979 revolution because 'life with its irrational reality and its store of possible meanings is inexhaustible' (Weber, 1949, p. 111). I do hope to shed new light on the complex reality while acknowledging its limitations.

I became interested theoretically in the state while reading an illegal copy of the Farsi translation of Althusser's *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (Althusser, 1971). His alternative account of ideology and the resulting problematic contrasted starkly with the mainstream naturalisation of ideology and associated understanding of

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the Islamic Republic as an 'ideological regime'. Back then, for me, the state was mainly a set of institutions deployed as its instrument by the ruling class. Althusser appealed to me for his emphasis on the wider reproduction of society because he took ideology – for him, an imagined relationship to the world or lived experience – into account more seriously than the banal dominant currents in historical materialism. For Althusser, ideology cannot be reduced to an epiphenomenon of the economic: it has its own logic and effectivity. Viewed as extending throughout a social formation rather than being confined to the superstructure, ideology must comprise an important aspect of my research on the 1979 revolution. It, therefore explores how social actors understand their conditions and participate in social interactions such as the Iranian revolution in terms of the concept of social imaginaries. Although Althusser does not use this particular concept, he did refer to ideology as an imagined relationship to the world (Althusser, 1971, p. 162). It is also very relevant to ideology and *Ideologiekritik*. In short, back in my youth, Althusser provided a bridge that connects the marginalised political left in Iran with a critical perspective in the social sciences. Indeed, the problem of the social sciences in Iran, as I understood it then and it remains today, was its dependence on an unthinking Modernization Theory (chapter two). It sorely lacked a comprehensive and new critical social approach.

Working as an activist on child labour issues and refugees, I was preoccupied with the question of social class in Iran. Althusser was a gateway for me to read Poulantzas, Gramsci and, more importantly, Marx in search of a class-based understanding of contemporary Iran. The latter seemed to me, and almost all Iranian leftists at the time, the key to a wider understanding our society. The general theoretical tendency at the time (and, indeed, for many leftists still today) was to reduce all social relations to the economy and, for the same reasons, to adopt, implicitly or explicitly, an economistic account of social class. Althusser was liberating here because he referred to, and insisted upon, determination by the economy *in the last instance*, opening a space for

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more nuanced analyses – especially as 'the lonely hour of the last instance never comes' (Althusser, 2005, p. 113). Accordingly, I tried to apply Althusser's account of ideology and ideological state apparatuses, including its emphasis on social as well as material reproduction, in a Poulantzasian explanation of social class relations and their reproduction in Iran with a focus on child labour. This research aimed to find evidence on how social class relations were reproduced for working class families in Iran. Later, by reading Towfigh's critiques of the social sciences in Iran, I learnt about the limitations of applying theory to cases without regard to the specific context in which that theory was developed.

Towfigh, himself, has worked on the national state in Iran. He introduced me to Jessop's works on the capitalist type of state. Towfigh's main contribution to my work was to stress the lack of a theory of the national state in Iran. On this basis, he criticises the wider social sciences in Iran for their lack of originality and adoption of Modernisation Theory as the main frame of understanding any social problem in Iran (Towfigh & Ahmadnia, 2014). He argued that sociology in Iran not only suffered from a massive 'orientalist' worldview in the moment of its formation – a trait that it shares, perhaps paradoxically, given Iran's location in the 'East', with its counterpart in western countries; but it also 'involves a (kind of) suspension of the Present' (Towfigh & Ahmadnia, 2014), which is not so characteristic of sociology in the West. Thus, for most local academics, Iran is neither 'traditional' nor 'modern'. This implies a silence about the current conjuncture or postponing modernity to a yet-to-be realised, undefined future moment. In other words, the humanities and social sciences in Iran offer a history haunted by chronology, malestream and mainstream tales; a sociology that is reduced to non-functional positivism and struggles with narrow descriptive accounts (e.g. the State is taken for granted); and systematic neglect of singularities and universalities of Iran. This means that it cannot produce fruitful knowledge.

This suspension, as such, is realized by – and reflected on – its dominant approach (i.e. the modernization theory) and the notion of 'transitional society' and therefore, it consequently gives rise to a sociology which is not even capable of providing a typical positivist explanation of *status quo* let alone allowing for the possibility of a historical-critical understanding of *the social*. (Towfigh & Ahmadnia, 2014)

This critique helped me avoid the failings of some common accounts about 1979 revolution based on a struggle between so-called modern and traditional forces (chapter two). Indeed, by applying imported Western theories to their unique subject of study, Iranian academics can be said to have acted differently from the House of Bourbon when it returned to France: they have forgotten nothing and learnt nothing. Social science in Iran has been overloaded with orientalist assumptions and concepts. Instead of this naïve general frame, Towfigh argues for taking the history of Iran and the ruptural impact of modernity seriously. This invites one to develop a theory for this historical individual, as Weber would describe it, which cannot be imported from outside but must be constructed on the basis of local materials.

Last but not least, when I started this project I aspired to develop a more politically sensitive account of the revolution. My primary idea of revolution at that timed rested on a linear understanding of history that takes progress for granted. This made me hesitant at the beginning of this project even to use the concept of revolution for the so-called 1979 Revolution without placing the term in quotation marks because it seemed far from progressive. Confronting the 1979 Revolution, I realised that a linear account cannot grasp the complexity of the historical conjuncture. Indeed, the difficulties faced by all scholars or those tasked with acting in the here and now of defining the present moment and its significance for strategic action became ever clearer to me as I tried to make sense of this complex phenomenon. Accordingly, I stopped putting quotation marks around the word 'revolution' in addressing what happened in Iran in 1979 as I sought to develop a less reductionist and simplistic

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account of state transformation and allowed for many kinds of ruptural transformation and for different combinations of continuity and discontinuity. Thus, although, as Marx famously wrote, revolutions are the locomotives of history, there are multiple tracks that can be laid and followed.

1. Introduction

My main research question below is how did Islamists, especially a significant part of the Shi'a clergy, become the dominant political force in Iran in the 1970s, which was a decade of state transformation? Given that Islamism is 'often taken to describe not the same but many different things in different national settings, of which only a few maybe characterised in terms of social movements' (Bayat, 2005), for my purposes and to avoid any essentialist and/or ahistorical account of Islam, Islamist denotes those who use a particular narrative of Islam as their main semiotic resource in the power struggle. As presented below, the 1970s was a time of transition between the two main periods of Iranian development in the modern era. As such it was a critical conjuncture with high stakes for the future of Iran and the region. I am interested in how the Islamist narrative shaped the transition between these two periods.

Thus, this study explores the capacities of political forces, especially the Shi'a clergy, to shape the transformation of the national state in Iran and how these capacities relate to certain discursive and extra-discursive aspects along with the distinctive spatio-temporal grounding and horizons of their imaginaries, projects, and political interventions, broadly understood. Of particular interest are the state projects and hegemonic visions of the political groups and above all the Shi'a clergy on the eve of the 1979 revolution (chapter 3). Hence, it is important to study the time and space of the 1979 Revolution. The discursive capacities of Islamists helped them promote a

political imaginary that could contribute to the realisation of their hegemonic vision at the time. For this reason, each chapter focuses on a different kind of social imaginary and the thesis, as a whole, brings these alternative imaginaries into dialogue and seeks to understand their overall articulation. The overall structure of the thesis, the purpose and content of individual chapters, and their interconnections are discussed at the end of this introduction.

1.1 The 1979 Revolution

This heading is not as innocent as it might first appear. Indeed, the naming of the object of this doctoral dissertation is contested and this contestation is an important aspect of my analysis. While 'Islamic Revolution' is the common name for what happened in 1979, I reject this label on theoretical grounds because it unreflectingly attributes certain features to that event and even assumes that it is somehow or other essentially 'Islamic' in character. Furthermore, from a political as well as sociological viewpoint, Islamists, thanks to the official narrative of the revolution, emphasise its religious character to justify the oppression of the political opposition, especially leftists, in the Islamic republic. In short, there are theoretical and political issues at stake in identifying the series of event and transformative processes at the centre of my research (chapter 3).

To state that this research concerns a historical event can be misleading. For, it is not about finding new 'historical facts', in the positivist sense of history comprising a succession of historical events. Rather, it is informed by a historical sociology that emphasises the *historicity* of all social phenomena. This has two meanings here. First, for me, as for many critical scholars, history is a political project that is concerned with the present moment. In this context, it can be seen as a project that aims to 'produce new knowledge by interpreting already known facts according to known viewpoints' (Weber, 1949, p. 112). Nonetheless, this study is not a 'history of the past in terms of

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the present' but a 'history of the present' (Fuggle, Lanci, & Tazzioli, 2015, p. 3). In this sense, instead of studying the 1979 revolution in the light of new historical findings and/or 'facts', I focus on the history of the present moment in Iran and stress that this cannot be grasped without an account of the revolution. Thus, this is not a history of 1979 revolution *in* the present moment, but a history *of* the present moment in the light of the path-dependent effects of the 1979 revolution both structurally and in terms of its impact on current political imaginaries. This indicates a second sense of historicity – 'the use of history to make history' (Jessop, 2013).

This can be illustrated from a current political conflict. The main reason for the importance of the 1979 Revolution in reproducing the present moment is a fundamental duality at the moment of its formation (chapter 7). This duality has been realised through its institutions, strategies and hegemonic visions and, in a nutshell, involves a tension between the 'Islamic Revolution' and the 'Islamic Republic of Iran'. This does not imply that a neat dividing line in Iranian history between two separate periods demarcated by this duality. However, it does illuminate a certain contradiction that is expressed intuitionally, strategically, and so forth over the last four decades in Iran. For instance, there are two different military forces that work and act concurrently, the *Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution* (Sepah, سپاه پاسداران انقلاب اسلامی) and the *Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran* (Artesh, ارتش جمهوری اسلامی ایران). While the latter is a more or less 'normal' army similar to the one before the revolution, the former acts and exercises power internally and externally with the aim of realising the Islamic Revolution. At stake, then, is the shifting topological relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran as the territorial crystallisation of the Islamic Revolution and the broader dynamic of the Islamic revolution on a potentially global, or at least not inherently bounded, scale.

Based on my original research for this thesis, I argue that this duality is rooted in Shi'a messianism and the formative moment of the national state in Iran. In this sense, the 1979 Revolution has been translated into Shi'a eschatological language and located within the greater global revolution of the Shi'a Messiah (Mahdi). As the time of the future rise of Mahdi is unknown to Shi'a believers, the horizon of action varies with the time of the anticipated reappearance (chapter 4). Of particular interest here is how these different temporal imaginaries affect the strategies of political forces and their discursive articulation in the present conjuncture. Thus, an account of the transformations wrought during and after the 1979 Revolution is critical for understanding the Islamic Republic and, hence, for writing the history of the present moment.

Studying the national state in Iran can provide a basis for further research on the Middle East and wider Islamic world. Iran can be examined as a national state that is born from a dying mother, i.e., the Persian Empire. The legacy of this imperial background explains the fascinating varieties of languages, religions, nations, ethnicities and minorities that still characterises Iran. Iran also experienced the first constitutional revolution in the Middle East in 1905-1907, developed the first oil well in the Middle East in 1908 and saw the establishment of the Anglo-Persian oil company afterwards. In the early twentieth century, nationalist forces in Iran established an authoritarian developmental regime (Pahlavi Dynasty) to modernise the state and society. Iran was also the first country in the region to witness a nationalisation movement and the first and, some say, the only modern mass party (Tudeh Party of Iran) in the Middle East (1941). Along with its crucial geostrategic location in the Middle East, Iran is an interesting research case of state transformation and revolution.

This research explores Islamism as an evolving comprehensive strategic social imaginary, i.e., one imaginary that provides an orientation to groups that have

objectively strategic importance in Iran as they elaborate rival projects to reconstruct the national state in the 1970s. Indeed, in line with the conceptual vocabulary developed later, it provided these groups with a language for thinking about accumulation strategies, state projects, and hegemonic visions. Equally interesting, however, is that, after establishing a secular-modernised regime, the pro-modernisation discourse had to confront the rise of Islamism (chapter 2). Eventually, Islamists succeeded in subjecting the political regime to a radical political transformation. Increasing its 'imperial' role, Iran, as a 'middle-sized power', has been playing a key strategic role not only in the Arab Middle East since the 1970s, but also in the south border regions of 'Eurasia' since the decomposition of the Soviet Union. Thus, it seems ever more necessary to investigate the inner constitution of the state that has enabled it to play such an important external role. While these remarks indicate the need for a multiperspectival approach to the Iranian state as a unique historical individual, this has never been attempted before. This reveals some of the pivotal weaknesses of the academy in Iran and also points to the unique contribution that this thesis hopes to make.

As noted above and further developed in later chapters, my theoretical and methodological entry-point for this thesis is the successive and/or rival legitimising discourses, hegemonic visions, and sub- or counter-hegemonic visions that have shaped Iran's modern history. Notably, given my particular focus in this thesis on the 1979 Revolution, is how Islamic imaginaries and projects moved from being a marginal force to political success deserves special attention. Moreover, from a strategic-relational viewpoint, this inquiry should go beyond realist-descriptive political analysis and refer to the historical dynamics in Iranian state building and its subsequent transformation. This could also shed light on the transitions that occurred in the Middle East and globally around the same time, especially as Iran, with its Shi'ite tradition,

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differs so much from other Middle Eastern countries marked mainly by a Sunni legacy and movements.

1.2   Periodisation

This research does not aim to write a simple chronology of this revolution; instead it adopts periodisation as an alternative approach to reconstruct a historical moment (on my approach to periodisation, see chapter two). I identify two main periods in the formation of the national state in Iran. The first was the period of national state building (1848 to 1970), when the national state was formed in the context of a dying, if not yet dead and buried, Persian empire. The second period could be named after a transformation in state power and re-imagination of Iran in relation to its neighbouring countries. The second period is not yet finished but the critical moment of transformation between these two periods, the interregnum in the 1970s, offers a unique opportunity to construct a genealogy that can provide the analytical ground of the present moment. This interregnum is especially interesting because, depending on the struggles and balance of forces in this phase, very different results could have emerged. While more is known about the bookends of this process, the interregnum is a black box that needs opening. This periodisation presented here is, of course, still preliminary. For the moment, to situate my analysis, I will concentrate on the first period. However, the 1970s in Iran deserves special attention and focusing on this interregnum is essential to understanding the whole process.

The periodisation presented here contributes to my conjunctural analysis of the 1970s in Iran. In general, one can divide the first period into two stages. The first stage (1848-1921) was the Age of Reform and started with the reign of Nassereddin Shah Qajar (1831-1896). This stage coincided with the emergence of the first great source of

emulation[1], Sheikh Morteza Ansari (1781-1864), and a powerful messianic movement that was inaugurated by Ali Mohammad Bab (1819-1850) aimed to reform in religion and the political establishment of the empire (chapter 4). An important aspect of this stage was the colonial competition between Great Britain and Russia, which led to semi-colonial conditions (Towfigh, 2000 for more details, see chapter 5). In this context, several strategies were formulated by different social forces to redefine and reshape the Persian Empire. These strategies can be categorised into two main groups. Group one comprises strategies oriented to modernising the Persian Empire, i.e. reconstructing imperial state projects and hegemonic visions to reproduce their important role as the organiser of the state bureaucracy and strengthen the empire against outside forces that weaken the ties between the central state and the local powers such as landlords. The second group was concerned with changing the logic of integration from the typical centre-peripheries structure of empires with their regional asymmetries toward greater homogenisation and uniformity based, specifically, on promoting democratic nationalism as a new type of hegemonic vision (Poulantzas, 2000; Towfigh, 2006).

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[1] A source of emulation, *marjaʿ taqlīd* (مرجع تقلید), is the highest rank in Shi'a clergy (the dominant Usuli school), that issue edicts, *fatwa* (فتوا), and Shi'a community follows him. Ansari as the first grand ayatollah is important for, in contrast to the past limited domain of fatwas, he developed rules that allowed sources of emulation to 'issue edicts on virtually any subject'. (Momen, 1985, p. 187)

1848

Ansari, the first grand Ayatollah

Rise of Babi messianic movement

Era of Tanzimat in the Ottoman Empire

1851 Dar ul-Funun
The first modern higher education inst.

Colonial competition between
Great Britain and Russia

1863 a new phase of Babi movement: Bahá'í Faith

1890 revolt against tobacco concession

1896 assasination of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar

1901 D'Arcy oil concession

1905 Revolution in Russia

1906 the protestors ask for a house of justice

The Constitutional Revolution   **1906**

1907 Anglo-Russian agreement:
Iran division into a Russian and British zone

1908 bombardment of the
Parliament by Mohammad Ali Shah

1914 WWI -Ottoman, British and Russian
Empires made Iran their battlefield

1908 Triumph of Tehran by the pro-constitutionalists
The shah was sent to exile

1917 Revolutions in Russia- they left Iran

Years of civil war and local powers

1919 partitioning of the Ottoman Empire

Persian coup by Reza   **1921**

1919 Anglo-Persian Agreement

1921 Qom seminary establishment- new Shi'a center

1923 Reza became the prime minister

1924 Stalin took power in Soviets

1925 End of Qajars- Reza Shah the first Pahlavi king

1929 the Great Depression

1933 a 60-year agreement signed with
Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in favor of Britain

1933 Hitler took power in Germany

1935 Replacement of Persia
with Iran as the name of country

1938 trans-Iranian railway completed

1939 WWII

Reign of Mohammad Reza Shah   **1941**   **Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran**

1941 the Tudeh Party of Iran

1945-6 Azerbaijan People's Government
in the Soviet's occupied lands in Iran

1949 an attempt on the life of the Shah
Tudeh party was blamed and banned

1948 Israeli Declaration of Independence

1951 Ali Razmara, the P.M. was murdered
by a Islamist group that inspired Khomeini

1949 the establishment of
the People's Republic of China

1951 Nationalization of oil
Mosaddegh became the P.M.

1953

1953 death of Stalin   **American-British coup**

1956 the first Resalah Amaliyah- Boroujerdi

1957 Savak- Organization of
Intelligence and National Security

1956 the nationalisation of the Suez Canal

1959 Cuban Revolution

1960 The Organization of the Petroleum
Exporting Countries (OPEC) formed

1961 Death Borujerdi the last Grand Ayatollah

1961-3 Kennedy as the US. President

1963 the White Revolution

1963 the Third Development Plan

1963-4 Khomeini openly opposed the Shah
sent to exile First to Turkey soon to Najaf in Iraq

1967 the Fourth Development Plan

1967 the Six Day War between Israel and Arab nations

1968 the pan-Arabist Ba'ath party took power in Iraq

1969 Nixon Doctrine

1970 Khomeini's book: Islamic Government   **1970**   1970 British forces left Persian Gulf

1971 Siahkal -first leftist guerrilla operation

1971 independence of Bahrain

1971 The 2,500 year celebration

1973 the oil embargo by Arab countries
The price qudraupt

1973 the Fifth Development Plan

1973 American coup in Chile

1975 Rastakhiz- Iran's single legal political party

1975 Lebanese Civi Warl

1976 the Post-oil-boom crisis
Inflation and massive corruption

1977 Hoveyda -the P.M.- resigned for 14 years

1978 Khomeini moved to France from Iraq

1978 the communist Party seized power in Afghanistan

1979

Figure 1.1: The main periodisation based on the chronology of significant internal and external events.

Here, I note some important features of this stage, to be elaborated in later chapters. First, there were two main phases in this stage, demarcated by the 1906 Constitutional Revolution. This created the conditions for the vision of democratic nationalism to win hegemony. This dream faded when Iran was invaded by imperialist forces during WWI. Moreover, the rise of the Soviet Union and abolition of the colonial manipulation Imperial Russia changed the conditions of semi-colonisation in Iran.

The first stage (1848-1921): The age of reform and democratic nationalism	
Phases	**External events**
The first phase (1848-1906)	**1905 revolution in Russia**
The second phase (1906-1921)	**1914 WWI** **1917 Revolutions in Russia** **1919 Anglo-Persian Agreement**

Table 1.1: The first stage of the first period (1848-1921).

The second stage (1921-1970) was the Age of Modernisation. As Towfigh (2000) argues, disappointed about nationalist democracy - as the hegemonic vision of the previous stage – the bureaucrats as a strategic group sought to find an iron fist to proceed with their own state project from above. The main reason for that was the inability of the governments to overcome internal conflicts among local powers, tribes and political groups and resist the external pressures from Russian and British empires. The new stage had four phases. Phase one (1921-1941) comprises the reign of Reza Shah. It was the era of consolidation in which the local nobles and notables were integrated into a powerful central government. It was also coincided with the emergence and consolidation the Qom seminary in Iran and a scalar turn in the Shi'a

network from a regional toward a national level of action. The invasion of the country by allied forces during the Second World War concluded this phase. The next phase (1941 to 1953) was that of nationalisation of resources and was associated with three strategic groups. The Tudeh party appeared for the first time as a strategic group at the national level and was one of the leading forces behind nationalisation. The other two strategic groups were technocrats, also represented in the National Front that formed in support of Mosaddegh[2] the struggle over nationalisation of oil resources, its extraction, processing, and export, and local nobles and notables who mainly supported the new Shah, namely, Asadollah Alam[3], who feared Tudeh Party and support the coup. The third phase (1953 to 1963) was one of transition as the technocrats finally integrated into the state apparatus, and the Tudeh party abolished from the political scene of Iran with its key members ran to exile, imprisoned or executed. The last phase of the second stage was from 1963 to 1970. It began with the White Revolution[4] (1963) and the third development plan[5]. The fifth chapter mainly

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[2] Mohammad Mosaddegh (1882 -1967), the leader of nationalisation of oil in Iran, was prime minister (1951-3) until the US/British coup. He was jailed for three years and later kept in house arrest until his death.

[3] Asadollah Alam (1919-1978), born into a powerful and family of landlords of the south east of Iran. He became the prime minister (1962-1964) and later minister of royal court for 10 years until 1977. He was one of the Shah's closest friends.

[4] Officially named the 'Revolution of the Shah and the People', this was a set of reforms introduced by the regime to decrease the danger of a socialist revolution, including land reforms, nationalisation of forests, electoral reform, denationalisation of state industries, profit-sharing for workers in industrial establishments, female suffrage, and the creation of a literacy corps (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 424; Pesaran, 1982).

[5] The first (1949-1955) and second (1955-1962) Development Plans were just a limited set of projects, mostly focused on infrastructure, without any comprehensive planning for the development of the country. In contrast, thanks to the growing oil revenue, in the third Development Plan, for the first time, a detailed and sophisticated set of objectives, 'overall grow

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discusses this phase and the era of transformation in the 1970s, which was significant as the interregnum between the first and second periods – an interregnum not in a dynastic or teleological sense but in the sense that the second period was prefigured in the first.

The second stage (1921-1970): The age of modernisation and dictatorship	
Phases	**External events**
1921-1941	**WWII**
1941-1953	**Anglo-American Coup**
1953-1963	**Post-Stalin era in the Soviet Union**
1963-1970	**Nixon doctrine**

Table 1.2: The second stage of the first period (1921-1970).

As noted above, the interregnum between two main periods, the 1970s, is the primary focus of this project, which rests on a periodisation concerned with the decade's different temporalities.

1.3 Mapping the following chapters

This work investigates the prehistory and political conjuncture of the 1979 revolution and the capacities of Shi'a clergy to develop the counter-hegemonic visions that challenged the Shah's regime. Regarding the heuristic purpose of this project, a

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rate and sectoral targets, as well as the sources and uses of development finance' were introduced and combined with the White Revolution (Amuzegar, 1977, p. 163).

chapter-based organisation of the thesis is not the only way to read it. While each chapter can be read separately in its own terms, the complexity of the 1979 Revolution justifies identifying important conceptual and thematic cross-links within and across successive chapters. These are presented in Figure 2. The core of the thesis comprises three main chapters that focus respectively on one of the three imaginaries identified in Figure 2 but also refer to the others where relevant. A similar principle applies to the three key issues in Iranian national state formation: progress, justice, and independence (chapter 5). Here, however, concept of justice is the nodal point for understanding the other two concepts because, as shown in chapter five, they can both be construed in terms of justice.
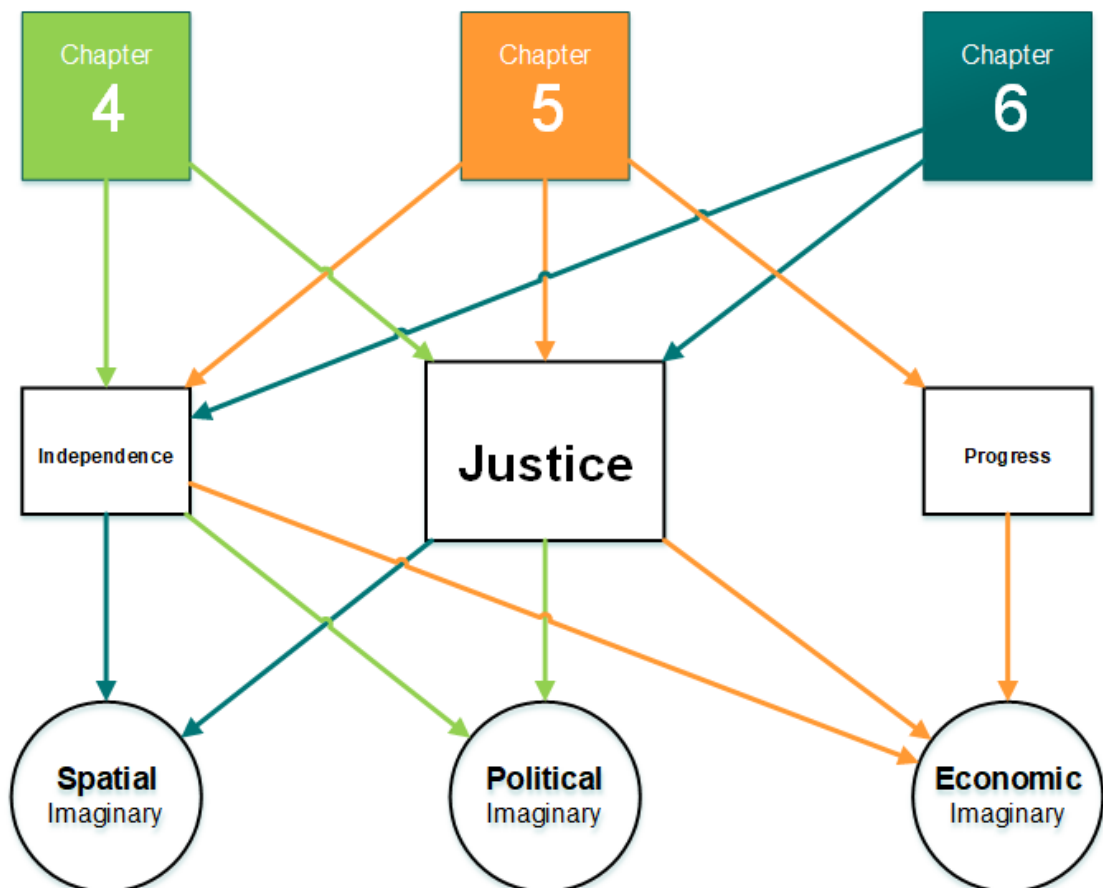
Figure 1.2: A map of the main chapters, focus points and imaginaries.

I now present the main content and questions of each chapter. Chapter two begins with a review of the dominant theories of the 1979 Revolution and national state in Iran to identify their potentials and shortcomings. In particular, the chapter discusses different accounts of Islamism and the rise of Khomeini to demarcate the dominance of the Modernization Theory and its concepts on several theories of the 1979 Revolution in Iran. Thus, it argues that these theories cannot account for the rise of Khomeini and his subsequent success in Iran regarding its (extra-)discursive aspects for they lack strategic concepts and concerns. Apart from reviewing existing theories, the chapter stresses the different historical moments that are stressed by a variety of scholars. This should assist readers less familiar with Iranian history to understand later chapters.

Chapter three introduces my conceptual toolbox and discusses a few other alternative theoretical sources. It demonstrates how the Strategic-Relational Approach and Cultural Political Economy can provide strategic concepts and insights (e.g., state projects, hegemonic visions, and accumulation strategies) to addresses the question of Khomeini's dominance in the revolutionary moment. Likewise, it compares these approaches with others to provide a map of the theoretical terrain and the relation of potential alternative perspective with this study. The chapter presents the concept of social imaginary to address sense- and meaning-making and its relation to the state power. It also adopts time and then space as entry point to discuss spatio-temporality. Regarding the former, it defines periodisation, in contrast with chronological approach to history, in order to facilitate working with several temporalities in this study. In terms of the latter, the TPSN approach is presented to elaborate its merits for a multi-dimensional approach to space. After these remarks, the chapter introduces the Logical-Historical method as a grand theory that enables studies the problem of this research without falling to positivism and empiricism. Building up on the chapter's remarks, finally, the conceptual toolbox of the research is introduced.

The fourth chapter examines the dominant political imaginary of the 1979 Revolution. In particular, it examines Shi'ism and the Shi'a clergy to discuss the (extra-)discursive capacities of Islamists in forming a hegemonic vision to transform the national state in the 1970s conjuncture. In doing so, Shi'a martyrology and eschatology are stressed. While the former denotes a never-ending war between good and evil forces that necessarily connects past, present, and future, the latter is inherently future-oriented and provides an important ground for integrating future (political) wars to age-old conflicts. In other words, this martyrological-eschatological duality engendered something that was, at the same time, very old and very new: the concept and, indeed, strategy of just war. These two elements are translated into a political imaginary that transforms the conservative boundaries of the 'Others' in Islam. In this sense, an 'us' formed that includes almost everyone except the Shah. This hegemonic vision mobilised people in the several demonstrations resulting in the revolution. The chapter looks beyond mainstream accounts of Shi'a clergy as a mere 'traditionalist force' to illuminate the consequences of the historical constitution of the Shi'a clergy in the mid-19th century and their transformation into an important political force on the political scene in Iran and the Middle East. In this context, I reinterpret Khomeini's political project and locate it in the wider periodisation of Iranian national state formation. This long chapter also underpins the next two chapters, where I discuss economic and spatial imaginaries in the 1970s.

While the fourth chapter started from the Shia history to provide an account of national state transformation in Iran, chapter five begins with the national state in Iran in order to connect the discursive and extra-discursive conditions and forces that operated in the 1970s. Revisiting the history of Iran in the last two centuries, the chapter introduces the holy triad of the national state in Iran comprising justice, progress and independence: the problematic of governance in Iran in a nutshell. Each axis of this triad is examined regarding its relevant temporality. The chapter's main focus is the

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dominant economic imaginaries and a failed shift among them. Likewise, the question of justice and its conceptualisation is discussed. It suggests that, following the economic crisis of the mid-1970s, the Shah failed to manage his image as a just ruler. This failure has close ties with the particularities of oil in Iran. For, oil has extra-economic aspects that are important for national state formation in Iran. Thus, an oil-related crisis paved the way for a greater transformation of the state in Iran. Crucial here is the connection drawn between the symptoms of the crisis and the Islamists' diagnosis of its causes and proposals for overcoming it. For the crisis provided the pretext for their assertion of another kind of justice. This was facilitated by the inconsistency between the Shah's account of justice, which promoted equality to prevent leftist opposition, and the results of the uneven capitalist development that occurred under his government. The first great economic crisis on a national scale revealed the limits of the 'holy triad' as articulated under the Shah's regime and opened the space for an alternative, Islamist articulation. The notion of this holy triad shapes the whole thesis and is presented in figure 5.2.

Chapter six is devoted to the spaces of the 1979 Revolution as a spatial understanding of revolution in Iran is rather novel. It examines the space of revolution and spatiality of Khomeini's counter-hegemonic vision. I argue that Shi'a spaces were important when combined with the space of the national state in Iran and its ongoing transformations in the 1970s. Of special relevance is how political forces incorporate spatiality in their (counter-)hegemonic visions through spatial imaginaries. This does not entail separating the time of the 1979 Revolution from its spatial configuration. Rather, studying the Islamists' spatial imaginary can shed light on the extra-territorial aspects of the conjuncture. Specifically, I want to know why those who came to the streets to demonstrate considered themselves to be in the most crucial moment of the history and the heart of the world. Why did they not limit their understanding of the space of revolution to the borders of the national state? Regarding this, the chapter

stresses the space of messianism in Shia and its capacity to transform the spaces of the national state in Iran. Moreover, the spatiality of the oil complex and the spatial impact of the mid-1970s oil embargo are discussed to illuminate the changes in social boundaries and its related strategic selectivities. The final factor regarding the spaces of revolution is the formation of Israel and its role in forming a trans-national 'we' that rescaled the resistance against the Shah by Islamists and provided them with a means to put the movement in an extra-territorial context. Thus, their spatial imaginary, locates the struggle against the Shah as a part of a broader movement against tyrants in the region toward a universal justice.

The concluding chapter, apart from summarising previous chapters, follows their cross-cutting links to examine the complexity of the conjuncture by connecting the separate findings in different chapters. Moreover, it builds on the previous chapters to move toward a synthesis of them. Last but not least, it discusses the limitations of this study and advances further questions about the 1979 Revolution to contribute to future works.

2. Theorising the Iranian State and 1979 Revolution

I am shocked because the new U.S ambassador said we have a religious opposition in Iran. Does he mean the Islamic Marxists? They are all communist.

The Shah, May 28, 1977. Source: Alam (2014).

For the people who inhabit this land, what is the point of searching, even at the cost of their own lives, for this thing whose possibility we have forgotten since the Renaissance and the great crisis of Christianity, a political spirituality.

Michael Foucault, October 1978[1]

2.1 Introduction

'Attention! Attention! This is Tehran, the true voice of the Iranian nation, the voice of the revolution.' This was the announcement of the national radio station just after its capture by guerrilla forces and other armed persons on the evening of 11 February, 1979. The revolution was a shock on many levels and its causes, character and subsequent development are still hotly disputed. This is indicated by the diversity of names used to designate the event. These include the Islamic revolution, the Iranian revolution, the 1979 revolution, the defeated revolution, the counterrevolution, and so

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[1] In: *What Are the Iranians Dreaming [Rêvent] About?* First published in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, October 16–22, 1978. (Afary & Anderson, 2010, p. 209)

forth. For, in politics, as mediated through discourse, debate, and deliberation, the primary weapons are words and their usages (Koselleck, 2004, p. 57). The politics of naming aside, the revolution is widely regarded as a strange and unpredictable event (Kurzman, 2004, p. 1). It was tough to foresee it or satisfactorily theorise it afterwards. This could be partly due to an optimistic view of history that sees the rise of a religious group to power as an exception from the norm of progress. Enlightenment rationalism cannot accept that two centuries after the French Revolution, the Shi'a clergy led the downtrodden and promoted their eschatology, which anticipates that tyranny and injustice would come before the end time. Indeed, this optimistic Enlightenment rationalism is a major reason why so much political and theoretical attention was paid to the 1979 Revolution. For instance, Ghamari Tabrizi suggests that Foucault's 'conviction that the Enlightenment rationality has not closed the gate of unknown possibilities for human sciences, was motivated his writing on the 1979 Revolution' (Ghamari-Tabrizi, 2016, p. 192).

So fascinated was Foucault, when reporting the revolution from Tehran for *Corriere della Sera*, that he wrote that it lacked the two main driving forces that western observers regard as typical of a 'revolution': class struggle and political ideology (Foucault, 1988, p. 212). No wonder that leftist opposition forces in Iran were busy trying to locate this surprising and changing conjuncture in their linear historical narrative and to place themselves at the forefront of the revolution. They failed to do so. Indeed, tragically, history was repeating itself for them. They considered themselves as the Iranian incarnations of Lenin and/or other comparable revolutionary figures. Yet their accounts did not match the emerging reality of events and, disoriented by the revolutionary turmoil, they could not understand the rise of Khomeini. Kurzman (2004, p. 166) interestingly suggests developing an 'anti-explanation' for the revolution instead of explaining it. The former means 'abandoning the project of retroactive prediction in favour of recognising and reconstructing the lived experience of the

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moment'. However, before that, it is necessary to summarise and critique the dominant accounts and explanations of the 1979 Revolution.

This chapter has seven sections and aims both to review the history of Iran and to provide a brief historical background for those unfamiliar with Iran's history. Section two addresses some general concerns regarding studying the national state and revolutions in Iran. The third section focuses on the Iranian state, historiography, and historical references for theories on the 1979 Revolution. Section four discusses the roots and domination of Modernisation Theory in Iran for several theories, explicitly or implicitly, adopt its concepts and hypothesises. The fifth section is devoted to oil, development and the political economy of pre-revolutionary Iran. In particular, the Rentier State theory is introduced, and its effects on the explanation of the revolution are discussed. Section six turns to theories that take Shi'a Islam seriously and/or attempt to provide a multi/causal holistic narrative of the revolution. The last section sets the stage for subsequent chapters. As this chapter is not ordered chronologically, the sections may overlap. Thus, the chapter moves forward and backwards and revisits historical events and processes, introducing relevant accounts and concepts as necessary or appropriate.
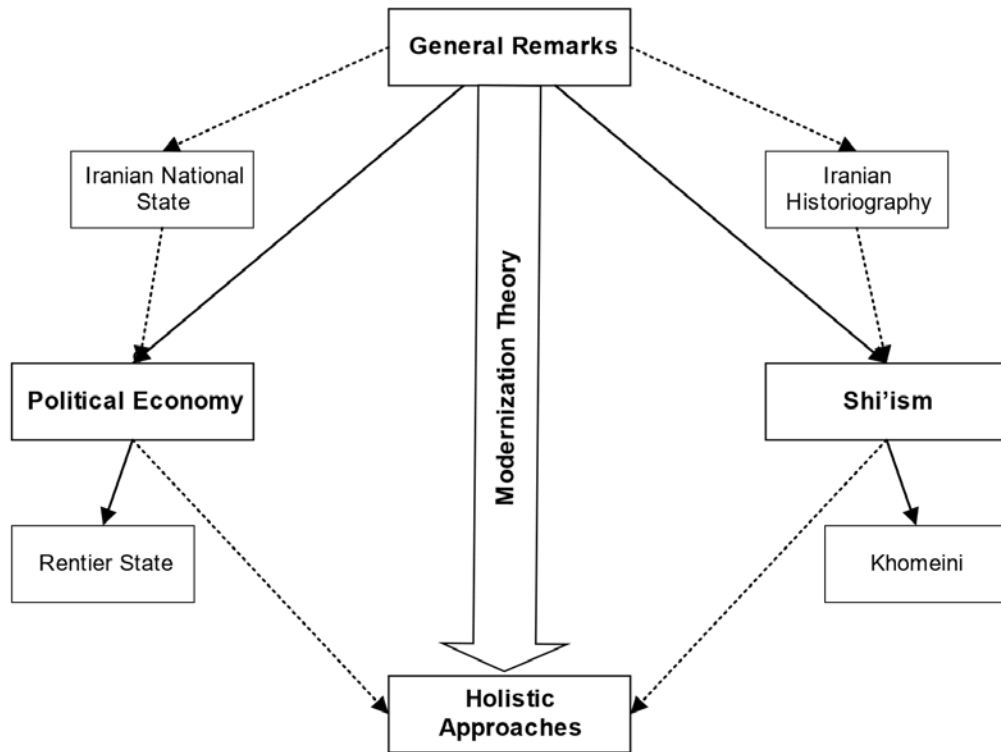
Figure 2.1: Mapping chapter two.

2.2   A few general remarks

Bayat (2013) distinguishes two contrasting ways of explaining changes in the Middle East: those that present these changes as 'exceptional' and those that uncritically deploy generic models and concepts for analysing societies. This creates a theoretical impasse. For example, trying to locate the Iranian revolution in theories on revolution, Keddie (1983) describes it as 'aberrant'. Arguing for a general theory of revolution before, Skocpol exemplifies the 1979 Revolution as the only revolution that 'was made' (Skocpol, 1982, p. 275). Matin (2013, p. 1) summarises the main circular argument of the dominant theories of the 1979 Revolution and illustrates the impasse as follows: 'the revolution is exceptional because it does not fit existing general theories, and general theories cannot accommodate the revolution because it is exceptional'. He stresses that this argument is a sign of a greater problem, namely, 'Eurocentrism'. This is a 'specifically internalist mode of comprehending modernity that begins and ends

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with Europe as a socio-culturally homogenous and discrete space' (Matin, 2013, p. 2). This Eurocentrism is rooted in the 'Orientalist' (Said, 2003) approach to the Middle East:

> Mainstream Orientalism tends to depict the Muslim Middle East as a monolithic, fundamentally static, and thus 'peculiar' entity. By focusing on a narrow notion of (a rather static) culture – one that is virtually equated with the religion of Islam Middle Eastern societies have been characterized more in terms of historical continuity than in terms of change. In this perspective, change, albeit uncommon, may indeed occur, but primarily via individual elites, military men, or wars and external powers. (Bayat, 2013, p. 3)

On the left, Vali (1993, p. 3) identifies a similar duality between 'Soviet' and 'Asiatic' periodisations of Iranian history. The former approach seeks to confirm the perfect coherence of Iranian political development with the historical analyses of pro-Soviet scholars influenced by the linear, teleological Stalinist reading of Marx's 1859 preface (Marx, 1977). The reading provides a stage-ist template (i.e. ancient, feudal, bourgeois societies) that can guide historical analysis and political practice. This template poses problems for those seeking to explain specific patterns of historical development because there are always some anomalies and, to preserve the template, Soviet accounts resort to distorted accounts to make them fit the iron bed/iron law of unilinear development. In most cases, the differences are explained as 'deviations' from the norm. In short, these approaches simply fail to see, neglect to mention, or misrepresent deviant facts or else they differentiate important general and insignificant particular features or resort to more complicated tautologies as in the case of Nomani's analysis of pre-capitalist Iran in terms of the concept of 'Iranian Feudalism' (Nomani, 1972). Conversely, sharing the same reference model, Asiatic periodisations 'admit to the general theoretical validity of the schema in the European context, but are opposed to its universalization and application to non-European societies, arguing that such a

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universalization ignores the fundamental dissimilarities between European and Iranian histories' (Vali, 1993, p. 4). Thus, Ashraf (1969) and Katouzian (1981) argue for an extended Asiatic period instead of Slavery and Feudalism in the Soviet approaches (Vali, 1993, p. 12). Focusing on the 'despotic state', Asiatic approaches 'displace the 'specificity' of Iranian history in favour of its 'uniqueness'' (Vali, 1993, pp. 12–13).

Perhaps the general feature of these two dualities is that they are grounded in 'comparativism', which 'tends to take one of the elements of the comparison as the norm for the other, finding that there is either a resemblance or a lack of one, but never questioning the original configuration' (Roy, 1994, pp. 8–9). For example, Vali (1993, p. 4) criticises leftist periodisations of Iran because they 'consider the Marxist concepts as 'ideal type' models and attempt to prove or disprove their applicability to Iranian history with reference simply to the latter's similarities and dissimilarities with European feudalism'. Opposing these dualities, Bayat (2013, pp. 5–6) suggests that one should 'think and introduce fresh perspectives to observe, a novel vocabulary to speak, and new analytical tools to make sense of specific regional realities'. In doing so, first we need to review the dominant accounts of the national state and 1979 revolution in Iran.

2.3   The national state in Iran

As Towfigh (2000) argues, unfortunately, there is no theory of the national state in Iran. He correctly observes that the problem of Iranian national state is more theoretical than empirical. Scholars who attempt to theorise the state and/or revolution took for granted the Iranian state and began their studies at different moments in Iranian history. Foran (1993) starts from the Safavid Empire (1500 A.C.) and Moazami (2013), traces the state formation in Iran back to 1796 and the rise of Qajars. In particular, Moazami (2013) emphasises that the Ottoman reforms (Tanzimat) were the main source of inspiration for the Iranian reformists in the 19th century (cf. Towfigh, 2000, p. 90) and the Russian Empire influences the Qajar's court and military system. Based on these

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observations, Moazami (2013, p. 157) locates the Qajars and a larger body namely 'Eurasian regional state system' that, besides Iran, compromises the Russian and Ottoman Empires. The base of this 'othering' is that none of them can be fitted into the Weberian account of the modern territorial state with its 'monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within their territories' (chapter 3). Instead of monopolising 'the means of coercion', the Qajars maintained the state by 'cultivating alliances among other tribes, divani families [the Persian speaking bureaucrats], and commercial interests' (Moazami, 2013, p. 156). Thus for Moazami, the Qajar state involved a 'centralised' rule based on 'fragmented authorities': 'a coalition of the autonomous military power of tribes and the warlords of settled agricultural communities, with the cooperation of city and provincial notables and the bureaucratic divani families' (Moazami, 2013, p. 13). The merit of his account of state formation in Iran is its engagement with the history of Iran but, while trying to avoid Eurocentrism, still suffers from comparativism because it takes the modern European state as its reference point. This leads Moazami to focus more on the continuities in the formation of the Iranian national state than its discontinuities. He correctly follows the historical formation and institutionalisation of Shi'a clergy and provides a valuable context for understanding the rise of Khomeini.
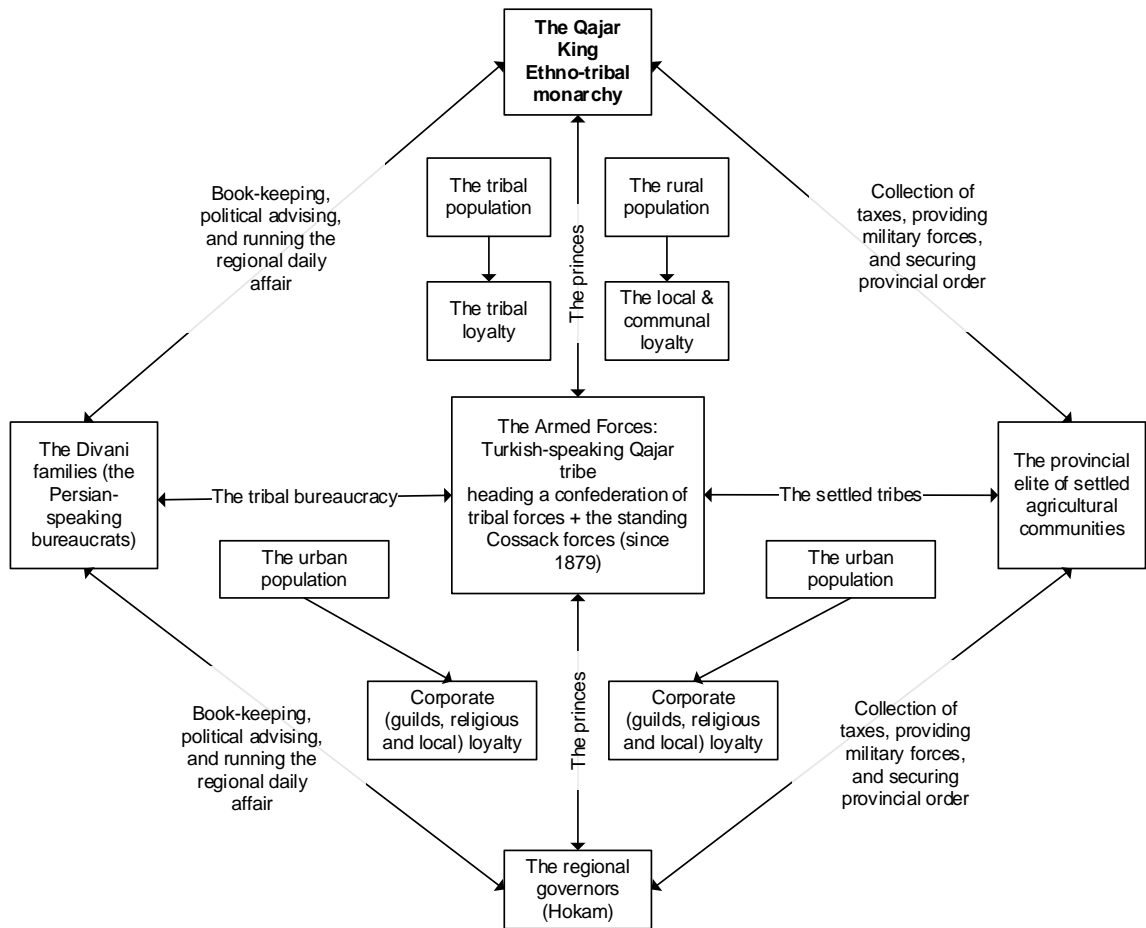
Figure 2.2: 'Centralised, but fragmented rule' in Iran, 1796–1925.
Source: (Moazami, 2013, p. 14)

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the 'centralised but fragmented' rule of Qajars, as described by Moazami, witnessed the semi-colonial interventions of the Russian and British Empires and integration to the world market. Towfigh (2000, 2006) argues that the old bureaucrats were the first ones who were affected by the Semi-colonial conditions of the 19th century Iran that weakend the established central-local order (chapter 5). Losing their position as the handlers of the relation among the central state and local powers, they started searching for a solution similar to Ottoman Tanzimat beginning with reforming the old state (Towfigh, 2000, pp. 89–90). At the same time, in the clashes resulting from political and economic intervention of the super powers, for the first time, 'the tremendous political potential of the use of clerical

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domination over the masses for the purpose of mass mobilization' was uncovered (Arjomand, 2016, p. 395). These things together set the stage for the Constitutional Revolution at the beginning of the 20th century.

Another reference point for many scholars who study the 1979 Revolution is the Constitutional Revolution (1906-8) and, like generals fighting the last war, they expect history to repeat itself. Thus, following the 1979 Revolution, many political groups were expecting that the Shi'a clergy would be marginalised (Towfigh, 2000, p. 323). Martin (2013, p. 7) suggests that 'the combination of state weakness, economic problems, popular discontent and elite disgruntlement produced the Constitutional Revolution'. Whether this is correct or not, this account shaped the dominant narratives of the 1979 Revolution. For example, focusing on class ideology, Bashiriyeh (1984, p. 174) stresses that 'the ideology of the Islamic Revolution was basically the continuation of the Islamic nationalism of the late nineteenth century, based on the reaction of the Ulama and the bazaar to Western economic and political penetration'. Akhavi (1980, p. 25) credits the Shi'a clergy for 'articulating grievances and leading the struggle against the monarchy's tyranny'. Interestingly, the official narrative of the 1979 Revolution in Iran, considers Shaykh Fazullah Nuri (1843-1909), an anti-constitutional ayatollah who was executed by constitutionalists, as a 'forerunner to the Islamic revolution' because he was resisting the 'Westernization seculars' (Abbas Amanat, 2009b, p. 25). Moazami (2013, p. 78) argues that the Constitutional moment is the convergence of institutionalisation of Shi'a clergy and formation of the state in Iran. For 'the ulama, as a constitutionally recognized social and political entity with certain rights and privileges, effectively entered the evolving national political arena' (Moazami, 2013, p. 78). According to him, this is evident in the electoral law of 1906 that categorises the electors of the nation in six main 'classes' (Moazami, 2013, p. 81). These comprise: '(i) princes and the Qajar tribe; (ii) doctors of divinity and Students

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[ulama]; (iii) nobles and notables; (iv) merchants; (v) landed proprietors and peasants; (vi) trade-guilds' (Browne, 1910, p. 355).

There is a general problem in almost all accounts of the 1979 Revolution that build on narratives of the Constitutional Revolution that conceal or deny the major role of Babi apocalyptic movement and its followers in the 19th century Iran (chapter four). This leads to what Amanat (2009b, p. 40) calls the 'de-hereticization' of the historiography of the constitutional revolution as the Shi'a clergy and political Islam are written out of the script. Exceptions to this approach include Moazami (2013) as well as Amanat himself. The latter's fascinating work draws on significant texts and figures to show that the messianic atmosphere of Babi movement (the 1840s) contributed greatly to the constitutional revolutionary moment (the 1900s). For Babis and crypto-Babis who hid their pro-Babi beliefs, 'the Revolution presented a messianic moment of awakening when forces of injustice and oppression were overcome, forces that manifested themselves in the Qajar state and the ulama establishment' (Abbas Amanat, 2009b, p. 35). Thus, Babism provided a political imaginary, i.e. a frame to understand that historical moment (chapter 3). They were important in mobilising the Shi'a clergy and articulating the constitutional discourse but overlooked and undermined by the Iranian historiography. The modern historians of Iran 'are less sensitive to alternative readings of the past, and less willing to remember forbidden memories and unsettling realities that go against the accepted order of things' (Abbas Amanat, 2009b, p. 23). The 'accepted order of things' is related to the present conjuncture. Thus, one can ask about the impacts of Babism on Khomeini's hegemonic vision.

In contrast to the few accounts that explore political Islam and the messianic nature of the Constitutional Revolution, the official Iranian historiography provided the master narratives of history and fed it to the public culture via textbooks, monuments, stamps and so forth. The modern historiography of Iran formed in the 1920s and with the rise

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of Reza Shah Pahlavi. During the Pahlavi era, the Constitutional Revolution was narrated officially as 'an altruistic public effort that nevertheless triggered domestic chaos, foreign occupation and political betrayal; an upheaval that eventually brought to an end by Reza Khan, the savior of Iran'.

> for the Pahlavi historians the national history was a tailored discourse whose main task was to institute a mass historical memory juxtaposed with its corresponding amnesia. The natural repercussion of such a task was to ensure a historical legitimacy for the political establishment or those who challenge its entity. For some vernacular intelligentsia, who studied the past, the frequent antinomy was the interpretation of the national history vis-à-vis the nation's mere contemporary manifestation. The past in its entirety was often assumed to be a mirror which reflected the national destiny. (Atabaki, 2009, p. 70)

In short, the rise of Reza Shah as the saviour of Iran became a template for narrating the national history. This 'dehistoricization' of a specific conjuncture (Atabaki, 2009, p. 78) encouraged an 'elitist' narrative of history for the entire 1920s-1950s period:

> was marked by the rise and fall of dynasties whose fall came as a result of chaos and where territorial disintegration was viewed pessimistically. At the same time, this led the subjects to expect the appearance of yet another authoritative agent who enjoyed the divine effulgence, if not the popular acceptance, to establish a new order. (Atabaki, 2009, p. 73).

Interestingly, Atabaki (2009, p. 92) suggests that, as the 1979 Revolution approached, thanks to modern historiography in Iran, 'the call for an impeccable saviour became more apparent, so much so that the intelligentsia saw no other option but to look once again for yet another redeemer'.

It is noteworthy that for those scholars who understand the 1979 revolution as a clash between traditional and modern political forces, the late 19th century is the moment when this confrontation escalated.

> [T]he beginning of modernization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries set the stage for the emergence of a dual society in Iran which has been characterized by the reproduction and endurance of traditional life styles and modes of thought among the religio-bazaari strata, peasants, and tribesmen and the gradual departure, since the beginning of the present century, of the modernizing strata from centuries-old Persian cultural traditions. (Ashraf, 1981, p. 25)

Looking for the historical grounds for a class analysis, Abrahamian (1979, p. 414) stresses the 'socioeconomic impact' of attempts to confront the West that led to the Constitutional Revolution, specifically, the rise of a discontented, revolutionary 'national bourgeoisie'.

> the alleviation of communal conflicts, helped create a propertied middle class; the propertied middle class, threatened by foreign competitors and local compradors, became a discontented national bourgeoisie, aware of both its own strengths and the weaknesses of the ruling dynasty; and the discontented national bourgeoisie, encouraged by the traditional anti-state sentiments of the Shi'i 'ulama', developed into a revolutionary class. Economic changes had caused social changes; social changes, in turn, had led to political changes. (Abrahamian, 1979, p. 414)

Unfortunately, given the theoretical approach to be developed below, in dealing with the 1979 revolution, Abrahamian abandons this class-based account for the more familiar contrast between the 'developed socioeconomic system and the underdeveloped political system'.

With the social turn in historiography in the 1960s, some approaches were developed that assume an essential historical coherence and continuity to Iranian history. For

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example, stressing Iran's geopolitical location in the way of several tribes, Piran (2010) suggests that despotic states in Iran arise from enduring security needs. Katouzian (1981) argues that 'the Iranian state and society perennially oppose each other', which is assumed a theoretically-constructed duality as the nation and state of Iran, which have invariant essences that run in parallel through Iran's history (Schayegh, 2010, p. 46). As Towfigh correctly elaborated: Katouzian stretches a temporal separation of the state and people in the 1960s and 1970s to the whole history of Iran and portraits it as an essential element of Iranian history (Towfigh, 2006). Similarly, in his later works, Katouzian puts forward the 'theory of arbitrary rule' to describe what he assumes to be a 'norm in Iranian history':

> Iran has been an arbitrary state and society throughout its history. That is, power and authority has not been based in law; state and society have been virtually independent from, hence, antagonistic towards, each other; the state has not been representative of the higher social classes; on the contrary, they have been its clients by virtue of the privileges it has bestowed upon them, and has withdrawn at will; property ownership has been a privilege not a right; and so on. (Katouzian, 2003, p. 10)

His essentializing approach to history takes the existence of the Iranian state for granted and then narrates 'its' history from ancient time to the present moment. Comparing the two revolutions in Iran, Katouzian criticises attempts to describe and explain the Constitutional Revolution as a 'bourgeois revolution', like Abrahamian's account, and claims that they were both 'revolutions against arbitrary rule' that is the norm in the history of Iran (Katouzian, 2003, p. 27). This quest for a general theory leads Katouzian to offer a simplistic, ahistorical account.

Schayegh (2010, p. 38) criticises historiographies of the Pahlavi era for 'methodological statism' on the grounds that historians have been gripped by the image of an omnipotent, completely autonomous state'. However, one can also find 'histories from

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below' in the Iranian historiography, e.g. Khazeni (2009) whose work is discussed on the next page. It seems that the interesting observation of Schayegh is based on a more institutional understanding of the state. Regarding Schayegh's critique, I argue that one should approach social transformations armed with a meso-level study of transformations of the Iranian society that focuses on the state power (chapter 3).

The best attempt to theorise the forms and modalities of state power in Iran is that of Ebrahim Towfigh (2000, 2006). In contrast with essentialist, dehistoricizing accounts, he stresses the ruptural and contingent development of the national state in Iran. Weber (1978, p. 231) argues that patrimonial domination happens, whenever traditional domination develops an administration and a military force that are purely personal instruments of the master'. Stressing the moment of formation of the national state under the Pahlavi Dynasty, Towfigh (2006) claims that the old system of political feudalism based on the tribal characteristics of Iranian society could not rescale and integrate the feudal power network into a modern, centralised state (cf. Vali, 1993). During the early Qajar era, there had been 'a certain balance between centralisation and decentralisation, between centripetal and centrifugal elements throughout the empire' (Khazeni, 2009, p. 8). Towfigh argues that the Iranian national state has been formed as 'the negation (in the Hegelian sense) of the feudal political power structure that, encountering the semi-colonisation[2] in the 19th century, could not reproduce itself anymore' (Towfigh, 2006). However, in a dialectical twist (or *Aufhebung*), the old structure that was destroyed by the modern army and bureaucracy was revived in a

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[2] The colonial competition of the Great Britain and Russia made the colonization conditions impossible. According to Towfigh (2006), while the northern axis, that its geopolitical situation facilitated its integration with the world market, witnessed reformist bureaucrats, in the southern axis with the influences of Great Britain the tribal power network was dominant.

'pseudo-patrimonial' way. In other words, the old structure was dismissed, but its carriers were re-integrated into the modern state.

In discussing the Iranian national state, Towfigh recognises two main strategic groups. The first is the technocrats who derive from the old reformist bureaucrats (divani) in the north-west axis. The second is local nobles and notables, which mainly represents the interest of landlords and tribal chiefs in the south and east axis (Towfigh, 2000, 2006). While the former initially followed a nationalist hegemonic vision to form a powerful central state to re-integrate peripheral nobles and notables, the latter, thanks to British support, acted as centrifugal forces (e.g. Sheikh Khaz'al in the oil fields of the south-west). Towfigh argues that this inherited contradiction is the main key to understanding the Iranian national state. For Towfigh, the historical milestone in the historical constitution of the Iranian state is the change in the imperialist balance in the region. With the October Revolution and formation of the Soviet Union, in 1919 the British government tried to transform the Iranian state into a full colonial state. When this proved difficult, its primary strategic goal shifted to building a powerful central state in Iran that could resist the influence of the Soviet Union. Hence, for the first time since the mid-19th century, the two strategic groups reached the same conclusion and came to share common interests (Towfigh, 2006). Thus, the Pahlavi state was the product of the close cooperation and coalition of these groups. For instance, according to Towfigh (2000), the land reforms program (1963) that began as a part of the technocrat group's state project, in the first phase (mainly north and west) was a radical land distribution. However, later, as the balance shifted among the main strategic groups, the second and third phases initiated a banal transformation of ownership to preserve the interest of landlords (mainly in south and east). As long as the regime could maintain this contradiction, it could avoid the 'crisis tendency' of its formation (Towfigh, 2006).

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The technocrats' strategic group was crystallised institutionally in the ministry of labour and particularly the plan organisation (Towfigh, 2006). The White Revolution, in this sense, was the pseudo-patrimonial reintegration of the apolitical centralist technocrats alongside with the conservative localist notables to reconstruct the developmental dictatorship (Towfigh, 2006). The longest period of the governance of a Prime Minister, i.e. Amir-Abbas Hoveyda from 27 January 1965 to 7 August 1977, is the representation of this reconstruction. In this context, the dialectical contradiction of conservative and reactionary roots of the Shah power on the one hand and the developmental dictatorship state one the other resulted in the transformation of state in the 1970s with a new hegemonic vision, i.e. the Great Civilisation. Towfigh (2006) also recognises two crucial external factors. The first was the end of a British military presence in the region that reinforced Iran's position as the hegemonic military power. The second was the increasing oil price and ensuing oil boom. In analysing the last decade of the Shah era (1969-1979), Towfigh suggests that the formation of the one-party system in March 1975 was 'the beginning of the end[3]'. Indeed, he argues that the accumulation strategy of the technocrats' group had continuously undermined the social basis of the Shah

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[3] The Shah himself claimed that:

> Those who believe in monarchy, the Constitution, and the Sixth Bahman Revolution [the White Revolution (1963)], and those who don't. ... A person who does not enter the new political party and does not believe in the three cardinal principles which I referred to will have only two choices. He is either an individual who belongs to an illegal organization ... or in other words is a traitor. Such an individual belongs in an Iranian prison, or if he desires he can leave the country tomorrow, without even paying exit fees; ... he is not an Iranian, he has no nation. ... Everyone must be man enough to clarify his position in this country. He either approves of the conditions or he does not. (Cited in Shambayati, 1994)

strategic support, i.e. conservative nobles and notables. Hence, the Rastakhiz (Resurgence) party, was expected to provide the Shah with a new social basis and balance the struggle between two main strategic groups but failed to do that as it is discussed in the later chapters.

Towfigh (2006) argues that the Pahlavi state collapsed as a result of its pseudo-patrimonialism because of the inability of the court in institutionalising its patrimonialism. He explores the formation of Khomeini's supporters as a strategic group regarding the changes in the Iranian society (Towfigh, 2000, pp. 345–362). However, he does not answer how did Khomeini succeed in translating his specific interests to a general interest appealing to the majority of people? Despite this failure to consider the question of hegemony, Towfigh is right in his efforts to move beyond the traditional-modern duality that informs too many accounts of the 1979 Revolution. Thus, the next section addresses the roots of this problem in Modernization Theory.

2.4   Modernisation Theory

Modernisation Theory and cognate concepts have been and remain the most influential social theoretical approach in Iran. Indeed, they have shaped the main body of sociological studies as 'sociology of development' (Towfigh & Ahmadnia, 2014, p. 318). This dominance is also reflected in several apparently unrelated accounts of the 1979 revolution that interpret it as the reaction of 'traditional' parts of Iranian society against the Modernisation policies of the Pahlavi regime (Towfigh, 2000). Let me begin, then, with a brief history of Modernisation Theory and present its key axioms.

The rise of Modernisation Theory is rooted in the post-WWII American relation with the 'Third World'. As Gilman (2003, pp. 32–33) argues, 'modernisation' became popular in the 1940's and 1950's thanks to: (1) 'decolonisation', i.e. the independence of former colonies; (2) 'the availability of resources' in form of aid and loans thanks to the economic dominance of the United States; and (3) the increase in the Soviet Union

influence as presented an 'unprecedented ideological and economic challenge to the United State', i.e. the Cold War. In this context, 'American social scientists believed that modernization theory would define their nation's historic accomplishments, identify the deficiencies of an 'emerging world', and allow them to respond to the needs of the state in a time of crisis' (Latham, 2000, p. 30). Thus, Modernisation Theory was promoted by scholars involved in 'the rapidly expanding research and teaching programmes established by the US government to equip the country with the regional expertise it needed to exercise its new role as a superpower' (Leys, 1996, p. 9). Influenced by works of Parsons (1991) and Shils (1965), modernisation theory proposes a linear account of history that leads from 'traditional' to 'modern' societies.

> Influenced by his reading of Max Weber, Parsons was particularly concerned with finding a way to describe how the point of social equilibrium might shift over time. Parsons and Shils's proposed solution was a set of 'pattern variables', an expanded list of binary oppositions to refine the dichotomy between 'traditional' and 'modern' conditions. With this tool, they suggested, complex social relationships could be placed along a progressive index. Culture, personality, and society could be evaluated on the basis of whether they emphasized universalism or particularism, achievement or ascription, orientation toward self or the collective, role specificity or diffuseness, and affective or nonaffective relationships. (Latham, 2000, p. 33)

In this sense, modernisation had changed from a more technical usage at the beginning of the 20th century to entail 'the reorientation of an entire social, political, and economic system, conceived as an integrated totality, toward norms defined by the West' (Gilman, 2003, p. 31). The main assumptions of Modernisation Theory, according to Bernstein (1971, p. 141), are '(1) that modernization is a total social process associated with (or subsuming) economic development in terms of the preconditions, concomitants, and consequences of the latter; (2) that this process constitutes a 'universal pattern''. For example, Rostow suggests that:

> It is possible to identify all societies, in their economic dimensions, as lying within one
> of five categories: the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, the take-off,
> the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass-consumption. (Rostow, 1960, p. 4)

One of the most prominent exponents of classic Modernisation Theory is Daniel Lerner, author of an influential text (1958), who became 'a fixture at Pentagon-sponsored conferences on U.S. psychological warfare in the Third World during the 1960s and 1970s, lecturing widely on the usefulness of social science data for the design of what has since come to be called U.S.-sponsored low-intensity warfare abroad' (Simpson, 1996, p. 84). Lerner stressed the close temporal ties among different elements of modernisation. For him, modernisation is:

> a process with some distinctive quality of its own, which would explain why modernity
> is felt as a consistent whole among people who live by its rules. We know that
> urbanization, industrialization, secularization, democratization, education, media
> participation do not occur in haphazard and unrelated fashion even though we often
> are obliged to study them singly. Our multiple correlations showed them to be so
> highly associated as to raise the question whether some are genuinely independent
> factors at all -suggesting that perhaps they went together so regularly because, in
> some historical sense, they had to go together. (Lerner, 1958, p. 438)

Thus, a 'positive relationship between economic development and political competitiveness' that accounts for democracy was assumed (Coleman, 1960, p. 539). This may explain why the U.S. State Department's bureau of intelligence and research, (cited in Popp, 2008, p. 94), described the 1963 riot against the Shah's White Revolution (the land reforms) as 'another in the long series of confrontations between religious conservatism and a modernizing government ... the standard bearers of Shia Islam ... are fighting a losing battle'. For this was the first time that Khomeini appeared on the political scene. It seems that Islam, as a part of the 'tradition', should not have had any chance in the face of the economic development that will accompany political

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development. This optimism was criticised from within the paradigm for Modernisation Theory on the grounds that it had become 'an ideology of anti-traditionalism, denying the necessary and usable ways in which the past serves as support, especially in the sphere of values and political legitimation, to the present and the future' (Gusfield, 1967, p. 362). Moreover, externally, Modernisation Theory faced a strong critique from its theoretical opponent, i.e. Dependency Theory, for neglecting the international hierarchic chains of metropolis-satellite that affect the process of development. Thus, as Frank (1966) argues, 'contemporary underdevelopment is in large part the historical product of past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite underdeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries'. However, there was more than just a theoretical challenge for Modernisation Theory in the 1960s.

Confronting the 'national liberation wars' (Leys, 1996, p. 11; Solovey, 2001, p. 179) supported by the Soviet and later Communist China from the 1960s, Modernisation Theories and the U.S. government needs to change to be successful in guiding ''underdeveloped' nations through a dangerous transitional period in which destitution and authoritarian repression made them most vulnerable to Marxist insurgency' (Latham, 1998, p. 200). One of the most important figures of the new phase of Modernisation Theory is Samuel Huntington that emphasised the need to shift from 'classical Modernisation Theory', with 'its psychological orientation and its ostensible emphasis on democracy', to the 'politics of order' and stability (Berger, 2004, p. 108; Huntington, 1971). During the 1950s and 1960s, Huntington was actively giving consult and advising the U.S. government and the Democratic Party (Berger, 2004, p. 108). Observing the situation in Vietnam, he criticised the concept of 'political development' that supposed to follow the economic development and social reforms in the classic Modernisation theory. Instead, as he calls the aim of his study 'political order' (Huntington, 2006, p. XIX), which is also apparent in the title of his main book *political order in changing societies*, 'the important question about any reform, for Huntington,

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is not its merits per se but simply whether it averts revolution or acts as a catalyst for it' (Leys, 1982, p. 337). Reviewing political unrest in the 'Third World' during the 1950s and 1960s, Huntington argues:

> Throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America there was a decline in political order, an undermining of the authority, effectiveness, and legitimacy of government. There was a lack of civic morale and public spirit and of political institutions capable of giving meaning and direction to the public interest. Not political development but political decay dominated the scene. What was responsible for this violence and instability? The primary thesis of this book is that it was in large part the product of rapid social change and the rapid mobilization of new groups into politics coupled with the slow development of political institutions. (Huntington, 2006, p. 4)

Thus, for him, the problem is 'the lag in the development of political institutions behind social and economic change' (Huntington, 2006, p. 5). However, this does not mean that Huntington prescribes more democratisation for the Third World. He argues for a 'participant polity', which means 'a high level of popular involvement is organized and structured through political institutions' (Huntington, 2006, p. 88). Both the Soviet and constitutional societies exemplify a participant polity. Participation, for him, 'need not (and Huntington thinks should not) mean popular control of government, but rather governmental control of the people through their 'involvement' in the organs of the 'polity' that make this possible' (Leys, 1982, p. 336). In short, the problem in political participation is derived from 'the lack of an optimal correspondence between the economy and the state within a given society' (Matin, 2013, p. 102).

The 1979 revolution was a crisis for social theory in general (Foran, 1994) and Modernisation Theory in particular (Towfigh, 2000). As Pope (2008, p. 76) mentioned, a Harvard University anthropologist Michael M. J. Fischer emphasised in his study for a state department colloquium on Iran, held on 25 May 1979, that Iran was 'a major test case' for Modernisation Theory 'throughout the 1960s and 1970s'. This was

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because 'it was the case where the constraint of capital was theoretically removed, and therefore the case where transformation from the third world into the first world was expected to be most'. Facing the revolution in Iran, Modernisation Theory provided the general framework for many accounts of revolution that understand the conjuncture as the result of a clash between 'traditionalist' and 'modernist' forces assuming that the latter would be the 'natural supporters' (Axworthy, 2008, p. 254) of the Shah (Jahanbegloo, 2004, p. X). Thus the framing offered by Modernisation Theory was consistent with diverse accounts that ranged from blaming the Shah for modernising 'too much and too quickly for his traditional-minded and backward-looking people', to accusing him of excessively slow modernisation that was not 'fast enough and thoroughly enough to overcome his initial handicap of being a CIA-installed monarch in an age of nationalism, neutralism, and republicanism' (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 426). Basically, the revolution was a result of 'bad modernisation' that made the Iranian people more open to 'oppositionists who stood against the Shah, the West, and western ideas' (Keddie & Richard, 1981, p. 145). According to her, the revolution occurred because modern values did not 'trickle down' to the lower class and poor Iranians.

In contrast, inspired mainly by Huntington's emphasis on the duality of political and economic modernisation, Abrahamian (1982) emphasises 'the unequal pace and depth of economic and political developments, which results in contradictions beyond the absorptive capacity of the state' (Matin, 2013, p. 102). Hence, according to this account, a rapid economic development consequent upon the land reforms (1963) transformed the class structure but left an underdeveloped political society.

> Thus by 1977 the gulf between the developing socioeconomic system and the underdeveloped political system was so wide that an economic crisis was able to bring down the whole regime. In short, the revolution took place neither because of

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overdevelopment nor because of underdevelopment but because of uneven development. (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 427)

Likewise, Green (1980, p. 46) calls for a re-evaluation of expectations of economic modernisation and stresses 'the absence of participatory mechanisms may magnify rather than ameliorate popular dissatisfaction, thus exacerbating popular dissatisfaction by frustrating the needs of the people to have their problems recognised, if not resolved'. Similarly, Momayezi (1986, p. 81) suggests that 'marked discrepancies in levels of development between political institutions and overall socio-economic transformation are probably more important than the rate of growth or income inequalities as a source of instability and revolution'. Matin (2013, p. 102) correctly criticises these accounts of the 1979 Revolution for assuming 'distinct economic structures to which specific political forms correspond at particular developmental stages'. In contrast, as he argues:

> The disjunctures between political and economic forms are neither 'exceptional' nor 'pathological'. Rather, as instances of asymmetric amalgamation they are, and have been, intrinsic to processes of capitalist uneven and combined development everywhere including in Europe itself. (Matin, 2013, p. 102)

In general, the dominance of Modernisation Theory in American sociology as the social sciences were established in Iranian Academia in the 1960s has had a lasting effect that persists today. The duality of 'traditional' and 'modern', brings forward the concept of 'transitional society' (Towfigh & Ahmadnia, 2014, p. 313): a transition from an 'oriental tradition' toward 'western modernity'. For example in studying the institution of the family in Iran, the concept of transitional family denotes a transition from 'extended traditional family' toward 'nuclear western family' (see for example Abdi, 2014, pp. 14–15). As Towfigh and Ahmadnia argue, this obsession with transition gave rise to 'suspension of the present moment': the social sciences in Iran refuse to face reality

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for it is not capable of providing an account of its complexity (Towfigh & Ahmadnia, 2014, pp. 313–314).

An important issue in dealing with national state in Iran is avoiding 'methodological nationalism', i.e., taking the territorial national state and its boundaries for granted (Wimmer & Schiller, 2003, pp. 577–578). Panah (2007) argues for the importance of the international context and dimensions in understanding the revolution in Iran (cf. Matin, 2013). Matin (2013, p. 9) correctly criticises the Weberian 'analytical distinction between the domestic and the international with their ontological separation' in accounts such as Skocpol (1979). Panah (2007, p. 163) asserts that 'international processes were central to the emergence of the revolutionary movement in Iran, both in giving rise to its objective circumstances and in influencing the subjective formation of the Revolution's participants'. This involves more than assuming that the Iranian government in the Shah era was understood by people as associated with the 'western' powers (Keddie, 1980a). As Panah (2007, p. 163) correctly observes, 'the subjective formation of the participants in the Revolution was influenced both by a history of interventions of great powers and by the specific international conjuncture'. Thus, Matin (2013, p. 3) calls for a 'social theory that has international relations at its intellectual core' to avoid Eurocentrism and provide an account of the revolution which is sensitive to the international conjuncture. Such a social theory 'involves the adoption of a plural ontology that posits relationships and processes between and within societies as mutually constitutive, and development as intrinsically interactive and multilinear' (Matin, 2013, p. 3). This is important not just for studying the temporalities of the revolution but also its spatial aspects (chapter six).

In addition, popular understandings of the international and associated social memories and myths were important aspects in building the revolutionary moment in 1979 in Iran. Two examples are the invasion of Iran by the Allied in 1941 that led to the

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abdication and exile of Reza Shah and 1953 American-British coup against Mosaddegh (Abrahamian, 2008; Bashiriyeh, 1984; Moaddel, 1992b). As discussed in chapter five, oil represents independence, development and justice for the Iranians. With the post-war boom the oil prices increased gradually and provide the state with a reliable financial support for development plans. The 1970s witnessed soaring oil revenue for the first time in the history. Addressing the consequences of these and theories that use this change as their entry point for understanding the 1979 Revolution is the task of the next section.

2.5 The political economy of the pre-revolutionary era

Smith (2004b, p. 238) studies the 'determinants of regime failure across 107 developing countries' and concludes that 'oil dependence exerts a robust and significant negative effect on the likelihood of regime failure, suggesting that longer-lived regimes in oil exporting states appear to be the representative cases'. However, as mentioned, one of the main issues that is displayed one way or another in many accounts of the 1979 Revolution is the excessive oil revenue in the 1960s and 1970s (for example see: Abrahamian, 1980, 1982, 2008; Amuzegar, 1982; Halliday, 1979b, 1979a, 1982, Katouzian, 1981, 2003; Milani, 1994; Najmabadi, 1987; Skocpol, 1982) (cf. Matin, 2013). However, they often failed to explore the broader implications of this change for Khomeini's hegemonic struggle in the 1970s (chapters 5 and 6).

The oil revenue worsened the already 'sickening system of nepotism, bribery and greed that grew out of the rotten court system the Pahlavis had created' (Halliday, 1979b, p. 6). Halliday (1979) also elaborates how dangerous was the dependence on the oil revenue for the Shah on the eve of revolution:

> The protracted political strike by oil workers in the Khuzestan oil fields from
> October 1978 onwards crippled the regime and was the greatest single blow to the
> Shah's power, more so than the largest street demonstrations, for it struck not only

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at the repressive apparatus by depriving it of oil, but also cut off the revenue on which the whole state had depended. (Halliday, 1979b, p. 11)

Considering the Iran's rising state oil revenues, Mahdavy (1970, p. 428) introduces the concept of rentier state to refer to 'those countries that receive on a regular basis substantial amounts of external rent'. For him, 'external rents' are 'rentals paid by foreign individuals, concerns or governments to individuals, concerns or governments of a given country' (Mahdavy, 1970, p. 428). Thus, Mahdavy stresses the source of revenue, here the external rent in comparison with domestic taxation, as an important factor that can demarcate a category of states (Beblawi & Luciani, 1987, p. 10). In classical political economy[4], rent is the non-productive revenue of a landowner or other monopolist. For, when land was rented 'without any improvements on it, 'rent' came to mean the return on a scarce, non-reproducible asset' (Losman, 2010). However, rent is not limited to land, but generally it is 'a reward for ownership of all natural resources' (Beblawi, 1987). Mahdavy (1970, p. 432) compares the problem of rentier state with the 'inflow of gold into sixteenth century Spain' and the 'transfer problem' arising from the German reparation payments after the First World War'.

Inspired by Mahdavy, Beblawi considers a rentier state as a 'special case of a rentier economy' in that the external rent is monopolised in the hand of a minority and the majority 'being only involved in the distribution or utilisation of it' (Beblawi, 1987). Thus, in a rentier state 'the government is the principal recipient of the external rent in the economy' (Beblawi, 1987). Assuming that an economy creates a 'specific mentality', Beblawi (1987) suggests the concept of 'rentier mentality':

The basic assumption about the rentier mentality and that which distinguishes it from conventional economic behaviour is that it embodies a break in the work-reward

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[4] For a discussion about rent see Marx's *Capital* Vol. III Part VI.

> causation. Reward -income or wealth- is not related to work and risk bearing, rather to chance or situation. For a rentier, reward becomes a windfall gain, an isolated fact, situational or accidental as against the conventional outlook where reward is integrated in a process as the end result of a long, systematic and organised production circuit. (Beblawi, 1987)

Although Beblawi correctly stresses the extra-economic aspects of economic activities, 'rentier mentality' is limited to the micro-level. It cannot account for the collective actions of particular actors in a conjuncture such as 1979 Iran. How did petrodollars in the 1960s and 1970s contribute to the understanding of the conjuncture by Iranian people? Halliday pictures the extra-economic effects of the post-oil-boom crisis in the mid-1970s.

> The sense of impending crisis, if not real doom, unsettled many people; the first serious unemployment for some years became noticeable; and public awareness of the mismanagement and of the social problems associated with the boom, spread. This relative stagnation in the economy – not, be it repeated, a real crisis, but a far cry from the galloping optimism of 1974 and 1975 – was a significant contributing factor to the emergence of the political cataclysm that Iran was quickly to undergo, for it weakened the illusion of permanent and grandiose advance fostered by the Shah and it compounded the hostility already bred by the inequalities and disruptions of the oil boom itself. (Halliday, 1979b, p. 9)

Similarly, considering how fast was the 1979 Revolution (13 months from the first mass demonstration) Najmabadi (1987, p. 214) emphasises the rise of oil revenues and the decline of 'politics' in pre-revolutionary Iran to explain the lack of support for the Shah in the moment of revolution. In line with the rentier state argument, she stresses 'the autonomy of the state from civil society' thanks to 'the huge oil revenues accruing directly to the state' (Najmabadi, 1987, p. 213). It is related to the fact that 'the state's main relationships to Iranian society were mediated through its expenditures -on the

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military, on development projects, on modern construction, on consumption subsidies, and the like' (Skocpol, 1982, p. 269). The externality of this revenue affects 'the socio-economic development of the country as well as the political behaviour of the state in very particular ways' (Najmabadi, 1987, p. 213).

> In a rentier state, the distinction between a productive civil society and a parasitic state becomes irrelevant, since the source of national wealth is largely external rent, not domestic labour. Thus in the 1970s in Iran, politics became polarised around questions of wealth distribution, not control over production; around moral decadence and conspicuous consumption, not political participation and rational decision-making. (Najmabadi, 1987, p. 223)

This interesting observation is crucial in understanding the social imaginaries of the 1979 Revolution, but it is not enough to explain the happening of the revolution. Chapter five addresses the consequences of the polarisation society as Najmabadi described above. For as Skocpol (1982) argues, and comparing with other 'rentier state' relying mainly on the external rent in the case of pre-revolutionary Iran, despite all consequence problems and risks, this theory cannot explain the mobilisation of people on that pace and scale during the revolution. One needs to consider different processes with varieties of temporalities to account for the rise of Khomeni and revolution in Iran. For, other countries, e.g. Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait and so forth with durable states, shared many conditions with Pre-revolutionary Iran (Munson, 1988).

Bashiriyeh (1984, pp. 29–30) suggests the main features of Iranian society in the late Pahlavi era were:

> (a) state control of large financial resources made available through the massive oil billions; (b) the success of the economic stabilisation and growth programme and the intervention of the Shah in the economy to ensure economic stability; (c) intermittent attempts at mass mobilisation and the creation of an equilibrium of classes through their economic control and intervention in the economy; (d) the establishment of

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patron-client relations with the upper bourgeoisie and the Shah's control of private enterprise through participation in entrepreneurial activities; and (e) the expansion of the coercive forces of the state, and reliance on Western and especially US support.

These features led to a general discontent with the Shah (Moghadam, 1989):

> When all the institutional channels that could have given expression to the discontent were closed, the populace became increasingly alienated from the state. In the meantime, corruption, inefficiency, a sense of injustice, and a feeling of moral outrage characterized the social psychology of many Iranians. So, during the tense years of the 1970s, at the height of the Shah's authoritarian rule and remarkable economic development, many people (except perhaps the upper class and landed peasantry) seemed dissatisfied, albeit for different reasons. But all were united in blaming the Shah and his western allies for that state of affairs. (Bayat, 1998, p. 143)

Skocpol (1982, p. 272) offers a better summary when she argues that 'disruption and discontent alone do not give people the collective organisational capacities and the autonomous resources that they need to sustain resistance to political and economic power holders'. For her, 'Shi'a Islam was both organizationally and culturally crucial to the making of the Iranian Revolution against the Shah' (Skocpol, 1982, p. 275). The next section deals with theories that aim to explain the rise of Shi'a Islam and Khomeini and/or including it in their attempts for providing a holistic account of the 1979 Revolution.

2.6   Shi'a Islam, clergy and the 1979 Revolution

The left and nationalists in Iran, almost since 1979, understand the dominance of Khomeini as a sudden event in contrast with what was going on before the revolution. In a nutshell, they think Khomeini 'hijacked' the revolution. As Towfigh argues, this just reveals more clearly the political naivety of the other political groups that expect the clergy to be marginalised in the post-revolutionary era as happened in the constitutional

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revolution (Towfigh, 2000, p. 323). Ironically, Khomeini's theory of Islamic State that reserves the right of government for a Shi'a jurist was 'a point of departure from constitutionalism' (Mahdavi, 2014, p. 56). Despite the political naivety of Khomeini's rivals with their 'self-deception about their own popularity', and their misreading of 'the nature of Iran's revolutionary movement' (Milani, 1989, p. 6), there is a truth in their claim for 'Iran witnessed an Islamic revolution without a strong Islamic movement' (Bayat, 1998, p. 142). Thus it was not, as mainstream accounts of the revolution suggest, 'an outcome of an ideological process, the culmination of a long-lasting Islamic movement which had been evolving since the late 1960s' (Bayat, 1998, p. 136). Bayat interestingly suggests that what Iran experienced was 'an insurrectionary movement aimed at capturing the state power' (Bayat, 1998, p. 143). However, even if Khomeini was not the 'leader' of revolution, he was the symbol of revolution (Munson, 1988). Some (Moghadam, 1987; Skocpol, 1982) argue that the suppression of other parts of opposition can partly account for the rise of Khomeini but why him, who was a marginal figure in Shi'a clergy (Moazami, 2013, p. 118), and no other religious figure. Thus, the main question is how it was possible for Khomeini, and not any other political figure, to become 'hegemonic' and occupy this canonical position in the revolution? Chapters four, five and six deal with this question from different perspectives but here first we need a brief review of the existing accounts of Shi'a Islam and Khomeini regarding the 1979 Revolution.

The importance of Shi'a Islam for understanding the 1979 Revolution is challenged by Abrahamian (1993), Parsa (1988), and Moghadam (1989). These scholars understand the movement as yet another case of populist movements similar to the Latin America, albeit with an Islamic twist or sharing the same factors with other 'Third World' revolution. For these accounts, Khomeini is important just as a populist leader regardless of the fact that he was a Shi'a Islamist. This categorisation limits their analytical power regarding the particularities of Khomeini's dominance in the 1979

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Revolution. Moghaddam (1989, p. 413) calls for a distinction between the 1979 Revolution and the Islamic Republic that came after. For her, the former was 'an anti-imperialist, populist rupture, containing an emancipatory project but lacking a clear program for democratization and modernization' but the latter is 'both an extension of and a radical departure from the Revolution' (Moghadam, 1989, p. 413). In this sense, 'Khomeinism', i.e. the Islamic populism, became dominant after the revolution. In contrast, Islam for others, e.g. Skocpol (1982), Rajayee (2007), Fischer (2003), Moaddel (1986, 1992a, 1994, 1996), Dabashi (1993, 2011) and Amir Arjomand (1985, 1988a, 1988b, 1989), is a determining factor in understanding the 1979 revolution. Khomeini himself in his narrative of the revolution stresses that 'the people fought for Islam'[5]. The argument for the importance of Shi'a Islam in the revolution is clearly summarised by Skocpol:

> Shi'a Islam was both organizationally and culturally crucial to the making of the Iranian Revolution against the Shah. Radicalized clerics, loosely following the Ayatollah Khomeini, disseminated political ideas challenging the Shah. Then the networks, the social forms, and the central myths of Shi'a Islam helped to coordinate urban mass resistance and to give it the moral will to persist in the face of attempts at armed repression. (Skocpol, 1982, p. 275)

However, this raises other questions. Why did some social groups in the Iranian society, when the Shah was increasingly referring to Islam, turn against him? How did Khomeini win their political, moral, and intellectual leadership?

Taking ideology seriously, for Dabashi, Shi'a Islam provides the language and discursive support for the 1979 Revolution. In other words, Islam is a powerful

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[5] An interview with Khomeini by Oriana Fallaci, *The New York Times*, Oct 7 1979. https://nyti.ms/1OWbdNt

imaginary that provided the language and symbols to express discontent and then gave the course of this discontent a specific, path-dependent inflexion. Dabashi in his classic book, *Theology of Discontent*, cautious not to claim to explain the 1979 Revolution, emphasises the importance of an 'ideological build-up' in making a revolutionary moment (Dabashi, 1993, p. 4). This ideological build-up was the result of works of Islamic figures who were mainly motivated by an identity politics based on a confrontation with the west that was rooted in collective discontent. This 'West' is an imaginative constructed concept envisaged by Islamist ideologues. So he stresses the role of these figures in their 30 years of divergent mythmaking and the 'enormous arsenal of Shi'i rebellious symbolism' that finally resulted in the Iranian Revolution[6] (Dabashi, 2011, p. 314).

> The 'Islamic Ideology' was the quintessential prerequisite of 'the Islamic Revolution' in Iran. Although I am not suggesting that this ideology caused the Revolution, I do submit that 'the Islamic Revolution' could not have occurred without 'the Islamic Ideology'. (Dabashi, 1993, p. 7)

The reason for this importance is, he argues, that, 'as the revolutionary movement unfolded, an increasing number of patently Islamic symbols came to identify the nature and define the direction of the revolutionary movement' (Dabashi, 1993, p. 497). Thus, an Islamic movement was at work in a cultural struggle that led to 'inevitable theological language' for 'theology is the ultimate language of truth' (Dabashi, 1993, p. 4). His account of Islam as a frame for understanding the struggle is inspiring. However, he does not engage with the hegemonic struggle and Khomeini's strategic orientation to

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[6] The main body of his book, (Dabashi, 1993), is devoted to the main figures in the creation of Islamic ideology in Iran: four clerics (Morteza Motahhari, Mahmud Taleqani, Muhammad Tabatabai, and Khomeini) and four laymen (Jalal Al-e Ahmad, Ali Shariati, Mehdi Bazargan, Abol-hasan Bani-Sadr).

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win it: How did this particular frame become dominant in the revolutionary moment? How did Khomeini as an Islamist among others, embodied the revolution?

In contrast, Moazami (2013, p. 117) emphasises the importance of political processes in the Islamization of the political and social movements in pre-revolutionary Iran. For him, 'Khomeini's radical political leadership, unwavering since his entry onto the national scene in 1962, was critical in politicizing the environment (including that of the religious establishment) and promoting the formation of a national identity around Islamic ideology during the revolutionary period' (Moazami, 2013, p. 117). Moazami correctly argues that the key to understand Islamization of the Revolution is 'Khomeini's unorthodoxy (especially the impact of mysticism on his radicalism), the politics of his promotion to the position of Source of Emulation, and his use of this position to mobilize religious and political forces' (Moazami, 2013, p. 118).

Like Dabashi, who emphasises the confrontation with the 'West', Rajaee (2007, p. 7) stresses that 'as a result of the infiltration of Iran by outsiders, which Iranians felt had become total in the 1960s, a powerful plea for nativist restoration became the dominant paradigm in the 1970s'. Assuming an essentialist account of Islam, he blames the pre-revolutionary Islamists for reducing Islam to 'an ideology of revolution for the sake of power' (Rajaee, 2007, p. 22). For him, Islam that is essentially 'an ethical system comprised of faith, rituals, obligations, responsibilities, and a continuous search for the meaning of God's intention' was gradually transformed into 'an ideology that claimed to have already discovered God's plan, which was manifested in its practical program' (Rajaee, 2007, p. 110).

> Islamic discourse focused on three main ideas: articulation of the other (in this case, demonization of the shah and his supporters, mainly, the West); romanticization of the past (idealization of Islamic heroes and ideologization of Islamic precepts); and formulation of an alternative imagined community against modernity and, particularly,

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> Westernization (that is, drawing a distinction between modernization and Westernization on the one hand and the use of all modern applied knowledge on the other). (Rajaee, 2007, p. 110)

Khomeini became the dominant figure in Islamic discourse for, as Rajaee (2007, p. 123) argues, his discourse 'appealed to the masses of indigenous Iranians, who could relate to the vocabulary, syntax, and cultural context of Khomeini's vernacular'. This philological account risks neglecting the messianic aspect of the revolution and its selectivities for Khomeini's discourse and himself as the embodiment of the revolution. Some scholars (e.g., Abrahamian, 1993; Kamali, 1997; Moaddel, 1986; Panah, 2007; Skocpol, 1982) stress the organisational abilities of the clergy and bazaar. Others (e.g., Berberoglu, 2001, p. 304) emphasise the political vacuum, thanks to a strong suppression of the leftist by the regime in the last decades of the Shah era. According to Halliday (1979b, p. 10):

> the absence of any other form of evident organised opposition, and the real ideological confusion experienced by first generation migrants to the cities, enabled the ulema [ulama] to become a focus of popular opposition again, and through their network of mosques and associated officials, to mobilise people in the streets.

However, apart from this correct observation, one should also consider discursive crises of the leftists in Iran who had become disarmed and bereft of their former ideology (Nabavi, 2003b, p. 149). Nabavi argues that the reason for this discursive disarmament was the 1953 coup by the U.S. and the U.K., and the White Revolution in that some socialist measures and land reforms to prevent a red revolution in Iran were adopted (Nabavi, 2003b). It was hard for the leftist intellectuals to defined themselves 'progressive' but not pro-west and in agreement with the Shah, i.e. 'authentic' (cf. Moaddel, 1996, p. 352). In this context, Nabavi (2003a, p. 104) recognises the rise of the discourse of 'authentic culture' in response to 'a combination of third-worldism and the movement of counterculture predominant in the West' in the

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1960s and 1970s Iran. One problem with Nabavi's account is she considers the religious intellectual to be traditionalist and runs the risk of oversimplifying the struggle to a traditional-modern duality. Thus, she cannot explain the novelty of Khomeini's hegemonic vision relative to other Islamists (chapter 4). The other issue is the dominance of leftist guerrilla movements at the beginning of the 1970s which challenges her claim on a discursive crisis of the left. However, at the same time, her interesting study sheds light on the discursive selectivities of pre-revolutionary Iran. The other merit is tracing discursive aspects of political transformations in Iran.

Building on his previous works on the history of Shi'ism, Amir Arjomand adopts a semi-Weberian approach to the bases of the legitimacy of authority to explain the state in Iran in the Qajar era (Arjomand, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1989, 1996, 1997) and a Durkheimian account of the moment of 1979 revolution emphasizing normative disorientation (Arjomand, 1985, 1988b) (cf. Bayat, 1998). According to him, following the crisis of legitimacy after the fall of Safavid Empire, in the Qajar era, there were two competing sources, one religious and one kingly, that could have provided the Persian Empire with a theoretical basis for its legitimacy. This trend continued until the White Revolution (the 1960s) in which the Shah, confident about his rule, started to neglect the need for a religious justification. In this context, Amir Arjomand rejects the adaptation of J-curve theory in understanding the revolution (for example see: M. H. Pesaran [Walton, pseud.] (1980, p. 288)), in which revolutions generally happen when a prolonged economic development is suddenly reversed (Arjomand, 1988b, p. 110; Davies, 1962). Thus, instead of the later crisis of the post-oil boom, he highlights the social dislocation and normative disturbance that followed state economic development (Arjomand, 1988b, p. 5). Specifically, the Shah failed 'to integrate uprooted elements, especially the socially mobile, newly educated elements, into his political system. This neglect offered Khomeini and the cornered Shi'ite hierocracy 'an unparalleled opportunity for creating a politicized revolutionary mass movement'

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(Arjomand, 1988b, p. 200). Hence, based on their independent religious authority, they could mobilise this 'disengaged' people to incorporate 'the modern political myth of revolution into the ideology of the Islamic movement' (Arjomand, 1985, 1986, 1988b, p. 104). He provides a rich account of Shi'a history and casts light on the revolutionary moment from this perspective. However, he cannot demonstrate the strategic orientation of Khomeini's messianism regarding the revolution (chapter 4).

Stressing ideology as an independent factor with its own logic that can determine revolutions, Moaddel defines it as an 'episodic discourse', i.e. 'a set of general principles, concepts, symbols, and rituals that humans use to address the problems of a particular historical period' that 'influences what coalitions are permissible and structures the opportunities available for building intellectual justifications for actions' (Moaddel, 1992a, p. 359). The Islamic ideology, he argues, was shaped in contradiction with the state's national secular ideology. For him, at stake is the emergence and domination of the Islamic ideology with regards to the social classes that engaged in the revolution and expresses their discontent. So the Islamic revolutionary discourse, according to him (Moaddel, 1992a, p. 375) was 'produced by diverse ideologues as a result of the dialectic between the state and its opponents in a broad episodic context' (cf. Dabashi, 1993). In sum, because Islam was excluded from the state ideology, it became the ideology of the revolution. In dealing with ulama, Moaddel rejects the idea of assuming ulama as a 'homogeneous category' and reminds that:

> (i) the question of ulama politics should be posed within the framework of class and state formation. (ii) Changes and divisions in ulama politics should be understood and explained in the context of class struggle, changing class alliances, and bases of different segments of the ulama. (iii) The ulama as a whole do not constitute a class. (Moaddel, 1986, p. 520)

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This approach to the clergy is obviously one step forward from homogenisation of the ulama but it still seems to suffer from economic reductionism. In the post-1953 coup era, according to Moaddel (1986), the mobilisation of parts of ulama against the Shah was a result of marginalisation of the social classes that they represent, i.e. 'the traditional petty bourgeoisie, the merchants, and the landlords'. This marginalization, he argues, united them but the 'Islamic fundamentalism', a modern (post 1950s) 'ideological revolutionary movement' that aimed at 'a total reorganization of society according to Islamic teachings on virtually all aspects of social life ranging from the style of dress to broader political and economic issues', transformed this discontent toward a revolutionary move (Moaddel, 1996, p. 331). For him, the revolutionary ideology is the principal determinant of revolutionary action and 'economic and political considerations play a secondary role' (Moaddel, 1992a, p. 375). His attempt not to reduce the ideological to the economic or political is inspiring but his assumption that they are separate factors results in a simplified, mechanical account of their interaction in the revolution.

The 1979 Revolution is less often considered as an apocalyptic moment. Yet 'millenarianism', as an important element of Shi'a Islam, is discussed in studies on the revolution (for example, see Amir Arjommand's works on the history of Shi'a and state in Iran). Messianism is important in understanding Khomeini's discourse, which rested on his novel narrative of Islam (Farhi, 1990, p. 106). Moazami (2013, p. 136) is among the few that consider messianism in understanding the revolution. For him, the 1979 revolution is 'a dominantly secular modern mass rebellion led by a messianic theologian on the margin of the religious establishment eventually produced a modern militant, theocratic, and messianic Republic, as the balance of power shifted'. Rinehart (1997, pp. 32–33) puts one step forward and introduces the concept of 'revolutionary millenarianism' for millenarianism 'represents the manifestation of people's disappointment and unhappiness with their situation and condition here on earth that

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materializes in a collective yearning for immediate and complete solutions to the problems of society'. He examines Iran, China, and Mexico to find the conditions for emerging revolutionary millenarianism: (i) having a history of a 'powerful and durable millenarian notion of a chosen people purifying a tyrannical world by destroying the agents of corruption'; (ii) experiencing 'extreme distress, disorientation, and social dislocation, the causes of which are largely unclear to the mass of the population' (resembling Durkheim); and (ii) 'the emergence of a charismatic leader' (echoing Weber) (Rinehart, 1997, pp. 32–33). Although one can find evidence for these similarities in Rinehart's cases, it cannot explain other cases with durable states. Moreover, eschatological readings of Shi'a Islam, for example, has changed over the time and one should be careful with an essentialist account of it. Perhaps it is useful in the case of Iran to focus on emerging a messianic moment on the eve of the revolution (chapter 4 and 6).

In contrast to the above-mentioned scholars, who stress the importance of Islamic ideology, Farhi (1990, p. 103) argues that although 'the revolution was launched by a crisis centered around the structure and situation of the Pahlavi state within the domestic and international fields surrounding it', at the end of the day the Shah was victim of 'the success of his ideological construction'. For he was imagined and accepted as the creator of 'modern' Iran, so he is also responsible for its failure (Farhi, 1990, p. 103). Farhi (1990, p. 111) considers ideology as 'an important explanatory factor together with the political and socioeconomic factors'. She correctly argues that 'the process through which a particular view of the world comes to dominate revolutionary rhetoric is important for understanding the boundaries within which the 'new' social reality is created' (Farhi, 1990, p. 111). So an important question is how Khomeini became, as Mahdavi (2014, p. 55) observes 'the absolute representation of the Truth' in the situation that 'not everyone who decisively contributed to the fall of the

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Pahlavi regime was moved by the social myth of the clerical party or believed in or even knew about their political theory' (Arjomand, 2016, p. 405).

In search for a more complex account of the rise of Khomeini, Mahdavi considers the Islamic political culture heterogeneous.

> The radical-populist culture of Iran in the 1970s, the influence of traditional institutions, and the charismatic clerical leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini constituted the trilogy of ideas, institutions, and individuals that were the three most important factors that turned Khomeinism into the dominant voice of the opposition to the Shah. (Mahdavi, 2014, p. 54)

For Mahdavi (Mahdavi, 2014, p. 55), 'Khomeinism was built around a political and pragmatic reinterpretation of religious scripture that evolved into revolutionary, and is neither symbolic of a pre-modern movement nor a post-modern phenomenon'. His Weberian account has a hard timing relating systematically with the structural factors that he mentions in analysing the pre-revolutionary Iran, i.e. 'petrolic neo-sultanism, uneven development, and the global structure of power during the Cold War' (Mahdavi, 2014, p. 45).

There are several accounts that try to provide a holistic approach to the 1979 Revolution based on an eclectic mix of factors, concepts and explanations (e.g., Bashiriyeh, 1984; Foran, 1994; Mahdavi, 2014; Milani, 1989, 1994). For example, instead of offering a theory of the 1979 Revolution, Milani (1994) tries to combine different theories of revolution to explain it. He draws on Huntington's uneven development (Huntington, 2006) and J-curve theory (Davies, 1962), emphasises Carter's human rights policy (Munson, 1988), and stresses the important role of increasing oil revenue as well as the Shah's arbitrarily rule in alienating different social classes from the regime (Katouzian, 1981). John Foran also offers a multi-causal explanation of the revolution to a holistic picture of the conjuncture. For him, like other

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'Third World' revolutions, the causes of the Iranian revolution are to be sought 'in the same processes of dependent development, state repression, political cultures of resistance, economic downturn, and world-systemic opening that underlay other successful revolutions in Mexico, Cuba, and Nicaragua' (Foran, 1994, p. 181). A serious difficulty in developing such accounts is that they combine concepts, arguments, and 'facts' that belong to very different theoretical traditions and refer to different levels of abstraction from different planes of analysis without any serious attempt to integrate them.

A better formulated multi-causal account of the 1979 Revolution is that of Bashiriyeh (1984, p. 4). Focusing on the state and social class relations and avoiding economic definitions of social class, he adopts a Poulantzasian account of social classes as 'groupings of social agents, defined principally but not exclusively by their place in the production process, i.e. in the economic sphere' (Poulantzas, 1975, p. 14). Social classes were 'the result of an ensemble of structures and of their relations, firstly at the economic level, secondly at the political level and thirdly at the ideological level' (Poulantzas, 1978, p. 63). However, as the next chapter shows, he adopts concepts from the early 'structuralist' Poulantzas rather his later relational accounts of the state and social classes. Bashiriyeh considers ulama as a social class and the state in the late Pahlavi as a 'bureaucratic regime' that sought to 'maintain a degree of autonomy from the dominant class interests' (Bashiriyeh, 1984, p. 29). He portraits the 1979 Revolution as 'a petty bourgeois, Islamic-nationalist revolution' (Bashiriyeh, 1984, p. 185) that is rooted in the alienation of bazaar and clergy from an increasingly autocratic state. However, at least he not generalises this alienation to the whole history of Iran like Katouzian (2003, p. 31). For Bashiriyeh (1984, p. 174), the 'ideology' of the 1979 Revolution was 'basically the continuation of the Islamic nationalism of the late nineteenth century, based on the reaction of the Ulama and the bazaar to Western economic and political penetration' that is expressed in terms of Islam. Apart from his

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interesting observations, his work suffers from the general problem of eclectic holistic approaches for combining Marx, Huntington, Poulantzas and Davis. Another problem is the inability to explain the rise of a particular group of clergy and Khomeini as the main figure of the revolution. Last but not least, Bashiriyeh cannot explain the transformations of the Iranian nationalism that occurred as the 1979 Revolution refashioned it and sought to transform Iran's relations with other countries in the region (chapter 6).

Parsa seeks to develop a semi-general theory of revolution for the 'Third World' countries in the 20th century (Parsa, 2000, p. 25). He divides theories of revolution into two main groups: social breakdown models that emphasise the process that resulted in a revolution, and social movement models that focus on ideational factors and authority figures (Parsa, 1988). Seeking to avoid their respective limits and inspired by Resource Mobilisation Theory, Parsa focuses on the formation of revolutionary coalition. He sees this as based mainly on an urban movement, comprising mostly demonstrations and workers' strikes, organised through mosques (Parsa, 1989, p. 2). He argues for a meso-level theory, focusing on the state and class struggle, based on the degrees of state intervention into the economy and the intensity of the 'solidarity structure', i.e. the capacity of civil society to resist these interventions (Parsa, 1989, p. 12). This approach avoids one-dimensional analyses and reveals the complexities of the changing coalition of social forces that supported the revolution at different times with their diverse demands and capacities to promote them (Parsa, 2009). Analysing the Pahlavi state, Parsa recognises 'the centralization of state power, the formation of an exclusive state, and government intervention in capital allocation and accumulation' as its main vulnerabilities (Parsa, 2009). However, this structural analysis, he claims, is insufficient to explain the revolution. To integrate agency and class struggle, Parsa (1989, p. 299) emphasises the role of bazaaris, industrial workers, and white-collar employees in resisting government development policies and increasing interventions.

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He thereby rejects an explanation of the revolution based on factors such as modernisation, uneven development and uprooted people (Parsa, 1989, p. 299). In particular, Parsa criticises the mainstream narrative of the revolution as based on a bazaar-clergy coalition (B. Smith, 2004a) and adds that to emphasise the mosques' cultural role misses their main importance as a safe and protected social space for the opposition to meet (Parsa, 2011). Gramsci similarly contrasts the safety and ability of places for the industrial and landowning bourgeoisie with the lack of 'safe natural places' where 'the proletariat can assemble without cost' (Gramsci, 1978, p. 35; Jessop, 2005). One merit of Parsa's analysis is that he considers the spatial aspects of revolution by focusing on the networks and places in the revolutions. However, the dominance of Khomeini counter-hegemonic vision cannot be solely explained with an extra-discursive account as such.

In conclusion, Shi'a Islam as a factor is differently incorporated into several accounts of the revolution. For some scholars like Dabashi (1993), it provides the semiotic resources for the revolution thanks to an ideological build-up based on the Shi'a martyrology and eschatology. In terms of class struggle, the Shi'a clergy is considered as a a social class by Bashiriyeh (1984). Moaddel (1994) argues that the Shi'a clergy is not a homogenous entity and different fractions represent different class interests. His critique is important, but he somehow dissolves the problem of clergy in an economist account of class. Other scholars focus on the institutionalisation of Shi'a clergy in Iran and its relation with the state, e.g. Amir Arjomand (1984, 1985, 1988a, 1989, 2016) and Moazemi (2013). The network of Shi'a clergy and its role in the dominance of Khomeini is emphasised by Parsa (1989, 2009), Skocpol (1982) and others. More important for this study, few scholars discuss the eschatological aspects of the revolution, e.g. Moazemi (2013) and Rinehart (1997). However, several studies assume a separation among the cultural, the political and the economic that result in several problems in dealing with the complexity of the conjuncture.

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2.7   Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to summarise the theoretical stakes and struggles in exploring the Iranian state and explaining Khomeini's dominance in the 1979 Revolution. As discussed above, different approaches trace the roots of state (trans-)formations back to different historical moments. Several moments in history are stressed: (1) The Constitutional Revolution (1906-8) as the first important event in reforming the state in Iran, emergence of Shi'a clergy in the political scene; (2) the rise of Reza Shah (1921) for centralising, institutionalising, and territorializing the national state in Iran; (3) the 1953 American-British coup, fall of Mosaddegh and nationalisation of oil for the general discontent and hostility against the 'West'; (4) the White Revolution (1963), land and social reforms, emergence of Khomeini as a political figure for marginalising bazaar, landowners and clergy; (5) the 1973-4 for a boom in oil revenue and following economic problems; and (6) 1977-8, Carter's human right policy and outbreak of demonstrations in the main cities. The majority emphasises the continuities more than discontinuities in their account.

In sum, some scholars stress the structural causes of the 1979 Revolution (e.g. Abrahamian, 1980, 1982, 2008, Halliday, 1979a, 1979b; Matin, 2013; Panah, 2007; Pesaran, 1982). Others emphasise agency (e.g. Dabashi, 1993; Moaddel, 1992a, 1992b, 1994). Few, like Parsa (1989) focus on resource mobilisation in the revolutionary process. Alternatively, Towfigh (2000, 2006) and to some extent Bashiriyeh (1984) move toward providing a meso-level account of state (trans-)formations and revolution in Iran. Shi'a Islam plays a major role in the revolution for some scholars (e.g. Arjomand, 1984, 1985, 1988b, 1989, 2016; Dabashi, 1993; Farhi, 1990; Moaddel, 1992b, 1992a, 1994; Rajaee, 2007). One can also find several failed attempts to provide a multi-causal account of the revolution (e.g. Bashiriyeh, 1984; Foran, 1993, 1994; Mahdavi, 2014; Milani, 1994). The main problem with these efforts

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is they are an eclectic mix of concepts and theories based on different ontologies, e.g. Modernization Theory and Marxism. One cannot just add failed explanations and expect a fruitful result. The 1979 Revolution is an exception for some scholars, e.g. Skocpol (1982), Keddie and Richard (1981), Kurzman (2004). In contrast, for others it is yet another Third Word revolution, e.g. Foran (1993, 1994), Parsa (1989), Abrahamian (1980, 1982), and Moghadam (1987, 1989). In general, there is a lot to learn from these accounts and at the same time serious limitations in understanding the rise of Khomeini, national state and 1979 Revolution in Iran.

The hegemonic vision of Khomeini mobilised people in the several demonstrations resulting in the 1979 Revolution. Why did he was the only one that successfully embodies the revolution? Why and how his political imaginary thanks to Shi'a eschatology and martyrology frame the conjuncture for people? What were the structural and strategic selectivities of the Pahlavi state? To deal with these and similar questions, the Towfigh's novel approach to the national state in Iran and Jessop's strategic-relation approach are particularly insightful. For, they provided my research with concepts, concerns and considerations that are necessary to understand the revolutionary moment in 1979. As Towfigh's account of the national state in Iran has been reviewed in this chapter, the next chapter will argue for the conceptual toolbox of this study based on the SRA and CPE.

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3. Toward a conceptual toolbox

This study explores the 1979 Revolution in Iran in order to understand how Khomeini managed to win the hearts and minds of Iranians and embody the revolution. This is a strategic as well as historical question and demands a strategic as well as historical perspective. As the previous chapter demonstrated, strategic concepts are largely absent from accounts of the 1979 Revolution. Thus, this chapter introduces the Strategic-Relational Approach (hereafter SRA) and Cultural Political Economy (hereafter CPE) as useful sources of strategic concepts and insights that can illuminate the rise of Khomeini to a position of strategic dominance.

The chapter has seven sections that introduce my chosen sources and compare them with potential alternative theoretical influences (see the chapter map). Thus, whereas my thesis draws mainly on a strategic-relational interpretation of Marx's critique of political economy (including state formation and ideological contestation) that is particularly inspired by Gramsci, Poulantzas, and Jessop. I also consider its overlap with other Marxist approaches as well as the work of Max Weber and neo-Weberians

and their potential contributions to explaining my research topic. This comparison is worthwhile because some of the theorists considered in chapter 2 were inspired by these alternatives. For example, Abrahamian's historiography of the 1979 revolution (1982, 2008) was influenced by Edward Thompson; likewise, Bashiriyeh (1984) employed the early Poulantzas's structuralist class analysis in his account of the revolution; however, he worked with the early 'structural' Poulantzas and not his later relational phase (see below). Towfigh (2000, 2006) employed Weber's concept of patrimonialism to explore Iran's national state.
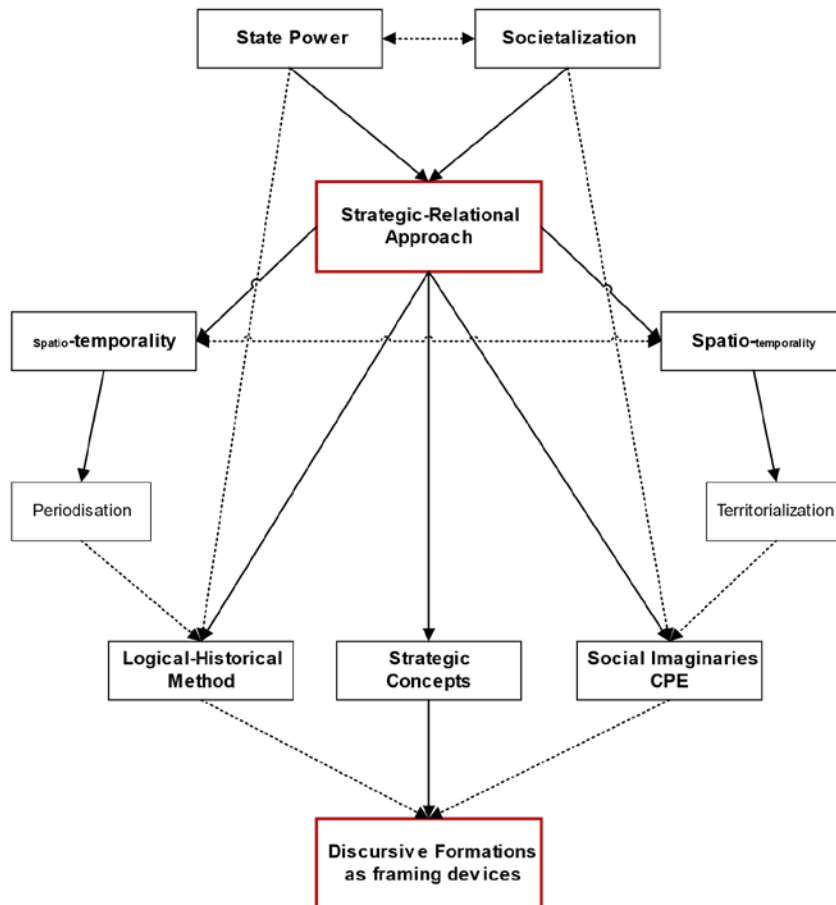
Figure 3.1: Mapping chapter three.

3.1 Theorizing societalization

My thesis is concerned with social relations and societalization (*Vergesellschaftung*) rather than with Iranian society as a taken-for-granted object of investigation. At stake in broad terms is past and present contestation over the past, present and future of 'Iran' and the competing social imaginaries, accumulation strategies, state projects, and hegemonic visions that are developed and mobilised in successive conjunctures. Accordingly, this section considers some alternative approaches to social relations and societalization that have directly or indirectly influenced either my own theoretical toolbox for analysing the rise of Khomeini or have contributed to the framing of the substantive questions that it raises. Subsequent sections will show how these approaches have been integrated into this toolbox and/or altered my understanding of what is a stake in relation to specific questions that are part of my investigation.

Exploring the contingent rise of Khomeini involves questions of motivation and interpretation. Dilthey (1989) and Simmel (1977) contrasted *verstehen* as 'an attempt to understand the "inner-motives" of the acting individual' with a positivist sociology that seeks to discover the objective laws of social life (Hewa & Herva, 1988, p. 122). The former is more appropriate to my research topic. Weber also argued for a v*erstehende Soziologie* of social action:

> We shall speak of "action" insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his behaviour – be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence. Action is "social" insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course. (Weber, 1968, p. 4)

Importantly, Weber's emphasis on subjective meaning did not deny the need to explore material causality. For he insisted that his sociological approach rejects the assumption that '[interpretive] "understanding" and causal "explanation" have no relationship with another' (Weber, 2012, p. 279). He did not 'aim to substitute for a one-sided

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materialistic an equally one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture and of history' (Weber, 2001, p. 125). On the contrary, he argued that a sociological explanation should be adequate at the level of material causation as well as meaning (cf. Sum & Jessop, 2013, p. 65).

In developing this approach, Weber developed ideal types for historical and comparative analysis of orientations to action, structural configurations, social processes, and so on. Ideal types have a special epistemological and heuristic status in his work insofar as they do not refer to postulated essences or specific empirical realities. On the contrary:

> An ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct (*Gedankenbild*)… [that] cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. (Weber, 1949, p. 90)

For example, neoclassical economics rests on an ideal-type construction because it assumes social actions as 'purely rational and oriented to economic ends alone' (Weber, 1968, p. 9).

Weber also called for a *Herrschaftssoziologie* (sociology of domination). Indeed, he regarded domination as 'the most important elements of social action' (Weber, 1968, p. 941). He argued that 'in most of the varieties of social action, domination plays a considerable role, even where it is not obvious at first sight' (ibid). He distinguishes 'power' (*Macht*) from domination (*Herrschaft*). The former is 'the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests' (Weber, 1968, p. 53). The latter is 'the probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed

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by a given group of persons' (ibid). He also remarks that 'any advantage of life', needs to 'justify itself'' (Weber, 1968, p. 953). In his terms, then, domination and its justification are the appropriate focus of this research. The sources of legitimacy (justification), according to Weber, are traditional, legal, and charismatic authority (Weber, 2008, p. 157). Traditional authority is based on 'an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them' (Weber, 1968, p. 215). Legal authority rests on 'a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands' (ibid). Finally, charismatic authority is based on 'devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him' (ibid). These are, of course, 'ideal-types' developed to facilitate analysis of complex realities from a specific perspective.

These Weberian points are all relevant to my research. First, it is concerned to develop explanations adequate at the level of both meaning and material causality – but employs a cultural political economy approach to this end. Second, it is explicitly concerned to understand the forms of domination that characterise successive kinds of state and state-building processes in Iran. Third, in its interest in how Khomeini came to power, it is especially interested in what Weber would describe as charismatic authority. Fourth, I will draw on Weber's ideal-typical contrast between two forms of religious authority in my analysis of messianism: prophet and priest. The former is defined by Weber as 'a purely individual bearer of charisma, who by virtue of his mission proclaims a religious doctrine or divine commandment' (Weber, 1968, p. 439). In contrast, the latter 'lays claim to authority by virtue of his service in a sacred tradition, while the prophet's claim is based on personal revelation and charisma' (Weber, 1968, p. 440). In other words, whereas prophecy marks a discontinuity with the past, the latter signifies continuity. I argue that the novelty of Khomeini's strategic orientation lies in his state project, which combined these two forms. Thus, as the next chapter

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demonstrates, Khomeini's state project manifests a continuity in discontinuity and a discontinuity in continuity based on Shi'a martyrology and eschatology.

There are some affinities between Weber and Gramsci in their concern to develop explanations adequate at the level of meaning as well as material causality and to understand the nature of domination in advanced western societies. For Gramsci, '"popular beliefs" and similar ideas are themselves material forces' (Gramsci, 1971, p. 165). For instance, he draws on the history of Christianity and argues that 'over a certain period of history in certain specific historical conditions religion has been and continues to be a "necessity", a necessary form taken by the will of the popular masses and a specific way of rationalising the world and real life, which provided the general framework for real practical activity' (Gramsci, 1971, p. 337; cf. Weber, 2001). However, whereas Weber adopted a national liberal bourgeois perspective concerned to advance Germany's position as a modern imperial power, Gramsci focused on issues of communist political strategy and developed his conceptual framework to this end. This is reflected in Gramsci's interest in hegemony. Thus, in contrast to Weber's concept of legitimacy, which is limited to the political society and involves an elitist view of democracy, Gramsci introduces the concept of hegemony, a phenomenon that is also located in civil society. Thus, at stake for the Italian is not only justification of power (legitimacy) but the process of winning the active consent of the society to secure the hegemony of the dominant class. He nonetheless recognises that hegemony is insecure and that hegemony is protected by the armour of coercion (Gramsci, 1971, p. 263) and, where there is a crisis of hegemony or authority, exceptional regimes can emerge (fascism being only one example). These are all important points for my own analysis of the crisis of the Shah's regime.

If there are certain affinities between Weber and Gramsci, there are also affinities between Gramsci and E.P. Thompson. The latter takes culture seriously in his account

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of social class, as illustrated beautifully in his analysis of the making of the English working class (1966), Thompson rejects banal materialism and suggests that the social classes are not effects of objective class relations but emergent social relationship:

> By class I understand an historical phenomenon, unifying a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material of experience and in consciousness. I emphasise that it is an *historical* phenomenon. I do not see class as a "structure", nor even as a "category", but as some thing which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships (Thompson, 1966, p. 9).

For him, class happens when 'some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs' (Thompson, 1966, p. 9). Thus, he argues that 'we cannot understand class unless we see it as a social and cultural formation, arising from processes which can only be studied as they work themselves out over a considerable historical period' (Thompson, 1966, p. 11). For Thompson, then, it is not capitalism per se but how it is 'experienced' that makes the working class as an active subject (Efstathiou, 2014, p. 411). Nonetheless, this experience does not exist in an economic vacuum:

> I hope that nothing I have written above has given rise to the notion that I suppose that the formation of class is independent of objective determinations, that class can be defined simply as a cultural formation, etc. This has, I hope, been disproved by my own historical practice, as well as in the practice of many other historians. (Thompson, 1978, p. 148)

Thompson's historical analysis of the English working class appeared around the same time as Louis Althusser was promoting 'structural Marxism'. Althusser, whom Thompson described as the 'Aristotle of the new Marxist idealism' (Thompson, 1995,

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p. 5), developed an analysis of the 'overdetermination' of social relations through the interaction of relatively autonomous economic, political, and ideological regions:

> overdetermination does not just refer to apparently unique and aberrant historical situations (Germany, for example), but is universal; the economic dialectic is never active *in the pure state*; in History, these instances, the superstructures, etc. – are never seen to step respectfully aside when their work is done or, when the Time comes, as his pure phenomena, to scatter before His Majesty the Economy as he strides along the royal road of the Dialectic. From the first moment to the last, the lonely hour of the 'last instance' never comes. (Althusser, 2005, p. 113)

Despite this clear rejection of economism, Thompson claims that Althusser 'is unable to handle, except in the most abstract and theoretic way, questions of value, culture - and political theory'. Thus, as summarised by Hamilton, he depicts Althusserianism as 'a self-sufficient theoretical system, closed off from the healthy flow of empirical evidence; that it is hostile to history, and to human agency; and … explains the infinite variety of human culture as mere epiphenomena of economic forces' (Hamilton, 2011, p. 172). Whether valid or not, these charges can be read as timely warnings against any temptation to adopt a theoreticist and economistic position in this thesis. I also affirm the importance of taking history seriously (albeit without reducing it to chronology) and exploring human agency – something crucial for this thesis not only in regard to the figure of Khomeini but also in relation to other religious and political leaders and to their struggles to build and consolidate their social bases, whether through hegemony or passive revolution. Indeed, one might describe my project as being concerned with the making of the social basis of Khomeini in his struggle against the Shah.

Even if Thompson's accusations were valid against Althusser's contributions to *Reading Capital* (1968) and *For Marx* (2005), a question that need not detain us here, they are irrelevant to five key Althusserian insights that have inspired my past and

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present research. These are: (1) his notion of aleatory materialism, which is a decidedly anti-determinist concept and highlights the contingency of historical development (Althusser, 2006); (2) his concept of overdetermination, with its anti-essentialism and emphasis on the contingent, potentially disjunctive, articulation of different regions – or fields – of social practice; (3) his increasing emphasis on social agency, which he unfortunately tended to reduce to class agency, in historical development; (4) his emphasis on the historical forms of individuality; and (5) the notion of ideology as an imaginary relationship to the real world that shapes lived experience.

The fourth point can be read as a response to Thompsons' critique of Althusser's early structuralism, with its surprising claim that individuals are merely the *Tråger* (passive supports) of structures. For this claim was linked to another: 'the problem of the concept of *the historical forms of existence of individuality*' (Althusser & Balibar, 1970, pp. 111–112). Concern with forms of individuality is one way to move from Althusser's self-acknowledged 'flirtation' with structuralist terminology, which, he conceded, 'obviously went beyond acceptable limits' (Althusser, 1976, pp. 127–128). Examining forms of individuality invites concern with interpellation and subjectivation (the latter also indicating possible links to Michel Foucault's work as well as Max Weber) and is important when seeking to understand the contemporary recontextualization of religious identities in the Iranian revolution. The next chapter demonstrates how Khomeini's conceptualisation of Shi'ism interpellated his followers to engage in the struggle against the Shah.

Regarding the fifth influence, Althusser claims that ideology has material existence. It 'represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence' (Althusser, 1971, pp. 162–167). Its material existence is related to the role of a plurality of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) (see next section). Althusser's emphasis on an 'imagined relationship' with the real world could be a productive way to interpret

Thompson's notion of 'experience'. For, based on his account of ideology, one can argue that the 'subjective meaning' of social actions is not based on the direct experience of the real world with all its complexity but involves active sense- and meaning-making based on evolving social imaginaries (cf. Weber's *verstehende Soziologie* and Jessop and Sum's cultural political economy). In short, as sense and meaning are important to understand social actions, one cannot reduce it to only direct individual or collective experience. These incorporate 'a sense of the normal expectations we have of each other, the kind of common understanding that enables us to carry out the collective practices that make up our social life' (Taylor, 2004, p. 24). Or, as Sum and Jessop put it:

> An imaginary is a semiotic ensemble (or meaning system) without tightly defined boundaries that frames individual subjects' lived experience of an inordinately complex world and/or guides collective calculation about that world. Without imaginaries, individuals cannot 'go on' in the world and collective actors (such as organizations) could not relate to their environments, make decisions, or engage in strategic action. In this sense, imaginaries are an important semiotic moment of the network of social practices in a given social field, institutional order, or wider social formation. (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p. 165)

These remarks complete my necessarily brief survey of other theoretical resources deployed in my thesis that might not seem self-evident. This is because the insights of Weber, Thompson, and Althusser can be integrated into the strategic-relational approach that provides a more sophisticated general heuristic that is either compatible with their general arguments (Weber's *verstehende Soziologie*) or can situate their particular arguments within a broader theoretical framework (Thompson and Althusser). Gramsci's case is different because it is critical influence on the SRA and cultural political economy and his influence – along with that of Nicos Poulantzas – will be evident throughout this thesis. I will present the strategic-relational approach in

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greater detail after I have addressed another major theme – how to analysis state power as a specific problem as opposed to societalization as a general problem.

3.2   State Power

> What is a "state?" This cannot be defined sociologically on the basis of what it does. There is almost no task that has not at some time been taken on by a political association. At the same time, there is also no task of which it could be said that it is always and exclusively to be performed by those associations that are termed political, or by states, in today's language, or by the historical precursors of the modern state. (Weber, 2008, p. 156)

In response to his own question, Weber concludes that the state cannot be defined based on its content and activities. In dealing with state, power, and domination, he introduced several ideal-types. For example, under the traditional authority that mentioned above, he defines 'gerontocracy' as an elementary types of traditional domination 'where the master has no personal administrative staff' (Weber, 1968, p. 231). More important to this study, he identifies 'patrimonialism' and, in the extreme case, 'sultanism' whenever 'traditional domination develops an administration and a military force which are purely personal instruments of the master' (ibid). I briefly 'flirt' with Weberian language, particularly in discussing Khomeini's political imaginary and Shi'ism (see chapter four). In dealing with the *modern* state, Weber famously defines it as an *apparatus* that successfully claims a monopoly on the legitimate use of *physical force* within a given *territory* (Weber, 2008, p. 156, italics added)*.* This situates his approach in the tradition of *allgemeine Staatstheorie* (general state theory), which focuses on three key features of the state, namely, a state apparatus, its territory, the (resident) population over which it rules.

Jessop adds a fourth element to the general concept of the state, namely, 'the state idea or state project' to emphasis 'the contradictions and dilemmas involved in political

discourse' in understanding the state (Jessop, 2016, p. 49). State project, in this context, 'does not refer to the general legitimation of state authority (for example, in Weberian terms, traditional, rational-legal, or charismatic) but to political imaginaries that present the nature and purposes of the state for the wider society in particular periods' (Jessop, 2016, p. 51). He distinguishes state projects that are 'oriented to creating and reproducing the institutional unity of states' from hegemonic visions concerned with 'the nature and purposes of the state for the wider society' (see below) (Jessop, 2016, p. 57). Close to these concepts is 'accumulation strategy': the 'organizing myth that gives shape and coherence to economic growth' (Jessop & Sum, 2006, p. 72). It defines 'a specific economic "growth model" complete with its various extra-economic preconditions and also outlines a general strategy appropriate to its realization' (Jessop, 1990, p. 198). Considering these remarks:

> The core of the state apparatus comprises a relatively unified ensemble of socially embedded, socially regularized, and strategically selective institutions and organizations [*Staatsgewalt*] whose socially accepted function is to define and enforce collectively binding decisions on the members of a society [*Staatsvolk*] in a given territorial area [*Staatsgebiet*] in the name of the common interest or general will of an imagined political community identified with that territory [*Staatsidee*]. (Jessop, 2016, p. 49)

The Weberian tradition of state theory has developed more toward studying bureaucracy and sociology of rule. For instance, Michael Mann suggests that 'the essence of the state's functions is a monopoly of binding rule-making' (Mann, 1984, p. 188). He distinguishes two senses of the state power. The first sense is 'the despotic power', the ability of the state to act 'without routine, institutionalised negotiation with civil society groups' (Mann, 1984, p. 188). The second sense, according to him, is 'infrastructural power': 'the capacity of the state to actually penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm' (Mann, 1984, p. 188).

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Mann puts together these two independent dimensions of the state power and introduces a two-dimensional matrix of the state power that results in four ideal types of states.

infrastructural co-ordination

	low	High
Low	feudal	bureaucratic
High	imperial	authoritarian

(Row labels under **despotic Power**)

Table 3.1: Two dimensions of state power. Source: (Mann, 1984, p. 191)

Regarding his table, Mann describes the feudal state as the least powerful form. Corresponding to Weber's patrimonial state is the 'imperial state' that 'possesses its own governing agents, but has only limited capacity to penetrate and co-ordinate civil society without the assistance of other power groups' (Mann, 1984, p. 191). The third ideal-type is the bureaucratic state that is 'controlled by others, civil society groups, but their decisions once taken are enforceable through the state's infrastructure' (ibid). The fourth is 'authoritarian' that is 'a more institutionalised form of despotism, in which competing power groupings cannot evade the infrastructural reach of the state, nor are they structurally separate from the state' (ibid). These ideal-types are insightful for research on the state and struggle for hegemony and the crisis tendency of the states. However, using them, as it is the case with Weber himself, within a comparative frame, can limit the analytical power of a study (see chapter two on comparatism and its limits).

3.2.1. From *Allgemeine Staatstheorie* to the state as a social relation

General state theory tends to focus on the properties and competences of the state apparatus. This can be seen in Weber's analyses and the work of Michael Mann, reviewed above, with its distinction between despotic and infrastructural power. This is a useful distinction but points beyond the state apparatus to the nature of state power. This is inevitably strategic-relational in nature. This is particularly evident in Gramsci's distinctive approach to the state, which he defines 'the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules' (Gramsci, 1971, p. 244). He notes that the 'supremacy' of a social group 'manifests itself in two ways, as "domination" and as "political, intellectual and moral leadership"' (Gramsci, 1971, p. 57). He emphasises that the struggle for hegemony becomes crucial in the modern state once the masses enter politics as democracy expands from the 1870s onwards. Thus, in contrast with the narrow Weberian account of the modern state (limited to political society), Gramsci focuses on the 'integral state' which is 'political society + civil society, in other words, hegemony protected by the armour of coercion' (Gramsci, 1971, p. 263). Hegemony involves political, intellectual and moral leadership and is concerned to build a national-popular or collective will, which is by no means guaranteed. To understand how this occurs

> requires an extremely minute, molecular process of exhaustive analysis in every detail, the documentation for which is made up of an endless quantity of books, pamphlets, review and newspaper articles, conversations and oral debates repeated countless times, and which in their gigantic aggregation represent this long labour which gives birth to a collective will with a certain degree of homogeneity-with the degree necessary and sufficient to achieve an action which is coordinated and simultaneous in the time and the geographical space in which the historical event takes place. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 194)

This kind of inquiry is very demanding and cannot be undertaken in this thesis, but I will indicate the results that might be expected from such an exhaustive investigation based on selected texts and speeches as exemplars of the strategic visions of different social forces. Gramsci's insights were further developed by Nicos Poulantzas, who explicitly developed the thesis that the state is a social relation, i.e., 'a relationship of forces, or more precisely the material condensation of such a relationship among classes and class fractions, such as this is expressed within the state in a necessarily specific form' (Poulantzas, 2000, pp. 128–129). Poulantzas combined a strong interest in the changing form and functions of the state and their strategically selective character with an equally strong interest in the balance of forces in different periods and specific conjunctures. Both aspects were essential to understand the reproduction of social relations and, therewith, social relations of exploitation and domination.

Following Poulantzas in his relational approach, the SRA emphasises that, as a social relation, the state can be seen neither as a simple instrument to be used by any social force that controls it for any purpose nor as a rational subject. Instead, it considers the state as 'a social relation which can … be analysed as the site, the generator and the product of strategies' (Jessop, 1990, p. 260). Accordingly,

> a strategic-relational analysis would examine how a given state apparatus may privilege some actors, some identities, some strategies, some spatial and temporal horizons, and some actions over others; and the ways, if any, in which political actors (individual and/or collective) take account of this differential privileging by engaging in 'strategic-context' analysis when choosing a course of action. (Jessop, 2006, p. 124)

This approach makes explicit what was partly implicit in Gramsci's and Poulantzas's analyses and is, therefore, more useful heuristically. Jessop also builds on their work (as well as Parisian regulation theory) to introduce three useful strategic concepts. These comprise accumulation strategies, state projects, and hegemonic projects (later

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renamed 'hegemonic visions'). For the moment, I focus on Jessop's creative redefinition of hegemony in terms of hegemonic projects. He writes:

> In broad terms, hegemony involves the interpellation and organization of different 'class-relevant' (but not necessarily class-conscious) forces under the 'political, intellectual and moral leadership' of a particular class (or class fraction) or, more precisely, its political, intellectual and moral spokesmen. The key to the exercise of such leadership is the development of a specific 'hegemonic project' which can resolve the abstract problem of conflicts between particular interests and the general interest. (Jessop, 1990, pp. 207–208)

Hegemonic projects:

> offer general guidelines for conducting state policy. These visions seek to reconcile the particular and the universal by linking the nature and the purposes of the state to a broader – but always selective – political, intellectual, and moral vision of the public interest, the good society, the commonweal, or an analogous principle of societal organization. (Jessop, 2016, pp. 86–87)

Hegemony is mediated through ideological apparatuses and forms the structural selectivities in a given society.

> Hegemony is crystallized and mediated through a complex system of ideological apparatuses to be found throughout the social formation. Indeed, although they certainly occur within the governmental system, hegemonic practices mostly take place beyond the state in its narrow sense. (Jessop, 1990, p. 53)

This complex system of ideological apparatuses (Gramsci called them hegemonic apparatuses) takes meaning systems, social imaginaries, as defined in the previous section, and lived experience as its 'raw material'. However, imaginaries are subjected to power struggles and the past semiotic and material practices. They are dynamic and have a 'central role in the struggle not only for 'hearts and minds' but also for the

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reproduction or transformation of the prevailing structures of exploitation and domination' (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p. 165). In this sense, the hegemonic struggle can be understood as a fight to make one imaginary the hegemonic or dominant frame over the rival imaginaries (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p. 166). Moreover, consistent with the strategic-relational approach:

> Struggles for hegemony always occur on quite specific, strategically selective terrains. And this means that the success of putative hegemonic projects will depend on structural conditions affecting their production and reception as well as on their specific content and appeal. (Jessop, 1990, p. 217)

Having discussed the SRA account of the state, the following two sections reflect on the temporal and spatial concepts that are useful in developing an account of the 1979 Revolution and rise of Khomeini in Iran.

3.3   Periodisation and temporal concepts

There are theoretical and political issues at stake in identifying the series of events and transformative processes at the centre of my research. Hence, it might be useful here to mention the implications of Gramsci's remark that a crisis is a process as well as an event (Gramsci, 2001, pp. 351–352). Writing on the Great Depression, he observed:

> Whoever wants to give one sole definition of these events or, what is the same thing, find a single cause or origin, must be rebutted. We are dealing with a process that shows itself in many ways, and in which causes and effects become intertwined and mutually entangled. To simplify means to misrepresent and falsify. Thus, a complex process, as in many other phenomena, and not a unique 'fact' repeated in various forms through a cause having one single origin.

The same point holds even more strongly for a revolution, which involves conscious actions on the part of many actors as well as the unfolding of diverse underlying crisis-tendencies.

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One way to build on Gramsci's insightful comments on the complexities of crisis and the challenges of construing their causes, effects, and future development is to develop Forgues and Roux-Dufort's useful distinction between an event and a process approach. In the former, the primary focus is on '[i]ncidents or accidents [that] constitute contingent and/or peculiar events as opposed to routines, regularities and experience' (Forgues & Roux-Dufort, 1998). Thus viewed, the 1979 Revolution comprised an event or series of events that marked a rupture with the past and set Iran on a new path. In contrast, the latter 'refers to a combination of actions, disruptions or to a succession of sequential (causal and linear) or systemic (mutual causality, interactions, feedbacks) steps or phases that bluntly combines a series of different familiar or unfamiliar stakeholders, issues and resources resulting in a destructuring effect on the organization and its stakeholders' (Forgues & Roux-Dufort, 1998). Thus viewed, the 1979 Revolution has a pre-history rooted in the development of the old regime, occurred in a specific conjuncture with a specific institutionally-mediated balance of forces, involved specific strategic and tactical interventions, and set in train a series of developments with unintended as well as intended consequences whose dynamic is shaped by the legacies of the past as well as present actions and aspirations for the future. In short, at stake in a processual approach are the interaction of multiple crisis-tendencies and processes together with the dialectic of path-dependency and path-shaping in specific periods and conjunctures – a key feature of strategic-relational analysis.

As we are dealing here with several processes, I should emphasise that my study rejects a linear account of history. I can explain this by distinguishing between chronicles, chronologies, and periodisation. Whereas chronicles 'merely record events or list statistics in calendric time', chronologies operate with a unilinear or, at least, uni-temporal timeframe to narrate some aspect of history (Jessop & Sum, 2006, p. 326). Chronologies often resort to narrative history to understand the succession of historical

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conjunctures. Narratives 'emplot selected past events and forces in terms of a temporal sequence with a beginning, middle and end in an overarching structure that permits causal and moral lessons to be drawn' (Jessop & Sum, 2006, p. 326).

To provide an alternative and a more complex account of Iran's modern history, I will employ the methods of genealogy and periodisation. 'Genealogies trace the differential, fragmentary origins of various elements that are later combined into a structurally coherent pattern marking a new period of relative invariance' (Jessop & Sum, 2006, p. 326). This method is combined with the SRA to periodisation. The latter is concerned to 'identify discontinuity in continuity and continuity in discontinuity and explore different types of conjuncture where strategic interventions could make a decisive contribution to path-shaping in spite of path-dependent legacies', would produce a proper theoretical tool analysis historical crystallisation of the modern state in Iran (Jessop & Sum, 2006, p. 542). This approach provides several advantages over mainstream chronologies. Jessop notes these new possibilities of periodisation in the light of Marx's approach in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*:

> First, whereas a chronology orders actions, events, or periods on a single unilinear time scale, a periodization operates with several time scales ... Second, while a chronology recounts simple temporal coincidence or succession, a periodization focuses on more complex conjunctures. It classifies actions, events, and periods into stages according to their conjunctural implications (as specific combinations of constraints and opportunities on the pursuit of different projects) for the actions of different social forces on different sites of action over different time horizons ... Third, whereas a chronology typically provides a simple narrative explanation for what occurs by identifying a single temporal series of actions and events, a periodization rests on an explanatory framework oriented to the contingent, overdetermined interaction of more than one such series. (Jessop, 2008, pp. 88–89)

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Adopting the SRA to develop my periodisation, two axes should be stressed (Jessop, 2008, pp. 84–100). The first is continuity-discontinuity as a way to deal with periods, stages, phases and steps. For periods, the largest unit of analysis (although variable in duration), discontinuity is the analytical dividing line between periods. Stages are located within periods and are characterised by discontinuity in continuity. Phases are strategic moments of variable duration within a stage and steps concern the specific strategic and tactical initiatives that occur within a stage. This distinction relates to the second strategic-relational duality in periodisation. In this sense, where periods and stages (demarcated by shifts in the balance of forces, a decisive turning point, a defining event, etc.) are more structural, phases (changes in strategy) and steps (changes in tactics) are more strategic.

These distinctions can be used to refine Gramsci's concept of conjuncture. In analysing the Great Depression, for example, he defines a conjuncture as a 'set of circumstances which determine the market in a given phase if these circumstances, however, are conceived of as in movement, in other words as an ensemble that gives rise to a process of ever new combinations, i.e. the process of the economic cycle' (Gramsci, 2001, p. 312). More generally, a conjuncture comprises several different events, processes, and actions meeting in a historical moment. Hence, the 1970s in Iran as a critical conjuncture needs an analysis of the strategic possibilities that this specific era 'gives for different actors, different identities, different interests, different coalition possibilities, different horizons of action, different strategies, and different tactics' (Jessop, 2012). To explore this in strategic-relational terms requires

> (a) an appropriate set of concepts for moving from basic structural features to immediate strategic concerns; (b) the spatio-temporal horizons of action that define the conjuncture; (c) a clear account of medium- and long-term goals that should guide strategy and tactics in the current moment; and (d) ethico-political commitments that

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set limits to acceptable action in particular contexts on the grounds that the ends do not always justify any means. (Jessop, 2012)

3.4 State space and spatial concepts

Genealogy, chronology, periodisation and conjunctural analysis are prima facie temporal concepts. However, time is always intimately connected with spatiality, and these four concepts are just different ways to analysis spatio-temporality by taking time as an entry-point. Yet, as Jessop has shown for Gramsci's work, his crucial concepts 'are sensitive to issues of place, space and scale as well as to issues of periodisation, historical structures, specific conjunctures and social dynamics' (Jessop, 2005, p. 435). This section takes space as its entry-point into spatio-temporality and introduces the spatial theories that inspire my analysis of the 1979 Revolution and the rise of Khomeini. This is particularly important for a spatial understanding of the revolution that goes beyond its objective coordinates is largely absent from the relevant literature. This matters all the more because, for a long time, both sociology and Marxist analyses were dominated by a concern with time and temporality (we saw this earlier regarding modernisation). So the challenge for this thesis is to develop an analysis that is equally sensitive to the temporal as well as spatial aspects of the Iranian revolution and, where possible, to show their interconnection and uneven development.

From a strategic-relational perspective on socio-spatiality, space can be said to comprise 'socially produced grids and horizons of social action that divide the material, social, and imaginary world(s) and also orient actions in terms of such divisions' (Jessop, 2016, p. 124; cf. Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 38–39). In this sense, space is crucial in any discussion of power and governance.

> …space can function as a site, object, and means of governance. Inherited spatial configurations and their opportunity structures are sites where governance may be established, contested, and modified. Space is an object of governance insofar as it

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> results from the fixing, manipulation, and lifting of material, social and symbolic borders, boundaries, and frontiers. Space can also be a means of governance when it defines horizons of action in terms of 'inside' and 'outside' and configures possible connections among actors, actions, and events through various spatio-temporal technologies. (Jessop, 2016, p. 124)

Moreover, as Jessop (Jessop, 2016, p. 123) argues for state power as well as the capital relation and other forms of domination, space-time relations have both their structural and strategic aspects. Thus, we must explore social space and its complexity to study the state space. However, there are several one-dimensional traps in the treatment of socio-spatiality. The most remarked of these, and the one most relevant for my research on Iranian nationalism, is the 'territorial trap', which involves three common methodological problems:

> The first [is] the reification of state territorial spaces as fixed units of secure sovereign space. The second is the division of the domestic from the foreign. The third geographical assumption is of the territorial state as existing prior to and as a container of society (Agnew, 1994).

Similar issues occur with other spatial turns (for a discussion of these, see Jessop, Brenner, & Jones, 2008, p. 391). These limitations can be avoided with 'more systematic investigations of the interconnections among the four spatial dimensions of social relations' (Jones & Jessop, 2010). Therefore, chapter six explores, among other things, how Shi'a places and their parallel networks based on pilgrimage and religious schools have contributed to the reterritorialization of the national state in Iran.

Here I elaborate further on territory for its particular importance in the Iranian nationalism. The first crucial point is to recall the crucial distinction between the terrestrial and territory, which has important implications for the political economy of oil and its role in Iran's dependent development and attempts at nation-building. The

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terrestrial is a 'general substratum' of 'forms of socio-spatial organisation' and the territorial as a 'distinctive political form' (Jones & Jessop, 2010):

> Whereas the former [the terrestrial] denotes the initial geophysical raw material or substratum for sociospatial relations (and becomes 'second nature' through its sociospatial transformation), territorialization is one form of the sociospatial appropriation and transformation of the terrestrial. Thus, while all social relations occur in terrestrial space (until the rise of telematic or cyberspace), not all social relations occur in territories constituted and controlled by a state apparatus. (Jessop, 2016, p. 135)

This is important for dealing with oil and its role in Iranian nationalism. It is terrestrial in the first instance as oil is a natural resource or 'gift of nature', although its exploitation is capital-intensive and generates absolute and differential rents. However, as chapter six argues, oil has influenced the boundaries of Iranian national state and its relation with other nations in the Middle East. For instance, the Arab-Israeli wars in the 1960's and 1970's facilitated an Islamic frame that connects different countries in the region and brings forward an extra-territorial 'we' (chapter 6).

Neglect of the terrestrial-territorial distinction is one aspect of the taken-for-grantedness of the concept of territory and the resulting weaknesses in the theoretical literature on territorial orders and configurations (for an extended discussion, see Elden, 2013). Yet, as mentioned above, territory is one of the three (or four) key features of the state. Chapter six demonstrates the non-coincidence of territorial boundaries and religious communities regarding Iranian national state. As elaborated, Shi'a dynamic boundaries based on its communities, holy places, and networks (religious tax, seminaries, and pilgrimage) has influenced the national boundaries in Iran. Thus territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization are crucial to the study of state formation and transformation. Indeed, '[t]erritory is not simply an object: the outcome of actions conducted toward it or some previously supposedly neutral area. Territory is itself a

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process, made and remade, shaped and shaping, active and reactive (Elden, 2013, p. 17). As we shall see in the "Iranian" case, these processes take different forms in different epochs and periods, and their contestation involves different phases, stages, and steps. Of special interest below is the formation of the national territorial state and its articulation to competing concepts of nation-state.

Poulantzas (2000, pp. 103–105) argues that capitalist social formations are characterised by a set of segmented and homogenised units, namely, nation-states. These territorialised units serve as 'the nodal points for the transnationalization of production, territorial wars of re-division, and even genocide' (Jessop, 2008, p. 135). In discussing how class struggle overdetermines time, space, and nationhood, Poulantzas stresses that 'the modern nation is not the creation of the bourgeoisie alone but actually reflects a relationship of forces between the "modern" social classes' (Jessop, 2008, p. 136). This is a very useful guideline for the study of the Iranian state and competing concepts of nationhood (chapter 6).

One aspect of this is the close relation between territorialization and boundary-making.

> Boundaries - as lines of inclusion and exclusion between social groups, between 'us' and 'them' - do not locate only on border areas but also are 'spread' - often unevenly - all over the state territory. Boundaries penetrate the society in numerous practices and discourses through which the territory exists and achieves institutionalized meanings. (Paasi, 2003, p. 113)

It follows that several aspects of society and particularly of the state in its integral sense are affected by the continuous (trans)formations of territories.

> Territory is a historical question: produced, mutable, and fluid. It is geographical, not simply because it is one of the ways of ordering the world, but also because it is profoundly uneven in its development. It is a word, a concept, and a practice, where the relation between these can only be grasped genealogically. It is a political

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question, but in a broad sense: economic, strategic, legal, and technical. (Elden, 2013, p. 330)

These comments are especially useful for my research and can be linked to three main kinds of analysis of state spatiality (Brenner, Jessop, Jones, & MacLeod, 2003, pp. 6–7). The first group deals with state space in narrow terms, focusing on the spatiality of the territorialized state, e.g., 'the changing organization of state territoriality in the modern inter-state system; the evolving role of borders, boundaries, and frontiers; and the changing intra-national geographies of state territorial organization and internal administrative differentiation' (ibid). The second group addresses state space in its integral sense. It examines the 'ways in which state institutions are mobilized strategically to regulate and reorganize social and economic relations and, more generally, the changing geographies of state intervention into social and economic processes' (ibid). Finally, the third group looks at state space in the representational sense. It considers the spatiality of political imaginaries and hegemonic projects both in terms of exercising and resisting state power (ibid). Chapter six elaborates some key themes from the first two groups to underpin an account of the rise of Khomeini based on the third theme, namely, representational space. This involves examining the link among state, power, and knowledge and can also provide a geopolitical periodisation: This continual production and transformation of state space occurs not only through material-institutional practices of state spatial regulation but also through a range of representational and discursive strategies through which the terrain of sociopolitical struggle is mapped and remapped by actors who are directly involved in such struggles (Brenner et al., 2003, p. 11).

To understand such discursive strategies and the structural selectivities of the state, I adopt the concept of spatial imaginary. Spatial imaginaries are 'discursive phenomena (semiotic ensembles and associated semiotic practices) that distinguish specific places, scales, territories, networks, or spaces in general from the inherently

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unstructured complexity of a spatialized world' (Jessop, 2016, p. 138). Now that we discussed the strategic-relational approach and its merits for avoiding several classic sociological dualities, we can discuss methodology and introduce the method and resources of this study.

3.5   On methodology

The method of this research is grounded in the strategic-relational approach and cultural political economy, which are rooted, in turn, in a critical realist philosophy of (social) science. All three assume the hypercomplexity of the real world and posit the need to reduce that complexity as a condition for actors to be able to 'go on' in the world and for observers to be able to study it. In both cases this involves a choice of entry-point for sense- and meaning-making, whether this is a specific kind of imaginary or a particular theoretical and methodological paradigm. Because critical realists posit that actual events and processes result from the interaction of underlying real causal mechanisms, capacities, and liabilities, they also emphasise the contingently necessary nature of these events, processes, and their emergent effects. They, therefore, reject some significant alternative epistemological positions, especially empiricism and positivism (which focus on empirical evidence and seek to identify empirical laws based on constant conjunctions) and different forms of essentialism that deny the contingency of the real world and engage in different forms of reductionism. The epistemology and methodology that corresponds to critical realism and that are also crucial to the SRA and CPE can be described as the method of articulation (Jessop, 1982) or as a 'logical-historical' approach. The key to its application is to establish a specific explanandum that is defined at a given level of abstraction within one axis of abstraction and a given degree of complexity, which depends in turn on the number of axes of abstraction that are at stake. It then starts from one or more series of concepts that are theoretically related within one or more given entry-points

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(theoretically justified axes of abstraction) and then proceeds to show how different mechanisms and conditions belonging to specific axes interact in contingently necessary ways to produce specific cases. In this context, then, 'logical' refers to the articulation of concepts within an axis of abstraction with due recognition that their articulation cannot proceed through a simple logical derivation of every succeeding, branching concept from a single essential concept. This requires theoretical justification that may well be based in part on historical and comparative analysis as well as the usual trial-and-error learning processes involved in the process of investigation and in the search for the best method of presenting results. Conversely, 'historical' refers to the historical contingencies involved in the interaction of different causal mechanisms to produce events, processes, and emergent effects. This is exactly the procedure that is required for a research project such as mine, with its relatively complex-concrete explanandum – the rise of Khomeini considered as a strategic intervention in a complex conjuncture comprises multiple processes with their different spatio-temporalities – and its inevitable contingencies. This is especially important because I am combining concepts drawn from different entry-points and seeking to define progressively more concrete-complex factors as my historical analysis approaches the moment of Khomeini's rise.

Another way to understand what is at stake in the logical-historical method is to distinguish a general theory from a grand theory (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p. 99). The former is an 'abstract systematic general theory that seeks to integrate and explain everything about humankind and society in a universal, trans-historical manner via the logical unfolding of concepts' (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p. 99; Wright Mills, 1959, p. 25). In contrast, as Sum and Jessop (2013, p. 99) suggest, a grand theory aimed to develop:

> 1. a preliminary set of basic and sensitizing concepts and positive guidelines (that is, not a closed system) that are

2. relevant to historical description, hermeneutic interpretation and causal explanation;

3. scalable, that is, applicable to different scales of analysis without seeking to unify the micro-, meso- and macro- levels (however defined) within a single system, whether this attempt is made through upward or downward reduction that ignores emergent properties or through a simple conflation that denies the specificity of different 'levels'; and

4. recognize the importance of evolutionary mechanisms and contingent effects without assuming they are always progressive and/or irreversible.

This thesis can be located within the tradition of grand rather than general theory – although it is not itself a contribution to grand theory but a selective application of some themes in grand theory. As such, it is not a simple fact-gathering case study. For, the nature of my research problem is such that I cannot (1) test hypotheses in an empiricist manner – it is an extended, multidimensional case study; nor (2) use multivariate analysis – each period, stage, phase, step is unique; nor, again, (3) use comparative analysis – there is only one case and no way to test this analysis against others. Instead, it draws on tools and concepts developed in a grand theoretical orientation to understand a specific case. It seeks to develop an account that is theoretically informed, concerned with historically specificities, rejecting any general theory, but capable of identifying commonalities and differences. The presented interpretation of 'logical-historical' method fits in with Weber's focus on the uniqueness of historical cases and the role of ideal-type analysis. Thus, it is not the task of this study to compare what happened in 1979 Iran with some Weberian-style ideal type to make sure the extent to which and respects in which it was a revolution or not (see, Skocpol, 1979). Instead, this study started with a conceptual toolbox based on SRA and CPE, and concepts get progressively and coherently refined in and through their application to its complex-concrete historical case.

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Regarding the methods of the research, several first and second-hand resources are used. The former comprises oral history (in particular, the Iranian oral history project in Harvard University), biographies, speeches, interviews, letters, newspapers, official documents (especially the development plans before and after the revolution) and so forth. I focus on important figures in the state in integral sense, e.g. the Shah, the minister of the royal court, the heads of the Plan Organisation, party leaders, Khomeini, and so forth. For the latter, several history books, accounts of the 1979 Revolution, history of Shi'ism, Khomeini's books and so forth are studied to illuminate the moment of revolution from different perspectives. In particular, Khomeini is important not as 'the leader of the revolution', which is the cornerstone of the official narrative, but as its main figure that can symbolise a great coalition between different forces and embody the revolution. Thus, this study does not suggest that other Islamists were not important in the formation and promotion of the Islamist's hegemonic vision. Instead, it is more concerned with the strategic selectivities of the state and structurally oriented strategies of this figure to realise such a counter-hegemonic vision in the Shah's regime.

3.6   Discursive formations as framing devices

Having introduced the SRA and its contribution to avoiding reductionism and overcoming common sociological dualities, the last section elaborates the specific conceptual toolbox employed in this research. For the moment, I take the main state-theoretical concepts for granted and highlight the social imaginaries that are crucial to explaining how (and why) Khomeini came to power. Here I focus on three discursive formations that help to define the state project and together comprise the Holy Triad that frames competing projects: namely progress, independence and justice that are the results of spatiotemporality of historical constitution of the national state in Iran and strategic interventions of political groups in different scales. How these come to be articulated in different periods, stages, phases and steps in Iranian state building

involves precisely the sort of historical contingencies for which the logical-historical method of articulation is well-suited. Specifically, I argue that justice, as a discursive formation that is also very important in Shi'ism, is the hegemonic (or, at least, dominant) frame of political understanding in Iran. It means that the other two formations are translatable into the language of justice: it is not just to be a backwards nation or to be dependent to the other nations. A genealogy of these discursive formations and an analysis of their interaction and articulation in different stages, phases and steps will help to avoid ahistorical accounts of Iran that overlook the necessity of meso-level analysis and therefore jump to unjustified concrete conclusions about the everyday life.

Abstract ....
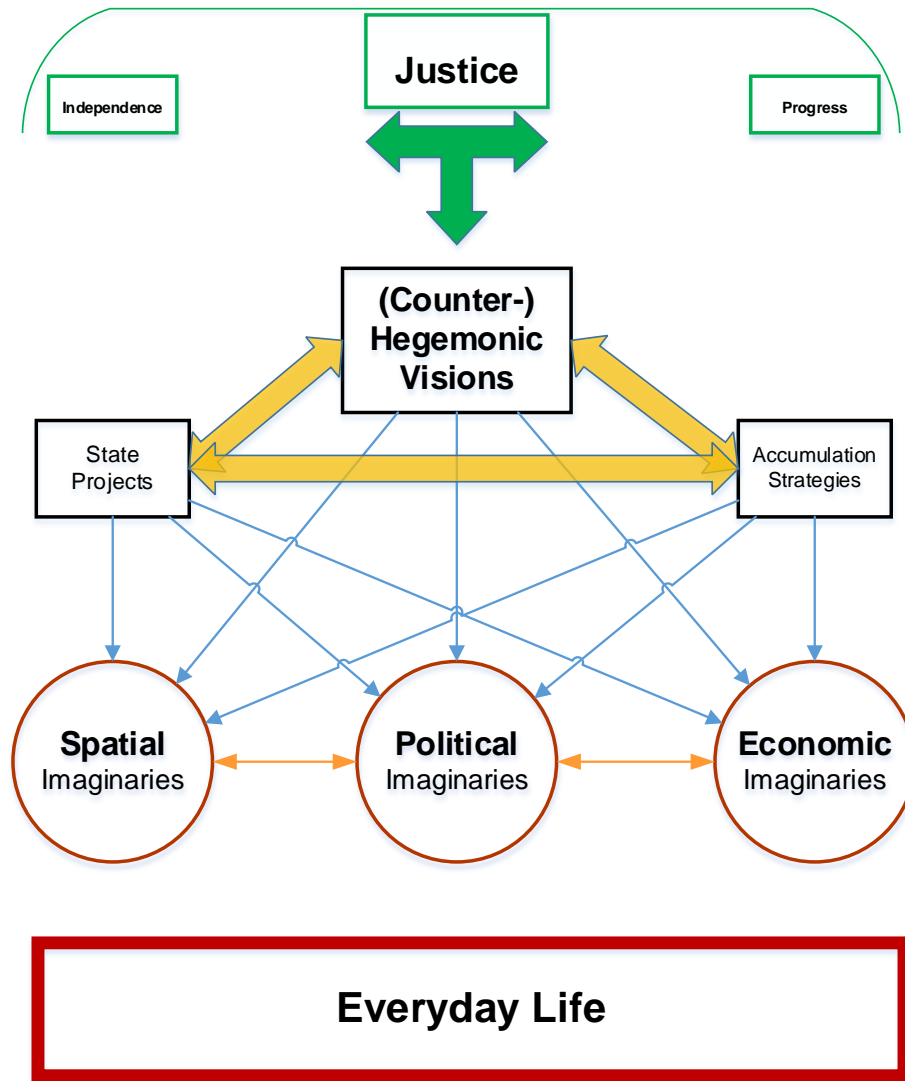
Concrete ....

Figure 3.2: Toward a conceptual framework.

As mentioned, these discursive formations have formed as a result of previous strategic interventions and, at the same time, they limit the capacities and strategies in the present conjuncture. In short, there is a dialectic of path-dependency and path-shaping at work here. To understand these discursive formations and state power, this study employs three strategic concepts state projects, (counter-)hegemonic visions and accumulation strategies (Jessop, 2016). These meso-level concepts are related to the concrete everyday life of people via social imaginaries.

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3.7 Conclusion

This chapter elaborated some key theoretical aspects of this study based on the reviewed approaches and theories as well as my previous critique of other accounts of the 1979 Revolution. In doing so, it reflected on a few alternative theoretical sources to argue for the SRA and CPE and their strategic concepts. Likewise, it provides a theoretical toolbox to relate this study to the dominant approaches to the 1979 Revolution. It began with a discussion on meaning-making and its importance for Weberian sociology with its focus on subjective meaning of social actions – a theme affirmed here but explored in alternative terms. Visiting Gramsci's strategic concept of hegemony (to win active consent) and Althusser's account of ideology (the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions), the chapter introduced social imaginary, as developed within CPE, as mediating concepts that frame the understanding of social actors and help them going on in a very complex real world. This is useful to overcome 'structuralism', and the absence of an account for history in Althusser's approach as Thompson claims.

After that, the chapter turned to the problem of theorising state to introduce the novel SRA and its relations with other theoretical traditions. The SRA provides the meso-level concepts and concerns, e.g. hegemonic visions, state projects and accumulation strategies to explore the rise of Khomeini and his hegemonic struggle in Iran. It adds state idea as the fourth element to the general state theory which considers the main features of the state as an apparatus, a population and a territory. The chaptered argued that temporality is not separable from spatiality. Thus, it takes time and space as its entry-point to discuss spatio-temporality and related concepts. Accordingly, the chapter presented periodisation that works with several temporalities as an alternative for simple chronologies. Moreover, it discussed the socio-spatiality and territory to facilitate the discussion on the spaces of the 1979 Revolution.

The chapter continued with a discussion on 'logical-historical' method and its merits comparing with empiricism and positivism. This method, in the sense presented here as a grand theory and not a general one, starts with a set of abstract and simple concepts and refines them as it proceeds to more complex-concrete aspects of a given case. Regarding this method, the chapter introduced the diversity of sources it uses in analysing of the 1979 Revolution and Khomeini. Building on these concepts, concerns and approaches, the last section moved toward the conceptual toolbox deployed in subsequent chapters. It related the main strategic concepts of the SRA with three discursive formation in Iranian national state, namely, justice, progress, and independence. The next chapters, armed with this toolbox, deal with 1979 Revolution and subsequent dominance of Khomeini in Iran.

4. Shi'ism, State and the Political Imaginary of Islamists in 1979 Revolution

Know well that the world today belongs to the oppressed, and sooner or later they will triumph. They will inherit the earth and build the government of God.

(Khomeini, 21 March 1980)

4.1 Introduction

When I started my primary school in Iran in 1988, every day we were obliged to gather in the schoolyard to listen to the Quran and chant 'revolutionary' slogans as part of our ideological programme. The main slogan and prayer, which we said daily, was: 'Dear God! Dear God! Guard Khomeini (keep him alive) till the day of the Mahdi's revolution!' For, Mahdi, the Shi'a Messiah will fill the world with justice. One year later Khomeini died, and our slogan changed: 'Dear God! Dear God! Guard Khomeini's movement till the day of Mahdi's revolution!' This assimilation and affiliation between Khomeini and Mahdi did not emerge suddenly after the revolution. It was prefigured much earlier. On

27 November 1978, a few months before his return to Iran after being 15 years in exile, a rumour spread widely that Khomeini's face would appear on the moon that night. The day after, people excitedly discussed the event. A few months later, Khomeini flew from Paris to Tehran: He was the 'sun' that people had been told would rise from the west as the sign of Mahdi's return. In the first speech on his return, he attacked the Shah's regime: 'I shall kick their teeth in; I am appointing the government; I am appointing the government by the support of this nation'. He praised the Iranian revolution and situated it in the eternal battle of good and evil following Ashura. This was the massacre in April 680 by Yazid (the caliph at that time) of the third Shi'a Imam and his followers. This event has long been regarded as a pivotal point of this never-ending war. Khomeini wrote[1] that

> Ashura is the revolution of the advocates for justice, it rose amongst the few in number and great in faith and love, to face the oppressors, people of palaces and arrogant thieves, and its law is that this approach addresses the life of this nation at all times and all the lands. (Khomeini, n.d.-a, p. Vol. 9, 245)

Thus, in adopting and reinterpreting the Shi'a meaning system, Khomeini presented a counter-hegemonic vision aiming at an Islamic state. Michel Foucault, who visited Iran twice[2] a few months before the revolution and also met Khomeini in exile, claimed that the Iranian people regarded the Islamic government in the pre-revolutionary Iran as a

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[1] On 7 September, 1979, the anniversary of the 1978 black Friday in Iran, when demonstrators were killed in the streets by army and the last hope for a compromise between the regime and protesters was vanished (Abrahamian, 2008, p. 160). Translated here: http://en.imam-khomeini.ir/en/NewsPrint.aspx?ID=6689

[2] 'Foucault was commissioned as a special correspondent of the leading Italian newspaper *Corriere della sera*, and his articles appeared on the front page of that paper'. (Afary & Anderson, 2010, p. 2)

political regime without any control or supervisory role for clerics (Afary & Anderson, 2010, p. 202). For Foucault, the Islamic government would involve two temporal orders:

'A utopia', some told me without any pejorative implication. 'An ideal', most of them said to me. At any rate, it is something very old and also very far into the future, a notion of coming back to what Islam was at the time of the Prophet, but also of advancing toward a luminous and distant point where it would be possible to renew fidelity rather than maintain obedience. In pursuit of this ideal, the distrust of legalism seemed to me to be essential, along with a faith in the creativity of Islam. (cited in, Afary & Anderson, 2010, p. 202)

To capture the particularities of this duality of being 'very old' and 'very new', of continuity in discontinuity and discontinuity in continuity – a duality that was a feature of the dominant political imaginary of the phenomenon of the 1979 revolution, we need to develop a genealogy of different Shi'a narratives. For the political imaginary of Islamists is located at the intersection of rival accounts of Shi'a martyrology and eschatology – an intersection that is nonetheless marked by a shared concern with the concept of 'justice'. While narratives of Shi'a martyrdom connect this political imaginary to the genesis of the world (an enduring war), Shi'a messianism concerns the potentials and promises about the future when this never-ending war will be finally resolved. In other words, the 1979 revolution was a 'just war' for an eternal justice that would benefit the whole world. This image of a holy or just war was extended to the war with Iraq (1980-1988) and political opposition to the United States, the 'Great Satan', a devil with a clear territorial base. Yet things were not so simple in practice. The messianic aspect of this historic mission was viewed by scholars such as Foucault (2003, p. 53) as holding the promise of a universal revolutionary politics; yet the full potential of the revolutionary conjuncture was subverted as clerics seized the moment and construed it in line with Khomeini's political project.

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We can understand how this happened by exploring how the old elements of Shi'ite Islam intermingle with state-building projects in the (trans-)formations of the national state in the 19th century. Khomeini's political imaginary reinterpreted this hybrid discourse and integrated it into the Islamist (counter-)hegemonic vision in the 1979 Revolution. Accordingly, I now sketch the formative phases of Shi'ism and then explore two main lines of historical inquiry regarding the distinction and tensions between the prophetic and priestly ways of Shi'ism in the mid-19th century. A certain discontinuity in continuity is evident in the prophetic tradition thanks to the attenuation of the apocalyptic character of Shi'a messianic movements in the Middle Ages. Conversely, continuity in discontinuity characterises the historical consolidation of the Shi'a clergy and the dynamics of its different schools. Exploring these aspects and their various temporalities will also provide a better understanding of the dominant role of Shi'ism and the strategic selectivities of the Islamic republic in the current conjuncture. Thus, this chapter eschews a simple chronological account of the genesis and transformation of Shi'ism for its own sake and develops a history of the present. It will show how the development of Shi'ism influenced political imaginaries in Iran in the 1970s.
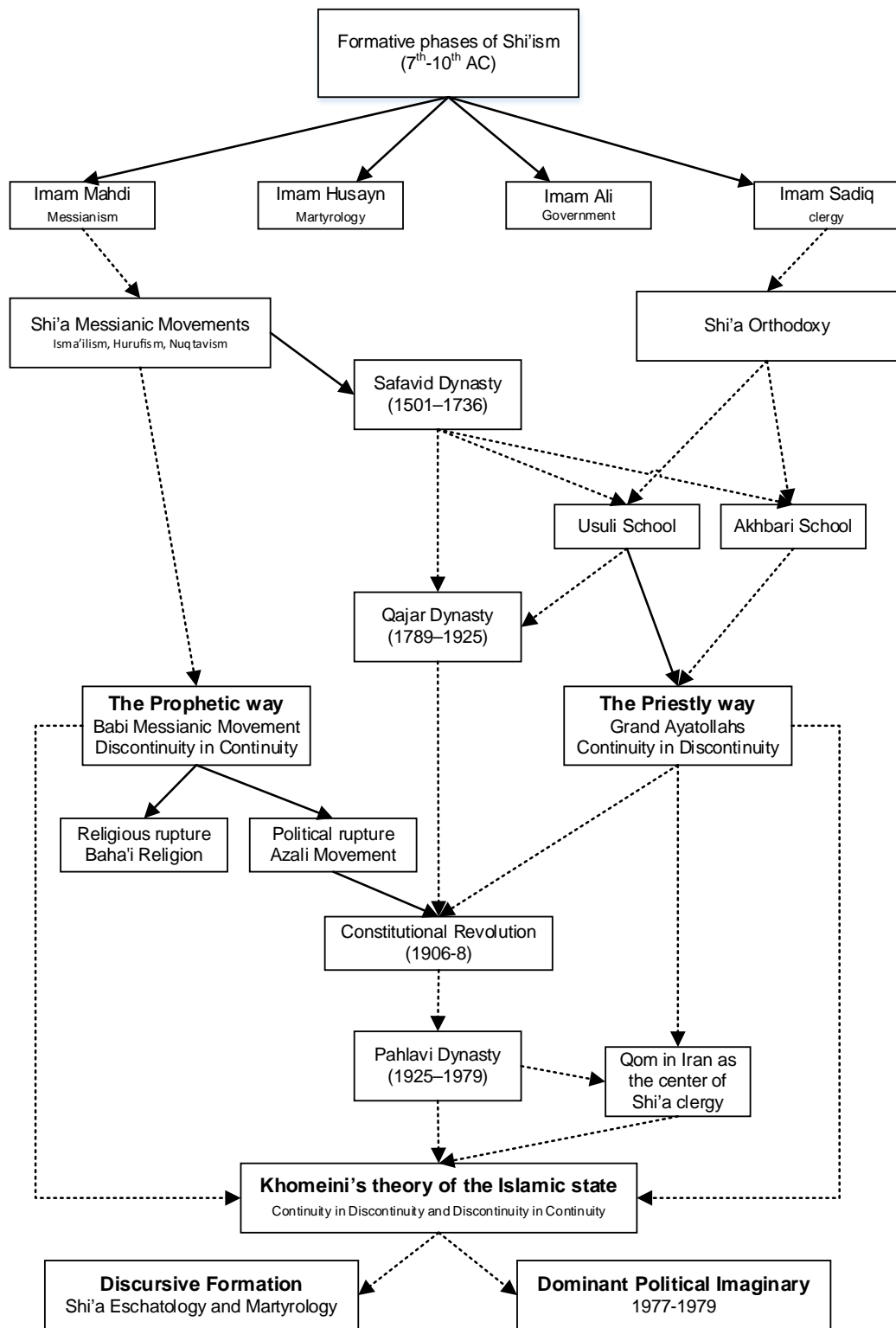
Figure 4.1: Mapping of chapter four.

4.2 Islam and Shi'ism

The Islamic calendar does not start with the birth of the Prophet – as the Christian calendar does with the birth of the Christ child. Rather, it began somewhat later with Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina, leading to the foundation of the first Islamic state (622 AD). Islam, from its very beginning, was not a religion of a specific ethnic group, a chosen people, or a promised land. In contrast to Yahweh, Allah can be 'a god of otherworldly salvation: he promises and threatens to mete out justice upon Resurrection, and holds out rewards and punishments in the other world for possession or lack of faith – *iman* and *kufr* – and for the observance or infringement of its ethics of salvation in the deeds committed in this world' (Arjomand, 1984, p. 32). Islam, like every religion, has no essence. It can be narrated as a set of apolitical, quietist beliefs that guide only the personal life of its followers and motivate them to avoid the power struggle of their society for whatever that happens is Allah's will. Also, it can provide a strong basis for political activities of its followers to realise the perfect society in accordance with their understanding of Islam. Muhammad, himself combined positions of political and spiritual leadership. This prepared the ground for the first division within the Islamic Empire in its formative period (7th to 9th century) and, indeed, for crisis and civil war over the political and spiritual succession for centuries afterwards (Daftary, 2007, p. 36).

The First Civil War (Fitna) (656-661 A.D) in Islamic history was triggered by the murder of the third caliph. It led to the rule of Ali. Shi'a followers believe he was the first Imam and the designated successor of the Prophet, i.e., their rightful ruler. The background to this was that 'the Muslims were confronted with an unfulfilled idea of a just order, which gave rise to a discussion of the necessity of a qualified leadership to assume the Imamate of the *umma* [religious communit], on whom depended the establishment of a true Islamic order' (Sachedina, 1981, p. 4). Shi'a followers believe that the temporal

and spiritual leadership should be unified in Imams, as occurred in the era of the Prophet. Indeed, 'for Imamis, there was no explicit recognition of the separation of temporal and religious authority, *de jure*, the Imam was considered the supreme political and religious leader of the community' (Arjomand, 1984, pp. 33–34). In contrast, the dominant Sunni narrative of Islam secularised political power with their installation of caliphs. This move was consolidated in the reign of Umayyad dynasty (661-750) when caliphates became kingdoms (Al-Katib, 2008, pp. 44–45; Arjomand, 1984, p. 33).

4.3   Formative phase of Shi'ism (7th-10th A.D.)

While there are a few minority movements/currents in Islam, Shi'ism and Sunnism are the two main divisions. The various subcategories in Shi'a can be considered as different expressions of a 'core idea … devotion to the House of the Prophet and more specifically love for the House of Ali' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 4). The main institutional expression of this devotion is the Imamate, i.e. the infallible spiritual and political leadership of the religious community by descendants of Muhammad. This said, 'concepts of the Imamate have varied widely, not only with regard to the identity and number of the Imams, but also with respect to the modus operandi and extent of their guidance of the community' (Algar, 1969, p. 2). Indeed, Imams have acted differently in relation to the prevailing social and political situation, 'accommodating power when necessary, and even legitimizing it, or adversely rebelling against it by resorting to a vast reservoir of memories of suffering and resistance' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 2). These shifting patterns of conduct can be related in part to different social imaginaries in the Shi'a meaning system that enable narratives of Imams to appeal to different social classes and strategic groups. Thus, regarding the Twelver Shi'a, which is the main branch in Iran, one can discern four main themes linked to four different Imams: Imam *Ali* (the first Imam) as the champion of justice, Imam *Husayn* (the third

Imam) as the champion of resistance, Imam *Sadiq* (the sixth Imam) as the most knowledgeable, and Imam *Mahdi* (the twelfth Imam) as the Messiah.

4.3.1 Ali

Ali was the cousin and the son-in-law of the Prophet and, as noted, the first shi'a Imam. He was also the fourth of the rightly guided caliphs (*Alrashedin*) and became the symbol of just rule in Shi'ism. The veneration of Ali as 'the champion of justice, affection and self-sacrifice' is deeply related to the ideal form of government in Shi'i beliefs (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 5). At stake here is an ideal form of devotion that 'should be seen as more of an establishment cult that crosses social boundaries to tie the rulers to the ruled' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 5). Whenever a government relies on the Shi'a religious cult and its apparatus as the main source and basis of its hegemonic vision, just rule is the core of its claim to legitimacy, flanked and supported by other patterns. The Islamic Republic used this imaginary a lot to mobilise its supporters and militia against its rivals after the 1979 Revolution. Thus 'the doctrine of the 'Guardianship of the [Islamic] Jurist' (*wilayat-i faqih*), the founding doctrine of the Islamic Republic of Iran, is a legalistic interpretation that is ultimately grounded in the old principle of Ali's legitimacy' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 5).

4.3.2 Husayn

The second imaginary and associated practices are based on the tragic martyrdom of Husayn, the third Imam, at the hands of Umayyad caliph, Yazid, in the battle of Karbala (in the modern Iraq) on the day of *Ashura* (the tenth day of Muharram in the Islamic calendar) in 680 A.D. There is a ten-day mourning ceremony annually for Shi'as to remember this event. For the massacre of a small group by a large army at Karbala is the primary source of the semiotic resource for Shi'ite resistance projects and, equally importantly, it represents the minority and oppositional place of Shi'ism relative to

official Sunnism. This pattern of 'commemorative Shi'ism' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a) symbolises the 'cosmic battle between forces good and evil'. Thus, if there is a Shi'a tragedy, its leading character is Husayn. However, like many tragedies, it is open to interpretation: there is no single narrative of the history of Ashura, and the form of its annual commemoration has changed and absorbed several local elements.

> The popular, dramatic forms of mourning Husayn were introduced in the tenth century, though *marthiyas* (mourning dirges) and similar poetry may well be older. The passion plays, however, seem to have taken form only in the seventeenth century under the Safavids, and became important in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries under the Qajars, especially under Nasir al-Din Shah, who built a royal stage for their production in Tehran. (Fischer, 2003, p. 31)

Considering this history and variations, one can distinguish two main approaches to Karbala in contemporary Shi'ism. In the first narrative, Husayn was well aware of his eventual martyrdom and welcomed it. In this sense, he is the Shi'a Christ who sacrifices himself for Shi'as to be forgiven. Supporters of Khomeini attack this approach as a 'traditionalist' and conservative reading of Karbala. In contrast, there is an alternative narrative of Karbala as a last resort attempt by Husayn to resist hereditary rule, seize power and establish a true Islamic government only when other efforts short of war had failed. For example, Salehi Najafabadi in his controversial book, *Shahid-e Javid* (the eternal martyr), opposed the mainstream account of Husayn as a saint who sought martyrdom.

> [T]he principal aim of the 'Immortal Martyr' is the politicization of an aspect of the Shiei Imamology result has been a cautious, but growing tendency among the Shiei militants to treat the drama of Karbala as an essentially human tragedy, and concurrently, to avoid regarding Husayn's heroism as a unique and inimitable event in history, above the capacity of the common run of human beings. This tendency is epitomised by Khumayni [Khomeini], who, perhaps more than any other Shiei

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theologian of comparable stature, has used the memory of Karbala with an acute sense of political urgency. 'It was', he says in his *Wilayat-i faqih* ('The Guardianship of the Jurisconsult') [guardianship of the Islamic jurist], 'to prevent the establishment of monarchy and hereditary succession that Husayn revolted and became a martyr. It was for refusing to succumb to Yazid's hereditary succession and to recognise his kingship that Husayn revolted, and called all Muslims to rebellion'. Khumayni likewise calls upon Iranian Muslims 'to create an Ashura' in their struggle for launching an Islamic state. (Enayat, 1989, p. 57)

In contemporary Iran and the competition to win the heart and minds of people, Shi'a Islamists reinterpret (especially from the 1960s onward) the event of Karbala to mobilise their supporters and provide a frame for understanding the politics. This new interpretation was based on a generalisation of time and space: you are always a Shi'a and, regardless of your history and geographical location, you are responsible for whatever has happened to the imams. A famous slogan for Islamists in contemporary Shi'ism that reveals the importance of this event is 'every day is Ashura and every land is Karbala'. Ali Shariati (2001), a famous ideologue of the 1979 revolution, argues for a philosophy of history based on the following motto: the whole history of the world is but a constant war between good and evil. In his view, the martyrdom of Husayn was not aimed to calm down Shi'a followers for they are forgiven. Rather, martyrdom brings us the responsibility to build a society of exemplary justice. Thus, Husayn's martyrdom was not similar to the crucifixion of Jesus. Drawing on Althusser's account of interpellation (hailing) as a key mechanism in the reproduction of ideology, understood as an imaginary relation to the real world, which is never directly accessible to experience (Althusser, 1971), we can read this slogan as interpellating a Shi'a Muslim as someone called to resist. Regardless of time and space, the universal war between good and evil is an ever-present reality. A true Shi'a, on this reading, should be aware of the ongoing war and, equally obviously, side with good. Moreover, this imaginary

could help to unify and integrate those who find or imagine themselves to be resisting an unjust power. Here are two political billboards in Tehran focusing on the battle of Karbala and Shemr, a villain in Shi'a history who killed Husayn in Ashura as examples of recent uses of the event to tackle political issues in Iran.

Figure 4.2: A present political narrative of Ashura in Iran. This poster was published in 2014 to stress the timeless battle of forces of good and evil. The message urges Shi'a believers to know the Shemr of their time (in this case he is Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli PM). This means that as a true Shi'a you should know the forces of good and evil and fight against the evil in the just front.

Figure 4.3: Another political reading of Ashura. A billboard with Barack Obama standing next to Shemr, uttering the same phrase in the years 2013 and 680 respectively: 'Be with us, be safe'. This means that forces of evil will try to deceive you by offering this-worldly favours.

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The Karbala event and its subsequent recontextualizations have contributed to the political imaginary promoted by Khomeini and embraced by the people in the 1979 revolutionary conjuncture. Khomeini often stressed the importance of the annual carnival of *Ashura* and used this event to legitimate his political stand against the Shah. In section seven on Khomeini, I relate this particular narrative of the Karbala event in the discursive formation of the 1979 Revolution.

4.3.3 Sadiq

A third imaginary and set of practices is associated with Imam *Ja'far al-Sadiq*, sixth in succession 'from whom originates so much of Imami hadith (traditions concerning the sayings and deeds of the Prophet and the Imams' (Algar, 1969, p. 2). He lived at the same time as the founder of the main Sunni branches and, under the pressure of the caliphs, recommended his followers 'total abstention from even so much as verbal dispute with their opponents' (Algar, 1969, p. 2). Indeed, with Sadiq and his father Baqer, 'Shi'ism developed a distinct doctrine and a distinct system of jurisprudence, while the diverse proto-Shi'ite and early Shi'ite elements were organized into a sect' (Arjomand, 1984, p. 27).

> To assure the lasting sectarian organization of the Shi'a as a disciplined sect under institutionalized religious authority, he dissociated supreme religious authority from actual political rule and rested it on divine inspiration and on *Ilm* (knowledge). Later generations of Shi'ite scholars, the 'ulama (the learned), derived their religio-legal authority from this basic premise without any reference to reigning political authority. (Arjomand, 1988b, p. 11)

Hence, in contrast to a resistance reading of Husayn's death and/or of messianic movements that challenge the existing political powers, this imaginary represents the most conservative, quietist and scholastic tendency among Shi'a jurists. It 'encouraged compliance and even collaboration with the 'unjust' and 'tyrannical' (*ja'ir*) state

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especially if and when the state was accommodating the Shi'is' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 182). Hence, confronting an unjust temporal rule, Shi'ite believers should practice *taqiyya*[3] (dissimulation) to prevent danger and save themselves for future. Based on this understanding, Shi'a clergy grudgingly accepted the ruling power. The main reason for having accepted the unjust temporal rule for them is that bad government is better than no government; 'that many imams had categorically opposed armed insurrections' (Abrahamian, 1993, p. 19). Their injunction to Shia's to 'transact with the rest of Muslims and to enter the service of non-Shi'ite governments signified the acceptance of 'the world'' (Arjomand, 1984, p. 101).

4.3.4 Mahdi

The last pattern is the apocalyptic narrative that is connected to the last Imam in the line of Imamate, i.e. Mahdi (the guided one; the saviour). Perhaps reflecting the agricultural cycle, many religions have stories of how the cycle of life repeats itself, with ends also marking beginnings, which also come to an end. Hence, an apocalyptic worldview, i.e. 'the imminent expectation of the total transformation of the world', occurs in many societies (Arjomand, 2002, p. 106). It was historically prior to and presupposed by messianism, i.e. 'the expectation of the appearance of a divine saviour' (Arjomand, 2002, pp. 106–108). One of the oldest cases is the Zoroastrian religion in the old Persian Empire, which later influenced the Abrahamic religions, with its powerful millennial eschatology, i.e. the expectation of a radical rupture at the end each 1000 years.

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[3] The concept of taqiyya can be understood in two ways. First, as an obligatory practice in the esoteric Shi'ism refers to 'the permanent guarding of a secret doctrine'. Second as a legal concept that denotes 'precautionary dissimulation of believes' that is 'obligatory in some circumstances, but void as a duty in others' (Clarke, 2005, p. 46).

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In Abrahamic religions, the apocalyptic prophecy first appeared in ancient Judaism with the book of Daniel, which was written during the Maccabean revolt by poor Jewish people against the Seleucid rulers of Palestine, who tried to prohibit all Jewish religious observances around 165 B.C. (Arjomand, 2002, p. 108; Rinehart, 1997, pp. 18–19). Interestingly, although this Book has influenced Islam in many ways, e.g., in references to how Angels[4] took up swords and joined battles to help Muslims overcome their enemies, the Quran does not describe Daniel as a prophet (Arjomand, 2002, p. 108). Nonetheless, the apocalyptic narrative in his book is the archetype of a recurring revolutionary phantasy:

> The world is dominated by an evil, tyrannous power of boundless destructiveness - a power moreover which is imagined not as simply human but as demonic. The tyranny of that power will become more and more outrageous, the sufferings of its victims more and more intolerable - until suddenly the hour will strike when the Saints of God are able to rise up and overthrow it. Then the Saints themselves, the chosen, holy people who hitherto have groaned under the oppressor's heel, shall in their turn inherit dominion over the whole earth. This will be the culmination of history; the Kingdom of the Saints will not only surpass in glory all previous kingdoms, it will have no successors. (Cohn, 2011, p. 21)

This narrative is open to different interpretations. For instance, 'kingdom of saints' can be understood along a continuum from a fully materialist to a completely spiritual state of affairs. In any case, adopting this imaginary and its associated pattern of conduct,

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[4] And already had Allah given you victory at [the battle of] Badr while you were few in number. Then fear Allah; perhaps you will be grateful. [Remember] when you said to the believers, 'Is it not sufficient for you that your Lord should reinforce you with three thousand angels sent down?' Yes, if you remain patient and conscious of Allah and the enemy come upon you [attacking] in rage, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels having marks [of distinction] (Quran 3:123-125, Sahih international translation)

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'millennialists tend to engage in some form of temporalizing the past prophecies and demonstrate the imminence, or near imminence, of the End at their own time and place' in order to mobilise masses (Abbas Amanat, 2002, p. 2). One cannot fully understand Islam and the Prophet without considering their apocalyptic narratives. Although Islam shares the messianic idea with Christianity and Judaism, there are differences regarding the understanding of salvation:

> The Islamic doctrine of salvation does not conceive of man as a sinner who must be saved through spiritual regeneration. Rather it holds that man is not dead in sin, so he needs no spiritual rebirth. Nor does the doctrine conceive of its people's salvation in nationalistic terms, with the assurance of the realization of the kingdom of God in a promised land by a unique, autonomous community. The basic emphasis of Islamic salvation lies instead in the historical responsibility of its followers, namely, the establishment of the ideal religio-political community, the *umma*, with a worldwide membership of all those who believe in God and His revelation through Muhammad. (Sachedina, 1981, p. 2)

Appearing as a messianic movement in its beginning, Muhammad claimed to be the seal of prophets and Islam was supposed to complete the great monotheistic religions of the Abrahamic tradition (Arjomand, 2002, p. 113). Unifying the majority of Arab tribes of Arabian Peninsula, in a process of de-apocalypticization, these messianic aspects dissolved and later appeared in the form of the Islamic messiah (Mahdi).

Crises, social dislocation and normative disturbance can trigger the rise of an apocalyptic movement. Historically, while the First Civil War marked the birth of Shi'ism, the idea of Mahdi first appeared during the Second Civil War (680-92 A.D.), when, following the martyrdom of the third Imam (Husayn), Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya claimed to be the Mahdi. After his death in the year 700, Kaysaniyya, a branch of Shi'as, announced that 'he is in concealment or occultation (*ghayba*) in the

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Radwa mountains and would return as the Mahdi and the *Qa'im* [riser]' (Arjomand, 2002, p. 114).

> The apocalyptic vision is a powerful means for transcendentalizing the normative order. Order is no longer identified with cosmos and nomos but requires a radical break with both; it therefore radically transcends the existing reality which is destined for cataclysmic destruction. (Arjomand, 2002, p. 108)

Several claims of Mahdihood have been made from the time of Muhammad ibn Hanafiyya onwards, and these have prompted several schisms in the Shi'a movement (Modarressi, 1993). The quest for Mahdi continued for two centuries as the Shi'ite community asked every Imam if he is the Mahdi or they should still wait. The chain of Imamate finished after the death of the Eleventh Imam who apparently left no son. The resultant crisis was solved with the doctrine of *Ghaybat* (occultation). Regarding this doctrine, the Twelfth Imam is alive and the function of Imamate is fulfilled in concealment and 'he will return as Mahdi (messiah) at the end of time' (Keddie, 1980b, p. 88). This doctrine is based on a tradition attributed to the Prophet, 'which predicts the appearance of one of his descendants who 'will fill the earth with equality and justice as it is filled with oppression and tyranny' (Arjomand, 1984, p. 160). Mahdi is 'not only from the House of the Prophet and a progeny of "Ali", but, more importantly, is the "riser" (*qa'im*) who avenges all that went wrong in Shi'i sacred history and all the sufferings that Ali, Fatima, Hussain, their family and supporters sustained' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 5). Hence, he is 'the man who will be both the beast of the Apocalypse and the saviour of the poor' (Foucault, 2003, p. 57).

In the beginning of the tenth century, the main branch of Shi'a (i.e. Twelvers or *Ithna Ashari*) accepted the twelfth Imam as Mahdi. Hence, 'the state of his invisible (yet indirectly effective) existence in the physical world, as the chief postulate for denouncing any form of temporal power (in the absence of the Imam) as inherently

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unjust and therefore illegitimate' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 182). This situation has allegedly prevented the articulation of a legal public space in Shi'ism. In other words, 'while the imam remained in occultation, a shadow of illegitimacy was bound to cover all worldly strivings and activities, above all those related to government. There was no true authority or the possibility thereof: only power' (Algar, 1969, p. 4).

Apart from belief in God and the Prophet, the primary duty of a Shi'a is to follow the Hidden Imam (Algar, 1969, p. 6). Nonetheless, there are differences regarding the expectation for the time when the Mahdi would rise and this is reflected in different spatio-temporal horizons of action inside the Shi'a movement. In particular, one can distinguish apocalyptic and de-apocalyptic tendencies.

Regarding the apocalyptic tendency, to assume that the Mahdi is going to rise in the near future can lead to social mobilisation. For his rise will lead to the suspension of law and order or marks a new cycle that needs a new spiritual and/or political order. In both cases, the follower is supposed to adopt a short horizon of action. Likewise, in spatial rather than temporal terms, a novel feature of this messianic moment is the ability to integrate non-Shi'a and even non-Muslims. In fact, an important part of Mahdi doctrine is the salient concept of *Raja* (return to the present state of existence after death, before the Day of Resurrection) (Sachedina, 1981, p. 166). For example, according to some Shi'a eschatological narratives, Jesus will return as a sign for the Hour as mentioned in Quran[5] and will follow Mahdi in prayer (Sachedina, 1981, p. 172).

Regarding the de-apocalyptic tendency, the hidden Imam will not reveal himself in the foreseeable future. This extends temporal horizons of actions and strategies but narrows spatial horizons. This is 'de-apocalypticization' (Arjomand, 2002, p. 118) of the

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[5] 'And indeed, Jesus will be [a sign for] knowledge of the Hour, so be not in doubt of it, and follow Me. This is a straight path'. (Quran 43:61, Sahih International translation)

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idea of occultation and accounts for the quietest approach to political power among Shi'a believers. Another important factor here is whether the government is considered as a just and true Shi'a state or an unjust temporal rule. In the former case, in line with the fifth and sixth Imam, Shi'a followers should obey the Shi's political authority. In the case of both imams, it was prohibited to set a time for the Mahdi's rise and those who did (*al-waqqatun*) were condemned as liars (Sachedina, 1981, p. 156). Likewise, in terms of spiritual guidance, the occultation doctrine had gradually come to emphasise the role of clergy and Islamic law. Spatially, de-apocalypticizing Mahdi led to a narrower and less offensive political power that is bordered and less militant. It has close ties with territorialization of political power.

	Apocalyptic Prophet		De-apocalyptic Priest	
Politics	Messianic	New cycle	Deputy	Unjust temporal
Time	Narrow	Narrow	Long term	Long term
Space	Extended	Extended	Territorialized	Immigration
Duty	Mobilize	Search	Follow	Dissimulation
Shi'ite pattern	Mahdi	Prophet	Ali	Sadiq- Husayn
Network	Central from below	several	Central from above	several

Table 4.1: Spatio-temporal horizons of Shi'ism.
Source: Author's own summary.

Discussing the main patterns in Shi'ism, in a more chronological approach, Amanat (2009a, pp. 1–2) demarcates seven overlapping episodes that narrate the history of the development of Shi'ism from the early day of formation until now. I present this narrative together with the four above-mentioned main patterns in the following table:

Episode	Description	Era	Dominant Pattern
1	From proto-Shi'i trends of the time of the Shi'i imams in the eighth and ninth centuries to the Shi'i legal and hadith scholarship of the ninth to eleventh.	800-1200	Sadiq
2	The movements of dissent inspired by Zaydi and Isma'ili (and Qarmati) brands of Shi'ism against the caliphate and Sunni establishment active during the ninth to thirteenth centuries.	900-1400	Husayn and Mahdi
3	Messianic movements that led to the formation of Safavid Dynasty in 1502.	1300-1600	Mahdi
4	The speculative endeavours of the philosophical schools of Isfahan and Shiraz in the seventeenth century, represented by the likes of Sadr al-Din Shirazi and its resonances throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries	1600-1900	Ali and Sadiq
5	The hadith and legal scholastic studies of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries that led to the crystallisation of Usuli school.	1500-1900	Sadiq and Mahdi
6	The messianic aspirations which led to the formation of Shaykhi school, culminating in the Babi movement (and leading to the emergence of the Baha'ism.	1800-1900	Husayn and Mahdi
7	The new developments in clerical and communal Shi'ism in the late twentieth century that led to the formation Islamic Republic based on Khomeini's theory of *Wilayat e Faqih.*	1900-now	Ali, Husayn and Mahdi

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Table 4.2: Patterns and episodes of Shi'ism.
Source: Based on the original periodisation of Amanat (2009a).

These patterns of Shi'ism that have been dominant in these consecutive periods reveal how the different power modalities are connected to the shifting social and political imaginaries. This idea will be explored and expanded in the following sections.

4.4 Shi'a in medieval times (10th-15th century A.D.)

This section provides a brief history of messianic movements in the middle ages to stress the continuity of messianic movements in the history of Shi'ism. For, the new apocalyptic movements in Iran resembles some elements of the medieval movements. A notable case is the Babi movement in the 19th century, which has several motifs that can be traced back to these medieval movements and marks a discontinuity in Shi'ite history. It is discussed in section 4.6.1 below.

4.4.1. Isma'ilism

Following the beginning of Abbasid movement and their new Caliph dynasty (750–1258), a new schism emerged in the Shi'a community after the death of the sixth Imam, Sadiq. The schismatics believed that a grandson of Sadiq, Muhammad ibn Isma'il, whom they consider as the seventh and last Imam, had not died and would rise as the promised Mahdi. In contrast to the quietist Shi'a clergy who followed the main body of Twelvers Shi'a religion, Isma'ilism was the most important radical Shi'ite movement in the medieval period. In general, one can consider them as a part of radical Shi'as who were unhappy with the passivism and conservatism of Shi'a Imams following Husayn's martyrdom (Daftary, 2007, p. 92). They first appeared as missionaries (*da'i*) who proselytised in favour of their expected hidden Imam and invited people to follow him.

> Each missionary (*da'i*) was in charge of an 'Island' (*jazira*) where he established a
> communistically-organized 'abode of migration' (*dar al-hijra*), so designated after the

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model built by the Prophet after his migration to Medina, and raised contributions on

behalf of the expected Mahdi-Qa'im. (Arjomand, 2002, p. 121)

Isma'ilism later divided into many branches and gained power in some places (e.g. Fatimid Caliphate (909-1171) in northern Africa). The dominant branch in Iran, Nizari, in the late 9th century controlled several mountain fortresses that hosted a community and were also 'used for training the zealous devotees (*fida'i*) and developing the technique of political assassination[6] in the revolutionary struggle against the Seljuq empire' (Arjomand, 2002, p. 124).

> …strict class strata and distinctions of the sort developed under the Saljuqs did not exist among the Persian Ismailis, who referred to one another as *rafiq* or comrade, as is fitting in a revolutionary movement. Any capable individual could rise to a leadership position as governor of a stronghold or chief *dai* in a region. Most Nizari leaders, in fact, came from modest social backgrounds. (Daftary, 2007, p. 317)

The Mongol invasion of the Middle East put an end to the Abbasid Caliphate (1258) and its main apocalyptic resistance movement, Nizari Isma'ilism (1256).

> The deep-rooted tradition of dissent that for centuries was kept alive by various Isma'ili trends had now lost its organizational core and its confined fortress community. Pockets of Nizari resistance in Iran were forced to adopt a cryptic existence, often in the garb of Sufi orders. Our knowledge of the post-Alamut [their main fortress] Nizari Isma'ilis and their communal endurance in Iran remains scanty, but enough is known to believe that in most cases Nizari activism was turned into a parochial acquiescence typical of all sectarian religions in their post-revolutionary phase. (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 73)

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[6] Interestingly, the word 'assassin' came from Arabic word *Hashashin* (حشاشین) that was used to refer to Nizaris.

4.4.2. Hurufism

Although several political movements adopted Shi'a language or beliefs in their political struggle against Mongol and Timurid (1370–1507) governments, the apocalyptic potential of extremist Shi'ism was realised for the first time with Hurrufism (Arjomand, 1984, p. 71). This movement was one of several messianic movements that broadly 'shared a doctrinal pattern founded on the ideas of cyclical renewal of sacred time, anticipation of a messianic advent, and hermeneutical (*batini*) interpretation of the text' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 74).

Initiated by Fadl Allah Astarabadi (d.1394) as the Mahdi, the Hurufi movement claimed that the letters of the alphabet (*huruf*) have divine quality as their words emanate from God. Hence Fadl Allah founded a science of getting knowledge about God based on 'the interpretation of the (gnostic) significance of the letters of the alphabet in their diverse numerical values as determined by the widely known *abjad* system' (Arjomand, 1984, p. 72). Having this science, 'the esoteric plan of the universe, alluded to symbolically in the teachings of earlier religions, had become explicit' (Bashir, 2002, p. 169). Stressing the cabalistic significance of letters and alphabets, he distinguished three cosmic cycles:

> The prophetic cycle began with Adam and ended with Muhammad; the cycle of sainthood began with 'Ali and ended with Fazlallah; and the divine cycle began with Fazlallah's proclamations following his enlightenment and was expected to end with an imminent final apocalypse. (Bashir, 2005, p. 56)

This periodisation enabled Hurufism to provide an account of parallel messianic movements (e.g. Sarbedaran, Safavid and Nurbakhshi) during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the eastern Islamic world following the Mongol invasion (Bashir, 2005, p. 62). After the execution of Astarabadi and later massacre of his followers,

Hurufism as a literate urban movement appealed above all to artisans and intellectuals engaged in clandestine political activities (Arjomand, 1984, p. 72).

4.4.3. Nuqtavism

Another significant messianic movement in medieval Iran was Nuqtavism -- founded by Mahmud Pasikhani, a close companion to Fadl Allah before his execution. In contrast with Hurrufism with its cabalistic interpretation of words based on letters, he stressed points[7] (Nuqte). Mahmud's main novel theory with direct political consequences was advancing the basic theory of cyclical renewal in Hurufism. Mahmud considered human history as 'a series of consecutive prophetic cycles each running its course before being superseded by the advent of a new one' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 77). In contrast to Hurufism, each cycle is linked to a specific ethnic group. In this context, Islam as the religion of the Arab cycle was superseded by a new Persian cycle with its Persian prophet, Mahmud. Hence, the idea of cycles, which can be traced back to the Zoroastrian era, was used to glorify the Persians. These ideas reappeared with Babism in Iran (see section 4.6.1 below).

4.5 From messianism to de-apocalypticization

4.5.1 Safavid: The Shi'a Empire

This section develops the argument by referring to the Safavid Empire (1501 to 1722 AD) which is a significant milestone in the history of both Shi'ism and Iran. Shi'a Islam for the first time has affiliated to Iran more or less within its contemporary territory. This spatial alignment can be linked to the concept of spatial imaginaries (chapter six). Following the 1979 Revolution, a growing body of literature addressed this era and

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[7] In Arabic and Persian there are points in the alphabets (e.g. ث ت ن ژ ز).

'Safavid Studies' emerged as a distinct field of scholarly endeavour (Newman, 2009, p. 3). Here, however, I briefly discuss the development of the different trends and schools of Shi'ism in this period to show how they provided semiotic resources for the Shi'a movements in the 20th century to develop their counter-hegemonic visions. In particular, it can help us to understand the continuities in the Shi'ite priestly reaction to the national state formation that occurred some 100-150 years later.

Mysticism, 'the great spiritual current which goes through all religions' long before Islam, denotes the existence of some mysterious part of life that is inaccessible to ordinary people (Schimmel, 1975, p. 3). Sufism or Islamic mysticism is understood as the inner Islam that is concerned with the inward, personal life of the individual in contrast with the outward Sharia presented by clergy (Hodgson, 1974, p. 203).

> From about the twelfth century, Sufis throughout the Muslim world began organizing themselves into orders or brotherhoods (Aramaic [Ar.] sing. *tariqah*), with a hierarchy that descended from the inspired leader (*shaykh* or *pir*, both meaning 'elder'), his 'lieutenants' (sing. *khalifah*), often in other cities, and the mass of adepts or *murids*. (Cole, 2002a, p. 286)

Although Sufi orders were mainly Sunni, the mystical and esoteric aspects of Sufism can provide a fertile ground for Shi'a extremists to develop their state projects (Schimmel, 1975, p. 83). In this context, the foundation of the Safavid dynasty also marked a significant moment in the history of Shi'ism, i.e. a fusion of Sufism and Shi'ism.

> On the one hand, we have the intellectual development of Imami Shi'ism from the late tenth and early eleventh to the early fourteenth century. Imami Shi'ites remained an urban sect throughout this period, with first *Baghdad* and then *Hilla* as their most important centres of learning. Then from the thirteenth century onwards, we witness an independent religious phenomenon, popular Sufism, some branches of which selectively adopted a number of Shi'ite notions. This Second trend produced both

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> dogmatically undisciplined 'extremist' Shi'ite movements and increasing general devotionalism toward the Imams on the part of the rest of the population. The first trend represents the internal development of sectarian Imami Shi'ism, the second, the elective affinity of the Sufi masses for ideas and stories about the lives and miracles of the holy Imams. (Arjomand, 1984, p. 31)

The Safavid dynasty was founded by Ismail (1487-1524) when he was only fourteen. He was the head of a Sufi order in the north-west of Iran. The order developed in the 14th century from a Sunni, urban and quietist mystic order to become a militant messianic coalition of Turkmen tribes called Qizilbash. Politicising the master-disciple relationship in Sufism, the Shah appeared as the 'perfect master' (*murshid-i kamil*) in the eyes of his people (Lewisohn, 1999, p. 18). Indeed, Qizilbash militants considered Ismail, somewhat idolatrously, as the manifestation of God himself or Mahdi (Savory, 2007, p. 33). Hence, the Safavid dynasty claimed 'not only descent from the seventh Imam but to be the current link in the chain of divine inspiration passed from God through the Prophet to Ali and the Imams' (Fischer, 2003, p. 28). These claims mobilised their tribal supporters and provided them with devoted military forces whose combatants considered their ruler(s) as living Imams and would fight until the end for the final redemption.

The reign of the Safavid kings was the first time that Shi'a became the official religion in Iran. This conversion was a painful process in some cases and relied on the use of brute force. It went through a process of de-apocalypticization with the battle of Chaldoran (1514) in which Ismail was defeated by the Ottoman Empire. This milestone marked the beginning of the process of stabilisation in the Safavid era. In order to successfully transform from a messianic movement that mobilises fervent fighting forces to a stable state the kings adopted orthodox Shi'a beliefs with a view to uniting their kingdom against the Ottoman Empire in the West and Uzbeks and Mongols in the East (Fischer, 2003, p. 29). Hence, Shi'ism 'became finally and inalienably associated

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with Iran as its homeland and stronghold. It is also from the Safavid period onwards that one may meaningfully talk about the existence of a body of Shi'i *ulama*' (Algar, 1969, p. 5). In this context, in the Safavid era, *ulama* from Lebanon, Bahrain and holy cities in contemporary Iraq were allocated to the territory of the Persian Empire. It means that an orthodox Shi'ism of *mujtahids* was brought into Iran and sponsored by the Safavid rulers 'in order to replace the extremism of the period of conquest' (Arjomand, 1988b, p. 13). They replaced the political position of the Sufis in the Safavid government and developed their power network in a stepwise manner. However, Sufism did not disappear from the society and continued in the margins of political power.

> The Shi'ite *ulama* …incorporated many of the features and practices of popular Sufism into the official belief system during the seventeenth century. These developments eliminated the rivalry of the Sufi *shaykhs* [masters] as popular religious leaders and enabled the emergent Shi'ite hierocracy in Iran to control the daily religious life of the masses to an extent unknown in other Islamic lands. (Arjomand, 1988b, p. 12)

Amir Arjomand (1984) stresses the clash between the new Shi'a clergy who had roots outside of the Persian Empire territory, and the new converted clerics inside the country mostly from notable families and descendants of the Prophet (Sayyid). Based on a Weberian account of state, i.e. considering state as a set of institutions, he claims that the Safavid state 'remained 'caesaropapist' to its last day, with the monarch enjoying religious legitimacy as the descendant of the holy Imams and the Lieutenant of the Lord of the Age' (Arjomand, 1988b, p. 12). At the same time, clerics adjusted to the new conditions and tried not to stress and clarify the boundaries of their power for, 'the Safavid rulers successfully recruited the *mujtahids* as state functionaries' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 183).

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4.5.2 Variation of Shi'a orthodoxy

Considering the Shi'a orthodoxy as a movement toward de-apocalypticization of militant Shi'a messianic movements in the history, the logical end of this process is to transform Shi'ism to the fifth school of law in the main body of Sunnism[8] and consequently regulate and normalise it. This was the heart of religious policy of Nader Shah (1698-1747) who was the first Iranian king who revived the Persian Empire after the collapse of Safavid. In contrast to the Shi'a Empire of Safavid, regarding his mix army of Sunni Afghan tribes and Shi'a Iranian, he followed an Islamic ecumenist policy. Indeed he 'made it a condition for accepting the crown that the people of Iran forswear the aberrant religion of Ismail the Safavid, which had been the cause of centuries of dissent and bloodshed among the Muslims, and rejoin the mainstream of Sunni Islam' (Arjomand, 1981). This pan-Islamic state project was coincident with the rule of Mamluk dynasty (1704–1831) in Iraq as the vassal state of Ottoman Empire that followed a more or less similar approach regarding the danger of Arab Shi'a tribes in the southern Iraq. As a consequence of these political shifts, the previous conditions of clergy in Iran changed and they needed to adapt to the new situation. Clerics lost the most of their support from the states and their established financial assistance from endowments in Iran.

An account of transformations of orthodox Shi'a with regard to political shifts in 18th century Iran, as any other social explanation should be adequate at the level of meaning and material causation. Hence, apart from the discursive moments of the main Shi'a schools, i.e. Akhbari and Usuli, the extra-discursive moment of them, i.e. *inter alia*, their political economy and relation with political forces are important. Akhbari

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[8] Sunnism since Ottoman Empire has four school of law: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali.

school was dominant until 11th century then appeared again for a short era in 17th before the final domination of Usuli school[9]. It is worth noting here that both schools existed and even after the domination of Usulism the other schools, mainly Akhbarism, has continued as a marginal trend in Shi'ism.

As mentioned above, the core idea of Shi'ism is Imamate, 'an institution of a succession of charismatic figures who dispense true guidance in comprehending the esoteric sense of prophetic revelation' (Algar, 1969, p. 2). However, in the formative era of Shi'ism, this was a controversial concept. The main conflict was on the permission of Shi'a clergy or, better, Shi'a doctors to act as the vicegerent of the Hidden Imam. Regarding this, in short, Akhbari school was 'hostile to all extension of the authority of the Imams after the concealment of the Twelfth Imam in the ninth/third century, and conceded de facto religious authority only to the compilers of their traditions (Akhbar)' (Arjomand, 1984, p. 13). In contrast to this conservative account, 'Usuli jurists perceived rational approach to the religious rules, methodologically and substantively, as a fundamentally valid path in the discovery of the rule that was supported by the religion itself' (Boozari, 2011, p. 24). Hence, in Usuli's jurist can practice ejtehad, i.e. determining valid legal judgments based on reason, Quran and the tradition of Muhammad and Shi'a Imams. I deal with each school in turn.

4.5.2.1   Akhbari school

Boozari formulates the main principles of this school as follows:

1. There is a Divine Pronouncement, mostly in the form of a tradition attributed to the Prophet (or the Imam).

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[9] For an excursus of their struggle particularly the interregnum between the collapse of Safavid until the Qajars in the late 18th century see Cole (2002b, pp. 58–77).

2. Subcategorization of the traditions as merely valid or invalid is wrong.

3. All the traditions compiled in the canonical books are valid.

4. The required knowledge to access the truth is far beyond man's capacity to acquire.

5. Man's acquired knowledge is insufficient to establish a valid counterargument against *dalīl naqlī* (text-based evidence). (Boozari, 2011, p. 13)

As mentioned, there was political rivalry under the Safavid dynasty between newcomers, i.e. Shi'a doctors (*ulama*), and the local notables (Sayyids) who newly converted to Shi'a Islam from Sunnism. The Akhbari School revived or better supported by this latter group in order to limit the Shi'a clergy and undermine their claims to be the deputies of the Hidden Imam. For, *inter alia*, rejecting the role of interpretive reasoning in Akhbarism, the clergy is 'restricted in the field of jurisprudence to only those areas in which there is an explicit Tradition' (Momen, 1985, p. 225). This 'enhanced the hegemony of the sayyids of the clerical estate by strengthening their charisma of lineage, which can safely be assumed to have been on the wane since the suppression of extremism and the advent of Shi'ite *ulama* as the professional specialists in religion' (Arjomand, 1984, p. 147). The key figure in this revival was Mulla Muhammad Amin AstarabadI (d. 1626-27). The resurgence of the Akhbari school lasted about a century. Apart from these local notables, following the Safavid Empire's collapse in 1722, a part of Usuli clerics who sought a safer place, regarding continued political struggles and wars in Iran, moved to the shrine towns of southern Iraq and adopted Akhbari beliefs. This means that 'they became predominantly literalist, emphasizing transmission of knowledge (*naqI*) rather than use of interpretive reason (*aqI*)' (Fischer, 2003, p. 30). The rise of Qajar dynasty (1785–1925) marked the decline of this school and the rise of the Usuli clergy as a source of legitimation of political power. The legitimising role of Usuli school enabled them, since the 19th century, to contribute to the national imaginary in Iran (chapter 6).

The most significant aspect of the Akhbari school is the rejection of the division of Shi'a Society into *mughallid* (ordinary people) and *Mujtahid* (source of emulation) and support for the idea that the entire society should be considered as the followers of the hidden Imam. This understanding limits the role of clergy in many ways and created severe obstacles in developing a clergy power network in the society. The lack of official support and instability of dynasties before the reign of Qajars put much pressure on this school. Likewise, after the collapse of the Safavid dynasty, other dynasties could not create a comparable autonomous source of hegemony; so, from time to time they tried unsuccessfully to invoke the Safavid legacy to justify their claims to authority.

4.5.2.2 Usuli school

The Usuli school first emerged during the 11th century with the domination of Shi'a Buyids (934–1062) on the Abbasid Islamic Empire. It was the first time that the Shi'a scholars had the chance to discuss their beliefs openly before the public (Momen, 1985, p. 80). In contrast to the traditionalist Akhbari school that was dominant before, the new school argued for the importance of reason, based on transmitted sources, to discover 'knowledge of what the Imams would have decided in any particular legal case' (Momen, 1985, p. 186). Indeed, for the Usuli school, knowledge and reason were linked with salvation. The roots of this school can be located in the development of Shi'a law studies in the previous centuries. Specifically, these roots were in the juristic tradition of engaging those endemic, trenchant, and didactic questions, raised in the Islamic Philosophy and *Kalām* (theology), that revolve around the Law of the Divine and the human potential for acquiring knowledge about it' (Boozari, 2011, p. 9). Usulism followed the path of Sunni schools of law to establish a well-informed legal discourse for Shi'a governments. In fact, 'Shi'i Islam came to follow Sunni Islam so closely in legal matters that its jurisprudence does not differ more from the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence than they differ among themselves' (Momen, 1985, p. 184).

In this context, the main principles of the Usuli school can be formulated as follow:

1. General rejection of *akhbār āhād* (traditions reported by less-than-reliable number of transmitters).

2. Invoking such traditions, only if their content could be verified by external indicators.

3. Acceptance of *akhbār mujma'un 'alayh* (those traditions that the Shiite community had consented on their applicability).

4. Acceptance of the Shiite community as an independent source of jurisprudence, to the extent that *al- Murtadā* believed most of the *Shari'ah* rules are deducible from the established consensus in the Shiite community. (Boozari, 2011, p. 13)

Usuli was the dominant school among Arab Shi'a scholars who came to Iran in the period of de-apocalypticization of Safavid Empire. In the last decades of the Safavid dynasty, however, Akhbaris gained power and pushed Usuli clergy back for a few decades. The main figure in the revival of Usuli school after the collapse of the Safavid dynasty was Aqa Muhammad Baqir Bihbihani (1705-1803), who came from a famous religious family. His appearance in the Shi'a history marked the end of the anarchic interregnum after Safavid. His leadership, based on his illustrious predecessor, consolidated hierocratic power without the direct support of the state (Arjomand, 1988b, p. 89).

> It consisted in the vigorous reaffirmation of the principle of *ejtehad* and thereby resulted in very considerable enhancement of the power and the independence of the Shi'ite hierocracy. The revival of religious jurisprudence greatly augmented the prerogatives of the Shi'ite mojtaheds (doctors of jurisprudence) as the authoritative interpreters of the Sacred Law. (Arjomand, 1988b, p. 14)

Thus, with the emergence of Usuli movement in the late 18th century and the development of *ejtehad* as the main principle of Shi'a religion, a functional relationship

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between 'the *mujtahid* (one who applies limited deductive methods to arrive at reasonably practical legal norms) and the *muqallid* (one who emulates/follows the mujtahids in his legal rulings)' was established (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 149). The transformation of Shi'a clergy and the new interpretation of the role of Ulama formed the ground for the Shi'ite hierocracy to gradually control the religious life of over 90 percent of the Iranian population by the end of the 18th century (Arjomand, 1988b, p. 14). This was possible by controlling the endowments, Friday prayers, issuing *fatwas,* and receiving religious taxes. In this context, 'Usulism, with its doctrine that the ulama can legitimate Friday prayers (said, in fact, in the name of the secular ruler) and its position on state-related functions such as defensive holy war, proved more amenable to the needs of the rising rulers in Iran' (Cole, 2002a, p. 77). Through the expansion and concentration of the logic of emulation, 'first the concept of *marja'-i taqlid* ("supreme exemplar"; in Twelver Shi'ism, superior judicial status) and then the notion of *marja'iyat-i taqlid-i tamm* (complete authority [of one mujtahid] over the community, the supreme exemplar) were proposed in the latter part of the nineteenth' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 149). The eventual domination of the Usuli school also affected how the Hidden Imam was perceived, its role in the society and the corresponding political imaginary:

> The tension between the unseen, superior authority of the Imam, and the immediate, incorporate one personified by the ulama, was largely offset by the existence of parallel religious practices: respect and obedience were granted to the mujtahids as expounders and enforcers of the law, while the emotional need for communication with the Hidden Imam was at least partly met by pilgrimages to shrines and the devotional practices connected with them. (Algar, 1969, p. 8)

The Qajar dynasty (1785–1925) was the first stable dynasty that could secure more or less the same territory and reduce the shadow of Safavid Empire. In contrast to the latter, the foundation of this dynasty was not based on a messianic movement. Thus, the Qajar kings were unable to benefit from a charismatic messianic authority, similar

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to Safavids, as the descendants of Imams. Hence, 'to meet the need to secure such legitimation, Fath'Ali Shah [the second king of Qajar] turned to the Shi'ite hierocracy, many of whose prominent members responded favourably' (Arjomand, 1981). In particular, Usuli clerics played an important role in the legitimisation of the new dynasty. At the same time, they secured their position as the legitimisers of the political power. In doing so, 'consonantly with the logic of Shi'ism as authoritatively interpreted by the hierocracy, the blessing of the Hidden Imam came to be bestowed upon the king as temporal ruler' (Arjomand, 1981). Hence, while they legitimated kinship pertaining to the temporal, in contrast to Safavid, 'the religious sphere was left to exclusive hierocratic authority of the mujtahids' (Arjomand, 1983). The final moment of this transition occurred in the mid-19th century when the first grand source of emulation, the highest authorities in Shi'a who are responsible for understanding and explaining Islamic religious jurisprudence, emerged (see section 4.6.2 below).

4.5.2.3   The extra-discursive moments of orthodox Shi'ism

In order to understand the differences between these two orthodox Shi'a schools, the rise of the Usuli school, after the short revival of Akhbarism, and the emergence of mujtahids, it would be useful to consider their class relevance. In particular, financial support casts important light on the extra-discursive moment of the school. For, the chaos of the collapse of Safavid Empire in the 18th century gradually weakened the vital governmental support for Akhbari school, especially as the break with the religious policies of Safavid began with Nader Shah involved 'the systematic exclusion of religion from political organization' (Arjomand, 1984, p. 217). This was more evident with Nader Shah's pressure for secularising the government and decreasing the tension between the Sunni and Shi'a branches of Islam. He marginalised the Shi'a clergy and deprived madrasas and shrines of control over the religious endowments granted during the Safavid era, which provided their financial backbone (Cole, 2002a, p. 58). One

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consequence of mutual support between Qajars and clergy was the restoration of these religious endowments.

> The restoration of Safavid *waqfs* [religious endowment] under Fath'Ali [the second Qajar king, 1797-1834] - the reverse of Nadir's policy - brought a large portion of *raqabat-i Nadiri*[10] under clerical control. Skilful justification for the repossession of unclaimed property (*ghasb-I, bila-sahib*), as well as actual participation in trade and agriculture, gave them a substantial economic base. (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 159)

Religious taxes also contributed to the independence of new Usuli clerics. The ground for these taxes was prepared by a religious imaginary that devides the society into those who specialize in religious law and those who must follow them. This division was based on the concept of general deputyship that governed the relations among the clergy, ordinary people and the Hidden Imam (Cole, 2002a, p. 193).

This theoretical renewal provided the Shi'a clergy with a potential alliance with urban petty bourgeois strata, i.e. merchants, guildsmen, craftsmen and shopkeepers. These strata provided the sources of emulation with special religious taxes, and in exchange they issued fatwas to deal with everyday religious problems. This does not mean that there were no divisions among the clergy in Iran around general economic issues and around their own revenue sources in particular. Although as a social and intellectual-cum-religious category,[11] the clergy does not comprise a single class or class fraction, there are potential divisions around their place in the clerical hierarchy, their spatial location (e.g., centre-periphery), and their sources of revenue. In securing their new

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[10] Raqabat-t Nadiri were endowments which were registered as property of the Shah during the reign of Nadir Shah and later. See also (Lambton, 1991, p. 131).

[11] On the distinction between a social category and a social class, see Poulantzas (1973), *Political Power and Social Classes*.

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position without the direct official control of the government during Qajars, the clergy had several ways to secure necessary financial support:

> In the first place, there was personal wealth through inheritance or income from gainful employment or remunerative economic activity in which a religious professional might be engaged. Second, there were pensions, stipends, grants, gifts, and paid administrative offices that the shah bestowed on religious leaders as a form of government employment. Third, there was judicial income—the *khums* and *zakat* taxes—canonical taxes were paid to the religious class. Fourth and last, there were endowments, from which the ulama, either as *mutavalli* (manager) or as *nazir* (trustee), derived an income, while, in addition, these same endowments often had as their main purpose the financing of stipends for students and teachers as well as the maintenance of buildings (school, mosque, shrine, etc.). (Floor, 2001, p. 60)

4.6   The birth of the Iranian national state

Toward the mid-19th century, the Persian Empire encountered several changes resulting from semi-colonial conditions, integration into the world market, and the introduction of capitalism: all that is solid melts into air. In this context, the formation the national state in Iran from the Persian Empire facilitated a new schism in the Shi'a society that, I argue, is vital in understanding political Islam and (counter-)hegemonic Islamist visions in the 20th century. The two religious reactions to these changes can be contrasted in Weberian terminology as the priestly and prophetic ways respectively. In the former, the Shi'a sacred tradition was acknowledged and the clergy reorganised to deal with the new conditions. In the latter a new 'prophet', Muhammad Ali Bab, declared new revelations that signified an end to the influence of the Shi'a clergy. Whereas the priestly way stressed continuity more than discontinuity and tried to maintain the tradition through introducing reforms, the discontinuity of revolution was the solution advocated by the prophetic way. The political implications of the national state interacted with the emergence of new colonial powers to produce a distinctive

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political conjuncture. For instance, the Persian Empire lost Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia in a series of Russo-Persian Wars of to the Russian Empire (1804–13, 1826–28) and lost Harat following the Anglo–Persian War (1856-1857) (chapters five and six). This prepared the ground for questioning the political power and legitimacy of Qajar kings led eventually to the Constitutional Revolution (1905-7) and the rise of Pahlavi Dynasty in 1925.

4.6.1   The prophetic way: Babism

After about a thousand lunar years of the occultation of the Hidden Imam, in 1843 *Sayyid Ali Muhammad* (1819 -1850) first claimed to be the *Bab*, the 'gateway' to the Hidden Imam. Thus inspired, a new messianic movement emerged in Iran and affected the society deeply. This movement marked the discontinuity with the past in terms of religion. Leading Babis (Bab's followers) played an important role in the Iranian political scene in the second half of the 19th century and finally in the Constitutional Revolution (1905-7). Bab foretold the appearance of 'he whom God shall make manifest' in the future. In 1866 Baha'ullah claimed he was the expected prophet foretold by Bab and most of Bab's followers recognised his claim. Baha'i faith continues to exist in Iran and other countries as a religious minority.

One can find several resemblances between Babism and medieval messianic and extremist Shi'a movements. Indeed, 'the title of Bab was given in Isma'ilism to one of the seven grades of the esoteric hierarchy' (Algar, 1969, p. 148). The historical and religious roots of the Babi movement were rest in Shaykhi school, i.e., an interpretation offered by a minority part of the Shi'a clergy concerning the relationship between the Shi'a society and the Hidden Imam. According to this school, Mujtahids are not enough on their own to provide the necessary mediation. Thus, in order to intermediate between the community and the Hidden Imam, one should search for a 'more

authoritative incarnation of divine guidance' (Algar, 1969, p. 7). Given such a connection between one intermediary[12] and the hidden Imam in their religious imaginary, mujtahids are unnecessary. In this sense, the Shaykhi school had similarities with a Sufi order for it has a master. Bab revelations advanced the inner-outer or esoteric-exoteric binary of Shi'a esoteric tradition (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 112). Hence, its attempt to 'reveal the inner sacred beyond the perimeter of the adept (*khawas*) into the world at large set Babism at odds both with the ulama, as guardians of the external world of the sharia and with the guardians of esoteric truth' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 112). Further, like the idea of cyclical renewal of time in Nuqtavism, Bab considered his revelations as the end of the Islamic cycle:

> Like the Qur'an, it considers and recognizes the Abrahamic chain of prophets from Adam on and traces among them a certain historical continuity and doctrinal affinity. Yet, unlike normative Islam, which considers Muhammad as the 'seal of the prophets' and interpret that as meaning the end of the prophetic revelation, the Bab, and especially in the *Bayan* [his holy book], views divine revelation through the prophets, or rather divine 'manifestations', as an open-ended and unavoidable process. In an ingenious symbolic interpretation of the eschatological doctrine of the Resurrection (*qiyamat*) in Islam, the Bab considers each prophetic cycle as the end of the old cycle and the beginning of a new one. (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 122)

One can consider the *Bayan* as a response to the new changes in the society during the 19th century and its difficulties for Bab's followers. For, it provided them with updated duties as believers compared to the guidance provided by the old Shi'a clergy. It also facilitated a messianic militant movement. As a 'dispensation with a strong pantheistic and gnostic character allowed him to claim divinity while enabling his

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[12] This one intermediary was called 'Perfect Shi'a' (*shi'a-yi kamil*), and later 'Fourth Pillar' (*rukn-i rabi'*).

disciples to claim divine inspiration as new incarnations of the archetypes that had assumed the human forms of Muhammad, Fatima, and the Imams during the previous cycle of manifestation (*zuhur*)' (Arjomand, 1984, p. 254).

It is not enough to discuss this movement as just a *bid'at* (reprehensible innovation in matters of faith) which mobilised clergy and broadly facilitated a new unification with state power. Considering Babi's extra-discursive moment, there is a special link between Bab's own lived experience in Iran and his teachings. Babism as a millennialist movement:

> … was certainly characterized by dualism and pessimism about the prevailing order. The Bab was extremely critical of what he saw as the religious laxity of the semi-feudal ruling classes and even of the bazaar, from whence most of his own support derived. Significantly, he attacked the imposition of extra-canonical taxes and imposts by the Qajar elite. He was suspicious of the motives of European merchants, and given his family's commercial ties to Bombay and Hong Kong he would have been well aware of the tendency for imperial conquest to follow in the wake of the European trading companies. He therefore restricted the Europeans to trading in only a few provinces of the country, preserving the rest for the indigenous merchants. Aware of the crucial importance of credit as a modern instrument of trade, he allowed the taking of interest on loans [in contrast with Islamic law]. (Cole, 2002a, p. 293)

Although *ulama* consider themselves as 'the institutional expression of the power of Islam, the expositors and guardians of its doctrine and the enforcers of its law, and among their functions was the rebuttal of heresy and innovation', Babism found overwhelming support in rural areas and among young clerics from rural backgrounds, who found a revolutionary language for representing their ideas and opposing the corrupted and unjust government (Algar, 1969, pp. 137–138). As Engels stressed in *The Peasant War in Germany*:

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> It is obvious that under such conditions, all general and overt attacks on feudalism, in the first place attacks on the church, all revolutionary, social and political doctrines, necessarily became theological heresies. In order to be attacked, existing social conditions had to be stripped of their aureole of sanctity. (Engels, 1962)

Similarly, although Babism was clearly a revolt against the political-religious order of Iran based on Bab's interpretation of Shi'ism, at first the government did not oppose it. It hoped to benefit from it politically thanks to the resulting weakening of one source of religious authority (Shi'a orthodoxy) as another source of religious authority (Babi messianism) became more influential.

> The Babi experience proved to the jurists their precarious dependence on the state and made the government more conscious of its [the government's] vital role [in this regard]. The decades following the final episode of the Babi movement (1848–52) thus witnessed the gradual diminution of clerical prestige in Iran and the reversal of the earlier autonomous trend. (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 163)

However, when the Babi movement threatened the Qajar dynasty itself, undermining its overall political authority rather than effecting a shift in the sources of its religious legitimacy, the government brutally suppressed them, and the penalty for apostasy was applied to Bab himself who was executed in 1850.

From the outset, the Babi movement had two faces: religious and political. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, following Bab's death, the Babi movement split and followed two separate paths. The majority sect recognised Mirza Hosain Ali Nuri Baha'ullah's claim that he is the prophet foretold by Bab and became the universal quietist faith known as Baha'ism (Bayat, 1991, p. 54). Thus the militant political aspects of the original movement were neglected in favour of the religious rupture with Shi'ism. Conversely, refusing to join the Baha'i faith, the minority sect continued to follow Mirza Yahya Nuri Sobh-e Azal, Baha'ullah's half-brother. Focusing on political militancy, the

Azalis[13] 'carried on the struggle against the Qajars, practising taqiyya to escape persecution and undertake their subservient underground activities' (Bayat, 1991, p. 54). Their state project and national imagination influenced the Constitutional revolution and the national state in Iran.

4.6.2 The priestly way: Ejtehad and emulation

Regarding the priestly way of dealing with the changes that occurred in the national state formation during the 19th century, a grand Ayatollah appeared on the scene for the first time in 1849 in the figure of Shaykh Murtada Ansari (1781-1864). This event was more or less contemporary with the rise of its religious rival, Babism. Ansari became the main source of emulation for the Shi'ite community, 'the supreme exemplar or most authoritative of the Shi`ite jurists of the time' and received religious tax as the vicegerent of the Hidden Imam (Cole, 2002b, p. 95). He 'inaugurated the technically accomplished phase of the Usuli movement' (Arjomand, 1981). Although as Mangol Bayat (1991, p. 13) stresses, Ansari himself argued against the jurist's right to absolute authority in all matters, his main contribution was to expand Shi'a edicts to cover the vast amount of new subjects that emerged with the rupture in everyday Shi'a life. He did this by 'deriving a set of principles to be used in formulating decisions in cases where there was doubt' (Cole & Momen, 1986, p. 187). Likewise, the topic of 'guardianship of jurists' first was also raised from this time onwards by ulama in their *Kitab al'-bay* (book of sale) (Kadivar, 2008, p. 269).

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[13] According to the recent studies, several key leaders of the Constitutional Revolution were Azalis. For the political importance of Azalis see: tarikh-e maktum, Seyyed Meqdad Nabavi Razavi, Shirazeh, Tehran, 1393 (2014).

> The effect of the development instituted by Shaykh Murtada al-Ansari was far-reaching. Whereas previously the mujtahids had restricted themselves to ruling on points where there was the probability or certainty of being in accordance with the guidance of the Imams, the rules developed by Ansari allowed them to extend the area of their jurisdiction to any matter where there was even a possibility of being in accordance with the Imam's guidance. This effectively meant that they could issue edicts on virtually any subject. Ansari's own strict exercise of *ihtiyat* (prudent caution) severely restricted this freedom but other mujtahids allowed themselves a freer hand. (Momen, 1985, p. 187)

Moreover, thanks to improved communication networks, the religious tax led to a relative stabilisation and stratification of the clergy compared with the previous acephalic conditions of the post-Safavid era (Arjomand, 1984, pp. 247–248; Floor, 2001, p. 64). Indeed, 'the root of his success lay in his ability to attract funds and divert them for the upkeep of his educational and social network – almost the functions of a rudimentary welfare system – both to the satisfaction of the contributors and the recipients' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 166). Ansari's successors followed his practices to form follower networks. Acting as the vicegerents of the Hidden Imam 'enhanced the capacity of the head[s] of hierocracy to mobilize mass action in situations of national crisis, even though the plethora of independent mujtahids precluded unified routine action by the religious institution' (Arjomand, 1981). Khomeini built on this tradition and exploited similar conditions to gain agency in forming a counter-hegemonic vision to transform the national state in Iran.

These developments had several implications for the division of religious duties between sources of emulation and their followers. For instance, as there is no institutional order to verify the necessary qualifications of a proper mujtahid, 'the ultimate arbiter, therefore, is the follower (*muqallid*) who decides upon, and thus presents his loyalty to, the mujtahid of his choice' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 152). This

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is why it is often said that 'the order of the clerical community (*ruhaniyat*) is in its disorder' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 149). In this context, 'in a complex game of prestige and popularity', sources of emulation 'depended on their followers for higher standing' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 188). In other words, the more followers they had, the greater was their prestige. Thus, the capacity of jurists to influence the Shi'a community was determined 'not only by the merits of their scholarship or the degree of their piety but also by their political clout: their access to the centres of temporal power, the importance of the mosque and religious endowments entrusted to them by wealthy individuals whose patronage needed cultivation, the size of their entourage of students, disciples, and private guards, all depending financially on them' (Bayat, 1991, p. 31).

The offensive development of Shi'a clergy was represented more clearly in the 1890 revolt against the tobacco concession that was granted by the Qajar king to British imperialists. Responding to a *fatwa*[14] issued by the Grand Ayatollah *Shirazi*, popular unrest forced the king to cancel the concession. This improved the self-confidence of the clergy and opened space for their later interference in the political scene in Iran. Finally, in the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1907), the political claims of Shi'a clergy were translated into legal form for the first time:

> The constitution specifies that five mujtahids should pass on the legitimacy of all bills
> proposed to parliament on the grounds of their acceptability by religious law; that the
> king and ministers and judges must be *Ja'fari* or Twelver Shi'ites; and that education
> and freedom of the press should be so limited that nothing repugnant to Shi'ism would
> be allowed. (Fischer, 2003, p. 31)

Resaleh is another noteworthy issue here. Resalehs are books written by a source of emulation. They comprise a set of religious edicts without presenting proof about them,

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[14] The fatwa declared that the use of tobacco was tantamount to war against the Hidden Imam.

arranged according to topics dealing with ritual purity, worship, social issues, business, and political affairs. Previously, Shi'a followers were mostly in touch with the local clerics, if any, rather than the main sources of emulation; however, as modern communications and easier transportation widened spatio-temporal horizons of action, the sources of emulation appeared as universal experts who were connected more or less directly with their followers. The publication of these *raselah* books provides Shi'a followers with a solid normative base that connects them directly with the sources of emulation. This was a radical innovation in Shi'a history compared to the previous practice of writing complicated books and then getting local clerics to use them to interpret everyday questions. The first Resaleh introduced in 1953 by Ali Asghar Karbaschian[15] (d. 2003) was based on fatwas issued by Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Hossein Borujerdi (1875-1961), who was the primary source of emulation in the Shi'a world at the time. Apart from publishing resaleh, Borujerdi reformed the religious tax system and transformed it into a more reliable official network. Khomeini used, among others, this well-organised network to agitate and mobilise people against the Shah in 1978-9.

4.7 Khomeini

Most scholars who seek to characterise the 1979 revolution focus on Khomeini's role in the changing political scene in Iran. There were heated debates on the movement. Was it a fundamental, populist (Abrahamian, 1993), traditional (Afary & Anderson, 2010), a phase in or rather a reaction to, the modernisation process (Bayat, 1983; Cole, 2002a) and so forth? I argue that the Khomeini's (counter-)hegemonic in the 1970s was based on an innovative interpretation of Shi'ism that rooted in the reaction to the national state formation initiated in the mid-19th century. This does not entail that

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[15] He later funded a crucial Islamic high school that provides the Islamic Republic with many high-ranking officers.

Modernisation Theory is the key to interpreting the 1979 revolution. Rather, Khomeini's theory of governance, i.e. the guardianship of the Islamic jurist over the Islamic government, successfully bridged the two ways of facing massive changes in the society: priestly and prophetic. Hence, the Islamic state, I argue, represents continuity in discontinuity and discontinuity in continuity. Moreover, one should not overemphasise the subjective aspects of the revolution as it is the case in the official narratives of the revolution in the Islamic Republic. Although Khomeini's hegemonic vision benefited from his innovative interpretation of Shi'a doctrine, the extra-discursive aspects of the conjuncture are also crucial for any sound analysis of the success of the revolution. These aspects are discussed in other chapters. Here, focusing on the history of Khomeini, at stake is how Khomeini used history to make history, particularly through a novel account of Shi'a long history of revolt and messianism.

4.7.1 Genesis

Khomeini's two major works, which are relevant to this section, are *Kashf al-Asrar* (Revealing of Secrets) and *Welayat-e faqih* (Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist) or *the Islamic Government*. The former was written in 1943 in response to several attacks from secular writers -- particularly one book, *Asrar-e Hezar Sale* (Thousand Years Secrets) by Akbar Hakimzade that challenged ulama to respond to specific questions, e.g. 'the role of the Imamate in Shi'i doctrine, the precise nature of the authority of the mujtahid, the relation of the 'ulama' to secular power, and the legitimacy of man-made laws' (Martin, 1993). Addressing these questions, Khomeini's first political book anticipated arguments in the better-formulated second book on Islamic government. Published originally in 1970, the latter was the conclusion of his lectures in Iraq when was in exile and formed the theoretical and political basis of the Islamic Republic of Iran. A significant difference is that, whereas *Kashf al-Asrar* argues for the supervision

of the body of ulama on the political power, *Islamic Government* calls for a single Jurist to exercise power instead of passively monitor its execution/executor (Martin, 1993).

According to the doctrine of occultation, the complete actualisation of Sharia is postponed to the re-emergence of the Hidden Imam. It means 'a denial of legitimacy but an abstention from active opposition: the sharia, in its political aspects, is not being put into effect but there is no one available to implement it' (Calder, 1982). Hence, one of the key features of orthodox Shi'ism is a paradoxical combination of *de jure* illegitimacy and *de facto* acknowledgement of political power. In this context, Khomeini stresses his integral concept of Islam as a comprehensive religion with a legal body that has been developed over centuries and is ready to be implemented. Basically, the main line of Khomeini argument is that 'there exists a legal system (Islamic law) which can be put into effect, which covers all aspects of social and political life and which promises an end to disorder and chaos and even to crime and bureaucratic inefficiency, and guarantees the formation of a just government' (Calder, 1982).

> Islamic law is a progressive, evolving, and comprehensive system of law. All the voluminous books that have been compiled from the earliest times on different areas of law, such as judicial procedure, social transactions, penal law, retribution, international relations, regulations pertaining to peace and war, private and public law—taken together, these contain a mere sample of the laws and injunctions of Islam. There is not a single topic in human life for which Islam has not provided instruction and established a norm. (Khomeini, 1981, p. 30)

This doctrine is of particular importance when addressing the new challenges in the Iranian society. Searching for the answers in their personal and political life, this narrative of Islam can appeal to the people and provide them a political imaginary. However, Khomeini did not stop here but argued for his state project, i.e. an executive power that is necessary for the implementation of Islamic law. For, Muhammad himself

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was not a mere messenger of God but also an executor of the divine law (Khomeini, 1981, p. 37).

> We believe in government and believe that the Prophet (upon whom be peace) was bound to appoint a successor, as he indeed did. Was a successor designated purely for the sake of expounding law? The expounding of law did not require a successor to the Prophet. He himself, after all, had expounded the laws; it would have been enough for the laws to be written down in a book and put into the people's hands to guide them in their actions. It was logically necessary for a successor to be appointed for the sake of exercising government. Law requires a person to execute it ... After a law is established, it is necessary also to create an executive power. If a system of law or government lacks an executive power, it is clearly deficient. Thus Islam, just as it established laws, also brought into being an executive power. (Khomeini, 1981, pp. 36–37)

In his works, Khomeini quotes Naraqi (d. 1828-9) who argues for the authority of the religious jurist based on the authority of the Hidden Imam and suggests that 'the *fuqaha* [religious jurist] are entitled to exercise all the worldly functions of the Most Noble Messenger [Muhammad]' (Khomeini, 1981, p. 124). It is a controversial claim because it is almost impossible to identify a clear-cut theory of the government in the absence of the Hidden Imam in Shi'a resources (Kadivar, 2008, p. 274). While, before Khomeini, the debate between Shi'a scholars was concerned with the less perfect temporal and secular power, now the goal was to establish an ideal one. Khomeini argues that, during the occultation, the least harmful and consequently ideal form of government would be the one under the reign of a jurist. This means the abolition of the separation between the temporal and the spiritual. In this context, Khomeini's theory may appear as the logical expansion of the Usuli school. As mentioned above, this school sought independence from governmental handouts by finding new sources of revenue. However, while the followers emulate the source of emulation, their payment of

religious taxes makes him dependent on them in turn. In this context, 'from this historical perspective, Ayatollah Khomeini's thesis of the Guardianship of the [Islamic] Jurist [Welayat e Faqih] is an innovation as much in revolt against the authority of a secular ruler as it is against the hegemony of the followers' (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 178).

Hence, in developing this theory of Islamic government, Khomeini made an advance within the Usuli School tradition. Specifically, for the first time in the history of Shi'a after Imams, his theory opens a possibility for overcoming disorder in the Shi'a clergy and institutionalising their authority. For, in order to emerge as a political force, 'hierocracy has no choice but to establish a party organization and to use demagogic means, just like all other parties' (Weber, 1978, p. 1195). This means that one can recognise at least three main steps in the transformation of Usulism. First, the division of society into mujtahids and followers. Second, the emergence of the main sources of emulation. And, third, an Islamic government follows the vicegerent of the Hidden Imam. This step is not yet complete but it accounts for the recurrent tensions between sources of emulation and the supreme leader in Iran.

> The *wilayat-i faqih* promised not only the ascendancy of the jurists to positions of political power but a virtual end to clerical resistance to institutionalization. The rise of the *wilayat-i faqih* as an institution harbingered the eclipse of the *marja'iyat* [emulation] and all the ambiguity that was inherent in qualities of the mujtahid. (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 191)

There are some debates about other roots of the Khomeini's theory besides the Usuli School. Amanat (2009a, p. 194), for instance, mentions the relationship between his theory and the 'mystical propensity for classical Sufism and specifically *Ibn 'Arab*i's (d.

1240) theory of *wilaya*[16]'. Noteworthy here is that the encounter with modernisation efforts and the interventions of the Imperialist powers in 19th century coincided with a new generation of Islamist reformists in the Middle East. Khomeini was influenced by their writings and thinking. Sayyid Jamal Asadabadi, also famous as *al-Afghani* (1838–1897), who envisaged a pan-Islamic empire to resist the western imperialism, was an important influence in Khomeini's political programme. In particular, Asadabadi was more optimistic about Shi'ism, compare to Sunnism, 'since the Shi'is regard temporal monarchies as usurpations the modification of despotism is easier among them' (Keddie, 1972, p. 362). Several Islamic thinkers influenced by Asadabadi wrote on the problems of Islamic society and the political actions needed to solve them. For example, *Muhammad Abduh* (1849–1905) who 'believed Islam had the potential to be a school of thought and guiding ideology for Islamic society as a whole', *Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi* (1849–1902) 'argues a religious ruler as caliph for the Islamic lands, supported by a system of consultation'; *Rashid Rida* (1865–1935) stresses that 'the reason for backwardness was that Muslims had permitted the debilitation and pollution of their religion, and needed to strive for the dynamism that existed in Europe' (Martin, 2003, pp. 101–103). One can also recognise the influence of al-Farabi's reading of Plato's philosopher king 'who displays knowledge, a sense of justice and

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[16] *Wilayat* (Arabic *wilaya*: authority, guardianship) and *walayat* (Arabic *walaya*: bond of friendship), for Shi'is it was the hereditary status primarily arrogated to Ali and his Imam descendants as true successors to the Prophet; a status of sovereignty over his true believers. In Sufism wilayat implied friendship with God, a saintly status of proximity to Truth, even according to some on a par with prophethood. For the Shi'i jurists, however, wilayat was a purely legal term denoting the state of guardianship often assumed by the jurist over the legal minor (*saghir*) and mentally retarded (*mahjur*), hence *wilayat al-faqih*. (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 190)

the best qualities of character, and who embodies all the authority of the state' (Martin, 2003, p. 162).

4.7.2 Discursive formation: Shi'i martyrology and eschatology

Reading Khomeini's theoretical writings is not enough to understand his popular appeal in Iran. We need to examine more closely the formation of the political imaginary that was presented by Islamists to the people during the 1979 revolution. I argue that two crucial factors in this regard are the martyrology and eschatology of Shi'ism. In fact, a significant question is how Khomeini's account of the Islamic government, a very old and very new thing at the same time as Foucault conceptualised it, framed the political struggle for Iranians in the 1970s. Khomeini used the martyrdom and the tragedy of Karbala to connect his political imaginary with something old and messianic aspects of Shi'ism in order to relate it to the future. These ideas fed into, and drew from, a broader stream of Islamist ideologues, e.g. Shariati, that comprised a source of concepts that were finally productively articulated by Khomeini.

Foucault's account of Khomeini's political project, the Islamic State as a simple utopia, is misleading. To correct this, one can stress the importance of social myths, as 'expressions of a will to act' (Sorel, 1999, p. 28). Sorel distinguishes a utopia from a social myth and argues that the former is 'an intellectual product; it is the work of theorists who, after observing and discussing the facts, seek to establish a model to which they can compare existing societies in order to estimate the amount of good and evil they contain' (Sorel, 1999, p. 28). In this sense, a utopian project is one without connection to the past: a suspended future. However, Khomeini's writings on the Islamic state put the myth of Karbala and Mahdi at the heart of his hegemonic vision. The past and the future came together based on the concept of justice. Khomeini

adopted this pattern to orient his political battle more and more toward the moment of revolution.

Considering the event of Karbala, Islamist ideologues such as Ali Shariati had developed an understanding of the religious duties of a 'true' Shi'a. They narrate Shi'ism as if it is always an anti-monarchy movement and even picture Husayn as if he was a rebel against the monarchical government of Umayyad. Hence their narrative of Islam is incompatible with monarchy. Here we can refer to Dabashi who stresses a central paradox in Shi'ism for, 'its political success equals its moral collapse, and conversely its political failure equals moral authority' (Dabashi, 2011, p. 322). Although one can disagree with his semi-essentialist and subjective account of Shi'ism, his reading is insightful in understanding the dominant political imaginary and discursive resources available during the 1979 Revolution. Khomeini himself benefited from this narrative and contributed to it.

> The Lord of the Martyrs (upon whom be peace) summoned the people to rise in revolt by means of sermon, preaching, and correspondence and caused them to rebel against a monarch. Imam Hasan (upon whom be peace) struggled against the king of his day, Mu'awiya, as far as he was able, and when he was betrayed by a group of self-seeking, opportunistic followers and left without support, the very peace treaty that he signed with Mu'awiya disgraced that monarch, just as Imam Husayn's bloody revolt later disgraced Yazid. This struggle and confrontation has continued without respite, and the great scholars of Islam have always fought against the tyrannical bandits who enslaved their peoples for the sake of their passions and squandered their country's wealth on trivial amusements. (October 31, 1971) (Khomeini, 1981, pp. 206–207)

Applying Discourse Historical Analysis (DHA), Gholizadeh and Hook (2012) distinguish two main macro-areas that guide Khomeini's discourse in the commemorative declarations on the eve of revolution: the endless battle of Karbala and a dangerous

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'other'. He framed Karbala as if 'it is a Manichean struggle of good versus evil and thus made an appeal to all Iranians to join Khomeini in the ranks of the 'good', fighting the Shah's 'evil' injustice' (Gholizadeh & Hook, 2012).

> We are all Husayn: the Iranian people. The Iranian people are portrayed as victimised and oppressed, spilling their blood under a vicious attack. Khomeini uses 'deprived people', 'heaped-up corpses' and 'those who have been oppressed' when referring directly and indirectly to the Iranian people. (Gholizadeh & Hook, 2012)

In this sense, combining Shi'a martyrology and its eschatology, the hidden Imam will not manifest himself and rise because his followers, i.e. Shi'as, are still disobedient and have not prepared themselves to fight the unjust world. Regarding this guilt-ridden account of continuing occultation, *Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist* offers followers a 'second chance' to bypass the inner paradox of Shi'ism and find relief from their guilt. Perhaps one can find several indications of this 'second chance' such as using the title 'imam' or assigning metaphysical powers to Khomeini by his followers in this context. This new 'second chance' of the vicegerent of the Hidden Imam, which is available for a limited time (its temporality), combined with extra-discursive aspects of the conjuncture, e.g. post-oil-boom crisis of the mid-1970s, converged to underpin the Islamist counter-hegemonic vision and encourage people to act against an unjust world (chapter 5). He presented this invitation to repentance in as inclusive terms as possible to appeal to all people. Thus the Imam in Shi'a is 'likened, in this community, to the ark of Noah: he who boards it obtains salvation and reaches the gate of repentance' (Arjomand, 1984, p. 35).

> Khomeini strives to make his in-group as inclusive to the Iranian people as possible, even going to great lengths to specifically give direction to those who are currently in the out-group (members of 'both houses of the illegal Iranian parliament' and members of the 'illegal Regency Council') to refrain from their 'illegal' activities, presumably, so that they may enter the in-group. (Gholizadeh & Hook, 2012)

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The indignation of an unjust world at the heart of Shi'ism combined with a timely but limited window of opportunity for repentance based on deeds. One can trace this sense of urgency in Khomeini's speeches before and after the revolution: do it while you still have time. In this sense, Khomeini and his supporters depicted a dark future to stress the importance of urgent action against the Shah. They pictured an irreversible failure of Iran in the near future as a result of the Shah's reign. So as Shi'a you not only have a last chance to deal with your shame but there is a temporally limited opportunity to fix the unjust world and put your country back on the track.

> I tell you plainly that a dark, dangerous future lies ahead and that it is your duty to resist and to serve Islam and the Muslim peoples. Protest against the pressure exerted upon our oppressed people every day. Purge yourselves of your apathy and selfishness; stop seeking excuses and inventing pretexts for evading your responsibility. You have more forces at your disposal than the Lord of the Martyrs [imam Husayn] (upon whom be peace) did, who resisted and struggled with his limited forces until he was killed. If (God forbid) he had been a weak, apathetic, and selfish person, he could have come up with some excuse for himself and remained silent. His enemies would have been only too happy for him to remain silent so that they could attain their vile goals, and they were afraid of his rebelling. But he dispatched Muslim to procure the people's allegiance to him so that he might overthrow that corrupt government and set up an Islamic government. (October 31, 1971) (Khomeini, 1981, p. 209)

4.7.3 Post-revolutionary interpretations

The theory of guardianship of the Islamic jurist formed the basis of the constitution in the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, this theory is interpreted in two main ways. First, directly relate the jurist to the Hidden Imam:

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> On the basis of this set of theories, a legitimate government is a government which comes into power through being appointed by God, is affiliated with Him, and occupies office with His permission. The opinion and desire of the people does not have any share in the divine legitimacy. People are obliged to accept the legitimate government and to obey it. (Kadivar, 2008, p. 275).

This means a state project based on an absolute power that is centralised in the hand of the supreme leader, who is answerable only to the Hidden Imam:

> The Guardian Jurist is solely designated by the Mahdi (the Hidden Imam) rather than by the people and that his command (*hukm*) is obligatory for all. The people's only prerogative is to 'discover' (*kashf*) the guardian from among qualified jurists but they have no say in accepting or rejecting his decisions. (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 195)

The second interpretation gave authority to the clergy in general and not just to the jurist. Hence the elected supreme leader as the executor of the temporal power must be accountable to those who elect him. This narrative is not dominant and, in practice, the Islamic Republic follows the first interpretation. For it seems more compatible with what Khomeini wrote about before.

> It is highly significant that in Khomeini's book, Islamic Government, there is no mention of an Islamic republic. There is every reason to believe that Khomeini considered the Islamic republic to be the appropriate form of government only for the period of transition to the truly Islamic government. In this final stage, sovereignty would belong to the clergy on behalf of God. There would be no room for sovereignty of the people nor for the supremacy of the state as the presumed embodiment of the national will. (Arjomand, 1980)

The inner guilt and the Karbala event are strong parts of contemporary narratives of Shi'ism even after the revolution. This narrative can also explain the post-revolutionary anti-imperialist position of the Islamic Republic. Avoiding or postponing the inner paradox that is stressed by Dabashi, the Islamic Republic needs to reinvent an unjust

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enemy (imperialism) to justify the victory against the Shah. Supporters must reimagine political resistance on a new scale. Khomeini formulated the rescaled political imaginary in his speech during the first days of the war with Iraq, two years after the revolution.

> Let the Muslim nations be aware that Iran is a country effectively at war with America, and that our martyrs—the brave young men of our army and the Revolutionary Guards—are defending Iran and the Islam we hold dear against America. Thus, it is necessary to point out, the clashes now occurring in the west of our beloved country are caused by America; every day we are forced to confront various godless and treacherous groups there. This is a result of the Islamic content of our Revolution, which has been established on the basis of true independence. Were we to compromise with America and the other superpowers, we would not suffer these misfortunes. But our nation is no longer ready to submit to humiliation and abjection; it prefers a bloody death to a life of shame. We are ready to be killed and we have made a covenant with God to follow the path of our leader, the Lord of the Martyrs [the third Imam, Imam Husayn]. (Message to pilgrims, September 13, 1980) (Khomeini, 1981, p. 307)

Thus, there a politics of scale here, for Khomeini wanted to envisage a war with unjust imperialism to avoiding being likening to the unjust caliph. Using an imaginary Karbala to picture the war to achieve a just world, the important point is its extent. Whether it is on a national scale or international one can completely change the political position of the ruler from an Imam to a tyrant.

4.8 Conclusion

Khomeini's theory of Islamic Government and his claim to be the vicegerent of the Hidden Imam provided Islamism with a political imaginary that could adapt the best of messianic and de-apocalyptic Shi'ism. In other words, he appeared as the priest and prophet at the same time. He rose as if the Hidden Imam would soon appear and ruled

as if the Hidden Imam will never come. He stresses that the Prophet himself was a political person (Khomeini, 1981, p. 39). Considering this fusion of the political and the spiritual, the supreme leader in the Islamic Republic of Iran can suspend or stop the very basic laws and practices of Islam in the name of the interest of Islamic government/society. Although this is not something that happens every day in Iran, this is a sign of a power that can be found only in the messianic movements in the history of Shi'ism.

In his political imaginary, the past and future are united and consolidated via the concept of justice. By reserving the legitimate rule for the jurist, Khomeini likens himself to the Shi'a holy Imams who were deprived of their right to govern. In this context, he transcends the 'cosmic battle between forces good and evil' to the moment of revolution. In this ahistorical battle, he is Husayn, the third Imam, who was killed in *Karbala* by Yazid the Umayyad king, for his followers in *Kufa* was too frightened to help him. Thus, a significant body of semiotic resources of Shi'ism were revived and used by Khomeini's supporters to mobilise masses during the demonstration: 'we learned from the history and will not let him be killed by the Shah'. This was also important in the following years after 1979 that other rival political forces were suppressed by bolding this narrative of Shi'ism and its related political imaginary.

The vicegerency of the Hidden Imam, who is fighting in an eternal war of good and evil, is not limited to the official borders. This accounts for the transformation of the national state in Iran and the emergence of a new spatial imaginary in the 1970s. This political imaginary has extra-territorial potentials in integration. While there was no place for a non-Iranian to be a part of the Shah's state, particularly somebody from the Middle East, the Islamic State has the potential to integrate and unite other Shi'a people around the world. I shall deal with this in chapter six on the spatial imaginary of the revolution. Moreover, this political Imaginary affects the economic imaginary of the

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1979 revolution with regard to the crisis of the aftermath of the oil boom in pre-revolutionary Iran. This will be addressed in the next chapter.

5. The Holy Triad of the National State in Iran: Justice, Independence, and Progress

He [the Shah] always tells me that we must consult with experts and, especially regarding the economy, do exactly contrary to their opinions.

(Alam, 1992c, p. 61)

5.1 Introduction

'What has happened to us?' This is the fundamental question posed by the Crown Prince of Iran, Abbas Mirza (1789, 1833). He had commanded the Iranian army in the Russo-Persian Wars (1804-1813 and 1826-1828) and was shocked at losing all of Persia's territories in the Caucasus to Imperial Russia under the treaties of Gulistan (1813) and Turkmenchay (1828). The Iranian people likewise recognised a growing gap between the European powers and the standing of their country. It seemed that Iran was falling behind, and Europe was moving forward. They were so upset that these treaties entered popular culture as the most humiliating political interaction with foreigners ever. In this context, Abbas Mirza asked Pierre Amédée Jaubert, Napoleon Bonaparte's representative in Iran: *Quelle est la cause de vos progrès et de notre constante faiblesse?*

> What is, he once said to me, the strength that gives you such superiority compared with us? What is the cause of your progress and of our constant weakness? You

know the art of governing, the art of winning, the art of putting in action all human faculties while we look condemned to vegetate in a shameful ignorance, and only dreaming about the future. Is the Orient less habitable, less fertile, less rich compared with your Europe? The rays of the sun that illuminate us before reaching you next, are they less good here than in your heads; is the Creator who, in his goodness, diversifies all his talents, did he want to privilege you more than us? I do not think so.[1] (Jaubert, 1821, pp. 175–176) (my translation)

Reflecting on this situation, I argue that the national state in Iran was formed in the mid-19th century around three main axes: progress, independence and justice. This encapsulates the problematic of governance in Iran in its most condensed way. The core of this triad is justice, i.e. these conditions are not fair. It is iniquitous that we lose our lands to foreigners; it is unjust to be backward when others are progressing. We are not independent because we are weak; we are weak because we are not progressing; we are not progressing because we lack justice from a just sovereign. These three axes are associated, as this chapter will demonstrate, with different temporalities. In this context, I will advance two main arguments. First, the Iranian government tried unsuccessfully to shift the economic imaginary and its implications for economic strategy and policies after the economic crisis (1973) that followed the collapse in oil prices following the boom in the preceding years. Second, the dominant concept of justice for the Iranian population did not support the Shah's accumulation strategy manifested in the development plans. For, while he had proposed an egalitarian sense of justice (in competition with, and to weaken the appeal of, leftists) that was supposed to cover all Iranian citizens, the economic plans pursued by his

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[1] My translation.

government had directly increased economic and social inequality. Khomeini was able to exploit this contradiction and to present himself and Islam as its just resolution.
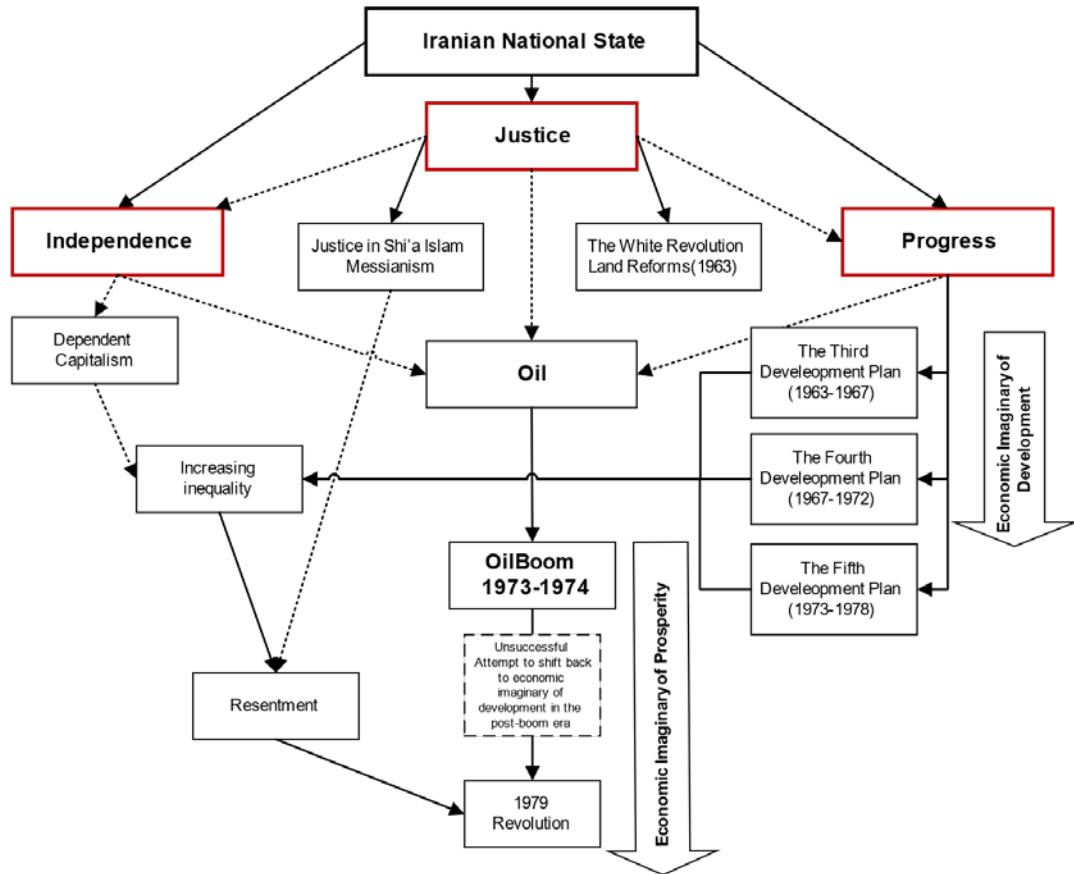
Figure 5.1: Mapping chapter five.

To understand how this was possible, we must consider the broader social repercussions of the oil sector in Iran and its place in political imaginaries, especially as these were articulated in practice or potentia with the three axes of the Iranian holy triad. In short, we must consider the cultural political economy of oil. The collapse in Iranian oil revenues in the 1970s was different from any previous crisis in the country in terms of its wider consequences. The chapter, explores these broader aspects and maps Khomeini's hegemonic vision regarding them.

Figure 5.2: The holy triad of the Iranian national state.

5.2   Justice and the national state in Iran

Justice is the most important element in Shi'a Islam and is a core pillar of the holy triad of the Iranian national state. This section presents the Shah's distinctive conception of justic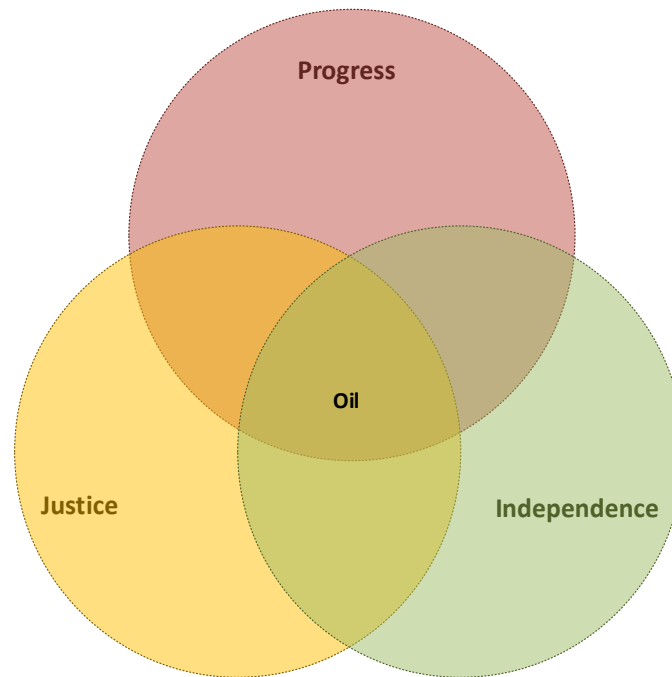e in this context, focusing on the White Revolution. It also shows how the central role of justice in Shi'ism enables the Shi'a clergy to appeal to, and mobilise, the people around competing conceptions of justice. Together these analyses will inform my account of the 1979 revolutionary moment in Iran.

Historically, before the establishment of the modern judicial system during the reign of Reza Shah (1926), the administration of justice was equivocal because of the blurring of the formal distinction that existed between *Urf* (common law) and *Sharia* (religious law). While the government was supposed to administer common law, including punishing violence against the government, clerics were supposed to deal with personal and civil matters based on Islamic law (*Feqh*). In reality, this distinction was

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fuzzy. Thus, eventually, local authorities and nobles had the strongest influence on the final decisions.

> Among the tribes, justice was administered by clan khans; among peasants, by *kadkhudas* (headmen), village elders, and landlords; and among craftsmen and tradesmen, by their own guild elders. In the main cities, the formal judicial system was divided in a somewhat ambiguous fashion into shari'a (religious) and 'urf (state) courts'. (Abrahamian, 2008, p. 12)

This distributed and fuzzy division of labour in the administration of justice created the space for demands for judicial reform. Moves in this direction were triggered by an economic crisis that developed in 1904-05 due to 'government bankruptcy and spiralling inflation' (Abrahamian, 2008, p. 41). The government used the bazaar as a scapegoat to avoid facing the angry mobs. However, it backfired when they bastinadoed three respected sugar merchants, provoking a strike in the bazaar with support from the clergy (1906). The protestors mainly demanded the establishment of an *Adalat Khaneh* (House of Justice), which was a preliminary move in asking for a national parliament. This amounted to a constitutional revolution. Some 70 years later, the Shah also tried to scapegoat the bazaar in the economic crisis that erupted in the last years of his rule in the 1970s. He ordered the country's only official party to control prices in shops and engage in anti-profiteering campaigns. The traditional petty bourgeoisie suffered deeply from these systematic attacks of the government. According to Abrahamian (2008, p. 152), 'almost every family in the bazaar had a member fall victim to the "anti-profiteering campaign"' in forms of fine and/or imprisonment.

5.2.1 Justice in Shi'ism

Shi'a theology comprises five articles of faith: *Towhid* (oneness), *Nabowat* (prophethood), *Ma'ad* (resurrection), ʿ*adl* (justice), and *Imamat* (leadership). Justice is

important not only as a pillar of the faith but its synonyms, after the worlds 'Allah' and 'knowledge', are the most frequent terms in the Quran (Nomani & Rahnema, 1994, p. 36). Likewise, of the four main themes of Shi'a discourse that relate to the four most significant Imams, i.e., Imam *Ali* (the first), Imam *Husayn* (the third), Imam *Sadiq* (the sixth) and Imam *Mahdi* (the twelfth), three concern justice. The veneration of Ali as 'the champion of justice, affection and self-sacrifice' relates directly and deeply to the ideal form of government in Shi'a beliefs (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 5). The second theme, which centres on the martyrdom of Imam Husain, represents resistance against injustice (*ẓulm*). The third related theme is grounded in the apocalyptic narrative of the last imam, i.e. Mahdi, who 'will fill the earth with equality and justice as it is filled with oppression and tyranny' (Arjomand, 1984, p. 160). The concept of justice in Islam is highly in debt of Plato's conceptualisation of it: a more or less natural and pre-given division of labour in that 'each person does one thing for which he is naturally suited and does it at the opportune moment, because his time is freed from all the others' (Plato, 2004, p. 48). In Shi'a's view, God has appointed Imams after the prophet with the same logic to prevent deviation in the society and Islam. Hence, there is a divine right for Imams to rule and lead the Islamic society. This divine position is occupied unjustly by caliphs who oppressed the real godly appointed leaders (Imams) and their followers, i.e. Shi'a Muslims. The hidden Imam, the last of twelve Imam, will rise to restore the justice.

In economic terms, *adl* (justice) denotes a just distribution of the public wealth. In this sense, one can argue that Islam is 'more concerned with the concept of economic justice than with laying down a specific economic system' (Pesaran, 1982). Before his prophethood, Mohammad had long traded as the agent of *Khadija*, a famous merchant, who later became his wife. The Islamic tradition is rich in terms of market economy and respect for private property. In this context, in the last century, a growing body of literature associated with several fundamentalist movements, such as those of Abul-

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A'la Maududi (1903-79), Sayid Qutb (1906-66), and Muhammad Baqir Sadr (1931-80), discussed economics and stressed that a developed Islamic economy could be an alternative to capitalism and socialism. Envisaging this as the basis for a utopian society, their main argument can be summarised as follows:

> The dominant economic systems of our time, virtually every major text asserts, are responsible for severe injustices, inefficiencies, and moral failures. In capitalism interest promotes callousness and exploitation, while in socialism the suppression of trade breeds tyranny and monstrous disequilibria. The fundamental sources of Islam prohibit interest but allow trade; hence, a properly Islamic economy would possess the virtues of these two systems without their defects. Typically, this claim is supported by references to Islam's Golden Age, the period 622-61 C.E., which spans the latter part of Prophet Muhammad's helmsmanship of the Muslim community and the tenure of the 'rightly guided' caliphs. (Marty & Appleby, 1993, p. 304)

In this context, an Islamic economy has three distinguishing elements (Kuran, 1995). The first is the prohibition of interest. The Quran bans *Riba*, i.e., 'the pre-Islamic Arabian practice of doubling the debt of a borrower unable to make restitution on schedule, including both the principal and the accumulated interest' (Kuran, 1995). The second element is the Islamic redistribution of wealth based on motivating Muslims to pay the religious tax (*Zakat*). The third component comprises Islamic economic norms (Kuran, 1995).

> These norms 'command good' and 'forbid evil'. They promote the avoidance of waste, extravagance, and ostentation. They discourage activities that create harmful externalities. They stimulate generosity. They encourage individuals to work hard, charge fair prices, and pay others their due. The intended effect of the norms is to transform selfish and acquisitive *homo economicus* into a paragon of virtue, *homo Islamicus. Homo Islamicus* acquires property freely, but never through speculation, gambling, hoarding, or destructive competition. And although he routinely bargains

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> for a better price, he always respects his trading partner's right to a fair deal. (Kuran,
> 1995)

These three elements were articulated by Islamists into an economic imaginary that critiqued the dominant hegemonic vision of the late Pahlavi era and offered an alternative.

However, like many other concepts in Islam, *adl* can be interpreted in different ways. For example, a radical narrative of the Islamic approach to the economy, formulated by a banal reading of Marxist tradition by Ali Shariati, envisaged an Islamic utopian socialism and had close ties to *Mujahidin Khalgh*, one of two main guerrilla movements in Iran. In contrast, the conservative narrative of Morteza Motahhari provided merchant supporters of the movement with an alternative economic imaginary that stabilised their historical relation with the Usuli clergy (Arjomand, 1988b, p. 15; Behdad, 1994). With the rich semiotic resources of Islamic, especially Shi'a, discourse, these economic imaginaries have informed the Islamic state project in Iran. However, Islamists were not the only group reflecting on justice in their hegemonic vision. The Shah himself, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, addressed the issue of justice in the White Revolution. This created a space of ideological contestation of social imaginaries.

5.2.2 The White Revolution (1963)

The 'Revolution of the Shah and the People' in 1963 – or White Revolution –had many dimensions. These included land reforms, the nationalisation of forests, electoral reform, denationalisation of state industries, profit-sharing for workers in industrial establishments, female suffrage, and the creation of a literacy corps (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 424; Pesaran, 1982). Here I explain the Shah's general approach to justice, which can be summarised under the rubric of the White Revolution. I argue that the Shah, in response to fears about leftist-inspired socialist revolutions around the world

and under the pressure of Kennedy's government for social reforms to confront it, developed and/or promoted a sense of justice that was contradicted by the real outcomes of his policies. Ashraf claims that the land reforms were instituted to avoid an imminent peasants' revolt (Ashraf, 1991). In this sense, the external factor, namely, Iran's geopolitical importance for the imperialist bloc and the danger of the 'red revolution' is stressed by several scholars (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 423, 2008, p. 140; Matin, 2013, p. 108). The Shah himself claimed that:

> I am going to go faster than the left. You're all going to have to run to keep up with me. All the old economic and political feudalism is over and done with. . . What could a (man) do with one-tenth of a hectare of land? No, that is not the fate of my people, to live like miserable beggars. (Shakibi, 2007, p. 181)

The Shah presented himself as the champion of justice, which, as noted, is the dominant theme in the holy triad, as if he were serving the divine will for justice.

> The Shah: 'God and Holy Imams would not approve anything more than we are doing today, including releasing miserable peasants from chains of enslavement and making 15 millions of people owners of the land they are working on. Nothing is godlier than social justice and eliminating tyranny.' (9 jan 1963, opening address in National Congress of Farmers, Qom)

Before the White Revolution, three main groups lived in rural areas: small landowners (25%), tenant peasants whose rights had a historical basis in common law (*Nasaq*) (40%), and landless peasants (*Khoshneshin*) (35%). During land reforms implemented in the White Revolution (1963), 52 to 62 percent of all cultivated lands were distributed among tenants and those who had *Nasaq* rights; this abolished differences between tenants and small landlords (Ashraf, 1991). Likewise, a limited increase (less than 2 percent) in agricultural output, which contrasted with a growth in demand of 15 percent, produced stagnation in the rural areas. One result was immigration to the cities:

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> Because agricultural output was not properly organised and promoted, it failed to provide adequate employment for the half of the population still living outside the towns, with the result that millions flocked to the towns and half of the rural population became landless labourers, even more socially outcast than they had been prior to the reform. (Halliday, 1979b)

Given the growing centralisation of health facilities and industrial plants in the main cities, the annual number of rural-urban migrants rose by 78% during 1966-76 compared with the 1956-66 period (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 431; Walton, 1980) (see Table 5.1).

Year	Total	Urban	Rural	Degree of Urbanisation
1956	18,955	5,954	13,001	31.4
1966	25,789	9,794	15,995	38.0
1976	33,662	15,797	17,865	46.9
1978	35,509	17,342	18,167	48.8

Table 5.1: Iran's population by urban and rural areas (000s; percent).
Source: (Walton, 1980).

The Land Reforms programme ended officially in 1971. Despite all the claims made about the increase in the productivity thanks to reforms in land ownership and the introduction of industrial agriculture, the White Revolution completely failed to boost productivity in the countryside (Amuzegar, 1977; Halliday, 1979b, 1979a, pp. 103–137; Looney, 1982, p. 40). Failure is also evident in the rapid expansion of food imports from $142 million in 1968 to $2,550 million in 1977 (Halliday, 1979b). These imports were applied mainly to meet shortages and prevent living costs from escalating. They were

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'detrimental to the plight of farmers, who were becoming increasingly disillusioned with the second and third stages of the Shah's land reform' (Pesaran, 1982). Considering this failure, one can ask about the absence of the rural area in the 'revolution'. For, the poor migrants with peasant background in the main cities were not engaged in the upheavals of 1978 until its last days and were left in the margins of the main political scene (Bayat, 1997).

Towfigh (2006) suggests that the land reforms should also be understood in terms of the strategic competence of the two main groups of traditional landlords and technocrats who were trying in their different ways to pursue their respective state projects. In fact, considering the strategic role of landlords and their political pressure, the later phases of land reform (the second in 1965 and the third in 1969) proved to be more and more conservative and unfruitful plans (Towfigh, 2006). Thus 'the subsequent amendments to the Land Reform Law enabled many landlords to keep a sizeable proportion of the most fertile lands in a village and those unlucky farmers who happened to be cultivating the land retained by the landlord became landless' (Walton, 1980).

The high hopes of the Shah for rapid economic development resulted in a less spatially equitable society that favoured the city against the countryside, the axis of north and west against the axis of south and east, the capital Tehran against the provinces, and Tehran's affluent northern parts against its southern slums. The economic imaginary of prosperity and unjust governance, as the consequences of these social and economic reforms, later used by the opposition to mobilise masses against the Shah in the main cities. I allude to this here and discuss it in more detail later in section 5.6 on the 1979 Revolution.
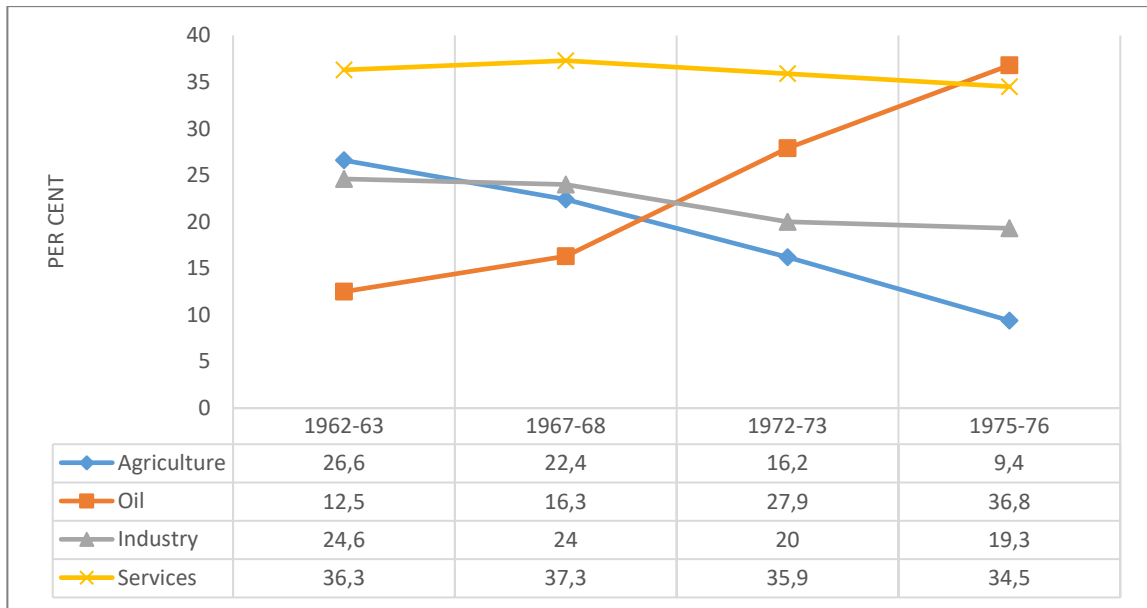
	1962-63	1967-68	1972-73	1975-76
Agriculture	26,6	22,4	16,2	9,4
Oil	12,5	16,3	27,9	36,8
Industry	24,6	24	20	19,3
Services	36,3	37,3	35,9	34,5

Table 5.2: The sectoral share in GDP (1962-1976).
Source of data: (Amuzegar, 1977, p. 256).

The White Revolution coincided with the appearance of Khomeini on the Iranian political scene (1963). He openly opposed the reforms, mostly from a reactionary viewpoint but in a complicated way that opened space for speculation about his intentions. Following his speech against the Shah (June, 3, 1963) in which he advised the Shah to learn from his father's fate (i.e. abdication and death in exile), his followers' demonstration led to clashes with the police. Some claim that the three days upheavals in the main cities without any strike, particularly in the oil industries, resulted in the death of 400 demonstrators (Baheri, 1982, pt. 7).

> Although many clerics opposed the regime because of land reform and women's rights, Khomeini, revealing a masterful grasp of mass politics, scrupulously avoided the former issue and instead hammered away on a host of other concerns that aroused greater indignation among the general population. He denounced the regime for living off corruption, rigging elections, violating the constitutional laws, stifling the press and the political parties, destroying the independence of the university, neglecting the economic needs of merchants, workers, and peasants, undermining

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the country's Islamic beliefs, encouraging *gharbzadegi* -indiscriminate borrowing from the West- granting 'capitulations' to foreigners, selling oil to Israel, and constantly expanding the size of the central bureaucracies. Not for the last time, Khomeini had chosen issues with mass appeal. (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 245)

This riot also influenced the official post-revolutionary narrative of the 1979 Revolution. It claimed that the revolution began with this upheaval and that it initiated a continuous Islamic movement against the Shah led by the clergy that finally ended in 1979. It also provides the basis for distinguishing revolutionary generations. Thus, while the first generation participated in the riots of 1963, the next generation comprises the youth who were active in the 1978-9 upheavals and later fought on the front in the war against Iraq. In turn, the third generation comprises the young generation of post-war Iran. This historical narrative is widely used by the government recently to facilitate the hegemonic vision of the Islamic Republic.

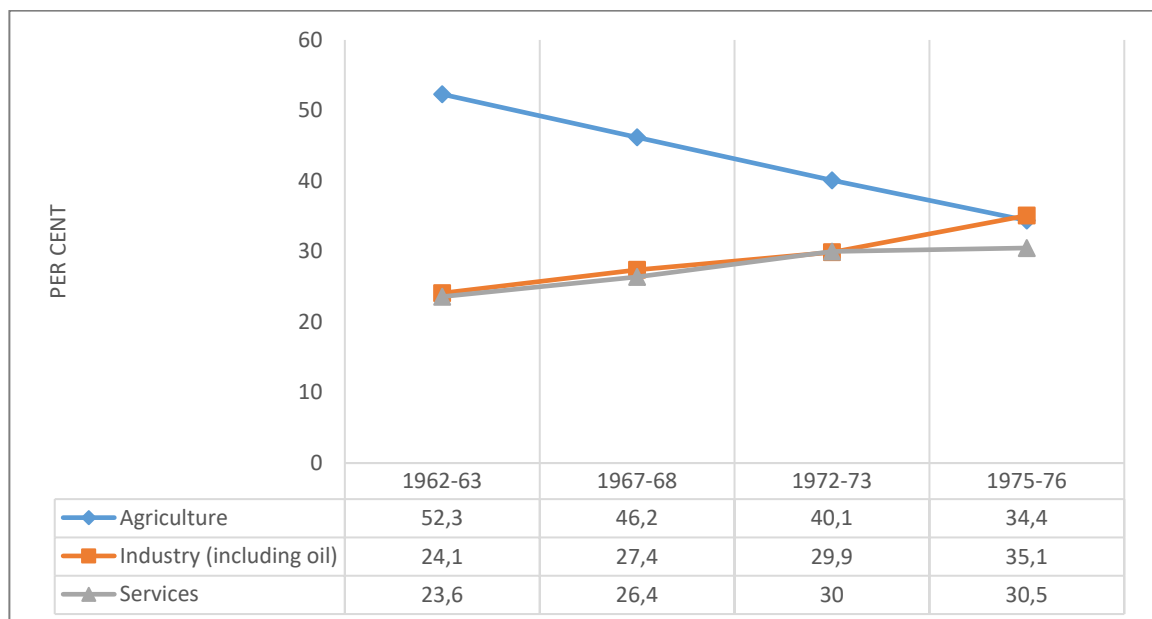|	1962-63	1967-68	1972-73	1975-76
Agriculture	52,3	46,2	40,1	34,4
Industry (including oil)	24,1	27,4	29,9	35,1
Services	23,6	26,4	30	30,5

Table 5.3: The share in employment (1962-1976).
Source of the data: (Amuzegar, 1977, p. 256).

However, this narrative ignores the support given by the main body of clergy for the Shah in the 1953 Anglo-American Coup. This neglect is also evident in a speech by Khomeini, alleging that the Shah received orders from Americans as an obedient agent (as if that was the first time and he had not come to power in 1953 coup with Imperialist support). Addressing mainly the urban middle class, Khomeini attacked the Shah at a key weak point, i.e., his relationship with imperialist forces in a decade of anti-colonial wars.

> Iran no longer has any festival to celebrate; they have turned our festival into mourning. They have turned it into mourning and lit up the city; they have turned it into mourning and are dancing together with joy. They have sold us, they have sold our independence; but still they light up the city and dance. If I were in their place, I would forbid all these lights; I would give orders that black flags be raised over the bazaars and houses, that black awnings be hung! Our dignity has been trampled underfoot: the dignity of Iran has been destroyed. The dignity of the Iranian army has been trampled underfoot! A law has been put before the majlis [parliament] according to which we are to accede to the Vienna Convention, and a provision has been added to it that all American military advisers, together with their families, technical and administrative officials, and servants— in short, anyone in any way connected to them—are to enjoy legal immunity with respect to any crime they may commit in Iran. (October 27, 1964) (Khomeini, 1981, p. 182)

Khomeini claimed that the problem of injustice (in particular a lack of economic justice) in Iran stemmed from the Shah's dependence on the imperialists. Thus, the next section addresses the importance of independence in national state formation in Iran.

5.3 Independence

From the decline of the Persian Empire, passing through humiliation and lost territory and through the emergence of Iran as a putatively national state, independence can be understood as the achievement of justice in international relations. The form and

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focal points of the independence discourse have changed in line with the transitions from colonisation to classical imperialism and then economic imperialism. Thus, from a more territorial understanding of independence in the 19th century, on the eve of the 1979 Revolution, we find a more economic interpretation oriented to winning independence within the space of flows. Nonetheless, past understandings of independence limit its present narrations.

Figure 5.3: A cartoon from the English satirical magazine Punch, or The London Charivari. The caption reads: AS BETWEEN FRIENDS. British Lion (to Russian Bear). 'IF WE HADN'T SUCH A THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING I MIGHT ALMOST BE TEMPTED

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TO ASK WHAT YOU'RE DOING THERE WITH OUR LITTLE PLAYFELLOW'. 13 December 1911[2].

In the early 19th century, independence was mostly articulated around territorial sovereignty, reflecting Iran's semi-colonial situation. This struggle over territory continued at the beginning of 20th century. For example, although Iran became a sovereign country in name right after the Constitutional Revolution (1905-7), things looked rather different on the ground. For the Russian Empire and the Great Britain, in response to the rise of Germany, settled their conflicts in the central Asia (Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet), divided Iran into three spheres of influence: the Russians dominated the north and the most important cities, the British held sway in the south-east, and there was a neutral buffer zone in between (Greaves, 1968). This division of influence was a clear sign of the struggle the Iranian state and people faced to survive among rival imperial super-powers (figure 3). The spatial aspects of independence are discussed in chapter six, but here we focus more on the political economy of independence.

> This peculiar type of 'contact' between the West and Persia took place through the process of western penetration and through direct contacts between western agents, i.e., the representatives of the colonial ruling class and power elite on the one hand, and the major Persian structural forces on the other. The peculiarity of this total situation is due to the rivalry of the two great powers [i.e. GB and Russia] in maintaining the collapsing political community in Persia. Moreover, the rulers were forced to accept a policy of balancing irresistible pressures within the new situation. As a result Persia did not enter into a formal colonial situation but survived as a buffer state between the expanding Russian appetite for the South and the British policy of the defence of India.

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[2] Punch, or the London Charivari 141: 429. Artist: Leonard Raven-Hill. Retrived from: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:As_Between_Friends_(Punch_magazine,_13_December_1911).jpg

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Following their so-called 'special interest' the two colonial powers arrived at a general agreement to divide the country into their zones of influence. (Ashraf, 1969)
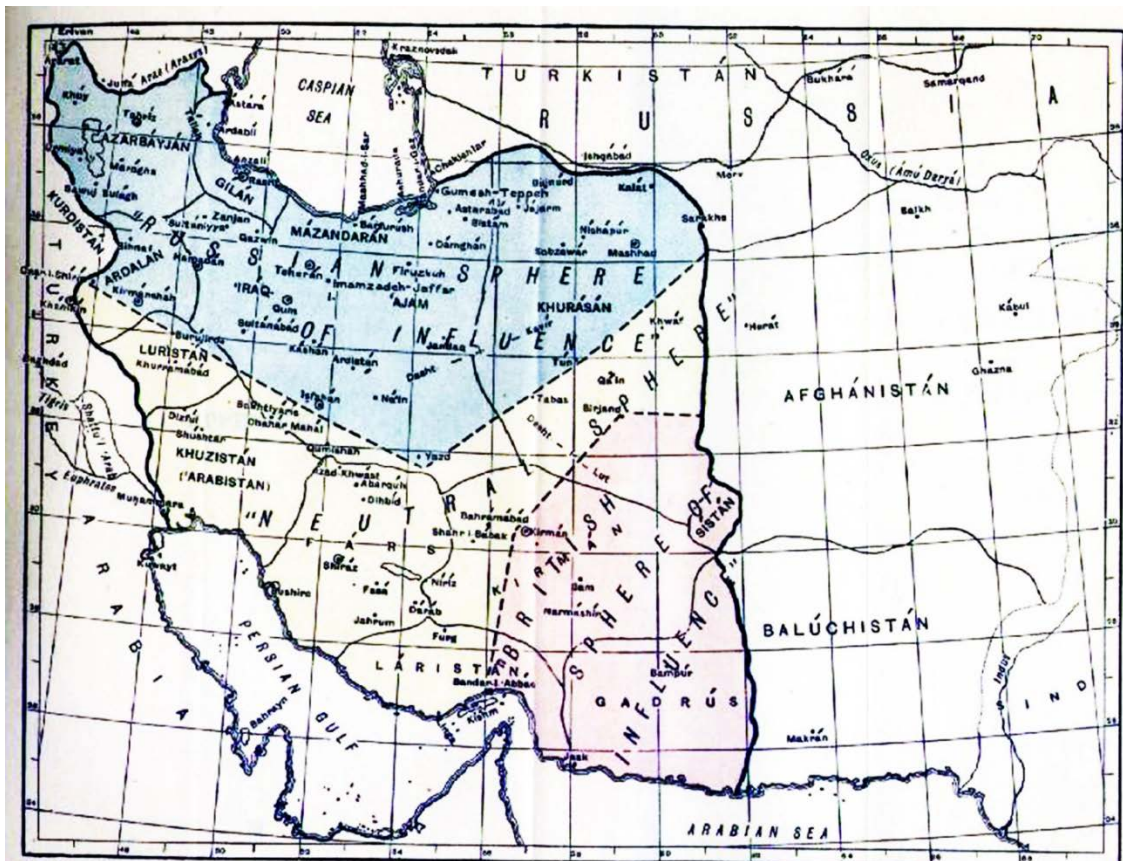
Figure 5.4: Map showing the three 'spheres' (Russian, British and neutral) defined in the Anglo-Russian agreement of August 31. 1907.
Source: (Shuster, 1912, p. 5).

Another aspect of this dependent relation was that, by the late 19th century, economic monopolies were being granted to foreigners in exchange for loans and/or short-term income (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 74). The loss of independence and perceived injustice was widely resented and, in one case, triggered a Tobacco movement (1890) (Keddie, 1983). It this case, merchants deployed the Shi'a discourse to justify resisting foreign domination by an infidel company on Muslim's lives (Moaddel, 1992b). Such calls for independence continued in the Constitutional Revolution and focused mostly on loans from and concessions to foreigners. Given this, Reza Shah banned all new foreign

loans. Likewise, regarding the oil reserves, the D'Arcy oil concession that gave only 16% of profit to Iran was subject to new contractual terms. In particular, the 1933 agreement gave birth to Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). However, this was greeted with hostility by many Iranians. As a World Bank's report[3] suggests (World Bank, 1952):

> The Iranians consider the 1933 agreement void ab initio, the Company having engineered the cancellation of the D'Arcy Concession and having secured the signature of the 1933 Agreement under duress of the military and political power of the British Government.

The oil company was the representative of the semi-colonial relation between Great Britain and Iran and was regarded as a sign of humiliation. Following the Allied occupation of Iran in 1941 to support the Soviets against Germany, the space of flows and uneven regional development shaped understandings of dependency and interdependence, increasing the popular antagonisms. This was reinforced as local movements mobilised against the central government in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan in the Iranian territory. These Soviet-backed People's Governments challenged the Pahlavi regime from 1945 until 1947. In the last Shah's rule, oil and the discourse of exploitation of the 'rich soil of Iran' became the pivotal point of common understanding of the independence, particularly after the failure of the nationalisation movement in 1953 following the coup. I return to this in greater detail in section 5.5 on oil.

5.3.1 Good and evil Bourgeoisie

Focusing on the growing involvement of international companies in Iran during the oil boom, I now discuss general understandings of independence in pre-revolutionary Iran. There are two interesting issues here. First, there is the distinction between 'good'

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[3] The report was only declassified after 60 years in 2013.

and 'evil' economic forces in Iranian capitalism. There were quite different views on this distinction and they provided fertile ground for various economic, political, and social strategies and associated alliances and movements. Second, there is the important separation of 'national' and 'comprador' bourgeoisie.

Regarding the first issue, for the Shah and some of his supporters, 'good' and 'evil' denoted comprador elements and the bazaar respectively. Whereas the bazaar was depicted as backward, industrial corporations and supermarkets that had entered partnerships with multinational corporations were progressive. The Shah himself addressed the bazaar as a backward economic force:

> Bazaars are a major social and commercial institution throughout the Middle East. But it remains my conviction that their time is past. ... The Bazaaris are a fanatic lot, highly resistant to change because their locations afford a lucrative monopoly. I could not stop building supermarkets. I wanted a modern country. Moving against the bazaars was typical of the political and social risks I had to take in my drive for modernization. (Cited in Shambayati, 1994)

Conversely, for the leftists, with its interest in imperialism, the Iranian partners of multinational corporations (MNCs) and banks were at the heart of the dependent and comprador bourgeoisie. In this sense, they were regarded as evil rather than good. This position was partly a legacy of the 1953 coup. For, although the term 'national bourgeoisie' was used negatively before this coup in the counter-hegemonic vision of the Tudeh party (the main leftist group), this movement later engaged in a self-criticism on this point and recognised that the national bourgeoisie could play a progressive role. The same ambivalence, albeit justified in different ways, was common among many smaller groups. For example, the Maoist movements emerging in the late 1960s considered the progressive national bourgeoisies as part of popular fronts; this belief was represented discursively directly or indirectly in the narratives of guerrilla movements (Mao, 1948).

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Islamists held a different view. For them, the 'good-evil' duality ran between the traditional Muslim merchants who had not fully integrated into the state project of the late pre-revolution era and new elites who had formed a close relationship with the court. Hence, Islamists gave a religious meaning to this distinction: they separated good Muslim capitalists from those who work directly or indirectly with infidels. In this image, a key indicator of virtue is paying religious taxes on one's economic activities.

> Although the vast majority of the upper class was Muslim, some senior officials had joined the court-connected Freemason Lodge in Tehran, and a few - notably Yazdani, Elqanian, and Arya -- came from Baha'i and Jewish backgrounds. This provided fuel for rumours often heard in the bazaars that the whole upper class represented an international conspiracy hatched by Zionists, Baha'is centred in Haifa, and British imperialists through the Freemason Lodge in London. (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 432)

Having identified different perspectives on this good-evil duality, I now consider its significance for the economic conditions of pre-revolutionary Iran. The system of dependent capitalist relations denotes a relation between national and international capitalism with apparent spatial dimensions and implications.

> I argue that owing to the predominance of oil revenues in the Iranian economy the role of the state vis-a-vis the industrial bourgeoisie differs markedly from that in many other developing countries. The focus is on the 'dependence' of the capitalist class first on the state and second on foreign technology, managerial skills and, to a lesser extent, on finance for its existence and survival. I refer to this tripartite relationship among the state, local industrialists and foreign vested interests as the system of dependent capitalism. (Pesaran, 1982)

A similar point emerges from the plans for import-substitution industrialisation (ISI). This project was prescribed by 'the International Monetary Fund to alleviate Iran's chronic balance of payments problems in the early 1960s', depended heavily on foreign technology, capital and skill workers (Pesaran, 1982). It required the government to

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facilitate foreign investment. For instance, investors could 'enter into any branch of production in any part of Iran and enjoy, among other things, a perpetual 50 percent tax exemption' (Rahnema, 1990). They also benefited from high tariffs on import and 'credit and industrial-licensing policies designed to keep the domestic competition for large private industrial enterprises down to a minimum' (Pesaran, 1982).

> The liberal policy toward the importation of capital and intermediate products, regarded as essential to a successful implementation of the import-substituting strategy, distorts the choice of products and techniques in favour of the production of luxury consumer goods and capital intensive industries and thus increases the country's dependence upon sophisticated foreign technology and know-how with little employment-creating effect. (Pesaran, 1982)

Although these conditions incentivised foreign investment, especially in the oil sector and the ISI project, foreign investment was a small portion of the overall investment in Iran. Thus complaints about dependency, which was a crucial theme in the opposition's counter-hegemonic project, was more often justified by noting the presence of multi-national companies (hereafter MNCs) and foreign military officers.

> Whilst overt xenophobia towards foreigners in Iran was rare, the presence of a large number of US military in the provincial town of Isfahan, complete with a crop of ex-Saigon prostitutes, did lead to considerable friction in that town at least. (Halliday, 1979b)

Economic imperialism was especially evident in the contractual terms between MNCs and Iranian firms. For:

> (1) local production of the Iranian firm was limited to the manufacture of a set of less-sophisticated components of the finished product and was heavily reliant on the

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> continuous import of the major CKD[4] components and materials; (2) the supplier of technology (the licensor) did not commit itself to give the technical assistance, training, and R&D needed for increasing the share of local production and adding to the local content; and (3) conversely, the supplier of technology imposed a variety of restrictions to prevent the Iranian firm from adding to its technological capabilities, reducing the items in the imported CKD pack list, and consequently lowering the increasing costs of imports. (Rahnema, 1990)

While the hegemonic vision of the pre-revolution era comprised rapid social transformation from a 'traditional' and 'under-developed' situation to a 'modern' and 'developed' one, with the first post-boom crisis in 1977, it was clear that this project was having disastrous effects in the industrial sphere. The independence and 'modernity' promised through massive industrial development vanished.

> After over two decades of rapid industrialization, the manufacturing sector on the whole was in a situation where the needed materials, machinery, and parts for firms (1) either could not be produced locally; or (2) were not in sufficient local supply; or (3) were not of high enough quality; or (4) finally, owing to low productivity, were higher in cost than those of imported materials and parts. (Rahnema, 1990)

This debâcle was used by the opposition forces to depict the Shah as a puppet in the hand of imperialism tasked with destroying the Iranian economy and independence. Even in the most important leftist guerrilla movement, *Organization of Iranian People's Fedai Guerrillas*, the main slogan in the 1970s was 'down with imperialism and its running dogs!' Khomeini also took up this theme in conjunction with xenophobia and Shi'ism to attack the Shah at every opportunity.

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[4] CKD = 'Completely Knocked Down'.

> The Shah has given foreigners all the subterranean wealth and vital interests belonging to the people. He has given oil to America; gas to the Soviet Union; pastureland, forests, and part of the oil to England and other countries. The people have been deprived of all the necessities of life and kept in a state of backwardness. The imperialist system has taken control of the army, the education, and the economy of our country, and has taken away from our people all opportunity for development.'
> September 27, 1978. (Khomeini, 1981, p. 239)

These remarks invite a discussion on development as an accumulation strategy and its institutional setting in Iran.

5.4 Progress

As the Iranians acknowledged their weakness in the war with Russia at the beginning of the 19th century, there was a growing obsession with progress. This was especially strong among bureaucrats (on their significance as a strategic group for development, see below). This obsession began in Abbas Mirza's court in Tabriz and was reflected in his sending of students abroad to learn the techniques of the 'Europeans'. Established in 1851, *Darul-Funun* (Polytechnic) in Tehran was the institutional embodiment of this trend. Romanticising the idea of progress, technocrats like to argue that Iran passed three successive 16-year periods of development in the 20th century, all of which ended disastrously[5]. The first era was during the reign of Reza Shah (1926-1941) and culminated in the military occupation of Iran by allied forces. The second era (1963-1979) ended in the 1979 revolution. Ironically, the third era (1989-2005) finished with the election of *Mahmud Ahmadi-Nejad*.

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[5] See for example (Laylaz, 2013).

The idea of progress had been proposed before, but it was never realised and institutionalised at a national scale because of the lack of control on the society and semi-colonial conditions of Iran. It was the Pahlavi dynasty in 1926 that attempted to realise, with some success (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 136). In line with the ambitions of the period of Constitutional Revolution (1906-8), in 1922 Reza Shah, at the head of Iran's first central government, presented a 'program of planned industrialisation and urbanisation' (Amuzegar, 1977, p. 162). This involved heavy investment in key industries, import restraints, and low-interest loans and it motivated private capitals to build factories. Thus, 'the industries ministry built some 300 plants producing sugar, tea, cigarettes, rice, canned food, soap, cotton oil seed, glycerine, jute, sulphuric acid, cement, lumber, copper, batteries, and, most important of all, electricity – by 1938 most towns had some electrical lighting' (Abrahamian, 2008, p. 77). Moreover, in response to world crisis, the government introduced its monopoly of foreign trade in 1931 and exchange control in 1936. Those interventions aimed to secure revenue and defend Iranian industry against a crisis that was wreaking havoc in the world economy. Likewise, the government invested heavily in building a national railroad from the southwest to northern Iran (more than 1400 km). Like all industrial investment, the private sector provided half and the other half was funded from special taxes on tea and sugar (Katouzian, 1981, p. 115). This fulfilled one of the most important aspirations of Iranian nationalists, an investment with Iranian money and under their control.

Towfigh (2000, 2006) stresses the emergence of technocrats rooted in old bureaucrats, as a strategic group, with a particular state project realised through the Pahlavi dynasty. Strategic groups are built when, as a result of social and/geopolitical change, a power vacuum occurs or new resources become available (Evers & Gerke, 2005). These groups formed to protect their shared social status and/or to take or keep control of such new strategic resources. Technocrats, as a strategic group, were mainly represented by the Plan and Budget Organization. This apparatus, particularly in the

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era after the White Revolution, played the leading role in the 'minor industrial revolution' with its ambitious development plans (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 230). Consequently, in the aftermath of 1962, Iran experienced an average growth rate of 9.6 percent for almost 15 years that exceeded the average of other 'developing' countries (Amuzegar, 1992). The exponential increase in oil revenues accounts directly for the high annual growth rate and also indirectly push 'the real non-oil GDP grew by an average annual rate of 10.8 per cent over the 1963-64 - 1977-78 period which was 1.5 percentage points higher than the annual rate of growth of GDP with oil, indicating a considerably broader base of development than is normally realized' (Pesaran, 1982). This broad-based growth engine was fuelled by the investment of the government's increasing oil revenues in development plans.

> Under the influence of internal and external forces, and with increasing revenues from oil exports the state moved beyond its traditional roles and took major responsibilities for economic development as entrepreneur, banker, regulator, and the primary provider of infrastructure and social services. (Esfahani & Pesaran, 2009)

Thus, progress was translated into economic development. According to official reports, governmental planning aimed at '(1) earmarking the bulk of oil revenues for direct public fixed capital formation in certain fields, and (2) pointing the way for private investment in other fields through conductive information, projection and incentives' (Amuzegar, 1977, p. 159). Thanks to the increase in oil revenue, the projected expenditure of plans rose drastically from $350 million in the first plan to $8,284 million in the fourth and $69 billion in the fifth after the oil boom and the corresponding revision of the plan (Halliday, 1979a, p. 139).

Aiming at 'improving the living conditions of the Iranian masses', the first plan (1949-1955) was confined by the limited resources and revenues of the government. Indeed, the nationalisation of oil in 1951-53 actually decreased the state's revenue in the short

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term as a result of the international embargo against Iranian oil. This led one commentator to remark, correctly, that the first plan was 'deficient in both basic planning methodology and objectives' (Looney, 1982, p. 10). Lacking any objective measure for assessing progress, it was basically a set of middling individual projects mostly in the infrastructure section. Likewise, the massive changes in the management of the Plan Organisation made it almost impossible for the technocrats to realise their political projects. In short, the first plan was more partial compared with the comprehensive planning from the third plan on (Abadian, 1985). The restoration of power after the coup in 1953 and the ending of the boycott on oil exports provided the opportunity to present the second plan (1955-1962).

This plan also lacked a systematic framework and did not set quantitative growth targets. Furthermore, it only addressed the public sector (Maclachlan, 1991, p. 624). With an almost tripled budget allocation, thanks to the oil revenue, it focused on a set of huge infrastructure projects 'whose main commonalty was that they had been easy to identify' (Looney, 1982, p. 12). The financial support for the plan rose from an initial 60% of oil revenue 80%. From 1955, oil revenues 'began to become the major source of revenue for government expenditures' (Mahdavy, 1970, p. 441). However, this produced a short boom that produced inflationary pressures within a few years due to rapid growth in imports and the problem of balance of payments. The government responded with an 'economic stabilisation programme'. This comprised 'a set of standard IMF measures including direct control of private sector credit, the raising of interest rates, the restriction of imports, and forced reductions in government expenditures' and created a deep recession (Looney, 1982, p. 17).

The main difference between the first and second plans was the restructuring of the Plan Organization. The new head of the Plan Organisation, Abolhassan Ebtehaj (1899-1999), is probably the most famous figure in the history of banking and planning in

contemporary Iran. He perfectly represents the aspirations of the strategic group of technocrats in the Pahlavi regime. As the head of National Bank of Iran (the central bank), he managed to cut the hands of British Imperial Bank and monopolising the central banking tasks in an Iranian bank for the first time. The legendary Ebtehaj was convinced that, by using the oil revenue to plan development, Iran would have a bright future. He reorganised the Plan Organisation and employed young, well-trained economists. Thus, apart from the former technical members, he recruited an economic bureau in the middle of the second development plan that later resulted in a new approach in the third plan. Interestingly, the head of this new economic section was the great-grandson of Abbas Mirza, Khodadad Farmanfarmaian. Ebtehaj disagreed with the Shah regarding the use of oil revenue. For, he thought it should be completely at the disposition of the Plan Organisation to spend it for development. In contrast, the Shah was more interested in investing in the military and playing a more important role in the region (Ebtehaj, n.d., pt. 6). Likewise, fighting the corrupt bureaucracy, he managed to mobilise enemies ranging from the landlords who preferred their local interests (Madjidi, 1985, pt. 4ff) to the national plan for development, freemasons, and old bureaucrats who resisted the new economic planning (Ebtehaj, n.d., pts. 5–6).

5.4.1 The third development plan (1963-1967)

Specialists from Harvard University, financed by the Ford Foundation, were recruited to assist with the formulation of the third development plan (Maclachlan, 1991, p. 624). Basically, the Foundation financed 'the cost of foreign advisors, to train Iranians and a small amount of money to be used as subsidy to augment the salaries of Iranians who could not or would not work for the salaries that were prevalent in the Plan Organization' (Farmanfarmaian, 1983, pt. 2r ff). This was the first time that a detailed and sophisticated set of objectives, 'overall growth rate and sectoral targets, as well as the sources and uses of development finance', were introduced and combined with the

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White Revolution, formed the historical bloc (Amuzegar, 1977, p. 163). Targeted at 6% growth, significant new industries, e.g. steel, machine tools and petrochemicals, established (Amuzegar, 1977, p. 164). The third plan was successful in overcoming the depression resulted from the last plan (Madjidi, 1985, pt. Seq. 4).

> While the first two years of the plan period were years of recession, the subsequent economic recovery together with increase in development outlays resulted in a substantial increase in the domestic supply of goods and services during the latter part of the period…. The government actively pursued a price stabilization policy during the last two years of the Plan by directly importing those products for which significant domestic shortages had occurred. (Looney, 1982, p. 25)

The third development plan is almost free of any reference to justice. Perhaps one can explain this with the concurrent White Revolution (land reforms) in Iran. While land reforms addressed the issue of justice, the Plan Organisation was obsessed with Modernisation Theory and development and seemed to regard justice as a by-product of successful development. This belief was facilitated by growing oil revenues. Introducing quantitative targets in terms of economic growth, the expected private investments, oil price and so forth also marked a pivotal change compared to earlier trends. Farmanfarmaian, as the economic brain behind this plan, justified this concentration on progress as follows:

> The philosophy of the times, of which we were all deeply enamoured was economic growth. It wasn't that we were unaware of the necessity of improving, as soon as possible, the living standards of the masses, the problem of disguised unemployment and inequitable income distribution. In fact, when you read the document of the third plan, it's very clear that we talk about these as the ultimate goal of development. But we do, however, state that unless there is growth, there cannot be much to distribute. So questions of income distribution, of equity and unemployment, did not play a very prominent role in our thinking. Growth played a very pivotal role in our thinking.

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> Perhaps we should have paid more attention from the beginning to the whole question of income distribution and unemployment. (Farmanfarmaian, 1983, pt. Seq 2r)

The other substantial change concerned the balance of power between the ministries and the Plan Organization. While before the third plan, the Plan Organisation was directly responsible for the execution and finalising the projects, it now gave the executing function to the other ministries. On the other hand, the whole process of budgeting was concentrated in the hands of the Plan Organization. This was Farmanfarmaian's solution to make sure that they have enough power to push the government in their desired direction for 'the budget of a country, especially in a developing country, in the final analysis, should in fact reflect, more than anything else, the national development goals of the country on an annual basis' (Farmanfarmaian, 1983, pt. 3r ff).

5.4.2 The fourth development plan (1967-1972)

Allocating 80% of the steadily growing oil revenues, it was claimed that the fourth plan aimed to achieve a more equitable distribution of incomes, diversify exports to promote independence, and adopt advanced managerial techniques to improve the service sector (Looney, 1982, p. 25). However, it contradicted the official expectation that contributed to the economic hegemony of the dominant strategic group, 'the benefits of rising real income, even if they did "trickle down", were not enough to improve or even stop the unfavourable trend in the distribution of income and wealth among households and geographical regions, as well as between rural and urban areas that existed in the early 1960s' (Pesaran, 1982). Indeed, an important change in this plan compared with the previous one was to emphasise the industries at the expense of agriculture.

Let us note a few related points here. First, given the apparent success of the third plan and the increasing oil price, there was a growing confidence during the period of the fourth plan in economic governance and, in particular, in the smooth progress of current development plans (The Fourth Development Plan, 1968, sec. 15). The fourth plan was almost entirely designed by Iranians, and this contributed to the routinization of planning and budgeting processes. Second, the political dominance of the Plan Organisation as the heart of the dominant strategic group, i.e. technocrats, had declined in 'the late 60s' (Maclachlan, 1991, p. 626) in favour of the court and growing personal importance of the Shah. One important sign of this change was the increase in the military expenditure from $370 million in 1966 to over 2.6 billion in 1973, i.e. the end of the fourth plan (Looney, 1982, p. 27). This is because, for the Shah, having a strong army signified independence, especially following the withdrawal of the British military presence that created a vacuum in the Middle East. Independence, as we noted above, is the third element in the holy triad. In addition, the 'Nixon Doctrine' in July 1969 required local allies to support the U.S. global interest in terms of political backing and military power (Hanieh, 2011, p. 39). This coincided with another important trend: the beginning of the end of the postwar boom.

> Just as the United States was displacing Britain and France as the dominant power in the Middle East, the postwar economic boom was beginning to draw to an end. By the end of the 1960s, many of the factors that had enabled this boom to occur had begun to be undermined. First, two decades of expanding production had led to overaccumulation at the global scale -particularly following the entry of European and Japanese competitors into major manufacturing sectors who were able to benefit from low wages, long working hours, and the introduction of modern technological techniques. (Hanieh, 2011, p. 39)
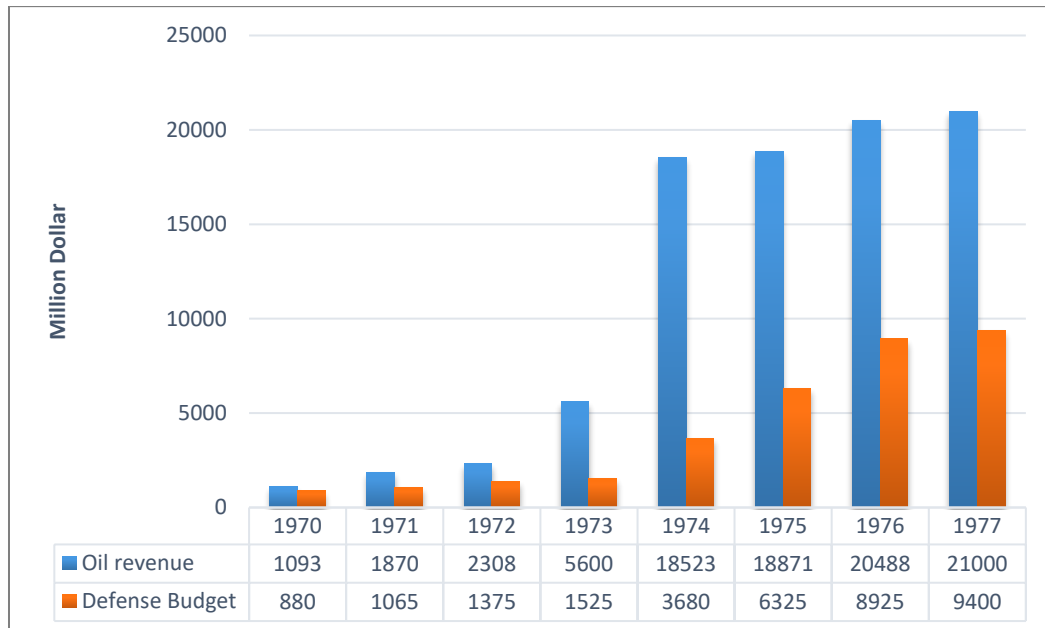
	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Oil revenue	1093	1870	2308	5600	18523	18871	20488	21000
Defense Budget	880	1065	1375	1525	3680	6325	8925	9400

Table 5.4: The increase in the defence budget (1970-1977).
Source of data: (Halliday, 1979a, p. 94 and 143).

Justice in the Fourth Development Plan was regarded as a technical issue that can be addressed just by taking some technocratic measures. Indeed, after continuing economic progress, the second general goal of the plan, to be achieved quasi-automatically through such progress, was a fairer distribution of income. This was to be achieved by boosting job creation and generalising social and welfare services to the entire population (The Fourth Development Plan, 1968, p. 1). Apart from this bold aspiration, the plan had several related sections. For instance, regarding social welfare, the plan declared:

> The main objective of the social welfare programme is to gradually transform all the current limited charity activities from a short-term solution for social problems into an organised public service, under government supervision and based on scientific standards. Meanwhile, all those activities should be coordinated with the welfare services of all public and private organisations in order to make it possible for everyone to benefit from a minimum of welfare and social rights. Therefore social justice will be extended to all social strata and hidden potential of some groups will

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> be deployed for common good and national growth. (The Fourth Development Plan,
>
> 1968, p. 19) [my translation]

A sense of spatial justice can also be discerned in this plan in the sense that it addresses issues of uneven development in centre-periphery and regional terms as well as in relation to associated forms of social inequality. Considering the continuation of the White Revolution, the plan mentions several times that the marginalised and departed parts of the country as well as peasants in general should receive particular attention. Overall, then, it seems that welfare should be expanded from the cities to the countryside, enhancing justice by extending the so-called benefits of urban living to the villages. For example, on the renovation of rural areas:

> The main objective of this plan is to extend social justice and distribute benefits of
>
> growth and economic development among rural people, through promoting prosperity
>
> in the villages, constructing public facilities, facilitating means of welfare for rural
>
> people, and [also] preparing villages to catch up with fast economic developments.
>
> (The Fourth Development Plan, 1968, p. 12) [my translation]

5.4.3 The fifth development Plan (1973-1978)

The original plan was developed by the same team that prepared the third plan. However, in contrast to the third plan and like the fourth Plan, there was no input from foreign advisors. Farmanfarmaian explained that, as part of their job in the Plan Organization, they analysed the Shah's speeches to discover his preferences. That was a significant change from the 1950s when Ebtehaj headed the Plan Organisation, and his charisma enabled him to impose his opinion against the will of the prime minister and sometimes even the Shah. Growing more self-confident regarding oil prices, against the advice and ideas of the Plan Organization, His Majesty started dreaming about several projects. Two of several examples were to build a tank factory and establish nuclear power plants. These grandiose ambitions reflected a mechanical

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approach to progress that focused on physical plant to the neglect of infrastructure and human resources (Abadian, 1985). In this context, the original draft of the fifth plan was far away from his majestic dreams.

> For example, in the case of the Fifth Plan, we felt that the country was slowly, slowly beginning to develop endogenous inflationary tendencies. Our estimate of inflation during the Fifth Plan, if we were to carry it out, was about eight percent. That's before, of course, the oil price was increased. So we presented as an argument that we should perhaps spend less, we should control certain types of expenditures and shift from, let's say, long-term investment to the type of projects that would have short-term fruition or short-term gestation period, so that we would increase the flow of goods and services faster than other alternatives would have allowed, and thus decrease the pressure of inflation within the system. (Farmanfarmaian, 1983, pt. Seq 15r)

In contrast to the Plan Organization, the government wanted to spend more and they were unhappy about this proposal for limiting spending. In a meeting for the official presentation of this draft, there was a fight between the government and the Plan Organisation (Alam, 1992b, pp. 374–375). The Shah left the room in an angry mood. He later dismissed Farmanfarmaian and ordered a series of revisions. As the fifth development plan was approved, there was a massive increase in external revenues and investment into the Iranian economy. For instance, compared with the previous year, government expenditure tripled. From this increase 'only 28% went to the fixed capital formation whereas 58% was spent on the current expenditure' (Looney, 1982). This strategy pushed prices into double-digits in 1974 (Amuzegar, 1992).

The fifth plan differed from previous plans because it took the extra-economic aspects of developments seriously. Emphasising the constant economic growth in the last ten years, the very first paragraph of the plan began with an announcement: Iran has entered a new era. Accordingly, in terms of priorities, the planners mentioned culture

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and equal distribution of income and justice even before the economic growth as their main goals:

1. Improving the level of knowledge, culture, health and welfare of the society.

2. A more just distribution of the national income and a fast increase in the living and welfare standards of low-income people. (The Fifth Development Plan, 1973, sec. Introduction)

After the revision, the first goal of the plan remained improving the quality of life for all people in Iran. Thus, there was a shift from targeting specific and limited groups for justice and development towards promoting universal equality. The plan thereby proposed direct interventions on welfare issues and poverty. Several sections in the fifth plan mention justice or a sense of universal justice. For example, in the general economic and social policies, unemployment benefits (chapter 3, sec. 7-2), wage policies (chapter 3, sec. 8), spatial justice in regional main policies (chapter 4), helping talented less privileged children with public boarding schools (chapter 20, sec 3-4) (The Fifth Development Plan, 1973). Even chapter five in the plan, on the natural environment, stressed the need to provide equal opportunities for all people to enjoy nature.
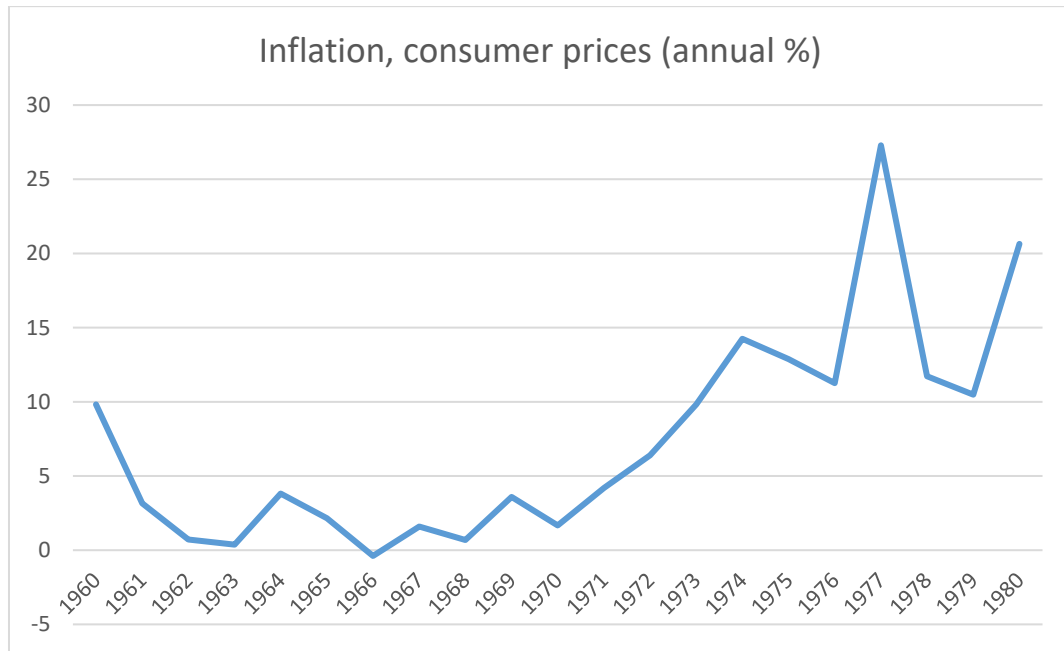
Figure 5.5: Iran's inflation rate based on consumer prices (1960-1980).
Source of data: World Development Indicators, World Bank.

The actual results of the fifth plan were disastrous – something evident in less than two years after the boom in 1974. In addition to falling oil revenues in the second half of the fifth plan and its corresponding crises, the infrastructure and bureaucracy of Iran could not cope with this amount of expenditure. As Abadian, deputy director of the Plan Organization, pictured it: the economy was moving irreversibly fast, and there was no brake or steering wheel (Abadian, 1985, p. 13).

> The implementation of the revised Plan, as was expected, produced the worst that the planners had feared. The bottlenecks created in the ports and the transportation networks meant that up to 200 ships had to queue at a time to unload their cargoes with an average waiting time of 160 days. The shortages of electricity meant frequent blackouts in urban areas and costly disruption of industrial production. The manpower shortages resulted in considerable wage increases in almost all sectors, and in a considerable inflow of foreign workers both from the industrialised and the developing countries. The lack of preparation of the government's bureaucratic machinery to handle such a large expenditure invariably resulted in wastage and amplified the

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inherent weaknesses of Iranian public administration. Corruption took new dimensions and the public's discontent with government officials reached new heights. (Walton, 1980)

The image of a constant development that was celebrated in the heavy triumphalist propaganda promoted by the ideological state apparatuses such as media and Rastakhiz Party, the only legal party of Iran on that time, created an illusion –both among elites and among the people– that it was possible to speed up the unilinear process of catching up with advanced economies by shortening each step in the path of development. The economic imaginary was optimistic and envisaged that, within two decades, Iran would catch up with the advanced capitalist countries and become a major industrialised power (cf. Halliday, 1979a, p. 168). This period (1963-77) is still perceived today in the common sense as the era of stabilisation when prices were fixed. Faced with the first sign of the economic crises in 1977, i.e. a record high inflation (see figure 5.5), the Shah blamed everything except the plans for the situation – notably conspiracies against him. Conversely, in line with their counter-hegemonic projects, the oppositions blamed the Shah for everything.

> Muhammad Reza made loud claims about having 'A Mission to Serve the Country',
> even writing a book with that title, and conducted a propaganda campaign about the
> alleged progress the nation had made. Everyone knew those were lies. Everywhere
> in Iran there is still poverty and wretchedness; conditions for the common people are
> so miserable that they do not even have homes. The people that live right on top of
> our oil deposits are suffering from hunger and thirst, and cannot even clothe
> themselves adequately. (Khomeini, 1981, p. 337)

As my discussion of the successive development plans elaborated, oil revenue was economically crucial in the Shah's claims for progress. However, the history of oil in Iran also carries an extra-economic importance. The next section draws on oil in Iran and explain its implications for the holy triad of the Iranian national state.

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5.5   Oil as the heart of the holy triad

This section argues that, although justice is the dominant pillar of the holy triad, the crucial precondition for realising all three objectives is the successful exploitation of oil resources and the application of the resulting revenues to pursuit of all three pillars. This was crucial for the hegemonic struggle on the eve of the 1979 Revolution. We have seen how this played out in different plans with different weights attributed to each pillar as well as in earlier periods. Here I develop the argument that the political economy of oil is at the heart of the holy triad as it has been articulated over time in the Iranian national state. Accordingly, I first briefly discuss the history of oil exports to provide the crucial framework for my account of the political economy of state transformation during the 1970s. This explains why the reaction to an oil-related crisis was different from that to any other crisis. For oil was a deeply ambivalent symbol in economic and political imaginaries. On the one hand, it was the symbol of imperialist exploitation; on the other hand, it signified the last chance to catch up with the west, realise the dream of progress, and, provided oil revenues were distributed equally, to empower all Iranians through this God-given wealth.

Bina (2006) suggests that the Middle Eastern oil economy developed in three stages: '(a) the era of colonial oil concessions, 1901–50; (b) the era of transition and transformation, 1950–72; and (c) the era of post-cartelization and globalization, since 1974'. Key players in stage two were the 'Seven Sisters[6]' cartel, which held the main

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[6] Anglo-Persian Oil Company (now BP), Gulf Oil (later part of Chevron), Standard Oil of California (SoCal, now Chevron), Texaco (later merged into Chevron), Royal Dutch Shell, Standard Oil of New Jersey (Esso, later Exxon), and Standard Oil Company of New York (Socony, later Mobil, now part of ExxonMobil).

oil concessions in the Middle East. Oil concessions[7] matter because, in contrast to the USA, private ownership of land in the Middle East does not include the subsoil (Bina, 2006).

The transition to stage two occurred thanks to anti-colonial ideological currents and political movements and, particularly, to the successful nationalisation movement in Iran 1951-3. This stage 'saw the uneasy coexistence of the declining cartelized mechanisms and practices, and the rising proliferation of market forces that carried and conveyed the spread of competition against the prearranged production, captive oil concessions, "gentleman's agreements", and arbitrary accounting of oil royalties (and rents) according to fictitious "posted" pricing' (Bina, 2006). Tied to the post-war Fordist boom, the global consumption of oil rose drastically, and it became a vital strategic resource (Hanieh, 2011, p. 35). This led to strong international action (led by the USA) to keep oil flowing abundantly and at falling real prices to keep the North Atlantic Fordist boom running. The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was formed in 1960 in response to the decrease in posted prices and political

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[7] As Bina (2006) suggests, 'the term concession, rather than lease, refers to a contract between a private entity (i.e., a company) and a government (i.e., a would-be sovereign entity)'. According to him, the oil concessions in stage one (1901–50) broadly shared the following commonalities:

    1. They nearly covered the entire subsurface of the land in a country or territory.

    2. They had a long duration that normally extended beyond fifty or sixty years.

    3. They were only a handful of cartelized concessionaires worldwide.

    4. The terms of the concessions were uniform.

    5. The principal financial obligation was the uniform payment of royalty.

    6. The financial terms were extremely moderate.

    7. There was little change in the terms and conditions of these concessions.

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pressures for nationalisation. Nonetheless, it took a decade for member states to gain the confidence to challenge the pricing system (Fattouh, 2007). By the 1970s, 'the Middle East had surpassed North America and Europe as the world's major oil provider' and, by the mid-1970s, its oil production was 'equivalent to the combined totals of Europe and North America' (Hanieh, 2011, p. 36). Iran's oil income became 'more than quadrupled and contributed 84 per cent of the total budget in the 1974-75 fiscal year' (Shambayati, 1994).
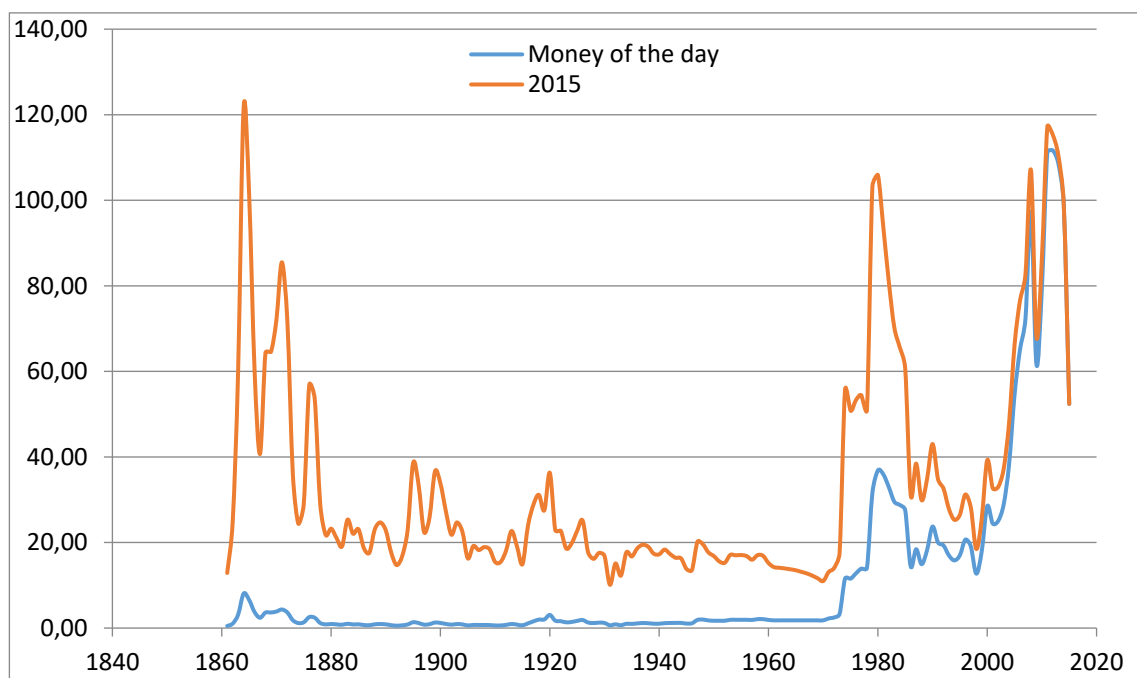
Figure 5.6: Oil prices (1860-2015).
Source of data: The BP Statistical Review of World Energy (2016)

The 1973 Arab oil embargo, which was a reaction to United States' support for Israel during the Yom Kippur War[8], marked the beginning of the end for stage two (see section

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[8] The 1973 Arab–Israeli War that fought by a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria against Israel from October 6 to 25, 1973. The Surprise attack of Arab countries aimed to retake what Israel occupied in the Sinai and the Golan Heights since the Six-Day War of 1967.

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4.2 in chapter six). However, the decrease in the oil price after the end of the 1973 boom undermined optimism for the future in oil exporting countries. It was now evident that this gift of nature was no guarantee of permanent prosperity. People realised that the horizon for action was short: now or never. Khomeini himself used this in his famous speech after he returned to the country from exile, ten days before the revolution:

> If the Shah's rule had (God forbid) lasted a few years longer, he would have exhausted our oil reserves in just the same way that he destroyed our agriculture. Then our people would have been reduced to total penury and would have been obliged to work for foreigners. It is on account of all these various forms of destruction and plunder that we have been crying out in protest against this man, and partly on account of them, too, that our young people have shed their blood. (February 2, 1979) (Khomeini, 1981, p. 260)

Regarding independence, oil reserves, particularly after the 1953 coup, symbolised the imperialist exploitation of the national wealth and provided an important political and economic imaginary that was later used by the Islamists to mobilise the masses in the main cities. The increasing price of oil in the 1970s was also effective in reinforcing these impressions. The extraction of black gold from the oil fields and association pipelines facilitate a simplistic picture of colonisation in that parasitic 'oil-hungry foreigners' suck the blood of the wounded motherland.

> They take advantage of this country like this. Its gas is stolen by the Soviets. Its oil is stolen by the USA. When we say that we want an Islamic government, we want to stop these corrupts. We don't want to go back 14 centuries, as the Shah accused us for. We want to go back to the kind of justice that we had back then. We have open arms for all achievements of civilisation. However, what they [the regime] have done are not the achievements. Does civilisation mean killing people? Or martial law imposed on the people? Giving our oil to others in exchange for weapons that we

cannot use? We don't have expertise in these weapons and we need their advisors

for using them' October 11, 1978. My translation from (Khomeini, n.d.-a)

However, even before the 1970s, oil was an important factor in how the Iranian people imagined independence. In 1901, Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar that reigned Iran from 1896 to 1907, granted a concession to William Knox D'Arcy (1849–1917) for an 'exclusive right to the exploration, production and refining of petroleum for sixty years, as well as exclusive rights to lay pipelines within the area of the concession' (World Bank, 1952, p. 2). In return, the operating companies of the concession gave the Shah £20,000 in cash, another 10% of 'the first exploitation company', and 16 per cent of annual net profits. Likewise, in 1961 (60 years after the start of the concession), Iran supposed to gain ownership of all that company's assets and properties in and outside of Iran. This first concession gave birth to Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC), but in 1913 the British government became its major shareholder to secure its naval needs that recently changed from coal to petroleum. As a result, the British Naval forces received discounted prices that reduced the APOC's profit. Iran could not oppose the wishes of the company in any way. In 1933 Iran annulled the concession with two primary motivations. First, the percentage was improper and, second, it tied government revenues to world market conditions, especially during the Great Depression.

According to the already-mentioned confidential report of the World Bank (1952), the company was also interested in having a new contract to extend the duration (60 years in the first concession from that a half had passed then) and to 'eliminate the obligation of giving Iran access to its books and records and thus to insure the secrecy of its real profits'. The agreement reached in 1933 inaugurated the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). It was a major defeat for Reza Shah in his relation to foreign powers. While the Iranian negotiators refused to accept the proposed agreement by the company, they were forced to sign a new contract under the shadow of military presence of the British Army in the region:

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> After the negotiations broke down the political and military facilities of the British Government were marshalled to break the commercial stalemate and force Iran to accept the Company's terms. The powerful force of the British Royal Navy already in the Persian Gulf began to show signs of preparing for the occupation Southern Iran. In addition, the British threatened to set up a puppet sheikhdom over the oil-bearing area. This had a terrorizing effect on the Iranian people. The dangers to Iran's political security were so imminent that the Shah intervened and ordered the negotiators to accept the Company's terms. An agreement was signed and promptly ratified by the Majles [Iranian parliament] without discussion. (World Bank, 1952)

The new agreement put some limits on the territorial scope of the concession and guaranteed a minimum payment of £750,000 to the government. However, the company did not even bother to stick to these terms for it was not just a commercial entity but the political and military arm of the British government. The movement for nationalisation of oil in 1951 appealed to Iranian for this public anger with the colonial role of AIOC.

Although the idea of the nationalisation of oil was presented for the first time by a Tudeh party member in 1949 May Day demonstration (Abrahamian, 2008, p. 113), the special relation between the party and the Soviet government undermined their legitimacy during the nationalisation of oil and even the 1979 revolution (Dabashi, 1993, pp. 48–49). As with their antagonistic tactics and strategies in Iran during WW2, they lost their privilege of active interference because of their lack of independence and continuous hesitation. This was reinforced after the Soviets demanded an oil concession in the north of Iran and the Tudeh party supported this claim. For contrasted directly with the party's former policy of agitating massively about the urgency of oil nationalisation against Great Britain (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 210). This U-turn was a complete surprise to Tudeh supporters and can only be explained by their obedient relation with their northern mother party. This is reminiscent of the ambivalent situation of pro-Soviet

parties before and during WW2 and their opinion about social democrats, fascism and imperialist states. This imperialist-related issues of oil and the 1953 coup against the nationalisation of oil in Iran had long-lasting effects which can be traced until now.

> The US organised and executed coup in 1953 against Mossadegh had three consequences. Firstly, the image of the US and the Shah was badly tarnished. Secondly, US-Iranian relations came to play a very important role in domestic politics. Many in Iran came to believe that Mohammad Reza Shah ruled the country only because of, and with US support. The Pahlavi government's decision in 1963 to grant extraterritoriality to US military advisors and their dependants in exchange for a US loan strengthened this impression. Thirdly, despite his talk of independence in the back of his mind Mohammad Reza Shah believed that in the end the US could, if it so desired, dislodge his regime. (Shakibi, 2007, p. 183)

The importance of oil for understanding dependency in the 70s is evident in Khomeini's speeches, which gave a religious twist to anti-colonial discourse. In this context, oil is the hidden wealth that Allah gives Muslims (as a sign of his favour to them); however, infidels are deceiving Muslims by using their agents (the Shah regime) to prevent them from using the oil for developing Iran.[9]

> And he [the Shah] stated, among other things, that in a few years Iran's population will be 65 million and there will be no oil. Who is ruining the oil? He always says that there is no oil; there is oil if you stop feeding USA and others. We have vast reserves. You are losing them and in a few years oil will be exhausted, and people would live in misery. Then his Majesty [in a sarcastic way] wants to use solar energy. Stop this nonsense. (May 31, 1978), my translation from (Khomeini, n.d.-a).

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[9] See speeches and interviews in (Khomeini, n.d.-a), (03, 12, 1974), (09, 10,1976), (07, 24, 1977), (02, 27, 1978).

Oil is directly related to development and progress not only regarding its potential financing of development plans but also because it appeared as a second chance to a 'backward' country. This opportunity should be taken while it lasts to bypass the linear path of 'modernisation'. In this context oil boom in 1970s appeared as a momentum.

> What happens to all that money? Is our country poor? Our country has an ocean of oil. It has iron; it has precious metals. Iran is a rich country. But those so-called friends of humanity have appointed their agent to rule this country to prevent the poor from benefiting from its riches. Everything must go into his masters' pockets and be spent on their enjoyment. If some small bit of the country's resources is left, the Shah and his gang grab it; there is enough left for them to have a villa, a palace, an estate awaiting them wherever they travel, in addition to all their money in the bank. February 19, 1978. (Khomeini, 1981, pp. 224–225)
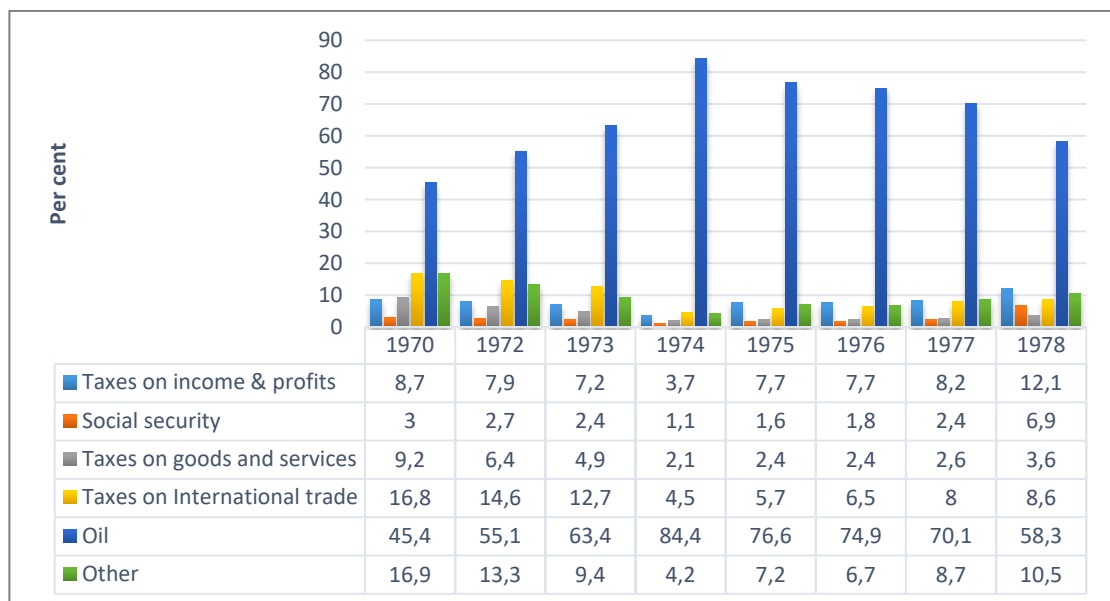

	1970	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Taxes on income & profits	8,7	7,9	7,2	3,7	7,7	7,7	8,2	12,1
Social security	3	2,7	2,4	1,1	1,6	1,8	2,4	6,9
Taxes on goods and services	9,2	6,4	4,9	2,1	2,4	2,4	2,6	3,6
Taxes on International trade	16,8	14,6	12,7	4,5	5,7	6,5	8	8,6
Oil	45,4	55,1	63,4	84,4	76,6	74,9	70,1	58,3
Other	16,9	13,3	9,4	4,2	7,2	6,7	8,7	10,5

Table 5.5: Sources of government revenue, Iran (as percent of total revenue) (1970-1978). Source of data: (Shambayati, 1994).

Oil revenues and how they are spent also affect how people understand justice. For, '[f]rom the perspective of citizens, oil revenues do not result from government policies; rather, oil rents are a 'gift from God' that should be divided equally among all citizens'

(Shambayati, 1994). Hence, in the light of the epochal oil boom, the inequalities were also understood differently. Wealth meant for the Iranian people to enjoy is diverted to the pockets of a few. Even Ahmadi-Nejad, the former president of Iran (2005-2013), promoted this understanding of oil. Witness his slogan: 'put the petroleum income on people's tables' meaning the oil profits will be distributed among the poor. The last aspect of oil is its extra-territorial effects. Considering the Middle East and its growing importance in world oil markets since the 1970s, it enabled the Islamists to argue that Allah favoured Muslims. This (extra-)economic, divine factor unites the former territories of the Persian Empire and opens a 'bright future' for them based on mutual interest and ties. Thus oil not only represented the holy triad of the national state in Iran, but it also proposed an extra-territorial 'we' considering colonialism that is represented clearly in the exploitation oil: united in being exploited (see section 6.5.2 on the spaces of oil).

5.6   The 1979 Revolution

In the light of the preceding remarks, I now explore two main issues regarding the 1979 revolution. One concerns the economic imaginary that accompanied the transformation era: specifically, a shift from *development* toward *prosperity* (the 1970s). In contrast to this issue of political economy, the other issue concerns the concept of justice. How did the Shah lose the image of a just ruler and how did Khomeini offer an alternative appeal to people? I begin with the economic imaginary.

5.6.1   The shift in economic imaginary

One can trace this shift in the development plans and the Shah's speeches. In the plans, whereas the development imaginary figures in the third and fourth development plans (1963-1973), the fifth plan shifts to the prosperity imaginary. Following the crisis triggered by the collapse of the oil boom, the regime tried to promote a return from the

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prosperity imaginary to development. This was a real problem because falling oil revenues affected the Shah's claims to legitimacy based on the ability of his government to provide prosperity.

The economic imaginary of development (1963-1973) rested on a linear historical narrative that regarded progress as forward movement on the road to modernity. In agential terms, this imaginary can be traced back to the old bureaucrats of the north and west axis who contributed to the constitutional revolution and later found their iron fist in Reza Shah (Towfigh, 2006). The accumulation strategy corresponding to this imaginary was state-planned industrialization. In this sense, in Gramscian terminology, the historical bloc of this era, that is as (Jessop, 1997) defines it, 'an historically constituted and socially reproduced correspondence between the economic base and the politico-ideological superstructures of a social formation', reached its apogee in the combination of the White Revolution and the development plans.

> According to the CIA, the Shah had a concept of 'himself as a leader with a divinely blessed mission to lead his country from years of stagnation . . . [into] a major power, supported by a large military establishment. (Milani, 2011, p. 272)

In contrast, the decisive element in the imaginary of the transformation era (the 1970s) was the goal of prosperity. This was probably linked to the contemporaneous oil boom which seemed somehow to guarantee further progress on the road to development and justified the hope in an inevitable brighter future. In this sense, while *development* will be achieved 'tomorrow' *prosperity* already exists 'today'. Also worth stressing are extra-economic factors like the military vacuum in the Middle East and the Nixon doctrine that supported U.S. allies in the region; in this case Iran as the gendarme of the Persian Gulf (Alam, 1992a, p. 200). In this context, 'the doubling of government expenditure in a period of less than a year and the unprecedented expansion of private sector activity heightened the expectations and aspirations of people who were led by

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the regime to believe that "money" was the answer to all of Iran's socioeconomic ills' (Pesaran, 1982). The Shah himself clearly proclaimed the age of prosperity in an interview in 1974:

> We do not expect Iranians to tighten their belts, eat less and labour away for the promised heaven which is put off by a year every day. We try to offer the nation the welfare and care we have promised-today. (cited in Graham, 1978, p. 102)

Self-evidently, after promoting a shift in the economic imaginary for many years, it would be hard to reverse course once signs emerged of the post-boom crises. While the Shah ordered the industrialised world in a 1974 press conference to 'tighten its belt' and 'work harder' to cope with the increasing oil price, in 1976 he told Iranian people that 'things will now change'; 'everyone should work harder and be prepared for sacrifices in the services of nation's progress' (Graham, 1978, p. 15 and 103). Almost nobody bought this. For, the public was 'constantly reminded of the gross inequalities by the rich who flaunted their wealth through conspicuous consumption and by the financial scandals which periodically shook the establishment' (Abrahamian, 1980).

> If it were not for these profligate royal ceremonies, this reckless spending, this constant embezzlement, there would never be any deficit in the national budget forcing us to bow in submission before America and Britain and request aid or a loan from them. Our country has become needy on account of this reckless spending, this endless embezzlement, for are we lacking in oil? Do we have no minerals, no natural resources? We have everything, but this parasitism, this embezzlement, this profligacy—all at the expense of the people and the public treasury—have reduced us to a wretched state. (Khomeini, 1981, p. 58)

In this conjuncture, oil could be represented as Allah's gift to the oppressed (Muslims in general and Iranians in particular) and, in the new economic imaginary, prosperity signified the fulfilment of God's promise. This meme was intensified during the 1973 Arab–Israeli War, which triggered the oil boom (see section 4.1 in the next chapter).

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In sum, this shift revealed the limits to the economic imaginary of prosperity in providing simple answers to complex problems. As Mahdavy put it, 'the prosperity may lull many people into believing that the problems of economic growth are much simpler than they really are' (Mahdavy, 1970, p. 435). This in turn has implications for feasible (counter-)hegemonic projects. Above all, it reduced the problem to one of how to interpret and deliver a just distribution of the new-found wealth.

> There may be different norms regarding how much inequality should be tolerated, who one should and should not do business with, what should not be commodified, who should work, who is entitled to be supported by others, what peoples' obligations to future generations and to other species are, and so on. (Sayer, 2000)

I now illustrate this point for the 1979 revolution.

5.6.2 Tyranny and resentment

The Shah's conception of justice was formed under pressure from the left, it corresponded to formal equality and universal welfare for all citizens. However, following the oil crisis, the modernisation project failed to deliver the promised benefits to all and the universal conception of equality, as presented by the Shah, was belied by intensified uneven development. Khomeini's response to this hegemonic crisis was to present underdevelopment and inequality as the same problem. He interpreted underdevelopment as a sign of corruption of government and dependency on the west. The Shah's great civilisation inflated expectations and, when these were disappointed, he appeared as a tyrant and thereby prepared the ground for Khomeini to offer a counter-hegemonic vision.

Under the last three development plans, 'the working class grew nearly fivefold' (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 234). But despite this rapid expansion in industry and the size of the working class, class inequality rose drastically during this era.

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> Income distribution in both urban and rural areas became increasingly more unequal over the whole of the post-1963 period. In an early study of this, the International Labour Office concluded that the Gini coefficient for Iran's income distribution in 1969/70 was 'higher than any country in East and Southeast Asia, considerably higher than in Western countries and probably as high or higher than in Latin American countries for which data are available'. (Walton, 1980)

These conditions provide the opposition with strong grounds to criticise the late Pahlavi state project. Even Islamists tried to integrate the economy into their social imaginary:

> If you pay no attention to the policies of the imperialists, and consider Islam to be simply the few topics you are always studying and never go beyond them, then the imperialists will leave you alone. Pray as much as you like; it is your oil they are after—why should they worry about your prayers? They are after our minerals, and want to turn our country into a market for their goods. That is the reason the puppet governments they have installed prevent us from industrializing, and instead, establish only assembly plants and industry that is dependent on the outside world. (Khomeini, 1981, p. 39)

As a result of uneven spatial development, within the usual urban-rural inequality, Tehran as the capital city in the 1970s was uniquely marked by its massive wealth and modern cityscape symbolised by skyscrapers with helicopter pads, when the rural population struggled to find potable water and take a bath. Even inside Tehran, whereas the Alborz Mountains in the north were home to the Shah's palaces and rich neighbourhoods occupied by people close to the government, the centre of the older city and the home of the Bazaar lay to the south. Moreover, in the peak of the oil boom, although most central governmental buildings were still in Tehran's southern region, the Shah announced a vast urban project to develop a new commercial and administrative centre in the north, i.e. *Shahestan Pahlavi*. Estimating to take 15 years

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to complete, this new centre symbolised the break not only with Bazaar as the old hub of the country but with the era of modernisation (Graham, 1978, p. 26).

Corruption was another decisive indicator of the problem of distribution and justice in the 1970s. The oil boom triggered a series of large-scale corruptions by high-rank officials in the government.

> Enormous and unquantifiable corruption was also involved, evident in the luxurious 'Californian' lifestyle of the Iranian rich who lived in north Tehran and who purchased over 100,000 houses abroad by early 1977. Until late 1978 no serious exchange controls were imposed on private individuals taking money abroad, so that enormous capital flight occurred whenever political conditions were unfavourable. (Halliday, 1979b)

Apart from corruption, two other issues justified the charge of unjust governance presided over by the Shah in the eyes of the public. The first was the economic crisis and ensuing stagnation that forced the state to play down the imaginary of prosperity. Critics suggested that it signified bad governance because of wasteful expenditure of national wealth or a lost opportunity for development. The second issue was how the government dealt with inflation when the boom ended: that is, through an anti-profiteering campaign. Although the campaign began with a few wealthy businessmen, it soon targeted shopkeepers and bazaar to the extent that 'by early 1976, every bazaar family had at least one member who had directly suffered from the anti-profiteering campaign' (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 498; cf. Skocpol, 1982). The Shah himself declared war against profiteers and 'the so-called Guild Courts set up hastily by SAVAK[10] issued some 250,000 fines, banned 23,000 traders from their hometowns, handed out prison sentences, ranging from two months to three years, to some 8,000 shopkeepers, and

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[10] Organisation of Intelligence and National Security

brought charges against another 180,000 small businessmen' (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 498). Compared with the wealth and corruption of the royal dynasty and Pahlavi Foundation, which were totally neglected in the campaign, the public saw the Shah as an unjust tyrant. As the Shah ordered the arrest of more high ranking officials, e.g. Hovayda who had served as the prime minister for 13 years (1965 to 1977), it just gave the opposition more proofs to stress the corruption of the whole system.

Asadollah Alam (1919-1978), the former prime minister and minister of the royal court for ten years, wrote about the economic situation in his diaries on 23rd January 1976, almost three years before the revolution, and gave a clear picture of the conditions.

> I was riding alone for nearly two hours. Lost in deep and complicated thoughts; the one that mainly haunted me was last night's negotiations with Madjidi, the head of Plan Organisation on a few projects, which are the Shah's favourites. He [Madjidi] came to my house last night and provided a terrifying picture of the country affected by the financial shortage and the waste of money in the past, which made me very disturbed. The conjuncture is in such a state that will inevitably lead to a revolution. First, the budget deficit issued for this year is up to 250 billion Rials [3.5 billion dollars]. Second, they have wasted so much money in unfruitful projects and orders, e.g. buying 4000 lorries without having the proper roads or drivers for them, wheat and food products, sugar and so forth that indeed are jaw-dropping. But, most ridiculously, he told me that, as the head of Plan Organization, he was not aware of these costs before they were contracted. Debts to foreign states that cost nearly two billion dollars per se. (Alam, 1992d, p. 404) [My translation]

In this sense, the Islamic opposition with their well-articulated accounts of economic justice based on distribution had a kind of privilege against the Leftist opposition. Although both Islamist and Leftist stressed the role of imperialism, Leftists approached inequality in terms of exploitation in the production sphere while, for the public, the

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main source of national wealth was and remains oil revenues as the gift of nature or God.

> And we wanted to confer favour upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors. (Quran, 28:5)

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the holy triad of Iranian national state. Three crucial conclusions can be drawn. First, reviewing its three axes, I argue that Justice is the core of this trinity and provides the framework in which to consider development and independence. Thus, Dependency and 'Backwardness' in terms of modernisation are understood as an injustice. Exploring this triad enables us to explore how this triad opened space for the Shi'a clergy and Khomeini above all to promote their counter-hegemonic project. Second, reviewing the economic and extra-economic aspects of oil regarding the holy triad of the national state in Iran, I argue that it has played a unique historical role. Thus, this chapter explored the historical significance of this triad and how oil in Iran crystallises all three axes. I argued that oil appeared as if it is the last chance to catch up with the west; to become powerful and independent in terms of international economy; and to redistribute wealth to Iran's poor people. Moreover, oil, as chapter six shows, can provide a ground for an extra-territorial 'we', a new spatial imaginary that can connect peoples in the region and unite them against imperialist powers and their puppets.

Third, building on this account, I argue that the mid-1970s' crisis and the fall of the oil prices damaged the Pahlavi regime. While the oil boom underpinned an economic imaginary of prosperity that won significant popular support, the regime's failed attempt to revive the pre-boom development imaginary was exploited by Khomeini as a sign of bad governance. One result was a growing contradiction between the Shah's account of justice, which was developed in competition with leftist, and the real results of

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development plans. He found himself undermined by presenting himself as a champion of social and economic justice and overcoming uneven capitalist development yet depending on a corrupt and weak bureaucracy to deliver his promises. The resulting discontent opened space for Islamists to appropriate and reinterpret the economic imaginary of prosperity for their own hegemonic vision based on redistribution. Armed with a historically well-developed concept of justice, the Shi'a clergy pictured Khomeini as located in the heart of the holy triad of the Iranian national state.

The failure of the Left on the eve of revolution is noteworthy here. Given the general crisis of socialism in the late 1970s, leftists could not argue for a unique socialist way of development. They were also disarmed by the White Revolution and land reforms. Likewise, the Soviet presence in northern Iran and the former conflicts over Azerbaijan and Kurdistan made them vulnerable to the charge that socialism might mean a loss of independence. Moreover, in the late Pahlavi era, relations between Iran and the Soviet Union and China were developing drastically. These international relations affected the ability of Leftist groups to appeal to the people in Iran.

In this context, Khomeini[11] put forward a crystal globe[12] in that every part of the society saw its favourite image.[13] For he envisaged a 'balance that brings inherently

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[11] For a set of his comments on economy see (Khomeini, 1981, pp. 78, 89, 133, 158, 160, 171, 234, 295).

[12] 'The cup ('Ja'm') is:

> a mythological figure of Greater Iranian culture and tradition. It was said to be filled with an elixir of immortality and was used in scrying. As mentioned by Ali-Akbar Dehkhoda, it was believed that all seven heavens of the universe could be observed by looking into it. (Wikipedia)

[13] As Molavi (Rumi) the great poet wrote in his Persian poem 'The Song of the Reed':

contradictory elements into a harmonious whole' (Behdad, 1994). Hence, focusing on the International dimensions of capitalism and partly neglecting the domestic capitalism, a part of leftist groups envisaged a progressive petit-bourgeoisie that can unite the popular front against the imperialism and will disappear in the 'next steps of the revolution'. For social groups with more religious roots, Khomeini, like many other Islamists, conflated the economic consequences of capitalist development in a simple image that comprises infidels, Baha'is and Zionists. For the nationalist, it was the chance to cut the line of dependency and have the revenge for the 1953 coup: to bring the justice back to the scene and answer the question that was asked by Abbas Mirza more than 150 years before.

Their own thoughts were the thing they loved me for.

They would not seek the secret that I bore.

My secret was not separate from my cries

But was sequestered from mere ears and eyes

(Translated by A.Z. Foreman)

6. Spaces of the National State and 1979 Revolution in Iran

> **O Cyrus [Koroush], great King, King of Kings, Achaemenian1 King, King of the land of Iran. I, the Shahanshah of Iran, offer thee salutations from myself and from my nation. Rest in peace, for we are awake, and we will always stay awake.**
>
> **The Shah, the celebration for 2,500 years of monarchy in Iran, Persepolis 1971**

> **Our revolution is not limited to Iran. The revolution of Iranian people is the starting point for the great revolution in the Islamic world that will be led by Mahdi…**
>
> **Khomeini, 1988**

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the relation between space and history in the development of the national state in Iran. In addition to developing a periodisation that identifies the changing [objective] spatial coordinates of social relations as they evolve and get displaced or embedded in specific spatial configurations, and perhaps distinguishing different periods, stages, and phases in this regard, I will seek to subjectivise and historicize my spatial periodisation. Specifically, I argue that spatiality is not reducible

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[1] The Achaemenid Empire is the first Persian Empire founded in the 6th century BC by Cyrus the Great.

to objective coordinates but involves their subjective significance for different social agents and forces too. This holds especially for the meaning of place (e.g., holy sites) and also affects other spatial moments. Relatedly, the objective identity of socio-spatial relations is not pre-given and transhistorical but subject to historical transformation as new measures and, indeed, forms of measurement develop, means of transportation and communication change, new forms of governing space are established, and new spatial imaginaries develop. This in turn affects how participants and observers approach spatial relations. For space is not just an object of analysis 'but part of the conceptual armoury we have for analysis itself' (Elden, 2001, p. 151)[2]. This requires a strategic-relational analysis of the changing articulation between 'objective' socio-spatial relations and their 'subjective' significance and, in this context, of how and why concepts of spatiality have changed. In addition, since spatiality and temporality are closely related substantively, even if it sometimes makes sense to separate them analytically, a subjectivised and historicized periodisation of sociospatiality also has implications for sociotemporality. For, states, apart from their sociospatial aspects, involve 'specific temporal metrics and intertemporal linkages and have their own discursive, strategic, and material temporalities, their own temporal horizons of action, and their logistical implications' (Jessop, 2016, p. 135). Accordingly, this chapter will explore the spaces of the 1979 revolution to provide a better analysis of its subsequent

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[2] This does not mean that spatialization always leads to a successful periodisation. Thus Elden writes:

> A classic instance is Althusser, who uses such terms as field, terrain, space, site, situation, position, but … seems to rely on language alone. This charge could be levelled at many of the Structuralists, whose language was often overtly spatialized. Lefebvre calls this a fetishism of space, in part because of the neglect of questions of historicity. Questions of space must not be separated apart from questions of time. (Elden, 2004, p. 186)

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development and its relation to changing expectations about moments of ruptural change.

In writing the 'spaces' of the 1979 Revolution, we must pay special attention to how political forces employ spatial imaginaries to incorporate spatiality in their (counter-)hegemonic visions. For instance, it is common in Iran to rename streets following any major political change. Gramsci (2000, p. 381) stresses the importance of naming as an instance of the materialisation of ideology to influence public opinion (Jessop, 2005). Unsurprisingly, then, the important streets in Iran have seen several name changes. First, in the era of Reza Shah, they were named after or changed to old Persian names. Then, after the 1953 coup, there was a trend to use western names. Conversely, after 1979, they were renamed to promote the Islamic reputation of the new government. Apart from this general observation, one can also trace several fascinating patterns in this process that might shed light on the political imaginary that is presented via space. For example, there was a pattern after 1979 of renaming places that referred to the 'Shah' to 'Imam' or 'Khomeini'; and the longest street in Tehran was renamed from 'Pahlavi' (the name of the royal dynasty)' to 'The Lord of time or Hidden Imam (*Vali'asr*)'. This last renaming rests on a narrative according to which the Islamic Republic in Iran is (or would become) the precursor to the re-appearance of the Hidden Imam to fill the world with justice. This practice reflects and reproduces a spatial as well as temporal imaginary of the Islamic world and provided the Iranian people with a context for their revolt that went beyond the confines of national territory. Indeed, it had significance for the entire Islamic world and its past, present, and future development. These spatio-temporal aspects were reinforced by other events in the 1970s with broader, if not global, significance, especially the Arab-Israel war and the oil embargo.
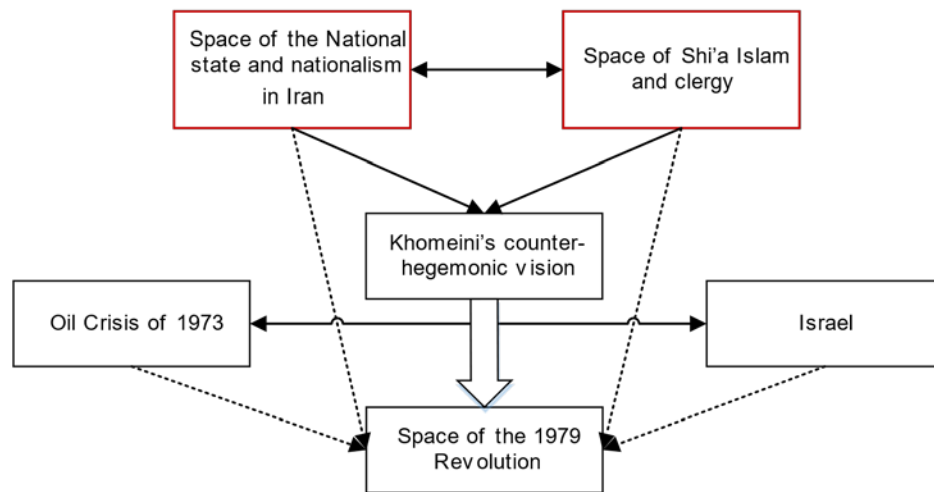
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Figure 6.1: Mapping chapter six.

6.2 Spaces of nationalism and national state in Iran

As Brubaker (1996, pp. 14–15) suggests, the very question of 'what is a nation?', is not theoretically innocent because it presupposes the existence of nation as a real entity and runs the risk of 'adopting categories of practice as categories of analysis'. However, this question is the main concern of the majority of theories of nationalism and resulted in a classic duality in the historiography of nations. The first side of this duality is called by Anthony Smith 'perennialism' on the grounds that it considers all or parts of existing nations as primordial and premodern and also understands the phenomenon of nationhood as 'universal and, as a form of association and collective identity, disembedded' (A. D. Smith, 2000, pp. 66–67) (e.g., Armstrong, 1982; Hastings, 1997). For example, Hastings (1997, p. 6) emphasises that 'the nation-state does not inherently belong to modernity' and that the base of the nation is ethnicity. The perennialist approach to the history of nations can lead to a fixed spatial understanding of national territory. In contrast to perennialist approaches, Smith identifies a modernist approach to the historiography of nations that emphasises that nationalism and nations are both 'recent and novel' (A. D. Smith, 2000, p. 57). This

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approach, in its extreme, is vulnerable to an *ex nihilo* account of nations with a focus on discontinuities in contrast to continuities but in general, there is an emphasis on modernisation. Gellner (1983, p. 6) stresses that nations are 'a contingency, and not a universal necessity'. Thus nations can be understood as 'communities of people that have come into being as a result of various processes that happened in the modern period' (Jones, Jones, & Woods, 2004, p. 85). For Gellner (1964, p. 168), nations are not just there waiting for nationalism to awake them, rather, nationalism using some 'pre-existing differentiating marks', can 'invents nations where they do not exist. Hobsbawm (1992, p. 54), suggests that 'the modern nation, either as a state or as a body of people aspiring to form such a state, differs in size, scale and nature from the actual communities with which human beings have identified over most of history, and makes quite different demands on them'. Smith himself attempted to stand somewhere in between perennialist and modernists approaches by identifying pre-modern features of a nation by defining it as 'a named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members', but stressing that nationalism is a modern phenomenon (A. D. Smith, 1991, p. 14). But assuming the common features of nations as something that is already there is problematic. Instead, it is more fruitful to as Brubaker (1996, p. 21) suggests, to focus on 'nation as a category of practice, nationhood as an institutionalized cultural and political form, and nationness as a contingent event or happening, and refrain from using the analytically dubious notion of "nations" as substantial, enduring collectivities'.

In doing so, perhaps Benedict Anderson's emphasis on the notion of 'imagination' instead of 'invention' can provide a better way of distinguishing communities from each other based on different ways and style that they have for their imagination instead of searching for true old nations and newly invented ones (Anderson, 2006, p. 6). He famously argues that nation is an 'imagined community': 'it is an imagined political

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community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (2006, p. 6). This new imagined community, he argues, formed thanks to the 'convergence of capitalism and print technology and the fatal diversity of human language' (Anderson, 2006, p. 46). Anderson (2006, p. 12) discusses the two main cultural systems in contrast with nation, namely the 'religious community' and the 'dynastic realm' for nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which – as well as against which – it came into being'. Anderson's notion of imagined community is a good starting point for my discussion of the spatiality of nationhood in Iran.

Any nation-building project rests on the purportedly shared attributes among a community. In other words, it emerges 'from the mutual recognition of large numbers of persons unknown to each other on the basis of supposedly shared attributes that qualify them for membership of the same nation and, it should be added, that distinguish them from other persons who are thereby excluded from such membership' (Jessop, 2002, p. 173). Considering different ways and sources of imagining a community, Jessop (2002, pp. 173–174) introduces his categorisation of nationhood based on allgemeine Staatstheorie. In the first type, ethnicity is the main source of nationhood (*Volksnation).* The second form of nationhood is a cultural nation (*Kulturnation*), that is based on a 'shared national culture that may well be defined and actively promoted by the state itself' (Jessop, 2002, pp. 173–174). Moreover, the third form is a civic nation (*Staatsnation*), that is based on 'patriotic commitment to the constitution and belief in the legitimacy of representative government' (Jessop, 2002, p. 174). Regarding the different forms of nationhood and the process of territorialization that is prior to nation-formation, Jessop suggests a typology of imagined political communities linked to nation-states:

Type of nation	Simple national community	Basis of community membership	Multiplex form of community	Form taken by nation when decomposed
Volksnation	Ethnos	Blood ties or Naturalization	Multiethnic	'Melting-pot society'
Kulturnation	Shared Culture	Assimilation, acculturation	Multicultural	Postmodern play of identities
Staatsnation	Constitutional patriotism	Test of political loyalty	Nested political loyalties to multi-tiered government	'Dual state' in given territory or transnational diasporas

Table 6.1: Typology of imagined political communities linked to nation-states. Source: (Jessop, 2002, p. 173).

Jessop emphasises that 'the three forms of nationhood can reinforce each other, be combined to produce relatively stable hybrid forms of national state or provoke conflicts over the proper basis of the nation-state' (Jessop, 2002, p. 174). However, it seems that the second and third forms of nationhood offer more possibility for 'others' to be integrated into the imagined nation. Said (2003, p. 54) argues that social space can provide a common horizon for identity by stressing a distinction:

> … this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is 'ours' and an unfamiliar space beyond 'ours' which is 'theirs' is a way of making geographical distinctions that can be entirely arbitrary. I use the word 'arbitrary' here because imaginative geography of the 'our land— barbarian land' variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for 'us' to set up these boundaries in our own minds; 'they' become 'they' accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from 'ours'. (Said, 2003, p. 54)

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Building on the preceding conceptual distinctions, I argue that any national imaginary has spatial features. This involves more than some kind of connection between a nation and its self-proclaimed 'historic territory'. The spaces of a nation, like nationhood more generally, can be contested by rival imagined nations and/or linked in particular ways to other kinds of imagined community (e.g., religious, political). These competing imagined nations and/or links to other kinds of community can be connected to hegemonic, sub-hegemonic, or counter-hegemonic visions. In other words, political forces may appeal to one or another imagination of nation and its associated spatiotemporalities in their political struggle and even change these appeals as conjunctures shift – including shifting to other kinds of community mobilisation[3]. In this context, these differential spatiotemporal imaginaries can be explored through the concept of spatial imaginaries (chapter 3). They are also linked to different spatial horizons of actions and strategies. Drawing on these considerations, this section now addresses Iranian nationalism, transformations of nationhood, and the national imaginary in Iran.

Vaziri (1993, p. 172) suggests that the modern Iranian identity formed with regard to 'secularism, the already unified territorial zone of Iran, the Farsi (Persian) language, and constitutional/ democratic movements'. This seems to combine elements of cultural and political nationhood. Vaziri regards secularism as a necessary path to nationhood, given the existence of multi-religious and multi-ethnic communities in Iran. Reflecting the general neglect of the importance of Babi messianic movement in the historiography of 19th century Iran (chapters two and four), Vaziri mentions Babism in

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[3] An example from Soviet history would be the shift from communist mobilisation to nationalism (Great Patriotic War) when Germany invaded.

passing and pays more attention to the importance of Iranian territory in the formation of Iranian identity. Thus he writes:

> the creation of a modern nation-state in Iran did not require territorial consolidation unlike in some European states (such as Italy and Germany); the land was there, and it was simply a matter of time and effort to convert this imaginary boundary into a common territorial Iranian identity for the masses. (Vaziri, 1993, p. 175)

This argument naturalises the territorial boundaries of Iran (despite its historical contingencies) and, in particular, ignores how semi-colonisation in the 19th century divided the country into two regions. Russia controlled the Qajar's court and influenced northern Iran while the British supported local powers in the South and opposed any powerful central government (Towfigh, 2000, 2006). Hence, Kashani Sabet (1999, p. 7) correctly argues that the cartographic idea of frontiers and land, as presented in geographical works and maps as well as in historical and political treatises, provided the primary impetus for Iranian nationalist discourse. This is why independence in its spatial sense and control over the territory have been related to (counter-)hegemonic visions in Iran. Thus, a 'rarified notion of territorial Iran vis- à- vis its neighbours and the world at large' was an important pillar in the emergence of Iranian nationhood (Abbas Amanat, 2012, p. 21). The third factor was the Farsi language. Although several communities inside and outside of the territory of the Empire used it, during the late 19th century, Farsi became synonymous with Iran thanks to efforts of Orientalists and Iranian nationalists (Vaziri, 1993, p. 177). The fourth factor was the democratic movement against the tyranny of Qajars that led to the constitutional revolution (1906-8) and identified the inhabitants of the Iranian territory as constitutionally Iranian (Vaziri, 1993, p. 178). The main line of exclusion in this context was, then, populist in character (cf. Laclau, 2005). For, rather than focusing on ethnic identity or a real or imagined difference between Iranians and inhabitants of neighbouring countries, the line of demarcation concerned the people versus those involved in the tyranny of the state.

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Thus, the nation was imagined as all those inhabitants of the former territory of Persian Empire who are the victims of state injustice as embodied in the king's absolute rule. Because of this the Shi'a clergy, based in the southern Iraq (then a part of the Ottoman Empire), could sway the movement and put pressure on the Qajar Shahs. It was also reflected in the more or less democratic and equal relations between the capital city and other parts of the country. The constitutional movement resulted in a sense of citizenship among the Iranian people.

> As Iranians began to see their country as a nation, they saw themselves no longer as subjects of the Shah but as citizens of a state. The Constitutional Revolution popularized the ideals of citizenship through participatory institutions and by championing rights such as education. History textbooks of this period inculcated the rights and obligations of citizens by rereading the past in light of contemporary events. Education became a core component of citizenship: students were expected to know their nation's history and its place within the world. (Vejdani, 2014, p. 171)

The formation of the USSR to the north changed Iran's geopolitical role in the region. In a political U-turn, Britain intervened in Iran to strengthen the central government at the expense of local powers. This created the international conditions for the rise of Pahlavis from 1926 onwards. Whereas, under the Qajars, being Iranian signified being resident in the territory considered Iranian, during Reza Shah's reign, it increasingly came to mean being 'Persian' (Kashani Sabet, 1999, p. 217). The push to promote a Persian narrative of the newly born Iran was anchored in the past by recalling the pre-Islamic Persian Empires. This politics of memory had contrasting aspects. On the one hand, Persianisation aimed to interpellate and hegemonise the inhabitants of Iranian territory as members of a Persian ethnic community, which belongs to the wider Aryan race and is therefore supposedly superior to the neighbouring Turks and Arabs (Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016). On the other hand, by invoking the previous empire, this discourse provided the basis for extra-territorial claims on the part of the Iranian state and people.

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This became clear in the 1970s. For, according to this narrative, because Iranian means being of Persian descent and because the old Persian Empires controlled vast areas beyond the current borders of the national state of Iran, this justifies irredentist attempts to reclaim lost territories. In this sense, *mellat* in Farsi became the literal translation of Nation in contrast to *ummat* that is the commonwealth of Muslims.

Shi'ism in this regard was closely tied to the Iranian identity. Thus, as Vejdani argues, the 'Iranian historians under-scored the unique contribution of ethnic Iranians to Islamic civilisation, created a genealogy for Iranian mysticism, and distinguished Shi'ism as a particularly well-suited form of Islam for Iranians' (Vejdani, 2014, p. 173). This is clearly reflected in the change in the official calendar from Lunar Hijri (the Islamic calendar) to Solar Hijri, implying that Iran is Islamic but separate from other Muslim nations. For, whereas *hijra* (the migration of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina to form the first Islamic State) denotes the formation of the Islamic *ummah*, adopting the pre-Islamic solar Persian calendar distinguishes the Iranian nation from other Muslim communities that employ the lunar calendar. This separation was necessary because, as it represented in official historiography of the Pahlavi's nation-building, 'Iran's pre-Islamic past was celebrated as a glorious and industrious age, and its integration into the Arab–Islamic world was shunned as a cause of its "reverse progress"' (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, p. 96). Persianisation in the Pahlavi era comprised language cleansing, which was institutionalised in the Academy of Iran formed in 1935 under the order of Reza Shah; this process focused on suggesting Persian equivalents for Arabic and French loanwords. However, this was just one part of a greater modernisation project in the Reza Shah era that consolidated the national identity in Iran. In the same way as Massimo d'Azeglio famously observed 'Abbiamo fatto l'Italia. Ora si tratta di fare gli Italiani' (We made Italy, now we have to make the Italians), one might argue that, for Iran, it would be historically meaningful to remark 'Abbiamo fatto l'Iran. Ora si tratta di fare gli Iraniani (We made Iran now we have to make the Iranians).

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> Registering and documenting personal identities and issuing passports further reinforced Iranian citizenship. These measures gave individuals a sense of belonging to a defined national space and a common destiny. Deliberate and at times ruthless, the policies of dismantling regional, tribal, and linguistic entities helped homogenize Iranian identity. Forced settlement of the migrating nomads, punitive action against marauding bandits, disciplining the peasants and local notables, subduing the clerical class and restricting its symbols of influence, and enforcing of a Westernized dress code, all had profound impact on mass national awareness. Likewise, the unification of the armed forces, conscription and mandatory military service, employment in an ever- expanding state bureaucracy, and above all standard school curricula at all levels enhanced sense of national belonging. (Abbas Amanat, 2012, p. 22)

Pahlavi's nation-building rested on what Jessop called spatial strategies that aimed to:

> reorder territories, places, scales, and networks to secure the reproduction of the state in its narrow sense, to reorder the socio-spatial dimensions of the state in its integral sense, and to promote specific accumulation strategies, state projects and hegemonic visions. (Jessop, 2016, p. 139)

In 1935, the state asked all delegates to use Iran instead of Persia for the name of the country to mark the separation with the previous imagination of the country. Tehran as the capital city was refashioned as the centre of the new nation state, mostly with a view to promoting modernisation and development. Furthemore, in line with the language reform, many cities were officially renamed to Persianise the country. For example, Mohammerah changed to Khorramshahr, Urumia changed to Rezaiyeh, Maushur to Mahshahr. Likewise, the state was engaged in several place-building efforts. In particular, in contrast to Qajar kings (1785–1925), who were more interested in sending gifts to Shi'a holy shrines, which are mostly located within the borders of the [former] Ottoman Empire, the Pahlavi Dynasty spent large sums in boosting historically

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significant places inside Iranian territory in order to promote the development of an Iranian national imaginary. These places comprise historical sites from the ancient and mostly pre-Islamic Persian Empires that are located inside the Iranian state, tombs of national poets and later new symbolic places. The latter are places of memory that comprise 'museums, monuments, cemeteries, statuary, public buildings and squares, streets, historic preservation projects, plaques, and memorials, as well as the rituals, images, and practices associated with them' (Till, 2003, p. 297). The social memory in this period referred to Archaic Iran and excluded the neighbouring countries from it to present the separation of Iran and its territory.

Regarding the previous discussion, the first period (the 1850s–1970) of national state formation in Iran can be described as the era of nation-state building. A second period began in the 1970s. This was triggered by the British military withdrawal from east of Suez and the proclamation in July 1969 of the 'Nixon Doctrine' (Hanieh, 2011, p. 39), which called on local allies to support the U.S. global interest politically and militarily. In this stage Iran began to emerge as a regional power in alliance with imperialist forces. Thus, through mass militarisation and the boom in military-related expenditure, Iran became the 'surrogate gendarme' of Americans in the Middle East. Iran's political and military presence beyond its official borders, for example, its military interference in Oman to help the government suppressing Dhofar rebellion, signified the end of the first period. Accordingly, the dominant imagination of Iran was transformed with emergence and consolidation of the Great Civilization hegemonic vision that was promoted in school textbooks, newspapers and ceremonies. Perhaps the most important event that marked this new era was the celebration of 'the 2,500th year of Foundation of Imperial State of Iran' in 1971.

> The celebration was not an ordinary one; the setup and the costumes that attendants wore were reminiscent of previous dynasties as they paraded before the Shah and his international guests (mostly monarchs) at Persepolis. Those common folk who

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> had television sets could watch it and never forget it; others heard or read about it.
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> (Vaziri, 1993, p. 198)

The 'greater Iran' expanded from Transoxania to the Caucasus and from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean and its continuity from Cyrus to Mohammadreza was recalled and stressed in this era (Abbas Amanat, 2012, p. 21). This hegemonic vision promoted an optimistic perspective in which Iran would, within two decades, become a major industrialised power and catch up with the advanced capitalist countries' (Halliday, 1979a, p. 168). Interestingly, the change in the hegemonic vision was also represented in the 1976 change in the national calendar. For, the reference of the Calendar changed from Hejra of Prophet to the beginning of Cyrus the Great's reign as the first day (the year changed from 1354 to 2534) to emphasise Iran as the inheritor of the great ancient Persian Empires and locate the Shah in line with 2500 years of monarchical tradition. Likewise, many efforts were made to re-present the city as the imagined capital of the Imperial Iran (i.e. the new Persepolis). For instance, the Shah announced a huge urban project to develop a new commercial and administrative centre in northern Tehran, i.e. *Shahestan Pahlavi*.

With some simplification, one can conclude that the spatiality of the dominant state projects in Iran changed from national integration (before 1970) to an imperialist logic of regional integration (the 1970s) to an empire logic of universal integration (after 1979) as it is discussed later. It is also evident in the reports of the minister of court, Asadollah Alam to the Shah and his reaction.

> The *Time and Life Institute* has recently published a book named *The Persians,* which is very good. It includes a map of Persian Empire. He [the Shah] raised a few problems regarding the map: why they did not include Yemen in the map of the empire? It was not connected directly with the mainland of Iran, I said. He replied, they also exclude Ethiopia that was connected directly to the mainland of Iran via Egypt. 'Oppose this and raise the problem!' he ordered us. 'Yes, your majesty', I said.

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Then I said even today if this part of the world wants to be ordered there is no other way except this map (a Persian Empire). The Shah said 'interestingly Pakistan also wants to, together with Afghanistan, be united with Iran. But they want a federation which means that we pay and they enjoy. This is not something that I would accept'. September 16, 1975, my translation from (Alam, 1992d, p. 239).

Period	1848 - 1970	The 1970s	1980-Onward
Logic of integration	Internal Nation-state building	Imperialist	Empire
National scale	Territorial	Extra-territorial	Extra-territorial
Temporality of the national narrative	Past to present	Present to future	Present to future

Table 6.2: Periodisation of nationhood and national imaginary in Iran.

The 1979 Revolution put forward a messianic moment that transformed Imperial Iran and the relation of Iranian nationhood and the region. Counter-hegemonic vison of Khomeini located the Iranian people in the heart of a more universally important event. I will discuss this later using two examples of Israel and oil in the 1970s. In this sense, the Imperial Iran narrative transformed to the Islamic Revolution that goes beyond the Iranian territory but thanks to its Messianic narrative it can integrate other countries in the region to its cause. Thus, Islamists with presenting larger concepts of imagined communities such as *Ummat* (امت) (religious commonwealth) and *Mustazafin* (مستضعفین) (downtrodden) translated the extra-territorial Iran to their spatial imaginary. No wonder then, Tehran in the post-revolutionary era has been represented as the centre of the

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whole Islamic or at least Shi'a world[4]. However, how did this spatial imaginary become dominant and what were the (extra-)discursive resources of it? For answering these questions one has to consider the spaces of Shi'ism and the counter-hegemonic vision of Khomeini. The rest of this chapter addresses these issues.

6.3 The spaces of Shi'a Islam and clergy

This section refers to the spatiality of Shi'a Islam and clergy to stress the geography of the revolution and the dominant spatial frame that defined the social boundaries in 1979. I argue that Shi'a Islam, with its topology of sacred places and its messianic aspect, has strong potential to provide an extraterritorial spatial imaginary for the 1979 Revolution. Even the Shah's Minister of Court and close friend Alam realised the importance of Shi'a Islam for the Iranian state and mentioned it to the king:

> It is evident that the Crown Prince, before any other thing, should be familiar and sympathetic with the tradition and history of Iran and its language and poems. Shame that this is not possible with the current system of education of the prince. It is not just shameful but it is a serious lack of the basis in his education. Farsi language, Shi'ite religion and the royal regime are the main three pillars of Iran. The Crown Prince should think about and love them. I told the Shah that your majesty! You are in fact the Shi'a emperor and not only the king of Iran. The Shah answered that poor Shi'a they are in minorities everywhere and their clergy only makes problems for us. I replied that this is correct but his great factor should be used. The Shah replied it is only possible with having power. I said I totally agree but fortunately, power is here and we should use that great factor and it is already late for it. (September 24, 1975). (Alam, 1992d, p. 254, my translation)

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[4] Umm-al-qura (the centre and the mother of all lands) as the Arabic word that is used in Quran to indicate a city (addresses Mecca) is adopted for Iran.

Islamists used this potential to reimagine the Iranian nation in relation to, and as part of, Islamic Ummah. They succeeded because their reimagination of the Iranian nationhood benefited from the international changes in the region during the 1970s. Section four explores these changes in section four and their role in the hegemonic struggle but it is first worth studying the available (extra-)discursive resources.

The theory of Islamic state that was developed by Khomeini assumes the unity of the 'temporal and spiritual government' can provide a political imaginary that facilitates the logic of practising power in an empire, i.e. transcending singularity to universality. The debate on temporal-spiritual government is not unique to Shi'a or Islam.

> The fracturing of political power represents divided authority, as Hobbes continually insists, and instead makes a case for the centralization of control in a single source: undivided and unlimited. He sees division as a problem if it is between two rivals for the same kind of power, but also if there is a division between powers, understood in different terms. (Elden, 2013, p. 299)

In analysing the claim of the Pope that stresses the right of pastors and teachers of the Church as God's ministers to govern the commonwealth, Hobbes elaborates a tendency in the Church to revive the old Roman Empire:

> … the Pope prevailed with the subjects of all Christian princes, to believe, that to disobey him, was to disobey Christ himself; and in all differences between him and other princes, (charmed with the word *power spiritual*,) to abandon their lawful sovereigns; which is in effect an universal monarchy over all Christendom. For though they were first invested in the right of being supreme teachers of Christian doctrine, by and under Christian emperors, within the limits of the Roman empire (as is acknowledged by themselves) by the title of *Pontifex Maximus*, who was an officer subject to the civil state; yet after the empire was divided, and dissolved, it was not hard to obtrude upon the people already subjected to them, another title, namely, the right of St. Peter; not only to save entire their pretended power; but also to extend the

same over the same Christian provinces, though no more united in the empire of Rome. This benefit of a universal monarchy, (considering the desire of men to bear rule) is a sufficient presumption, that the Popes that pretended to it, and for a long time enjoyed it, were the authors of the doctrine, by which it was obtained; namely, that the Church now on earth, is the kingdom of Christ. (Hobbes, 1998, pp. 457–458)

As mentioned previously, the Shi'a clergy claims the deputyship of the Imam, without any direct comparison with the case of the church, one can consider the concept of territory and idea of this Hidden Imam for the revolutionary Shi'a Islamists.

> As early as the tenth century, the Twelver Shi'i (Ithna Ashari) jurists recognized the Occultation (ghayba) of the Twelfth Imam, the state of his invisible (yet indirectly effective) existence in the physical world, as the chief postulate for denouncing any form of temporal power (in the absence of the Imam) as inherently unjust and therefore illegitimate. Only the return of the Imam in an undetermined moment in future, it was believed, could establish on earth the ultimate values of justice and legitimate rule. (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 182)

In Shi'a, after belief in God and the Prophet, the primary duty of the believer is *wilayat*, i.e., total loyalty and obedience to the Hidden Imam. Perhaps, this is the ground for the famous Shi'i hadith that 'he who dies without recognising the Imam dies an unbeliever'. This duty will continue until the re-appearance and rise of the Imam:

> As the Lord of Time (al-Sahib al-Zaman) and the Riser (Qa'im) of the House of the Prophet, he will restore justice and equity to the world when it is filled with evil and oppression. This sense of restoring justice was tied in Shi'i prophecies with reinstalling the right to political leadership of the House of the Prophet, vengeance against the usurpers of that authority, and consequently expansion through jihad and the Imam's world domination. (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 49)
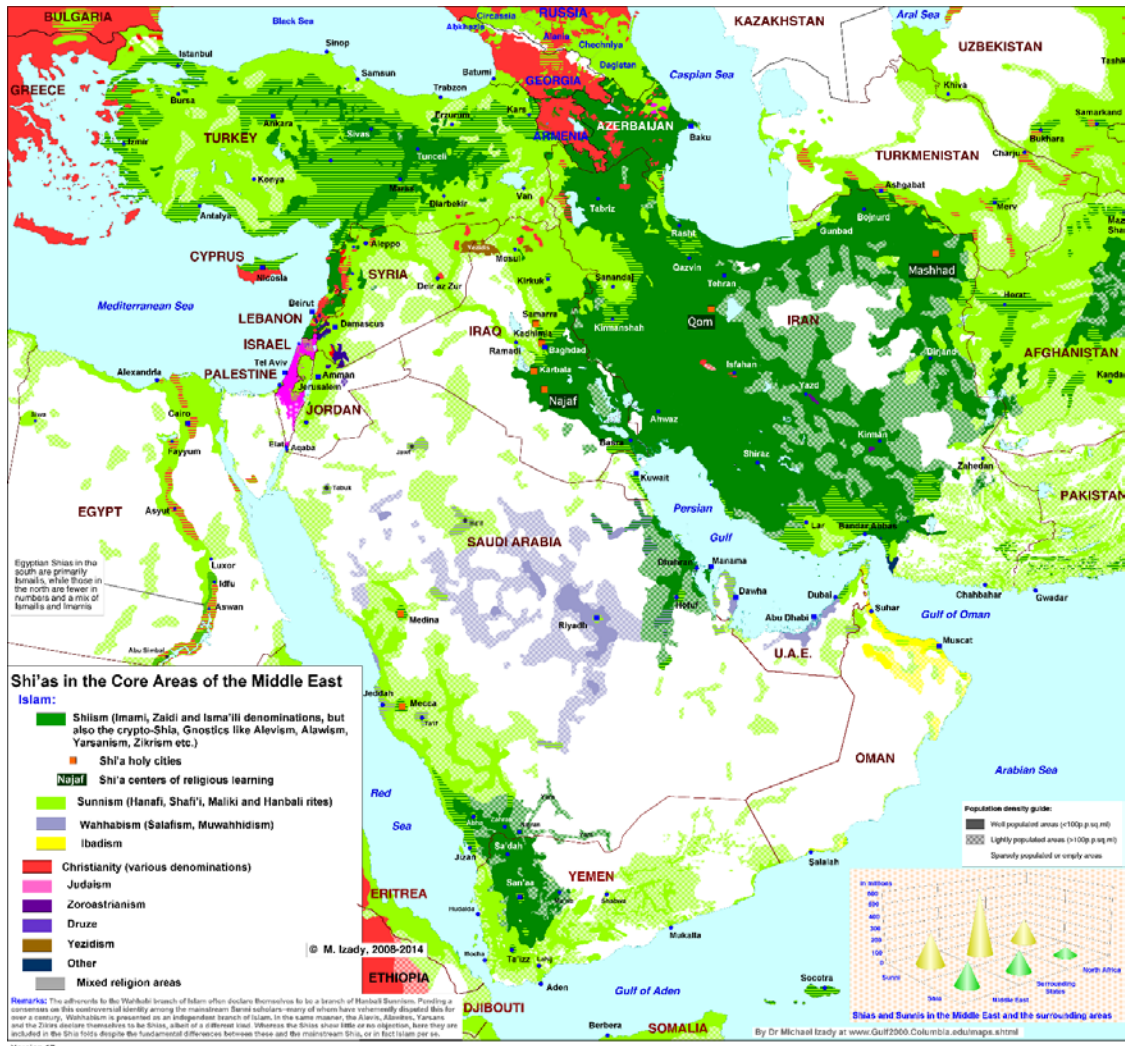
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Figure 6.2: Shi'as in the core area of the Middle East.
Source: Izady, Gulf/2000 project.

Regarding Shi'a messianism, the hidden Imam is the *Lord of Time,* and this is his most famous name. It means that he is alive and the line of divinity continues despite the passing of time. In contrast to the Christian messianic social imaginary, the Hidden Imam is always here, but he hides from ordinary people. As such, he will not come back. He will just reveal himself to all. Based on this, many people and mainly Shi'a clergy from time to time claim that they have met the Imam and that he ordered them to do something. The Shi'a clergy is the official group that has the privilege to accept or reject such a claim (for an interesting account of the early history of Shi'a Islam see:

Modarressi, 1993). However, it seems that the Hidden Imam is also the *Lord of Space* but his spatiality in this regard and its consequences for any political project has not yet been stressed in theology or accounts of the 1979 revolution. Hence, not only is he always here, but he can also be everywhere, for, he is Lord of the whole world, not just the Shia world. In this sense, there is no limitation in terms of his connection with the people. According to Shi'a beliefs, the Imam is going to make the whole earth a better place and not any particular Promised Land or territory. So, he is beyond any border and territory and can be invoked to articulate a hegemonic vision that aims to pass the official national borders or reimagine Iran as part of a greater entity or movement. The Hidden Imam as the 'riser' will build a universal Caliphate, i.e. a government with the logic of empire [as distinguished from imperialism above]. This understanding of Shi'a messianism can be mobilised by a political group to present its movement as part of a universal cause beyond the national territory. Islamists revolutionaries used this understanding and portraying Khomeini as if he is only a short step away from the Mahdi. As such, it provides a political imaginary that can surpass Iranian national borders. Also, based on this, a new cartography of nations in the Middle East can be imagined: the past spaces of lost empires can be connected to a messianic future.

Apart from its messianic aspect, in order to provide a proper account of Shi'ite spatiality, it is worth recalling the main idea of Shi'ism, i.e. Imamate. A crucial difference between Sunnism and Shi'ism is that, for the latter, holy imams serve as means of grace, i.e. the mediator to divinity. Hence, not only their own shrines but those of their descendants are treated as sacred places. For instance, believes in the healing qualities of sacred shrines are always stressed by Shi'a religious texts. In this context, it is a common religious practice for Shi'as to visit their graves and the grave of any holy man and ask for grace. Because of this, Shi'ite people are accused of polytheism by Wahhabis (an important part of Sunni radicalism and the dominant narrative of Sunni Islam in Saudi Arabia). Considering this, the imaginary religious space of Sunni

Islam seems to be more homogeneous and mostly articulated around the holy cities of Mecca, Medina with the practice of *Hajj* (pilgrimage), and Jerusalem (القدس). In contrast, Shi'a Islam with twelve Imams, many *Imamzade*[5] (shrine of a supposedly immediate descendant of a Shi'a Imam), and tombs of religiously significant persons has a more dispersed spatial religious imaginary, involving many religious sites (places).

Apart from those Sunni holy cities, the main Shia holy cities comprise Karbala, Samarra, Baghdad, and Najaf in Iraq and Damascus in Syria, and Mashhad and Qom in Iran, Mazar-e-Sharif in Afghanistan, and so forth.[6] In fact, it is quite normal for any city with considerable Shi'a inhabitants to have at least one local holy place. Thus, one can suggest that place is a very fruitful entry point to discuss the spatiality of Shi'ism and its particularities. The Shi'a sacred places were first emphasised during the Safavid dynasty (1500-1736) to compete with pilgrimage (*haj*) to Mecca and Medina, which were controlled by Ottoman Empire (Fischer, 2003, p. 29). The practice of pilgrimage and the routes taken by pilgrims provide a network to support religious people on their journey to the holy Shrines. Moreover, there has been a tradition of inhabiting the holy cities. For example, many Shi'a followers from all over the world have moved to stay in Karbala in Iraq. As part of the Arabization of Iraq by the Ba'ath Party, about 650000[7] people with 'Iranian background' were deported from Iraq during the 1970s. In this sense, 'sacred spaces should not be conceptualized and understood only in terms of sites and locations, but in terms of religious routes as well' (Kong, 2004, p. 369). In

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[5] Before the 1979 Revolution Iran has 1500 shrines and now, 36 years after revolution, it is estimated to be more that 10000 shrines in Iran.

[6] For a list of Shi'a holy site see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holiest_sites_in_Shia_Islam

[7] According to Hamshahri newspaper (http://www.hamshahrionline.ir/details/7737).

order to discuss these roots, perhaps the space of Shi'a clergy is a promising entry point.

To address the spatiality of Shi'a clergy, one can start with a comparison between the organisation of the Catholic Church and the Shi'a clergy. There is no official hierarchy among the Shi'a clergy: the order of the Shi'a clergy lies in its disorder (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 149). In contrast, the organisation of the Catholic Church can be compared to the feudal system. Here again, I want to avoid any suspicion of Orientalism but it is noteworthy that the main revenue of the Catholic Church came from the land while the primary support for the Shi'a clergy, particularly Usulis, who are dominant in the last two centuries, comes from merchants and the urban petty bourgeoisie (Arjomand, 1988b, p. 15). One may recall Marx's famous phrase in *The Class Struggles in France* that 'the bourgeoisie has no king; the true form of its rule is the republic'. In this sense, it seems that a clerical organisation that is based on the religious tax would be possibly best formed as a polycephaly. This can partly account for the existence of several *marja* (the source of emulation) at any given time, in contrast with more or less centralised form of the Catholic Church, ignoring the long tradition of heresies:

> The marja'iyat was meant primarily to address the need for communal leadership rather than a supreme legal authority. No marja' ever claimed his legal opinions to be universally binding. Nor did any of the marja's claim to be standing at the apex of a judicial hierarchy or was accepted as such by the mujtahids or the community at large. (Abbas Amanat, 2009a, p. 181)

Considering this, there is a complex network of Shi'a clergy in the Middle East. *Hawza* (religious seminary) as the main centres where clerics are trained, similar to many other religious seminaries, gather students from all over the world. The main hawza is in Najaf in Iraq, however, and dates from the era of Reza Shah (1920s), and its main rival is the seminary in Qom. Likewise, there are many small seminaries in other cities.

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Khomeini who used to live in Qom, spent most of his exile in Najaf, teaching and lecturing in seminaries. Moreover, the flow of religious taxes to marjas and financial support for deputies established a network of followers and clergy distributed all over places with a Shi'a population. Receiving religious taxes was started during the beginning era of Islam while Shi'a Imams lived. A network of their deputies from all around the Islamic Empires send money to them (for an interesting account and review of this era see: Modarressi, 1993). And, last but not least, mosques and the other places such as *Hussainia*, *Tekyeh* and so forth, where people gather to mourn the martyrdom of the third Imam, can serve as nodal points for a distributed network of Shi'a followers. They also, as stressed by Parsa (2011, p. 63), provided safe and secure places for the revolution. Although these are not basically political, they can host and promote the hegemonic vision of Islamists. For example, *Unified Islamic Associations* (هیأت‌های مؤتلفه اسلامی) as the political arm of conservative merchants in Bazaar formed in this context. It is worth noting that the Shah tried to use them against the more dangerous leftist or Islamist-leftist groups[8]. However, the availability of these (extra-)discursive resources is not enough for reconstructing the revolutionary moment in 1979. Hence, the section focuses on the revolutionary conjuncture and the dominant spatial imaginary of the 1970s to shed light on the spatiality of Khomeini's counter-hegemonic vision.

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[8] For example, he released several conservative Islamist prisoners one year before the 1979 Revolution.

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6.4   The space of Khomeini's counter-hegemonic vision

As mentioned in chapter two, the political engagement of Shi'a clergy in national state formation in Iran is traced back to the mid-19th century. In the chaos of the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, the Shi'a clergy contributed to the political scene of Iran. Perhaps this was more evident in the 1890 revolt against the tobacco concession that was granted to British imperialists. Based in Najaf in contemporary Iraq, a *fatwa*[9] was issued by the Grand Ayatollah *Shirazi* and forced the Qajar king to cancel the concession. With the rise of Reza Shah in 1926, which coincided with the formation of new national states in the former territory of the Ottoman Empire, an important part of state's spatial strategies was to move the centre of Shi'a inside Iranian territory (Qom). Therefore, the clergy more or less split based on the borders of the national states in the Middle East and formed local networks (Feirahi, 2012, pp. 410–439). This changed in the post-1953 coup era. With the support of Bazaar[10], Shi'a clergy successfully formed a national network centred on Qom in Iran. From the main national madrasa in this city, every year sources of emulation (Grand Ayatollahs) financed young students and sent them to remote cities and rural areas to agitate. This network realised a national imaginary with extra-territorial connection with other nodes in the neighbouring

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[9] The fatwa declared that the use of tobacco to be tantamount to war against the Hidden Imam.

[10] According to Shambayati:

> Although the bazaars' relative share in the domestic economy declined over the years and although there were some structural changes within the bazaar, in absolute terms the financial resources of the bazaaris actually increased and as a whole the bazaars prospered through much of the 1960s and 1970s. (Shambayati, 1994)

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countries. Khomeini, for example, stressed the need for such transnational cooperation.

> This crime happened just recently, but here in Najaf no one is aware of it! Why is Najaf so sound asleep? Why is it not trying to help the wretched and oppressed people of Iran? Is our only duty to sit here studying the principles and details of religious law? Should we pay no attention to the disasters that afflict the Muslims? Should we do nothing to help them? Do we not feel any duty and responsibility in the face of God and the nation? (Khomeini, 1981, p. 205)

The extra-territorial nature of this call was no accident. For Khomeini's counter-hegemonic vision contained a wide-ranging spatial re-imagination of 'Iran'. It envisaged Iran as an important part of a larger body, i.e. the 'Islamic World' that is afflicted by the same enemies. It is noteworthy that in the 1970s, Iranian state attempted to adopt a de facto non-alignment position in its international relations within a pro-Western alliance (Zabih, 1970). This policy, as Abidi (1981, p. 341) suggests, was reflected in

> a number of moves like Iran's joining the Regional Co-operation for Development (RCD), signing a host of industrial/technical and economic agreements with the Soviet Union and the states of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe, changing its attitude towards, and initiating a dialogue with, the People's Republic of China, and deepening its relations with India.

Although these attempts put pressure on those leftist oppositional forces who were inspired or supported by these countries, it failed to heal the wounded image of the Shah as a dependent ruler that formed with regards to the American-British 1953 Coup in his support.

In the post-1975 era when Iran settled down its territorial problems with Iraq, the Shah moved closer to the Arab bloc and attempted to consolidate Iran's dominance in the region (Parsi, 2007; cf. Zabih, 1976). This move occurred despite the vast economic

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and military cooperation between Iran and Israel. Thus, I argue that two main interconnected factors delegitimised the Shah and have consolidated the dominant extra-territorial spatial imaginary in 1970s Iran: Israel and the mid-1970s oil crisis. For, although Iran was not successful in integrating the main Arab countries into its visions for the Middle East under its dominance, it suffered from the humiliation of the defeat of Arab countries in the 1973 war with Israel and their attempt for an oil embargo against Israel and its supporters. In this context, the shared history and economic situation of Iran helped Islamists to promote this spatial imaginary and locate Iran on the eve of revolution not only in terms of its historical significance (with its messianic indications) but also as the most important place, in both metaphorical and literal terms, for realizing that moment. Hence Iran is no longer a separate country that the early Pahlavi's nationalists define in terms of the exclusion of Arabs and Turks but is the example and trigger of a broader event to come. Khomeini himself argued for an Islamic state several times:

> For seeing that an entire population has risen up against the Shah, despite all the power he has at his disposal, the rulers of Dubai, Kuwait, and so on naturally ask themselves, 'How can we be sure the same thing will not happen to us?' Demands for an Islamic state are now being heard in Turkey as well, partly as a result of what is happening in Iran. So the rulers of the Muslim countries are bound to oppose the movement in Iran for the sake of self-preservation, not only in the countries I have mentioned, but also in Pakistan and Afghanistan (of course, now there are additional factors in the case of Afghanistan). All these rulers are afraid their own people will follow the example of Iran. This is true even of the Soviet Union; it is afraid that the same demands now being raised in Iran will be heard among the Muslims of the Caucasus and other parts of the Soviet Union. (Interview on December 29, 1978) (Khomeini, 1981, p. 325)

Here I shall discuss the effects of the formation of Israel and the oil crisis of 1970 with more detail to shed light on Khomeini discursive articulation and its extra-discursive base.

6.4.1 Israel

The founding of the Israeli state in 1948 in the aftermath of the Second World War was also a key driver to the extra-territorial and transnational spatial imaginary of Islamists. Perhaps the first encounter of Shi'a community with Israel involved the Shi'a community in Lebanon. The birth of Israel and the occupation of lands in Palestine cut off the Shi'a community from its markets in the region and the more than 100 thousand Palestinians who were expelled from the country found refuge in the southern part of Lebanon (Cole, 2002b, p. 176). This put extra pressure on the people in that region. While it was mostly formulated in that time as an Arab problem, later, with the rise of Islamic discourse in the region, Islamists like Khomeini reframed it as a problem for the Islamic world. Ironically, an Islamic frame to understand the Arab-Israeli conflict also mentioned by the Shah himself in his 1975 interview with Muhammad Hassanein Haykal, the famous Egyptian journalist with close ties to Gamal Abdel Nasser (cited in Alpher, 1989, p. 157):

> We followed the principle 'my enemy's enemy is my friend,' and our relations with Israel began to develop. But now the situation has changed. . . . I think occasionally of a new equilibrium in the region. . . . Perhaps [it] can be integrated into an Islamic framework.

The Shah used the Islamic framework in response to the end of the strategic relationship between Egypt and the Soviet. Before that Iran and Israel had a long history of close but unacknowledged cooperation (Parsi, 2007). As Parsi (2007, p. 29) explains, this owed more to mutual fears of the Soviet Union, which actively supported

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the Arab side of the conflict and was also trying to expand its influence in the Middle East. Thus, Iran before the 1970s sought to work with Israel to avoid becoming the focus of pan-Arab hostility. It was better for the Shah that the Arab countries were addressing the immediate problem of Israel than opposing the growing power of Iran in the region. In this context, we should note that, before the 1970s, the problem of Palestine was mainly articulated around a secular pan-Arabism promoted by Gamel Abdel Nasser Hussain rather than in Islamic terms. However, even then, Nasser urged the people of Iran to revolt against the Shah because of his cooperation with and *de facto* recognition of Israel. In this context, in contrast to the past hostility of Sunnism toward Shi'a communities, in August 1960 'at a meeting of Al-Azhar, 150 "ulama" issued a proclamation calling on Muslims throughout the world to adopt an attitude of jihad against the Shah of Iran for his pro-Israeli policy' (S. Nasr, 1988, p. 82). This blurred the previous important line between Shi'a and Sunni at least for a while and was close to the political project of Khomeini to build an Islamic state. In this sense, there is a spatial imaginary for the 'Islamic world', and formation of the Jewish state threatened its realisation. With the embodiment of 'Islamic territory', Islamists pictured Israel as the result of a 'rape' of the motherland of Muslims by colonial powers. Khomeini used this conceptualisation to push against the Shah and at the same time to promote his political project.

> The sinister influence of imperialism is especially evident in Iran. Israel, the universally recognized enemy of Islam and the Muslims, at war with the Muslim peoples for years, has, with the assistance of the despicable government of Iran, penetrated all the economic, military, and political affairs of the country; it must be said that Iran has become a military base for Israel, which means, by extension, for America. (February 6, 1971) (Khomeini, 1981, p. 198)

Adopting this pan-Islamist approach, Khomeini, for example, issued a fatwa to let Palestinian people use their canonical taxes in order to fight Israel (Martin, 2003, p. 72). He stresses a spatial narrative of Israel to connect his anti-colonial argument.

> Israel, which is at war with the Muslims and plans to occupy all the lands of Islam up to Iraq and (God forbid) to destroy the noble shrines of Islam! Israel, which set fire to the Masjid al-Aqsa, a crime that the Iranian regime tried to cover up with all sorts of propagandistic proposals to rebuild the mosque! Israel, which has turned more than a million Muslims into refugees and occupied the lands of the Muslims that state is now to arrange the celebrations for the Iranian monarchy, and that state is supplied with Iranian oil by tankers. Ought the people of Iran to celebrate the rule of a traitor to Islam and the interests of the Muslims who gives oil to Israel? (Khomeini, 1981, p. 201)

He used Israel to recall a narrative of victimisation (Amanat, 2012, p. 22). The same approach had been adopted previously by nationalists, who used the invasion of Macedonian, Arab, Turk, Mongolian, and later Uzbek, Ottoman, and Afghan lands to define Iran in a national and territorial sense by excluding this element from what the supposed Aryan essence of the nation (Towfigh, 2000). The main difference between the two cases is that the Islamists' account of Israel was inclusive, in contrast with the racist and national forms of victimisation, and it promoted an extra-territorial spatial imaginary. The boundaries of this spatial imaginary include the (semi-)colonised former territories of the Islamic empires, particularly the Ottoman and Persian empires. In this sense 'We', those who are the victims of colonialism and Zionism, should unite to defeat 'them'. Israel, in this context, provides the Islamists with a materialisation of their Islamic frame to formulate colonialism. While earlier in the 19th century, colonisation was formulated by Islamic figures like Asadabadi (Afghani), as Keddie (Keddie, 1972) observes, in the form of something that happened to the 'Islamic countries'. However, the formation of Israel and its several wars with the neighbouring countries, e.g.

Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, consolidate this frame for understanding colonisation or at least give it a strong push. Khomeini stressed that the first step in resisting Israel is to overcome the puppet governments of this Muslim community that is split among several states.

> The imperialist states, like America and Britain, brought Israel into existence, and we have seen what misery they have inflicted on the Muslim peoples by means of Israel, and what crimes they are now committing against the Muslims, particularly the Shi'a. In Lebanon they install one agent and reduce the country to its present miserable state, and in Egypt they install another, by the name of Sadat, whose every act is devoted to serving imperialism. A short time ago, he went to Israel and gave Israel official recognition and approved all that the Israelis had to say. The Shah of Iran also says it is necessary to make peace with Israel. In fact, this wretch recognized Israel twenty years ago. We were in Qum at the time. He gave his recognition to a government of unbelievers—of Jews, at that—thereby affronting Islam, the Qur'an, the Muslim governments, and all the Muslim people. The name of Israel was not openly mentioned at first, but later it was. (February 19, 1978) (Khomeini, 1981, p. 216).

Therefore, based on his spatial imaginary, Khomeini argued for a united Islamic front against Israel:

> If the heads of Muslim states were to abandon their mutual disputes in order to acquaint themselves with the lofty goals of Islam and to orient their policies in accordance with Islam, they would no longer be the abject captives of imperialism. It is those disputes between the heads of Muslim states that have allowed the problem of Palestine to arise and that do not permit it to be solved. If the 700 million Muslims, with the vast countries that they inhabit, had the political maturity to unite and organize themselves in a single front, it would not be possible for the big imperialist powers to penetrate their countries, let alone a handful of Jews who are the servants of imperialism. (February 6, 1971) (Khomeini, 1981, p. 197)

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Ironically, at the end, more than the close relation between the states of Iran and Israel, it was the Shah's strong support for moves to conclude a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel that proved decisive in the revolution in Iran. Therefore, the rise of an Islamic frame to understand the problem of Palestine, the peace process and naturalisation of Israel all together contributed to the delegitimization of the Shah in Iran. However, this delegitimisation was connected to the broader problem of the Islamic countries for they apparently also suffered from corrupted and dependent rulers. A related example here is Anwar el-Sadat (1918-1981), the Egyptian president who followed Abdel Nasser but rolled back his policies of pan-Arabism and close relation with the Soviet Union. Egypt was the dominant power among Arab states and Sadat was both the key figure in the peace process with Israel and a close ally for the Shah. Indeed, he remained friends with the Shah until the end. Egypt was the last stop for the Shah in exile, and it gave him a state funeral when even the US refused him entry in the post-revolutionary era. It is no surprise, then, that Sadat was assassinated a year after the Shah's death by a member of an Egyptian Islamic Jihadi group as punishment for his participation in the peace process with Israel. In sum, a move against the Shah was located by Islamists inside an extra-territorial frame of the Islamic and colonised countries that suffered from internal and external injustice. Perhaps this injustice can be best elaborated by the situation of the oil producing countries.

6.4.2 The spaces of oil

A further factor influencing the dominant spatial imaginary in 1970s Iran was the oil crisis. The previous chapter addressed the role of oil regarding the holy triad of the national state in Iran. This section now focuses on the spaces of the oil to examine its significance for the spaces of Khomeini's counter-hegemonic vision. This was related, of course, to the formation and actions of the Israeli state but its main dynamic was grounded in other historical geoeconomic and geopolitical factors. Specifically, the

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Arab oil embargo in 1973 and its impact on regional politics and crisis-tendencies provided an extra-territorial identity for the 1979 revolution. The political economy of oil in the 1970s revived memories of the 1953 coup in Iran against Mosaddegh, especially its imperialist aspects. Oil moved to the heart of popular economic understanding. As elaborated in chapter five, it crystallised the holy triad of the national state in Iran comprising progress, independence and justice. This section discusses the discursive-spatial aspects of oil in Iran and its importance in reconstructing the revolutionary moment in 1979. Notable here is a new boundary based on the exploitation of oil, which demarcated the 'others' and provided Islamists with an extra-territorial spatial frame to locate 'Iran' in their counter-hegemonic vision.
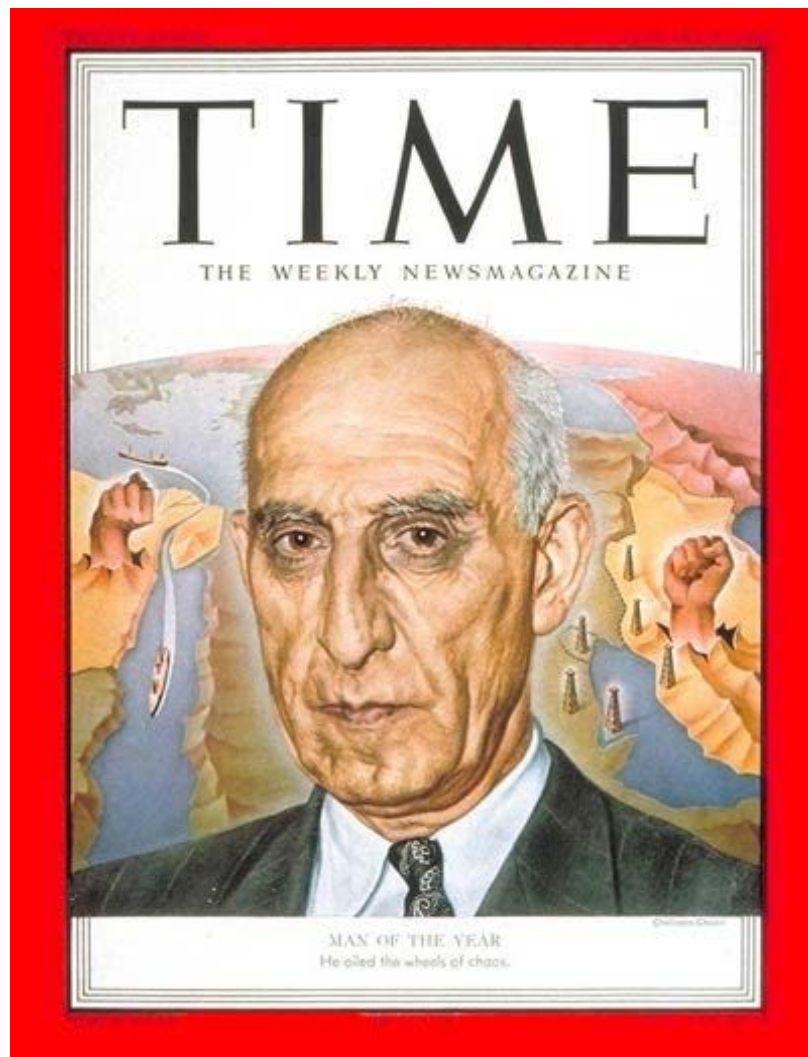

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Figure 6.3: Mohammed Mosaddegh, the prime minister of Iran during oil nationalisation (1951-3) as the man of the year, on the cover of Time Magazine, Jan. 7, 1952. The interesting point is the illustration of Suez Canal and the struggle for its nationalisation in Egypt on the left side of the picture, and the oil fields in the region: the rise of (semi-)colonized countries against their colonisers with Iran at its forefront.

Oil was discovered in Iran in 1908 around the same time as the Constitutional Revolution occurred (1905-1907). Both were the first of their kind in the Middle East. There is a long path from that remote oil well in the south-west of Iran in Masjed Soleyman to its becoming the heart of the national economy and politics in Iran. In terms of its spatial-discursive aspects, oil has two main pivotal historical points. The first was 1953 when a resistive anti-imperialist nationalist discourse formed around oil and its nationalisation. It was the first time after the Allied Forces had invaded Iran that a nationalist movement appeared. The movement portrayed Iran as a victim of imperialism, but it failed to build extra-territorial bonds based on oil with similar countries in the region. The 1953 US-British coup against the nationalist government restored international dominance on Iranian oil export and had a profound and lasting effect on the collective memory of Iranians. Perhaps one can suggest 'conoilization' for describing the Imperialists relation with Iran during the Pahlavi era. For, the exploitive with Iran best symbolised and articulated around oil. The second milestone in the history of oil in Iran is the 1973 Arab oil embargo, which quadrupled Iran's oil revenues. The boycott launched by Arab members of OPEC targeted the USA, UK, Canada, and other states for having supported Israel in the war with Egypt and Syria. However, its significance was not just economic - important though this was. It signified oil's potential as a strategic resource in the international *political* struggle. Specifically, states in the Middle East that had been judged weak gained in power potential because they possessed this 'strategic commodity' and could use the revenue that it generated for diverse purposes or, indeed, directly deploy oil for political ends. The fact that several

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states, in particular in the Middle East controlled oil facilitated a transnational identity that enabled them to weaponise it. This power potential also made oil a key referent in popular economic and political imaginaries in the region. Although this transnational identity was understood and promoted more as a pan-Arab movement to boycott the supporters of Israel in other countries in the region, in Iran, it was widely adopted by Islamists. In the post-Suez Canal Crisis (1956)[11] that endangered the Iranian oil export to Europe, Iran financed an oil pipeline that connected the Gulf of Aqaba in the south of Israel and the Mediterranean' and enabled bypass the Egyptian territory in accessing the world oil market (Parsi, 2007, p. 23). Iran did not participate in the oil embargo and continued supporting Israel with crude oil export. However, at the same time, the Arab state on the other front received oil and financial assistance from the Iranian state (Parsi, 2007, pp. 46–47). The oil trade with Israel had a damaging consequence for the legitimacy of the Shah. Khomeini imagined oil as a major God-given resource that proved to have a significant role in this struggle. Thus, according to him the oil should be used to push back against the West, but it was utilised by the 'corrupt' leaders of the Islamic countries (most importantly by the Shah) to favour the West. In this sense, there was a political struggle to control this armoury, and it is a legitimate war in the eyes of Allah.

> Are we not to protest that the oil belonging to Iran and Islam is sold to a state at war with the Muslims? Why is Israel able to gain influence in the affairs of a Muslim country? Of course, the answer will be, 'We are given orders, and we have no choice but to obey. These are our orders, and we have to carry them out'. The Shah himself in one of his speeches, which was later reproduced in a book, stated, 'The allies, after occupying Iran, thought it fitting that I should be in control of affairs, and they agreed

[11] The crisis was the result of nationalisation of Suez Canal and consequent unsuccessful invasion of Egypt by Israel, followed by the United Kingdom and France in late 1956.

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to my accession to the throne'. May God curse them for thinking it fitting and casting us into disaster! Naturally, someone who is a puppet has to serve his masters; he cannot do otherwise. (Khomeini, 1981, p. 205)

Khomeini clearly used a pan-Islamic frame to narrate the importance of oil. He thereby connected the oil question with the internal political struggle in other Islamic countries. Thus, oil became a means of unification on a transnational scale. Islamists' rescaling the problem of oil provided them with a base to utilise the us-them duality in favour of a common hegemonic vision. In this sense, the Shah is not the only puppet of imperialism in the region, 'we' (all Muslims) are slaves of a certain traitor elite that rules our countries. This imagined community includes all Muslims and, to some extent, other oppressed people too.

> Do those workers and officials know that the bullets that pierce the breasts of our precious youths, that drown our men, our women, our infants in blood, are paid for with the money earned by the oil that their exhausting labor produces? Do they know that the major part of the oil used by Israel, that obstinate enemy of Islam and usurper of the rights of Muslims, is provided by the Shah? If the usurpatory government wishes to continue this act of treason by bringing pressure to bear on the workers, the question of oil may be settled once and for all. (Khomeini, 1981, p. 245)
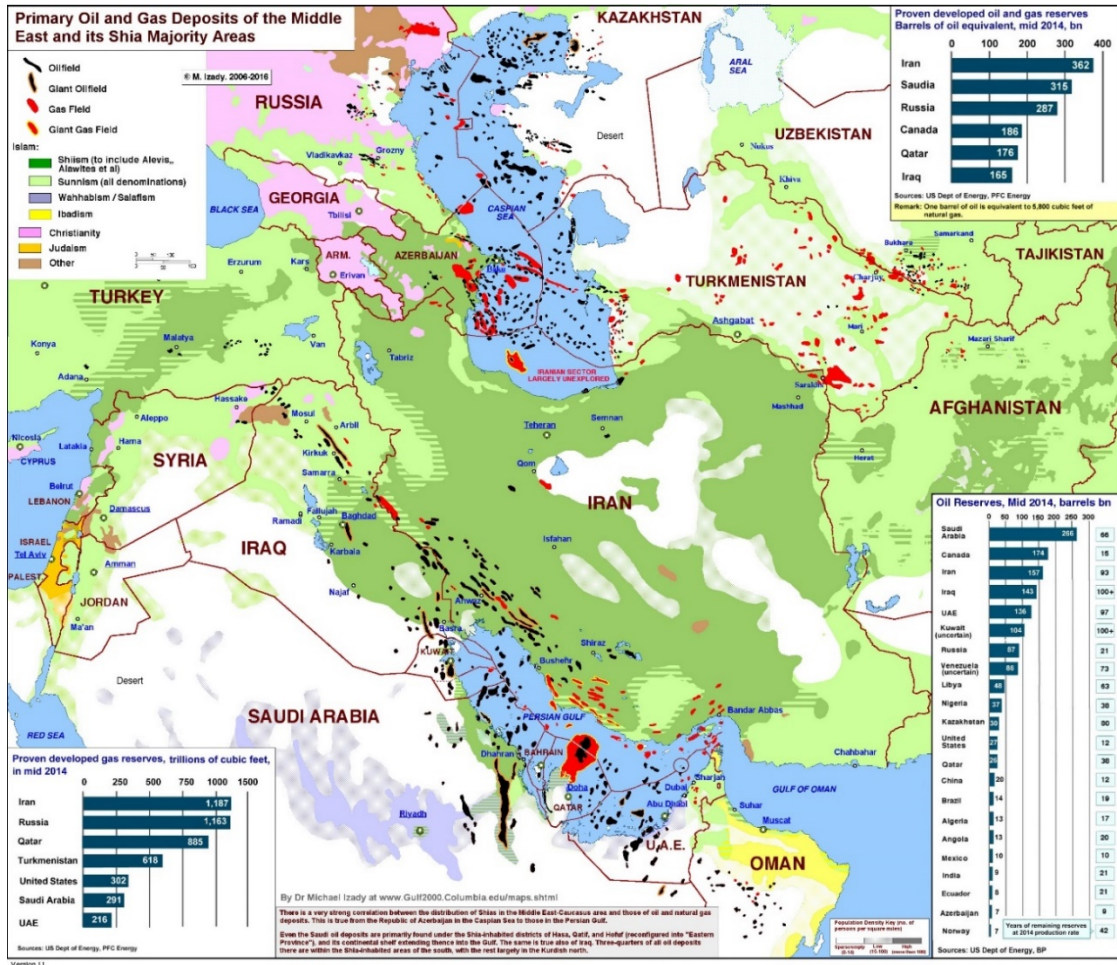
Figure 6.4: Oil and Shi'a communities in the Middle East.
Source: Izady, Gulf/2000 project.

It is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the effects of this strategy in integrating non-Iranians into Khomeini's political project. Instead, I want to stress the importance of this Islamic frame using 'God-given' resources of these countries in providing a spatial imaginary for people in Iran during the revolution. This spatial imaginary reimagined Iran's relation with the wider struggles for justice in the Middle East. Thus the Arab-Israeli conflict and the 1973 oil embargo give extra-territorial meaning to the vernacular struggle against the Shah. This extra-territoriality was facilitated by Shi'a messianism that promises a universal uprising against injustice. The Shah attempts to present an independent figure by moving toward moderate Arab state and helping both

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sides of the conflict in the region which further reinforced the spatial imaginary of Islamists.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief spatial account of national state formation in Iran. It focused on the spatial state projects, the spaces of (counter-)hegemonic visions and spatial imaginaries to provide a spatial periodisation of the state power in Iran. The Shi'a's space is articulated around sacred places. I argued that, by tracing back the historical roots of Shi'a Islam and Iranian nationalism and their spaces, a spatial imaginary can be discerned that enabled Islamists to promote their counter-hegemonic vision toward an Islamic (Shi'a) Empire. To elaborate this, different kinds of nationhood and their potential for spatial state projects were discussed.

I also stressed the role of interpretations of the Shi'a messianism as a basis for an extra-territorial spatial imaginary in the eve of the 1979 Revolution. This chapter argued for the potentiality in particular readings of Islam to provide hegemonic resources for an expansive and extra-discursive spatial state project. I distinguished integration in an imperialist way (by occupation) and as a part of an empire. In this context, instead of the birth or revival of the Persian Empire, one can consider the celebration for 2,500 years of monarchy in Iran in 1971 as the funeral of the Imperial Iran. In this sense and as Gramsci would put it, the era of transformation (the 1970s) is an *interregnum*: the old is dying and the new cannot be born. The old is the hegemonic vision of the nation-state building that is the main characteristic of the first period and the new is the empire as the logic of integration. Thus, one can suggest that the imperialist state project of the Shah, i.e. the great civilisation, proved abortive. For, not only did the mother (Pahlavi regime) die but also her child (imperial Iran) could not survive. Imperial Iran transformed to Islamic Revolution after the interregnum.

The 'Islamic Revolution' proposed a more inclusive spatial imaginary that benefits from the shared history and vast semiotic resources. This new space and horizons of action redefined the revolt in Iran. It provides people with a universal subjectivity. This frame of action reimagines their understanding of the situation and their position in it. In this context, an Islamic 'we' was defined that appeal to people compare to leftist and bordered nationalist identities of its rivals for it was coupled with the extra-discursive aspects of the conjuncture. *Inter alia*, the Arab-Israel wars of the 1970s and the resulting oil embargo reassure the success of this transnational identity. Khomeini's spatial imaginary later and mainly in the post-revolutionary era change from a more pan-Islamic reduction of the Middle East in favour of a Shi'a Empire that rises against Sunni fundamentalism.

7. Conclusion

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living.

The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. Karl Marx.

7.1 Introduction

It is a famous saying that generals always fight the last war and economist the last depression. This can summarise the Shah's political manoeuvres in the two years of upheaval before the 1979 revolution. In 1971 he was self-confident enough to tell Alam, the minister of the royal court that he is sure whoever came in his way will be destroyed (Alam, 1992b, p. 200). In this context, as international examples, he mentioned Kennedys in the USA, Abdel Nasser (1918-1970) in Egypt and Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971) in the USSR; Alam himself added some domestic examples: Mohammad Mosaddegh (1882-1967), Ahmad Ghavam (1873-1955), and Haj Ali Razmara (1901-1951) who served as the prime minister in Iran (Alam, 1992b, p. 201). In fact, in 1975 and before the outbreak of the revolution he was not shy to order that the journalists should understand that 'appointing the government and ministers is in the hand of the

Shah himself and he has the ultimate executive power' (Asadollah Alam, 1992d, p. 41). However, with the appearance of the public discontent, everything changed drastically.

On 7 April 1979, less than two months after the revolution, Amir Abbas Hoveyda (1919-1979), the Shah's famous prime minister, who held office over 12 years (1965-1977), was executed shortly after facing a so-called revolutionary court. In the last month before the revolution, he was in jail perhaps as a scapegoat for the growing crisis. The post-Hoveyda era for the Shah was an unsuccessful search for finding what is wrong with the system. He appointed four prime ministers in less than two years but these moves can be seen as symbolic actions. The first one was Jamshid Amouzegar (1923-2016), a very close friend of Hoveyda who was appointed as the head of Rastakhiz Party that supposed to comprise all loyal political forces to the Shah and rule the country in a single party system. Amouzegar was compelled to resign by the Shah when his crisis management policies led to more economic depression and triggered discontent in public. In a desperate search to find the correct cure for his regime, the Shah appointed Jafar Sharif-Imam (1910-1998): a well-known freemason and the grand master of the grand lodge of Iran who had a long relationship with parts of clergy due to his family ties. He began with political reforms and changes in public in favour of religious groups, but the ever-growing demonstrations and general strikes prevented him from success. Trying to show the iron fist of the regime, the Shah called Gholam Reza Azhari (1912-2001) to form a military government. Having a heart attack and failing in restoring the power, he resigned in less than two months. The last effort of the Shah before leaving the country was the appointment of Shapour Bakhtiar (1914-1991), a member of National Front opposition. This move was the last station in his blind search for a saviour and/or a scapegoat, but as the history revealed, technocrats, Freemasons, generals and even the formal nationalist opposition were unable to stop the revolution.

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The failure of this series of desperate measures is characteristic of revolutions. Indeed, it was not only the Shah who could not see the coming revolution and the political crisis in his regime perhaps for 'pre-revolutionary Iran did not experience any fiscal-administrative crisis as a result of war or military competition, the main agency of the revolution was not the peasantry but the urban petty bourgeoisie and middle classes, and finally the revolution was led not by a secular intelligentsia but by a radicalized faction within the Shi'a clerical establishment' (Matin, 2013, p. 13). The 1979 Revolution was quite a surprise to the political actors, academicians and even the revolutionaries themselves. The important point here is not the unexpectedness of the revolution but the theoretical trap of post-revolution studies that 'read history backward, to project the outcome to the process, or to explain the revolution by weaving precursory narratives to fit the eventuality' (A. Bayat, 2013, p. x). In fact, it is the main part of several different narratives of the 1979 revolution that nobody expected it. As an example of this unexpectedness in the mainstream media in Iran it is common to refer to Jimmy Carter's speech on 31 December 1977, a year before the revolution, that 'Iran, because of the great leadership of the Shah, is an island of stability in one of the most troubled area of the world' (cited in, Ganji, 2002, p. 42). The revolution was a challenge for theory; a theoretical crisis for certain theories that adopt a linear account of history, above all, the Modernisation Theory and Stalinist Marxism, as it is discussed in chapter two. In this context, an study of the state power and revolution in Iran needs to, as Asef Bayat (2013, pp. 5–6) suggests, think and introduce 'fresh perspectives to observe, a novel vocabulary to speak, and new analytical tools to make sense of specific regional realities'. This served as a compass for this research.

7.2 The thesis in perspective

This section summarises the main arguments of the past chapters to review the thesis. Avoiding the post-revolution studies trap mentioned above, this research is an effort to

reconstruct the revolutionary moment of 1979 in Iran by rereading the historical event with different temporalities. A social explanation of the 1979 revolution in Iran, like any other social explanation must be 'adequate at the level of meaning as well as of 'material' causation' (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p. 3). Thus, in reconstructing the revolutionary moment, one needs to include both its discursive aspects, such as Shi'a theology and messianism, and its extra-discursive aspects, such as the political economy of the Pahlavi regime and the broader trajectory of Iran's development.

Chapter two reviewed some intellectual efforts to explain the 1979 Revolution and the rise Khomeini. Against the prevailing theoretical tendencies, it argued for the importance of reconstructing the revolutionary moment in the light of Shi'a messianism. It started with a few general points regarding theorising the national state and revolution in Iran. Then, it discussed exceptionalism and/or uncritical application of conventional theories to address the history of Iran, one-sided focus on structures or agents, generalising a temporary condition that leads to essentialism. Moreover, the chapter stressed the influence of Modernisation Theory on several theories on the Iranian national state and 1979 Revolution with its linear account of history from 'traditional undeveloped' societies, e.g. Iran, to 'modern developed' ones which is represented at its best in the 'western' societies. Thus, the revolution, according to this understanding, is the result of a 'bad modernisation'. Regarding the importance of oil revenue for the state in Iran, the 'rentier state' theory has been reviewed to stress the shortcomings of categorising states by the similarity in patterns of revenue and neglecting the internal/external dynamics and histories. These theories cannot account for the revolution in Iran and, at the same time, the stable conditions of the other 'rentier states'. The last part of the chapter focused on theories that in one way or another take Shi'a Islam into account in dealing with the revolutions in Iran. For some of them, Shi'a Islam contributed to the revolutionary discourse of economically and/or politically marginalised groups of the society, e.g. petit bourgeoisie, landlords. For others, it is the

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network of clergy and its places that were important in the dominance of its political imaginary. The institutional transformations of Shi'a clergy vis-à-vis the state in Iran was the principal source of its ability to promote its counter-hegemonic vision. Also, one can find essentialist accounts of Shi'a Islam and clergy that simplified the problem of the revolution to a struggle between the 'traditional' and 'modern' parts of it. This categorisation takes for granted a linear account of the history and homogenises different and sometimes contradictory forces under two essentialist rubrics. Last but not least, I reviewed attempts to provide a conjunctural multi causal account of the revolution that results in an eclectic mix of concepts and causes from ontologically contradictory theories. Finally, the chapter argued for the importance of Shi'a Islam in the revolutionary moment and a focus on the transformations of state power to avoid essentialism and classic sociological dualities such as agency-structure. To deal with the 1979 Revolution one needs to be armed with fresh concepts and a novel approach to the existing historical data. These concepts were introduced in chapter three.

Considering the shortcomings of existing accounts of the rise of Khomeini, particularly in providing a strategic perspective to his dominance in the revolution, chapter three argued for the conceptual toolbox of this study inspired by the Strategic-Relational approach and Cultural Political Economy. As elaborated, they provide strategic concepts (e.g., hegemonic visions, state projects and accumulation strategies) and insights, in a grand theoretical orientation to illuminate the revolutionary conjuncture and dominance of Khomeini. Likewise, the chapter reviewed some alternative theoretical perspective (Marxist and Weberian), and their potentials and positions regarding the toolbox. It introduced CPE's social imaginaries to demonstrated how social actors (individuals and institutions) reduce the complexity of the real world to be able to 'go on'. Then the chapter reflected on general state theory to argue for the strategic-relational approach to state power as a social relation. Next, it considered spatio-temportality from both time and space entry points. In terms of temporality,

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periodisation was discussed in the chapter to elaborate it merits compared with chronology that work with single unilinear time scale. Regarding spatiality, the chapter argued against reducing socio-spatial to one of its dimensions (territory, place, scale, network). Likewise, it presented spatial imaginaries as frames to understand socio-spatiality that used in my account of the spaces of the 1979 Revolution. This chapter also addressed the issue of methodology to distinguish grand theories (such as the SRA) from general theories (e.g. positivist sociology). It introduced the 'logical-historical' method that was used in this study to explain why, for instance, it is not a simple fact-gathering research. Finally, the chapter related the introduced concepts with the discursive formations of the holy triad of the national state in Iran, namely, justice, progress, and independence.

Chapter fourth began with a brief account of the history of Shi'a religion to guide readers unfamiliar with Islam and, in particular, with its Shi'a branches. The aim of that historical reading is to reconstruct the moment of revolution and the dominant political imaginary in the 1970s in the light of semiotic resources of Shi'a Islam. In the core of this historical account is two main concepts: Shi'a martyrology and eschatology. Thus, the revolutionary moment, regarding these two main poles, is in the continuity with a Manichaean past (martyrology) and a rupture toward a just future (eschatology). In Shi'a martyrology, the Karbala event, in which the third Imam (Husayn) and his 72 followers were killed tragically by the vast army of the ruling caliph (Yazid), has the pivotal role. However, Shi'a eschatology has crystallised around the myth of the hidden Imam (Mahdi, the twelfth Shi'a Imam). As elaborated in the chapter, several messianic movements in the history of Shi'a Islam has contributed to the apocalyptic theme of Shi'ism. The chapter argues, in particular, for the importance of Babi movement in the mid-ninetieth century and its representation in the Constitutional Revolution (1905-7). It was a prophetic break with Shi'ism while the emergence of the first grand Ayatollah, the supreme exemplar of the Shi'a community, at the same time provided a priestly

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way of continuing the past. In this context, Khomeini's novel theory of the Islamic State that argues for sovereignty a just Shi'a jurist until the rise of Mahdi represents continuity in discontinuity and discontinuity in continuity. Therefore, it bridges the priest-prophet duality and provides his followers to benefit from the existing Shi'a (extra-)discursive resources and frame the revolution. The core of his political imaginary was 'justice' so Khomeini appears to his followers as the vicegerent the hidden Imam: Imam Khomeini. Building on a revolutionary account of Shi'a martyrology that had also developed by other Islamists (above all Ali Shariati) and asked followers to participate in the eternal war between good and evil, Khomeini's political imaginary puts him in opposition with the Shah, an unjust tyrant. Hence, he embodied the 1979 Revolution and his political imaginary framed the revolutionary moment for the majority of its participants. However, although he had a well-articulated of revolutionary myths and semiotic resources, why and how did he succeed in dominating the political struggle against the Shah and no other political figure and on that particular time and not sooner or later? Addressing these questions, one needs a further discussion on the national state in Iran and the transformations of state power with a focus on structural and strategic selectivities of the state. This is the task of the fifth chapter.

Chapter fifth elaborated the holy triad of the national state in Iran, i.e. justice, independence, and progress and briefly discussed them to provide a basis for understanding the dominant economic imaginary in Iran during the 1970s. To take into account these three axes, they were presented with different temporalities focusing on 1963-1979. The chapter stressed the importance of justice as the frame for an understanding of two other axes and oil as the crystallisation of the three. In this context, the decline in state's oil revenue in the post-boom (1974) era has extra-economic severe consequences for the Pahlavi regime. The chapter briefly discussed justice regarding Shi'a Islam and the white revolution comprising land reforms and social services. It showed, in line with chapter four, the importance of justice in Shi'a

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Islam and the privileges it gave to Khomeini for promoting his counter-hegemonic vision and framing the dominant account of justice in Iran. At the same time, the Shah's concept of justice was developed in competition with the left and later contradicted the results of his economic developments. Independence or justice in international relations is the next axis which was discussed with a focus on the emergence of the particular bourgeoisie with close international relation thanks to development measures introduced in the post-White Revolution era. It traced a change from a more territorial account of independence in the nineteenth century to a more economical one in in the late Pahlavi era response to change from the colonial era to classic and economic imperialism. The development plans in Iran, particularly after the White Revolution were of particular interest in dealing with the third axis, i.e. progress. As the chapter showed, the Ford foundations financed hiring specialists from Harvard University to help the government in introducing comprehensive development plans. The gradually increasing oil revenue provided the Plan Organisation in Iran with the necessary funds for its projects. However, the result was an aggressive uneven development that contradicted the universal and inclusive concept of justice promoted by the Shah to neutralise the danger of the left.

Oil was the principal factor in pursuing all three pillars of the national state in Iran. It represented a second chance or perhaps the last chance of dealing with the injustice that represents itself in poverty, dependency and underdevelopment. Regarding this, the oil boom in the mid-1970s that resulted in a quadruped increase in the state's revenue was a decisive moment for the regime. As the chapter argued, it brought about two main issues. The first one is an unsuccessful attempt to shift back the economic imaginary of 'prosperity' (that became dominant thanks to the large expenditures of the state during the boom and the fifth development plan for welfare plans) to the economic imaginary of 'development' (that was dominant in the third and fourth development plans). Stressing that 'we are at the gates of being a great civilisation', the Shah caused

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popular inflated expectations during the boom era that with the declining oil revenue in the post-boom era delegitimised him. The second issue was the contradictory class inequality and the conception of justice developed by the Shah. In this context, Khomeini attacked the regime by presenting underdevelopment and inequality as the same problem. He pictured the Shah as an unjust ruler who is dependent on the 'West' who is losing the last chance for catching up with the west. In sum, chapter five followed different axes of the national state in Iran with their various temporalities to reconstruct the extra-discursive aspects of the revolutionary moment using oral history and official documents. However, it is also important to consider the spaces of the 1979 Revolution in Iran. Thus, the last chapter aimed at spatializing the revolutionary moment, competing state projects, and the hegemonic visions.

The main questions of the final chapter were how (and why) did the spatiality of the revolution favour Khomeini's counter-hegemonic vision? Focusing on the state space, the spaces of (counter-)hegemonic visions and spatial imaginaries, chapter six was intended to provide a spatial periodisation of the national state and a spatial reconstruction of the revolutionary moment in 1979 Iran. As it is shown, one should not reduce spatiality to objective coordinates for it involves their subjective significance for different social agents and forces too. Thus, the spaces of Shi'a Islam, particularly regarding its places and networks, were discussed to provide an account of the spatial imaginary of the 1979 Revolution. The chapter argues that holy sites of Shi'a, which are mostly beyond the Iranian territory and the transnational network of religious tax, pilgrimage and Shi'a educational institutions provided an extraterritorial spatial imaginary that framed the spatiality of the 1979 Revolution. Of particular interest are the spaces of Shi'a eschatology that is not limited to any national territory and claims to bring justice to the world.

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Conclusion

The spaces of Khomeini's counter-hegemonic vision were not *ex nihilo*, but rested on and constrained by the spaces of Iranian nationalism. As it is shown, the Iranian nationalism has severe spatial aspects for it has formed at the same time of losing former territories of the old Persian Empire (Kashani Sabet, 1999), faced semi-colonial condition in the 19th century, experienced occupation by allied forces during the World Wars, opposed by the self-governing states in its territory (e.g. Kurdistan and Azarbaijan in 1945-6), and suffered from the US-British coup against nationalisation of oil (1953). In this context, the chapter reviewed the spaces of Iranian nationalism and suggested a spatial periodisation of the national state in Iran. Accordingly, the first period covers the pre-1970 era was more concern with nation-building in the Iranian territory. However, this changed in 1970 with the emergence of Iran as a regional power and a military vacuum thanks to a decline in British forces in the Persian Gulf. This extra-territoriality has continued despite the 1979 Revolution however as the chapter argued, the logic of integration changed from imperialist to empire regarding the spatial imaginary of revolutionaries. As it is elaborated in the chapter, benefiting from the potentiality of Shi'a Islam for providing hegemonic resources for an expansive and extra-discursive spatial state project, Khomeini's counter-hegemonic vision transformed and reimagined 'Iran' as the most important part of a larger body, i.e. the Islamic World. The Islamic World, according to Khomeini and other Islamists did not just share a common past but suffered from the same pain caused by a common enemy (the 'West') and will have the same future (messianism). Therefore, apart from the potential of messianism for a revolutionary movement, the novelty of the new interpretations of Shi'a messianism was the transformation of the national narrative. In contrast to the previous national narrative based on an orientalist racial discourse (Iran means the land of Aryans), Shi'a messianic movement formed a new base to integrate different ethnical groups. Thus, the Iranian nation was not imagined in a separation

with its region anymore. For, the nation comprised Muslim people who has a major role in a global revolution.

Considering the temporality of the national narratives, Shi'a messianic narrative of nation points to the future in contrast to the racial discourse that is obsessed with the glories of a lost past. This account of nationhood put forward a more inclusive logic of integration in comparison with the imperial state project of the late Pahlavi that rest on territorial claim and occupation. However, apart from its discursive novelty thanks to its eschatological aspects, two extra-discursive factors favoured the dominance of this narrative. The first factor was the Arab-Israel conflict in the region that territorialised colonialism for the observers and mark the fall of Arab nationalism with its secular basis. Khomeini and several other Islamists successfully transformed the problem of Palestine from its Arab nationalist origin to an Islamic problem that should be addressed by al Ummah, i.e. the Islamic commonwealth. The second factor was the oil crisis in the 1970s when several Arab oil-exporting states imposed an embargo against the Western supporters of Israel that led to a record-breaking increase in oil price for the first time in the history of the Middle East. The defeat of Arab states against Israel caused a general humiliation that in the case of Iran added to the lasting effects of the US-British coup against Mosaddegh, the hero of oil nationalisation movement in 1953. Weaponing oil put forward an extraterritorial 'We', the Muslims that received the God-given wealth of oil and suffer from its exploitation by their enemies thanks to their corrupt leaders. Therefore, as the chapter argued, oil provided an extra-territorial frame to reduce the complexity in the 1970s that favoured the counter-hegemonic vision of Khomeini for a messianic transnational Islamic revolution. Taking spatiality into account in dealing with the national state and revolution in Iran, now the ground is ready to go beyond each chapter in the next section.

7.3 Toward a synthesis of the past chapters

As it is stressed in the course of this study, in the real world, there is no separation among the political, the economic and the cultural. At the same time, one should not isolate the temporal from the spatial in her analysis of society. However, for the sake of organisation and presentation, there were particular interests and focuses in the past chapters. This section aims to follow cross chapter links to provide a more complex reconstruction of the revolutionary moment in 1979 Iran.

Although oil and oil revenues have been stressed in several accounts of the Iranian national state and 1979 Revolution, as this study suggested, one needs to reflect its importance in economic, political and spatial imaginaries. As mentioned above, oil in Iran became the object of hope, the crystallisation of the holy triad of the Iranian national state and a bridge connected Iran into other countries for they have the same exploiters. Oil encapsulates the spatiotemporality of the revolution. For it represents the limited time for correcting the national path toward progress as the oil reserves are going to finish soon. Likewise, oil is a symbol of the extra-territoriality of the revolution in relation with other oppressed and exploited nations. This is why, if the 19th century was the era of semi-colonialism, one can suggest the best description for the 20th century Iran is 'conoillisation'. This is because the oil question crystallizes the exploitative relation with the external powers and the domestic injustice. It is evident in several speeches and interviews of Khomeini that he stressed the urgency and importance of the problem of oil in the progress, justice and independence of Iran (chapters five and six).

The official name of the 1979 revolution is 'Islamic Revolution'. This labelling runs the risk of conflating this revolution to the other Islamic movements in the region. Although one should not deny the effects and resonances among any group political movements in a region, let alone those that refer to a religion, I argued that particularities of

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messianic Shi'ism facilitated a distinguished political movement that transformed the national state in Iran. One should recall here that Shi'a is not an ahistorical essence but an ensemble of semiotic resources that can be articulated in different and sometimes contradictory ways. Hence, instead of a chronological history of Shi'a Islam, the fourth chapter of this thesis developed a genealogy of Shi'ism focusing on its eschatology and martyrology. I argued that these two features made it something very new and very old and the same time. The idea of justice is what connects these two poles together, although its meaning has changed several times in the history. Khomeini's success was to make a practical fusion of these two aspects of Shi'ism.

The history of Shi'a is full of messianic movements. However, there was also a Sunni messianic movement in the region more or less at the same time with the 1979 Revolution. In November 1979 an armed religious group occupied the Grand Mosque in Mecca and called Mohammed Abdullah al-Qahtani, one of its leaders, the promised Mahdi (Trofimov, 2007). It took more than two weeks for the Saudi government with the help of Pakistani and French Special Forces to break the siege. This was a turning point for the Saudi state to become closer with conservative Wahhabi clergy and exporting Jihadism to Afghanistan to fight with 'infidel communists'[1]. Thus one can observe that there was a messianic atmosphere in the region whether it was the result of political and economic processes, the cultural turn in the 1970s and/or the simple fact that 1979 was coincided with the year 1400 in Islamic lunar calendar, turn of the century which carries messianic expectations. However, the messianism was not just limited to Islamists. There was a messianic moment in the hegemonic visions of the Shah himself. Interestingly, the name of the only party that supposed to unite the nation was Rastakhiz (Resurrection).

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[1] Khomeini condemned the siege as the conspiracy of the Great Satan, i.e. the USA.

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Discussing the messianic atmosphere of the 1970s, it seems that there is a duality at work in the history of the Iranian national state that is clearer after 1970 and transformed by the 1979 Revolution. A brief discussion of this duality can reveal its potentiality for understanding the present moment in Iran. Here first these moments of the national state in Iran are introduced, and then a few historical milestones in the post-revolutionary in the light of the findings of this study is reviewed. The Pahlavi state in pre-revolutionary Iran and in particular in the 1970s carried a tension between the two moments of 'Imperial Iran' and 'Iran as a nation-state'. Regarding Towfigh's distinction between two main strategic groups in Pahlavi era that is discussed in chapter two, the former was promoted by the land-lord strategic groups, and the latter was the political project of the technocrats embodied in the government (Towfigh, 2006). The 1979 Revolution transforms this duality to a tension between the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic in the post-revolutionary era. To understand these tensions one needs to focus on the spatio-temporalities of each part. The first category, comprising 'Imperial Iran' and the 'Islamic Revolution', is based on an extra-territorial spatiality and a 'messianic time', i.e. a spatio-temporal imagination that understand Iran as the most significant place in the world and at its most critical moment of it. In contrast, the second category, Iran as a nation-state and the Islamic Republic of Iran are territorial and working with a homogeneous 'empty time' (cf. Benjamin, 2004, p. 395). The next paragraphs of this section provide a very brief discussion on the post-revolutionary era to show the potentiality of this model in bringing new perspectives for understanding the present moment.
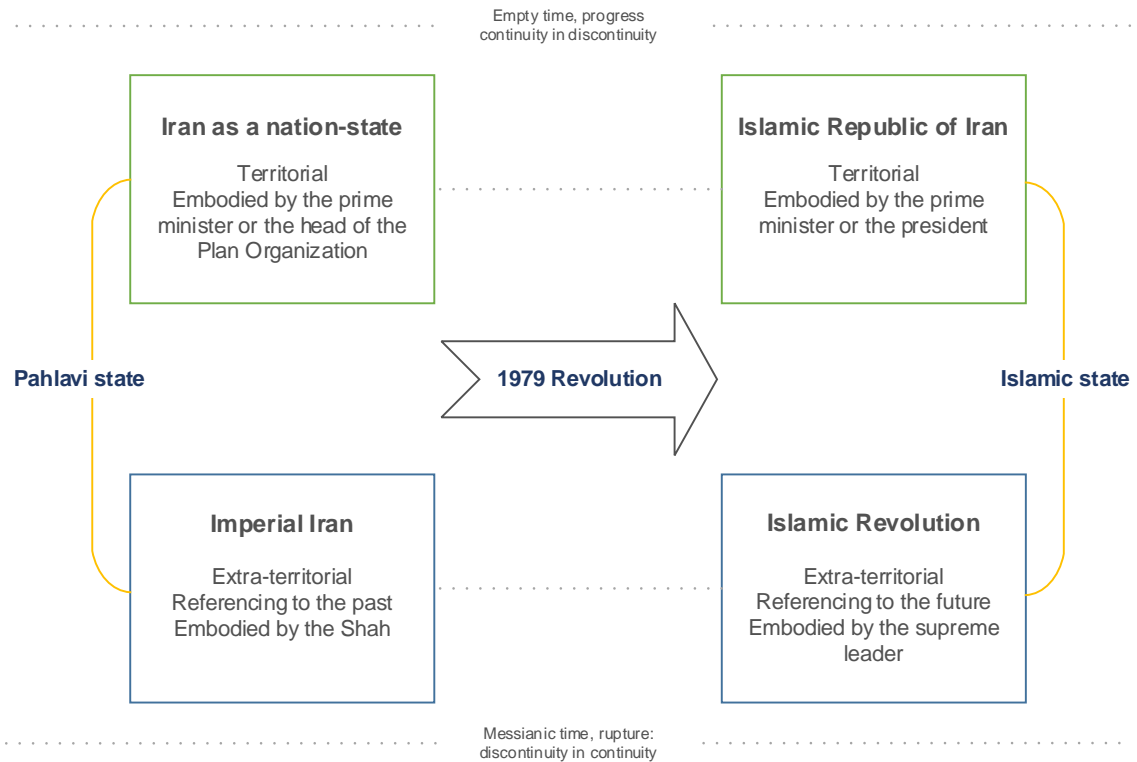
Figure 7.1: Transformation of the national state in 1970s Iran.

In the two years after the revolution, Khomeini and his supporters managed to consolidate and institutionalise their power by suppressing their rivals. An important moment in that era was the break out of the eight years' war between Iran and Iraq that can reveal the two moments of the Iranian state. Two countries since the fall of the Hashemite dynasty in Iraq (1958) had not an easy relation. They stood on two sides of the cold war and spent a lot in modernising their militaries. With the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser (1970) and the defeat of Arab states and in particular Egypt and Syria from Israel in 1973 war, Iraq Baath party that since 1979 embodied in Saddam Hussein emerged as the champion of pan-Arabism. While Iraq cautiously welcomed the revolution in Iran, this country had an important position in the Khomeini extra-territorial hegemonic vision.

Following the strategy of 'exporting the Islamic Revolution', the new state in Iran encouraged and actively supported Shi'a people in Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia to revolt against their governments (Hunter, 1988). Iraq did not only control the

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majority of Shi'a holy places and host the main Shi'a religious schools but had a significant (60%) Shi'a community with less political power compared with the minority Sunni population (Donovan, 2011, pp. 86–87). From 1950s the Shi'a clergy in Iraq became more political and perhaps inspired by the success of the revolution in Iran, they called for an armed struggle against the Baath Party in 1979 (Chalcraft, 2016, p. 402). At the same time, Iran has an Arab minority population mainly live in the oil-rich province of Khuzestan near Iraqi borders. In this context, one can analyse the war between Iran and Iraq (1980-8) from the viewpoint of rival spatial imaginaries and the logic of integration. Building on a useful analytical distinction between contiguous imperialist space and a discontinuous empire, one could say that, while Iraq aimed to free and integrate the 'Arab lands' through imperialist integration, i.e. an annexation of Khuzestan. In contrast, Iran pursued the path of integration based on an expanding an empire. Thus, the main aim of Iran was to delegitimise the Iraqi state and encourage an Islamic revolution there. In this context, the war between Iran and Iraq could be considered as one between two logics of practising power and integration. While Iran was attempting at integrating Iraqi state to the Islamic Revolution led by Iran, Iraq sought to integrate parts of Iran's territory in the name of its Arab speaking inhabitants. The messianic aspects of the Islamic Revolution and its extra-territoriality discursively empowers Iran to form extra-territorial supporting groups for its cause, e.g. Hezbollah in Lebanon and more recently pro-Iranian support groups in Syria and Yemen possible. Khomeini pictured his wish for an Islamic state that will unite all Muslim peoples and lands on the early days of the post-revolutionary era.

> I hope that all Islamic nations who are fighting each other, for the agitations and manipulations of foreigners, be awake and united. [They can] make a great Islamic state, one state with one flag: there is no god but Allah (لا اله الا الله). This state can be victorious against the whole world. (February 25, 1979) (Khomeini, n.d.-a, vol. 6, p. 226)

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He portrayed Iran as the forerunner of the Islamic Revolution toward this Islamic empire. Another clue for this speculation is the famous quote from Khomeini message after the acceptance of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 598 that urged the cease fire and effectively ended the war. For he likened accepting the UN resolution to drinking a 'poisoned chalice' (Khomeini, n.d.-b, vol. 21, p. 88). His metaphor is important for indeed the acceptance pushed back the Islamic Revolution in favour of the Islamic Republic and ended a phase of messianism in Iran. For, the war for Iran was the continuity of the messianic moment of the state. One can imagine the nuclear program of Iran in the postwar era as the initiator of a new phase of the messianic moment of the state in Iran. No wonder that the acceptance of 'Iran nuclear deal', i.e. an international agreement on the nuclear program of Iran that marked the end of Iran's aggressive program of enriching uranium, which can be used to build an atomic bomb, was described as the glass of poison. For it also finished the new phase of messianism, although it is still soon to conclude this.

7.4   Limitations and future works

This study was an attempt to explain how Khomeini achieved hegemony in the 1979 Revolution. However, it also aimed to contribute to the understanding of the national state in Iran focusing on an important moment in the transformation of the state power during the 1970s. Thus, at best it could be one piece of the puzzle in the big picture. The problematic of the national state in Iran needs collective and accumulative theoretical efforts that adopt various spatial and temporal perspectives. Moreover, Jessop (2015, p. 58) suggests that six dimensions of a state are its 'forms of representation, institutional architecture, modes of intervention, social bases, state projects, and hegemonic visions'. Regarding these dimensions, this study focused more on the latter two with the aim of reconstructing the revolutionary moment in 1979 and explain Khomeini as its dominant figure. Hence, a suggestion for further

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researches on the 1979 Revolution is to consider continuities and discontinuities in the first four dimensions. Such studies can provide multiple periodisations of the national state in Iran and contribute to an account of the present moment.

At the same time, it was beyond the scope of this research to have a direct analysis of the everyday life experience of people in Iran. Instead, it focused on official documents, oral history of a few key figures, diaries and so forth. Thus, it approaches political, economic and spatial imaginaries mostly from a meso-level starting point. Therefore, a first-hand historical study of the everyday life of the Iranian people in the 1970s can shed light from a less abstract point to the same issue and enrich it. Two suggestions for such studies could be the shift in popular understanding of justice and oil. As it is discussed in the past chapters, both are significant in the 1979 revolutionary moment. One can observe that the understanding of oil has changed in Iran from the 'black gold' to 'black curse' with decisive moments of 1953 coup, the oil boom of 1970s and its consequent crisis, and the dominance of 'structural adjustment programmes prescribed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in the 1990s and so forth. In the same way, a shift in the concept of justice can be traced by discursive analyses of movies, newspapers, novels and so forth. Perhaps it would be interesting to consider the intersectionality of popular understanding of oil and justice.

Although this study has attempted to provide a spatial account of the revolution, it cannot cover all aspects of it. Thus, one can study the state power in terms of its spatial politics. For example, a study of urban projects can shed light on the Iranian nationalism and its transformations by emphasising its spatial materialisation. In this context, Tehran seems to be an interesting starting point. Not just because it is the capital city but for by the mid-1970s, 'Tehran – with less than 20 percent of the country's population – had more than 68 percent of its civil servants; 82 percent of its registered companies; 50 percent of its manufacturing production; 66 percent of its university

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students; 50 percent of its doctors; 42 percent of its hospital beds; 40 percent of its cinema-going public; 70 percent of its travellers abroad; 72 percent of its printing presses; and 80 percent of its newspaper readers' (Abrahamian, 2008, p. 142). Moreover, it was and is the main destination of the internal migration and has encapsulated several networks with ties with different parts of Iran. At the same time, it has represented the future of the country with its streets, skyscrapers and urban monuments. The Shah was following a major project to build a new centre and, in a way, reinvent Tehran perhaps to spatialize the imperial Iran (chapter six). The Islamic state also introduced large urban projects to materialise the Islamic Revolution and locate Tehran in it. Thus, it seems fruitful to trace the transformations of state and provide an alternative periodisation from a Tehran's perspective.

Another limitation of this study is overemphasising the national and regional at the expense of the local. This runs the risk of homogenising a large and complex mix of diverse local dynamics. The revolutionary moment was not the same in large cities, small cities and villages. Kurdistan with its history of political movements, its location with Iraqi Kurdistan and majority of Sunni Muslims was not integrated to the national state in Iran and did not have the same experience of the 1979 Revolution with Tehran. The revolution has transformed, included, and/or excluded the local power networks. Studying the history of these local networks and their (trans)formations, their relations with the central state, different forms and basis of inclusion or exclusion before and after the revolution, can contribute to a more complex understanding of state power and the 1979 Revolution.

Although the Iranian nationalism and its spaces were discussed in chapter six, it did not cover the issue of citizenship in term of the legal system. Therefore, a focus on the legal system and in particular the Iranian nationality law and its shifts vis-à-vis the state (trans)formations can shed light on the logic of integration and provide a periodisation

of the national state in Iran. Perhaps there are three critical moments in dealing with citizenship law in Iran. The First moment is the expulsion of Iraqi people with Iranian background in the 1970s and their integration into society before and after the revolution. One can compare the inclusion of those who are close to Shi'a power networks in the holy cities and the Faili Kurds who were also expelled from Iraq, lost their citizenship, displaced and partly forced to march across the Iranian borders. While the former groups have many figures who became high-rank officials in Iran, the latter group has a hard time getting their citizenship from the Iranian state. Interestingly, regarding the two moments of the Islamic state, while in the Constitution having an Iranian origin is mentioned in the list of qualifications for the President of the Islamic Republic, there is no such obligatory condition for the other high positions of the Islamic state. Thus, currently, the Larijani brothers (Sadeq and Ali) who are the Chief Justice and the Speaker of the Parliament of Iran, and the Chairman of Expediency Discernment Council are born in Iraq. In fact, the last one, Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi was the leader of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq that aimed for an Islamic revolution there similar to Iran. The second moment is when more than two million Afghan citizens fled from the civil war and political unrest since 1980 to Iran and stay for almost four decades. They have not received Iranian citizenship and have suffered from serious discriminations. The last moment is the several emigration waves from Iran in reaction to the revolution, the war or in hope for a better economic, political or cultural conditions. These migrations resulted in the Iranian diaspora with more than five million Iranians live outside of the country, mostly in the North America and Europe. Apart from studying the legal system, another important issue is focusing on the national imagination at the micro level: how did the national identity change in the 1970s era that made the counter-hegemonic vision of Khomeini appealing to the people?

Another important aspect of the state power in Iran is its gender politics, which was out of the scope of this study. Gender relations and its apparent shift regarding the 1979 Revolution is an important entry point to research the state power in Iran. Despite the mainstream understanding of the 'reactionary' Islamic movements, the Islamic Revolution has encouraged female education and is very successful in integrating the marginalised parts of the society in its gender politics. The increase in the rate of literacy and female higher education, and the very successful family planning in the post-revolutionary era are important clues to be traced in the further studies. One can also focus on the obligatory hijab in the Islamic Republic and its role in practising state power in the public spaces. Moreover, this study is not concerned with the reproductive policies of the Iranian state. Family planning started in 1967 in line with the Shah's White Revolution but it was not very successful in decreasing the fertility rate. In contrast, Iran witnessed a baby boom in the immediate post-revolutionary era. The Islamic state had a successful pro-natalist policy during the war (1980-1988). However, in the postwar era the state launched its family planning program which was coincided with introducing comprehensive development plans in the Islamic Republic. The new family planning was one of the most successful in word and managed to reduce the fertility rate from 6.5 in 1986 to 1.7 in 2011. What can account for these changes in reproductive policies and gender politics and their success in Iran? How are they related to the state projects and hegemonic visions? Answering these questions can provide another periodisation of the national state and enrich the current understanding of the state power in Iran.

The list of limitations is for sure more extended than what mentioned above. Considering the current underdevelopment of the state theory about Iran and the time limitation of a PhD dissertation, this study had to neglect some perspectives, dimensions and histories. At the same time, the existing archive for studying the historical (trans)formations of the national state in Iran does not equally cover all its

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aspects. Therefore it is harder to discuss the state space compared to for example the political economy of the Pahlavi state. Another issue in the way of writing this thesis is the problem of the target reader. In order to make the arguments accessible for a reader with almost no knowledge about the Middle East, Iran and Shi'a Islam, the study has to provide historical backgrounds from time to time. Although this can affect the rhythm of the text in some cases, perhaps there is no escape from it. Despite the mentioned limitation, this research hopes to put one step forward in explaining the rise and success of Khomeini, and theorising the state power and the 1979 Revolution while there is a long way ahead. For, the history of the present moment in Iran cannot be grasped without an account of the revolution.

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