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SHI'ITE REFORMISM VERSUS SHI'ITE
FUNDAMENTALISM: A COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF SHI'ITE DISCURSIVE
PRACTICES IN 20TH CENTURY IRAN: THE
CASES OF KHOMEINI AND
HAKAMIZADEH

Mozafar Banihashemi

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DISSERTATION

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Dedication

In memory of my father and my brother.

This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

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ABSTRACT

The patterns of socio/political transformation that Iran went through in the 20th century generated episodes of great ideological divergence within Iran's shi'ite establishment. The current study seeks to shed light on an instance of textual exchange that took place in the earlier part of the century – in 1943 – but became the bedrock for subsequent discursive conflicts within shi'ism notably during and after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Adopting the format of a dialogue and operating within the milieu of a shi'ite outlook, the authors of this exchange, Hakamizadeh and Khomeini, touched upon several social and political topics such as the God/human relation, the notion of Imamate, the institution of the clergy, the state, and the law. In this doctrinal dialogue, one writer, the ex-cleric Hakamizadeh, set out to depict shi'ism as simply a persuasive system to deter the individual from harmful deeds. His critic, the cleric Khomeini, represents shi'ism as a divine regulatory system to codify the standard of not only ethics and manners but also the political

management of society. Three decades later, Khomeini found himself intimately engaged in the construction of such an Islamic regulatory system, namely the Islamic Republic of Iran. This study explains how Khomeini's construction of this system after 1979 was inspired by his analytical conception of an ultimate order that he communicated in the above discursive exchanges more than three decades earlier.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In two distinct eras in the history of Iran, first in the period of the Safavid dynasty (1501-1722) and later in the period of the Pahlavi dynasty in the 20th century (1925-1979), shi'ism prospered into social and political preeminence. From an obscure sectarian collectivity, shi'ism evolved into a delineated religious institution during the rule of the Safavids. During this period, the shi'ite establishment served as functionaries of the state and advisors to the kings, exercising a significant influence over the social and political affairs of the state. Concurrently, the same establishment gradually built an institutional structure independent from the state that was completed subsequent to the demise of the Safavids and lasted through the inception of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 (Arjomand, 1984).

In the 20th century, in the face of the modernizing efforts of the Pahlavi state, the shi'ite hierocracy retreated largely into political quietism. On the basis of the theological and doctrinal principle of religion/state separation, a group of the traditional ulama took the quietist approach. However, another group of the clergy tactically complied with the Shah's policies only to bounce back in the last quarter of the century through an astounding sociopolitical upheaval, establishing de jure dominance over the political structure.

The above two eras coincided with two transformative epochs in which modern developments were about to change the course of world history. First, in the 17th century, the streams of enlightenment began to penetrate every aspect of life in the West, and Cartesian thought became the dominant mode of inquiry. Second, in the last quarter of the 20th century, the third wave of democratization around the world, especially in modernizing societies, grew to become a towering force of social change.

While affected in some part by these developments, Iran – as the bearer of an old civilization – remained in large part resistant to them. In both transformations, religious obscurantism formed the ethos of this historical anachronism (Milani, 2004). Under the Safavids, shi'ism in its fundamentalist form became “the dominant language of politics” (Milani, 2004, p. 28). In this sense, fundamentalist shi'ism entered the political sphere as the religion of a patrimonial state granting certain caesaropapist prerogatives to the Safavid dynasty (Arjomand, 1984). In the last quarter of the 20th century, a parallel version of fundamentalist shi'ism developed into a statist ideology to legitimize the rule of the shi'ite hierocracy in a modern theocracy. In both eras, two prominent clerics, Majlesi in the 17th century and Khomeini in the 20th century, played a determining part in derailing the Iranian modernist trajectory.

The obstruction of modern developments appears to be the continuation of Iran's failed experiment with certain aspects of modernity that, according to Milani (2000, and *tajadod setizi*), began between the 10th and 13th centuries. Concentrating on the second era of the two historical periods, this study focuses on the shi'ite blueprint of social change in twentieth century Iran.

The advent of Constitutional Revolution (1905-1909), in spite of its eventual failure in establishing constitutional democracy in Iran and especially the Pahlavis' modernizing efforts, catapulted the modernization movement in Iran. As a result of its political prominence and amid its traditional ethos, shi'ism found itself laboring with modern life. This gave birth to two main contesting discourses within the shi'ite hierocracy - modernist and fundamentalist. It should be noted that some contention exists among analysts of shi'ite Iran in the usage of the terms “fundamentalism” and “traditionalism”. Arjomand (1984) uses

“shi’ite fundamentalism” to refer to radical Islamism in the Iranian context and differentiates it from “shi’ite traditionalism.” While both trends tend to sustain and reproduce Islam in what they consider its authentic and literal mode, shi’ite fundamentalism “represents the revitalizing synthesis not of the ulama but of Moslem laymen” (Arjomand, 1984, p. 229). Accordingly, “shi’ite fundamentalism” tends to transcend intermediary institutions as its referent framework and resort instead to its main sources such as the Qur’an and hadith. Arjomand, furthermore, proposes the term ‘revolutionary traditionalism’ to be contrasted with shi’ite reformism. ‘Revolutionary traditionalism’, according to Arjomand, is oppositionally geared to the part of Western cultural influence that carries a sense of militancy against the inferior “other”, and is increasingly interested in a sociopolitical overhaul. Riesebrodt (1998), on the other hand, prefers the term “fundamentalism” due to its connotation of a literal regress to a past conceived as the “Golden Age” of Islam. It is fair to assert that both “shi’ite fundamentalism” and “revolutionary traditionalism” identify with literalism and a puritan ideal order; however, the latter attains distinction by its desire for a revolutionary transformation of society. For the sake of simplicity and parsimony, I use ‘shi’ite fundamentalism’ and ‘revolutionary traditionalism’ interchangeably, depending upon whether my analysis takes place in the context of literalism or radical change or both. This study thus focuses primarily on discourses of shi’ite fundamentalism and shi’ite modernism, also termed respectively revolutionary traditionalism and shi’ite reformism.

The advent of the Islamic Republic of Iran shifted the political place of shi’ism from the periphery to the core, thus providing a new twist in the shi’ite modern maelstrom and forcing the two competing shi’ite trends to reflect on their assumptions, constraints, methods, and motives.

Modernity and Iran

Modernity, an intrinsically sociological phenomenon (Giddens, 1990), refers to modes of social life or systems that emerged in post-feudal Europe around the 17th century and gained global influence in the 20th century (Giddens, 1990, 1991; Hall et al., 1992). As a post-traditional order, modernity has given rise to an increasingly complex system of differentiated social institutions. Each institution possesses a certain degree of autonomy and follows its own patterns of change and development.

Remarkable in this process are the emergence of the capitalist mode of production and the nation-state, the formation of democratic rulership whose legitimacy is based on popular will, the expansion of civil society, the separation of the public and private sphere, the relegation of religion to a differentiated sphere of society resulting in the severance of church/state unification, the emancipation of the realm of ideas from the enslaving embrace of religious dogma, and the institutionalization of critical reasoning and the permanency of radical doubt in all areas of knowledge. Beyond these epistemological and institutional developments, modernity interweaves deeply with individuality. The new individualistic outlook centers on the natural and inalienable rights of the individual (Giddens, 1991; Milani, 1998).

As stated above, Iran was not exempt from the consequences of modernity. The discourse of modernity has significantly influenced all dimensions of social life in Iran in the past two hundred years, a small period for historical Iran. Modernity has taken a distinctly central place in the accounts of social change in twentieth and twenty-first century Iran.

Institutionally, Iran's encounter with modernity dates back to the early 19th century during the reign of the Qajar Dynasty (1794-1925). Iran experienced various domestic and

international challenges during the course of the century. Domestically, the central government remained impotent and powerless; the administrative system was recalcitrant and ineffective; military forces were unqualified and weak; the fiscal structure was antiquated and unproductive; and the educational system was underdeveloped (Issawi, 1971).

Additionally, Iran was the target of Russia and Britain's economic and political interests. In the North, Iran engaged in two devastating wars with Russia which resulted in humiliating defeats and ensuing treaties of Gulistan (1813) and Turkomanchai (1828). From the South, the British government invaded Iran and forced the Paris treaty (1857) on the Qajars (Abrahamian, 1982; Keddie, 2003). As Abrahamian (1982) notes, "thus military defeats led to diplomatic concessions; diplomatic concessions produced commercial capitulations; commercial capitulations paved the way for economic penetration; and economic penetration, by undermining traditional handicrafts, was to cause drastic social dislocations" (p. 52). The debilitating results of these factors made modern reform a necessity for the country.

Thus, much to the consternation of the King, Nassir-al-Din Shah, and the ulama, several state-oriented attempts at rapid modernization by the Prime Minister, Amir Kabir, began, first in the military establishment in early 1800s, and later in other social arenas such as the judiciary, economy, education, and politics (Nashat, 2002; Abrahamian, 1982; Vahdat, 2002). The implementation of modern reforms varied from building an army, constructing 15 factories to supply the army, to publishing the first official newspaper (Newspaper of Current Affairs). In 1851 the country's first secular polytechnic school (Dar-al-Fonun or Abode of Learning) was founded in which social and applied sciences, medicine, military sciences, professional training for administrative officials, and even band music were taught.

As Moaddel (2005) notes, the school “became an effective channel for the transformation of thought, having considerable social impact and throwing doubt on the adequacy of the curriculum in the traditional schools” (p. 110).

Reform struck the state’s organization of finance as well. It established a new tax system on fief holders, tried to rein in on government’s expenses and increased state revenues by raising exports. For the implementation of these reforms, the government decided to seek professional assistance from France and the Austrian-Hungarian Empire (Abrahamian, 1982). To some extent, these reforms, although short-lived, helped rationalize the function of the state, increase administrative efficiency, raise the standard of living, and encourage the practice of honesty, sincerity, and social trust. Still, this experience with modernity concentrated on the scientific and technological achievement and exhibited an anemic interest in introducing democratic institutions (Vahdat, 2002).

However, modernist reforms received fierce resistance from three sources. First, the Qajars had no vision and no interest in modernizing the country. The king of the Qajars at the time, Naser al-Din Shah, ordered to truncate modern initiatives in favor of a slower pace of social change. In this decision, he was pressured by the other two sources. Due to the establishment of protective tariffs and the presence of Austrian-Hungarian professional and technical advisors in Iran, the Russian and British governments became worried about their economic interests and political influence in Iran. Through diplomatic pressure, threat of war, and their influence in the royal court, these two powers persuaded the King to digress from reforms. Finally, conservative shi’ite ulama positioned themselves against modern reforms. This opposition took an uncompromising character when reforms were directed toward the secularization of laws and the court system and modernization of culture (Nashat,

2002; Moaddel, 2005). Moaddel (2005) specifically characterizes the second half of 19th century Iran as “a period of intense conflict between the reformists and conservatives over cultural change.” (p. 109). The differential association of the shi’ite ulama in this cultural feud is of particular import to this dissertation, and thus warrants exclusive attention at this juncture.

Historical Background and Dynamics

The European and Russian encroachment in Iran paved the way for preserving the authoritarian structure of power, while providing an opportunity for Iranian intellectuals to become familiar with Western thoughts and spread modern ideas across Iranian society. Through travel and education abroad, publications and translations, and the establishment of educational institutions, a group of distinct and heterogeneous intellectuals embarked on the task of circulating the discourse of modernity in the country. The translations of Descartes’ *Discourse on Method*, Darwin’s *The Origins of Species*, and works of Newton exemplify Iranian intellectuals’ attempt to appropriate modern ideas, especially the emphasis on human reasoning and discarding religion as the sole source of knowledge (Abrahamian, 1982; Vahdat, 2002; Moaddel, 2005).

The shi’ite ulama’s reaction to these reforms was fierce. Having already gained powerful standing due to the weakness of the central bureaucratic status, the ulama perceived the spread of modern thought as a serious threat to their religious and cultural hegemony. Two historically consequential developments with significant cultural implications within the institution of shi’ism cleared the way for the shi’ite ulama to strengthen the social standing of orthodoxy while remaining doctrinally fragmented: (a) the emergence of the Usuli School, and (b) the Babi movement.

Rise of the Usuli Tradition

In the early decades of the 19th century, the competition and rivalry between the two major schools of shi'ism, the *Akhbari* (traditionalist) and the *Usuli* (orthodox or principalist), ended with the triumph of the Usulis. The Akhbari School was prominent in the 11th century and rose to dominance again in the 17th and 18th centuries. According to the Akhbari teachings, juridical authority is the undivided and sacrosanct domain of the Prophets and his descending Imams. However, the *occultation* claim of the 12th Imam in 872 A.D. stopped the exertion of this authority. The source of religious jurisprudence during his absence was restricted to the Qur'an and the Traditions and Practices (*akhbars*) of the Prophet and Imams (Algar, 1968; Hairi, 1977, Arjomand, 1984 and 1988b; Keddie, 1995; Moaddel, 2005). By denying the extension of juristic authority to individuals other than Imams, the Akhbari tradition disclaimed the need for an independent interpretation of the Qur'an and the akhbars, as well as systematic reasoning for law finding, i.e. the practice known as *ijtihad* in Islamic jurisprudence. According to Arjomand (1984), Akhbari traditionalism “tended to prefer philosophy and hermeneutics and devotional mysticism, centering on the figures of the Imams, to the syllogistic hairsplitting of the jurists” (p. 146). The ulama's function, therefore, is to accumulate and narrate these akhbars. This practice, in fact, framed the ulama's religious legitimacy and had two significant political implications.

First the Akhbari orientation prescribed a sense of devotionalism to the Imams as the basis of the ulama's religious authority. This embodied a structure of authority sanctioned by tradition whereby honor becomes the basis of an autonomous domination, in the words of Weber, “the domination by *honoratiores*” (Weber, 1978, p. 1009, 1055). The devotional attachment to the charisma of the prophetic-Imami lineage was appealing to the masses and

became the basis for a social stratification between clerical notables and ordinary believers (Arjomand, 1984). Within this social arrangement, by exercising religious authority as collectors and narrators of the akhbars, the clerical estate gained a distinct sociopolitical legitimacy. This leads to the second political implication.

In the political realm, the assertion of having lineage to the house of the Prophet boosts the ulama's authority. This is specifically noteworthy in the course of the Safavids' reign. Building on their religious authority, the Akhbari ulama consolidated their sociopolitical domination and refused to assign their religious authority to a socially differentiated sphere. In other words, the Akhbari doctrine upheld a unified structure of political and religious domination (Arjomand, 1984).

The formation of the Qajar dynasty in 1794 went together with the eclipse of the Akhbaris and rise of the rival shi'ite school of the Usulis. The Usulis focused on restoring the venerable status of the ijtehad that had been belittled by the Akhbari School. The act of jurisprudence, thus, concentrated on the practice of certain jurists, called *mujtahids*, who were qualified and certified for independent reasoning and judgment. The Usuli mujtahids appropriated the body of the Practices and Traditions of the Imams and the Prophet that was accumulated in the course of the Akhbari dominance. In the words of Arjomand (1984), this accumulation "served as invaluable and indispensable sources upon which the value-rational ingenuity of the Usuli jurists in creation of new legal norms could be exercised" (P. 153). According to the teachings of the Usuli School, it is incumbent upon ordinary believers to follow legal rulings of the mujtahids. Consequent to this, each individual is required to choose a living mujtahid and adhere to his juristic judgment (Amanat, 1988; Arjomand, 1988c; Keddie, 1995; Moaddel, 2005).

By extending the law finding legitimacy beyond the Prophet and Imams' rights, the Usuli orientation reestablished the legal authority of the clerical estate. However, unlike the Akhbaris, the Usuli School refrained from the extension of this authority to the political sphere. Furthermore, the Qajar state enhanced the Ulama's legal legitimacy by conceding the autonomous function of educational and judicial institutions to the Ulama, but uncompromisingly maintained a monopoly over temporal power. In this way, the Qajar rule smoothed the way for the formation of a dual structure of authority consisting of the religio/legal and secular/political. In the light of this argument, it is fair to say that the dominance of the Usuli intellectualism went along with the consolidation of the shi'ite hierocracy (Arjomand, 1984). Ironically, it was Khomeini, a senior Usuli mujtahid (Abrahamian, E., 1993; Arjomand, S.A., 1988c), who eventually digressed from the Usuli doctrine to extend the right of legal authority to the domain of the political, thus dismantling the aforementioned duality in favor of the theocratic structure.

Rise of the Babi Movement

The second historical event involves the emergence of the Babi movement in the mid-19th century. This movement surfaced within the shi'a tradition during a period of economic decline and the menace of political disintegration. As the result of two defeats during wars with Russia, the central government was weak and financially bankrupt. People were over-taxed and enormously pressured by the burden of the wars (Issawi, 1971; Keddie, 1980; Moaddel, 2005). Bemoaning these conditions, the Babi movement denounced the government in the first place. Under duress, disaffected masses found Babism politically appealing and joined the movement in significant numbers. It is estimated that 20 per cent of the total population actively supported the movement (Moaddel, 2005). Furthermore, the

Babi faith disparaged the religious and ideological superiority of the shi'ite orthodoxy and targeted the shi'ite hierocracy as its main enemy.

Babism adheres to the basic tenets of shi'ism, which is the belief in the absolute and permanence of God's authority. This authority is mediated through the Prophet and after him to the 12 Imams to men. However, the disappearance of the Mahdi, the 12th Imam, put an end to this mediation. At this juncture though, the Babi faith departs from traditional tenets. It states that in the absence of the last Imam, the Mahdi, it is up to the *Bab*¹ to function as intermediary, and he becomes the *gate (Bab)* between the *Hidden Imam* and men. According to Arjomand, (1984), "Mirza Ali Muhammad at first claimed to be the Bab (gate) to the Hidden Imam, but soon relegated the position of the Bab to a disciple and claimed mahdihood as the redresser of the house of Muhammad." (p. 254). In this sense, the Babi faith falls under the category of millenarian extremist movements. The Bab proposed a new scripture called the *Bayan* or "Enunciation" superseding the Qur'an to the extent that he eventually claimed to be advocating a new religion. In an attempt to portray Babism as a reformist movement, Bayan put forth certain modernist ideas; as Keddie notes (2003):

In his scripture and preachings the Bab spoke out for greater social justice, and his partially modern, perhaps "bourgeois" contents is seen in such points as a high valuation of productive work, a denunciation of begging... a call for mild and humanitarian treatment of children and others, and the end to the prohibition of taking interest. He also called, if not exactly in modern economic terms, for guarantees for personal property, freedom of trade and profits, and the reduction of arbitrary taxes. He called notably for a higher position for women, who were to be educated and not

¹ Ali Muhammad Shirazi, the founder of the Babi movement, called himself *Bab*, which means *gate*.

to be beaten, and for limits on polygamy. The already educated but formerly secluded Babi poet and preacher, Qorrat al-Ain, was reported to have preached unveiled; most Babi women did not dare go that far at this early time (p. 46).

In addition, the Bayan prescribes a wide range of meticulous ethical injunctions to regulate various aspects of personal and public life. Arjomand (1984) maintains that this generates a tension between “chiliasm and ethical rigorism” within the Babi movement. He states that,

Though undoubtedly reflecting the intention of the Bab, it is difficult to assess the immediate reception of his ethical regulations by his followers. While one group of converts, predominantly the craftsmen and merchants, can be presumed to have found them palatable, another group, chiefly the young seminarians (*tullab*) hankering after chiliastic action, could not have cared much for them (P. 254).

The tension, however, did not prevent the movement from gaining the support from ordinary populace and noteworthy members of the shi'ite hierocracy in its short-lived history.

By opposing both the shi'ite establishment and the state, the spread of the Babi movement appeared to undermine the aforementioned dual structure of authority. Consequently, both sides of this duality, the shi'ite hierocracy and the Qajar state, joined together to violently suppress the movement. Due to insufficient modern transportation and communication, the Babi movement was not able to mobilize its mass supporters in a coordinate and coherent way (Keddie, N., 1981). With the backing of the shi'ite hierocracy, the Qajar government employed its newly reformed and organized military machinery to cruelly defeat the Babi revolts.

Social Reform and Fragmented Shi'ism

The suppression helped the shi'ite establishment to solidify its doctrinal orthodoxy while it remained fragmented. With the reestablishment of the practice of ijtehad, major mujtahids enjoyed the authority of independent ruling and interpretation concerning religious law, a practice that deepened the pluralistic make-up of the shi'ite institutions. Moaddel (2005) states “this pluralism made their unity vulnerable to the crisscrossing pressures emanating from diverse social forces.... As a result, they almost always displayed disunity vis-à-vis virtually all historically significant issues facing the public” (p. 102). Moaddel's insight can be an effective lens in assessing the predicament of the shi'ite hierocracy when Iran marched into the 20th century.

Towards the end of the 19th century, Iranian society was marred by multiple level crises. The Qajar state's subordination to and dependence on Russia and England resulted in the loss of control of internal markets by indigenous merchants and traders. Urban and working classes increasingly suffered by high rate of inflation and unemployment (Foran, 1993). The central government was powerless. Centrifugal provincial forces increasingly eroded the authority of the state. Society, according to Abrahamian (1980), was deeply disintegrated and “divided horizontally into a ruling court with no organizational roots among the population: and the population itself was fragmented vertically into a number of distinct sectarian, linguistic, and tribal communities” (p. 98). The shi'ite establishment held the Qajars responsible for the country's calamities and began to distance itself from the ruling state.

Amir Kabir's partial social reform, described above, led to the formation of an intelligentsia that became inspirational in propagating modern concepts such as

constitutionalism, national sovereignty, popular will, individual rights, and the secular state. While older traditional ulama perceived the spread of modern concepts as a threat to Islam, and felt challenged and displaced by the emerging intelligentsia, a group of young clerics found these ideas appealing and forged an alliance with the nascent intellectual group. The embrace of new concepts was notable in the realm of political culture. As Abrahamian (1980) observes:

The old basis of legitimacy – the divine right of kings – was gradually replaced by the concepts of elective institutions, representative governments, and inalienable rights of man. Secularism gradually eroded the political influence of the wide gulf between the governors and the governed. The traditional aloofness of the political system from the social system became unacceptable as citizens viewed the government not as distant court uninvolved in society, but, on the contrary, as the vanguard of economic and social modernization. And the old tolerant attitude toward cultural heterogeneity was gradually supplanted by an intolerant crusade for national homogeneity (p. 99)

It became increasingly clear that a historically significant social change was in the making in Iran at the threshold of the 20th century. The Iranian shi'ite hierocracy entered this era of modern social change structurally and ideologically fragmented. In the face of the Constitutional Revolution in the first decade of the 20th century, this fragmentation translated itself into the formation of two distinct shi'ite discourses: reformist and fundamentalists. Throughout the 20th century, through a web of social actions, shi'ism played a determining role in the process of social and cultural change that eventually led to the development of a shi'ite state in 1979 in Iran.

Rationale and Purpose

The two aforementioned discourses figure logically but differentially in the course of this historical process of transformation. On one side, demonstrating a positive reading of modernity, a group of traditional clerics takes on the task of adapting shi'ite Islam to the impulse of modernization. On the other side, viewing modernity as a threat to shi'ite traditional values, another traditional group of clerics employs the fundamentalist discourse of shi'ism as an ideological instrument, eventually entirely derailing the path toward modernization in Iran. Thus, in a broader sense, the formation and practice of these two discourses were shaped in reaction to a larger discourse: modernity. Specifically, elemental to the dispute between the two discourses was the establishment of an Islamic government. Led by a traditionalist but moderate Ayatollah named Na'ini, reformists believed that the institution of a true Islamic state is contingent upon the return of the hidden Imam. During the Occultation of the Imam, Muslims are commanded to go along with the best living form of the state, which, in Na'ini's account, was constitutional democracy. The ulama will advise the government in safeguarding the shari'a, but will not engage in the practice of power. The opposing faction led by Ayatollah Nuri was repulsive to the professed affinity between democracy and Islam. He advocated the restoration of pristine Islam and, in Milani's (2009) phrase, "dismissed democracy and the rule of law as inferior alternatives to the divine, eternal, atemporal, nonerrant wisdom embodied in the Qur'an and shari'a."² While promoting anti-constitutional views, Nuri did not venture into formulating his desired form of government. The burden came to rest on Khomeini who seven decades later picked up Nuri's anti-democratic views and put together an Islamic version of government under the

²Milani's article can be seen at: <http://www.tnr.com/print/article/the-new-democrats>

authoritative command of a supreme jurist. Modern social life has pushed the shi'ite reformist and fundamentalist discourses to forge their own distinctive patterns of social experience.

Broadly, this dissertation aims at investigating how the different discourses within shi'ism became involved in changing contemporary social relations in Iran. Specifically, this dissertation will address how in the construction of modern reality shi'ism emerged as two distinct modes of representation and discursive regimes, reformist and fundamentalist. It will assess how these two distinct discourses reexamined and restructured their understanding of shi'ism as well as modern social life in Iran, and in the process came to reconstruct the social life itself.

Within this analytical envelope, this dissertation gives weight to the cultural and symbolic dimensions of social transformations in contemporary Iran. This “cultural turn,” to quote Hall, comprises the thread that runs through this entire study and underscores key sections of this academic research. This study, specifically, aims to employ concepts such as language, meaning, sign, symbols, signification, etc. within the context of a comparative analysis of the above two discourses. To this end, it is hoped that it contributes to the understanding of the dynamics of religion and politics through a cultural lens that has received less attention in the study of social change in Iran.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This study is an attempt to explore how, in reaction to the advance of modernity, the two main shi'ite strands of reformism and fundamentalism shaped their own distinctive domain of meanings and practices, and in turn, influenced the course of modernity in contemporary Iran. Rather than reflecting submissively or dismissively on the reality of modernization, the aforementioned shi'ite discourses have exercised significant agency and actively negotiated their relationship to new sociopolitical dynamics. By stressing the autonomous capacity of social agency, this study demonstrates the analytical and explanatory import of the concept of culture.

The scholarly attention to the political ascendancy of shi'ism in Iran has produced a significant reservoir of studies on shi'ism and contemporary social change in Iran. This dissertation gives more weight to the cultural and symbolic dimensions of social transformations in Iran. It is centered on comparatively analyzing the shi'ite reformist and fundamentalist discourses in the context of the advance of modernity in Iran. By according higher explanatory status to these dimensions, I will show how these discourses reexamined and restructured their understanding of modern social life in Iran, and in the process came to reconstruct the social life itself. In this way, it is fair to say that this dissertation will take a discursive bend, which explains the emphasis I will place on language, text, and meaning in my social analysis of change in contemporary Iran. This mode of analysis, indeed, entails engaging with the concept of discourse and its place in the analysis of the Iranian contemporary social transformation.

Discourse, Text, and Social Change

Today various social science disciplines are increasingly coming to recognize the significance of the concept of discourse in the study of social and cultural change (Fairclough, 1992; Downes, 1998). Discourse as a system of meaningful representations is constitutive of social life. It constructs social reality by giving meaning to objects, the nature of the world, people's minds and experiences, and social relations. Discourse bridges the gap and transcends the distinction between language and practice, and since every social practice is meaningfully oriented, all social actions are, therefore, shaped by discourse. As a representational system, discourse reflects not just a mental activity, but also complex structures, social dynamism and practices that are concerned with the production of knowledge and meaning in a given historical time (Dijk, V.A., 1997; Hall, S., 2005). In this sense, the notion of discourse implicates social action and while it involves the use of language, it is not exclusively a linguistic concept.

Within this perspective, one way of studying social relations would be to view how they are translated linguistically. This view, however, runs the risk of treating language in a purely static and semantic manner. To avoid this, I attempt to embed language analysis in the process of social and cultural transformation, therefore shifting the dissertation from analyzing merely the formalistic and cognitive dimensions of language to the study of discourse. I will elaborate on this later in this study.

One discursive context wherein social and cognitive linguistics converge is text (De Beaugrande et al., 1997). As a public mode of representation, texts are not just the utterance of word sequences; rather, "they are cultural and psychological products, constructed in ways

which make things happen and which bring social worlds into being” (Wetherell, 2001, p. 16).

In Islam a great sense of authority is bestowed upon the textual manifestation of ‘divine truth’ (Milani, 2000). According to Brown, Islam enters modernity with the mystique of the Book: “the logos is not made flesh; it is a Book.” (Brown, 1991, p. 63). The primacy of text in Islam is evident by the place of *hadith*, in addition to the Qur’an as the ultimate source of guidance, in the shaping of a Muslim’s life. Hadith presents the traditions of Mohammad as patented in his deeds and articulated in his words. While the Qur’an is considered a revealed source by Muslims, hadith communicates ethics and codes of conduct on which the Qur’an has no saying (Küng, 2007; Goldziher, 1971). The collection of hadiths contains a hefty number of textual narratives of the prophet’s remarks and actions. The content of these narratives is founded on oral discourse and gains a divine authority merely by its prophetic attribution. For the purpose of this dissertation, it is important to note that Shi’ism, moreover, extends the traditions of the prophet to those of the twelve Imams. In addition to the Qur’an and hadith, through practicing personal opinion and critical reasoning, a number of Muslim scholars created various texts to cover legal concepts and norms contributing to the development of Islamic jurisprudence. By basing their statements on the Qur’an and hadiths, these narratives claimed divine sanctity and were treated as such. It would be fair, thus, to stress that *ulama*, in the course of history, have displayed themselves as strong textualists seeking legitimation through, quoting Greenblatt (1992, p. 93), “self-validating circulatory” of their own “textual construction of reality”.

In twentieth century Iran, the shi’ite scholars who represented contesting shi’ite modes of thoughts have produced a repository of texts reflecting on various aspects of social

life - intellectual, political, psychological, aesthetic. Few social historians dispute the assertion that shi'ism conquered political power in Iran through the motto "the pen is mightier than the sword" (Wilson & Dutton, 1992, p. 6), notwithstanding the fact that post-revolutionary political power is sustained by the gun rather than the text.

In reviewing these texts, I will draw upon an emerging literary and cultural school of study known as "New Historicism" or "Poetics of Culture." Influenced by cultural and sociological studies, the New Historicist approach redefines the association between cultural codes and sociopolitical formations: "on the one hand, the social is understood to be discursively constructed; and on the other, language-use is understood to be always and necessarily dialogical, to be socially and materially determined and constrained" (Montrose, 1989, p. 15). This formulation of the interplay of text and context, verbal and social – or, in the word of Montrose (1989, p. 23), "the historicity of texts and the textuality of history," – attempts to properly place individual and collective agency in the account of social change. The new historicist emphasis crosses the boundaries between all areas of social change including history, politics, literature, art, and economics (Barry, 1995; Bressler, 1994; Greenblatt, 1989). Following this argument, unlike much of the extant literature on contemporary social change in Iran, in this interpretive assessment, in principle I would assign parallel importance to cultural/artistic discourses and to social/political. However, I focus here on social and political contents of the texts under study due to the limitations of the space and expertise. To this assessment, thus, the shi'ite texts – and in a broader sense any particular form of discursive practice – are socially and historically determinate as well as determining. My analysis is less concerned with the structure of these texts than with their orientation to the pattern of ideas that has influenced modern history of Iran. Simply stated,

not just the material objects presented in these accounts, but also the concrete social processes of modernity in which these texts are embedded are of interest for my analysis. In this sense, I will analyze how shi'ite reformist and fundamentalist trends have textually constructed the meaning of particular social dimensions of modern life such as power/knowledge, individual/subject, truth/ideology, and self-identity. I will briefly make briefer reference to how these dichotomies subsequently shape Iranian social and political life.

As stated above, this dissertation revolves around the idea of comparatively analyzing social narratives on the institutionalization of shi'ism in Iran. This entails an engagement with the concept of narrative and its place in historical sociology. Through this engagement, I will formulate a summary and synthesis of critical debates and current knowledge in reference to the topic of this dissertation. Griffin (1993) defines narratives as “analytic constructs (or colligations) that unify a number of past or contemporaneous actions and happenings, which might otherwise have been viewed as discrete or disparate, into a coherent relational whole that gives meaning to and explains each of its elements and is, at the same time, constituted by them.”

The current state of literature on historical development and social change in shi'ite Iran involves four distinct narrative trends. The first trend consists of literatures that fall within the traditional notion of historical account limiting their narrations to a chronologically sequential organization of descriptive historical details. While this literature tackles the conventional elements of historiographical investigation, that is to say society, religion, state, and culture, they barely introduce an explicit argument and simply log in recorded instances of the above elements to build a coherent story. Quite an array of studies

on the history of Iran conforms to this mode of historical narration. This includes the majority of historical studies on Iran in Farsi, such as *Islam in Iran* written by Petrushevsky, I.P. and *Tarikh e Tahavolat e Ijtemaii (The History of Social Transformation)* Written by Ravandi, M. I classify The Cambridge History of Iran (8 volumes) under the same category as they offer a coherent narrative of historical events in Iran but fall short of probing the dynamics of social transformations.

Narrative construction of events in these studies tells us a story that contains a beginning, middle, and end. Within this sequential order, the narrator presents a social entity that is going through a process of change. In his account for change, the narrator delineates one set of events that leads to another set with no appeal to causal inferences and relational laws. While the author attempts to furnish his story with an argument and introduce a point, the reader may separate the components of the argument from the story at no loss of understanding the facts and meaning of the story itself.

The second trend, following the classical Marxian tradition of grand narrative, attempts to locate the dynamic of change in the economic base viewing the displacement of sociopolitical formations in Iran as the untranscendable sequence of the mode of production. Despite the variance in their analytical arrangement, both approaches, however, drastically diminish the capacity of human agency. Petrushevsky's *Islam in Iran* and Vali's *Pre-capitalist Iran* exemplify this trend.

Historical narratives are widely used by various comparative interpretive sociologists in sociological inquiry. This approach represents the third narrative mode. These sociologists tend to portray a story that introduces and elaborates an argument. The story has a beginning, middle, but no ending. It is not the ending, but rather the proposed argument

that casts the meaning of the story. This genre of narrative, according to White (1972, p. 8), “directs attention to thematic elaboration.” In this sense, the narrative develops and elaborates a particular theme, and sustains it throughout the story. For this trend, I limit my review to four scholars whose studies on the role of religion in historical dynamics of the medieval and contemporary shi’ite Iran typify the third narrative mode.

In a cluster of extensive studies on the emergence of a shi’ite polity in Iran in the thirteenth century to the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the last quarter of the twentieth century, Said Amir Arjomand (1984) persuasively argues that the process of social change in Iran “entails the gradual modification of the pattern of traditional and affectual action in the light of new norms and values” (1984, p. 3). Drawing on rich descriptive historical details, he explains how this process of societal change led to the emergence of two normative structures of domination constantly competing and contending with each other.

Derived from the “Persian theories of kingship” (Arjomand, 1985), one structure, by grounding its legitimacy in a prophetic tradition, represents a shi’ite establishment that quests for institutional independence through pious detachment from political life. The other normative order of domination reflects the mindset of patrimonialism. In this context, according to Arjomand (1984), “rulership was shorn of its caesaropapist trappings and came to rest on the basis of the patrimonial principles of legitimacy” (p. 259). Arjomand (1979), furthermore, argues that in the traditional Islamic orthodoxy God’s domain belongs to the otherworldly salvation, which is thus kept dogmatically distinct from the sphere of political sovereignty: “there is a fundamental dogmatic disjunction between God and political authority.... Allah is the creator of the universe and the lord of this and of the otherworld.

But He is not directly involved in mundane political events” (p. 62). Arjomand seems to be aware of the negative attitude of the shi’ite establishment toward any state in the absence of the 12th Imam. However, the shi’ite hierocracy accommodated the state by accepting “these principles [patrimonial principles] as the appropriate norms for the regulation of the political sphere” (259). This separation of legitimacy will be operational during the occultation of the Hidden Imam.

In Arjomand’s evaluation the Safavids (1501-1722) rose to power attending to the dogma of two separated legitimacies. By eliminating sunnism and marginalizing sufism and extremists who believed in the imminent return of the Hidden Imam, the Safavids paved their way to incorporate the hierocracy into the institution of politics, thus establishing a caesaropapist structure of government under a political head. According to Arjomand, the divorce between religion and political authority in shi’ite Iran was completed in the 17th century. By achieving their financial independence from the state, the shi’ite hierocracy was able to establish their own sphere of authority. Short of ascendancy to political rulership, however, the ulama gained more clout in the realm of judiciary and education. However, the power of the shi’ite hierocracy diminished significantly with the modernization project of the Pahlavi Shahs, who never sought the support of the ulama to legitimize their power base. The negative impacts of statist modernization projects of the Shahs have not gone unnoticed under Arjomand’s (1988b) observations:

As the result of the dislocation caused by excessively rapid social change and a mismanaged economic policy, popular discontent mounted while petro-dollars sapped the vigor and commitment of the upholders of the regime. When the first crack suddenly appeared and the imposing edifice of the Pahlavi state began to crumble

from within, the autonomous hierocracy could rejoice at the prospect of defeating and subjugating the impiously arrogant state. (p. 87)

Through an interpretive sociological assessment, Arjomand (1984) explains how the two normative structures produce “clashes, adoptions, compromises, and an eventual synthesis” (p. 3). He identifies this complex social process as a form of the Weberian notion of “value rationalization”, which influences and shapes the process of social change in Iran. Most notably, Arjomand (1988a) explains how Khomeini, having rejected the traditional idea of religion/politics separation, institutionalized his own interpretation of religion/state relation in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this connection, he argued that in the absence of the 12th Imam’s rule, this imperative rests on the qualified ulama. Khomeini presents his political theory of the “Mandate of the Jurist” as the legitimation narrative of his argument. The ruling jurist is invested with the authority to rule and “his supreme office is interchangeably defined as ‘Imamate’ and ‘leadership’ (Arjomand 1988a, p. 195.) In this sense, according to Arjomand, by eradicating the dual authoritative structure of temporal and religio-legal spheres, Khomeini revolutionizes shi’ism.

In a study covering the historical period beginning with the descent of Islamic empires in the seventeenth century to the ascent of Islamic fundamentalism in the second half of the twentieth century, Mansoor Moaddel illuminates the pattern of stability and change in the ideological production of a few selected countries. Employing a historical comparative analysis, Moaddel (2005) explains how the variation in the nature of the discursive context of the selected countries – “whether it is pluralistic or monolithic and its proximity to power – had a determinant impact on the expressions of the intellectual leaders as they tried to address the significant issues facing their societies.” (p. 24) By granting ideological

production an autonomous status not reducible to class and organizational dynamics, Moaddel lays out an explanatory model to account for the historical variation in the production of ideas. His model is anchored on two parameters: “the variation in the discursive context from pluralistic to monolithic and the variation in the state’s direct intervention in culture from minimal (i.e., in an ideologically neutral state) to extensive (i.e., in an ideological state)” (2005, p. 324). Basing his explanation on this model, Moaddel argues that Islamic fundamentalism emerged and obtained historical significance in a dialectical relationship with the discourse of the state. He demonstrates how a shift in the dynamics of the discursive context from pluralistic to monolithic discourse imposed from above by an ideological state paved the way for the shift from Islamic modernism to Islamic fundamentalism in the countries under his study. In the case of Iran, Moaddel paralleled the shift in “the discourse of the intellectual leaders from anticlerical secularism and constitutionalism, to economic nationalism, and then to clergy-centered Islamic fundamentalism” with the change in “the dominant regime of signification from monarchical absolutism and the *ulama*’s obstructionism, to British economic domination, and then to monarchy-centered secular-nationalist discourse” (2005, p. 325).

The liberal discursive vacuum explains in large part how the economically dissatisfied social classes and groups – especially the *bazaaris* and middle class that positioned themselves in support of the secular and liberal-reformist ideas of the 1905 Constitutional Revolution and Mossadeqh’s nationalist movement – found in the religious institutions a place for political refuge, and in radical shi’ism a unifying slogan.

Ervand Abrahamian has extensively written about the turbulent social history of contemporary Iran. His book, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (1982), gives a detailed

account of the substantial social transformation that took place between the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-9 and the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran. This book provides a wealth of impressive primary and secondary data for those investigators who wonder how Iran stepped into the 20th century with a secular/liberal revolution but ended up with an Islamic state in the last quarter of the same century. He contends that the historical trajectory of contemporary Iran is rather paradoxical. Massive doses of social modernization that were injected into society by the Shahs' of the Pahlavi dynasty, unlike the conventionally held expectation, did not secularize Iran and prevent it from slipping into further regressive religiosity.

Abrahamian classifies his book under the category of political sociology and employs this approach to analyze the class bases of the Islamic Revolution. He specifically points out that while the anti-Shah movement cuts across bourgeois and petit bourgeois as well as working classes, it was the traditional middle class bazaaris with its organic link with the ulama that provided the fundamental support for the anti-Shah and pro-Khomeini movements. Despite his emphasis on economic factors and class dynamism, he pointedly distances his work from the conventional Marxist approach as he maintains that, "the underlying premise throughout the book will be E. P. Thompson's neo-Marxist approach that the phenomenon of class should be understood not simply in terms of its relation to the mode of production (as orthodox Marxist have often argued), but, on the contrary, in the context of historical time and of social friction with other contemporary classes" (p. 6).

In documenting the instances of social friction in contemporary Iran, Abrahamian, in the style of the Thompsonian historical sociology, pays keen attention to the symbiosis of cultural and material practices. In this sense, a new historicist investigator finds ample

examples of anecdotes, statistical charts, illustrations such as postage stamps portraying historical and ideological personalities, brief descriptive biographies, and maps, that on the surface seem inconsequential, but that within the context of Abrahamian's Neo-Marxist political sociology are deeply connected with the discursive dimensions of the enormously eventful recent social history of Iran. This is particularly evident in his latest book: *A Modern History of Iran* (2008). Additionally, in accordance with his method of study, in *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, Abrahamian allocates a specific place to the individual's conscious efforts to produce social change, and in the case of contemporary Iran, to the centrality of Khomeini's role. He likens Khomeini's position to that of Lenin for the Bolshevik Revolution, Mao for the Chinese Communist Revolution, and Castro for the Cuban Revolution. It might be fair to say that this idea forms the drive behind a separate book he wrote on Khomeini called *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic*. The title of the book reveals that Abrahamian treats Khomeini's religious and political ideas as an ideological system. Within this frame of reference, he associates Khomeinism with populism, rather than fundamentalism:

The central thesis of this book is that “populism” is a more apt term describing Khomeini, his ideas, and his movement because this term is associated with ideological adaptability and intellectual flexibility, with political protests against the established order, and with socioeconomic issues that fuel mass opposition to the status quo (p. 2).

Drawing on Weber, he points out that Khomeinism is not a movement for the “rejection of the modern world”, but rather a movement seeking to actively engage in changing the world. He therefore identifies Khomeinism as a political movement as not simply a “religious

crusade obsessed with scriptural texts, spiritual purity, and theological dogma” (p. 3). According to Abrahamian, in his popular guise, Khomeini resorted to radical slogans that would inflame “social antagonisms” such as the redistribution of wealth and social classes egalitarianism. Despite this mixture of ‘populistic’ and ‘socialistic’ rhetoric, in a calculated way Khomeini expressed his commitment to protect the middle class. On this point, Abrahamian refers the reader to Khomeini’s *Unveiling the Secret*, the book under study in this dissertation: “Kashf al-Asrar favored not only private property but also the propertied middle class” (p. 40). Abrahamian believes that the above commitment played a significant role in forcing Khomeini to rationalize his approach to the conflict between the interests of the state and the clerical establishment. As I will explain in the chapter on the law, this conflict becomes a crucial obstacle in the institutionalization of the Islamic Republic regime. To remove the obstacle, by introducing the concept of the ‘state expediency,’ *maslahat* in Farsi, Khomeini declared that it was an Islamic duty to stand with the state in its conflict with the hierocracy’s interest.

Nikki Keddie represents another major contributor to the discussion and understanding of the contemporary social history of Iran. Her works are the product of consuming thirst for knowledge of the Muslim world in general and Iran in particular, extended fieldwork in Iran and the Middle East, and the employment of a comparative method of analysis. On Iran, her corpus incorporates a broad cluster of socioeconomic, religious and cultural topics covering pre and post-Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911 to pre and post-Islamic Revolution of 1979. In her writings, Keddie distances herself from the conventional method of ‘simply writing history’, instead builds a connection between specific topics, for example shi’ism, and broader issues such as socioeconomic structure. At

the same time, she avoids basing her explanations on any deterministic bent that reduces discursive practices to sole economic factor. In an interview, Keddie explains this avoidance: “Marxists in fact tend to underrate the differences among societies and cultures, and this is one reason many intellectuals turned to more nuanced and culturally-oriented views.”³

In her studies on Iran’s Constitutional movement, Keddie (1966) points to a mold of *religious-radical alliance* that shaped the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911. Delineating the alliance as a recurrent pattern in Iran’s politics since the end of the 19th century, she characterizes it as a somewhat incompatible liaison of conservative bazaaris and an important section of the ulama with anti-clerical liberals and radicals, in her words “the most advanced and westernized political activists” (p. 70) and “leading modernizers” (p. 71). She traces the roots of this coalition to the movement against the Qajars’ tobacco pact with the British government in 1890-92. Her writings on this topic are largely an attempt to explicate this unique grouping of “incompatible bedfellows.”

Keddie (2003) suggests that since the late 19th century certain particular themes have kept recurring in the minds of Iranian religious and secular intellectuals. She points to their shared stance against the Western cultural domination and Iran’s economic dependency on the West. Keddie also speculates that those who rejected liberal and Marxist discourses found in Islamic discourse a natural choice. This would explain the Islamic nature of much of the protest movements against the monarchical dynasties. Keddie asserts that the 1979 Islamic Revolution targeted the dynasty and the Shah as its embodiment because of his

³ Gallagher, Nancy, ed. (1994). *Approaches to the History of the Middle East: Interviews with Leading Middle East Historians*. Ithaca Press: Reading, UK

subservience to the Western powers. However, in explaining the 1979 Islamic nature of the rebellion against the Shah, Keddie (1986) maintains that shi'ism is not intrinsically revolutionary or conservative. Shi'ism has assimilated a diverse set of religious schools throughout its history; therefore, "it is not surprising that the widest variety of political and religious doctrines should have been followed under the Shi'i rubric" (p. 113). She specifically aims at the quietist and revolutionary approaches within shi'ism. She maintains that after the demise of Hussein, the Third shi'i Imam, the shi'i community split. One line, known as Ismailis, "generally kept the revolutionary and rebellious traditions of shi'ism" (114). Following the sixth Imam's doctrine of the separation of Imamate from caliphate, the second line assumed a quietist approach. Keddie notes that the history of shi'ism exemplifies shifts from one line into the other. However, in the case of the revolutionary shift, once the messianic shi'ite aspiration was culturally institutionalized, shi'ism tends to return "to doing things largely in the prerevolutionary way, and put down their former "extremist" supporters. She identifies the 1979 Islamic Revolution as a case wherein the shift from quietist to revolutionary took place in a fairly rapid sequence (1986, p. 115). In the absence of revolutionary or conservative predisposition in the shi'i thought, according to Keddie, it was its distinctive institutional development that led the ulama to assume significant relevance in Iran's contemporary historical unfolding. She points to the emergence of the mujtahids and their binding authority of exercising Ijtihad. She (1986) suggests, "this system gave great power to living mujtahids, particularly the one or group at the top" (p. 120). The institution of ijtehad led to the diversity of thoughts in shi'ism, while it secured the centrality of the organization of mujtahids. The ulama's financial self-reliance, and the upper handedness of

the Usuli School over the Akhbaris at the end of the 18th century are additional important institutions that Keddie attributes to the establishment of the shi'ite hierocratic power.

These major studies of the rise of the shi'ite hierocracy in Iran manifest the symbiosis of historical narrative and sociological analysis. The authors intelligently use the historical evidence to conceptualize social change in Iran. Like the first narrative method, their stories point to the process of change. But instead of simply adding new events as the story progresses, the authors compare and contrast features of change to a set of stable structural arrangements underpinning them. In other words, through the unfolding of historical events, these authors explain the patterns of mutually constitutive interplay of social action and social structure. In this sense, through “the cumulative succession, connectedness, and holistic configuration of the event’s actions” (Griffin, 1993), their narratives redefine and reconstitute historical events, and help the reader comprehend the complexity of this reciprocal interaction. Therefore, by associating their “narrative construction of the event” (Griffin, 1993) to an explanatory framework, Arjomand, Moaddel, Abrahamian, and Keddie successfully demonstrate some of the key causal dynamics underlying Iranian history.

Abbas Milani introduces the distinctive fourth mode of explanation to social narratives of Iranian history by closely associating individual life stories with different positions in the contemporary Iranian social reality. Human personality is both a produced result and producing element of all instances of socialization. The representation of individual life by means of biographical narrative – or more precisely the construction of a life history – can become an instrument of the articulation of historical and social reality. Therefore, through mirroring life processes, biographical narrators unravel individual particularities as well as broader historical generalizations.

Through his autobiography and the biographies of the Shah, 150 eminent personalities of contemporary Iran, and of Amir Abbas Hoveyda (the Shah's prime minister from 1965 to 1977), Milani has ventured quite boldly into the political biographical narrative. Through these writings, Milani has embarked on a social analytic language that existentially and publically constructs the narratives of social life, social action, and social identities that culminated in the Islamic Revolution in Iran. He makes this point eloquently in *The Persian Sphinx* (2000): "Every biography wants to creatively weave character and context into a narrative appealing to a wider readership than those afforded academic tracts. *The Persian Sphinx* is no exception to this rule. The Pahlavi era, and the pathos and pathologies of Iran's socioeconomic development, are no more than the context for the evolution of a man called Amir Abbas Hoveyda."

Pondering over the life of a statesman, *The Persian Sphinx* is the story of "hopes and aspirations, the accomplishments and the failure" of a generation of Western-trained technocrats who embarked on the cause of reforming a political system from within and freeing Iran from "the clutches of tradition." Hoveyda personified this generation. However, Milani argues that, in the face of authoritarian rigor, Hoveyda succumbed to the lust for power and subsequently to disenchantment and passivity, voiding his moral and political responsibility.

Moreover, by reading this book along with other studies in Milani's corpus such as *The Lost Wisdom* (2004), we can infer an argument. Milani argues that the two forces of modernization, the Shah reflecting monarchical authoritarianism and secular intellectuals representing democratic practices, failed to converge despite their common strategic inspiration for modernity. The Shah's response to the resulting instability – his insistence on

the suppression of liberal and leftist discourses – paved the way for Khomeini, the most formidable force of de-modernization, to forge an alliance with secular intellectuals and the middle class against the regime of the Shah: “The victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran can in no small measure be seen as the consequence of this rather strange alignment of forces” (Milani, 2000, p. 194).

In this study, I will argue that the premise of the Islamic state that Khomeini established in 1979 is derived logically from the concepts that he presented in *Unveiling the Secrets*. The above authors’ works bring significance to this connection and facilitate my effort to trace 1979-Khomeini to 1943-Khomeini.

Chapter 3

Research Question

The encounter with modernity subjects the contemporary history of Iran to incidences of radical disruption and discontinuity in all dimensions of social life. This would include shi'ism, which has experienced its own particular fissures and transformations. Rather than reflecting submissively, shi'ite discourse has exercised significant agency and actively negotiated its relationship to new sociopolitical dynamics. It is not the random practices of the shi'ite movement, but instead the unifying episteme of modernity that has largely patterned the interaction of shi'ism with the new reality of 20th century Iran as well as within shi'ism itself. The result has been the formation of two distinct discourses of fundamentalism and reformism within the shi'ite establishment.

The patterns of sociopolitical transformation that Iran went through in the 20th century generated episodes of great ideological divergence within Iran's shi'ite establishment. This study seeks to shed light on an instance of doctrinal dialogue that took place in the earlier part of the century – in 1943 – but became the bedrock for subsequent discursive conflicts within shi'ism notably during and after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. In general, this study seeks to identify certain patterns of cultural and ideological discontinuities that the Iran's shi'ite establishment experienced as the result of major social and political change in Iran during the 20 and 21st centuries within shi'ism with respect to the sociopolitical transformation in the given historical era in Iran. Within this general framework, this research study will address three specific interlocking inquiries. First, it will explore and compare the distinctive interpretations that these two shi'ite discourses construct from their interface with modernity in Iran. In this sense, my analysis deals less with the

workings of institution and organizational practice of shi'ite discourses, and more on how the two discursive shi'ite trends speak, write, and make sense of modernity in Iran.

Second, each shi'ite discourse has made an effort to construct a particular knowledge concerning the advent of modernity. Through their speaking, writing, and practicing they have defined their own "truth" about the new sociopolitical dynamics in Iran. This attempt extends to the dismissal of other accounts and truths about the issue of modernity. This is the point where a discourse produces power effects. An integral part of this study will analyze the competing shi'ite discourses and how they have shaped the political dynamics within shi'ism and in the larger social history of contemporary Iran.

In addressing these inquiries, my study focuses on instances of sociopolitical rupture, breakup, and threshold within contemporary Iran. The depth and scope of these discontinuities force this study to steer away from traditional historical analyses that, in the words of Foucault (1972),

turn their attention to long periods, as if, beneath the shifts and changes of political events, they were trying to reveal the stable, almost indestructible system of checks and balances, the irreversible processes ... the movements of accumulation and slow saturation, the great silent, motionless bases that traditional history has covered with a thick layer of events (p. 1).

Finally, it should be noted that while the modern sociopolitical dynamics have altered a wide range of dimensions of traditional social order in Iran, this analysis will specifically focus on the following interrelated social, political and cultural dimensions of modern life in Iran: *Power/Knowledge, Truth/Ideology, Individual/Subject, and Self/Other (Identity/Difference)*. These dimensions outline a set of orientation themes to which my

analysis of shi'ite discourses frequently returns. I will elaborate on these themes in the chapter on methodology.

Chapter 4

Research Design

The goal of this study is twofold. First, it examines the evolution of shi'ism under the influence of modernity in 20th century Iran. Second, it explains how shi'ism through its two main discursive practices, the fundamentalist and the reformist, has profoundly influenced the trajectory of modern Iran. The study compares the divided legacy of shi'ism to stress the unique features of the two aforementioned dominant discourses, and explain how these unique characteristics impinge on the general social process of change in 20th century Iran. In view of this approach, the study treats each discourse as a complex whole in its own right that represents a distinct social and cultural structure arising within a significant historical period.

This study's conceptual design involves an interpretive qualitative approach focusing on discourse analysis. In this arrangement, various components of design such as purposes, conceptual context, research questions, and methods are connected to each other in a mutual pattern of influence and implication at each stage of the study. Thus, in this project, design was an ongoing function embedded throughout the study, not just at the beginning. The investigation, moreover, did not begin with preconceived theoretical assumptions and avoided presenting a set of well-defined hypotheses to be tested through specific analytic procedures resulting in causal generalizations about patterns of social change.

Instead, in keeping with the logic of interpretive historical sociology, this study employs broad concepts and themes to draw comparisons between individual cases. As Skocpol and Somers (1996) note, "themes and questions may serve as frameworks for pointing out differences between or among cases" (p. 75). Particularly, in the case of shi'ite

discursive formations in modern Iran, this study draws on contrasts between fundamentalist and reformist discourses to focus on specific themes and general concepts. These themes and concepts are used as a comparative framework while striving to maintain the distinguishing features and historical integrity of each discourse. While I present these concepts in the start of the study, I leave the possibility open for other concepts to surface as the study progresses.

The Interpretive Turn and Historical Shi'ism

This study selects a specific period of Iran's social history and attempts to meaningfully interpret the dynamics of change during this period; in doing so, it does not attempt to make causal generalizations about patterns of social change. According to Skocpol (1987), meaningful interpretation entails an account of the culturally embedded intentions and actions of social actors – in the case of Iran, shi'ite reformists and fundamentalists in the above given era. Pointing to this cultural shift, Geertz (1980) notes, “many social scientists have turned away from a laws and instances ideal of explanation toward a cases and interpretations one, looking less for the sort of thing that connects planets and pendulums and more for the sort that connects chrysanthemums and swords” (p. 165).

In contemporary Iran, shi'ism has been able to expand the spheres of its authority and influence from individual moral wellbeing to a collective life of politics and economy that in recent years has included the state apparatus and corporate business, effectively establishing itself as a cultural enterprise. The constitutive presence of this cultural enterprise in the substantive, empirical, and materialistic fields as well as in the domains of subjectivity, identity, and consciousness formation in 20th century Iran prompts this study to emphasize the analytic and explanatory sway of the concept of culture.

Cultural Analysis

The centrality of culture in this sociological analysis, however, is not a rupture from mainstream trends in social theory or a flight to a new conceptual universe. Within classical sociological traditions, this approach is consistent with Durkheim's study of the dynamics of 'the social' and 'the symbolic' and the notion that social solidarity forms the basis of religious meanings and experiences. The study relates to Weber's insightful articulation on the link between 'social action' and 'meaning' and the 'elective affinities' between various social strata and systems of meanings, legitimations, and theodicies. While my analysis disagrees with the Marxian approach which reduces the cultural and the symbolic to mere reflections of economic base and class interests, this study finds an affinity with Marx's notion of the human being as a meaning-making being whose attitudes and behaviors are directed by discursive practices and grounded in material relations. This is translated in his observation that the work of the worst architect is superior to that of the best of bees. That is, this study's focus on cultural dynamics does not reject the centrality of the material dimensions of social life, but rather insists that material dynamics always intersect with and are shaped by processes of meaning-making. Moreover, this study appropriates major scholarly works in the field of contemporary social theory, which incorporate cultural and symbolic elements in mainstream sociological analysis. I can point, *inter alia*, to the writings of Gramsci and Althusser on ideology, hegemony, and power, and Berger's notion of a 'sacred canopy' that grants religion the quality of a meaningful symbolic order. In continuity with the same sociological tradition and important for this study's interpretive analysis is Foucault's works. Particularly, this study will make use of the Foucauldian presentation of the dynamic interplay of discourse, knowledge and power.

The place that culture has claimed in this study demands an engagement with concepts of language, meaning, representation, and discourse and their relations to social object. In sociology these concepts are recognized to belong to the interpretive domain of human and social life. The crucial question is how social reality is discursively constructed. Contemporary reformist and fundamentalist shi'ites have been attempting to make sense of the new social life out of which they themselves have emerged, and in the process have come to reconstruct social life itself. Before answering the above question, however, a brief explanation of cultural elements of this interpretative approach seems to be exigent.

Signifying Practice, Representation, and Discourse

At the heart of cultural activity lies the practice of meaning-making. By linking the two worlds – the ‘material’ and the ‘symbolic,’ any predetermined and rigid distinction between them are suspended. In other words, besides interpreting objective reality, the capacity of meaning-making allows for understanding and interpreting anything that is ‘imaginary’ and ‘symbolic’ and beyond the confines of the ‘objective world’ (Hall, 1997c). Meaning, however, is not inherited in ‘the material world’. Human beings construct meaning by using concepts and signs. The production of meaning occurs at two levels. At the first level, we establish a set of associations between things in the world such as people, events, objects, ideas, etc. and conceptual representations of them. At the second level, we construct “a set of correspondences between our conceptual map and a set of signs and images, arranged or organized into various languages which stand for or represent those concepts” (Hall, 1997c, p. 19). Hence, the production of meaning in language hinges on the mediated relationship between things, concepts and language. ‘Representation’ is the process that puts this relationship into practice. Through representation, meaning and language make

connection with culture. Since the relationship between signs and concepts are made by cultural codes and social conventions, all signs are arbitrary. On the other hand, a sign itself cannot establish meaning; rather, it is the relationship between a sign and a concept that fixes meaning. In this sense, meaning is relational. Meaning is never fixed in a single place or time, and as noted by Herder (1993), “the chain of culture and enlightenment stretches to the ends of the earth” (p. 51).

The analysis of meaning-making when deployed to examine the constitutive role of culture, however, requires a shift from a mere preoccupation with the ‘science of signs’, the *poetics* of representation, to the study of the effects and consequences of meaning-making, the *politics* of ‘representation’ (Hall, 1997b). In general sociological terms, this is called the shift from ‘semiotics’ to the ‘discursive’. Thus, the work of representation is implicated in the production of not just ‘meaning’ but also of ‘social knowledge’, the knowledge about, to quote Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983), “the social, the embodied individual, and shared meanings” (p. 17) at a particular time and in a particular place. The construction of this knowledge, however, depends on a larger structure of representation than language. This is the stage where ‘discourse’ as a system of representation comes into play. The term discourse entails:

Ways of referring or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or *formation*) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society. These *discursive formations*, as they are known, define what is and is not appropriate in our formulation of, and our practices in relation to, a particular subject or site of social activity; what knowledge is

considered useful, relevant and ‘true’ in that context; and what sorts of persons or ‘subjects’ embody its characteristics. (Hall, 1997b, p. 6)

This notion is exemplified in Foucault’s investigation of the development and practice of three institutions of internment: the asylum, the clinic, and the prison (Cousins & Hussain, 1984). Foucault demonstrates how the modern subjects of sexuality, madness, and punishment are constructed within the medical, psychiatric, legal discourses, and institutional machinery of the Western societies in the 19th century. In the same way, in their discursive attempts to make sense of modernity (in constructing their own historical subjectivity in the face of modernity) in 20th century Iran, competing shi’ite discourses have produced a repository of books, novels, stories, periodicals, essays and articles, and treaties of varied genres such as jurisprudence (fiqh), philosophy, mysticism, sociopolitical, cultural and economic, psychology, literary, aesthetics. They have invoked formal and informal debates, conversations, dialogues; they have instituted training regimes for clerics, missionaries, and propaganda purposes; and they have set in motion action plans for resistance and subversion, regulations for control and constrain, and so on.

Discourse conceived along these lines has far-reaching implications for the notion of social activity. Every social action or institution, whether political, economic, administrative, legal or cultural, has a meaning-making orientation, produces its own unique realm of meanings, and therefore possesses a discursive character. As Hall (1997c) observes, “every social practice has cultural and discursive conditions of existence” (p. 226). This argument suggests that the aforementioned question of the discursive construction of reality, in fact, boils down to the relationship between cultural or ‘discursive’ and material or ‘non-discursive’ practices.

Discursive Practice and Social Action

Social reality is the product of collective activities of human beings. These activities are culturally specific and historically conditioned. As pointed out above, discourse is central to these activities. From this perspective, social reality consists partly of a complex and dynamic network of discourses, which themselves sometimes conflict and sometimes coincide in their definitions of reality. This does not necessarily imply that no society exists outside of discourse; rather, society becomes meaningful, and subsequently, an object of knowledge not by itself but through a discursive practice. It is through this constructive process that the 'social' and the 'discursive' enmesh. As Geertz (1973) pointedly states:

To undertake the study of cultural activity – activity in which symbolism forms the positive content – is thus not to abandon social analysis for a Platonic cave of shadows, to enter into a mentalistic world of introspective psychology or, worse, speculative philosophy, and wander there forever in a haze of 'Cognitions', 'Affections', 'Conations', and other elusive entities. Cultural acts, the construction, apprehension, and utilization of symbolic forms, are social events like any other; they are as public as marriage and as observable as agriculture (p. 91).

As a representational system, thus, discourse entails not just a mental activity but also complex structures, social relations, institutional developments, strategic practices. This is clarified in Shapiro's observation (1992):

Statements are situated in structured interpersonal relations ... intelligible exchanges are always situated. This claim is much more than the banal assertion that there are rules for language use which are dependent on the immediate context of the utterance, for the context-meaning relation subsumes a complex history of struggle in which one

or more ways of understanding contexts and their related utterances has vanquished other competing possibilities” (p. 38).

Needless to say, it is the burden of social actors to carry these representational activities, to make sense and produce knowledge about social reality, and to engage in negotiation and exchange with other social actors in a meaningful way.

Social Change and the Use of Text

The collapse of the theoretical distinction between the discursive practices and non-discursive practices unshackles critical analysis from the impulse of an inflexible deterministic causal relationship between the two realms of material and culture. The social sciences identify the field of ‘material’ and the universe of ‘culture’ in varied ways. One variation points to them as “physical object and labor” and “discourse and signification” respectively (Wetherell, 2005, p. 390); in another variation, they are placed side by side as “system, totality, or hegemony” and “strategy, practice, or agency” (Montrose, 1989, p. 21), in the same order. Departing from conventional Marxism that posits material practices as determinant to cultural practices, this study considers neither of these two practices in a deterministic position to the other. Thus, it avoids pointing where one stops and the other begins. The analytical construct of this study attempts to capture the agency of culture and discursive practice in a macro-structural process of social change involving, specifically, contemporary Iran. More concretely, this study investigates the midcentury discursive practices of the two critical historical protagonists, fundamentalists and the reformists, in order to understand their subsequent capacities for action. I will argue that their capacities to impact the social relations in which they were enmeshed are the result of enduring cultural practices in 20th century Iran. In this way, this dissertation will take a “discursive turn”, to

quote Hall, which explains the emphasis I will place on language, text, and meaning in my social analysis of change in contemporary Iran.

As a public form of representation, texts are not just the utterance of word sequences or in the word of La Capra (1983), “a situated use of language” (p. 26); rather, they play a part in the shaping of a culture. Texts “are cultural and psychological products, constructed in ways which make things happen and which bring social worlds into being” (Wetherell, 2001, p. 16). This assertion makes clear that it would be pointless to view things as purely inside or outside texts (La Capra, 1983). A text is situated within and is a response to the network of interactive discourses in a historical time; therefore, it is the site of contesting ideas and institutions, and contingent social practices. The quest for a text’s meaning, thus, should feature the relations of the text to this discursive matrix out of which it emerges. In other words, like any other cultural expression, its significance lies in its double relationships: (a) to other texts with which it communicates and from which it differentiates itself; and (b) to the material dynamics of the society in which it is embedded. This is a dynamic and incessant interpretive process that will never be complete (Bressler, 1994) as interpretation breeds interpretation and interpretation again.

In Islam a great sense of authority is bestowed upon the textual manifestation of ‘divine truth’ (Milani, 2000). According to Brown, Islam enters modernity with the mystique of the Book: “the logos is not made flesh; it is a Book.” (Brown, 1991, p. 63). The primacy of text in Islam is evident by the place of *hadith*, in addition to the Qur’an, as the ultimate source of guidance in shaping a Muslim’s life. Hadith presents the traditions of Mohammad as patented in his deeds and articulated in his words. While the Qur’an is considered a revealed source by Muslims, hadith communicates ethics and codes of conduct on which the

Qur'an has no saying (Küng, 2007; Goldziher, 1971). The collection of hadiths contains a hefty number of textual narratives of the prophet's remarks and actions. The content of these narratives are founded on oral discourse; merely by its prophetic attribution, it gains a divine authority. For the purpose of this dissertation, it is important to note that Shi'ism, moreover, extends the traditions of the prophet to those of the twelve Imams. By basing their statements on the Qur'an and hadiths, these narratives claimed divine sanctity and were treated as such by Muslims. In addition to the Qur'an and hadith, a number of Muslim scholars created various texts to cover legal concepts and norms contributing to the development of Islamic jurisprudence by practicing personal opinion and critical reasoning.

New Historicism and the Study of Culture

To review these texts, I will draw on an emerging literary and cultural school of study known as "New Historicism" or more accurately defined "Poetics of Culture"⁴. Influenced by cultural and sociological studies, New Historicism redefines the association between cultural codes and sociopolitical formations and offers a new orientation to textualism. According to Montrose (1989), "the writing and reading of texts, as well as the processes by which they are circulated and categorized, analyzed and taught, are being reconstrued as historically determined and determining modes of cultural work" (p. 15). Text, in this approach, is on one hand a form of language by means of which social reality is discursively constructed; and on the other it is an expression of subjectivity (values, ideals, and experiences) that is itself socially and materially constructed and constrained.

⁴ Defining New Historicism as a critical practice with a specific interest in Renaissance studies, Greenblatt (1988) terms "this general enterprise – study of the collective making of distinct cultural practices and inquiry into the relations among these practices – a poetics of culture" (p. 5)

This view of text questions several orthodox fallacies regarding the reciprocal relationship between text and context, the verbal and the social. The first is the ‘formalist fallacy’ that supposes a text to be an autonomous work through which one can arrive at a correct and true meaning. Accordingly, by transcending the shifting necessities of history, the social context and material base from which it springs, a text assumes a “paradigmatic form in which the problems of making meaning become manifest” (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 14). Abstracted from its contemporaneous surroundings, it is clear that a text of this kind does not serve specific and precise interests. Its meaning and purpose lies within itself. These texts are self-justified, autonomous, and autotelic. The object of their textualism constitutes a *self-enclosed* and *self-validating* corpus of representations that evades “the period eye.”⁵

The second is the “historicist fallacy” that involves the conventional notion of historical accounts that limit their narratives to simply “a collection of inert discursive record of real event” (Montrose, 1989, p. 23). While this literature tackles the standard elements of historiographical investigation, that is to say society, religion, state, and culture, they scarcely introduce an unequivocal argument and simply log in recorded instances of the above elements to build a coherent story (White, 1972). The advocates of this kind of textualism usually segregate an event and the representation of that event. For them, a historical event is merely ‘background’ data with no representational function, which should be immediately reflected in a text as it was.

⁵ I borrowed this analogy from Greenblatt and Gallagher (2001) in their reference to Michael Baxandal’s assertion in *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* that drawing is not independent from “the period eye” to argue that linguistic skills cannot be abstracted from broader expressive domain in language.

The third is the “base/superstructure” fallacy. Inspired by the orthodox Marxian historical materialism, this fallacy entails a mode of determinism that regards a text as cultural superstructural event merely reflecting economic base. The basic idea of this materialistic determinism maintains that the nature of ownership and mode of production lead to the inevitable societal division of antagonistic classes, which in turn influences and shapes the minds of authors. Authors’ products, be it a text or any other form of social consciousness, accordingly, echo social divisions. Therefore, the constituents of a text, in ‘the final analysis’, are class interests that are, in fact, situated outside of the text. From this point of view, any cultural and critical practice intrinsically carries a political cause. In reading texts, the practitioners of this fashion of textualism seek to quintessentially expose the *emancipatory* or *oppressive* traces concealed within the text.

Textual Approach to Culture

In its attempt to decode the multiple ways by which culture and society interact, new historicism is characterized by a mode of evaluation of historical phenomena and processes of social change that is unbound by the pressures of the above fallacies, namely, idealist, empiricist, and materialist (Montrose, 1992). Rather, it places emphasis on the historical relativity of the subject matter, the social subjectivity of the construction of the world, and the notion that the essential core of humanness is a product of social history. In narrating a people’s drama in an era, new historicism orients its textualism not only toward how a people “was ruled and how it was wiped out” but also toward “its way of thinking, its desires and wants, the ways it rejoiced, and the ways it was guided either by its principles or its inclinations” (Herder, 1993, p. 143). A text or any form of narration, in this account, is

considered culture in action; or as Montrose (1992) observes, “culture as lived in the performances and narratives of individual and collective human actors” (p. 399).

In treating cultures as texts, New Historicism follows Geertz in the symbolic anthropological orientation to culture. Man, unlike other hominids, is born genetically flawed. He needs an extragenetic apparatus to survive. He develops his mental power. He gains knowledge. He adopts law and morals. He communicates and negotiates meaningfully with his fellow men. He builds culture (Berger, 1967; Geertz, 1973).

This web of communication and shared significance is precisely what Geertz holds to be ‘culture’ – “the culture concept to which I adhere...denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (p. 89). Texts, thus, are cultural representations within which ideological and material structures of society find are made manifest.

Study of Text and Implications for This Study

The idea of culture as text entails several implications for this conceptual framework. First, it posits text as a social sphere wherein various social discourses such as history, politics, literature, sociology, art, or economics interact and compete (Barry, 1995; Bressler, 1994; Greenblatt, 2000). It is alongside such complex interrelations and interconnectedness of discourses that new historicists define social change. New historicist textualism does not privilege one discourse over another, as each discourse reveals a specific aspect of social life. Within this textualism, discourses that are cultural and artistic, and discourses that are political and social receive equal fascination. When they interact, these discourses shape culture and pattern human activities – including everything from writing, reading, and

interpreting to political action. The abandonment of the primacy of a specific discourse demands the study of such discourse to open itself up to a broader range of expressive traces of a culture. The new historicist critic argues that

To wall off for aesthetic appreciation only a tiny portion of the expressive range of a culture is to diminish its individuality and to limit one's understanding even of that tiny portion, since its significance can be fully grasped only in relation to the other expressive possibilities with which it interacts and from which it differentiates (Greenblatt, 2000, p. 13).

In this sense, a critic's domain of interest expands to include texts and authors that are conventionally positioned at the margins. This new historicist insight is foremost valuable for the study of shi'ite culture in which a diverse range of expressivist modes of language is present. Specifically, this study benefits from this insight since it involves a comparative analysis of textual traces of "marginal" and "central" trends, namely reformist and fundamentalist, in shi'ite culture. I will further elaborate on this point in the methodology chapter.

Second, this notion of culture reemphasizes writing and authorship as modes of social action. I have pointed in the preceding paragraphs to the interactional function of discourse as an element of culture. For an obvious reason, this function includes the use of language. In this sense, the use of language is a social act and the user of language engages in social interaction. Although these actions possess distinct properties, they all are parts of a social network of communicative actions. In other words, authors as well as texts serve the function of social actors. Their actions are, nevertheless, socially and culturally specific. Authors are parts of diverse social categories and their products, such as texts, bear their

distinctive social roles and identities. At the same time, by writing and reading, as Van Dijk (1997) suggests, “language users *construct* and *display* such roles and identities” (p. 3). In other words, they perform and exercise social agency. By taking the stand that history is not an unbending process and leaving aside the idea of historical inevitability, new historicism resolutely asserts the pervasiveness of agency in shaping the course of history. As Greenblatt (1990) observes, “every form of behavior, in this view, is a strategy: taking up arms or taking flight is a significant social action, but so is staying put, minding ones business, turning one’s face to the wall. Agency is virtually inescapable” (p. 164). Under this argument, by shaping the subjectivities of human factors, discourse in general and text in particular display their capacity to impact social change. New historicism, at the same time, acknowledges the historical, social, and institutional positioning of any discursive practice – writing, reading and interpreting; and accordingly, it subjects the agency to structural factors such as religion, gender, class, national identity, or language. (Greenblatt, 1990; Montrose, 1989).

This assertion would inevitably lead to the classical binary formulation of structuration and subjectification, which is a key to understanding the two aforementioned historical anachronisms in Iran in which two clerics performing as “switchmen,” Majlesi in the 17th century and Khomeini in the 20th century, make use of shi’ism as an ideological instrument derailing the trajectory of modernization in Iran. While the Iranian experience tends to prescribe an insistence on the agency of human subject, my explanatory design views structuration and subjectification not as a binary opposition, but rather as mutually constitutive social and historical processes (Swell, 1992; Montrose, 1989; Giddens, 1987). More concretely, my study will draw on this analytic framework to assess how the two central historical shi’ite characters – fundamentalist and reformist – attempt to reexamine and

restructure their understanding of modern social life in Iran, and in the process come to reconstruct the social life itself.

The third implication treats text as the negotiator between the past and the present. Because of its importance to this conceptual design, the third implication necessitates greater articulation in this section. The analysis of the traces of a culture, remote in time or space, resonates meaningfully with certain aspects of the present condition. To understand the social, the political, the psychic, and the material reality of a people is to reconstruct the past in a way that enters into a continuous and self-conscious interchange with the historical present. Viewing the Renaissance as a transitional age marked by rupture and conflict, Greenblatt (1980) asserts that “we are situated at the close of the cultural movement initiated in the Renaissance; the places in which our social and psychological world seems to be cracking apart are those structural joints visible when it was first constructed” (p. 175).

The critical view of history, in general, holds the familiar view that the events of the past are irrecoverably lost and no longer available to perception in their entirety and authenticity. Historical events and attitudes, consequently, are accessible in written documents, which constitute the ground on which historians construe the reality of a historical period. One way of speaking of history, therefore, would be as a textual construct characterized by multiplicity in meaning and heterogeneity in nature (Montrose, 1989; White, 1978; Howard, 1992; Lentricchia, 1980). When textualism becomes a domain within which various social discourses, whether they are aesthetics, sociological, political, literary, etc., intersect, the resulting textual analysis transcends the boundaries of the past and the present. In light of this argument, text becomes a part of history that actively engages in “constructing a culture’s sense of reality” (Howard, 1992, p. 28). On this ground, text is a

viable concept by means of which social discourses can be mediated and compared. I will discuss the application of this point to my study in the methodology section.

The dialogue with the past does not necessarily mean an undeviating projection of the present into the past. This awareness is conducive to the fourth and last implication, which views history as the result of multifarious interfaces of discursive and non-discursive social forces. Against this insight, however, the ‘materialist’ understanding of history contends that non-discursive forces, such as political, social, economic, gender, and religious, function in a hierarchical relation of super-ordination and subordination to determine the pattern of historical sequences. In this way, history progresses in a *law-like* and *codified* display. On the other hand, the theological presumption of history in general and the shi’ite position in particular attributes historical developments to the function of ‘mysterious’ and ‘unseen’ forces that transcend the capacity of human perception.

While the two interpretations compete on highly contradictory epistemological grounds, both arrive at an identical ‘metaphysical’ and ‘repressive’ conclusion: history presents a trajectory that is predictable and knowable, whether via the progression toward the ‘classless’ and ‘stateless’ society in the ‘materialist’ interpretation; or toward the utopian “end of time” under the supreme rein of the “revealed” twelve Imam in the shi’ite interpretation. In their narration of history, both interpretations overlook historical breaks and lay emphasis on continuities. Inspired by Foucault’s theory of episteme, scientists in all strands of social thought, including the new historicist, have long abandoned the teleological and monolithic understanding of history and underline radical ruptures and discontinuities in their narratives of social change. This contains important implications for social research on

Iran where historical sequences in the past 500 hundred years, since the inception of shi'ism, exhibit considerable disruptions, fissures, and breaks.

Following new historicist critique, my study tries to do away with the primacy of non-discursive forces or mystified agents of change. It seeks to identify those aspects of history, “poetics” in the word of Greenblatt, that challenge, disregard, and breach the dominant materialist and theological “codes” of historical interpretations. Hence, it is interested in cultural and discursive elements, “the episodic, anecdotal, contingent, exotic, abjected, or simply uncanny aspects” (White, 1989, p. 301), of the contemporary historical register of Iran.

Chapter 5

Research Method

The aim of this study is to explain how the two contemporary shi'ite discourses, while deeply influenced by the vision of modernity in Iran, attempt to redefine their relationship with the sociocultural field from which they have sprung, and to engage in the effort of remaking this field on their own terms. Hence, the purpose of the study is to produce knowledge about and make sense of the cultural work done by these two shi'ite discourses. The production of this knowledge will be undertaken by way of comparative reasoning of various textual traces of fundamentalist and reformist shi'ite discourses.

Methodological Strategy of Textuality and Social Change

Far from claiming a universal application or generating sweeping causal generalizations and an overarching theoretical envelope, this dissertation professes that this knowledge is partial, situated, and relative. It is partial in the sense that it does not claim to capture the total "truth"; no work of history or historical sociology can convey the whole story (Skocpol, 1987). It is situated since it depicts a specific historical context - 20th century Iran; and it is relative for it is a reflection from my own vantage point, itself influenced and biased by cultural forces.

This study's methodological strategy pursues a two-tier approach. First, it draws on the textual understanding of culture (see previous chapters) to develop a specific means for analyzing shi'ite discourses in 20th century Iran. Second, in seeking to interpret the patterns of change in this period of Iran's social history, it selects specific themes and concepts against which the textualism of two principal social actors, namely shi'ite fundamentalists

and reformists, can be distinguished and compared. I will explain both methodological elements in the following section.

Text and cultural interpretation. I argue that knowledge or meaning is produced through the interaction of a range of discursive and non-discursive social forces, and the mutual embeddedness of history and text. Accordingly, this study's method of analysis avoids drawing a fixed line that demarcates the discursive and other dimensions of social life such as social structure sociopolitical power, social classes, social organizations, etc. Following the new historicist insight that no text has in itself all the necessary elements to arrive at full interpretation, and the abstraction of a text from sociocultural context leads to the loss of understanding of the very same text, my analysis invokes a broader vision of the practice of cultural interpretation and aims at surveying a diverse group of texts. Reading within this textual continuum, each text is related to other written texts and cannot be decoded in isolation.

Exploring a culture through textualism invites an expansion of the range of texts considered for interpretation and comparison. This, in turn, gives rise to a couple of methodological propositions with respect to the selection of texts and authors, and the strategy of interpretation. Regarding text, broadening the field of interpretation tends to disband the conventional notion of the hierarchy of textuality in which certain texts are positioned as "central" or "major" and some others as "marginal" or "minor". In the conventional sense, some texts are "canonized" and "privileged", and therefore open to interpretation, while others are reduced to *decorative history* simply facilitating the practice of interpretation. As Greenblatt (1988) suggests,

History cannot simply be set against literary texts as either stable antithesis or stable background, and the protective isolation of those texts gives way to a sense of their interaction with other texts and hence of the permeability of their boundaries” (p. 95).

Avoiding the dual analytical composition of literary foreground and historical background, my analysis looks at each cultural trace of an historical era in Iran as part of an *archival* of written texts, which has contributed to defining, reflecting, and constituting the cultural environment of that period, therefore deserving to be interpreted in its own terms.

The collapse of the textual pecking order, by extension, extends to the classification that divides authors into “major” or “canonical” and “minor” or “non-canonical” as well. This classificatory system disputes the inventiveness of “minor” authors’ works and judges them as entirely isolated achievements, therefore, unmerited of the same attention as works of “canonical” authors. As Greenblatt (2000) explains, “new historicism helps raise questions about originality in art and about the status of ‘genius’ as an explanatory term, along with the status of the distinction between ‘major’ and ‘minor’” (page 10).

This methodological rationale leads my analysis to track textual traces that are situated in varied discursive zones from the realm of high culture to the world of everyday life. It also leads my investigation to navigate between center and margins to identify authors suitable for analysis. For example, for my analysis, I have selected a pamphlet, *Asrar-i-hizar sala (The Secrets of a Thousand Years)*, (Martin 2000, p. 104) written by Ali Akbar Hakamizadeh, published in 1943. Deemed “minor” and “marginal” to the canonical discourses of shi’ism, both the author and the text have been neglected by the contemporary Iranian “community of interpreters.” I found this document appropriate for my analysis because Hakamizadeh, an ex-cleric, outlines the idea of state/religion differentiation and

challenges ulama “to respond to specific questions on, for example, the precise nature of the authority of the *mujtahids* and the legitimacy of man-made laws” (Martin, 2000, p. 104). It is interesting to note that the publication of this pamphlet did not remain unnoticed by the Qum seminary; as a result, Khomeini, a minor cleric at the time, assumed the task of responding to Hakamizadeh. This response came out in his publication of *Kash al-Asrar (Solving Mysteries)*, (Milani, 2010) or in Martin’s translation, *The Revealing of Secrets* (Martin 2000), a “non-canonical” work at the time of publication, which is another selected text for my study. Without directly naming Hakamizadeh in his response, Khomeini refutes the idea of a quietist and apolitical Islam, and roughs out the foundation of a shi’ite theocratic state. I have selected these two documents for my analysis for three main reasons. First, while both texts were located in the periphery of the shi’ite canon, they possess significant interpretive implications in this study. Second, they display characteristics that link profoundly yet differentially with social, political, cultural, and economic relations surrounding today’s Iran. Last, the two documents are *representations* of two shi’ite discourses targeted for my study, namely reformist and fundamentalist.

In outlining my strategy of interpretation, I drew on a technique used by Geertz in his anthropological fieldwork, which is widely applied in new historicist works: “thick description.” Geertz borrows the notion of “thick description” from philosopher Gilbert Ryle⁶ to expound the intellectual attribute of the practice of ethnography. Geertz (1973) begins with an explication of his semiotic approach to cultural studies,

⁶ Gilbert Ryle, “Thinking and Reflecting” and “The Thinking of Thoughts: What is ‘Le Penseur’ Doing?” in *Collected Papers*, vol. 2 of *Collected Essays, 1929-1968* (London: Hutchinson, 1971), pp. 456-96

Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. It is explication I am after, construing social expressions on their surface enigmatical (p. 5).

He goes on to assert, “analysis, then, is sorting out the structures of signification ... and determining their social ground and import” (p. 9). For him, thick description is a component of this cultural analytical exercise that aims at not thinning the argument down to matters of mute behaviors and isolated actions, but giving an “account of the intentions, expectations, circumstances, settings and purposes that give actions their meaning” (Greenblatt, 2000, p. 23).

For methodological purposes I consider the notion of thick description coextensive with the notion of culture as text. Within this purview, textual traces are largely amenable to interpretation and explication because of their association with those webs of significance. As Schneider asserts, “culture is everywhere textual, everywhere telling a story that needs to be deciphered and interpreted” (p. 809). While description of a culture induces the act of interpretation, it entails interpretations of other interpretations, “in short, anthropological writings are themselves interpretation and second and third order ones to boot” (Geertz, 1973, p. 15). What this statement deploys is that the quality of “thickness” cannot be limited to the explication alone, but should be extended to the text that is analyzed (Greenblatt, 2000). Methodologically, this extension suggests that among all textual traces open to interpretation, some are “thicker” than others which create a continuum, one end of which is empirical observations that are text-like, i.e. ethnographic accounts. These thicker traces

may be deemed “marginal” or “simple evidence,” but they are “comments on more than themselves ... Small facts speak to large issues, winks to epistemology, or sheep raids to revolution, because they are made to” (Geertz, 1973, p. 23)⁷.

To maintain its critical faculty, my methodology must not select its texts based on a rigid principle presupposing the ultimate value of a text is contingent on its position at the margin or in the center. While these texts may be marginal to the dominant canonical works of their time, they link deeply with the ideological, discursive, and material structures that shape the relations of power and subordination in the present Iran.

Interpretive history and contrast-oriented themes. The logic of my historical interpretive framework calls this study to develop an argument that is neither idealist nor materialist, neither deterministic nor voluntarist. It encourages a comparative analytical work that integrates cultural construction and material structure. This constitutes the second element of this study’s methodological strategy, which involves the employment of an interpretive historical comparison. The aim of this approach is to improve the knowledge of the sociocultural context from which the two competing shi’ite discourses originate, try to make sense of this context, and strive to alter it. This study’s comparative analysis will not engage in making causal inferences or full-fledged explanation due to the insufficient number of cases and the lack of sizeable set of independent variables. Instead, it will base its methodological approach on what Skocpol and Somers (1996) called “Contrast-Oriented Comparative History” (p. 75). The focus of this approach rests on stressing the distinguishing characters of cases and the way these particularities have influenced the shaping of general

⁷ Geertz points to “winks to epistemology” to refer to Gilbert Ryle’s reference to a twitch and a wink to distinguish between thick and thin descriptions.

social processes. The use of comparison, especially the assessment of contrasts, enhances our understanding of each case and the patterns of historical change in which they are situated and involved. The pertinence of the contrast-oriented comparative method to this study is evident in Skocpol's apt depiction of its essence. According to Skocpol (1987), the scholars of this strategy,

Seek meaningful interpretations of history, in two intertwined senses of the word meaningful. First, careful attention is paid to the culturally embedded intentions of individual or group actors in the given historical settings under investigation. Second, both the topic chosen for historical study and the kinds of arguments developed about it should be culturally or politically "significant" in the present; that is, significant to the audiences, always larger than specialized academic audiences, addressed by the published works of interpretive historical sociologist. (p. 368)

Typically, the practitioners of this approach avoid engaging in direct and immediate narratives of the nature and historical dimensions of each case. Instead, they develop their comparative narratives through the mediation of broad themes and ideal-type concepts, as Skocpol and Somers (1996) indicate, in two intertwined ways: "Themes and questions may serve as frameworks for pointing out differences between or among cases. Ideal types may be used as sensitizing devices – benchmarks against which to establish the particular features of each case" (p. 75). Following this interpretive rationale, I have singled out four general conceptual binaries to base and orient my comparative investigation of shi'ite discourses in 20th century Iran: Power/Knowledge, Truth/Ideology, Individual/Subject, and Self/Other (Identity/Difference). While these concepts are mental constructs in an abstract form, they

nevertheless represent certain elements in the discursive formation of modernity in contemporary Iran.

Power/Knowledge. As explained earlier, knowledge as a view of the human condition is the product of discourse. It is, therefore, historically and culturally specific. This knowledge has consequences and effects upon discursive practices. Through these practices and within certain institutional settings knowledge takes on an instrumental role, or to Foucault (1980) an institutional apparatus, for regulating individual and social conduct. In that sense, knowledge is inscribed with power because it leads to disciplinary practices and entails real constraints. This is the case with the Iranian contemporary shi'ite discourse, which has persistently and manifestly attempted to rationalize its theological tenets and convert them into an authoritative knowledge, a knowledge that has become effective in the real world. Through this effort, shi'ism has become an integral part of the underlying principle of order and contributes to the organization and regulation of the relations of power in Iran.

Truth/Ideology. In a conventional sense, ideology is perceived as a system of beliefs and set of social actions that supply the existing order, including the relations of power, with legitimacy. This legitimacy is grounded on the claim that ideology owns the total and all-inclusive "truth." Furthermore, religious belief systems assume an ideological function when they are portrayed as explanatory instruments for all dimensions of human and social life on the basis of an a priori truth free from any error and illusion (Kolakowski, 1999). The vision of Islam as "all-encompassing praxis" is the product of this endeavor.

When religious beliefs are put to work to regulate social life, they frequently get involved in explaining empirical facts, which is the requirement for scientific theories. Faith

tenets, then, become testable hypotheses. This runs contrary to their cognitive makeup, which cannot be subjected to scientific verification. Where the boundaries of theoretical ideologies and scientific theories are crossed, religion and ideology converge. As Kolakowski (1999) reminds us, “they want the facts to confirm them in the same way that scientific hypotheses are confirmed, being thereby compelled to distort and conceal unfavorable facts ... They are supposed to possess absolute truth and to be testable at the same time” (p. 234). Within the network of contemporary shi’ite discourses in Iran, I will compare fundamentalist and reformist representations of this paradoxical paradigm and the way they attempt to build a bridge between faith and reason on the level of epistemology and practical applicability.

Individual/Subject. From the above two binary systems a third one emerges which is associated with the individual/subject relation and its influence on social processes. In the conventional account the *individual* refers to a whole and undivided entity that is the source of conscious action and, therefore, determining. The *subject*, however, is the object of dominant forces such as ideology and power and, therefore, determined. On an empirical sense, however, this hypothetical opposition loses its ground, since the whole and integrated *individual* is always subject to various discursive modes such as ethnic, gender, family. As Smith (1989) indicates,

These multifarious subject-positions must be considered part of the ‘individual’ who exhibits or inhabits them; yet they never cohere to form a complete and non-contradictory ‘individual’ – let alone an ‘individual’ who determines the character or constitution of his/her own subjectivity. In this light it may be useful to stress the lure that is offered in the very word ‘individual’: in its etymology it suggests one that

cannot be divided and, by extension, one that is plenipotent. Thus it offers a fiction of cohesion that bears as its symptom a belief in a fully enabled and self-conscious power. (p. xxxiv)

Ideological systems have always attempted to construct such a model of individual perfection. These systems contend that the individual falls short of shaping his/her own identity. As Saint Augustine declared, “Hands off yourself ... Try to build up yourself, and you build a ruin.”⁸ In this model the individual is no more than a representation of the social or the ideological, or both (Smith, 1989). This effort often takes an eschatological orientation which pretends that the construction of this total replica would be merely possible within a utopian future. This is the case of the Mahdistic society in shi’ism and the classless society in communism. In the words of Greenblatt (1989), “a philosophical claim then appeals to an absent empirical event. And literature is invoked at once as the dark token of fallenness and the shimmering emblem of the absent transfiguration” (p. 3). Dispensing with this theoretical disposition, the term *individual/subject* employed in this study thus embodies a notion of a human agent who possesses the characteristic of a *subject* and an *individual* simultaneously.

Self/Other (identity/difference). The hierarchical vocabulary of power relations tends to represent difference as otherness. Like every regime of representation, this one is also inscribed with power/knowledge dynamics. The “bi-polar” couplet of *Self/Other* exemplifies the center/periphery edifice of domination and inequality, and the knowledge and values that validates it (Rutherford, 1990). Within the terms of this polarity, identity represents shared historical experiences and fixed symbolic and cultural codes that transcend

⁸ Quoted in Greenblatt (1993), p. 2

the discourses of history and culture. In constructing the *self*, ideological structures, whether secular or religious, tend to identify with this fixed origin or the once-for-all transcendental cause. This identification process characteristically implies the exclusion of some *others*.

Criticizing this essentialist notion of identity, the relational view, however, asserts the over-determined and heterogeneous nature of identity. As Rutherford (1990) points out, “identification, if it is to be productive, can never be with some static and unchanging object. It is an interchange between self and structure, a transforming process” (p. 14). In other words, identity is not a fundamental core, rather a *positioning* (Hall, 1990). Within the context of this study, this positioning is understood as the product of the intersection of the past with the actual social, cultural, and political relations of hegemony. Multiplicity in subject positions inevitably results in multiplicity of identity. In this sense, the effort for identity formation, or in the words of Greenblatt (1993, p. 1), “a sense of personal order, a characteristic mode of address to the world, a structure of bounded desires”, does not center on the inertial frame of reference of *self/other* or *center/margin*.

Conclusion

I conclude this chapter by writing about the rigor of my research methodology. As mentioned above, the interpretive nature of this study claims to produce a knowledge that is partial, contingent, situated, and reflexive. This assumption implies that this study shuns the conventional method of analysis that places the rigor of a research on three criteria - reliability, validity, and replicability. Instead, it employs different standards of evaluation, namely, relevance, coherence, and depth and consistency.

This research project claims to connect with some aspects of sociopolitical change underway in present Iran; in this sense, it stresses relevance. The study also furthers the

sense of relevance by tracing its findings in relation with previously published works.

Moreover, this study attempts to offer a coherent, rational, and persuasive argument. Finally, far from any claim to full and total interpretation, this study makes an effort to provide the reader with richness of detail and consistent explanation of the course of analysis (Taylor, 2001). Through these criteria, this research hopes to stick to principles of best academic practice, and achieve valuable and meaningful findings.

Chapter 6

Main Analysis

Prologue

In 1943, the publication of a pamphlet called *Secrets of a Thousand Years*⁹, or *Asrare Hezar-Saleh*, aroused uproar within the Iranian shi'ite orthodoxy for calling into question some of the most essential and revered principles and ethics of shi'ism. The author, a former cleric named Ali Akbar Hakamizadeh, was the founder and editor of a reform-oriented journal called *Humayun* in the mid-1930s. He published 10 issues before closing it down under the pressure of the shi'ite hierocracy.

In a terse text of 42 pages, with a clear-cut tongue and through common parlance, Hakamizadeh touched upon various shi'ite fundamentals, such as norms of authority and legitimacy including Imamate and *mujtahid*; the place and role of the shi'ite hierocracy in the public and political sphere; religion and temporal power relations; and rational reasoning versus the authority of the *hadith*. He framed these subjects into six discourses: God/human relations, Imamate, the Clergy, the State, Law, and Hadith. In discussing these discourses, he upholds a rational appeal that would unshackle shi'ism from the fixed codes of the established hierocracy. The *Secrets of a Thousand Years* discloses and cancels out those factitious shi'ite practices – sham rituals, superstitious sacraments, incongruous stoicism, bibliomancy and oracles, submission and obedience that, as he argues, the clergy uses to transform a shi'ite into a blind idolater. As Milani (2011) observes, Hakamizadeh

⁹ Translated by Richard (1988, p. 160). Milani (2011) has adopted a different translation, that is *Thousand-Year-Old-Mysteries* (p. 57).

“advocated a Shiism without the obscurantism of the clergy, and a polity guided by the rule of law and reason” (p. 57).

At the end, Hakamizadeh posed 13 unambiguous questions bearing upon the above discourses, and challenged the *ulama* to address them. Richard (1988) has reliably summarized these questions as follows:

(1) The value of prayers for intercession made at the tombs of the Imams and the Prophet; (2) the value of bibliomancy and other oracles (*istikhara*); (3) the actual place of Imam¹⁰ among the beliefs, as God had not judged it necessary to speak of it in the Qur’an; (4) the Traditions (*hadith*) which maintain that pilgrimage and mourning ceremonies are more worthy than martyrdom; (5) the limits of the power of the doctor of jurisprudence (*mujtahid*) as representative of the Hidden Imam; (6) the effort of the *ulama* to be independent and free in their preachings; (7) the legitimacy of secular power; (8) the legitimacy of taxes imposed by the secular state; (9) the legitimacy of laws written by men; (10) the justification for the imposition, universally and without change, of the Sacred Law, which was itself in part abrogated during the years of its revelation; (11) the explanation as to why God, after having created the best of His creatures, forbade him the use of his intelligence to understand His commandments; (12) the Traditions which are incompatible with human reason; and (13) the reason for the current lack of interest in religion (p. 160).

The circulation of the *Secrets of a Thousand Years* was one of numerous similar signs of the moral fracture within shi’ism at the time. But the text possessed the power to unsettle the equilibrium of the shi’ite orthodoxy. Compounded with the fact that it was written by a

¹⁰ Imam¹⁰ is the Farsi equivalent of Imamate

former cleric who had cut off his bond with the shi'ite hierocracy by rejecting its cloak, the *Secrets of a Thousand Years* won the enduring enmity of the clerical establishment.

In reaction to the publication of the *Secrets of a Thousand Years*, a group of bazaar merchants, in congruence with the ulama, implored Khomeini (Martin, 2000), then a mid-range cleric, to give an all-inclusive response to Hakamizadeh. In a voluminous 334-page text, called *Unveiling the Secrets*, Khomeini made an effort to counter Hakamizadeh's 42-page text discourse-by-discourse, chapter-by-chapter, and point-by-point. As a prologue to the upcoming comparative assessment of the discourses presented in the two texts, I shall emphasize two distinct elements that set these two writings apart from each other, and provide insight into the substance of the two documents.

First, the immense disproportionality in length – 42 pages as opposed to 334 pages – suggests the shi'ite establishment's experience of angst and distress for what Greenblatt (1993) correspondingly ascribes to the established Church of the 16th century: “the great unmooring ... their sense that fixed positions had somehow become unstuck, their anxious awareness that the moral landscape was shifting” (p. 88).

The tormented sense of nerve-racking within the shi'ite establishment was deeply embedded in the massive material and cultural transformation Iran was going through at the time. Emanating from the inroads that modernity was making in Iran, the changes generated an unsettling liminal state in the midst of which the publication of these two texts took place. The socioeconomic and cultural reforms initiated and forcefully implemented under the reign of Reza Shah (1924-1941), the first king of the Pahlavi dynasty, were largely modeled after the Western-styled reforms of Mustafa Kemal of Turkey, and pushed Iran onto the path of industrialism, commerce, urbanism, nationalism, secularism and state capitalism. As a

result of these reforms, traditional social structures as well as modes of life experienced a significant dislocation. Additionally, in 1941, the Allied Forces forced Reza Shah to abdicate and leave Iran to exile. The transition of power to his son, Mohammad Reza Shah, imposed a period of increasing sociopolitical instability and strife on Iranian society from which, at the same time, a certain measure of political openness ensued.¹¹ The shi'ite enterprise was not off the hook from these ruptures. In the growing ideological and intellectual market of the time, the shi'ite hierocracy refused to stay on the sideline and aimed at making itself competitive. Voices of reform also resonated in a meaningful fashion within the shi'ite establishment. A number of clerics and shi'ite intellectuals broke with the traditionalistic core of the institution of shi'ism, and fostered, instead, an interpretation of the faith that would match up with the humanistic spirit of modernity.

For these clerics and intellectuals the practice of faith was a self-conscious act, shaped by private judgment that represented an individuated identity. The individual seizes the truth, as he or she perceives it. For orthodox shi'ism the notion of faith is predicated upon the pervasive presence of a thick institution, communal rituals, and traditions descending by generations, within which the practice of a faithful is situated. The principle of total obedience to the spiritual authority of the Mosque, in this sense, compels total immersion into this communal entity.

Thus, for the orthodox shi'ite clerics, fostering an individualized religious conscience is synonymous with decentering the shi'ite communal body and paving the way for centering on the individual: the locus of modernity. To this effect, Hakamizadeh's monograph

¹¹ Literature on these reforms is immense. For detailed and comprehensive explanations, see Abrahamian (1982) and Katuzian (2000) and Foran (1993).

represents a subversive discourse that would unavoidably seep into the canon of the shi'ite orthodoxy. This is the underlying moral shift that kindled much anguish and melancholy in the campsite of the established shi'ism.

Second, in contradistinction to the vernacular (colloquial) Farsi of the *Secrets of a Thousand Years*, the *Unveiling the Secrets*, Khomeini's first published book (Martin, 2000 & Milani, 2011), exploits a sophisticated parlance while justifying the position of the shi'ite orthodoxy. Far from simply a rhetorical differentiation, this distinction marks out meaningful historical and doctrinal demarcations that inform the two accounts.

Hakamizadeh attempts to propagate and promote his idea of reform not by considerable institutional work, but by the power of the word. The *Secrets of a Thousand Years* is not a blueprint for laying out a vanguard organization that echoes and advances the interests of particular social classes and status groups. It is the work of an individual seeking to prop up unaided individuals in using their own judgment, without the mediation of the clergy, to discern the word of God. However, Khomeini would not shrink before this argument, and by accusing Hakamizadeh of demagoguery states, "you claim that the faith is a guide to reason, and whatever our intellect understands is the faith"¹² (*Unveiling the Secrets*, p. 7). He contends that this streak of reasoning would leave no place for Islam, the Qur'an, God, and the prophet. Throughout the centuries, the shi'ite establishment has sermonized Islamic scriptures with a sense of hidden wisdom and truth that can only be decoded by means of certain proficiency and craft. Access to this craft is made possible through training and teaching that is the undivided domain of the community of the ulama.

¹² This is my own translation. Cited otherwise, all Khomeini and Hakamizadeh's statements throughout the dissertation are my own translation of the original texts.

Khomeini himself insists that since “regular people don’t know the craft” it is the imperative duty of the clergy to make known these demagogues “who have not read the Qur’an once;” moreover, “historical evidences are testimony to the fact that ever since the demise of the prophet, ulama have been the only ones to preserve people’s faith and exclude libertines’ rant” (p. 8). Hence follows the ulama’s prescription for an unenlightened populace: the avoidance of the abyss of disbelief and doubt and the embrace of the eternal bliss, achievable solely through a devoted deference to the clerical monolithic hermeneutic authority. As Milani (2004) states, “since salvation only comes from this sacred fount of wisdom, it is incumbent upon the majority to assume a posture of total submission to the will of these select interpreters” (p. 29). This compulsory obedience is nowhere more apparent than in the formulation of Khomeini’s political theory of the “Mandate of the Jurist”. He maintains that the formation of the Islamic state is the obligatory duty of the community and just *jurist*. “If one such succeeds in forming a government it is incumbent on the others to follow him.”¹³

In contrast to the ulama’s claim, Hakamizadeh argues that the meaning of the holy writ is readily accessible to the intellect of an individual Muslim. Within their independent mental faculty, Muslim individuals are reasonably capable of comprehending the word of God. He states, “they (ulama) always wanted to direct people toward ignorance, and since *reason*¹⁴ would resist their effort, they inexorably proclaim that your intellect is *imperfect*, so you need to reckon the *total* intelligence, that is to all lies that they construct” (*Secrets of a Thousand Years*, p. 10). He palpably belittles ulama’s claim to total intelligence and unambiguously validates the autonomous judgment of individuals, “about the intellect’s

¹³ Translated by Calder (1982)

¹⁴ Italics are mine.

shortcoming it can be said that they (ulama) coat different things with a made-up reason and name it intelligence. They do the same with faith as well as feeling; even though with little inquisitiveness we can lay bare their fabrications” (p. 10). In other words, no clerical intermediacy is needed for the diffusion of the divine truth in the realm of the public.

It is helpful to draw on an historical parallelism to elucidate this argument further. The English translation of the Bible in the 16th century is considered to be a turning point in the popular access to the Holy Scripture, and the expansion of literacy in England; hence, the thawing of the absolutistic intellectual command of the Catholic Church. Considering this development as an act of heresy, Sir Thomas More (1981) prescribed true believers, “to give diligent hearing, firm credence, and faithful obedience to the Church of Christ concerning the sense and understanding of Holy Scripture, not doubting but since he hath commanded his sheep to be fed, he hath provided for them wholesome meat and true doctrine” (2:112-3). In these words, Sir Thomas More is trying to preserve the external authority of the Catholic Church, as keenly depicted by Pizzorno (1978):

Indeed, the use of Latin as the language capable of transcending the local-boundedness of unwritten vernaculars, as well as the specific cultivation of writing and record keeping, allowed the ecclesiastical class to mediate any type of extralocal, and therefore all “political,” communication and discourse as well as any communication through time, either from the past (the cultural tradition) or to the future (the language of salvation, of ultimate ends) (p. 36).

But this authority becomes the subject of increasing public scrutiny as the production of the English Bible copies increases.¹⁵ The growth of the public access to the Bible, in the words of Greenblatt (1993) implies:

It is easy to understand Scripture, its meaning lies directly in front of us, competing interpretations are perverse mystifications. There is no need of advanced degrees, the mastery of difficult languages, the juggling of arcane symbolisms, prodigious memory, and expensive library; the truth is as accessible to a shoemaker as to a theologian, perhaps more accessible, for the latter has been poisoned by popish sophistry. (p. 100)

The masses' engagement to the meaning of the Bible insists that the language of the faith be vernacular. The same is also true in the case of the Qur'an and hadith in Islam.

The vigorous back and forth between the two interpretative approaches illustrates an instance of how language and discourse are transformed into a form of *power*. The textual exchange over representing the faith as simply a persuasive system to deter the individual from harmful deeds on the one hand, and as a divine regulatory system to codify the standard of ethics and manners on the other, undoubtedly reflects relations of power. Almost 70 years after the above textual swap between Hakamizadeh and Khomeini, this association is significantly functional in Iran, where under the theocratic reign of the shi'ite clergy faith has found itself pressed into the realm of national policy. Shi'ism today has become a key instrument in controlling and balancing political power, programming social well-being, shaping family life, regimenting personal conducts, regulating all forms of expression,

¹⁵ It is estimated that 200 copies between 1521 and 1600, 480 copies between 1601 and 1700, and over 500,000 copies in the early 18th century were printed. See Greenblatt (1993), p. 98.

punishing dissent, and myriad dimensions of social and public life. In 1943, Khomeini resorts to the force of ideology to proliferate his own faith, and in large part with the help of that force seizes the power in 1979. But soon after, he found that the ideological apparatus was not adequate to uphold worldly power. He, therefore, chained the practice of faith to the mechanism of punishment. Similarly, a 1617 speech by Francis Bacon to a group of judges reminds us of the necessary marriage between ideology and coercion:

Next for the matter of religion. In principle place, I recommend both to you and to the justices the countenancing of godly and zealous preachers ... For there will be a perpetual defection, except you keep men in by preaching, as well as by law doth by punishing ... Cicero, when he was consul, had devised a fine remedy, for he saith: those that trouble other's quiet, I will give them quiet (p. 213).

Predictably today, under the reign of Khomeini's successor, Khamenei, the power of the word is infinitely masked by the sway of the sword.

Chapter 7

First Discourse: The God-Human Relation

As observed earlier, the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1907, and the ensuing sociopolitical dynamics led to an intellectual and doctrinal polarization inside the shi'ite establishment culminating in the publication of the aforementioned contending texts. These texts brought into sharp focus competing issues that had hitherto been largely evaded by main shi'ite discourses. At the core of this doctrinal dispute rests the issue of the *control of interpretation*. The modernist shi'ite trend represented by Hakamizadeh strives to institute the word of God beyond the realm of 'skill and craft' into the personal grasp of the individual observer. To the established traditional clergymen such as Khomeini, on the other hand, Hakamizadeh's writing subjected their interpretive legitimation to doubt, question, and subvert

The public circulation of these two texts, nonetheless, led afterward to a shift in the treatment of these contentious ideas within the institution of shi'ism. The competing shi'ite factions began to take these controversial and conflictive visions with seriousness and diligence. Moreover, when these writings were absorbed back into the shi'ite community, as a necessary consequence, they gained an institutional import which has become one of the continual motifs in the practice of the shi'ite authorities since. Over the years, the advocates of these ideas transformed them into cultural practices and social institutions. It is believed that the subversive force of an idea depends not merely on its cognitive content, but on the context of its enunciation. The post-1979-revolutionary Iran where shi'ism assumed political expediency and became an instrument of political legitimation provides the context in which the above contending ideas engage in full-fledged cultural and institutional sparring. The

locus of the new contention around the authority of interpretation resides in questions of the *obedience of the individual* in a metaphysically ordained order.

The debate on the first discourse centers first on the notion of God's providence and His exercise of authority on the universe. As argued below, on this point the two texts disclose a relatively similar pattern of understanding of the idea of providentialism. The argumentative debate, however, starts when the above writings turn to the second and third points. These address God's stand in relation to the notion of order in general including nature as well society, and the place and role that God assigns to the individual in His providential design.

The Providential Idea and God's Authority

The underlying sameness that runs through the first discourse in both texts is the belief in the providence of God shared in Abrahamic monotheistic faiths that God has created the universe with order and meaning. The order of things in the providential design is established from eternity on an immutable and purposeful connection that is coextensive with the order that governs nature. The operation of this metaphysical apparatus, for the most part, is not subjected to human understanding and intellectual scrutiny (Thomas, Dollimore, 1989; Swedenborg, 1986; Thomas, 1971). For Hakamizadeh (1943), "God has made the universe on the basis of a fixed and total order and won't ever alter it" (p. 9). He asserts that the human being is incapable of accomplishing God's work, and any claim to the contrary is false and a likely pretext for accumulating wealth and acquiring power (p. 9).

In the same vein, Khomeini (1943) argues "it is proven to human conscience that all creatures, from the shining sun to materials, plants, animals, and all other ingredients of this divine manufacture are in God's command and made by him to benefit the human being" (p.

71). For Khomeini, God's hand and permission is behind all undertakings in the universe: "everything in this world and in the other springs from God. He would bestow his grace and apply his wrath to any body and anything He wishes" (p. 82). God performs with "absolute independence" and "free from any assistance"; Khomeini contends that "power and might are intrinsic to God and do not stem from another source" (*Unveiling the Secrets*, p. 28).

Moreover, Khomeini affirms the finality and irreversibility of God's decision.

Both Hakamizadeh and Khomeini affirm the authority and authenticity of the Qur'an but differ in their interpretation of the book. A close reading of the two texts reveals that the emphasis on the centrality of God's judgment is nowhere near as consistent and unwavering as portrayed in the above excerpts. This takes prominence when the notion of providence is extended to the social world and particular situations of the individual.

The belief in Providence in traditional shi'ism inclines to underpin and sanction some extant moral codes and traditions including political attitude and behavior.¹⁶ Within the naturally ordered universe, God has encoded social life with a system of statutory and regulative laws. These laws are inscribed in the Qur'an, the Prophet's Sunna, and hadiths.¹⁷ Aberration from these laws is synonymous to transgressing God's sanctioned order; as Thomas (1971) indicates, "in place of unacceptable moral chaos was erected the edifice of God's omnipotent sovereignty" (p. 107). Providentialism, in this sense, is a ground for the traditional shi'ite clergy to determine the legitimacy or the lack of legitimacy of the social world.

¹⁶ On the relation between the concept of providence and moral codes, see Thomas (1971) pp. 78-112.

¹⁷ In the Islamic tradition the authenticity of a hadith and the extent of its usage have been subjected to much debate and controversy. It is an important subject that requires separate study.

Providentialism and Social Order

Approach to the status of the existing social order and ethics by our two authors, however, is dissimilar and takes a complex form. For Khomeini, social life under the Pahlavi dynasty epitomizes the aberration from divine legitimation. He faults Reza Shah's governance for the ongoing social maladies, and privileges the clergy with the godly task of uncovering and resolving them. He proclaims that the clergy is the sole social force that providentially "encounters his (Reza Shah) poisonous intents, and protests his policies that are harmful to the country's wellbeing and religious interests" (*Unveiling the Secrets*, p. 9). Hakamizadeh, on the other hand, places the above-mentioned aberration on the shi'ite hierarchy itself. He introduces the *Secrets of a Thousand Years* with the following statement,

It has been over a thousand years that our *leaders and rulers* [italics are mine] have manipulated and exploited faith to advance their personal and political aims. Consequently, faith, nowadays, has become a titular entity with no true identity. Monotheism and piety, which are the truth of faith, are no longer in command and have been replaced by idolatry and lie. Faith that is supposed to be a divine guidance has become an obstacle to the divine's path and life. The absence of this path itself is the reason for all these troubles we are facing ... Now, if we want to serve our faith, we inevitably need to get rid of all these lies or a thousand years of rubbish in order to shed light on the path forward. (p. 4)

There are two distinct lines of argument from the preceding passages: order and value. In *Unveiling the Secrets*, Khomeini tends primarily to erode the legitimacy of the existing

secular order, and replace it with a *sacred order* whose defining structure licenses the clergy for healing sociopolitical illnesses.

The *Secrets of a Thousand Years*, on the other hand, dwells upon the practice of piety and observance of moral laws, which are naturally embedded in the divine providence. Hakamizadeh attributes the commonness of immorality to the ulama, who camouflage habit and imitation with the garb of reason to swindle uninformed individuals. This captures a key tenet in the *Secrets of a Thousand Years*: stress on value.

Shi'ism and social action

The above discourses of providentialism direct the practice of faith toward two conflictive tracks within the shi'ite establishment. It is evident that the *Unveiling the Secrets* ranks faith under the class of ideology. The text perceives Islam as a “be-all and end-all” practice exceeding all human actions. It then attempts to insinuate the clergy into the existing order and exploit its sociopolitical, religious, and psychological structures, to privilege the clerical group. This type of insinuation has been the trait of shi'ism in Iran since its public inception in 1501.

The shi'ite practice of insinuation parallels a Renaissance manner of behavior that, in Greenblatt's (1993) words, is called *improvisation* and refers to “the ability both to capitalize on the unforeseen and to transform given materials into one's own scenario” (p. 227). Greenblatt depicts the practice of improvisation in an instance of European colonialist expansion in 1525 in which “the Spanish in Hispaniola began to raid neighboring islands” (p. 226), due to the shortage of manual labor for working in gold mines. When the Spanish reached an island in the Lucayas (presently Bahamas), “they learned through their interpreters that the natives believed that after death their souls were first purged of their sins

in icy northern mountains, then borne to a paradisaal island in the south, whose beneficent, lame prince offered them innumerable pleasures” (p.226). Upon understanding of these imaginations, the Spanish made an effort to “persuade the natives that they are coming from those places, where they should see their parents, and children, and all their kindred and friends that were dead: and should enjoy all kind of delights, together with the embracements and fruition of beloved things.” Unaware of the trickery but certainly feeling thrilled, the Lucayas population “passed onto the ships and were taken to the gold mines of Hispaniola. The Spanish, however, reaped less profit than they had anticipated; when they grasped what had happened to them, the Lucayans undertook mass suicide” (p. 226). Greenblatt draws on the Lucayas incident to demonstrate, “European’s ability again and again to insinuate themselves into preexisting political, religious, even psychic structures of the natives and to turn those structures to their advantage” (p. 227).

The traditional clerics, represented by Khomeini, appear to be conscious that they could not simply eradicate the dominant ideology of monarchism in order to substitute for it their own regime of truth. The practice of insinuation, as Greenblatt (1993) explains,

Is made possible by the subversive perception of another’s truth as an ideological construct, that construct must, at the same time be grasped in terms that bear a certain structural resemblance to one’s own set of beliefs. An ideology that is perceived as entirely alien would permit no point of histrionic entry: it could be destroyed but not performed (p. 228).

In the context of contemporary Iran, the structural resemblance is reflected in an emerging symbolic structure’s displacement of a pre-existent symbolic structure or, in the perceptive words of Amir Arjomand (1988b), the substitution of “the Turban for the Crown”. In reality,

the hierocratic shi'ism with Khomeini as its Supreme Head inserted itself into the existing secular power relations and established its supremacy. In this instance, the shi'ite insinuating practice assumed a new distinction by converting the structure of monarchical absolutism into its own favorable scenario, notwithstanding the two absolutisms, the monarchical and clerical, differ in nature and application. In this way, the absolutism of the jurist becomes a mandate following the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran.

The theory of the "Mandate of the Jurist" preserves the absolutist character of the kingship as the embodiment of the above structural likeness, close enough to ensure the progression of the shi'ite's insinuation practice, but adequately distanced to uphold shi'ism in its unspoiled orthodoxy and avoid its portrayal as an alterable human construct. In this sense, while inexplicit about his political goals, Khomeini uses providentialism subversively and conservatively at once. It is an irony that this situation comes close to what Dollimore (1989) observes, "it is true that providence was thought to operate through evil agents, that God would use the sinful to destroy the sinful" (p. 38). In fact, the assemblage of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic embodies the secular epiphany of the above dynamic in which the rationale of secular state, reflected in the Republic insignia, is situated in the periphery, while the providential apparatus, reproduced in the doctrine of the "Mandate of the Jurist", captures the center, a point which will be the subject of further examination later in this study.

To elaborate, it is fair to state that the debate between the two above texts suggests an early expression of such discursive practice that later in the century it became the locus of power relations, and which today so potently infuses social life in Iran. While the traditional clergy were venerating divine providence with "the celebration of power", the secular logic

of modern state was gradually and playfully creeping into the providential machinery knowing well that providentialism can hardly function in a secular atmosphere. What is left of providence years later is merely a mystified façade in the name of the “Mandate of the Jurist”, yet is increasingly becoming demystified under the shifting pressure of objective reality. A parallel to these dynamics existed in early modern England: As Greenblatt (1993) aptly argues in recounting the relation of Tudor power to Catholicism, “indeed, as here, the sacred may find itself serving as an adornment, a backdrop, an occasion for a quite secular phenomenon” (p. 230). I leave a further elaboration on this structural tension in the analysis of upcoming discourses, especially on the discourse of the state.

In contrast, Hakamizadeh’s stress on value in the *Secret of a Thousand Years* tends to preserve providentialism but strictly within the domain of the private whose chief locus consists of the individual intellect. He differentiates between “God’s affair” and “God’s path” and insists that, “God’s affair is his own” but “God’s path is for us, and rather than following others thoughtlessly, we must perceive it first and then move forward ... There is no place for the ignorant to argue with the enlightened” (p. 10). He further argues, “our intellect, like our eyes, is in need for guidance.... In other words, it is like mathematics laws, discovering of which requires teaching; but the teaching itself must correspond with reason in order to be acceptable” (p. 10). In these remarks, while leaving God’s affair unapproachable, Hakamizadeh palpably lays out God’s path for human reasoning and critical judgment: “they [the ulama] say that human intellect is imperfect because of so many religions that have been around and still exist in the world, while in truth there is only one religion [Islam] (p. 10). On this point, directly addressing the ulama, Hakamizadeh further articulates, “it is on the basis of the above reasoning that you claim to know God and

establish your life. If the rule of reason is imperfect, you will have to put aside faith and life altogether. It is as if you are cutting off the root to hang on the branch” (p. 10). To advance his argument, he specifically aims at the practice of superstition. He reflects on this practice as a cause for Iran’s lagging behind in progress. To elucidate his point Hakamizadeh maintains, “every year in this country, thousands books are published about how to perform praying or commemorating religious martyrs... but only few people show interest in the publication of a book about the science of agriculture” (p. 11). In this respect, he claims that the ulama try to justify the act of superstitions by saying that “superstitions are everywhere.... or the practice of superstitions is better than acting immorally” (p. 12). To him: “This adage is like to say that since illness is everywhere so let it be. The practice of superstition is a mental illness and the more a nation is inflicted by it, the more underdeveloped is that nation. To understand my point, just compare Iran versus Turkey, China versus Japan, or India and Russia” (p. 12). Hakamizadeh, indeed, denotes the power of the intellect and importance of speculation by rejecting a passive conviction in faith. While sticking to his rationalistic emphasis, he seems to avoid implicating the superiority of reason over faith: “We can be neither superstitious nor immoral, but rather a disciple of truth. This exemplifies the same path the early community of Islam followed” (p. 12).

Providentialism and the Individual

The medieval notion of providentialism implies that God has assigned a defined and predetermined place for each individual in the order of things, with which the individual identifies. To transcend this place is to transgress divine teleological design by the individual. Providentialism in this sense connects logically with the static nature of the medieval society. Social life in this formation is informed by a conservative mode of thought

and managed by a religious authoritarian mode of governance. The emergence of the Renaissance, however, paves the way for the birth of a rational and sovereign individual who could acquire a sense of self with full personality that is “indivisible” and “singular, distinctive, unique” (Williams, 1988, pp. 161-165: Individual). To elaborate,

The emergence of notions of **individuality**, in the modern sense, can be related to the break-up of the medieval social, economic and religious order. In the general movement against feudalism there was a new stress on a man’s personal existence over and above his place or function in a rigid hierarchical society. There was a related stress, in Protestantism, on man’s direct and individual relation to God, as opposed to this relation mediated by the Church. But it was not until C17 and C18 that a new mode of analysis, in logic and mathematics, postulated the individual as the substantial entity (cf. Leibniz’s ‘monads’), from which other categories and especially collective categories were derived. The political thought of the Enlightenment mainly followed this model. Argument began from individuals, who had an initial and primary existence, and laws and forms of society were derived from them: by submission, as in Hobbes; by contract or consent, or by the new version of natural law, in liberal thought. In classical economics, trade was described, at some starting point, to enter into economic or commercial relations. In utilitarian ethics separate individuals calculated the consequences of this or that action which they might undertake. (Williams, 1988, pp. 163-4)

Although the different historical contexts make it difficult to draw precise parallels between European and Iranian history, the debate between Khomeini and Hakamizadeh regarding providentialism and the individual represents a similar struggle to establish shi’ite

underpinnings for modernity. To the author of the *Secret of a Thousand Years*, the centrality of God is embedded in the action of each human being who is endowed with the faculty to reason; “reason is God’s close herald and for human beings is identical to eyes which serve them to see the steps they take” (p. 10). By insulating God’s affair and approaching God’s path, Hakamizadeh attempts to merge two axes of a paradoxical conceptualization. By the former, he situates the Providence at the center and places an obedient subject on the sideline. By the latter, he depicts an individual subject who, by virtue of his rationality, consciousness, and intellectual capacity, “synchronizes with this teleological design and discovers within it the main principles of his own moral law” (Dollimore, 1989, p. 42). Sticking to his own teaching, Hakamizadeh puts the discourse of God’s affair aside. For him, however, in observing God’s path, the ‘sovereign individual’ enjoys a measure of agency without which the providential scheme becomes untenable. Perhaps he sees himself as a sovereign agent and assails certain false practices by the clergy, which undercut providentialism. Superstitious rituals, absurd habits, factitious ceremonies, bibliomancy are among many activities Hakamizadeh identifies as factors that disrupt the naturalness of the God-human relation. He states that the Prophet “spent 23 years of his precious time” (p. 11) to unmask and tear down these practices. He specifically points to bibliomancy and prophesy that “have become a notorious sedition for us” (p. 7). Thus, Hakamizadeh constructs a shi’ite understanding of the Providence-human relationship that he believes can underpin a modernizing Shi’a Islam. This is the point that Khomeini picks up and uses to counteract Hakamizadeh.

Khomeini’s belief in a *different version* of providentialism as the defining tenet of the God-human relation is expressed throughout his text, explicitly and implicitly. However, his

expression of legitimacy for the practice of bibliomancy seems to counter this claim and fracture his support of providentialism. He states, “one meaning of bibliomancy is that when an individual is helplessly stuck in a problem ... and if God has no *definite instruction and injunction* [my emphasis] for how to solve that problem”, the Qur’an becomes “the source of assurance” and “the practice of bibliomancy shows him the right direction” (*Unveiling the Secrets*, p. 91). Shi’ism portrays the divine providence as the root of ultimate and all-encompassing knowledge and wisdom.

However, the above statement pictures a God whose judgment is blighted and displaced by an external source, which is the Qur’an. It is true that in the traditional strand of shi’ism, the Qur’an is God’s words, an expression of the ultimate reason, and a source of conduct. But, in accordance with Khomeini’s argument, the practice of bibliomancy shifts the cause of the Providence from God to the book; in other words, God is the Book; in the practice of bibliomancy God is decentered and replaced by text. To the traditional clergy, the centered text in this instance is the Qur’an, which is a mystified body of verses with boundless meanings. As Khomeini indicates, “not everybody can understand the sciences of the Qur’an and hadith, and they are not out there for everybody to perceive them; but rather they contain metaphors and allegories through which the author relates to a special group” (p. 322). In the words of Milani (2004), “every verse in the Qur’an has infinite layers of meanings. In this labyrinth of meanings, the devout shi’ite can at most grasp the outermost, superficial layer ... Only the Prophet and his progeny are empowered to find the allegorical meanings of the text and unravel the mysteries of its inner layers” (p. 29). The *Unveiling the Secrets* is stuffed with the assertion, directly or indirectly, that posits the ulama as the progeny of the Prophet and sole proprietor of the knowledge of Qur’anic hermeneutics. In

other words, understanding the Qur'an, a non-vernacular text, requires a didactic mediation, which is exclusive to the ulama. Khomeini seems to make the same point when he states, "there are sciences in the Qur'an and hadith the knowledge of which is privy to a group of high-minded of scientists and nobody else.... Scientists like the great philosopher Sadr-el-Motealemin and his exalted disciple Fayze Kashani can infer rational sciences from the same Qur'anic chapters that you hardly understand" (p. 323). The claim to the above interpretive authority demonstrates that the pattern of decentering in the *Unveiling of Secrets* is not confined to God. It is, rather, stretched out to include the Qur'an itself. Now, *it is the clergy that occupies the center.*

Conclusion

In conclusion, an initial shared belief in the function of divine providence as the foundation of the universe leads our authors to two quite distinct conclusions, both based in the shi'a tradition and the Qur'an, yet simultaneously contradictory and inescapable within the respective writer's underlying ideology. While Hakamizadeh arrives at a paradoxical impasse as explained above, the idea of centering the ulama logically leads Khomeini to displace the idea of providentialism in God-human relation. Moreover, the power of claiming the center directs the ulama to demand obedience from every member of the shi'ite community. In the discursive practice of the *Secrets of a Thousand Years* versus the *Unveiling the Secrets*, this demand is widely manifested in Khomeini's attempt at discrediting Hakamizadeh's discourses and disparaging his personality. In the later political practice of the post-revolutionary Iran, this demand takes the shape of imprisonment, forced abjuration, public disgrace, and even elimination.

Chapter 7

Second Discourse: Imamate

The notion of the management of the religious and temporal affairs of the Muslim community sits in logical association with the doctrine of ‘providentialism.’ Whether to perceive social and political life as unavoidable and natural – the product of the Providence, or as subjectively constructed are key contentions related to the issue of *leadership* within the Muslim community. This may be the underlying motive behind both authors’ take on the Imamate, which is associated with the discourse of leadership.

The discourse of the Imamate has been the main recurring motif in the historical development of shi’ite thought. Today, this discourse has gained further currency and weight due to: (a) the establishment of a shi’ite theocracy in Iran; and (b) the ascription of the label of *Imam* to Khomeini and the attempt to do the same with his successor, Khamenei. The concept of Imamate relates to the question of succession and continuance of the Muslim community’s leadership after the demise of the Prophet in 632 A.D. This issue rose to immediacy in an assembly called *Saqifah*, in which, as a result of a heated dispute, the fate of the Prophet’s successor was eventually determined. During the altercation, one group of Muslims representing the majority, who came to be known as the ‘sunnis’, maintained that the Prophet confers the selection of his succession on the Muslim community. Opposing this stance, another group representing the minority posited that the Prophet actually designated his son-in-law and cousin, Ali (d. 661), as his successor. This group, who came to be known as ‘shi’ites’, argues, “it was inconceivable given God’s justice and benevolence towards human beings that he [the Prophet] should have left the issue of the leadership (Imamate) undecided” (Enayat, 1991, p. 5). However, it was the Sunni view that eventually prevailed

and the Saqifah assembly selected Abu Bakr, a close companion of the Prophet, as first *Caliph*, or the successor of the Prophet. Subsequently, the aforementioned Ali was appointed as the fourth Caliph in 656 A.D. The assassination of Ali ended the circle of early caliphate, commonly known as the 'Rightly Guided' Caliphs.

Imamate and Otherworldly Salvation

The dissection of Islam into two main groups of sunni and shi'i, moreover, goes beyond a historical event relating merely to the unique and complicated procedure of the Prophet's succession. It gradually becomes intertwined with the doctrine of salvation in Islam. According to Sachedina (1981), "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" (p. 2). It is, for the most part, the variation in the interpretation of the notion of salvation and the nature of the *umma* that underpins the sectarian differences between the sunnis and the shi'ites in the aftermath of the Prophet's death. To the former, the allegiance and fidelity to an ideal Muslim community, a community that fully adheres to the observance and execution of the Shari'a regardless of its leadership, ensures salvation. To the Shi'ites, the realization of an ideal Islamic society in the absence of the Prophet revolves around the leadership of the Prophet's rightful successor, who is qualified to uphold the continuity of the Prophet's charismatic authority.

Focusing on the shi'ite interpretation, the emphasis of this study, this leadership is a privilege bestowed upon a designated member of the Prophet's Household in the track of a line of inheritance that exclusively comes down from the Prophet to Ali and from Ali to 11 more successors. As Sachedina (1981) explains, "the notional exaltation of the Prophet and

his rightful successor as a second cause... gave rise to the very concept of messianic leadership from among the descendants of the Prophet, an Imam, who could save the believers” (p. 5). The Imamate is the institution that facilitates the succession of charisma and warrants the umma’s salvation. In the shi’ite view, it is therefore the allegiance to the Imamate that ascertains salvation. From a shi’ite perspective, the Imamate is an integral part of Islam and equally important as the principle of prophecy. Specifically, this shi’ite group came to be known as *Imamis*, who later on became the *Twelver shi’ites*.

In early debates around the question of succession after the demise of the Prophet, there was a general consensus among shi’ite scholars that the divinely ordained Imam, following the Prophet’s tradition, is in charge of the twin leadership tasks—the temporal and the religious—of the Muslim community. In principle, these shi’ites did not draw a line separating temporal and religious authority. In practice, however, the authority of the Imam never exceeded the realm of the religious. It was the sixth Imam, Ja’far al-Sadiq, who at last penned the theory of the Imamate and placed the institution of the religious leadership in a differentiated sphere from the political. Through the action of Ja’far, the authority of the Imam became depoliticized (Arjomand, 1984; Hodgson, 1955). Since then, the discourse of the Imamate has played an overriding role in the development of the very nuanced social manifestations and practices of Iranian shi’ism: from a sacrosanct messianic leadership manifested in centuries of political quietism and isolation to the revolutionary political activism of the 1979 Islamic Revolution to the ideological radicalism underpinning the polity of the Islamic Republic of Iran today.

This trajectory did not remain out of Hakamizadeh’s limited but keen sight (observation) and he acknowledges:

An unbiased view of the Qur'an and history of early Islam shows us that, at first, the Imamate had been a simple political affair about which the Qur'an and Muslims were silent; however, later on, our leaders in Iran have customized the Imamate for mustering public support for their resistance to Arab and Turkish Caliphs' dominance. (p. 15)

In the following pages, I shall examine the evolution of the theory of the Imamate as represented by Hakamizadeh and Khomeini. This examination revolves around three concepts: (a) historical Imam; (b) the Imam's knowledge; and (c) the practice of *Taqiyya* (prudential dissimulation).

Universal Imam Versus Historicist Imam

In the elaboration of the Imamate theory, the sixth Imam consecrates the Imamate as a covenant between God and mankind (Jafri, 1979). In this contract, the Imam is the chosen supreme and infallible authority to which "God has ordained obedience" (Qur'an, 4:59). Drawing on this Qur'anic verse about authority, Ja'far declares, "God has delegated to the Imams spiritual rulership over the whole world, which must always have such a leader and guide" (Arjomand, 1984, p. 35). Subordination to Imams' absolute authority is central to an individual's piety: "whoever dies without having known and acknowledged the *Imam of his time* [my emphasis] dies as an infidel" (Jafri, 1979, p. 294). The notion of the 'Imam of the time,' the historical Imam, invokes two conflictive perspectives from Hakamizadeh and Khomeini.

Hakamizadeh questions the extreme devotion Iranians have granted to the Imamate: "Iranians have dedicated their life, their country, their wealth and time to the Imamate" (p. 16). He refutes some of the existing interpretations of the Qur'an that improperly draw on

few Surahs to justify the idea of the Imamate: “many books interpret some Qur’anic chapters as the proof of the Imamate. ... If the Imamate was so attractive to the Qur’an, why is it not explicitly mentioned in the Qur’an, which could have prevented all wars revolving around this subject?” (p. 14). He goes on to criticize the Iranian people for sacrificing God and the Prophet to Imams and takes on the notion of the Imam of the time: “whoever is the Imam, he is the Imam of his time and not of other times” (p. 16). In these statements, Hakamizadeh points to the historical specificity of the Imam and obliterates the teleological tenet of the theory of the Imamate upon which the shi’ite orthodoxy represented by Khomeini so compellingly insists:

According to a legitimate hadith [Kafi], for every epoch there is an Imam from the Prophet’s household, and this means not to deny the Imamate, rather to prove that the Imamate exists at each era ... and even though each Imam is the guide of the time in which he lives, his command remains valid after his demise ... since his commands stem from the Prophet whose commands, in turn, are purely from God. (Unveiling the Secrets, p. 163)

In this orthodoxy Ali inherits all the Prophet’s distinguished characteristics, which are passed lineally from Ali to his successor. The Imams’ commanding qualifications are universal because they originate from the same providential force in which the Prophet’s inherent privileges are embedded. Khomeini observes, “rationality, which is God’s close associate, implies that for the same reason that obedience to God is obligatory, the obedience to His messenger and Imams (those in authority) is” (p. 176). Hakamizadeh, on the other hand, as aforementioned, partially calls into question the notion of the Imamate due to its conspicuous absence in the Qur’an; to that he adds, “today, while our faith considers the

Imamate inferior to the principle of prophecy, in practice the Imamate is regarded much higher, however” (p. 13). As if being insufficiently satisfied with his own observations, Hakamizadeh levels a reformatory knock at the doctrine of the Imamate: “not only the Imamate, the very Imam also should not be regarded as part of the faith, for Imams are the faith’s guide not its elements” (p. 17).

In response, Khomeini draws on numerous Qur’anic verses to infer that, “Imamate is a principle of Islam” (p. 136) and “it is with the Imamate that faith becomes complete and proselytisation ends” (p. 135). In another instance, he points out that “the Imamate, which means the guardianship of the faith, must be considered an absolute and immutable principle in Islam” (p. 134). The phrase, ‘absolute and immutable principle in Islam,’ underlies Khomeini’s doctrinal approach to the Imamate. He tends to generalize the Imamate by extending it beyond shi’ism onto Islam. Also, by presenting the notion of the Imamate as totalizing and unchanging, he indubitably lodges this principle in the realm of the eternal law aligned with the doctrine of providentialism.

Transhistorical Versus Discursive Knowledge

Closely associated with the theory of the Imamate, is the unique position of the Imam with reference to ‘knowledge.’ Central to the Imami theory of the Imamate is the irreplaceable role of the Imam in transmitting God’s knowledge, once possessed by the Prophet. In the absence of the Prophet the Imam is assigned to become the repository of the divine knowledge and the sole authority in the hermeneutic interpretation of God’s revealed and transmitted texts. Thus, the Prophet confers his divinely revealed knowledge to Ali, the first Imam, and through him to the incumbent Imam. Such transference takes place by means of inheritance within the circle of the Prophet’s household (Arjomand, 1984; Jafri, 1979;

Kohlberg, 1988; Lambton, 1981; Milani, 2004). When one Imam dies, his chosen son inherits and is entrusted with the ‘special knowledge’ of the scriptures and mysteries of the faith. Such knowledge is, thus, denied to ordinary individuals, and no Imam possesses knowledge independent from his predecessor or, logically, from the Prophet. In this sense, the Prophet’s knowledge becomes the source of unrivalled authority for Imams. This raises questions on the relation between the institution of prophecy and the Imamate with respect to the issue of ‘knowledge.’ I will look at this problem in the two texts under study.

The first question raised is whether the Imam is entitled to change or alter the nature and scope of the knowledge that he inherits. The prevailing view within the Imami theology stresses on the immutable nature of this knowledge and that Imams cannot hold more knowledge than the Prophet. The rationale is that any action to this effect would disrupt the procession of authority that descends from the Prophet to his successors. This rationale is unequivocally manifest in Khomeini’s assertion, “inescapably, the flow of laws and God’s decrees is not confined to the Prophet’s time; this course must continue after the Prophet as well” (p. 134). To achieve this, he suggests, God has to designate a successor “who knows His and the Prophet’s word in its entirety and word-by-word” (p. 134). He declares that these qualifications were present solely in Ali, the first Imam. The same rationale applies to circumstances following the demise of the first Imam. This approach is anchored in two interconnected arguments in shi’ite theology: (a) the Imam who personifies the Prophet’s knowledge is inferior to the Prophet in terms of knowledge; nevertheless, (b) in principle the Imamate is identical to that of the principle of prophecy.

Hakamizadeh, on the other hand, rids the Prophet of possessing the power of ‘special knowledge’ and shrinks his status to that of the everyday individual: “according to the

Qur'an, the Prophet is a human being like others who has no knowledge of the unseen, does not cure the blind, and is not the provider of all needs. The only thing that makes him different is the revelation" (p. 16). Muslims believe that God's words are transmitted to humanity through 'revelation.' His will is inscribed in the heart of Prophets ever since Adam. In this sense, shi'ite theology deems revelation and prophecy as two complementary mechanisms that impart divine law to humans, and the cycle of revelation and prophecy reaches its closure with Mohammad, the Prophet of Islam (Bill, Williams, and Alden, 2002; Nasr, Dabashi, & Nasr, 1988). Implied in Hakamizadeh's argument is that in the absence of the knowledge of the unseen—or 'special knowledge' in Imami shi'ism—something else must be present to denote the prophecy of Muhammad. This is where revelation comes into play. In the above passage, Hakamizadeh dislodges 'special knowledge' as the source of authority and replaces it by revelation, a point that the shi'ite orthodoxy never negates. However, since 'revealed knowledge' cannot be hereditary, the knowledge of textual traces of the revelation, the Qur'an and hadith, *supposedly* can. But then the question becomes, if the Prophet lacks 'special knowledge' to transmit to his descendants, how can Ali inherit it? This leads to the next issue that further problematizes the doctrine of the Imamate as represented in the texts under study.

The manner in which knowledge is acquired, mobilized, and communicated are cardinal concerns related to the concept of knowledge, and appropriately applicable to the case of the Imamate. Intriguingly, both authors are either silent or implicit on this subject. As the above quote indicates, Hakamizadeh rejects the notion of 'special knowledge;' therefore, he shears the concept of the Imamate from one of its most essential elements. Ipso facto, one might conclude that from this point it is only a short step before Hakamizadeh

discards the very concept of the Imamate. This matter will be addressed later in this chapter. As for Khomeini, he seems to be in a state of double bind on this question.

As a member of the shi'ite hierocracy, Khomeini is bound up in the doctrine of the Imamate; hence is his belief in the inevitability of the transhistorical and inherited knowledge of the Imam. The Imami shi'ite theology, for the most part, postulates that the corpus of the knowledge that is transmitted by the Prophet is immutable; therefore, there is no difference between the nature and scale of the Prophet and Imams' knowledge (Kohlberg, 1988). On the other hand, as a scholar and practitioner of the shi'ite jurisprudence, Khomeini is expected to learn that the acquisition of knowledge is a cumulative process and appreciate the provisional and uncertain status of knowledge as it is embedded in cultural and discursive practices. Thus, it might be unavoidable that an Imam discards some elements of the knowledge passed on to him by the previous Imam (s) and thus by the Prophet. Logically, this leads to the idea of the superiority of the Imam over the Prophet in the domain of authority—an idea unsettling to orthodox shi'ism. As noted above, in his text, Khomeini does not doubt the vision of the Imam's unchanging and unalterable 'special knowledge'. But he shuns from addressing whether, in the process of transmission, an Imam can add to the knowledge inherited from the previous Imam. This issue has led to a long and divisive controversy in the history of shi'ite thought (Kohlberg, 1988). Given that doubt is the motor of reason, and despite that Khomeini constantly associates faith with reason, in the above dialectical paradigm of faith and doubt—'special knowledge' versus historicist knowledge—he chooses to represent not doubt but Truth, the eternal Truth.

While Khomeini refrains from addressing the status of the Imam's knowledge in this text, he is quite explicit about the Imam's inferior authority: "Imam does not issue a decree

on his own ... all his rules come from the Prophet whose injunctions, in turn, derive completely from God. So, with the demise of the Imam, God's laws don't die" (p. 164). In other words, the Imam does not have an independent hold on the embodiment of authority; that is, the issuance of decrees. He simply follows God's order. Khomeini, on the one hand, assents to the shi'ite hierocracy that places the Imamate by the side of the principle of Prophecy on doctrinal classification. On the other hand, he significantly limits the Imam's authoritative power. Khomeini tends to fill this authoritative vacuum with the clergy, an issue that is going to be the subject of my analysis later in this study.

Prudential Dissimulation Versus Tactical Dissimulation (Taqiyya)

The practice of dissimulation or concealment of beliefs is not alien to human behavior. It is included in wide-ranging religious teachings, political handbooks, and ideological manuals. The rationale that necessitates the act of dissimulation lies in the common-sense norm of self-preservation. In Islam, the practice of dissimulation is known to be a normative behavior associated in large part with shi'ism. The formulation of this practice is credited to the fifth and sixth shi'ite Imams, and by virtue of centuries of commonplace practice, it has developed into a fundamental of shi'ism (Arjomand, 1984; Enayat, 1991; Kohlberg, 1975). The development of Taqiyya, I will argue, is a logical corollary of the doctrine of the Imamate. By definition, the Imamate is conceptualized by the sixth Imam to give Muslims access to a transhistorical truth. While it bears a tinge of private judgment and personal longings, and providence of its author, in a deeper sense it is an expression of historically rooted social, political, cultural, and discursive configurations of the time.

To elaborate, within decades following the death of the Prophet, the Arab-Muslim community spread its supremacy over much of the Middle East from underdeveloped peripheries to more developed central areas. With the conversion of non-Muslim populations (Jewish, Christian, and Zoroastrian) to Islam, new communities emerged, within which Arabs and non-Arabs together advanced the reach of the Islamic empire and culture. This Islamization of the Middle East kept the old social and institutional structures unbroken while representing them with a new discursive shape. According to Lapidus (1991), the Islamization of the Middle East “seems to have infused inherited institutional forms with a new vocabulary, concepts and value preferences, and a new definition of personal, social, and political identity” (p. 121). Through this process, Islamic discourses were constructed to define, rationalize, and legitimize the emerging institutional forms. Similarly, novel elites began to surface and eventually dominate the religious and political spheres of Arab societies. The new communities did not, however, form a unified and monolithic block. Rather, they “embodied, not one but a number of conflicting orientations” (Lapidus, 1991, p. 121). Among them, the sunni and shi’ite groups constituted the two major orientations. In their construction of the discourse of succession, both groups laid emphasis on power relations: each orientation linked its discursive practice with contestation over power. Each group attempted to rule-in its own *truth* about the *post-prophetic* governance and limit and discredit that of the other. In this dynamic, it was the sunni discourse that possessed the power to *make itself true*; and this making, in large part, resorted to a path of violence. The interplay of faith and power ultimately pushed the shi’a orientation to the periphery. Under these circumstances, distantiation from politics became an imperative practice for the shi’ite group. The formulation of the theory of Imamate by the sixth Imam legitimized this recourse

and transformed shi'ism into an organized sect (Arjomand, 1984; Hodgson, 1955; Kohlberg, 1975).

The differentiation of the religious sphere from that of the political according to the doctrine of Imamate accommodated the shi'ites with a norm of conduct that enabled them to deal with their violent treatment by the ruling sunnis—political quiescence. The sixth Imam, who personified this conduct, allowed his followers “to engage in normal intercourse with the larger community, and to acquire property and possessions that have passed through impure hands. The shi'ites were also permitted to serve the illegitimate government” (Arjomand, 1984, p. 36). Under keen and heartless sunni vigilance, this practice could be made possible solely by concealing one's faith and this reflects on the state of affairs that imports the conduct of Taqiyya. In the words of Jafri (1979), “thus arose the famous doctrine of Taqiyya (dissimulation) on which Ja'far [the sixth Imam] put the utmost emphasis, raising it almost to the status of a condition for Faith” (p. 298).

While disputing the English standard translation of Taqiyya as “dissimulation or (expedient) concealment,” Enayat (1991) asserts, “both may be necessary to guard oneself from physical or mental harm on account of holding a particular belief opposed to that held by majority” (p. 175). Explaining the shi'ite's perspective of Taqiyya, Enayat states:

The necessity of Taqiyya is based on a commonsense ‘counsel of caution’ on the part of a persecuted minority. Since for the greater part of their history the Shi'is have been a minority amidst the global Islamic community and have lived mostly under regimes hostile to their creed, the only wise course for them to follow has been to avoid exposing themselves to the risk of extinction resulting from an open and defiant propagation of their beliefs (p.175).

Hakamizadeh builds a direct link between the theory of Imamate and the practice of Taqiyya. As explained above, he professes ambivalence over the validity of the Imamate, but he seems unambiguous in discarding Taqiyya. Without an explicit reference to Taqiyya, he frames his revulsion towards this practice in this manner:

There is a hadith from an Imam's companion who says, I asked the Imam a question, he answered. Another person came and asked the same question, the Imam answered differently. The third person came and asked the same question, the Imam replied differently again. Then, I asked the Imam that three shi'ites asked you the same question, but how come you responded differently? The Imam responded, I wanted them to disagree with each other so that nobody could identify the 'truth' (p. 14).

Hakamizadeh adds that according to the account present in other hadiths, "the Imam replied that this was the authority that has been bestowed upon us" [Imam] (p. 14). Ostensibly baffled, Hakamizadeh also indicates, "What can I say about truth, if these hadiths are true?!" (p. 14).

Furthermore, Hakamizadeh equates Taqiyya with a conservative and prudential attitude and about this he is quite explicit:

They [the ulama] say that the Prophet avoided talking about the truth with people since he was afraid that they would not follow his command. However, the Qur'an and the Prophet's life are the proof of the fact that the Prophet never practiced conservatism (or Taqiyya) ... The Qur'an is the proof of the Prophet's truthfulness" (p. 14).

In other words, the relation of the Prophet to the Qur'an is underpinned by the practice of truth, which leaves no open space to fill with Taqiyya.

Khomeini, on the other hand, puts forward a vigilant defense of Taqiyya. Based on his customary method, he relates Taqiyya to rational mindfulness: “This is a clear dictate of rationality, and anybody who even possesses minimal intellect understands that Taqiyya is God’s preemptory diktat; it is deemed that a person without Taqiyya has no faith” (p. 129). His definition of Taqiyya hints at the prudential attribute of this conduct. He suggests, “the practice of Taqiyya means that individuals need to talk untruthfully or act contrary to the principles of the Shari’a in order to protect their life, wealth, or chastity” (p. 128).

Khomeini employed the context of Taqiyya to validate the Prophet’s “conservative” stance toward an equivocal mentioning of the Imamate in the Qur’an: “Earlier in this discourse, we proved that the Prophet evades the explicit mention of the term Imam in the Qur’an because he fears that after him people would alter the Qur’an or create rift among Muslims, which may result in *Islam’s disappearance* [my emphasis]” (p.130). This explanation manifestly marks an effort to place the Prophet’s action within the confines of Taqiyya. Subtly, it insinuates a shift in the impulse of exercising Taqiyya; that is, the impersonal providential preservation of faith takes center stage at the cost of decentering the drive for personal safeguarding—protecting personal life, wealth, and chastity. At first glance, this shift seems to be simply rhetorical. But, as I will discuss later, in actuality, Khomeini was able to cause a discursive shift whose material effects, nearly four decades later, profoundly shaped the trajectory of sociopolitical dynamics in Iran.

In *Unveiling the Secrets*, Khomeini unequivocally fosters the acceptance of the status quo or relations of power that were in place. To elaborate, he states that the ulama have no intention to aim at political power. In his word, “no faqih has ever said or written that being the Shah or the monarchy is our right” (p. 186). He even specifies that “this class [the

clergy] has never opposed the foundation of the monarchy; rather, many of the ulama have cooperated with various Shahs” (p. 187). He alleges that there are individuals who “are trying to provoke the government’s distrust towards the clergy; there is nothing but devilish purpose and sedition behind these acts, which intend to create strife and disrupt the unity on which the foundation of the country is based” (p. 187). Needless to say, in 1979 Khomeini mobilized a massive political action to eradicate the very monarchical government that he allegedly supported. Between embracing the foundation of the state and obliterating that foundation, and between professing the mosque/state divide and rising above that divide lies an enormous moral gap that supposedly only Taqiyya can traverse. Practicing Taqiyya is an act of vigilance, and Khomeini seems to be conscious when he preaches on this recourse after seizing power in 1979:

Before the Revolution, I believed that once the revolution succeeded then there would be honest people to carry out the task. ... Therefore I ...stated the clergy would leave and attend to their own profession. But I later realized that ... most of ... [the honest people] were dishonest. ... I later stated ... that I had made a mistake. This is because we intend to implement Islam. Accordingly ... I may have said something yesterday, changed it today, and will again change it tomorrow. This does not mean that simply because I made a statement yesterday, I should adhere to it. Today I am saying that ... the ulama should continue with their jobs¹⁸

This instance of Taqiyya represents a curious aberration from shi’ite orthodoxy. A comparative look at Taqiyya as enacted by Imam Ja’far elucidates this digression. For Ja’far,

¹⁸ Broadcast on 11 December 1983, Khomeini made these remarks while discussing Guardian Council tasks. I borrowed the quotation from Brumberg (2001).

Taqiyya works in tandem with ‘special knowledge’ that is solely privy to the Imams, and “this affair [the Imamate and the esoteric meaning of religion] is occult and veiled by a covenant, and whoever unveils it will be disgraced by God”.¹⁹ In this sense, as a means to immunize the divine knowledge against unrefined publicity, on the practice of Taqiyya, the sixth Imam cultivates a work of theological virtue. Moreover, on the scale of importance and urgency, he gives precedence to the task of developing the corpus of Islamic jurisprudence. He was in need of his companions to move forward with this task; therefore, he cautioned them to hide their religious identity to survive the brutal suppression of shi’ites by sunni governments (Arjomand, 1984; Kohlberg, 1975). In this stance, Ja’far prescribes Taqiyya as a practice of prudence. In the practice of Taqiyya, Ja’far finds a rationale to steer the institution of religion clear of the institution of the state. He even rejected the proposition by the existing caliph that “espoused the restoration of theocratic caliphate under any branch of the house of the Prophet” (Arjomand, 1984, p. 34). In the binary of power/knowledge Ja’far sides with knowledge.

In this binary, however, Khomeini sides with power. For him, Taqiyya suits, for the most part, the hidden intent for power. In contrast to Ja’far, he uses Taqiyya to fuse the two institutions of religion and state. Khomeini’s version of Taqiyya bears no prudential attribute of dissimulation; it reflects, instead, in the words of Kolakowski (1999), “a built-in necessary of lying” (p. 234), hence a ‘tactical or political dissimulation’ of belief. Khomeini uses Taqiyya for what Greenblatt (1993) articulates, “the pretense necessary to achieve an agreeable social presence ... idea of the sugarcoated pill of political virtue” (p. 163). As a

¹⁹ Quoted in Jafri (1979), p. 289.

result of this pretense and the semblance of virtue created by Khomeini's Taqiyya unenlightened individuals and masses embraced his ascendancy to power in 1979.

Conclusion

I shall address the mode by which the theory of Imamate is represented by our authors. Despite approaching the Imamate with a veil of doubt and uncertainty, Hakamizadeh demonstrates a touch of what might be called an *involuntary take (prostration)* on the Imamate when he views it through the eyes of history. He asserts:

Once, due to political exigency and for the sake of Iran's independence and protection from its two arch enemies—the Ottomans and Uzbeks— it became necessary to mobilize people by means of mourning, pilgrimage, visiting Imams' shrines, etc. But, these politics and politicians are long gone, and the modern world has made enormous progresses; however, we are still investing in these innovations and nobody knows how long we have to be preoccupied with them" (p. 15).

It should be noted that practices such as 'mourning', 'pilgrimage', and 'visiting Imams' etc., represent popular ritual conducts to commemorate and venerate a few selected Imams of the shi'a. Therefore, in shi'ite vernacular, these conducts allude to and is intermingled with the principle of Imamate.

In this statement, Hakamizadeh briefly explains the time-bound unfolding of an action, the practice of the Imamate, to unmask the ideological tenet that the shi'ite hierarchy attaches to it. His ideological critique is simply tied up with an event— "to mobilize people by means of mourning, pilgrimage, visiting Imams' shrines"— and its consequences—" we are still investing in these innovations and nobody knows how long we have to be preoccupied with them"— that come about in a particular historical episode. Thus, he pulls

away from delineating the theory of Imamate per se. As if, he reduces the meaning of Imamate to the presence and importance of historical agents who enact it and to stories in which it is veiled. As quoted earlier in this chapter, Hakamizadeh, in general terms, faults the actions of religious elites for converting the Imamate from a simple belief in messianic role of Imams in the aftermath of the Prophet's demise to a complex dogma that plays into all facets of shi'ite theology. However, he evades criticizing the Imamate and characterizes it as a historical exigency without offering any supportive factual evidences. In this sense, it is fair to assume that he extends a contextual assent to this theory. Nevertheless, Hakamizadeh's text under study is not substantive enough to determine whether his assent is an act of faith or merely an attempt to advance his polemical purpose.²⁰ In either case, this implies that Hakamizadeh has not taken the short step that would have led him to discard the entire premise and theory of the Imamate.

Khomeini, on the other hand, draws on a theological approach and represents the Imamate in structural and institutional terms, rather than in narrative historical terms:

Despite their shortcomings, these rituals and ceremonies for commemorating martyrs are the source of faith's commands and ethics, and the flow of virtues and respects. God's faith and the divine laws that represent the very sacred shi'ite faith ... have been in place and will be as a result of these rituals, which in appearance are about mourning; but, in truth, they are God's rules and proliferation of faith.... Given that shi'ites have always been a minority, if it was not for these institutions, which are

²⁰ No writing by Hakamizadeh, subsequent to this text, is available to further clarify his position on the Imamate.

among important institutions of our religion, shi'ism would have long disappeared.

(p. 163)

In this doctrinal formalist statement, Khomeini takes in stories and symbolism of the Imamate to represent it as a system of abstract visions and relations. In this mode of representation, he stresses on eternal structures and sanctifies the ritual, formal, and showy display of these structures. He inverts Hakamizadeh's take on the Imamate to disallow the temporal embeddedness of the doctrine of Imamate. It is as if the Imamate, to borrow from Greenblatt (2001), "had something to lose by history, as if any determinate location and time would invalidate its claim to eternal efficacy, as if any record of struggle and process and change would necessarily threaten its universal validity" (p. 80).

While Hakamizadeh depicts the Imamate as commonsensical story accessible to everyday understanding, Khomeini represents it in a form of esoteric doctrine whose understanding is the exclusive possession of the clerical elite. Khomeini, as we will see in the next chapters, reflects on this doctrine as a means to relocate the clergy to the position of center as the main agent of social change in contemporary Iran.

Chapter 9

Third Discourse: The Clergy

The multifaceted issues that gather around the discourse of the clergy are entrenched in the larger context of the doctrine of Imamate. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the beginning of the discursive exchange between Hakamizadeh and Khomeini on the notion of the clergy. In questioning the role of the clerical establishment, Hakamizadeh suggests that, “today, according to our clergy, during the *period of occultation* [emphasis added] the jurist [faqih] is the Imam’s successor.... If this vicegerency is for interpreting religious creeds, obviously then, it differs from your [the clergy] purpose; and also if it is for governing and guardianship (velayat), then there are going to be several shahs in each district and perhaps in every house” (p. 17).

In his response, Khomeini instantly takes notice of the issue of the clergy and after a relatively lengthy discussion on the state’s *raison d’être* confronts Hakamizadeh: “The question of the mujtahids’ guardianship has been the subject of discussion among the ulama since day one. This discussion includes the legitimacy of the ulama’s rulership and its contour and scope” (p. 185). The dissection and analysis of the above statements demands in the first place an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the emergence of the ulama in Islam in general and in shi’ism particularly.

In the early days of the formation of the Muslim community, religious and political institutions cohered under the unique leadership of the Prophet. The Prophet possessed the religious and political authority of the community as a whole and embodied the umma. Because of his religious authority, loyalty to the Prophet along with membership in the Muslim community constituted the necessary ingredients to manifest belief in Islam; and as

Lapidus (1975) observes, “in this case, religious and political values and religious and political offices were inseparable” (p. 346). This original sociopolitical arrangement continued in the absence of the Prophet under the leadership of his successor, the Caliph. The Caliph consequently displaced the Prophet as the personification of the umma and embodied the fusion of religious and political aspects of social life.

However, this structural union ceased to function after about four hundred years of the Islamic empire. The management of an unrestrained policy of imperial expansion forced Islamic rulers to concentrate their efforts on the political side of communal life (Arjomand, 1979). The concentration of political tasks in the hands of a ruler who was also in charge of religious undertakings did not aptly serve the interests of an expansionist state. Thus, the political affairs of the Islamic polity became less the focus of the Caliph, and as Lapidus (1975) suggests:

From the middle of the tenth century effective control of the Arab-Muslim empire had passed into the hands of generals, administrators, governors, and local provincial lords; the Caliphs had lost all effective political power. Governments in Islamic lands were henceforth secular regimes – Sultanates – in theory authorized by the Caliphs, but actually legitimized by the need for public order. Henceforth, Muslim states were fully differentiated political bodies without any intrinsic religious character, though they were officially loyal to Islam and committed to its defense. (P. 364)

In other words, religion and politics as well as religious and political communities began to develop along two differentiated paths. Thus, in this period, a relatively independent institution of religion incorporating groups of learned Muslim scholars – the ulama – gradually emerged. The ulama assumed the function of religious advisers and

regulators of the umma. They put together local apparatuses of administrators, educators, and judges whose preoccupations, for the most part, focused on the practice of Islam. In this sense, a communal identity separate from the caliph began to take shape within the tradition of Islam. According to Arjomand (1979), “with the growth of religious activities independent of the state and the emergence of the Schools of Jurisprudence, the Caliphate was no longer the sole identifying symbol of Islam. In fact, the emergence of the ulama as a distinctly religious elite marked the disjunction between the caliphate and the institution embodying the Islamic Revelation” (p. 63).

In shi’ism, the ulama emerged in conjunction with the formation of shi’ite sectarian communities during the imamate of the fifth and sixth Imams. Under these Imams’ guidance, shi’ite religious elites initiated the task of compiling shi’ite rites, hadiths, and practices. The ulama gradually developed a shi’ite law distinctive in its understanding of the Qur’an and hadiths, in which the notion of the Imamate constituted a key component.

In their characterization of the clergy, both Hakamizadeh and Khomeini implicitly associate the clergy with the notion of Imamate, while explicitly linking the clerical function to an era that is singled out by the absence of the Imamate – the ‘period of occultation.’ Both authors maintain the *occultation* as an a priori assumption on which their engagement with the discourse of the clergy is based. This makes it all the more necessary to elaborate on the concept of occultation and its implications for the evolution of the institution of the clergy consequent to its consolidation in the tenth century.

The Concept of Occultation

Upon the death of the 11th Imam in 874 without leaving an apparent heir, the cycle of successive Imams reached its end and the chain of transmission suffered a rupture, which

forced the shi'ite establishment to undergo a major crisis of succession. In approaching the crisis, the shi'ite community laid out diverse solutions ranging notably from chiliastic extremism to more rationally oriented prescription. As a result, the Imami community submerged into sectarian divisions (Arjomand, 1984, 1979; Sachedina, 1981). Some sects opted for the chiliastic belief in either the immortality of the eleventh Imam or his imminent return as the 'redresser of wrongs' (the *Qa'im*). Against these orientations, a few groups promulgated the idea that the Imam had actually left behind a son who went into hiding to avoid the tyranny of the ruling Abbasids (750-1258) and to save the institution of the Imamate. Sachedina (1981) presents this stand as the earliest formulation of the shi'ite doctrine of the messianic hidden Imam by the Imamis who maintain that

There is a proof (*hujja*) for God on earth among the descendents of al-Hasan b. Ali Askari [the eleventh Imam]. God's decree is in effect and he is the legatee (*wasi*) of his father in accordance with the method laid down by the previous traditions.... All that has been mentioned above is attested by the reports of the two Sadiqs [the fifth and sixth Imams].... The earth cannot be void of a *hujja*. If the Imamate disappeared from the world even for a moment, the earth and its inhabitants would perish....

We have conformed to the past tradition and have affirmed the Imamate [of al-Hasan al-Askari] and accept that he is dead. We concede that he had a successor, who is his own son and the Imam after him until he appears and proclaims his authority.... God allowed this to happen because the authority belongs to him....

It is also unlawful to mention his name or ask his whereabouts until such time as God decides. This is so because if he is protected, fearful, and in concealment, it is

by God's protection. It is not up to us to seek for reasons for what God does. (P. 49-50)

According to the doctrine of the occultation, the concealment of the twelfth Imam took place through two processes, which impacted the formulation of this doctrine with divergent implications. The first process, the *lesser occultation*, started immediately after the death of the eleventh Imam in 874 and lasted until 940. During this period, the Imam, while in temporary concealment, was in contact with his viceroy at the time, who on his behalf was in charge of the management of the affairs of the Imami community. Initiated by the sixth Imam, the Imams had assigned plenipotentiaries as their deputies to assist them with the administration of the mundane of their communities. Throughout the first occultation, these representatives remained in the position of vicegerency and exercised authority over the shi'ite communities on the Imam's behalf (Arjomand, 1984).

Four deputies managed the era of the lesser occultation. The impact of the second and third deputies on the adoption of the theory of the occultation by the Imami community is noteworthy. Coming from a wealthy family in Baghdad – the Nawbakhti family – both deputies, a father and son, had the respect and support of the elites of the shi'ite community. Arjomand (1979, 1984) maintains that during their tenure, the Nawbakhti father and son were able to win over the opposition of the Imami chiliastic extremism and develop the Imami theological dogma of the occultation. Also, by overcoming the plebian resistance of the extremist dissidents, “the aristocratic outlook of the prominent shi'ite families prevailed in the shi'ism of the ensuing three centuries” (Arjomand, 1984, p. 41).

It is the second process, the *greater occultation*, however, that marked the turning point in the formulation of the doctrine of occultation. This process comes with the

vicegerency of the fourth and last agent, al-Samarri. It is documented that in 940, six days before his death, al-Samarri put forth an authoritative command from the Hidden Imam stating that his occultation was deemed to continue until the end of time (Arjomand, 1984, 1979; Kohlberg, 1976; Sachedina, 1981). According to this ordinance, the Hidden Imam declares to al-Samarri:

So take care of your affairs and do not appoint anyone in your place, since the complete occultation has taken place. I will not appear until God permits me to do so and that will be after a long time and after the hearts become hard and the earth is filled with wickedness. In the near future there will be those among my followers who will claim to have seen me.... Whoever claims seeing [me] before the rising of Sufyani and the [cosmic] battle cry [Saiha – signs of the end of time] is deceitful and calumnious. (Arjomand, 1984, p. 43; Sachedina, 1981, p. 96)

The complete occultation implies that the cycle of the Imamate ends with the twelfth Imam; with that the Imami shi'ism assumed the label of the Twelvers.

The doctrine of the occultation experienced an era of great theological polemics between various shi'ite sects in the ninth and tenth centuries. In the course of these debates, the dogma became further rationalized and eventually incorporated into the doctrine of the Imamate. As Arjomand (1984) indicates, "Thus from the tenth century onwards, the development and systematization of the shi'ite sacred literature rested on the premise of the absence of the Imam, with little provision being made for his return" (p. 44). It is now evident that the idea of occultation intended to put an end to the crisis of succession subsequent to the death of the eleventh Imam, in which shi'ite extremism found an opening to consolidate its position within the shi'ite community.

At the same time, the dogma of occultation raises the prospect of another potential crisis: the relation between the religious and temporal authority in the Imami community during the period when the Imam is not physically present. It is within this context that the role and function of the clergy assumed prominence, thus becoming the subject of polemical arguments among the ulama, extending to the present time to include Hakamizadeh and Khomeini.

Ulama and Social Division of Labor

The point of contention between the two discourses revolves around the dimensions and scope of the ulama's function. Hakamizadeh, at first, gives an implied recognition to the notion of social differentiation of labor. To make his point, he suggests, "every person is made for a specific task. The work of the clergy and the practice of governance are like the work of a physician and a mechanic; that is devoid of interdependence" (p. 18). That is, he limits the ulama's occupation to a specific domain, "the cleric means the doctor of the soul.... The job of a cleric is to grapple with beliefs, to get brains rid of superstitions, and to cleanse the faith from lies" (p. 20). Hakamizadeh makes this specification with no reference to the notions of Imamate and the occultation. Instead, he positions the clergy's task within the realm of the everyday mundane through which lay people live, thus relieving the functional specialization of the clergy from mystified legitimation. He wonders at such a cleric "who can prepare himself to take on daily tasks and become accountable for his family's subsistence" (p. 20); because, as he argues, "the cleric is God's creature too and not outside of the natural law ... he learns his own lesson when he sees that wealth and respect reach those clerics who pretend to be more credulous, or when he sees that those clerics who fabricate lies, while on the altar, receive more audience" (p. 20).

Khomeini, however, portrays a complicated and somewhat paradoxical image of the function of the clergy. On the one hand, he demonstrates a tinge of awareness of the normative implications of occupational specialization. He declares, “when we claim that the government and guardianship in this period [occultation] is the ulama’s responsibility, we do not imply that the faqih functions as the shah, the minister, the military, and the garbage man at the same time” (p. 185). On the other hand, he continues to urge on the function of general guardianship for the ulama. He associates the clerical task with being a proxy for the Hidden Imam. In this sense, the clergy’s function assumes universal legitimacy and, accordingly, blurs the boundaries of the differentiated spheres of social labor, especially the religious and the political. To promote his argument, he draws on an authoritative hadith from Shaykh Saddooq, one of the major mujtahids of the tenth century, who states, “for every incident you must refer to the narrators of our hadiths because they personify my proof and I am, in turn, God’s proof” (p. 188). This leads Khomeini to conclude, “during the occultation, for *all their affairs* [my emphasis], people are obliged to refer to the narrators of the hadiths and obey their ordinance because the Imam has made them his own proof and successor” (p. 188). It is no secret that the “narrators of the hadiths”, in this insinuation, are the ulama. Furthermore, Khomeini refers to another hadith from the same mujtahid and asserts, “it is clear that those who narrate hadith and the Prophet’s traditions are his successor; therefore, they are entitled to whatever the Prophet is entitled to, including obedience, velayat and rulership” (p. 188). And he finalizes his argument by making a conspicuous induction, “it appears ... that the execution of all affairs should be in the hands of the ulama, who are conscious of what is permissible and what is banned” (p. 188). It seems that his initial recognition of religiopolitical separation was a tactical manipulation of this traditional shi’ite

dogma. In reality, the construction of the Islamic Republic of Iran three decades later reveals his true contempt for this principle.

How do these functions, assigned distinctly by Hakamizadeh and Khomeini to the clergy, operate? While both authors claim to have based their explanations on reason and rational thinking, unsurprisingly, they offer two different operations. Consistent with his vernacular rhetoric and in an astoundingly forthright manner, Hakamizadeh outlines in unrefined language his recommendations through several observations of the status of the shi'ite clerical establishment. He complains that the ulama's status has been so inflated that they would hardly accept any idea of reform. He maintains that, "on the surface, this issue [inflated status] may be beneficial to the ulama, but in fact it has caused them great harm, surely because when the way of critique and questioning is blocked, the way of corruption opens up" (p. 19).

The Ulama's Autonomy and Hierocratic Reform

The idea of reform of the clergy gains particular weight in Hakamizadeh's discourse. He believes that reform must come from within the clerical institution: "reform must be done by the ulama themselves, not by Reza Shah or Nader Shah" (p. 21). However, only an autonomous institution of ulama would be capable of accomplishing this important task, an autonomy that, according to Hakamizadeh, is quite alien to the actual status of the clergy. Hakamizadeh faults two crucial institutional practices in shi'ism that have been in place since the 18th century for the absence of clerical independence.

The first practice instituted a functional hierarchy between religious elite and ordinary followers. In this hierarchical relationship, based on certain qualifications, a jurist becomes the source of emulation for ordinary people who are seeking legal guidance. In the second

practice, under the guise of religious tax, the followers would allocate part of their income to the jurist whom they emulate for their religious duties. These two practices created a shi'ite ecclesiastical enterprise with: (a) extensive juristic authority; and (b) massive financial resources independent from the state. In Hakamizadeh's view, this hierarchical arrangement has become a site of corruption in the shi'ite hierocracy. He states, "another epithet added to the clergy that has caused this institution to thrust into corruption is that today the clergy receive their income directly from people and as a result they feel obliged to talk in accordance with or at least not against popular longings" (p. 20). He contends that this practice "has two major shortcomings. First, the general public has many wrong ideas, which do not tend to last. But they become a conviction when the ulama approve them or maintain silence about them.... Second, instead of people emulating the ulama, the ulama would emulate the masses" (p. 20). The distantiation between the ulama and general public suggested in the above statement seems to imply that the ulama have no scope for populist practice. But for Hakamizadeh the rejection of populism does not necessarily entail a push into elitism. While the members of the clergy are entrusted to seize upon the truth, they are enslaved by the necessities of everyday existence such as market pressure, similar to members of the masses. As Hakamizadeh states, "if the clergy were not afraid of losing their continued subsistence, these secrets would no longer have to remain in secrecy" (p. 21). Thus the question becomes, what is the source of income for the clergy?

Generally, Hakamizadeh rejects the idea that the interpretation of religious rulings should be compensated by materialistic incentives. He equates the interpreters of religious rulings, the ulama, with government agents who receive their income from the state: "these individuals [the jurists] can receive their salaries not from people, but rather from the

national budget, as we know that the state employees work for people but get paid by the state” (p. 21). Hakamizadeh, however, is aware that this practice interferes with the independence of the institution of the clergy: “Make no mistake, it would be wrong for the state to interfere with clerical affairs” (p. 21). To resolve this paradox, he proposes to use religious endowments, under simultaneous supervision of the clergy and the state, for providing the ulama’s livelihood (p. 21).

In the meantime, for Hakamizadeh the arrow of independence between the state and religion must run both ways. He even denies the ulama a consultative role with the government. He urges as follows:

Some people say that there is no need for the ulama to head the government. Rather, the rulership can remain in the hands of whoever is the ruler, but the ruler should obtain the ulama’s approval like many kings have done and as is written in the Iranian Constitution. I would say that ... if this recommendation is intended to improve the nation’s affairs, it cannot actually happen because law and the parliament become dependent on the ulama’s permission, and with the presence of the ulama the practice of both law and the parliament won’t make any sense (see the section on government and law)” (p. 18).

To elaborate his reasoning, Hakamizadeh identifies the role of the clergy as the betterment of social life: “if the ulama could express what they know, our life and our faith would be in a better situation” (p. 21). In Hakamizadeh’s discourse, however, this agency does not emanate from the position of center. Rather, it is placed in the context of commonplace practices by means of which ordinary people live their own lives independent

from others. In such a discursive practice, the clergy loses its position of centrality in human and social affairs: in other words, it is politically decentered.

Hakamizadeh's marginalizing discourse does not go unnoticed by Khomeini's keen perception. He maintains, "those of you who try to weaken and discredit the clergy commit the greatest treason to the country. When the clergy is undermined, the nation will suffer from irreparable damages" (p. 202). Intensifying this perception, he defensively insists that, "we know that you and the likes of you are targeting God's ruling, reason, and the clergy; that you are trying, even though in vain, to charge the ulama with your own or others' faults; hence to scare off people from them" (p. 214). With this perception in mind, Khomeini shapes his response around counterclaiming every facet of Hakamizadeh's discourse with an underlying motif of bringing back the ulama to the center.

In several statements, Khomeini considers the welfare of the Iranian nation to be at the locus of the clerical class. In an unmistakable manner, his rhetoric seeks to relocate the clergy from the margin to the center. While his statements are dispersed, a close reading of his text can depict a pattern of the ulama's centrality as their common bedrock. As he declares, "despite all flaws, imperfection, and despairs that mete out upon this class [the clergy], their work for the betterment of the country and people is far more efficient than hundreds of military regiments and police" (p. 202). With a special fervency, he links the importance of the shi'ite hierarchy to the interest of the country and political management of society: "alas, unreasonable people, a faithful country constitutes the heaven on earth, and this can only be established by the clergy. Yet, even the actual impaired clergy, which straws like you attempt to further undermine, is still silently running two-thirds of the country's affairs" (p. 202). He continues, "by means of the clerical force the preservation of the

country's independence and greatness on the face of foreign politics as well as the protection of internal security and peace can be effectively provided" (p. 208). His rhetorical articulation of the centering of the ulama reaches its climax in the following statement: "To separate the hierocracy from the state is tantamount to separating *head* [my emphasis] from body; this would cause the state to lose its hold on the nation's independence and internal and external security, as well as the exhaustion of the clergy" (p. 208). The crude analogical equivalent of the term 'head' to the shi'ite hierocracy signifies the clergy as the site of expediency and reason. Naturally, if this metaphor holds, the state must pay heed to the clergy, just as the body responds to the orders of the head.

Khomeini does not hesitate to underpin his argument with theological legitimation. He draws once again on his longstanding preconceived cliché and over-inflated form of reasoning warning all men that he who judges the clergy judges the Prophet and God; he who opposes the clergy opposes the Prophet and God:

The apostate is the one who denies God or the Unity of God, or denies the Prophet, or denies any of the faith's requirements ... since the denial of the faith's necessity entails the denial of the Prophet. So, the rejection of an Islamic prerequisite results in blasphemy as it leads to the denial of the Prophet.... In this sense, if somebody affronts a cleric in the pretext that he is affiliated with the Prophet and if this person's action leads to the negation of the Prophet or animosity toward the Prophet and God, he is an infidel not because of the act of slur, but due to his denigration of the prophecy (p. 200).

Khomeini simply jumps from the power of God over human beings to the power of clergy over subjects. He centers the ulama and totalizes them from that center.

Khomeini exemplifies the inclination toward the totalization of the clergy in his various rejoinders to Hakamizadeh's discourse on the clergy. He totalizes the ulama most visibly and pervasively in approaching the clergy/state relations. He begins with a reassertion of the common sense rationale of the *raison d'être* of the government. But for him, this rationale contains certain exclusive qualifications. He states, "only God's ruling is entitled to possess and appropriate people's life since He is the true owner of the universe and all creatures" (p. 181). Consequently, as he observes, "nobody but God has the right to rule and to legislate. The practice of reason demands that God has to determine who rules and makes law" (p. 184). However, Khomeini reduces God's ruling to that of a transcendental subject who surpasses the influence of the environment and the shifting ways of perceiving and thinking. In his words, "yet, law is the very Islamic law that is made by God and is made for everybody and for all time. When the Prophet and Imam were present, the responsibility of the state was theirs. But our discussion is about today" (p. 184). In other words, on whom does the responsibility of the state lie when no Imam or Prophet is present?

As mentioned above, for Khomeini, the responsibility rests on the guardianship of the mujtahids. He begins with embodying 'authority by God' in an all-enclosing faith:

This law whose rule encompasses all related matters from general aspects of all nations in the globe to specific dimensions of individuals' lives to social life of human beings to the fate of a person who lives in a solitary cave ... is God's law, which is Islam.... I clearly announce that this [Islamic law] is a comprehensive law that offers a blueprint for the process of government formation, adoption of the system of taxation, enactment of penal and civil laws, and anything related to the

regimen of the country from building military to establishing administrative apparatus (p. 184).

While Khomeini affirms that the responsibility of putting law to work necessarily rests on the government, he reminds the reader that the enactment of this law [Islamic law] is the Prophet or Imam's mandate. However, in the absence of the Prophet and Imam, responsibility for the enactment lies within the general guardianship of the clergy.

From Theory to Practice

This leads the reader to wonder how the clergy will fulfill this responsibility. In an unequivocal account, Khomeini exempts the ulama from the role of the Shah [ruler] and asserts the clergy's loyalty to the regime:

The mujtahids never opposed the country's regime and did not dispute the independence of an Islamic nation; and if they believe that the existing system of law runs contrary to the divine's law and perceive the government oppressive, they do not oppose them and never will because of the belief that the presence of this rotten regime is better than no regime" (p. 186).

In this statement, Khomeini classifies the clerical responsibility within the confines of the existing regime and specifically delineates two institutions that according to him, "have been formed by force":

In this country the *constitutional assembly* [my emphasis], which is constituted by the very people of this nation taking up the task of forming a government and selecting a monarch. In the same manner, there is a *parliament* [my emphasis] that consists of incompetent members who keep ratifying such bills that are adopted from Europeans and have no compatibility with our domestic conditions" (p. 185).

Khomeini, then, proposes his own blueprint, “what we say is that the constitutional assembly should consist of the mujtahids who know the divine law, who are just and devoid of ego ... and the parliament should be formed of or supervised by pious jurists as the law dictates” (p.185). The two proposed institutions constitute the core of the mechanism through which the clergy can exercise their influence on the state. In them, one can fairly observe the kernel of the structures that Khomeini established several decades later under the Islamic Republic of Iran: the Assembly of the Leadership Experts, the Islamic Parliament, and the Guardian Council. In this sense, his emphasis on the constitutional assembly and the parliament in his discourse is deliberate and purposeful.

Thus, Khomeini’s quest for assigning the ulama to a unique center tends to totalize in two distinct manners. First, for Khomeini, the process by which the constitutional assembly and the parliament are formed is of no importance. It is, rather, the membership combination of the two assemblies that assumes significance for him. In his discourse on the clergy, he points to but does not object to the formation of the assemblies by force. Furthermore, he never refers to an alternative democratic procedure for building his proposed institutions. If we accept that “totalizations are always reductive” (Poster, 1993, p. 110), then Khomeini’s blueprint for centering the ulama exposes a totalized discourse in which the legitimizing function of the assemblies is reduced to the activities of a small number of selected mujtahids. These mujtahids, as we shall see later in the discourse of law, do not make law; rather, they exclusively engage in describing and interpreting the divine law.

Second, the totalizing link in Khomeini’s discourse takes a jurisprudential turn when he draws on the concept of *ijtihad* to justify his approach. In shi’ite literature *ijtehad* is construed as the practice of independent reasoning to extract law from the Qur’an, the hadith,

and the tradition of Muhammad (Arjomand, 1984; Lambton, 1981). Khomeini states, “ijtehad means the knowledge of such divine laws that relate to all social and private matters. This practice that is extremely far-reaching cannot be mastered even in 50 years” (p. 204); only few mujtahids whose “numbers may not exceed ten” (p. 203), can reach this level. Khomeini associates the wellbeing of the Iranian nation with the work of these mujtahids who are exquisitely privileged to superintend the “management of the faith affairs, operation of divine laws, invitation of people to piety and truth, and deracination of treason, crime, and lack of self-inhibition” (p. 205). In this connection, Khomeini totalizes the execution and operation of the country at the locus of the clerical oligarchy.

For Hakamizadeh the fundamental mandate of religion is for the individual’s welfare. For Khomeini, however, the quest for religion is tied to the quest for ‘total human liberation’ including the social and the private, the religious and the political; thus the mandate is fundamentally implicated in the question of *order*. He states, “religion is necessary for the organization of the government, the country, and life” (p. 236). Khomeini centers the fulfillment of this quest on Islam:

Islam wants to triumph over the world in the interest of the world’s inhabitants....

Islam conquers the world to promote justice and to establish Gods’ wise rulings....

Islam’s intention to gain control of the world is to provide people with otherworldly salvation ... and to eradicate the roots of injustice and dictatorship (p. 229).

But in Khomeini’s discourse, knowledge of Islam is the distinctive property of a few mujtahids; hence, alien to the shared knowledge of common people. Therefore, the locus of Ijtehad – the knowledge of Islam – is the site of the authority of a handful mujtahids.

Furthermore, as if the centering of the clergy is not enough to assure the ulama's authority, Khomeini totalizes it by envisioning an institutional framework for their authority:

It has become clear now that for putting our faith in action there is a need for religious functionaries [the clergy]. The clerics' voice would not bear effect unless they form a unique party to accentuate their import.... We keep insisting that this party be exclusively a clerical party whose superiority must be respected (p. 205-6).

On the basis of the prescribed totalization of the role of the clergy, Khomeini defends the ulama's financial dependence on popular religious taxes. At first, he draws a parallelism between two models of taxation: the state and the hierocracy. The state tax is legal but arbitrary: "the parliament ratifies a tax bill and implements it by force and spends it on government employees ... this is the characteristic of all governmental taxes, that is people do not pay voluntarily" (p. 207). The religious tax is legitimate and non-arbitrary: "however, with satisfaction, people will bring this godly tax to the center of knowledge and submit it to those who are selected by God to distribute among the seekers of knowledge" (p. 207). He intensifies his attack on Hakamizadeh and insists on this financial structural dualism:

We know what your problem is. You object to divine laws; you are averse to the Qur'an; you are fighting conscience and reason; you are against the principal essence because it disfavors your desires.... Alas this unreasonable perception considers lawful and rightful the bill that is ratified in the parliament by a few scumbags ... but construes a godly law that people greet by their own free will as parasitical ... ignoring the fact that the ulama use this money to serve the country and nation" (p. 208).

Khomeini seems to recognize the importance of the clergy's financial independence from the state in establishing the shi'ite hierocracy. He directs the reader to read his discussion on the state in the next chapter in which he further elaborates on the issue of taxation.

In his response to Hakamizadeh who maintains that the clerical establishment is intransigent to reform, Khomeini, at first, admits to the existence of corruption within the clerical body. According to him, "we never say that this class is entirely good and pure and in no need for improvement" (p. 201). Khomeini refutes Hakamizadeh's assertion that the clergy's state of ego-inflation precludes "anybody from approaching this enterprise to reform it" (p. 19). However, he agrees with Hakamizadeh to exclusively qualify the ulama for the task of reforming the shi'ite establishment. While Hakamizadeh is quiet about the qualifications of reformers, Khomeini privileges the exclusive knowledge and practice of Islam as a necessary instrument for reforming the clergy. To him, a person who takes up the task of reforming the hierocracy must possess several qualities:

- (a) Expert knowledge on the science of religion; (b) piety and fondness for the clergy as well as believing in the necessity of the clerical establishment for the country; (c) intent that is pure and devoid of personal interest; (d) wisdom and common sense and the ability to discern goodness from perversion; and (e) influence over clerical establishment that enables him to implement his agenda" (p. 201-2).

Khomeini detects these qualities "solely in the high ranked ulama; therefore, others are exempt from this task" (p. 202). In the case of reform within the clerical establishment Khomeini finds another context to advance the objective of centering the clergy, an objective that in his eyes is crucial for the formation of the shi'ite independent structure.

Furthermore, Khomeini adamantly rejects Hakamizadeh's suggestion that direct religious tax makes the ulama the captive of populist sway. Khomeini seems to be well aware of the threat of populism to the clerical centering: "the ulama have already told people that no cleric even a high ranked one ... can accept plebeian views against God's laws because once the ulama consent to the thoughts of common people they will lose their position in the eyes of the same people" (p. 210). At every point in his text, Khomeini unreservedly places emphasis on the elitist character of the clergy. In the preceding statement he reasserts this belief and stratifies the shi'ite community into the elite and the masses. His insistence, in the text (he repeats this appeal in his discourse on the state), to embed clerical authority in extant political institutions such as constitutional assembly and parliament indicates his aversion to an unmediated relationship between the state and population. Khomeini, at the same time, demonstrates no affinity for constitutionalism:

Islamic government is neither tyrannical nor absolute, but constitutional. It is not constitutional in the current sense of the word, i.e., based on the approval of laws in accordance with the opinion of the majority. It is constitutional in the sense that the rulers are subject to a certain set of conditions in governing and administering the country, conditions that are set forth in the Noble Qur'an and the Summa of the Most Noble Messenger. It is the laws and ordinances of Islam comprising this set of conditions that must be observed and practiced. Islamic government may therefore be defined as the rule of divine law over men.²¹

²¹ I borrow this quotation from *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, translated and annotated by Hamid Algar (1981).

In 1979, against the regime of the Shah, Khomeini was able to band together a wide range of groups, associations, and organizations into one mass. After the fall of the Shah, while Khomeini maintained his commitment to institution building, he employed this one “mass” to severely restrict civil society and the public sphere in Iran, a practice that, as indicated by Cohen and Arato (1997), characterizes populism.

Conclusion

Both authors share the belief that religion in general and Islam in particular are for the betterment of the human condition. However, they differ significantly in explaining the nature and usage of religion. Hakamizadeh sees religion as the inner impulse and an instance of personal conscience that contributes to the ordering of the individual life. Within his personal conscience, the individual possesses the faculty for understanding the truth of God’s words in its own right. Consequently, in Hakamizadeh’s argument, as put aptly by Gay (1966), “religious institutions [including the clergy] and religious explanations of events were slowly being displaced from the center of life to its periphery” (p. 338).

In Khomeini’s discursive reasoning, the regulatory systems of Islam are provisioned to manage the individual as well as the country’s affairs. The working of these systems is contingent upon a particular way of knowing Islam. This specific knowledge of Islam allows certain individuals – the clerical elite – to speak for Islam and to assume the position of dominating subject while reducing others to the position of subordinating subject.

Khomeini’s discourse, in this way, exemplifies the constitutive role of knowledge and practice in the formation of social relations of power. Khomeini transforms the message of salvation into an ideology. In Khomeini’s vision, Islam assumes two major functions. First, it serves as the defining concept in the procedure of perceiving, thinking, and speaking.

Second, it develops into the principle that organizes systems of power relations. A historical parallelism might give insight into Khomeini's ideological grasp.

Not far from where Khomeini wrote his text in Russia, the Soviet State was experimenting with the project of "total human emancipation" that according to Marx was centered in the liberation of the working class. As Poster (1993) phrases it, Marx "finds the key to human emancipation in the organization of labor and in the potential critical praxis of the working class" (p. 108). Lenin, in turn, found the organization of labor too expansive and ineffective, and thus narrowed the center of liberating activities down to the locus of the leadership of a few professional revolutionaries. In the same manner, Khomeini positions his version of human salvation at the locus of the leadership of a few clerics. As Kolakowski (1977) observes, "in both cases the overriding ideology stressed the idea of social justice and proclaimed that some chosen parts of mankind (a superior race or nation, a progressive class or vanguard party) had the natural right to establish uncontrolled rule by virtue of historical destiny" (p. 125).

Both Salvationist projects, the secular socialist and the sacred Mahdistic shi'ite, produced the same result: the slippage of the theory of human emancipation into a totalizing bureaucratic control, for orthodox Marxism in the form of the Soviet totalitarian state, and for orthodox shi'ism, the absolutist Islamic Republic of Iran.

Chapter 10

Fourth Discourse: the State

In a well-known passage about the relation of the sacred to political power and legitimacy of the temporal authority, Weber (1978) maintains, “everywhere state and society have been greatly influenced by the struggle between military and temple nobility, between royal and priestly following” (p. 1160). It is believed that all world religions make an effort to establish their autonomous authority drawing from a transcendent deity, desacralize temporal authority, and pave the way for the formation of hierocratic order. In this sense, “they introduce an element of dualism into the normative order” (Arjomand, 1993a, p. 47). The form and nature of the struggle between political and religious systems of domination have been subject to variation depending upon who exercises the ultimate authority. Weber (1978) depicts secular and clerical power relations in three separate ideal types “depending on whether we deal with 1) a ruler who is legitimated by priests, either as an incarnation or in the name of God, 2) a high priest who is also king – these are two cases of hierocracy – or finally, 3) a secular, caesaropapist ruler who exercises supreme authority in ecclesiastic matters by virtue of his autonomous legitimacy” (p. 1160). Weber (1978) defines hierocracy as “an organization which enforces its order through psychic coercion by distributing or denying religious benefits “(hierocratic coercion)” (p. 54). Murvar (1979) incorporates Weber’s characterization of hierocratic organization into the framework of power relations and redefines the term hierocracy as “a relatively independent religious power structure coexistent with another (political) power structure within the same society or larger social order (such as the medieval polity in the West)” (p. 78). It is logical to assume that as an

independent structure, ecclesiastic power attempts to exercise its authority, and thus, immerses itself into the relations of domination. As Eisenstadt (1973) explained:

On the whole the level and extent of political participation of the religious organization and of their support to the political regimes of the historical bureaucratic societies was greatly influenced by the extent of development of those of their characteristics in which the autonomy of the religious field was most manifest....

Thus the extent to which the religious institutions were organizationally autonomous greatly influenced the degree to which they could participate in the central political struggle (p. 191)

Inescapably, as I explained above, this produces a tension between political and sacred orders that, in the course of history, has resulted in the steady formation of a dualistic and diffused structure of domination (Arjomand, 1984; Murvar, 1979). In Murvar's account, a resolution to this tension:

Is achieved by subordinating religious or priestly power to the political rulership or by subordinating political to hierocratic rulership:

- 1- The unity of power structure under a political head – political monism
- 2- The unity of power structure under a hierocratic head – hierocratic monism (p. 79).

Yet in Iran, since the inception of shi'ism as the official religion in the 16th century, the relation of power between the secular and the ecclesia has produced a distinct institutional co-existence of domination between the state and hierocracy that has significantly influenced the historical trajectory of the country until today. In their reflection on the social forms and roles of the state, Hakamizadeh and Khomeini offer disparate outlooks of this institutional arrangement. This chapter traces the distinctive features of both

views focusing on several issues such as the notions of structural differentiation and dedifferentiation, the shi'ite practice of improvisation and accommodation, displacement, co-optation, and absorption.

Hakamizadeh starts with charging official shi'ism with a bold claim: "today, our religion says that every state before the stage of Parousia of the 12th Imam is illegitimate" (p. 23). Khomeini's reaction to Hakamizadeh's charge is twofold. He starts with a repetition of his previous assertions that "the only rational state is God's state" (p. 223), or only an "official Islamic state can embody God's state" (223), and "the duty of our actual state is to follow the path of this Islamic state and it is upon our parliament to ratify laws that incorporate the very God's law" (p. 223). On these bases, Khomeini affirms that all states in the pre-Parousia era are illegitimate and unjust. He further grounds his affirmation on an a priori assumption that "no government before the coming of the 12th Imam tends to be dutiful" (p. 225). He exempts, however, one state from this sweeping generalization: Ali's government (656-661) as the single legitimate and righteous state in the post-Mohammad era (p. 225). In the second aspect of his answer, Khomeini rejects Hakamizadeh's claim that cooperating with illegitimate governments is an act of blasphemy, but he conditions the validity of that cooperation as follows: "we say that working with the same dictatorial government with the purpose of preventing corruption, reforming the country, and improving people's livelihood is not only a good deed but also sometimes obligatory" (p. 227). To validate his point, Khomeini makes a reference to shi'ite Imams who "despite of the oppressive character of the governments at the time, dealt with them and provided them with advice, assistance, and resources in order to protect the Islamic nation" (p. 226). Needless to say, in a different political context, Khomeini reversed his injunction as Abrahamian (1988)

indicates “in his exile in Turkey from 1964 to 1965, in the section on ‘forbidden occupations’ Khomeini forbade his followers from entering the service of ‘the tyrant’ in positions in ‘the army, security forces, government of towns, etc.’” (p. 147).

Hakamizadeh argues that the clerical establishment is well aware that classifying governments under the general category of illegitimacy during the occultation is too absurd and impractical to sell to the public (p. 23). Therefore, he insists, the clergy tries to “camouflage its intent with different outfits” (p. 23). To him, the clerically camouflaged objective consists of three fundamental structures, (a) “a jurist must be at the helm of the state”; (b) “the state must be religious”; and (c) “the state must be run on justice” (p. 24). Hakamizadeh rebuffs this camouflaged clericalism and renounces any correspondence between the functions of a jurist and a political ruler. In his customary simple and casual language, he draws on the complex theory of structural differentiation to prove his point. In his phrase, “it is true that an engineer needs to know mathematics or a judge must be jurist”, but “it is preposterous to say that an engineer must be a jurist for there is no relevance between jurisprudence and geometry” (p. 23). He contends that a jurist cannot be a king since the king must, first of all, “have an intrinsic talent for this job and then possess a good historical and military knowledge” (p. 23). In making his case, he implicitly points to the entrenched shi’ite tradition of the differentiation between state and religion: “furthermore, the country is like a ship in need of a navigator to steer it to its destination, whoever this navigator might be. Our clergy *is not able or does not want* [emphasis added] to take this job; but life goes on and the country cannot move forward without a government [navigator]” (p. 23).

With this in mind, Hakamizadeh extends his objection to the vision of the Islamic state. He maintains that, “they [the clergy] claim that state must be religious [Islamic]. If they talk about a faith that coheres with life, then the idea is attractive. Any state will welcome such a faith because religion is the best supportive constituent for the state” (p. 23). Hakamizadeh, however, included a caveat “but if they talk about the faith that is available to us today, I must say that it is similar to a page of a book that is only there to be seen; and if one day they want to extract that page from the book and put it to work, this will be detrimental to people’s life as well as the country’s interests” (p. 23). Thus it is fair to say that in revealing the above clerical objectives, Hakamizadeh displays an explicit aversion to hierocratic monism; but only ambiguously affirms political monism.

On the question of a ‘just state’, Hakamizadeh seems to be sympathetic: “they [the clergy] say that government must be fair and evenhanded. Of course, this is a condition to which no body objects” (p. 24). However, he is quick to portray the clerical profession as an example of, in Greenblatt’s (1993) phrase, the “divorce between the tongue and the heart” (p. 228). He maintains that the clergy pleads to so-called “just government” to conceal their subversive intent: “we all know that these sayings are just another excuse to disguise the main ambition” (p. 24). He speculates that an all-inclusive religion as represented by the ulama, must have “an agenda for a system of governing, which is considered the foremost basis of life to which people refer all the time” (p. 24). For Hakamizadeh, being tacit about the form of government cannot obstruct the fundamental hierocratic subversive principle for which, “no matter how dutiful or undutiful, the existing state is an accomplice of oppression and an associate to blasphemy” (p. 24).

Thus, in his response to Hakamizadeh, Khomeini exposes this subversive intention and idealizes the hierocracy's preferred system of domination turning to a paradoxical approach. On one hand, he reiterates his commitment to the status quo. On the other hand, he tries to tilt the stability between two competing hierarchies of domination to the hierocracy's favor.

We discussed in the previous chapter Khomeini's conservative penchant for preserving the status quo; that is the status of patrimonial monarchism. According to Arjomand (1984), "after the advent of Islam, the ruler could no longer be a god but before long assumed the exalted title of the Shadow of God on Earth. Much of the political ethos of sacral kingship was retained" (p. 7). Al-Ghazzali (d. 1111) the eminent Islamic theologian of medieval ages, describes the above duality:

Know and understand that God has chosen two categories among mankind, and place them above all others: the prophets and the kings. He has sent the prophets to His creatures to lead them to him; and He chose the kings to protect men from one another, making the common weal dependent on them.... The ruler is the shadow of God on earth.²²

With the weakening of the position of the caliph and its eventual decline in the 11th century, the notion of kingship, inherited from the pre-Islamic era was established and became an instrument for the legitimacy of the temporal domination. In adapting the pre-Islamic Persian theory of the state (Farah Izadi), the principal objective of the rulership of the Shadow of God was to establish justice on earth. As Lambton (1962) eloquently articulates,

²² I borrow this passage from Arjomand (1993): "Religion and the Diversity of Normative Orders." In Arjomand (ed.): *The Political Dimensions of Religion* (p. 47). New York: State University of New York Press

The divergence in practice and theory from the ideal of the early caliphate increased as time went on. From Sasanian sources [the last pre-Islamic Persian dynasty] came the theory of the ruler as the Shadow of God upon earth; to this was assimilated the Hellenistic idea of the philosopher-king. From both Sasanian and Greek sources came the doctrine of the 'mean', which was to be achieved by the maintenance of equipoise, and which tended to express itself in a tendency towards conservatism. These borrowings, however, are permeated by Islam. Obedience to the just ruler, the Shadow of God upon earth, is equated with obedience to God and His prophet. The philosopher-king is interpreted to be the imam; and the law, which, in the theory of the philosophers, preserves equipoise, as the *shari' a*. Justice, rather than right religion, became in the medieval theory the foundation of righteous government, but the purpose of government remained the establishment of conditions in which, under the just ruler, the right religion could be lived and Islamic virtues practised. The ruler's task was to maintain the balance of mundane society giving each group within society its due place and function. The reign of justice was seen, not in legal terms, but as the harmonious relationship of society in a divinely appointed system, the component parts of which were in a perfect equilibrium (p. 119).

Khomeini adheres to this worldview as noted in the discourse of the Imamate: "this class [the clergy] has never opposed the foundation of the monarchy; rather, it is in the record that many of the ulama have cooperated with various Shahs" (p. 187). Khomeini's position in support of the ethos of patrimonial monarchism converges with the normative postulate of the traditional shi'ism translated in the differentiation of the two spheres of authority, the political and the religious.

However, in articulating his vision for the role and function of the clergy within this dualist structuration, he moves away from the position of upholding the harmonious discord between political and spiritual orders to favor hierocratic superiority. This shift is manifest in Khomeini's text in which he subjects "the just king" to the "divine law;" that is to the Shari'a: "We never said and do not say that the Shah must be a faqih or he must have knowledge of the jurisprudence. The Shah could be a military man but he must not contravene the jurisprudence, which is the nation's official law" (p. 233). In principle, by differentiating the Shah and faqih in the first part of the preceding statement, Khomeini seems to sanction the distinctness of the political and the religious. In this sense, he seems to echo Tabatabai, one of the most authoritative shi'ite theologians and interpreters of the Koran in contemporary Iran, who unequivocally limits the exercise of political authority to the Prophet and Imams:

Therefore "those in authority" must refer to the individuals from the umma who are infallible, whose recognition depends on the explicit designation of God or his Messenger, and to whom obedience is incumbent. All this corresponds only to what have been related from the Imams of the House of the Prophet, may peace be upon them, as "those in authority".

As for the assertion that "those in authority" are the rightly-guided caliphs, the lords of the swords (emirs), or the ulama who are followed in their sayings and views, it can be completely refuted."²³

²³ I borrowed this statement from Arjomand (1988): *Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism*, p. 193.

In an analytical reversal, however, in the second part of the same statement, Khomeini makes an effort at dedifferentiation of the twofold domain of authority subjugating the authority of the political to that of the religious and converting the former into a property of the latter, thus wholly contradicting Tabatabai. In this respect, he follows Najm al-Din Razi, a Sunni theologian of the 13th century, who appropriates the earthly transient king for service to the divine eternal king:

There are two classes of kings: Kings of the world and kings of religion. Those who are kings of the world are the form for God's attributes of favor and wrath, but they are imprisoned within their form and unable to recognize their attributes.... As for those who are the kings of religion, they are both the manifestation of the divine attributes of favor and wrath and the recipients of that manifestation.... They have penetrated to the mystery of the treasure of "he who knows himself, knows too his lord," (Qur'an 76:20) and have mounted as rightful owners the throne of eternal kingship and abiding monarchy.²⁴

In major world religions and especially in Islam as a religion of law, the subjugation of the political to the religious ethical prescription or in Luhmann's version (1982), "the identification of the political code with a moral code" (p. 187) represents a dedifferentiation process. For Iran, as we will see later in this study, this process entails significant consequences. In the same vein, Khomeini insists on the 'uncompromising' and 'uncorrupted' characteristics of the ulama that make them best fit to control the state

²⁴ I draw directly on this quotation from Arjomand (1993): "Religion and the Diversity of Normative Orders." In Arjomand (ed.): *The Political Dimensions of Religion*. New York: State University of New York Press.

apparatus. In this respect, he holds as exemplary the jurist Modarress who “was a pious cleric and for a number of years assumed the speakership of the parliament.... After his death, Modarress left no inheritance but a legacy of dignity and nobleness. We say that people like Modarress must take the helm of the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of the regime” (p. 234).

Khomeini’s propensity to locate the ecclesiastical authority at the center of the relation of power is not a matter of choice specified to one individual voice within the shi’ite hierocracy. It is rather intrinsic to the logic of hierocracy, as vividly expressed by Weber (1978):

Whenever hierocratic charisma is stronger than political authority it seeks to degrade it if it does not appropriate it outright. Since political power claims a competing charisma of its own, it may be made to appear as the work of Satan; time and again the most consistent ethico – hierocratic trends in Christianity have tried to impose this view point (p. 1163).

However, when neither power structure is strong enough to eliminate or decisively subordinate the other one, they co-exist and compromise by necessity. Weber (1978) is direct on this point:

As a rule, priestly charisma compromised with the secular power, most of the time tacitly but sometimes also through a concordat. Thus the spheres of control were mutually guaranteed, and each power was permitted to exert certain influences in the other’s realm in order to minimize collisions of interest; the secular authorities, for example, participated in the appointment of certain clerical officials, and the priests

influenced the educational institutions of the state. These compromises also committed the two powers to mutual assistance (p. 1161).

As explained earlier, the belief in the principle of de jure illegitimacy of all pre-Parousia governments does not prevent the ulama from seeking a concordat with the state. Once established as an autonomous authority, the shi'ite hierocracy designed a "modus vivendi", in Calder's (1982) phrase, with political power, on the basis of a de facto recognition of the state. Calder maintains that the ulama made continuous efforts at exploring juristic improvisation to accommodate the political structure of domination. He writes:

One of the most significant advances was made by Kashif al-Ghita' in the early nineteenth century. Acting in response to the threatened Russian invasion of Persia, and relying on the by now well-established theory of clerical authority he indicated his support and sanction for the defensive activities of the Shah. He thus provided the Shah with a temporary, partial and derived legitimacy (p. 6).

Calder postulates that Ghita's decree set a precedent in the Imami jurisprudence for the de facto recognition of the legitimacy of a secular ruler.

Parallel to the Spanish recourse to *improvisation* to exert colonial dominance over the Lucayans as accounted in the first discourse of the present study, it has been through a continual operation of improvisation that the shi'ite hierocracy has accommodated the state in order to influence relation of power. Among various characteristics of the practice of improvisation, Greenblatt (1993, p. 230) delineates "displacement and absorption", which, appear to be applicable to the dynamics of dual order of power in shi'ite Iran.

Displacement and Absorption

Greenblatt defines displacement as “the process whereby a prior symbolic structure is compelled to coexist with other centers of attention that do not necessarily conflict with the original structure but are not swept up in its gravitational pull” (p. 230). The manner in which the shi’ite establishment approaches the monarchical state exemplifies the act of displacement. In principle, for the shi’ite hierocracy all governments during the period of occultation are illegitimate. However, they never refused to co-exist with these governments even as they resisted abandoning their institutional autonomy. Moreover, under various conditions such as an external threat to Islam – the case of Kashif al-Ghita – or the degree of the perceived justice of the actual ruler, the ulama do not desist from lending their support to and even cooperate with the very illegitimate state. Khomeini’s de facto recognition of the monarch’s rulership coexists with his de jure consideration of the illegitimacy of the Shah’s authority. At the same time, for practical purposes, he recommends cooperation with these states, as stated above: “working with the same dictatorial government with the purpose of preventing corruption, reforming the country, and improving people’s livelihood is not only a good deed but also sometimes *obligatory*” [italic is mine] (p. 227). However, by making the obliteration of the secular regime of the Shah in 1979 *obligatory*, Khomeini stripped off this mask of cooperation and made obvious that his suggestion was simply a tactical manipulation of this entrenched Islamic dogma.

What’s more, the coexistence of the two power structures tends to grow into formal or informal alliance as observed by Weber in the case of bourgeois and religious powers in the Orient (Weber, 1978, vol. 2). This is especially true when the necessity of domesticating a subject population arises. Murvar (1979) formulates such alliance as follow:

If the hierocracy is willing to legitimize political rule through domestication of the people by using religious, sacred, and supernatural means, the political rulers will in return extend uniformity over the entire country by removing dissenters and heretics and forcing other religious groups to accept the officially approved religion (p. 79).

In Iran, in two periods of 1678-1722 and 1785-1850, the emerging shi'ite hierocracy and the Safavid and Qajar states forged an alliance to suppress "Sunnism, extremist millenarianism, philosophical dissent, and Sufism" (Arjomand, 1984, p. 258). In contemporary Iran, the instance of alliance took place when the Shah's repressive policy against leftists and liberals between 1953 and 1979, received a lip service from the already established shi'ite hierocracy. During this period, the Shah's coercive apparatus systematically suppressed secular leftists and infrequently targeted individual shi'ite intellectuals and members of the ulama while, for the most part, left non-militant Islamic groups to organize and operate with minimal or no restraint.

Parallel Taxation: Example of Displacement

Since its formation and establishment, apart from the period of the reign of the Reza Shah Pahlavi (1925-1941), the shi'ite hierocracy has been successful in obtaining the license of the secular state to collect religious tax as, in Weber's (1978) phrase, "the external means of enforcement for the maintenance of their power or at least for the collection of church taxes and other contributions" (p. 1161). In exchange, the ulama reward secular taxation with their de facto legitimation. The hierocracy's submission to the existence of a secular structure paralleling a religious structure for tax collection typifies an act of displacement. It is logical to expect that this parallelism becomes a contentious element in the discourses of Hakamizadeh and Khomeini.

As indicated in the previous chapter, Hakamizadeh expresses his objection to the religious tax, arguing that it enchains the clergy to plebian's judgment and erodes the ulama's capacity for objective and independent reasoning. In the discourse of the state, however, he incorporates the issue of secular taxation into a broader perspective and states ulama's contention is, "whoever gets taxes, whether little or large, is forbidden (haram)... We should avoid paying tax [secular] in every possible way since, once paid, it is gone like a bird flying out of a cage" (p. 24). Within this context, Hakamizadeh regards the system of taxation as a measure for accountability. He maintains that, "the first condition to protect a nation is to design a right system of taxation" (p. 27). While crediting modern taxation procedures for securing the ability to recompense the nation's expenses, he discredits religious taxes as outmoded systems that "do not correspond with modern life.... Not only do they [religious taxes] have no benefit for the country, but also they produce and perpetuate poverty" (p. 27). On this ground, he equals religious taxes with clientism and patronage:

Helping young and healthy people is to provide jobs for them and encourage them to be paid in exchange for work.... Handing them money gratuitously will make them idle and harm the country; and if we take a careful glance we will notice that these unnecessary alms and benefactions [religious] are the very source of the presence of so many beggars and parasites (p. 27).

Seeing this travesty partly as the function of the shi'ite institution, he praises Reza Shah for: "passing the law of selling religious endowment and spending it on culture and public health" (p. 29). To Hakamizadeh, however, the state is not exempt from the same burden of accountability: "If we protested the state for dodging its duties or spending taxes ineffectively, we would not witness this waste and undutifulness" (p. 24).

In response, Khomeini offers a lengthy account of the Islamic tax system through which he defends religious taxes and tries to match them up with modern taxation systems. He acknowledges, though, that his detailed account is incomplete and at times fuzzy. He points out that, “we need a separate book to explain all different types of Islamic taxes” (p. 255). Aware of the insufficiency of his response, he claims that, “there is no way that we can discuss and resolve this issue [Islamic taxation] from a jurisprudential viewpoint here, for this requires scientific debate, which is beyond the scope of this document and these peoples’ [Hakamizadeh and alike] understanding” (p. 268). However, from this study’s perspective, Khomeini’s reaction accentuates the main argument of his discourse on the state, namely the perpetuation of the dual structure of power. Subsequently, as seen below, he will show his inclination to eventually transform this duality into a unified system with the ecclesia in the control.

Khomeini characterizes Islamic taxation as, first, a feasible system: “Even though it contains many taxes, Islamic law of taxation is adopted based on rationality and fairness, which puts excessive burden on no specific social class” (p. 265); and second, as universal: “it is not designed solely for our country; rather, it is adaptable to all countries” (p. 264). Framing the debate within modern budgeting procedure, he organizes Islamic taxation under two categories: collection and spending. The larger portion of his detailed account of this system is dedicated to the collection phase, the examination of which rests outside of the reach and expertise of this study. It is in the category of spending that he favors the ulama, the “*descendants of the Prophet*” (p. 270) with privileges and compensations in distinction with the Others, “*non-descendants of the Prophet.*” He defends the practice of collecting religious tax by the ulama, as argued above in the chapter on the clergy. He goes further and

maintains that rewarding the ulama and seminary students with financial assistance from taxes is justified for: “they are the employees of the Islamic State and responsible for the presence of Islamic identification and the interpretation of law.... The fact that no Islamic State is still in place today... does not negate the truth that the service of this class to the country is far more than that of other classes” (p. 271). On the surface, he seems to put this argument forward in direct response to Hakamizadeh who accused the shi’ite hierarchy of self-indulgence: “How do Mohammad and Ali, who are the fountain of courage, consent to the idea that their descendants [the Ulama] receive money in exchange for doing no work; thus, in the name of the faith, a large group of people become idle and indolent” (p. 27).

Hidden in Khomeini’s argument, however, is the shi’ite hierarchy’s well-established practice of preserving its financial advantages in relation to the state, and hence counterbalancing the system of political domination. While Khomeini does not press forward the hierarchy’s aim at political power and expresses no objection to the temporal state for collecting taxes, he refuses to situate the hierarchy on the margin in this process. Therefore, he defines the conditions under which profane tax-collection is legitimate. First, Khomeini calls for the formation of hierocratic administrative machinery that, independently from the state, promotes and protects the interests, financial and political, of the ulama. To this machinery, he gives the name of “the office of Islamic propaganda” and the responsibility for “devising the statutory membership of all people and assigning everybody to their specific task” (p. 246). Khomeini, then, points to the inability of the actual rulership to execute Islamic taxation: “as a matter of fact, the Islamic law of taxation is inoperable in the country today; the existing state cannot implement this law the way it is written because the existing governmental apparatus is not Islamic” (p. 261). However, he maintains that

collecting taxes can be made possible through the operation of the propaganda office: “If this Islamic apparatus is established and the office of Islamic propaganda becomes operative, nobody will evade paying tax and disobey law” (p. 265). Thus, in a way, he directly places the ulama in the center and indirectly expresses the hierocratic ambition for political goals. Weber (1978) introduces the “autonomous administrative apparatus” (p.1163) as the “office charisma” that facilitates the hierocracy positioning itself in proximity to political power:

The church advances its demands toward the political power on the basis of its claims to office charisma.... By virtue of its power, the hierocratic church also establishes a comprehensive ethico-religious réglementation of all spheres of conduct; in principle this system has never tolerated any substantive limitations.... For the enforcement of its claims hierocracy disposes of very considerable means of power, even beyond the support of the political authorities (p. 1164-65).

Khomeini inclines to the political triumph of the hierocracy and the establishment of, in the words of Murvar (1979), “an ever-increasing structural unity: one ruler, one religion, one society” (p. 79). But, unmistakably, he attempts to communicate this inclination in a politically unthreatening fashion. In his discourse, he transgresses the monarchical structure of domination not by negating it, but rather by reproducing it in accordance with the shi’ite requirements. This brings me to the other dimensions of the practice of improvisation by the shi’ite hierocracy, namely co-optation and absorption.

Co-optation and Absorption

Khomeini’s critical rhetoric vis-à-vis the status quo reflects a paradoxical argument. As argued previously, Khomeini lends support to the authority of the Shah, thereby upholding the status quo; that is the political dominion of the actual power. On the other

hand, he shifts radically to destabilize the status quo by supporting the shi'itization of the organizations of power; that is, the hierocratic control of existing branches of political structures. He seems to swerve between "oppositional" and "complicitous" approaches. This contradictory feature, or to his admirers, this politically sophisticated approach, is intrinsic to what Graff (1989) calls the practice of *co-optation*. According to Graff, "what makes 'co-optation a paradoxical concept is the negative value it assigns to something we usually think of as desirable" (p. 171). Khomeini consistently situates himself between a negative valuation, that is the tyrannical character, and a desirable appropriation, that is the shi'itization, of the status quo.

To produce, distribute, and extend its own authority structure, the hierocracy needs to co-opt the ethos of the political authority. Inevitably, in this process, the repressive character in the power of the secular monarch is reproduced and featured in the power of the ecclesiastic ulama. Khomeini's tolerance for the repressive Shah serves the cause of another mode of repression, that of the ulama. This tolerance is absorbed into his product, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and is extended, as incisively put by Marcuse (1968), to "policies, conditions, and modes of behavior which should not be tolerated because they are impeding, if not destroying, the chances of creating an existence without fear and misery" (p. 1). In this sense, Khomeini's discursive practice is repressive by being permissive. The phenomenon of the Islamic Republic of Iran, taken in relation to Murvar's analysis of the duality of power, reflects a shift in the monistic make-up of the power structure from political to hierocratic, and portends a change in the social organization of domination. Under the hierocratic monism of Iran's Islamic state, the rulership of the political is transformed into an administrative branch of the religious; that is an inverse transposition of what Weber (1978)

pictures for a caesaropapist state: “Caesaropapist government treats ecclesiastic affairs simply as a branch of political administration” (p. 1162). In other words, the Islamic Republic tends to treat political affairs simply as a branch of religious administration.

While the monarchical and Islamic states do indeed represent a divergence in the relation of subjugation between the political and the religious, this divergence hides an important parallel in the underlying composition of the two regimes: the authoritarian structural sameness embodied in the two institutions of the King and the Mandate of the Jurist. The totalizing condition of the shi’ite hierocratic monism, one state, one society, one religion, leaves no space for the co-existence of a two-power structure and two modes of authority. It demands, though, that the shi’ite rulership sacralize its political authority. The presence of an independent political power stands in the way of the fulfillment of this requirement. To resolve this tension, hierocratic domination must absorb the political mode of control into the religious mode of control. There is nothing wrong with the presence of legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of the states. But, they must be “under the guardianship of a hierocratic ruler, a faqih” (p. 232). Thus, Khomeini obliterates the symbolic kingship but internalizes its modes of control within the Islamic Republic and presents it as a stride toward salvation. His successor, Khamenei, takes this practice farther and wants to remove the kingship from Iranian history all together. This parallelism, nonetheless, denotes a transition in the practice of improvisation by the shi’ite hierarchy from displacement to absorption as defined by Greenblatt (1993) as the “process whereby a symbolic structure is taken into the ego so completely that it ceases to exist as an external phenomenon” (p. 230).

It might be relevant to note that, in recent months, in a statement from prison a

prominent shi'ite reformist in Iran, Mostafa Tajzadeh, who, ironically, happened to have a hand in the construction of the Islamic Republic of Iran, wondered why the hierocratic rulership interpreted any criticism of the Shah as a critique of the Supreme Jurist Khamenei.

Chapter 11

Fifth Discourse: The Law

The final chapter of my main analysis concerns the discourse of law as represented by Hakamizadeh and Khomeini. The importance of this chapter lies in the perception that our authors would offer a legal framework for institutionalization of their visions as presented in previous chapters. Short of a comprehensive blueprint for institutionalization, in relatively short chapters, Hakamizadeh and Khomeini sketch out a general understanding of law, which once more displays, in larger perspective, how the two authors differ in their approach to social and political life. While Hakamizadeh detects and cultivates non-Islamic secular elements of law, Khomeini presents an Islamic legalist approach that aims at securing the central position of the shari'a and its bearers: Islamic jurists.

On the surface, their positions regarding the law appear quite similar – indeed, as we shall see, each revolves around a nearly identical set of three concepts. Despite their rhetorical resemblance, however, the visions presented by our authors diverge significantly when they are put into concrete legal envelopes. The authors of the two legal frameworks differ deeply in their understanding of the types of law and their centrality to social life.

The Central Exchange: Hakamizadeh and Khomeini on The Law

Hakamizadeh begins his arguments with a general practical question: “why is law not enforced in this country?” In answering this question, he makes an excursion into the underlying dynamics of religious and secular law in shi'ite Iran. He accuses the shi'ite clerical establishment of a gross travesty, describing it “as one of the founts of this country's malady” (p. 30). In his phrase: “Our today's faith [i.e. the clerical establishment] declares that the only official law, the sole enforcement of which is legitimate, is the one that derives

from the shari'a. All other laws are [depicted as] counterfeit and self-invented" (p. 30). He sees this as absurd, and argues that human law must also be enforceable. On the basis of this claim, he structures his vision of law around three dimensions:²⁵ "faith, reason, and nature, which come from the truthful God and may not always cohere; nevertheless, they never act contrary to each other" (p. 34).

In response, Khomeini reasserts his conviction that "it is no secret that religion of Islam recognizes no other laws; that God has sent the Islamic law [i.e. shari'a] for the whole universe, the whole time, and the entire humanity" (p. 292). Consequently, he labels the accusation of travesty leveled at the clergy by Hakamizadeh absurd and the product of "syphilitic irrational brains" (p. 292). In this sense, Khomeini affirms the centrality of faith in the province of law. He envisions a regime of law that revolves around three themes: God, reason, and faith.

In a fairly short essay and in a rather implicit mode, Hakamizadeh translates the three dimensions of faith, reason, and nature (noted above) into the natural law and the human law. Khomeini incorporates his three dimensions into the themes of the eternal law, the human law, and the sacred law [the latter sometimes termed the divine law].

Hakamizadeh's Detailed Position on the Law

Hakamizadeh posits the doctrine of natural law as the centerpiece of his account of law. To him, the natural law reconciles the providence of God with human will. He states, "it is the law of nature that clearly and appropriately represents the will of God" (p. 32). Weber (1987) contends that Christianity created natural law to build a "bridge between its

²⁵ Note that Hakamizadeh builds his tripartite construction of the law in a rather fragmented way, never stating it as directly as I reconstruct it here.

own ethics and the norms of the world” (p. 866). From a sociological angle, Weber classifies natural law as the ensemble of the norms that not only are independent from man-made law or positive law, but also by virtue of their theological nature underpin the legitimacy of the positive law. Weber, thus, identifies natural law as a “collective term for those norms which owe their legitimacy not to their origin from a legitimate lawgiver, but to their immanent and teleological qualities” (p. 867). Hakamizadeh seems to reflect on the same point when he states, “when we look at nature’s system and laws, which are God’s creation, we can easily decipher what God wants from us” (p. 33). While Hakamizadeh suggests that individuals should not look beyond the law of nature to exercise their own agency, nowhere in his text does he advocate the supremacy of God’s will. Rather, Hakamizadeh stresses that the human being synchronizes his will with the providential teleological design and discern his own moral law. Hakamizadeh maintains that their capacity of reasoning makes human beings provident: “It is true that the human being is in need of guidance, but God has bestowed us with eyes and intellect to determine our goals and ways” (p. 32). In his logic, the law of nature is defined by the contribution of divine will in the creation of rational being. He, consciously or unconsciously, resonates with Aquinas, the distinguished monk of the Dominican Order, who states:

Among all others, the rational creature is subject to Divine providence in the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes of a share of providence, by being provident both for itself and for others.... Whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act

and end: and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law.²⁶

To Aquinas, the natural law is a guide of conduct for human beings to fulfill their deepest natural inclinations, which in turn reflect the will of God written into the very fabric of human nature.

Hakamizadeh seems to adopt a similar position, believing that the human being is civic and social by nature. He equals the human being with organs of our body, which “adapt their function to the change in the environment. Furthermore each organ is for the benefit of the collective body first, and then for its own” (p. 33). This natural inclination poses practical questions involving human conduct and human community. How can humans discover natural law and its application? What constitutes the directives of natural law for human conduct? What are our human obligations toward law? How can we determine those obligations? What is considered to be a just law? Hakamizadeh appears to be aware that the notion of natural law in itself is too abstract and general to address the above questions. As indicated earlier, he proposes the human capacity to reason as the key element in addressing realistic issues. The use of reason, however, cannot take effect in a vacuum and must be transformed into real actions and practical decisions.

Here, one can distinguish between “law finding” and “law making”: To keep legal activities, in principle, within the bounds of natural law is to linger, in practice, in the realm of *law finding*. Taking real actions and making practical decisions demand transition to the domain of *law making*. This leads Hakamizadeh to the discussion of human law -- that is,

²⁶ I borrowed this quotation from: Weinreb, Lloyd L. (1987). *Natural Law and Justice*. P. 57. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press

those laws made by human beings -- which according to Weinreb (1987) “is the positive law of particular communities” (p. 59).

Khomeini’s Detailed Position on the Law

Unlike Hakamizadeh but similar to Aquinas, Khomeini starts his account of law with an accent on the law of God or the eternal law. His version of the eternal law parallels that of Aquinas, who defines it as “the very idea of the government of things in God the Ruler of the universe.”²⁷ Khomeini reiterates his conviction that God is the only qualified legislator “whose ordinances are pervasive and binding for He is the creator and true owner of the universe” (p. 289). His conception of the eternal law follows from the notion of divine providence and is anchored in two premises: transcendent justice and reason. He states, “we attribute to God the highest degree of justice and understanding” (p. 291). God’s justice and understanding transcends the vicissitudes of human subsistence: “You must know that the legislator must be somebody who is devoid of materialistic life, lustfulness, and egoistic tendencies ... and this can’t be anybody but the Just God” (p. 291). God’s reign over the universe, logically, reflects this transcendent justice.

In the same streak, Khomeini tends to limit the origin of reason to God alone. To him, legislation is a rational practice, which is exclusively suitable for the domain of God: “On the basis of reason, God’s rules are compulsory, while human rules are not, even if they are considered rational and in line with the common good” (p. 289). For Khomeini the practice of reason belongs solely to God’s providence. The eye of Providence closely observes natural and human life. Whether resulting from nature or human action, every event is a sign of the pervasive presence of God’s wisdom. Favorable and unfavorable

²⁷ Ibid., p. 56

events in the life of human beings display the Providence's infallible justice. In this connection, according to Khomeini, "the Just God has fulfilled his responsibility, otherwise we shall regard God as irresponsible and a traitor" (p. 291).

Of course, when reason is associated with the unfalsifiable order of Providence, it cannot be refuted. Given that critique is an inherent function of reason, by restricting the practice of reasoning within the framework of God's faultless guidance, Khomeini depletes human reason from its critical function. Furthermore, the critical function of reason lies in its relativity. However, when justice and reason are converted into elements of divine providence, they are logically considered to operate independently from the sociopolitical order; hence they are parts of the absolute ordinance of God. On this premise, Khomeini contends that, "since reason determines that legislation is God's exclusive responsibility, nobody but God has the right to legislate" (p. 291). This would appear to rule out all human law making.

But God does not legislate in a vacuum. He translates His rule into the system of religion; that is Islam. Thus, in Khomeini's vision the religion of Islam "is God's supreme law, which is initiated to manage quotidian life as well as the world system, and its practice will be rewarded with salvation in this world as well as the other" (p. 291). In other words, transcendent justice and reason become undivided parts of Islamic faith. From this, Khomeini shifts his argument toward the system of Islamic law, or Islamic jurisprudence [Fiqh], in which the practice and administration of divine reason and justice are specified.

In this way, Khomeini moves the jurisprudence, which is the product of human agency to the center to replace the eternal law, which is the product of God. This is crucial, because Khomeini subsequently bases his claim of authority to transform society on the

Qur'an and positive religious norms, Islamic jurisprudence. It is not accidental that he pays little or no attention to natural law because within this paradigm there is not much space for the invocation of natural law. He substitutes shari'a-based order for natural order and considers shari'a-based order normative. It is as if Khomeini involuntarily intends to reverse the assumption behind Weber's insight that natural law continues to exist while sacred authority can no longer hold sway. In other words, by claiming such continuing force for the shari'a, Khomeini cancels out the *raison d'être* of natural law. In the contest of natural law and religious authority, Weber (1978) refers to natural law as "the specific and only consistent type of legitimacy of a legal order which can remain once religious revelation and the authoritarian sacredness of a tradition and its bearers have lost their force" (p. 867). By displacing the natural and eternal law in his discourse, Khomeini, thus, poses the shari'a as the single legitimate law to counter the positive law or human law in Hakamizadeh's discourse.

Human Law (Positive Law) Versus Sacred Law

As shown above, for Hakamizadeh, the human law is an extension of the natural law. He draws on a simplified analogy to present his transition from the natural law to the positive law in the text:

When we look at our body, we see that there is one managing organ called brain, which puts to work all other organs for the preservation of the body. We also see that these organs change their functions according to the change in the environment. We further observe that each organ is for the benefit of the collective body first, and then for its own. If one organ does not function well it will become ill and after a while the illness will spread across the whole body. Mass people are like the body. They

need ruler, soldier, taxation, and law; and this law must be adaptable to the changing environment (p.33).

This analogy establishes a direct link between general precepts of the natural law and their application to human law. Hakamizadeh seems to present the positive law as outsourced from the law of nature, hence normative. However, the adaptation of human law to the changing environment requires human interpretation. Therefore, the conformity of the human law to natural law is not absolute; rather, it depends on the relative state of human existence and is subjected to the constraints of time, space, and human reason.

Furthermore, Hakamizadeh's view of positive law follows the main premise on which his entire discursive line of argument in the text is grounded: the segregation between secular and ecclesiastical polities. In his account of the functional necessity of law, he assigns the shari'a to the domain of the religious jurisprudence and dissociates it from the sphere of public and civil legal proceedings:

Undoubtedly, the shari'a, no matter how comprehensive and complete it might be, cannot fulfill all human necessities everywhere and every time. So to say, today we are in need of a wide range of legislation concerning municipal law, custom law, statute limitations, due process, budgetary law and accounting, and hundreds more for which the shari'a offers no say (p. 30).

To Hakamizadeh all such legislation is the result of human reasoning. In this sense, a great measure of judgment and thoughtfulness is required to apply the prescriptions of the natural law to positive law. To exemplify his case, Hakamizadeh directly confronts the clergy with respect of the source of law: "When they claim that all laws are in the Book [the Qur'an] and

the tradition [hadith], they want to thwart the practice of analogical deduction [human reasoning]; obviously, they will fail at the end” (p. 33).

Khomeini approaches the concept of human law with some ambivalence and confusion. By alluding to Islam as the religion in which God’s law is embodied, Khomeini portrays Islam as a religion that “has cancelled out all other laws of the universe and recognized no other law as legitimate” (p. 292). He accuses Hakamizadeh of ignorance of Islam and the Qur’an and concludes, “God has sent Islamic law for all time and all people” (p. 292). Thus, Khomeini reasserts the transference of the eternality and universality of God’s law to the already written Islamic law of the shari’a.

Historically, the shi’ite jurists’ legal activities were limited to compiling and interpreting the traditions of the Prophet as well as providing written answers to questions posed to them by members of the community, a practice identical to the Roman jurists’ activity in Medieval Christendom, which is called *recognised responsa prudentium* (Arjomand, 1993a; Schiller, 1958). In this sense, the shari’a has historically been a jurist-centered law whose core activity remains within the boundaries of law finding rather than law making (Arjomand, 1993a). By elevating the shari’a to the status of a sole legitimate law, however, Khomeini represents Islam as a corporate institution of law that is entitled to prescribe the codes of conduct for the entire society *in light of religious expertise alone*. Furthermore, he proposes the shari’a as the only venue through which a society can change and reach a desired end: an ideal social order yet to be formed. Thus, Khomeini argues:

Every reasonable person admits that besides this infantile life there is a bigger universe. God has sent messengers and guides to organize that bigger life; however,

God has designed law for this world and this life as well. But, the ultimate end is to provide the eternal life of the other world (p. 304).

According to Khomeini, God has not ignored this worldly life: “God is aware of everybody’s needs and possesses the power to meet them” (p. 293). He encases God’s power in the shari’a on the premise that beside Islam no other source of legitimate law exists; therefore, Islamic law must satisfy all private and public needs: “There is no law in Islam that cannot relate to this life; rather, all Islamic laws constitute the foundation for building a logical and moral life” (p. 305).

Khomeini’s arguments, inescapably, implicate the shari’a in the practice of human law and legislation. However, this raises profound questions for a religion that has traditionally exercised its legal authority within the purview of law finding rather than law making: What to legislate? What procedure should the practice of legislation follow? Every act of law is implicated in the act of abolishing laws as well. What laws should be abolished? And, on what basis should they be abolished? Most importantly, given the plural structure of juristic authority within shi’ism, questions will arise about what institutions in the hierocratic order would be in charge of making law. Not surprisingly, Khomeini does not answer these questions in his text. He instead sets out an intangible and obscure classification on the basis of which the hierocracy takes up the task of law making.

According to him:

The laws that the country will gradually need and are not mentioned in the shari’a can be classified under two categories. First, are the laws regulating conduct against the shari’a, such as tax on prostitutions and alcohol...or laws related to judiciary,

illegitimate trades, marriage, and the like? These laws regulate conduct detrimental to people and against the interests of the nation (p. 294).

Second are the laws that contribute to the order and progress of the nation and do not contradict the shari'a.... For example, in early Islam due to the limited Islamic territory, there was no need for property rights, banks, and census; and the organization of military was different from that of today.... The Islamic law is not against the formation of these institutions even though it does not speak about them (p. 295).

In this statement, the hint at public order in the second category is associated with laws that are not provisioned in the shari'a. In shi'ite jurisprudence, these legal provisions are considered *secondary ordinances*, which in distinction with *primary ordinances*, are related to governmental regulations and public law. According to Arjomand (1993b) the primary ordinances "derive from the source of the Sacred Law" while the secondary ordinances derive from "expediency as the prerequisite for the implementation of the incumbent primary ordinances" (p. 104). In other words, when the sacred law does not provide adequate ground to reach a ruling on a particular case, the use of secondary ordinance becomes necessary or expedient. Such secondary ordinances comprise all state and public laws, the enactment of which entails the engagement with the practice of law making. But such law making is only legitimate in so far as it is necessary for implementing primary ordinances.

Khomeini's approach to secondary ordinances is as vague as his preceding classification of law. He seems to include these ordinances in the second category of his classification; that is, among those laws that are not against the shari'a and result in societal progress. For example, he points to the "accounting law" as an instance of the "secondary

law” within the frame of the “Islamic budgetary law” (p. 300). He is certainly aware of the ulama’s deep-seated preference for disengagement from the practice of law making; therefore, he cautiously avoids giving such legal advice that would contradict, in principle, the ulama’s orthodox position. The disengagement though is bound to generate a sense of passive quietism in the ulama’s approach to the concept of positive law. On the other hand, a passive approach sits at odds with the logic of the centrality of the shari’a that Khomeini enjoins throughout his discourses. While he attributes the status of lawlessness in the country to the lack of Islamic ruling (pp. 298, 304, 305), his insufficient competence in the shi’ite jurisprudence does not give him the permission to make any recommendation that would suggest a radical departure from the traditional shi’ite juristic authority: a move away from law finding to law making.

For Khomeini, the question is how to reconcile, in principle, the central position he wants to give to the shari’a and the clergy with the previously marginal practice of law finding. His answer, however, furthers his conundrum. He proposes that, “an *Islamic state* [emphasis added] with the *help* [my emphasis] of competent religious experts [the mujtahids] can identify these secondary provisions, conform them to the shari’a, and then adopt them” (p. 295). However, he does not define the nature and composition of the Islamic state; therefore, the relation of the shari’a to this state remains obscure. On one hand, the enactment of the public law – the secondary provisions – continues to be the state’s function. Therefore, the state occupies the central position, inevitably pushing the shari’a to the margin. On the other hand, all state laws must be commensurate to and directed by the shari’a. In other words, the Islamic exposition of a norm must become an enforceable rule of action. In this sense, the shari’a takes the center, pushing the state to the margin. But

directing, orienting, and enacting specific laws presuppose the exercise of authority. This conundrum would ultimately be institutionalized at the heart of the state four decades later, when Khomeini ends up in authority. In the formative years of the Islamic Republic the debate over the primacy of the interests of the two contending authorities, the ecclesia and the state, took a position of enormous importance in mundane political and social affairs. This dispute encroached upon and, for the most part, obscured much of the processes of institution building and decision-making in the Islamic regime. The gravity of the situation demanded Khomeini's direct arbitration. In the summer of 1987, a dispute between the parliament and the Guardian Council over the labor law forced Khomeini to intervene. Now that Khomeini was in power and facing the logic of maintaining law and order, he issued a governmental edict backing the state's exclusive power to rule:

By using this power, the state can replace those fundamental ... Islamic systems, by any kind of social, economic, labor ... commercial, urban affairs, agricultural, or other system, and can make the services ... that are the monopoly of the state ... into an instrument for the implementation of general and comprehensive policies.²⁸

With this statement Khomeini unambiguously implied that the state's "expedient interests," *maslahat* in Farsi, take precedence over the interests of the hierocracy. On another occasion in January 1988, Khomeini found it appropriate to extend the notion of *maslahat*, in Brumberg (2001) words, "to its most logical extreme." In publically rebuking Khomeini – then the President and now the Supreme Leader – who tried to subjugate the power of the executive branch to the constraint of Islamic laws and principles, Khomeini re-emphasized

²⁸ I borrowed this quote from Brumberg, Daniel (2001). *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. P. 135.

the primacy of *maslahat*, the determination of which is the prerogative of the “supreme faqih:”

Government is among the most important divine injunctions and has priority over all peripheral divine orders. Your interpretation of what I said, that is, the government [or state] has jurisdiction within the framework of divine injunctions, is ... contradictory to what I said.... The government, which is part of the total [or absolute] vice-regency of the Prophet ... is one of the foremost injunctions of Islam and has priority over all other secondary injunctions, even prayers, fasting and the hajj.... The government is empowered to unilaterally revoke any lawful agreement ... if the agreement contravenes the interests of ... the country. It can prevent any matter, whether religious or secular, if it is against the interests of Islam.²⁹

According to this statement, once a jurist takes the helm of the state power, the state’s injunctions bear divine validation equal to those of the absolute “vice-regency of God.” The jurist, and by extension the state, has the *privileged authority* to define the *maslahat* of Islam and the nation, and accordingly, to determine both the divine and secondary provisions. Whether or not the article of *maslahat* exists in shi’ite jurisprudence is beyond the purview of this study;³⁰ nevertheless, it reverberates significantly through the structure of power in the politics of the Islamic Republic. It is fair to say that the introduction of *maslahat* played a large part in the demise of the clergy, ironically, under the supreme rein of Khomeini,

²⁹ Brumberg (2001), p. 135

³⁰ Shirazi (1998) maintains that, “the resort to *maslahat* to justify various government or private actions has played an important role throughout the history of Islam. The practice was accepted by most of the Sunni schools of jurisprudence as the rule of *esteslah* (taking account of interests) and *masaleh-e-morsaleh* (consideration of interests without deriving the from the shari’a). However, the Twelver shi’a have always rejected it as *bed’at* (forbidden innovation) (p. 233).

himself a cleric. Today Khamenei, who on one occasion was bemused by Khomeini's ruling and terrified by the prospect of clerical diminishing, has been keen to selfishly exploit Khomeini's diktat and forcefully press forward the interests of the state that he is heading thus speeding up the course of the priestly downfall.

Khomeini's Dilemma

At the time of his writing in the 1940s, Khomeini was facing a different problem. In Khomeini's reasoning, only an Islamic state could resolve the paradox of the secondary provisions. According to the same reasoning, the existing secular government of the Shah did not possess the qualifications of an Islamic state, and hence lacked the authority to take up the task of law making. Does this mean that in the absence of the Islamic state no instance of law making can legitimately take place? Khomeini's recognition of the inevitability of order and government renders the enactment of the state law imperative notwithstanding the nonexistence of the Islamic state. In Khomeini's view, however, the absence of the Islamic state does not necessarily undo the continuous and pervasive presence of the shari'a in the process of legislation. Through the agency of the ulama in helping the state to make laws in accordance with Islamic norms, the intervention of the shari'a and its central position is ascertained. He further insists, "today, experts in Islamic affairs, the ulama, must give consideration to all institutions that are in compliance with Islamic norms and necessary for the country, and must help to establish them. Also, the military's accoutrements must be arranged in the interest of the nation. The Islamic law never opposes these political and social progresses" (p. 295). Thus, Khomeini allowed law making under the Shah only when guided by the ulama's expertise in the shari'a.

The Ongoing Exchange

Unlike Khomeini and unconcerned about the shari'a's position in legislation, Hakamizadeh premises his understanding of the concept of law on the natural law ordained by God, and proclaims that all other laws are the extension of the natural law. To him, rules of conduct do not descend from God; rather, they are the product of human reasoning and argumentation. Faith, in this process, logically plays a nominal role, because it is less reliable and more open to (mis-)interpretation than are natural law and reason. According to Hakamizadeh, "the Qur'an is one of God's books, but the universe is His bigger book. You perceive God's prescription from nature and reason in a direct way, but the prescriptions from faith might reach you with all kinds of mediation, each changing these directives by prejudice and mistake" (p. 34).

In this way, by ruling out the authority of the hierarchy to make law, Hakamizadeh implicitly but necessarily charges the only competing structure, the state, with the responsibility of legislation. However, he is mute about the procedure and mechanism by which the act of legislation should proceed.

Dissatisfied with Hakamizadeh's approach to human reasoning as the unique source of law, Khomeini ties his arguments about law and human conduct to an *ultimate end*: "Philosophers believe that human beings run two lives. One is the material life of this world and the other is the spiritual life of the other world. For each of these lives there are instructions and means ... for which the prophets' directives are enough" (p. 312). He further states that, "all human laws invite the individual solely to the material life and keep him unaware of the eternal life" (p. 312). On this premise, he presents Islamic law as an entity that contains both dimensions of life. The shari'a attends to "the material life as well

as to the spiritual life and the means necessary to fulfill both” (p. 312). As stated earlier, to him God’s main objective is the other world, or *the ultimate end*: “For this reason, in his celestial book [the Qur’an], God considers the life of this world infantile and strained by the indulgence to sensual pleasures” (p. 304). Khomeini is resolute in indicating that the shi’ite hierarchy is the sole body qualified to define the ultimate end, to provide resources and means to realize it, and to determine the rules and conditions of the use of these resources: “The Qur’an and hadith have come for various classes of people. They consist of sciences, to the knowledge of which only experts in revelation, not other people, are privy. These sciences are for one class of scientists.... Not everybody must intervene in the sciences of the Qur’an and hadith, and the Qur’an and hadith themselves forbid any foolish appropriations” (p. 323). Regarding a very different context, Pizzorno (1978) gives an observant insight into the logical consequence of such monopolization: “Such a monopoly of spiritual resources grounded the demand for the advent of an order in which that class [ecclesiastical] would be autonomous and, in some form, superior” (p. 35). Khomeini’s position is oriented to establishing a similar socially superior position for the ecclesiastical shi’a elite.

In principle, Khomeini seems to stick to the two traditional quests of the hierarchy: the preservation of religious identity and prescription of the rules of everyday life (Pizzorno, 1978). In practice, with the separation of the temporal and religious orders, fulfilling this task grows increasingly complicated. Khomeini introduces the ulama as a new actor to bridge the religio-temporal gap. But the ulama’s historical alienation from the act of legislation compels him to afford no more than a councillorship function in the capacity of *help* to the state, for the hierarchy. This role, however, is hardly central. To seize the possession of the center requires the control of normative procedures. In Iran’s routine of the

1940s, in which the religio-temporal dissociation was partly in place and encouraged by the hierocracy, the ecclesiastical management of the rules seemed to be impractical. Therefore, the shi'ite hierocracy was doomed to remain in the margin. Some exceptional time was necessary for the hierocracy to engage in the law making process and, in consequence, occupy the center. The 1979 Islamic Revolution provides this extraordinary moment and Khomeini would forcefully and effectively seize upon it.

Chapter 12

Conclusion

The point of departure of this study is the examination of two texts written in the early 1940s in Iran. To a significant extent, three decades later these texts constituted the underlying discourses that have shaped the rise of the Islamic Republic of Iran – the most crucial episode in the contemporary history of the country. It is clear that in their texts both Hakamizadeh and Khomeini present a mindset primarily concerned with the analytical presentation of a desirable order. Both authors represent themselves as reformers who aim at improving the social project of life for Iranians, albeit with different approaches. However, it was Khomeini who some three decades later found himself intimately engaged in the real and pragmatic conditions of constructing such a social order, namely, the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI). This concluding chapter will largely explain how Khomeini's construction of the Islamic order in 1979 in Iran is inspired by his analytical conception of an ultimate order articulated in the above discourses more than three decades earlier. In keeping with my method of analysis, I analyze the text of the Constitution of IRI to locate the instances of this inspiration.

I start with a brief summary of the main arguments and key insights regarding the above discourses. Adopting the format of a dialogue and operating within the milieu of a shi'ite outlook, the two authors, Hakamizadeh and Khomeini touch upon several social and political discourses such as the God/human relationship, the notion of Imamate, the institution of the clergy, the state, and the law. In his review of these discourses, Hakamizadeh emerges to be critical of the official clergy's understanding and practice of shi'ite teachings, while Khomeini stands in defense of the shi'ite establishment.

The notion of providentialism is at the heart of the dispute between the two authors in regard to the discourse of God/human relation. While both authors identify with the idea of providentialism, they vastly differ in their interpretation of this concept. To Hakamizadeh, because of the individual's ability to rationalize and reason, the human being is capable of functioning autonomously within the providential design. By pointing to the notion of the sovereign individual, he tries to present a modernizing translation of the shi'a Islam. In sharp contrast with Hakamizadeh, Khomeini affirms the providential power of God over the free will of human beings and uses it to delegitimize the then existing social order. He presents faith as the sole mechanism for healing social maladies. This leads him to present Islam as the self-enclosed curative source and reservoir of good judgment, to which only a few, the ulama, have access. In Khomeini's design, the authority to exercise sovereignty belongs to the shi'ite hierocracy, to which the Muslim community is obliged to subordinate itself.

The leadership of the Muslim community constitutes the main content of the second discourse, the Imamate. Hakamizadeh views the Imamate as a simple and commonsensical practice devoid of any ideological character. To him the notion of Imamate is time-bound, therefore, not subject to teleological consideration. He is averse to the Iranian people's devotion to the institution of Imamate. Hakamizadeh limits the application of the Imamate to the leadership of the religious sphere, thus separating it from political management of society. In contrast, Khomeini considers the Imamate as the rational extension of Mohammad's prophetic legacy, which embodies political and religious leadership combined. For Khomeini, however, this combination does not stop at the Imamate; it continues its function through the guardianship of the ulama who personify the Imamate in the absence of the Imam. In this line of succession, the absolute and universal attributes of the Prophet's

authority will be passed on from the Imamate to the guardianship of the faqih, a notion that Khomeini formulated later in the form of the theory of the “Mandate of the Jurist”.

The exchange between Hakamizadeh and Khomeini over the notion of clergy inescapably follows their dispute about the Imamate. The two authors depict different function for Islam in social and political life, and accordingly, present different views of the clergy’s role in public. Hakamizadeh’s focal point is the separation of the clerical function from the practice of politics and governance. Throughout his text, Hakamizadeh implicitly and explicitly stresses that religious institutions are irrelevant to political institutions. For him, religion is mandated to improve individuals’ spiritual and moral life. In accordance, the agents of religion, the ulama in Islam, are obligated to concentrate their effort on helping individuals to achieve their spiritual goals. But, it is not evident that whether or not in his vision of an ideal faith there is a place for religion in public life. More specifically, he expresses no position whether faith should enter the public sphere to defend the individual’s rights and freedom from the arbitrary infringement of the government, as well as to promote democratic civil society. Khomeini, on the other hand, is rather forthright in stressing that political institutions must embrace a sacred cosmos and religious outlook. In principle, he puts an end to the differentiation of political and religious society. In his perspective, Islam is placed within political society and holds a political function. Moreover, in this dedifferentiated structure, Khomeini bestows religious institutions primacy over political institutions. In Islam he sees a complete blueprint for the management of society. But he relocates Islam from the broad public sphere into political society and the state. Therefore, Islam in Khomeini’s paradigm is incapable of establishing a public autonomous space to safeguard and cultivate civil society. Moreover, he proposes the ulama, by virtue of their

total knowledge of Islam, as the undivided group to assume the task of the leadership of political society. In this scenario, once in power, the ulama are no longer qualified to contest and question the arbitrary authority of the state. This became manifest in his construction of the Islamic Republic of Iran few decades later.

In principle, Khomeini puts an end to the differentiation of political and religious society. In his perspective, Islam is placed within political society and holds a political function. Moreover, in this dedifferentiated structure, Khomeini bestows religious institutions primacy over political institutions. Relocated from the broad public sphere into political society, and therefore lacking agency in civil society, Islam in Khomeini's paradigm, is incapable of taking up a democratic function. In Islam he sees a complete blueprint for the management of society, and with that he proposes the ulama, by virtue of their total knowledge of Islam, as the undivided group to assume the task of this management. This became manifest in his construction of the Islamic Republic of Iran a few decades later.

The point of contention between our two authors on the fourth discourse, the state, lies in the relation between the two structures of domination: the state and the hierocracy. Sticking to his underlying argument, Hakamizadeh makes a case for the separation of politics and religion. By drawing on the modern notion of specialized differentiation, he resolutely asserts that, by definition, the function of a mujtahid has no equivalence to that of a political ruler. On this ground, he concludes that the concept of Islamic state has no relevance to a modernizing society. While he rejects the religious basis of the state legitimacy, he does not concretely make a suggestion on its replacement, but his position implicitly embraces democratic authority. For Khomeini Islam presents the sole legitimate regulatory system of

governance. It would be rational that those who possess the unsurpassed knowledge of this system, the mujtahids, reside at the helm of this system. Therefore, Khomeini rather explicitly proposes the foundation of an Islamic state in which the clergy are positioned on the leadership of major political institutions. In this way though, He sets the intellectual foundations of the future state/religion relation in Iran.

The final discursive argument between Hakamizadeh and Khomeini is allocated to the concept of law. At first, Hakamizadeh laments the absence of the rule of law in Iran and largely faults the existing practice of shi'ism in this regard. He then turns to three elements of faith, reason, and nature, which he believes are key to the institutionalization of major social and political proposals in his text. In an argument that is coherently in line with his idea of providentialism, Hakamizadeh suggests that human beings are inherently rational, civic, and social. Due to their capacity to reason, according to Hakamizadeh, individuals are well situated to define and make their own law or the positive law. In contrast to Hakamizadeh, Khomeini places emphasis on God's law. To him, God has the sole authority to legislate, and human beings are only capable of interpreting God's supreme law. The product of human interpretation, according to Khomeini, is best embodied in the Shari'a. In this manner, Khomeini, in principle, opens the way again for the centrality of the shi'ite hierocracy. For him, God's law is superior to human law because it offers provisions for the eternal life. He acknowledges that in certain circumstances, human beings must attempt to provide provisions for earthly life, but these are secondary provisions and inferior to God's law. He contends that the Shari'a directs the production of the secondary provisions; therefore, the knowledge of the shari'a is required in this process. Needless to say, in Khomeini's mind, it is the institution of the clergy that monopolizes this knowledge.

Clerical Social Position Vis-à-vis the State

Among the various dynamics of religion and society in Iran that the two texts attempted to address, the social position of the clergy emerges as the most recurrent theme in both texts. That theme thus provided the impulse behind this dissertation. Within this religiopolitical context, the two authors, Hakamizadeh and Khomeini express two different attitudes to the centrality and marginality of the clerical establishment.

Hakamizadeh portrays the existing social conditions of Iran as irrational and unnatural. Furthermore, he maintains that the shi'ite hierocracy plays a socially central role in the creation of these conditions. He goes on a quest to put an end to the sway that faith exercises on the emotional and intellectual trends in Iran society and to replace it with secular social ethics. This move implies the substitution of, in Talmon's (1952) phrase, "social utility for tradition as the main criterion of social institutions and values" (p. 3), which to Hakamizadeh would be a natural and rational antidote to the status quo. In this schema, on which Hakamizadeh's entire text persists, religious authority can hardly hold the position of center and is accordingly tossed to the margin. Hakamizadeh rejects the idea of faith as the sole source of public social morality and sees in this rejection the rise of the ordinary Iranian's consciousness over the habit of intransigent religious ethics. While it can be assumed that with the rejection of the shi'ite hierocracy and displacement of Islamic ethics in Hakamizadeh's logic, the state would consequently take on the main authorship of social morality, he does not clearly stress the state as the institution that would replace faith for this function. Hakamizadeh implicitly and unconvincingly points to the role of the state [the Reza Shah's state] in this regard, but never goes beyond this casual hint.

Khomeini seems to affirm Hakamizadeh's assertion about the unnaturalness and irrationality of the conditions of social life in Iran. But, in a contrasting line of argument, he attributes the existing social maladies to the incomplete and aborted rule of Islamic faith. Khomeini asserts the need for shared values in society with a sense of significance and urgency and argues in favor of Islamic ethics as the sole unifying organization in society. In his schema, however, he largely leaves the reader in the dark with respect to the function of the state. As expressed previously, he simply speculates that the institution of politics finds in religion the precept of a self-enclosed and all-encompassing truth based on a "preordained, harmonious, and perfect scheme of things, to which men are irresistibly driven, and at which they are bound to arrive" (Talmon, p. 2). He argues that on this foundation an ideal society can be built. Khomeini designates the clerical group, by virtue of having the possession of spiritual resources, as the sole social agent responsible for leading Iranian society in the direction of this ideal society and demands obedience of the others to the ulama's cause. In this yet-to-be-created "perfect scheme of things," politics and religion are naturally and rationally deemed undifferentiated. Not surprisingly, this vision was resonated in an expression frequently used by *nouveau* religious revolutionaries in the aftermath of the demise of the regime of the Shah in 1979: 'our politics is identical to our religion and our religion is identical to our politics,' or in Farsi: 'siasat ma ei'n dianat ma ast and dianat ma ei'n syasat ma.'

Politics of Ultimate Ends

Infrequently in his text, Khomeini attempts to discern politics as a domain independent from religion. As previously shown, this attempt is instantiated in his support for the position of the Shah as the head of the political structure. At the same time, however,

he ties the institution of politics with the premise of ‘godly ends,’ hence shaping the substance of the political in the mold of the religious. Accordingly, in the construction of the new Islamic order, he ties politics with godly or ultimate ends. In this connection, he attributes a religious trait to all spheres of politics in the Islamic state. The second Article of the IRI’s Constitution defines this particular set of godly ends:

The Islamic Republic is a system based on belief in:

1. The One God (as stated in the phrase "There is no god except Allah"), His exclusive sovereignty and the right to legislate, and the necessity of submission to His commands;
2. Divine revelation and its fundamental role in setting forth the laws
3. The return to God in the Hereafter, and the constructive role of this belief in the course of man's ascent towards God
4. The justice of God in creation and legislation
5. Continuous leadership (Imamate) and perpetual guidance, and its fundamental role in ensuring the uninterrupted process of the revolution of Islam;³¹

Stemming from the enduring struggle between the two contending structures of authority, the religious and the political as explained in the fourth discourse, it is logical to suppose that the Constitution designates two collectivities responsible for godly ends. The first designation is the collectivity of Islamic believers including, in particular, those who are faithful to the shi’ite orthodoxy; the second is the collectivity of the state that binds individuals on the basis of territorial boundaries irrespective to their religious allegiance or degree of religiosity.

³¹ This Article is extracted from: <http://www.iranonline.com/iran/iran-info/government/constitution-1.html>. All reference to the IRI’s Constitution is from this source unless mentioned otherwise.

Pizzorno (1978) sees these two collectivities as the social base for two forms of power: “power spiritual” and “power temporal” respectively (p. 34). The two collectivities differ significantly in terms of the nature of their identity. While the collectivity of believers identifies with a particular religious bond, the state collectivity determines the identity of individuals on the basis of their living within the boundaries of one state. The tensions between these two identities are evident in the title of the new regime in Iran: the Islamic Republic, in that ‘Islamic’ represents the first collectivity and ‘Republic of Iran’ the second one. Article 2 of the Constitution, nevertheless, assigns godly ends to both collectivities with the expectation of transcending their differences and avoiding their looming friction.

Article 57 of the Constitution of IRI instantiates the source of the tension between the two powers. At first, the article seems to recognize the modern notion of the politics by espousing the *principle* of the separation of powers: “The powers of government in the Islamic Republic are vested in the legislature, the judiciary, and the executive powers.... These powers are independent of each other.” This secularized principle treats the state as a temporal body located within political society and serving mere political purposes. However, the principle of power separation in the Constitution seems untenable since in Khomeini’s “grand schema” the state should also tend towards godly ends, and by subjecting to the clerical authority, strives to assure that it will function as a spiritual agent.

In remarks about the evolution of the notion of the State in European political thought, Skinner (1978) argues, “the sphere of politics should be envisaged as a distinct branch of moral philosophy, a branch concerned with the art of government” (p. 349). Skinner concludes, “the acceptance of the modern idea of the State presupposes that political society is held to exist solely for political purposes. The endorsement of this secularized

viewpoint remained impossible as long as it was assumed that all temporal rulers had a duty to uphold godly as well as peaceable government” (p. 352). With respect to Skinner’s argument, the above principle in Article 57 had to be altered to accommodate the ‘godly’ nature of the Islamic state. Therefore, the Article was furnished with a supplement: all three powers function “under the supervision of the absolute vilayat al-'amr [Mandate of the Jurist] and the leadership of the Umma, in accordance with the forthcoming articles of this Constitution.”

Article 57, on one hand, provides the context for the transfusion of the latent contention in the dual system of authority in the old society into the new regime of the Islamic Republic. The conspicuous invocation of absoluteness in the Article, on the other hand, points to the intention of the framers to secure the superiority of the power spiritual. The Article also refers to the later provisions in the Constitution that pave the way for clerical dominion in the power structure of the Islamic Republic. The rest of this chapter examines the ways the supremacy of the clergy is established in the ethos developed in the IRI’s constitutional text.

In traditional societies, by way of monopolization and control of spiritual resources, the clerical class professes its autonomy and supremacy. According to Pizzorno (1978), four modes of control of spiritual resources aid the ecclesia in purifying and advancing its vocation and standing in Christendom: “These controls are of knowledge, of normative procedures, of the states of devotion, and of the definition of the enemies” (p. 35). Pizzorno’s insight can be applied to the case of the shi’ite ecclesia, which in 1979 ventured the initiation of a social order in which its sovereignty and primacy is delivered. The shi’ite hierocracy uniquely assumed the task of defining and prescribing the usage of these

resources. It was up to the framers of the Constitution of this social order to objectivize this task amidst the growing complexity of the social division of labor.

The Control of Knowledge

As expressed in various lines of reasoning, this study's analysis is premised on the interplay of power and knowledge. On this ground, it can be argued that the control of knowledge makes up a powerful resource for the exercise of domination. Pizzorno (1978) attributes great importance to this resource "especially insofar as it rests on the basis of an all-encompassing vision of the long-term, ultimate ends of society and individual" (p. 35). As explained above this is manifest in the constitutional text of IRI, which imperatively calls on the new Islamic order to attend godly ends. However, in parallel to what we have so far seen in the large majority of Khomeini's discourses, Article 2 of the Constitution introduces these ultimate ends in a mystified and esoteric style placing them beyond the range of ordinary perception. The novel revolutionary shi'ite ecclesia employs this as a pretext to claim the exclusive possession of resources and proficiency for supplying the transcendental knowledge of ultimate ends. In this way, the eschatological knowledge of godly ends becomes an important source of power for the newly emerged ulama around the charismatic Khomeini.

But the transcendent knowledge of ultimate ends does not put forward a complete package in which answers to all dimensions of social life can be found. There is a need for the unorganized, common, and everyday knowledge; that is, the shifting knowledge of daily policies for the changing social environment: the knowledge of *proximate ends* and *means*. To keep the centrality of the clergy intact, the framers of the Constitution have to provide the control of the shi'ite ecclesia over the knowledge of proximate ends as well. The framers

sought to achieve this control by tying the knowledge of daily ends to the knowledge of godly ends in major articles of the Constitution that deal with multiple facets of the individual and collective life such as education, economy, justice, associational life, human rights, public policy, civil and political engagement. In each of these cases, and in a rather perfunctory manner, they attached phrases such as *Islamic criteria*, *ethics of Islamic norms*, or *law of Islam*. The tacked-on qualities of these terms amount to *fairy phrases*: terms lurk around the constitutional text like fairies on the land to prove that, on the surface, as if the ‘magical power’ of these phrases routinely transforms the profane nature of these practices into sacred. Beneath the surface, however, the attachment aims at bindingly subjugating the pursuit of daily social activities to the power of the clergy; that is, the social group that monopolizes the knowledge of the above ‘fairies.’ Pizzorno (1978) believes that transcendent knowledge bears to the knowledge of proximate ends “the same relation that the ‘general’ bears to the ‘particular’: it gives meaning to it” (p. 36). By applying this parallelism to the quest of Christian ecclesia for supremacy, Pizzorno suggests that:

Awareness of all these facts provided the partisans of the superiority of the spiritual power with their central argument: As knowledge of the “general” is superior to knowledge of the “particular”, since one cannot grasp the latter without having first understood the former, so spiritual power is superior to the temporal one. It follows that a ruler cannot take day-to-day decisions successfully if he is not enlightened by knowledge of the general ends of society. And this only the spiritual (ecclesiastical) class possesses” (p. 36).

The Control of Normative Order

Another source of power in close association with the control of knowledge is the authority to control normative processes. The prescription of rules, on one hand, ascertains the continuous presence of ultimate ends in daily life; on the other hand, it establishes norms for long-term goals and proximate ends. In this respect, the main challenge for the founders of the new order in Iran was to determine which collectivity must undertake the responsibility of normative order. Leaving the discovery, interpretation, fixation, and execution of norms to the discretion of the state collectivity was incongruous with Khomeini's reasoning for the centrality of the clergy. First, it would amount to the recognition of rival jurisdiction, the state, within the clerical boundaries. Second, it would interfere with the monopolization of knowledge by the clerical hierarchy. Both conditions tend to wear away the independence and authority of the shi'ite ecclesia.

To accommodate the above challenge, the founders of the Islamic Constitution draw on two key provisions. First, the heads of all main judicial positions must be mujtahids and appointed by the supreme leader, himself a mujtahid. Second, all judicial processes, from law finding to law making to due process are subjected to obscure provisions such as "Islamic penal code", "authoritative Islamic sources and authentic fatwa", "Islamic criteria", and "laws or the norms of Islam", which are added to the descriptive content of each Article. These so-called 'legalistic' qualifications are incorporated into the Articles 156, 157, 162, 167, 168, 170, and 171 to imply that in the Constitution's frame of mind, to borrow from Pizzorno's account of 'Gregorian movement' (1978), both "power ordinationis" and "power jurisdictionis," that is, "both eternal knowledge and daily regulations should then stay in the hands of spiritual apparatus" (p. 37).

But there is more. The constitutional text is designed to exemplify both the descriptive and normative contents of the shari'a. But unlike the cognitive system of the shari'a, in which the descriptive and normative narratives are undifferentiated and embody a single practice of faith, in the Constitution the two texts are separated and grounded on different knowledge. A look at Articles 167, 168, and 170 illustrates the above point. Article 167 delineates the authority of a judge: "The judge is bound to endeavor to judge each case on the basis of the codified law. In case of the absence of any such law, he has to deliver his judgment on the basis of *authoritative Islamic sources and authentic fatwa* [emphasis added]". Article 170 further delineates this authority: "Judges of courts are obliged to refrain from executing statutes and regulations of the government that are in conflict with the *laws or the norms of Islam.*" The Article 168 defines the adjudication process of political offenses: "Political and press offenses will be tried openly and in the presence of a jury, in courts of justice. The manner of the selection of the jury, its powers, and the definition of political offenses, will be determined by *law in accordance with the Islamic criteria.*" Since the shari'a has no voice on matters regarding constitutionalism, the normative content in the above Articles is adopted from non-Islamic sources – Western narratives – reflecting, therefore, *secular* knowledge. The secular knowledge, however, raises the question of the legitimation of the relevant Articles in a constitution that is deemed Islamic. While in the shari'a it is the sole authority of the Providence that validates both normative and descriptive dimensions, in the Islamic constitutional text of Iran, the validation transpires differently. Rather than "Providence" generally, specific Islamic descriptive phrases will fill the divine validation vacuum: "Authoritative Islamic sources and authentic fatwa" or "determined by law in accordance with the Islamic norms" or "law in accordance with the Islamic criteria."

The Constitutional articles are thus transformed into textual amalgams confounding subjective assertions with objective norms. In a parallel description of the operation of the ideology of the Communist State, Kolakowski (1999) aptly characterizes this process: “The distinction between normative judgments and factual utterances is blurred in such a fashion that ostensibly descriptive judgments disguise normative rules which the believers are supposed to accept in their descriptive meanings” (p. 235). To the framers of the Constitution, the Islamic descriptive narratives provide explanatory value for empirical normative elements, thus justifiably changing the substance of normative stances into Islamic stances. Islamic contents, in this sense, supply the mechanism of validity for normative rules. Moreover, because Islamic judgments are deemed never wrong, they have the authority to validate normative rules in one context and invalidate them in another.

The Control of Devotion

In the context of rivalry between the collectivities of the state and the ecclesia, the third form of control plays an important role in relations of power. Pizzorno (1978) defines devotion as “that attitude of mind, or that project of life, thanks to which individuals determine to ‘devote’ their activity, time, and riches to a collective cause that transcends their self-interest” (p. 37). In a religious context, the sacrifice of self, in any of its forms, is linked with the status of the individual in the afterlife, or understood differently with the aspiration for spiritual ends. In this context, the individual’s identification with ultimate ends coincides with religious society’s ultimate ends. In shi’ite Iran, as the underwriter and director of godly ends and prescriber of norms of conduct, the revolutionary ulama arrogate themselves the ‘right’ to control the act of devotion. In the totalizing mindset of the shi’ite hierocracy, any step back from this ‘right’ will be countered with a step forward by the rival collectivity,

the state; hence, any such ceding of control would represent a step down from the center of power – and thus is unacceptable; indeed, it would violate the very calling of the ulama to be authoritative interpreters of divine will for society.

To establish its control of devotion, the shi'ite ecclesia must patch up the modes and techniques of commitment to ultimate ends. In the tormented climate of the 1979 post-Islamic revolutionary, which was burdened with political pretensions and contentions, the traditional mode of devotion such as committing one's wealth, time, and even life would not suffice. A new mode of commitment must supplement it: *political allegiance*. By virtue of being the agent spiritual and 'possessor' of truth, the ulama, in principle, would claim the control of this allegiance. In practice, however, they faced the task of doing away with the competition of the state for the allegiance of the populace. For a while the personal magnetism of charismatic Khomeini would reliably secure the devotion of the ordinary populace. But this alone was not enough: political allegiance is not an unbound commitment and it can only temporarily draw on contemplative factors such as charisma. It demands permanent institutions. On this ground, the induction of devotion leads to the proliferation of clerical-cum-political institutions in parallel with the state's institutions. Such parallel institutions are thus adopted in the Constitution, as shown in the Constitutional Chart (see Appendix B, and further discussion below).

At the head of each institution resides a member of the ulama, a mujtahid, to assure (a) identification with the organized knowledge of godly ends; (b) the autonomy of power spiritual versus power temporal; and (c) immediate personal ties to the ecclesiastical institution of religion. Thus, the old dual mode of power reincarnated itself within the system of the Islamic Republic, this time with the dominance of the religious.

The Control of the Definition of the Enemies

Pizzorno (1978) believes that, “an institution entitled to decide who my enemies should be – enemies that I will have, at times, the right to kill, enemies of life and death – has a deeply penetrating power” (p. 38). In a modern state, setting boundaries with enemies is normally within the sole authority of the state. But, in the extraordinary arrangement of IRI, this authority becomes the subject of relations of power. For the militant shi’ite ecclesia the boundaries of ultimate ends determine the boundaries of the enemies; that is, “us” versus “others.” Those who do not incline to the same ultimate ends are in the outer edge of legitimacy. Moreover, as the narrator of ultimate ends, the shi’ite hierocracy determines the dynamics between sameness and difference; hence, it settles on who is included and who is excluded – and who among the excluded will be defined as collective “enemies.” Pizzorno (1978) gives a picture of the same practice for the historical Christian ecclesia: “This has been the fundamental, long-term function of the church in the formation of Western civilization: offering a set of symbols of a *common identity* [emphasis added] which made it possible to establish who belonged and who was excluded, irrespective of cultural origins, and to test the bids of belonging” (p. 39).

The IRI’s Constitution has made the issue of shared identity essential to its text. This is projected in the Preamble of the Constitution in which all levels of life are shaped by an Islamic aspiration: “The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran advances the cultural, social, political, and economic institutions of Iranian society based on Islamic principles and norms, which represent an honest aspiration of the Islamic Ummah³².” The Constitution, however, portrays Iranian identity as ‘one true Islamic self’ that ‘one Iranian people’ hold in

³² The Preamble text can be seen in: http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/ir00000_.html

common. Surpassing history and culture, this ‘oneness’ underlies the stable and unchanging essence of ‘Iranianness,’ which was hidden beneath manufactured and superficially imposed ‘identities.’ The Islamic Revolution of 1979 unearthed the ‘true Islamic oneness’ of Iranian identity: “This aspiration was exemplified by the nature of the great Islamic Revolution of Iran, and by the course of the Muslim people's struggle, from its beginning until victory, as reflected in the decisive and forceful calls raised by all segments of the populations” (The Preamble). The distinct characteristic of this Revolution, according to the Preamble, is its “ideological and Islamic nature”, which directs the Islamic government “to represent the fulfillment of the political ideal of a people who bear a *common faith and common outlook*, [emphasis added], taking an organized form in order to initiate the process of intellectual and ideological evolution towards the final goal, i.e., movement towards Allah”.

The discourse of ‘Islamic oneness’ establishes a system of representation that serves several purposes. First, ironically it provides a ground to divide Iranian society into different categories. Second, it tends to condense complex differences that exist among different categories of Iranians into a stereotypical entity, in the words of Hall (1993), “one simple cardboard cut-out” (p. 308). Third and most importantly, it sets out a criterion for comparing and evaluating these categories. In this connection, the authors of the ‘one Islamic identity,’ the militant ulama, judiciously divide this stereotype into a bi-polar set of adjectives such as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ and present it as truth. The structure of the IRI’s dominant sense of identity is constructed on the basis of this “stereotypical dualism.”³³ either ‘us’ or ‘them,’ and in Farsi, either ‘khodi’ or ‘non-khodi.’ Far from being immune to the play of power, this

³³ For a concise explanation of this term see Hulme, P. (1986). *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797*. London: Methuen.

dualism has been an important part of the mechanisms by which power flows and performs in Iranian society. Thus, them' are infrequently considered 'apostate' or 'enemy'. They become 'beasts in human disguise' who possess no sense of 'reason' and 'wisdom'.³⁴ They must be brutally marginalized due to their 'bestiality' and 'maliciousness.' The IRI's list of non-khodi is unsurprisingly wide. It cuts across ethnicity, religion, gender, unions, ideology, and political dissension. Ironically, in recent years the list has incorporated the very individuals who zealously contributed to the advent of the Islamic Revolution and the creation of the Islamic Republic.

Finally, at times in his text, Khomeini laments the displacement of Islam in matters associated with social life and bemoans the marginality of the ulama's social position in much of the history of Islam. For example, in the opening pages of his book he wonders that, "Islam conquered half of the world in half a century, but declined afterwards in the next 13 centuries" (p. 6). Because his mentality was engrossed by a commitment to 'a single truth', 'one identity', and 'essentialized experience' that is Islamic, he was incapable of situating the decline of Islam within the breakages and discontinuities of history. Instead, he insisted on the ground of the sufficient religiosity of Islam's first half-century, to conclude that inadequate religiosity is the main cause of the subsequent Islamic decline: "The rulers of that period [the first half-century] were those who enforced God's punishment. They would cut thieves' hand; they would behead insurgents and seditious and ward off aliens and infidels... While they benefited from religiosity, from belief in the invisible, and from affection for the

³⁴ After the 2009 controversial presidential election in Iran, the supreme leader Khamenei appropriated the term wisdom – *basirat* in Farsi – to distinguish the camp of 'us' from the 'other' camp that opposed the result of the election. Since then, for the camp of 'us', this term has become a banal and vulgar style of refashioning their own sense of identity.

clergy, we are lagging behind and will remain behind them in these matters” (p. 7). These points seem to be depicted in the Preamble of the Constitution:

Although the Islamic line of thought and the direction provided by militant religious leaders played an essential role in recent movements, nonetheless, the struggles waged in the course of those movements quickly fell into stagnation due to departure from genuine Islamic positions. Throughout this time, the conscious and responsible segment of society was bringing enlightenment to the people from the strongholds of the mosques, centers of religious teaching, and universities. Drawing inspiration from the revolutionary and fertile teachings of Islam, they began the unrelenting yet fruitful struggle of raising the level of ideological awareness and revolutionary consciousness of the Muslim people.

Furthermore, the Preamble does not conceal the militant clergy’s longing for globalizing Islamic revolutionary aspirations: “In particular, in the development of international relations, the Constitution will strive with other Islamic and popular movements to prepare the way for the formation of a single world community – in accordance with the Koranic verse *‘This your community is a single community, and I am your Lord, so worship Me’* [21:92].” In this sense, the IRI Constitution is a document of *imagined rediscovery and reunification*.

Iran entered the revolutionary phase of the 1970s with two distinct structural patterns. At the level of authority, a competing dual structure of religious power, and political power made its presence pervasive. At the level of political culture, competing discourses of patrimonial monarchism and radical shi’ite traditionalism dominated the ideological market, while no meaningful presence of liberal democratic and leftist discourses could be observed.

Khomeini emerged from the combination of these two structural dimensions. As a member of the shi'ite establishment, he had published the "Unveiling the Secrets" in 1943 to accentuate the position of the shi'ite hierocracy in the dual structure of domination; and in 1979, he assumed the ideological control of a bipolar political culture leading a revolution that established the supremacy of the shi'ite hierocracy within the same dual relation of power.

The processes that were at work to shape the above combination put limits and constraints upon Khomeini's intervention. As the teachings of new historicism suggest, Khomeini could not move beyond his own historical moment. In his response to Hakamizadeh in 1943, Khomeini was bound up with the requirements of the shi'ite Orthodoxy. However, this boundedness did not exclude the possibility that Khomeini was able to alter these contingent processes: By 1979, Khomeini would break with shi'ite Orthodoxy, but *not* with the path laid out in 1943 and analyzed here. His visions in "Unveiling the Secrets" evolved into his theory of the state, the *Mandate of the Jurist*, which has been serving as the legitimate narrative of the Islamic Republic of Iran since 1979. As already expressed, at the advent of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, Khomeini pried himself loose from the ethos of the shi'ite hierocracy and set a radically different structural pattern of power relations. In the moments of societal distress of the Iran's 1979, sociopolitical conditions made people susceptible to an "otherworldly" experience. "All extraordinary needs," Weber (1978) explains, "i.e., those which transcend the sphere of everyday economic routines, have always been satisfied in an entirely heterogeneous manner: on a charismatic basis. The further we go back into history, the more strongly this statement holds" (p. 1111). The absence of a rational democratic discourse bolstered this preexisting

charismatic void. It was Khomeini who filled the void. His innate qualities conditioned by society's predisposition toward a charismatic response, enabled him to exercise and establish a charismatic bond with his followers. Through his agency, Khomeini was able to effectively alter the course of contemporary Iran. Although it might be logical to conclude that, under the leadership of somebody other than Khomeini, the 1979 Islamic Revolution would have inevitably resulted in the formation of a similarly authoritarian structure of domination. However, in Khomeini's absence the social and political organization of that structure would have been very different from the actual Islamic Republic of Iran.

Drawing on an essential tenet of new historicism, I found a powerful interpretive link between the Hakamizadeh/Khomeini exchanges in 1943 and the advent of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Greenblatt (1990) writes, "new historicist critics... have been more interested in unresolved conflict and contradiction than in integration; they are concerned with the margins as with the center; and they have turned from a celebration of achieved aesthetic order to an exploration of the ideological and material bases for the production of this order" (p. 168). In the moments of disintegration of the early 1940's, in his reply to the publication of "Secrets of a Thousand Years", a marginal text by a marginal writer, Khomeini, a marginal cleric, wrote "Unveiling the Secrets", a marginal work, in which he presented a blueprint for a Shi'ite state. In the tormented periods of 1979 and after, under favorable structural bases, this blueprint, woefully ignored by the scrutiny of critical observance, became a central ideological precept for the formation of a shi'ite order in Iran.

Appendix A

Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran: A Conceptual Map

The initial intent of the framers of the constitution was to combine constitutional democracy with Islamic authority in society. Its first draft was modeled on the 1958 constitution of the French Fifth Republic (Amir Arjomand, 2000³⁵). With the incorporation of the Shi'ite vision of authority, however, the final draft was profoundly altered.

As illustrated in the conceptual map, the structure of the Iranian political system is a system of parallel sovereignty with no clear relationship between power and authority. Theoretically, the elements of a modern nation-state are in place: three independent branches of power in charge of running the state. According to the constitutional text, these branches function independently. In practice, however, the check and balance system does not exist. The parliament and the president are the elected bodies. The supreme leader, however, appoints the head of the justice department. Located at the division of Power Spiritual, there are four additional and extra-democratic bodies whose basis of legitimacy, unlike the presidency and parliament, are not popular election but divine mandate: (a) the office of the supreme leader (valy-e faqih); (b) the Guardian Council (shoray-e negahban); (c) the Expediency Council (majam-e tashkhis-e masla-hat); and (d) the Assembly of the Leadership Experts (majles-e khobregan-e rahbari). Several characteristics of this constitutional structure bear mentioning. But first, it should be noted that each arrow in the constitutional chart indicates the direction of domination and superiority.

³⁵ http://www.iranchamber.com/government/articles/civil_society_politics_iran_khatami.php

The Office of the Supreme Leader- Although selected in a non-democratic process, the supreme leader – located in the middle of the map- is the head of the state and representative of the Islamic society. The supreme leader possesses the ultimate power and the authority to dissolve all the state institutions, and rule the country through decrees. Furthermore, the 1989 constitutional amendment raised the authority of the leader to such an absolute power that no modern constitution could match it. The direction of the arrows flowing from the leadership position indicates its supreme authority over the institutions of the Islamic state. It is the responsibility of the Assembly of the Leadership Experts to select the supreme leader.

The Guardian Council- The Guardian Council is arguably the most powerful decision-making body of the state. The main and permanent members of this council consist of six high ranking jurists appointed by the leader. The rights and responsibilities of the Guardian Council include:

- a- The interpretation of the Constitution
- b- To ratify or veto all parliamentary legislations
- c- To approve the qualification of candidates for presidency, parliament, and the Assembly of the Leadership Experts
- d- To supervise elections and sanction the results of voting

Through the above constitutional rights and responsibilities, the Guardian Council has accumulated immense power whose exertion extends from the highest public office to the private lives of the citizens of the country.

The Expediency Council- This Council was created by Khomeini to intervene between the Guardian Council and the Islamic parliament. Initially, its main responsibility

was to determine the fate of any legislative gridlock between the Guardian Council and the Islamic Parliament. Under the rulership of Khamenei, Khomeini's successor, making state macro-policy was added to this institution's responsibilities. This was an indication of the ruling clerical elite's determination to undermine and erode the power of the executive and legislative branches as the elected institutions of the Islamic state. It should be noted that the jurists of the Guardian Council are among the members of the Expediency Council as well.

The Assembly of the Leadership Experts- This assembly consists of eighty-six clerics who are in charge of the selection and supervision of the supreme leader. The members of this assembly are exclusively clerics and the majority of them are elected by direct popular vote. However, the candidates are carefully selected by the Guardian Council to ensure that no voice of dissent against the authority of the "Mandate of the Jurist" could be expressed in this influential institution. The supreme leader appoints a few of them.

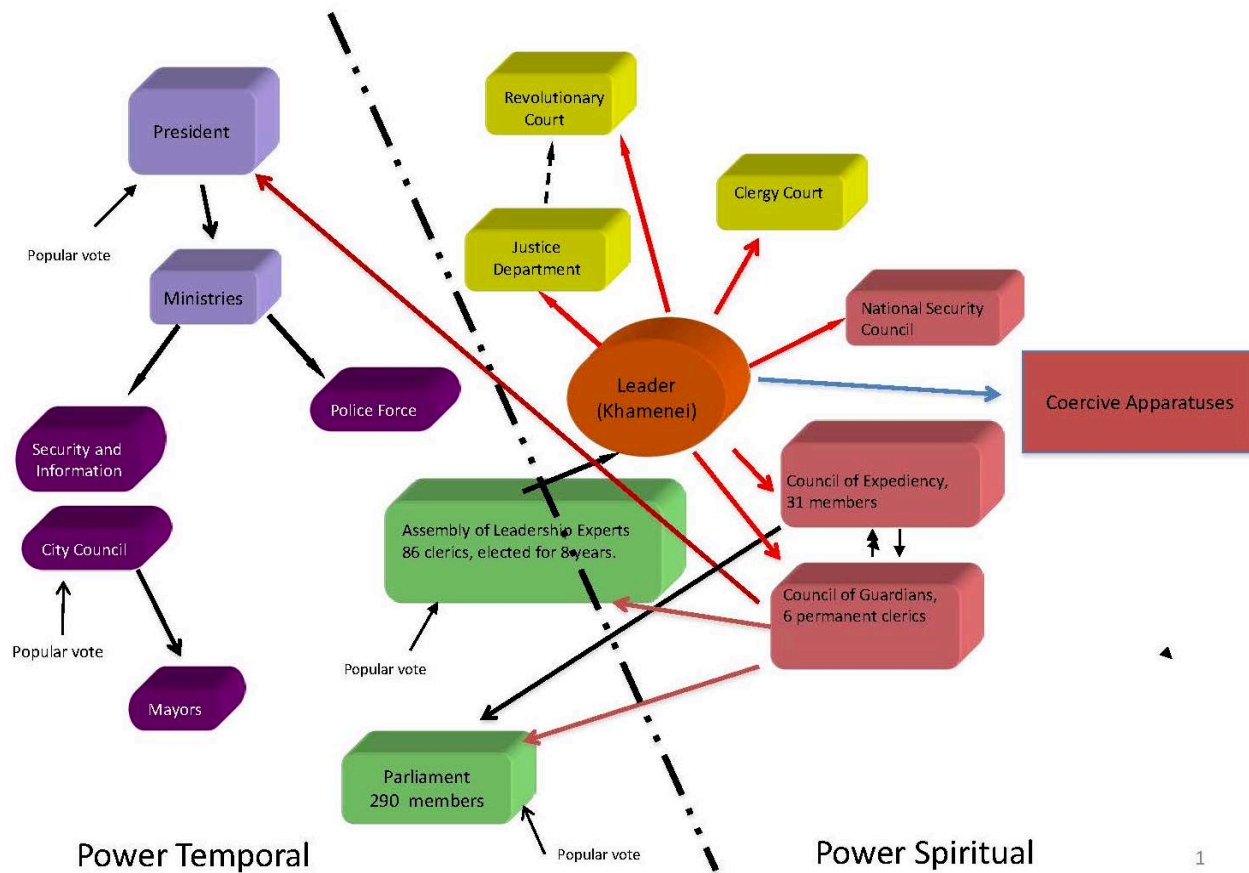
The State Executive Branch- The two legislative and executive bodies subject to popular vote form the other ingredients of this dissonant constitutional composition. As opposed to the "divine" section of the Constitution, popular direct vote constitutes the basis of the legitimacy of the President and Parliament. In the reality of power relation, the two institutions possess marginal authority, thus they represent the democratic façade of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The constitutional map unmistakably displays the duality of power structure in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Power Temporal and Power Spiritual. In the competition for power the Constitutional text stands upon the side of the spiritual dimension. The orientation of arrows in the constitutional map demonstrates the extensive encroachment of the religious upon the temporal. Moreover, each of the extra-democratic institutions that instantiate this

invasion is chaired by a mujtahid, intended to ensure the centrality of the ulama in the determination of knowledge, rules, devotion, and enemies. To be sure, the introduction of the concept of maslahat by Khomeini, as explained before, jeopardizes this power arrangement and has become a source of instability in the balance of power between the two structural elements, namely the state and the hierocracy, in post-Khomeini era of the IRI.

Appendix B

Islamic Republic's Constitutional Chart



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