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Implications of political islam on governance: a case study on Iran

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Abstract

This study examines Iran's historical evolution from the 19th century to the 1979 Islamic Revolution, focusing on the political, social, and religious dynamics that influenced the nation. The transition from the Qajar to Pahlavi Dynasty marked a period of modernization but also spurred discontent, leading to the establishment of an Islamic Republic under Ayatollah Khomeini. The dissertation explores the role of political Islam, notably embodied by Khomeini, in responding to social crises and discontent following the White Revolution. Utilizing a qualitative approach and literature review methodology, this research delves into Iran's historical context, the impact of political Islam on governance.

Key words: Iran, historical evolution, political Islam, 1979 Revolution, political dynamics, Ayatollah Khomeini, khomeinism

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Introduction

From the 19th century to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Iran has passed through numerous transformations and faced various challenges that have shaped its political, social, and religious landscape. The region, since ancient times, had a central importance for the world's politics and economy, and for that reason, it was always a place of dispute between different groups.

The contemporary history of Iran starts with the Qajar Dynasty (1795 - 1925). According to Galerani (2010), in this period, Iran experienced the loss of territorial integrity and influence. And during its last dynasty, Pahlavi (1925 - 1979) the country was marked by rapid modernization, Westernization, and economic growth fueled by oil revenues, but at the same time a great discontent of the population, and disparities within the social groups. This dissatisfaction and the emergence of a new political and religious leader led to the Iranian Revolution in 1979.

The Iranian Revolution of 1979, which overthrew the Pahlavi Dynasty and established an Islamic Republic under Ayatollah Khomeini, brought significant changes in the country's government and society, instilling a renewed sense of national identity and pride, as explained by Messari (2005). The country, which since 1925 had a monarchy type of government, ruled by Shah Pahlavi, turned into an Islamic government, using the Quran and Islam as the foundation for the government.

The Islamic religion, predominantly symbolized by Ayatollah Khomeini, played a significant role in promoting revolutionary movements during the 1970s, as elucidated by Yazdi (2016). From a historical perspective, it can be seen that the Shah's regime had already lost credibility due to the 1953 coup.

Moreover, the 1979 Islamic Revolution, represents a milestone in Iranian history, establishing an Islamic Republic and fundamentally transforming the country's political and social landscape. Galvão (2005) states that this transformation is reflected in the

integration of religious principles and institutions into the state structure, as well as the implementation of Islamic law (Sharia) in various aspects of governance.

It was a response to a social crisis that emerged in the country after the White Revolution, and the dissatisfaction of the largest part of the population with the monarchy policies, introducing to the country a way of ruling that can be classified as "political islam". This phenomenon is not exclusive to Iran but it can also be observed in other Middle Eastern countries like Iraq, Syria, and Egypt.

The use of political islam as a type of government creates a very particular political scenario in the country. The present work delves into the history of Iran's territory, and the many rulers, and dynasties present in the region during history; it will analyze what political islam is, and the implementation of this political model in governments, using Iran as a case study, as well as its governance implications, using as a methodology a qualitative approach, with literature review.

The first chapter covers the historical evolution of the types of governments in Iran, from contemporary history to the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Iran's history is marked by a variety of cultures, dynasties and empires that have shaped the country's identity and influenced its political, social and religious landscape. The chapter offers a comprehensive overview of the main historical periods in contemporary Iran, including the fall of the Qajar dynasty, the Pahlavi dynasty and the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The Second chapter of this dissertation explores the history of Islam as a religion, its emergence in the Middle East, and its expansion into other regions. Furthermore, the section discusses the essence of Political Islam, a term that refers to a diverse range of ideologies, movements and interpretations within the Islamic faith, seeking to establish the principles and values of Islam in the political sphere.

The final chapter analyzes the evolution of post-revolution society in Iran, exploring the dynamics of the new Islamic government, the status of women after social reforms and the redefinition of Iran's foreign relations in the global arena. It sheds light on the interplay between ideology, governance and foreign relations.

Chapter 1: History of Contemporary Iran

This chapter explores the historical evolution of types of governments in Iran, analyzing its transformation from contemporary history to the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The history of Iran is characterized by a diverse range of cultures, dynasties, and empires that have shaped the country's identity and influenced its political, social, and religious landscape. This chapter has the objective of providing a comprehensive overview of the major historical periods in contemporary Iran, including the fall of the Qajars dynasty, the Pahlavi dynasty, and the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

The Qajar dynasty faced internal and external challenges that contributed to its downfall. Internally, the central authority was weak, and pressure from smaller tribes made it difficult for the central government to enforce laws. In addition, corruption in the government undermined its legitimacy and effectiveness. Externally, colonial powers such as Russia and Great Britain exerted significant influence over Iran, exploiting its resources and imposing unequal treaties. This foreign interference undermined the country's sovereignty and provoked discontent among the population. The combination of these factors led to the collapse of the Qajar dynasty and the search for more modern and representative reforms in Iran.

The Pahlavi dynasty (1925 - 1979), was established by Riza Shah Pahlavi in Iran. Riza Shah, was a military officer that seized power and implemented socio-political reforms, with the goal of to modernize Iran and reduce the influence of colonial powers. During this government, many infrastructural and educational advancements were made, and the country experienced relative stability. However, his autocratic style of governance and suppression of political views contrary to his created discontent among the population. Riza Shah's son, Mohammad Riza Pahlavi, succeeded him in 1941. His reign was marked by rapid modernization, Westernization, and economic growth impulsed by the oil market. These policies resulted in huge disparities and discontent among the population, leading to the Iranian Revolution in 1979, that ended with the fall of the Pahlavi Dynasty and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran under Ayatollah Khomeini.

1.1 The Qajars Dynasty, 1795 - 1925

The Qajar dynasty originated from a Turcoman tribe based in northeastern Iran, associated with the Safavid dynasty, and rose to prominence in the 16th century. The Qajar dynasty was founded by Agha Mohammad Khan in 1795, with Ahmad Shah as its last ruler in 1925. By the end of the 18th century, the Qajars had emerged as an important military power in Iran, succeeding the Safavids amid the dominance of a series of Turkish dynasties, especially the Afsharids and the Zand dynasty. During the Qajar era, tensions with the Russian Empire intensified. (Nezam-Mafi, 2012)

Nezam-Mafi (2012) writes that in the brief reign of Agha Mohammad Shah (1795-96), the country was unified after years of civil war, establishing a centralized administration in Tehran. However, his rule was marked by cruelty and war, especially against Russia. Agha Mohammad was assassinated in 1796, leaving his nephew, Fath Ali Shah, as his successor. The second Shah of the Qajar dynasty ruled until 1834. In his period, the royal power was consolidated, the administration centralized and there were significant changes in Iran's foreign relations. He faced challenges, including a war with Russia, resulting in the loss of Caucasian territories and the signing of a peace treaty. The next Shah was Mohammad Shah, who ruled until 1848. Those years were marked by continuous struggles with foreign powers, mainly Britain and Russia. He tried to assert Iranian influence over Herat, leading to a failed siege and subsequent pressure from Britain. Iran eventually signed a peace treaty with Britain in 1841, granting trade privileges similar to those given to Russia. Mohammad Shah also faced internal challenges, including rebellions and the emergence of a new religious movement led by the Bab, which later developed into the Babi movement. His reign ended with his death in 1848, leaving a legacy of conflict and attempts at reform amid external pressures.

As mentioned before, and according to Galerani (2010), the Qajar dynasty managed to consolidate its power under its first Shah rulers, but faced internal challenges, weak central authority and external pressure from colonial powers. Even without the influence of the great European powers, the Qajars found themselves unable to establish a strong, centralized government in Iran, being destabilized by the power of smaller tribes. These tribes often refused to follow the laws established by the central

monarchy, which lacked military power - in fact, the monarchy depended on the militias of these individual tribes, which underlines how little power they really had.

Rashidvash (2011) supports these views, saying that during this period, Russia and Britain continuously exerted significant influence over Iran, exploiting its resources and imposing unequal treaties. This resulted in significant challenges, such as a change in the geopolitical landscape, leading to a loss of territorial integrity and influence, as well as dissatisfaction among the population. Consequently, these factors collectively contributed to the collapse of the Qajar dynasty and the subsequent emergence of modern reforms in Iran.

In the following reigns, after the era of Mohamad Shah, Iran continued to face political, social and economic challenges that profoundly shaped its destiny. As exposed by Nezam-Mafi (2012), during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah (1848-1896), the country faced the continuous and significant influence of Russia and Great Britain, who exploited Iranian resources and imposed unequal treaties. This interference caused great dissatisfaction among the population. Similarly, the reign of Mozaffar al-Din Shah (1896-1906) witnessed attempts at liberalization and modernization, such as the formation of companies and societies and a reduction in police control and press censorship. However, these efforts were hampered by persistent opposition to foreign influence, especially Russian, and government corruption. Both periods culminated in popular uprisings and the search for constitutional reforms, reflecting a desire to limit monarchical power and promote more accountable and representative governance in Iran.

According to Rashidvash (2011), this Western influence had a double effect on Iran: it weakened the fragile ties between the Qajar court and broader society, and it created a common threat for dispersed urban bazaars and religious figures, uniting them into a middle class that had shared thoughts against the government and foreign powers. This class maintained a lasting connection between the mosque and the bazaar dating back to the late nineteenth century. The Western penetration began with military defeats by the Russian and British armies in the early nineteenth century, leading to treaties that shaped Iran's geopolitical landscape. These treaties, along with the

subsequent granting of commercial and diplomatic concessions known as capitulations, initiated the commercial integration of Iran into the world economy. The treaties also set the stage for foreign powers, especially Russia and Britain, to influence Iranian politics and contribute to the perception that foreign hands controlled the country.

During the reign of Mozaffar al-Din Shah (1896-1906), there were attempts at liberalization, such as allowing the formation of companies and societies. However, these efforts were overshadowed by increased opposition to foreign influence, especially Russian, and government corruption, as Ayatollahi (2022) elaborates. After his death, his son Mohammad Ali Shah tried to impose autocratic rule, which sparked revolts and culminated in the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, which restricted the monarch's power.

Abrahamian (1979) argues that the socio-economic impact of the West was arguably crucial in triggering the Constitutional Revolution in Iran. Economic integration united disparate regional economies into a unified national economy, easing traditional tensions between urban communities. This integration fostered the emergence of a middle class, which, feeling threatened by foreign competition and local elites, became a discontented national bourgeoisie. This bourgeoisie, according to the author, influenced by traditional anti-state sentiments among the Shia theologians, eventually became a revolutionary force. In essence, economic transformations precipitated social changes, which in turn catalyzed political changes.

The Qajars' efforts to contain foreign influence through defensive modernization, the sale of concessions and loans proved inadequate, while at the same time government deficits and inflation increased, setting the stage for the conflicts that erupted during the Constitutional Revolution. It is important to note that the main motivation for the Revolution was economic, and the vigorous uprising did not begin directly by demanding constitutionalism. A government decision in Tehran to reduce the price of sugar destabilized the finances of respected merchants, providing the first legitimate reason to rebel against Qajar despotism, as Ayatollahi (2022) points.

Eventually, a parliament was elected, with a constitution based on Belgium's, but with supervision by Islamic law. As outlined by Keddie (1983), the real power remained with the Shah, however, which led to continuous conflict. The revolution escalated when a new shah closed the parliament in 1908, triggering a guerrilla resistance.

Abrahamian (2008) highlights that in June 1908, a coup led by the Shah, with the support of Russian intervention, triggered a tumultuous period marked by martial law, the arrest of parliamentary leaders and the bombing of the Majles building. This upheaval led to a civil war, with the Cossacks taking control of Tehran. In the end, the conflict culminated in the Shah's abdication in July 1910, paving the way for the establishment of a Grand Majles and the election of a provisional government.

This intervention further destabilized the revolutionary scene. According to Keddie (1983), while some groups in society advocated a return to Islamic traditions, others embraced Westernization as a means of resisting foreign domination. Unlike the later revolutions, the theologians' involvement lacked a transformative ideological dimension; their main objective was to secure positions in parliament to contain the Shah's authority. Under the auspices of the new government, sweeping reforms were enacted, including the democratization of the electoral system, the abolition of class and occupational representation and the expansion of suffrage to include all adult males by 1911, as Abrahamian (2008) elucidates.

At the end of the First World War, Iran was in a state close to anarchy, as it had been invaded and disputed by the troops of the various belligerents, resulting in occupation by British and Russian forces (Avery et al., 1991). This period of foreign intervention caused significant economic disorganization in some provinces, characterized by a drop in agricultural production, shortages of basic goods due to the presence of the occupying forces and devastating famines resulting from poor harvests and market manipulation by speculators, supports Galerani (2010).

However, the effects of the war in Iran opened up a unique educational opportunity for its inhabitants. The foreign presence not only expanded the horizons of a generation, but also brought about a remarkable change in perspective compared to previous

generations (Avery et al., 1991). The population was exposed to global events and had direct interactions with foreigners on an expanded scale. This new intellectual awakening in post-war cities created an environment conducive to the acceptance and comprehensive implementation of innovative measures introduced later by Reza Shah, promoting transformative changes.

To conclude, the Qajars tried to modernize Iran, but in a conservative way: devout Shia, they tried to follow the same path as the Ottoman Empire: progress with security. While they modernized their institutions, royalty and army, they kept their traditions with them. The territorial integrity of Qajar Iran was further weakened during the First World War and the invasion of the Ottoman Empire. Four years after the coup d'état in 1921, Riza Shah took power in 1925, forming the Imperial State of Persia, also known as the Pahlevi Dynasty, as mentioned by Abrahamian (1979).

1.2 The Pahlavi dynasty, 1925 - 1979

1.2.1 Riza Shah, 1921 - 1941

During the initial period from 1921 to 1925, which coincided with Riza Khan's attempts to consolidate his power as prime minister and minister of war, the influence of the theologians reached significant levels. This was due not only to Reza Khan's obedient attitude towards them, but also to the resistance of the theologians themselves to the idea of establishing a republic. When Reza Khan gave up his initial intention of establishing a republic, the theologians began to support his struggle for the throne, legitimizing his reign by claiming that his efforts to reunify the country were essential to preserve and defend the interests of Iran and Islam. This dynamic eventually returned the theologians to power and political activity, from which they had withdrawn after the Constitutional Revolution (Faghfoory, 1987).

During the Fourth Majlis (1921-23), as Zirinsky (1992) explains, Riza Khan aligned himself with the moderate members of his party, establishing alliances with leaders such as Prince Firuz and Modarres. He freed political prisoners and reached out to theologians, counting on the support of prominent religious figures. The reformers, sharing Reza's goal of reducing separatist movements, supported the elimination of the Cossack armed forces and the gendarmerie. However, efforts to centralize the government provoked revolts, resulting in military intervention. After the end of the Fourth Majlis, Reza rose to the position of prime minister and subsequently further consolidated his power by becoming commander-in-chief of the armed forces, ousting the Qajar dynasty and establishing his total rule in 1925.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Iranian worldview was shaped by the belief that the country was caught in an inescapable grip created by the competing influences of Britain and Russia, as Avery et al, (1991) point out. The survival of an independent Iran was attributed to the intense rivalry between these powers, which prevented them from direct annexation. However, the danger of an Anglo-Russian settlement became apparent through events such as the 1907 collaboration during the war.

Recognized as the driving force behind the 1921 coup and the visionary behind the new army, Riza Khan began to embody the spirit of national pride and self-assertion characteristic of the post-war generation. This perception solidified among the general public, shaping Reza Khan as a central figure in the nation's narrative, as Avery et al. explain (1991). In his quest for power and authority, Reza Khan surrounded himself with a core of devoted officials, individuals he could trust to carry out his directives. The author goes on to explain that a few days after being appointed Prime Minister, the Shah embarked on a trip to Europe, never to return. With this departure, Riza Khan found himself in the de facto position of ruling the country. Despite holding considerable power, he continued to approach governance with caution, adhering to the established cabinet and parliamentary system as required by law.

This fifth Majlis, which assembled in January 1923, initiated a series of measures which set the stage for the subsequent centralizing programmes of the two Pahlavi rulers. According to Avery et al (1991), the bill for compulsory military service was passed. A money bill granted tax revenues from tea and sugar as well as an income tax for the construction of a projected Trans- Iranian railway. Weights and measures were made uniform throughout the country. The pre-Islamic calendar was resuscitated. Birth certificates were introduced and everyone was required to adopt a European-style family name, Riza Khan choosing that of Pahlavi, redolent of the glories of ancient, pre-Islamic Iran. Qajar titles of nobility were abolished. And the prime minister became Commander-in-Chief.

At the beginning of 1925, Riza Khan saw his personal influence grow, especially after his activities in Khuzistan. In February, the Majlis extended his powers even further. Rumors of the Shah's return from Europe caused a wave of criticism of the royal family. On October 31, 1925, the Majlis voted to depose the Qajar dynasty and met as a Constituent Assembly. Meanwhile, Riza Khan was appointed Head of State. On December 12, 1925, the Majlis voted almost unanimously to crown Riza Khan and his heirs (Costa, 2016).

Riza Shah's vision for Iran sought self-sufficiency and sustainability, with a focus on mobilizing talent and energy for national progress, according to Costa (2016). His policy

of integrating religious minorities and women reflected the aspiration for a modern Iran. Although there were notable advances in women's public life, the civil code introduced by Riza Shah, although celebrated, still maintained some of the old Islamic assumptions about gender.

From 1927, according to Faghfoory (1987), the Iranian government began a series of reforms to modernize the economic, judicial and educational sectors, as well as overhauling the administrative structure. Any clerical opposition to these measures was rigorously repressed. Modernization threatened the power of the theologians, leading the government to act forcefully to prevent the organization of resistance. The process of modernization and secularization brought with it growing criticism of Islam, especially Shiism and what was called "clerical fanaticism". Nationalists saw Islam as a foreign faith imposed on Iran by civilizations considered inferior, such as the Arabs. This resulted in attacks on theologians, who were blamed for corruption and moral degeneration.

From the moment it took power in Tehran, the new regime acted according to its agenda, actively seeking to dismantle the autonomy and feudal authority of the tribal leadership. Its main objective was to subjugate the tribal populations to the direct power of the modernized state and integrate them into sedentary society. This approach marked the beginning of a sustained effort by the regime to establish military and administrative hegemony over the tribes, as pointed out by Cronin (2000). The author also explains that in order to achieve this goal, the regime implemented numerous military operations against various tribal groups, especially in the 1920s. However, these campaigns were limited by the endemic and chronic defects and weaknesses of the army, making the results of the fighting unpredictable at best.

Riza Shah, in his pursuit of modernizing Iran, adopted a confrontational position towards the traditional tribal communities. His rigorous treatment of the tribes, perceived as punitive and unnecessary, served as a stringent test for his troops, highlighting his firm control and unwavering commitment to modernization. The major tribes were in the front line of this approach, facing significant setbacks, and despite some recovery post-Riza Shah's removal, they lost autonomy and political influence. Simultaneously,

the economic consequences, including livestock loss and neglect of potential advancements in animal husbandry, were substantial. Interestingly, these considerations appeared to hold limited weight in Riza Shah's decision-making process (Avery et al., 1991).

For Medeiros (2015), the main opposition to the Riza Shah government's project came from the religious class, which opposed reforms in the mosques and used its economic, cultural and legal power to publicly reject the regime's ideals. In response, the government adopted a secularization agenda to reduce the political influence of the clerics. Britain also demanded secularization as a condition for supporting Khan as ruler, fearing the influence of the clergy and the resistance of the class to Western powers in Iran, which required profound transformations in Iranian society and an ideological discourse that valued the country's non-Shia roots, and reflecting the Western ideal of a secular state.

Khan adopted a nationalist discourse based on pre-Islamic Iranian society and culture, aiming to rescue heroes and symbols from before the cultural domination of the clerics in order to unify Iran around this heritage. The government also encouraged the teaching of the Persian language without Arabic influences and adopted the name of the dynasty, Pahlavi, an old Persian word. This nationalism, according to Medeiros (2015) based on the memory of an ancient civilization, aimed to eliminate ethnic and tribal divisions, creating a single Persian-speaking Iranian people under a centralized state - an integrating ideology that was fundamental to the success of the government's aim.

According to Katousian (2003), by 1928, the Shah's dictatorship was transforming into an autocracy and then into an arbitrary government. During this period, the government still maintained a constitutional structure, with some room for ministerial action and parliamentary debate, which differentiates a dictatorship, even an autocratic one, from an arbitrary government. In 1929, the finance minister was suddenly and inexplicably arrested while leaving a public event alongside the Shah himself. This event was the first alarming sign that no one was immune from arbitrary arrests from then on.

Nonetheless, as pointed out by Avery et al (1991), Riza Shah's regime laid the groundwork for a European-style educational system, although it remained under-funded for a considerable period. As a result, education largely remained a privilege for the wealthy and the emerging middle and professional classes. At the same time, Riza Shah's was responsible for establishing the University of Tehran in 1935, fostering the growth of an indigenously educated Westernized elite and an increasingly articulate youth. This initiative contributed to the development of a locally educated intellectual class, even as the goal of studying abroad remained a prevalent aspiration for most Iranians who could afford it. The expansion of a proficient and partially skilled labor force concentrated in select urban hubs presented novel challenges for a government conceptualizing its role primarily through licenses, controls, and regulatory laws.

1.2.2 Mohammed Reza Pahlevi, 1941 - 1979

Mohammed Reza Pahlevi, according to Ansari (2017), unlike his father, was not content with portraying himself and his dynasty as indispensable to the nationalist program of modernization. He sought to develop a more sophisticated role, associating his leadership with the country's future progress and prosperity. This vision began to gain prominence during his reign, although it was only fully expressed with the launch of the "White Revolution" in 1963. During this period, the Shah faced difficulties in articulating his ideology due to financial constraints and a lack of confidence. The essential crisis of this period remained the question of the legitimacy of the Pahlavi dynasty, aggravated by suspicions of foreign intervention in its restoration to the throne in 1953. The main aim of the Shah's policies was to legitimize his rule and his dynasty, despite internal threats of conspiracies to overthrow him.

After the Second World War, Iran faced a period of geopolitical complexities. As mentioned by Coggiola (2007), in 1941, the country was invaded by British and Soviet troops, leading to the exile of Shah Reza Pahlevi. His son, Mohammed Reza Pahlevi, took the throne in the midst of these transformations. During this period, the Middle East became a central focus in the emergence of the Cold War. The Soviet occupation of Iranian Azerbaijan and failed negotiations over oil concessions increased instability in Iran. However, the Iranian government's crackdown on separatist movements marked the end of this tumultuous period. The growing Soviet political presence in the region led the United States to redefine its foreign policy, marking the beginning of the Cold War. The "Truman Doctrine" of 1947 reflected the US commitment to supporting free peoples against foreign influences, laying the foundations for confrontation between the superpowers.

Coggiola (2007) explains that after the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iran, internal pressures led the new Shah to appoint Mohammed Mossadegh, a nationalist leader close to the Islamic hierarchy, as prime minister. Mossadegh's rule was marked by tensions with the British, leading to a diplomatic rupture and the intervention of the United States, which sought to replace British influence in the region. However, Mossadegh's nationalism quickly revealed its class limitations. Although the popular

movement claimed full democratic freedoms, these were not granted. The Tudeh (communist party), outlawed since 1949, remained banned, maintaining its activities in a semi-clandestine manner. In addition, Mossadegh did not implement land reform and even passed a law banning strikes.

In the 1950s, the monarch adopted a strategy of approaching the clerics and criticizing the privileges granted to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), created by Mossadegh, which provoked repudiation from the population and nationalist leaders, as Costa (2016) states. The political movements of the time, including the nationalization of AIOC in 1951, counted on the active participation of the clerics. Mossadegh's position as prime minister generated support for his policies, but also raised concerns about the secularization of the state among the clerics. The granting of extraordinary powers to Mossadegh, including control over the armed forces, caused distrust among the religious, although the political scenario favorable to the prime minister temporarily silenced religious voices. The developments that led to Mossadegh's loss of political influence were influenced by the fear of secularization of the state and the intervention of the United States, which saw Iran as a region of geopolitical interest.

Despite having lost all his supporters, the prime minister was still popular with the people. In an attempt to demonstrate control over the increasingly unstable situation in the country, Mossadegh ordered the army to withdraw from the streets. However, according to Avery et al. (1991), the next day, August 19, the conspirators launched a coup d'état. During the coup, the prime minister's residence was attacked and ransacked, despite the valiant resistance of his bodyguards. Two days later, Mossadegh, who had been taken to safety by his supporters, surrendered to the new regime. On August 23, the Shah returned from Europe, marking the beginning of a new chapter in Iran's long history of despotism.

In the late spring of 1960, elections were held for the twentieth Majlis, signaling a resurgence of widespread political consciousness. However, the government did not intend to awaken such political awareness by reviving party politics. The voting results revealed a rigged process, with the two official parties conveniently dividing the seats between them. Public expectations had been sufficiently aroused for these results to

provoke widespread indignation. The Shah promptly expressed his displeasure at the way the elections had been conducted (Galerani, 2010).

The author also points out that in the early 1960s, land reform emerged as a crucial issue at the national level, with widespread belief in its potential as a remedy for progress. The debate over land distribution, especially crown lands and large estates, became heated, with criticism from both the right and the left. Although the National Front apparently supported land reform in principle, it criticized the government without offering any substantial alternatives. Avery et al. (1991) also point out that the economy remained in crisis, and the government persisted in its policy of austerity and cuts in government spending. He even demanded substantial reductions in army funding, a measure the Shah was unwilling to accept.

At this moment, Muhammad Riza Shah, who had ruled the country for almost 20 years, initiated the "White Revolution," positioning himself as the ultimate beneficiary of his people's aspirations for material improvement and aligning with American beliefs that reforms were crucial for further modernization.

The White Revolution, as Bill (1970) explains, was a series of reforms launched in 1963 by Shah Mohammad Reza Shah, which came about as a response to growing social dissatisfaction and pressure for political change in the country. The main aim was to modernize Iran and consolidate the Shah's power by strengthening the social classes that supported the traditional system. The reforms addressed several key issues, such as land reform, the sale of state-owned factories, profit-sharing in industry, electoral reform to include women, literacy, health, rural development, justice, among others. Although some progress was made in land distribution and improving education. However, the reforms faced many difficulties. The hesitation of the peasants to trust the government, the lack of infrastructure and the resistance of the middle class to change were some of the obstacles encountered.

The reforms included land reform, the sale of government factories to fund the acquisition of large estates, profit-sharing in industry, the nationalization of forests, a new electoral law incorporating women's suffrage, and the establishment of a Literacy Corps to extend elementary education to rural areas lacking access to the existing state education system. According to Avery et al 1991, The government faced significant opposition, marked by massive anti-plebiscite demonstrations and riots.

Mosque sermons played a crucial role in mobilizing the people against the government, according to Homan (1980), conveying messages of resistance and solidarity. The religious leadership, especially represented by Ayatollah Khomeini, emerged as a powerful and unifying voice of opposition, offering an alternative vision of government based on the principles of political Islam. Sermons in mosques played a crucial role in mobilizing the people against the government, conveying messages of resistance and solidarity. The religious leadership, especially represented by Ayatollah Khomeini, emerged as a powerful and unifying voice of opposition, offering an alternative vision of government based on the principles of political Islam.

During the 1963 protests, which reflected discontent with the new reforms in the country, religious figures emerged in politics for the first time during the reign of Muhammad Reza Shah. In this context, religious leaders stood out as leaders of a broad alliance of regime opponents, some of whom were already known for their opposition to despotism and defense of an Islam that combined progressive and socialist ideals with traditional religious and ethical values (Avery et al., 1991). In addition, the years leading up to the revolution marked a weakening of the figure of Reza Shah. By the 1970s, he was no longer seen as an indispensable barrier against communism on a front that was vulnerable in the eyes of American public opinion. During this period, the rise in oil prices, the perception of extravagant spending by the Iranian government, internal repression, high-level corruption and mismanagement of the country's resources became increasingly evident, undermining the image of an Iranian imperial renaissance.

Consequently, instead of the party achieving the desired political stability, strengthening the monarchy and the position of the Pahlavi in Iranian society, its results were quite the opposite. The party ended up weakening the regime even more, and

bringing about a resentment of the population towards the monarchy, feeding the necessary incentives for the imminent Iranian Revolution. Thus, with the creation of the party, instead of the regime establishing new links with the population, it ended up destroying the ones that already existed and, more than that, in the process it awakened a series of enemies (Galvão 2020).

In the end, the White Revolution did not fully achieve its objectives. Although it introduced some significant reforms, many of them ended up preserving, rather than eradicating, traditional patterns of power. In addition, it contributed to increasing social and political tensions in the country, preparing the ground for the emergence of opposition movements that would eventually lead to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, which overthrew the regime of Shah Mohammad Reza Shah and established the Islamic Republic of Iran (Bill, 1970).

The Shia leadership, especially Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini, who had gained increasing prominence on the national stage, became a focus of attention for Shah Reza, as defined by Costa (2016). Khomeini, part of the "more radical" wing of the Iranian ulema, criticized the reforms initiated by the Shah in 1962, which would become the "White Revolution", especially the way in which financial resources reached the hands of the government. The Shah's government stepped up repression against religious people who opposed the reforms brought about by the White Revolution, and Khomeini was expelled from Iran in 1964. After his exile, the internal movements in Iran lost intensity due to the Shah's repression, which made any kind of mobilization difficult.

The 'White Revolution' led by Shah Reza Pahlavi failed to convert the abundant oil revenues into economic development and well-being for the Iranian people. Meihy (2007) points out that Iran's economic growth benefited the population very little due to two main factors: the government's high military spending and corruption in the monarchical elite. The ambition to turn Iran into a military power has led the government to allocate a quarter of its GDP to the acquisition of foreign armaments.

The recession that hit Iran from 1976 onwards played a crucial role in the Shah's decline in popularity. While the cost of importing consumer goods rose, oil prices on the

international market failed to keep up. As a result, the Shah was forced to reduce investments in industrialization and development, which had previously been boosted by petrodollars from the 1973 shock. This austere economic policy raised questions about the need to buy foreign armaments, especially from the United States. In addition, the increase in corruption among the monarchical elite further aggravated popular dissatisfaction, and the high amount of Shah Reza Pahlavi financial assets represented a problem for the population. Such ostentation and wealth on the part of the imperial family was no longer tolerated by impoverished and oppressed people (Meihy, 2007).

In this way, the revolution of 1979 had two fundamental aspects: removing "American imperialism" and ending the despotism of the Shah, considered to be two sides of the same coin. In this way, the revolution of 1978 and 1979 had two fundamental aspects: removing "American imperialism" and ending the despotism of the Shah, considered to be two sides of the same coin.

1.3 Iranian Revolution

In a short space of time, the changes resulting from the process of westernization implemented by the Shah profoundly altered the lives of the population in Iran, mainly challenging the authority of the Muslim clergy. Progressively, opposition to the monarchical government became increasingly religious, with the aim not just of establishing a republic, but an Islamic one. In the second half of 1978, a singular leader emerged as the main spokesman for the Iranian opposition: Ayatollah Khomeini. According to Meihy (2007), he advocated a return to the roots of Islam, exalting virtue and national identity as a response to the influence of Western technology.

Galerani (2010) supports this thought, saying that the 1979 Islamic Revolution was driven by widespread discontent with the modernizing policies adopted by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Although his secular measures, such as the expansion of women's rights, were seen as progressive by some, they met with strong opposition from the Shiite religious leadership, led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The authoritarianism, sectarianism and violence used by the Shah during the modernization process fuelled resentment among the students. The Shah's foreign policy, characterized by automatic alignment with the US, which frequently interfered in Iran's internal affairs, also generated dissatisfaction, especially among the students. These four social segments - the Shiite clergy, the students, the poorer population and the merchants - formed an opposition coalition which, led by Khomeini, ended up overthrowing the Shah.

Khomeini, in the late 1950s and early 1960s began to raise a series of questions about Iran's domestic and foreign policy. Initially, he raised simple issues, such as the realization of joint activities by boys and girls, and later began to raise more substantive concerns, ranging from land reform legislation to the opening of informal diplomatic relations, as well as economic collaboration with Israel. Khomeini, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as Galvão (2020) states, began to raise a series of questions about Iran's domestic and foreign policy. Initially, he raised simple issues, such as the realization of joint activities by boys and girls, and later he began to raise more substantive concerns,

ranging from land reform legislation to the opening of informal diplomatic relations, as well as economic collaboration with Israel.

Khomeini accused the Shah and the White Revolution referendum of being against Islamic Sharia, claiming that the measures taken by the government were considered pagan and therefore incompatible with Islam. The monarchy came to be seen as a threat to the Islamic faith in Iran. Apart from this, the Ayatollah made accusations of corruption, misappropriation of public funds and enrichment from the undue accumulation of assets. Thus, Khomeini threatened the Shah that he would not remain quiet or silent and that in the face of all these accusations, the government would face strong opposition from the clergy. Khomeini's public demonstrations led to a very violent response from the regime, resulting in the presence of the army on the streets with tanks and heavy weaponry, resulting in the death and injury of hundreds of people. (Galvão, 2020)

A crucial event occurred in January 1978, when an Iranian newspaper published an article offensive to Khomeini, who was still in exile, generating a huge demonstration of popular support for the Ayatollah, according to Bruno (2014). The protests began in Qom and spread across the country, leading to the closure of shops and violent clashes with state repression. The students who died or were injured became martyrs of the Revolution, while the bazaar merchants supported the victims financially, strengthening ties with Khomeini. The Ayatollah also mobilized the network of mosques and promoted an increasingly Islamic revolutionary language, culminating in his move to Paris in October 1978, where he expressed his intention to establish an Islamic government in Iran.

Between October 1977 and February 1978, Iran was the scene of intense popular demonstrations, with approximately 90% of the population mobilizing against the government, as Coggiola (2007) explains. Initially led by students and later by the working class, the protests sought both democratic rights and a more equitable distribution of national wealth. The repression in Qom in January 1978 triggered a general strike in Tehran, which soon spread to other cities. In December 1978, around two million people took to the streets of Tehran to protest against the Shah, while

Khomeini was living in exile in France. At the same time, oil workers went on strike, halting the daily production of 6.5 million barrels.

The author goes on to explain that with the press censored and the absence of active political parties, Iranians sought refuge in the mosques, which became crucial communication centers. The army began to fragment as soldiers refused to repress the demonstrators. The country was facing a serious economic crisis, with billions of dollars being withdrawn from the country. Under pressure from Jimmy Carter, the Shah made political concessions, but it was too late. With the massive support of the population, Khomeini's return to Iran, on February 1st of 1979, marked the end of the imperial regime, with a general strike paralyzing the country in support of the revolution.

During this period, Iran experienced the revolution that abolished the monarchy, dismantled the privileges of the Pahlavi family, and undermined the elite, aiming to weaken the secularized middle class. Khomeini, the primary leader of the revolution, returned from exile in Paris on February 1, 1979, two weeks after the Shah had left the country. According to Galvão (2020), the initial aspirations of the Islamic Revolution were for democracy, freedom of expression, and human rights. However, it also harbored left-leaning ideals, and in the historical context of Iran, this revolution achieved fewer democratic and liberal outcomes than the Constitutional Revolution of 70 years earlier, in 1906.

At the end of 1979, pro-Khomeini militants attacked the US embassy in Tehran, capturing 53 American hostages. This event took place after the cancellation of arms purchase agreements and the oil embargo on the United States in August of that year. According to Coggiola (2007), the hostage-taking was used as an instrument to influence American public opinion, while Iranian students feared an intervention similar to Operation Ajax of 1953, which reinstalled the Shah. In December, a new theocratic constitution was established in Iran, adopting Sharia as official law and guaranteeing representation for religious minorities in the country, although Iranian foreign policy remained hostile to Israel.

The Islamic Revolution therefore became a milestone in the fall of the monarchy in Iran and the beginning of the establishment of a new government structure, the Islamic Government. While before, during the Shah's regime, Iran sought modernization through a strong rapprochement with the United States, after 1979 the country's domestic and foreign policy underwent significant transformations. The way in which Iran would relate to the countries of the Middle East region, as well as the rest of the world, would no longer be the same.

For Messari (2005), the Iranian revolution was made possible through the formation of a diverse coalition, made up of the conservative religious leadership of the Bazaar merchants, the various left-wing movements, including those with Marxist leanings, and active intellectuals representing a variety of perspectives. The joint aim of this coalition was to depose the Shah of Iran.

Chapter 2: Islam and Political Islam

When addressing the complexity of Islam, it is essential to delve into the origins, ideological foundations and evolution of this religion over the centuries. This in-depth understanding not only sheds light on faith as a spiritual practice, but also reveals Islam as a comprehensive system that has left deep marks on societies and even the political sphere.

Islam, finds its roots in the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and has its revelations presented in the Qur'an. The emergence of Islam, dating back to the 7th century in the Arabian Peninsula, was driven by a complex intersection of social, political and economic factors.

Muhammad, represented not only a spiritual prophet but also a political and military leader, and played a crucial role in the initial expansion of Islam. After his death, divisions between Sunni and Shia Muslims emerged, marking a turning point in the historical evolution of Islam. The geographical expansion of the religion, accompanied by the spread of its culture, consolidated Islam as a global religion.

However, over time, ideological divisions have gained prominence, giving rise to the phenomenon known as political Islam. In this context, the Islamic faith is interlaced with political power, manifesting itself in theocratic regimes, such as Iran's government, after the 1979 Revolution. Understanding the historical roots of these divisions and contemporary influences is essential for a critical analysis of the use of political Islam in modern governments.

In this framework, this chapter addresses the phenomenon of political Islam, which seeks to articulate a specific vision of governance based on Islamic principles. The ultimate goal of it is to unify religion and politics by establishing an Islamic structure to govern according to these principles, as it will be discussed next in this section.

This section also discusses Khomeinism, an ideology of political Islam derived from Ayatollah Khomeini, leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979. Khomeinism combines religion and governance, highlighting the supremacy of the learned Islamic jurist over religious and political issues.

2.1 The Islamic religion

Islam is Abrahamic and monotheistic religion, with its foundational text being the Quran, written based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, who is considered by Muslims to be the last prophet. Islam means "submission." A Muslim is someone who submits to the will of God (Allah). Muslims believe in the existence of a single God and recognize Muhammad as His Prophet. The religion follows the Quran, holy book that they believed to have been revealed to Muhammad through the Angel Gabriel between 610 CE and 632 CE (Campos & Salles, 2017).

Muslims follow five pillars in the religion (Ferreira, 2013): Shahada, that involves believing in only one God (Allah) and in Muhammad as the last prophet; Salat, that is the five daily prayers; Sawm, fasting during the month of Ramadan; Zakat, a form of Muslim tithe; and Hajj, a pilgrimage to Mecca, that should be done at least once in a lifetime by those who are healthy and financially able. These pillars are the Sharia.

According to Nasser (2005), Sharia is the Islamic law. This Law is not limited to the legal sphere, but comprises a set of revealed norms and guidelines that guide Muslims and their communities on the way forward. In this broad conception, sharia regulates, in the first place, the relationship between the believer and his creator (ibâda), imposing on the Muslim the obligations of worship, known as the pillars of faith.

Aligned to this view, Bostanji (2005) says that the Sharia is directed at every Muslim and, consequently, every human being, who is called to recognize revelation and submit to God, as well as being directed at the community of believers, wherever they may be. If there is a government that declares itself Islamic, it must apply the rules of the Sharia in its relations with its subjects and with other governments, and ensure that they are obeyed by those who live under its rule. This represents a universal normative order, a call to men to develop the means and institutions to make it applicable and effective. It is primarily a normative order inseparable from the faith and set of beliefs of many human beings, who, at least in theory, should prioritize their loyalty to it over any other social or political bond.

Despite all Muslims following the same principles, their organization is not homogeneous. After the death of Prophet Muhammad, Muslims divided into two main branches: Sunni Muslims, who believe that the prophet did not leave a specific heir, and Shia Muslims, who believe that the descendants of Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law, are the rightful heirs (Lanne, 2013).

Sunni Muslims constitute the vast majority of the Muslim population worldwide, with Shia Muslims accounting for only 10% of the total, as mentioned by Campos & Salles (2017). Between 68% to 80% of Shia Muslims live in countries like: Iran, Pakistan, India, and Iraq (Pew Research Center, 2009). According to the Pew Research Center's study on Mapping the Global Muslim Population, from October 2009, Iran has a 99.4% of muslim world population, and 66 million to 70 million Shias, or 37-40% of the world's total Shia population.

As stated by Coggiola (2007), followers of the Shiite branch of Islam believe that all divine messages were transmitted by Mohammed and are recorded in the Quran. The Shiites, predominantly concentrated in Iraq and Iran, hold the belief that the leader of Islam must be a descendant of Ali, one of the first caliphs who succeeded Mohammed, who, according to their faith, is "hidden" in a plane of existence beyond this world.

2.1.1 The Emergence of Islam

In the 7th century, the Arabian peninsula had two major powers: Persia and the Byzantine Empire (which had been established in 330 BC after the division of the Roman Empire, with its capital being Constantinople, now Istanbul). As stated by Demant (2013), the emergence of Islam took advantage of the persecution of the Monophysites, considered heretics by Christianity, who believed in the divine nature of Jesus. When Islam emerged in the so-called Fertile Crescent - a region shaped like a crescent, located between the eastern coast of the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf - it used the frustration and dissatisfaction of those persecuted, ethnically closer to the Arabs than the Byzantines.

As claimed by Lanne, 2013, among these religious upheavals, the Byzantine Empire was losing strength and territory, while the Persian Empire was consolidating. Wars disrupted the Silk Road, used by traders to travel from China to the Mediterranean world. As an alternative, traders created a new route connecting the Red Sea to Persia, benefiting the city of Mecca (Demant, 2013). In addition to the profits from trade, the elite protected the spiritual monument, the Kaaba, which brought significant revenue from visitation tributes.

At that time, Arabs, now a term used for any people or person born in the Middle East, were the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula, speaking the Arabic language. It was a desert region between Asia and Africa, with the majority of the population being nomadic Bedouins, but also featuring small civilizations and urban centers.

It was within one of these bedouin clans, that Muhammad, was born in 570 AD. It was after the age of 40 that Muhammad began to have visions and hear voices, which he believed to be the archangel Gabriel revealing the words of God. The messages spoke of a single, omnipotent God whom all humans should submit to and worship. Hence the name of the religion, as Islam means submission.

Muhammad initiated the public preaching in 613 AD. However, the Quran (recitation), a compilation of all the revelations given to Muhammad, would only receive its definitive version thirty years after his death (Demant, 2013).

In 622 AD, Muhammad and his followers fled to a city more open to their messages, Yathrib, later named Medina. The escape became known as hijra and marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar. In the beginning, they faced resistance in the city, but they were overcome by the military superiority of their followers. This is how Medina became the first city to be governed solely by Islamic laws. According to Ferreira (2013), those defeated by this army were either expelled, exterminated, or converted, while the new believers pledged to wage a war of expansion for Islam. Consequently, most tribes were integrated into the Muslim community.

In this way, Muhammad transitioned from being a prophet to a religious, political, and military leader. His growing power attracted more and more followers who allied with him and the new religion. Shortly before his death, the Prophet even made a pilgrimage to Mecca, henceforth dedicated to the one God. By the time of Muhammad's death, the Hijaz and most of Central Arabia were already in Muslim hands (Demant, 2013).

According to Khaldun cited by Lanne (2013), it is the sense of group belonging that connected all members of a tribe. Thus, when this feeling does not originate from blood ties but rather religious ones, Arab society undergoes significant change. Therefore, the identity of the tribe is not built by all members of the city - nomads and sedentary alike - but rather by those belonging to the same tribe. In this regard, we suggest understanding the relationship between the Quraysh, Muhammad's tribe residing in Mecca, and the problems created by the Prophet with the Jewish tribes when he began to govern Medina (Lanne, 2013).

The Prophet built a social and political unity based on the union between Arab ethnicity and Islamic values, creating a society above social tensions (Lanne, 2013).

However, after his death, doubts arose about his succession since Muhammad had not declared to whom power would be passed. Thus, the major existing forces began to vie for this right. Two names came to the forefront: Abu Bakr, Omar, and Abu Abaida. Still, the council of elders, the Shura, chose Abu Bakr by consensus (Lanne, 2013). Abu Bakr then declared himself Khalifat Rasul Allah ("successor of the messenger of God"),

and thus began the Caliphate. In this way, the caliph possessed, like Muhammad, both political and religious leadership.

After the Battle of Yamama, where many Muslims were killed, there arose the need to preserve Muhammad's teachings for posterity. Since many of those killed in battle were "carriers of the Quran," fearing the loss of these carriers and the diminishing number of those who bore the prophet's word, the leaders initiated the safeguarding of the entire written source. They also sought approval for the form of this document compiled by the authority of existing readers and all companions of the Prophet, each of whom separately knew specific parts of the Quran (Nasr, 1972).

2.1.2 The Expansion of Islam

The religion and Arabic language began to dominate a significant part of the globe in accordance with the geographical conquests of the time. The political state of the Arab Empire was established in conjunction with the religion. Thus, based on the Quran, peoples in the region were unified, and Islamic culture and religion began to spread worldwide.

The most time-consuming process was the conversion of the population. It occurred over centuries through incentive measures such as the payment of differentiated tributes. It wasn't until the 10th and 11th centuries that the majority of the population converted to Islam. Initially, the majority of Muslims were of Arab origin, but from the 8th century onwards, this scenario reversed, and the majority of the population became composed of Muslims of diverse ethnicities (Lannes, 2013).

After the end of the caliphate in 661, Islam underwent a process of expansion. Regions not yet conquered, such as Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, and Cyrenaica, were incorporated into the territory. According to Zaia (2006), the first territorial conquests occurred in Syria, in the city of Damascus. Subsequently, they conquered Jerusalem, Persia, and finally, Alexandria in Egypt.

With the expansion, many non-Arab peoples began to come into contact with the religion. As explained by Costa (2016), the number of Islam followers grew in tandem with the expansion of the Arab Empire. It was during this period that some specific groups began to fragment and possess religious differences. Around 653 AD, there were two caliphs. Uthman Ibn Affan conquered all of Persia and Egypt, and Ali Ibn Talib emerged with another religious line, the Shia.

In 661 AD, the capital of Islam shifted from Medina to Damascus, Syria. According to Carneiro (2013), the Umayyad dynasty promoted a shift in the Islamic political center, leading to a new expansion into the Iberian Peninsula. However, not everyone converted to the Islamic religion. Many, still Christians, adopted the Arabic language and culture but not the religion.

In Asia, the Arabs penetrated between 711 AD and 713 AD. During this conquest, the local Buddhist and Hindu population was not discriminated against, receiving the same treatment given to dhimmis (People of the Book), as was customary for Jews and Christians. This marked the first entry of Islam into India (Zaia, 2006).

According to Zaia (2006), the Abbasid dynasty was responsible for shifting the empire's center from Baghdad, turning it into an intellectual, political, and cultural centre. The fusion of Persian, Syrian, and Indian cultures gave the city an extensive cultural and philosophical range.

It is estimated that there are a total of 1.6 billion Muslims in the world, according to a Pew Research Center survey. This makes Islam currently the second-largest religion in the world in terms of followers. The majority of Muslims are not Arabs (only 20% of Muslims are native to Arab countries). The largest Muslim population in the world is in Indonesia (Coggiola, 2007).

In this case, there is no talk of political expansion with a connotation of territorial domination but rather of cultural presence, causing a sociopolitical impact. Arab immigration in Western Europe does not follow any model. According to Zaia (2006), there are no historical precedents for Muslims living under non-Muslim regimes.

However, younger generations end up presenting a more pronounced Islamic identity, a sociopolitical identity that emerges and manifests particularly when the Arab world is involved in high-tension or conflict situations. In other words, the Islamic identity of these younger generations is determined not by a claim of ethnic-religious affiliation but by the occurrence of external circumstances (Carneiro, 2013).

Even though military expansions do not exist today, we can understand how the historical-political context of countries influenced their way of interpreting the world. Moreover, it is possible to identify the significant expansion of a previously unknown religion and language in history, which now has a global reach.

2.2 Defining Political Islam

Political Islam is a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses Islamic political movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Hezbollah and Jamaat-e-Islami. Each of these movements articulates a distinct vision of governance and social organization based on Islamic principles. The ultimate goal of political Islam is to unify religion and politics, aspiring to establish an Islamic structure that governs political structures according to Islamic principles.

A definition of Political Islam could be: "a form of instrumentalization of the religion by individuals, groups and organizations that have political objectives. According to this definition, Islam provides political responses to the challenges of contemporary society, based on fundamentals articulated and reappropriated from the Islamic tradition" (Brancoli, 2014, p. 152).

On a broader scale, advocates of political Islam believe that Islam, as a body of faith, has something important to say about how politics and society should be ordered in the contemporary Muslim world and implemented in some way (Lo, 2019). This sentiment can be observed in various groups, with the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah actively advocating the integration of the Islamic faith into the political arena.

The main functions of this ideology, as mentioned by Coggiola (2007) would be: the definition of a collective identity, outlining what a people or community stands for as well as what does not identify them; the presentation of a historical narrative considered legitimate, which encompasses both heroic acts and betrayals and oppressions; the promotion of an ethic of struggle and sacrifice; and the establishment of a model for the construction of a new social order, based on a set of principles designed to justify the suppression of power by those who challenge this new order.

Lo (2019) also argues that the supremacy of the value of absolute justice in political Islam is put at risk, and its defenders often face unexpected crises of political relevance. However, it is worth noting that the adoption of Islam by various societies around the world has generated a variety of interpretations of the faith. Despite these

differences, there seems to be one constant in Muslim societies: the value of justice. This is also a defining value for modern militant groups that claim leadership of Islam.

A definition of political Islam has emerged, characterizing it as a form of instrumentalisation of Islam by individuals, groups and organizations pursuing political objectives. It provides political answers to current social challenges by imagining a future whose foundations are based on re-appropriated and reinvented concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition (Brancoli, 2014). This conceptualisation highlights the adaptability of political Islam, as it has the capacity to readapt its Islamic concepts to contemporary challenges.

There are two distinct approaches to the Islamization of a society, each with its own strategies and objectives, as stated by Messari (2005). The first is known as "Islamization from below", which emphasizes the need to convert society at its base. From this perspective, gaining control of the state would not be effective if the population was not completely converted to Islam. Thus, the focus is on the spread and acceptance of the Islamic faith among ordinary people.

On the other hand, still in the author's perspective, there is "Islamization from above", which focuses on taking control of the state apparatus. This can be achieved by democratic means, such as voting, or through a revolution. Once in power, the aim is to impose the sharia, Islamic law, through legislation and establish a monopoly on the use of violence by the state to ensure its implementation. In this approach, change begins at the top of the political hierarchy and spreads downwards, influencing the whole of society.

In the approach of "Islamization from above", Messari (2005) highlights the need for the government to ensure its legitimacy among the people, which drives a reformist trend. This trend resulted in a broadening of government support among the population, attracting not only members of the middle class - educated but dissatisfied with the lack of personal and national prospects in the Muslim context - but also segments of the working classes, as well as parts of the intellectual and financial elites. The Iranian revolution is cited by the author as an example of this second generation of Islamic

activism, in which the owners of the Bazaar, traditional wealthy merchants, were among the participants in the movement that transformed Iran into an Islamic republic.

The Shia branch of Islam argues that only the Quran is a legitimate source for understanding the Muslim religion, basing their conviction on the principle that Islam is Deen wa Dawla (a faith and a state). According to Costa (2016), for these individuals, the Quran is the reference for all issues facing society, including civil and political aspects. Consequently, they turn to the Quran to discuss everything from issues such as polygamy and alcohol consumption to issues such as relations with non-Muslims and taxation.

As Ayooob (2006) explains, the intersection between religion and politics is not exclusive to Islam. Similar dynamics can be seen in Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. Political Islam expresses itself in different ways, even within the same country. Traditional Salafist groups, for example, distance themselves from the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, both in the Middle East and in Southeast Asia. In Pakistan, Jamaat-i-Islami is involved in an ongoing ideological struggle with ulema-based parties such as Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam and Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Pakistan.

The author goes on to explain that political Islam is not characterized as a unilateral phenomenon, presenting itself in different forms, even in countries where various groups fight each other. Factors intrinsic to Islam, including the use of a language that resonates with the masses, contribute to its popularity. However, external factors, such as the authoritarian and repressive nature of regimes, play an even more significant role in granting political Islam legitimacy and credibility. Its evolution and impact are influenced by a complex interaction of historical, cultural and political factors, both internal and external. (Ayooob, 2016)

2.3 The arising of political islam

The emergence of political Islam has its roots in the post-colonial era, when Islamic thinkers and activists sought to deal with the challenges posed by colonialism and its impact on Muslim societies. However, it was towards the end of the 20th century that political Islam gained significant notoriety, catalyzed by socio-political factors such as the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. These events triggered a new wave of Islamic revivalism and politicization, solidifying the concept of political Islam as a formidable force, mainly concentrated in the Middle East (Simbar, 2009).

In the history of the Middle East, after the Ottoman Empire's defeat by an Arab uprising and British forces in 1918, the region suffered great changings. This period witnessed a perceived betrayal by British and French governments, evidenced by the Sykes–Picot Agreement, a treaty to partition the region and to define the borders (History of the Middle East 2022).

The 20th century marked the fight for independence and liberation in the Middle East, starting in the The First Revolution in Egypt, led by Saad Zaghloul in 1919, that highlighted the tensions between colonial powers and anti-colonial sentiments. The eventual creation of the nominally independent Kingdom of Egypt in 1922 reflected a complex process shaped by external influences (History of the Middle East, 2022).

By the 1970s, all of the countries in the Middle East region had declared national independence from colonial powers. However, a new force emerged, characterized by the 'coercion of modernism and westernization' (Soherwordi, 2013). This period witnessed a shift from colonial aggression to a religious influence, impacting the political, social, economic, and cultural landscape of the region.

The 1970s witnessed a period of global economic stagnation and geopolitical tensions, with the Middle East uniquely influenced by the Arab-Israeli conflict. As highlighted by Soherwordi (2013), the era was marked by oil embargoes, the failure of

international liberalization, and excessive military spending, exacerbating wealth disparities. In this context, the cry that 'Islam is the answer' reverberated, becoming a rallying point for those who believed in establishing governments based on Qur'anic principles. The young educated middle class, facing unemployment in a society unprepared for their skills, found solace in Islam as a response to the challenges of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Simbar (2009) also highlights the transformation of the geopolitical map of West Asia with the emergence of Muslim republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The birth of five new Central Asian republics, along with Azerbaijan in the Caucasus, signifies a quantitative growth in the number of independent Muslim states operating in the international system. Although these states may not align with the classic definition of Muslim states dominated by Islamic culture, their existence contributes to the geographical expansion of the Muslim world. Simbar notes that the addition of these six Islamic states, with 70 million people, will probably affect the direction and policies adopted by the established Muslim states.

Moreover, Simbar (2009) categorizes Muslim economies into two types: surviving economies, predominant in much of Muslim Africa, and stagnant or underperforming economies, characteristic of some countries in the Arab world. The latter, made up of more than a dozen Muslim states, face challenges related to the deficiency of natural resources or the inability to respond to global pressures in the increasingly interconnected international system.

Muslims' religious consciousness and self-perception have undergone significant transformations since the 1960s. According to Costa (2016), the observance of ritual law, which once defined what it was to be a Muslim, has expanded to include a deeper involvement in political and international affairs. Islam's international political influence can be traced back over the last seven decades, particularly evident in the post-World War II era, when Islam played a role in various anti-colonial struggles as a tool of indigenous nationalism. Notable cases of Islam's involvement in political conflicts emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, most notably during the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and the ramifications of Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran, with its declaration of managing the country based on Islamic principles and pursuing a policy of non-alignment, served as a turning point in the Islamic World. The seizure of the U.S. embassy further strained Iran's relations with the West, marking a pivotal moment that reverberated through the region (Brancoli, 2014).

In conclusion, the multifaceted nature of political Islam reflects its dynamic evolution over time, influenced by historical events, socio-political dynamics, and economic factors. The shifts in Muslim economies, geopolitical landscapes, and the global perception of Islam highlight the complex interplay between religion and politics, shaping the contemporary Muslim world.

2.4 Khomeinism

Khomeinism is a specific strand of political Islam, being an ideology and system of governance derived from the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. While political Islam, in its broadness, articulates various visions of governance based on Islamic principles, Khomeinism stands out as a particular strand, notable for the introduction of the concept of *velayat-e faqih*, giving an Islamic jurist supremacy over religious and political issues, which will be explained in this section. Khomeinism is a Shiite Islamic ideology that combines religion and governance, centered on the principle of *velayat-e faqih*, which gives a learned Islamic jurist supreme authority over religious and political matters. This ideology, according to Ayatollahi (2022), challenged the tradition, gained prominence in the 1960s and has predominated since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

As referred by Tayebipour (2023), Khomeini devoted his life to the study of the Quran, and his evolution into an Islamist ideology was significantly influenced by events such as the Shah's reform initiatives (1961–1963) and the demise of Borujerdi in 1961. His activism arose in the 1940s, when he criticized the Pahlavi government in a book about Islam and government. His experiences, including the death of his father and interactions with Shia clerics, influenced his views. In the 1960s and 1970s, Khomeini, leading a faction of activists, opposed the Shah's regime, gaining support from the lower classes and bazaar merchants.

The author also points out that Khomeini's intervention advocated a union between the political and religious systems, arguing that only together could they guarantee independence, justice, freedom, reform and rights. As well as having a clear plan for the success of the revolution, Khomeini also advocated for an ideal system of government, under the supervision of Islamic law jurists (*Faqih*) and based on majority voting (Yazdi, 2016).

The already tense relationship between the Shah and the ulama worsened after the state attacked the Fayziya Seminary in Qom in response to the 1963 referendum that ratified the White Revolution. Khomeini issued a strong message, denouncing the

danger to Islamic principles and banning taqiyah - the practice of concealing one's belief and renouncing normal religious duties when threatened (Gheissari & Nasr, 2006).

Yazdi (2016) also points out that Khomeinism, based on the interpretation of Ayatullah Khomeini, is based on four essential elements: Islam is considered the best guide for governing society and establishing a state, with religious leaders being seen as the most qualified to lead; The law is seen as the basis for social and international relations; The empowerment of the people is emphasized, with the active participation of the population in choosing leaders and overseeing the government being considered crucial for the legitimacy of the state; International hegemony is seen as an obstacle to freedom and independence, with Khomeini arguing that puppet regimes supported by foreign powers have hindered the autonomous development of Islamic countries, especially Iran.

Khomeini's formulation represented an innovation in Shia political thought (Ayatollahi, 2022). In the traditional Shia political view, the goal of the ulama (theologian versed in law and religion) was to protect the interests of the Shia religion; to achieve this, they would advise and exhort the rulers, but their goal was not served by ruling directly. As well as not serving their purpose, ruling was undesirable because it was not possible to establish a just government. For according to the messianic doctrines of Shiism, the Hidden Imam will return at the end of time to establish a just government; until then, the ulama should only seek to protect and propagate Shiite values.

According to Khomeini, the affairs of state should be based on the precepts of Islamic law and should therefore indeed be managed by those who are most knowledgeable about Islamic law - the ulama (Gheissari, & Nasr, 2006). Khomeini's ideology was also the counterpoint to the type of state that secular and constitutionalist Iranians had advocated in the 1906-1925 and 1941-1954 periods, and also in liberal democratic circles throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Khomeini was arrested in 1963 and again in 1964. In the 1970s, Khomeini formulated the "The Shah must go" campaign, emerging as the main political opponent of the Shah's regime. The Shah, alarmed by Khomeini's activities in Iraq, formally

requested Khomeini's expulsion by the Iraqi government in September 1978. Complying with the Shah's directive, the Baathist regime expelled Khomeini, prompting him to move to France (Tayebipour, 2023). In France, Khomeini enjoyed greater freedom, enabling him to communicate directly with the Iranian people and intensifying the opposition's momentum. Finally, in 1979, Khomeini returned to Iran, and instituted a new political order, emphasizing the centrality of velayat-e faqih.

Velayat-e faqih, the Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist, is a concept created by Khomeini, that can be traced to Ancient Greek philosophy. Thiessen (2009) suggests that the concept of velayat-e faqih can be likened to Plato's Republic, advocating for a wise and virtuous leader who guides the community towards its collective improvement. Within Islamic tradition, individual fulfillment is believed to be achievable only within a society dedicated to a lofty common purpose. The leader must not only excel in wisdom but also demonstrate moral superiority. A notable distinction between the two lies in the source of limitations: whereas Plato's leader is constrained by objective truth, in the Islamic context, restrictions stem solely from divine law, namely the shari'a.

Meaning that, the Supreme Leader has duties that include determining the interests of Islam, defining general guidelines for the Islamic Republic, supervising the implementation of policy and mediating relations between the executive, legislature and judiciary, according to Munareto (2016).

Another important point to mention is that, according to Munareto (2016) Islam has always been intrinsically linked to politics, from the earliest years of its existence with the Prophet Muhammad. The religion, since its foundation, has involved religious leaders in political roles, culminating in the idea of velayat-e faqih, expressed by Khomeini as a tradition of combined political and religious authority over the Muslim community (ummah).

The fundamental principles of Khomeinism include hostility towards the West, especially the United States, often referred to as the "Great Satan", according to Ferreira (2020). Khomeini's vision extended beyond Iran, framing the Islamic Revolution as a global movement to liberate oppressed Muslims from colonialist powers. This ideological

basis is embodied in Iran's constitution, emphasizing the defense of the rights of Muslims throughout the world. Khomeini actively called for the export of the revolution on a global scale, and his regime engaged in activities through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to support proxies and sympathetic partners in the region.

Khomeini advocated a change in government structure, claiming that the monarchy was incompatible with Islam. From Khomeini's perspective, the intoxication caused by Western ideas represented the greatest danger to Iran (Ferreira, 2020). The Wilayat-al Faqih government proposed by Khomeini argues that the primary moral foundation is Islamic, and its laws are predetermined by God, established in the Qur'an by the Prophet Muhammad. He states that, according to Islamic Sharia, the law was established to create the state and manage the political, economic and cultural affairs of society (Ferreira, 2020).

Furthermore, it is clear to say that political islam "should not be read as a rejection of the idea of the nation-state, but it seeks to run a nation-state according to Islamic rules and under the supervision of an Islamic jurist: faqih." (Tayebipour, 2022)

To conclude this chapter, it can be seen that Islam has always been intrinsically linked to politics since its emergence, where religion has not only addressed spiritual issues, but also outlined a comprehensive political and social system. This relationship between politics and religion can be seen again in the ideology of Khomeinism, a contemporary manifestation of this interconnection, where Ayatollah Khomeini sought to establish a government based on Islamic principles after the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

To understand Islam in its complexity, it is essential to explore its origins, ideological foundations and evolution over the centuries. From the emergence of the Prophet Muhammad to contemporary ideological divisions, Islam has been not only a spiritual faith, but also a comprehensive political and social system.

Political Islam, exemplified by Khomeinism in Iran, stands out as a contemporary manifestation of this intersection between religion and politics. By unifying Islamic principles with governance, it seeks to establish regimes based on Islamic law, reflecting a political tradition that goes back to the very beginnings of the religion.

Chapter 3: The case of Iran: religious influence in society, governance, and external Relations

The Islamic Revolution of 1979, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, marked a turning point in Iranian history, as it established an Islamic Republic and fundamentally transformed the country's political and social fabric. This transformation can be seen in the integration of religious principles and institutions into the state structure, as well as the implementation of Islamic law in various aspects of governance.

The government of Iran follows the Sharia, which is the legal system of Islam, and has as the foundation of the government's ideology on the religion. The Iranian government is in the framework of political islam, since it unites theocratic elements and republican features. The Supreme Leader, who is the highest authority in the country, holds significant power and is considered the religious and political leader of the Islamic Republic. The clergy and religious institutions play a crucial role in the government, with clerics playing prominent roles in key positions such as the judiciary and religious councils. This intertwining of religion and politics has led to the implementation of policies and laws based on Islamic principles.

This chapter analyzes the complex evolution of post-revolution Iranian society, exploring the intricate dynamics of the new Islamic government, the status of women in the wake of social reforms and the redefinition of Iran's foreign relations in the global arena, shedding light on the interaction between ideology, governance and external relations.

3.1 A new Iranian society

The Islamic Revolution brought fundamental changes in Iran's social structures, especially in the composition of its political elite, with the replacement of a secular elite by an elite whose members largely had religious roots (Rakel, 2008). The post-revolutionary Iranian political elite established a new constitution which, on the one hand, presented a semi-theocratic government based on the *velayat-e faqih* principle, and on the other, had characteristics of a modern state, whose institutions found their origins in the 1906 constitution - the very name of the new political system, the Islamic Republic of Iran, reflected its contradictory character and represented the effort to combine republicanism with Islamic ideals (Hunter, 2010).

The new Constitution of 1979 announced a new order and a new way of thinking based on religious ideology; it also presented the new political and social rules of the regime and built a new identity. Just as the Islamic elites had intended, the new Constitution conceived Islam as a total system, where its values should guide all aspects of society and all laws (Munareto, 2016).

After the overthrow of the Shah, who went into exile, a provisional government was set up. With the end of the revolution, there were many violent clashes in the country during the revolutionary movement was declared victorious on February 1, 1979. From that moment the measures taken by the revolutionaries aimed to reorganize and strengthen the country's political bases in order to continue with the numerous reforms and transformations demanded. (Bruno, 2014)

Following the consolidation of the new political regime in Iran, the elites undertook a gradual process of Islamization of society in order to establish an identification between the state and the population. As elucidated by Munareto (2016), Islam should be present in all sectors and so, at the beginning of 1980, a cultural revolution was launched, with the total transformation of the education system, from universities to pre-school, with the aim of producing citizens forged on the basis of Islamic principles. In this same period, the wearing of the veil for women became compulsory, characterized as a drastic measure in order to establish a post-revolutionary Iranian religious identity.

In this new society that was being created, there is a deep interconnection between religion and social life, where laws and norms are shaped by Islamic jurisprudence and permeate all aspects of daily life. Bijjos (2020) supports this connection saying that life in Islamic society has no rules other than those of its religion, of which Muslim law is an integral part. According to the author, this is why Muslim law has not aged and remains one of the largest systems in the modern world, regulating the relations of just over five hundred million Muslims.

In addition to these aspects, according to Munareto (2016) freedom of the press was ended and it was declared the responsibility of the media to prevent the spread of anti-Islamic sentiments and to promote the construction of a model Islamic society; any advertising that was not in accordance with Islamic principles was prohibited. The economy was also affected, as the Revolution itself aimed to eradicate Iran's political, cultural and economic dependence, rejecting colonialism and foreign influence.

The new provisional government had the aim of transferring power, organizing a referendum on regime change, and preparing the constituent assembly and elections for the new parliament. This government was made up of representatives of the middle class, who worked together with the religious groups and, as pointed out by Gheissari, Nasr, (2006), at the same time, the Islamic Republic Party was created, composed mainly of men close to Khomeini, whose aim was to establish a theocracy in the country. In March 1979, a national referendum was held. It confirmed, with 98.2% of the vote, the replacement of the monarchy with an Islamic Republic. In August, a constituent assembly was elected to draft the new constitution, based on Islamic law.

The elections represented the establishment of a new regime that would be based on khomeinism ideals. The pro-Khomeini Islamic Revolutionary Party won the majority of votes, enabling it to largely shape the country's institutions. Thus, a new regime was established which, in turn, would be a mixture of theocracy with democratic features, in other words, in a way that reflected Khomeini's theory (Galvão 2019)

The clear objective of the new government was to Islamizing society, through the Khomeinist clergy. According to Bruno, 2014, for this aim, komitehs were created -

committees for the salvation of the people of Iran, mostly based in the mosques themselves. These committees had the objective of controlling the actions of the new government and civil society, undermining any activity not approved by the religious. All those involved in political activities not linked to the religious, or not linked to Islam, were eliminated through firing squads and prisons. As a result, the leaders of the Islamic Republican Party and the leaders of the Iranian Communist Party - called Toudeh - were assassinated in a campaign that became known as the "annihilation of the left".

In the year that followed the revolution, Iran was invaded by the Iraqi army, led by Saddam Hussein. The invasion of the country in 22 September of 1980 led to a 8 years war, that had as an overcome the death of over 1,5 million soldiers. The high number of deaths strengthened the revolutionary ideology. "The physical death of this large number of young people was also the symbolic death of their social group as a political protagonist. For them, the political use of the Shia doctrine had changed its meaning. Despite this, the Iran-Iraq war was important in determining the new form of the state and the national policy adopted in the country, extending the lifespan of revolutionary ideology and diverting attention from socio-economic problems. " (Bruno, 2014, p.65)

Meihy (2007) reaffirms this position by explaining that the impact of the emergence of a conflict with a neighboring nation had direct consequences for the nation project built and defended by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The political dimension of this project began to include new elements in the discursive elaboration of the "Iranian nation". In addition to the permanent coincidence of the nation with the state after the 1979 revolution, the possibility of external aggression employed by competing national projects began to guide the theoretical constitution of the concept of nation developed by the Iranian state.

According to Gheissari (2006), after the war, the Islamic Republic has ruled in the name of these people that were killed for their homeland. The masses of poor young people in the cities haven't really disappeared and, in fact, are experiencing one of the strongest demographic growth waves in the world. The regime was then forced to take measures to encourage these tens of thousands of young people to join. These measures were more pronounced on the moral and economic fronts. As an example of

this concern, the families of the martyrs were able to send their children to university without them having to pass the exam, and they received numerous scholarships, housing, subsidized food and other benefits through the large foundations run by the clergy.

After Khomeini's death in 1989, his successors tried to create a modern state in Iran that at the same time followed the principles of the Islamic revolution, thus maintaining Khomeini's legacy, but they encountered challenges and were unable to resolve the conflicts between pursuing development while remaining faithful to the revolutionary ideology. In an attempt to do so, they redefined the state and society in innovative ways, sparking debates about ideology, state-building and democracy, as stated by Gheissari (2006). However, the effort to reshape the government was limited by the fact that the country's political structure remained rooted in the fundamentalist ideology of the revolution. Policymaking was driven by pragmatism, but was constrained by the demands of Islamic ideology and its militant supporters. Thus, Rafsanjani's period did not represent a break with the revolutionary past, but rather ensured institutional and ideological continuities with Khomeini's period, sustaining the edifice of the Islamic Republic while introducing limited changes.

3.2 An Islamic Government

According to the theories and ideas spread by Khomeini, the government can only be legitimated by following the Sharia, the government of God, which means a government that conforms to divine law. An Islamic government is governed according to Islamic law. Therefore, only an Islamic government is legitimate. And this legitimacy would be the essential factor for building a strong and cohesive nation, where all classes would be united in the pursuit of the country's growth and development

According to Buchta (2000), Iran's decentralized and almost feudal economic and power structure is a legacy of the hierarchical but decentralized structure of the politicized Shiite clergy, which has been in power in Iran since 1979. This decentralized power structure manifests itself in the form of informal coalitions between like-minded individuals or groups and is characterized by personal ties of patronage.

The natural consequence of a society governed by an Islamic government would be the total Islamization of all aspects of social life, to the point where the private sphere merged with the religious sphere and the latter with the political sphere, in the view of Galvão (2019). In Khomeini's view, this would be the main mission of the Islamic political system: to provide and encourage free movement between each of the spheres by organizing the private and collective lives of all citizens. In this model of society, Khomeini believed that justice, good governance and morality would be guaranteed, and that deviance and corruption would be absent.

With all this ideology coming to dominate the post-revolution debate, as described by Bruno (2014), in January 1979 the Council of the Islamic Revolution was created, with the aim of forming a constituent assembly made up of representatives elected by the people to approve the new constitution of the Islamic Republic. The process took five months, when the first draft of the constitution was presented by the head of government appointed by Khomeini, the pro-democracy activist Mehdi Bazargan.

The regime had a greater theocratic influence, in which the legislative and judicial powers were concentrated in the hands of the supreme jurist, the faqih, who was Khomeini himself. Article 5 of the constitution guarantees to the Supreme Leader

supreme authority as the main political and religious leader of the Islamic Republic, as described by Lo (2019).

The new constitution was inspired by the Constitution of the Fifth French Republic, the document established a parliamentary regime with traces of presidentialism, providing for the election of a president by direct vote and a prime minister. As well as being inspired by the French constitution, the project also drew on the Iranian constitution of 1906-1907, which at the time provided for a committee of five experts in Islamic law to ensure agreement between the laws and Islam, highlights Bruno (2014).

The government and the president were responsible for the day-to-day administration of Iran and were subject to a parliament, the majlis, which was elected by universal vote. The Council of Guardians was established, responsible for checking the laws of the parliament to make sure that they were in accordance with Islamic Sharia law, in case otherwise they had the authority to veto them. The democratic part of the regime was represented by the multiparty system, according to Lo (2019).

In the new constitution, article 110 stated the Leader's authorities and responsibilities. Galvão (2019) described that it is up to the supreme leader to determine in a general manner the political system of the Islamic Republic after counseling with the Council of Discernment, as well as to supervise the proper implementation of such policies of the system. The leader also becomes commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and is responsible for declaring war, peace and the mobilization of forces, as well as issuing appointments, dismissals and accepting the resignation of various high-ranking government positions, such as the highest positions in the judiciary or the president of the Republic's mass media.

When analyzing the political system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, it can be seen a complex division of powers between the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary. The President of the Republic plays a significant role in executive power, although he is not the head of state, as evidenced by Article 113 of the Iranian constitution which stipulates that after the leadership, the President of the Republic is the highest official in the

country. He is responsible for executing the constitution and heading the executive branch, except in cases directly related to the leadership (Galvão, 2020).

Galvão (2020) also explains that the Legislative Branch is represented by the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis). It is made up of 290 deputies elected by the people for a four-year term through direct universal suffrage. The parliament is responsible for proposing and approving laws, ratifying international treaties, approving the government budget and evaluating nominations for the Council of Ministers, subject to supervision by the Council of Guardians. In addition, religious minorities, such as Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians, have the limited right to elect representatives.

The executive branch is exercised by the President of the Republic, whose term of office is four years, with the possibility of consecutive re-election, and who is responsible for economic policy, the state budget, appointing ambassadors and signing treaties. The president acts in conjunction with the Council of Ministers. In addition, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard, part of the Iranian armed forces, plays an important role, originally created to protect the achievements of the Revolution (Buchta, 2000).

The Judiciary, constituted on the basis of Islamic precepts, is led by the Head of the Judiciary, appointed by the Supreme Leader for a five-year term. The courts have the responsibility of protecting individual and social rights, guaranteeing the application of justice, while the Council of Guardians acts as a revising chamber for laws to ensure their conformity with the Constitution and Islamic law (Bruno, 2014).

The Supreme Leader, elected by the members of the Assembly of Experts, is the highest political and religious authority, with the power to oversee the three branches of government, command the armed forces and appoint/dismiss members of vital councils. The Assembly of Experts, made up of religious members, is responsible for appointing and dismissing the Supreme Leader, while the 34-member Council of Discernment acts as a mediator in disputes between Parliament and the Council of Guardians (Bruno, 2014).

Iran has an interconnected political structure, where the Supreme Leader plays a central role in supervising and controlling the executive, legislative and judicial branches.

The Supreme Leader of the Revolution in Iran, it can be considered the most important and powerful institution of the Khomeinist government. This position is inseparably linked to the theory of government created by Khomeini, and as explained by Buchta (2000), "in Iran the terms rahbar-e engelab (leader of the revolution) and vali-ye faqih (ruling jurisprudent) are generally used synonymously. Khomeini's followers implemented the velayat-e faqi against all opposition and, by means of Article 107 of the 1979 constitution, established it as a state principle inseparably linked to the person of Khomeini. In this way, they created an office whose power far exceeded even that granted to the shah in the 1906 constitution." The author also explains that Iran's supreme jurisprudent is given the authority by the constitution to command all armed forces, declare war or peace, mobilize troops and appoint and dismiss various authorities.

Thus, as noted by Bruno (2014), when analyzing the political system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we see an interconnected power, where the Supreme Leader plays a central role in supervising and controlling the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches. These structures reflect not only the influence of the Iranian Revolution, but also the Islamic precepts that shape the country's system of government. Khomeini's understanding of the need for an Islamic government, based on his theological interpretations, resulted in the institutionalization of this ideology and the creation of a unique political system that seeks to reconcile Islamic principles with democratic elements. This search for an Islamized and cohesive society is a distinctive feature of the model of government proposed by Khomeini, whose ramifications extend to the most diverse spheres of social, economic and political life in Iran.

Galerani (2010) explains that the consolidation of the Islamic government proposed by Khomeini is not restricted to the theoretical sphere, but is put into practice through the creation of institutions that reflect the fusion between divine law and the administration of the state. The complex political structure, with the Supreme Leader, the Parliament, the President and the Council of Guardians, exemplifies the attempt to balance democratic elements with the guidelines of Islam. The multi-party system, representing Islamic diversity, coexists with strict supervision to ensure that laws comply with Sharia.

Khomeini's concern to differentiate his model of Islamic government from other existing forms is evident when he states that it is a constitutional government, in which everyone, including the rulers, is subject to the laws. This distinction is crucial for him, as he seeks to combat oppression and absolute power, arguing that Islamic government should be guided by justice, not be tyrannical or absolute.

The complete Islamization of society, according to Khomeini's vision, is not only a political process, but also a cultural and economic transformation. Reducing imports of products, values and ideas contrary to Islam is seen as liberating the Islamic world, strengthening the nation and increasing its independence from the Western world.

To conclude, the Islamic government proposed by Khomeini is intrinsically linked to the implementation of divine laws, with the aim of creating a cohesive and strong society. The complexity of the Iranian political structure reflects the attempt to harmonize Islamic principles with democratic elements, while the role of the Supreme Leader stands out in the supervision and control of political institutions. This search for a balance between Islamic theology and democratic governance continues to shape the Islamic Republic of Iran.

3.3 Women's rights in theocratic Iran

Going a little further back in history, during the Pahlavi regime (1925-1979) in Iran, many religious leaders were excluded from power structures, despite their continued moral authority. This had a positive impact on women's struggle for gender equality, especially in relation to participation in political life and the reform of family law. Women's citizenship became a central point in the conflicts between modernists and religious fundamentalists, although both groups showed no real interest in the fate of women.

According to Hoodfar (2019), in Iran, the social reforms that happened during the Pahlavi regime included the stipulation of a minimum age for marriage and the banning of the mandatory use of the veil (in 1936). However, the most striking transformation took place in 1963, with the inclusion of women's suffrage as part of the White Revolution, which also encompassed a long-delayed land reform. This significant change, that represented a major step in terms of gender inclusion, sparked vehement opposition from the ulema, religious leaders who controlled extensive lands due to religious donations, arguing that extending women's rights was contrary to Islamic principles.

In 1967, other moderate legal reforms were implemented, giving women more rights, especially in the family and marriage scenario. As an example, the Family Protection Law represented a partial advancement in women's rights within marriage: granting them the right to divorce, which was previously solely under the husband's control, now subjected to legal proceedings; furthermore, polygamous marriages now require the consent of the first wife or authorization from the court, describes Hoodfar (2019)

But, these reforms were not accepted by all groups in society. The religious elite were not content at seeing their sphere of influence limited. Other than that, Ayatollah Khomeini, that at this time was still in exile, publicly proclaimed the legislation faced challenges in terms of religious acceptance: if a divorced woman remarried, she risked

being accused of bigamy, while her children could be labeled as illegitimate, thereby prohibited from marrying other Muslims. (Hoodfar, 2019).

In the following years, with the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the country experienced a social transformation, as mentioned before. Khomeini, included significant reforms that affected women's sphere, such as the compulsory wearing of the headscarf (veil or hijab) by women. Over time, the government's propaganda, policies, and enforcement of women's hijab intensified. Police frequently harassed women in public for inadequate hijab, making such incidents a common occurrence, states Bahadori (2017)

Contrary to expectations, women's initial passivity gave way to angry demonstrations against this determination. This change was just one of many that marked the opposition between the modernizing Pahlavi regime and the Islamic government. According to Bahadori, 2017, gradually, women in Iran are defying social restrictions by allowing more hair to escape from their headscarves and by wearing more fitted clothes in public. Although they are aware of the risk of being targeted by the country's morality police, these acts of defiance demonstrate women's rejection of a law they consider unfair and discriminatory.

In this scenario, women's rights emerged as a crucial element in the struggle between these two groups. In the Islamic government, religious leaders maintained political and economic influence, they also held undeniable moral authority in family and marriage matters and in defining the roles considered 'appropriate' for Muslim women. Hoodfar (2019) affirms that their convictions arose from a narrow interpretation of Sharia, disregarding the complexities of Iranian society. Consequently, women's rights activists sought to uphold the modest legal and social progress offered by the Pahlavi regime, employing varied approaches, some more passive, while others more active, utilizing both state structures and government-sanctioned women's organizations.

Besides the mandatory use of the veil, Khomeini also repealed the Family Protection Law (Mahdi, 2004) restoring men's unilateral right to divorce, encouraging polygamy and restricting women's participation in judicial roles. The ideologues of the new regime aimed for an Islamic society founded on strict gender segregation,

effectively erasing the advancements that women's rights activists had painstakingly achieved over seven decades., supports Hoodfar (2019). Other than that, severe restrictions on sexual relations outside of marriage were established, with punishments such as stoning and whipping.

As stated by Bijjos (2020), the new Iranian constitution, predominantly written by male members of the clergy, avoided any mention of women's equality, with the justification that God had deprived them of certain rights. This resulted in discriminatory laws, such as the testimony of two women being equivalent to that of one man.

Nevertheless, for islamic religious groups the position of women in a society is clear and protected by divine law. According to them, the social role of women in the national community is closely related to the family institution, and it is almost a kind of "civic duty" to be concerned with the values of Islam, as mentioned by Meihy (2007).

This view is supported by Hajjami (2008), that says that women's relationship with religion reflects the tribal and slave society of the time when Islam was created. As characterized by the author, customs prevailing in Arab society at the time often marginalized women, exemplified by practices like polygamy, which relied solely on the man's wealth and social standing, as well as repudiation, forced marriage, denial of inheritance rights, and slavery.

In this context, Muslim women have the same duties as men in relation to Ibadah (worship) and the other obligations required in this faith. The woman must fulfill each of the rituals mentioned in the Quran. This principle of equality, however, is only present in the religious vision of men and women, since, when used by political Islam, some Quran prescriptions have been diverted from their purpose and interpreted with an oppressive meaning. This is the case with polygamy, the dissolution of the marital bond, and inheritance. (Hajjami, 2008)

Luz (2020) argues that although men are also affected by disciplinary practices that impose religious morality, gender segregation in societies makes women more vulnerable and direct victims of possible violence, which would result in a loss of personal and family honor. The man, however, the author says, despite violating

religious customs and traditions, does not go through the same process of losing his honor as the woman and, in some cases, may only have to marry her to legalize the situation and restore family honor.

The scenario for women's rights in Iran changed at the end of the 1980s. The death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989 ushered in a decade of significant reforms in the field of public policies for women, developed under the administrations of Presidents Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-1997) and Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005). The improvements in the areas of education and health and in the political and social fields, promoted from the 1990s onwards, were notable, especially for women. (Ricci, 2014)

Women's resistance to discrimination and marginalization was evident as awareness of their position in society increased. Also according to Ricci, 2014, educational programs encouraged by the government and the growing participation of women as economic agents led to a transformative experience. Marriage ceased to be a submission to the wills of parents, becoming more negotiated between fathers and daughters. Polygamy became less acceptable, and the average number of children per woman decreased significantly, reflecting the evolution of women's position in Iran.

Despite women being allowed to participate in elections, as exposed by Hoodfar, 2017, the representation of women in Parliament has consistently lagged behind pre-revolution levels. Prior to 1979, it stood at 7.0%, dropping to a mere 1.5% during the initial three legislative terms of the Islamic Republic. Subsequently, there was a slight increase, with the highest level recorded between 2000 and 2004, reaching 4.4%. It's crucial to note that significant barriers hindered women's candidacy, with only those possessing 'suitable' religious credentials, such as close familial ties or marriage to a member of the political elite, being considered eligible.

Besides the changes that started to happen in the 1990s, challenges remain in the framework of women's rights. Nevertheless, feminist movements in Iran, including Islamic organizations, actively seek to expand women's political and social participation within the parameters of religion, challenging the patriarchal convictions rooted in

conservative leaders. Ricci (2014) explains that contrary to the argument that Iranian women are marginalized by the Islamic system of government and therefore seek to abolish Iran's theocratic regime, the Zeinab Society political party, the largest and most active political party of Islamic women in Iran, represents the opposite. The Zeinab Society was established shortly after the Islamic Revolution, and has since been working to increase women's political and social participation.

Finally, today, although the law establishes strict penalties for inappropriate dress, the rigor of the moral police has diminished over time, Moretão (2017) argues that the moral police are no longer so strict. Women are even taken to the police station and have to sign a form committing themselves to following the rules, but they are unlikely to face any legal proceedings.

In conclusion women's freedoms and responsibilities are outlined by Islamic ideology and are supported by the laws imposed by the Islamic government. From the Pahlavi regime to the present day, women's struggles for gender equality and political participation reflect the conflicts between modernists and religious groups, with social and legal reforms being enacted amid opposition and contestation. Despite advances and setbacks over time, women in Iran continue to defy social and political restrictions, seeking to broaden their participation and influence within the parameters of the Islamic religion.

3.4 External Relations

In political systems marked by the presence of a strong and predominant ideological system, the maintenance of the power of the political elites becomes associated with the defense of that ideology and the need arises for all aspects of the new regime to be in accordance with its principles. In view of this, according to Soltani (2010), the Islamic Revolution established a total reorientation of Iran's foreign policy and the change of political elites meant that they gave a new meaning to the country's foreign relations and adapted them to their own conceptions, defending the Islamic and independence principles preached by the revolutionary movement.

Iran's aggressive attitude aimed to export Islamic revolution, using propaganda and support for Islamic uprisings, challenging secular regimes (Munareto, 2016). Iran's foreign policy, based on supranationalist principles, defends the rights of Muslims and non-attachment to hegemonized superpowers. Khelghat-Doost (2022) supports this view saying that the supranationalist principles, such as "defending the rights of all Muslims" and "non-alignment with hegemonic superpowers," form the cornerstone of Iran's foreign policy. According to the author, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic supports the just struggles of the oppressed against the oppressors in every corner of the globe.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran triggered significant changes in its geopolitical environment, shaping the country's policies in subsequent decades. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the defeat of Iraq by the US-led coalition and the subsequent isolation of Baghdad, along with the US military presence, altered Iran's basic strategic landscape, making it more secure. Byman (2001) says that as a result, Iran's policies, in the words of Minister of Defense Admiral Ali Shamkhani, are driven in large part by 'deterrent defense.' With extended maritime borders and seven neighbors by land, Iran has a potentially difficult role in ensuring its own defense. Illegal migration, drug dealing, and smuggling magnify the problem of border security.

In the first years after the revolution, Iran's foreign policy was centered on Khomeini, the Supreme Leader, who had the power to declare war, mobilize troops and represent the country internationally (Barbosa, 2020). Relations with the United States,

marked by hostilities, contrasted with the former Soviet Union, reflecting the Islamic Revolution's reaction to the Shah's friendly relations with the US.

Khomeini's revolutionary rhetoric, which needed an antagonist, found its main opponents in the United States and the West. Opposition to the West became a fundamental pillar of Islamic ideology, portraying relations between the Middle East and the West as a battle between good and evil, describes Takeyh (2009) apud Munareto, (2016).

Khomeini's messianic vision, rejecting the contemporary international political order in favor of a global Islamic order, delineated Iran as the bearer of the mission to spread Islamic principles globally, explains Espirito Santo (2017). The new elites sought to position Iran as the epicenter of a new Islamic order, promoting its international projection and aspiring to lead regionally supports Munareto (2016).

One of the main changes in foreign policy with the establishment of the Islamic Republic was the reorientation of relations between the country and the United States. According to Coggiola (2007), in the early years of the new political system in Iran, 52 American diplomats were held hostage in the embassy in Tehran by a group of students and Islamic militants. The seizure of the US Embassy in Tehran and the subsequent hostage crisis served as a test for Iran's idealistic revolutionary foreign policy, which resulted in Iran's isolation from most countries worldwide. Lasting 444 days, the hostage crisis led to significant consequences, notably the continued suspension of diplomatic relations between Iran and the United States up to the present day.

During the Cold War, Iran subsequently adopted the slogan of *Na Sharqi, Na Gharbi, Jomhoori-e Eslami* (Neither East nor West, but the Islamic Republic) as the foundation of its foreign policy. Khelghat-Doost (2022) states that guided by this vision, Iran embraced the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1979, aiming to forge alliances with developing nations aligned with its foreign policy goals, given its stance as a developing state. Iran's religious, cultural, and historical context doesn't align with forming alliances with either the East or the West. Concurrently, the Islamic Republic has consistently criticized Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) governments with pro-Western

leanings, branding them as corrupt and anti-Islamic, thus challenging their legitimacy directly.

In the Persian Gulf, countries saw the new Iranian regime as a threat, both ideologically and militarily. The Gulf countries, Sunni monarchies with marginalized Shiite populations, feared the spread of the revolution and formed the Gulf Cooperation Council to protect themselves. However, Espírito Santo (2017) claims that Tehran sought to export the revolution to these countries by example, not by force. Firstly, because of the conflict with Iraq, where the Iranian government was focusing its attention. And also because of the protection these countries received from the West. In addition to tensions over the issue of Shiite populations, what Tehran disliked most was the financial and logistical support provided by these countries to Iraq during the conflict

The principle of opposition to the West also guided relations between Iran and Israel. Roberto (2015) affirms that unlike the period before the Revolution, in which relations were intensified by the Shah, after 1979 Iran began to promote a policy of opposition to the Israeli state and considered it an obstacle to the spread of Islam and revolutionary ideals. The conflict between Israel and Palestine came to be interpreted by the country not merely as a territorial dispute, but also as a clash between Islamic forces, considering Israel's existence as an attack on the entire Muslim community. Thus, Israeli-Iranian relations not only reflected the country's anti-imperialist intentions, but also reinforced the revolutionary ideal of opposition between the West and Islam.

It is interesting to note that soon after the 1979 revolution, various Islamic groups such as Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Hezbollah were created and evolved with the common goal of defeating the United States and Israel and spreading their particular interpretations of Islam, points out Munareto (2016).

The change in Iran's stance led to its participation in a prolonged war against Iraq, making it one of the longest-running conflicts in the Middle East. Despite initially facing disadvantages in terms of allies and military resources, Iran managed to consolidate its power and mobilize the population. According to Simão (2017) Iran found itself isolated

and marginalized by the conflict, following the decision of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, all Arabs, and the US, Germany, France and the UK to support Iraq.

Simão (2017) also explains that the conflict was one of the most deadly in the country, and transcended a simple territorial dispute, turning into an ideological clash, where Iranian rhetoric emphasized the protection of Islam against forces considered unholy. The war was presented as a divine mission, seeking to confirm the faith of Muslim society and serve as a means of social mobilization for the new political regime. Despite intense nationalist rhetoric and mobilization efforts, Iran faced significant challenges due to a lack of strategic support and military limitations. The conflict, although costly, was inconclusive, not allowing Iran to defeat Iraq, transform the region or export its Islamic model beyond its borders.

Another important issue in Iran's foreign relations is its natural resources. The country has the fourth largest oil reserves and the second largest natural gas reserves in the world. During the Pahlavi dynasty, the Shah sought to strengthen the Iranian state and the country's military capabilities through oil agreements with Saudi Arabia, as explained by Roberto (2015).

However, in August 1979, the US arms purchase agreements were canceled and Iran stopped supplying oil to the country, as mentioned by Coggiola (2007). This interruption, due to the Islamic revolution, resulted in a significant halt in oil production, triggering the second great oil shock. According to de Melo (2008), the interruption in oil supplies from Iran resulted in a drop of almost 8% in global supply, leading other exporting countries to increase their exports in order to rebalance the market. However, inevitable price rises followed, bringing instability back to the international oil market. Against this backdrop, OPEC adopted a more aggressive policy, resulting in eight consecutive price increases until 1986.

Iran's current geopolitical outlook is more positive than in the initial decade of the revolution, but the situation lacks clarity. Iranian leaders need to adopt a more nuanced vision, focusing on the particularities of different countries, rather than considering a single cohesive threat (Byman, 2001).

To conclude, Iran's foreign policy in the post-Islamic Revolution period has been characterized by a firm defense of Islamic principles and independence from the hegemonic powers. This ideology has led to significant changes in Iran's relations with Western countries, especially the United States, but has also had an impact on its stance on regional issues.

On the international stage, Iran has adopted a defiant stance towards the West and the global status quo, promoting a vision of Islamic leadership and resistance to imperialism. This approach has influenced not only Iran's foreign relations, but also regional geopolitical events, marking the country out as a central player in the Middle East.

Despite the challenges faced, such as the prolonged conflict with Iraq and fluctuations in global oil markets, Iran's geopolitical landscape has evolved, requiring a more nuanced approach to international relations.

Conclusion

Islam, from its origins with the Prophet Muhammad in the 7th century, has played a fundamental role in the history and governance of Muslim-majority countries. In Iran, this impact has been especially evident since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which marked a radical change in the country's governance structure.

Before the Islamic Revolution, Iran sought modernization through close collaboration with the United States during the regime of Shah Reza Pahlavi. However, the Shah's policies, including the suppression of political dissidents and corruption within the ruling elite, fueled growing discontent among the Iranian people.

The revolution, led by a coalition of religious leaders, left-wing movements and intellectuals, resulted in the overthrow of the Shah and the establishment of the Islamic Republic, led by Ayatollah Khomeini. Since then, Iran has been governed according to Islamic principles, with Sharia law playing a central role in legislation and governance.

The Iranian government, based on the theory of "Velayat-e Faqih", gives substantial powers to the supreme leader, who has authority over religious and political matters.

In this political sphere, Iran has developed a unique system, combining theocratic and democratic elements. This case represents a remarkable example of the use of religion to govern, where faith is intrinsically linked to laws, the political system and government ideology. The Iranian government vividly illustrates how Islam is employed as a unifying and guiding force in structuring the state and making political decisions, demonstrating the complexity and uniqueness of this religion-based approach to governance.

In the context of post-Islamic Revolution Iran, the issue of women's rights has been a central and frequently debated topic. The implementation of Islamic law, or Sharia, has brought significant changes to the lives of Iranian women, affecting areas such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and dress.

Since the revolution, women in Iran have faced restrictions on the rights and freedoms they previously enjoyed. For example, marriage and divorce laws are based on strict interpretations of Sharia law, which often puts women at a disadvantage compared to men. In addition, the mandatory dress code, which requires women to wear the hijab in public, has been a source of controversy and protest, with many women seeking more freedom of choice regarding their dress.

Despite these restrictions, women in Iran have fought for their rights and political participation. Feminist movements, both inside and outside the Islamic system, have worked to expand women's rights and promote gender equality. Women activists have used various forms of resistance, including public protests, social media campaigns and participation in elections, to make their voices heard and promote change in Iranian society.

In terms of foreign policy, Iran has adopted a defiant stance towards the West and global powers, promoting a vision of Islamic leadership and resistance to imperialism. The country has played an active role in regional issues such as the conflict in Syria, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and tensions in the Persian Gulf.

Iran's foreign policy has been shaped by supranationalist principles, such as defending the rights of Muslims around the world and non-alignment with hegemonic superpowers. This has led to alliances and coalitions with other Muslim countries and Islamic movements, strengthening Iran's position as an important player on the international stage.

In short, Islam exerts a deeply rooted influence on Iran's governance, leaving its mark on the country's political structure, legislation and foreign policy. The 1979 Islamic Revolution represented a decisive turning point in Iranian history, establishing a government based on Islamic principles that continue to this day, influencing not only the lives of Iranian citizens, but also the country's relations with the outside world.

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Annex

1. Iran's political timeline (1795 - 1989)

1795: Establishment of the Qajar Dynasty

1906: Constitutional Revolution

- Mohammad Ali Shah's autocratic rule triggers a constitutional revolution.
- Establishment of a parliament and enactment of sweeping reforms.

1921: Reza Shah's Coup

- Reza Khan, a military officer, stages a coup against the Qajar dynasty.
- Rise to power of Reza Shah Pahlavi and establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty.

1925: Pahlavi Dynasty

- Reza Shah officially establishes the Pahlavi dynasty.

1941: Reza Shah's abdication

- British and Soviet forces invade Iran during World War II.
- Reza Shah's regime collapses, leading to his forced abdication and exile.

1953: Overthrow of Prime Minister Mossadegh

- Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh is overthrown
- Reinstatement of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's power.

1963: White Revolution

- Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi announces a series of reforms known as the White Revolution.
- Land reform, women's suffrage, and modernization initiatives are introduced.

1979: Iranian Revolution

- Mass protests and demonstrations lead to the overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty.
- Establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini.

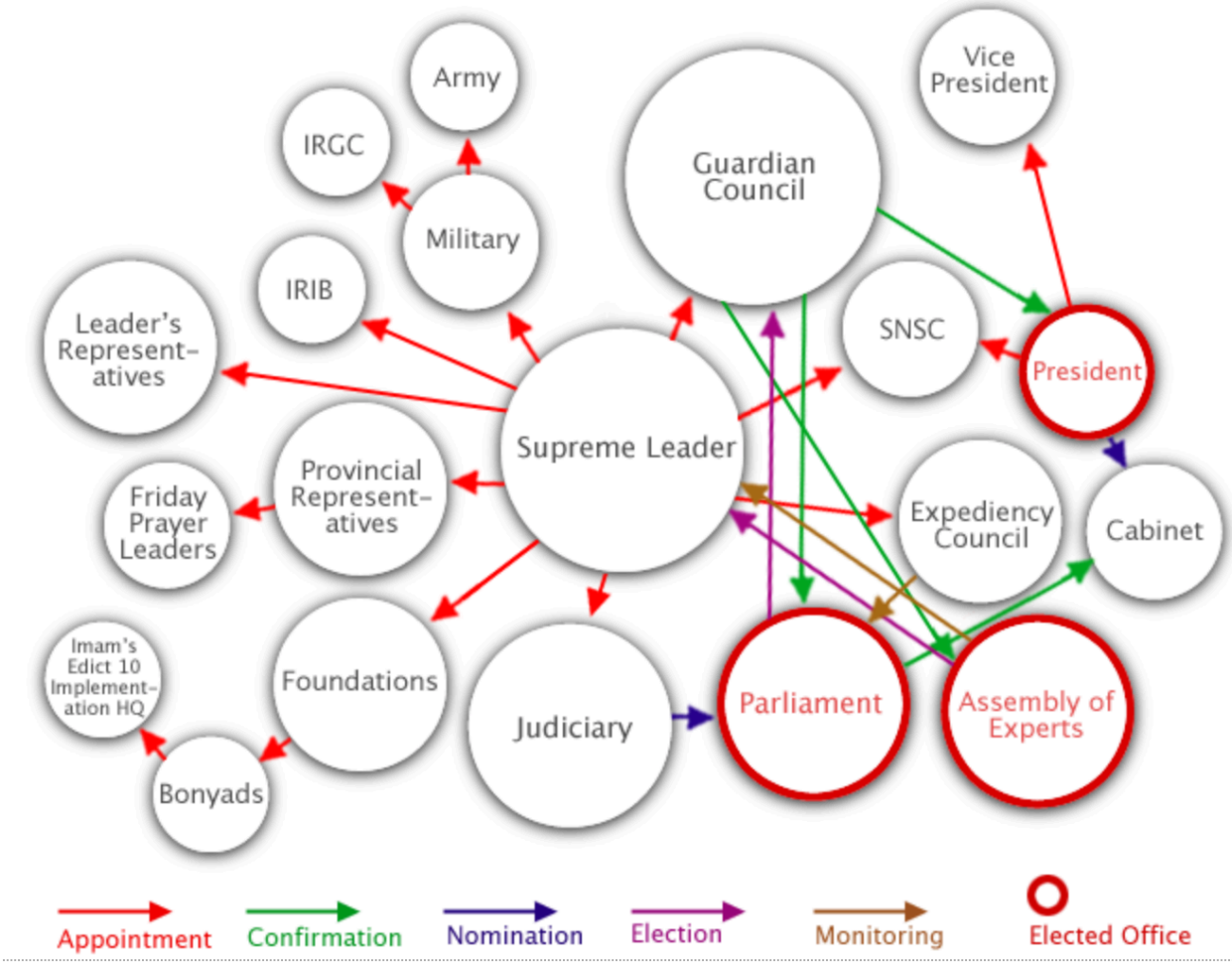
1980-1988: Iran-Iraq War

- Iran engages in a prolonged conflict with Iraq, resulting in significant casualties and economic strain.

1989: Death of Ayatollah Khomeini

- Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, dies.
- Succession by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as the Supreme Leader of Iran.

2. Iran's political structure chart



Source: Iran Data Portal