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Shia Political Islam in Iran

A political and economic approach

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Abstract

Although Islamism could be traced back to the seventh century when prophet Mohamad died and conflict between Shia and Sunni started, the recent growth of Islamism and emerging of new phenomena such as establishing Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1920s, Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979, and some other Islamists groups like Hezbollah, and Al-Qaida highlighted the importance of Islamism. Moreover, forming the new Islamists in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen after the Arab uprising in 2010 which intensified the conflict between Shia and Sunni increased the concerns over increase in sectarianism in the Middle East. Considering the significance of Shia groups in recent movements, it is important to have a deep and comprehensive understanding of the nature and function of Shia Political Islam.

Despite internal and external concerns, Shia Political Islam has emerged and continued to have control over power in Iran for more than four decades. The post-revolutionary Islamic government has been able to keep its power through reviving the Shia Movement since the 1979 Islamic revolution. Therefore, this thesis asks 'how has Shia political Islam managed to survive in Iran over the past four decades? The answer to this question relies specifically on understanding the nature of Shia ideology and how the Shia control entities' access to petrodollars. The study aims to clarify the concept of Shiism and explain the mechanism of the survival and continuation of the Shia movement in Iran through the lens of Social Movement Theory.

This thesis argues that the essential mobilisers of the Shia Movement like the IRGC, the Basij and mosques have succeeded in sustaining the survival of the Shia Political Islam. The durability of this political approach lies in actively reviving the origins of the Shia movement, utilising Shia values, religious symbols and holy events such as Ashura, and financially rewarding the Movement with petrodollars. The mobilisers, especially the IRGC, use these values as a steering fuel to run the Shia Movement and suppress any security threat to its survival. For instance, after the 2009 presidential elections, the Green Movement was a serious security threat to the Islamic Republic and the political approach Shia political Islam. However, the IRGC and the Basij employed Shia symbols to mobilise their social base in a counter-movement in 2019 to overcome the threat of the Green Movement. The thesis concludes that if the Shia mobiliser organisations keep supporting

the Shia Movement by utilising Shia values, religious symbols, and available economic resources such as petrodollars, Shia political Islam will stay resilient and survive.

To memory of my brother, Ali.

For my wife, Fatemeh,

and

my beloved sons, Amin and Iman.

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Abbreviations

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

BCF: Basij Cooperation Foundation (BCF)

CCMV: Coordinating Council for promoting the culture of Martyrdom and Veterans

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

CPMA: Centre for Programming Mosques' Affairs (CPMA)

EU: European Union

FNA: Fars News Agency

GHORB: Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarter (Gharargah-e Sazandegi- ye Khatam al-Anbia)

IRDC: Islamic Republic Document Centre

IRGC: Islamic Revolutionary Guard Crops

IRI: Islamic republic of Iran

IRNA: Islamic Republic News Agency

ISNA: Iranian Student News Agency

NOC: National Oil Company

OPEC: Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries

RMT: Resource Movement Theory

SAVAK: Organization of Intelligence and national security (IRAN)

SDC: Supreme Defence Council

SMOs: Social Movement organizations

SMT: Social Movements Theory

SPI: Shia Political Islam

UN: United Nation

USA: United State of America

VMAF: Veteran and Martyrs Affairs Foundation

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Chapter1. Introduction

Emerging new conflicts in the Middle East and new Islamic groups like Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq, Houthis in Yemen, Hashd al-Shabiin in Iraq, and reviving Taliban in Afghanistan increased the global concerns regarding Islamism growth in the region. For analysing the future of Islamism and explaining the events which Islamists are involved, the term of Islamism or political Islam has been interpreted in different ways by scholars (see 2.1). In this study, the term of Islamism or Political Islam refers to the activities of an individual, organisation and movements that use and interpret Islamic values, signs and symbols to enforce or emasculate specific Islamic beliefs for their political objectives.

One of the main debates in the literatures over Islamism situation is whether Islamism is falling or rising (see 2.3). The lack of distinction between Shia and Sunni in studying political Islam among scholars has resulted in inaccurate analysis and understanding of the current state of Islamism. As a results, findings of some scholars like Oliver Roy that political Islam has failed, does not apply to a non-Sunni context like Iran, where Islamists are still in power after more than four decades and have even grown their influence in the region. This thesis aims to provide a wider and more accurate understanding of Shia political Islam (SPI) to fill the gap in political Islam studies and explain how Shia political Islam has managed to survive in Iran over the past four decades despite internal and international threats. To answer this question, this thesis will examine how the Shia value, Symbols, and concepts like Jihad and Martyrdom have been utilized by the mobilizer institutions such as IRGC and Basij to sustain Shia movement in Iran since the Islamic revolution in 1979.

1.1. The 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran

The Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 emerged as a new phenomenon in the Middle East. This revolution differed in many ways from other revolutions around the world, the link between Shia Islam and politics being one of those differences. Shia Islam, as one of the main branches of Islam, has been in the political sphere in Iran since the mid-14th century when the Sarbedaran movement took control of a part of western Khorasan. During the Safavid dynasty (1501-1722), Shi'ism became more widely used by the Safavid kings to

boost their political legitimacy and popularity. Using Shia values for social popularity was applied to some extent by the kings of the Qajar dynasty, although the opposition also utilised Shia values against the kings' power. However, the more religious beliefs were exploited by the kings, the stronger were the social influences of Islamism. Although in some periods, such as during the first Pahlavi era, although the king tried to reduce the political and social power of Islamists and the clergy, they still had strong enough social bases to survive. The fall of the imperial system in 1979 afforded a new environment for the growing Shia political Islam (PSI).

While many ideologies were represented by the revolution, Shia dominated, and the Islamic government was established, resulting in the empowerment of Shia political Islam. Despite the participation of many different groups, such as Liberal parties, in the revolution, and despite Ayatollah Khomeini's pronouncements during the uprising regarding religious equivalence, Islamic activism became more powerful after the revolution. While Ayatollah Khomeini stated that he would not take political power, he set himself up as *Velayet Faqih* and the supreme leader of the Islamic government. Also, in the early post-revolution years the Islamic government oppressed many other groups, such as *Mojahedin,* which had played a key role in the revolution. The conflict between different revolutionary groups paved the way for Islamists to steadfastly move into the political sphere through suppression of their opponents and expansion of their political power in all parts of the government, especially after Bazargan's[1] resignation and Banisadr's[2] impeachment. The role of Islamists in the government raised the question of *what the role of Shia would be in the future of Iran*.

As well as the internal impact of the revolution, the empowerment of Shia groups around the region, with the support of the Islamic government of Iran, raised a question over Islamism and triggered scholarly interest in studying Shia political Islam. The religious

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[1] Mahdi Bazargan
[2] Abolhassan Banisadr

approach to Iranian foreign relations concerned both Middle East and Western countries regarding Shiism in the region. The rise of Shiism in the Middle East, especially in a country with a significant Shia population like Iraq, on one hand, and some proclaimed goals of the Islamic government such as exporting the Islamic revolution on the other, was of concern regionally and internationally.

The regional expansion of Shiism highlighted the apprehension about SPI. Since the 1979 revolution, one of the key foreign strategies of the Islamic government has been to support Islamic, especially Shia, movements around the world (CIA 2006: 20). This policy brought the Shia political Islam phenomenon to the centre of global attention, and scholars were concerned about the increase of Shia influence in the region. The Islamic revolution affected Middle Eastern countries with a majority Muslim population such as Iraq, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia (Ansari Jovini 2019). The formation of Hezbollah in 1982, with support from Ayatollah Khomeini, was the first new revolutionary movement which stemmed from the Islamic revolution. The potential spread of the revolution worried these countries, especially Iraq because of its Shia majority. Moreover, the direct or indirect role of the Islamic government of Iran in the recent conflicts in the Middle East such as the Arab uprising; conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Bahrain; and the war between the Houthi group and the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, indicate the importance of studying SPI because at least one side in these conflicts is a Shia group. The world watches the role of religion in these conflicts, especially between Sunni and Shia, and the escalation of violence, especially in the behaviour of IS in Syria and Iraq, which is committing atrocities against its opposition, especially Shia and Yazidi groups.

The importance of SPI is intensified when a new Shia-Sunni conflict arises in the Middle East, such as the formation of jihadi extremist groups and IS in Syria. These groups kill innocent people. Using Islamic symbols and religious slogans they mobilise young Islamists from various countries to join jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq, and to establish an Islamic caliphate: these are strong indications that show political Islam has not failed in the Middle East, where different factions of Islamism are fighting each other. Syria and Yemen have faced deconstructive sectarian wars between different groups. In Syria, Iran

and Russia are supporting Bashar al-Assad against other jihadist groups. Although there are many reasons why Iran is supporting Bashar al-Assad, one significant reason is political Islam, because Iran wishes to keep its strategic relationship with Hezbollah, as a Shia group in Lebanon, via Syria. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is recruiting soldiers to send to Syria by propagating Shia symbols. In Yemen, the impact of the conflict between Shia and Wahhabi factions of political Islam is more extensive, where the Houthis as a Shia group are fighting against Saudi as a Wahhabi group. Despite the rise and fall of Islamic groups in the Middle East, political Islam plays a significant role in conflicts in this area.

The establishment of an Islamic government in Iran, has not only changed the political environment in the Middle East, but also Iran-West relations. The new religious approach of the government fundamentally affected its international relations with the rest of the world. For example, the US-Iran conflict became a controversial challenge when a group of university students belonging to the *Muslim student followers of the Imam's line* took over the United States embassy in Tehran on 4 November 1979 and revealed a new perspective of the Islamic government.

The emerging new Islamic government in Iran raised debate over the clash between the West and Islam in academic discourse. For example, culturalists like Samuel Huntington (1997), Bernard Lewis (2018) and Daniel Pipes (2000) have stressed the threat of Islam to global security and the likelihood of discord between Islam and western civilization in the future. They argue that understanding Muslim behaviour through studying Islamic history and theology is really important, as a means to taking the most appropriate action at the right time. Most of these studies only concentrate on Islam as a whole, and have not explained the difference between the Shia and Sunni approach to Islam.

Many other scholars such as Nazih Ayubi (Ayubi 2003) , Oliver Roy (1994), Bassam Tibi (2002), Graham Fuller (2003), Gilles Kepel (2002), and Asef Bayat (2005a) have tried to explain the Islamism phenomenon (See 2.3). Except for Asef Bayat's work, all the others concentrate on political Islam as a whole, while from other points of view Shia political Islam is not same as the Sunni model. Having the same perspective of Shia and Sunni

paradigms could cause misunderstandings. As the nature of Sunnism and Shiism is different, Shia political Islam should itself be investigated separately to provide a framework for understanding Shiism in Iran and the Middle East. For example, the rise and fall of the Muslim Brotherhood as a Sunni group in Egypt (see 2.3.1) should not be generalised for the Shia model. However, this study aims to fill this gap through investigating the situation of Shia political Islam in Iran.

Understanding SPI is important for analysis of events in the Middle East for both regional and international actors; for reginal actors to understand the new political environment in the Middle East, and for international actors to understand the nature of SPI. Misunderstandings about Shiism distort the attitudes of some politicians regarding the Islamic government. For instance, President Trump believed that economic sanctions would force the Shia government to change its regional behaviour. Although re-imposing the sanction in November 2018 limited Iranian funding to some Shia groups in the Middle East, the economic sanctions have not changed the government's behaviour.

The escalating importance of Islamism in the Middle East and the misunderstanding of the nature of SPI, which is different from that of the Sunnis, has encouraged this researcher to provide a deeper understanding of Shia political Islam. This study will help scholars and politicians to gain a better undrstanding of SPI. As the original base of SPI was in Iran, this thesis will concentrate on the process of the emergence and survival of SPI, as a Shia movement, in Iran through examining this question: **how has Shia political Islam managed to survive in Iran over the past four decades despite internal and international threats?**

Understanding how the Shia movement is surviving and continuing in Iran could provide more clarity about the mechanism of SPI - which is the principal aim of this thesis. To analyse the situation of SPI in Iran, two points should be taken into consideration. Firstly, where this study mentions that SPI has not failed in Iran, it does not necessarily mean SPI was successful. As Asef Bayat (2013b) in his post-Islamism theory argues, the social basis of Islamism is not strong compared with the early years of the Islamic revolution.

Even if this notion assumes that the majority of Iranian society does not participate in Islamic rituals and practice, it is does not matter, because the Islamic government is ruling the country, which means the Shia movement has been able to survive and continue. Chapter 9 will indicate that even when a massive demonstration took place in 2009, the Islamic government, with the support of the IRGC and Basij, survived. Therefore, as long as the Shia government can control and rule the country, Shia political Islam has not failed.

Secondly, despite the significant impact of international factors on the survival of Shia political Islam in Iran, this project is not going to examine the main research question from an international perspective.   Without doubt, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1922 that provided a Shia footing in Iraq, World War II that brought about the collapse of the first Pahlavi regime, the challenge between West and East during the Cold War, and the economic crisis in 1970 which increased the price of oil, have all had an impact on emerging Shia movements in Iran. In the post-revolution era, collapse of the bipolar order could also be considered as a new environment for politicising Shia. Bassam Tibi notes "In the post-bipolar era religion is becoming increasingly politicised" (Tibi 2000: 846). Despite the West-Shiism conflict, the impact on empowering Shia movements of the Gulf war in 1991 and the US war against Saddam Hussein in 2003 should not be ignored. Juan Cole argues that is how the Iraq war developed the Shia crescent in the region (Col 2009). Also, this assumption could be considered in the light of some western countries such as the USA and UK not wanting to destroy the Islamic government and political Islam in the region, as they might be able to benefit from this phenomenon despite the Islamists' argument that the USA wants to change the regime in Iran. Recently Ayatollah Khamenei further rejected as "a lie" Trump's claim that "he was not after regime change in Iran, saying if the US president were able to bring about such a change, he would definitely go for it" (Khamenei 2019). However, although the international environment has had a considerable effect on survival of the Shia movement, this project will moderate these factors because engaging in them all, international and domestic, is beyond the feasibility of this project.

1.2. Thesis objectives

Providing a wider understanding of Shia political Islam is the main objective of this research. It aims to fill the gap in political Islam studies by showing how the SPI is working in Iran. Investigating the nature of Shiism is essential to understand the differences between Shia and Sunni Islamism. Putting these two differing approaches of Islamism in one bowl could mislead both politicians and decisionmakers.

Briefly, the objectives of this thesis include: investigating the Shia movement and explaining the role of Shia symbols, values and rituals in the Islamic government's mobilising of soldiers; explaining how the IRGC and Basij guard the Islamists; and providing an explanation of key Shia concepts like Jihad and Martyrdom.

1.3. Thesis Structure

The structure of thesis has emanated from social movement theory. The theoretical framework chapter studies an anatomy of the Islamic movement through social movement theories. According to these theories, a movement's form has three components: Origin, Mobilisers, and Resources. Hence this project investigates these three parts of the Shia movement as a mechanism of Shia political Islam to examine how Islamism is continuing in Iran. The fourth chapter will examine the origins of the Shia movement; Chapter five will investigate the essential mobilisers of Shiism; and chapters 6 and 7 will discuss the resources and fuel which play a crucial role in the continuation of the Shia movement. Chapter 8 is a case study of the Green Movement to indicate how the mechanism mentioned in the previous chapter is working to maintain the survival of SPI through suppressing the Green Movement as an internal threat.

Analysing the reasons for the survival of SPI can help to clarify the nature of Shia political Islam. Hence this thesis will examine these reasons in seven chapters based on social movement theories. The **current chapter**, Introduction, briefly introduces the importance of studying SPI and provides the rationale for the thesis. **Chapter two**, the literature review, will indicate the gap in the current studies about political Islam. This chapter

comprises three parts; the first will focus on the meaning of Islamism and political Islam, because the varying perspectives of Islamism are one of the main reasons for differing analyses among researchers. Hence clarification over the definition of Islamism is the first important step, providing a conceptual framework for this research project. Although, in social sciences, providing a precise definition of concepts that are commonly acceptable is not an easy task, without a primary definition of these concepts we cannot describe a phenomenon at all.

After clarification over the meaning of Islamism the second part will present an intellectual view of Shiism and will analyse SPI's thoughts in texts and in the minds of three influential leaders (Ayatollah Khomeini, Ayatollah Motahari, and Ali Shariati) through presenting some Qur'anic interpretations as the basis of these ideologues' thoughts, and reviewing the opinion of key theorists of the Islamic revolution which will pave the way to grasping the Ideas behind SPI.

In the third part, the debate in the existing literature from Oliver Roy, Salwa Ismail and Asef Bayt, as representatives of different attitudes towards political Islam in the Middle East, will be presented and criticised. This part highlights the gap in political Islam studies and shows how misunderstanding the reality and nature of Shia political Islam can be misleading. Following that, the situation of Islamism in Iran and Egypt will be examined. As some arguments which believe that political Islam has failed are critiqued (see in 2.3), this part will indicate how Islamism is still alive in Iran. The oscillating trend of Islamism after the Islamic revolution indicates that Islamists have not failed as they are running almost all the powerful institutions in the country, such as the Supreme Leader's house and its dependent institutions, the military organisations, and the judiciary system. In contrast to the situation of political Islam in Iran, Egypt is a good example to clarify the meaning of the failure of political Islam. This part will investigate the reasons why the Muslim Brotherhood, as a Sunni movement, has failed in Egypt to illustrate the rise and fall of a Sunni political Islam group. Egypt has been chosen as an example of the failure of Sunnism in contrast to the success of Shiism in Iran because: 1) the Muslim Brotherhood is a well-organised Sunni institution; 2) Iran and Egypt are two globally important Muslim countries where the idea of two faces of Islamism has been shaped and

developed (See Ayoob 2009: 3)   two of the main ideologues in political Islam, Hassan Al-Bana and Ayatollah Khomeini, developed their Ideologies in Egypt and Iran: 4) two of the main Islamic universities are in Egypt, Al-azhar, and Iran, Qom seminary, which play an essential role in promulgating and producing the religious beliefs among society, to shape their preferences.

The **third chapter**, methodological and theoretical framework, will clarify how this thesis is going to answer the main question. This project will use social movements theory (SMT) as a theoretical tool to analysise the Shia movement's process in Iran. As SPI is a working Shia movement, the SMTs can provide a fundamental framework to study Islamic and Shia movements. In this chapter, some of the key features of SMT, which were discussed in the first section, are reviewed and then a new structure based on the goals of the current study will be proposed. Finally, the three main features of SMTs will be discussed, using a new format: origins of social movements (SMs), mobilisers of SMs, and fuel of SMs. The third section will try to explain some differences between Islamic movements and SMs, and then will analyse the key features of Islamic movements. Later in the chapter, the methodology, which is mainly based on secondary data, will be discussed to validate the sources and the method of data collection.

The **fourth chapter** in the first part a historical view of the emergence of Shia political Islam in Iran during the Safavid and Qajar dynasties will be presented to demonstrate how the deep social roots of SPI have formed in Iranian society. Although the Islamic revolution in 1979 was a key step in setting up a Shia government in Iran, the emergence of Political Shia can actually be traced back to the Safavid period. The second part of this chapter will investigate the key origins of the Shia movement in both periods to explain how maintaining these origins helped to revive Shia political Islam. The first part of the chapter investigates some of main origins of SPI, especially after the coup d'état in 1953, with the emergence of new Shia movements under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. The second part will explain how some of these key origins were reproduced and highlighted by the Islamic government after the revolution.

Chapter five will investigate the role of two organisations, the Mosque and IRGC, which have played an essential role in the emergence, success, and continuance of the Islamic

revolution in Iran. The mosque and Hussainiya need to be regarded as the base of the revolution, where the clergy taught people, mobilised them against the Shah's regime, and encouraged them to follow Islamism (Parsa 1989). The other organisation is the IRGC (Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps), a revolutionary organisation established after the 1979 revolution to protect the Islamic revolution.

The next three chapters will analyse the impact of religious and financial resources on the Shia movement. **Chapter six** will show the importance of Shia values and symbols in the survival and continuation of SPI. Some of the key rituals and symbols such as Ashura, Mourning ceremonies, and Heyat will be deliberated as the main religious sources of Fuel to be utilised by the mobilisers to run the Shia movements. Also, this chapter will examine the role of Shia rituals in promoting Shia values such as Jihad and martyrdom culture which are influential in the survival of SPI. In **chapter seven** the impact of financial resources, especially petrodollars, on the Shia movement will be examined. This chapter will explain how the oil revenue that increased the distance between poor and rich during the 1970s helped Islamists to promote themselves; how petrodollars helped Shia groups to survive; and how they used oil money to finance their Islamic institutions and activities.

This project will analyse the Green Movement in **chapter eight**, to apply the mechanism of survival of Shia political Islam which was discussed in previous chapters. This chapter will investigate how the factors mentioned supported the Shia movement against the Green Movement, which proved to be a serious internal threat against the Islamic state. The success of the government and IRGC in suppressing this movement shows how the Islamic government can utilise Shia values and other resources to mobilise people in order to suppress rivals or threats.

Chapter 2. Islamism and Shia Political Islam in literature

The core debate of this project is about discussing how Shia political Islam in Iran has survived for more than four decades. The basic assumption in this debate is that SPI has not failed in practice. Hence the main purpose of this chapter is to verify this assumption through investigating and critiquing the existing literature. This section will criticise some studies such as Roy and Bayat's arguments about the failure of political Islam.

The first step will explain the meaning of Islamism by analysing the various existing approaches of Islamism and political Islam through reviewing the relevant literature. The various interpretations of these concepts are complicated because they are often used in different contexts to explain the behaviour of Islamist groups around the world. Hence this section will clarify the variances in meaning between Islamism and violence, Islamism and fundamentalism, and Islamism and Islam to avoid any misunderstanding over these terms.

After clarification about the terms, the intellectual background of SPI will be discussed for a deeper understanding of Shiism. As the ideologues' thoughts are mainly based on primary sources such as the Qur'an, firstly some Qur'anic interpretations of the politics will be discussed. Then, what some Shia leaders think about politics in Islam will be indicated. Moreover, some of the key features of Shia Islam like Jihad, Martyrdom, and *Velayat-e Faqih* will be extracted from the thoughts of three influential SPI leaders who had strategic roles in the Islamic revolution – Ayatollah Khomeini, Ayatollah Motahari, and Ali Shariati.

The next parts will criticise current studies about the failure of political Islam in general and the state of political Islam in Iran in particular to investigate whether or not it has failed. Also, the state of political Islam in Egypt and rise and fall of the Muslim Brotherhood will be discussed to compare the political Islam process in both countries. This comparison will specify the meaning of the failure of Islamism, as happened in Egypt after the Arab uprising.

2.1. What is Islamism?

To understand the situation of political Islam, as a first step the meaning of this term should be clarified because Islamism or political Islam has been used broadly in the literature, especially after 9/11, and has been interpreted in various different ways by scholars, journalists and commentators. Whereas the terms Islamism and political Islam have been used synonymously in most of existing literature (Bayat 2013b: 2), (Fuller 2003), (Ayoob 2004), this project has applied these two terms equally, too.

 The rise of Islamic and extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda and IS make the meaning of Islamism more complicated and have raised many questions about the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon. These questions highlight the complexity of terms that are used every day and yet there is no consensus over their meanings. Even from a theological point of view, the meaning of political Islam is complex because there is no clear definition of the concept either in the Qur'an or Hadith, or in traditional Islamic theological literature. To have a clear understanding of the term political Islam, a distinctioin between Islamism and Islam, Islamism and fundamentalism, and Islamism and violence is required.

The following section aims to provide a definition which is closest to the nature of Shia political Islam. For this, the definition of Islam in existing studies will be presented and criticised.

2.1.1. Defining Islamism

 As there is no universal definition of Islamism, Islamism and political Islam have been defined from different viewpoints by scholars according to their perspective regarding Islamic groups. This part will present and critique the definitions of Graham Fuller, Oliver Roy, Asef Bayat, Salwa Ismail, and Mohammed Ayoob to provide a meaning which is closer to the nature of Shia political Islam.

- Fuller uses Islamism and political Islam synonymously and suggests that "an Islamist believes 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

seeks to implement this idea in some fashion". He argues that the term political Islam should be neutral in character and broad enough to cover different spectra of Islamist expression from peaceful to violent, modernist to traditionalist, moderate to radical, authoritarian to democratic (Fuller 2003: 194).

- Oliver Roy writes "what I call Islamism is the brand of modern political Islamic fundamentalism that claims to recreate a true Islamic society, not simply by imposing sharia, but by establishing first an Islamic state through political action. Islamists see Islam not as mere religion, but as a political ideology that should reshape all aspects of society" (Roy and Volk 1994: 58) .

- Asef Bayat states "I take Islamism to refer to those ideologies and movements that strive to establish some kind of an Islamic order -a religious state, sharia law, and moral codes in Muslim societies and communities" (Bayat 2013b: 5).

- Salwa Ismail defines Islamism as a term that encompasses Islamist politics and re-Islamisation. She states "the term 'Islamist politics' is used here to refer to the activities of organisations and movements that mobilise and agitate in the political sphere while deploying signs and symbols from Islamic traditions. It is also used to refer to political activism involving informal groupings that (re)construct repertoires and frames of reference from Islamic traditions" (Ismail 2003: 2)

- Mohammed Ayoob considers Fuller's definition to be too broad and general to be able to provide an explanation of political activities under the name of Islam. He defines political Islam as "a form of instrumentalisation of Islam by individuals, groups and organizations that pursue political objectives" (Ayoob 2009: 2)

The definitions of Fuller and Roy are based on at least five presumptions.

1. The first is that they concentrate on a religious perspective of Islamism and assume a close relationship between politics and religion in Islam. They try to describe Islamism as a political form of Islam which aims to establish an Islamic order in the world.

2. Secondly, they describe Islamism as a monolithic phenomenon without attention to the varieties of political Islam in different countries; for instance, it is clear that Islamism in Egypt and Iran are dissimilar. In the other words, Sunni political Islam

is not the same as the Shia one. The Shia concept uses symbols such as Ashura while the Sunni one does not.

3. The third assumption is that Islamists have set rigid objectives to achieve their goals through establishing an Islamic state; while some groups of Islamists such as the Muslim Brotherhood have changed their strategies and defined varied objectives in different periods according to the prevailing situation.

4. One of the main and most common assumptions in these definitions is the relationship between Islamism and violence because they infer that violence is an integral part of Islamism.

5. Finally, it has been assumed that a feature of Islamist parties is anti-democracy because they believe that an Islamic state is under God's sovereignty rather than that of the populace. Hence Islamists believe that their legitimacy is from God, not from the ballot-box.

Fuller, Roy, Bayat and other scholars define Islamism according to their own purposes. These definitions are not precise enough to present Shia political Islam because:

1) They are not sufficiently clear in their explanations of the differentiation between fundamentalism and Islamism. Labelling the Muslim Brotherhood and Al-Qaeda as Islamists is misleading. The section below will explain more fully that Shia political Islam is not a fundamentalist movement because it is following some modern phenomena such as democracy, although its interpretation of democracy is different from that of the West.

2) They do not consider the differences among the many faces of political Islam. How can we have a rational understanding of Islamism in the Middle East when its meaning is broadly defined and we are not able to separate Islamism, for instance, in Saudi Arabia and Iran? A broad definition to cover both Sunni and Shia Islamism is not enough to evaluate the situation of political Islam in Iran. Therefore, a narrowed-down definition needs to be provided to be able to explain Shiism;

3) These definitions do not distinguish clearly between Islam as a religion and Islamism as a way of achieving political order, nor do they differentiate between Muslims and Islamists. For instance, Asef Bayat in his post-Islamism theory notes that "post-Islamism is expressed in the idea of fusion between Islam (as a

personalized faith) and individual freedom and choice" (Bayat 1996: 45). He argues that phenomena such as the redevelopment of Tehran municipality, the growth of Islamic feminism, and budding new thoughts in the 1980s represented the post-Islamism trend. The emergence of these phenomena paved the way for reformists to oppose conservatism. Appling modern symbols or paying less attention to Islamic rituals could not be understood as an anti-Islamism approach. Therefore, it seems that among the above definitions those of Ismail and Ayoob are closer to the reality of Shia political Islam in the Middle East. Ismail's definition clearly shows the importance to activists of using signs and symbols of Islamic tradition to mobilise people in the political sphere. However, she does not mention the goals of these activities, while Ayoob does.

Finally, this study combines Ismail and Ayoob's definitions to present an operational definition of political Islam to steer this research. *Political Islam here refers to the activities of an individual, organisation and movements that use and interpret Islamic values, signs and symbols to enforce or emasculate specific Islamic beliefs for their political objectives*.

According to the presented definition of Islamism or political Islam, the correlation or overlap of this concept with other terms like fundamentalism, violence, and Islam needs to be examined to differentiate the meaning of political Islam from other terms which have been used by scholars to explain some Islamists' behaviour. Clarification of these terms is necessary to have a deeper understanding of whether this project should be called Islamism or Political Islam. For example, once it is explained that Islam as a religion is different from Islamism, it will be clear that paying less attention to some Islamic practices, does not necessarily mean that Islamism is failing. However, the following subsection will discuss the differences in these concepts.

2.1.2. Does Islamism mean Fundamentalism?

The diversity of the meanings of Islamism and Fundamentalism needs to be considered. These two concepts have different interpretations according to the writer's point of view. Islamic fundamentalism and Jihadism are usually used by commentators who want to show the violent face of Islam. For example, former US President Obama's counter-terrorism adviser, John Brennan, treated Islamism and Jihadism alike and defined

Islamism as inherently violent (Tibi 2012: 137), while all Islamists are not fundamentalists. The term fundamentalism refers to Islamic groups who "follow a narrow reading of the Quran and traditions of the Prophet" (Fuller 2003: xii). Fundamentalists want to apply all Islamic laws in the same way as in the original period of Islam, also they are insistent and radical in applying Islamic law in society (Fuller 2003: xii). But the terms Islamism and political Islam refer more to a political attitude in Islam.

The term "fundamentalism" is rooted to a group of protestant Christians who suggested returning to the "fundamentals" of Christian belief and the literal text of the Bible to oppose modernist and liberal values. Hence many western scholars use this term to define and explain Islamic movements and Islamist activities.

The Iranian revolutionary movement should not be considered only as a fundamentalist movement. This interpretation of the Islamic revolution will only highlight the religious side of it. After the Islamist victory in 1979, scholars such as Bernard Lewis incorrectly applied the notion of fundamentalism to explain the new Shia movement as being the same as other Islamic movements. He articulated that the use of this term is established and must be accepted, despite the differences between Muslim movements and fundamentalism (Lewis 2010: 53). "Fundamentalist" is a Christian term, and denotes certain Protestant churches and organisations; more particularly those that oppose the liberal and modernist theologians, who tend to have a more critical, historical view of scripture. Lewis argues that among Muslim theologians there is as yet no such liberal or modernist approach to the Qur'an, and all Muslims, with regard to their interpretation of the text of the Qur'an, are in principle fundamentalists (Lewis cited in Kramer 2003). They base themselves not only on the Qur'an, but also on the "Traditions of the Prophet, and on the corpus of transmitted theological and legal learning" (Lewis cited in Kramer 2003). Lewis's view cannot be applied to the Iranian revolution. He calls the Islamic revolution in Iran a fundamentalist movement (Lewis 2010: 53), while in theory, during its emergence, it was a modern revolution. During the struggle against the Shah's regime many different groups, such as the Tudeh and Liberal parties, from various political standpoints were campaigning against the Shah. Ayatollah Khomeini, as a theological leader, confirmed his belief in modern political principles such as democracy, women's rights, and freedom

of speech. For example, he endorsed women's political rights. In a sermon on 19 September 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini said "Women have the right to intervene in politics, It is their duty" (Kian 1997). Although he had criticised the Shah's decision in 1963 regarding the voting rights of women, Kian argues that the participation of women in revolutionary activities changed his mind (Kian 1997).

The constitution of the Islamic government indicates that the Shia movement believes in political and religious freedom, at least on paper. Article 26 provides "formation of parties, societies, political or professional associations, as well as religious societies, whether Islamic or pertaining to one of the recognized religious minorities, is permitted provided they do not violate the principles of independence, freedom, national unity, the criteria of Islam, or the basis of the Islamic Republic" (Cited inFairbanks 1998: 20).

In contrast with Lewis, Esposito argues that the fundamentalist label is not the right categorisation to be used for the entire Islamic movement. He maintains that Islamic fundamentalism cannot explain the different faces of Islamic movements, stating "fundamentalism often has been regarded popularly as referring to those who are literalists and wish to return to and replicate the past. In fact, few individuals or organizations in the Middle East fit such a stereotype. Indeed, many fundamentalist leaders have had the best education, enjoy responsible positions in society, and are adept at harnessing the latest technology to propagate their views and create viable modern institutions such as schools, hospitals, and social service agencies" (Esposito 1999: 5). Although Esposito believes in distinguishing between the many facets of the Islamic movement, his understanding of Shia Islamism is not clear when he places Ayatollah Khomeini and Saddam Hussain in the same group as Islamic fundamentalism, while their Ideas about Islam and the Islamic state were completely different. Although both leaders used religion for their political goals, Saddam and the Ba'thi party were following an Arab nationalist ideology. The greater concentration of Saddam on religion as an instrument during the 1990s should not be interpreted as a shift from Arab nationalism to Islamism (Helfont 2018: 2-5). While Saddam was using religion for his nationalist approach, Ayatollah Khomeini was only thinking about establishing an Islamic state in Iran and other Islamic countries (Khomeini 2013:29).

However, Islamism is different from fundamentalism although fundamentalism could be understood as a type of Islamism because both are utilising Islamic values and symbols for their political order. If Islamism is to be understood as a fundamentalism, it could be argued that Islamism has failed in Iran because the Shiism introduced by Ayatollah Khomeini is not a fundamentalist approach to Islam.

2.1.3. Islamism and violence

Does Islamism equal violence? The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York attracted the attention of scholars and commentators who applied the concepts of Islamism to explain the rise of this new force through analysing the relationship between Muslim, Islam, politics and violence. This tragedy highlighted the connection between Islamism and violence and led many non-Muslims to implicate Islam as a violent religion (Puniyani 2005: 98). Hence some observers, especially from western countries, used the term Islamism pejoratively, and focused on the many violent activities perpetrated by some extremist Islamic groups to equate Islamism with violence (Martin and Barzegar 2010: 53-54).

A violent approach to Islamism could reduce its definition to applying only to extremist groups. The term Islamism has been linked more with violence by western society since 9/11. Donald Emmerson epistemologically argues that the term Islamism, unfairly or not, has become associated with violence because of western propaganda via the media. He rejects this perspective because he believes that a violent approach to Islamism cannot cover all its aspects – the term Islamism should represent all Islamist groups, not just extremist groups. Donald Emmerson refers to James Piscatori's definition of Islamists as "Muslims who are committed to public action to implement what they regard as an Islamic agenda" and explains three parts of this definition to show in practice and theory that Islamism is not necessarily related to violence (Martin and Barzegar 2010: 27-29).

Tibi criticises western perspectives of Islamism, particularly those who connect Islamism with violence and those who focus only on peaceful Islamists as being moderate (Tibi 2012: 11). This argument shows that the nature of Islamism is not synonymous with violence, although in some cases violence has been used for political purposes. There are different perspectives of Islamism. Some researchers, especially in Muslim

communities, reject the relationship between Islam and violence, believing Islam to be a religion of peace, although some adherents, as in other religions, can be violent.

In addition to the 9/11 attack, recent events in the Middle East, especially in Syria and Iraq since 2012, have highlighted the violent actions of Islamists. The brutal behaviour of the Islamic State (ISIS) has propagated the violent perspective of Islam, which could distort a profound understanding of Islamism and political Islam; equating Islamism with violence will lead to missing some other facets of Islamism. Although it is not possible to separate the violent actions of extremist groups from Islamism, as Tibi argues, not all Islamism groups are extremists. It is, therefore, very important to separate the behaviour of extremist groups from other Islamists in order to have a better understanding of Islamism. Hence in this study, the term Islamism or political Islam does not refer to extremists.

2.1.4. Islamism or Islam

Are Islamism and Islam different? How can these two terms be distinguished? Some scholars do not differentiate between these terminologies and analyse Islamism as an integral part of Islam, this perspective misdirecting the understanding of Political Islam (See Tibi 2012: 3-6).

Islamism is a political perspective of Islam. Bassam Tibi's book, *Islamism and Islam*, is an important work which tries to present a comprehensive definition of Islamism through emphasising the differences between Islam and Islamism. Although some Islamists deny any difference between Islam and Islamism, Tibi refutes those western scholars who believe that all Muslims can be identified by Islamism. He avows that the essential difference is that "Islamism is about political order, not faith. Nonetheless, Islamism is not mere politics but religionized politics". He stresses that religionised politics means "the promotion of political order that is believed to emanate from the will of Allah and is not based on popular sovereignty. Islam itself does not do this, as a faith it implies certain political values but does not presuppose a particular order of government" (Tibi 2012: 1).

Pipes distinguishes between traditional Islam and Islamism. He states "traditional Islam seeks to teach humans how to live in accord with God's will, whereas Islamism aspires

to create a new order of faith-based totalitarianism" (Pipes 2000). He argues that traditional Islam is self-confident, emphasises individuals, and is a personal credo while Islamism is deeply defensive, emphasises communities, and is a political ideology. Like Pipes, Fuller considers distinctions between Islam and Islamism. He argues that Islam is a religion not a political ideology. "Islam may inspire Muslims to formulate visions of political Islam, but Islam is the essence and remains independent of all political interpretations". "Islam, as the faith of one-quarter of mankind, is a source of inspiration, explanation, guidance, solace, and fulfilment for life in this world and beyond, but Islamism has some aspects of political ideology" (Fuller 2003: 14-16). So, based on this view of Islamism and political Islam, the Islamic groups not involved in political power could not be defined under Islamism.

Once Islamism has been separated from Islam, the fall of Islamic values, ritual, symbols and beliefs in a society will not interpreted as the decline of Islamism. Although, in some Islamic countries like Iran, especially in recent decades, respect of some Islamic rituals has been reduced and the number of people who attend the mosque has dropped, it could not be understood that Islamism has failed.

Finally, by investigating various interpretations, this section has conceptualised the term political Islam according to the aims of this research. Hence the term political Islam does not equate with fundamentalism, nor does it define the behaviour only of extremist groups, and it does not mean Islam. Hence, when this project talks about the fall or raise of political Islam: 1) it is not about the situation of fundamentalists in a specific country; 2) it is not about the increase and decrease of violent activities or extremist groups; and 3) it does not mean the fall or rise of Islam. However, this section has tried to provide a clear understanding of the meaning of political Islam, and to distinguish this concept from fundamentalism, Islam, and violence.

2.2. Shia Political Islam's thoughts

The Islamic thoughts that led to the emergence of SPI are rooted in the beginnings of Islam, and the Qur'an. The founding of the Islamic state by Prophet Mohamad in 622 after his migration to Medina (Nation), to unify Muslims under an Ummah, brought a political approach to Islam. As Esposito notes "under Mohamad's guidance, Islam in Medina crystalized as both a faith and socio-political system" (Esposito 1998: 1-7).   Prophet Mohamad applied his political power to transform the tribal society into a united Ummah. He was both a political and religious leader, being head of state, Prophet, chief judge, and commander of the army. His power and authority were based on the Qur'an: "whoever obeys the Prophet, obeys God" (Q, 4:80); "Obey God and Prophet" (Q, 3:32); "those who swear covenant to you (Mohamad), covenant with God" (Q, 48:10). Hence the primary thoughts of political Islam are based on the Prophet Mohamad.

There is a controversial debate over the role of politics in Islam and its main sources like the Qur'an. Some scholars such as Ayubi reject the association of Islam with politics. He claims that "the original Islamic sources likes Quran and Hadith have very little to say on matters of government and the state" (Ayubi 2003: 2). However, whether or not Islam has an association with politics is not the main question here. What is being investigated is the interpretation of some Shia scholars regarding the role of Islam in politics. This approach of Islam had an important role in the development of Shia politics in Iran. According to numerous Shia scholars like Ayatollah Tabataba'i, Ayatollah Khomeini, or Amid Zanjani, there are many verses in the Qur'an which directly or indirectly talk about government and state. Although there is a discourse over the political interpretation of some verses in the Qur'an, a group of Shia scholars who highlighted the *Velayat* and *Emamat* as a principle of Islam believe there is a political approach in their interpretation. For instance, the Qur'an invites the Prophet to establish an Islamic government (verse 49 of Surah 5) "*And judge, [O Muhammad], between them by what Allah has revealed and do not follow their inclinations and beware of them*" (Samsudin and Hamjah 2015: 31). Moreover, Seyed Mohammad Hossein Tabataba'i in his book, *Velayat V Zeamat dar Islam*, refers to the Qur'an (Q 2:213 & 30:30) and argues that establishment of an Islamic government is essential (1396, no1: 172-177). Other religious scholars like Makarem

Shirazi (Makarem Shirazi 1995 32), with reference to certain verses, argue that the Qur'an emphasises the establishment of a government to lead the people. Therefore the Qur'an, and its interpretation by Shia scholars, should be understood as the origin of thought in political Islam. One of the scholars who extracted the principles of Islamic thought from the Qur'an is Abbas-Ali Amid Zanjani.

Zanjani (Zanjani 1987) argues that the Qur'an is the root of political thought in Islam. He believes the Qur'an presents and explains the principles of political thought which could not be distinguished from faith and the Muslim way of life. He numbers these principles as:

- divine caliphate: according to the Qur'an the human is the successor of God on earth to establish God's sovereignty, "when your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority'" (Q, 2:30);

- United *Ummah*: the concept of *Ummah* as a political unity is based on the Qur'an;

- Leadership and *Imamat*: Islamic *Ummah* needs a leader, *Imam*, who is elected by God to lead the people to happiness, "We made them leaders guiding by our command" (Q, 21:73);

- Jihad and martyrdom: Jihad is one of the controversial concepts in the Qur'an: there are more than 400 verses regarding Jihad and its rewards. This concept has been interpreted by different Islamic groups, especially extremist groups in order to mobilise young soldiers to fight for them: "*Those who believe, and suffer exile and strive with might and main, in Allah's cause, with their goods and their persons, have the highest rank in the sight of Allah. they are the people who will achieve*" (Q, 9:20);

- Human rights;

- Anti-oppression: the Qur'an emphasises reducing oppression in society and fighting against it, "neither you wrong any one nor be wronged yourselves" (Q, 2:279);

- Justice: raising justice in the world was one of the main objectives of Islam. Prophet Mohamad in the Qur'an cited that his main mission is doing justice, "I am commanded to do justice among you" (Q, 42:15). Developing justice in society has always been mentioned by Islamic scholars, especially Shia ones, as being the most important goal of Islamic government;

- Struggling for truth: the Qur'an encourages the people to fight against falsehood, promising that truth will prevail in the end. "We fling the truth (this Qur'an) against the falsehood (disbelief), so it destroys it" (Q, 21:18).

Although the concepts mentioned in the Qur'an could be interpreted in different ways, these principles and concepts are at the centre of political thought in Islam, especially in Shia. Some of these principles, like *Imamat* (leadership), show the difference between Shia and Sunni political thought. These terms provide a fundamental concept for political thought in Islam as influential religious scholars have applied them in their arguments to support different approaches in political Islam, to show the political aspects of Islam, and to mobilise the people to build a society according to these principles.

In addition to the Qur'an, Shia political Islam's thought can be understood through its leaders' vision. The idea of key religious leaders in the Islamic revolution like Motahari, Ayatollah Khomeini, Ayatullah Taliqani, and Ali Shariati who created and published SPI's thought in Iran, is essential to understanding the foundation and success of SPI. As discussed in the theoretical chapter about the crucial role of elites in social movements, these intellectual elites developed a practical notion of Islam in society and encouraged social forces to apply Islamic belief against the status quo. They transferred political Islam from theory to practice. The vision of these scholars is important to understanding the belief system of the Shia movement in Iran. Hence the paragraphs below are going to present key points from some of the influential leaders' canons.

2.2.1. Ayatollah Khomeini

The leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, was born on 24 September 1902 into a religious family in Kumayn. He started his religious study in Arak when he was 19 years' old. His first statement about the political situation was published

in a book, *Kash Al-Asrar*, in 1943, written two years after Reza Shah abdicated. He critiqued Reza Shah's policies against clerics and Islamic symbols and presented the primary idea for the *velayat-e faqih* doctrine (*Kashf Al-Asrar*: 125-145).

The political thoughts of Ayatollah Khomeini, which laid the foundation of the Islamic revolution, confronted the world with a new phenomenon: Shia political Islam. The following paragraphs will present some of the main characteristics of his political view:

- *Islam is a political religion*: the main feature of Ayatollah Khomeini's perspective of Islam is a political approach. He believed that Islam is not only a faith, it is a political system. He argued that Islam is totally political and modern politics is rooted in Islam. He cites that "Islam is the religion of politics with its all dimensions. It is very clear for those who have the least knowledge of political, economic and social aspects of Islam. Thus, anybody maintaining that religion is separate from politics, has no knowledge of religion and politics." (Khomeini 1982: Vol21:402). According to this view, he recommended that clerics become more involved in political issues and in religious rituals like Friday prayer and the Hajj. In his *Tahrir al-wasilah* book, he asserted that Imams in Friday sermons should talk about political issues and Muslim interest to inform prayers about the condition of other Muslim countries (Khomeini 2000: 234).

  Ayatollah Khomeini argued that the lives of Prophet Mohamad and the Imams indicate that religious leaders should not shy away from political issues. He notes "the Prophet's policies on internal and external affairs indicate that one of his tasks was his political activity" (Khomeini 1982: Vol20:111).

- *Islamic government*: one of the most significant political aspects of Ayatollah Khomeini was his conviction of the necessity of forming an Islamic government. He argued that not only is there no separation between religion and politics, but establishing an Islamic state is essential. In his treatise "*Islamic government: governance of the jurist*" he refers to the following reasons to explain why Islamic government is necessary during the absence of the Imam: 1) because Islam and Islamic law is a religion for all places and times, and an executive power is necessary to apply Islamic law. Otherwise the earth would be full of corruption and

injustice; 2) the tradition of Prophet Mohamad shows that Islamic government is essential because firstly he established a government himself, and secondly he chose a successor based on God's recommendation; 3) a set of rules is not enough to manage societies, therefore a magistrate is required to enforce these rules. For this God appointed the Prophet to administer religious laws. Hence, a governor and government were needed; 4) defending Islam and Islamic countries against colonialists is vital (Khomeini 2005: 26-51). The next question he raised was who could rule the Islamic government during the absence of Imam Mahdi. Ayatollah Khomeini presented the *Velayat-e Faqih* doctrine to answer this question.

- *Velayat-e Faqih doctrine (governance of the jurist)*: in the political history of Islam, this thesis theoretically is rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith. Although the theory of *Velayat-e Faqih* was not created by Ayatollah Khomeini, he applied it pragmatically and redefined it as the basis of Shia political Islam in Iran. This project is not going to investigate this doctrine juristically, but a brief explanation will show the function of the dominant political thoughts for governing in Shia.

Ayatollah Khomeini presents this idea for the first time in his book *Kashf Al-Asrar* and developed it later by writing further works such as *al-Bay, Islamic government: governance of the jurist, al-Rasil, Tahri, and al-Wasila,*

In *al-Bay*, Ayatollah Khomeini refers to the many hadith that support the idea of *Velayat-e Faqih (Khomeini and Ruhollah 2001: 467-486)*. He argues during the absence of Imam Mahdi a particular person needs to be the leader of the Islamic government. This person should possess at least the following two qualifications: he should be a just person (Justice); and have command over religious laws (*faqih*). He notes "*Islamic government is a legal government aiming at implementing the Divine law. Its objective is to bring about justice and execute divine laws among people. Thus the leader of such a state should fulfil two conditions, considered to be the basis of the state: knowledge of law and justice. The matter of efficiency and ability of management are contained in the knowledge of a ruler. This may be considered as a third condition ... Thus, leadership belongs to a just faqih*" (Khomeini and Ruhollah 2001: 464-466).

Although *Valy-e faqih* is not allowed to intervene in some specific areas, such as the private lives of people, its authority is unlimited. According to *Velayat-e Faqih* doctrine, if *Valy-e faqih* finds that it is in the interest of Muslims, the primary and secondary rules can be temporarily suspended. Ayatollah Khomeini in a letter to Ayatollah Khamenei when he was president cited that *"It is said that I held that government has authority but within the framework of Divine rule. Such assertion is against my ideas. If the authority of state is within the Divine derivative commandments, then, divine rule and absolute guardianship of the Prophet(s) should be meaningless ... State is a branch of the Prophet's absolute guardianship. It is one of the primary rules of Islam and is prior to all derivative commandments, like prayer, fasting and Hajj pilgrimage ... State can stop any issue whether ritualistic or non-ritualistic if it is against the interest of Islam."* (Khomeini 1982: Vol20:451).

Finally, some scholars like Abrahamian (1993: 13-39) argue that Ayatollah Khomeini's idea emanated from Marxism, because his appeal in public is based on real economic, political, and social grievances rather than theological themes. But the political thoughts of Ayatollah Khomeini show deep belief in the Islamisation of politics, economics and society. As the above paragraphs show, Ayatollah Khomeini's Idea about Islamic government is rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith (Khomeini 2005). So, there is no evidence to show that he was affected by Marxist doctrines.

2.2.2. Ayatollah Morteza Motahari (1920-1979)

Although Motahari was assassinated by the *forghan* group after the Iranian revolution in 1979, he had an influential effect on the emerging Islamic revolution. As Dabashi (2017) indicates, Motahari was the chief ideologue of the Islamic revolution. When he finished his initial study in Mashhad, he moved to Qom in 1936 to continue his study in Philosophy. At Qom, he was a classmate of Ayatollah Khomeini in some courses. By 1952 he had finished his study and left Qom for Tehran to start his teaching in Islamic studies. When the Shah's regime banned his lectureship in Tehran University, in 1965 he established *Hussainy-e Ershad,* as a religious organisation to propagate Shia beliefs which motivated

listeners to mobilise against the authoritarian regime. Unlike President Hasan Rohani, who believes Motahari was not interested in political Islam and expressed that "Motahari warned that revolutionary Islam is dangerous for the Islamic revolution" (Rohani 2016), Motahari as a close friend of Ayatollah Khomeini, was active in the political sphere and in his speech in *Hussainy-e Ershad* incited the action of the people against the unacceptable state of affairs. He said "one of the features of Islam is teaching its followers to reject and fight against undesirable situations. So what is the meaning of Jihad? It means if the current situation is not acceptable, you should not surrender and accept conditions, you should struggle against it to provide a desirable situation" (Motahari 1998: 55). The following paragraphs articulate his thoughts around some key factors such as the relationship between religion and politics, Jihad, and *Velayat*.

- *Religion and politics*: Motahari believed there is no contradiction between religion and politics. He said "Islam is a religion and at the same time an ideology to control a country" (Motahari 1998: 33). He rejected secularism arguing that it is a struggle by imperialists to separate religion from politics. He expressed that politics is a subset of religion in Shia thought (Motahari 1998: 25-26).

- *Jihad*: Motahari presented four lectures about Jihad in Al-Javad mosque in 1972. These lectures, collected in a book called *Jihad*, state that Jihad is a basic principle of Islam (Motahari 1985). He argued that the Qur'an (9:29) legitimises Jihad with the people of the book at such times that a war is started against them, when their invitation to Islam is stopped, and when others are tyrannised. He said that Jihad is a basic principle of Islam. In his third lecture, he expounded on Jihad for the defence of human rights. Motahari illuminated his point by giving the example of the Algerian war against French colonialists and discussed that this kind of Jihad, for sacred values like freedom and human rights, is legitimised (Motahari 1985). However, in his lectures Motahari propagated the notion that Jihad is necessary to be freed of an oppressive regime. This perspective of Jihad motivated the people to fight for their rights and sacred values, and to achieve them or be martyred.

- *Velayate-e Fagih:* Although Motahari's ideas about *Velayat-e Faqih* can be interpreted in different ways, his explanations about leadership of the Islamic government during the absence of the twelfth Imam shows how he highlighted the

role of the Islamic Jurist in running the Islamic government. He propounded that although during absences of the twelfth Imam nobody is appointed by God to rule society, the Islamic Jurist could govern Islamic society as a successor to the absent Imam (Motahari 1994: 98). He supported the clergy's role in Islamic movements and stated that only clerics can lead an Islamic movement (Motahari 1998: 71). Although Motahari did not believe in the absolute Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist, he encouraged people to follow their Islamic leader, especially Ayatollah Khomeini, if they wanted to be released from the authoritarian regime.

However, Ayatollah Motahari as an Islamic philosopher was an ideologue of SPI. His lectures and books provide a fundamental basis of Political Shia thought, as Ayatollah Khomeini articulated "I believe Ayatollah Motahari should be known as a person who had a significant role in reviving Islamic thoughts, who was one of the most affective scholars to survive the role of Islam in society" (cited in Seifi 2010).

2.2.3. Ali Shariati (1933-1977)

Ali Shariati was born in 1933 into a religious family in Mashhad. When he finished his foundation study in Arabic language at the University of Mashhad, he won a state scholarship to Paris to do his PhD in sociology and Islamic history. He returned to Iran in 1965, was arrested and spent six months in prison. Later, in 1967, he returned to Tehran and began lecturing at *Husainy-e Ershad*, where he presented his effective idea about the power of religion in governing a society, and his key theories such as political government, martyrdom, and Shia government.

Because Shariati was a non-clergy ideologue, his thoughts about the role of religion in politics have been criticised in recent decades by authors like Akbar Gangi and Abbas Milani. Gangi (2011) was a follower of Shariati in the 1970s but he introduces him later as an Islamic Marxist. Gangi denounced Shariati's Idea of the authority of Shia. Abbas Milani, the director of the Iranian Studies programme at Stanford University, in an interview with *Voice of America* admires Gangi's attack on Shariati and argues that Shariati had paved the way for a Shia government in Iran (Milani 2010). However, these kinds of critique are based on the behaviour of the Islamic government in recent decades. Hence this project is not going to criticise Shariati's thoughts, but will investigate them

because, as an ideologue, he had an important role in the emergence of Shia political Islam in Iran.

Ali Shariati was one of the actors behind the Islamic revolution. His lectures in *Husainy-e Ershad* on the history of Islam, Shia symbols, and sociology attracted many students and new Islamic intellectuals who played a crucial role in the revolution. In 1973 about six thousand registered to attend his lectures in *Husainy-e Ershad*. His books and writings were widely published and the recorded tapes of his lectures circulated among young students. He quickly became a teacher of revolution (Khalili 2006: 80). Shariati's main impact was in modernising Shia concepts like justice, martyrdom, and equality in Iranian society to prove that Shiism is the only way of salvation from oppression.

- *Religion and politics*: Islam was at the centre of Shariati's discourse. From his point of view, Islam was a complete ideology containing the social, political, and economic aspects of social life. He argues that only Islam and Shia can protect Iranian society from foreign threats. He persuaded his followers that the only way to stand against a superpower is a return to Shiism (Shariati 1976: 19). As Dehbashi notes "for Shariati Shiism had a built-in mechanism of ideological preparation and political mobilization" (Dabashi 2017: 23). Shariati propagated Shia as a legitimised religion which is able to provide justice and a modern government. He rejected secularism and introduced Shiism as a "complete political party". He stressed that "the Prophet Muhammad had come to establish not just a religious community but an umma in constant motion towards progress and social justice" (Shariati 1977: 27).

  Shariati's political thought is based on the notion of return. In this theory, he argues that third world countries need to return to themselves via a national revolution to end all forms of exploitation and imperial domination. In his monograph, *Bazgasht be khishta,* he explains that a return to Iranian nationality or Iranian tradition will not solve our problem. We need to go back to Islamic culture, to our active religion which is rooted in us (Shariati 1977). Although Shariati founded the solution of a return to Islamic culture, his opinion about the Islamic state is complicated as he argues in *Religion against Religion* that the religious state is a clerical oligarchy

(Mahdavi 2011). It looks as though he divided the clergy into two categories and recognised a religious state as a state which is ruled only by the clergy.

- *Conceptualising Martyrdom*: Shariati is known as a preacher of martyrdom culture. He propagates the culture of martyrdom among young people through interpretation of Ashura. In his book, *Husain Varese Adam*, he cites that martyrdom is the heart of history. He argues that as the heart pumps the blood in the body, the martyr pumps life into a society which is involved in corruption (Shariati 1986: 204). He denotes that in Shia history, martyrdom has one of the highest values and an animator. Hence Shariati's lectures about martyrdom had a significant impact on promoting a martyrdom culture in Iranian society. For example, when he finished his lecture about martyrdom in *Narmak* Mosque in Tehran in 1972, many people protested against the Shah's regime. Shariati had a crucial role in publicising a culture of martyrdom which encourages young people to protest against an authoritarian regime without fear of death.

- *Valayat-e faqih*: Shariati in a series of lectures which are collected in *Umat v Emamat* (Nation and Imamat), discusses the role of the Imam in society. He argues that Imamat as the basis of Shia is one of the most important principles of Islam (Shariati 1968: 1). Although Shariati did not support the *Valayat-e Faqih* theory, he believes an Islamic leadership should govern society (Abdolkarimi 2015). He rejected western democracy and presented a form of Islamic government which needs to be led by an Islamic Jurist (Shariati 1968: 55).

Shariati's thought about political Islam is controversial: from one side he was known as the architect of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, on other side, he always critiqued the role of the clergy in government while also emphasising the role of Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist in leading Islamic society. Although Shariati was in some ways against the clergy being involved in politics, he emphasised that referring to Islam is the best means of being released from a tyrannic regime (Mahdavi 2011). Shariati struggled to introduce Islam as a comprehensive and revolutionary Ideology to be compared with Marxism and liberalism. He provided a redemptive image of Shia in the midst of a curious generation which was looking for an instrument against authoritarianism. His lectures, therefore, were influential

among students. For example, *MohamadJavad Tondgoyan*, (former minister of oil who became a martyr in the Iran-Iraq war) said that Shariati's lecture regarding Islam and humans in Ahwaz University in 1974 changed the University into a revolutionary centre, even though some students had been following Marxism before (Kashmari 2014). Ayatollah Behesheti also affirmed the importance of Shariati's thought in the revolution. Beheshti mentioned that Shariati created a revolutionary and Islamic atmosphere which attracted educated and lyrical youth to follow the Islamic revolution (Beheshti 2016: 108).

Consequently, the theoretical origin of SPI can be traced back to: 1) the main Islamic sources, like the Qur'an, and 2) the thoughts of some key Ideologues of SPI such as Ayatollah Khomeini, Ayatollah Motahari and Ali Shariati. Although the Qur'an is not talking about politics directly, some verses have been utilised by interpreters to show that Islam is a political religion. The mentioned ideologues used these verses (see Q 2:213 & 30:30) to legitimise the Islamic government. The way that these ideologues were thinking about Islamic government was the basis of establishing Shia political Islam in Iran and paved the way for the Islamic revolution in 1979. The role of Islam in the political arena, from the Safavid dynasty onwards, has had a significant impact on these Ideological opinions, so the next section will consider the development of the Shia Movement historically.

2.3. The fall or rise of Islamism

The main objective of this research is to explain how Shia political Islam in Iran has continued during last four decades despite internal and international threats. The key assumption of this statement is that Shia political Islam has not failed in Iran. The following chapter is going to investigate the Islamism situation in Iran. For this, the paragraph below will present the current debates over the fall or rise of Islamism and will critique them later.

It should be noted here that the fall or rise of Islamism is a comparative term because the level of Islamism could not be measured, for example, by statistics. As the theoretical chapter will discuss, Islamism is behaving like a movement. A movement could decline by losing of its members, but it does not mean that this movement has failed completely since some of its members are still active. But according to this thesis's definition of

political Islam, while a movement like the Shia Movement in Iran still holds political power and is achieving its political objectives, this movement has not failed although it might have lost its majority in society.

The key literature around the rise or fall of Islamism will be presented in this section to highlight the the existing scholarly debate, and to provide a deeper understanding of the state of Islamism in some Islamic countries, especially in Iran. The main debate here is about Oliver Roy's argument regarding the failure of political Islam. This section will discuss Roy's claim and its critics. In the following, the current state of political Islam in Iran will be examined, as this research will investigate the reason for the survival of Islamism in Iran. The Egyptian paradigm will be considered because the Muslim Brotherhood is a prime example illustrating the meaning of the failure of Islamism, even though it remains a well-organised faction among other Islamic movements. The rise and fall of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt can show how Sunni Islamism was unable to sustain its movements and retain political power because it was unable to mobilise its followers against the militia. Highlighting the Muslim Brotherhood is only to clarify the meaning of the failure of political Islam, as the MB was not able to achieve its political goal: establishing the government.

In 1992 Oliver Roy published his first book, *The Failure of Political Islam*, and asserts his thesis that "Islamism which has faded into neo-fundamentalism is not a geostrategic factor: it will neither unify the Muslim world nor change the balance of power in the Middle East" (Roy and Volk 1994: 194). Islamists in most Islamic countries have melded into the existing model of state. He claims that Islamist movements have been reduced to only a few neo-fundamentalist groups because they have lost their revolutionary characteristics. But, he did not clarify how Islamist movements lost these traits. Although he illustrates that these movements were not able to adapt to the new modern phenomena, it does not mean that they lost their revolutionary characteristics. Clearly, it would seem that Roy did not clarify the differentiations between Islamism and fundamentalism.

Why, in Roy's opinion, is Islamism declining? He recounts several reasons to show how Islamism has lost its capability to present a political agenda in the new era. The first reason is that Islamists were unable to create a new model for society in opposition to

western modernity; they could not adapt their Islamic system to new social phenomena such as educated youth, or an urbanised mass. Hence, the only thing which has remained from Islamism is "sharia and only sharia" (Roy and Volk 1994: 195).

Roy brings many examples from Algeria, Sudan, Malaysia and Afghanistan to show how national identities have dominated Islamic identity, which means that Islamism has not been able to move beyond nationalism. In term of the Islamists' relations with the West, he claims that neo-fundamentalists took a defensive position because they could not redefine their relations with other religions and modern societies so they were unable, culturally, to incorporate modernity. Roy writes "The culture that threatens Muslim society is neither Jewish nor Christian; it is a world culture of consumption and communication, a culture that is secular, atheist, and ultimately empty; it has no values or strategies, but it is already here, in the cassette and the transistor, present in the most remote village" (Roy and Volk 1994: 203).

Roy highlights some bleak societies, such as Saudi Arabia, arguing that Islamism has not provided an attractive urban space, especially for young people, by creating Islamic leisure activities; they could not establish new social institutions, except mosques, to absorb the younger generation. As a result people in Islamic societies look towards western modernity, which can respond to their desires, so that Islamism is losing its social basis (Roy and Volk 1994: 195-197).

While Islamism was a response to colonialism and military intervention, neo-fundamentalists faced the new demands of westernisation and Americanisation. Although Islamists have always striven to reject international culture, sometimes they have had to accept it; for example, the leader of FIS in Algeria proposed replacing French with English in Algerian schools. Roy also argues that Islam is losing its religious authenticity because "the political victory of Islamism is the end of true devotion": mosques are full of volunteers during demonstrations to mobilise protestors against a state, but they empty once Islamism takes power (Roy and Volk 1994: 197-199). Although mosque attendance could be understood as less participation in Islamic rituals, it does not necessarily mean Islamism is losing its political power. This argument could arise from Roy's misunderstanding of Islam and Islamism.

Roy in his more recent work argues that Islamic movements that attempted to recreate Islamic states and unite the ummah (Islamic nation) were not successful in establishing true Islamic states because of their inaccurate conceptual framework, challenging their perception of politics and nationalisation of Islamism. Most Islamic movements tend to express national interest rather than Islamic ideology, despite of their primary claim to be supranational (Roy 2004: 61-62).

While Roy interprets the advent of post-Islamism as showing how new nationalist tendencies replacing Islamic sentiments have diluted Islamism and dissociated the religious field from the political, Salwa Ismail rejects Roy's notion and assesses his argument on two analytical levels. At the first level, she refers to the geopolitical and strategic successes of Islamism and she brings evidence to illustrate how Islamists have been successful in achieving some of their declared objectives and goals. She mentions that Islamist groups, like other political activists, have changed their goals, as the militant objectives of Islamists in the 1980s and 1990s were different. She indicates that taking up arms to support Afghan resistance and Iranian efforts to export the Islamic revolution in the 1980s shows how they expanded their efforts to reconstitute the ummah. At the national level, she highlights some Islamic groups in Egypt, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, which have been successful in achieving their political goals via legal channels. In terms of strategic success, she instantiates the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the al-Islah v al-Tajdid party in Morocco to demonstrate how these organisations have changed their strategies to achieve their goals: from militant to political action (Ismail 2003: 162-168).

At the second level she looks at Islamism as a socially and politically transformative movement, arguing that although Islamism, in geo-strategic terms, has not been able to change the map of the Middle East, "it is important to note that their impact at the societal level and in local politics remains significant" (Ismail 2003: 165). She gives some reasons such as "the Islamists' increasing focus on questions of morality; the Islamists' incorporation of strategies of action developed in spheres other than that of religion; and the relationship between Islamism and re-Islamisation" (Ismail 2003: 165) to reject Roy's thesis.

Ismail claims that Roy's argument about the failure of Islamism is related to the Islamists' political aspirations, while they achieved many successes at the social level especially in the sphere of morality. Hence this resource of power should be considered to gain an understanding of relations between Islamists and political actors. The social positions of Islamists help them to legally increase their social standing in some Islamic countries. "In other words, as a social movement, moderate Islamism's aim is to capture society, not just the state", says Ismail (Ismail 2003: 169).

Ismail claims that with a more penetrating look at Egypt, Morocco, Algeria and Turkey we can see powerful conservative Islamist groups which are important forces, especially as a counterbalance to the militants. The conservative Islamists have gained political power via new political and social strategies, acting in the economic and educational fields. For example, in Algeria the leader of Hamas was active in power with representation in parliament; in Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood developed their political power through the occupation of social space, by establishing Islamic schools and Islamic charitable organisations (Ismail 2003: 167). Finally, Roy sees political Islam as a project which tried to create an ummah, without success, but for Ismail olitical Islam is a process which is achieving its goals.

Asef Bayat criticises Roy's work because of its poor conceptualisation and misperceptions. He argues that Roy has a generalist notion of Islamism, while there are many faces of political Islam. He writes "some critics correctly disputed the premature generalizing of the end of Islamism" (Bayat 2013b: 8).   Hence, he applies the term post-Islamism to explain how the nature of Islamist movements has changed and examines the transformation of Islamism over the last three decades. Bayat states "In the Muslim Middle East, the future is likely to belong to a kind of socio-political change that might be termed post-Islamist revolution" (Bayat 2013a: 221). As the Green Movement in Iran, the Egyptian uprising and the Tunisian revolution indicate, the Middle East will confront a post-Islamist period because the dominant movements are based on democratic, post-national and post-ideological tendencies (Bayat 2011).

 Bayat argues that post-Islamism is a political and social condition affected by its own internal contradictions and by societal pressure, and under these conditions Islamism has

been forced to reinvent itself. He illustrates the transformation in political and religious discourses in Iran during the 1990s to exemplify these conditions. He also states that post-Islamism is a project because it is an attempt to fuse freedom and faith, rights and religiosity; it is an endeavour to marry Islam with modernity and democracy, with freedom and individual choice (Bayat 2013b: 6-10).

Among the scholars mentioned, it seems that Bayat presents a more precise perspective on political Islam through investigation of the nature of Islamic and social movements in the Middle East.   Although he has considered some socio-political factors, it is still not enough to provide a deep understanding of Islamist trends in the Middle East because, for example, his argument cannot explain the rapid rise and fall of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt during a single year.

- However, Roy's argument regarding the failure of political Islam could be criticised at least in terms of Iran and Egypt: In Iran, Islamists have been successful in establishing an Islamic state and maintaining it for three decades (see below). Roy defines political Islam as a brand of Islam which is trying to establish a political state through political action (Roy 2004: 58). So according to his definition, Islamism has not failed, because it was successful in establishing an Islamic state. He concentrates on a specific period of time to illustrate his argument. For example, he considers only the early years of the Islamic revolution in Iran.
Roy devotes a chapter of his book to Iran but his argument about Islamism in Iran is not clear. He refers to the Iranian constitution and claims the Iranian model of the State is secular, while Articles 1 and 2 state that sovereignty belongs to God. He also asserts that "Khomeiniism undermined the Shiite clerical system that had developed over the course of three centuries" and argues that Aytollah Khomeini precipitated the end of Islamic transcendence (Roy and Volk 1994: 179) with the clerics playing important roles in government as the council of senior clerics has a lot of power. Even if this argument were correct, it does not mean that Ayatollah Khomeini failed to establish an Islamic state later in 1979. He used Islam to mobilise the people against the monarchical regime (Martin 2000: 105-115).

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Moreover, it seems that Roy's argument could be criticised because Shia political Islam has not lost its revolutionary features, as this study is going to discuss.

- In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood, as a well-organised group, tried to establish an Islamic state when they won the election in 2012 although they were unable to continue their state because of various political and economic factors. Nazih Ayubi, like Roy, claims that Islamism will not be successful in taking power in any Arab country in the foreseeable future. In 2003 he argues in his book, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*, that Egypt is an exception because the Islamic movement is strongly established: as he states "one aspect of its strength is that the Islamic movement is multi-layered, with the Muslim Brothers representing the largest mass organization" and also "no one can be sure that a large army of conscripts could remain shielded from the influences of the Islamic movement" (Ayubi 2003: 178). Moreover, following the Arab uprisings many scholars believed that Islamism would take power especially since the Brotherhood won the parliamentary election in Egypt; as Hamid states "In Egypt and Tunisia, Islamists have only grown stronger in the wake of the revolutions" (Cited in Pollack et al. 2011: 37). The oscillating trend of Islamism in Egypt indicates that Islamism has not failed totally, as Roy claims. Although the MB were not able to keep their political power in the long term and failed after just two years in power, it does not mean that Islamism has failed forever.

2.3.1. Fall and Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

As already mentioned, the reason for presenting the MB's background and status in Egypt is to show the meaning of the failure of political Islam. The fall of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013 can illustrate this project's understanding of the failure of Islamism.

From 1928, when the Muslim Brotherhood was founded by Hassan al-Banna, the MB tried to establish an Islamic state, and finally won parliamentary representation in 2011, and in the following year won presidential elections. On 11 February 2011 when Hosni Mubarak resigned from power, many argued that a new Islamist era had started in Egypt,

especially among commentators, politicians, and journalists (see *The Economist* 2011). As Samir Amin writes "the victory of political Islam became inevitable because Islamic self-identity dominates the reality of our societies, and it is a reality that some had rejected or denied its social validity, and thus this reality imposed itself on them" (Shihade et al.37). In the new environment, the MB found the prevailing conditions ripe to achieve their political goals, so they participated in parliamentary elections and won more than two-thirds of the seats.

In contrast, others such as Bayat and Roy suggest that despite some concerns about a new period of Islamism, Islamists will not gain power in Egypt. Bayat claims that there is disagreement among the older and younger members of the MB about many issues and "they made it clear that they did not wish to participate in any post-Mubarak administration" (Bayat 2011: 11). Roy states "I don't think that the Islamists now in power will construct an Islamic state" (Roy 2012). But this claim could be a critique as the MB tried to utilise religious tools to set up an Islamic government through the constitutional referendum, For example, they tried to keep Article 2 which identified the principle of Sharia as the main source of legislation in the amendment of the constitution. A few days before the constitutional referendum, the Brotherhood, with the cooperation of Salafi groups, distributed flyers that announced that a vote against the amendment was a vote against Islam. They achieved a 77 per cent 'yes' vote to the amendment through a religious campaign (Wickham 2015: 171-173). Although in the early stages of the 2011 uprising the MB did not play a significant role, later they found an opportunity to reach their political goals and establish an Islamic state. Although reformist and youth members of the MB wanted to form a more secular government, more inflectional members such as Mahmoud Ghuzlan, the Brotherhood's official press spokesman, confirmed the application of Sharia. He said "We created a party to serve our ideas and our wider mission [risala]. This is a matter of belief [ʿaqida] and we can never abandon it. The Shariʿa is what God handed down to the people as a source of guidance" (Wickham 2015: 187).

In what followed, the MB lost their political power despite their well-organised party and social bases. The different political approach among the MB's members paved the way for the emergence of different parties such as the Freedom and Justice Party and Nahda Party. In addition to economic and military reasons, the theoretical conflict between these different groups started the downward trend of the MB (Wickham 2015: 178-185). Notwithstanding the MB's social power, they lost their political power shortly after they won the presidential and parliamentary elections, once they started to increase their political power. Neriah states, "it did not correctly assess the opposition, because it was eager to dominate all key positions in the state, and because it did not foresee the possible coalition between the liberals and the army" (Neriah 2013). Although the failure of the MB in Egypt is rooted in the country's political structure, especially the role of militia in politics, it is clear that the Islamists were unable to mobilise their people to keep their political power. Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian president, in an interview with the *Al-Thawra* newspaper said "What is happening in Egypt is the fall of so-called political Islam" (*World reaction to the ousting of Egypt's Mohammed Morsi* 4 July 2013). Many others also argue that the decline of the MB is the end of Islamism in Egypt. Columnist Galal Nassar claims the MB's inability to improve security and economic conditions as the main reasons for the uprising as the people decided to end MB rule, which means "the end of the three-decade sway of political Islam" (Galal 2013).

This study is not going to discuss the reasons for the failure of the MB in Egypt but when the militia regained power and El-Sisi arrested the leaders of the MB, it was the end of the MB's political power. It could be argued that Islamism did not fail because of social power as Ismail, Ghannouchi and Shakir claim, but political Islam failed when the the MB lost state power. According to the definition of political Islam, Islamism has failed once Islamist groups such as the MB cannot achieve their political power though use of the religious tool. In contrast some argue that Islamism has not collapsed because of the failure of the MB. For example, Imam Zaid Shakir asserts that the decline of the Brotherhood and Morsi in Egypt does not mean the end of political Islam, it will continue to exist. He writes "Political Islam must embrace pluralistic societies and reconcile religion with constitutionalism if it is to survive" (Shakir 2013). Hugh Miles presents the same argument, maintaining that the decline of Morsi and the Brotherhood does not indicate

the fall of political Islam because some Islamic parties such as Salafi and Al Nour, which in the 2011 election came in second after the MB, were among those celebrating Morsi's downfall. He states "since the Brotherhood had insisted on taking all the power, it ended up taking all the blame". The MB could be backed if the secular parties failed to deliver the demands of the revolution (Miles 2014). Moreover Rashid Ghannouchi, leader of the Al Nahda movement in Tunisia, argues that in Egypt, or anywhere else, Islamism has not been defeated because it is deeply rooted in society. It is correcting mistakes and preparing for a new era (Ghannouchi 2013). Most of these arguments refer to the social bases of the MB to show that Islamism has not failed. Even if the social power of the MB were strong because of the Muslim majority in Egypt, they lost their political power. Hence the situation of political Islam is dependent on the political power of Islamists, not only their social influence. As the next section will discuss, in some countries like Iran, it could be argued (Bayat 2005b) that the social power of the Islamist is decreasing, but once Islamists control all or part of the government, Islamism is continuing.

However, the rise and fall of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt shows that having only an Islamist social basis is not enough for Political Islam. While Islamists were capturing the Egyptian society, as Ismail (Ismail 2003) claims, the Egyptian people came back to the streets in protest against Mohamad Morsi in 2012 when the MB was in power. The fall of the MB also shows that only one well-established feature of an organisation is not enough to keep the movement alive. As Ayubi argued, the MB as a movement was strongly established in Egypt, but they could not mobilise the people against El-Sisi. All of these factors show that the Islamic movement could rise and fall depending on its leaders' ability to utilise the religious tendencies of the people to mobilise them for political demands. According to social movement theories (see Chapter 3.2), an Islamic movement can roll along for as long as its organisation is able to continue momentum by mobilising the people through their religious beliefs. If, as Roy (Roy and Volk 1994) argues, Islamists have lost their ability to establish an Islamic state, how did the MB gain power in Egypt albeit for a short period? If, as Ismail claims, Islamists captured society in Islamic countries, why did the Egyptian people protest against the MB when they had voted for them only one year before? What were their demands that the MB could not deliver? Bayat (Bayat 2011) asserts that the main demand, which drove the Egyptian people to

put themselves at risk and protest against Mubarak's regime, was democracy. But why did they return to the streets to protest against the Morsi administration which was elected in a democratic process? It seems some pieces of this puzzle are lost.

For a comprehensive understanding, as Ismail mentions, Islamism should be looked at as a process. Although she follows the socio-political process of Islamism to show that it has had many successes, especially in Egypt, her argument is not sufficient to answer why the Muslim Brotherhood failed after a year in power. If the Islamists in Egypt were successful in capturing the society, why were they unable to control the society when they were in power? And, if the Islamic movements were strongly established in Egypt, as Ayubi claims, why could they not mobilise the people against El-Sisi when he imprisoned Morsi and the supreme leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Mohammed Badie?

However, the Islamism trend in Egypt provides a good example to indicate the meaning of the failure of political Islam. Has it happened in Iran, as it did in Egypt?

2.3.2. Islamism in Iran

This part will answer the question of whether Islamism has failed in Iran or not. As this project is going to explain how political Islam is continuing in Iran, its primary assumption is that Islamism or political Islam has not failed yet. Hence this section will try to accredit this assumption by analysing the political power of Islamists after the revolution, and comparing the situation with that of Islamists in Iran and Egypt. The important point to be considered here is that if Islamism has not failed in Iran, it does not necessarily mean that Islamism has succeeded. Also, it does not mean that Islamism has a strong social base in Iran.

The Islamic revolution brought Islamism to everyone's attention and highlighted its power in Iran, although the history of Islamism is rooted in events many years ago, at least back to the early 20th century when a group of ulama played an important role in the constitutional revolution in 1905-06 (see Chapter 1.2.6). Establishing an Islamic government based on Islamic rules indicated the rise of political Islam in Iran. But what followed? Did Islamists fail to keep their governmental power, as happened in Egypt?

Islamism has had an oscillating trend in Iran since the revolution, but it has not failed. From the victory of the revolution, Islamists started to monopolise political power. The political instability in the early years of the revolution provided the conditions for the rise of Islamism by suppressing the liberal and secular parties (Chehabi 1990: 278-300). Although many different groups which were involved in revolutionary activities before the revolution believed that everyone, secular and believer, would have an equal chance to participate in power, the Islamists did not allow them to step forward (Rajaee 2010: 90-150). Supressing important organisations such as Mojahedin Khalq on one hand, and on the other encouraging groups such as Jameʿeye Rohaniyat-e Mobarez-e Tehran (the Society of the Combatant Clergy of Tehran) and the Hezb Mellal-e Eslami (Islamic Nations Party), which were established to mobilise mass support for Ayatollah Khomeini and also to distribute his speech, provided the conditions for the rise of Islamism.

The death of Ayatollah Khomeini was the start of a new chapter of Islamism in Iran because, as Rajaee writes, "many had considered Khomeini the engine of political Islam. They thought his death would end extremism and revolutionary politics" (Rajaee 2010: 151). He claims that radical groups lost their ascendency when President Rafsanjani took power because he tried to open the political arena to intellectuals by appointing Mohamad Khatami as Minister of Islamic Guidance and emphasising economic development by returning to capitalist policies (Rajaee 2010: 159). Ehteshami (Ehteshami 2002) calls this period the second republic because the pace of reform accelerated, the structure of power changed, Iran became more realistic in foreign affairs and started to improve its relations with the West, the *Valayt-e Faqih* (spiritual leader) theory came under criticism, and some new liberal economic policies were enacted under president Rafsanjani's administration (Ehteshami 2002: 45-73). Although, as Ehteshami and Rajaee argue, in this period the Islamists' power had been reduced, the economic and political power of the IRGC as a mobiliser for Islamism had increased (see Chapter 5.3).

The presidential election in 1997 brought in a new period of Islamic discourse. Rajaee mentions that the message of this election was that public demands had changed dramatically. The new president, Khatami, concentrated on freedom as one of the main public demands, especially for women, during his election campaign, which was against

some Islamist beliefs. In this period revolutionary zeal and violence were replaced with dialogue in both internal and international contexts. Khatami's proposal for labelling the year 2001 "the year of dialogue between civilizations" showed this change (Rajaee 2010: 193-198). Fred Holliday also, in his article, claims that during Khatami's administration Islam became Iranianised and the Iranian reformist president presented an Iranian model of political Islam which he called Islamic mardumsalari (Holliday 2010). Asef Bayat (Bayat 2013a: 59-67) argues that a reformist winning the presidential election of 1997 was a second revolution which brought post-Islamism into power. He argues that historically the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988, the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989, the new president, Rafsanjani, and the agenda for post-war reconstruction provided evidence for the advent of post-Islamism in Iran (Bayat 2005a). Despite his claim that post-Islamists brought more secular and liberal Ideas into the political domain, he notes that they failed to dislodge the Islamists from power (Bayat 2013a: 59-67).

Moreover, Kepel argues that there was an ascendency of reformists who criticised the Islamic republic and noted "the current status of the Islamic republic was massively questioned by the voters who elected reformist Mohammed Khatami to the presidency in 1997" (Kepel 2002). Although Khatami, the former president, tried to change political conditions through appointing many intellectuals to important positions, other powerful institutions like the IRGC, judiciary, National TV, and the Guardian council were controlled by Islamists. This meant that Islamists still had real power, as evidenced by their arrest of thousands of journalists between 1997 and 2002.

 After Khatami, as Rajaee states, extremists returned to power when President Ahmadinejad was elected in 2005 (Rajaee 2010: 238). Revolutionary zeal became alive again, as in the post-revolution period. He writes of the change in power that "Khatami's belonged to a post-Islamist generation, and Ahmadinejad's voiced the concerns of Islamism" (Rajaee 2010: 238). As a result, Rajaee argues, although the nature of government in Iran is Islamic, the situation of Islamism had not followed a consistent upward or downward trend. In some periods the Islamists were at the top of the power chain, and sometimes they lost their influence.

In terms of philosophical views, Ali Mirsepassi focuses on the philosophical roots of Islamism in Muslim countries and particularly in Iran. He examines the impact of western philosophies on Islamic thinkers and argues that many of them have become fascinated especially by Heidegger, who critiques the West as the source of modern dehumanisation. He claims that political Islam as a reaction of the nativist against modernity is increasing in Iran and it has been strongly influenced by Heidegger's philosophy (Mirsepassi 2010: 6-7). In contrast to Bayat and Rajaee who argue that Islamists lost their absolute power in the post-war era, Mirsepassi argues that "unless a properly democratic narrative of modernity that is compatible with contemporary Islamic societies can be offered, the Islamist ideology will likely continue to dominate even in the clear absence of an ability to offer any meaningful political or socioeconomic progress" (Mirsepassi 2010: 9).

Although it might be argued that Islamism has lost its social basis gradually, especially after the Iran-Iraq war, as Bayat and Dabashi discussed (Bayat 2013a: 39-42), it does not necessarily mean that Islamism has failed, as it has not yet lost its state power. Dabashi has carried out research on relations between Islam and power in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Although he applies the situation of Islamists in Iran as an example to prove his thesis, it shows the trend of Islamism in Iran as well. He posits Islam, particularly Shi'ia, as a religion of protest and presents the historical role of Islamists in Iran to show that Islamic ideology has developed against colonialism over a long time, since the Qajar period (Dabashi 2008: 74-94). He cites evidence such as the 1997 election when Khatami was elected as president, the June 1999 student uprising, and the victory of reformists in the 2000 parliamentary election to argue that Islamic ideology has ended in Iran. He states "we have witnessed the end of an era, the end of Islamic Ideology as a specific product of the fateful encounter between the ancestral faith of a people and the colonially mitigated project of modernity" (Dabashi 2008: 66). He finally argues that Islamists lose their influence when they are in power, as Islamism " can only morally succeed when it is politically weak and combative, and conversely it morally weakens and loses legitimacy when it is in political power" (Dabashi 2008: 61). Debashi's argument does not clarify the difference between fait and Islamism. Islamic ideology is not same as Islamism, and modernity and Islamism are not a contradictory phenomenon. However, Debashi clearly

mentions that Islamism is like steel in power despite its weak public support. According to the definition of political Islam, while the Islamists are in power and achieving their political goals, Islamism is continuing. So long as the Islamic government is ruling the country through the Islamic constitution, Islamists will be in power.

According to the IRI constitution the government should be ruled by Islamic jurists. Article 110 clearly explains the political power of *Velayat-e Faqih*, Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist. The following are some of the powers and duties invested in the Supreme Leader, *Valy-e faqih*:

1) "Making the general policies
2) Appointing supreme command of the armed forces
3) Declaring war and peace, and mobilizing the armed forces
4) Dismissal of the President of the Republic"
5) Appointment, dismissal, and acceptance of resignation of:
    a) The faqihs of the Guardian Council
    b) The supreme judicial authority of the country
    c) The head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting
    d) The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
    e) The chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps
    f) The supreme commanders of the Armed Forces and the Police. (The Office of the Supreme Leader, 2010).

Article 110 specifies the place of Islamic jurists in the structure of power in Iran. Although in some periods reformists seized state power and challenged the Islamist power, they were not able to eliminate or even seriously challenge the status of political Islam.

Islamists have not lost their state power in Iran although Islamism has an oscillating trend. Oliver Roy argues that Islamism has failed in Iran while basing his definition on political Islam (Roy 2004: 58), Islamism has not failed in Iran as the Islamic state has been in power since 1 April 1979 when 98 percent of participants in a referendum voted for the Islamic Republic. Also, according to this project's definition (see above), Islamism has not failed because there are many Individual organisations such as Basij and IRGC (see Chapter 5) that are using Islamic values and beliefs for their political goals. The Shia

political Islam which has dominated political power in Iran since 1979 is ruling the country, although it does not have the same social basis as during the early years of the revolution. However, Islamists have been able to continue the Shia movement during the last four decades.

2.4. Conclusion

The main aim of this chapter was to show that SPI has not failed in Iran. Hence it was necessary firstly to try to clarify the meaning of political Islam and Islamism through consideration of various literatures and show that these concepts are not equivalent to Fundamentalism, Violence, and Islam. The debate over the failure of political Islam in general has also been reviewed through investigating the existing corpus of works. Oliver Roy's argument about the failure of political Islam could be criticised, at least as far as Iran is concerned, because an Islamic state has been in power there for more than four decades. As well as Roy's view, Bayat presents a post-Islamism theory to explain that Islamism in Iran is declining, especially since 1997 when a reformist gained power, but his theory would need to be rejected as it is not able to explain the rise of Islamism under President Ahmadinejad. Bayat's arguments could be applied to the social power of Islamism but cannot show that Islamism has failed in Iran as it did in Egypt. The MB's position in Egypt provides a clear understanding about the failure of political Islam as the MB lost its political power and some of its leaders were arrested.

In comparison with Egypt, the Islamic government is like steel in power after four decades. Hence the question is: how they were able to keep their power and survive Shia political Islam? The following chapter is going to analyse this question based on social movement theories.

Chapter 3: Methodology and conceptual framework

3.1. Method of research

In order to facilitate our understanding of the reason behind the continuous survival of Shia political Islam (SPI) in Iran, this thesis does so by relying on qualitative research based mostly on secondary data sources. The study argues that the status of SPI depends on the power of the Shia movement as a social movement. Hence, this research analyses the standing of Shia political Islam through the lens of social movement theories (SMTs), explained in detail in the following subsection. The structure of the thesis, therefore, is based on a mechanism which is derived from SMTs. According to the findings of the mechanism (see section 3.3), it is evident that continuation of the Shia movement is dependent on three main factors: *Origin, Mobilser and Fuel*.

In terms of the three factors necessary for the survival of SPI in Iran, firstly, Islamists are keen to keep the *origins* of their ideology for the Shia movement which are demonstrated in anti-foreign penetration in domestic policies and politics, anti-westernisation policies, economic ingrediency, etc. Secondly, Islamists need to sustain the power of the main state *mobilsers*, for example, the IRGC. Thirdly, the Islamists need to maintain the supply of religious and financial fuel to adminstrate and enhance the power of the movement. Therefore, to analyse and prove how for decades this mechanism has been working in Iran to secure the survival of SPI, this study is going to use the secondary data available in relation to the three variables.

The key data have previously been collected by validated sources and are available through university libraries, internet academic research engines, international newspapers, Iranian newspapers, valid social media platforms, news agencies such as the BBC, Al-Arabiya, Al-Jazeera, CNN and Iranian domestic media in Farsi (Persian) language, such as, Farsnews, Mashregh News, Tasnim News, and IRIB. Also, data have been collected from International organisations like the World Bank and International Republican Institute (IRI); and research institutions such as Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

The limitation in collecting primary data from Iran led this project to be designed mostly based on secondary data, published by the different sources as explained above. Since political freedom in Iran is restricted (Roth 2019), collecting primary data by conducting interviews has a high risk potential for both the selected interviewees and the researcher. Moreover, the Iranian people do not feel free or comfortable to talk about political issues and criticise politicians or state policies, therefore for safety reasons they do not accept to participate in any questionnaire. According to the Human Rights Watch (HRW), people who participate in any activities not approved by the Revolutionary Islamic Government could be arrested and may face prison sentences (Roth 2019). In such a securitised and limited environment, conducting an interview or asking people to fill in a survey might not be safe for them or for the researcher. Although, people might answer the question in a conservative way and request that their reponse not to be recorded or shared in confidence, their participation could not be considered valuable, valid or ethical to serve the research purposes.

Despite the concentration on secondary data collection, I -the researcher- spent a few months in Iran in order to gain access to published data in Iranian academic journals and local newspapers which are not available to online access. During my stay, I visited Tehran University Library to access Persian textbooks of Shia ideologues such as Ayatolah Khomeini, Morteza Motahari, Ali Shariati and others, to collect data and information on how they have shaped and influenced Iranian politics in the past and present. Also, I participated in a book festival in 2014 in which was held by the Basij Organization for group observations, discussions and having access to confidential '*martyrs wills*' written by soldiers who participated and lost their lives in the eight-year Iranian-Iraqi War.

For instance, Chapter 5 discusses and analyses the impact of Shia values in mobilising and motivating soldiers to participate in the Iran-Iraqi war. In the book festival hosted by the Basij Organization, I managed to collect data from some of the martyrs' notebooks which indicates how Shia values, especially Ashura, encouraged them to participate in the war in order to serve a religious victory. Furthermore, I observed how the Basij Organization utilised these "martyrs' wills" to promote the culture of martyrdom and

encourage more people to join the Basaji armed militia. Regarding the martyrs' wills, a Persian language website called Avini[3] published some of these documents.

 Although this project has not collected or relied on primary data, during the study, the researcher's observations while living in Iran have been used as a source of analysing the rationality and validity of the collected data. The researcher has previously attended mourning ceremonies and religious speeches in mosques, which helped in understanding how the Shia Clergy promote Shia values and culture to gain public support. Moreover, his observations, while serving his mandatory military service period in the IRGC, of the role of the Basij Organization in suppressing the 2009 uprising are applied in Chapter 8 to show how the Basij Organization was suppressing the Green Movement in Iran.

In more detail, excluding data from the researcher's observations, the main sources of data in this projected are based largely on secondary and published data including:

1) Published interviews, statements, memories, and the speeches of influential Shia ideologues and some Shia activists. The collected data was published by local newspapers, news sites, or valid websites like Hawzeh.net. Islamic activists and leaders had been mobilising the people through propagating Shia values and symbols in their statements, speeches and interviews. These were usually published in specific media under the control of the Islamists, and streamed in the Persian language. For example, national TV, which is under the control of the Supreme Leader , broadcasts speeches by Shia activists to enhance Shia ideology and enforce the psychology of the conspiracy against the Shia/Sharia beliefs to gain Shia symbols for their political goals.

Also, in regards to religious speeches, newspapers and news agencies, which are mostly published by conservative groups in Iran, are also a resource for collecting data about how Shia values are utilised to achieve political goals. For example, in this study the analysis uses the websites of Fras News, Mashregh News and Tasnim News, which are main sites for publishing the Islamists' speeches and cover events that took place during the research timeframe. However, since the targeted community for the Islamists' speeches is mostly domestic groups in Iran, most of

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[3] https://www.aviny.com/

these speeches are published in the Persian language. It is important to note that the researcher was responsible for translating the main statements taken from those speeches to serve the analysis.

Although this project uses diverse references in the Persian language and Persian news, it could be criticised that the conservative news agencies like Fars News, Tasnim, and Mashregh News have been used far more in comparison with other sources. The main reason for that, is that at some points direct citations of Islamists' statements are required; those conservative news agencies are used because usually they are the only agencies that publish the speeches of influential Islamists. For example, Mashregh News and Tasnim are the only agencies that cite all the statements and lectures of the IRGC generals. It is also important to note that the researcher refers to other available sources to validate the statements and ensure similarity of the speeches. For example, if part of a speech by an IRGC commander has been published on the Fars news website, the researcher has used other sources like Mashregh news website to validate it and ensure similarity in the information.

2) The current constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) which is published officially online. The thesis refers to some IRI constitutional articles to clarify how Islamic values dominate the constitution to support of the Islamists and Shia institutions like the IRGC and the role of Velayat-e Faqih in politics.

3) In analysing various specific events and milestones in the country, this thesis analyses many major events during the last four decades to clarify how the Islamists in Iran employed Shia values to mobilise the people against any internal threat and for legitimising their power. The details of these events have been published through social media and local newspapers. Although the governmental and conservative media only published their own perspectives of these events, this study also refers to other, international, sources such as, the BBC Persian news anf Kalame agency news to provide a wider perspective and more critical data about the events and analyses the opposing views.

4) In collecting statistical data from secondary sources, the thesis refers to trusted sources of data such as the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). According to the SMTs used in the thesis, one of the key fuels that has enhanced the Shia movement is the financial flow of money. Chapter 7 discusses how religious funds such as Khoums and Petrodollars funded the movement and have been used to mobilise people. These data are available in the annual budget and the annual national accounts which can be accessed through the CBI's published data, and through the military expenditure of the Iranian government before the revolution, published by SIPRI.

To indicate the role of petrodollars as a financial source for survival of the Shia movement, this thesis refers to data which has been collected, calculated and published by other scholars such as Golkar (2012) and Forozan & Shahi (2017) for statistics about the Iranian-Iraqi war; Wehrey (2009) for data about the IRGC's economic activities; Khalag (2011) for the share of religious institutions in the annual budget; and Abrahamian (1980) and Pesaran (1982) for data regarding the role of the bazaar in funding revolutionary activities.

In conclusion, this thesis applies SMTs to provide a theoretical and functional framework to analyse the status of SPI in Iran. Moreover, it refers to secondary data to analyse the theoretical framework and draw the rationale of the validation of the compatibility between the theory used and the data collected. In the following section SMTs are elaborated in detail and then used to design a mechanism which serves as a method or a guideline to indicate how and which data could be useful to enhance the analysis and further the discussion that follows.

3.2. Islamic movement as a social movement

This study considers the reasons for the continuation of Shia political Islam (SPI) in Iran through a social movement theory (SMT) lens. This section will use SMT to provide a theoretical model to analyse how SPI is operating. Using SMT does not necessarily mean that other theories are not applicable. Whereas the main goal of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework as a tool to lead this thesis, not a deep discussion over the

theoretical base of the Islamic revolution, the following paragraphs will try to clarify why SMT can provide a comprehensive model to understand the nature of SPI.

As well as SMT, scholars have applied other theories such as 'authoritarian regime' to explain the political system in Iran (Chehabi 2001). According to this theory, the Islamic government is trying to keep its power through oppressing its opponents. These scholars, like Parsa, argue that the central government is using its political, economic, and military power to repress internal threats such as the Green Movement. He states "to understand more fully how the Islamic Republic has endured for more than four decades requires us to compare the dynamics of authoritarian stability" (Parsa 2020: 63). Although the Islamic government uses its power to survive, the question is how do they utilise their powers to repress opponents? Political, military, or economic powers are not enough for the survival of the regime. Applying these powers in society has needed soldiers. As Parsa mentions, deception is required alongside purges for the regime to continue. He says "over the past several decades the Islamic Republic has succeeded in maintaining power through deception and purges" (Parsa 2020: 67). Deception is a group of people using power tools to survive. For example, as chapter 8 will explain, during the Green movement the Basij played a crucial role in supressing the protesters.

 Although the Islamic government could be understood as an authoritarian regime, it also needs at least some followers to fight against any internal or external threat. Even if a government is fully equipped with the most modern weapons, it needs soldiers to use these weapons. This is the key point that motivates this study to use SMT because it can explain how the Iranian government utilised its Shia tools to mobilise its followers. Even if the opponents are in the majority, the Islamic government will be able to continue while it can mobilise its supporters for its political goals.

However, SMT can provide a more comprehensive model than others because:

- SMT is broad enough to cover all aspects of revolutionary Islam. For example, SMT can explain the organisational aspects of SPI, the role of resources in mobilisation, and the role of beliefs and values in a movement.

- As mobilising the populace by using religious symbols and values is a key feature of SPI, SMT is more suitable than others (see Arjomand 1981).
- SMT can provide a unifying framework on which to hang Islamic activism (Wiktorowicz 2004).
- As political Islam is dependent on the strengths and weaknesses of Islamic movements, these might be elucidated by SMT, as the below sections will discuss.

To provide a model for analysing the main question of this study through the SMT lens, in its first section this chapter will present a definition of social movement, various models of social movements, key assumptions of these models, and discourse on the debate over the different paradigms. It will impart a brief summary of some existing theories to investigate the main features of social movements which are significant for understanding the Islamic movements.

In the second section, the anatomy and structure of Social Movement (SM) will be examined. First, some of the key features of SMT, which were discussed in first section, are reviewed and then a new model based on the goals of the current study will be proposed. Finally, the three main features of SMTs will be discussed, using the new format: origins of SMs, resources of SMs, and fuel of SMs. The third section will initially try to explain some differences between Islamic movements and SMs, and then will analyse the key features of Islamic movements.

3.2.1. Social movement theories

Although uprisings and protests have always been used by people to achieve their interests and change their social situation, the term 'social movement' is a recent phenomenon. In the 1960s, events in America and Europe such as the anti-war movement, American civil rights, and student protests in Britain and Germany all highlighted the concept of social movement in academic research. These new phenomena attracted the attention of scholars to analyse them through social movement theories. Therefore researchers, in accordance with their fields of study, have presented and applied different perspectives of social movements within the last decade. Although the collective behaviour view of the Chicago School was the first academic theory in social

movements, later many different researchers were attracted to this field, improving and presenting new theories to analyse these social phenomena. The following paragraphs will present a historical classification of social movement approaches to provide a framework for studying Islamic movements.

3.2.2. Definition of social movements

Social movements, like other concepts in social science, have many different values. There is, therefore, no standard definition of social movements among researchers. Scholars explained the various connotations of this concept according to their theoretical formulation. Whereas having a broad understanding of the meaning of social movement is necessary, the following paragraphs will define social movements in some of the more popular theories such as: collective behaviour, mass society, relative deprivation and resource mobilisation, and political process approaches.

The collective behaviour perspective identifies social movement as a non-institutional effort for social change. Turner and Killian (Diani 1992: 246) define a social movement as "Collectivity acting with some continuity to promote or resist a change in the society or group of which it is a part. As a collectivity a movement is a group with indefinite and shifting membership and with leadership whose position is determined more by the informal response of the members than by formal procedures for legitimizing authority". This theoretical view of social movement as a physiological phenomenon, as McAdam notes, is "the first generation of social movement theory…rooted in functionalism and focus on the structure and psychological causes of mass mobilization" (Wiktorowicz 2004: 6)

The definition of the mass society approach does not differ significantly from that of collective behaviour. This perspective views SM as a non-organised group of people who band together to create and support social change. For instance, King (King 1956: 27) defines an SM as "a group venture extending beyond a local community or a single event and involving a systematic effort to inaugurate changes in thought, behaviour, and social relationships". In comparison with collective behaviour, this approach has less interest in examining a movement; it emphasises the cultural and social factors in the emergence of a movement.

By contrast with collective behaviour, the relative deprivation (RD) approach pays less attention to analysing social movements, being more concerned about revolution and political violence because of relative deprivation. The initial concept of RD is simple: a "person might be deprived of desirable thing relative to their own past, other person, persons, Idea, or some other social category" (Walker and Pettigrew 1984). This feeling of deprivation might inspire them to strive to change their social condition. Although according to RD, political violence as a social phenomenon is rooted in social deprivation, and does not investigate the dynamics of such violence.

Definitions of SM from Resource Mobilising Theory (RMT) and the political process approach are different from other mentioned approaches.   McCarthy and Zald present an organisational-entrepreneurial form of social movements. They articulate "a social movement is a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society." (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1217) This definition introduces both struggle for power and the organisational aspect of SM. Like RMT, political process also investigates the impact of power-seeking in SM. Charles Tilly brought the concept of political process into SM theories, defining a social movement as: "A sustained series of interactions between national power holders and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation, in the course of which those persons make publicly-visible demands for changes in the distribution or exercise of power, and hack those demands with public demonstrations of support" (Tilly 1979: 12). Tilly presents a historical aspect of SM which shows how nationalisation of politics and institutionalised group interests generated SM from the nineteenth century. Although the struggle for power has been one of the main reasons that some groups mobilise their members against dominating parties, some newly emerged movements like the Green Movement have not been struggling for political power. Hence the New Social Movement (NSM) perspective provides a broader definition of SM.

 New Social Movements (NSMs) theory was an intellectual struggle against Marxist propaganda which was reducing SMs to an economic and class conflict basis only. The definition of social movements is categorised by the differences between new and old social movements that were based upon Marxist ideas. Hence, Touraine defines social

movements as "the organized collective behaviours of a class actor struggling against his class adversary for social control of its system of meaning which sets dominated rules in a concrete community" (Diani 1992: 5). Moreover, NSMs brought some new concepts to the meaning of SM such as identity, culture, set of meaning, and ideology that have been overlooked by other social movement theories (Pichardo 1997: 425).

3.2.3. *Social movements' models*

Since the 1970s, when SM theories were applied in the social sciences to analyse new social phenomenon, many different approaches have been posited by scholars according to condition, nature of the phenomena and their objectives. However, the key questions in most of these approaches are why and how social movements emerged. Whereas from some points of view Islamic movements and social movements are the same, reviewing the findings of the main existing approaches to these questions will provide a framework to investigate Islamic movements. To achieve this, the following section will review the key methodologies in SM such as collective behaviour, resource mobilisation, political process, and New Social Movements to underline their main arguments.

 Collective behaviour perspective: the first perception of social movements came from a functionalist social psychology view of mass behaviour, which argues that the social grievances and equilibriums which are the result of social structure caused the collective behaviour against existing conditions. Turner and Killian define social movements "as a peculiar kind of collective behaviour, to promote or change the society or organization" (Diani 1992: 4).

 The question is whether the existence only of grievances is enough to initiate a movement. Although some scholars like Parsa (Parsa 1988) argue that collective behaviour caused the Islamic revolution in 1979 and criticise scholars who rely upon SMT, this argument could not explain the role of organisations such as the mosque (see chapter 5.1.1) in the revolution. As well, collective behaviour cannot explain how institutional mobilisers such as IRGC and Basij utilised Shia symbols and values to mobilise the populace to continue the survival of SPI. Hence the collective behaviour perspective has been criticised because it pays little attention to the organisational aspect of social movements. In contrast Resource Movement Theories (RMT) examine the role of organisational factors in social movements.

Resource movement perspective (RMT): the central question in RMT is why movements do not exist in all places where there are grievances.   McCarthy and Zald (McCarthy and Zald 1977) believe some variables such as resources and mobilising structures are needed to translate the individual discontent into an organised movement. They argue rationally that individual action would not be enough to remove a grievance, while sustained, organised, collective action would. RMT also examines the importance of media, explaining how the organisation of social movements used media for advertising (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1230).

However, RMT could be criticised especially regarding Islamic movements. Although the role of organisations like the mosque have been essential in these movements (See Abrahamian 1988), these organisations were not enough to mobilise the Muslim groups. As resource movement theories only focus on organisational resources and emphasise social movements as specific organised actors, it cannot explain all the roots of Islamic movements, such as political and religious inequality. In contrast, theorists like Charles Tilly argue that socio-psychological issues and mobilising structures are not enough to create social movements: external factors such as political issues should be considered as the root of social discontent and social movements. Hence Tilly provides a broader view of social movements by emphasising the political process which determines social unrest and its characteristics (Diani 1992: 5).

The political process perspective: Tilly defines a social movement as a sustained series of interactions between power holders and the person parading visible demands to change the distribution of power (Tilly 1979: 306). Tilly (2004) presents a historical view of social movements to explain their political nature. He defines social movements as a series of contentious performances, displays and campaigns by which ordinary people make collective claims on others. Tilly claims "social movements are a major vehicle for ordinary people's participation in public politics" (Tilly and Wood 2015: 3). He argues that social movements emerged from three major elements:

1. "Campaigns: a sustained, organized public effort making collective claims of target authorities;

2. The social movement repertoire: employment of combinations from among the following forms of political action: creation of special-purpose

associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, statements to and in public media, and pamphleteering; and

3. WUNC displays: participants' concerted public representation of **W**orthiness, **U**nity, **N**umbers, and **C**ommitments on the part of themselves and/or their constituencies" (Tilly and Wood 2015: 3).

Although RMT and the political process perspective sketch the structuralist and strategic dimensions of mobilisation, they are not enough to explain how people were persuaded to participate, nor how they define themselves collectively. Hence, new social movements (NSMs) focus on the cultural and framing process.

NSMs approach: the new social movement originated in the social, political and economic dynamics of the twentieth century. It attempts to investigate the correlation between social movements and cultural, structural changes (Diani 1992: 5). NSMs highlight the essential function of cultural, language and cognitive tools as the principles of identity, which provide a frame to help participators identify themselves as part of a group, and to provide a movement interpretation to support and mobilise participants (Wiktorowicz 2004: 15). Snow, et al. (1986) argue that frames provide a conceptual bridge between social, psychological and resource mobilisation views on movement participation. They contend that motivational structures are needed to persuade potential actors to engage in a movement because frames provide a condition to recognise the problem, to present a solution, and to provide a rationale to motivate collective action.

3.3. Anatomy of social movements

Although categorising social movements into certain theories is not possible because of their different objectives and conditions, the key features common to these theories could be applied to the analysis of various movements. The following paragraphs are going to model the main features of social movement and create a functional model for analysing the Shia movements in Iran. According to SMTs, the three main features of social movements which have an important bearing on the emergence and continuation of a movement are: origin of movement, resource of movement, and fuel of movement. This

study will use the term "fuel of movements" to explain what a movement needs to continue.

3.3.1. *Origin of movements*

The starting point of most movements is rooted in dissatisfaction with a current situation or in concerns about the future. Although the RMT school argues that the emergence of movements is dependent on resources and formal organisation to nourish and unify the discontented people, they assume there are always enough grievances and concerns (McCarthy and Zald 1977). So, in the fact, the grievances and concerns intensify the motivation of people to protest for a change.

These grievances or concerns may be understood at a micro-level, like individual willing, and at a macro-level such as the economy, environment, culture, political system, social injustice, etc. For example:

> At the micro-level, Opp investigated the correlation between individual discontent and collective action in a movement against nuclear power in Hamburg. He argues there are clear direct effects between grievances and participation in social movements (Opp 1988: 855). Or in the 1930's Mass Movements in North America, people joined the movement because they felt insignificant, atomised and socially detached, as mass society theory indicates (Chesters and Welsh 2010: 5).
>
> At the macro-level, worries about climate change have incentivised people to join the Green Movement since the 1960s. Inequalities between men and women have encouraged a group of people, especially women, to rise up against gender discrimination since the 1970s.

All the above-mentioned perspectives of social movements, directly or indirectly, underline the importance of grievances and concerns as significant factors in the emergence of movements. The collective behaviour theory, directly, focuses on the question of why social movements have emerged. This approach investigates the reasons why people put themselves in a dangerous situation to join a movement. Turner and Killian (1957) deal mainly at the micro-level of collective action. They argue how the individual and psychological willingness of people intensifies their drive to join collective action (Chesters and Welsh 2010: 5). The strong, common assumption in collective behaviour methodology is that shared grievances are an essential precondition for the

emergence of a social movement (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 2115). Although McCarthy and Zald critique the collective behaviour theory, because they pay less attention to the role of organisation in mobilisation they do not reject the significance of grievances and deprivations in social movements. They articulate "we are willing to assume that there is always enough discontent in any society to supply the grass-roots support for a movement" (Goodwin and Jasper 2014: 195); "We want to move from a strong assumption about the centrality of deprivation and grievances to a weak one, which makes them a component, indeed, sometimes a secondary component in the generation of social movements" (McCarthy and Zald 1977). For instance, Walsh claims that grievances are a predominant factor in social movement participation, although their impact is related to social structures. He argues that grievances will lead people to join movements when the structure is provided (SeeOpp 1988: 853).

The political process and new social movement (NSM) perspectives consider discontent and concerns to be the instigators of social movement. Although the emphasis of these approaches rests more on political power and ideology respectively, their main assumption is based on discontent. Charles Tilly in his book, *From mobilization to revolution*, investigates how the discontent of a group of people about the political system mobilises them for a collective action to change the current situation, and to achieve more political power (Tilly 1979). Moreover, the NSM approach argues that movements are indirectly based on grievances. It claims that movement is distributed on the axis of identity and grievance. For gender and sexual movements, for example, it is argued that collective grievances are linked with issues of identity (Gusfield et al. 1994: 23).

But the origin (social bases) is not enough for a movement to be created and achieve its objective.

3.3.2. *Resource of movements*

The resource movement theory hypothesises organisation, resources, and political opportunities in addition to traditional grievances as the origin of social movements. This perspective argues that although grievances, discontent and concerns are the origin of social movements, these are not enough to create and continue a movement. This perception believes that grievances will not initiate a movement automatically. Hence some mobilisers and organisation are essential resources. McCarthy and Zald claim

"grievances and discontent may be organized, defined, created, and multiplied by issue entrepreneurs and organizations" (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1215). For example, in America when senior citizens were faced with the Medicare question, they were not able to organise their disposition into a lobby group without the AFL-CIO support.

As resource mobilisation theories argue, organisations and institutions have a key role in social movements (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Although there is a debate over the organisation of movements between the centralised bureaucratic model (McCarthy and Zald 1977) and the decentralised informal model (Gerlach and Hine 1968), all believe that organisations are fundamental structures at the centre of movements. Organisations are vital for a movement to mobilise resources, to achieve the potential resource, to organise participants, to create or highlight discontent, to define the objectives of the movement, to encourage people participation, to manage resources, and to provide a link between rationality and their objectives.

One of the most effective factors in the success of a movement is entrepreneurial activity. Berry's analysis of public interest organisations shows that most participants are affected by energetic entrepreneurs, who are effective without any considerable increase in grievances (Berry 2015: 17-27). Some studies emphasise the role of elites in a group, using institutional resources, to redefine or highlight some specific interest to mobilise the people. Wood (2020) indicate that the emergence of environment movements is in the hands of policy researchers and natural scientists who redefine traditional concerns in environmental issues and mobilise organisational resources. Likewise, Useem (1980) argues that relative deprivation was created by elite challenges in the countermovement in Boston. Or Walsh's study indicates the importance of elite action in generating the movement against reopening the Three Mile Island nuclear plant (Jenkins 1983: 530-531).

Resources such as labour, money, media and facilities have been deliberated in the resource mobilisation theory of social movements. This perspective emphasises, firstly, the aggregation of resources for understanding social movements and, secondly, the minimal form of organisation for accumulating resources (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Despite a dearth agreement over the type of resources (See Jenkins 1983: 533), some scholars have listed them as money, labour, facilities, and means of communication

(McCarthy and Zald 1977, Tilly 1978, Freeman 1979 cited in Jenkins 1983: p.533). For instance, McCarthy and Zald (1977) underlined institutional resources like private foundations, the mass media, governmental agencies, and universities as the key resources in movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, resources need to be considered a crucial factor in the social movement process because of their significance in the success of movements.

The political process perspective of social movement argues that discontentment with the political situation and looking for more power should be recognised as a powerful resource which mobilises participants to change a political sphere or become more involved in the political process. This aspect of social movement argues that the outcomes of movements are considerably influenced by the political environment. Tilly (1979) explains the relation between collective action and struggling for power. He posits that when a clash of interest occurs between two groups, a group's power is essential to achieving its collective interest via collective action (1979: 115-119). The interesting feature of Tilly's approach for this study is the role of the government in a movement. He explains how the government acquires collective control over the essential resources through its political power to mobilise its proponents to take action against opposing groups. Likewise, the struggles of an authoritarian regime to centralise power into a state also provoke people's anger to rise against them. Skocpol's (Skocpol and Theda 1979) study of social revolution in Russia, China, and France demonstrates that the emergence of these revolutions evolved from political crisis. She explains how the centralisation of power in the hands of the old-regime state in these countries mobilised the social classes to revolt against the authoritarian regime.

But, as the new social movement (Snow et al. 1986) perspective argues, although origin and resources are the primary bases of a movement, these necessary elements could not automatically run movements. They believe that organisation alone is not enough to provide a strong linkage between participants. Nor are just resources able to provide sufficient motivation for individuals and groups to continue their activities (Snow et al. 1986). Hence new elements such as identity, culture, and values should be considered to understand how movements operate. These elements will be called *Fuel of Movements* in this study.

3.3.3. *Fuel of movements*

In the late 1980s, a new form of collective action was shaped when major traditional political parties in Europe were faced with serious challenges from new parties. The older breed of social movement was not able to explain these new movements – like student movements, peace movements, anti-nuclear protests, women rights, animal rights, and fundamentalist religious movements. Hence a new conceptualisation of the meaning of social movement was needed. Although all significant factors (origin and resources) that were considered by previous methodologies were essential to explain why and how these movements emerged, new dynamics were needed to analysis the sustainable motivations of participants. Therefore, new concepts such as ideology, culture, values, and identity have been applied to explain the process of new movements.

All new definitions of social movements emphasise a set of beliefs and a need for belongingness as motivators for collecting action. For example, Killan and Turner focus on 'group identity' and 'ideologies' as requirements for the continuity of social movements (Diani 1992: 8). Shared beliefs provide a collective identity for a social movement, especially in Islamic countries, although many other explanations might be considered as a reason for collective action.

The New Social Movements' theory argues that a set of values, symbols, beliefs and meaning provide strong sentiments for belonging to a social group, defining a new identity for individuals, and creating a new attitude for participants (Gusfield et al. 1994: 7). Inglehart investigates the question of why people participate in NSMs and indicates four key factors: 1) objective problems; 2) motivating values; 3) organisational network; and 4) certain essential skills. He emphasises the role of values as a motivator in forming movements. Inglehart's study shows a strong link between values and behaviour. He notes "the existence of problem and organization would have no effect unless some value system and ideology motivated people to act" (Cited Waters 1999: 373).

Identity is also a core characteristic of NSMs. Some empirical studies investigate the impact of identity in social movements. N. Pichardo Almanzar, Heather Sullivan-Catlin, and G. Deane examine the relationship of personal identity in the participation of people in environmental movements. They note "a significant, association between self-reported

environmental identity and participation both in conventional social movement activities and in everyday behaviours" (Pichardo 1997: 415).

The NSM perspective employs the term 'framing' to analyse the role of meaning and beliefs in movements. Sets of belief and meaning inspire and legitimise the activities of participants in a social movement. As Goffman argues, frames indicate schemata of interpretation that enable people to perceive, locate, identify, and label occurrences in their life space (Benford and Snow 2000). However, the NSM indicates how beliefs and values are important to motivate people in a movement: especially in an Islamic movement which is labouring the term Islam, a set of beliefs.

Finally, any movement needs an origin to emerge, resources to be organised, and fuel to continue. These three futures of a social movement could apply to Islamic movements too. Although in an Islamic movement values and beliefs play a crucial role, the origin and resources are still as vital as in other SMs.

3.4.   Islamic movements

The emergence of political Islam should be considered in the context of Islamic movements. The fall or raise of political Islam in the Islamic world is rooted in the power of Islamic movements to achieve their political goals through mobilising the public.

Islamic movements are different from social movements in some ways because they draw on the name of Islam, their objectives are different, and the countries in which they occur are different in terms of social, economic and political conditions.

One of the most controversial differences between Islamic movements and other social movements is their objectives. A social movement such as the labour movement, the youth movement, the women's movement, and the peace movement seeks to change some specific phase of the exiting social order (Blumer 1995: 60). For example, the Iranian Green Movement in Iran has emerged because of doubt over the 2009 presidential election and its objective was clear: where is my vote? The protesters were asking the government to cancel the election (Dabashi 2011: 9-15).

Although Islamic movements seek to change an existing social order, it is not their final objective, Islamic movements seek a religious purpose too. The majority of Islamic leaders tried to change the social order through applying Sharia laws (Dallal 1993). The

Islamic movements also look to improve the spiritual life of the people as well as their social life. For example, Ayatollah Khomeini believed that the Islamic government was going to change the spiritual life of people. He stated "We, in addition to wanting to improve your material lives, want to improve your spiritual lives … they have deprived us of our spirituality. Don't be content that we will build real estate, make water and power free, and make buses free. Don't be content with this. Your spirituality, state of mind, we will ameliorate. We shall elevate you to the rank of <u>humanity</u>. They have led you astray. They have the world so much for you that you ideate these as everything. We shall revitalize *both* this world and the afterlife" [4].

Despite of different between Islamic movements and social movements, both could be understood in the same structure and anatomy. In the following, this chapter will apply a combination of the presented theories to provide a framework for understanding the process of formation and continuation of Islamic movements as the engine of political Islam. This study, according to its objectives, will use the three essential features of social movements (Origin of Movements, Resources of Movements, and Fuel of Movements) in Islamic movements. These three features will provide the parameters of this study. Studying the origin, resources and fuel of the Shia movement will indicate how it is still a presence in Iran and how the Islamic government has been able to keep it live through refreshing these three features.

3.4.1. *Origin of Islamic movements*
The origin of Islamic movements can be traced back to discontent and concerns of participants, although these grievances and concerns have been interpreted or manipulated through Islamic beliefs.

There are at least four groups of scholars who investigate the socio-psychological bases of Islamic movements. The first group (Dekmejian 1995) argues that the structural crises which resulted from the of failure of the secular modernisation project motivated Islamic activists. Mandaville contends that the emergence of Islamism as an Islamic and political movement was "a response to the westernization of modern regime and their failure to

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[4] See https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Ruhollah_Khomeini

deliver on the promises of modernization" (Mandaville 2010: 96). The second group (Ibrahim 1980) focuses on socio-economic factors to explain the root of grievances which encourage the individual to join an Islamic movement. The third group (Keddie 1966) claims the main pretext for Islamic movements is cultural imperialism which was disseminated by western powers as a support for their political, economic, and military intervention. Group four declares that whereas an authoritarian regime banned political movements in some countries, the Islamic movement is a natural reaction to political discontent (Wiktorowicz 2004: 8). All these groups concentrate on social, economic and political grievances as the socio-psychological roots of Islamic movements.

3.4.2. *Resources of Islamic movements*

Although Islamic movement studies have not addressed RMT directly, some researchers like Parsa (1989) highlight the essential role of organisational resources in the Islamic movement. The mosque, as the central institution for Islamic practices, has played a crucial role in movements. Parsa explains how the mosque provided an organisational resource for Islamic activists to advertise their beliefs, to plan their activities, and to incite the people against the authoritarian regime during the Islamic revolution on the 1970s (Parsa 1989: 189-223). As well as mosques, the IRGC as a political and military organisation has been central in the survival of political Islam in Iran.

Moreover, the organisational theory of social movements highlights the role of the elite in mobilising the people in a group. Like other social movements, the impact of elites is essential in the Islamic movement. For instance, the role of Hassan al-Banna was crucial in founding and organising the Muslim Brotherhood as the Arab world's most influential Islamist organisation in Egypt; as was the role of Ayatollah Khomeini in mobilising the people against the Shah in Iran during the 1979 Islamic revolution. As well as the significance of a charismatic leader in Shia movements, the impact of others, such as the clergy and religious acolytes (Maddah) should also be considered as major actors in order to understand the Shia movement.

The Islamic movement, like other movements, has been shaped by available resources as a key element for organising and mobilising people. Shadid's (1988) study of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in the West Bank shows the importance of funding for the MB to finance its programmes. He claims that the MB has obtained funding from the local

zakat (tithes) committee, wealthy zakat committees in the Gulf state, the government of Saudi Arabia, and the Jordanian government. The MB uses these funds to establish and manage schools and mosques to absorb and train new members, which helps them to be more powerful. As well as money, media as a tool for mobilisation also plays a vital role in the success of movements. Media increase the ability of organisations or their leaders to mobilise the people, to broadcast their ideas, to provoke the Islamic vigour of their members, to brainwash their members, and to attract new members. Hirschkind conducted fieldwork in Cairo to understand the role of the media in expanding the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology in Egypt. He shows how the MB's preachers circulated their organisational beliefs and social issues by available media (Meyer and Moors 2005: 29-50). It illustrates that organisations can apply resources such as media propaganda to intensify the importance of an issue in society. In this regard, this perspective of social movements will be applied in this study to explain how petrodollars supported Shia movements to survive in Iran after the Islamic revolution (see Chapter 7).

Since the 1990s, most Islamic movements have engaged within the political context. For example, Hamas as an uncompromising movement has strategically responded to change in its surrounding political milieu (Wiktorowicz 2004: 15). Therefore, the struggle for power within an Islamic government can be understood as a resource of Islamic movements.

As such, resources movement theories provide a framework to investigate the role of organisations and resources in Islamic movements. These resources can be divided to three types: 1) structural resources like the Mosque and other institutions which organise movements and encourage individuals to participate in them; 2) material resources like labour (members), elite, money, and media which are vital for movements to be successful; 3) political resources.

3.4.3. *Fuel of Islamic movements*

Islamic movements are involved in the production of values and meaning. Most are based on cultural and social discourse. Islamic struggles challenge the dominant cultural system and provide a new frame for shared meaning and values in the society (Melucci 1996). Islamic movements are largely based on Islamic culture, symbols, beliefs, and values. These elements provide a framework for Islamists to create new objectives and mobilise

the people in order to realise their objectives through media propaganda. They can use these elements to legitimise their political goals, to mobilise the proponents of their political interests (Chapter 6), to inspire the emotions of their participants, and to encourage more people to join them.

3.5. Conclusion

Social movement theories provide a structure through which to study Islamic movements. The three key factors – origins, resources, and fuel of social movements – which are extracted from SMTs are applicable in Islamic movements, as section two discusses. The framework presented can explain the emergence and continuation of Islamic movements. Political Islam as a Shia movement can continue if it can maintain its origins, if its resources remain available, and if it can provide fuel for the movement. The emergence of SPI which is discussed in the previous chapter indicates the importance of these three factors in the historical formation and growth of SPI in Iran.

The anatomy discussed provides a method and guideline to structuralise the rest of this project to analyse the main question. To investigate how Shiism maintains its presence in Iran, the next chapters will show how the origin has been maintained, the mobilisers and resources are working, and the religious and financial fuel are beig produced to bolster survival of the Shia movement.

Chapter 4. Social, political, and economic origins of the Shia movement in Iran

4.1.   **Introduction**

Based on social movement theories, a movement must have an origin and it will continue while its origin exists. As the historical chapter on the Shia Movement indicates, this movement can be traced back to the Safavid period, but as the Islamic revolution was an important juncture for SPI, this chapter firstly will present a historical background of Shia political Islam in Iran then will concentrate on the origin of Shia Movement before and after the revolution to explain how maintaining these origins helped to revive Shia political Islam. The chapter investigates some of main origins of SPI, especially after the coup d'état in 1953 with the emergence of new Shia movements under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. The second part will explain how some of these key origins were reproduced and highlighted by the Islamic government after the revolution. The main argument of this chapter is that after the revolution, in order to survive, Islamic leaders and organisations highlighted the origins which had played a significant role in the emerging Shia Movement to preserve Shia political Islam (SPI). They emphasised political, religious, and economic grievances to mobilise their people, according to their political objectives in both periods: before and after the revolution.

The theoretical chapter discussed the importance of social, political, and economic origins in the emergence of a social movement. McCarthy and Zald (1977: 279) consider that social movements arise from a grass roots structure. They are necessary for a movement's nascent foundation to continue, because if they disappeared, the people would lose their motivation to participate in the movement. The resource mobilisation theory in social movement argues (See 3.3.2) that the leaders or organisers often highlight specific aspects of the origins to promote their goals.

4.2.   **The Emergence of Shia Political Islam in Iran**

It is necessary to look at the historical background of Shia political Islam (SPI) in order to gain an insight into the emergence and continuation of SPI in Iran. According to the theoretical framework (Chapter 3.4), the origin of movements is pivotal to their rise or fall. Although the next chapter will discuss the social, political and economic origins of Shia movements during the Pahlavi era and the Islamic republic, this section will investigate the historical roots of SPI in Iran from a practical stance. This historical review will provide a deeper understanding of the emergence of SPI in Iran.

Although the Islamic revolution in 1979 was a key step in setting up a Shia government in Iran, the emergence of political Shia can actually be traced back to the Safavid period. This section firstly reviews some important points in the history of Shia and will then concentrate on historical Shia influences in the political environment of Iran. Investigating the historical background of Shiism during the Safavid and Qajar periods demonstrates how the deep social roots of SPI formed in Iranian society.

4.2.1. Shia Political Islam: From movement to state

Shia movements have evolved since Sarbedaran times and have been involved in politics during the Safavid, Qajar, and Pahlavi dynasties. The study of these movements could provide a boarder view of Shia movements in Iran despite their differences. Here, the history of these movements is not considered in order to explain the relationship between them, as they have differing points of view, but it is mentioned to show the political origin of Shia movements. The political power of these movements fluctuated until the establishment of an Islamic government in 1979, but they had not had an influential impact on society. For example, during Reza Shah Pahlavi's era, Reza Shah tried to reduce the clergy's social impact, but not only was he unable to eliminate the Shia movement, he actually motivated it to become more active. In the following, this chapter will present a historical chronology of the emergence of the Shia movement until the founding of an Islamic state. (Roy and Volk 1994) argues that SPI identity was created in two periods; firstly, during the Safavid era when the state religion was established, and secondly with the appearance of independent hierarchical clergy in the Qajar period. Despite Roy's argument, the emergence of SPI dates back to the early years of Islam with the emergence of significant Shia movements like the Sarbedaran.

4.2.2. Historical process of Shia movements

The initial root of the Shia movement could date back to the conflict between the Prophet's companions. After the death of Prophet Mohamad in 632 CE, a group of his companions argued that the Prophet had appointed Ali, his son-in-law, as his successor during the controversial events in Ghadir Khumm (see Nasr 2007: 38-39), while the rest did not accept this because they believed that the revelation ended with the prophet's death. So, the majority of the Prophet's companions appointed Abu Bakr as the first Calipha. The Shia, Ali's followers, became dissatisfied when their leader was rejected by some of the Prophet's companions (Kohlberg 2003). When Ali was unsuccessful in succeeding to the caliphate after the Prophet, a political dispute among Shia originated over authority and succession. Shia movements became more active when Ali became the fourth Calipha and the battles between Shia and Sunni started. Shia movements were more involved in politics after the Karbala tragedy when Husain, Ali's son, was killed by the newly established Umayyad dynasty (Ayoob 2009: 11). The martyrdom of Husain has been used politically by various groups, such as the Abbasids, to legitimise or attain power. As Fischer notes, "the Karbala paradigm has an ever-present, latent political potential to frame or to clothe contemporary discontents" (Fischer 2003: 13). Later, a group of Shia and the Abbas family, cousins of the Prophet, revolted against the Umayyads, overthrowing them and establishing the Abbasid dynasty (750-1258). The Abbasids claimed their relationship with the Prophet's family to rule, and utilised Shia sentiments, like Karbala, to legitimise their political power (Nasr 2007: 160-191). The Hashemyah movement, which was a derivative of the Mukhtar uprising against the killers of Husain bin Ali, revolted against the Umayyads and brought the Abbasids to power (Hawting 2000: 110).

Although the Abbasids were supported by the Shia and used the Shia to overthrow the Umayyads, after they had stabilised their power they later suppressed the Shia movement. The Abbasids killed and imprisoned Shia Imams and encouraged Sunni groups to persecute the Shia especially after the Roman attack against the Abbasids in 971 CE. Even after the destruction of the Abbasid dynasty by the Mongols in 1258, attacks

against Shia believers increased, so they endeavoured to make their movement survive by keeping it insular (Nasr 2007: 53).

4.2.3. The Sarbedaran Movement: the First Shia government in Iran

The Sarbedaran (1336-1381) was a Shia movement which emerged in Iran after political instability during the Mongol period. The fall of the Abbasids caused long-term political uncertainty in Iran. The Sarbedaran movement could be considered as the first to establish a Shia state in Iran. The Sarbedaran government, which was created many centuries before the 1979 Islamic revolution, was an illustration of a unique and non-monarchic government, although there is insufficient enough evidence to prove that the 1979 Islamic revolution was influenced by the Sarbedaran movement.

The beginning of Shia political Islam can be traced back to the Sarbedaran movement. This movement started in the *Bashteen* area around Sabzevaran (a city in the northeast of Iran) in 1336 and ruled for 45 years. Although the Sarbedaran government was short-lived, its heritage still continues. This study believes, as do many other scholars (Alviri 2014), that the basis of Shia political Islam is related to the Sarbedaran movement. The anti-Mongol movement began in a very unstable political era when most people held strong Shia beliefs. In the early stages, they attained power with the support of the Sufi people, although they later purged the Sufis and became interested in Shia jurisprudence. This is the historical start of Shia political Islam which heralded a Shia State in Iran (Alviri 2014: 152).

The Sarbedaran movement became a political model for Shia ideologues and leaders to follow in their quest to establish a Shia state. For example, Ali Shariati, one of the main intellectual leaders of the Islamic revolution, was attracted by the revolutionary aspect of the Sarbedaran movement: for him "*The sarbedaran movement was didactic and motivated*". The Sarbedaran movement provided a pragmatic framework for Shariati to provoke his listeners into being more active and to preserve revolutionary beliefs (Agenda 1984: 156).

Yaghoub Ajand argues that the Sarbedar is a good example to show the power of the Shia movement in Iran. Although there were many other Shia movements, the

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Sarbedaran was the first to establish a Shia semi-state. After the seventh century, Twelver-Imam Shia, in comparison with other forms of Shia, became the main Shia ideology for government (Agenda 1984: 157). Despite the decline of the Shia movement during the Abbasid and Mongol dynasties (Keddie 1980), the Sarbedaran movement tried to keep alive until the advent of the Safavids.

4.2.4. The Safavid dynasty: Establishing Shia Political Islam

The Safavid period (1501-1722) was the starting point of the domination of Shia political Islam in Iran. The Safavids' ancestry can be traced to the seventh of the Shia Imams, Musa Al-Kazem. Their political power arose in the northwest of Iran and continued until 1501 when Ismail I defeated the Mongols and established the Safavid dynasty. Ismail's ideological background was in Sufi doctrine which was deeply based on Shia beliefs. Ismail I was a zealous Shia adherent and wanted to spread Shiism in Iran (Nasr 2007: 65). As Keddie (1980: 7) notes, King Ismail determined to convert Iran forcibly from Sunnism to Shiism. Safavid kings attributed themselves to imams in relative and spiritual terms. In other words, Safavid kings considered themselves descendants and offspring of the infallible imams of the household of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S).

Shia political Islam arrived in Iran during the Safavid dynasty because:

1. For the first time the clergy became involved in the bureaucracy and constitution of the state. They held high office in government to propagate Shiism and they were appointed as the religious authority in main cities (Banani 1978).

2. The Safavids provided an institutional foundation for Shia religious scholars. They imported many Shia clergy from Iraq and Lebanon to Iran to structurally establish the Shia theology (Hiro 2013: 14). Safavid kings invited Shia scholars Bahraini and Jabal Ameli to Iran. "Karaki", a researcher considered as the most salient scholar, came to Iran and the "Tahmasebi" government grandly welcomed his arrival, to the extent that he was officially called the deputy of the imam. By giving his support to the Safavid kings, "Karaki" legitimated their government in Iran. He also considered the enforcement of social teachings such as Friday prayers and

festivities as "permissible". However, he turned to the resources of religious imitation for qualified jurisprudents to administer spiritual rites and rituals, not the Safavid king. He raised and fostered the concept of qualified jurisprudents to prove his verdict and he defined widespread powers for qualified jurisprudents within this framework. Amicable and conciliatory relations between scholars and the Safavid government, and the verdict of jurisprudents on the acceptability and permissibility of presents to the Safavid kings promoted the social and economic status of jurisprudents significantly (Karimi Zanjani Asl 2013).

Returning Shia jurisprudence to government in a new language is solid evidence in this respect, where scholars and kings are complementary to each other and are in line with the evolution of the Iranian government and with the political Islamic hub of Shia.

3. The Safavids propagated Shia rituals and symbols by funding the rituals and developing a shrine to some Shia Imams. For instance, the shrine of the eighth Imam, Imam Reza, in Mashhad was rebuilt and developed during the reign of Shah Abbas I (Donaldson 1953).

Official recognition of Shiism and the convergence of religion and government are considered as one of the salient characteristics of the Safavid period. If a line is drawn on an assumed diagram from the ups to the downs of interaction between religion and government in the Safavid era, one will notice a clash, with a rather severe convergence in the beginning and a kind of divergence at the end. It seems that the thoughts of Shah Ismael I had been deemed a factor of avoidance for Arab Shia scholars in subsequent Safavid governments. When Shah Tahmasb came to power, this avoidance turned into a type of cooperation, but bec(ame an avoidable convergence in the reign of Shah Abbas Safavid I. At the end of the Safavid era, especially under the rule of Shah Soleyman, a tension developed in relations between religion and government. This trend was so marked that it paved a way for the gradual independence of the institution of clerics from government (Aghajari and Allahyari 2011). The collapse of the Safavid government isolated the institution of Ijtihad from the institution of politics. The relationship that had existed between the two in the Safavid era was never repeated. Nader Shah, the last military conqueror of West Asia, envisioned governing a vast area of the Islamic world

which was predominantly home to the Sunni religion. For this purpose, Nader Shah attempt to modify Shiism in such way as to be acceptable to Sunni opinion (Hiro 2013: 14). No single, powerful political force came into being in Iran after the death of Nader Shah, right up to the Qajar era. However, no firm bond was established between the two institutions of Ijtihad and politics.

4.2.5. Qajar dynasty: Promoting Shia Political Islam

A clergy organisation was promoted in the community because the Qajar kings needed to legitimise their power through the ulama. When the Qajar government came to power, a new form of government was established. Following the triumph of a principled movement on Akhbaritoun, the imitation organisation was institutionalised and the king, like other grass roots and common people, was considered an imitator of Shia scholars. While during the Safavid era not only the king considered himself higher than a top imitator, but also Shia scholars were not differentiating the source of religious imitation and imitator clearly, in the Qajar era the king was considered as an imitator (Bayat 1991: 11).

The Qajar period provided the opportunity for the clergy to promote their beliefs and consolidate their power in society through:

- Access to religious funds. They collected religious tax and controlled vast religious endowments attached to the shrines and mosques (Hiro 2013: 15). They used these funds to run their social and educational institutions. One of the biggest endowments was attached to Imam Reza, Eitheth Imam of Shia, in Mashhad. These endowments were the largest source of income for the clerical institution during the Qajar period. This income increased the clergy's power: later, Naseradin Shah tried to remove the endowments from the hands of the clergy because he believed that this money might be used for opposition against the state (Algar 1980b: 15).
- Establishing the Ijtihad system. Ijtihad was a heritage of the Qajar period and could be conceived as the basis of *Vellayat-e Faqih* (Amanat 2003). The question

of who should govern Islamic society during the occultation of the 12th Imam has been at the centre of debate in Twelver Imami Shia. The debate was between two key schools, Akhbari and Usuli, in the late 17th century. The Akhabri school opposed mujtahid dominating the judiciary, and representing the Imam of the Age in Occultation; in contrast the Usuli school propounded "emphasis on the role of the mujtahids not only as legal scholars but judges and social mediators" (Amanat 2003). The Qajar period was the golden age for promoting Ijtihad and Mujtahid in Najaf and Qom, which led the way to the *Velayat-e Faqih* theory. This time, the Mujtahid controlled the Mosques and maintained a good relationship with the merchants of the Bazaar (Amanat 2003). It should be noted that clerics and the market were considered two important forces in Iran's traditional civil society, so that the two pillars enjoyed relative independence and little governmental interference in their lifestyle. Moreover, both the clerics and the bazaar enjoyed the ability to influence the government's political decisions.

- Promoting Shia rituals such as Tazzyie and Rozehkhani (dramatic performance and recitation commemorating of the martyrdom of Imam Husain) (Algar 1980b: 20). The mourning ceremony and Tazzyie, which emerged during the Safavids era, reached its zenith in the Qajar period. Naser Al-din Shah built special theatres such as Tekiy-e Dowlat in Tehran to play Tazzyie which was supported by mujtahids such as Mirza Qasem Qummi (Nakash 1993). However, as Chapter 6 will explain, Shia rituals, especially Ashura, which emerged during the Safavid and Qajar eras, played a crucial rule in the survival of the Shia movement in Iran.

The Qajar period saw the beginning of the contradiction between religious institutions and the state. While the Safavids used religious influence in society and tried to improve the relation between state and religion, during the Qajar dynasty this relationship was more complicated as ulama contested some of the King's decisions, like the tobacco concession which was granted by Naser Al-din Shah to Great Britain (Keddie 1966). The reasons for this contradiction are: firstly, the Qajar kings were not as charismatic as the Safavid kings (Gleave 2004: 4); secondly, financially ulama became independent form the state as they had access to religious tax and endowment income (Hiro 2013: 15); thirdly, ulama gained more political power as they controlled key institutions such as the

judiciary (Gleave 2004: 4). The Qajar kings and rulers complemented religion instead of supplementing it (Tabatabaei far 2005). However, the conflict between ulama and state heralded a constitutional revolution.

The Tobacco movement in 1980-1982 demonstrated the mobilisation power of Shia political Islam. While the tobacco concession was not directly an Islamic issue, the ulama became involved in this crisis for their own political goals. When Naser al-Din Shah granted the tobacco concession to a British company, the merchants gradually lost their control over the domestic market which became dominated by foreign companies by the late nineteenth century (Moaddel 1992: 457). First of all, merchants from Tehran and Tabriz protested against this agreement, and then they tried to gain the support of the ulama. Merchants send petitions to mujtahid Mirza Hasan Shirazi in Karbala and asked for his support. Three months' later, Shirazi sent a telegram to the Shah that stated, "permitting the foreigners to interfere in the internal affairs of the country, their intermingling and closeness with the Muslim people, and the act of the banking, tobacco and railroad concessions and so forth are contrary to the Quran and Godly Principles, weaken the independence of the state and the order of the country, and deteriorate the condition of the people" (cited in Moaddel 1992: 460). This letter shows how Shirazi related an economic issue to an Islamic issue to mobilise people against the Shah. Finally, the King cancelled the concession when many people listened to Shirazi's Fatwa and boycotted tobacco. However, the Tobacco movement improved the relationship between merchants and ulama. Ulama used religious principles like Fatwa for their political and economic objectives. As Keddie notes, the ulama participated in this movement because of their interest in the tobacco business, and their relation with merchant families (Keddie 1966: 65). The increasing social and economic power of ulama led them to revolt against the political system.

4.2.6. Constitutional movement: the emergence of revolutionary Political Islam

The constitutional revolution signalled the revolutionary potential of Shia political Islam. This revolution, as others, was rooted in social, economic and political discontent during

the Qajar era especially during the reign of Muzaffar al-Din Shah (Abrahamian 1982: 70-75). The economic crisis in 1905 provided enough encouragement for different groups to revolt. The economic crisis, weak government and increasing foreign influence intensified the ulama's opposition in the second half of the nineteenth century. Keddie argues that western secularisation and control of natural resources by the West were the two main reasons that activated the radical role of ulama in the political sphere (Keddie 1969: 50). Keddie (1966) maintains that Naser Al-din Shah's fear of rebellion discouraged him from applying a modernisation policy although some powerbrokers like Amir Kabir tried to improve the situation – however, they all either resigned or were assassinated.

Improving the relation between the bazaar and the clergy was the legacy of constitutional revolution. The weakness of the Qajar government provided a fertile ground for foreign intervention in Iran. Muzaffar al-Din Shah opened the country to foreign markets in order to obtain more loans from abroad. For example, he sold the monopoly on oil exploitation to a British company and accorded road tolls to the Imperial Bank to obtain a loan. He appointed Monsieur Naus, a Belgian, as director of customs in Iran (Abrahamian 1982: 74). Penetration of European companies into the domestic market and factories caused dissatisfaction among Iranian businessman who were losing their economic powers in the bazaar. Merchant dissidents pushed them to ask religious leaders for assistance. The relationship between these two groups played a significant role in the success of Shia political Islam in establishing an Islamic state in Iran in 1979 (Ashraf 1988).

Politicising Shia rituals and organisations intensified during this period. As ulama were pivotal in previous crises like the tobacco embargo, their social influence encouraged them to start the revolution by using Shia rituals and Shia organisations. Shia rituals which were developed during the Safavid and Qajar eras were employed to organise demonstrations. Shia organisations and rituals had a significant role in this revolution: the first protest was organised by ulama during the religious mourning of Karbala; the second protest was launched when a businessman who built three mosques in Tehran was beaten by the regime because of the price of sugar; a third protest also took place in Muharam in 1906 when the regime arrested many preachers and clergy which intensified the anger of the people (Abrahamian 1982: 81). When the regime killed many theology

students, Shia Mujtahid, like Tabatabai and Behbahani, compared the Qajar leader with Yazid, the Umayyad leader who killed Imam Husain. The Shia ulama started to mobilise people against the regime via mosques and the bazaar. Finally, Muzaffar al-Din Shah signed the constituent National Assembly (Abrahamian 1982: 84).

The forming of revolutionary organisations by Shia ulama was a result of these actions. During the early months of the movement, ulama in Tehran established a clerical association*, anjoman-e hauza-ye Islami*, for regular meetings to discuss political issues. As all the high-ranking ulama joined this organisation, it was a place to acquire collective current opinions on political affairs (Bayat 1991: 116). Later, when the regime tried to supress the ulama, they intensified their underground activities and improved their network, forming new organisations such as the association of united clergy, *anjoman-e ettehadiyya-ye tollab*. This association was able to mobilise thousands of ulama in the religious school of Tehran to propagate revolutionary activities (Bayat 1991). Through these organisations, the clergy started to publish and distribute a secret newsletter, *Shabnameh*, to encourage Mujtahids to be more involved in the uprising, and also to raise public awareness about the political situation and motivate the populace to participate in protests (Bayat 1991: 118).

Constitutional revolution increased the ulama's power in real political space and in the constitution. In this period, ulama introduced Shia beliefs into the constitution, which was signed by different kings. The Tobacco movement and the revolution showed that ulama had become an important political force. The clergy took about 106 seats in the first parliament and passed a set of fundamental laws according to Islam. Article 1 declared only a Shia could become a king and Twelver Shia would be the state religion; Article 39 asked the king to "promote the Twelver Shia doctrine and to seek help of the holy spirits of the saints of Islam to render service to the advancement of Iran" (Hiro 2013: 20). Despite his opposition to the constitution, Muhamad Ali Shah signed it when his prime minister, Amin Al-sultan, was assassinated after a demonstration in Tehran (Hiro 2013: 20). Although the parliament and constitutional revolution failed through foreign intervention, ulama were actively involved in the political arena until 1911, before the

outbreak of World War I and the ensuing 10 years of instability in Iran (For more informaation seeAbrahamian 1982: 103-118).

Internationally, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire as a result of World War I had a significant impact on the life of Shia political Islam because of a new emerging political situation in key Shia countries like Iraq. In the 1920s, the internal revolts and foreign intervention of the Ottoman Empire declined, its territories separated and new countries such as Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine were established. Because of the new world order and the weakness of the newly-established countries, they became the colonies of foreign powers under a guardianship regime. When this happened, Islamic and Shia beliefs did not accept Kuffar sovereignty over Islamic land, hence the colonialism system precipitated the appearance of Islamic and Shia movements to fight for independence (Haj Seyed Javadi 2001).

4.2.7. Pahlavi dynasty: decline of ulama political power

Reza Pahlavi, who was a General during the Ahmad Shah Qajar period, created national police forces to recentralise the collapsed state. He defeated many regional uprisings and movements and was then supported by the fourth and fifth National Assemblies to establish the Pahlavi dynasty (Abrahamian 1982: 120-125). Although in the early years of his monarchy Reza Shah upheld the clergy to gain their support for establishing his rule, he later decreased the clergy's power and their control over institutions by creating modern schools and courts (Keddie 1980: 99).

Reza Shah Pahlavi tried to lessen the power of the clergy in society by introducing policies to reduce their social, political and economic influence. Some of these policies included (Hiro 2013: 27-29):

- Reducing the number of clergy in the judicial system and public schools. He employed new western-educated experts to replace clergy judges in the courts
- Reducing the number of clergy in the national council from 24 representatives in the fifth council to 6 in the tenth council

- Reducing their economic income through removing control of all endowments from the hands of the clergy

- Ignoring Islamic law to enact new family laws

- Closing some mourning shrines and religious schools. For example, he closed the Navab School in Mashhad and used its building for military training (Jafarian 2001: 17).

However, despite Reza Shah's attempts to eliminate the clergy's political power, he was not able to curb their social and institutional power. The control of mosques around the country was under the clergy's jurisdiction. They also established the Qom seminary, *Hwuzeh Elmyieh*, which provided an organisational system for collecting the religious tax which increased the clergy's influence in Iran. This new institution helped them to use the religious tax for training and to support more clergy to promote Shia values around the country.

4.3. **The origins of the Shia Movement before the revolution**

The previous chapter discussed the historical background of SPI in Iran. Although this describes the provisional process of the emergence of SPI, the key period for the new Islamism began in the 1960s when Mohamad Reza Shah determined to reduce the influence of Islamist powers in society by introducing political and economic reforms. Albeit the king also wanted to increase his popularity through applying these reforms, such as the land reform in 1962, they are indicative of the high demand for change in society. However, the origin of SPI can be traced back to the social, economic and political conditions of the pre-revolution era. The following sections will explain how these origins emerged.

4.3.1. Pre-revolution environment

When Mohamad Reza Shah returned to power after the coup d'état in 1953, which was orchestrated with the assistance of the CIA and MI6, he decided to apply many reforms to reduce the dissatisfaction of people through modernisation and westernisation of Iranian society (Clawson and Rubin 2005: 70-75). During the early years after coup the Shah was dependent on foreign aid to rule the country, and was influenced by western

thought. Hence, later, in 1963 he launched reforms such as the White Revolution to modernise, liberalise and westernise the country, and to increase his legitimacy among the working class and peasants. The 12 main elements of this programme were (Bill 1970: 31-32):

- Land reform
- Nationalisation of forests and pastures
- Public sale of state-owned factories to finance land reform
- Profit-sharing in industry
- Reform of electoral law to include women
- Literacy Corps
- Health Corps
- Reconstruction and Development Corps
- Rural Courts of Justice
- Nationalisation of the waterways
- National reconstruction
- Educational and administrative revolution

In traditional Iranian society, modernisation from above through the White Revolution had a major impact on the social, economic and political environment. As a result of this plan, a deep rift occurred between Mohamad Reza Shah and the clergy, because the clergy saw the introduction of these reforms as a potential threat to Islam (Roshandel 2002: 12). This was the starting point of a serious political reaction from Ayatollah Khomeini. A few months later, on 6 June 1963 in Tehran, the conflict between the clergy and the Shah incited a massive demonstration that could be considered as the first serious uprising against the Pahlavi dynasty.

 Form a social perspective, the White Revolution caused a mass migration of people from the countryside to the big cities, which created a working class which was not satisfied with its living standards. In the early 20th century, the majority of the Iranian population lived in the countryside. For example, in 1911, the rural population amounted to around 80 percent of the total population. Although the causes of urbanisation were many, some of the Shah's policies like land reform and the White Revolution triggered a huge

immigration to big cities like Tehran. Tehran's population reached 5 million in 1979, while it was about 200,000 in 1911: 25 times more.

Although Hassan Hakimian (1988) argues that the standard of living for the working class improved during the 1960s and 70s, the immigrants who were not familiar with urban culture were unable to conform with urban values. Living conditions in the villages were meagre in comparison with the cities, with a huge disparity between them in terms of the standard of living. The majority of villagers had deprived living standards and facilities, and the remoteness of the villages made living conditions hard. According to the 1976 census (Anon 1979), there were about 65 thousand villages in Iran with small populations. Because of their dispersion the central government was unable to support them. Hence, the villagers suffered a high death rate and were uneducated: in 1974 only 33 percent of children in villages were able to go to school.

However, the huge number of immigrants who were looking for work in big cities like Tehran created a large working class. As Abrahamian cited "Mohammad Reza Shah had nourished the working class to become the largest single class in Iran" (Abrahamian 1982: 435). He indicates that the working class rapidly grew fivefold in the period between 1963 and 1977. This working class became the backbone of the revolutionary movement in 1979.

In the areas of literacy and health care, the rate of educated people and number of doctors in big cities like Tehran was considerably higher than the rest of country. For example, in 1973 near half of Iran's doctors were located in Tehran, where there was one doctor for 878 people, while it was one doctor for 5011 people in the rest of the country. At the same time the literacy rate in Tehran was about 76 percent while it was about 38 percent for other parts of country (Cite inAfshar 1985: 30).

In terms of economic development, although the Shah tried to improve conditions through economic reforms in the White Revolution, these reforms were unsustainable, which increased public demand and caused a wider gap between the poor and rich classes. As Nikki Keddie (2006) argues, the "White Revolution" was not adequate enough to industrialise the country, or to distribute land, wealth, agricultural technology and

equipment, and credit equally. She critiques the political scientist who indicated that these programmes steered Iran to a developmental process. Keddie shows that these programmes, the White Revolution, not only caused an unsustainable development but also created many cultural and political issues. She states "Pahlavi's insistence on the rapid modernization from above, along with the alienating overemphasis on secular, pre-Islamic cultural nationalism, created a cultural gap between the upper and new middle class and the masses of people who were guided by Islamic cultural traditions, adding to the socioeconomic gaps created by this program" (Keddi Cited In Mahdi 1983).

The industrialisation and land reforms of the 1960s increased the inequality of income distribution. The International Labour Office mentioned that the Gini coefficient for Iranian income distribution in 1970 was higher than for other East and South Asian countries (Pesaran Cited in Afshar 1985: 30).

Another significant feature in the growth of the Iranian economy, especially in the oil sector and manufacturing during the 1963-78 period, was an increasing level of corruption in Iran especially in the Pahlavi family and among the Shah's close associates. The fast expansion and investment in industry and financial services encouraged the royal family to become more involved in economic activities. For example, the royal family supported their close associates in establishing new banks that provided easy access to public and private deposits for the royal family to grant loans to specific institutions which belonged to them, such as the Pahlavi Foundation (Pesaran 1982). The Pahlavi Foundation penetrated all parts of the Iranian economy. As cited by Bostock and Jones, it was a "nominally charitable foundation [which] fostered official corruption" (cited in Chehabi and Linz 1998: 199). However, these kinds of economic activity increased corruption in the royal family.

In terms of the political climate, the Shah did not seriously take steps to develop a political system to cultivate a close relationship with the new working class, to open political arenas for different social forces, to understand the crucial demands of the lower classes, or to obtain real feedback from the society about his reforms. In the years after the coup d'état in 1953, he even started to consolidate his power by placing coup leaders like Generals Zahedi, Hedayat, and Bakhtiyar in key posts, and used foreign financial aid to

develop economic and security strategies (Abrahamian 1982: 420-423). For example, in 1957 he established the SAVAK, a national security and information organisation, with the assistance of the CIA and MOSAD to control the political arena through arresting and torturing his political opponents.

During the 1960s and 70s, the self-created political parties were not enough to provide a clear relationship between the masses and the monarchy. From the 1960-63 crises onwards, the political system in Iran was based on two major parties. As a part of the White Revolution in 1963, the Shah established a new party called the Melyion (Nationalist's) Party, to stand against the Mardom (People's) Party. Although Mohamad Reza Shah noted in his book, *Mission of my country*, "If I were a dictator rather than a constitutional monarch, then I might be tempted to sponsor a single dominant party such as Hitler or such as you find in communist countries" (Shah 1961: 337), later, in 1975, he banned two existing parties and established a unique political party, the Resurgence Party, to unify and control all other political groups. As Abrahamian argues, the main goal of this party was "to transform the old-fashioned military dictatorship into a totalitarian-style one-party state" (Abrahamian 1982: 441-443). Although the Shah wanted to provide an open political space for new and young elites who were not able to find a position in the political pyramid, establishing this new party was not successful in providing equality for all political groups in power, especially for religious opponents.

The Resurgence Party not only increased state control over the middle class, working class, baazar (market), and rural masses but also presented the Shah as a spiritual and political leader – it denounced the clergy as "medieval black reactionaries", replaced the Muslim calendar with a new monarchy one, encouraged women to forsake the Islamic hijab, and enforced the Family Protection Law, which showed less consideration to Islamic laws (Abrahamian 1982: 443-445). For this reason, the establishment and activities of the Resurgence Party produced a serious reaction from the clergy, the Ayatollahs denouncing this party as against Islamic law. Ayatollah Khomeini, who was in exile in Najaf, after only 10 days from its creation, declared that any participation with this party was Haram because it was against the Islamic and national interests of the Iranian

nation (Khomeini 1982: 358 ,Vol 1). Consequently, the Ayatollahs' opposition incited demonstrations against the regime, especially in Qom.

Finally, increasing state power over most organisations and institutions, such as the bazaar, through the Resurgence Party intensified discontent over political conditions that weakened the whole regime. Abrahamin (1982: 446) argues that the monopoly of the Resurgence Party destroyed the existing bridge between society and government. Not only the clergy but also thousands of small businessmen, workshop keepers, and shopkeepers were dissatisfied with this new political party.

Consequently, the political, economic, and social conditions during the 1960s and 70s initiated much dissatisfaction in society. Although the Shah tried to rectify some issues by introducing reforms through the White Revolution, not only did these reforms not allay the discontent but they produced more dissatisfaction among Iranian society, especially in working class and religious groups. Hence modernisation, westernisation, injustice and corruption, and political authoritarianism could be construed as the fundamental origins of the Islamic Movement.

4.3.2. Secularisation and modernisation

Mohamad Reza Shah, like his father, had been taught that modernising society was the best way to improve his legitimisation and introducing secularisation programmes to reduce the power of religion in the traditional society of Iran. This modernisation process produced fundamental changes in the economic, social and cultural environments. So, during the 1960s and 70s social institutions, economic relations, and the cultural pattern were affected by state-sponsored modernisation programmes. These programmes, like land reforms, caused a huge migration of people, whereby rural dwellers transformed into urban society, thus changing the urban way of life in Iran (Mirsepassi 2000: 73). In addition, modernisation destroyed the traditional social structure and established new forms of state institution like the Literacy Corps. This transformation increased the role of government in people's lives which caused dissatisfaction, especially in rural areas. Moreover, extension of secularisation, which motivated the Ayatollahs to rise against the Shah's reforms, was a result of the modernisation process in the 1960s and 70s.

Separation of religion from politics could be considered as a significant root of the Islamic Movement in Iran. During different periods, not only did the clergy and Islamist activists reject separation of religion and politics but they also propagated Islam as a political religion (See 2.2). Although there was a controversial debate about the correlation between religion and modernisation (see Bruce 1999), the Shah's modernisation programmes initiated an anti-Islamic sentiment among ulama and activated the Ayatollahs against the regime. For example, the demonstrations of 5 and 6 June 1963 were triggered by these programmes. These uprisings could be considered as the first applied actions which paved the way for the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Regarding the reaction of the Ayatollahs to the Shah's modernisation plan, there were more than 371 announcements from Shia Ayatollahs from 1962, excluding those of Ayatollah Khomeini (Center 1995: 27-30). These announcements show the Ayatollahs' concern about ignoring the Sharia in new laws, and how the introduction of these changes was seen as a threat to Islam. For instance, when Parliament approved the new law which allowed women to participate in elections, permitted the elected PM to swear on any book, not only the Qur'an, and decreed the equal rights of Muslims and Non-Muslims in elections, Ayatollahs Marashi, Khoee and Golpayegani wrote a letter to the Shah and harshly critiqued these new laws (Center 1995: 27-30). All of them mentioned that these laws were against Sharia. Ayatollah Khoee, in a letter to the Shah, mentioned that copying laws from foreigners is against Islam and the constitution. He recommended that if the Shah wanted to apply reforms, it was better to do it according to the Sharia laws (Center 1995: 30).

In addition, the Shah's modernisation plans imparted the idea among Ayatollahs that these programmes heralded the path to secularisation. When the Shah decided to put his White Revolution to a referendum, Ayatollah Khomeini boycotted it and said "it seems that this obligated referendum is a prelude to omitting the religion from the constitution" (Rohani 1982: 230). Following Ayatollah Khomeini's announcement, other Ayatollahs also rejected this referendum and asked people to shun it. Despite the Ayatollahs' boycott, the Shah called a referendum in early 1963 which caused a deadly demonstration in June of that year.

However, it is clear that the Ayatollahs' concerns about secularisation mobilised them and religious groups to form an Islamic movement. They published more than 70 announcements during a two-month period before the uprising in June 1963, to incite the people against the Shah's reforms, because they believed they were a threat to Islam (Center 1995: 198).

4.3.3. Anti-foreigner sentiment

Anti-foreigner sentiments were a key motivation in Iran during the Islamic revolution and later. The presence of foreigners, especially American advisers and foreign interventionists in the political and economic arena provided a strong reason for the masses and religious leaders to blame foreigners for their conditions. Keddie (2006) and Pasaran (2008) explain how the social and economic interventions of foreigners provided social bases for opposition to be unified against the regime. Almost all ideologues of the Islamic revolution, such as Ayatollah Khomeini, Motahari and Ali Shariati, highlighted the anti-Western tendencies in Iran. For example, Ali Shariati's main concern was that western culture and ideology were destroying the human soul. He presented his theory, "return to one's roots", and argued the only way to be developed and modern was to return to Islamic culture and fight against the western one (see Chapter 2.2.3).

Foreign intervention in Iran intensified anti-foreigner sentiments, especially the roles of the Soviet Union and Britain during different periods. During World War II, the Soviet Union from the north, and Britain from the south, invaded Iran and occupied Tehran in August 1941. Although this occupation was because of Reza Shah's relationship with Germany, it created a bad feeling among Iranian society towards foreigners. With the start of the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union, Iran was also at the centre of attention of both super powers, mainly because of its oil resources and its strategic position. The Soviet Union started its intervention in social and political arenas by establishing the Tudeh Party (See Abrahamian 1982: 281-299). However, the US exerted significant influence through creating a close relationship with Mohamad Reza Shah who was empowered by the support of the Allied forces in 1941.

The 1953 coup against the legitimate Prime Minister was a clear foreign intervention which intensified and fed a common negative approach towards foreigners among the

people and religious groups. The intelligence services of the US and Britain planned a coup d'état against the democratic government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq following his attempt to nationalise the oil industry.

The control of foreigners, especially Britain, of the oil industry created a demand among the Iranian people to cut the foreigners' hand from the resources (Gasiorowski 1987). The oil industry was under the control of the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). In the 1940s this issue became one of the main sources of discontent among religious leaders like Ayatollah Kashani and political parties like the National Front. In the 1950s religious groups and the National Front held a demonstration against Britain and the Shah, which forced the Shah to appoint Mosaddeq as Prime Minister. When Mosaddeq took power, he nationalised the oil industry and set up the National Iranian Oil Company. However, Mosaddeq's attempts to reduce the Shah's power and to nationalise the oil industry, and also tension between Mosaddeq and Kashani as the religious leader, led to a successful coup against him.

This project is not going to explain the reasons for and result of this coup, nor to investigate the controversial role of religious groups and the Tudeh Party in the success of the coup, but the growth of anti-foreigner sentiments needs to be considered. As Gasiorowski argues, the key result of this coup was establishing a pro-American regime in Iran which provoked future anti-American incidents such as the terrorist attacks on American citizens in the early 1970s (Gasiorowski 1987: 279). For instance, The People's Mojahedin Organization, *Sāzmān-e mojāhedin-e khalq-e irān*, which was founded in September 1965, held an anti-American campaign during the 1970s. It planned a failed kidnap attempt on the US ambassador to Iran, an attack against USAF, and killed a senior US Army officer on 2 June 1973.

The presence of American companies in military and economic sectors had disgruntled many groups such as the bazaar and the middle class (Pesaran 2008). A new state of affairs after the coup and fear of a more communist sway encouraged the US to become more involved in the economic and military fields. For example, when a group of American companies, about thirty-five American investors and industrialists, held a conference in Tehran in May 1970, middle class and religious groups strongly condemned the

conference as an imperialist tool. The conference intensified anti-American sentiments and opponents demonstrated in Tehran and attacked the American-Iranian Society office. Ayatollah Khomeini censured the conference from his exile and announced "any agreement that is concluded with these American capitalists and other imperialists is contrary to the will of the people and ordinances of Islam" ((Bill 1988: 181). In the following month, Ayatollah Mohamad Reza Saidi, one of Khomeini's students, was arrested by SAVAK and tortured to death in June 1970. The killing of an Ayatollah by the regime increased the anger of the people against them and foreigners.

Another event which escalated Anti-American sentiments was the law of Capitulation. The widespread presence of American military forces in Iran for political, economic and military goals persuaded the US government to impose the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), known as Capitulation, on the Iranian government to protect its army, instead of granting economic aid such as a $200 Million loan (Bill 1988: 156-157). On account of this, in 1964 the US embassy proposed enactment of Capitulation on the Asadollah Alam administration. Later, in October 1964, the Mansour administration forced Parliament to approve it. As Young argues, the anti-Americanism rose in reaction to the SOFA (cited inBill 1988: 158). Enactment of this law incited the nationalist and religious groups against the foreigners. There was considerable opposition from Ayatollah Khomeini. On 26 October, he issued an announcement saying "Let the world know that all the troubles of the Iranian and Muslim nations originate from the foreigners, from America. The Islamic nations hate foreigners in general, and America in particular..." (Iranreview 2005). He also interpreted this law and announced "If any of them commits a crime in Iran, they are immune. If an American servant or cook terrorizes your source of religious authority in the middle of the bazaar, the Iranian police does not have the right to stop him. The Iranian courts cannot put him on trial or interrogate him. He should go to America where the masters would decide what to do. We do not consider this government a government. These are traitors. They are traitors to the country" (Brun 1978: 108).

To sum up, many events like the coup in 1953, the growth of the foreigners' role in the economic and military arenas, and Capitulation intensified anti-foreigner and nationalism sentiments among Iranian society and became one of the main roots of the 1979

revolution. Some of the slogans such as "Neither East nor West, Islamic Republic", "Independence, Freedom, and Islamic Republic" during the revolution clearly show the importance of these sentiments which mobilised the people against the dependent regime of the Shah. In addition, the leader of the Shia Movement, Ayatollah Khomeini, utilised the widely held anti-American sentiments to mobilise the people under his banner (Rouleau 1980).

4.3.4. Injustice: social and economic inequity

Justice is a basic principle of Islam. Struggling against injustice and the establishment of justice in all aspects of society has been one of the main goals of the Islamic Movement (see chapter 3.2). Hence injustice that could be construed as a result of corruption in society mobilised people to improve the situation. For example, Ms Nusaibah Ibraheem Zakzaky, the daughter of Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky, the leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, asked Muslims and non-Muslims to rise against injustice. She said "Islamic Movement is about unity against injustice. The Islamic movement's main agenda is to oppose injustice and anyone from anywhere including non-Muslims are welcome to join the movement" (Zakzaki 2015).

During the 1960s and 1970s, the modernisation and industrialisation programmes, according to the White Revolution plan, proceeded at a steady pace. The 1973 energy crisis increased the price of oil dramatically which provided a huge oil revenue for the Shah's regimes (see chapter 8). Industrialisation and high oil revenues caused a wider gap in income distribution, and also brought about more economic corruption in the royal family. According to the ILO (International Labour Office), during 1969-70, the Gini index for Iranian income distribution was higher than any country in Latin America, western countries, and East and South-east Asia (Pesaran 1982). The data shows, from 1971 to 2005, the Gini index of inequality of urban household expenditure reached its highest point in 1978 (Behdad 1989). Therefore, inequality in income distribution stimulated a feeling of economic injustice among the working and middle classes in this period.

As well as inequality, corruption in the royal family intensified a demand for justice in society. The economic boom in the 1970s expanded corruption in the royal family and among close associates of the Shah, which imparted a high level of dissatisfaction among

the working and middle classes in Iran. These dissatisfactions mobilised the people against the Shah's regime, as Parvis Sabeti, a high-ranking member of SAVAK, argues corruption was one of the most important reasons for the success of the opposition (Ganji 2002: 8-9). The *Washington Post*, on 19 November 1978, published a report about corruption in Iran (Jonathan 1978) which indicates how corruption mobilised a torrent of demonstrations against the Shah.

Abrahamian (1982) estimates corruption in the royal family at around a billion dollars during 1973-76. He explains that the upper class, which consisted of the royal family and five other groups who had a close relationship with the Pahlavi family like aristocratic families, enterprising aristocrats, old-time entrepreneurs, 200 elder politicians and military officers, and a half-dozen new entrepreneurs "owned not only the large commercial farms, but also some 85 percent of major private firms involved in banking, manufacturing, foreign trade, insurance, and urban construction" (Abrahamian 1982: 432). Among this upper class, there were some businessmen with Baha'i and Jewish background who stirred a religious sensitivity towards them. Ayatollah Khomeini in several announcements condemned the role of the Baha'i and Jewish in the economy. He strongly criticised the role of Baha'ians and Israel in the oil industries. He noted "if Israel wants to intervene in the Iranian oil export, the Muslim must kill them and discharge them" (Khomeini 1982: Vol 1:227, Vol 5:242).

Although the active role of Bahai'ans in the economy and the Shah's administration aroused discontent, corruption in the royal family provided a more negative impact against the regime in society. According to a *Washington Post* report of 17 January 1979, the activities of Ashraf, the Shah's sister, and Prince Gholam Reza in smuggling and forcing landowners to sell their property caused much dissatisfaction (Branigin 1979).

Another example of corruption in the royal family is the Pahlavi Foundation, which is now known as the Alavi Foundation. Mohamadreza Shah founded the Pahlavi Foundation as a charitable organisation in 1958. The organisation was active in many parts of the Iranian economy and had shares in 207 companies. As the *New York Times* reported, "behind the façade of charitable activities, the foundation is used in three ways: as a source of funds for the royal family; as a means of exerting influence on key sectors of the economy;

as a conduit for rewards to supporters of the regime" (Abrahamian 1982: 438). According to Chehabi & Linz, the Pahlavi Foundation, with $81 million capital and $1.05 billion assets, was the "tip of the iceberg of official and dynastical corruption, outside and inside Iran" (Chehabi and Linz 1998: 199).

Although grievances such as injustice, inequity and corruption (see Chapter 3.3.1) alone are not enough to mobilise the people, as the roots of movements they played a crucial role in the Islamic revolution of 1979. Some scholars have argued the point that expansion of corruption among royal and official families led to public discontent and paved the way for the Iranian revolution (see Mackey and Harrop 1996: 250-260).

There are more instances which evidence the importance of inequity and corruption in triggering a movement against the Shah's regime. The Shah's speech before the revolution, through national TV in 1978, indicates the magnitude of corruption and injustice in the people's uprising. He said "I pledge that past mistakes, lawlessness, injustice, and corruption will not only no longer be repeated, but will in every respect be rectified... I guarantee that in future the government in Iran will be based on the Constitution, social justice, and the will of the people, and will be free from despotism, injustice, and corruption" (Azimi 2009). Following the Shah's speech, Ayatollah Khomeini, from exile in Paris, mentioned that the poverty in the country is not because of lack of resource, it is because of corruption in the royal family. He said, "we want a government to share the resources among poor people, not only among royal family". He severely critiqued the Shah's speech and said "Shah announced, he will claim the spoliated money and will punish the robbers. He must punish himself first because he is the biggest robber" (Khomeini 1982: Vol4: 463).

The Iranian people and the clergy's reaction to the 2,500-year celebration of the Persian Empire in Persepolis, which took place in October 1971, shows how some groups were unhappy with the corruption and injustice. Although this anniversary, like other events, had various advantages and disadvantages from different points of view (See Nahāvandī 2005), it drew further criticism of the royal family and the Shah's regime in public. While the working class was suffering from economic inequality and there was a serious famine in provinces like Fars and Sistan v Baluchistan, the Shah decided to hold one of the most

expensive anniversaries in the world, which cost an estimated $200 million (Bill 1988: 183-185). On 1 May 1971, a group university students demonstrated against this event. Police attacked the demonstrators and arrested more than 100 students. Afterwards, Ayatollah Khomeini presented a lecture in the Ansari mosque in Najaf and asked the clergy and people to rise up against the Shah's decision to hold the anniversary. He mentioned that while some members of the clergy wrote to him about the economic grievances of people in different cities, the Shah was going to waste millions of dollars of Iranian wealth on the anniversary. He articulated that clerics in the Islamic world should ask and push the Shah to stop this programme which was organised by the Shah's Israeli counsellor. He also asked the ulama in different countries to force their presidents to have less participation (Khomeini 1982: Vol 2:368).

Finally Injustice, corruption, and inequality were used by the Shia group to organise the Shia Movement: firstly, because struggling against inequity was a key slogan of Shia groups, as discussed in Chapter 3; secondly, looking for justice had been an essential principle of the Shia Movement (see chapter 3.2). Hence during the revolutionary activities, the corruption of the royal family and economic inequality were utilised many times by activists to fight against Mohamad Reza Shah's regime.

4.3.5. Political discontents: looking for freedom

Political dissatisfaction has been an origin for the Shia Movement. According to RMT and political process theories of social movement, political discontents are a key motivation for people to participate in a movement. As Tarrow (1988) argues, political opportunity and constraints encourage mobilisation (see chapter 3.2). Political discontents have been considered by scholars to explain public behaviour and also how these discontents can encourage them to participate in a movement. For example, Beinin & Vairel (2013) analyse the impact of political demand in some Arab countries on emerging uprisings since 2009. They argue that despite differences in the revolutionary movements in Yemen, Libya, Syria and Bahrain, these movements were for democracy and social justice.

Political demand, such as for democracy and freedom, should be considered as significant political roots for the emergence of the Islamic movement in Iran. In the 1970s,

the central slogan of revolutionary groups, "Independence, Freedom, and Islamic republic", shows the public demand for political freedom (Maleki 2009). One of the key events which raised political discontent in Iran was the 1953 coup against a nationalist Prime Minister, Mohamad Mosadeq, who had a pivotal role in nationalisation of the oil industry. According to a CIA report, the coup to overthrow Mohamad Mosadagh was supported by the USA and Britain. Although Mosadeq was known for his nationalist charisma, he had an important social and political power. So, after the coup, Mohamad Reza Shah started to reconsolidate his power which increased political discontentment; as Abrahamian said "The coup inaugurated an era of political repression" (Abrahamian 2013: 211). Arresting many of Mosadeq's followers, especially in the Tudeh Party, caused chaos in the political spectrum, as Ghods notes, "Shah and General Teymour Bakhtiar, the military governor of Tehran, turned Iran into a police state" (Ghods 1989: 189). In this period the Shah also suppressed political parties such as the Tudeh Party and the National Front because he believed that the Tudeh Party was trying to dominate power in Iran.

Although the Shah tried to increase his legitimacy through the White Revolution and reforms, as Ghods argues, after the Amini administration in 1963, the Shah also consolidated his power through three main means: economic control, military force and SAVAK, and political control (Ghods 1989: 197-210).

Despite the Shah's attempt to change the state of affairs through economic reform, the political situation did not improve. Abarhamian articulates "Although the Shah helped modernize the socioeconomic structure, he did little to develop the political system" (Abrahamian 1982: 435). The Shah was not able to provide a link between the regime and the newly-formed classes. He only sought to control the political arena by establishing a political party. For instance, in 1975, he dissolved the existing political parties and established a one-party system. He proclaimed that the country was based only on one party, the Resurgence Party: the groups who did not like to join this party might be imprisoned or could leave the country. He said "Freedom of thought! Freedom of thought! Democracy, democracy! With five-year olds going on strike and parading in the street!... democracy? Freedom? What do these worlds mean? I do not want any part of them"

(cited inFitzgerald 1974: 82).   Abrahamian (1982: 441) argues that although the key objective of creating the Resurgence Party was to transform the military dictatorship into a totalitarian-style one-party state, the result was more governmental control over the middle class, the rural mass, the working class, the religious establishment, and especially on the bazaar (Abrahamian 1982: 441). These new political orders by the Shah invoked a serious reaction in different groups.

The first reaction against the formation of the Resurgence Party was from the clergy. Ayatollah Rohani announced that this party was against the principle of Islam, interests of Iran and constitutional law (Abrahamian 1982: 445). Moreover, Ayatollah Khomeini from Najaf advised true believers not to participate in this party because of its anti-Islamic nature (Khomeini 1982: Vol3: 71). The Party incentivised a group of ulama which was against it, because its members were medieval black reactionaries (Abrahamian 1982: 444). A secondary disappointed group was businessmen, because of an increased governmental control of the market.

The Resurgence Party was trying to stabilise the political status quo after the coup. But even improving the situation was not successful enough to restore the legitimacy of the Shah's power. Abrahamian (1982: 446) notes "the Resurgancy party weakened the whole regime, cut the monarchy further off from the country, and intensified resentment among diverse groups".

Another phenomenon which caused further political discontent after the coup was the establishment of SAVAK, *Sazeman Amniat Vetelatat Keshvar*, Organisation of National Intelligence and Security of the Nation. SAVAK was organised by the USA and the Israeli intelligence service to improve the political condition through controlling and supressing opponents of the Shah's regime. Keddie argues that the Shah's aim in establishing SAVAK was to provide an organisation to suppress opponents and the dissident movement (Keddie and Richard 2006: 134).   Although SAVAK had some success in achieving its goals to suppress guerrilla movements during 1963-77 (Graham 1978: 142-149), it generated fear in the political environment with its violent activities which heightened dissatisfaction against the regime. *Time* magazine described SAVAK as the most feared and hated Iranian institution which had "tortured and murdered thousands of

the Shah's opponents" (*World: SAVAK: Like the CIA* 1979). This kind of violent behaviour on the part of SAVAK against opposition increased political discontent.

However political discontent during the Shah's regime should be considered as one of the significant origins of the Islamic revolution in 1979. This discontentment encouraged people to participate in the movement against the Shah.

4.3.6. Religious discontent: looking for Islamism

The religious belief system in Iran has had a close correlation with social classes and the political movement from pre-Islamic times, especially after the dominance of Shia Islam (Keddie 1980: 80).   Although the dominant religion in Iran was Sunni until the 16th century, following a Moghul attack and establishment of the Safavid dynasty, Shia Islam became the preeminent religion in Iran. Safavid kings propagated Shia beliefs among society. Thereafter Shia beliefs penetrated most parts of Iranian life, especially among the popular classes who were in the majority. So, from the Safavids, Shia beliefs had a significant impact on Iranian society while all social, political and economic discontent was highlighted and interpreted through Islamic beliefs. As Morteza Motahari explains, the Islamic movement "sought justice under the banner of Islam, and freedom and independence in the light of Islam" (Keddie 1980: 210). In fact, in the contemporary era, some social movements such as the boycott of tobacco in 1891, the constitutional revolution in 1905, nationalisation of the oil industry and the 1979 Islamic revolution show the vital role of Shia beliefs and ulama. These events indicate the important effects of religion in society and the political environment.

During the Pahlavi dynasty, religious discontentment increased because of the attitude of Reza Shah and Mohamad Reza Shah towards Islam. Although Reza Shah in the early years of his monarchy followed some of the clergy to secure their support for establishing his monarchy, later he decreased their power and control over institutions by establishing modern schools and courts (Keddie 1980: 99). Events like banning the hejab, and the Goharshad Mosque attack in the 1920s indicated Reza Shah's attitude to religion and ulama (Abtahi 2005). Likewise, Mohamad Reza Shah tried to decrease the power of ulama through modernisation and secularisation. The Pahlavis' struggles to decrease the

influence of ulama in society were interpreted by the ulama as anti-Islam policies which provoked Islamic sentiments in the traditional society of Iran.

Religious discontents played a functional role in the 1979 revolution. Different groups, who were concerned about Islamic values and Shia beliefs, and who were looking for democracy, freedom, justice and independence, were aware that religion had a functional role in motivating and mobilising the people against the Shah. Keddie explains that both the modernised middle and upper class religious faithful had important functions such as: explaining injustice, giving rules and organising ceremonies for death, birth and marriage rites, and providing periodic ceremonies for people who were killed in demonstrations (Keddie 1980: 102).

Theda Skocpol has highlighted the effects of Shia Islam in mobilising the people during the revolution. He cites "Shia Islam was both organizationally and culturally crucial to the making of the revolution against the Shah" (Skocpol 1982: 275). From the viewpoint of some Iranian ideologues, the main purpose of the revolution was the survival of Islam and applying Islamic rules in society. For example, Morteza Motahari argues that "the Islamic revolution means the way of looking for Islam and Islamic values. Therefore, the Islamic revolution and fighting are only for establishing Islamic values" (Motahari 1994: 59). Moreover, the revolutionary slogans illustrate the importance of Islamic values in the revolution. Mohamad Hossein Panhi identified around 4153 slogans during the four years from 1977 to 1981. He categorised them into four types and showed that about 738 (17.7 percent) were related to goals and values, and among those around 111 slogans were about the relevance of Islamic values to the demonstrators (Panahi 2000: 63-84).

For religious leaders and various other groups the only way of having a free and just society is through Islamic culture. Ayatollah Shariatmedari explained that religion provides answers to issues of conscience and tools for fighting injustice and corruption (Kraft 1978).

Finally, the above sections discussed some important origins of the Shia Movement since the 1950s. As social movement theories highlight the role of origin in the emergence of social movements (see section 3.3.1), phenomena such as anti-foreigner sentiments,

political and religious discontentment, and modernisation and westernisation played a crucial role in the nascence of the Shia Movement. While the Shah's regime provoked this phenomenon as explained above, the opponents highlighted it, to start the movement and mobilise people against the regime.

It was assumed that some of the origins of the Shia Movement would be put to rest after establishing the Islamic government. Not only have these origins not disappeared, but the Islamic government is revisiting them (although some origins such as economic grievances have always existed) to continue the Shia Movement. The Islamic government knows that it cannot mobilise the people against their internal (see Chapter 8) and external opponents without these origins because, as social movement theories explain, the movement needs origins. Hence the following section will analyse how the mentioned origins of the Shia Movement still exist in the post-revolution era.

4.4. Origin of the Shia Movement in post-revolution era

The first part of this chapter explained the main origins of the Shia Movement in Iran before the revolution, the origins which encouraged social forces to revolt against the Shah's regime and finally triggered a revolution in 1979. This section will investigate the destination of these origins. Did the social, political, cultural and economic discontentments which were the root of the Shia Movement disappear after the revolution?

The most mentioned origins of the Shia Movement have continued or been revived following the revolution. Some of these origins, such as anti-foreigner sentiments, have been revived by the government. Other origins have at times been highlighted by different groups to mobilise people for their political goals – for example, after the presidential election in 2009 when a Green Movement was formed to oppose the result, the government condemned the Green Movement as a desecration of Ashura and Shia values. So, the government intensified its religious sentiments and mobilised religious people to rise up against the Green Movement on 30 December 2009 (Laurent 2019

).

4.4.1. Anti-West sentiments

Part 4.1.3 discusses how westernisation policies and foreign interventions especially during the Pahlavi era intensified anti-foreigner sentiments in Iranian society before the 1979 revolution. These sentiments continued after the revolution, mobilising the nation against the foreign enemy of the Islamic government. Mobilising soldiers in the Iraq-Iran war is an example.

The participation of the US in the Iran-Iraq war increased anti-American sentiments which helped the Iranian administration to muster more soldiers for the battlefield. Western countries, especially the US, supported Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war, providing dual-use technology and non-US origin weaponry, and providing military intelligence and special operations training for Saddam (Timmerman 1992). Even though US military support for Saddam was limited, the Iranian government tried to show that western countries were supporting Saddam. Iranian national TV promulgated that Saddam has started the war with a green light from the US. Although US strategy in the war was balancing power between the two sides, the Islamic government was broadcasting the US as the main enemy. These anti-West and US sentiments were a significant factor in encouraging young people to go to the battlefield. Some of the wills of soldiers who were killed in the war indicate how these feelings motivated them to participate. Shahbazi (2015) analysed about 50 wills and argues that anti-Imperialism feeling played a crucial role in encouraging and motivating soldiers.

 Anti-West sentiments, especially anti-American, continued in the post-revolution period. The attack on 4 November 1979 by a group of students against the US embassy that caused a serious hostage crisis in Tehran, shows the high level of anti-American feeling. "Death to America" has been the essential political slogan in all governmental and some public ceremonies, in Friday prayers, and on city billboards since 1979. For instance, this slogan has been used for morning assemblies in schools. In my own experience, when I was in primary and secondary school, every morning "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" were common slogans in assembly.

in the post-revolution era, the Iranian supreme leaders, Ayatollahs Khomeini and Khamenei, accused the United States of being the key enemy of Islam and Iran. They

portrayed America as an Imperialist country exploiting oppressed countries. Ayatollah Khomeini encouraged people to strive against America. He espoused that America wanted to destroy Islam and Iran, rallying support for the struggle against the US which should continue until it achieved victory (Khomeini 1982: Vol 21: 89). Aytollah Khamenei always mentioned the hostility of the US towrds the Iranian nation and Islam in his speeches. Even when Iran and the US reached an agreement over the nuclear issue, he said this agreement doesn't mean that we can trust the US. The hostility of the US towards Iran has not changed (Dehghan 2015).

Sometimes the US and Iranian administrations tried to rebuild their relationship but the Iranian government and Islamist groups in Iran did not allow the ice in the relations to melt. In recent years, despite a nuclear deal between the US and Iran in 2015, the Iranian government and supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei have intensified anti-American feelings. On the occasion of the 36th anniversary of the US embassy hostage crisis, the government tried to hold a larger demonstration than before to show its negative attitude towards the US, despite the nuclear deal. The government also propagated this attitude via the media, which are under the control of the government.

However, anti-foreigner sentiments as an origin of the Shia Movement are still working. Western countries have always been accused by Shia leaders of intervention in Islamic countries. During the 2009 uprising in Iran, the Green Movement, the conservative government, accused the United States, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom of supporting the opponents (see Chapter 8). Some of the slogans and banners in the *9 Day* demonstration against the Green Movement indicate how anti-foreign sentiments motivated them. As the photograph below shows, protesters condemned the Green Movement leaders for having relations with the United States.

Source:(Khabar24)

4.4.2. Anti-Secularisation in the post-revolution period

Before the revolution, the clergy and religious forces rallied the people against the regime because of its secularisation policies. They accused Mohamad Reza Shah of applying anti-religion politics in society in order to reduce the influence of religion (see 1.2.7). An anti-secularisation motion as an origin of the Shia Movement did not end with the establishment of an Islamic government. Although Bazargan's provisional administration tried to establish a liberal democratic government, he was not able to control the Islamist groups and resigned in 1979. It ensued, as Chehabi argues, that "Islamists got rid of other parties one by one" (Chehabi 1990: 278-300) especially when Abolhasan Benisader, as the first president of the Islamic revolution, was impeached by parliament and condemned for anti-Islam and anti-clergical policies. Ayatollah Khomeini in his speech of 10 June 1981 said that Banisadr and his followers were against Islam and Iran, "they started an uprising against the Quran so we cannot accept them, they should be suppressed like the Shah" (Khomeini 1982: Vol 14: 452).

One of the key features of thought on the Islamic revolution's ideologues such as Motahari, Shariati and Ayatollah Khomeini was the link between religion and politics (Chapter 2.2). The followers of this thought had supressed the secular activists from the

earlier years of revolution, because they believed that secularism was a danger to political Islam and revolution. For example, Ayatollah Khamenei argues that secularism was going to make a neutral Islam which is different from revolutionary Islam. He noted that the success of the Islamic revolution depended on preserving revolutionary Islam (Khamenei 2015).

In the post-revolution era, secular tendencies among the younger generation are increasing. Although there are no reliable statistics available, some evidence indicates a new secularisation process (Abdolmohammadi 2015). Hence Islamists have become more concerned about it while Alireza Arafi, the head of seminaries in Iran, claims that secularism is threating the Islamic revolution from different aspects. He recommends that the Hawzah (Qom Seminary) needs to struggle against secular thoughts to protect the Islamic revolution (Soleimani 2016). Thus, Islamists labelled their opponents as secular to suppress them, especially after the 2009 presidential election when the Green Movement was accused of being a secular movement. Ayatollah Janati, head of The Guardian Council of the Constitution, said the Green Movement's target is to establish secular government under USA control which is a real danger for the Islamic revolution (Janati 2016).

However, the existence of secular groups after the 1979 revolution helped Islamists to use secularisation to mobilise people for their own political goals. The *9 Day* uprising against the Green Movement (see Chapter 8) is a clear example of how a government mobilizes people through state-controlled media. The national TV highlighted the anti-religious activities of some demonstrators as proof that the Green Movement is a secular and anti-Islam movement and to intensify public feeling against them.

4.4.3. Inequality and injustice in the Islamic republic

As the above part explained, economic and social inequity during the Shah's regime was utilised by opponents to motivate the public against the Shah. This motivation for maintaining the Shia Movement did not end after the 1979 revolution, although it has since been used in different ways. In some cases, corruption and inequity between social classes has been employed by Islamists like Ahmadinejad to gather the support of poor

people in the presidential elections of 2005 and 2009 (Ignatieff 2005). Inequality and poverty in society provided the fuel for Islamists to regain control of states in 2005.

Despite evidence which shows an improvement in inequality and poverty in society in the post-revolution period (Salehi-Isfahani 2009), dissatisfaction with the economic and social conditions in society continued. During the Iran-Iraq war the voice of dissatisfaction was modified because all parts of the country were involved in the war, which affected economic conditions. But after the war, it was expected that the government would improve conditions. As statistics show, the government was unable to deliver a better standard of living: the poverty rate increased from 0.20 in 1985 to 0.40 in 1989, the GDP per capita decreased from about $6000 in 1980 to less than $4000 in 1990. This was because the government was faced with many difficulties such as obliterated infrastructures and a high birth rate during the 1970s and the 1980s, which caused an inflated rate of unemployment, especially among young people in the 2000s, a high inflation rate during the first economic plan 1988-1994, and the failure of privatisation (Salehi-Isfahani 2009: 10-25).

Inequality and corruption as the origin of economic populism instigated the rise of new Isalmists in 2005. The election of Ahmadinejad as the neo-conservative President in 2005 indicated a new trend of Islamism in Iran. Some commentators called the election of Ahmadinejad as President the second revolution in Iran (Savyon 2005). Although the raise of neo-conservatism had various reasons, the poverty and corruption that were plaguing Iranian society had an significant impact, as Ehteshami & Zweiri (2007: 62) argue "the roots of his [Ahmadinejad] victory can be traced to the persistence of social and economic inequalities in Iran and the failure of previous leaders to address them". Reviewing key slogans of President Ahmadinejad during his presidential campaign in 2005 shows how he used the economic situation to incentivise the people. One of his main slogans was putting oil money onto the dinner table, which signified distribution of petrodollars among the poor (Moubayed 2006).

The victory of new wave Islamism that had started with the fall of the reformists in the 2005 election was affected by poor economic conditions. Whereas the reformists focused more on improvement of the political and cultural situation, they paid less attention to the

economic state. As Ali Rabei (2008), the adviser to President Khatami on social affairs, noted, neglect of the poor classes by the reformists while the conservatives paid a lot attention to the lower classes in society was one of the essential factors in the fall of the reformists and the rise of Islamism. Gasiorowski argues that although there is no concrete evidence for the Ahmadinejad victory, three trends in Iranian opinion were effective. He notes the first reason is that "Ahmadinejad's campaign emphasized the growing gap between Iran's rich and poor, the widespread corruption and rent-seeking that exist there, and his own humble lifestyle"(Gasiorowski 2005: 25).

However, seeking for justice and struggling against inequality and corruption has been used by Islamists and the government in the post-revolution period to revive their public image. Ayatollah Khamenei, after the 2005 presidential election, said that emphasising justice in society was the most important step taken by Ahmadinejad during his campaign. He said people voted for Ahmadinejad as a person who was going to fulfil the Islamic and revolutionary values in society (Khamenei 2005).

4.4.4. Politico-Religious discontentment

Before the 1979 revolution, Islamic groups and leaders used political discontent to mobilise the people against the Shah's regime, in search of democracy and freedom. In the post-revolution era political discontent was also a source for continuation of the Shia Movement, although it became combined with religious discontent. Post-revolution, most religious discontent had been interpreted as political, and vice versa. The Green Movement and its counter movement is an example of the combination of political and religious discontent.

During the early years after the 1979 revolution, establishing a new political system and the transformation of power caused serious political chaos in the country. This political instability nurtured the rise of Islamism by suppressing liberal and secular parties (Chehabi 1990: 278-300). There were deep political rifts among different groups. The provisional administration, which was formed by members of the Liberation Movement, wanted to follow liberal policies, while the Islamists were following their revolutionary aspirations. So, Mahdi Bazargan, provisional Prime Minister, resigned when he found that

he is was unable to control the Islamists. Later the parliament impeached Abolhasan Banisader because of his political conflict with the republican party and clergy.

Although political discontent in Iranian society brought about the rise of movements like the 2nd Khordad Movement (reform movement) in 1997 and the Green Movement in 2009, which were more liberal and secular, Islamists also utilised political discontent to mobilise their followers. The reform movement lost power when Ahmadinejad was elected President in 2005, and the Green Movement was controlled by the government after the *9 Day* uprising which was arranged by Islamists. Some scholars like Asef Bayat (1996), respectively, argue that reform and the Green Movement symbolised a new trend of post-Islamism in Iranian society. But, as will be shown in the following, the fall of both movements critiques the post-Islamism theory.

Islamists and the Iranian government tried to popularise and channel the political discontent into religious discontent. They made a link between political discontent and religious dissatisfaction to fight against other social movements like the Green Movement. Islamists usually accused the Green Movement of being an Anti-Ashura movement (see Chapter 8).

4.5. **Conclusion**

This chapter in the first section discussed the emerging process of SPI in Iran from the Sarbedaran movement, which could be considered as the first Shia state, before the Safavid, Qajar, and Pahlavi dynasties. The Safavid period was the starting point of the nascence of SPI in Iran as the Safavid kings imported Shia and expanded Shia ideology in Iranian society. After, during the time of weakness of the Qajar kings and foreign intervention in the Iranian economy, SPI and ulama became more powerful and utilised Shia values for their political goals which led to the constitutional revolution. During the Qajar era: 1) revolutionary aspects of Shia emerged despite division among the clergy about the role of Islam in politics; 2) the relationship between the bazaar and the clergy was formed.

However, a historical review of the Shia movement can illuminate the goals and roots of Shia movements. Historically they follow the significant goals listed below, which

emanated from their religious beliefs. The constitutional revolution indicates that the Shia movement looked at revealing Islamic values and the changing political order, as usually they reject authoritarian regimes and try to establish a new form of government according to Islamic law.

What are the roots of the Shia resurrection? This question could be answered from two viewpoints: sociological and ideological. From the sociological dimension, Shia movements usually attempt to solve a common social crisis. In the Middle East, social crises which are based on political, economic and social deprivations on one hand, and other frictions such as internal disorder, dictatorship, colonisation, influence of western culture and extension of western values on the other hand, caused a reaction in Shia groups and motivated them to reconstruct the system. In terms of ideology, Shia always tries to maintain its followers' dissatisfaction with the social and political conditions. Shia groups usually want a profound change in Islamic societies because of:

- Belief in arrogation of God's Caliph: Shia believes leadership is God's faith and Prophet Mohammad (SA), according to God's command, chose Imam Ali as his replacement on 15 March 632 at Ghadir Khumm. But after the death of the Prophet, some Muslims did not accept this command and established their own government. This was the start of conflict between the two main groups of Muslims and incited many battles between them such as Jamal, Seffein and Nahrovan. Since the Prophet, Shia Muslims have not recognised governments which were not based on the Imamate principle.
- Battle of Karbala: the martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS) and his companions was used by Shia groups to mobilise the people for revolution and uprising. The Karbala tragedy has become a symbol in Shia culture: the symbol of fighting against oppressive rulers. Most Shia groups usually hold an anniversary ceremony for the martyrdom of Imam Husain and provoke the people to take action against any injustice in Islamic society – not to accept oppressive governments.

During the Pahlavi dynasty, Reza Shah tried to lessen ulama power in politics through secularisation of society which took away the educational and judicial functions of ulama,

and banned Shia rituals such as mourning ceremonies. The downward trend of the constitutional movement and the failure of the clergy to renovate and restore their status were associated with the culmination of Reza Shah's power. Reza Shah fortified and strengthened the configuration of Iranian society differently. In his newly-devised approach, the status of scholars declined in civil society and their [scholars] influence on governmental policies weakened considerably. Grand Ayatollah Haeri, the famous and distinguished source of religious emulation and founder of Qom theological School, designed a policy based on political silence and compliance with the government. After the collapse of Pahlavi I, the Qom seminary became the main base of Shia political Islam.

In the following, This chapter has explained how the origins of the Shia Movement have continued since the 1979 revolution. The anti-West sentiments, anti-secularisation, economic inequality, and political discontent help the Islamic government to utilise these origins to maintain the Shia Movement and political Islam by mobilising their followers against its internal and external opponents. Although these origins in themselves are not enough to mobilise the people, they are essential for a movement. A movement cannot continue without origin (See Chapter 3.2).

 As explained in Chapter 3.3.1, existing origins are not enough in themselves for the success of a movement: development of a structure is necessary to fuel its continuation. In the following chapter, this thesis will examine the role of the Mosque and IRGC as two important structures in the survival of the Shia Movement in Iran.

Chapter 5. Mobilisers of the Shia Movement in Iran

5.1. Introduction

According to resource mobilisation theory, a degree of organisation is necessary to mobilise people for specific objectives. The success of a movement is directly related to its mobiliser's abilities. The mobiliser will use existing discontents and grievances to encourage people to take action to improve their conditions, achieve their goals, and solve their problems (See Chapter 3.3.2).

This chapter will investigate the role of two organisations, the Mosque and IRGC, which have played an essential role in the emergence, success, and continuance of the Islamic revolution in Iran. The operational roles of these two organisers will be discussed to show how they survive the SPI.

What about other organisers? Although the IRGC and mosques were not the only mobilisers expanding SPI in Iran, this project will concentrate on these two institutions because: 1) before the revolution, the most organised institution involved in the mobilisation of people was the mosque. Although other institutions like the bazaar also played a role (see Abrahamian 1988) in the revolution, the bazaar was also cooperating with some of the mosques in the bazaar (Arjomand 1981). For example, the Shah mosque which is located in the Grand Bazaar in Tehran was a centre for revolutionary propaganda and activities among the merchants; 2) after the revolution the IRGC was appointed by Ayatollah Khomeini to guard the revolution. Hence all other mobilisers' activities were under control of the IRGC with the cooperation of the mosques. For example, the Islamic Propagation Organization is formally responsible for organising all governmental demonstrations such as the revolution anniversary demonstration on 11 February, but the IRGC and Basij organise it directly. So, this chapter will only analyse the operational role of the mosque and the IRGC as two key mobilisers.

5.2. Mosque: The foundation of Political Islam

The mosque and Hussainiya need to be regarded as the base of the revolution, where clergy taught people, mobilised them against the Shah's regime, and encouraged them to follow Islamism. The role of the mosque in the Shia movement had historical roots, as chapter 5.1 indicated, during the Tobacco movement, and the constitutional revolution of the mosques was a platform for ulama to mobilise people.

The mosque has been at the centre of the Islamic movement since the emergence of Islam. In the early age of Islam Prophet Mohamad built many mosques, like the Al-Nabi mosque, when he immigrated to Madineh. A brief study of the Islamic movement in Islamic countries shows the importance of the mosque in social and political movements against the government. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt centralised its activities in the Grand Mosque of Cairo (Sharifpour 1997). As in other Muslim countries, mosques have historically played a central role in Islamism. During the Safavid and Qajar dynasties, governments and kings paid specific attention to building and controlling the mosques (see Chapter 5.2). At the end of the Qajar period and during the Pahlavi dynasty, mosques were run by ulama and religious groups. In terms of administrative structure, the government did not control the mosques, which were operated by a small voluntary group of members of the executive board of the mosque. There was no transparent, democratic way of choosing these members, who were usually from the area around the mosque and known as religious people within society. Commonly, the head of this board was a clergyman who managed the mosque affairs and presented lectures. These clergy had been sent to the mosques by Qom seminary to spread Islamic propaganda, hence the mosque provided an assembly for clergy and Islamists to propagate their ideology.

In Iran, mosques had an enormous impact on the political and social life of people, especially during the Islamic revolution. According to statistics, there are about 80,000 mosques in Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini argues that mosques have been bases for most Islamic activities, such as Islamic promotional events, mobilising soldiers for war, fighting against Kuffar, and inviting people to join Islam. The mosque, therefore, was the centre of Islamic activities (Khomeini 1982: Vol 7: 65). During the uprisings in the 1960s and 1970s, the mosque was a place for mobilising people against the Shah, organising political activity, and funding the revolution. In the post-revolution era, mosques retained

their importance in the survival of Islamism. During the Iran-Iraq war they mobilised soldiers and provided services for the battlefield. After the war, the mosques encouraged people to support Islamism in society. Although there is little difference in the clergy's perspective of political Islam, government-controlled mosques supported Islamism. Nevertheless, mosques have been significant in the victory and continuation of political Islam in Iran. Hamid Algar claims "One of the important elements in the success of the Revolution was the revival of the mosque, of the full dimensions and functions of the mosque, not simply as a retreat from society where people go to be away from the world and pray and make their ablutions and listen to the recitation of the Qur'an; on the contrary, it became a centre of struggle, an organization of command" (Algar 1983: 56).

In the following, this question will be discussed: *How has the mosque played a crucial role in the emergance and continuity of Shia movements in Iran?* To answer this question, the next sections will analyse the role of the mosque in the victory of the Shia movement before the 1979 revolution and its role in surviving SPI after the revolution.

5.2.1. The function of Mosques in the victory of the Shia Movement
 Mosques had many functional roles in the victory of the 1979 Islamic revolution, most notably providing a network among the clergy, propagating fervour against the Shah's Regime, organising and funding the revolutionary activities.

a) *Providing a network among Ulama*
   As well as the Qom seminary, the mosque was a place for forming and publicising revolutionary opinions through providing a network, especially among the clergy. For example, Ayatollahs Mofateh, Beheshti, Motahri, and Bahonar held a meeting in the Imam-Javad mosque in Tehran to discuss and share information about the political and social conditions (Jamalzadeh 2014). A SAVAK report in 1979 indicates how the clergy used the mosque to establish a harmony for their struggle. It claims that a group of Imams congregated in the mosque in Shiraz to discuss the exile of their colleague and find a way of dealing with the situation (Jamalzadeh 2014). The mosques were also used by Islamists to improve their network against the Shah's regime.

b) *Propagating revolutionary opinions and mobilising religious forces*

During the second Pahlavi period, the mosques became more engaged in political conflict. In their speeches in the mosque, the clergy tried to transform the social and economic discontents into a force against the Shah. Foucault's observation, during his visit of Iran, is clear evidence showing the role of mosque. He notes: "In the mosques during the day, the mullahs spoke furiously against the shah, the Americans, and the West and its materialism. They called for people to fight against the entire regime in the name of the Quran and of Islam. When the mosques became too small for the crowd, loudspeakers were put in the streets. These voices, as terrible as must have been that of Savonarola in Florence, the voices of the Anabaptists in Münster, or those of the Presbyterians at the time of Cromwell, resounded through the whole village, the whole neighbourhood" (cited in Afary and Anderson 2010: 83). As Foucault argues, although the clergy were not the main revolutionary forces, they used the mosques to propagate revolutionary speech, and also he explains how the preaching of clergy in mosques mobilised the people for demonstrations (Afary and Anderson 2010: 200-203).

The start of the 1979 revolution could be traced back to mosques where Ayatollah Khomeini spoke against the regime. His first revolutionary lecture, against the 1962 bill on the election of local and provincial councils, was presented in Feyziyeh School (Mahdavi 2011). In his oratory, the Ayatollah harshly criticised the Shah because of the White Revolution. After this speech the regime arrested the Ayatollah, which caused the 1963 uprising. As well as Ayatollah Khomeini, other key ideologues that formed the thought of political Islam, like Shariati and Motahari, presented and published their opinions through the Hosseiniyeh Ershad mosque in Tehran.

The clergy and ulama mobilised people against the regime from mosques all around the country. Although there is not enough data available regarding the role of all mosques in the revolution, the most famous mosques become bases for propagating anti-government activists. When Ayatollah Khomeini started his anti-regime struggle, other Ayatollahs with a strong influence in society followed Khomeini in mobilising

citizens in most cities of Iran. The centre of this mass mobilisation was the mosque, as the following examples show:

- In Tehran, the *Lordzadeh, seyed Azizollah*, and *Hedayat* mosques were three of the main centres of religious force. *The Hedayat* mosque, where Ayatollah Taleghani preached, was, at the time, the meeting place of a small group of radical clergymen (Abrahamian 1982: 458). *The Aziziolla* mosque in Tehran's marketplace forged a strong collaboration between businessman and Islamists, while during the 1963 uprising Ayatollah Khansari mobilised many people against the Shah's reforms. *The Lordzadeh* mosque was one of the main gathering points of religious forces especially when Ayatollah Falsefi assumed control of the mosque's affairs. The Ansar group, which was active in publishing Ayatollah Khomeini's declarations, was established in the Lordzadeh mosque. Ayatollah Falsafi mobilised people to participate in the uprising in June 1963 (Mazanderanian 2010: 120-128).
- In Shiraz, the Grand Mosque and the Reza mosque were the centres of revolutionary activity. Ayatollah Dastgheib and his brother were the preachers in these mosques, and it was their lectures against the regime that mobilised people to protest in June and August 1978, which subsequently provoked a violent reaction against the regime (Mizbani 2004: 56).
- In Tabriz, the Feyzolahee mosque was the starting point of the 20 July 1977 uprising. When people gathered in this mosque to observe the mourning of Qom's martyrdom, the police killed many of demonstrators (Nikbakht 1997: 176).

The mosques in other cities like Mashhad, Kerman, and Yazd were also centres for mobilising participators against the regime. In Kerman, the regime killed many people who had gathered in the Grand Mosque to mourn the revolutionary martyrdoms in 1978. All of these events show that mosques were the main place to organise religious forces and indicate that the mosques were central in encouraging people to participate in demonstrations. Although the clergy did not directly call for an uprising, their sermons in the mosques connecting all the social and economic discontents to the Shah's regime automatically motivated people to revolt.

c) *Organising revolutionary activities*

The operational function of the mosques was to form and organise a social network among the public. Whereas most media were under the control of the government, the mosques were able to provide a network for revolutionary activities. Some of these operational functions were:

- Providing a network to publish speeches and declarations. SAVAK describes how religious forces distributed the recorded voice of Ayatollah Khomeini during prayers in cities like Tehran, Mashhad, and Tabriz (Mizbani 2004). As Stempel argues, for the first time in 1977, the mosque proved its organisational function because the Liberation party used the institution to send its declarations and orders to its followers. Hence ordinary people were informed about the political situation through a non-governmental source (Stempel 1981)

- Holding of weekly meetings in cities by ulama

- Coordinating action and the uprising against the regime. SAVAK reports describe how the opponents organised their activities from the mosques (Araqi 2009)

- Forming a national structure to organise revolutionary activities. During 1978 and 1979 when Ayatollah Khomeini was in exile, a council of clergy (Ayatollahs Beheshti, Mofateh, Motahari, Hashemi, and Bahonar) led the revolution. These ulama had connections with other ulama around the country (Jamalzadeh 2014)

- Holding mourning ceremonies. The mosques provided a structure for revolutionary activists to promote their activities. Holding mourning ceremonies in the mosque has long been a traditional custom in the Shia religion (see Chapter 6.5). Activists, who were looking for any opportunity to confront the Shah, exploited mourning ceremonies to mobilise people. For instance, after the death of Seyed Mostafa Khominin in 1979, most of the major mosques in Iran held mourning services, during which the preachers criticised the Shah's policies and promoted Ayatollah Khomeini's opinions about Islam and government (Sharifpour 1997: 103-106). Moreover, the regular Moaharam and

Safar mourning ceremonies and mourning for people who were killed by the Shah's regime were two key events in the mosques where activists promoted their activities against the Shah. Javad Maqsoudi, an Islamic activist in the Azizollah mosque, explains how they employed various religious rituals in the mosque to struggle against the regime. He says "we tried to utilize all religious programs for fighting against the regime. Even in Moharam mourning, we replaced the usual dirges with a specific one which compared the Karbala events with the current conditions" (Jamalzadeh 2014).

d) *Funding the revolution: a financial network*

The bazaar and mosque were two main funding sources for the revolution, with most of the funding being raised by the mosques. Although there is no a clear data available to prove how much money had been raised for revolutionary activities through the mosque and bazaar, there is some evidence to show role of the mosques in funding the revolution.

During the revolution, a group of activists, especially businessmen, tried to support the revolution financially through establishing a charitable institution and interest-free loans. Since the regime did not allow them to register these institutions, they did it behind a public social organisation, the mosque, which performed two important functions: firstly, taking in poor people, who were supported by the mosques to join to revolutionary activities, and secondly, direct financial support of activists.

Since the 1963 uprising, financially supporting the families of imprisoned activists had become a new function of the mosques. This financial support gave confidence to the activists, knowing that there was an organisation to help their families during their incarceration. For instance, the Lordzadeh, Jalili and Hemat mosques in Tehran set up a committee to fund the families of prisoners and support them (Rajaee 2014).

Another monetary function of the mosques, which had a significant impact on boosting public confidence in the Islamic revolution, was their financial support of poor people. Businessmen and clergy set up new financial institutions such as charities and interest-free funding in the mosque. In actual fact, these institutions were exploited

for political activities against the regime. For example, Ayatollah Mahdavikani and other activists set up a charitable institution, *Nejat*, in the Jalili mosque to support patients and poor people. He noted that "establishing this institution was one of our main revolutionary tasks. Although the purpose of this was supporting poor people and patients, we wanted to do political activities behind this fund" (Khajehsarvari 2006: 131).

Finally, the mosque as a social organisation in Islamic society played an essential role in the victory of the Shia movement in Iran. The kernel of the 1979 revolution was the mosque, where Ayatollahs rejected the Shah's reforms during the 1960s, where Islamic ideologues presented Islamic government theory, where Ayatollahs mobilised people against the regime, where activists organised their activities, where ulama shared their opinions about revolution, and where people were motivated to support an Islamic government.

Although the mosque and its functions were important in the rise of Shia political Islam, it also had significant impact on the survival of Shia movements after the revolution. The section below will explain how the mosque supported SPI.

5.2.2 Mosque: supporting political Islam post-revolution

In the post-revolution era, the mosque served an important purpose in preserving, recreating, propagating and organising SPI values. As Ayatollah Khomeini said, the mosque paved the way for the victory of the Islamic revolution; these institutions are important places for managing all affairs (Khomeini 1982: Vol13:15). He highlighted mosques as a trench for Islam and said "Mosques are as a trench for Islam. In early Islam, everything went out of the mosque. The mosque was a place of judgment. The mosque was a place for everything such as mobilization and it itself was an army. Mosques should be firmly protected, and these mosques are trenches of Islam, the altar is a place of war" (Khomeini 1982: Vol 1:58). This attitude, as a dominant opinion among Islamists, encouraged the Islamic government to concentrate on the organisational role of mosques in supporting political Islam, in order to control them.

During the Iran-Iraq war mosques, like other organisations, were involved in the conflict. The conflict was a threat to SPI life; the mosque supported the battlefields by mobilising

soldiers, registering soldiers, military training, and organising public aid. After the war, the importance of the mosques persuaded the government to create a new structure to control mosques directly. Ayatollah Khamenei, as Supreme Leader, ordered Ayatollah Mahdavikani to establish the Centre for Programming Mosques' Affairs (CPMA) in 1989. The main objective of this centre was to organise the mosques' affairs and hold various cultural and Islamic programmes (masjed.ir). This organisation helped the government to direct the mosque through control over the Imams, because one of its main objectives was to elect Imams to send to mosques as preachers.

 How did the mosque survive SPI? After the revolution, mosques retained their organisational role in maintaining the Shia movement through mobilising people, holding various Shia ceremonies, and promoting Shia culture.

1) Promoting Shia values

   Promoting and propagating Shia beliefs has been the most important task of mosques in Iran. In the post-revolution era, the Islamic government found that one of the best ways of continuing the Shia movement was by promoting Shia values as a fuel for the movement (see Chapter 6), especially among young people, through mosques. Hence the government established the CPMA for this purpose. The CPMA's charter highlighted the promotional role of mosques. Although a survey (see Tezcur et al. 2006) was conducted during a low level of mosque attendance in Iran, after the Islamic revolution, mosques continued promoting Shia values among the small group of worshippers. There are, however, some studies which show that politicisation of religion had a negative affect on the mosques' congregation (see Kazemipur and Rezaei 2003). The survey, conducted by the World Values Survey in 2001, indicates that less than 30 percent of Shia people in Iran attend mosques to participate in religious rituals.   Tezcür et al. refer to this survey and explain that "the symbiotic relationship between the mosques and the regime is responsible for the declining mosque attendance rate among Iranians" (Tezcur et al. 2006: 223-225). Despite the low rate of mosque attendance in the post-revolution era, mosques have not stopped their activities. Although participants in their programmes have decreased, the smaller groups remaining

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actively join in. They organise and run all political and religious programmes planned by mosque's Imam or the local *Basij* commander. Most of these groups are also members of local *Basij* which play a crucial role in the political environment in Iran (see Chapter 5.4). Although the politicisation of religion caused mosque attendance to drop, it does not mean that the function of mosques has lessened in the survival of Shia political Islam. Moreover, these surveys (Kazemipur and Rezaei 2003) have not included the rate of attendance during special ceremonies such as Ramadhan and Ashura. On these occasions, mosque attendance is higher than normal, so the clergy uses them to promote Shia values. For instance, a few years ago mosques started holding a special practice called Itikaf, which calls upon people to stay in mosques for three full days in Rajab, the seventh month of the Islamic calendar. According to statistics, the rate of attendance is going up every year. The head of the Itikaf headquarters claims that there were around 700,000 participants in 2013 which had risen about 10 percent from the previous year (Rohaninejad 2013).

2) Promoting the martyrdom culture

Another function of mosques is to disseminate the culture of Jihad and martyrdom in society. Chapter 6 argues that Jihad and martyrdom culture is one of the key components of Shia political Islam. Mosques were central during the Iran-Iraq war in propagating the culture of martyrdom and Jihad to prepare and mobilise soldiers for the battlefield. Although the war produced enough resources which could be used by various media and institutions to promote this culture in society (see Chapter 6.3), after the war, mosques as a social institution promoted the culture of martyrdom according to Shia values and symbols like Ashura, one of the ways to promote it being to hold various events such as:

- Holding Islamic exhibitions about martyrdom culture. Masoudi & Mohamadina (2016) examine the role of the mosques in Mashhad, Iran's second largest city, in advocating the culture of martyrdom. They argue that the mosques' programmes, such as holding exhibitions, have intensified the

sense of seeking martyrdom among participants, especially young people. Almost all major mosques in cities hold this kind of exhibition during a specific period like the Basij week, and the Sacred Defence week. For example, the Almahdi and the Imam Javad mosques in Tehran organise an anniversary exhibition every year with help of local Basij bases during Basij week (*Exhibition of martyrdom on the occasion of Basi week* 2015).

- Mourning the martyrdom of Shia Imams: As well as Moharam, mosques hold mourning for the martyrdom of other Shia Imams on the night of their martyrdom anniversary. During these vigils, the Imam of the mosque promotes the culture of martyrdom by interpreting some verses and Hadith about martyrdom. For instance, Alireza Panahian, as one of the influential clergy in Tehran who has about 5000 followers on Facebook, sanctions martyrdom culture in his oratory. An investigation of about 100 of his speeches at various events (Panahian 2016) shows he talked about the values of martyrdom in Shia culture and the place of martyrs in the next life in about 80 of his dialogues.

- Distributing free books about martyrdom: Distribution of free books by mosques is a method of promoting the martyrdom culture because the content of the books is a bibliography of martyrs, an appealing story of the Ira-Iraq war, or sacred defence. For example, the mosques in *Charmahal V Bakhtiari* province distributed around 250,000 volumes about Sacred Defence (Ganji 2013).

3) Mobiliser function of mosques

During the Iran-Iraq war, mosques mobilised soldiers for the battlefield. They were a focus for *Basij* to attract and enrol young people to send into battle: as Taherian, Deputy of the Cultural Clubs of Mosques, claimed, about 90 percent of martyrs in the war were sent to the battlefield through mosques (Taherian 2013). The biography of some martyrs disloses the role of mosques in mobilising and organising the youth to join the Basij. For example, the book *Nardeban Touhid*,

which is about the martyrs of *the Touhid* Mosque, articulates how the mosque attracted the youth in a local area to participate in the Basij (Mahini 2005).

In the post-war era, the mosque kept its mobilising function to support Islamism, although this role is now dissipating. When the war ended in 1988, the most active organisations like the Basij became involved in the practical reconstruction of many public buildings that were destroyed during the war. The construction process absorbed many of their resources thereby diluting their cultural role.

More attention was paid to the economy after the war which brought about a new political and cultural environment that was affected by the liberal Ideas of the Rafsanjani administration. This new environment lessened the role of mosques in society, which prompted the government to try and reactivate them in cultural and Islamic promotion. To this end, on 9 March 1993, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei ordered the Super Council of the Cultural Revolution to establish a new institution called the Grand Headquarters of Mosques' Cultural Centres. The main mission of this institute was to promote Shia values and mobilise people to participate in cultural activities.

The mobiliser function of mosques was highlighted after the 2009 presidential election. When reformists started a campaign to show their dissatisfaction with the election result, the Mosque's Basij started a counter-campaign. The Mosque's Basij is an organisation established in 2009 with two main missions, preserving the Islamic revolution's achievements, and confrontation with the soft war and cultural war against Islamic revolutions. This organisation had an active role during the 2009 uprising. As Taherian claims, mosques and the Basij of mosques were in the front line of the struggle against protesters (Taherian 2013). For example, the 9 Day counter-uprising was organised by mosques and Husainia (see Chapter 8). The clergy and activists in mosques highlighted the anti-Islam activities of protests during the Ashura event and mobilised the mosques' participants against them.

4) The circles of righteous men (*Haleghehaye salehin)*

These are a new activity of mosques with a mission to promote revolutionary discourse among youth. These groups, which have been organised by the local Basij of mosques were founded in 2009, and comprise about 15 to 25 persons who are members of the local Basij. Leaders of these groups are local clergy, usually the Imam of the mosque or a well-educated member of the local Basij. This new programme, the circles of righteous men, was an initiative of the Supreme Leader to improve the morality and beliefs of participants, and to prepare them for a specific time when the Islamic revolution is threatened, as Desemi, the training deputy of Basij, declared in a meeting with leaders of the groups. He said the target of this programme is to absorb at least 30 million people around the country. He confirmed that about 250,000 circles (average 20 people per circle) had activated since 2009 (Decemi 2015). The main focus of these programmes is attract youth who will be preached to by the leader of the group. Basij and IRGC use various methods to draw more members. They organise free religious journeys for group members: the *Rahian nour*, travel to Mashahd, Qom, and Jamkeran are samples of these trips. Most leaders of the circles are educated and elected by he Basij and IRGC: who will automatically train the participants according to their political and Islamic perspectives (Golkar 2010). For example, General Naghdi, former head of Basij, argues that the key role of these circles is to struggle against the soft war that has been planned by western countries against the Islamic revolution. He says that members of these groups need to be educated to be prepared as soldiers to preserve the revolutionary values (Naghdi 2016).

Therefore, mosques, as a traditional organisation in Islam, have played a crucial role in the emergence, victory and survival of Islamism and Shia political Islam in Iran before and after the Islamic revolution through promoting Shia values, promoting martyrdom culture, mobilising people for political purposes, and providing a place for the Basij to absorb people, especially youth, as soldiers of the revolution.

As well as mosques, the IRGC and Basij should also be considered as key organisations in the survival of the Shia Movement. The next section will investigate the important role of IRGC and Basij in preserving Shia political Islam by maintaining revolutionary values and suppressing the opponents of Islamism.

5.3.   Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC): Guarding Political Islam

Although it is not easy to calculate the impact of the IRGC on surviving SPI among other governmental organisations, it could be argued that the IRGC is the most important player. Its role could support the reason and goals of the emergent IRGC or it could also be understood as a centre of Shia militia. The following paragraphs will explain why and how the IRGC survives Islamism.

 The main purpose of the IRGC is guarding Shia political Islam. In the early months of the Islamic revolution when the formal armed forces, Artesh, were not in line with the new revolutionary doctrine, Ayatollah Khomeini created IRGC by decree on 4 December 1979 to guard the revolution and its achievement.   The first Islamic republic constitution that was ratified in 3 December 1979 declared in its article 150: "The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps … is to be maintained so that it may continue in its role of guarding the revolution and its achievements. The scope of the duties of this corps and its areas of responsibility, in relation to the duties and areas of responsibility of the other armed forces, are to be determined by law with emphasis on brotherly cooperation and harmony among them" (Alfoneh 2008). This article clearly emphasises that the main objective of the IRGC is to preserve the Islamic revolution's achievements. Whereas the main achievement of the revolution was establishing an Islamic government according to Shia values, the mission of the IRGC was to guard Political Islam. Hence this chapter is going to investigate how the IRGC as an organisation has played a key role in the survival of Shia political Islam in Iran.

5.3.1. Emergence of the IRGC

During the initial days of revolution, the provisional government did not have enough power to control the country because of the collapse of the armed forces, Artesh. General Gharani, head of the army headquarters after the revolution, stated " we have a collapsed Army and the army situation is not under control" (Darvishi 1999: 96). Moreover, the US Embassy in Tehran mentioned in its report to the USA state government that at that

moment the Iranian army was only a concept. It was unable to undertake any operational exercises to control the country (Darvishi 1999: 97).

Groups from different parts of the country, especially to the west of Iran, like Khalgh-e Arab and Komoleh, started counter-revolutionary activities. In this unstable situation, Hasan Lahoty, a revolutionary clergy, was given permission by Ayatollah Khomeini to establish armed forces to support the provisional government. The prime minister, Mehdi Bazargan, complained about the independent activities of the IRGC and brought the newly-established organisation under the control of the provisional government (Forozan 2015: 106-107). Accordingly, the first decree of Ayatollah Khomeini established the armed forces under the provisional government.

After the revolution, several armed groups were formed due to the army's lack of strength in security and policing, such as the IRGC, Revolutionary Guard, and Universities Guard. In March 1979, the IRGC with the assistance of Hashemi Rafsanjani persuaded other armed forces to join to the IRGC. When all these groups joined together, their representatives, Mohsen Rezai, Mohsen Rafighdost, and Abbas Duzduzani, met Ayatollah Khomeini in Qom to obtain permission for the IRGC to be independent from the provisional government. After this meeting, on 5 May 1979 Ayatollah Khomeini issued a new decree placing the IRGC under the Revolutionary Council (ISNA 2016).

The Revolutionary Council listed the duties of the IRGC in eight categories (Alfoneh 2008: 21):

- assisting police and security forces in the apprehension or liquidation of counter-revolutionary elements
- battling armed counter-revolutionaries
- defending against attacks and the activities of foreign forces inside the country
- coordinating and cooperating with the country's armed forces
- training subordinate IRGC personnel in moral, ideological, and politico-military matters
- assisting the Islamic Republic in the implementation of the Islamic Revolution

- supporting liberation movements and their calls for justice for the oppressed peoples of the world under the tutelage of the leader of the Revolution of the Islamic Republic
- Utilising the human resources and expertise of the IRGC to deal with national calamities and unexpected catastrophes and supporting the developmental plans of the Islamic Republic to maximize the IRGC's resources.

In terms of an organisational chart, in the early years of the IRGC, the Head was appointed by the Revolutionary Council. Later, in 1981, the IRGC came directly under the control of the Supreme Leader who appointed the chief commander, according to article 110 of the Islamic Republic of Iran's constitution.

The members of the IRGC were called *Pasdar,* a person who is ready for Jihad for Allah and guarding the Islamic revolution's achievements. The following criteria were required to join the IRGC:

- belief in the principles of Islam, revolution, and the Islamic republic regime
- belief in and practical obedience of the principle of clerical rule
- practical recognition of Islamic law, Islamic republic rules, and Islamic morality
- non-membership of political parties, organisations, and groups
- good attitude and no criminal record

Although these organisations were founded before the Iran-Iraq war, they have been affected in many ways by the war, and the strengthening of the IRGC should be considered as one of the war's main outputs. The war provided fundamental bases for them to be the most powerful political, economic and military actor in post-war Iran. As former IRGC commander Major General Rahim Safavi argued, the IRGC mission changed after the war. He states that "since the termination of the Iran-Iraq War, the IRGC has assumed three major and two peripheral missions. The major missions of the IRGC involve defence, security, and cultural issues and its peripheral missions are related to the construction of the country and carrying out relief and rescue operations during natural disasters" (cited in Wehrey et al. 2009: 12).These new missions have been designed according to the capabilities of the IRGC which were honed during the war.

5.3.2. Religious Army forces

What is the difference between the IRGC and other military organisations? The distinguishing attribute of the IRGC was its Shia ideology, which led to it being entrusted with guarding Shia political Islam. The IRGC should be considered as a religious military organisation that has a cultural and ideological mission as well as security and defence. As Katzman (2019) argues, the IRGC was different from professional army groups in other post-revolutionary armies such as in France, the Soviet Union, and China, one of the main differences being that the IRGC is a religion-based force. As he asserts, the IRGC not only provided internal and external security, it also had a religious mission to preserve Shia values and promote Shia culture. Iran's former reformist president, Seyed Mohammad Khatami, described the IRGC as one of the most ideological armed forces in the world (Abedin 2011: 381). In August 2007, the then IRGC Commander, Major General Rahim Safavi, argued that, "since the termination of the Iran-Iraq War, the IRGC has assumed three major and two peripheral missions. The major missions of the IRGC involve defence, security, and cultural issues and its peripheral missions are related to the construction of the country and carrying out relief and rescue operations during natural disasters" (cited in Wehrey et al. 2009: 19).

Preserving Shia culture has been one of the main responsibilities of the IRGC in the post-war era, mobilising it to guard Shia beliefs. According to General Safavi, in 2007, "The IRGC does not intervene in the cultural activities of other government organizations and bodies. However, based on the nature of the IRGC, which is intertwined with belief and military activities, the organization's orientation is to enhance the forces' Islamic and ideological beliefs; and this is a part of the duties vested with the IRGC" (cited in Wehrey et al. 2009: 20).

Its ideological mission has influenced all other aspects and activities of the IRGC, the recruiting process showing the importance of its ideology. Almost all requirements for joining the IRGC are related to Shia beliefs (see 5.2.2). Even after employment, reinforcement of Shia beliefs among the members is one of the main inter-organisational activities. From my experience, When I was doing my military service in the IRGC (all young Iranian man have to enter military service for around two years), we had to

participate in religious activities. Many religious training classes are held for both members and soldiers. When I attended one of these classes, where preachers speak about the importance of following *Valy-e-Faqih* in Islam, I found that most of the middle and high-level local commanders also participated.

How do religious identities of in the IRGC provide a robust organisation as a key mobiliser of Shia political Islam in Iran?

Firstly, Shia ideology has had a significant impact on the behaviour of IRGC members in guarding political Islam. Several scholars, such as Legro and Katzenstein (1996), highlight the importance of culture in the conduct of the armed forces. Legro (1994: 101-105) examines the impact of culture in World War II and states that beliefs and custom are important in the function of the military forces. He argues that ideology fosters cohesion within the armed forces through increasing commitment among a group. A strong commitment can motivate members of a military group to be more active in a collective effort to achieve their objective.

Shia beliefs among *Pasdaran* (members of the IRGC) inspire a potent dedication to guard Islam. These beliefs produce a bonded soldier for Shia political Islam. Martyrdom-seeking is a belief which has emanated from Ashura culture (see Chapter 6) and plays a crucial role in the attitude of IRGC members. *Pasdaran* are ready to be martyrs, and to sacrifice themselves for their beliefs, the Islamic revolution, and the motherland. The Iran-Iraq war shows how this commitment, based on Shia religion, helped the newly-established Islamic regime preserve itself from a foreign threat. Fear of Iran exporting political Islam persuaded Saddam Hussain to invade the country (see Chapter 6.6). Shia beliefs like martyrdom motivated many soldiers to join the IRGC and Basij to guard the revolution. Except for religious beliefs, what else was able to keep young soldiers in the front line of fire? Although in the Iran-Iraq war patriotic feeling was a consideration, what about the Syrian conflict where the IRGC members participated in the war against IS and Assad's enemies? The Syrian conflict also highlights the importance of Shia beliefs in encouraging *Pasdaran* to participate in this conflict. An interview by Scott Peterson with a mother of a martyr in the Syrian conflict illustrates how deep Shia beliefs mobilise people to protect Shia political Islam. When asked about her feelings on losing her son, the

mother said "I was proud of the fact that in this modern world, my son has come to the understanding that for religious and political beliefs, he should do this" (Peterson 2010).

Secondly, the religious mores of the IRGC has affected its organisational objective and duties; as general Safavi cited, the organisational orientation of the IRGC is to enhance the forces' Islamic and ideological beliefs (cited in Wehrey et al. 2009: 19). This Shia orientation has provoked the IRGC to suppress all political and social activity which criticises the government and *Valy-e-Faqih* theory because, in some Shia beliefs, *Valy-e-Faqih* is a successor of the occulted Imam (see Chapter 2.2). The Supreme Leader's deputy representative to the IRGC, Hojatolislam Abdolah HajiSadeghi, in his speech to IRGC members claims that obedience of *Valy-e-Faqih* is the same as obedience to God. He argues that guarding the Islamic government and *Valy-e-Faqih* is one of the main functions of the IRGC (Hajisadeghi 2011).

The role of the IRGC in the Green movement shows how its religious attitude impacted on its conduct against the anti-government movement in 2009. The protesters and the opposition leader were called instigators, *Fitnegar*. The IRGC and Basij accused the movement of being anti-religious, anti-Ashura, and anti-*Valy-e-Faqih,* and arrested many activists to protect the Islamic government (see chapter 8). After a mass demonstration against the state on 15 June 2009, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei warned the protesters against any further demonstration. He said in his Friday sermon on 19 June, "We will fulfil our duty. We said what had to be done and we would continue. All I have is my life. I am disabled also. I will sacrifice all I have for Islam and the revolution. Our master [Hidden Imam]! Please do pray for us. You are the real owner of this country and the revolution. You are our true backer. We will continue this path strongly. Please do support us" (Col 2009). Later, in July 2009, Major General Firouzabadi, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces and Basij, in a published letter to Imam Mahdi (occulted Imam) highlighted the religious mission of the IRGC and Basij and described the demonstration as a cultural attack on Iran. He confirmed the full commitment of these organisations to protect the Islamic government against the instigation, *fitnah*. He wrote "Dearest Mahdi, we have taught our children and our grandchildren to await your arrival, and to raise the banner of this holy state until you do... O Lord, please beseech God, as we do, that the Islamic

Revolution takes root alongside the worldwide revolution that you [will bring]" (Firozabadi 2009).

Finally, the identity of the IRGC, dominated by Shia religion, played a significant role in the survival of the SPI in Iran through: 1) instilling a full commitment among IRGC members to guard the Islamic revolution; 2) influencing the nature of the internal and external missions of the IRGC, so that the IRGC will interfere in any situation it believes is anti-Shia activity. During the Green movement era the IRGC motivated its members to protect the only Shia state until the return of the hidden Imam. Since 1979 they have been successful in protecting the Islamic government from a serious domestic treat.

5.3.3. Politicisation of the IRGC

Despite Ayatollah Khomeini's advice, the political situation in the early years of the Islamic revolution opened the window for the IRGC to be active in the political arena. Khomeini said "I insist that the armed forces obey the laws regarding the prevention of the military forces from entering into politics, and stay away from political parties, groups and [political] fronts. The armed forces [consisting of] the military, the police force, the guards, and the Basij should not enter into any [political] party or groups, and steer clear from political games" (cited in Wehrey et al. 2009: 78). The IRGC's political involvement has been one of the controversial issues in the Islamic government. According to the IRGC manifesto, it should not support any political party, but in some periods it has supported the conservative party, at least, indirectly. However, this section will analyse how the IRGC survives SPI through its political intervention.

The political role of the IRGC in the post-revolution era, supressing internal dissent and opposition, has paved the way for the domination of Shia political Islam. Although Ayatollah Khomeini was against politicisation of the armed forces, most prime duties of the IRGC enumerated by the Revolutionary Council had a political orientation: as Wehrey (2009: 77-78) argues, the constitutional role of the IRGC is purely political in its essence.

Rafsanjani's administration tried to depoliticise the IRGC by involving it in the post-war reconstruction process. Rafsanjani believed that the IRGC should not be involved in

politics, as he clearly indicated that it was the IRGC's responsibility to change its organisation into a totally military one (Forozan 2015: 116). Forozan argues that the Rafsanjani attempt to depoliticise the IRGC through economic involvement provided an opportunity for the IRGC to be more influential in social and political areas, especially when Ayatollah Khamenei decided to consolidate his political and religious authority (Forozan 2015: 119). Even if Khamenei's wish for more political power was rejected, his desire for religious authority was enough to establish the IRGC. Rafsanjani's liberalisation policy made Khamenei concerned about the decreasing role of religion in society, as he stated in October 1992 that "some in the system are mocking the Hezbollah and their virtues, but if we spend a billion on development projects and ignore moral issues in the country, all achievements amount to nothing" (cited inForozan 2015: 119). It followed that the IRGC decided to become more involved in many areas of government, such as Parliament, to provoke the revolutionary Islamic value.

In the post-Khomeini era the IRGC became more immersed in politics, especially after Mohamad Khatami had been elected as a reformist president from 1997. The new social and political challenge in Iranian society motivated the IRGC and its members to be more active in politics. The main slogan of the Khatami campaign for presidential election was 'freedom'. The reformists were trying to provide a free political climate for the media and newspapers. During the first year of Khatami's administration some newspapers, like *Salam,* started to criticise the Islamic government by means of publishing secret documents against the killing of some liberal writers. An incident in a Tehran University dormitory on 9 July 1999, shows how the IRGC would supress every demonstration against the Islamic regime.

While the temporary political freedom had provided a new space for newspapers to critique the political and cultural environment, the parliament, which was dominated by conservatives, enacted a new restrictive press law. Following this new law, the government banned the *Salam* newspaper because it had published some highly secret documents. A student at Tehran University demonstrated against this law on 8 July 1999. One day later, the Ansar-e Hezbola, and Basij, as two subclasses of the IRGC, surrounded and raided the student dormitory, beat student, and set fire to a room. As a

result of this attack one student was killed and many were wounded. The next day, students rallied in a demonstration which was supported by the people. Although the Supreme Leader condemned this incident, the demonstration continued and spread from Tehran to other major cities like Tabriz and Mashhad. Protesters in different cities shouted slogans against the Supreme Leader and *Valayat-e Faqih* regime. The anti-Islamic and anti-*Velayat-e Faqih* slogans precipitated a group of IRGC members (the Organisation of Mujahedin of the Islamic Revolution) to warn president Khatami and accuse him of a weak reaction against protesters. On 12 July, they wrote a letter to President Khatami, which noted "Esteemed Mr. President, today when we saw the face of the Supreme Leader, we wished for God to put us out of our misery. It is because our shoulders have locked up, and with itching eyes and lumps in our throats, we must observe the withering away of the product of fourteen centuries of the torment and persecution of Shi'ism and Islam" (Afkhami 2010). In this letter, they warned President Khatami that their revolutionary patience had ended: "with complete respect and endearment towards His Excellency, we declare that our patience has come to an end, and we will not permit ourselves any more tolerance in the face of your inaction" (Afkhami 2010).

In these circumstances, the IRGC commander, Safavi, asked the supreme national Security Council to deploy the Basij to suppress the demonstration. Although the Interior Minister opposed the intervention of the IRGC, they received permission from Ayatollah Khamenei and ended the demonstrations by force on 13 July (Sinkaya 2015: 152-156). The following day, the IRGC and Basij mobilised the people and organised a counter-movement demonstration in Tehran to show that their reaction was supported by the people. Notwithstanding that this incident, which was the result of the cultural and political reforms, highlighted the role of the IRGC in guarding the Islamic government and *Velayat-e Faqih*, they became more directly involved in politics. As Forozan & Shahi argue, the increasing role of the IRGC in internal security in this period paved the way for them to boost their political influence (Forozan and Shahi 2017).

In 2003, former members of the IRGC took control of most city and village councils which set the precedence for them to be ready for parliamentary election in 2004. They succeeded in taking considerable power in parliament with 91 newly-elected members of

parliament having an IRGC background. After the election, it was time to seek more power in politics.

In the 2005 presidential election, the IRGC effectively supported Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as a conservative candidate (Wehrey et al. 2009: 77). Alfone argues that under Ahmadinejad, IRGC intervention in domestic Iranian politics peaked. During the Ahmadinejad administration many former members of the IRGC were appointed to a political position, occupying 9 of the 21 ministry positions such as the ministers of welfare and social security, energy, industries and mines, culture and Islamic guidance, justice, petroleum, commerce, defence, and cooperatives (Alfoneh 2008). Having these political posts provided an opportunity for the IRGC to consolidate its political power. As Forozan (2015: 127) argues, they tried to manage the eighth parliamentary election in 2008 through the interior ministry. The IRGC's political involvement gradually increased and General Jafari, former Commander of the IRGC, noted that the IRGC is not only a military institution, as its duty is preserving the revolution's achievements, but it will also fight against any actions which threaten these achievements (Forozan 2015: 127).

The major impact of the IRGC on Iranian politics began during the 2009 presidential election when they feared a real threat to the Islamic revolution. General Jafari, Commander of the IRGC, claimed that the danger of the 2009 demonstrations for the revolution was the same as the Iran-Iraq war, because these uprisings targeted the *Velayat-e Faqih* (Jafari 2017b).

 After the controversial presidential election in 2009, the IRGC supressed the ensuing mass uprising that continued for months. While the leader of the Green moment, Mir Hossain Mosavi, accused the IRGC of conducting a coup, the head of the IRGC, Jafari, and the head of judiciary, Sadegh Larijani, both supported the IRGC's action against the Green movement. Larijani said "The responsibility of the IRGC had been based in the constitution. This identity is not just that of a military force, but its duties include all activities necessary for the defence of Islam and the school of Islam, and this basis is very important to the function of the IRGC" (cited inRizvi 2012: 590). However, the political role of the IRGC peaked after the 2009 election. As Chapter 9 explains, the IRGC assumed the Green movement was a high threat to the Islamic revolution and arrested

the leader of movement and other political activists to suppress it, utilised the governmental media against the movement, and arranged a counter-movement on the ninth day.

To sum up, the IRGC as a military organisation has been deployed to support SPI since the 1979 revolution. It guards the Islamic revolution and suppresses any anti-revolutionary movements in Iran because of its ideological and political nature. Its red line was the revolutionary values and *Velayat-e Faqih*, as it opposed president Ahmadinejad when he started a conflict with the clergy and disobeyed Ayatollah Khamenei's order (see below photo) regarding his administration team. While the IRGC supported Ahmadinejad in his first period, they upbraided him when Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei, former vice-President, tried to intensify nationalism rather than Islamism (Forozan 2015: 135-137).

جمهوری اسلامی ایران

Source: (News 2021)

The next organisation to be considered in this chapter is the Basij, which is an operational part of the IRGC supporting SPI. The following section sets out how the Basij absorb and mobilise the people, especially youth, through training, holding religious ceremonies and running the mosques.

## 5.4.	The Mobilisation Resistance Force (Basij): The Mainstay of SPI

Why is the Basi's role in the continuation of SPI important? The Basij organisation's role in the survival of the Shia movement needs to be considered from two perspectives: firstly, its guardianship functions. The Basij, as the operational unit of the IRGC, battles with any domestic threat against the Shia government. Secondly, the promotional function of the Basij. As Berry puts forward, the entrepreneurial activities in society play an effective role in the success of a social movement (Berry 2015: 17-27); the cultural and social activities of the Basij have had a significant impact on reviving the SPI movement in Iran.

The Basij has been an operational instrument in the hands of the IRGC and the Islamic government since the 1979 revolution. The following section is going to discuss how the Basij have effected the survival of SPI through mobilising and organising the youth for the Iran-Iraq war, controlling society politically and culturally, suppressing dissidents, promoting Shia values, and supporting the *Velayat-e Faqih* system.

5.4.1. Formation of the Basij

The historical background and the process of establishing the Basij will show the nature and goals of this organisation. The creation of the Basij can be traced back to the victory of the revolution in 1979 when Ayatollah Khomeini called for the formation of a "twenty million man army". According to article 151 of the constitution, "the government is obliged to provide a program of military training, with all requisite facilities, for all its citizens, in accordance with the Islamic criteria, in such a way that all citizens will always be able to engage in the armed defence of the Islamic Republic of Iran" (Ramazani 1980).

On 26 November 1979, the national organisation for mobilisation was created by order of Ayatollah Khomeini.   A few months later on 30 April 1980, the Revolutionary Council enacted the bill, forming the Basij. The first article of this bill proclaims that to fulfil the Supreme Leader's order regarding the training and mobilisation of a "twenty million man army", the national organisation for mobilisation should be formed under the supervision of the interior ministry. Three months after the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war, on 29 December 1980, the parliament enacted a law to consolidate the national mobilisation

within the IRGC, changing its name to "The Organization for Mobilization of the Oppressed".

In the early years of the Basij, its main objective was counteracting the growing international and domestic threats against the newly-formed Islamic Republic. For example, while different groups around the country were seeking separation, the Basij help the central government to fight against Kurdish, Baluchi and Turkmen separatists (Alfoneh 2016). When the Iraq war began, the Basij were central in the mobilisation, recruitment, and organisation of volunteers to send them to the front line. In December 1986, the Basij mobilised around 100,000 volunteers and sent them to the front (Alfoneh 2016)).

The Iran-Iraq war increased the Basij's influence in Iranian society because of its new sacred perspective among the populace. Chapter 5 explains how this branch of the IRGC has played a crucial role in the reinforcement of political Islam in Iran since 1979 through mobilising its forces for its political goals. Although this organisation was established in 1979, the Iran-Iraq war amplified the Basij's resistance forces. Hence the impact of the war on the importance of the Basij should be counted. General Kargar (2014), head of the Foundation for Preserving Works and Publishing Values of the Holy Defence, claims that Basiji discourse is a key product of the sacred defences.

When Saddam invaded Iran in 1980, the Basij as a social institution started to organise, recruit, and deploy volunteers to the battlefield. According to official statistics, more than 80 percent (2.1 million) of all participants in the war were recruited by the Basij, and about 85,000 of them became martyrs (*Iran's casualties from the 8-year war: 190,000 killed, 672,000 wounded, $ 97 billion in damage* 2015). All the people recruited by the Basij were volunteer soldiers; the majority being active in the front lines. They fought against Saddam because of their national and religious beliefs. In some cases, they sacrificed themselves to open the way for their army groups. For example, a thirteen year-old soldier, Mohammad Hossein Fahmideh, sacrificed himself by exploding a grenade in an Iraqi tank. These kinds of stories, highlighting the bravery of the Basiji soldiers at the front, made them heroes. Babai (2011) argues that the abnegation and martyrdom-seeking of Basij forces during the war engendered a sacred perspective of the Basij. Therefore, the

term Basij became more popular and sacred in Iranian society because of the Iran-Iraq war. As Ayatollah Khomeini states, "I always envy the sincerity and purity of the Basijis and pray to God to enlist me among the Basijis. In this world, my honour is to be a Basij. I would like to recall to the honourable nation of Iran and the officials that, whether in war or in peace" (Khomeini 1982: Vol 21: 189-191).

5.4.2. *Organisational structure and membership of the Basij*

During its first year of formation, the Basij did not have a clear structure. Basiji groups in some cities were run by revolutionary activists. They applied their own style of managing the Basij because of a lack of central authority. Basij structure changed with the beginning of the Iraq war, as it tried to organise and expand its activity to recruit volunteers. The chief Basij at that time, HojatolIslam Salek, announced that the Basij would be administered respectively by a chief, a deputy, council and other active sectors such as the promotion bureau, provision, training and operation offices (rural, labour, student), and its sister Basij. In this period, the Basij started its organisational networking by establishing regional bases in various cities, with around 4000 bases throughout the country (Salak 1982).

The end of the Iran-Iraq war and death of Ayatollah Khomeini in June 1989 affected the Basij function. As General Farhadi, Head of the Basij Cooperation Centre, purports, the Basij was in a hiatus during 1988 until 1989 when the new Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, transferred "The Organization for Mobilization of the Oppressed" to "the Basij resistance forces" as one of the five main divisions of the IRGC (*From IRGC Basij Unit to Basij Organization of the Oppressed* 2013). The final change happened in 2009, when the commander of the Basij, General Mohamad Reza Naghdi, who was appointed by Ayatollah Khamenei, requested to change the name of Basij back to the Organization for the Mobilization of the Oppressed. At the same time, the chief of the IRGC, General Jafari, restructured the Basij as an organisation under the IRGC. Ayatollah Khamenei ratified the new structure. This structural change came about because of the new internal political climate which was affected by the 2009 demonstration. According to the new mission of the Basij, it was more cultural and political than military. In this structure the Basij was no longer the fifth of the IRGC military forces, it became incorporated in the 32 provisional

IRGC groups which were established in this period (BBC Persian 2011). As Golkar (2010) argues, it was a specific organisation for suppressing cultural and political threats against the Islamic government.

In the post-war era, the Basij expanded its regions (branches) around the country in the light of its new mission. All cities, based on their population, have many Basij regions that are controlled by the IRGC provisional command. These provisional IRGC commands are responsible for logistically supporting their Basij regions, training Basij members and using Basij for security or military operations in their province. The number of Basij regions increased from 1990 to number around a thousand in 2013. In Tehran there were only about 5 Basij regions in 2009, which increased to around 23 in 2010 (Golkar 2015: 31-35).

In terms of organisational structure (see figure 5.5.1), the Supreme Leader, as commander of all forces, is in command of the Basij and IRGC. As the figure below shows, the smallest part in the Basij structure is the resistance base which is directly under Basij control. Basij bases are located in mosques, governmental offices, factories, universities, and schools. There are no accurate statistics about the number of Basij bases in the country but, as Golkar (2015: 33) estimated, there are about 35,000 to 40,000 bases. As Desemi (2017), Commander of the Basij Mosque Organization, claims, in mosques alone there are about 23,000 Basij bases. However, organisational penetration of the Basij in society is visible everywhere: in universities, organisations, schools, mosques, and labour organisations. This influential structure helps the IRGC and Islamists to mobilise people for their political goals, and to make distributing resources among their followers easier. The expanding structure of the Basij increased even more after the 2009 uprising.

Figure 5.4.1: the Organisational structure of Basij

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│               Suprem Leader                   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
        ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
        │ Armed Forces General Command Headquarters │
        └─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │              │
        ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
        │     Army     │   │     IRGC     │
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                    │         │          │
            ┌──────────┐ ┌────────┐ ┌────────┐
            │   IRGC   │ │ Basij  │ │  Quds  │
            │Provincial│ │        │ │ Forces │
            └──────────┘ └────────┘ └────────┘
                    │
            ┌──────────────────────────┐
            │    IRGC Basij regions     │
            └──────────────────────────┘
                        │
            ┌──────────────────────────┐
            │      Basij districts      │
            └──────────────────────────┘
                        │
            ┌──────────────────────────┐
            │        Basij bases        │
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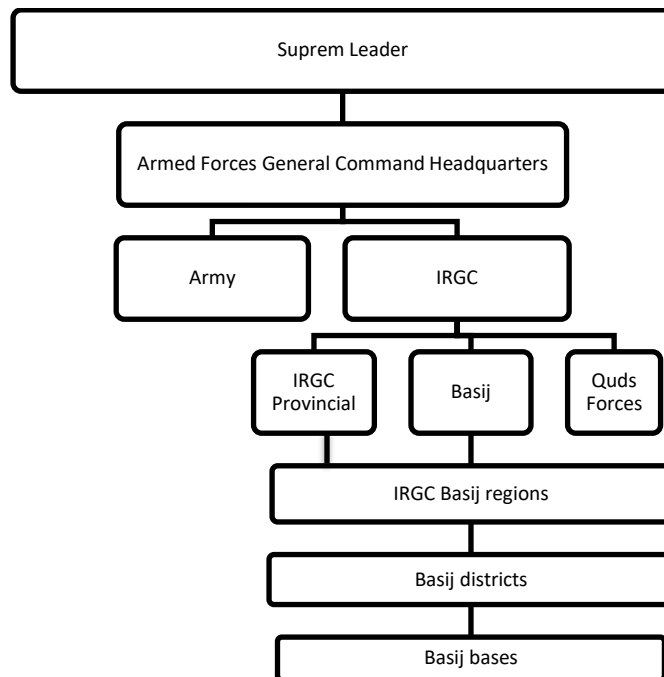
The 2009 uprising motivated the IRGC to establish more bases in the country, especially in big cities. General Hamedani, Head of the Tehran IRGC, urged that in big cities like Tehran the number of Basij bases needed to be doubled. He noted there were about 3000 Basij bases in Tehran, which was not enough; the number should be doubled to 6000 bases (Hamadani 2010). Moreover, Desemi (2017) asked the IRGC to establish more bases in mosques. He claimed that having only 23,000 bases in mosques is insufficient when there are about 70,000 mosques in the country.

Because of the Basij's impact in suppressing the 2009 uprising, the IRGC developed the organisation and highlighted its main duties. Basij bases, as the operational part of the organisation, have the following duties, according to Basij regulations (Golkar 2015: 36):

- "Identifying, recruiting, and organising the people into the Basij bases, resistance groups, and resistance battalions.

- Following, introducing, and implementing ideological, political, and military training for its members.
- Following and implementing programs for maintaining the solidarity of members, including within the Basij camps.
- Implementing programs for defending the neighborhood, carrying out delaying operations (amalyiet takhiri) in the event of open combat, and ensuring physical protection for its members.
- Collaborating with the police in their geographical area.
- Popularizing defenses and creating a "readiness of defense" against external threats and enemies.
- Gathering intelligence and implementing security patrolling and stop-and-inspect operations in their neighborhoods.
- Implementing moral policing and offering verbal guidance to people.
- Dispatching Basij members for civil and military maneuvers.
- Hosting and organizing cultural programs (Quranic program) and ceremonies on national anniversaries, such as the victory of the Islamic Revolution".

In terms of membership, the members of Basij are from different ages, sex, educational backgrounds, and social groups, including the young, old, men and women. For instance, in the Iran-Iraq war the Basiji volunteers were between 12 years and 70 years old. They were from both uneducated and high level education groups. The members of Basij can be categorised into three types (Golkar 2015: 46-50):

- Regular member: a volunteer person who is over 11 years old can join the Basij as a regular member via filling out a form at a Basij base and passing the general basic training which includes the military and religious course for eighteen hours. These types of member would be mobilized in wartime and will engage in social and cultural Basij programs in peacetime.
- Active members: a regular member who meets the following conditions can apply for active membership:
    1. At least fifteen years old
    2. Has been a regular member for at least six months

3. Actively participates in ideological Basij programs.

The application will be reviewed by two commanders of regional Basij bases, a local representative of the supreme leader for an ideological check, and Counterintelligence Bureau for security checking. When the applicant's request is accepted by all these, s/he needs to pass a promotional training course to be categorized in active member.

The active member should spent at least six hours per week in local bases and also should participate in special political and ideological training courses such as righteousness circles.

- Special Member: a dual member of Basij and the IRGC. This member is known as *Pasdar* and has passed all special training courses to join to the IRGC ground forces.

The number of Basij members is not clear. Different sources estimate varying numbers. According to the Iranian press, Basij members were about 5 to 7 million in 2002 while General Safavi claimed that Basij had 10 million members in the same year. IRGC Human Resource Chief Masoud Mousavi claimed that the number of Basij was 11.2 million in 2009; the Centre of Strategic and International Studies estimated the total number of Basij at about 1.4 million in 2005 (Alfoneh 2016).

The key criterion in the Basij membership procedure is emphasis on the religious beliefs of the members. Active membership should be approved by a clergy in the neighbourhood of a candidate, who is familiar with the religious activities of the person. The members should participate in their local mosque's programmes so that meeting the requirements can be raised. These programmes are mostly religious and have political activities like righteousness circles that promote Shia political beliefs.

The reasons for joining Basij also are an important factor in membership procedure. These reasons are ideological and material. From its early years of formation until the end of the Iran-Iraq war the ideological reason was the most important, but later on the material reason also motivated the youth to join the Basij. Although the Basij announced that the only motivation for joining is defence of Islamic and national values, social,

political and economic benefits provide a strong motivation in the recruiting and absorbing process. In contrast to the IRI which claims that Ideological beliefs are the main reason for Basij membership, alternative motives—including reduction in the length of military service, low interest-rate loans, university entrance quota privileges, and employment priorities—are the important reasons why people join the Basij. Golkar, based on a study conducted in Basij bases in 2006–7, argues members do not feel free to explain their main reason for joining Basij. He notes they are "afraid to admit their own materialistic reasons for joining". The study indicates about 66.3 percent of participants in Basij bases reported their friend's motivation for joining Basij is other than ideological, while 96.7 percent of the same respondents reported that ideology was their own reason for joining (Golkar 2015: 180-182).

However, the materialist reasons as well as the ideological ones are important motivations for joining the Basij. According to a law passed on July 19, 1998, "the services made available to the Basiji include the following:

- Benefits in hiring and receiving job opportunities.
- The enjoyment of housing facilities.
- The enjoyment of loan facilities.
- The enjoyment of welfare and cultural services.
- Access to special educational and training facilities for studies in and entering centres of higher education" (Golkar 2015: 181).

Some of these financial privileges are grounded on the economic power of the IRGC and Basij. Chapter 8 of this study will explain how petrodollars helped these organisations to support their activities and fund their members.

5.4.3. Basij: guarding and promoting Shia Political Islam

The operational role of the Basij in protecting SPI in Iran could be looked at from two aspects: guarding and promoting SPI.

a) Guarding the Islamic Revolution

Article 36 of the Basij constitution highlights the main responsibility of the Basij as "defends the country and the Islamic Republic government". This article obligates the

Basij organisation to prepare and train volunteers for this objective. Since the establishment of the Basij in 1980, it has been a major operational force behind the IRGC to suppress opponents and counter-revolutionary activities in different periods of time: in the early years of the revolution, during the Iran-Iraq war, in the Khatami presidential period, and in the 2005 uprising.

In the early years of the revolution, when there was no formal and strong force to provide security, the Basij was effective in maintaining security. Hussein Hamadani, former Deputy Commander of the Basij, summarised the activities of Basij in those years as follows (Wehrey et al. 2009: 26):

- Purging the old-regime loyalists and anti-revolutionary elements in Government office.
- Creating a network of ordinary people called "the 36 million [member] information network" to gather information about the opposition. When different political groups around the country started their activities against the Islamic government, Ayatollah Khomeini encouraged ordinary people to report any information about opposition (Khomeini 2001). For instance, in July 1980, when a former member of the Shah's forces was planning the Nojeh coup, a Basij member reported a counter-revolutionary activity to the government.
- Suppressing the Kurdish Democratic Party in the city of Paveh (see 5.4.3)
- Suppressing the communist uprising around the country especially in the city of Amol

During the Iran-Iraq war, the Basij was integral in the fight against a foreign threat to the Islamic government. By order of Ayatollah Khomeini, thousands of volunteers prepared for the warfront. They registered in local mosques and received some basic military training. The majority of the volunteers had been recruited in the Basij. The ideological beliefs among Basiji forces and religious symbols like Ashura encouraged them to sacrifice themselves on the battlefield. The mobilisation of volunteers caused a human wave to go to the Iran-Iraq front. According to the official report, the total personnel who participated in the war numbered about 2,547,000 while 2,130,000 of them were Basiji.

which means that nearly 84 percent of the military during the war was from the Basij. This majority indicated the importance of the Basij in defence of the Islamic revolution.

 By the end of the war, and during the Rafsanjani administration, the Basij focused more on reconstruction of the country, which was destroyed during the war. Although during the months after acceptance of the 598 resolution the Basij was in limbo, the new mission ordered by Ayatollah Khomeini involved them in reconstruction programmes.

The policing role of the Basij in guarding the Islamic revolution intensified when Mohammad Khatami was elected as a reformist president on 2 August 1997. Khatami promised to increase social justice, individual and political freedom, and women rights. The key slogan of his presidential campaign was freedom. Conservative groups like the IRGC and Basij saw Khatami's policies as an internal threat to the Islamic government. So the Basij confronted the new administration by political and social intervention. A clear example of this intervention is the operational role of the Basij in the incident in the dormitory of Tehran University, on 9 July 1999. A Basij member, by order of the IRGC, attacked students in the dormitory, killing and injuring many students.

During the reformist period, the Basij was a tool in the hands of the conservatives to supress their political opponents. It targeted high ranking positions in Khatami's administration, like the Minister of the Interior Abdolah Noori and the Minister of Culture, Ataolah Mohajerani (Golkar 2015: 96). On 4 September 1998, in a ceremony for martyrs of the Iran-Iraq war, a group of Basij members attacked the cars of both ministers and injured them while a statue of Mohajerani was broken. In this period, the Basij also attacked women's movements because they were seeking legal reforms to protect women's rights. For example, on 8 March 2016, the Basij attacked a women's rally and arrested some participants (Golkar 2015: 96).

A new period of Basij authority started from the election of Ahmadinejad as a conservative president in 2005. The IRGC and Basij became directly involved with politics. Some of the high ranking IRGC commanders, like Sadegh Mahsoli, became ministers in the Ahmadinejad administration. The Basij and IRGC had been influential in the election of Ahmadinejad, although they harshly critiqued Ahmadinejad later when he did not follow

the Supreme Leader's order regarding the appointment of members in his second administration.

In this new era, the Basij and IRGC gained more access to the government. The Basij budget increased 400 percent from 2005 to 2009 (Golkar 2015: 27). This funding helped the organization set up special groups like the Zolfagar Unit to guard the revolution in 2005. The key mission of this unit, formed by a sportsman, was to suppress potential opponents in the streets. According to Basij regulations, "districts were ordered to shape their Zolfaqar units for confrontation with any internal threats in their periphery"(Golkar 2015: 98).

The 2009 presidential election highlighted the importance of the Basij in guarding the Islamic revolution. In the aftermath of a controversial election and the start of the Green movement, the IRGC tried to change the key function of the Basij from a military force to an organisation for fighting against internal threats. Changing the name of the Basij indicated its new mission. However, the Basij reverted to its original name, the Organization for Mobilization of the Oppressed. At the same time, a Basij commander, Fazli, argued that this change would help them to be free from only military roles. He said "the Basij will be more involved in the social, scientific and development arenas" (cited inOstovar 2013: 350).

Suppressing the Green movement is an example of the Basij's new mission. As Chapter 9 explains, the IRGC used the Basij to strive against protesters in the streets. General Jafari, Commander of the IRGC, claimed that the 2009 uprising was the biggest political and security threat to the Islamic revolution that had been controlled by the Basij. He said that without Basij participation, controlling the situation would not have been possible (Jafari 2014). General Araqi, Commander of the *Mohamad Rasololah* Brigade, claims this taskforce was an operational arm of the Basij in Tehran, and arrested thousands of protesters with the cooperation of the police on 20 June 2009 (Araqi 2009). In the conflict between the Basij and protesters during the uprising, many people were killed. For instance, on 14 February 2010, motorcyclists shot down two students in the street and killed them: as the students' friend reported, the motorcyclists were members of the Basij (Fasihi 2011).

b) Promoting Shia Political Islam

The IRGC and Basij promoted Ideological and political education among Basij members to mobilise them in support of SPI. One of the regular programmes at Basij bases is an ideological and political training course. Regular and active members of the Basij were encouraged to attend courses such as introductory general training, complementary general training, specialised training, refresher training, and consistency training. According to the Basij constitution, these courses are designed to train the regular membership in improving their military, Ideological, and political education. The courses normally include "Jihad and Defence in the Quran", "Fluency in Reading the Quran", and "Islamic Government and Guardianship of the Jurist (Velayat-e Faqih)" (Golkar 2010).

Where some of the non-ideological motivation, such as financial benefit (see 5.5.2), attracted people to join the Basij, it tried to improve their ideological beliefs, and to increase their loyalty to Islamic government ideology by holding many programmes. The Basij also tried to increase its influence on society and to reach people from different levels. The organisation holds various types of programme and plans every year for their members and ordinary people, with cooperation from the mosque. These programmes are planned and carried out by Basij districts around the country. Some of the most popular are (Golkar 2010):

- The Guardianship (Velayat) Plan: The primary goal of this plan, started in 1997 by Ayatolah Mesbah Yazdi, a conservative clergy, is to improve members' understanding about the *Velayat-e Faqih* theory, as well as to increase the legitimacy of the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. The main target group of this plan is university students and academic staff.

  The plan is organised by a Basij student organisation and the Imam Khomeini Training Organisation and held every summer for about 45 days. Moreover, the provincial Basij bases hold the Velayat plan every summer in different cities. For example, 400 Basiji participated in the Velayat plan in Qazvin city in the summer of 2016, and in the summer of 2017 about 250 students attended this Ideological plan in Semnan city (see *Mashreghnews*. 08 June 2017).

- The Insight (Basirat) Plan: The basirat plan was designed in 1998 to improve the political insight and religious belief of top ranking IRGC and Basij commanders.   In the early years, this plan was not welcomed by them. When Ayatollah Khamenei emphasised the importance of political knowledge for commanders, this plan become a requirement for IRGC and Basij personnel.

- The Awareness (Marefat) Plan: In 2001, Ayatollah Khamenei presented a speech to Basij members, advising them to increase their knowledge about Basij philosophy and activities. After this discourse, the Basij started holding a forty-hour course to improve their members' religious and political knowledge. This plan was designed at two levels: introductory and supplementary. Members had to pass the introductory level exam to be able to register at the supplementary level. They had to have passed these courses if they wanted to enjoy Basij benefits (Golkar 2010).

- The Elevation (Taali) Plan: The goal of this plan was popularising Basiji culture in society. Its design was based on Ayatollah Khomeini's 20 million army. As Taeb, Commander of the Basij, argues, this programme wanted to attract more volunteers and instigate a closer relationship with other organisations. He adds that this plan was successful in restructuring the Basij organisation to be more active (Taeb 2008).

- The Righteousness (Salehin) Plan: as part 5.2.4 explains, this plan was one of the most influential executed by the Basij and mosques. After the 2009 uprising, the plan was designed to improve the quality of Basij members. Whereas the uprising had raised too many questions in Iranian society and among Basij members about the new political order and the role of foreign powers, this plan was designed to prepare Basijis for confrontation with the soft threat and cultural invasion. Although similar to other ideological plans, the key difference was in its structure. The righteousness circle is formed by only ten to fifteen members, and managed by one of the higher-ranking officials who has been educated by the Basij for this job. As Golkar argues the most important aim of the plan was to control the Basijis, because small groups are completely under the control of their teacher. A teacher or educator gathers the

group in the local mosque a minimum of two nights every week to engage them in Basij activities, and would have control of everything (Golkar 2010).

The Basij has designed many types of plan to promote the ideology of an Islamic government and Shia political Islam among its members and society. The plans mentioned, especially the Righteousness Plan, had a profound influence on society. They attracted groups of students, women, teachers, workers, clergy and farmers to join the Basij for ideological and political training.

As well as these plans, the Basij also organised many exhibitions and anniversary programmes to promote the Ideology and Shia cultures like Jihad and martyrdom. As Chapter 6 explains, the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq caused many casualties which are used by the IRGC and Basij to promote the Ideology of the Islamic revolution. Every year, during The Holy Defence Week of 22-29 September, the Basij organises programmes in many cities. For example, General Yazdi, Commander of the Mohamad Rasololah Brigade, stated that the Basij would manage more than a thousand programmes during The Holy Defence Week in 2017 in Tehran. He outlined that these programmes comprised: 30 exhibitions about The Holy Defence, commemoration of Tehran martyrs, visits to martyrs' families, and promotion of the culture of Hijab (Yazdi 2017). The Basij also organise many programmes during The Basij Week (21-28 November). General Rezaee, Deputy of the Karbal Brigade in Mazandaran, notes that the Basij had organised nearly eight thousand programmes during The Basij Week in Mazanderan province. He elucidated that these programmes are based on eight themes including promoting Jihad culture, introducing resistance economics, promoting loyalty to *Valy-e Faqih*, promoting revolutionary behaviour, and helping deprived people (Rezaee 2017).

There is debate over the impact of these plans and programmes on the Ideological beliefs of Basij members. Babai et al. conducted a survey on the role of the Basij in confronting cultural issues among their members in Tehran. They argue that there is no clear correlation between the Basij cultural programmes and improving members' beliefs (Babaee et al. 2011). But there is some evidence that indicates that they have at least influenced a specific group of Basiji to mobilise them for political objectives. The 2005

election and suppressing the Green movement are good examples of how these ideological beliefs could be utilised for mobilisation and suppressing opposition (see Chapter 8).

Although, according to the constitution, the IRGC and Basij were not allowed to interfere in political affairs, they had a major impact in the 2005 presidential election when Ahmadinejad was elected as conservative president. Peterson (2010) argues that the IRGC and Basij used the Insight and Righteousness Plans to motivate their members to vote for President Ahmadinejad. He explains that the Basij asked participants in these plans to encourage their family members and friends to vote for Ahmadinejad in the 2005 election. The Basij employed its organisational and ideological abilities to persuade people to vote for Ahmadinejad as a working-class supporter. They used their influence in mosques to publish leaflets and distribute them in cities and villages. They also motivated people who attended mosques to pray to encourage their family to vote for Ahmadinejad. For example, as I remember, they gave my father a leaflet of Ahmadinejad slogans every night. He said to me that the mosque's Imam advised anyone worrying about Islamic values to vote for him.

5.5. Conclusion

According to social movement theories such as resource mobilisation, the existence of grievances in a society is not enough to create a movement. These theories argue that organisation and resources have an essential role in founding a movement and mobilising the masses for a specific target (see Chapter 3.2). In Iran, a key organisation, the mosque, mobilised the people for a Shia movement against the Pahlavi regime. Through the victory of the Islamic revolution organisations such as the mosques, IRGC and Basij have tried to revive and continue the Shia movement.

Mosques have been one of the most important organisations in the Islamic movement since the early years of Islam. They played a pivotal role in the victory of the 1979 revolution through propagating revolutionary opinions and mobilising religious forces, organising revolutionary activities, and funding the revolution. After establishing an Islamic government, the Shia movement utilised the mosques' organisation to endorse

Shia values, promote the martyrdom culture, mobilise ordinary people against any threat to the SPI, and provide a network among ulama.

The IRGC and Basij are two organisations with the same goals, guarding and promoting SPI. They, as Golkar (2010) claims, have dominated Iranian society through interference in political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of people's lives. According to their constitutions, they confront any threat to the Islamic government, to guard Islamic revolution achievements. The Basij as an operational arm of the IRGC mobilised its members to suppress a threat to the Shia government.

However, the survival of SPI in Iran is owed to its mobiliser organisations - mosques, IRGC, and Basij. These organisations support, guard, and promote SPI and mobilise people against all threats to SPI by employing Shia symbols. As the next chapter will explain, Shia culture and symbols, as a fuel for the Shia movement, have been used by these organisations for their political, economic, and social targets.

Chapter 6: Religious Rituals and Symbols: Fuel for Shia Political Islam

6.1.   Introduction

The previous chapter discusses how the organisers such as the Mosque, IRGC and Basij tried to survive SPI. According to social movement theories (chapter 3.2), an origin and organisers are necessary for a movement to be formed, but continuation of the movement needs some fuel to mobilise the public. In Islamic movements, especially in the Shia movement, values and symbols play a significant role in the continuation of movements. Symbols such as Ashura in Shia have been employed to improve and disseminate Shia beliefs and culture in society. Chapter 3.2 expounds on the importance of beliefs to motivate people into collective action. The theory of New Social Movements argues that a set of values, symbols, beliefs and meaning arouse strong sentiments of belonging in a social group to define a new identity for an individual, and create an energy for participation in collective action (Laraña 2009: 7). Inglehart's study also denotes the significant role of values in the foundation of a movement (see Chapter 3.2). Hence the symbols and rituals which enhance their participants' beliefs have a profound influence on motivating people to join in a collective action for a specific goal. Chapter 1.2 indicates evidence to show the historical usage of these symbols in the emergence of Shia political Islam. For example, people's belief in the hidden Imam persuaded them to follow Ayatollah Shirazi's fatwa against the Tobacco movement. This chapter will highlight the importance of Shia values and symbols to the preservation and continuance of SPI, to explain how the rituals and symbols in Shia religion have provided fuel for the Shia movement to survive alongside SPI in Iran. How have these rituals been used by mobiliser organisations like the mosque, IRGC and the Basij to motivate citizens for their political objectives? And how have these rituals intensified religious beliefs such as Jihad and martyrdom which are central to the support of SPI? To answer these questions, the role of Ashura as the core of the Shia movement, and other Shia rituals like Heyat and mourning ceremonies, will be considered to show how these values and symbols have become strong religious tools in the hands of the Shia government to mobilise people for their political goals.

6.2. Shia Rituals

Rituals can be defined as "repetitious and stylized symbolic bodily actions that are centred on cosmic structures and/or sacred presence" (Zuesse 1987: 405). The use of religious rituals has various purposes including fulfilment of religious beliefs, linking social groups, collective identity, spiritual satisfaction, political objectives and protecting religion. In sociological terms, religious rituals could forge a stronger social linkage in a group. According to Emil Durkheim "religious rituals are used by people to sacralise the social structure and bonds of the community and to ensure the unconscious priority of communal identification" (cited inElbadri 2009: 53). Durkheim claims that rituals transform membership into belonging. Elbardi has applied the Durkhim theory in his research to show how "Ashura rituals are used by Shia as a way to reunite and reconfirm common values shared between members of Shia societies" (cited inElbadri 2009: 54).

Shia rituals have historically had a significant impact on the political and social environment of Iran. Rituals and symbols were used by the kings to legitimise their governments. The Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) recognised Shia as the main religion in Iran (see Chapter 1.2.4), the Safavid kings introducing a new form and meaning of Shia rituals. For example, a ritual sermon recounting and mourning the tragedy of Karbala, *rowzeh khani*, was created in this period. Also, the foundation of a Shia political doctrine can be traced back to the Safavid period (Nasr 2007: 70-75).

As Chapter 3 discussed, during the Qajar dynasty (1796-1925), the kings used Shia religious symbols to promote their political legitimacy. Some Shia clergy like Mirza Abu al-Qasem Qomi defined the interdependence between religion and kingship. The Qajar kings introduced themselves as the patrons of Shia rituals in *Muharam* (anniversary of the martyrdom of third Shia Imam) such as *Taziyeh, rowzeh khani* and *shabih khani*. They also supported these rituals financially which made these events even more popular among Iranian society. The Qajar kings presented themselves as Shia followers by participating in these rituals to legitimise their power.

The popularisation of Shia rituals provided an important means for the clergy and ulama to mobilise people for specific political and social objectives, the constitutional revolution

and tobacco crisis being good examples of this use of religious tools for political aims. The Tobacco movement in 1895 indicates the power of the ulama and religious rituals, even against the king. When Naser-a Din Shah Qajar gave the tobacco concession to a British company (see Chapter 1.2) Grand Ayatollah Mirza Hassan Shirazi in 1981 issued a fatwa against this decision. In his fatwa he decreed "In the name of God, the Merciful and the Forgiving. As of now, the consumption of tobacco and tootoon in any form is tantamount to war against the Imam of the Age" (Moaddel 1992: 466). The fatwa spread quickly through religious rituals in the major cities. When participating in rituals, the clergy and ulama asked people to demonstrate against the tobacco concession. The network of rituals facilitated the mobilisation of people against the concession, which finally forced the king to cancel it. This event indicated the important of Shia rituals in mobilising the people.

6.3. Ashura: the Base of Shia Movements

Ashura and Muharram are considered the most influential events in Shia culture. What is Ashura and how has it been utilised for mobilising the public before and after the 1979 revolution?

Ashura, 10th of Muharram (first lunar month), became important in Shia culture when Hussain ibn Ali, third Imam of Shia and grandson of Prophet Mohamad, become a martyr in the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE. Shia commemorates this tragedy during Muharram every year.

After the death of the Prophet, disagreement over his successor was the starting point of conflict between Shia who believe in the Imamate principle and Sunni who believe in the caliphate. Shia argued that Prophet Mohamad had chosen Ali, his son-in-law, as his successor and the leader of Muslims (Imam) should be from Ali's family; while Sunni argued that the Prophet's successor (caliph) should be chosen by council. This conflict between the two major groups of Muslims caused the tragedy in Karbala. When Husain Ibn Ali, Ali's son, refused the Yazid's demand for allegiance to his caliphate, he decided to emigrate to Kufah. But the Kufan governor stopped him near Kufah, surrounding him in the Karbala desert in southern Iraq, and killed Imam Hussain and all his men including

his brother, Abass, and his sons, and took the women and children captive, to send them to Yazid in Damascus.

For Shia, the battle of Karbala is the root of many religious practices and beliefs. The religious rituals arising from this tragedy usually start from first of Muharram until the end of Safar. Hence Muharram has become one of the most enduringly emotional months in Shia history. Ayatollah Khomeini highlights the importance of this month, noting "It is Muharram and Safar that have kept Islam alive" (Khomeini 1982: Vol 15:187).

Ashura and Muharram had a key role in the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini remarked: "we all should be aware that our Revolution may not have resulted in triumph if it were not for the uprising of the Master of Martyrs Imam Hussein; Islamic revolution is a light of Ashura and its Divine revolution" (Khomeini 1982: Vol 8:12). How did Ashura provide a base for the uprising before the 1979 revolution? Between 1963 and 1979, Muharram ceremonies, orations, rituals and dirges were used by activists and the clergy for their political objectives, to mobilise the people against the regime, and to proselytise the political lesson of Ashura. They highlighted the similarities between Umayyad caliphates and the Shah's regime. They strengthened people's religious emotions by comparing the Shah's behaviour with that of Yazid. They also intensified and propagated Ashura symbols during the Muharam ceremonies. Many decisive demonstrations were affected by Ashura such as:

1. The uprising of 5 June 1963: This uprising, which triggered an anti-Shah demonstration, was a reaction to Ayatollah Khomeini's oration on the afternoon of Ashura. Ayatollah Khomeini drew on Ashura cultures and symbols to motivate people to rise up against the corruption and oppression of the regime. He recommended ulama and preachers to use Muharram ceremonies to inform people about the dangers of the White Revolution to Islam and Iran. He proclaimed "Muharram is the month in which the Master of Martyrs Imam Hussein rose up against oppression to teach human beings construction and firmness. He did sacrifice and was sacrificed to annihilate the oppressor and the very same motif is the Islamic guideline for our nation forever" (Khomeini 1982: vol2:11). Accordingly, he asked the people and preachers to rise against the Yazid of the time, Mohamad Reza Shah. Although the regime warned ulama and the clergy that they should not

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speak against the Shah or Israel during Muharram rituals, Ayatollah Khomeini and his supporters did not heed the warning.

2. Black Friday: on 8 September 1978 a mass demonstration took place against the Shah in Jaleh square in Tehran. Black Friday marked the point of no return for the revolution. Thousands of protesters were killed and wounded by the military forces. Ayatollah Khomeini accused the Shah and Israel of massacring thousands of people (Khomeini 1982: Vol 3:478-480). On the first anniversary of Black Friday, Ayatollah Khomeini explained the relation between Ashura and this bloody event. He said "the 17th of Shahrivar (Black Friday) is a repetition of the day of Ashura, and the battlefield of the martyrs is a repetition of Karbala; and our martyrs are a replica of the martyrs of Karbala; and the enemies of our nation are repetition of Yazid and his supporters. Karbala demolished the palace of oppression; and our Karbala caused the collapse of the satanic royal palace" (Khomeini 1982: Vol 9:403).

3. The Arbaeen (the 40-day anniversary ceremony for the martyrs of Imam Husain) uprising on 19 January 1979 was one of the pivotal demonstrations against the Shah's regime. Ayatollah Khomeini on 15 January 1979 compared the revolutionary martyrs with those of Karbala, and the Shah's regime with that of Yazid, and encouraged people to protest against the regime. The manifestation of the uprising indicates how this mass demonstration was affected by Ashura culture, and shows how Ashura provides a model for protesters to sacrifice themselves in the struggle against injustice and oppression.

The above events indicate how Shia clergy utilised the Ashura ceremonies to mobilise the public against the Shah. Also, the battle of Karbala highlighted the importance of martyrdom and Jihad culture in Shia. Imam Husain and his supporters became the symbols of the struggle against oppression, injustice and corruption. At specific times when the Islamic revolution has faced a serious external or internal threat like the Green movement (see chapter 8) and the Iran-Iraq war, these values have fuelled the movement, and mobilised the people.

6.3.1. Martyrdom: the first lesson from Ashura

The terms Jihad and martyrdom can be traced back to the Qur'an and the early years of Islam.   Rudolph Peters notes "the origin of the concept of jihad goes back to the wars fought by the Prophet Mohammed and their written reflection in the Koran". He cites "the Arabic word Jihad means to strive, to exert oneself, to struggle" (Peters 1996: 320). Similarly, the root of the martyrdom concept returns to the Qur'an where it is declared "those who are slain in Allah's way are not dead, but alive" (Q 2:154). This verse has usually been interpreted to the mean that any Muslim fighter who is killed in the way of Islam is a martyr. The Qur'an recognises the reward for those who are martyrs in Allah's way. For example, the Surah Al-Imran in verse 170 mentions that "exulting in that (martyrdom) which God has bestowed upon them out of His bounty. And they rejoice in the glad tiding given to those (of their brethren) who have been left behind and have not yet joined them, that no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve" (Q 3:170). There are many more verses in the Qur'an which highlight the value of martyrdom (see 2:107, 61:10-12, 9:44) and show how the seeking of martyrdom is a superior value in the Muslim mind.

From some points of view, the Shia and Sunni interpretation of Jihad and martyrdom is different. Rudolph Peters argues that despite the similarity between Shia and Sunni theories of Jihad, there is one significant difference. The Twelver Shia believes that "Jihad can only be waged under the leadership of rightful Imam" (Peters 1996: 320). So what about the period of absence when the Twelfth Imam is not available? The lack of a common interpretation of Jihad in Shia doctrine during the absence of the hidden Imam makes it more complex. Assaf Moghadam (2007) refers to the interpretation of four Shia thinkers, Ali Shariati, Ayatollah Murtaza Mutahhari, Ayatollah Sayyid Mahmud Taleqani and Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah to illustrate the different thoughts on the question of who is the rightful holder of authority during the absence of the Twelfth Imam. He categorises these interpretations into three groups: the first believes there should be no Jihad during the Twelfth Imam's absence; in the second, some Shia leaders claim that they are representatives of Twelfth Imam so they can command Jihad; the third believes a third party such as mujtahids should hold responsibility to protect Islam. Despite these differences in the Shia doctrine about Jihad, as Assaf discusses, all four Shia thinkers

have been influenced by the Ashura tragedy and believe "that jihad is always legitimate when Islam itself, or Islamic values for that matter, are imperilled" and "jihad must be waged against tyrannical rule" (Moghadam 2007: 138). This kind of interpretation of Jihad makes it more sacred among Shia believers especially when it has been construed in the context of the Battle of Karbala. According to these understandings, if the person who participates in Jihad against tyrannical rule or for protecting Islamic values is killed in battle, s/he would be a martyr.

However, in Iran since the revolution, the third interpretation of Jihad has dominated. This is because, according to the Velayat-e Faqih theory (The Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist), Ayatollah Khomeini had authority and legitimacy to invite the people to participate in the war against Saddam. In the early days of the war, Khomeini announced that this was a war against the infidels. He declared that Saddam was against Islam because he found that Islamic values were in contrast with his goals. Ayatollah Khomeini tied together the Iran-Iraq war and Islam and presented an Islamic interpretation of the war. This opened a new discourse in Iranian society regarding Jihad, martyrdom and resistance.

Although martyrdom was one of the principal concepts of Islam and the Qur'an, Ashura intensified its importance in Shia culture: as Ali Shariati noted, Hussain is the embodiment of the persecuted (Khosrokhavar and Macey 2005: 43). In Shia, martyrdom has been presented as a struggle against oppression, injustice, and corruption.   Imam Husain, a night before Ashura, argued that the only way to stand against oppression is martyrdom, saying "You see what this matter has come to. Indeed, the world has changed, and it has changed for the worse. Its goodness has retreated, and it regards good as bitter. Or, there remain only the dregs like the dregs in a jar, sordid nourishment like unhealthy fodder. Can you not see that truth is no longer something that men practice and falsehood is no longer desisted from, so that the believer rightly desires to meet God. I can only regard death as martyrdom and life with these oppressors as a tribulation" (cited in Freamon 2003: 329).

The killing of Imam Hussain and his companions in Karbala was a milestone of martyrdom culture in Shia history. Shia refers to Husain as the master of martyrs. This tragedy became a symbol for people who want to sacrifice themselves to fight against oppression. The stories of the Karbala martyrs and the speech of Imam Hussain's companion before

entering to war provide emotional motivations. For example, the martyrdom of Hussain's son, Ali Akbar, who was young and unmarried, had a passionate impact on young people, impelling them to participate in the Iran-Iraq war. The martyrdom of Ali Akbar and Abolfazl Abbas (Husain's brother) has become a model for martyrdom.

The battle of Karbala demonstrated what martyrdom should be and provided a template for martyrdom in Shia. Ali Shariati, a day after Ashura 1970, in the Grand Mosque of Tehran interpreted the purpose of martyrdom according to Ashura culture. He said: "Shahadat has such a unique radiance; it creates light and heat in the world and in the cold and dark hearts. In the paralyzed wills and thought, immersed in stagnation and darkness, and in the memories which have forgotten all the truths and reminiscence, it creates movement, vision, and hope and provides will, mission, and commitment. The thought, 'Nothing can be done,' changes into, 'Something can be done,' or even, 'Something must be done.'… By his death, he does not choose to flee the hard and uncomfortable environment. He does not choose shame. Instead of a negative flight, he commits a positive attack. By this death, he condemns the oppressor and provides commitment for the oppressed. He reminds people of what has already been forgotten. In the icy hearts of a people, he bestows the blood of life, resurrection, and movement. For those who have become accustomed to captivity and thus think of captivity as a permanent state, the blood of a shahid is a rescue vessel" (Shariati 1968: 240). This emotional interpretation of martyrdom through linking it to Ashura events shows how Shia ideologues highlighted the martyrdom culture. As psychologists (Guess et al. 2007: 428) show, the role of religion, especially Islam, in motivating young men and women to become volunteers for martyrdom, demonstrates that Shia symbols like Ashura have had an important impact on promoting martyrdom culture.

 Martyrdom is a key factor in the success and continuation of the Islamic movement. The culture of martyrdom which has mostly sprung from Ashura in Shia provides a scene of honorific, mystical bravery in fighting undesirable political, social, and religious circumstances. Rahimi (2004) argues that the Islamic movement reinterpreted the discourse on martyrdom to "essentialize sacrifice in an ideologically totalistic way". The struggles of Islamic movements like Hamas (al-Jihad Islami movements) and Hezbollah indicates how this sense of martyrdom has motivated people to sacrifice themselves in

both the Sunni and Shia schools. Hamas' suicide-bombing campaign which started after the Goldstein massacre in the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron in early 1994, where many Muslims were killed, is an example. This event intensified the expression of vengeance among Hamas' members while they were suffering a loss of honour because of the Israeli presence in the occupied territories. So martyrdom through suicide attack was a way to regain their honour (Rahimi 2004). Hassan Nasrollah, Leader of Hezbollah, expresses the mystical aspect of martyrdom. He said "Our people in Palestine, as in Lebanon, possess a substantial power; they are lovers of martyrdom, lovers of meeting God, lovers of departing to the vicinity of God and the eternal gardens" (cited in Alagha 2012: 106). In Iran, martyrdom had a long history in political culture and Shia movements. Dorraj (1997) articulates the historical background of martyrdom in Iranian literacy, arguing that martyrdom as "a symbol has functioned to forge a sense of solidarity, enhance mass mobilization, and preserve the sacred values of the community" (Dorraj 1997). He also claims that martyrdom is a concept which has been deployed by the Iranian government to proselytise for the Shia movement.   They have used Ashura to redefine the concept of martyrdom in Shia and made it more sacred by creating an emotional link between the current martyrs and the those of Karbala. For instance, Tehran's municipality painted on the walls of metro stations pictures comparing Karbala's martyrs with the Islamic revolution's martyrs. According to this perspective of martyrdom, martyr is not just a simple religious term for one who has died during war; this concept holds a sacred position in the minds of Shia.

During the 1979 revolution, the clergy and ideologues employed Shia symbols like Ashura to promote the martyrdom culture to mobilise a million citizens against the Shah's regime. While security and military forces were shooting people in the street and killing many protesters, the clergy used the tradition of commemoration on the fortieth day and seventh day to mobilise larger numbers of people. For example, Ayatollah Khomeini, Ayatollah Morteza Motahari and Ali Shariati as ideologues of the Islamic revolution (see Chapter 2.2) employed the deeply rooted traditional martyrdom in Iranian culture to generate a spirit of self-sacrifice as a necessity for political struggle.   Motahari emphasised the spiritual and mystical aspect of martyrdom by interpreting Imam Husain's speech in

Karbala. He claimed that Imam Husain said "My grandfather told me that I was destined to attain a very high spiritual position, but that could not be attained except through martyrdom" (Motahari 1980: 9). He defines "Martyrdom is the death of a person who, in spite of being fully conscious of the risks involved, willingly faces them for the sake of a sacred cause, or, as the Holy Qur'an says, in the way of Allah" (Motahari 1980: 5). Motahari encouraged people to struggle against a corrupt regime. He argued that it is good for students and farmers to do their jobs properly, but holy men pray for martyrdom unconditionally. Ayatollah Khomeini also promoted martyrdom as a way to fight against oppression and injustice by referring to Ashura and Muharram. He continually invited influential preachers, clergy, elites and intellectuals to use Ashura to engage participants for the uprising. For example, on 23 November 1978, one week before the start of the month of Muharram, he declared that Muharram is "a divine sword in the hands of the soldiers of Islam, our great religious leaders, and respected preachers, and all the followers of Imam Hossein, the Doyen of martyrs. We must make maximum use of it; trusting in the power of God, they must tear out the remaining roots of this tree of oppression and treachery" (Khomeini 2017). Ali Shariati also used Ashura to promote martyrdom for mass mobilisation. He said "Fear is the main reason for defeat. If human beings were not afraid of death and surrendered totally to God's will, they would never surrender to degradation and humiliation. So far as our nation was tied to the past system and had its eyes focused on worldly gains, it was afraid of death and would commit any disgraceful act to escape. But since the day that our nation has come under a leadership modelled after the prophet, the leadership of Imam Khomeini, and stepped in the Imam's path, it has grown immensely and has overcome the fear of death. Death in God's path is no longer regarded as death but martyrdom" (cited in Dorraj 1997).

During the 1979 revolution, the impact of Ashura and martyrdom culture on the protesters was considerable. One of the famous slogans during uprising was *Husain Husain Shoar mast, Shehadat eftekhar mast* (Husain Husain is our slogan, martyrdom is our honour). Panahi studied the slogans during the revolution. He analysed about 4153 slogans and shows that about 390, nearly 10 percent, contain the concept of martyrdom and Ashura (Panahi 2006). Fischer who propounds "the Karbala paradigm" to explain the immense impact of Karbala on the Islamic revolution argues that the martyrdom theme was at the

centre of the revolution. He elucidates that the martyrdom of Husain provided "an intercessor for ordinary mortals at the last judgment", and claims "the symbolism of martyrdom was thus omnipresent" (Fischer 2003: 214).

During the Iran-Iraq war, martyrdom culture played a crucial role in mobilising soldiers for the front. Although the war provided a tool for the Islamic government to promote the culture of martyrdom in society (see Chapter 6.6), it also benefited from the martyrdom culture. The Iranian government tried to combine nationalistic and religious tendencies to recruit soldiers. The religious background of Iranian society, and Ayatollah Khomeini as a charismatic leader, provoked the government to use religious symbols forcefully. The culture of martyrdom and Ashura were key symbols. Although I was only about 10 years old when the war ended, I remember how the media, IRGC, Basij and the mosques broadcast sensitive songs and used Ashura symbols for recruitment. The government disseminated a similarity between the Iran-Iraq war and the Battle of Karbala. The willingness of some martyrs indicates how they were affected by Ashura and the martyrdom of Imam Husain (Rabiee and Tamnaie 2013). As Dorraj (1997) explains, martyrdom is deeply rooted in Iranian society and is part of Iranian and Islamic identity. During the war, this identity was emphasised by the government to give a pious and mystical perspective of martyrdom to recruit soldiers. As Hutchinson argues, the war solidified Shia beliefs in some people and caused these beliefs to take deeper root (Hutchinson 2004: 137). While the newly-established government was involved in stabilizing the political situation, and political groups with different agendas were trying to obtain a greater share of the political power, the Saddam invasion attracted all their attention. This united all groups to protect the revolution by mobilising their strengths, including even using religious symbols as propaganda tools. In the first days of the war, Ayatollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic revolution, announced that this war was a conflict between Islam and Kufr. He stressed "the issue is Islam and Kufr, not Iran and Iraq. The issue is that they [Baath regime] hate Islam because Islam is against their illegitimate interests and objectives. So they, who found Islam an obstacle, revolt against Islam" (Khomeini 1982: Vol 19:216). He fervently highlighted the anti-Islamic characteristic of this war and emphasised that protection of Islam is an imperative duty. He said "protection of Islam is our duty. if we are killed, we did our duty. If we kill, we did

our duty too" (Khomeini 1982: Vol 13:251). Hence, in an official message to the Iranian people, he invited them to resist against Saddam and stated "now, you, big Islamic nation of Iran, have two options. First is the way of felicity in participating in the Jihad for God and second is leaving in abjection if you do not participate in the war" (Khomeini 1982: Vol 13:271).

While different social groups were engaged in political manoeuvring after the revolution, the war brought them back to Shia values to mobilise the people against Saddam. The importance of Islamic values for some of the revolutionary groups on one hand and Ayatollah Khomeini's position regarding the Iran-Iraq war on the other, caused many Iranian people to participate in the war. Although Ayatollah Khomeini's charisma was influential in attracting people to participate, Shia symbols such as Ashura culture also had a significant impact. Having a look at the will of martyrs also shows how Shia beliefs encouraged them to participate in the war. For instance, Major-General Hassan Bagheri, who was a commander in the liberation of Khorramshahr, cited that "our war is the war between Islam and infidelity. Any negligence is a disloyalty to Prophet, accolated Imam, and martyrs" (Baqeri 2013). Two Iranian researchers, Rabiee and Tamanaee (2013) analysed the motives of about 50 martyrs and found that 94 percent of them followed Ayatollah Khomeini and 64 percent were affected by the Karbala incident.

Finally, martyrdom culture which was affected by Ashura culture supports the Islamic revolution in Iran. The importance of this culture in guarding SPI has been considered by many clergy and high-ranking officials in Iran. Ayatollah Khamenei (2014), Supreme leader, mentioned that promoting the martyrdom culture and preserving the names of martyrs was vital for the Islamic government. He argues this culture is guarding Islam in the world by illustrating the martyrdom of Imam Husain. He claims that a society which commemorates its martyrs will never fail. Swenson explains how this culture emotionally charged and triggered the revolutionary actions in Iran. He analyses Shia cultures, especially martyrdom, and notes that Ayatollah Khomeini "leads the mobilized masses through a continued myth-catharsis in martyrdom" (Swenson 1985: 147). Ayatollah Khatami, temporary Imam for Friday prayer in Tehran, said that the Islamic revolution had continued in Iran because of the martyrdom culture. He noted that the existence of this culture among young people was advancing the Islamic revolution (Khatami 2016).

Conversely, scholars like Roxanne Varzi argue that despite governmental propaganda, the new generation in the post-revolutionary era in Iran does not trust and believe in such Islamic cultures (Varzi 2006). But the conduct of many young people who went to Syria and Iraq for Jihad and to fight against ISIS criticize Varzi's argument. They are the new generation, some even born after the Iran-Iraq war. A documentary clip shows how they were affected by Shia culture especially Ashura. In this clip a young man who was with the soldiers on the front in Syria explains how a young man from a rich family participated in the war and became a martyr because of his Shia beliefs (FarsNews). According to a telegram report, about 2000 troops from Iran fought in Syria to support Bashar Al Assad. In this report, David Blair claims about 700 Iranian fighters had been killed in Syria up until 2016 (Blair 2016). In Iran, these soldiers have been called Haram defenders, Modafean Haram, which means soldiers who defend the holy shrines of Shia in Syria and Iraq. This concept and governmental propaganda during the burial ceremonies of those killed in Syria and Iraq shows the importance of Shia values in mobilising young people for political goals.

However, this culture as a lesson in Ashura has been used for suppression of internal and external threats to Shia political Islam. On an internal level, the Green movement could be given as good example to indicate the significant role of this culture in the suppression of the movement (see Chapter 8). The Islamic government accused its internal opponents of treading in martyrs' blood because they presented themselves as "the guardian of the honour and blood of martyrs".

6.3.2. Jihad: modified by Ashura in Shia culture

The battle of Karbala has been applied as a sample of the Shia interpretation of Jihad. Hence Ashura indicates how and when Jihad should be waged. The previous section presented a Shia understanding of Jihad and explained the difference between Shia and Sunni interpretations of Jihad. Almost all Islamic revolution ideologues referred to Ashura to define the concept of Jihad. For example, Morteza Motahari construed the meaning of Jihad in Shia by illustrating the battle of Karbala (Motahari 1980). The meaning of Jihad in Shia is related to the historical grievances and suffering of a Shia group. The battle of Karbala as a tragic event in Shia history has had a profound impact on the Shia

understanding of Jihad. Based on the Karbala paradigm, the three core facets of Jihad as a defensive concept are: 1) Jihad must be against a tyrannical regime; 2) the sacred role of martyrdom; 3) jihad can legitimately be waged when the dignity of Muslims is at stake (Moghadam 2003).

This perspective of Jihad protects and supports the Shia movement. The Islamic revolution has benefited from this interpretation of Jihad. Before the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini and other Ideologues (see Chapter 2.2) encouraged people to engage in Jihad against the Shah's regime. Although Ayatollah Khomeini did not directly order Jihad against the Shah, he incited the masses for the uprising with his interpretation of the Jihad concept. He interpreted Jihad as the only way to be released from an oppressive regime by illustrating the battle of Karbala. He claimed that Jihad is a foremost Islamic duty (Khomeini 1982: Vol 12: 312). According to Shariati, Shia is a revolutionary force that should participate in Jihad against oppressive regimes, in both practice and theory (Shariati 1972: 8). Ayatollah Taleghani, as an influential activist and ideologue of the Islamic revolution, in one of his lectures in Muharram 1962 promoted the concept of Jihad to mobilise the public in the struggle against the Shah's regime. He argued that Jihad is obligatory under certain circumstances. In the following, he explains the political circumstances in Iran at that time to indirectly order Jihad. He said " *Who in this country is working hand-in-hand with the enemies of the Muslims ?...I want you to confess. Who steals the wealth of the Muslims and gives it to assist the international Zionists and Israelis? Who forces Muslim women outside the bounds of chastity?...If a government or state has ties with them, what will the duty of Muslims be toward such a government? ... On one hand they make the Muslims homeless in the desert, and violate the boundaries of Islam; on the other hand they take the wealth of Muslims for different purposes, without putting it to proper or productive use; they encourage moral corruption; if a government opened an embassy for them, and the leaders and diplomats of a Muslim nation go there and "eat, drink, and be merry," what would the duty of the people be toward such a government? You tell me what their duty would be? Should a government that is not governed by Islamic law rule over Muslims? Please tell me. If it is a lie, call me a liar; if this is true then it does not conform to the boundaries set by Islam"* (cited in Aghaie 2004: 75).

In the post-revolution era, the Jihad concept was deployed by Islamic revolution leaders to mobilise the populace and resources to fight internal and external threats against the Islamic revolution. One controversial example is when Ayatollah Khomeini ordered Jihad to confront the Kurdish rebellions in the west of Iran. On 19 August 1979 when the Kurdish Democratic Party captured Paveh, a city in the Kurdistan province, Ayatollah Khomeini, as supreme commander of the armed forces, commanded the IRGC to crush the Kurdish rebellion. He said "I hold the armed forces responsible for the massacres in Paveh and if they disobey my command I will deal with them in a revolutionary way. If within 24 hours something positive is not achieved, I will hold the Army chief and head of the state police responsible" (cited in Kretser and C 1979). This command mobilised many the IRGC troops to recapture the city with a partisan war in which about 400 people were killed and hundreds wounded.

In the Iran-Iraq war, the role of Jihad was vital to protect the Islamic revolution from a foreign threat. When Saddam Hussain invaded Iran in 1980, the Iranian leaders employed religious doctrine and symbols to recruit soldiers for the frontline. At first, they used defensive Jihad to justify the war's legitimacy within a Jihad category in terms of jurisprudence. According to a verse in the Qur'an (2:190) "Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, but do not provoke hostility; verily Allah loveth not those who provoke hostility", defensive Jihad can be employed when a Muslim territory is invaded by an enemy. Defensive Jihad brought the Karbala paradigm to mind to show that this war was a war between good and evil. This homogenous aspect between the battle of Karbala and the Iran-Iraq war helped Iranian leaders to mobilise the populace against Saddam Hussain.

The leaders of the Islamic revolution employed the concept of Jihad not only for military war but also for cultural or soft war. Ayatolah Khamenei declared Jihad against a cultural war. During his visit to Imam Husain University he said that "these days we are not faced with military war, we are facing a cultural war. Our enemy is trying to destroy our beliefs via soft war. This is not a traditional war; it's a cultural war" (Khamenei 2016). In this speech, he recommended all parts of the government to be ready for war. However, this order was used by conservative groups to mobilise their followers and resources to suppress any anti-revolutionary activities. For example, the Islamists used the concept of

soft war to block social media or to apply filtering on the internet. General Mohamadkhani, Head of Police in Gilan province, said that "our enemy are using social media like face book in soft war against Islamic revolution, so it is our duty to confront with them. Hence we arrested about 64 people who were promoting anti-Islam values by social media" (Mohamadkhani 2016). Also Ayatollah Alamolhoda, representative of the Supreme Leader in Mashhad, claims that the Supreme Leader asked the communication ministry to reduce the speed of the internet because it was "a tool in the hands of our enemies in the soft war" (Alamolhoda 2014).

6.4. Heyat: a campaign for Shia Political Islam

Heyat (literally means delegation or group) is a kind of Shia ritual that had a significant impact on the Shia political sphere in Iran. It is a religious institution formed by a group of people who gathered in places like the mosque and Takiye for mourning during Muharram and Safar. Heyats conduct mourning ceremonies and organise religious programmes in cities and villages. Although mourning for Imam Husain has a historical root going back to Al Boyed and Safavieh, Heyats, in their current form, developed during the Pahlavi era. The use of mourning ceremonies by preachers against the Pahlavi regime forced Reza Shah to ban regular ceremonies (Mazaheri 2008), so a new pattern of mourning evolved, called Heyat, which took place in private venues and the homes of religious people. With the fall of Reza Shah, religious groups became free to hold their religious ceremonies again, but the White revolution, which increased dissatisfaction with the regime, forced Mohamad Reza Shah to assert his control over religious rituals (Mazaheri 2008: 64). This policy of the second Pahlavi era also encouraged Islamists to concentrate on Heyats. For example, Ayatollah Khomeini urged the administrators of Heyats to recite a political dirge against the regime during Muharram 1963 (Karbaschi 2002: 273).

Many Heyats formed in Tehran after this period such as: *Bani Fatemeh Heyat, Bani Zahra Heyat, Bani Hashem Heyat, Etefaqiun Heyat, Ansarolah Heyat*. Other influential Heyats followed, like: *Heyat Karbalian Tehran* established in 1969 with many branches in Tehran and other cities; *Qazvin Heyat* founded in 1973; *Heyat Moheban Imam Husain* started by Ayatollah Khonsari in 1984; and *Heyat Ahmadi* created in 1986 (Kashani 2000: 234).

According to a report of the Islamic Development Organization, the number of Heyats in Tehran increased dramatically to more than 4500 in 1997 (Kashani 2000: 229). As well as in number, the function of Heyats has changed since the Islamic revolution. While Heyats had only operated during Muharam and Safar, they now have programmes in all events in the Islamic and Shia calendars. For example, they organise Doa Kumail prayer every Thursday, Doa Nodbah every Friday morning, mourning ceremonies for the eleven Imams, and parties for the eleven Imams' birthdays.

Heyats campaign for the Shia movement. As Charles Tilly argues, campaign is one of the key elements in a social movement to organise public effort for specific targets. He highlights the role of the institution which is based on collective identity for collective action (Tilly and Wood 2015: 3). Heyats could fall into this category of institution as they are based on Shia identity like Ashura. During the Islamic revolution and afterwards, Heyats played a promotional and networking role in running the movement. Ayatollah Khomeini's pronouncements for mobilisation against the regime were propagated by preachers in Heyats, his messages being delivered to their administrators by *Araqi* and *Mahaliti* who were appointed by Khomeini to network with religious Heyats.

How did the Heyats provide a base for the Islamic revolution? During the revolution, Heyats had cultural, economic, political, and military functions, particularly in Tehran. Some of these duties comprised (Ghafari et al. 2012):

- Organising religious lectures by famous preachers like Hashemi Rafsanjani in *Anasarolah Heyat*, and Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi in *Banifatemeh Heyat*. Although these lectures were mostly religious, preachers indirectly condemned the regime policies.
- Holding didactic courses such as recitation of the Qur'an, and an Arabic language course in *Banifatemeh Heyat*.
- Collecting money to fund political struggles in Iran and Palestine. For example, Ayatollah Khamenei, preacher of *Ansarolhusain Heyat*, asked participants to help Palestine by donating cash to a bank account.
- Distributing food among families. *Banifatemeh Heyat* distributed food to families suffering because of their revolutionary activities.

- Organising and participating in demonstrations against the regime. For instance, Ayatollah Tabatabee in *Isfahanian Heyat* recommended Jihad against the Shah.
- Promoting Ashura culture and struggling against oppression.

In the post-revolution era, Heyats have promoted revolutionary beliefs to protect the Islamic revolution. Mariji (2015) argues that Hyats are one of the key elements in the continuation of Shia movements because they promote the values at the heart of the Islamic revolution. Although during the Iran-Iraq war Heyats were involved in recruiting soldiers and mobilising them for the front, in the post-war era they became more involved in politics, especially when supreme leaders ordered them to struggle against the cultural war. Ayatollah Khamenei warned about the new cultural invasion against the Islamic revolution in September 1989. He advised that the state needed to consider cultural issues as well as economic ones (Khamenei 2017). Conservatives also criticised Rafsanjani's administration for paying too little attention to cultural matters. They argued that the victory of the reformists was based on social freedom slogans, as a result of cultural invasion. Conservatives maintained that the new discourse in reformist administration was a threat to the Islamic revolution and claimed that the political development policies were based on secularist beliefs. Hence conservatives and Islamists decided to use their key social bases, Heyats, to struggle against secularism and reformist policies from 1997, especially when Ayatollah Khamenei directly advocated that Heyats should be active in the political arena. He said Heyats should not be secular; they should not ignore political issues. He pointed out that there is no secular Heyat for Imam Husain: anyone following Imam Husain is interested in political Islam because Islam is Jihad; Islam is giving blood in Imam Husain's manner, and Islam is martyrdom. He recommended that preachers in Heyats should discuss political Islam (Khamenei 2016). Based on this recommendation, Heyats invited conservative preachers to promote revolutionary values. The newly-established Heyat, *Heyat Razmandegan*, is an illustration of this purpose, formed specifically to confront the new political environment. Heyat Razmandeghan was established in many cities with support from the Basiij organisation. According to the Islamic Republic Document Centre (IRDC), this Heyat was pivotal in guarding the discourse of the Islamic revolution, through promoting Shia values,

organising religious rituals, holding ceremonies for martyrs and their families, and reviewing events of the Iran-Iraq war (IRDC 2016).

How have the Heyats suppressed internal threats to SPI? In recent years, particularly since the 2009 uprising, the role of Heyats in campaigning for political goals has increased. Preachers and singers, who recite poems about the Ashura tragedy, became directly involved in the political arena. As Chapter 8 will explain, singers in Ashura 2009 mobilised participants at the mourning ceremony to demonstrate against protesters in Tehran. Hasan, a student at Tehran University, said he attended the mourning ceremony in the university mosque on 23 December 2009. When the singer Said Hadaian reported that many protesters in the street were setting alight Ashura symbols, he recommended participants to go on the street and rally against the protesters. Hasan explained how they suppressed the protesters (Farda 2016).

In 2009, Hojatolislam Taqavi, former head of the Friday Imams' Policymaking Council, claimed that the Islamic revolution could be faced with a serious problem without help from the Heyats. He elucidated his observation of Ashura 2009, saying "I saw how Heyats mobilised their participants to supress protesters. Participants chanted Ya Husain and came to the street. When the protesters were faced with this massive demonstration, they left the street" (Taqavi 2014).

On 30 December 2009, Heyats mobilised people to participate in a pro-government rally which was organised by the government.   According to the IRDC, Hossein Sazor, a religious singer, explained the role of the Heyats. He noted that the largest events after the 1979 revolution, in which the Heyats had a crucial role, were on 30 December 2009. He claimed the main part of this mass pro-government demonstration was led by the Heyats. He and his colleagues, like Mohamreza Taheri, Mahmoud Karimi, Mansour Arazi, and Said Hadadian coordinated the mobilisation of Heyats on the streets to support the supreme leaders, and argued that Heyats performed whatever they were taught from Ashura (IRDC 2017). Abdolreza Helali, singer of Imamreza Heyat, said that the Heyat sent a message to about 200,000 of its followers exhorting them to participate in a rally to help mobilise a massive group of Heyat members to demonstrate in Imam Husain square in Tehran (cited in IRDC 2017).

In the 2016 parliamentary election, Heyats campaigned in support of the conservative party. On Thursday 4 February 2016, Mansour Arazi in Doa Kumail (a prayer recited every Thursday night) at *Adbodlazim Heyat* claimed that conservatism would win in the coming election because Heyats were campaigning for conservative nominees (Beheshti 2016). Beheshti, a columnist on an Iranian newspaper, argues that in the two recent decades, singers in Heyats have been using religious belief participants to promote the conservative manifesto and to criticise reformists (Beheshti 2016).

According to the head of the Religious Heyats Council about 91,000 Heyats are active around the country, organising religious ritual and programmes (Darikvand 2014). These organisations which are based on Ashura culture and identity have tried to protect the Shia movement by:

- Providing a collective identity: preachers and singers in Heyats highlight Ashura symbols and culture as a collaborative factor to form a strong correlation between members.
- Promoting Shia values:
- Creating a struggling and heroic spirit: singers and preachers create a heroic spirit by telling emotional stories about the battle of Karbala. Said Hadadian, a singer, explained how his poems inspired participants in 23 December 2009 to rise against protesters. He said "I tried to intensify heroic senses of people by making a relation between Ashura and current issues" (IRDC 2017).

6.5. Mourning sermons: pumping religious fuel into the Shia movement for its political destiny

One of the most influential heritage commemorations of the battle of Karbala is the mourning ceremony, which has provided a promotional ritual for Shia movements. Ayatollah Khomeini as the leader of Shia movements in Iran claims that the blood of Karbala's martyrs has revived Islamic nations and religious rituals have intensified public fevour to guard Islamic objectives (Khomeini 1982: Vol 5:331). The key function of these rituals is providing a collective identity. Jamshidiha (2017), a sociologist at Tehran University, argues that people who participate in these rituals feel integrated within a

group. He stresses that these rituals can create a movement. Whereas mosques, Heyats, Takieh, or Husainia usually perform the religious rituals, these ceremonies are controlled and utilised by Islamists groups and local Basij for their political objectives. However, the mourning ceremonies have had a crucial impact on creating, guarding and the survival of contemporary Shia movements in Iran.

Before the 1979 revolution, some of these ceremonies such as Rowzeh Khani, and Tazia sermons were used by the clergy, ideologues, preachers, and religious singers to propagate Shia values for their political targets. Morteza Motahari, in his lecture in a Rowzeh sermon in 1963 highlighted the importance of the mourning sermon as a tool for informing the public about political issues. He stressed these ceremonies, rooted in the Karbala, are one of the most important pillars of religion and society. He said "*some people who were rational, wise, and pious suggested that since these rituals [Moharram rituals] are always being held in the name of the Prince of Martyrs, and since people already gather in the name of Imam Hoseyn, why not use them for another purpose? Why not promote another principle at the same time? And this principle is "promoting Good, and preventing Evil. "... And what a wonderful thing to do, and what a wonderful tradition that has been brought into action. They put the feelings of the people toward Hoseyn Ebn-e Ali, which are sincere feelings, to a wonderful use.... Why should we not follow the principles of our own religion?! They are very good principles, and should be used ....Just as Mr. Beheshti said, the struggle between truth and falsehood has always existed in the world and still exists. There is always a Moses and a Pharaoh, an Abraham and a Nimrod, a Mohammad and an Abu Jahl, an Ali and a Mo'aviyeh, a Hoseyn and a Yazid*" (Cited inAghaie 2004: 74). Motahari used the sermon to critique the Shah's foreign policy. His lecture clearly indicates how preachers employ the Karbala paradigm to promote Shia movements. Motahari said "t*oday we face two great threats ....Of these two dangers, the first is Communism, and the other is Zionism, in other words the threat of the Jews. I can plainly state that the threat of Zionism is greater and more pressing than the threat of communism, even though the foundation of communism is materialism,... Zionists have spread their networks of espionage in all the Muslim countries. ...We must understand what Materialists and Zionists are doing. We must be more aware of these issues than the government is. Even if the Government neglects this duty, we must make the*

government aware of such things. Telling, informing, and recounting these things is a religious obligation.... This is the philosophy of mourning for Husain Ebn-e Ali. Otherwise, what good does it do to cry for Husain? What need does he have for someone to cry for him? Husain wants his name and ideology to remain alive; for us to fight against all evil in accordance with his belief system. He wants us to fight against Communism, tyranny, injustice, corruption, immorality, gambling, and intoxicants" (cited in Aghaie 2004: 75).

During the revolution, the 40-day commemoration which is a heritage of Karbala and a tradition in Shia culture provided a platform for preachers and the clergy to mobilise the populace against the regime. The repetitious 40 days of ceremonies, especially after the uprising on 30 December 1977 in Qom, quickly spread the revolution around the country. For example, the Tabriz uprising which took place on 18 February 1978 during the mourning in commemoration of the Qom martyrs. The Yazd uprising during the mourning commemoration of the Tabriz martyrs took place on 28 March 1978, with a bloody demonstration against the regime.

In the Iran-Iraq war, the mourning ceremonies had a significant role in mobilising and motivating soldiers. The rituals and mourning sermons were used to rally volunteers for the war by boosting morale. According to the Rezamand (2010: 94) "it was largely the clerics' sophisticated and efficient use of the people's religious sentiments—the harnessing of the most evocative themes of Shi'ite Islam to their cause—that have kept alive the mass support and the revolutionary religious zeal of the Iranian people".

During the war, the governmental media drew attention to a similarity between real senses of the war and the battle of Karbala. As Farzaneh argues, preachers, religious singers, and clergy exploited the Karbala events in mourning ceremonies to intensify the emotional sensibilities of listeners to provoke them into participating in the war. He cites "symbols such as the rowzeh sermons of Muhharam, and its taziyeh passion plays, were used to inspire religious nationalism, strengthening popular support for the war" (Rezamand 2010: 92).   One of the key singers was Ahangaran who was known as the nightingale of Ayatollah Khomeini. His melodies the night before battle strengthened the motivation of soldiers.

6.6. The Iran-Iraq war: pumping Shia values into the vessel of society

The above sections discussed the important of the Shia rituals and values in surviving SPI; this section will explain how the Iran-Iraq war pumped these values into the society. Although the war benefited from the martyrdom, Jihad and mourning culture to recruit soldiers, it was also used by the Islamic government to promote Shia values especially the culture of martyrdom in society. Although the culture of martyrdom, Jihad and resistance is deeply rooted in Shia culture, the Iran-Iraq war intensified this culture and provided a tangible representation for people to be more familiar with the meaning of Jihad and martyrdom. This culture enforced Shia political Islam in Iran through providing a stronger bond between Shia values and politics, giving more political legitimacy to the Islamists in power, helping Islamists to confront their political opponents, and reviving the revolutionary aspect of Islam. As Ayatollah Khomeini articulated, the war revived the spirit of revolutionary Islam (Khomeini 1982: Vol 21: 94).

The Iran-Iraq war, which called for the sacred and holy defence of Iran, began in September 1980 and ended in August 1988. This conflict was one of the bloodiest and longest wars in the twentieth century. Only 19 months after the Iranian revolution, when the newly-established government was not completely settled, Saddam Hussein saw an opportunity to overthrow the new Islamic state in Iran. The bombardment by Iraqi air forces of the main airports in Iran was the start of an armed conflict between two major powers in the Middle East. Many political, economic, historical and cultural factors were at the root of this conflict. Dilip Hiro in his book, The Longest War: The Iran-Iraq Military Conflict, enumerates some of these causes: historical rivalry between Iran and Iraq since the Ottoman Empire, competition over governance of the Persian Gulf region, the perceived threat of the Islamic revolution to the Baath regime in Iraq (Hiro 1991: 7-40). Although some studies like Swearingen's (1988) argue that a boundary dispute between the two countries over Shatt al-Arab was the key reason of the war, this issue was not enough to persuade Saddam to invade his neighbour. Manouchehr Mohammadi, an Iranian researcher, criticises the western studies which focus only on border issues and the threat of the Islamic revolution to Saddam Hussein. He argues that the international system and the personal characteristics of Saddam Hussein were two of the main roots of this war (Mohammadi 1999). However, for whatever reason (for more see Karsh 2009),

Saddam invaded Iran and started the longest war in the twentieth century, which has had many internal and international impacts on both nations.

On the Iranian side, this destructive conflict has had many social, economic and political consequences (see Alnasrawi 1986). In terms of political impact, analysing the impact of the war, which lasted a quarter of the longevity of the Islamic revolution, is essential to understand its role in the reviving Shia political Islam in Iran. As Ayatollah Khomeini stated "every day in the war we have had a bounty which benefited us everywhere. We exported our revolution to the world by the war. We broke the dignity of both, west and east, superpowers. We made the roots of our revolution stronger by the war. We intensified the sense of brotherhood and patriotism in society. And most importantly is the continuity of revolutionary Islam has happened by the war" (Khomeini 1982: Vol 21:284).

The heavy human casualties of this war had a deep cultural and social influence on Iranian society because many Iranian families were involved with the phenomenon of martyrdom, Jihad, and captivity. Based on the record of the Veteran and Martyrs Affairs Foundation, a government agency, on the Iranian side the number of victims consisted of around 188,015 fatalities, 45,000 captives and 320,000 injured (Status of equipment and military force 2011). As the Iran population numbered 37 million, these statistics show that many Iranian families were directly affected by the war. Secondly, when Saddam invaded Iran, all political groups, organisations and leaders concentrated on the war to mobilise their might against Saddam's threat. Whereas Iranian society was affected by the Islamic revolution in which Islamic values had played a crucial role, values like martyrdom and resistance that had military relevance became the centre of attention of all institutions, the media and leaders.

The Iran-Iraq war has promoted the culture of martyrdom and resistance in Iran through media propaganda and organisational activities. because of the importance of Shia beliefs and symbols in encouraging Iranian people to participate in the war, advocating Shia beliefs became the centre of Iranian propaganda to mobilise the armed forces. Major institutions and the media started to attract more soldiers through motivating these beliefs. Although during the first year of the war there was no consensus between different institutions regarding the means of broadcasting propaganda, later members of the Supreme Defence Council (SDC), established in 1980, decided they would organise the

propaganda. Kamal Kharazi, the former head of SDC and Pars news agency, said that the main purpose of the SDC was to employ all existing media capacity such as radio, television, newspapers and news agencies to mobilise citizens (Kharazi 2010). When the Pars news agency was established, it organised and published all promotional material about the war. Some of the main methods of religious propaganda were:

1. Using epical and Shia symbols to promote the spirit of martyrdom and Jihad among the military forces. The war headquarters was responsible for mass production of Shia symbols on Keffiyeh, headbands and armbands, and also many other signs which were painted in the name of the Shia Imams. Broadcasting videos and pictures on television of soldiers and martyrs with these signs, together with spiritual songs, had a deep emotional impact on the Iranian people.

2. Linking events in the battle of Karbala and the war against Saddam. This linkage was a significant factor in motivating the Shia people for participation in the war, and to strengthen the spirit of soldiers.

3. Emphasis on the culture of martyrdom.

As well as media propaganda, activities which were organised by revolutionary organizations promoted the culture of martyrdom, for instance the Veteran and Martyrs Affairs Foundation (VMAF), established in 1979. According to its articles of association, its main purpose is revising, protecting and promoting the culture of martyrdom and veterans. Moreover, after the war, more than 22 organisations became involved in promoting the culture of martyrdom. Therefore, the Iranian parliament, Majles, established the Coordinating Council for promoting the culture of Martyrdom and Veterans (CCMV) to synchronise all these organisations. However, these institutions, especially the Basij (The Organization for Mobilization of the Oppressed) had their own activities for promoting martyrdom culture among Iranian society, especially young people, some of the most effective activities including:

1. Rahian noor tours: the student branch of Basij held this tour for the first time in 1997 when a group of students went to visit the former war zone. Later in 1999 when Ayatollah Khamenei, the then Supreme Leader, visited the war zones of the Iran-Iraq war and publicised it, the Basij incorporated the Rahian Noor organisation (Golkar 2010). The main purpose of this organisation is

advertising and holding a free tour for all visitors, especially during the New Year holiday in Iran to promote the Martyrdom culture. As the commander of this organisation, General Ali Fazli, says "Expanding the culture of sacrifice and martyrdom and holding the tours of Rahian Noor can play an important role for promotion of this culture and it is really necessary for our community" (Fazli 2011). The secretary of the Rahian Noor organisation, General Yaqoub Solemani, claims more than 3.5 million people visited the war zones during one year. He argues that this tour can insure the Islamic revolution for a long time because most of the visitors are young people who will make the future of Iran (Soleimani 2016). These tours make visitors more familiar with the real martyrs' position on the battlefield and religious programmes during the tours have an ideological influence on them. Although this influence might be felt only temporarily, in some cases it has a deep effect. For example, a young Armenian girl became Shia during her visit to Chazabeh, a battlefield in Khuzestan. As she explained to her tour leaders, she was affected by the manner of the martyrs' lives (Pourrakani 2015). Masoudi & Noghani, investigated the impact of these tours on the attitude of participators towards martyrdom. They conducted a survey among a group of Mashhad University students who went on a Rahian Noor tour in 2011. They indicate that the students' views changed significantly after their visit (Masoudi & Noghani, 2013).

2. Funeral ceremonies of unknown martyrs: according to official reports, when the war ended in 1988, the bodies of about 25,000 soldiers who had been killed during the war were not returned. After the war, both sides agreed to help each other find these bodies. Hence the General Headquarters of Armed Forces created the Committee for Finding the Missing Soldiers to exhume and collect the bodies. This committee has found about 20,000 of the unknown martyrs since 1989 and has buried them with a distinctive funeral ceremony (Khosronejad 2013: 14). In this process, the essential point is the religious propaganda used in the funeral ceremonies in most cities of Iran. As Khosronejad argues, the sacred defence memorials and martyrs' ceremonies

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provide testimony from the Iranian state to commemorate the martyrdom culture (Khosronejad 2013: 6-9). The armed forces, especially the Sepah, and Basij, who held these ceremonies used the emotional feelings of those who attended to advertise their political and Islamic beliefs. Consequently, they have buried the bodies of these unknown martyrs in public places such as historical sites and universities to keep the martyrdom culture alive. General Bagherzadeh, commander of the Finding Committee, refers to Ayatollah Khamenei's advice regarding perpetuation of the names of martyrs and argues the main objective of burying the bodies of unknown martyrs in public places is promotion of the culture of martyrdom and resistance. He argues that this will help people, especially the youth, to become more familiar with the martyrs (Bagherzadeh 2011). Moreover, burying the unknown martyrs' bodies in public spaces could be considered as a political instrument in the hands of the Islamist groups to increase their influence in society. For example, when the Basij decided to bury the bodies of three unknown martyrs in the University of Sharif in Tehran, more than 82 percent of the students were against this policy because they were of the belief that this would pave the way for political groups to enter the university campus for their political goals (Esfandiari 2006).

3. Memorial ceremonies and festivals: the Foundation for Preserving Works and Publishing Values of the Holy Defence was created in 1990 by the order of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. General Kargar, head of this Foundation, states that "the main duty and aim of this foundation, as its name suggests, is to preserve the works related to the Holy Defence and to disseminate its values and promote the spirit of jihad, resistance, and martyrdom" (Kargar 2014). The foundation holds various programmes over the year especially during the sacred defence week. According to General Kargar, they held about 500 programmes in 2014 (Kargar 2014). These included: making documentary films, building monuments in cities, holding discussion panels in universities, historiography, novels, fiction, and holding photography and painting exhibitions.

4. Mourning ceremonies: The number of mourning ceremonies has increased because the war left many casualties and martyrs. This mourning which was in commemoration of the war martyrs has been deployed by conservative groups such as the Basij and IRGC to publicise their manifesto. Most of these ceremonies have been organised by the Basij, IRGC and mosques, which usually invite preachers and singers to highlight selected Shia values which are important to the survival of Shia political Islam. The operational role of mourning sermons in guarding SPI and supressing any internal threat to the Islamic revolution has increased since the 2009 uprising. As Chapter 8 will explain, mourning ceremonies have become significant propaganda tools in the hands of Islamists against any threat to SPI, such as the Green movement.

6.7. Conclusion

This chapter shows how Shia political Islam has benefited from Shia values and rituals to keep the Shia movement alive for four decades. Existing religious symbols and rituals, which have a deep root in Shia culture and identities, have provided a collective identity for collective action. These rituals, which have mostly emanated from the tragedy of Karbala, have been utilised by some organsations and groups to encourage people to take collective action for their religious and political objectives.

In addition, the chapter explains the role of Karbala events (where the Shia Imam was killed) in producing many different rituals in Shia culture such as Taziyeh, Rozehkani, and Heyat which help Islamists to propagate Shia values and mobilise people. Also, Karbala has intensified and demonstrated the meaning of martyrdom and Jihad.

The promotion of the culture of martyrdom and resistance has insured the Shia political Islam system in Iran. These cultures, by encouraging the people to fight against an oppressive regime, played a crucial role in the success of the Islamic revolution and, following, in support against Saddam's attack. As Aghaie claims "the symbolic language of jihad and martyrdom was used extensively and effectively to mobilize the masses of Iranians to fight against the Iraqi invasion" (Aghaie 2004: 113). According to social

movement theories, values are the key element for mass mobilisation of the people for political or social objectives (see theoretical framework Chapter 2). Reuter argues that the veneration and fearlessness of martyrdom in Shia culture brought down the Pahlavi regime despite the fact that Mohamad Reza Shah was heavily supported and armed by western power (is a Weapon 2004: 39). The martyrdom culture, which is correlated to Jihad, should be considered not only as a religious performance but also as a political tool. Gilles Kepel in his book, Jihad: the trail of political Islam, argues the point that Jihad as a fundamental feature of Islam aims to incite Islamists to revolt against existing regimes in the Muslim world. He illustrates how the term Jihad, which is extracted directly from the Qur'an, helps Islamic groups in Muslim countries such as Afghanistan, Malaysia, Egypt, Pakistan and Iran to fight against the regimes in power. He shows the significant role of Jihad in the founding and success of Political Islam in Islamic countries (Kepel 2002: 361-376).

Moreover, the Iran-Iraq war has enforced Shia political Islam by spreading the culture of martyrdom and resistance. The large number of casualties in the war has increasingly involved Iranian society in the martyrdom concept, and has provided a propaganda tool for the government to promote the culture of martyrdom, a culture which has been influential in supporting and enforcing political Islam in Iran.

Chapter 7. Petrodollars: funding Shia Political Islam

7.1. Introduction

How did petrodollars help the survival of SPI in Iran? Petrodollars had a direct and indirect impact on the emergence and survival of SPI. The indirect influence could be understood through the economic impact of petrodollars on the social and economic situation in Iran, before and after the revolution. In the chapter 1.2, there was a brief discussion about the socio-economic impact of petrodollars on the formation of grievances and social discontents as the origin of the Shia movement. Despite the importance of petrodollars in fuelling social dissatisfaction as a root of the Shia movement, this chapter is not going to explain the socio-economic impact of petrodollars in the survival of SPI. It will focus on the more direct impact of petrodollars in funding the Islamists' activities and developing the mobilisers of the Shia movement.

The aim here is to show how Shia political Islam as a social movement has benefited from financial resources, especially petrodollars, to emerge and survive. Although social and cultural resources are necessary for Islamic movements to succeed, because of their religious, moral, and spiritual nature, financial resources are vital for their continuance.

While Islamists were funded by religious tax and had no direct access to petrodollars before the revolution, afterwards they benefited from petrodollars which financed the Iran-Iraq war, promoted Shia values, funded revolutionary organisations, and supported religious institutions - all these ventures played an essential role in the continued existence of SPI.

However, this chapter is going to examine the importance of monetary resources in three periods:
- Before the 1979 revolution to explain how the Zakat funded the insurgents struggle;
- During the Iran-Iraq war to analyse the role of petrodollars in funding the war in its capacity as an external threat to the Islamic revolution;
- In the post-war era to investigate how petrodollars financed organisations and institutions like the mosques, IRGC, Basij, and Heyats to preserve and promote SPI.

Based on resources mobilization theory, money as a resource plays a key role in the success of social movements (see Chapter 3.2). McCarthy (1977) explains the interaction between resources and social movement organisations and institutions, arguing that social movement activities and their continuance depend on resources, and showing how these resources have developed mobiliser organisations. He claims "the larger the amount of resources available to conscience adherents the more likely is the development of SMOs and SMIs that respond to preferences for change" (1977: 1225). Also, he asserts that resources could help an organisation to attract more members and staff. He asserts "The larger the income flow to a SMO the more likely that cadre and staff are professional and the larger are these groups" (1977: 1234).

Shia political Islam, in different periods, has benefited from various financial resources such as Islamic sources (Khums and Zakat), charity, market support, and petrodollars:

1- In the pre-revolutionary period the movement only benefited from Islamic (Khums, Zakat) and social sources (charity and market support). Islamists and ulama became more powerful from the rise of the Qajar dynasty when they received religious tax (see Chapter 3). Khums, which have a special significance in Shia, is one of the major financial sources. Shia believes Khums is an obligation and Muslims must pay one-fifth of their annual surplus income or revenue from treasures and mines. Shia argues in the age of occultation of the twelfth Imam, Muslims should pay their Khums to the leader of an Islamic society or Marjah (religious scholars who have permission from the leader). According to Shia *Fiqh*, half the Khums belongs to Sadat (descendant of the Prophet's daughter) and the rest is under the control of the leader, which is called the Imam's portion. The leader or his delegation can use it to promote Shia religion in Islamic society (Hiro 2013: 15).

   Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam. According to Islamic law, Zakat should be paid by the owner of a property with accumulated wealth to fund religious purposes (approximately 2.5 percent of all financial assets owned over the course of one lunar year).

When petrodollars were under the control of the Shah's administration, Islamists and revolutionary groups did not directly benefit from them. However, petrodollars fuelled the emerging revolution indirectly by increasing social and economic grievances. The gradual increase of the price of oil during the 1970s provided a huge influx of petrodollars that has been considered a key motivation for the rise of the Islamic revolution because of growing injustice, widening of the gap between poor and rich, mounting corruption in the Shah's regime, and uneven development (see Skocpol 1982).

2- In the post-revolutionary era when the Islamic government took control of oil and gas revenues, petrodollars were more effective than any other source of income. The Islamic government used petrodollars for their political and ideological goals. From the 1979 revolution, about 50-70 percent of the government's budget was funded by oil revenue. Hence, the Islamic government has been able to fund revolutionary and religious organisations with these petrodollars.

7.2. Financial sources for revolutionary activities

Despite of the importance of ideological resources to the Islamic movement, money was crucial to the Islamic revolution, in order to organise and propagate Shia beliefs for political goals, in two ways: 1) giving the clergy and activists independence from the regime; 2) supporting activists and their familes during the revolution. In this period, Khums and market support were the predominant financial sources for revolutionary activities.

Khums and Zakat (religious tax) helped the clergy to be independent of the Shah's regime. Traditionally Khums and Zakat were paid by Iranians to great Ayatollahs or their delegations.   Ayatollah Hairi, founder of Qom seminary, organised a network around the country to collect Khums and Zakat which provided financial independence for religious institutions. As Alger notes, this network "became a great utility in the course of Islamic revolution" (Algar 1980a: 25). The financial independence of the clergy from the state through Khums helped them to feel free to critique the state and mobilise the public for

political goals, and lobby in political crises such as the Tabacco movement, constitutional revolution, and oil nationalisation (Rakel 2008: 25).

The religious tax helped the clergy to establish, organise and develop religious schools around the country, one of the most famous being the Qom seminary. Qom seminary is well-organised and was instrumental in promoting Shia values, creating SPI theory, and training clergy as organisers and ideologues for revolution.   It was established by Grand Ayatollah Abdul-Karim Hairi Yazdi in 1922. The immigration of famous ayatollahs from different cities, and countries like Iraq, to Qom, made it the largest Islamic school in the city. Although charity from businessmen assisted financially to establish religious schools in cities, before the revolution they were run from the Imam's portion of Khums. The Ayatollah, whose religious authority permits him to receive Khums from the people, usually uses a part of it to fund students and promote Shia values. For example, Ayatollah Khamenei in his research on the Mashhad seminary indicates how Ayatollahs used the Imam's portion of Khums to pay the tuition and fees for students in this school. He cited a list of monthly payments by the Ayatollah to students in 1967: Ayatollah Shahrodi 150 IR, Ayatollah Hasan Qomi 160-200 IR, and Ayatollah Seyed Hadi Milani 150-250 IR (Khamenei 1986: 47-56). Statistically, the funds available to Ayatollahs in the Qom seminary helps them to accept more to students. The number of educated clergy increased from 500 in 1946 to 11,000 clergy in 1971 (Khorasgani 2009).

 The Qom seminary became more involved in political action following the death of Grand Ayatollah Borujerdi, head of the school and the leading Marjah, in 1961. The death of Borujerdi caused division in the school in terms of political intervention and leadership, as the five famous Ayatollahs, Shariatmadari, Golpayegani, Najafi, Khansari, and Khomeini held differing views towards the role of the school in politics, which could be classified in three groups. The first group completely disagreed with involvement in political affairs (like Ayatollah Khansari); the second was opposed to an extremist struggle against the regime, even though they were not happy with the Shah's administration (Ayatollahs Shariatmadari, Golpayegani, and Najafi were in this group); and the third group was led by Ayatollah Khomeini who mobilised their followers to fight against the regime.

Despite the schism among the clergy in Qom seminary regarding the struggle against the regime, the third group, encouraged by Ayatollah Khomeini, was influential in the triumph

of the revolution. As Dehbashi (2017) argues, the ideological roots of the 1979 revolution were created by some of the illustrious students from Qom seminary such as Ayatollahs Motahari, Taleghani, Beheshti. Since 1963 most of clergy active as leaders or ideologues in the revolution had studied at Qom seminary. Some of them, such as Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mohamad Montazeri who had high-ranking positions in the Islamic government, and Morteza Motahari who was an ideologue of the revolution (see Chapter 2.2), were students of Ayatollah Khomeini.

The clergy's independence from the state allowed them to be at the centre of revolutionary activities. As accentuated by Ayatollah Khamenei in his speech to students "without the presence of clerics, neither the Islamic Revolution would have emerged victorious nor the Islamic Republic could survive". He argues that during the 16 years from 1962, the clergy promulgated rebellion against the regime by travelling around the country. He declared that the Shah was not able to stop them because their lives were not controlled by the regime, they were living on their monthly stipend provided by Qom seminary and therefore were not traders who needed to worry about their money, nor were they government employees concerned about losing their jobs (Khamenei 1995). The clergy used the mosque network to promote the Islamic movement according to Ayatollah Khomeini's theory.

Establishment of the Qom seminary, which provided an organisational system for collecting the religious tax, increased the clergy's influence in Iran at a time when they were losing their sway in society because of Reza Shah's policy against the clergy. This new institution helped the clergy organisationally to use the religious tax for training and supporting more clergy to promote Shia values around the country.

Reza Shah Pahlavi tried to reduce the power of the clergy in society by introducing a set of policies to decrease their social, political and economic influence. Some of these policies included (Abrahamian 1982: 120-125):

- Reducing the number of clergy in the judicial system and public schools. He employed some new, western-educated, experts to replace clerical judges in courts
- Reducing the number of clergy in the national council from 24 representatives in the fifth council to 6 in the tenth council

- Taking control of all endowments from the hands of the clergy
- Ignoring some Islamic laws and enacting new family laws
- Closing some mourning venues and religious schools. For example, he closed the Navab School in Mashhad and used its building for military training (Jafarian 2001: 17).

But after the fall of Reza Shah, the Qom seminary under Ayatollah Broujerdi's leadership, during the second Pahlavi administration, raised the clergy's cultural influence in society by:

- Publishing religious books as training material for clergy
- Paying a regular monthly salary to the clergy, which motivated more people to register in the school.
- Creating a magazine called "Islam school and Shia school" to publish religious articles by clergy (Jafarian 2001: 47-53).

These activities, which were funded by the religious tax and paid by the Qom seminary to support the clergy in promoting Shia values, played a crucial role in the success of the revolution. Theda Skocpol highlights the role of the clergy in the revolution, through spreading Shia values among cities and towns during the 1960s and 1970s, especially after the Shah's White Revolution in 1963 (Skocpol 1982: 267-274).

The second financial source for Islamist activity before the revolution was charity and the support of businessmen. The practical relation between the bazaar and the clergy originated in the Qajar dynasty when the Qajar kings granted major economic opportunities to foreigners, such as the tabacco concession. The presence of a foreign monopoly presented a serious risk to Iranian business, so the merchants joined together with the clergy, who were against the King's colonial policies, to fight against these concessions. The tabacco crisis was a clear example of this cooperation. When Ayatollah Shirazi issued a fatwa to boycott the use of tabacco, merchants also closed the bazaar in big cities like Tabriz, Shiraz, Mashhad, and Tehran. As Algar argues, the tabacco crisis brought an effective and pronounced alliance between clergy and Bazaar (Algar 1980b: 208).

The second Pahlavi king infuriated the bazaar and businessmen with his economic and political intervention during the 1960s and 1970s. These discontents encouraged businessmen to take action against the regime and support opponents. For example, the White Revolution and land reform incited landlords to rise against the regime. The intervention of Mohamad Reza Shah in market forces in 1975, when the inflation rate rose rapidly from 5 percent in 1972 to around 18 percent in 1975, mobilised the bazaaris against him. The Shah tried to regain his social position by holding a profiteering campaign to reduce retail prices. This policy, as Looney notes "sowed the seeds of distrust and resentment of the government by the bazaar" (Looney 1982: 167). As Pesaran describes "the manner in which the regime carried out its campaign was especially humiliating….A large banner was hung from the doorway of the shop proclaiming that the store would remain closed for a period of time because the owner had been fined for profiteering. Their names and localities of those shopkeepers who were arrested or fined were published daily in the national newspaper" (Pesaran 1982: 103). Assaulting the bazaar and arresting merchants, according to this intervention, caused unification among different groups of businessmen and narrowed the gap between ideological and economic groups. As well as economic intrusion, the Shah's political intervention in the bazaar also increased discontents when he tried to unify political groups by establishing the Rastakhiz party. This branch of the party in the market forced merchants to donate to the party and also tried to impose a new system which was more conducive to the regime's interest.

Abrahamian considers the social structure of the bazaar to explain its important role in the victory of the revolution. He argues that the bazaar was influential in Iranian society because: 1) businessmen and merchants had preserved some of its organisation which was independent of the state; 2) businessmen held influence over thousands of staff, workers, traders, and shoppers because of their economic relations; 3) the bazaar had influence in rural areas as well as urban; and 4) one of the key factors of the bazaar's power was its social, financial, political and historical linkage with the clergy which became intensified when Mohamad Reza Shah intervened in the bazaar (Abrahamian 1980).

The bazzar had a financial power and information network in Iranian society. The bazzar and clergy controlled the network that organised religious rituals and mourning sermons for many decades. The regime's policy against the bazaar made the relation between the bazaar and the clergy stronger, as businessmen funded the budget for mosques and religious rituals (Pesaran 1982: 91-126).

One of the main Bazaari groups directly active in revolutionary activities against the regime was the Motalefe Party (Islamic Party of Coalition). This party was established in 1962 at Ayatollah Khomeini's instigation. It was created by the coalition of three groups: Free Muslim Front (Key people: Haj Mahdi Arqi, Hashem Amani, Mostafa Haeree,and Habibollah Askaroladi), Sheikh Ali mosque (key people: Sadegh Eslami, Sadegh Amani, Hossein Rezaee), and Isfahan group (Asadolah Badamchian, Mahmoud Mirfendereski, and Habib Elahian). In 1962, Ayatollah Khomeini invited these three groups, which were established by leading bazaari merchants, to join each other to be more effective in revolutionary activities. This united group had the closest relationship with clergy among the bazaari groups, and had an essential role in funding revolutionary activities: indeed, they supported the June 1963 uprising.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the bazaar supported Islamists and their revolutionary activities through building and funding mosques and religious schools, participating in demonstrations, supporting activists and their families, and funding religious rituals and sermons:

- Building mosques and religious places: Many mosques and Husaini-e were built by businessmen in big cities near to the bazaar. For example, they built about 50 mosques around the bazaar in Tehran, each called by the name of the donor: Azizollahi Mosque, Jalili Mosque, Lebaschi Mosque, Haj Ali Akbar Bazaz,Reza Hamdani Mosque, and Bolorfrosh Mosque (Sasan 2017).
- A survey about persons killed during the revolution in Tehran indicates that around half them were from the lower and middle classes of the young bazaaris and their families (Ashraf 1988).
- Mobilizing and supporting activists: Bazaaris contributed to the revolutionary protests by incentivising participants and supporting street rallies, and aiding the families of people killed or arrested by the regime. The bazaari-clergy alliance

mobilised about 1700 of 2500 of the reported demonstrations (Ashraf 1988: 559). The bazaar used its financial power and social network to muster and organise protesters. The bazaar's financial help to the families of activists who were injured, killed or arrested, was instrumental in encouraging activists to participate in revolutionary protests without concern about their families. As Ashraf argues "The bazaaris also provided considerable financial support for many of the demonstrations, strikes, riots, and publication and distribution of newspapers, leaflets and cassettes. They supported welfare committees and Islamic cooperatives during the last months of the revolutionary movement. From November of 1978 to February of 1979, for example, some 45 welfare committees were formed by the bazaaris in different cities" (Ashraf 1988: 558-559).

- Funding religious rituals and mourning.

7.3.   Petrodollars: Financial sources of the Iran-Iraq war

Petrodollars were instrumental in the survival of the Shia movement in the Iran-Iraq war period, directly and indirectly. They supported the Islamic revolution directly by funding and equipping the war financially and logistically; and the war greatly expanded some of the Shia values such as Martyrdom which had a crucial role in the later survival of SPI (see chapter 6.3).

Petrodollars provided a considerable financial capacity for equipping Iran before the revolution. The second Pahlavi dynasty stockpiled various types of military equipment through the endowment of petrodollars. A dramatic increase in the price of oil during the 1970s helped the Shah to import military equipment from the USA. Mohamad Reza Shah, in his visit to Washington in 1969, suggested the exchange of oil for military equipment. Accordingly, Iran became one of the biggest customers of US equipment, with purchases totalling about $13.4 billion during 1972-1976. The huge oil revenue in 1977 helped the Shah to buy about $6 billion of equipment, which was about 36 percent of the total US export of military equipment (Pryor 1978). However, this hardware, bought and stored by the Shah, was used by the Islamic government during the Iran-Iraq war.

As well as having a massive stockpile equipped by the Shah's regime, the Islamic revolution also used the petrodollars to fund the war. According to estimates of the Budget and Planning Organization, Iran spent about $52 billion during 1980-1988, mostly funded by oil revenue. During these 8 years, the total Iranian oil income was about $121 billion. Although the defence budget in this period was about 12 percent of total oil income, the main revenue for the Islamic government came from petrodollars (Pakzad 2013). This means that without the petrodollar, Iran financially would not have been able to support the war for such a long time. Although it is not clear what might have happened if Iran had not had access to petrodollars to spend on the war, what is clear is that the Iran-Iraq war was a threat to the newly-formed Islamic government.

In the post war era, the Islamic government benefited from petrodollars to improve its military power. Iran's defence strategy and the military power of the IRGC were profoundly affected by the Iran-Iraq war, which encouraged them to concentrate on Iran's internal ability to produce military equipment. Their new strategies were based on self-sufficiency and modernising the armed forces. For this they used the petrodollars to import and develop their military equipment. After the war, the Iranian government concentrated on the military and increased the share of military spending in the national budget. The former defence minister in the Rafsanjani administration stated that "importing the military technology is our main task. We contacted with some foreign countries to purchase necessary technology to develop our defence industry" (Hoseini 2014: 35). According to a Central Bank of Iran report, military spending increased dramatically after the war. While the defence budget amounted to only 13 percent of total government expenditure (in constant price) in 1993, it increased to about 28 percent in 2006 (*Annual National Accounts* 2013). A comparison of military expenditure between Iran and other Middle East countries also shows how the Iranian government concentrated on defence after the war. According to the WDI (2012), in the 2000s, military expenditure as a proportion of Iran's total budget was about 16 percent, while it was generally around 13 percent in other Middle East and North African countries (Farzanegan 2014: 247).

The self-sufficiency policy of the armed forces was based on three parts: land force, air force and naval force. The Iranian army achieved a lot of success in manufacturing military equipment in all sections. Iran has designed and manufactured various types of

equipment domestically such as aircraft and helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles, aircraft upgrades and components, simulators, radar systems, various types of missiles, anti-tank missiles, recoilless rifles, naval missiles, armoured vehicles, mortars, artillery, rocket artillery, boats and destroyers, and submarines. Moreover, the Iranian government imported some high-tech equipment from Russia, like S-300 missiles, to modernise its defence system. As the result of the new defence strategy after the war, the Iranian government achieved a regional military power to protect the Islamic revolution from any international and domestic threat (Ehteshami 1993).

7.4. Petrodollars: Funding the Islamic revolution

In the post-war era, petrodollars were used as the principal source of income by the Islamic government to protect itself. A large tranche of this money was put into running Shia political Islam. This section shows how this resource was used to survive and expand SPI through: 1) developing mobiliser organisations like the mosque, IRGC, and Basij, (see Chapter 5) and; 2) promoting Shia values by funding religious institutions.

Whereas the Iranian annual budgets were mainly dependent on petrodollars, around 60 percent, (see Farzanegan 2014) the governmental expenditure was mostly funded by oil revenue. Hence the direct and indirect role of petrodollars on the emergence and funding of Shia political Islam should be considered as a financial source. In the pre-revolution era, opponents of the Shah's regime had no direct access to petrodollars, but petrodollars were instrumental in increasing political and economic grievances which provided the social bases for revolution. Teda Skocpol articulates how the Shah concentrated on petrodollars to improve Iran's regional power rather than on improving social conditions. She explains how oil revenue disrupted Iranian society (Skocpol 1982) which paved the way for the 1979 revolution.

The role of petrodollars in supporting Shia political Islam increased after the revolution, when the new Islamic government had direct access to petrodollars. Especially in the post-war era, petrodollars were used by the government to fund revolutionary organisations like the mosque, IRGC, and Basij which were important to the survival of the Shia movement through their mobiliser functions (see Chapter 5). As well, the Islamic government spend this money to propagate and spread Shia values and symbols as the

fuel of SPI (See Chapter 6), although the level of support varied in different administrations. For instance, the budget for religious organisations decreased during Khatami's reformist administration (Akhavi-Pour and Azodanloo 1998). But when Ahmadinejad, as a conservative president, came to power, the budget for religious instruction increased sharply. Of course, the exorbitant price of oil in this period, 2009-2013, was a contributing factor.

7.4.1. Building more mosques with petrodollars

The Islamic government paid specific attention to building more mosques after the revolution. The number of mosques increased from around 25,000 in 1979 to about 72,000 in 2011 – near to 200 percent growth (*What is the budget of Iranian mosques?* 2014). During Ahmadinejad's presidency, he focused particularly on cultural activities. In a meeting with the clergy of Fars province in 2007, Ahmadinejad claims "In the budget of previous administrations, no room was found for religious centres and religious matters. However, we have taken them into consideration in the budget" (Mazaheri 2010). According to Mohammad Hossein, Ahmadinejad's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Ahmadinejad increased the mosque budget from $1.6 million in 2005 to about $25 million in 2007 (Mazaheri 2010). Moreover, the Parliament raised the mosque budget five times in 2011. Hedayatkhah, a member of parliament in 2011, argues that mosques were the basis of the Islamic revolution and "we decided to disburse about 2000 billion Iranian Rials for building and improving mosque around the country" while this budget was about 400b in 2010. He explained "our main target for increasing this budget is improving religious value in society" (Hedayatkhan 2011: 54).

7.4.2. Petrodollars and raising the IRGC's economic power

The IRGC has benefited from petrodollars directly and indirectly. Although not all sources of IRGC income are clear, they receive a substantial annual budget. The IRGC has been involved in both accountable and non-accountable business. Accountable business refers to a clear and transparent process with accessible data, while non-accountable business activities do not have data that is clear and accessible to the state. Hassan Rohani,

President of Iran, strongly criticised the lack of transparency in the IRGC's economy. He claims in his tweet of 22 June 2017 that the IRGC is a state with a gun (Rohani 2017) . In reaction to this critique, General Jafari, IRGC's chief commander, said that the IRGC was involved in the economy at the request of the state (Jafari 2017a). Jafari's argument refers back to Rafsanjani's presidential period when his administration invited the IRGC to participate in construction projects and reconstruct the war damage.

The Iran-Iraq war provided conditions which caused the IRGC to become more involved in the reconstruction process and economic activities in the post-war era. Firstly, the war devastated many of Iran's fundamental facilities such as industrial sites, pipelines, factories and refineries, and infrastructure including harbours, roads, communication and transportation systems (Alnasrawi 1986: 878) which needed to be reconstructed; secondly, during the war, the Iranian government equipped the IRGC and the Construction Jahad, Jahad Sazandegi, a governmental organisation founded in 1979 by order of Ayatollah Khomeini, with machines to rebuild roads, bulwarks, bridges and battlefield ramparts (Droudian 2012: 100). According to the administration's meeting on 4th March 1978, the IRGC was responsible for mobilising, supporting and controlling all heavy machines during the war. Rafsanjani's state policy focused on economic reconstruction. On account of the private sector not being robust enough to reconstruct the devastation caused by the war, Rafsanjani invited the IRGC to participate. Rafsanjani argues that during the war, the IRGC was equipped with many machines such as trucks, loaders, bulldozers, and cranes. He noted that this equipment enabled the IRGC to undertake projects like the dam of Karkheh and to build roads more cheaply than other constructors. Because of their equipment, they offered a more reasonable price for the projects so the government paid less for reconstruction (Rafsanjani 2014).

The IRGC was expected to be funded by oil income after the war, while the government was in economic crisis. Rafsanjani's policy towards this issue was to involve them in business instead of paying them directly.

However, the IRGC indirectly benefited from petrodollars, which were the biggest source of government income (Ansari 2010). According to article 147, "In time of peace, the government must utilize the personnel and technical equipment of the Army in relief operations, and for educational and productive ends, and the Construction Jihad, while

fully observing the criteria of Islamic justice and ensuring that such utilization does not harm the combat-readiness of the Army" (Farzanegan 2014: 54). For this, the IRGC formed *Gharargah-e Sazandegi-ye Khatam al-Anbia* (GHORB) as the engineering corps for their new mission. The GHORB expanded its business activities in many sectors to become one of the largest contractors in Iran (Alfoneh 2007).

Today, they are active in many businesses in industry, such as the oil sector, civil engineering, cultivation, mines, dam building, telecommunications, transportation and design. For instance, the IRGC general, Abdolreza Abedzadeh claims the GHORB is currently working on 247 industrial and mining projects and has finished 1,220 projects since 1990 (Wehrey et al. 2009: 60). According to the GHORB website, the company

- has been awarded more than 750 contracts in different construction fields, including dams; water diversion systems; highways; tunnels; buildings; heavy-duty structures; three-dimensional trusses; offshore construction; water supply systems; and water, gas, and oil mains pipelines
- has completed 150 projects involving technical consulting and supervision
- Is currently implementing 21 new projects, many of which are slated for rural areas (Wehrey et al. 2009: 60).

Participation in the construction industry has provided an opportunity for the IRGC to benefit from petrodollars indirectly, because they have been earned through the government's construction budget. The IRGC's income from implementing various projects and its social network around the country encouraged it to be involved in the political sphere especially when Khatami's reformist administration decided to reduce its economic power.

During the first round (1997-2001) of Khatami's presidency, the IRGC had limited economic involvement and Khatami ordered the Ministry of Intelligence to stop all its economic activities (Golkar 2012: 630-632). But in the second round (2001-2005) the role of the IRGC and Basij in the political environment increased owing to political events which were threating the Supreme Leader's power (see Chapter 5.43). It followed that, by order of the Supreme Leader, the IRGC and Basij's political and economic power was resuscitated. As Golkar argues, both organisations created new sources of revenue in this period (Golkar 2012: 630-632). Despite President Khatami's attempt to thwart the

IRGC's economic activities, he was not really successful, especially in his second presidency round.

The victory of Ahmadinejad, a conservative candidate, in the 2005 election provided a new scenario for the IRGC to be awarded massive amounts of petrodollars for its political and economic activities. The IRGC and Basij deployed all their facilities to support Ahmadinejad during his presidential campaign. When he won the election, they benefited from governmental support, as General Mohammad Hejazi, former Basij commander, said ''Ahmadinejad is a Basiji, and in his government, Basijis play an important role'' (Cordesman and Gold 2014: 146). Moreover, they profited from the dramatic increase in the price of oil from around $70 per barrel in 2005 to around $140 per barrel in 2008, which encouraged the IRGC to try to access petrodollars directly through investing in the oil sector. The IRGC became involved in the oil industry during President Ahmadinejad's term (see Forozan and Shahi 2017).

The National Oil Company (NOC) signed many contracts with GHORB, the business branch of the IRGC, during Ahmadinejad's administration. Some of these projects are:

- Developing the fifteenth and sixteenth phases of South Pars Field which is one of the largest and most valuable gas developments in Iran. This contract was signed on June 25, 2005 without a bid, while according to regulations a bid was necessary. When some members of parliament criticised this contract, Golam Hussain Elham, government spokesman, defended it (Alfoneh 2007: 4). According to Javadi (2010), Head of NOC, the government spent about $5.5 billion for completion of this IRGC contract.

- The building of a 900 km gas pipeline from Assalouyeh to Sistan and Baluchestan with a value of $1.3 billion (Mehrnews 2010). This contract intensified the clash between the private sector and the IRGC in oil and gas projects. Ezatolah Yusofian, aformer member of parliament, criticised Ahmadinejad's administration for giving a large project to the IRGC without a formal bid. He argued that this kind of contract would destroy the private sector (Omidvar 2006). But General Safavi, former IRGC commander, and former Minister of Oil rejected this critique. He argues that the IRGC will only do a project when a private company is not interested (Omidvar 2006).

Petrodollars were the main source of funding for these projects, although Abedzadeh, GHORB deputy director, argues that the IRGC had funded the projects itself and said "the government does not do us any favours, We are paid to do our work" (Wehrey et al. 2009: 64). Petrodollars, which supplied around 60 percent of the annual government budget in 2005 (Heuty 2012), were the main source of funding the GHORB. For example, in the 2011 annual budget, nearly 60 percent of the total IRGC belonged to GHORB; while the total budget for IRGC was around $8.1 billion, about $5 billion was given to GHORB. The projects provided a massive profit for the IRGC to expand its economic and political power, although the IRGC's profit from these projects is not accountable. For instance, Abedzadeh admitted that the IRGC has used its profit to fund defence initiatives (Wehrey et al. 2009: 64).

As well as Ahmadinejad's reward to the IRGC, it also benefited from a change in law and article 44 regarding privatisation. In 2007, Ayatollah Khamenei ordered acceleration in privatisation of the state's assets to improve private sector cooperation. IRGC, as the main actor in the Iranian economy, grabbed this opportunity to expand its economic power through buying many governmental factories and companies at an underestimated price. Sadra and the Telecommunication Company were two huge firms which were handed to IRGC. On 25 April 2009, 51.8 percent of Sadra shares in the shipping and oil industries were sold to a consortium under GHORB control. Five months later, IRGC acquired 50 percent of the shares in the Telecommunication Company, which is largest company in this sector in Iran. These two transactions comprise the largest stock market transaction in Iran's history (Sayami 2010).

The IRGC was granted petrodollars directly, through an annual budget paid by the government. The main part of this budget comes from oil revenue because about 50 percent of Iran's annual budget is based on petrodollars. According to the 2012 annual budget, 46 percent of the total income is from oil revenue and the IRGC's budget is about $5 billion. Recently, in the 2018 annual budget, the IRGC budget increased about 70 percent compared with the 2017 annual budget (*The budget of 56 thousand billion Tomans for military and law enforcement institutions* 2017).

However, as Alfoneh (2007) and Forozan & Shahi (2017) argue the IRGC captured all parts of the Iranian economy. It started as a constructor company in the post-war era, but

became involved in all sectors such as the oil industry, telecommunications, and financial services. These days, it is not easy to find a sector in the economy without the presence of the IRGC. Although there are many political reasons which caused the fast economic growth of the IRGC, petrodollars played a crucial role because the oil revenue helps the government to fund the many projects undertaken by the IRGC. It should not be forgotten that the huge factory and company, which were constructed by the government with oil money, were delivered to the IRGC based on article 44 with an unreal price. Privatisation of the Telecommunication Company is an example indicating how the IRGC acquired this big company at an undervalued price. According to a parliamentary report, The IRGC bought 50 percent of shares for about $8 billion, while its real value was much more. The report shows that the IRGC used its political and security power to force the Pishgaman Company, which was its rival in this sale, to resign.

The IRGC's profit from its business activity has been used for its organisational objective, which is guarding the Islamic revolution and promoting the SPI. The IRGC's account could only be monitored by the intelligence service of IRGC (Alfoneh 2007). Hence the state or parliament is not able to monitor the the IRGC's accounts. In 2014, when Ahmad Tavakoli, former member of parliament, criticised the unaccountability of the IRGC, the head of the IRGC intelligence service mentioned that the IRGC accounts could be monitored by a delegation of the Supreme Leader to the IRGC. Although it is not obvious how and where the IRGC's profit has been invested, a part of it has been used for political and cultural purposes in guarding the Islamic revolution and spreading SPI. Mohammad Amin claims that the IRGC's profit from its business is "one of the largest funding sources for internal suppression, the production of nuclear weapons and the IRGC Qods Force activities in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Lebanon. It is estimated that the broad participation of the IRGC in civil war in Syria in the past three years has cost at least $ 50 billion for the Iranian economy" (Amin 2014).

As well as political and military objectives, The IRGC is funding cultural activities to promote SPI values in Iranian society. The IRGC established an organisation called Owj to produce and finance movies. Recently Owj spent about $4 million to fund a controversial movie, *Damascus Time*, about the positive role of Iran in Syria against Islamic state. The Owj director mentioned that "I am proud to get the money for our

productions from the IRGC" (Alipour 2018). The commander of IRGC, General Jafari, in his statement on 13 Feb 2018, praised the director of *Damascus Time* and said "The IRGC has a responsibility to support any pure attempts in this path and aid the link between those fighting for jihad and martyrdom and activists in the field of arts and culture" (Alipour 2018).

7.4.3. Petrodollars and funding Basij activities

Petrodollars have been pivotal in funding the Basij force which is one of the key organisations serving SPI through its mobiliser function to suppress internal threats to the Islamic revolution and promoting SPI values (see Chapter 5.4). The Basij's economic activities, like those of the IRGC, can be traced back to the end of the war, but the economic prosperity of the Basij started from 1992 when the Basij Cooperation Foundation (BCF) was established by order of the Supreme leader with the purpose of receiving more financial support from the government. In the early years of the BCF, its main purpose was supporting war veterans and basijis with government financial help. But it became more involved in economic activities when Ayatollah Khamenei ordered that the BCF should have priority to buy governmental companies in the privatisation process. It followed that Parliament enacted a law which gave priority to the Basij to buy state-owned companies. As a result, the Tehran Basij bought the stock of the car manufacturing enterprise, Iran Khudro (Golkar 2012).

The effective role of the Basij in suppressing the student uprising in 1999 increased its operational abilities in political crises. These capabilities earned more economic support for the Basij. For example, during 2001-2005 Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who was the mayor of Tehran, spent about $300 million of Tehran's municipal budget on Basij activities (Golkar 2012). The organisational and mobiliser function of the Basij, because of its economic power, attracted the attention of conservatives who used Basij social bases for their political goals. Ahmadinejad broadly benefited from the Basij during his presidential campaign in 2005. When he won the election, he decided to support the Basij financially. Golamhossein Elham, Ahmadinejad's government spokesperson, stated that "the Basijis must capture factories and take over the country's true economic power, not letting it fall

into the hands of certain monopolistic and capitalistic groups in the era of privatization" (Golkar 2012: 633). The result of this approach during Ahmadinejad's first presidency period was a dramatic growth in the economic activities of the Basij as they owned about 1400 firms and companies (Golkar 2012: 633).

As well as profit from business activities, the Basij has benefited from an annual budget and petrodollars. According to article 196 of the fifth development plan of Iran, the state should designate enough funding for the Basij to recruit about 30 million Basijis. The members of the eighth parliament, who were mostly from the conservative party, also enacted a new law in 2011 to support the cultural activities of the Basij. According to this law, in addition to the annual Basij budget, the Basij would benefit from 0.5 percent of the extra oil money (Bastani 2011).

However, the Basij benefited from petrodollars in three ways: 1) receiving an annual budget, 2) buying state-owned companies at an undervalued price and doing some construction projects, 3) being rewarded directly with oil money.

The Basij has used the petrodollars to fund various programmes for promoting revolutionary values in society. General Naghdi, former Basij commander, in his report of 2014 recounted some of the main programmes which different arms of the Basij had organised during 2009-2014 (Naghdi 2014):

- Providing a massive network for cultural training around the country. The Basij organisation formed about 250,000 Righteousness Circles and about 1300 circles for trainers. The Basij organised educational meetings for their trainers and usually paid for accommodation, food, transportation and key speakers (see Chapter 5.4.3).

- Organising various commemorations for the war martyrs. As Chapter 6 explained, the Iran-Iraq war provided more symbols, such as martyrs, which were used by organisations like the Basij to promote SPI values. General Naghdi reported that the Basij organised about 53,155 commemorations during 5 years. The costs of these commemorations have been paid by the Basij and IRGC. Although the cost of these events has not been reported clearly, Ahmad Khatami, member of the Assembly of Experts, stated unexpectedly that one of the commemorations of martyrs in Kerman had cost about $3 million (Khatami 2017)

- Arranging the cultural carnival for sacred defences to send people to the war districts. In this programme the Basij provides a free trip for its members to visit the war fields
- Publishing books about the sacred defence
- Producing movies
- Holding various programmes during the sacred defence week
- Supporting about 10,229 trips for students

However, all these programmes need budgets granted by the Basij. The Basij, therefore, uses part of its business profit or its annual budget to fund them for its own political and ideological goals.

7.4.4. Supporting cultural and religious institutions

Petrodollars became the main financial source for religious institutions after the 1979 revolution, although in the pre-revolutionary era the chief funding for religious institutions like Qom seminary were from religious sources: Khums and Zakat (see chapter 7.2). Using the state's budget for Qom seminary has sparked a controversial debate among the clergy. Some Grand Ayatollahs believe that the seminary should be independent of the state. For example, Ayatollah Sanehi harshly criticised the fiscal budget for the seminary and advised members of parliament to reject the 2018 budget (Sanehi 2017). But some clergy argue that the current budget is not enough for the seminary. Hojatolislam Rabani, chief of the service department of the seminary, claims that its budget is even less than Tehran University (Rabani 2017). Hojatolislam Amini, secretary of the Supreme Seminaries Council (SSC), in an interview explains that the SSC refused the first annual budget suggestion in 2001, but President Ahmadinejad encouraged the SSC to accept it in 2005. He argues that seminaries are receiving a budget from the state but are independent (Amini 2009). The SSC's budget has increased dramatically from about $34 million in 2006 to about $188 million in 2018, which represents around 450 percent growth (*What is the seminary's share of the 1997 budget bill?* 2017).

Many cultural and religious institutions have emerged after the revolution with support from petrodollars. The huge oil revenue provided financial ability for the Islamic

government to support some of the religious institutions for promoting s Shia values. For example, in the 2010 budget, the government paid about $623m to about 24 religious institutions (see table below). The main objective of these institutions is propagating and promoting Shia values and symbols in society, and mobilising the people against any threat to SPI. For instance, the Islamic Propaganda Organization brought pro-government forces onto the streets of Tehran on 30 December 2009, three days after the opposition's protest on the feast of Ashura.

Table 1: Endowments Receiving Government Funds in 2010

Organization	*Allocated Funding*	*Function*
Islamic Culture and Relations Organization	$80,000,000	Conducts public diplomacy and supervises cultural attachés
Endowment and Charity Organization	$48,780,000	Supervises endowment and charity activities
Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization	$1,759,000	Coordinates all pilgrimages outside of Iran
Office of the Supreme Leader in Universities	$1,500,000	Ensures that university curriculum and teaching conforms to the official ideology
Imam Khomeini Institute for Education and Research	$8,300,000	Trains educators and encourages Islamic principles in the humanities
Islamic Propaganda Organization	$65,940,000	Publishes books, journals and software; dispatches clerics to preach domestically and abroad
Al-Mustafa International University	$118,426,800	Educates foreign clerics
Imam Reza Shrine	$12,000,000	Funds used for encouraging visitors to the shrine
Alzahra University	$1,620,500	Educates women

Aid to Mosques and Religious Activities	$33,102,600	Encourages mosque attendance
Aid to Non-governmental Religious Institutes	$35,000,000	
Centre for Mosque Affairs	$15,000,000	Funds salaries of imams and other mosque expenses
Aid to Cultural and Religious Centres	$45,000,000	
Committee for Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong	$4,000,000	Enforces Islamic rules in the public sphere
Asra Institute	$6,000,000	Publishes the religious thoughts of Ayatollah Javadi Amoli
Imam Sadiq Institute	$3,000,000	Aims to enrich theological discourse in the Muslim community
Council for Representatives of Clerics in Seminaries	$2,000,000	
National Centre for Responding to Religious Questions (domestic)	$2,000,000	Answers inquiries about Islamic ideology
National Centre for Responding to Religious Questions (abroad)	$2,000,000	Answers inquiries about Islamic ideology
Islamic Propaganda Office, Qom Seminary	$52,242,000	Protects the legitimacy of the supreme leader
Supreme Council of the Seminaries	$80,840,000	Funds and manages the clerical establishment
Centre for Services to the Seminaries	$15,824,860	Provides housing and health insurance for the clergy
University of Islamic Sects	$3,522,800	Recruits Sunni students to study in Iran

Planning Council for Khorasan Seminaries	$6,500,000	Funds the clergy in Khorasan, Iran

Source: Adapted from the government's most recent budget bill, as approved by the parliament in May 2011 (Khalaji 2011)

Heyats as a religious institution have also been funded by the mayors of Tehran during the terms of Ahmadinejad and Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf, two conservative mayors. The Tehran municipality receives an annual budget from the government as well as its other income sources. In 2014 the public budget for Tehran municipality was about $100 million. The municipality supports Heyats financially under the name of cultural and art performance. During the last three years of Qalibaf, the municipality paid about $40 million to Heyats to perform religious rituals (Ali 2018).

7.5. Conclusion

The main objective of this chapter was to show the direct effect of petrodollars on supporting SPI and enabling it to be settled and to continue in Iran. As mentioned in the the introduction, the impact of petrodollars on the Shia movement could be understood in two ways: firstly, the indirect influence which increased social and economic grievances as the origin of the movement. Chapter 4 discusses the indirect impact of petrodollars on the emergence of the Shia movement; Secondly, the direct impact which has been discussed here. Resource mobilisation theory highlights the importance of money as a resource for mobilisation. This chapter indicates how petrodollars are the main financial resource to assist the Islamic government in keeping the Shia movement live. Despite the vital role of petrodollars in the emergence of SPI before the Islamic revolution, this money has supported the establishment and strengthening of the Islamic government in different post-revolution periods:

- During the Iran-Iraq war, petrodollars financed the conflict and supported the newly established government against a serious international threat. Although many other international and national factors were involved in the survival of the Islamic

government against Saddam Hussein, the role of petrodollars as the main financial source for the war could be considered.

- In the post-war period, petrodollars have been used by the IRGC and Basij, as the key mobiliser organisations, to develop their political and economic power. Petrodollars have also been deployed by religious institutions to promote and propagate Shia values. Hence petrodollars have been utilised as source for supporting and expanding revolutionary beliefs and activities as fuel for SPI. Without access to the petrodollars, as chapter 6 explained, promoting Shia values would not be easy.

Additionally, petrodollars have played a crucial role in expanding and exporting SPI in the Middle East especially in Lebanon (See Deeb 1988), Syria, Iraq (See Wastnidge 2017)and Yemen. The Islamic government used petrodollars for developing its reginal power through providing military support for Shia groups as well as financial and infrastructural support. Whereas this project is mostly focused on the internal factors which supported the survival of SPI, the international factors have not been detailed because of the limitation of this study. But the importance of regional power of the Islamic government in the survival of SPI should not be ignored, especially the influence of Iran in the Shia groups in the Middle East.

Chapter 8. The Green Movement: a case study

8.1.   Introduction

The previous chapters applied social movement theories to show that the Shia movement in Iran has survived during the last four decades because the Islamists have succeeded in producing and keeping all the necessary components for survival of a movement like origin, mobiliser and fuel. It has discussed that the Islamic government used Shia values to mobilise the people against any internal and international threats against SPI.

This chapter is going to investigate the Green movement as a serious internal threat towards the Islamic state to show how the above-mentioned mechanism is working. Although the failure of the Green movement was brought about by various internal and external factors, the success of the government and the IRGC in suppressing this movement shows how the Islamic government can deploy Shia values and other resources to mobilise people to quash rivals or threats. Hence, this chapter is not going to analyse the rise and fall of the Green movement, it is only going to apply the mechanism of the survival of Shia political Islam, as discussed in previous chapters. The nature of the Green movement will be considered here, but complex questions over its social bases and its correlation with political Islam will not be deliberated. From some points of view, it could be thought that the Green movement is a face of political Islam itself, because its leaders like Mahdi Karabo and Mir-Hossein Mosavi were both followers of Ayatollah Khomeini, and have held key positions in the Islamic state since the revolution. However, from the Islamist point of view, the behaviour of protesters could be understood as an anti-Shiism movement.

The rise and fall of the Green movement is a milestone in the history of Islamic republic. During the 2009 uprising, many analysts argued that the Islamic regime would collapse because of the Green movement (Bayat 2011). For example, after the 2009 Ashura events, Hossein Bastani conjectured that this event had driven the regime closer to collapse. He said "Everybody is now convinced that the Islamic regime cannot continue like this. I think we will see a very important change in the political system of Iran. Nobody can say when, whether it will be in two weeks, two months or one year. But everyone knows this regime is far weaker than to be able to survive. Because of the behaviour of

Khamenei and Ahmadinejad, most Iranians are now in favour of some sort of regime change" (Bastani 2009). Bayat also puts forward that the Green movement was leading the Islamic revolution into a post-Islamism era (Bayat 2011). But, in reality, the government controlled and suppressed the Green movement with a counter-movement on 30 December 2009, called the 9-day movement, giving the IRGC permission to arrest and suppress the activists.

8.2.   The Emergence of the Green Movement

The Green movement emerged as the result of the 2009 presidential election in Iran. Although its roots might be varied, the main reason for its ascension was because a group of people, especially reformists, believed that the conservatives had cheated in the election.

The election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as President in 2005 saw the start of a new conservative period of power in Iran. The conservative groups, most notably in the IRGC and Basij, became more involved in politics and economics during the Ahmadinejad period because they strongly supported him during the presidential campaign (Forozan and Shahi 2017). The conservatives returned to power when they tried to capture both political and economic supremacy by limiting and suppressing their opponents, which increased political discontent among the reformist and liberal groups. Hence, the reformist groups retaliated by becoming more active in the 2009 presidential election. When Mohammad Khatami, reformist leader, pulled out of the race because of conservative pressure and a disagreement with the Supreme Leader (see Bahari 2009), he supported Mr Mosavi during the presidential campaign and presented him with a green sash. From that time the colour green became the symbol of the reformist movement. While conservatives and the IRGC did not believe that Mosavi could be a serious rival for Ahmadinejad in the election, the support of reformist and liberal groups, such as that led by Ayatollah Rafsanjani, mobilised a vast network of supporters around the country. The mass support for the Mosavi campaign by reformers in big cities, student organisations, and the women's movement increased the chance of Mosavi becoming the next president. A debate between Ahmadinejad and Mosavi on national TV intensified the sensitivity of the election within society. During this debate Ahmadinejad harshly criticised

Mosavi's credentials, his wife and his supporters, like Rafsanjani and Nategh Noori. All of these events inflamed society from both sides to be more responsive to the result of the election.

Before the formal announcement by the Interior Ministry at 20:11 on the night of the election, Mosavi in a media interview claimed that he had won the election. He said that he was victorious and the majority of people voted for him, according to reports from different cities and polling stations (Mosavi 2009). But a few hours later, the Interior Ministry announced the formal result of election: a decisive victory to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad by 62 percent of the votes. Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme leader, then sent a congratulatory message to Ahmadinejad which indicated a confirmation of the election result. Despite the formal announcement, the wide margin of victory, the method of counting the votes, and many other reasons, were used by reformist groups to cast doubt over the result (see Eric 2009).

The day after the election, when the result had been announced by the Interior Minister, Ahmadinejad issued a ban on any unauthorised public gathering to show that the regime would not tolerate any demonstration. But thousands of people with green symbols came onto the streets in Tehran to oppose the result. The regime then tried to suppress demonstrations by unleashing the security forces including Basij units, the IRGC, and paramilitary forces (Lebas Shakhsi), and plain-clothed officers. Thousands of protesters were beaten and hundreds arrested. Despite the regime's violent reaction, the protests continued every day in Tehran and other major cities like Tabriz, Mashhad, Isfahan, and Shiraz. On 14th June one of the largest demonstrations since the 1979 revolution took place in Tehran. Tens of thousands of people poured into Azadi Street. Mosavi and Khatami, the leader of the movement, participated in this event and spoke with the protesters. Meanwhile, a group of protesters gathered near a Basij Unit, Meghdad base, where the Basiji opened fire on them and killed about seven people. The demonstration continued into the next days, and was known as the silent demonstration on the 15th, 16th, and 17th of June.

Khamenei delivered a Friday prayer on the 18th of June in support of the result and severely censured the demonstration. He said the candidates and their followers should not demonstrate in the street; if they continued then they must be responsible for the

aftermath of the protests (Khamenei 2009a). As the protesters had expected that Khamenei would at least be in sympathy with them, the Supreme Leader's ultimatum had a negative effect and intensified their anger. Although the main slogan during the first days of demonstration was "where is my vote", after Khamenei's speech the protesters challenged the system and chanted "Death to the dictator".

The next bloody demonstration took place on 19th June, the day following Khamenei's address. The IRGC and Basij forces tried to stop the protesters with tear gas, killing tens of demonstrators, according to some reports. The next day, the government arrested many journalists and reformist activists such as Faezeh Rafsanjani. In the following month, and up until 30 December 2009, many demonstrations took place, some of the main ones being (Milani 2010):

-       18 September, Jerusalem Day: during the rise of the Green movement protesters participated in traditional religious and governmental rallies to show their dissatisfaction with the regime. On Quds day, some pro-Green movement protesters participated in this rally and chanted the slogan against Russia instead of Israel.

-       4 November, anniversary of the occupation of the US embassy in Tehran. Thousands of pro-Mosavi protesters came to the street around the old American compound to protest against the Islamic regime instead of the United States. They chanted "Death to No One" instead of "Death to America" which was the usual slogan on this day by pro-government demonstrators.

-       7 December, national students' day which commemorates the death of several students during Nixon's visit to Tehran in 1953. The largest demonstration by students since September 2009 took place across the country. The government arrested many.

-       19 December: the death of Hussein-Ali Montazeri, who was one of the leaders of the Islamic revolution in 1979. He was appointed by Ayatollah Khomeini as his successor, although he was ousted from this position and from 1989 became a clerical face of the opposition. However, Montazari was a spiritual father of the Green movement, so the movement's followers arranged a demonstration at his funeral in Qom.

-       27 December: Ashura is an important day for the Green movement. On this day hundreds of thousands thronged the streets to support the Green movement. As the government had banned protests, opponents used Ashura as an opportunity to

demonstrate because they wondered whether Ashura could be a safe day for demonstration. But government forces opened fire and killed several participants.

8.3. The Green Movement's threat

The Green movement was a serious internal threat to the Islamic government and Shia political Islam. The Islamic revolution has been faced with many internal and external threats, such as the Iran-Iraq war and international sanctions, since it was established in 1979. Among these threats the Green movement shook the regime strongly, causing the government to resort to violence and apply all its force to defeat this threat. Although in the early days it was looked on as a social uprising to protest against the election result, later some of the key principles of the regime like Velayat-e Faqih were questioned. Both sides, opponents and proponents of the Green movement, acknowledged the threat of this movement to the Islamic revolution.

The reactions and statements of high-ranking conservatives indicate the importance of this threat. They used the word "Fetneh" (calamity) in their speeches and statements. Anti-Green movement groups have applied this word, Fetneh, to imbue the notion that the Green movement and its followers are anti-Islamism. Ayatollah Khamenei, Supreme Leader, states that Fetneh (Green movement) was a dangerous threat for the Islamic revolution. He articulates that the foreign enemies wanted to change the regime through this event; they wanted to occupy Iran (Khamenei 2011). General Jafari, chief commander of IRGC, argues that the threat of the Green movement for the Islamic revolution was more serious than the Iran-Iraq war, because the war did not threaten the principles of the Islamic revolution but the Fetneh endangered the Islamic movement (Jafari 2013). Major General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, the Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, cited "the intrigue of 2009 was, in fact, a full-fledged invasion against the entire Establishment of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic, led by the support of the imperialism, Zionism, and the betrayal and folly of intrigue plotters" (Bagheri 2017). Conversely, the Green movement has been identified as a democratic movement against Islamists. Mohsen Kadiver contends that the reaction of the regime in suppressing the movement was a final blot on the legitimacy of the Islamic revolution. He argues that the Green movement showed the failure of Shia political Islam as interpreted by Ayatollah

Khamenei (Kadivar 2014). Moreover, other of reformists like Sourosh also argue that the Green movement caused a serious crisis for the Islamic government (Sourosh 2010).

8.4.   Anti-Green Movement rally

The 9-Day movement, that was a counter-movement against the Green movement, on 30 December 2009 changed the political environment by supporting the Islamic government. While opponents and protesters believed that they could push the Islamic government to accept their demands to open the political arena for secular groups, the 9-Day movement supported the government to supress them. Since the 2009 election and the start of the uprising, the government has been strongly criticised by opposing groups that claim the government is deploying its forces, like the Basij and IRGC, to suppress the opposition without any social support from society. But after nearly six months, the government conceded its social power by organising a demonstration on 30 December 2009. The argument of some major figures in government shows what they achieved from this demonstration. For example, Major General Hassan Firouzabadi issued a statement to armed forces staff on 30 December 2009. He heralded 9-Day as "The day will be eternal as a golden page in the history of the Islamic Revolution; it is a day when the devotees of the Revolution and the Leader of the Islamic Republic consolidated their spiritual relationship with the leadership of the Revolution; it is a turning point, and a day of honor and prestige for any Muslim man and woman; it is a symbol of independence, national pride, and the covenant of a people whom resisted to their lives to defend the principles of Islam and ideals of the Islamic Revolution and Imam Khomeini (RA), the day revealed that all conspirators infiltrated into the mass of the public all these years, only superficially showcasing their commitment to the Revolution and the rule of the Leader." (Firozabadi 2014).

The Green movement's demonstration in the 2009 Ashura, on 27 December, provided a new reason for the 9-Day uprising. Following the Green movement's series of demonstrations, in Ashura many opponents came to the street in cities around the country. They wanted to use this religious ceremony as the Shiite holy day "symbolically about justice" against the government. Protesters in Tehran chanted "This is a month of blood; the dictator will fall", "Death to the dictator", and "Death to Khamenei" which

targeted the main principle of the Islamic government. They attacked police, hurled rocks, set police motorbikes alight, cracked many bank and shop windows, set a mosque on fire. According to official reports hundreds were injured and about 10 people were killed during Ashura Day (Worth and Fathi 2009). The state media and national TV broadcast some of the protesters' behaviour such as setting a police station on fire, clapping and dancing by a small group of protesters, and setting police motorbikes alight. The main objective of this propaganda was to show that the Green movement's followers did not respect Ashura and Imam Husain. National TV showed many interviews with ordinary people, who were angry and disappointed about the protesters' behaviour in Ashura, to intensify the religious emotion of people.

On the evening of Ashura, when a group of religious singers heard about the events in the street they motivated their audience to go to street to stop the protesters. Three days after the Ashura events, the Islamic government mobilised thousands of people against the Green movement on 30 December 2009, which is called the 9-Day movement. The people carried Ashura symbols, condemned the Green movement's leaders, and chanted many slogans in support of the Supreme Leaders. According to the state media, millions of people participated in this rally in Tehran. Similar rallies were also organised in other major cities around the country. Mashreghnews, the IRGC news agency, reported that about 40 million participated in these demonstrations in different cities.

Although this demonstration could not be considered a mass social support for the Islamic government, it shows the government's power in mobilising its followers and using this rally to crush the Green movement. Ayatollah Khamenei claims that the 9-Day epic demonstrated the mobilising power of the Islamic revolution. He said "which countries around the world have this power to mobilize tens of million people only during 2 days. If these people participate by the order of the government so this government is really strong" (Khamenei 2009b). While the leaders of the Islamic revolution introduced the 9-Day movement as a show of governmental power, some scholars do not believe it. For example, Dabashi argues this rally was the same as any other normal rally which was organised by the government at various events. He claims that this rally did not mean that the Islamic government had much public support (Dabashi 2017: 161-163). However, it did provide a reasonable excuse for the Islamic government to suppress the Green

movement more forcibly than before. Iran's Parliamentary Speaker, Ali Larijani, claims that the 30 December epic "ended the sedition movement in 2009" (Larijani 2017). While the government was successful in showing its public support, the IRGC and Basij used the 9-Day uprising politically to arrest many reformist activists and journalists such as Ibrahim Yazdi, the Secretary-General of the Freedom Movement of Iran, and Alireza Beheshti, the managing editor of Mousavi's official site.

 Nonetheless, the 9-Day movement provided social support for Islamism to provisionally eliminate a serious threat to the Islamic revolution. This uprising is a tangible example to show how Shia values and symbols have been deployed by mobiliser organisations such as the IRGC and Basij to protect the Shia movement. The following paragraphs will demonstrate the impact of the factors, which were discussed in the previous chapters, in initiating the 9-Day movement to guard SPI.

8.4.1. Origin of the 9-Day movement

As discussed in Chapter 4 regarding the importance of origins in the Shia movement, the Islamic government intensified anti-Western sentiments and religious discontent to organise the 9-Day movement. Since the rise of the demonstration against the 2009 election results, Islamists and their media promulgated that the Green movement was supported by enemies of the Islamic revolution. In his Friday prayer sermon on 19 June 2009 Khamenei, Supreme Leader, attacked the foreign powers' role in the uprising. He argues that the enemies of Iran and Islam were planning to strike the Islamic revolution because they were angry at the high participation of people in the election. He describes Britain as "the most treacherous of Iran's enemies" (Khamenei 2009a). Khamenei fervently emphasised the role of foreign powers in the uprising. He compared the Green movement with the colour movement in Georgia, accusing western countries of supporting the uprisings after the 2009 presidential election and said Iran is not Georgia. The events in the demonstration in Ashura 2009 allowed the government to introduce the Green movement as an anti-Shia movement. National TV widely broadcast protesters' behaviour such as setting Ashura symbols like tents and banners alight. Islamists accused all Green movement followers and leaders of being anti-Islam, with reference to these actions. The Farsnews, a conservative news agency, argues that the 9-Day epic

was a reaction to the protesters who desecrated the Ashura and Imam Husain. This IRGC news agency claims that Mosavi, Leader of the Green movement, was constrained because of his support for the protesters and called them the god-seeker people (*What happened on Ashura 88?* 2013). Mohamadreza Bahonar, former member of parliament, argues that people came to the streets on 30 December because they were angered by the desecration of Ashura, as the holiest belief of Iranian people (Bahonar 2010).

8.4.2. Mobiliser organisations

The role of the mosques, the IRGC and Basij as mobilisers in the survival of SPI in Iran is discussed in Chapter 5. Their part in suppressing the Green movement through organising a counter-movement indicates how they supported SPI. The 9-Day movement, like other movements, needs mobilisers to translate individual discontent into movement by organising the collective behaviours (see Chapter 3.3.2).

The support of mosques in the 9-Day movement was essential. Asgaroladi, Secretary-General of Islamic Coalition Party, compared the role of mosques in supressing the Green movement with their role in the success of the Islamic revolution in 1979. He argues that mosques and Imams were instrumental in confronting the Green movement (Asgaroladi 2010). Mosques had two significant functions in the 9-Day movement; firstly, Imams highlighted the danger of the Green movement for Islam. Secondly, mosques were the bases for Heyats which encouraged people to participate and intensify their religious feelings regarding the events in Ashura 2009. Hossein Sazor, one of the famous religious singers in Tehran, explained how Heyats organised the demonstration on 30 December, saying that some mosques' Heyats in Tehran agreed to bring the mourning groups to the street that day (Ghorbi 2016).

The Basij and IRGC's role in organising the 9-Day movement was vital. The Basij, as a well-experienced institution in organising demonstrations at various ceremonies, like the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic revolution or Jerusalem day, was the main organiser of the demonstration. The principal tasks of the Basij in the pro-government demonstrations were: 1) organising the routes of demonstrations; 2) providing and distributing placards and pictures among the protesters; 3) organising many groups of Basiji to participate in demonstrations; 4) providing food and drink for the protesters; 5)

preparing an audio system for chanting slogans; 6) organising a lecture at the end of the demonstration. For example, in the 9-Day event, the Basij invited Alamolhoda, a conservative clergy, for the oration.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei's statements indicate the role of the Basij in the 9-Day rally. In a Basij gathering in Qom, he highlighted the importance of the Basij in supressing internal threats against the Islamic revolution such as the 2009 uprising. He stated that organising a massive movement on 30 December 2009 shows that the Basij understood the situation while other groups made a mistake (Khamenei 2010).

8.4.3. Fuel for the 9-Day movement

As with other movements, the 9-Day movement needed fuel. The mobiliser organisations utilised religious rituals and Shia values to run a counter-movement against the Green movement.   Religious rituals such as Ashura provided fuel for the vehicle of Shia political Islam. Ashura and Muharam ceremonies are at the top of the list used by the government at different times for mobilising the Shia people for political goals (see Chapter 6.3). The events in the 2009 Ashura were central to mobilizing people against the Green movement on 30 December 2009. Ayatollah Khamenei refers to the role of Ashura culture in the 9-Day epic. He argues that Ashura helped people to recognise the threats as it had during the 1979 revolution (Khamenei 2009b).

 When on 27 December pro-Green movement protesters set fire to some Ashura symbols and clapped and showed happiness in the street (clapping in a time of mourning is not acceptable in Shia culture), the government highlighted this behaviour as a desecration of Ashura. The deep root of Ashura culture in Iranian society motivated religious movements to take action against these desecrations. Moahamdreza Bahonar, former member of parliament, claims that Iranian people are profoundly bruised by the desecration of Ashura because this behaviour insulted people's beliefs (Bahonar 2010). From the night of the Ashura events in 2009, the state TV started repeatedly to show the disrespectful behaviour and commentators condemned the Green movement's protesters for these actions.

The starting point of the pro-government demonstration goes back to the reaction of Heyats and religious singers to the opposition's behaviour on the day of Ashura. Heyat is a kind of Shia ritual performed by a group of people who gather in places like the mosque and Takiye to mourn during Muharram and Safar (See Chapter 6.5). While Heyats were holding mourning ceremonies for Imam Husain in the cities, the opposition was clapping and showing happiness in the street. The memories of some religious singers show how they played a crucial role at the start of the demonstration. For example, Mostafa Marvani, a religious singer in Ahwaz (capital of Khozestan province), claims that the desecration of Ashura heated the blood of religious youths in Heyats. He states that when members of the Heyat heard about the 27 December events in Tehran, they decided to organise a demonstration in Ahwaz. Marvani says "they organized it and told me that there would be a performance at 3 pm in front of the judicature in Ahwaz, when I arrived I saw a massive population who were angry because of desecration of their beliefs" (Marvani 2017).

The 9-Day movement was of considerable benefit to Ashura and the Heyats. The religious sensibility of Shia people was intensified when they watched the desecration of Ashura on TV. The Heyats and religious singers were deeply affected by these events. Hossein Sazor explains the role of Heyats and singers in the 9-Day movement. He states "9-Day was the biggest event in which Heyats were involved since the Islamic revolution". He describes how singers organised the demonstration, and continues "I remember that since 27 December many of the key singers in Tehran like Hadadian, Karimi, Taheri and Arazi were negotiating and coordinating to bring the groups of mourning to the street on 30 December" (Ghorbi 2016).

8.5.   Conclusion

How has the Islamic government supressed internal threats? The social movement theories have provided a mechanism for this project to examine how the Shia movement is continuing. In this mechanism the four important factors discussed in previous chapters are vital for a movement to remain live. This chapter applies this mechanism and illustrates how the Islamic government is able to preserve SPI by supressing threats like

the Green movement. The Green movement was a threat to the Islamic government as a result of SPI.

Hence the Islamic government and its organisations deployed Shia values and symbols to organise a counter-movement, the 9-Day movement, to supress the Green movement. Although many other factors were involved in suppressing the Green movement, the 9-Day movement was one of the key events because the conservatives refer to it as their social legitimacy.

This chapter shows how the 9-Day movement was launched by a mobiliser such as the Basij and benefited from origin and Shia values as fuel. The Islamic government emphasised anti-Western sentiments and religious discontents to motivate people for mobilisation through mosques, the IRGC, and Basij. These mobilisers also used religious rituals like Ashura ceremonies and Heyats to organise the movement.

Finally, suppression of the Green movement by the IRGC and Basij through mobilising the Shia Heyats is practical evidence to support this project's argument. Although many others factors could be considered for the success of the IRGC in suppressing the demonstrations, such as violent action, it is obvious that the Basij and the IRGC have employed Shia values to mobilise their members to kill and arrest their opponents in the street. During the 2009 uprising, I was doing my military service in a branch of the IRGC in Mehrabad Airport. I remember that one of the Basij members was telling us what he did the night before against the protesters in Azadi square. When I asked him the reason for his violent behaviour, he said that the protesters were against the Shia and Velayat-e Faqih so they should be wiped out.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, primarily when the US embassy was occupied by a group of militarised Iranian college students belonging to the "Muslim Student Followers of the Imam's Line", the world faced a new Shi'a-based phenomenon in the Middle East. While in the early years of the Iranian revolution, some revolutionary activists and significant political parties like the Freedom Movement of Iran[5] were trying to establish a democratic party system, particular events like the occupation of the US embassy (aka Iran hostage crisis) and the Iran-Iraq War formed and strengthened the position of Shia political Islam (SPI) in Iran. Needless to say, since the beginning of this revolution in Iran and the rise of SPI, the world has beein questioning how to deal with this new phenomenon.

The main point of this political phenomenon is its Shia essence because the revolution was based mostly on Shia activities, and its ideologues and leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, were Shia, led by Shia clergy. Many studies on political Islam have not distinguished between Sunni and SPI (see Chapter 2.3). Studying political Islam without considering their differences misled politicians, such as President Trump in the US, about the Shia government in Iran. For example, from 2017 to 2021, President Trump's administration tried to change the behaviour of the Islamic government through enforcing economic pressures. Michael Pompeo, the then US Secretary of State, noted, "We will continue to apply maximum pressure on the Iranian regime until its leaders change their destructive behaviour, respect the rights of the Iranian people, and return to the negotiating table" (Pompeo, 22 April 2019). This response by the US government has probably arisen because of a misunderstanding of the nature of SPI. Even though petrodollars are an essential source of funding for the ruling SPI (see chapter 7), cutting this funding source on its own may not stop the Iranian Islamic government's regional behaviour. It is important to note that the Iranian government has other solid religious funding sources that enhance religious ideologies to steer their movement.

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[5] The Freedom Movement of Iran (FMI) or Liberation Movement of Iran (LMI) is an Iranian pro-democracy political institution founded in 1961. It has also been described as a "religious nationalist party"

This study showed that the Shia political Islam still survives in Iran through sustaining the Shia movement via key organizations like the IRGC, Basij and Mosques. These organizations are utilizing and promoting the Shia values, symbols, and rituals to mobilize the people for their political goals and to supress their opponents. They are utilizing symbols like Karbala to promote Shia values such as Martyrdom and Jihad which had a key role for surviving the Islamic government in pre and post revolution period.

Although Sunni groups utilizing Islamic value such as Jihad and Martyrdom for mobilizing their followers, the Shia mobilizers has been benefited more form Shia values, symbols, rituals, and petrodollars. For example, the Karbala tragedy has been utilized hugely by Shia mobilizers to promote the values like martyrdom. However, without paying attention to the distinctions and differences between Sunni and Shia political Islam by some scholars, have mislead the politician and decisionmakers about the fall or rise of Islamic groups especially Shia ones. While scholars like Asef Bayat (2013b)and Dabashi considered the Shia approach of Islamism, they do not consider and analysis how Shia values are used by Islamic government to stay in power. Bayet, in his post-Islamism theory, argues that Islamism is failing because more secular and liberal Ideas become to the political domain by winning the reformists in the presidential election in 1997. However, only after 8 years, Islamists dominated the political domain when Ahmadinejad elected as president in 2005 and again Ebrahim Raisi in 2021.

9.1.   Emerging of Shia movement
SPI can be traced back to the Safavid and Qajar dynasties when the successive rulers started propagating and utilising Shia beliefs while ruling the state (see chapter 3); consequently, the recent 1979 Islamic revolution brought a new SPI perspective to the table for researchers to analyse. Some studies, like that of Oliver Roy, argue that Islamism in Iran has failed due to the victory of Ayatollah Khomeini. In contrast, other scholars believe that Islamism has failed to be enforced socially (Bayat 2013b). Nonetheless, politically, Ayatollah Khomeini and succeeding leaders have been running the country for more than four decades.
Although scholars like Asef Bayat claim it is the era of post-Islamism in Iran, these studies do not clarify the nature of Shiism and fail to explain how SPI is still continuing, via

controlling the most important sections of government. Hence, this research aims to fill this gap in perception and investigate the significant reasons for the continuation of SPI by highlighting critical religious and economic elements which support the Shia movement and keep it dynamic. Hence, the main research question of this project is: " how has Shia political Islam managed to survive in Iran over the past four decades?"

In order to investigate and further elaborate the research question, there is a need to clarify the meaning of political Islam. Political Islam refers to the activities of individuals, organisations and movements that use and interpret Islamic values, signs and symbols to enforce or emasculate specific Islamic beliefs to serve their political objectives. This simplified definition explains how SPI came to be present in Iran and how the ruling and influential Islamists employ Shia ideology to bolster their political agendas and maintain political power.

However, how does SPI manage to use this aspct of political Islam to maintain power? How does it all work? To analyse and understand these questions and explain the mechanism used by the ruling SPI in Iran, Social Movement Theories are used as the main conceptual framework and as a functional method. As discussed (in Chapter 3; Section 3.4), the SPI, in general, can be understood as a Shia movement, so its continuation depends on the state's situation and the power of the collaborative Shia movements in Iran. Therefore, if political Islamists can keep the Shia movements dynamic, the SPI can survive. So, how does the Shia movement continue to be active in Iran?

9.2.   Continuation of Shia movement in Iran

Oliver Roy (1994), in *The Failure of Political Islam*, argues that the Islamic movement is reduced to only a few neo-fundamentalist groups because it has lost its revolutionary activities. Roy has correctly considered the revolutionary activities as a significant point of failure for political Islam. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood party in Egypt could be understood as proof for his claim. Yet, the Muslim Brotherhood party failed to keep its political power in Egypt in 2012 (see 2.3.1). This assertion does not apply to SPI in Iran. In contrast to Roy's contention, the Shia movement in Iran has not lost its political power in the past four decades, since 1979. This is because the Islamist rulers in Iran have

managed to keep the Shia movement progressing and maintain their revolutionary activities.

As the theoretical chapter explains (Chapter 3.2), by identifying the Shia movement as a social movement, this movement needs primary factors to emerge and continue in Iran. The Shia movement needs *origins such as economic, social and political discontents (see 3.4.1), mobilisers like the IRGC and Basij, and steering fuel like religious rituals* to be able to effectively function and survive. This thesis argues that the Islamic government in Iran has continued to be dynamic -as presented by SPI- mainly due to the survival of the Shia movement. Hence, the ruling Islamists managed to maintain the survival of the Shia movement by distinguishing four main elements: preserving and perpetuating the origins (Chapter 4); strengthening the mobilisers such as mosques, IRGC and Basij Guard Corps (Chapter 5); promoting Shia values and rituals as the steering fuel for the Shia movement (Chapter 6); benefiting from petrodollars to fund the mobilisers and Islamic institutions to promote the Shia values and rituals (Chapter 7).

The ruling Islamists have been successful in preserving and perpetuating the origins of the Shia movement. The Shia movement needs origins to encourage people to participate in collective actions to support its agenda or suppress any threat (see Chapter 3; Section 3.1). These origins could be economic grievances such as corruption and injustice, political discontents such as imperialism and foreign penetration, and social dissatisfactions. The coup against Mohamad Mosadeq in 1953 and the White Revolution in 1962 were the fundamental political and economic origins in the formation of the Shia movement in the pre-revolution era. As the coup was organised by the CIA and MI6, it intensified anti-foreigner sentiments.

In the years from 1941 until 1979, Mohamad Reza Shah tried to stabilise his power in Iran through 1) fulfilling political and economic reforms such as the White Revolution in 1963; 2) modernising Iranian society; 3) secularising and controlling the political environment by establishing the Resurgence Party in 1975; 4) improving the industrial section by pumping petrodollars into the economy, which increased institutional corruption and caused the Iranian economy to go through severe turbulences; and 5) suppressing opponents through establishing the Intelligence and Security Organization of the Country

known as "SAVAK". All these measures taken by the Shah failed to expand his power in Iranian society and created further discontent among the conservative public, ultimately paving the way for the Shia movement in Iran.

However, the economic, social, and political discontents did not disappear after the revolution in 1979. As the Shia movement requires fundamental origins, the Islamic government still perpetuates some of these origins, such as anti-west sentiments, anti-secularisation, inequality and injustice, and politico-religious discontentment. Despite the propaganda of influential Islamists before the revolution, some economic and political discontents such as freedom, corruption, and injustice should have improved under an Islamic government. Still, this did not happen. Since the revolution in 1979, influential Islamists have been blaming external and internal opponents for these discontents. They disclaimed responsibility for the discontentment and highlighted these origins to suppress serious external and internal national security threats such as the Iran-Iraq War (see chapter 7) and the Green movement in Iran.

The second factor, the mobilisers, such as mosques, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Basij Guard Corps, played a significant role in the emergence and survival of the Shia movement in Iran. Presented as well-developed and well-organised institutions that utilise the available resources and origins to mobilise people to follow the Shia movement's ideology, they are another reason why SPI is continuing and surviving. Moreover, Chapter 8 indicates how the influential Islamists propagated political and religious discontents through the government-controlled media to mobilise their followers against the Green movement. For instance, mosques, as a mobiliser in the Shia movement, were the essential bases for influential Islamists to mobilise people even in pre-revolution times.

The main function of mosques in the pre-revolution period was to provide a network for the clergy to gather and discuss conditions of the state. The clergy would highlight discontents, propagate revolutionary opinions, and mobilise religious forces to serve the agenda; organise revolutionary activities by publishing holy speeches and declarations, hold weekly meetings in different cities, form a national structure plan for revolutionary

movements and host mourning ceremonies; they would also provide sufficient funding for the Islamic Shia revolution through religious taxes and charities.

Due to the decisive importance of mosques during the revolutionary activities, influential Islamists were persuaded to extend their control over mosques by establishing a new religious structural institution, the Centre for Programming Mosques' Affairs (CPMA). This religious institution aims to assist Islamists to lead the mosques' Imams and the religious activities to reach their goals. According to statistics by CPMA (*What is the budget of Iranian mosques?* 2014) in 2011, there are about seventy-two thousand controlled mosques around the country. Almost all cities and villages in Iran have mosques that provide fundamental bases for Islamist activities to serve the Shia movement.

During the rise of the Shia movement, mosques became an organisational mobiliser for the religious-based movement through, firstly, promoting Shia values. According to the CPMA's charter, the key task of mosques is to promote the values and beliefs of the Shia sector. Despite the low participation and attendance at the hosted activities, mosques try to attract youth by establishing new programmes and activities such as Itekaf and the circles of righteous men. Secondly, promoting the martyrdom culture by hosting Islamic exhibitions about the grace of martyrdom, mourning for the martyrdom of previous Shia Imams, and distributing free booklets about the holy spirit of martyrdom. Thirdly and last, mobilising and recruiting youth for specific religious goals with the Basij's cooperation. For example, during the Iran-Iraq war between 1980 and 1988, mosques were the base for recruiting soldiers for the battlefield.

Beside the role of mosques, the IRGC played a crucial role in the survival of the SPI. As implicit in its title, the main objective of the IRGC is to guard the revolutionary Islamist movement. In the 1979 revolution, the state military system collapsed, and many different military groups were formed for security and policing purposes. On 5 May 1979, by order of Ayatollah Khomeini, the country's Supreme Leader, these military groups joined together and formed the IRGC. The IRGC as a religious force held the most substantial division of the Shia movement.

Although IRGC is a military entity, since the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989 it has been considerably more involved in political and economic decision-making. After the Iran-Iraq war, the new economic strategy of Rafsanjani's government opened the way for the IRGC's economic permeation and activities. Once the IRGC got involved in economic matters, leaders of the organisation also determined to be part of the political arena when newspapers started to critique the Islamic government during the Khatami government in 1997.

The influential political role of the IRGC in perpetuating the Shia movement and guarding the Islamic government began during the Khatami government. Its first endeavour was to suppress a students' demonstration, which was considered an internal security threat to the Islamic revolution in 1999 (see Chapter 5; section 5.3). The IRGC as a strong Shia ideological unit had a significant impact on the political and economic sectors of the country, such as supporting the pro-Shia revolutionary movement and suppressing any security threat to the Islamic government and Velayat-elFaqih.

Also, to support and strengthen the position of influential Islamists in Iran, the IRGC has intervened in and manipulated the presidential and parliamentary elections throughout the years. For example, the IRGC supported Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the 2009 presidential elections but opposed him when he disagreed with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. However, the IRGC, according to its objectives, is using all of its power to keep the SPI dynamic and powerful; this includes utilising its economic power and abilities to invest in improving and developing Iran's missile capacities to combat any external security threat.

The Basij Guard Corps (The Organization for Mobilisation of the Oppressed) is one of the five main forces affiliated with the IRGC. The Basij Guard Corps aim to mobilise people to preserve and continue the Shia movement by guarding the Islamic government and promoting Shi'ism. As the social power of the IRGC, the Basij influences almost all parts of Iranian society; this includes universities, mosques, administrations, and all organisations. This solid social base is serving the Shia movement. The role of Basij in guarding the Islamic revolution is considerably important: it has a crucial role in suppressing both internal and external threats for the benefit of the Islamic government.

For instance, in supporting the IRGC, the Basij has assisted in stopping internal security threats such as the student movements and the Green Movement in the state.

Moreover, for the Iranian community the financial support of the Basij has focused on developing its activities in promoting Shi'ism. The Basij organises many rapid ideological courses and plans for its members and others to promote Shia values. Some of these plans include the Guardianship (Velayat) Plan, the Insight (Basirat) Plan, the Awareness (Marefat) Plan, the Elevation (Taali) Plan, and the Righteousness (Salehin) Plan. The main objective of their plans is to expand Shia values as the steering fuel for the Shia movement.

9.3.   Shia symbols and rituals are key factors in the survival of the SPI.

All movements need origins and a mobiliser to function effectively. However, alone they are not enough for them to succeed and sustain their presence in the long term. Some movements which have long-lasting purposes need a steering fuel to be able to continue. Although origins and mobilisers are two critical elements for the emergence and continuation of a social movement, in a case similar to the Islamic movement in Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt benefited from both origins and mobiliser elements; yet, it failed to survive when the Mohammad Morsi government was elected in 2012. Simply, this is because the Muslim Brotherhood party -the Sunni sector- lacked the religious and financial steering fuel required for its Islamic movement to continue and sustain even for its four-year ruling period.

A movement can emerge when origins and mobilisers exist, but it needs steering fuel such as financial sources and sponsorships to last and continue. For instance, there are economic, political, and social discontents in Egypt's case in terms of origins. From the mobiliser perspective, the Muslim Brotherhood has been one of the well-organised parties in Egypt. However, it lost its political power because it could not secure a sustainable steering fuel for its religious movement. Sunni political Islam lacks the significant religious and ritual symbols that Shia political Islam has. Salwa Ismail's (2003) argument in *Rethinking Islamist Politics: Culture, the state and Islamism* missed this fact in her interpretation of political Islam in Egypt.

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Religious and financial sources have been the two essential resources of fuel to steer the Shia movement in Iran. Historically, religious symbols were employed and expanded during the Safavid and Qajar periods. For example, King Ismail I, the founder of the Safavid dynasty in 1501 AC, brought and invited many Shia clergies from Iraq and Lebanon to spread Shia rituals and symbols, funded the hosted rituals and established shrines of sanctification to the Shia Imams. In contrast, the Qajar kings needed the Shia clergies to legitimise their power and influence; thus, the social bases of the clergy in Iran became stronger. Since then, the religious Shia clergy has had access to religious funds, established the Ijtihad system and introduced important Shia rituals such as Tazzyie and Rozehkhani (dramatic performance and recitation commemorating of the martyrdom of Imam Husain).

Nevertheless, the financial resource can be considered a factor in SPI's survival, and it cannot be overestimated. Currently, the Shia movement leaders in Iran indicate that they can survive with the minimum financial support provided to their movements. Yet, they have used petrodollars to fund and promote their movements, while in the pre-revolutionary years and during the constitutional revolution, the budget of the mobiliser groups and organisations was limited only to the collection of religious taxes and charities to organise their religious Shia activities. Since the 1979 revolution, the Islamic government has used petrodollars to defend its policies and strategies against any external threat. Therefore, SPI manages to survive through extensive funds provided by the petrodollars to improve the state's military power, promote Shia values through supporting religious institutions, export the Islamic revolution to neighbouring and regional states, and fund the IRGC and the Basij programmes (see Chapter 8).

The trade-in of the Shia values and religious symbols to convince people to invest in funding the SPI agendas and the use of petrodollars are the primary financial sources for Iran's Shia movements. The trade-in of the Shia values and symbols comes in the image as most Shia Imams, historically, had been arrested and tortured by the Umayyad and Abbasid Sunni Caliphates. Therefore, Shia has had many tragedies that can be utilized as religious symbols. For example, the Karbala event has been used by Shia influential Islamists to promote many rituals, such as Heayt, and intensify important Shia values

such as martyrdom and resistance. For that reason, the existence of these popular religious symbols and rituals factors in political affairs makes the SPI different from the Sunni one.

Symbols, rituals and values are some of the main factors sustaining the Shia movement and are strong drivers to gain public support in Iran. The mobilisers always deploy these factors to persuade and mobilise people to support the Shia government and to restrain its internal and external opponents. For example, Shia rituals and symbols played a role in mobilising and recruiting soldiers to join the Iran-Iraq war, since the war was a considerable external security threat for the Islamic government. In the same context of mobilising the religious symbols, rituals and values, the IRGC and the Basij accused the followers of the Green Movement of being an anti-Ashura group to repress their movement. The national TV and other government media claimed that the behaviour of Green Movement protesters in the Ashura religious event in 2009 was against Shia values and symbols (see Chapter 7).

9.4.   Situation of Shia Political Islam in the Middle East

SPI's standing depends on the status of the Shia movement in Iran. If the Shia movement can continue pursuing its activities and influencing decision-making, the SPI can't fail. According to social movement theory, the origins of movements are relatively constant; therefore, the continuation of the Shia movement would depend on its mobilisers and the steering fuels it uses to function. Despite referring to Asef Bayat's argument (2013b), which claims that the social base of Islamism in Iran is declining due to the formation of secular opinion in the society, there are enough influential Shia Islamist groups that can keep the SPI sustainable and dynamic. Even if we assume that influential Islamists are a minority in Iran, they have eliminated their opponents and maintained power exclusively for the Shia Islamic government.

While secular or moderate Islamic groups in Iran do not have enough motivation or power to establish a counter-movement, the Islamists will remain to mobilise people to serve their political and economic agendas. The movement tends to show power occasionally in regular government rallies; this indicates their strong mobilisation power in Iranian society. For instance, the government mobilised thousands of citizens in Tehran on the

40th anniversary of the Islamic revolution. Even if claims that the Islamic government had not organised this rally are valid, it still shows their mobilisation ability at the society level. Hence, as long as mosques, the IRGC and the Basij have unlimited influence to support and invest financial and ideological fuel into the Shia movement, SPI will continue and survive.

In the early years of the revolution (1980s), the influential Shia Islamists in Iran decided to export the revolution to other regional states. For example, Ayatollah Khomeini in 1980 said, "I hope that (Iran) will become a model for all the meek and Muslim nations in the world and that this century will become the century for smashing great idols…O meek of the world, rise and rescue yourselves from the talons of nefarious oppressors; O zealous Muslim in various countries of the world, wake from your sleep of neglect and liberate Islam and the Islamic countries from the clutches of colonialists and those subservient to them". When Islamists started to support the Shia movement in various countries such as Iraq and Lebanon, the US and the West attempted to stop the Shia crescent through using political and economic tools such as economic sanctions.

In terms of the sanctions' strategy, the Trump administration imposed strict financial sanctions on essential government institutions like the IRGC to cut the Iranian financial support for the Shia militias like Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthi in Yemen. However, will the political and economic sanctions of the Superpowers limit those movements? As this research argues, Shia values and symbols are the primary essential steering fuels for the survival of a Shia movement in Iran, beside the financial resources that assist in supporting their expansion and spreading their Ideology. So, cutting the financial steering fuel alone cannot stop the Shia Islamic movements from functioning. As long as the religious beliefs have a sizeable social base and the religious and state institutions' mobilisers utilise the religious motivational fuel for mobilisation, the Shia movement can continue to function. However, its advancement might be reduced due to financial limitations.

Furthermore, the Shia movement needs to strengthen its origins; even though some origins like economic grievances are relatively constant for the government in Iran, other origins like "anti-West sentiment" are necessary for SPI to survive. Accordingly, the

Islamic government needs to sustain its conflict with the West and the US in order to preserve the national support of the people. In 2019, the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, visited Iran to mediate between the US and Iran. Mr Abe passed on President Trump's message to the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, regarding the nuclear issue. It is evident that Trump had not requested any regime change in Iran; Khamenei made a speech to the public and stated that "the US wants to change the regime in Iran, but they cannot do it" and refused any further negotiations with the US over the nuclear issue.

9.5.   Research limitations and further research

The main limitation in the research concerning the analysis method is the restriction on conducting interviews with members of the public or decision-makers. This is due to strict Iranian policies dealing with any opponents or researchers related to Western countries. Since the main argument in this research is based on how the Shia mobilisers utilised Shia values to motivate people, especially soldiers, and gain public support for their political agendas, conducting interviews with specific group members such as local Basij commanders, could have helped in clarifying this mechanism. The researcher tried to demonstrate the impact of Shia values in mobilising the public by collecting statements and analysing the speeches of IRGC and Basij leaders from reliable sources. Yet, conducting interviews could have provided a more direct line of analysis as they could be designed specifically around this project's aims objectives.

This study focuses on how SPI has survived, thus far, in Iran and provides a fundamental analysis and introduces a mechanism on how the Shia movement is functioning. In spite of that, understanding how this religious paradigm can change in Iran could be an interesting question for further studies about SPI. For example, how can high-ranked Shia clergies mobilise the public to support or oppose the Islamic government? Since this project largely analyses the religious fuel as a steering motivation for the Shia movement in Iran, researching how these motivational steering fuels could lose their impact in the mobilisation process could be helpful. Referring to Asef Bayat's argument (2013b) on youth participation in Shia practices, where he argues, using post-Islamism theory, that the social bases of Shiism in Iran are gradually declining, providing an understanding of

how this change at the social level is working and how it could affect the survival of SPI could provide more clarification and a depth understanding of the political situation at the national level.

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