Social Change in Post-Khomeini Iran

SUMMARY REPORT

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Social Change in Post-Khomeini Iran
Working Group Summary Report

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The Iranian Revolution was one of the most important events to take place in the Middle East within the past fifty years. The revolution completely transformed one of the region's largest and most influential countries, and had far-reaching implications for both Iran's neighbors as well as the world at large. From its earliest post-revolutionary years, scholars and analysts have regularly puzzled over the Islamic Republic, its consequences for Iranian society and history, and its direction and evolution. Today, more than thirty years of the revolution, the resilience of the Islamic Republic has been clearly demonstrated. The thirtieth anniversary has also highlighted the fact that there is a critical need for a more nuanced understanding of the regime's endurance, and for in-depth scrutiny of the multi-faceted nature of contemporary Iranian society. Over the course of the past thirty years there have been significant and meaningful social, economic, and political transformations across the spectrum of the state and its society. It is these changes which need to be carefully studied if one is looking for a comprehensive understanding of contemporary Iran.

Much scholarly attention has been devoted to Iranian foreign and regional policies, its geopolitical and geostrategic significance, its security and defense strategies, and to its ideological intransience. Much current analytic focus is given to Iran's ruling clerical establishment, its controversial nuclear program, and its supposed ambition to assert regional hegemony over its neighbors. Iranian foreign policy behavior is consistently presented as a de facto threat to its neighbors and to the world at large. Against this backdrop of heightened global interest in Iran's international relations, embedded within myopic invective and a security-driven discourse, explorations of Iran's domestic or internal functioning are often relegated to secondary status.

Academic efforts examining domestic conditions in Iran have often focused particularly on the issues of political succession, the rivalry amongst competing political stake-holders and factions, the role of different state actors, the success or failure of various state policies, and the potential for reform. With the contested 2009 elections and the protest movements that followed, international attention was once again drawn to studying domestic political developments in Iran, for the most part to assess the extent of sociopolitical fissures within the state, and the potential for the regime to be severely threatened through public dissent. Despite the ongoing fascination with Iran in both policy and academic circles, there are few in-depth studies of social and cultural developments within the country.

A few recent efforts have been undertaken by scholars to engage in in-depth research on domestic development within Iran. In line with this body of nascent scholarship, CIRS is launching a new, empirically grounded research initiative aimed at studying the variety of changes and developments currently underway in Iranian society. Social Change in Post-Khomeini Iran will critically examine some of the most important topics within contemporary Iran, focusing on its social, cultural, economic, and political domains. Through this multi-disciplinary, empirically-based research initiative, our goal is to present a comprehensive study of contemporary Iranian society.

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Introduction: Social Change in Post–Khomeini Iran
Mahmood Monshipouri

The dramatic transformation of Iranian society over the past two decades has led to renewed attention to the ways in which social interaction and cultural tradition have evolved. Iran is currently experiencing long-term processes of cumulative social change that have fostered various kinds of reactions and adjustments, including contentious politics and a wide variety of social movements bent on transforming the social realm. Internal challenges to long-held ways of defining power and status have intensified relations among different factions vying for control and access within the Islamic Republic.

Focusing on the complexity and interconnected patterns of change, Craig Calhoun argues that significant social disruptions—such as population growth, demographic transitions, capitalism, industrialization, modernity, and the spread of information and communications technologies—tend to have far-reaching repercussions. Given the pervasiveness of this process, dramatic change in one aspect of social life undoubtedly alters other parts. It is in this sense that social change has caught up with the Islamic Republic. The striking intensity and speed with which change is occurring in Iran has far surpassed the ability of even the most entrenched regimes and establishments to come to grips with it. Although the Islamic Republic's success in exerting control over the nature and direction of some aspects of social change has been clear, its attempts to curb the flow of information facilitated by modern technologies of communication have proven less so.

The inability of most formal Iranian political mechanisms to generate sustained economic growth and effective long-term socioeconomic planning reflects not only the country's oft-changing realities but also the enduring effects of mismanagement. Struggles for power among the competing factions within and outside of the governing institutions, especially in the post-Khomeini era, completely overshadowed any systematic and meaningful attention to the economic, cultural, religious, and technological changes taking place in Iran. The persistent reliance of Iranian leaders on ad hoc and improvisational policy decisions has, in the past, led to gross miscalculations and mismanagement. More broadly, these factors have led to cumulative uncertainties and policy failures in the wake of the dramatic socioeconomic, cultural, and political changes that the country has recently undergone, making it increasingly imperative to define and understand the broader contours of social and cultural change in Iran.

It is worth noting that Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini depicted the 1979 revolution as an Islamic one rather than an exceptionally Iranian one, conferring further legitimacy on it as an anti-imperialist and anti-West movement capable of spreading. Both symbolically and substantively, this move fueled pan-Islamism throughout the region and led to an increased disdain toward foreign influence. The impact of the revolution was immediately and noticeably felt in the region. The subsequent Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988), which was rooted in the belief on the part of the Saddam Hussein regime that revolutionary Iran was attempting to trigger a Shi'ite uprising in Iraq, overshadowed the direction of the nation's socioeconomic and cultural change. The destruction of the war allowed little space for normal life as most Iranians were badly hit by the economic stagnation and sociocultural restrictions it engendered. The long-term effects of that bloody and devastating conflict cast a dark shadow over many Iranians for the ensuing years. Khomeini's death in June 1989 led to a new era with a new emphasis for Iranian politics. Revolutionary fervor was replaced by a desperate and urgent need for national reconstruction and economic development.

Thus the post-Khomeini era has been marked by a profoundly changed sociopolitical landscape in Iran. Since 1989, the internal dynamics of change in Iran—encompassing a panoply of socioeconomic, cultural, institutional, demographic, and behavioral factors—have led to a disruptive transition in both societal and governmental structures of power, as well as the ways in which Iranians have come to deal with the changing conditions of their society. Global trends in communication and information expansion have hastened burgeoning demands for women's rights and individual freedoms, and have exacerbated festering tensions over cultural politics. These realities have rendered Iran a country of unprecedented—and at times paradoxical—changes.

This book intends to open up new ways of looking at Iran by upending and unpacking widely held but dubious assumptions about Iranian society, state, culture, and economy. Our aim is to promote critical engagement with social change in an evolving and modern Iran with an eye toward deepening normative analysis and inspiring action and results. This book is organized around five parts. Part One deals with the conceptualization of power and political authority, as well as the evolution of identity construction and the rise of technocratic leadership. Part Two of the book evaluates the role of women's agency in pushing for reforms in law, engaging in struggles for political freedoms through arts and culture, and facing profound transformations in the family structure caused by socioeconomic change.

In Part Three, contributors examine the development of a broader civil society in Iran as well as the growth of civil society in diasporic communities, especially among the second- and third-generations Iranian-Americans in the United States. The contributors to Part Four pay special attention to the role that cinema, pop music, and art in general have in recent years played in spreading new ideas—sometimes challenging dictates of temporal and special change but at other times in conformity with Islamic precepts, principles, and local norms. Finally, Part Five examines the growing impact that the economic sector—Bonyads and corporate Iran in tandem with the apparatus of power—has had on the nation's economic development and social change.

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1. *What is Power in Iran? The Shifting Foundations of the Velayat-e Faqih*
   Arshin Adib-Moghaddam

In the revolutionary process that delivered the Islamic Republic, something rather novel happened in Iran. For the first time in world history, a state endowed itself with both a republican mandate and a religious, clerically centered sovereignty. The leadership of the Supreme Jurisprudent (*Velayat-e faqih*), theorized by Khomeini in exile in Najaf in the 1970s, is at the heart of this institutional make-up of the Iranian state which has endured the vicissitudes of domestic revolts, invasion, sanctions, and threats of war for over three decades now. In this chapter, I disentangle some of the foundations of power that underlie the system of the *Velayat-e faqih*. I will show how in the build-up of the post-revolutionary state, the nature of power of the *faqih* changed from a religious-theological ideal-type to a pragmatist-realist one. If Ayatollah Khomeini was a revolutionary cleric who brought about sudden and radical change in Iran and beyond, his successor Khamenei appears as a pragmatist "prefect" of Khomeini's contested political legacy, whose foundations of power are by far more sober and formalized than those of the late leader of the Iranian revolution.

The history of the institutionalization of the role of the Supreme Jurisprudent has been researched by many scholars. According to the detailed study of Asghar Shirazi, for instance, the governmental system in Iran can be best described as a hierocracy. Shirazi is right to argue that there has been a shift in the way power is legitimated in Iran, but he (and many others) adheres to a problematic dichotomy between religion (Islam) and modernity. At least since the emergence of the revivalist discourse of Islam in the late nineteenth century, pioneered by luminaries such as Muhammad Abduh and Jamal-ad din Afghani (Asadabadi), modernities and Islams have been engaged in an intense dialectic, which has not been resolved in favor of one or the other. Muslim societies have modernized Islam and Islamicized modernity exemplified by the globalization—institutional and ideational—of Islamic symbols in contemporary metropolises such as Paris, London, Berlin, and New York. There has never been a single, presumably Western modernity separate from other discourses, as much as there has never been a monolithic, unitarian Islam unaffected by other events in global history, whether in Iran or elsewhere: Islams are as hybridized by global history as any other ideational system.

If anything, the contemporary history of Iran is a very good example for overlapping temporalities/modernities that are constantly competing with each other (Islamic, Persian, Western, Shi'i, Zoroastrian, etc.). The Shah tried to resolve this never-ending dialectic in favor of a Persianized temporal space. His decision to change the Islamic solar *hejra* calendar into an imperial one in 1971 is emblematic for this Persian-centric ideology that his state espoused. Suddenly, Iran was in the year 2535 based on the presumed date of the foundation of the Achaemenid dynasty, a brazen effort to create a new historical space and meaning for Iran that was not centered on the Islamic *hejra* calendar. After all, in the political imagination of the Shah, Iranians were meant to be first and foremost "Aryan" and racially different from the "Semitic" Arabs and "their" Islamic history. The Islamic Republic reversed these efforts and re-Islamicized the temporal space onto which their Iran was pasted. At the time of writing, Iran is in the year 1392, following the solar *hejra* calendar which begins on the vernal equinox in accordance with astronomical calculations. Consequently, the Iranian New Year (*Nowrouz*, literally "new day"), which is replete with Zoroastrian symbolism, always falls on the March equinox. At the same time, the first year is fixed around the migration to Medina of the prophet Muhammad in 622 CE. The point of this foray into the way Iran have

been dated is to show that the idea of the country and the corresponding invention of identities for Iranians are not processed in a vacuum. The history of the country is as polluted and hybrid as that of any other.

When Khomeini was Supreme Leader, he was at the helm of a young state with nascent bureaucratic structures and a diffuse political system without much institutional depth. In contrast, today Khamenei is at the helm of a state that is by far more professionalized, with a rather more differentiated and experienced underbelly and an inflated public sector that is financially tied into the bureaucracy sustaining the state. Khamenei cannot afford to be arbitrary in the way Khomeini could. His movements have to be measured and strategic. His power is channeled through the diverse anchors scattered around the Iranian body politic from the nodal point of the *beit-e imam* in Tehran and from there to a whole cast of powerful loyalists: "representatives of the Imam" at universities, ministries, and councils, the editors of the two major national newspapers *Keyhan* and *Etelaat* in addition to larger institutions which zigzag through Iran's political system and society such as the heads of the economically powerful foundations, the director of the national radio/television network, the Baseej voluntary forces and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. In particular, the latter has become increasingly central to the economic and political power sustaining the Islamic Republic in general and the power of the *faqih* in particular. At the same time, the office of the Leader continues to be an institution in the competitive political market in Iran that has to be promoted with its own sophisticated public relations machinery like a commodity to be sold to a skeptical constituency who are exposed to the competing ideas of influential dissenters, from Abdol-Karim Soroush to Ayatollah Shabestari or Mohsen Kadivar. As a consequence of this pluralistic space that continuously impinges on his sovereignty and legitimacy, Khamenei seems to have chosen to rule as a "prefect" of an unrealized revolutionary dream—challenged he maybe, but ruling he does.

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2. *Post-Revolutionary Iran: Democracy or Theocracy?*
William O. Beeman

Many Americans were given the impression by Washington politicians and the press during the George W. Bush administration that Iran is a "theocracy" with no democratic institutions. Moreover, it was often stated that Iran also opposed democratic institutions elsewhere. As the conflict in Iraq increased, the Bush administration continually looked to blame Iran for U.S. failures, blaming Iran's anti-democratic ideology as one of the reasons for them. Typical of those in high places is Larry Diamond, a neo-conservative specializing in democratization at the Hoover Institution who formerly advised the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq (CPA).

The government of Iran in the Post-Revolutionary period may have religious leaders in central positions, but it is far from being a pure theocracy. Only 30 percent of all Iranian officials today are self-identified as clerics. Nevertheless, the impression that Iran has nothing even resembling democratic institutions has persisted and is believed by many in the international community who know nothing of Iran and who are fearful of Islamic attacks on Western culture. Without begging the complicated question of what constitutes a "democratic institution" it is important to note that political structures in Iran certainly have important features that any observer would classify as democratic, but it also has features unique to Iran.

I am pursuing this discussion in the spirit of Michel Foucault's widely explored notion of governmentality. Foucault's concept is broad, but generally covers the ways that government adopts a cultural ideology for carrying out its duties, a structural framework for implementing this ideology and a rationality associated with that framework. From an anthropological standpoint, it is expected that different forms of governmentality will be observed in different societies, with different cultural underpinnings resulting in unique institutions.

In this discussion, I hope to disentangle the complexity of these governmental structures in Iran, and to argue that they are dominated by two important cultural structures. This is the contrast between legitimate esoteric knowledge and processes, and illegitimate exoteric structures and processes. Concomitant to these two processes is the trope of martyrdom as proof of legitimacy

I want to make a clear distinction between the framework of governmentality in Iran and the conduct of officials and political actors. Every governmental system has good and bad persons in authority. There are laudatory actions and bad actions. This is certainly true in Iran, as in any nation. Iran has been widely criticized for its government's failure in observance of human rights. These criticisms are serious and important, but they stand apart from the structures of government. What is relevant to the question of the perceived bad behavior of Iranian officials is the structural tolerance in the governmental system for this disapproved behavior. Part of this tolerance, I would argue, is the invocation of the standards of legitimacy of actions, which can be freely invoked to suppress dissent or public behavior deemed anti-social, whether justified or not.

As I have tried to emphasize in this discussion, Iran's governmental system has a strong ethic of reinforcement of legitimacy of rule. Once again, I invoke Foucault's notion of governmentality as inspiration for this discussion. As I have tried to point out, legitimacy and its reinforcing structures is an important theme in Shi'a Islam, but it is hard to argue with this principle as a laudatory one for any system of governmentality. The particular form that this principle adopts in Iran is unique, and a tribute to the imaginative mind of the framers of the post-Revolutionary Constitution.

Despite its unique form, Iran's unique combination of appointed and elected officials is a feature of many democratic systems. In many nations voters cast votes only for political parties. The parties choose their own leaders internally. Therefore the Prime Ministers, Chancellors, and other political leaders in nations around the world are not directly elected by the public. Even in the United States some of the most powerful political figures, such as Supreme Court Justices are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate with no direct public electoral input.

The United States in particular would do well not to obsess over the potential Islamic nature of the Iranian constitution (or the constitution of Iraq going forward). Certainly there should be no interference to impose some imagined set of secular Western values or institutions on any Middle Eastern nation. Certainly Iran is not a theocracy in any absolute sense. Moreover the government since the Revolution of 1978-79 has proved robust, stable, and capable of sustaining itself. It is, in fact, one of the most stable governments in the region, if not the world.

William O. Beeman is Professor and Chair of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Minnesota and President of the Middle East Section of the American Anthropological Association. He was formerly Professor of Anthropology and Director of Middle East Studies at Brown University. Best known as a Middle East specialist for more than 30 years, he has also worked in Central Asia, the Caucasus, Japan, China and South Asia. He has served as consultant to the United States State Department, the Department of Defense, the United Nations and the United States Congress.

3. *Conceptions of Nationalism and Religiosity in Contemporary Iran*
   Mansoor Moaddel

Scholars of Iran's cultural history have documented a major shift in the orientations of Iranian intellectual leaders in the post-Khomeini period. This shift marks departures from religion as a framework to guide sociopolitical behavior and toward liberal nationalism. Findings from values surveys carried out in 2000 and 2005 indicate that a similar shift has occurred among the Iranian public as well. In 2000, a nationally representative sample of 2,532 respondents were asked; "which of the following best describes you: I am an Iranian above all; I am a Muslim above all; I am a Kurd, a Turk, or other, above all?" And "how proud are you to be an Iranian: very proud, proud, not proud, or not proud at all?" In 2005, these questions were repeated, using a nationally representative sample of 2,667 adults. The first question measures identity and the second measures national pride. The results show that between the two surveys, the basis of identity shifted from religion to nation, as the percentage of Iranians who defined themselves as "Iranian, above all" went up from 35 percent in 2000 to 42 percent in 2005. At the same time, those who said that they were very proud to be Iranian declined considerably—from 89 percent in 2000 to 64 percent in 2005. What is more, there were also changes in attitudes toward gender relations, democracy, and social individualism between the two surveys.

This chapter makes a modest effort to assess whether these changes in value orientations indicate a broader epistemic shift among Iranians from predominantly recognizing the currently dominant religious fundamentalist modality of politics to predominantly supporting a liberal nationalist alternative. It also evaluates the implications of this assessment for the social-scientific theories of nationalism by generalizing from the experience of Iran. This chapter argues that rather than conceptualizing territorial nationalism as a general phenomenon that is linked to conditions of modernity, it must be conceived of as only one of the many modalities of political sovereignty that have emerged in different societies in the modern period. In the twentieth-century Middle East, liberal nationalism, pan-Arab nationalism, and Islamic fundamentalism are instances of such modalities. They signify the diverse manners in which a political system is formed. Modalities define the governing principles of politics—the basis of legitimacy, membership in and identity of the political community, and the norms governing in-group and out-group relationships. They dictate the way history is officially remembered, constructed, or invented.

Modalities are constrained by the structures of economic, class, or group relations. The governing principles of modalities, however, cannot be derived from these structures. Similar social structures may sustain different modalities or different structures of the same modality. Far from being an inevitable reflection of social structures, modalities are thus produced, as intellectual leaders and the public at large attempt to resolve historically significant issues facing their society. Territorial nationalism, liberalism, pan-Arab nationalism, and Islamic fundamentalism constitute different resolutions of such issues as the basis of identity, form of government, the relationship between religion and politics, the social status of women, and the nature of the outside world—the West in particular.

To demonstrate that modalities exist, this chapter first presumes that identity is their defining feature such that changes in identity are associated with changes in value orientations. It also presumes that national pride is a driver that reproduces the dominant modality, here; the religious fundamentalism of the ruling regime. That is, the stronger the national pride, the stronger the support for the norms and values of the regime. Next, it advances a structural-equation model and uses the data from the 2000 and 2005 surveys in order to estimate the effect of

national identity and national pride on attitudes toward gender relations, religiosity, Western culture, religious tolerance, controlling for education, and socioeconomic status. The proposition is that if national identity, defined in contradistinction to religious identity, couples with more favorable attitudes toward women, more religious tolerance, more favorable attitudes toward Western culture, and less religiosity, and that national pride has opposing relationships with these variables, then these empirical patterns may in effect reflect the co-presence of two conflicting modalities of political sovereignty among Iranians, one being religious fundamentalist and the other liberal nationalist.

The statistical estimates of the model for the 2000 data show that national identity is negatively linked to religiosity, religious intolerance, and favorable attitudes toward gender inequality, while national pride is positively linked to religiosity and gender inequality. Using the 2005 data, the opposing relationships of national identity and national pride with all these variables are significant. Accordingly, national identity is negatively linked to attitudes toward gender inequality, religiosity, and religious intolerance, but positively to attitudes toward Western culture; while national pride is positively linked to attitudes toward gender inequality, religiosity, religious intolerance, but negatively to Western culture.

These findings show that the difference between national and religious identity among Iranians explains variation in their attitudes toward gender relations, attitudes toward Western culture, religiosity, and religious tolerance. It is thus plausible to argue that as more Iranians recognize the nation, rather than religion, as the basis of their identity, they also favor more strongly the equality between men and women, develop more favorable attitudes toward the West, grow more tolerant of other religions, and become less religious. Considering that the culture of patriarchy, anti-Western policies, religiosity and Islamic identity, and religious centrism and exclusivism, which promote religious intolerance, are among the pillars of the ideology of the Islamic regime, a significant departure among Iranians from these values may in fact signify an epistemic turn from the dominant Islamic fundamentalist modality and toward a liberal nationalist modality.

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4. *Women and Criminal Law in Post-Khomeini Iran*
    Arzoo Osanloo

Iranian criminal sanctioning laws are notoriously severe and, in some categories, carry disproportionate penalties for women. These laws serve as an example of how conservative factions in government employ their monopoly on law-making and *shari'a* interpretation, allowing them to secure authority and social control while circumscribing the possibilities for popular protest and political mobilization.

Since the revolution, state officials' persistent attention to women's legal status has served to reinforce particular and often competing views on how women can best serve the aims of the post-revolutionary state. Exploring how those views have changed with different administrations over the past thirty-four years allows for a better understanding of changes to the laws as well. An investigation into legal reforms will also allow for reflection on the enduring debates about Islam, the republic, and of course how, for the religious leadership, women's roles were to serve in the wider project of producing a utopian Islamic society, despite their discordant views. In the debates about women and their legal status in the post-revolutionary society, moreover, state officials concerned themselves with addressing women's contemporary problems, while at the same time attempting to somehow emulate an idealized vision of the community of believers during the time of the Prophet.

With specific attention to gender disparities in the criminal sanctioning laws, in this chapter, I argue that women's moral virtue plays a crucial role in the utopian ideal of Islamic society envisioned by the religious leaders of the Islamic republic. For these lawmakers, the severe criminal sanctioning system serves a deterrent purpose in the broader project of regulating morality and rehabilitating social values, first corrupted by the previous regime and later undermined by the reformists. From the start, this rehabilitation was to be borne by women, who were called upon to serve as representatives of the moral order, at once new and yet part of the reclamation of an Islamic cosmology, as they saw it.

Women, of course, were the focus of the post-revolutionary social rehabilitation project when, just after the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini moved to suspend the Family Protection Act of 1967 (rev.1975). The 1982 enactment of the first of a series of revisions to the penal code, the law of *Hudud* and *Qisas* (limits and retribution), further aimed to reintroduce the element of religious moral sanctioning. Not long after, women were to embody morality physically under the legal authority of the Mandatory Veiling Act (1983). They were, however, to bear this role through broad social reforms, and laws were only one channel for transmitting them to the public.

Constant refinements and debates around what exactly comprises virtue notwithstanding, in the thirty-four years of the Islamic republic, women continue to serve as vehicles of social virtue. For instance, just after the revolution, virtuous women were asked to stay home to perform their primary roles as mothers and wives. During the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88), virtuous women were called upon to enter into the public and private employment sectors, while the men participated in the front. Later, in the reform period, virtue for women also included civic and political engagement.

More recently, in the last eight years, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's government (2005-13) underscored this unflagging emphasis on women's morality and societal rehabilitation in various sectors of Iranian society. Ahmadinejad's government introduced important changes to both the Civil Codes on Marriage and Family and

the Islamic Penal Codes, which were widely debated from the floor of parliament to the World Wide Web. In this chapter, I examine the latest changes to the criminal codes as they affect women, and consider their impact on gender in criminal sanctioning.

In the first part of the chapter, I explore the revolutionary project of moral rehabilitation and its effect on the discourse of women's status in post-revolutionary Iran. By making women's issues central to the revolutionary aim of improving society, the leaders of the Islamic republic gave great significance to the status of women, and, as a result, unwittingly conferred upon women the authority and legitimacy to challenge the state on its failure to improve women's lives. I next examine some recent changes to the laws of Islamic punishment, which, while approved by both parliament and the Council of Guardians, still await implementation. While debates about the exact consequences of the new laws and their gendered effects abound, one clear consequence is that judicial authorities will have greater discretion in sanctioning. In some cases, this might help defendants, who may be able to introduce evidence of mitigating factors in a crime—juveniles lacking mental state, for instance. For others, however, the lack of predictability and transparency in the laws may result in too much judicial authority and permit unfair and uneven application of the most serious sanctions. How the laws will actually be implemented remains to be seen, but one result of discretion is likely to be uneven application. Finally, in the last section of the chapter, I pick up on the theme of disproportionate punishments to explore the effects of disparate *diya* (compensation for injuries) and some recent successful challenges to their uneven valuations for men and women.

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5. *A Revolution within Two Revolutions: Women and Literature in Contemporary Iran*
   Farzaneh Milani

An unprecedented flourishing of women's literature—a literary renaissance, really—is one of the collateral, unexpected benefits of the 1979 Revolution. Finally, the pantheon of Persian literature is integrated in terms of the gender of its producers, consumers, and objects of representation. Women are publishing a record number of books and best sellers in different genres—fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. They are winning some of the most prestigious literary awards. They have attained unprecedented stature previously reserved only for male writers. Gender issues are no longer the concern only of elite, highly educated, and urban women. Nor are they considered class-specific, personal, private, or unavoidable

It is the aim of this chapter to study the desegregation of a predominantly all-male literary tradition and the remarkable emergence of women writers as a transformative sociopolitical force in post-revolutionary Iran. Living in a sex-segregated society, consigned to absence or immobility, women writers had to defy the age-old patterns of gender apartheid implemented in the name of beauty, religion, chastity, class distinction, or safety. Denied the privilege to enjoy self-directed movement without incurring penalties, women writers knew they had to gain access to the public arena and the public discourse. To break the spell of their textual quasi-invisibility, they knew they had to make the circulation of their bodies and their voices central to their artistic universe. And they did. That is why thematically speaking, the literary universe of contemporary Iranian women writers is built on spatial tropes of movement and containment. This is not only a novel literary landscape. It is a radical sociopolitical upheaval.

While searching for justice and beauty, women writers have advocated structural and systemic change in their society. Refusing to be silenced and kept out of sight, they have transgressed religious, philosophical, political, as well as spatial boundaries. Defying sex-segregation, they have reconfigured the very definitions of masculinity and femininity. Indeed, if defying the age-old patterns of gender apartheid is the central trope of women's artistic universe, advocating and mirroring the shifting lines of power within the family is its most consequential outcome. No longer playing into their subordination in order to reap the allocated benefits of what Deniz Kandiyoti calls the "patriarchal bargain," women have reassessed traditional codes and conventions regulating gender relations within the family unit and, by extension, in the society at large.

In the turbulent history of contemporary Iran, doubts about modernity, about relations with the West, and about the place of religion in politics have been projected upon the emerging patterns of masculinity and femininity. The Islamic Revolution is an epitome of this anxiety over the proper place for men and women and the breakdown of the moral fiber of society. The reigning clerics bewailed the decline—crisis, really—in cherished ideals of gender relations, and proceeded to accentuate the differences between the two sexes. In fact, as early as the 1940s, Ayatollah Khomeini warned against a stolen and dying patriarchy. "In your European hats," he lamented in his book, *The Unveiling of Secrets*, "you strolled the boulevards, ogling the naked girls, and thought yourselves fine fellows, unaware that foreigners were carting off the country's patrimony and resources." The Ayatollah was in the company of many writers, who ridiculed this mutant character, this bad imitation of the West, this perversion of traditional Iranian masculinity or femininity.

Denying women agency, refusing to see their longstanding struggle for desegregation, social critics and writers blamed "unmanly men" for making "way for the arrival of the women's caravan." "What have we really done?" asks in desperation a disgruntled Jalal Al-e Ahmad. "We have simply given women permission to display themselves in society. Just a display. That is exhibitionism. We have placed women, who are the protectors of tradition, the family, the bloodlines, and the generations in a position of irresponsibility. We have brought them into the streets, to exhibit themselves, to be without duties, to make up their faces, to wear new styles every day and to hang around."

Hang around? Is this what pioneering women, like Al-e Ahmad's own wife, Simin Daneshvar, have accomplished? Yes—and much more. These circulating women—visible, voiced, and mobile—their unheralded sisters, and an increasing number of men have advocated the reform of the family unit from within and pushed against the boundaries of gender apartheid from without. While searching for justice and enduring harmony, they have advocated structural and systemic change in their society. Refusing to be silenced and kept out of sight, they have transgressed religious, philosophical, political, as well as spatial boundaries. Defying sex-segregation, they have reconfigured the very definitions of masculinity and femininity. Surely, the path to full and lasting gender-integration has been long and strewn with difficulties. Backlashes have been and continue to be inevitable. Still, traditional gender relations have broken down and conventional distribution of space, visibility, and power has been modified. A woman's presence, voice, and vision have been inserted in the public square and the public discourse. The genie is out of the bottle and the caravan of women, led by women writers, has, in effect, re-mapped the cultural geography of Iran and reorganized its political landscape without shedding a drop of blood.

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6. *The Iranian Family in Transition*
   Djavad Salehi-Isfahani

Over the last three decades there has been a complete transformation of the Iranian family. At the time of the Islamic Revolution, the average family lived in a home in a rural area with no running water and no access to a nearby school. It was headed by a couple who could not read or write, of whom the wife would give birth to seven children and whose main role in the family was to cook, clean, and struggle to keep her children alive past age five (only one in eight would survive to that age). About one-third of Iranians lived in an extended family.

Three decades on, the average family is urban with access to most household amenities, including a washing machine. The average couple has basic education and, most importantly, has only two children, whose education rather than their mere survival is their main concern. More than 85 percent live in nuclear families composed of parents and children only. The new family is not only more modern in its living conditions and outlook (less paternalistic in treatment of women and children), it also contributes more to economic growth because of its reorientation from quantity to quality of children.

As Gary Becker and Robert Lucas have argued, this shift in function and behavior of the family is the most critical step in economic development and social modernization. This transformation has also contributed to the national struggle for a more democratic society by reducing the gender gaps in education and economic status. It has also allowed the struggle for greater empowerment of women led by women intellectuals and activists to reach ordinary families in rural and urban areas.

While the beginning of modernity in Iran dates to the mid-twentieth century, and is characterized by the emergence of modern social norms among the elite Iranians, the transformation of the *average* family can be traced to the country's demographic transition three decades later, in the late 1980s. The delay in fertility reduction in Iran relative to countries with similar income and child mortality, reflects in part the underdevelopment of rural Iran and lack of access to family planning technology. Public policy in post-revolution, which emphasized the expansion of infrastructure—electricity, clear water, and paved roads—as well as health and family planning was critical in the transformation of the rural family. The most important consequence of the transformation is the narrowing of the gap in education between rural and urban residents and between men and women. New families, even in rural areas, are formed today by men and women who on average have the same level of education, plan on having two children, and invest in their children's education.

This transformation was deeply affected, if not set back, by the introduction of *shari'a* law into family laws that affirmed men as the head of households and gave them greater power over women, especially in divorce. This incongruity between changes at the micro and the macro level has manifested itself in a deep crisis in the Iranian family, represented by a high rate of divorce, especially among young rural couples, and involuntary delay in marriage. This crisis is far more serious than warranted by dramatic social change alone. A high divorce rate can be a natural consequence of a transition to a less paternalistic social norm, but it can also represent the discordance between greater empowerment of women within the family brought about by the economic-demographic transformation and their weakening status in law.

A similar incongruity has emerged between the decisions of modern families to invest more in their children's education and the society's limitations on youth access to employment as well as self-expression, subjecting

families to pressure from yet another direction. Youth unemployment in 2011 was about 25 percent for men and twice that for women, and education did not increase one's chance of finding a job. As with marriage, the youth employment crisis is compounded by an unfavorable age structure that in the last decades has brought five new labor market entrants for every adult who retires.

The demographic causes of the crises that engulf Iranian families will ease with time. The imbalance in the marriage market will reverse in the coming decade to increase the number of men of marriageable age relative to women. In the labor market the proportion of new entrants to retirees will fall from five to two. What is not certain to change are social and economic policies that so far have failed to address their root causes. For example, to promote marriage, the government has attempted to limit the amount of *mahrieh* that women can demand. This is a bond at the time of marriage that women obtain from their future husbands in order to hold them accountable in the face of the unequal legal protection they face from Iran's family laws. Rather than promote marriage, limiting *mahrieh* may discourage women from getting married.Similarly, in reacting to youth unemployment, instead of improving skill formation in education and discouraging credentialism, governments have consistently rewarded the mere acquisition of diplomas by targeting job creation programs to those with a university education. Finally, the response to women's ascent in various aspects of social and economic life has created a conservative backlash that seeks to limit their access to universities and to family planning.

Government policies intended to stop or turn back the historical forces that have transformed the Iranian family during the past three decades are doomed to failure. Public policy should instead try to take advantage of the positive energies unleashed by the transformation of the family, such as the focus on child education, to move the country forward.

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7. *The State of Human Rights in Iran*
Mahmood Monshipouri and Mehdi Zakerian

The contemporary history of Iran has shown that her people have frequently fought—though not often successfully—to break the yoke of tyrants. The struggle for reform and modernization at the turn of the century in Iran, dubbed the "constitutional revolution" (1905-1911), included all social strata and classes, while signaling national aspirations of the vast majority of Iranians for democratic reform. The collective hopes for democracy for many Iranians were dashed by an American-British engineered coup in 1953 that removed Iran's popularly elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the frustration felt by Iranians than the prolonged and tortuous effects of the West's interference.

In the ensuing years, the Pahlavi regime ushered in a new era of repressive rule and politics, with the Shah being largely above the law and a monarchical regime bereft of institutionalized democratic processes. In the wake of the Shah's ouster, the 1979 Iranian Revolution, while seeking such egalitarian goals as social justice, income equality, and human rights, left much to be desired in the realm of human rights. Much has been articulated about the political and international aspects of the Iranian Revolution, with a view toward explaining the root causes of a nationwide revolt that toppled the Pahlavi dynasty.

Several key factors—including systematic repression, widespread corruption, and disruptively fast-paced modernization—underlined a momentous event of unprecedented significance that culminated in the downfall of the Shah's regime. The post-revolutionary changes and transformation has since spurred a rigorous debate among the region's scholars over what interpretation of democratic reform and cultural politics should shape Iran's human rights condition in the future. In recent years, the country's moral and political divide has further deepened, with the ruling elite facing both normative and institutional challenges.

The revolutionary fervor, however, encountered wide-ranging challenges, as new social, economic, and political problems compounded the Islamic Republic's attempt to advance its ideological goals. The population explosion, the Iran-Iraq War, and the emigration of some three million Iranians created a whole host of problems that undermined the ruling elites' revolutionary approach.

While the first republic (1979-1989) became engulfed in the revenge, the purge, and the war with Iraq, the second republic (1989-1997) initiated reconstruction and economic liberalization, a period marked largely by pragmatism and economic advancement. The third republic (1997-2005) pitted theocracy against democracy. By 1999, Iran had become a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees; and the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

The reform process under President Mohammad Khatami met with considerable resistance by conservative actors, factions, and foundations, giving rise to the emergence of neoconservatives such as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The result was that the political evolutionary trend toward paving the way for the emergence of the fourth republic (2005-)—that is, the republic of liberalism and full-blown democracy—was effectively blocked. In 2009, the post-presidential election protests in Iran shook the foundation of the Islamic Republic, as a new wave of street protests, known as the Green Movement, posed a homegrown and popular threat to the country's

revolutionary power structure. The reach of social networking tools and digital interactions dramatically undermined the effectiveness of the "external" enemy argument as recourse to avoiding internal intractable problems. The ensuing crackdown on journalists, rights activists, and lawyers in a bid to stifle dissent led to a pervasive climate of fear, and lingering tensions and factions within the ruling regime.

This chapter seeks to divide the root causes of human rights violations in Iran since 1989 into three broad categories: domestic, individual, and systemic. Although it is difficult to theoretically distinguish these categories from each other, the interrelatedness of factors involved on these three levels makes the study and assessment of the human rights situation an extremely intriguing yet daunting task. Thus, identifying one category of human rights violations as the key cause or source of human rights abuses is woefully inadequate. Rather, we argue that protecting and promoting human rights in Iran involves a multipronged strategy aimed at simultaneously overcoming domestic, individual-centered, and systemic barriers.

While utilizing three levels of analysis (domestic, individual, systemic), we contextualize three periods of social change in post-Khomeini Iran—namely, reconstruction and pragmatism, political reform, and populism—in an attempt to demonstrate key factors that have played a role in influencing the state of human rights in Iran. To set the stage for analyzing the condition of human rights in Iran, we first turn to Islamic views on human rights with a view toward evaluating Iran's theocratic orientation. This is a prelude to investigating what the governing elites' interests and identities are and whether such leaders use their political powers and levers to either advance human rights or the regime's preservation. To do so, we examine the policies and practices of three subsequent administrations in post-Khomeini Iran to determine whether they have positively or adversely affected the state of human rights in Iran. Finally, we argue the need to strengthen the struggle for human rights in Iran, underscoring the importance of education, international organizations such as the United Nations, and local and regional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in fostering the interaction between internal and external political dynamics.

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8. *U.S.–Iran Tensions in Post-Khomeini Iran and Iranian Immigrants in the United States*
   Mohsen Mobasher

This chapter examines the impact of the Iranian Revolution on emigration of thousands of Iranians in the past three decades. It also examines the post-revolutionary U.S.-Iran political tensions on integration of first and second generation Iranians in the United States. Following the introduction, this chapter describes the history of Iranian immigration to the U.S., with particular emphasis on patterns and causes of immigration between the overthrow of the nationalistic government of Mosaddegh in 1953 and the Iranian Revolution in 1978. This section ends with the most current demographic profile of Iranians in the United States provided by the 2010 census.

The second part of this chapter discusses the ongoing social and political challenges with which Iranian immigrants in the United States have been collectively confronted since the Iranian revolution. The primary aim of this section is to examine the impact of U.S.-Iran political tensions, initiated by the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979, on widespread discrimination and prejudice against Iranians and their integration into their new host society. This chapter concludes with the impact of the 9/11 attacks on political mobilization among second-generation Iranian-Americans, and their significant political accomplishments in the last ten years.

This chapter argues that the fundamental elements that have linked the home- and host-ends of migration for Iranian immigrants and have shaped their overall migration experience have been U.S.-Iran political and diplomatic relations since the 1950s, and the abrupt drastic political shift in U.S.-Iran relations from friendly allies during the pre-revolutionary era to hostile enemies since the revolution, with nothing in between. By focusing on U.S.-Iran political relations during the last half century, this chapter highlights two major theoretical underpinnings, both of which have been ignored by most scholars of Iranian immigration. First, unlike many migration scholars who emphasize the role of human capital, cultural beliefs, and practices of migrants in the host society, this chapter reiterates the political nature of immigration. It underscores the powerful impact of political relations between migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries on integration and incorporation of immigrants. As research has shown, the mode of entry and the political relations between the migrant-sending and receiving states as well as the social, political, and economic conditions of the host society at the time of migrants' arrival are key factors that shape the experience of immigrants in the United States. Equally important, the degree of stability or social change in a migrant's home society has a profound impact on an immigrant's community structure, political orientation, and lifestyle in the host society.

This theoretical focus constitutes the central theme of the chapter and accounts for its title. The second theoretical thrust of this chapter is to show how Iranian immigrants are impacted by the exclusionary and discriminatory practices of U.S. immigration policies caused by the post-revolutionary political breakup between Iran and the United States. The cumulative impact of political breakup between the U.S. and Iran after the revolution and its impact on the integration of Iranian immigrants in the U.S. have not yet been subject to comprehensive analysis. Despite social scientists' increased interest in Iranian immigrants in diaspora in recent years, there is a lack of theoretical work that focuses on the political ends of the migration process for Iranian immigrants. This chapter is a small step in this direction.

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9. *Iranian Art-House Cinema—A Postal Cinema*
   Hamid Naficy

Of all the different types of cinemas produced in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the one that stands out in terms of its global reach and impact is the art-house cinema. However, this cinema constitutes only a small percentage of the total output of the country's feature film industry, which produces about sixty to seventy movies a year. Yet, because of their global impact, the art-house films have come to erroneously represent the "national cinema" of Iran for most film spectators, programmers, scholars, critics, and students abroad. This chapter briefly discusses the reasons for the global impact of the art-house cinema, and examines at length its politics and aesthetics.

The Iranian art cinema, or art-house cinema, has deeply impressed Western critics and audiences for many reasons. The reorientation from considering cinema a morally corrupting and imperialist enterprise to an indigenous and self-empowering industry was a major one. Reorganization and modernization of industry infrastructure; the de facto banning of film imports, particularly those from Hollywood, which could overshadow domestic productions; government financing, production, and wide-ranging censorship; rehabilitation of veteran Pahlavi-era new-wave directors; and the emergence of a new cadre of post-revolution filmmakers, including women and ethnic minority directors, were other reasons for the high quality of the films, and the new respect. The state's involvement intensified for a time after the revolution to the point of de facto takeover of all means of film production and distribution, but privatization muscled in, as did independent directors and, later, underground filmmakers. The small, humanist topics and the often deceptively simple but innovative styles with which these were treated, offered additional reasons for the high quality of, and enthusiastic reactions to, art-house films.

There were certain characteristics of the films' transnational and global reception that further contributed to their high recognition and regard. Their simple, quiet stories, told without the gloss and glamour of stars, special effects, violence, and car chases—their smallness—offered a refreshing contrast to the blockbusters and high-octane movies that dominated the world markets. Their humanism and smallness were doubly attractive as they seemed to offer a total contrast to the dominant view abroad of the Islamic Republic as a hotbed of hostility, violence, intolerance, and terrorism.

These multiple contrasts made the art-house films counterhegemonic politically, innovative stylistically, and exotic ethnographically. Arbiters of film culture and taste—influential film critics at major periodicals and broadcast stations, film curators and programmers at film festivals, museums, art galleries, and repertory cinemas, and university professors, students, and bloggers—showcased these films, critiqued them, programmed them, analyzed them, wrote about them, taught them, and organized conferences about them, paving the way for their wider distribution and deeper penetration by sales, commercial movie house exhibition, television transmission, cyberspace presence, and spectator reception. The Islamic Republic's severe censoring and its periodic banning and imprisonment of filmmakers, as well as the way its politics and policies were continually in the news for over three decades, further whetted the curiosity and appetite for these films. Finally, the large media-savvy Iranian population in diaspora (sometimes estimated to be as high as 3 million), residing in major metropolitan centers of the world with large film and media industries, provided an enthusiastic and loyal secondary market which helped give these films additional legs.

The art-house cinema is one of the ten types of films emerging in Iran after the revolution, in what may be called "postal" cinema. Art-house films produced since the late 1980s are postal because they surfaced after the iconoclastic destructions of nearly a third of the nation's movie-houses and the subsequent re-institutionalization of cinema. They also emerged after the imposition of the veil on women, after the eight-year war with Iraq (1980-88), and after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's death (1989). In their humanism they may be regarded, if not as a secular cinema, at least as a post-Islamic, but nevertheless spiritual and ethical cinema. The prefix "post" denotes not a complete break but a movement out of a closed Islamist doctrinal milieu or from the dictates of popular and other narrative film genres toward deeper and more expansive thematic and stylistic horizons. The art-house cinema is also "postal" in the way some films reject the exclusionary high culture, authoritarian certainties, and politicized aesthetics of modernism and realism for more nuanced, open, ambiguous, self-reflexive, intertextual, pluralist, playful, and humanist ethics and aesthetics of postmodernism. Finally, the art-house films are post-national and post-cinema, in that they exist both outside the originating nation and traditional movie houses: they live in transnational, international, and global mediascapes—film festivals, commercial movie houses, art-house venues, galleries, museums, television, video distribution, and cyberspace.

Hamid Naficy, a leading authority on cinema and television in the Middle East, has produced many educational films and experimental videos and has published extensively about theories of exile and displacement, exilic, and diaspora cinema and media, and Iranian and Third World cinemas. His many publications include such well-known titles as *An Accented Cinema, The Making of Exile Cultures, Otherness and the Media: The Ethnography of the Imagined and the Imaged, Iran Media Index*, and the AFI anthology, *Home, Exile, Homeland*. Most recently, he has published *A Social History of Iranian Cinema*, in four volumes available from Duke University Press.

10. *Pop-Music in the Islamic Republic*
    Nahid Siamdoust

This chapter is about the birth and evolution of state-sanctioned pop music in post-revolutionary Iran. As Iran slowly emerged from the devastating emotional and economic impact of the Iran-Iraq war, its large youth population was eager for forms of cultural production that reflected its openness and optimism toward the world and the future. State officials responded to these shifts in demography and taste by opening the gates to pop music after nearly two decades of prohibition on the genre. The bulk of this chapter is about this process, which was spearheaded by a number of distinct individuals among state officials as well as young musicians, attesting to the importance of personal agency. It also examines the evolution of this state-controlled "*musiqi-ye pop*" from its initial forms, which were rhythmically unprovoking and content-wise innocuous, drawing often on religious or "nature" themes, to its more current forms, which rely heavily on themes of romance and are musically couched in fast beats and dance-inducing rhythms.

It is now often difficult to distinguish between pop music produced in Tehran and its twin city half a world away, dubbed "Tehrangeles." Since the revolution and through to the mid-2000s, pop music produced by expatriates in Los Angeles often dominated Tehran's (private) party soundscapes, but was also prevalent in everyday spaces such as taxis and people's homes. This nearly unidirectional flow of production started reversing by 2005, when some pop music made in Iran reached higher popularity even among expatriates. By then the Islamic state no longer stood in the way of fast beats and love lyrics, and production and recording qualities in Iran had vastly improved. This exchange has now reached a sort of equilibrium, as both sides influence each other and indeed collaborate. Ultimately, the Islamic state—as far as we can at all talk about a unified body of decision-making on cultural production—has been very pragmatic in its approach to pop music; as long as the music does not pose an ideological or political threat to the regime, it is permitted, no matter how fast the beats or carnal the themes.

It took the Islamic Republic about a decade to arrive at this point, since all these issues were at first contested. I argue that whereas the state initially regulated pop music based on "Islamic" sensibilities, it has allowed musicians in this field to gradually push the boundaries in beats and diction. Because the state strictly controls Iran's public entertainment space, it is not concerned about the potential of fun's subversive power which at a minimum requires some spontaneity and freedom. This has led to a popular but shallow official musical culture. Although audiences always inject their own interpretations and subversions into the officially sanctioned or "public transcript," they never leave the state's "power paradigm" in this tightly controlled field. Thus, more than a decade after lifting the ban on pop music, the state allows most kinds of beats and lyrics as long as it can remain in control of their production, and as long as they do not pose a threat to its legitimacy.

Nahid Siamdoust teaches History and Politics of the Middle East and Modern Iran at the University of Oxford, where she recently obtained her doctorate in Modern Middle Eastern Studies at St. Antony's College. Her dissertation examines the field of music production as a politically charged public sphere in post-revolutionary

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11. *The Economic and the Political Role of Bonyads*
       Manochehr Dorraj

As significant as the ideological make up, psychological profiles, and self-perception of political actors might be in determining their political behavior, more salient are the larger social forces, structural and institutional frameworks, and policies and processes that allow them to maintain and manipulate power to remain politically relevant on the national and global stage.

Driven by a populist interpretation of Shi'ite Islam and a corporatist strategy that aspired to incorporate the support of the newly energized masses for the state, in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution of 1979, the Islamic Republic established a number of significant new institutions to achieve these goals. Bonyads were among the most significant of such organizations. Bonyads are quasi-governmental organizations, used as vehicles of dispensation of aid, services, and handouts to the lower class constituency of the regime, thus facilitating their recruitment and incorporation into the military and the security apparatus and the government bureaucracy. A close scrutiny of the political and the economic roles of bonyads in the post-revolutionary era may shed light on the institutional and policy mechanisms employed by the Islamic Republic to build and consolidate its base of support and maintain power and political control.

In this chapter, we discuss the pre-revolutionary origins, the post-revolutionary evolution, and the political and economic dynamics that define the multiple functions of bonyads. We examine how bonyads' original role as organizations of charitable giving and dispensation of aid and services to the poor have evolved into significant instruments of power for a sector of the clerical and para-military elites. We dissect their simultaneous reliance on and the autonomy from the state, and the dynamics that govern their function as parallel institutions versus the formal economy and the governmental bureaucracy. We also examine their impact on poverty and inequality in Iran since 1979. Further, we expound on their expanding role in the Iranian economy as corporate entities and their significant impact on the political landscape as instruments of political incorporation of the underclass. These dynamics and the nuances surrounding them are explored in this chapter.

By shedding light on the multiple functions of bonyads—as a microcosm of the modus operandi of the Islamic Republic in the economic as well as the political and cultural realms—some possible answers could emerge to the vexing question: why, despite all the odds against it in the last thirty-four years, has the Islamic Republic continued to survive?

Since its inception in 1979, the Islamic Republic has employed a number of political, economic, and institutional instruments to mobilize and consolidate its base of support. The most significant of these are bonyads. During the first decade of the revolution, when revolutionary zeal and ideological politics were intense, the charitable functions of bonyads superseded their business functions. With the ascendance of Rafsanjani to power, the gradual privatization of state-owned enterprises, and the onset of a more pragmatic tone in Iranian politics, the emphasis shifted to transforming these organizations into profitable enterprises. There were several distinct factors responsible for this transformation. Since Iran's treasury was drained by the war of attrition, and because of the weakness of the private sector, induced in part by the massive expropriation of private property and nationalization of the major industries, the state needed entities such as Bonyads to assume a larger role in order

to fill the economic vacuum. In addition, the Iranian government sought a new venue to divest military capacity and personnel in the aftermath of the war and diffuse the possibility of military coup d'états. Bonyads were useful vehicles for the achievement of these goals.

This partially explains the reason for the influential positions that the individuals with military and para-military backgrounds play in these organizations. In light of these considerations, in time, their function was redefined as not only instruments of distributive justice and dispensation of patronage, handouts, aid, and services to low-income people, comprising the primary constituency of the regime, but, increasingly, as the new economic stakeholders of corporate Iran with considerable economic and political clout. Hence, the different privatization initiatives encompassing state-owned enterprises since the 1990s, for the most part, has not included the assets of the bonyads. Quite the contrary, it has culminated in transferring many of the nationalized industries and enterprises, often through no-bid contracts, to the bonyads, thus empowering them further in the process. Therefore, there are many questions as to why these organizations that are obstacles to much needed economic and political reform and serve as agents of clientelism and crony capitalism should continue to be the target of preferential treatments, perks, and benefits from the government.

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12.   *Business and Enterprise Development in Iran*
      Bijan Khajehpour

Analyzing enterprise development in Iran is challenging, largely because of the existence of a growing sector known as the semi-governmental sector. In fact, Iran is unique in the sense that its state sector is much larger than its governmental sector. Therefore, assessing business and enterprise development in Iran requires an understanding of the transformations that have taken place in the three spheres of government, semi-government, and private sectors. This chapter's aim is to analyze these three sectors and their interaction as well as how each of these sectors has been influenced by the social, economic, as well as internal and external political dynamics.

The chapter looks at the most significant trends in economic policy since 1989 as well as the country's privatization campaign, external sanctions, and subsidy reforms that have shaped Corporate Iran throughout the past two decades. The core focus of this chapter is to outline the upsides and downsides of the transformation of Corporate Iran, and to identify how this phenomenon could change Iran over the next decade.

To understand the extent of change in the sphere of enterprise development, we need to take into account that the country has transformed on various fronts in the past two decades. Most significantly, Iran has moved from a government-run closed war economy to a diverse growth economy by leaving behind its government-centric economic structure and heading toward a diverse and decentralized economic structure. At the same time, the country has experienced a generational shift within its society, business community, and state management. Governance structures have evolved from an ideological mindset (shaped by revolutionary forces) through a technocratic mind (driven by technocrats during the country's post-war reconstruction) toward a technological-nationalistic mindset (pursued by military commanders and organizations). In other words, the country in general and the business community in particular have become more pragmatic and less ideological. This phenomenon has also paved the way for the transformation of business culture from state technocracy to a military/nationalistic mindset. Within Corporate Iran, this transformation, alongside phenomena such as subsidy reforms, has compelled businesses to become more efficient and modern. Furthermore, the growth of an export economy has helped Corporate Iran to integrate regional and international trade paving the way for greater interaction between Iranian and international businesses.

All the aforementioned transformations influence attitudes in Corporate Iran. While companies owned by the government would mainly fall back on government networks, the changing ownership will also change the networks—there will be a growing move toward the semi-governmental networks available in the economy (in banking, insurance, subcontracting, etc.). The new networks would rely largely on their former affiliation with the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and other semi-state institutions. Another distinction can be found in attitudes towards international business: government ministries and governmental circles were more in tune with Iran's conventional trade approach, i.e. the export of crude oil and the importation of goods and services. However, among the new owners, there is a much stronger tendency towards revolutionary ideals such as self-sufficiency and national capacity building. The military and even revolutionary organizations are dominated by former military commanders whose psychological mindset is more influenced by their experiences in the Iran-Iraq war, i.e. a deep mistrust of western values and enterprises, as well as a desire to fully control all processes. While this mindset can lead to inherent tensions in enterprises, an upside in many organizations, especially those affiliated with military entities, is their growing inclination towards a disciplined and modern approach to

management. As opposed to the traditional setting where values such as age, experience, and traditional hierarchy were dominant, in the new setting a military-style approach to management (based on efficiency, accountability, and performance) is prevalent. Incidentally, this business culture also appreciates the value of technology and knowledge, but the downside is that there is a sense of overconfidence among the military commanders in what they can achieve on their own.

Evidently, the current process is shifting the balance of power away from the governmental sector towards the semi-state sector. Consequently, the emergence of a new balance of power between government on the one side and the semi-governmental entities on the other will have a direct impact on medium-term economic as well as political developments. Private sector players as well as international investors will have to analyze the changing dynamics and understand risks and opportunities in the new enterprise environment.

It is believed that the growing economic nature of these semi-state entities will help them become more profit-driven, hence pragmatic in the future. In fact, if such organizations move towards an economic justification rather than ideological or security justifications, they would become more interested in regional and international cooperation. At the same time, the majority of economic organizations in Iran are experiencing changes and shifts, especially in the way they are structured and managed. There is greater attention to professionalism and modern management and there is also the impact of demography, i.e. the younger generation of managers who are more educated and more internationally-oriented. As such, one needs to revisit perceptions and assessments of all these entities on a regular basis, especially as so much is influenced by personalities who lead these organizations.

Looking ahead, a number of determinant factors (such as the domestic composition of power, foreign relations, nuclear negotiations, regional developments, etc.) are still in a state of flux. Nonetheless, if one projects the trajectory of past developments, one can identify a number of future trends that will shape Corporate Iran including a continued struggle between the government and semi-state companies to dominate the Iranian business scene, as well as a tendency towards more competition, professionalization, and internationalization. These changes will not be free of tensions, but they will help Iran develop a more pragmatic approach to interaction with the rest of the world.

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