

## CHAPTER 6 SOCIAL STRUCTURE: RELATIONS BETWEEN THE RELIGIOUS ELITE, THE BAZAAR, THE STATE AND THE CROWD IN IRAN

This chapter introduces Iranian groups, the religious elite (*mojtaheds*), traditional merchants (*bazaar*) and Iranian “crowd” (*lutis* and *tollabs*) who were mobilized during social movement activity in Iran. These groups often formed overlapping relations with one another in Iranian society, but each had different interests that had to be negotiated during social movement activity. Some groups, such as the clerical elite, were well positioned to negotiate among many different factions during social movement activity. These organizations represent *traditional mobilizing structures* of Iranian societies (see McCarthy and Zald 1973; 1977). During protest periods, coalitions between traditional groups were a part of an *opportunity structure* that helped facilitate social movement activity (see McAdam 1996).

### ***Historical Background***

A complete accounting of the period of Safavid Empire (1501-1736) and Qajar Dynasty (1794-1925)<sup>1</sup> is not possible in this work, but it is important to give a brief overview of these historical periods in order to understand how the authority of the religious elite in Iranian society was established. The Safavid rulers were the first to link their governing ideal, and their authority, to a modified Shi'i Islamic philosophy that accommodated monarchical governance. Likewise, a strategy of the Qajar rulers was to actively court prominent religious leaders (*mojtaheds*) as a means of consolidating their authority in Iran.

There has been an academic debate<sup>2</sup> as to the degree of independence the Iranian clergy had during the Safavid and Qajar periods. Most<sup>3</sup> regard the Iranian clergy as mediators between the Qajar rulers, the merchants (*bazaar*) and individual Iranians, and therefore a primary means

by which the authority of Qajar rule was reinforced at the local level. Others<sup>4</sup> regard clerical authority as being largely independent from Qajar rule, and often adversarial to monarchical governance. As it relates to the Tobacco movement and the Constitutional revolution, this debate has focused on whether the Iranian *mojtaheds* were leaders of the movements, or whether they generally supported the Qajar Shah until forced, by the *bazaaris* and liberal political reformers, to reluctantly support movements that were already in progress (Algar 1969, 1972; Arjomand 1981, 1984; Bayat 1991; Keddie 1966; 1969; Lambton 1965, 1987; Martin 1989).

#### *The Safavid Empire and the Development of a Clerical Elite*<sup>5</sup>

Shah Esmail, founder of the Safavid empire, was the son of Shaykh Haydar, the leader of a religious order that was established by Shaykh Safi Gilani (d 1334). The *Safi* orders were closely linked with *Sufism*, generally a more inward-looking and *gnostic* (often described as “esoteric”) form of Islam. The Safavid rulers claimed lineage from the prophet Mohammad through Fatima and Ali. They also claimed lineage to the *Sasanids*, the rulers of pre-Islamic Persia.

Shah Esmail, by the age of 20, had asserted control over Iran and was challenging the Ottomans in Asia Minor. He was defeated at the Battle of Chaldiran (August 24, 1514) by the Ottomans, who then engaged in a campaign to kill the rebellious Shi’i in Asia minor. Accounts vary, but thousands of Sufis (40,000 is a common estimate) were killed in this campaign. During this period the Safavids, aligned with the prominent religious leaders, actively endorsed the practice of *taqiyeh* for Shi’i being persecuted by the Ottomans. In this case it allowed for supporters of the Safavids, in areas occupied by the Ottomans, to hide their religious beliefs and continue to secretly support the Safavids.

The Safavid Empire survived the defeat at Chaldiran, was fortified by Shah Abbas (1587-1629), and became firmly established in Iran. The occupants of modern Iran were predominately Sunni before the period of the Safavid rule, and Sunnis were widely persecuted during the establishment of the Safavid Empire. As the Safavid rulers consolidated control over the region they helped establish an orthodox Shi'i hierarchy that helped to legitimize their authority. Religious leaders were often more involved in the daily affairs of local Moslem communities, the Safavid rulers assumed responsibility for protecting the empire from both external (the Ottomans) and internal (rebellious Sunni) threats. The Safavid rulers were also attributed with religious authority as "perfect leaders" and later "the Shadow of God" (Arjomand 1984). While the Safavid rulers had considerable authority over the religious elite they never fully consolidated control over the religious taxes (*waqf*) that supported much of the Shi'i hierarchy. This allowed the Shi'i religious establishment to retain a means of support independent from the state.

Accompanied by Safavid rule was the introduction of the idea that prominent *mojtaheds*—religious leaders who could interpret the religious doctrines—should be emulated by the faithful. As *mojtahed* guidance became integrated into the social system religious leaders began to exercise increased authority concerning the application of religious social law (*feqh*). Within this framework, those who were worthy of emulation (*marja-e taqlid*) were generally attributed with the title of *mojtahed*.<sup>6</sup> At times, one leader in the Shi'i hierarchy achieved preeminence—such as Ayatollah Shirazi who was the preeminent jurist during the Tobacco movement—but during other periods there were many prominent *mojtaheds* of nearly equal rank.

Some *mojtaheds* depended on the Safavid and Qajar rulers for support, and benefited from their semi-official status, now part of the governing ideal of the empire. Others remained closer to local communities and were more influenced by public opinion. Individual believers also retained an element of choice concerning their religious beliefs in that they could choose from the prominent *mojtaheds* who to emulate. So, while the degree to which an individual believer could practice *ejtehad* (an exertion of conscience in an attempt to remain pious) may have been circumscribed during this period (they now emulated a *mojtahed*), individuals did retain an element of religious choice in that they could choose the *mojtahed* they preferred to follow (see Arjomand 1984).<sup>7</sup>

***Social Structure: Relations Between the Bazaar, the Islamic Elite, the Crowd and the Qajar State***

Disentangling the relationship between the *bazaar*, the Islamic elite, reformers and the Qajar state has been an important preoccupation of historians who have studied the Constitutional revolution.<sup>8</sup> The locus of the debate concerns whether the relationship between the Islamic elite and the state was cooperative or confrontational during protest activities. In this respect, a general consensus has emerged that prominent *mojtaheds* often depended on the state for support, and that *mojtaheds* had advocates within the Qajar court who extended resources, and prestige, to different religious leaders. But different Qajar politicians favored different *mojtaheds*, and often fashioned coalitions based upon various personal, and institutional, power struggles within the Qajar court. Qajar politicians also fueled rivalries among the religious elite when it served their interest. In short, the Qajar court was inclined to support *mojtaheds* who supported Qajar positions, but withdraw support if a *mojtahed* acted independently.

Some *mojtaheds*, when they chose to, could act independently from the Qajar state. For instance, Lambton (1987) gives the following example that occurred when the first “modern” school of science, the *Dar al-Fanun*, was established. The school was opposed by prominent *mojtaheds* who saw it as a threat to their traditional role as educators. At this time, only a traditional religious education, taught at religious seminaries (*madrasas*) or mosques was available in Iran. This is an excerpted letter from Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri—the Prime Minister in the Shah’s court—to the British consulate in which he describes the court’s inability to control the prominent *mojtaheds*. .

You yourself are acquainted with the character and conduct of the Persian mullas towards the government and towards everybody else in Persia; and you know that we do not possess that power over them which we ought have; and at any rate we are obliged to be cautious in dealing with them. (Lambton 1987: 292)

The Islamic elite also had a close relationship with the *bazaar* (traditional merchants) who they depended on to support religious ceremonies (the *Moharram* processions), charities and traditional Islamic schools (*madrasas*). Some have argued that this close relationship between *mojtaheds* and prominent *bazaar* families—sometimes related through marriage—provided some *mojtaheds* with an independent sources of income separate from the support they received from the population at large. Later, some social movement leaders (e.g. Shariati 1979; 1981) would use this relationship to describe the “corruption” of Islam by the “commercial” interest of the *bazaari* elite. Indeed, some prominent *bazaari* families sent their children to the *madrasa* schools for religious training, and some merchant families—as well as large land-holding families—occasionally had children who became clerics. And many traditional

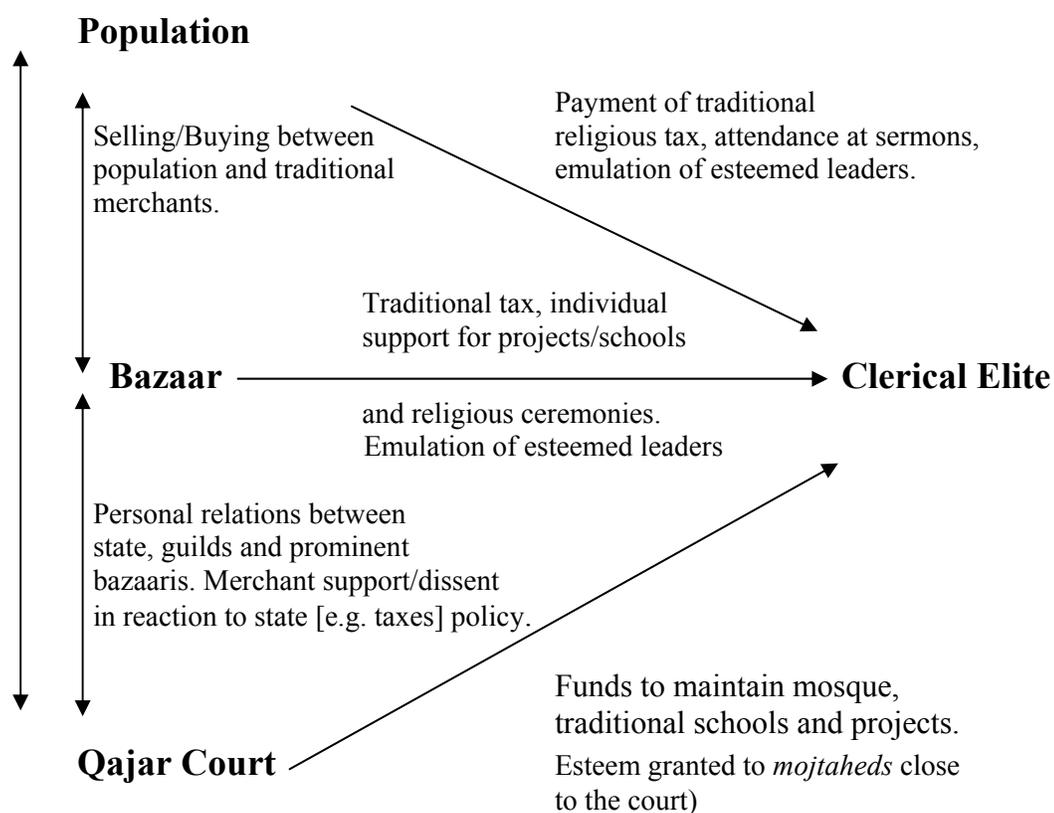
*mojtaheds* had close relationships with prominent *bazaaris* and the landed elite (see Fischer<sup>9</sup> 1980).

Prominent *mojtaheds* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century benefited from a close relationship with government officials. Likewise, some prominent *bazaar* families choose to send their children to the “modern” schools sponsored by the state and had formal and informal contacts that helped facilitate state support for their commercial interests. For instance, Hajj Mohammad Hasan Amin Zard—a wealthy merchant who headed the Council of Merchants in Tehran during the Tobacco movement—had a close working relationship with the Qajar Shah. This relationship did not prevent him, and his sons, from opposing the Qajar Shah during the Tobacco movement (Bayat 1991). In other cases, there were prominent families that had representatives in the *bazaar*, the state, and among the clerical elite (see Fischer 1980). For example, the most prominent *mojtahed* during the Tobacco movement, Mirza Hasan Shirazi, had strong *bazaar* connections and had systematically expanded his authority by broadening his teaching circles. These teaching circles, wherein students usually received a small stipend while they studied, necessitated steady financial support from prominent merchants. Amanat (1988) states:

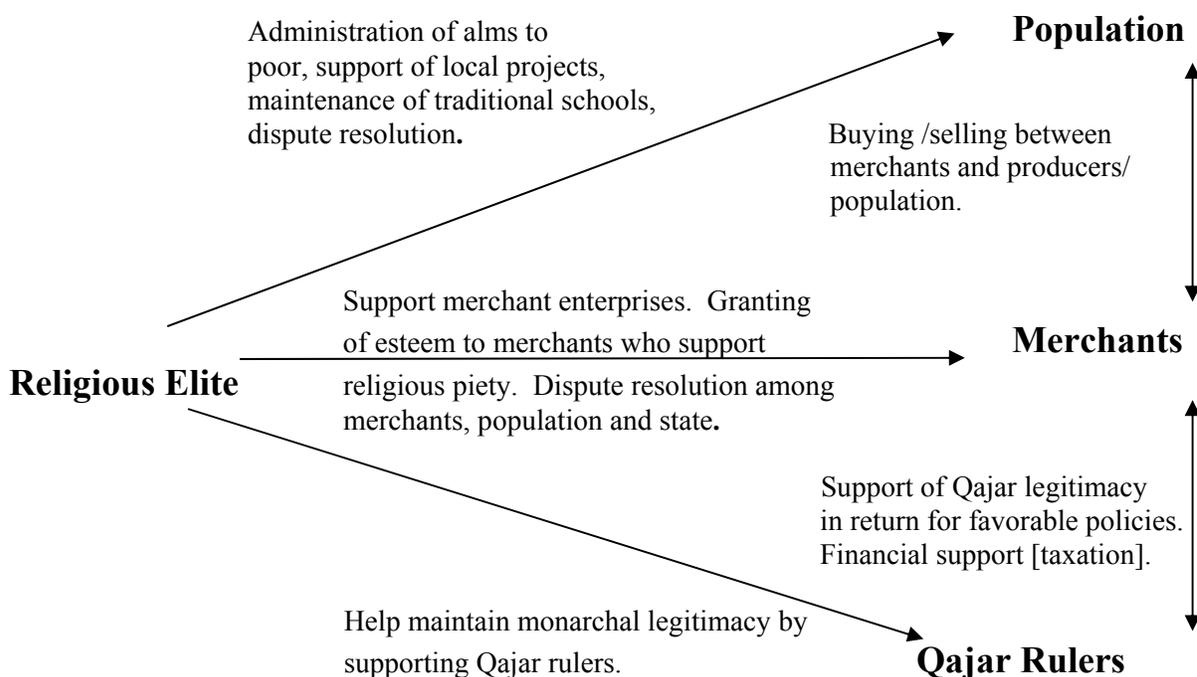
Throughout the 1880s, the fame of Shirazi surpassed other *mojtaheds*, chiefly because of his more systematic endeavors to achieve two objectives: first, to attract merchant support and funds, and second, to expand his own network. Most effective in his first task was Shirazi’s own mercantile background. He was coming from a Shirazi family of petty clerics with long established links with the closely woven network of merchants of southern Iran (116).

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 outline the relationships that the clerical elite fashioned with the state, *bazaar* and believers at the turn of the twentieth century. In some cases, individual *mojtaheds* might have particularly strong ties with one of these groups. For instance, a “populist” *mojtahed* might enjoy more popular support at the expense of increased state support. But, the most prominent *mojtaheds*, such as Shirazi, were generally adept at mediating relationships with, and support from, all of these groups.

**Figure 6.1 Support For Clerical Elite From Merchants, the State and Iranian Moslems in the Late twentieth Century.**



**Figure 6.2 Support From the Clerical Elite to Merchants, the State and Iranian Moslems in the Late twentieth Century.**



### *Points of Tension Among the Clerical Elite*

Throughout the twentieth century the religious elite—in relations among themselves—have continually engaged in fractious debates revolving around factors that include: personal rivalries, ethnic rivalries, regional rivalries, scholarly rivalries; or some combination of each of the preceding. For example, in the revolutionary period Ayatollah Shariatmadari was both a colleague, and rival, of Ayatollah Khomeini. Shariatmadari's primary support came from the ethnically distinct Azerbaijanis. In general, he was more moderate in temperament than Khomeini in terms of his personal style, as well as his orientation toward the West. While his religious scholarship was considered excellent—superior to Khomeini's in most respects—unlike Khomeini, he rarely lectured from the *minbar* to the masses during the Friday prayers (Fischer 1980). Despite these differences, both men were initially aligned with each other during

the Iranian revolution and Khomeini initially recognized that Shariatmadari's popularity made him the Ayatollah of second rank in Iranian social politics. In this regard Khomeini assumed that Shariatmadari would assume the position of first rank if Khomeini died. Later, as Shariatmadari began to criticize Khomeini's interpretations concerning the application of religious jurisprudence to state governance, he was, at Khomeini's behest, publicly stripped of his clerical rank. While infighting among the clerical elite was common, this was an act without precedence as the attribution of clerical rank had long been contingent on having considerable popular support. Many Azerbaijanis and clerical leaders were appalled by this action. A few religious leaders with enough standing to criticize Khomeini did so, but their criticism was muted (likely because of the fate of Shariatmadari), and nobody had the power to directly contest, or overturn, the public defrocking of Shariatmadari (see Bakhash 1985; Moin 1999).

The relation among the Islamic elite is comparable to relations that exist in other academic traditions in the West. As such, who an individual was trained by, where they attended school, the strength of their religious academic work (*resalah*), their personal popularity among their colleagues and the general population, their seniority and access to material resources, all of these factors have an effect on the relative strength of an individual within the Iranian religious system. Some religious leaders are better administrators than others. Some concentrate on religious scholarship. Some have widespread popular appeal. Likewise, junior clerics—who preach at local mosques and have not attained a high rank within the system—have a different set of priorities than high ranking clerics. High ranking members in this system, like Western academics, often compete to train junior members as a means of enhancing their own prestige. And, like Western academics, the clerical elite has demonstrated an ability to close ranks and support their institutional authority when it is threatened.

*Points of Tension in the Relationship between the Bazaar, Peasantry, Clerical Elite and State During the Twentieth Century*

*Bazaaris* were not always enamored of the clerical elite, particularly if they felt the support they gave to support local religious ceremonies (*Moharram* processions) and religious schools (*madradas*) was not duly recognized. For instance, some *bazaaris*, particularly those of lower rank, chafed at clerical influence and resented the obligation that they support religious enterprises financially in order to maintain their esteem in the community. To this end, the charge that some *mojtaheds* care more for money than the propagation of Islam has long standing in Iranian society. This was a common charge during the Constitutional movement. Likewise, following the revolution, one common saying was that the longer a *mollah's* beard (an outward sign of piety), the deeper his pockets. Indeed, the current charge of clerical corruption is among the most resonant movement frames used in modern Iranian politics. This frame now has considerable resonance because some religious leaders, during the revolution, experienced considerable financial gain when both state and privately owned enterprises were nationalized and became administered by members of the clerical class. In the past, if a *mojtahed* consistently supported one local political faction against another, it was not uncommon for the *bazaaris* to support a clerical rival in order to undermine a *mojtahed's* authority.

Some believe that the traditional *bazaari* merchants and guild workers—those producing, buying and selling traditional goods—were negatively impacted by the influx of Western commercial goods. The merits of this argument—primarily assertion that both the peasants and *bazaar* were suffering as a result of the introduction of Western crops and more modern modes of production—has been debated (see Keddie 1981; Olsen 1981; Bonine 1981). The evidence is mixed, but it is clear that the influx of Western goods caused a disjunction in long established social systems used in the production, buying, and selling of commercial goods. In some cases,

such as the introduction of tobacco as a cash crop by the British in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the production of a new crop affected the broader Iranian culture. A century later the use of tobacco was ubiquitous among all Iranians, of all social classes.

The *bazaar* clearly adapted to the new realities concerning the influx of Western consumer goods, but it is unclear how dramatically the influx of new commercial goods affected the overall social structure of the *bazaar*. What is more clear is that relations between the state and *bazaar* often became acrimonious when the state adopted “modernizing” policies (e.g. taxation) to raise revenue, or adopted policies that were designed to curb *bazaari* political influence. It also is clear that *bazaari* merchants, even when they benefited from the increased trade, came to resent the influence of Western commercial interests in their traditional sphere of authority. This was the case even among those *bazaaris* who used the shifts in the economy for their material gain. In this regard, it is entirely possible for individual *bazaaris* to experience some material advances during the period of Western market penetration, but to also resent the increasing power exercised by Western commercial interests (see Hayden 1949, Keddie 1980, Lambton 1953, Issawi 1971).

While the *bazaari* relationship with the religious elite was often strong during periods of opposition to the state, not all the *bazaaris* supported religious leaders. Indeed, there is evidence that many of the minor *bazaaris*, and laborers organized into the craft guilds, often resented the most esteemed religious leaders. At the same time, these *bazaaris* might still be religious, and perhaps more supportive of street levels preachers of a lower clerical rank who, like themselves, were often critical of clerics of high rank.

*Mobilizing “the Crowd” in twentieth Century Iran: The Lutis, Tollabs and Bazaaris<sup>10</sup>*

*Luti* is a term that refers to many groups who were often mobilized—and sometimes paid—to support the clerical elite, the Qajar elite, and later, the Pahlavi Shahs. Conversely, some *luti* leaders mobilized crowds for popular reform movements during the twentieth century. *Luti* leaders were generally self-interested individuals looking to enhance their personal esteem, as well as gain the patronage of powerful political and religious leaders. Generally, *luti* leaders in the cities often represented different ethnic or commercial interests. They often acted as an informal force that maintained order in a specific city quarter. They could also raise crowds in support of various political and social factions. They also engaged in a number of activities, such as collecting protection money and religious taxes, which often required the use of intimidation. They could be used by, but also remained somewhat independent from, the authority of the state or other regional political leaders (see Abrahmian 1968; Floor 1981). Momen (1985) summarizes the relationship between the *lutis* and clerical elite as follows:

During the Qajar period it became normal for the prominent ulama in any town to surround themselves with a band of the town’s ruffians, known as *lutis*, to their mutual benefit. The ulama had a ready band who would take to the street and create agitation when it suited the ulama to call them out, and many governor in the nineteenth-century Iran was withdrawn because of such agitation. The *lutis*, in turn, had a protector with whom they could take refuge if the government moved against them. The *tullab* (religious students) attached to the religious colleges were used by the ulama in much the same way in the larger towns (199).

The various descriptions of *luti* leaders, in terms of their social prestige, are contradictory. In general, they were often regarded as free-spirits who were sometimes the local strongmen (wrestlers and weightlifters associated with local gymnasiums) who protected the weak and upheld community morality (Fischer 1977; 1980). They had a strong code of honor among themselves, although some flouted the most restrictive orthodoxies of Shi'ism. They often frequented local taverns and wore unorthodox dress (Floor 1981). In this respect, they were afforded esteem by poor city dwellers in that they abided by a moral code, were sometimes considered protectors, and were often outside the bounds of the authority of the state. Indeed, as local "protectors" they helped negate state coercion employed against the poor. On the other hand, they are also described in negative terms in that they became, essentially, muscle for hire that was used to mobilize the poor in demonstrations both for, and against the state, religious factions and social reform movements.

The *lutis* of twentieth century Iran appear to have become a blend of both a traditional and modern city groups. On the one hand, the organization of lower class groups in cities, organized along ethnic and class lines, is not a condition that was specific to Iran. Indeed, ethnic groups, mobilized by "mob"<sup>11</sup> leaders in major American cities could raise crowds quickly, and engaged in some of the same behaviors that the *luti* leaders did in Iranian cities. Likewise, in American cities, leaders were often—among the population they purported to represent—both admired and resented, depending on the specific set of circumstances. And among themselves, they had a code of ethics. These groups were often used by other groups who wanted to maintain power in governance, or by traditional groups who wanted to protect their authority among a specific city group. Likewise, despite the fact that these activities might be considered irreligious, many leaders were sincerely pious, supported local religious leaders, and felt that this

elevated them in terms of their local esteem. In the Iranian tradition, this would lead to the attribution of being considered a generous man (*javanmard*) (Floor 1981:88; see Adelpkhah<sup>12</sup> 2000).

Raising and donating money to religious enterprises, particularly those that were popularly supported—such as the *Moharram* ceremonies—was common among *luti* leaders. Indeed, Floor (1981) regards the street entertainers and musicians to be part of the broader *luti* community, and they would have been active in the *Moharram* processions and employed during events at *Hosseiniyehs*. So, the *luti* are comparable to other groups, common in most cities around the world, organized along the lines of ethnic identity and economic interests (which often intersected). They engaged in enterprises that were sometimes legal, and sometimes illegal, and they resented attempts by local or regional authorities to impose control over their neighborhoods. They were also willing to support local and state authorities if they had a common interest (Adelpkhah 2000; Floor 1981)

It is also important to place the Iranian *luti* into their specific cultural context. For example, there appear to be longstanding ties, perhaps centuries old, among certain peasant coalitions who were also mobilized by leaders in support for or against different agrarian (local notables) interests. Likewise, there was a longstanding practice of local notables settling disputes by mobilizing their peasants (see Floor 1981). As such, the mobilization of crowds in Iran predates the development of the modern city, and aspects of peasant mobilization likely manifested itself in the organization of groups of *luti* in the city. These two groups developed independent of one another over time.

In terms of their composition, Floor (1981) has described as urban *luti* as lower class inhabitants of the cities, some with peasant backgrounds. Many were street performers,

musicians and entertainers (*luti kanh*), as well as athletes, primarily wrestlers and weight lifters (*varzeshkaran*). Indeed, the cultural importance of wrestling in Iranian society, where top wrestlers are afforded the status of national heroes, is an important condition of Iranian social life.<sup>13</sup> Some wrestlers (*varzeshkaran*), often affiliated with a local “sporting house” (*zurkhaneh*), were employed by local leaders as “muscle” during political disputes and to collect informal taxes. Indeed, there are parallels between the sponsorship of the *lutis*, and how local leaders in American cities recruited “muscle,” and sponsored athletes (particularly boxers) from their respective neighborhoods.

Some *luti* leaders rose to considerable prominence. For instance, Sha’ban Bimokh (Sha’ban “the Brainless”), the owner of *zurkhaneh* (gymnasium), after wavering between pro-Mosaddeq and anti-Mosaddeq forces in the 1951-1953 movement, turned out large anti-Mosaddeq crowds that were often described, in Western accounts, as “spontaneous” demonstrations of dissatisfaction with Mosaddeq’s governance. In fact, Sha’ban Bimokh was given state resources (trucks) and paid for his services by Mohammad Reza Shah (Floor 1981:92-93; Sarshar 2002). Prominent *luti* leaders were also rivals among each other, and one *luti* group might be mobilized to counter-act a *luti* mobilization initiated by another group.

*Bazaar* closings could be coerced by *luti* “muscle,” but were usually organized by the guild elders and the major merchants. *Bazaar* closings often corresponded with an increase in crowd activity. In some cases, the major merchants and craft guild elders had personal relationships with the leading *mojtaheds*, and this relationship could be used to facilitate a collective response between the *luti* supporters of a *mojtahed* and the merchants. As such, an important movement tactic was closing the *bazaar* which often coincided with an outbreak of

popular demonstrations. In this regard, the *bazaar* has always played an important part in the mobilization of “the crowd” in all modern movements in Iran. (Abrahamian 1968; 1985).

This tradition of “crowd” mobilization in Iranian politics continued after the role of the *lutis* started to decline and as the authority of the state increased. For instance, Mohammad Reza Shah, during the land reform debates proposed in the “White Revolution,” dressed members of the armed forces, and irregular supporters, as peasants and had them disrupt the sermons of prominent clerical opponents of these reforms (see chapter 9). Likewise, traditional religious leaders often had, in their employ, individuals that served as “muscle” and who could mobilize supporters on their behalf and also force *bazaar* closings if the merchants were reluctant to do so. Religious seminary students (*tollabs*) were also mobilized during conflicts during personal conflicts, or during conflicts with the state.

Identifiable groups of individuals, vagabonds, wrestlers and street performers who would self-identify as belonging to a *luti* group are less common than in the past. But, there are still “irregular” groups of men—sometimes war veterans, sometimes individuals associated with the gymnasium, sometimes men in the religious seminaries (*tollabs*)—who can be mobilized on behalf of the state, or in support of the traditional elite. For instance, Momen (1985) sees a direct relationship between the current *Ansar Hezbollah* (Party of God) that supports conservative religious leaders at the street level and past *luti* groups. He states:

Since the revolution, essentially the same group of persons, now called *Hizbu'llahis* (the Party of God) are providing support for the radical ulama at the street level. Some of these elements have been incorporated into the Revolutionary Guards (199).

Currently, *Ansar Hezbollah* is employed to disrupt meetings and rallies held by reformist factions in Iran. In response, other groups—particularly students groups who support the current reformers—appear to be growing more organized as a means of offsetting the disruptive capabilities of *Hezbollah*. This has resulted in occasional street battles, particularly in and around the universities, between these different factions.

An important aspect of the *luti* tradition, as it relates to this study, is that assembled crowds are *often responses to* broadly supported social movements. In effect, seemingly “spontaneous” crowds can actually be an extension of state authority. For instance, crowds mobilized against Mosaddeq were largely generated by *luti* groups and religious supporters of Mohammad Reza Shah. Later, prominent *luti* leaders were rewarded for this support. Nonetheless, in Western news reports, these crowds were described as being “spontaneous” reactions to Mosaddeq policies. Further complicating matters is that it was common for broadly supported social movements—such as Mossadeq’s National Front—to also employ *luti* groups as a means of protecting movement supporters. Still, the problem of identifying where support for the crowd comes from is not insurmountable. For the most part, Iranian observers on the scene usually identified the make-up of a crowd, and knew the factions that helped to mobilize them. For instance, during the mobilization of the Shah’s “peasants” in support of land reform, many observers noted that many of these peasants were rather “burly,” seemed fairly aggressive in relation to the way most Iranian peasants conducted themselves, and that they had arrived in military vehicles. There were likely some “peasant” demonstrators, but they were obviously not the main organizers this crowd activity, and were certainly not the leaders of this action.

A more spontaneous crowd response was apparent after each of President Khatami’s electoral victories in 1997 and 2001. This support was massive, broad based, and while aspects

of this response was organized, the crowds were not an extension of state power and were not directly controlled by Khatami. In fact, the crowds were large enough that there were very few attempts by the opposition to mobilize their own crowds (the *Ansar Hezbollah* and conservative *tollabs*). By way of contrast, the crowds of “rowdies” and “bullyboys”<sup>14</sup> who routinely interrupt reformist gatherings, such as the crowds that routinely accosted Abdol Karim Soroush (2000) throughout 1997, were an extension of the Iranian state and directly supported by the traditional Ayatollahs who support state policies.

### ***Summary of Social Institutions in Iran***

The Iranian factions discussed previously represent social groups<sup>15</sup> that were mobilized during protests in Iran. Organized protest in Iran—often a test of wills between traditional factions—is a long-standing tradition. Importantly, during the period of social movement protest surveyed in this study, leaders of these groups fashioned movement frames that bridged structural differences among these traditional groups. Indeed, movement leaders had to adapt their messages accordingly to maintain support among the *bazaar*, religious elite and rank and file citizens who had multiple social relations among each other.

At the turn of the century, the increasing power of Russian and British imperialism represented a new condition in Iranian society. As such, all of the groups discussed previously had to develop a frame of reference for describing the subjugation of Iranian political and economic interest to these powers. Likewise, they had to adopt programs that addressed how this subjugation would be ameliorated. The following chapter provides a brief description of British and Russian influence in Iran during this period.

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<sup>1</sup> The short-lived Zand Dynasty (1753-1794) was established for a brief period between Safavid and Qajar rulers.

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<sup>2</sup> See Algar (1969, 1972); Arjomand (1981, 1984); Bayat (1991); Keddie (1966; 1969); Lambton (1965, 1987); Martin (1989).

<sup>3</sup> See Arjomand (1981, 1984); Bayat (1991); Keddie (1966; 1969)

<sup>4</sup> See Algar 1969; 1972

<sup>5</sup> The following account can be obtained, in greater detail, from any standard history text concerning the Middle East. See Arjomand (1984) for an excellent, and richly detailed account of this period.

<sup>6</sup> Of particular importance was the doctrinal debate between the Usuli and Akbhari schools of religious thought. The Usuli systematized a process of Shi'i religious learning and developed more formal religious institutions.

<sup>7</sup> Arjomand's account is excellent, and it is generally supported by other prominent scholars (e.g. Keddie), but others (Algar 1969) take issue with the idea that the clerical elite was integrated into the governing ideal of the Safavids and Qajars.

<sup>8</sup> Information in the following section is generally a review of the debate concerning clerical authority that has been well discussed in Algar 1969, 1972; Arjomand 1981, 1984; Bayat 1991; Keddie 1966; 1969; Lambton 1965, 1987; Fischer 1980; Martin 1989.

<sup>9</sup> Fischer (1980), an American anthropologist, has detailed genealogies of the major religious leaders in Iran. Likewise, he breaks down family occupations among the bazaar, land-holding classes and government officials.

<sup>10</sup> Floor (1981) has a nice overview of the political role of the luti in Iran. Abrahamian (1985) also has a nice overview of "crowd" mobilization from 1905-53.

<sup>11</sup> The name implies that these leaders, or leaders of "the mob," were generally in control of "unruly" crowds.

<sup>12</sup> Adelkhah (2000) has a discussion concerning the attribution of being a man of integrity (javanmardi).

<sup>13</sup> The enthusiasm that Iranians have for wrestling is remarkable. It is the most prominent sporting tradition in Iran. As such, wrestling has been used for a number of political purposes. For example, the first sporting exchange between the United States and Iran after the revolution was a wrestling tournament. It was clear that the Americans who visited Tehran were impressed with the wrestling tradition of the country, the quality of their opponents, and the adulation that wrestlers receive from the Iranian public.

<sup>14</sup> This is the term currently fashionable in British press accounts of these organized bands of young men who disrupt oppositional political gatherings.

<sup>15</sup> Groups that were omitted during this overview would include regional ethnic, religious and linguistic groups that were often mobilized in response to the central authority of the Iranian state. Likewise, agrarian groups, and traditional tribal groups, were omitted. This decision was made for practical reasons, concerning space, and also because the bulk of this text concerns movements that, while nationwide in scale, were primarily based in Iranian cities.