

CHAPTER 12 Post-Revolutionary Movements (1997-present) in Modern Iran

Shariati wanted to make religion plumper, but I want to make it leaner.
(Abdol Karim Soroush 2000)

This chapter will review movement frames associated with post-revolutionary Iranian reform groups. A symbolic beginning for many of these movements was the day Mohammad Khatami, a reform cleric, was elected to the Iranian Presidency (May 23, 1997). After his election, an assortment of reform groups was often referred to collectively as the *May 23rd (2nd of Khordad)* movement, a reference to the date Khatami was elected. Preceding his election there was growing public debate concerning individual rights and the authority of post-revolutionary institutions. In particular, many Iranians resented the expansive authority of the Iranian judiciary. Many also objected to the *Ansar-e Hezbollah*, a group controlled by religious hardliners whose ranks are often drawn from veterans of the war with Iraq and seminary students (*tollabs*). This informal religious organization often policed people's public conduct and disrupted the meetings of reform groups. Often, *Ansar-e Hezbollah* and state security forces—also controlled by the religious hardliners—worked together to disrupt student demonstrations (see below).

Following the end of the war with Iraq in 1988, and the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989, there was increasing public debate in Iranian society concerning the governing system established after the revolution. Mohammad Khatami's presidential campaign in 1997 took advantage of this opening and he ran an innovative campaign. Khatami was a compromise candidate for a coalition of reform organizations. His electoral victory was a surprise because his primary opponent had strong institutional backing from the conservative clerical elite. His

electoral platform was dominated by two themes: 1) the need to establish a *Civil Society*, and 2) the need to establish a *Dialogue Among Civilizations*.

All social movements chronicled in this study used and transformed two frames of sovereignty: 1) *frames of individual sovereignty*, or the requirements that individuals should fulfill in order to participate in governance, and 2) *frames of national sovereignty*, which define a movement's relationship with the East and West. The new Iranian movements continue to debate national and individual sovereignty, and they are often reacting against the dominant frames established directly after the revolution. Most leaders of these movements do not, in general, question the legitimacy of the revolution, but argue that the democratic ideals of the revolution remain largely unrealized. Some movement leaders do question the legitimacy of the *Velayat-e Faqih* (Guardianship of Islamic Jurists), the legitimating ideal of the post-revolutionary governing system (see Soroush 2000).

All movement groups in Iran are debating the authority of political institutions outlined in the post-revolutionary Iranian constitution. Most groups accept that the constitution is the primary framework for a broad discussion of political and social rights. The Iranian constitution legitimates the traditional authority of the religious elite (*foqaha*), but it also recognizes the individual sovereignty of the Iranian people. President Mohammad Khatami has traditional religious credentials, but most support him because they believe that the jurisdictional authority of the Iranian Presidency (directly elected by Iranian citizens) should be expanded in order to curtail the authority that conservative religious leaders exercise. Currently, institutions that tie their legitimacy to the maintenance of clerical political authority are the Office of the Leader (*Rahbar*) and the Guardian Council (*Shoora-ye Naghban-e Qanun Assas*). The Leader is the preeminent political cleric in Iranian governance. The Guardian Council consists of twelve

members, half appointed by the Leader, who have clerical oversight (veto power) with respect to laws passed by the Parliament.

Reform groups believe the Iranian constitution can be interpreted to provide for greater social freedom. They are often advocates for reestablishing normal diplomatic relations with the West. Specific concerns include: 1) limiting the authority of the judiciary, 2) maintaining the freedom of the press, and, 3) protecting individual political rights. There are several groups who are loosely associated with the *2nd of Khordad* movement. They include a *New Religious Thinking Movement*, the *Women's Movement* and a *Student's Movement*.

While there has been greater social openness after Khatami's election, the security forces and judiciary continue to periodically arrest vocal reformers and censor reform presses. Most recently, reform movement goals have centered on increasing the constitutional authority of the President relative to the authority granted to the Leader and Guardian Council. To this end, a bill was recently passed by the Parliament on November 6, 2002 that would expand the constitutional authority of the Presidency and Parliament. In particular, it would give these institutions the right to identify individuals who violate the constitution, particularly judicial authorities who use the courts to censor the press (see *Entekhad* 2002). This bill must be approved by the twelve member Guardian Council, and the Leader of the Revolution, in order to become law. They are likely to veto the bill.

Authority in the Iranian Constitution: The Elevation of the Clerical Elite

The Iranian constitution established directly after the 1979 revolution granted considerable governing authority to the clerical elite. While many Ayatollahs continue to state, as a matter of philosophy, that only God is sovereign, and that their role is to interpret God's law,

the nonetheless exercise considerable authority with respect to how the laws of Iran are enforced. In particular, their oversight allows a 12 member clerical panel to veto any law passed by the Parliament that they judge is in conflict with religious law (*sharia*). The nexus of the new political thinking movement generally concerns two questions related to individual sovereignty: 1) Who is competent to judge Sharia law? and 2) Should judgments concerning religious law—particularly when these judgments are open to competing interpretations—enforceable as national law. In effect, are matters of religious judgment ultimately issues of individual faith?

Following the Iranian revolution governance was established in accordance with Shi'i Moslem traditions as interpreted by Ayatollah Khomeini in his seminal work, *Islamic Governance* ([1970] 1981). In congruence with Khomeini's governmental philosophy, the Guardianship of Islamic Jurists (*Velayat-e faqih*) was established with institutional oversight of the Iranian Parliament and Presidency. Khomeini's innovation, not accepted by many traditional Islamic clerics, is derived from Shi'i (some argue Sunni) traditions. Khomeini framed his system of governance as a return to tradition, but the *Velayat-e faqih* is primarily a modern innovation (Akhavi 1996; Schirazi 1999). As a practical matter, the revolutionary constitution reclaimed the old idea of clerical oversight—first debated in the Constitutional revolution—but reversed the clerical representative's relationship with the elected parliament. The original 1907 constitution established a four member clerical body—elected by the Parliament—that made judgments concerning whether parliamentarian law was in accordance with *Qoranic* law. The new constitution established a twelve-member board, the Guardian Council—controlled by the politically active religious elite—that exercises veto power over legislation and also oversees the electoral process.

The Iranian Constitution is unique. It opens with a long narrative extolling the virtues of the Islamic revolution, and after describing the religious basis of constitutional legitimacy it outlines the framework for governing institutions. Like many constitutions, it is open to interpretation as to the exact authority each Iranian governing institution exercises. Like many constitutions it is contradictory. In fact, those who argue against recognizing the legitimacy of the Iranian constitution often state that it is fundamentally contradictory in that it grants sovereignty to the Iranian people, but also institutionalizes religious oversight that is not subject to a direct electoral process (Schirazi 1998:161-219¹). In effect, fulfilling both these constitutional requirements is impossible. There is either the *sovereignty of the people*, or the *authority of the political clerics*. As such, the current debate among movement groups can be regarded as a constitutional crisis. The primary debate concerning the institutional authority outlined in the constitution concerns three broad issues: 1) the authority of the courts, 2) freedom of the press, and 3) the authority of the executive branch (popularly elected by Iranians) compared to that of institutions that exercise religious oversight.

Religious Oversight: Velayat-e Faqih

The Guardianship of Islamic Jurists (*Velayat-e faqih*) exercises oversight to assure that the laws of Iran are in accordance with Shi'i religious law. The lynchpins of this oversight is the twelve member Guardian Council and the Leader of the Revolution. Khomeini, as the first Leader, offered guidance in his Friday sermons or issued religious findings that outlined his general positions. Often, it was left to the Parliament and the Guardian Council to interpret these guidelines into practical policy. Often, if these institutions could not resolve a dispute, groups asked Khomeini, who had veto power with respect to legislation passed by the Parliament, for

further “guidance.” Khomeini often interjected himself into political debates and sided with different factions on different issues. Khomeini also reversed positions that he had previously directed the Parliament and Guardians to adopt.

The legal description of the role of Leader is outlined in article 110 of the Iranian Constitution,² but Khomeini’s actual authority extended beyond the legal definition of his office. Still, Khomeini often refrained from interjecting himself into the ongoing debate that occurred in both the Parliament and Guardian Council. As such, both of these institutions exercised some independence. On some issues, such as the 1986 land reform bill, there was considerable public debate (see Bakhsh 1990). But when Khomeini interjected himself into a debate his authority almost always prevailed. As such, he “guided” the Council Guardians and Parliament to accept a number of positions that they had previously rejected. Khomeini’s “guidance,” often undertaken with no consultation between the newly established governmental agencies, affected all aspects of Iranian society (Schirazi 1998).

One Khomeini intervention is important in the current debate concerning the authority of the *Velayat-e Faqih*. The specific case involved whether the three months maternity leave given to women who worked for the state was a law that also applied to private companies. Private interests argued there was no support in the *shari'a* (religious law) for granting the government the authority to enforce this law. This position was backed by the Guardian Council, which vetoed Parliament bills that would have granted women this maternity leave. The veto was based on the Guardian’s interpretation of religious law. In this case Khomeini stated that the government could abrogate a contradictory *shari'a* law if a policy served the greater interests of the people or was needed to maintain the state. The principle established is more important than the specifics of the case. In effect, the Guardian Council, even if they ruled a law was not in

congruence with *shari'a*, could now be overruled if it served the interests of the state. In the past, the Guardians often vetoed law passed by Parliament necessary to govern the state. Khomeini, in the previous finding, offered a means to end this deadlock.

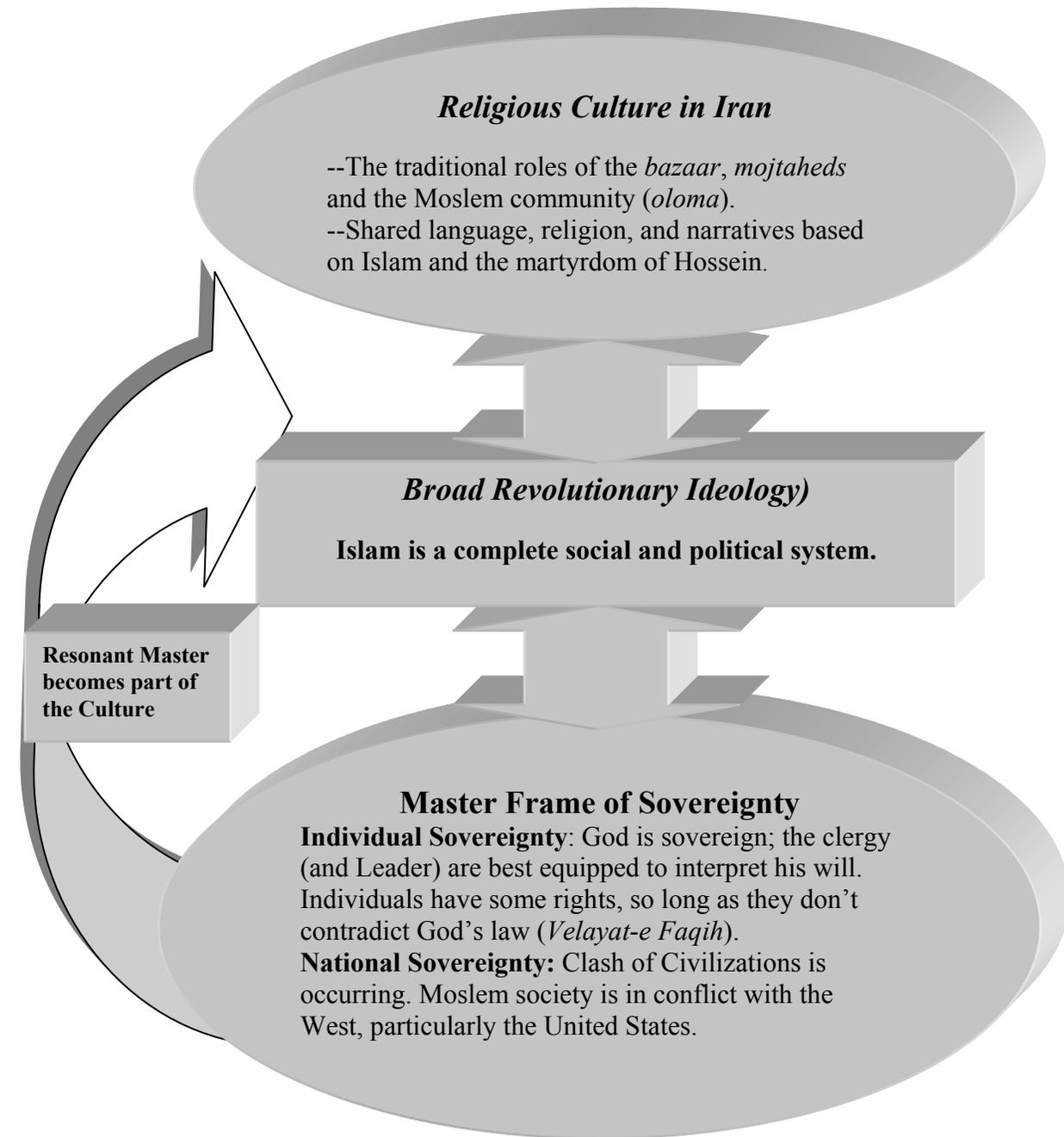
This principle led to the establishment of the Assessment Council (*Majma-e Tashkhis-e Maslahat-e Nezam*). This council has the ability to override a veto by the Guardian Council³ (see Akhavi 1996; Schirazi 1998). It is currently headed by Hashemi Rafsanjani,⁴ a powerful politician and past Iranian President.

Debate Over the Constitutional Authority of the Leader (Rahbar)

The position of Leader is a lifetime appointment made by the Assembly of Experts (Majles-e Khobregan) (see above). The Assembly of Experts was initially formed after the revolution to draft the first Iranian constitution. Currently, in order to serve in this assembly an individual must have some Islamic educational training. This assembly is theoretically a representative assembly, with Iranians voting for their representatives, but the Guardian Council decides whether the religious credentials of those running for this Assembly are adequate. They eliminate anybody who is not generally supportive of the Guardians and the Leader. Over time, the authority of this institution has diminished and it no longer makes national law and does not have veto authority. Its primary function is to elect the Leader, but the position of Leader is a lifetime appointment so the Experts do not often perform this function. The Experts do periodically meet to review the Leader's stewardship, and can dismiss the Leader, but this would be an extraordinary event. This indirect process of electing the leader is one basis for the Leader's political legitimacy. Reformers often claim that the leader is not directly elected, and exercises too much authority in Iranian governance.

As Khomeini declined in health almost everyone in Iran was aware that the totality of his authority could not be institutionalized into the governing structure (Schirazi 1998). Some wondered if the position of Leader would remain relevant after his death. The current Leader is Ali Khamenei. Previous to Ali Khamenei's ascension as Leader there was some dissension among the Experts concerning whether Khamenei's religious credentials were sufficient to qualify him for consideration to this post (Roy 1999). Obviously, Ayatollah Khamenei does not have the same level of authority as the late Ayatollah Khomeini. Khamenei's legitimacy depends largely on the fact that Khomeini instituted the position of Leader into the Iranian constitution and then, after considerable negotiation, sanctioned Khamenei as his successor.⁵ In this manner, Khamenei's authority is based directly on the maintenance of the Islamic ideal established by the constitution and endorsed by the first Leader of the Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini (Akhavi 1996; Roy 1999; Schirazi 1998). Below, in Figure 12.1 is an outline of how culture and revolutionary ideology interact with the legitimizing frames used to establish the *Velayat-e Faqih*

Figure 12.1 The Interaction of Culture, Ideology and Frames Among Conservative Leaders



Arrows represent the interaction between culture, ideologies, and specific movement frames. Culture shapes ideology and frames. Resonant frames affect the development of ideologies and change cultural practices.

The Modern Leader: A Source of Emulation and a Man Who Understands the Times.

Ali Khamenei has revolutionary credentials. He served in a number of governmental positions (including the Presidency) following the revolution, but his religious credentials were weak in terms of establishing him as a traditional religious authority. The position of Leader was first defined as the person who could act as both a source of emulation (*marja-e taqlid*) (see chapter six), but also understood the needs of the times (see Roy 1999:1). The second condition was directed toward traditional, largely apolitical, Ayatollahs who were sources of emulation but opponents of the *Velayat-e faqih*. The attributions associated with being *marja-e taqlid* (hereafter *marja*) are long-standing traditions in Shi'i theology, although they have been revised over time (see chapter 6). Basically, in absence of the one true Leader, the twelfth Imam, those who are a source of emulation can best interpret the twelfth Imam's will. In the past, the attribution of *marja* was a traditional, but somewhat democratic process. Khomeini's innovation was to "modernize" the institution by integrating it into the Iranian constitution (Akhavi 1996; Roy 1999; Schirazi 1997).

Ali Khamenei, at the time of his appointment as Leader in 1989, was a *hojjatoleslam*, a man with religious credentials, but not a source of emulation. He was conferred the title of Ayatollah following his appointment as Leader, but many traditional religious scholars did not think he had not fulfilled the requirements necessary for this attribution. Khamenei has actively tried to enhance his religious standing since becoming the Leader of the Revolution.

After Ali Khamenei assumed the position of Leader he attempted to act, as Khomeini had, as an arbiter between the different factions of the clergy. This proved to be an untenable position and Khamenei was generally forced to side with the conservative "political"⁶ Ayatollahs who were more predisposed, albeit reluctantly, toward granting him authority in accordance with

the *Velayat-e faqih*. At the Assembly for Revising the Constitution, which coincided with Khomeini's death, the authority of the Leader was curtailed. During this debate several leading "political" Ayatollahs stated that it would be unwise to put too much authority into the hands of one man, particularly given the current conflicts in the country. Furthermore, the standing of Khomeini was so great that no other man should be considered his equal. Former President Hashemi Rafsanjani also stated that giving the Leader too much power would render the Executive branch and the Parliament completely ineffectual (Schirazi 1999).

The authority exercised by Khamenei is a good example of Max Weber's conception of the routinization of charismatic authority. Weber described the transition from charismatic to traditional authority stating "the question (of succession) can be solved by the sacramental substantiation of charisma, the successor being designated by consecration, as is the case in hierotic or apostolic succession;" Furthermore: "Perhaps it is even more important that when the organization of authority becomes permanent, the staff supporting the charismatic ruler becomes routinized. The ruler's disciples, apostles, and followers become priests, feudal vassals, and above all, officials" (Weber 1946: 297).⁷

One reason Khamenei was chosen as the next Leader was because Khomeini had alienated many of the quietist Ayatollahs who acted as genuine sources of emulation. In the past, the attribution of Ayatollah required an individual possess a rigorous religious education, but was also based on the esteem that the religious community and general public granted an individual. Religious leaders who offer guidance to individuals at the community level generally attribute their line of reasoning to that of a specific Ayatollah. This is the manner in which individual believers emulate the most esteemed religious authorities. As a practical matter, different groups favor different Ayatollahs and this can cause dissension and competition among the Ayatollahs.

Khomeini broke with quietist Ayatollahs when he insisted that the religious elite should become active in politics. Many prominent Ayatollahs never accepted the concept of *Velayat-e faqih*. For example, early in the revolution the second most powerful religious authority, Ayatollah Shariatmadari, openly questioned Khomeini's concept of Islamic governance. Ayatollah Shariatmadari's followers were primarily Azerbaijanis who had a strong tradition of activism against the Shah. While consolidating control over the revolution, Khomeini stripped Ayatollah Shariatmadari of his religious title. This was an audacious act because Shariatmadari, in securing the attribution of Ayatollah, had developed a considerable number of followers who emulated his "line" of religious reasoning. Previously, stripping an Ayatollah of his clerical rank was a nearly impossible undertaking. The fact that Shariatmadari was excised from the Iranian political consciousness is an indication of the authority that Khomeini exercised directly after the revolution (Bakhash 1990).

Later, in 1989, Khomeini publicly disavowed his next supposed successor in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, Ayatollah Montazeri. Ayatollah Montazeri is conservative with respect to his personal politics and is a firm supporter of the revolution—but he became increasingly critical of the summary trials and executions of political dissidents during the period just before Khomeini's death in 1989. Ayatollah Montazeri is now the primary clerical opponent of Khomeini's appointed successor, Ayatollah Khamenei. He now states that the Leader should offer guidance concerning the validity of the Islamic tradition, but not be active in shaping daily politics. In effect, there is a group of clerics, mostly conservative in their worldview, who want to disassociate religious authority from political authority. For some, Ayatollah Montazeri—although he is banned from speaking publicly—has become their symbolic leader.

Mir-Hosseini (1999)⁸ observed this debate in Qom in 1995 and states:

Clerics fell into two main camps. Some supported the *velayat-e faqih* [Islamic governance] and saw a merger with the *marja'iyat* [traditional source of religious emulation] as inevitable. They argued that the old notion of authority embodied in the *marja* is no longer viable in today's world of real politics: it is no longer acceptable for a *marja* to be knowledgeable solely on religious matters and confine his rulings to them; he must assume Shi'i leadership on all fronts. This camp was clearly politically dominant, and hence most outspoken... (14)

The other camp comprised adherents of the old notion of authority in Shi'ism, who favored the continuation of the old system whereby the religious hierarchy maintains a clear separation from government. They argue that choosing a *marja* is the personal prerogative of every believer, thus no imposition can be made and no criteria set. The *marja* should emerge gradually through the consensus of the *ulama* and ordinary believers; any regulation would hinder a true consensus and thus deprive the *marja'iyat* of its real source of authority, which is the people and not the government. This camp is probably the majority in Qom, but without official support they were less able to be candid about their views;... (15)

Montazeri⁹ (2000) has stated that a direct election should determine the Leader, as opposed to the Leader being elected by the Assembly of Experts. The excerpted interview below first appeared in several British dailies on January 13, 2000. It was later published by three Iranian dailies. The judiciary later closed these papers. Throughout 2000 several demonstrations occurred in Qom that were generally supportive of Montazeri's position (see Dinmore 2001;

Moaveni 2001). As it relates to *individual sovereignty*, Montazeri (2000) frames his positions within the context of the *individual rights* granted Iranian citizens in the constitution (italics added).

The vali-e-faqih is elected by the people, his duties and powers are specified in Article 110 of the Constitution, and the people's direct and indirect verdict on him is based on his compliance with the Constitution and the country's laws.

In any case, the vali-e-faqih has no right to exercise absolute power. Article 107 states that the vali-e-faqih is equal to all citizens before the law, and that he is not above the law and cannot interfere in all matters, especially those outside his area of expertise like complex economic matters, foreign policy, and international relations....

Although some senior officials believe that the vali-e-faqih is appointed by the infallible imams, I have disputed this theory in detail... *It is certain that the legitimacy of this post is acquired by popular election.*

In reality, *there is a social contract between the people and the vali-e-faqih, and the Constitution was drafted on that basis. Accordingly, his term may be limited and temporary, like that of the president or a member of parliament.*

And given that the vali-e-faqih is accorded responsibility by the people, he is not infallible. He must accept criticism and be responsible for his actions.

Adelkhah (2000) believes that the institutionalization of the position of Leader has created “public” and “private” spheres of religious belief. As it relates to politics, Khamenei, in his position of *Leader of the Revolution*, has domain. As it relates to personal belief—an

individual's choice as to who to emulate—Khamenei's position of Leader does not automatically confer upon him this status. Of course, Khamenei—using his political office—may be granted these designations in the future. But this is a fundamentally different process than how religious designations were achieved in the past. For instance, Khamenei's accession to Ayatollah was the first time supporters sponsored a press campaign that corresponded with the traditional process being undertaken among scholars in the holy city of Qom. And, as a practical matter, Ayatollah Montazeri continues to be preeminent in the religious "sphere" (Adelkhah 2000).

Even though supporters of the Leader primarily claim that his authority is derived from his position in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, they also claim that he is democratically elected because a majority of the Assembly of Experts, directly elected by the Iranian people, chose the Leader. As a practical matter, this is a backhanded attempt to claim that the the Leader is also popularly elected by individual Iranians who are exercising sovereign rights. But, as stated previously, the candidates are so thoroughly vetted by the Guardian Council that only those supportive of the Leader can be elected. During the past election to the Assembly of Experts it was common for the reform press to use low voter turnout as an opportunity to compare the popularity of President Khatami (directly elected by the Iranian citizens) to that of the Leader. Ayatollah Khamenei was not being directly elected, but the Experts theoretically determine who is most suitable for the Office of the Leader. Many Iranian citizens regard the election to the Assembly of Experts as undemocratic because the Guardian Council systematically eliminates candidates who do not support the Leader. To date, no woman has been judged "suitable" to run for the Assembly of Experts. Religious minorities, as a matter of definition, are excluded.

Voter turnout for Presidential and Parliamentary elections, where there is more open competition among candidates, has traditionally been high. Over 80% of registered voters

participated in the last parliamentary elections. Nearly that many participated in the last Presidential election. In contrast, after the stringent ideological screening of candidates for the Assembly of Experts the turnout was woefully low (42% of registered voters), and much of that turnout was coerced by the state which required that government employees, and students with government support, vote in the election.

The low turnout was interpreted in the reform press as an indication that the Leader Khamenei enjoys less popular support than President Khatami. Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, at the time a conservative speaker of the Parliament who had recently been defeated by Khatami as a candidate for the Presidency, responded to this analysis with a succinct argument. He stated: “When some people say that the Leader’s legitimacy depends on his popularity, they don’t understand anything. Our regime gets its legitimacy from God” (*The Economist* Oct. 24, 1998). Later, in an example of Iranian spin doctoring that has become common among conservative supporters of the Leader, it was stated that the low turnout could be attributed to the “satisfaction” that Iranians felt with all of the candidates and the Leader.

It is significant that many of the quietist Ayatollahs, who should generally be regarded as having conservative worldviews, often side with President Khatami and the reformers. As a practical matter, the argument for the separation between religious and political institutions serves to empower the Presidency and Parliament relative to the Leader and Guardians. It is also important that the quietist Ayatollahs have, as their primary goal, maintaining Iran as a religious society. In effect, they think that the combination of politics and religion is to the detriment of religion. They argue this combination has made religion mundane, and caused people in Iran to become irreligious.

Importantly, the relationship between current Leader, Ali Khamenei, and President Mohammad Khatami is more complex than often reported in the Western press. Indeed, there are indications that the relationship between Khamenei and Khatami is cordial—both men have known each other since they were young seminary students—and that Khamenei, although not a liberal, might also want to limit the authority of the conservative judiciary. Khamenei has, in the past, supported Khatami in his ongoing struggle with the conservative judiciary. In effect, Khamenei likely wants to remain an arbiter of contentious social issues, and may not approve of the activist conservative judiciary. His actions are often constrained because he realizes he could lose some institutional support if he attacks the conservative factions outright. For instance, one leader of the “new religious thinking” movement, Taha Hashemi, is considered close to Leader Khamenei. He is also the editor of a conservative state supported paper (*Entekhad*) that has run editorials that are regarded as an attack on Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi, a hard-line member of the judiciary. Conservative seminary students responded to these editorials by periodically protesting against Hashemi and *Entekhad* (see Dinmoore 2001). Some interpret *Entekhad's* editorial stance as a maneuver to disassociate the Leader Khamenei with the unpopular rulings of the conservative judiciary (Hashemi 2001).

The 2nd of Khordad Movement

The symbolic frames that have been employed by the supporters of the *2nd of Khordad* reinforce the guarantees of individual sovereignty codified in the Iranian constitution. The two explicit sections of the constitution that reinforce individual sovereignty is Chapter 5 that is titled the “Right of National Sovereignty.” This section grants absolute sovereignty to God, but declares that humanity, as God’s vice-regency, has free-will:

Chapter V: The Right of National Sovereignty

Article 56: Absolute sovereignty over the world and man belongs to God, and it is He Who has made man master of his own social destiny. No one can deprive man of this divine right, nor subordinate it to the vested interests of a particular individual or group. The people are to exercise this divine right in the manner specified in the following articles.

Article 57: The powers of government in the Islamic Republic are vested in the legislature, the judiciary, and the executive powers, functioning under the supervision of the absolute wilayat al-'amr and the leadership of the Ummah, in accordance with the forthcoming articles of this Constitution. These powers are independent of each other (Iranian Constitution).

The symbolic leader of the *2nd of Khordad*, President Mohammad Khatami, has declared that it is the responsibility of the Office of the Presidency to uphold this principle. Mohammad Khatami also has revolutionary credentials. He was also the chair of the Islamic Center in Hamburg, Germany, during the Revolution. The Center helped coordinate the campaign against the Shah among dissidents in Europe. He was twice appointed as Minister of Culture, first in 1982, and then again in 1989. During his second appointment he was credited with liberalizing Iranian press policy following Ayatollah Khomeini's death. Indeed, the increasing press activism during this period caused conservative factions to force his resignation from this post in 1993. He then headed the National Library from 1993 until he ran for the Presidency in 1997. During his period at the National library Khatami (1997; 1998) wrote on both reform issues and Iran's

relationship with the West. As a compromise candidate among a coalition of reform groups, he was the surprise winner of the 1997 Presidential election (see Bakhash 1998).

Khatami's first electoral victory was a clear indication of the growing impatience that Iranians had with respect to political censorship, the power of Iranian security forces, and the arbitrary rulings of the Iranian judiciary. Khatami's campaign theme regarding the enforcement of constitutional law was a reference to both the growing dissatisfaction that Iranians felt toward the conservative judiciary, and also the growing resentment toward the largely self-appointed "morals police," an extension of the conservative clerical establishment.

There has been more open social debate following Khatami's election, the informal policing of public morality has diminished, and there is a greater degree of open protest activity in support of Khatami's liberalizing policies. Still, just before the elections to Parliament in 1999, and during Khatami's re-election bid in 2001, there was an increase in violence directed toward his supporters. In particular, the judiciary, just previous to the *Majles* elections in 1999, arrested and jailed popular reformers to keep them from running for Parliament. Other reformers, including a close Khatami aide, Saeed Hajjarian, were targeted for assassination. Miraculously, Hajjarian survived the attempt on his life (see *Fath* 2000a; 2000b). The Guardians also eliminated roughly 10% of the applicants who wanted to run for parliament, and many were Khatami supporters. Despite these tactics, two years following Khatami's first electoral victory moderates were overwhelmingly voted into the Iranian Parliament. Many Iranians hoped that if moderates controlled both of the executive branches of governance that they would be able to reform the state security forces and the judiciary.

Mohammad Khatami's primary rhetorical frame, during his elections and throughout his Presidency, concerns the establishment of a *Civil Society*. In most respects, his conception of a Civil Society (*jame 'e-ye madani*)—although framed using Moslem cultural norms—is largely indistinguishable from the conception of “Civil Society” in the West. Indeed, Khatami is well acquainted with Western thinkers and refers to them in much of his written work. In Khatami's (1997; 1998) speeches and published work he clearly states that “Civil Society” is tied to the acceptance of constitutional law applied to individuals equally regardless of their personal (e.g. clerical) backgrounds. Khatami also reinforces those parts of the Iranian constitution that guarantee individual sovereignty. Still, he is always careful to tie the basis of constitutional legitimacy to the revolutionary ideals articulated by Ayatollah Khomeini. During Khatami's (1997) inaugural speech he stated:

The Constitution, the covenant of our Islamic and national solidarity, the actual embodiment of popular allegiance to the Islamic Revolution and the great ideals of the late Imam Khomeini, and the document paid for with the blood of our noble martyrs including [President] Rajaie and [Premier] Bahonar, serves as the fundamental reference for the powers and responsibilities of the government and the rights and duties of the citizens. Therefore, to serve the people, it is incumbent upon the executive, and is likewise the mandate and mission of the President of the Islamic Republic, to endeavor towards institutionalizing the rule of law, and the Constitution, first and foremost.

At the same time, Khatami reinforced the idea that the Iranian constitution grants sovereignty to the Iranian people, endowing them with a degree of free will as God's vice-

regency on earth. So, among the remarks made by Khatami (1997) during his inaugural speech were (italics added):

Protecting freedom of individuals and the rights of the nation, which constitute a fundamental obligation of the President upon taking the oath, is an imperative emanating from the exalted worth and dignity of the human person enshrined in our Divine religion. Fulfillment of this responsibility can only be attained through wider popular awareness of their own rights, provision of the necessary conditions for the realization of constitutionally guaranteed liberties, *strengthening and expansion of the institutions of the civil society*, promotion of ethical values, *strengthening of the culture of dialogue*, discourse, appraisal and critique, and prevention of any violation of integrity, dignity and constitutional rights and freedoms of individuals.

Related to Khatami's call for a Civil Society is his call for open dialogue. He regards the need for dialogue as a national concern, necessary so that Iranian factions can engage in debate without acrimony and political violence, but he also extends the call for dialogue to include contacts with the West. Indeed, Khatami often states that Iranians can learn from Western civilization, although he tends to ground his program of "Civil Society" using Iranian Islamic ideals. For example, in the following speech at the Islamic Summit Conference (1997), made shortly after he was elected, he recognizes both Moslem, and Western, forms of Civil Society.

We can certainly move the present as well as the future generation towards the new Islamic civilization through setting our eyes on horizons farther away, being together with understanding and helping each other as brothers. *For this to*

become a reality, all of us must dedicate ourselves to the realization of the "Islamic civil society" in our respective countries. The civil society which we want to promote and perfect in our society and which we recommend to other Islamic societies is fundamentally different from the "civil society" that is rooted in the Greek philosophical thinking and Roman political tradition and which, having gone through the Middle Ages, has acquired its peculiar orientation and identity in the modern world. *The two, however, are not necessarily in conflict and contradiction in all their manifestations and consequences. This is exactly why we should never be oblivious to judicious acquisition of the positive accomplishments of the Western civil society* (Islamic Summit Conference, Tehran December, 9 1997)

The call for establishing a Civil Society, connected to the need to apply constitutional law uniformly, was popular among Iranians during President Khatami's first term. As politically motivated violence continued, and as the Iranian judiciary continued to censor the reform press, many have called on Khatami to more openly confront the political hardliners. But Khatami is also trying to model behavior that he regards as appropriate for public officials, and to this end he has been his has been remarkably restrained in terms of his political speech despite the considerable pressure he and his supporters have endured. This has exasperated those who want him to adopt a more openly confrontational stance. Nonetheless, following his re-election with over 70% of the popular vote (among eight candidates) large, spontaneous crowds openly celebrated the event. Clerical conservatives denounced these demonstrations and were particularly concerned by the public revelry and dancing (see Amouzadeh Khalili 2001).

The primary cleric opposed to Khatami's program is Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi. He usually frames his response to reformers by stating that reform groups are seeking to poison the minds of the young, and then make religion separate from the state. This is, in most respects, a continuation of the Westoxification theme established during the discourses of the revolutionary period. For example, in an interview with *Resalat* on June 7, 2002, after a series of questions regarding "cultural conspiracies" (*italics added*), he stated:

Since the enemies have failed in all their efforts, they are resorting to the last recourse, a *long-term cultural plan to infiltrate into the country*. They are seeking to provide a center for propagating their own views in a bid to lay the groundwork for materializing their ambitious plot. They sought to find loopholes to influence the current generation and change their views....

The enemies are sparing no efforts to undermine the Islamic government in three ways... They have been carrying out practical plans for this purpose and are seeking to inculcate their views into the minds of the younger generation. Their first plot is the division of the state and the religion. The second one is that the religion and state are not separate but the Islamic establishment is separate from the *velayat-e faqih* (governance of supreme jurisprudence). The third one is casting doubt on the accurate behavior of the supreme leadership.... (5)

Recently, Khatami has argued that the President is afforded the right to investigate the judiciary if its members violate the constitution (see Mehrpour 2001; Nowruz 2001; *Tose'eh* 2002¹⁰). To this end, Khatami formerly introduced a bill, in September of 2002, which would expand the rights of the Presidency and legislature (*Entekhad* 2002). The bill easily passed in the

Iranian Parliament, it will presumably be vetoed the Guardian Council. Khatami has threatened to resign if the bill is vetoed.

National Sovereignty and The Dialogue Among Civilizations

Mohammad Khatami (1997; 1998) has devoted considerable time to exploring the relationship between the Moslem Middle East and the West. In most respects, his views are similar to those of past moderate lay-reformers, such as Ali Shariati, with respect to how Iranians should confront the West. Like Shariati, he openly admires the accomplishments of Western civilization. He also assumes that “civilizations” always interact with one another.

The give-and take among civilizations is the norm of history. Prior to the discovery of the Americas, the civilizations of Asia, Africa, and Europe had been in contact since antiquity, transforming one another in various ways.

Fundamentally influenced by Greek civilization, Islam played a central mediating role by introducing Europeans to the achievements of Greek thought and philosophy. Thus “new” civilizations are never new in the true sense, for they always feed on the work of previous civilizations, appropriating and digesting all that fits their needs, dispensing with all that does not (Khatami 1998:2).

Khatami has had some success with respect to his program of a “Dialogue Among Civilizations.” Indeed, the Iranian delegation asked the United Nations to designate the year of 2001 as the year of “Dialogue Among Civilizations.” Khatami used the occasion of the acceptance of this proposal to address both the United Nations and to grant interviews to the American press. The timing of the proposal—corresponding with the new millennium—was

innovative. In an address to the United Nations in 2000, Khatami stated that he was hopeful that governments would accept a “new paradigm of dialogue among cultures and civilizations” as a means of preventing the “tremendous human catastrophes that took place in the 20th century.” Moreover, that the paradigm of dialogue among civilizations requires nations “abandon the will-to-power and instead pursue compassion, understanding and love.” In particular, Khatami envisions the possibility of a “world civilization” that also maintains the uniqueness of local cultures. He states:

What we ought to consider, in earnest today, is the emergence of a world culture. World culture cannot and ought not to ignore the characteristics and peculiarities of any particular culture with the aim of imposing its own upon them....

In order for the world culture to assume a unified identity, in form and substance, and avoid the chaos caused by various cultural discords, it must engage all the concerned parties in dialogues aimed at exchanging knowledge, experience and raising understanding in diverse areas of culture and civilization.

Khatami’s program directly addressed an academic and social debate occurring in both Iran and the West related to a supposedly inevitable “Clash of World Civilizations” (see Huntington 1996). Indeed, conservatives in Iran and the West like arguments related to the inevitability of civilizational clash for the same reasons. The consequences of the argument in Iran are more severe. In Iran, and to a much lesser degree in the West, many who accept the idea of the “Clash of Civilizations” use it as an argument for curtailing individual freedom. In effect, the Clash of Civilizations thesis in Iran is often cited with respect to why individual dissent is

dangerous. Moreover, it is used as a rationale as to why relations with the United States are untenable. Indeed, the “Clash of Civilizations”—although it is largely divorced from the academic treatment of Samuel Huntington’s work—has become a conservative frame in Iran used to describe relations between the East and West. Likewise, Huntington did state that his work was less social science, and more of a proposed “paradigm”—essentially a framework—for “understanding the world.” Conservative Iranians have taken Huntington up on the offer, and refer to him, and the title of his work, often (see Velayati 1998).¹¹ Likewise, the speeches of the Leader sometimes make reference to the Clash of Civilization, and specifically refer to the idea that the CIA continues to disseminate false information in Iran (see Khamenei [1998] “Some Print Media are Saying Things the CIA is Disseminating”).

Obviously, Samuel Huntington’s (1996) widely debated text, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, did not create the acrimony that has existed between Iran and the West. Indeed, the concept of civilizational clash has been a strong discourse among Moslem factions for a considerable period of time, although they did not previously employ Huntington’s specific phraseology. Huntington’s work is basically the Western rejoinder to a broader debate and he was obviously influenced by, and responding to, the Moslem debate (see Huntington 1996:109-120). In effect, Huntington agrees with conservative Moslem’s that Islamic civilization is in opposition to Western civilization. Huntington’s description of Islam is unflattering, and he tends toward accentuating, naturally enough, Moslem “responses” to the West that help further his argument concerning the inevitability of civilizational clash. Of course, whatever the offense to the sensibilities of Moslems that Huntington precipitated, some conservative Moslems have repaid in kind with respect to their descriptions of the West. In this respect it seems clear that the

clash of civilizations as an organizing framework for international exchanges and has the potential of becoming a “self fulfilling prophecy.”

The compelling rhetorical construction of Huntington’s title—now often disassociated from the author himself—has entered the political lexicon of the Iranian social debate and become a “frame” of interpretation for both conservatives and liberals in Iran. For instance, the *Tehran Times* (September 26, 2001) reported the following (italics added) after a meeting of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council following the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Iran condemned the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11 and said that the United States should take legal action against suspects through the International Court of Justice rather than resorting to retaliatory military action against Afghanistan which will cause more human catastrophe in the war-ravaged country.

Iran called on the United States to exercise self-restraint and avoid miscalculated military action in Afghanistan, the consequence of which may lead to a *clash of civilizations*.

By way of contrast, Mohammad Khatami (1997; 1998) engaged in counter-framing tactics and called for a *dialogue among civilizations*. Indeed, Khatami prefaced many of his remarks following the attack with statements to the effect that the attack was, given his hopes for a year of dialogue among civilizations, a particularly disappointing event. He then attempted to resurrect his program of dialogue. Khatami returned to the concept of civilizational dialogue repeatedly. For instance, the IRNA (September 26, 2001) reported (italics added) that Khatami:

called on the international community to lobby for a *dialogue of civilizations* instead of *clash of civilizations*.

“*Clash of civilization* is something that is currently going on in the international community,” he said calling for a promoting *dialogue of civilizations* in the special year (2001) as designated by the United Nations.

Khatami appears to have read, or is at least be familiar with, Huntington’s work. He believes that “civilizational clash” is a possibility, but has obviously devoted considerable time to creating a policy that might reverse negative Iranian relations with the West and other countries in the Middle East. To degrees, Khatami has had some success. For the most part, the European Union countries have engaged in a cautious reconciliation with Iran that would have likely been completed if not for the formal objections of the United States. Khatami, for his part, has undertaken several trips to Europe, and abroad—often to the consternation of the conservative Iranian press—and impressed the diplomats and politicians he has meet. There has even been a diplomatic *détente* with Iran’s historic enemy, the British.

Importantly, Khatami has also managed to re-establish diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia. Historical conflict between the Saudis and Iranians predates that with the West. The Saudis are predominately Arab and follow a strict school of orthodox Sunni thought. Conversely, the Iranians are Persian and predominately Shi’i Moslem. As concerns faith, language and temperament, the Saudis and the Iranians have longstanding historical differences. In the modern age of states each has traditionally served as a rhetorical whipping post for the other. For instance, Ayatollah Khomeini constantly assaulted the integrity of the Saudi monarchy, describing the royal family as American puppets that supported divergent Moslem beliefs. For

their part, the Saudis have historically suppressed the Shi'i community in the Eastern province of Arabia. During the spread of the teachings of al-Wahhab throughout Arabia, one of the more infamous acts was the destruction of Shi'i religious shrines in north Arabia. Among religious Iranians, being called a "Wahhabi"—a slang reference to state religion of Saudi Arabia established by al-Wahhab—is a serious insult. In short, the two countries have a history of animosity that rivals that between Iran and the West. Nonetheless, their relationship at present time has become extremely cordial.

Iran and the United States

On January 7, 1998, Mohammad Khatami granted an interview with Christine Amanpour of Cable News Network that was closely watched in both Iranians and Americans. The interview reflected the primary themes of Khatami's academic work and political program. Khatami has a considerable affinity with academics. More so than Western politicians, he takes academic arguments seriously. He likes to discuss the history of ideas—both Eastern and Western—and then place specific Iranian issues, such as relations with the West, into that historical context. This is, in general, a common discourse undertaken by politicians in Iran. One idea that Khatami is particularly enamored of is that religious reformation can provide an impetus for positive social change. He believes that it was only when Christianity became closed to innovation that people choose "freedom" over "faith." He often alludes to this idea in his speeches, suggesting that Islam in Iran will become irrelevant unless the religious authorities allow for a more open exchange of ideas. In his interview, in which he describes his admiration of American civilization, he makes this point with respect to how Americans reconciled both reason and faith.

This [American] civilization is best described by the renowned French sociologist Alexi de Toqueville who spent some two years in the U.S. in the 19th century and wrote the valuable book entitled *Democracy in America*, which I am sure most Americans have read. This book reflects the virtuous and human side of this civilization. In his view, the significance of this civilization is in the fact that liberty found religion as a cradle for its growth, and religion found protection of liberty as its divine calling. Therefore, liberty and faith never clashed. And as we see, even today Americans are a religious people. Therefore, the Anglo-American approach to religion relies on the principle that religion and liberty are consistent and compatible. I believe that if humanity is looking for happiness, it should combine religious spirituality with the virtues of liberty.

And it is for this reason that I say I respect the American nation because of their great civilization. This respect is due to two reasons: the essence and pillars of the Anglo-American civilization and the *dialogue among the civilizations*.

In terms of the *dialogue of civilizations*, we intend to benefit from the achievements and experiences of all civilizations, Western and non-Western, and to hold dialogue with them. The closer the pillars and essences of these two civilizations are, the easier the dialogue would become. With our revolution, we are experiencing a new phase of reconstruction of civilization. We feel that what we seek is what the

founders of the American civilization were also pursuing four centuries ago. This is why we sense an intellectual affinity with the essence of the American civilization.

Second, there is the issue of the independence. The American nation was the harbinger of independence struggles, the initiator of efforts to establish independence, for whose cause it has offered many sacrifices, leading ultimately to the Declaration of Independence which is an important document on human dignity and rights

Another theme that Khatami has constantly returned to is the distinction between American ideals and American foreign policy. Khatami's view is that American foreign policy is incompatible with American ideals. He stated:

But here I have to express pity over a tragedy which has occurred. Unfortunately, policies pursued by American politicians outside the United States over the past half a century since World War II are incompatible with the American civilization which is founded on democracy, freedom and human dignity. We ardently wished that those who enforced this foreign policy were representatives of the prominent American civilization; a civilization which was achieved at a heavy cost, and not the representatives of those adventurers who were defeated by the American people themselves.

This flawed policy of domination had three setbacks: One was severe damages that it incurred upon the deprived and oppressed nations, including our own. The other setback was that it dashed the hopes of the people of the colonized world, who had placed their trust in the U.S. tradition of struggle for independence. When the policies for domination were implemented in the name of the American people, the nations lost their trust in the Americans. This represents a grave damage done by the U.S. policies on the American nation. The third and most important of these setbacks is that what was implemented was done in name of a great people that had risen for freedom. I feel that the American politicians should realize this fact and adjust themselves with the standards of Anglo-American and American civilization and at least apologize to their own people because of the approach they have adopted.

Most Iranians now support establishing a diplomatic relationship with the United States. Recently, the National Society of Public Opinion Studies conducted a poll of Tehranis in October 2002 that showed 74.7 percent of Iranians favored a dialogue with the United States (IRNA September 11, 2002). The Iranian Parliament commissioned the poll. Abdollah Nasser, head of the Iranian news agency (IRNA), was arrested by the hard-line judiciary following the publication of the poll results. Likewise, Behrouz Gheranpayeh, head of the institute that conducted the poll, was also arrested and polling center closed. Shortly afterwards, Abbas Abdi and Alireza Alavitabar—both close advisors to the reformers in Khatami's cabinet who likewise run a polling institute—were arrested and their agency closed. What is remarkable about recent events is that the poll

was commissioned by the Parliament and the results were reported, without comment, by the official Iranian news agency. As a practical matter, the judiciary would have considerable difficulty closing the state-run IRNA.

The Decline of the West

The idea that the West is in decline and now lacks the dynamism it had from the 17th – 19th centuries has been a popular discourse in Iran. Indeed, some reformers in Iran, such as President Mohammad Khatami, were once enamored of the idea that the West is in decline. Most recently, Khatami has not returned to the theme of Western decline with regularity. Generally, the argument was, among academics in Iran, an extension of ideas that have been articulated by Western historians and political thinkers who have also described the “rise and fall” of civilizations. As such, some Western scholars—both conservative and liberal—also assume that the West is in decline. Often the East (e.g. China) is in the supposed ascent (see Huntington 1996). Indeed, the Iranian version of this theme is not particularly original in the marshalling together of evidence of Western decline. The only real innovation is that Iranian theorists state that civilizations in the Middle East—now often exemplified by the Iranian revolution—are developing a forward-thinking, dynamic, cultural system in ascent. For modernist thinkers, one function of this position is that it makes the West less menacing, and discussion of Western ideas more acceptable to many Iranians.

A similar theme concerning the inevitable decline of the West appeared in some traditional religious thought in the early 20th century. Indeed, Moslem religious leaders during the past century often assumed that the West, because it was not strong in the true faith, would eventually decline and the East would regain its prominence (see Lewis 2001). Again, the

primary difference between religious traditionalists and religious modernists is that traditionalists are more inclined to reject all forms of Western knowledge, while modernists consistently state that Iranians can learn from the West. Most recently, reformers have latched onto the proposition that the distinction between “Eastern” and “Western” forms of knowledge is facile. In effect, in the world of ideas, “knowledge” does not claim a culture or nationality (see Soroush 2000). As such, like modernists in the past, their primary goal was to revitalize Islamic culture so that Iranian society also produces innovative new technologies and ideas. The assumption has always been that this is the most practical way to realize material advancement while maintaining a cultural identity. Currently, the desirability to obtain technical knowledge from the West is widely accepted among even the staunchest religious traditionalists in Iran.¹²

Reform Struggles in the Courts and Press Freedom

One strategy of the religious conservatives who control the judiciary is charge reformers with corruption or treason in the courts. For example, Abdollah Nouri, a former Vice President and editor of a reformist paper (*Khordad*) (now closed) is a supporter of Mohammad Khatami who was convicted by the judiciary in order to prevent him from becoming the Speaker of the Parliament. Among the 15 counts Abdollah Nouri was indicted on were: 1) defaming the Imam by advocating renewed ties with the United States, 2) providing a political base for the Grand Ayatollah Montazeri, and 3) discussing the ideas of Mehdi Bazargan, first prime minister of the Iranian Republic, and Mohammed Mosaddeq, leader of the National Front (see Chapter 10) (Lyons, Oct. 14, 1999; Reuters, Nov. 11, 1999). With respect to Bazargan, Montazeri and Mosaddeq, Ayatollah Khomeini had explicitly denounced each. Khomeini dismissed Bazargan as Prime Minister. Montazeri was dismissed as Khomeini’s successor to the position of Leader.

Mosaddeq, because of his nationalist credentials, was largely expunged from the Iranian historical record. The position of the judiciary was that the words of the Imam must stand immutable throughout time, and that it was their role to assure this policy was adhered to. In the case of Abdollah Nouri, he questioned the very legitimacy of the court, and then made the argument that the Constitution offered a framework for making policy, and that the Khomeini's pronouncements were not immutable standards. He was, previous to the election, tried and found guilty in the "Special Court for the Clergy" (*Dadgeh-ye Vizheh-e Ruhaniyat*).

Abdollah Nouri—who has clerical credentials—regarded the Special Court for the Clergy as extra-legal because its authority is not outlined in the Iranian constitution. Currently, the primary issue that many of the reformers are being tried for in the religious courts is their insistence that they should be allowed to discuss a number of individuals, both religious and secular, who the hard-line clergy insist must remain expunged from the historical record. As traitors, the hard-liners argue, it is inappropriate to discuss the beliefs of people (secular or religious, conservative or liberal) that have been identified as threats to the Iranian revolution.

Another strategy of the conservative courts was to charge reformers with political graft. This strategy was likely employed because several reformist dailies were pursuing stories that described the considerable wealth that some clerical conservatives had amassed after the revolution. In particular, clerical conservatives have been appointed as heads of industries nationalized following the revolution, and have used these positions to enhance their own well-being. In particular, Akbar Ganji (2000), a well-known Iranian reporter, accused the clerical elite of both graft and murder with respect to a series of political assassinations in 1998. He has since been arrested and jailed (see *Payam-e Emrooz* June 2000).

The most highly publicized recent trial, during 1998, involved Gholam-Hossein Karbaschi.¹³ Karbaschi, at the time the mayor of Teheran and a close ally of President Khatami, was popular and considered highly effective by the citizens of Tehran.¹⁴ He was tried on charges of corruption in the Administrative Court. Karbaschi may have profited personally as mayor, but most citizens supported Karbaschi because he was considered a technocrat who was modernizing Tehran's cumbersome bureaucracy (Baniyaqoob 1998).¹⁵ In the context of Iranian politics Karbaschi was regarded as a technocrat who was fixing the streets, establishing green space and attracting investment to the city (Peterson 1997). Following his trial, *Iran Today* (1998) summarized the general debate that had occurred in court as follows (italics added):

In spite, or perhaps because of the far-reaching legal authority given to the judge, the trial has turned into an altercation between the judge and the accused, seriously undermining [judge] Mosheni Ejhe'i's *moral* authority and *legitimacy* as well as putting the judicial system itself on trial. (1)

Gholam-Hossein Karbaschi may be prosecuted in the court of law, but in the court of public opinion it is the judicial system that is being tried. Issues *concerning the ability of all powerful* but at times *ill qualified* judges to make fair decisions, [consider] due process, and the rights of the accused, are being discussed in ways never discussed before. This trial will undoubtedly enhance public pressure for the *reform of the judicial system in a direction more mindful of the due process and rights of the accused*. (2)

In general, before each of the recent election cycles the conservative judiciary has threatened and arrested reform journalists. Most recently, close to 30 reform papers have been closed. An early strategy of the Executive branch was to simply re-issue a press license to the same editors after a reform daily was closed. It then re-opened under a different name. Most recently, the judicial activism has limited this practice by jailing prominent editors. This struggle between the judiciary and reformers in the executive and legislative branches of government has moved to the forefront of Iranian politics. For example, in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times* (2002), Mohammad Khatami's brother—a representative in the Parliament and someone considered to be a spokesman for the reformers—stated:

Our first priority is to remove the obstacles in the way of the press, which is the symbol of free speech and thought. Unfortunately, the judiciary abused the law. They've struck at the rights of the people. We're also going to pass laws allowing private radio and television. There are many difficulties on this issue, based on different interpretations of the constitution.

The press is very important to us, but we can survive [without the 18 newspapers banned by the conservative judiciary]. The circulation of the [reformist] press was only about 2 million, but more than 30 million voters are with us. We have other forums: some 700 student publications [and] meetings in the cities and little towns. Plus, the majlis' proceedings are broadcast live everyday to the country and the world. Compare current circumstances with those three years ago, when we had only one paper, Salam, which was very conservative. Now we have five daily journals that are more radical than Salam and are still publishing (*LA Times* interview with Khatami Aug. 8 2000)

Political Assassination and the Trial of Iranian Security Forces

The elections to parliament in 1998 became a referendum concerning the authority of the courts and a condemnation of *Ansar-e Hezbollah*. Previous to the election there were a series of political assassinations of four well-known Iranian dissident writers and politicians (Mohammed Mokhtari, Mohammed Pouyandeh, Dariush Forouhar and Parvaneh Forohour).¹⁶ Eventually, in part due to an activist reform press that investigated these murders, the assassinations were connected to Iranian security forces. Saeid Emani, a deputy minister in the Information Ministry, was implicated in these murders. It was reported that he controlled an irregular security team in the Information Ministry. He committed suicide while in prison awaiting trial.

Following the parliamentary elections, 18 individuals, all employed by Iran's intelligence agency, eventually stood trial for activities related to the murders. Three were sentenced to death, five were sentenced to life imprisonment, and seven received prison sentences from 2 to 10 years (Anderson 2001). This was a partial victory for the reformers, as a few weeks previous to this decision, eight dissidents—including Akhbar Ganji (2000), considered the most effective investigative reporter working on the previous murders—were jailed for attending a conference in Berlin (Moore and Anderson 2001).

Demonstrating Lawfulness: Passive Resistance and the Strategy of “Dynamic Calm”¹⁷

A remarkable feature of the current Iranian movement is that movement leaders seem to assume, with an unnerving confidence, that they will ultimately realize their movement goals as long as the protests remain lawful. Moreover, their strategy of “calmness” and “lawfulness” with respect to their personal behavior is clearly a symbolic frame that models their broader movement goals. Indeed, one of the strategies of the current reform movement—important given

their emphasis on “the rule of law” —is that their personal conduct remains above reproach. Rarely do the reform leaders call for mass demonstrations, and when they do, they insist that the demonstrations be lawful. When spontaneous demonstrations have broken out (see student movement below), senior movement leaders in the 2nd of *Khordad* quickly asked that student protesters remain “calm” and “lawful.” Indeed, Khatami inevitably, during periods of increased social unrests, calls for calm and patience. This strategy has, among some of the more radical elements of the reform movement, been exasperating as the hard-line judiciary has repeatedly closed reform magazines and jailed prominent reformers. Indeed, many in the student movement resented the call for “calm” after security forces targeted them in 1999 (see below)

One obvious reason for this strategy is that reformers do not want to give the hard-line judiciary a rationale for imposing martial law. The other reason is that reformers want to model the behavior that they consider to be “lawful,” and directly contrast their actions to that of the conservatives, who often send *Ansar-Hezbollah*—usually armed with clubs—to disrupt the gatherings of moderate reformers. Moreover, President Khatami’s public demeanor, even as he endured considerable setbacks with respect to his reform campaign, has been one of an almost ethereal calm. He states that he expects, as a public official, to be criticized for his performance within the bounds of civil discourse. This is clearly part of the reform movement’s overall strategy. In effect, Khatami’s supporters want to impress on the public that their actions are “lawful,” and that the opposition resorts to largely extra-legal tactics when they suppress dissent. For instance, when *Zanan* (June 2001) interviewed Khatami’s wife (Zohra Sadei) they asked if the President’s demeanor was as calm when he was at home. She responded that no, that his demeanor was affected as a role he regarded as important as President (edited for clarity).

Q: Mr. Khatami's tolerance and patience is praiseworthy. Is he always like this?

A: No. He is not a patient person. Not that much patient. But, within those four years he was so patient. Sometimes I wonder how he could be so... Of course his patience made the other side (rival faction) become milder as well.

And later in the interview:

Q: What is his own view about his tolerance?

A: He says he could better fulfill his responsibilities this way. He feels perhaps through practice of tolerance he could gain a better result.

Q: Some would interpret it as conservatism.

A: Yes.

Q: What would he say in this regard?

A: He doesn't say anything but sometimes I feel offended by this much unkindness. He would never harbor a grudge against anybody and would never show any reaction. Sometimes I tell him how can those people who oppose him and write against him in their newspapers meet him again and speak to him as if nothing has happened? He usually dislikes those who flatter. He always advises me not to get annoyed of anyone.

Likewise, following the student unrest in 1999, an article in *Asr-e Maa: Political & Social* (Apr. - May 2000) used the term “dynamic calm” to describe the strategy of the *2nd of Khordad* Movement following these protest. The article stated (edited for clarity¹⁸):

Through [the] practice of vigilance, consolidation and self-restraint [the reform movement] might manage to neutralize the massive propaganda and political assaults aimed at dissolving the 6th Majlis by pushing the country towards tension

and unrest. Summing up and assessing this [protest] experience... which was based on a strategy of *dynamic tranquility*... a degree of convergence and consolidation of the May 23 Front can be further promoted.

Confidence building is another important feature of this strategy. As it was mentioned before, the Mafia network of power [the conservative clerics] are trying to generate a feeling of suspicion and pessimism in the important political institutes and influence them against the reform process and thus make the [reform] trend vulnerable. Because [reform] efforts present a transparent and clear image... it can deprive the Mafia network of any grounds for misuse.

Strategies of non-violence are hard to maintain, particularly when the opposition begins to employ violence. A parallel analogy can be made to the fissures in the black civil rights movement, wherein some younger student leaders objected to the position of movement nonviolence. Likewise, students in Iran tend to be the group that most often calls for a more activist strategy.

The Women's Movement in Iran

This section gives an accounting of the most recent movement frames being used by the Iranian women's movement. A proposition of this work is that frames established during the post-revolutionary discourse can be regarded as both *enabling* and *constraining* with respect to the current Iranian women's rights movement. Previous to the discussion of movement frames, some general trends concerning women's participation rates in the formal economy and the educational system following the revolution are outlined.

Women's Participation in Past Movements in Iran

Women participated in all the previous movements surveyed in this work. Indeed, there were accounts of women fighters, dressed as men, who fought with the constitutionalists during the defense of Tabriz. Likewise, women smuggled weapons and other material to men who were mobilized to defend the *Majles* during the constitutionalist struggle. Moreover, the first women's societies (*anjomans*) were also established during the constitutional movement, and they mobilized in support for the constitution as well (see Afary 1989; Bayat 1978; 1982). Indeed, Afary (1989) states that the Constitutional revolution marks the starting point of the modern Iranian women's movement.

During debate in the post World War II period, a few women assumed leadership positions in the Tudeh, often chairing committees devoted specifically to women's issues. Indeed, it is likely that the first women's protest—directed specifically toward an expansion of women's rights—occurred during the post-war debates. In particular, the Tudeh platform advocated for equal pay for women, and for giving women the right to vote. Nonetheless, men dominated the Tudeh party at both leadership and membership levels. During the post war debate, frames regarding women's conduct—with respect to appropriate dress, family, work and political issues—often became “wedge” issues that divided support among different nationalist factions. For example, the National Front stopped advocating for women's voting rights because of resistance from clerical factions who were supporting the oil nationalization effort (see Abrahamian 1982, Akhavi 1980).

Ayatollah Khomeini's (1941) early work and speeches are peppered with references concerning decadent, Western inspired women. For example:

We know that all this [establishing governance that abides by the *sharia*] is unpalatable to those have grown with lechery, treachery, music and dancing, and a thousand other varieties of corruption. Of course, they regard the civilization and advancement of the country as dependent upon women's going naked in the streets, or to quote their own idiotic words, turning half the population into workers by unveiling them (we know only too well what kind of work is involved here) (171-72).

This reference to women's work above is to prostitution, which was often rhetorically associated with "modern" women. With respect to the 1963 Qom protests, extending political rights for women and religious minority groups was a rhetorical goal of the Shah's White Revolution. It was clearly a policy that the clerical elite objected to.

The dictatorship of Reza Khan Shah, and his son, Mohammad Reza Shah, introduced, by fiat, programs of women's emancipation. The most notorious of these policies was Reza Khan Shah's outlawing of traditional dress in 1936 for both men and women. Modern educational opportunities, primarily made available for upper class urban women, were more widely available during the period of Pahlavi dictatorship as well. Likewise, Iranian intellectuals and nationalists tepidly supported women's rights programs.

Westoxification and Women

During the "Westoxification" discourse women who did not wear the traditional *hejab* and entered the modern workforce often became a symbol of the pervasiveness of the West. Modernist lay reformers, such as Ali Shariati, tried to formulate an enabling program for

women's rights, but were opposed to Iranian women pursuing a "Western" path toward emancipation. In this regard, women's issues related to family law, modern work and Western dress were all aspects of the Westoxification debate. Modern women became a potent symbol of the influence of the West in Iran. Moreover, women's emancipation programs became closely associated with the other reforms, often unpopular, instituted by the Pahlavi dictatorship.

Moghadam (1994; 1997) believes that women's issues are not usually a primary cause of revolutionary struggle.¹⁹ But, in the case of Iran, the revolution ultimately had a "women in the home" gender ideology that moved to the forefront of Iranian politics when Ayatollah Khomeini and his supporters abrogated family laws that had been instituted by the Shah. Many leftist groups that had formal programs for expanding women's participation in Iranian society ignored these programs once they became engaged in a struggle for power after the abdication of the Shah. For example, a member of a student dominated socialist party, now residing in the West, states that women were told by party leaders not to be provocative with respect to agitating for women's rights during the post revolutionary struggle for power (Moghissi 1996). During this period, the abrogation of the Shah's family laws and a re-imposition of the *hejab* were among the first actions taken by the revolutionary government. Both acts were protested by groups of Iranian women whom Khomeini publicly denounced using the discourse of "Westoxification" (see Tabari and Yaganeh 1982).

Among the left socialist factions who generally supported increasing rights for women in Iran, women's issues were considered less important than the broader revolutionary struggle (see Afary 1996b). This provided activist women with a valuable lesson, and they later organized themselves into groups that made women's rights issues explicit, and primary, movement goals (see Afary 1996a; Moghissi 1996).

The current women's movement in Iran is occurring within the context of a broad national debate about personal freedom. At times, women's issues have achieved prominence within this debate, particularly during the 1996 elections to Parliament. The current women's movement has been developing support from a broad cross-section of traditional and modern Iranian women's groups. Because current changes are taking place within the context of a broad social debate that often focuses on the rights of women, it is likely that recent advances in Iranian women's rights will be more durable than laws imposed by fiat during the period of the Pahlavi dictatorship (see Afshar 1998; Keddie 2000).

Initially, there was broad based support among women for the Iranian revolution.²⁰ Indeed, it was common during the cyclical period of protests throughout 1978-79 for women—with both traditional and modern backgrounds—to protest en masse, most wearing traditional *hejab*. Moreover, women in traditional roles likely found aspects of the Westoxification discourse appealing because it refuted the characterization of their traditional cultural and religious values as being backwards. By way of contrast, elite women with Western educations, the primary beneficiaries of the Shah's policies affecting women, regarded the revolution as a means of further expanding their political participation in a more open political system.

During the pre-revolutionary period there was very little discourse between traditional and modern women in Iran concerning their different conceptions of women's rights. Afary (1996) has described the disconnection between women modernists (left-socialists) and traditionalists (right-Islamists) as being in “nearly total ideological rupture”(2). These two disparate trends continue to exist in Iran today, but following a couple decades of post-revolutionary debate, the two sides appear to be in the process of reconciling their differences

and implicitly concentrating on areas of broad agreement (see Afary 1996; Afshar 1998; Mir-Hosseini²¹ 1999; Keddie 2000).

Enabling and Constraining Aspects of the Revolutionary Framework

Val Moghadam (1997) believes that a “women in the family model” is often the ideological outcome of cultural revolutions that identify the “ideal” woman as having traditional family roles. Indeed, in the rhetorical speeches that occurred directly after the revolution, essentialist biological arguments concerning the role of Iranian women as “mothers” was common. Paradoxically, aspects of the new family code law introduced after the revolution related to divorce, polygamy and custody rights, were changed to favor men. These were the first contradictions that were exploited by women activists in Iran to their benefit.

Women who fled from Iran during the revolution were, not surprisingly, extremely critical of the revolutionary outcome. But, over time, particularly as the dynamism of the women’s movement in Iran became increasingly apparent during the 1990s, some began to revisit the question as to whether the Iranian women’s movement might have been enabled by aspects of the post-revolutionary discourse. In particular, Helah Afshar²² (1998) has argued that Islamic ideologies in Iran are being “re-constructed” to accommodate an expansion of women’s rights in Iran. Afshar refers to this process as “capturing” the Islamic discourse (1997:155).

A primary contention of this work is that movement frames, negotiated during periods of conflict, are *both enabling and constraining* for specific movement participants. Indeed, the women’s movement in Iran has clearly begun to use the resonant revolutionary discourses, the most obvious being the *Qoranic* message of egalitarianism, to gain support for their movement goals. At the same time, the frames negotiated directly after the revolutionary movement clearly

imposed considerable restrictions on the discourses of women's rights in Iran. In particular, during the period from 1980-87 it was hard to find an "enabling" framework that could be used to support the women's advancements in Iran. Indeed, the primary enabling framework was that the revolutionary ideal, among all groups, rhetorically recognized that women were "equal" to men, and assumed that women were supposed to benefit from the new Islamic system. That is, when conservatives began to systematically repeal the family code, bar women from certain occupations and segregate women from public universities, they felt obliged to also state that these programs were part of a broader revolutionary ideology designed to "protect" and "elevate" women's status in Iran. By rhetorically including women in their post-revolutionary "ideal"-and by asserting that these new policies were broadly supported by women—conservative factions were inviting women to comment upon how the revolution affected their well-being.

Most women, including supporters of the revolution, ultimately concluded that the revolution had failed women. Increasingly, they demanded redress with respect to this situation. By 1990, longtime supporters of Islamic feminism, also strong supporters of the revolution, were openly critical of the government. For example, shortly after Khomeini's death in 1989, Zahara Rahnavard, a daughter of Khomeini who holds a Ph.D. in philosophy stated:

We have no strategy for including women in this country's destiny and in this respect we have fallen far short of our political aspirations... In the Five Years Plan women are only mentioned once... despite all our protests we have remained invisible. It is essential that women's role in the development process is clearly delineated (Afshar 1996).

The revolutionary frame with respect to women's rights was constrictive, but a range of women's groups disappointed with the revolutionary outcome later employed the frame of

Moslem “equality” established after the revolution. Moreover, the frame of Moslem egalitarianism—combined with post revolutionary oppression of women—united the previously disparate women’s groups and gave them a common language with which they communicated with one another. Previous to the revolution, it was assumed that advocates for women’s rights were hostile toward traditional Moslem culture. Women who felt an affinity with the traditional culture, who might also have had opinions with respect to women’s rights, would not have regarded secular feminists as advocates on their behalf, even if they agreed with some of their primary ideas (see Afshar 1998; Moghadam 1999).

Policy and Employment Trends For Women Following the Revolution

Before exploring the movement frames that women have used in post-revolutionary Iran, it is important to look at a few broad trends related to employment and educational opportunities for women that have taken place during the past twenty years. Indeed, one paradox of the post revolutionary period is that despite the hostile gender ideology of the conservative clerical establishment in power, women made considerable advances during the later (1990-present) post-revolutionary period. By all accounts, in the period directly after the revolution, women lost considerable ground in all spheres of Iranian social, political and economic life. More recently, women are gaining greater access to education, work and politics, and likely exercise more political and social power than the period just before the revolution. One particularly promising trend is that more women in Iran are enrolled in post secondary educational programs than men. In 2000, 57.2% of those who passed the university entrance exams were women (Zanan 2000).

Women represented about 13% of the formal workforce in pre-revolutionary Iran. During the first census taken after the revolution in 1986 this rate had fallen to 8% (Afshar 1998).²³ Even without the use of census data, it is clear that as a matter of policy women were systematically purged from some professions, particularly some fields of engineering and law. In other sectors of the formal economy it appears that men were favored during the severe economic crisis that resulted from the Iran-Iraq war and the economic embargo imposed on Iran by the United States. While women's employment rates were not high before the revolution, they likely declined in the years immediately after the revolution. In effect, women bore the double burden of being systematically denied access to some professions and then excluded from other professions, in favor of employing men, once the economy stagnated. (see Afshar 1998; Keddie 2000; Sabet-Ghadam 1994; *Zamineh Monthly* 1994).

As women's participation in the formal economy grew they were tracked into certain professions. In general, by the early 1990s women were starting to dominate the medical fields, including dentistry (about 55%) but had been omitted entirely from some engineering fields. In the early 1990s, women's rate of total workforce representation tended to be higher in the clerical fields (20%), as teachers (30%), and in the civil services (ranging from 16% to 21% in the different ministries) (Moayedi 1994; Zahedi 1994). The clear trend in post revolutionary Iran is that women's workforce rates increased in areas where they were allowed access in accordance with the revolutionary ideology, and declined in areas, sometimes by force of law, where their participation did not conform to the ruling ideology. Most recently, there is evidence that women are particularly interested in the engineering fields they were excluded from directly after the revolution.

Women have made significant advances with respect to literacy rates and access to higher education. Literacy rates, for both men and women, increased dramatically following the revolution and it appears female literacy was at roughly 80% in 1995-96. This is comparable to a rate of 57% that existed a few years before the revolution (*Zamineh Monthly Publication: Kowsar Economic Organization* n.d.). This result is likely because increasing literacy was part of the revolutionary ideology extolled by Khomeini as necessary in order to spread the new Islamic ideology (Afshar 1996; Keddie 2000; Moayeddi 1994; Sabet-Ghadam 1994).

Recently, government policy has recognized that if Iran's younger population is not integrated into the workforce, it represents a demographic time bomb. Following the revolution population growth rates increased dramatically (3.9% in 1983). This increase was directly related to the "women in the family" clerical ideology that advocated for large families and largely eliminated state run family planning programs. Currently, over half the population in Iran is under the age of 25 and the overall population has doubled since the revolution. Not surprisingly, official government policy is now geared toward promoting family planning designed to lower birthrates (see Afshar 1998; Keddie 2000). In some cases, women's integration into the workplace is viewed as a means of keeping fertility rates low and reducing the strain on the social services (primarily health care) which the government provides in accordance with its Islamic ideology.

Exploiting the "Women in the Family Frame" (1982-87)

Aspects of the women in the family frame were clearly designed to deny Iranian women sovereign rights related to both the right to work and engage in certain clerical and government professions. At the same time, the governing traditionalists, after the revolution, continued to

rhetorically arguer that they were expanding women's "freedoms" —often stated that the *Qoran* established that women were equal to men. But they then stated that men and women were, by virtues of their biology, predisposed toward assuming different roles in society. Likewise, essentialist arguments were rationales for sex segregation in the schools and other public places. In effect, women were important as "teachers and mothers" to the young, and temperamentally disposed toward "motherly" type professions (e.g. health care providers). Likewise, biological arguments were used in the defense of re-institutionalizing "modest" dress for women. The argument was that modest dress would allow women greater access to Iranian political and social institutions because men—inevitably lustful when viewing women not in modest dress—could now interact with women as peers. Likewise, this would prevent women from being sexually harassed at work. Many Iranian women, often sincere activists for women's rights, continue to make these arguments.

Despite the exalted rhetoric concerning the noble role that Iranian "mothers" played in society—particularly during the Iran-Iraq war—the actual policies that conservatives instituted were, by any measure, in direct contradiction to their own ideology. Women began to reclaim their rights by asking the obvious questions. For instance, if the *hejab* allowed women increasing latitude in choosing a profession, why was sex segregation in school and other professions (e.g. engineering) necessary? If women were superior mothers, why was the family code amended so that they did not receive child custody rights after a divorce unless the children were infants? If women should pursue a role as family caregivers, why was their no state policy for maternity leave? If the work women did in the home was of equal value to that done in the formal economy, why were women not paid for this work? And why did women receive no compensation for this work in the case of divorce? If women were experts on matters of the

family, why were women being excluded from the family courts as advisors, lawyers and judges? (See Afshar 1998; Mir Hosseini 1993; 1999; Keddie 2000).

Throughout the 1980s, particularly beginning in 1983, activist women—mostly supporters of the revolution—began to chip away at these inconsistencies. For instance, women representatives in the Majles introduced a bill that extended financial benefits to “unprotected” women, often widows of the Iran-Iraq war. A version of the bill was eventually passed in 1987 that gave widowed women their husband’s full pensions. Likewise, a bill was introduced which made private employers extend women three months paid maternity leave. During the mid 1980s, although women could still not preside as judges in family court, they became employed as advisors in the court. As a practical matter, women never stopped practicing law, and women’s centers that helped support women with family court cases became increasingly common (see Abedi 2000). Currently, while women are barred from being judges, they are the primary advisors and advocates in the family courts (see Mir-Hosseini 1993²⁴).

Several pro-women laws passed by the Majles are not generally enforced. For instance, while women can now demand, by force of law, payment for their housework from their husbands this is not a common practice. Likewise, while women can lobby for divorce in expanded circumstances, and theoretically receive half a husband’s wealth if divorced, it is unlikely that that most actually receive these payments. Indeed, the machinations that women go through in order to obtain a divorce—sometimes claiming their husband is insane, sometimes claiming their husband is impotent—make family court cases interesting, but still serve as a considerable obstacle that women have to navigate in order to be granted a divorce (see Mir Hosseini 1993; Keddie 2000).

Counter Framing Women's Activism: Feminism as "Western"

Iranian advocates for women's rights run the risk of being portrayed as more "Western" than Moslem in their worldview if they make provocative arguments with respect to gender equality. The necessity of making arguments that cannot be based on a Western idea (or be portrayed as being based on a Western idea) is an extra barrier that Iranian women have to contend with when they make arguments in favor of an expansion of women's rights. Of course, many Moslem feminists are actively searching for a "native" solution with respect to women's rights in Iran (see Moti 1997).

Many Islamic feminists in Iran, often academics such as Zahra Rahnavard (who holds a PhD in Philosophy) or Nahid Moti (a Ph.D. in Sociology) are clearly sincere when they argue that Moslem norms actually increase women's access to political and economic power. Moreover, Islamic feminists are familiar with Western feminist literature, and use the analogy of the "double shift" of work performed by Western women—who often work both outside the home but are responsible for the primary care-giving of the family as well—in order to demonstrate the problems concerning the outcomes of Western feminist movements (Moti 1997; see Hochschild 1990). The other academic trend is the use of "postmodern" perspectives as a means of demonstrating that Western perspectives on women's rights are not superior to Islamic perspectives.

Hard-line religious leaders often portray women's rights policies as "Western" as a means of discrediting activist women. Women activists in Iran have responded by drawing arguments from modernist Islamic scholarship that articulates an egalitarian gender ideology from an Islamic world-view. In particular, Ayatollah Yousef Sanei has issued *fatwas* (findings of fact) that state women are, in every respect, equal to men. He regards the current restrictions on

women's rights as "*sonatha-ye-qalat*" (erroneous traditions that are not Islamic). In effect, Ayatollah Sanei distinguishes between cultural practice (which restrict women) and Islamic values (which he argues do not) (Sanei 1996). These positions directly contradict other religious clerics who have stated, usually using a biologically determinist arguments outlined above, that women are not suited for certain positions in society.

Political and Press Activism

Women, in small numbers, have been elected to the *Majles* in each election after the revolution. The election year of 1996 was notable because it included widespread debate on women's issues and Faezeh Hashemi, a daughter of past President Hashemi Rafsanjani, received the largest number of votes to the *Majles*. She had actively advocated for change in a number of areas concerning women's education. She was particularly vocal concerning the need for women to participate in sport (*Akhbar* 1997). Later, she established a moderate woman's magazine (*Zan*) that was closed by the judiciary in 1999. In 1996, 14 women were elected to the 270 seat *Majles*. Currently, 11 women are in the *Majles*. As elections to municipal and local government positions became openly contested (many positions were previously filled by appointment after the revolution) women's representation was considerably higher than the representation at the national level. On many regional councils, women are the majority of participants (Mortazavi-Nasab 2001).

In the Presidential campaign of 1997, Mohammad Khatami openly courted the women's vote. In particular, when an activist women's magazine, *Zanan* [Women] asked to interview the candidates for the presidency, Mohammed Khatami accepted the offer. His conservative opponent, Nateq-Nouri, refused to be interviewed by *Zanan*. After winning the election,

President Khatami appointed a woman, Dr. Massoumeh Ebtekar, to his cabinet. She is also one of four appointed Vice Presidents.²⁵ Khatami was asked, during the course of his interview with *Zanan*, if he would consider appointing women to his cabinet and to other posts. He responded, “I think women are qualified for far better posts than they are holding presently and they must be permitted to have more wider presence in management levels (Khatami 1997b:1). Khatami likewise revitalized the sub-cabinet Office of Women’s Affairs, currently headed by Zahra Shojaie.

The most dynamic women’s magazine, *Zanan* [Women], is remarkably adept at revealing the underlying contradictions of many conservative positions. Indeed, their commentary often exposes the hard-line clergy—who usually claim their gender ideology is buttressed by a sophisticated reading of the *Qoran*—as simple-minded misogynists. The magazine has a dynamic group of contributors, and is expanding the parameters of gender dialogue in Iran in a number of different ways. For example, in 1992 *Zanan* published several provocative pieces on religious jurisprudence written by a religious cleric with an egalitarian interpretation of women’s rights. Mohsen Saidzadeh wrote the articles, based on *Qoranic* interpretations, and claimed women were as competent as men in terms of being judges and religious leaders. He wrote the articles under a female pseudonym (see Mir-Hosseini 1999). The conservative judiciary has since jailed him.

A clerically-based magazine that is devoted to women’s issues (*Payam-e Zan*)—liberal in the context of the clerical establishment, but not as provocative as *Zanan*—has also adopted reformist clerical interpretations concerning Iranian gender roles. *Payam-e Zan* is committed to a biologically essentialist view that accepts men and women may be superior in performing certain social roles, but the magazine is still effective refuting some specific characterizations used by

the conservative clergy that bar women from being active in some political and social spheres (see Mir Hosseini 1999).

Zanan has made it a point to interview women in positions of political power, or women who are active in the Iranian arts (see *Zanan* 1997b: Sept-Oct.). By way of contrast, conservative women's dailies, such as *Mahjubah* [The Islamic Magazine for Women], often recycle homilies such as "The Philosophy of Modest Dress" (March 1995:29-31) and "Marriage in Islam" (April 1995), or interview the wives of the religious elite who—in excruciating detail—talk about their rather monotonous lives, brightened when they are of service to their husbands (Sept-Oct 1992:25-26).²⁶ *Payam-e Zan* represents a unique place in this mix in that it is a journal with clerical editors (men) but is provocative because it is challenging the gender norms of many of the clerical elite, using their language and reasoning.

The discussion concerning whether women should be allowed to run for the Presidency offers a good example of how *Zanan* operates with respect to furthering a pro-woman agenda in Iran, and how other women's magazines tend to pick up on the themes that *Zanan* introduces. Currently, there is no formal barrier to a woman becoming President in the Constitution. Nonetheless, the Guardian Council vets the Presidential candidates and some Islamic jurists claim women are not suited for this position.²⁷ *Zanan*, during the 1997 Presidential election—in which no women were allowed to run for the Presidency—did a survey that asked whether a woman could be President (67% of the population said yes) (*Zanan* 1997a). When *Zanan* interviewed future President Khatami he stated while the point was being debated, but that many jurists had expressed the opinion that a woman could be President.

Inevitably, during the 2001 Presidential election the issue was re-visited, particularly when a woman, Farah Khosravi Talebi, announced that she intended to run for the Presidency.

Indeed, there was considerable debate concerning whether she would be considered eligible to run. Ultimately, she withdrew her petition to run for the presidency. But her example inspired 47 women to submit their credentials to be considered as candidates for the Presidency by the Guardian Council. None were allowed to run. Dokouhaki (2001) later wrote an article in which many of these candidates were interviewed as to why they submitted their credentials to the Guardians. The women represented a broad cross section of Iranian groups. They were between 19-and 69 years of age and employed in a wide range of jobs. Some were modernist, some were traditionalist. Some sincerely wanted to be approved to run. Others were making a symbolic gesture. Their responses, in what is largely a symbolic issue, are useful in that they provide an insight into the different perspectives that women in Iran adopt when advocating for women's rights. Responses included:

What I did was a symbolic gesture because I just wanted to show that women too could enter many scenes. I did not mean to become president because I approve of Mr. Khatami.

I became a candidate only to pave the way for other women. However, I am obedient to the Leader. If the Leader's ultimate view is that women should not participate in the presidential elections, I will never ever participate in the elections in future.

Women have grown up in families wherein they have been treated as second degree creatures. In fact, given the prevailing atmosphere of supremacy of men over women, men have always been treated differently in the society. Through my

candidacy I tried to initiate a new cultural movement among women so that they would always think of great tasks and never downgrade themselves.

The Guardian Council can by no means reject my eligibility as it should prove the opposite! My ancestors have been prominent religious figures generation by generation and I have been brought up by a person who had been Haj-Aqa (Imam) Ruhollah Khomeini's teacher. I consider myself being among the political personage. If they reject my eligibility I will publish it and let the world know it!

I did not intend to have my name be announced by TV or printed in the press. I just had a feeling of responsibility and for this purpose I entered the scene...

It is said that when Hadhrat Mahdi [the 12th Imam] (may God hasten his reappearance) reappears, women are in a superior position than men from an intellectual point of view.

Women's Struggle in the Courts

Perhaps one advantage that activist women in Iran had, previous to 1998, was that they could be provocative in the press, or as representatives in the Parliament, and they were not as likely to be targeted by the judicial authorities as men. Most recently, women journalists and politicians have been tried, and jailed, in increasing numbers since 1998. Indeed, the judiciary has recently disproportionately targeted them. As stated previously, the hard-line judiciary banned *Zan* [Women] in 1999 and charged Faezeh Hashemi with being a counter revolutionary (Reuters April 6, 1999). Previously, a newspaper reporter for *Zan*, Kamiliyah Antekhabi-Ford

was arrested and held for 76 days before being released (*Tehran Times* August 1, 1999).

Although other women journalists have been jailed and other papers have been closed, the closure of this paper is notable because Faezah Hashemi is the daughter of Hashemi Rafsanjani who currently chairs the Expediency council. Faezeh Hashemi was a member to the 1996 Parliament, she was outspoken concerning many women's rights issues.

The judiciary jailed Fatima Haghightjoo in 2001, ostensibly for her attendance at a conference in Germany where Iranian dissidents interrupted conference events with a public striptease. She is also a member of the Parliament, and has been among the most vocal supporters on behalf of students that were jailed in 1999 during clashes with security forces (see below). In particular, she discussed the plight of the students on the Parliament floor. She was previously called before the judiciary after objecting, in a speech at Parliament, to the treatment of a woman reform journalist, Fariba Mohajer, who had been arrested during the conservative crackdown on the reform press (see Haghightjoo [interview] 2000).

The reform press responded to these arrests in a number of ways. Perhaps the most innovative response was undertaken by *Payam-e Emrooz*, which published the prison diaries of a number of reformers. Among the diaries that were published were those of women reformers, Shahla Lahijji, Mahrangiz Kar and Shirin Ebadi.²⁸ The prison diaries are, for the most part, introspective accounts that really do not discuss politics. They discuss personal nightmares, food, other prisoners and the rhythms of life in jail. As such, they likely do not—in terms of the letter of the press law—violate any laws, although *Payam-e Emrooz* has closed soon after these diaries were published.

Shahla Lahiji was also charged with attending the conference in Germany that was disrupted by the striptease in front of members of the Iranian delegation. Her diary describes being admitted to the prison and her solitary confinement:

Like a somnambulist, I get out of the car by the order of the official. It was as though a thin mist surrounded me and everything appeared like a slow motion movie. The sounds appeared like that too – vague and incomprehensible. Office of identification, a number hung around my neck.... Flash... the whole face... sidewise... flash... ink... finger print... the women carrying out the physical inspection asked, your crime?" I did not answer. "Drugs?" she asked. I shook my head. –Check? – No –Fighting? –No – Theft? – No – "What is it then?" – I don't know – Whoever comes here, claims to be innocent (Translated by Roya Manajem. Available at Payvand.com.).

The Student Movement

The student current student movement in Iran has been the most vocal with respect to calling for an expansion of individual rights based on the Iranian constitution. Most recently,, some have been calling for a referendum on the authority of the *Velayat-e Faqih* to be voted upon by Iranian citizens. Iranian students—in the religious seminaries, modern universities and abroad—have always been important movement groups in Iran (Matin-asgari 2002). There is also a strong tradition in Iran of mostly non-political student protests. These types of protests most often involve issues related to living conditions, food, access to library materials, crowding, and other concerns related to getting an education. These protest are a common part of student life, but during the 1998 political crackdown directed toward the reformist press, students began

to more openly support Mohammad Khatami and other reformers. In July 1999, large student protests at Tehran University resulted in clashes with state security forces and one student death. Harassment of student supporters of Mohammad Khatami by hardliners became more prevalent following the July 1999 student protests. Most recently, several student leaders have been jailed. The judiciary now closely scrutinizes student papers. The most activist student organization is the Office for Fostering Unity (*Dafter-e Tahkim-e Vahadat*).

The student movement, before 1999, was not particularly vocal or well organized. One reason for this relatively slow student response may be related to the two-year closure of universities during the “cultural revolution” of 1980-1982 when the college curriculum was changed to correspond with the new revolutionary ideology. At the time, there were rumors that the universities might never reopen. The universities did reopen, but there is likely a residual institutional timidity with respect to academic and student organizing. Most recently, in November 2002, the student movement re-emerged—largely focusing on academic and personal freedoms—and could become an extremely important factor with respect to the overall success of the reform movement. All reform factions broadly supported the mobilization in November 2002, and it built upon the repertoires of past student protest.

*The 1999 July Student Protest*²⁹

The first widespread, widely publicized student protests occurred in July 1999 after state security forces—in response to small, localized student demonstrations—entered Tehran University with representatives from *Ansar-e Hezbollah* and ransacked the student dormitories. During the dormitory raid several students were beaten and many arrested. It appears that the security forces regarded this as a preemptive show of force, designed to keep student activism

from growing following the election of Mohammad Khatami. Rather than stemming student activity, student demonstrators took to the streets in large numbers the following day and called for the resignation of the Tehran Chief of Police. These demonstrations resulted in the conservative leadership banning subsequent demonstrations (Akbar Mahdi 1999).

The ban was ignored, and a series of non-violent sit-ins were planned at the university. One interesting debate within the student movement was the strategy that they should pursue with respect to the planned demonstrations. It appears that most leaders in the Office for Fostering Unity, responding to calls from the leadership in the 2nd of *Khordad*, wanted to engage in non-violent sit-ins—undertaken only on campus—that protested the raid on the university. In effect, there was an assumption that the campus represented a symbolic space that would not, given the public support of the students, be breached by security forces so long as the protest remained “calm.” Other student factions wanted to pursue public demonstrations off campus. Indeed, when some students protested off campus *Ansar-e Hezbollah* and the anti-riot police immediately assaulted them. Hundreds of students were arrested and the security forces pursued protestors onto the university grounds. Soon, students were barricading themselves on campus, and were engaged in street battles with the anti-riot police and *Ansar-e Hezbollah*. One student was killed during these protests. Several cars were burned and there was considerable property damage. Reform papers gave the student demonstrations wide coverage. Mohammad Khatami and other leaders called on the student’s to remain “calm.” Conservative papers, and the Leader, called for the students to be vigilant with respect to “traitors” who had infiltrated their ranks (Akbar Mahdi 1999). Members of the newly elected *Majles*, now dominated by reformers, promised to investigate the invasion of the university.

After these protest, which occurred during an ongoing investigation of the political assassinations of 1998, it appeared that the reformers might actually be able to force a reform of the judiciary and security forces. Indeed, 20 members of various state security forces, the most prominent defendant was Brigadier General Farhad Nazari who is the former chief of the LEF, was ultimately implicated in the invasion of Tehran University (*Teheran Times*: 2000 March 1, 3, 8 and 16). Moreover, the Parliament quickly passed legislation that prevented the LEF forces from entering university campuses. Still, these victories were relatively short-lived, and the conservative judiciary has continued to target reformers, which now includes students who have become more active following the Teheran University protest.

“Entrance Exam and the Time Of Resurrection”

The most interesting judicial case brought against students after the 1999 protests involve a play, *Entrance Exam and the Time Of Resurrection*, published in an obscure university journal, *Mowj* (The Wave). The play describes the awaited resurrection of the Imam Mahdi (the 12th Imam). The Shi'i believe when the 12th Imam appears he will gather 313 followers to help him in his battle for righteousness. With respect to the Iranian constitution, the 12th Imam remains the spiritual leader of the Iranian Republic.

In this play, the Imam Mahdi approaches a young man, Abbas, and states that Abbas is one of the 313 chosen to fight by his side. Abbas is at first overwhelmed, excited to be among the righteous, but becomes concerned when he is told that the date for the impending resurrection conflicts with his university entrance exam. He inquires if the Mahdi might consider rescheduling the coming apocalypse. Abbas then describes aspects of the Iranian revolution to the Imam, and states that Iranians were already

promised paradise once, and it has not turned out too well. When the Imam refuses to reschedule, it is implied that Abbas kills him as he pulls a knife and the stage goes dark.

A translated version [translator unknown] is available on the internet

(<http://www.iranian.com/Arts/1999/October/Time/>).

The conservative judiciary immediately banned the play and arrested the authors, Abbas Nemati and Mohammad Reza Namnamat, who were tried and given a three-year suspended sentence. Some conservative clerics were calling for the death penalty. Some reformers believe that conservatives, in order to embarrass the reform movement, manufactured the event (See <http://www.dfn.org/Voices/iran/waveplay.htm>). In general, the play is a good exemplar of Iranian-style social criticism. Moreover, it generally indicates how students are inclined to sum up their experience with the post-revolutionary educational system. Sections of the play are excerpted below.

MAN: I have come to gather 313 disciples. I am asking you if you wish to be my disciple.

Abbas: My Lord, how can I not wish so? I am alive because of your love. If I could I would have wished to be all of the 313 disciples myself.

MAN: You shall shave your head on Friday. At eight o'clock in the morning you will go to the Revolution Avenue. When I arise, you shall be recruiting followers for the final uprising.

Abbas: Friday??

MAN: What is wrong? Is it too late?

Abbas: Umm... err ... We have the university entrance exam on Friday at eight. Let's postpone it to Saturday.

MAN: No, it cannot be. It is God's will for it to be on Friday.

Abbas (a begging please gesture on his face)

MAN: No, it can't be!

Abbas: Look, I am not asking to postpone until after the exam results. I said Saturday. One thousand and three hundred and fifty four years and fifty-five days you have been hiding, why can't you wait one more day for me??

Man: The Almighty has decided. If you refuse to become a martyr...

Abbas: What? You are getting worse than these mollas. They promised us so much and look what happened. You have only just resurrected and already have decided I should be a martyr... Lord! Don't talk to me like this. I am not saying anything back to you because I love you, but if you talk like this to others they will land a punch right on your chin and tell you that they have a wife and children.

Man: Do you not love martyrdom?

Abbas: Me? I die for martyrdom! I love martyrdom. I wish I could be a martyr one hundred times over....

Abbas Nemati's defense was, in the best Persian tradition, novel. I think it might also have been, perhaps, a modern form of *taqiyeh*. He stated that the intent of his play was not to be irreverent, that he was sincerely religious, but that he wanted to demonstrate that Iranians, mired in the concerns of this world, were simply not ready for the return of Imam Mahdi (See <http://www.dfn.org/Voices/iran/waveplay.htm>).

The November 2002 Protests

The student protests in November 2002 drew upon many of the previous protest strategies that the reformers and students have used. The specific event that ignited the student action was when a history professor at Tehran University, Hashem Aghajari, was sentenced to death by the judiciary following a speech he had given in which he argued against the practice of imitation (*taqlid*) of the most esteemed leaders. He stated that this reduced people to being "monkeys." He gave this speech at a memorial service that commemorated the death of Ali Shariati, the renowned Iranian reformist who was also critical of clerical authority (see chapter

12). Dr. Aghajari is a veteran of the Iran-Iraq war, during which he was injured, causing one of his legs to be partially amputated. A brother was killed in the war (See IRNA 11/16 2002).

During his speech he stated:

Shariati used to say that the relationship between [the clergy] and the people should be like the relationship between teacher and pupil - not between leader and follower, not between icon and imitator; the people are not monkeys who merely imitate. The relationship that the fundamentalist religious people [seek] is one of master and follower; the master must always remain master and the follower will always remain follower. This is like shackles around the neck [i.e. eternal slavery].

They [the Iranian ruling clergy], however, want to exercise total power. Shariati did something about it; he told the religious leaders: 'You are not imams, you are not prophets, [you] cannot consider the people a subhuman species.' They are born the same way we all are, their blood is the same color as yours; they are born like you; they issue from their mothers' wombs? They are the same creatures of God that you are? (This translation is from The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI). See *The Iranian* at <http://www.iranian.com/Opinion/2002/December/Aghajari/index.html> or *Iran-e Emrooz* on gooya.com or gooya.com.)

After the court returned a verdict of death, which the court was unlikely to carry out assuming Aghajari would appeal the sentence and possibly renounce aspects of the speech, Aghajari refused to appeal the verdict, and instead dared the judiciary to impose its verdict.

Concurrently, small student demonstrations against the verdict began to take place. Soon the Office for Fostering Unity was coordinating these protests. They were largely peaceful, although some fistfights were reported when members of the *Basaji* and *Ansar-Hezbollah* disrupted a student gathering where speeches in support of Aghajari were being made. The IRNA reported, “Aghajari's wife, Zahra Behnoudi, said on Thursday that the academic had asked the students to ‘make their demands in the framework of the law’ and refrain from instigating riots,” and that “a group of people are seeking to inflame student movements. Thus, the students must follow up their demands in calm and with awareness and do not let their movements be exploited” (December 16, 2000).

Following the initial student protest, the Leader of the Revolution demanded that the judiciary evaluate the verdict. Mohammad Khatami stated that he personally regarded the verdict as "improper." Later, the Head of the *Majles*, who likewise denounced the verdict, publicly thanked the Leader for intervening on behalf of Aghjarari (IRNA November 13, 2002). Still, the hard-line judiciary remained defiant, and issued the following statement, excerpted by the IRNA (November 13, 2002).

“It is surprising that those who boast of piety consider blatant insult to the religion and the infallible household (of Prophet Mohammad PBUH) and their divine position as well as derision of brilliant Islamic principles as freedom of thought,” it said in a statement.

“Is it possible to defend a person who claims to be a Muslim, but has given himself up to satans by denying the basics of the religion, including the principle of emulation of top clerics.”

“How can one defend a person who has gone beyond (German philosopher Karl) Marx and called the religion not only the opium of the masses but also the governments.”

“Or he says as long as this decadent religion does not change, there will be no hope for any reform and that all religious teachings are dusty, darkened and antiquated,” the statement added.

The Judiciary pledged to carry out its legal proceedings in the case, despite all the “hue and cry.”

“The judicial apparatus, relying on the principle of the independence of judges and the judiciary ... will never give in to hue and cry and considers all proceedings in this case as legal and free from errors,” it said.

The students, for the most part, confined their protests to college campuses, which were often surrounded by state security forces and riot police. Indeed, the campuses seem to function as symbolic space that—particularly after the uproar concerning the 1999 protests—security forces are reluctant to breach. Still, it does appear that the security forces are limiting access to campuses. Many student demands expanded beyond the specific judicial case to include greater personal and academic freedom. Some students were also demanding a referendum on the future of the Iranian Republic that would delineate, or possibly do away with, the authority of the *Velayat-e Faqih* (see Hafezi 2002).

College administrations, including that at Tehran University, suspended classes and made statements in support of Hashem Aghajari. Among the notable faculty that spoke against the

verdict was Zahra Rahnavard, daughter of Ayatollah Khomeini. Likewise, the IRNA reported that Khomeini's grandson, a mid-level cleric, demonstrated against the verdict.

Post Revolutionary Movement Frames

Iranian social movements are still using traditional narratives to fashion movement frames. And they are still working to confront the West. Current reform groups in Iran have, to a greater extent than in the past, an unerring idea of who they are and where they are going in the future. Indeed, the discourses of the modern movements are remarkably confident. The women's movement is convinced change is coming, that they will affect it, and that Iran will be a better place because of it. The student movement, often irreverent, seems just as confident that they will, by sheer weight of numbers, prevail in the long run. Even President Khatami analyzes the reform movement in the context of the history of ideas. He tells Iranians about the past, he tells them about the future, and then asks them to make the appropriate choices, hoping that they will find a way to maintain their religiosity and also debate new ideas.

Previously, I stated that all social movements in Iran have been debated a master framework of sovereignty on two levels: 1) *national sovereignty*, concerning how Iran should achieve political independence from the influence of the Great Britain, the United States and Russia, and 2) *individual sovereignty*, concerning how individual Iranians respond to Western ideas. This project also chronicled the interaction between movement frames, ideologies and culture.

Throughout the preceding chapter, a variety of reformist arguments—from widely different ideological perspectives—have been presented, but all generally agree on a specific movement frame with respect to *individual sovereignty*. For example, religious conservatives

opposed to the *Velayat-e Faqih*, religious reformists such as Mohammad Khatami, and secular reformists, have all reconciled their specific ideologies toward establishing a “Civil Society” that allows for dissent. Establishing “Civil Society” has become a movement frame that all groups can, to degrees, accept.

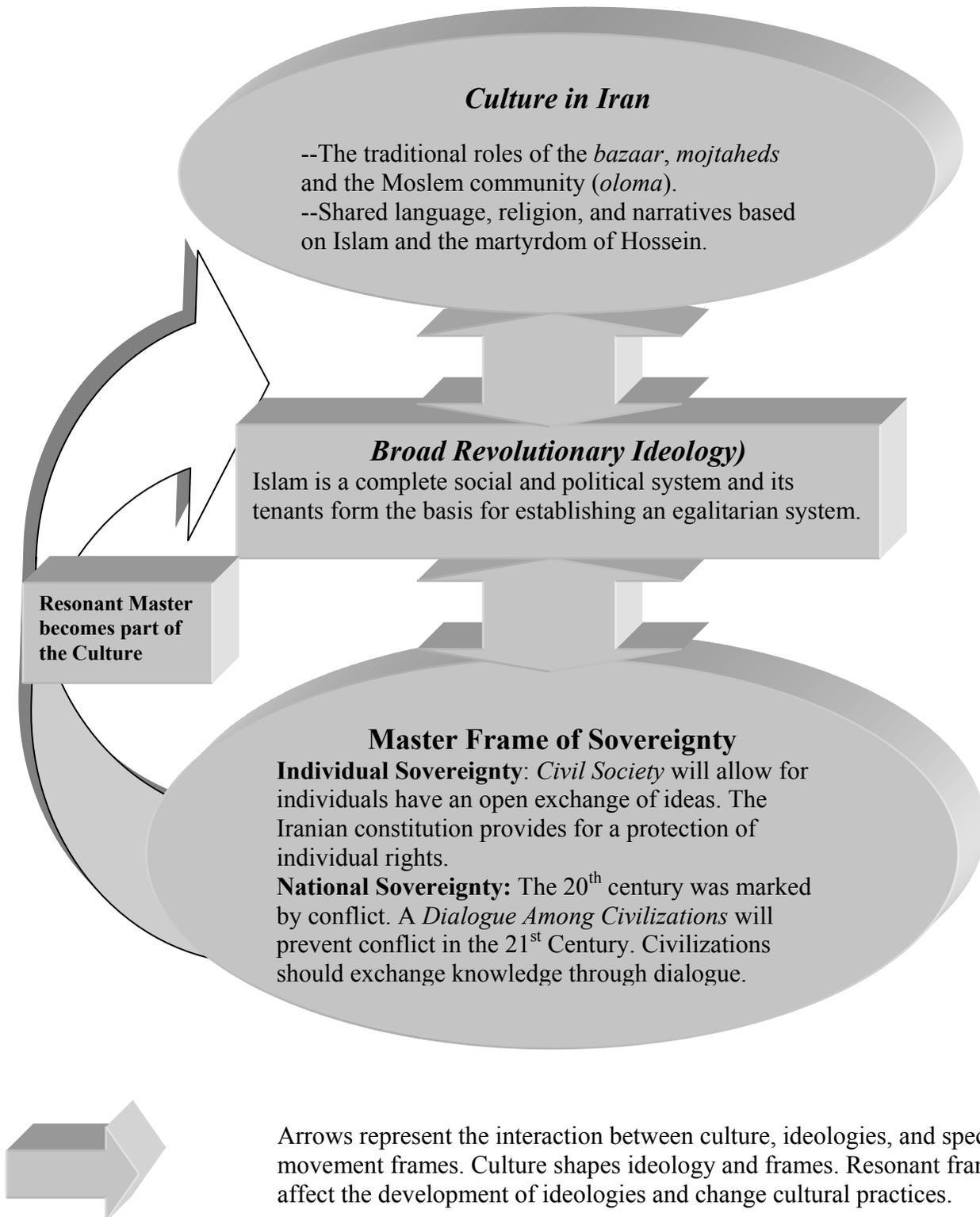
Of course, different movement factions continue to disagree about the degrees to which religion and democracy can be reconciled with each other, and whether the system of *Velayat-e Faqih* is salvageable. Many in the conservative clergy now portray “dialogue” as a cultural tradition rooted in the Moslem ideal and want to reform, not abolish, the *Velayat-e Faqih*. Moreover, conservatives have begun to re-emphasize the tradition of “choice” as it relates to following a spiritual leader. Khatami, and many of his supporters, believe that the Moslem ideal is egalitarian and are trying to interpret the Iranian Constitution so that it reinforces this ideal. Secular Iranians may not believe in either of these religious conceptions of egalitarianism, but appear willing to accept a “Moslem ideal” if it allows for open discourse.

As a whole, Iranians do not want to become Western, but most appear to believe that they can interact with Western ideas as individuals and not lose their identity as Moslems or Iranians. Most resent the authority of the conservative religious clerics who are trying to limit their access to the world of ideals. There is also a remarkable optimism among many people in Iran given their current financial and political hardships. Young Iranians earnestly talk of a cultural and social renaissance in Iranian society. They are comfortable with their identities as Iranians, but clearly want to reestablish the cosmopolitan aspects of past Iranian culture. Indeed, Iran has always been at the crossroads of Empire, between the East and the West, where amalgams of ideas and cultures have always mixed together. As a practical matter, in the urban cities, young Iranians already have access to the world of ideas, and it seems improbable that the ideology of

the religious conservatives—clearly appealing to many Iranians a generation ago—is ever going to be resonate among this younger generation.

The conservative clerics who control the judiciary continue to tie their governing ideology to a strict interpretation of the *Velayat-e Faqih* as was outlined by Ayatollah Khomeini. In their conception, clerical authority supercedes *individual sovereignty* because only God remains sovereign and the clergy are best equipped to interpret his will. As Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri succinctly stated during debate concerning the popularity of the Leader, “When some people say that the Leader’s legitimacy depends on his popularity, they don’t understand anything. Our regime gets its legitimacy from God” (*The Economist* Oct. 24, 1998). Moreover, while the conservatives have tentatively accepted reconciliation with the European nations, they continue to regard the United States as a threat and Western culture as dangerous. Below, in Figures 12.2 the interaction between culture, ideology and movement frames of the reform groups in Iran are presented.

Figure 12.2 The Interaction of Culture, Ideology and Frames Among Reform (2nd of Khordad) Leaders



Prediction is a risky, and Iran has proven more unpredictable than most places, but it seems unlikely that conservative Islamic ideology that has established the clerical oversight of the *Velayat-e Faqih* is going to be able to maintain its control of the Iranian judiciary indefinitely. The *Velayat-e Faqih* has little resonance among most young, urban Iranians and who are increasingly impatient with the pace of reform, but nonetheless confident that, ultimately, reforms will come. Indeed, the reformists most often describe conservatives as individuals who fear change. They describe change, reforms, and their increasing participation in society as an inevitable, unstoppable “force,” or as a “wave” that will, ultimately, overcome clerical conservatism. At the same time, it is unlikely that the reformers are going to—even as they reform or deconstruct the *Velayat-e Faqih*—regard the Iranian revolution as a negative event. The ongoing movement is not a counter-revolution, and reformers clearly frame their program as an extension of the revolutionary process.

¹ I regard Schirazi’s (1997) work, *The Constitution of Iran*, as the best piece of scholarship that describes how the Iranian constitution was formed. My only disagreement with his interpretation is that I ultimately argue that the institutions established in Iran are more flexible than in his interpretation.

² A copy can be found at: www.netiran.com.

³ Most recently, the Council broke an impasse between the Parliament and Head of the Judiciary over the appointment of six members to the Guardian Council. In general, much of the Iranian public regards this body as the least legitimate of the institutions established after the revolution because it has considerable power, and no electoral oversight.

⁴ Rafsanjani remains a formidable political figure, in part because he controls the Assessment Council. Some reformers have accused him of conspiring to assassinate political opponents. He is not personally close to the current Leader, Ali Khamenei.

⁵ For an overview of the considerable wrangling that preceded Khamenei’s ascension to this post, see Schirazi (1998:77-80).

⁶ In this section I use the term “political” to describe the activist traditional clergy, and “quietist” to describe those challenging the current conception of the *Velayat-e faqih*. This is, of course, a broad generalization of these factions.

⁷ For a good discussion of the hierotic aspects of the Iranian Constitution, see Schirazi (1998) *The Constitution of Iran*.

⁸ Mir-Hosseini (1999) gives readers a feel for the traditional discourse that takes place among Qom scholars in her text, *Islam and Gender*. It is an interesting book for people interested in dissecting the various modes of reasoning

used by the religious elite in Iran. The specific question she is exploring concerns changing conceptions of “gender” among religious scholars. Helah Afshar’s work (1998) *Islam and Feminisms: An Iranian Case Study* would be a good starting point for those interested in this topic.

⁹ This interview was first printed in British dailies and then picked up by the Iranian press, was the first that Montazeri—under house arrest—had given in years. Three Iranian periodical reprinted the interview. All were later closed by the hard-line judiciary (see for fuller account see <http://www.dfn.org/Voices/iran/montazeri.htm>)

¹⁰ Each of these articles chronicles the growing debate concerning the Constitutional authority of the Executive branch under the Constitution.

¹¹ Velayati is an advisor to the *Leader of the Revolution*, Ali Khamenei. Khamenei is the successor of Ayatollah Khomeini in this position.

¹² Early in the revolution there were advocates of “barefoot Islam.” These individuals regarded the “return” to Islam as a return to a pre-modern, agrarian and craft based society. It would be hard to find an advocate for this position in the current Iranian discourse, although many want to adopt “modern” technology and retain their “traditional” culture.

¹³ A rough translation of the entire trial proceedings is available at NetIran from the Farang & Andisheh Cultural Institute (1998).

¹⁴ Adelkhah (2000) has a great description of Karbaschi’s policies, particularly as it relates to taxation issues.

¹⁵ Zhila Baniyaqoob (1998) did a series of interviews with Karbaschi after he was indicted (but before he stood trial) that were published in *Hamshari*, an Iranian Daily. He does address criticisms of his “autocratic” style, as well as taxation issues. Karbaschi was also the managing director of this paper at this time. It is common in Iran for the newspapers to be directed by major (conservative and liberal) politicians. For a table of a few major (27 total) newspapers that indicates their relationships with various politicians and political factions use *Tavana* (1999).

¹⁶ “Culture Minister Comments on Social and Political Issues, Future of Executives, Killing of Writers, Extremism” (*Akhbar* 1998) offers an interesting interview with the Iranian Minister of Culture. In particular, it shows the delicate balancing that liberal reformers engage in as they attempt to maintain an open press policy, and the pressures they come under to close the most radical papers.

¹⁷ I took this from the title of an article published by the *Asr-e Maa: Political & Social (Weekly) Apr. - May 2000, No. 161* Page: 2. I think it nicely summarizes the strategy of remaining “calm” by the 2nd of Khordad.

¹⁸ The original translation was very rough, and I could not find the original in Farsi. I tried to remain true to the original in terms of its message, but go to Netiran to see the original translation and article.

¹⁹ She also thinks that Iran might represent an exception to this rule with respect to modern women being “symbols” of Westoxification.

²⁰ Studies conducted other Middle East countries that have measured support for Islamic groups, have tended to demonstrate equal support among men and women for Moslem groups (see Tessler and Jesse 1996),

²¹ Mir Hosseini (1999) thinks the ideological divide between the two groups remains considerable. In particular, she interviewed both “traditional” and “modernist” supporters of women’s rights. These were primarily magazine editors, writers and some clerical activist, who did not appear to have much contact, or affinity, with one another. Still, one goal of Mir-Hosseini’s was to facilitate dialogue among these groups in order to strengthen the women’s movement.

²² Helah Afshar’s (1982; 1994; 1996, 1998) work is interesting in this respect. She was extremely critical of the revolution’s effects on women in her early work, but now has become largely supportive of the Moslem “women’s rights” movement. Moreover, she has tried to both explain, and reconcile, Western and Moslem conceptions of

women's rights. I would not characterize her as being supportive of the revolution, but the discourses following the revolution between different Iranian groups clearly have engaged her, and she has adopted a program that does not exclude a "reconstruction" of Moslem ideology that includes a positive feminist program.

²³ Afshar (1998) has an excellent study with respect to women's participation rates in the workforce and much of the data she used is available online at net.iran. Independent of Afshar, I found some of the same census data during the course of preparing a paper for a graduate seminar and, in a much more limited treatment, I generally drew the same conclusions that she did with respect to women's participation rates in Iran. Moghadam (1995) thinks the pre-revolutionary employment rate for women was as high as 20%. The data, as both Afshar and Moghadam noted, is unreliable as different governments administered the census about ten years apart. Many economics journals, inside Iran, criticized the 1986 census. In particular, women's participation rates in the countryside were underreported. For a good Iranian critique and study of rural participation rates for women see (*Iqtisad-e Keshavarzi and Tose'eah* [Journal of Agricultural Economic Studies] 1995). Ghvamshahidi 1995 has an excellent study with respect to women's work and Iranian carpet production. Keddie (2000) has an overview.

²⁴ To get an idea of the complexities of family court and "divorce," see Mir Hosseini and Kim Longinotto's documentary "Divorce Iranian Style" is invaluable.

²⁵ Dr. Massoumeh Ebtekar, Minister of the Environment, was one of the student leaders who overran the American embassy and took the American hostages. As a spokesperson, she often referred to herself as "Mary."

²⁶ This is an interview with the Leader's wife. It should be pointed out that *Zanan* has, at least once, done the same type of interview. They interviewed Khatami's wife (see June 2001:2-10).

²⁷ The specific debate is rather mundane, and concerns whether the term "regal" is gender specific in meaning.

²⁸ These, and other prison diaries are available at Payvand.com. Roya Manajem translated them.

²⁹ For a photo essay and an account of the events, written by a student, see <http://www.iranian.com/Features/1999/July/Eyewitness/index.html>. This site is generally reliable.