

The Development of the Modern Iranian Nation-State:
From Qajar Origins to Early Pahlavi Modernization

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Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
In
Political Science

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May 3rd, 2017
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: Iran, nationalism, centralization, Persian, Constitutionalism

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Abstract

The establishment of the Iranian nation-state is a story of modernization in response to Imperialism. State-led reforms in the Qajar era conducted with the aim of modernizing the military created the conditions for the development of Iranian national consciousness and Iranian nationalism. Iranian nationalism continued to develop after 1815: the moment when Mirza Saleh Shirazi brought the first printing press to Iran. Iranian students educated in Europe brought Orientalist scholarship in history and philology back to Iran. European historiography connected the contemporary peoples inhabiting the Iranian plateau to Iran's pre-Islamic past, while philology emphasized the distinction of the Persian language from Iran's Arab and Turkic neighbors. Historiographic and philological conceptions would form the backbone of Iranian nationalism: which would itself change from a civic to an ethnic nationalism—especially acute during the reign of Reza Shah. Notions of political legitimacy changed, as monarchy became grounded in a notion of “the People” and a constitutional monarchy was established in 1906, carrying on into the rule of Reza Shah, whose reign established a modern state apparatus with a vast bureaucracy in Iran.

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General Audience Abstract

This thesis focuses on the development of the Iranian nation and state from 1811 to 1941. Both of these developments occurred in response to Iran's encounter with the European powers, specifically Russia and Great Britain. Government-led reforms opened the possibility for the development of Iranian nationalism, as Iranian students were in England and brought back the first printing press with them to Iran in 1815. The introduction of the printing press was significant to the development of the Iranian nation-state, as an increase in journals and periodicals introduced contemporary European political ideas to Iranians. This increased the calls to replicate the customs and norms of European society in Iran, ultimately leading to the Constitutional Revolution of 1906. The Constitutional Revolution established a Parliament in Iran that was politically weak and held little power in the provinces outside of Tehran. Tribal authority increased throughout Iran, and the Russians and British eventually occupied Iran from 1911 to 1917. The establishment of Reza Shah's rule in 1921 introduced a new centralized Iranian state that was legitimated by the nation and established its rule over the tribes. It is also during Reza Shah's rule that the conception of the Iranian nation begins to change.

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Introduction

Persicos odi, puer, apparatus;
Displicent nexae philyra coronae;
Mitte sectari, rosa quo locorum
Sera moretur
—Horace, Ode 1.38¹

This thesis looks at the development of the modern Iranian nation-state from the period of Qajar rule in the nineteenth century to the abdication of Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1941. The development of modernity in Iran was the contributing factor behind the development of the nation-state. This thesis is concerned with the simultaneous development of the Iranian nation and state,² and how these developments coincided during the reign of Reza Shah with the operation of a modern nation-state. Studies of Iran in this context are mostly concerned with the development of Iranian nationalism and look at the role of nationalism in developing the Iranian state. However, the beginning of Iranian national consciousness was a result of state-led, defensive reforms in the early nineteenth century: Iranian nationalism would not have been born without the attempts made at military modernization by ‘Abbas Mirza and Amir Kabir. These developments came out of the encounter of Iranians with the European powers, and therefore, European modernity. Modern Iran would not exist without Europe.

Iran as a nation was imagined in a very specific way in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* serves as a theoretical background

¹ John Scriver’s translation: “Boy, I detest the Persian’s state; // The philyra-woven wreath I hate; // Then cease to hunt where—hidden—blows // The floweret of the later Horace, *The Odes of Horace*, trans. John Scriver (London: William Pickering, 1843), 66.

² This thesis also examines the weakness of the state in Iran prior the reign of Reza Shah, as the development of Iranian nationalism would continue to occur in Tehran and the major cities even as the state held little coercive capacity in the tribal territories.

upon which this thesis analyzes Iranian nationalism. The imagination of the nation was born out of the development of print capitalism in Iran (Or at least a nascent publishing industry)³ that led to the development of a mass reading public through the simplification of Persian prose, which was no longer the purview of the royal court. The development of the Iranian nation was hinged on the study of the Persian language⁴ and the connections that could be made to Iran's pre-Islamic past through the perceived continuity of the Persian language. Both of these pillars of Iranian nationalism were born out of the scholarly work of Europeans, which Iranian students brought back from Europe and further expanded upon in Iran.

The secularizing vision of the Iranian nationalists sought to disestablish the Twelver Shi'a 'ulama from its position in Iranian society and combat the political primacy of the tribes that were located outside of Tehran. As Such, the major concern of Iranian nationalism was the manner in which community was grounded and given meaning, allowing for a sense of membership in the Iranian nation to fill the social vacuum left by the disestablishment of the traditional forces of the 'ulama and the tribes.

There were two differing nationalist visions in operation and their primacy changes with time: old and new nationalism. In the context of old nationalism, Iranian nationalism was seen as a cultural membership of community rooted in language, and notions of Iran's pre-Islamic past were still beholden to the mythic history found in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*. However, as European historiography began to study and form the narrative of Iran's pre-Islamic past, the new nationalists began to root Iranian identity in historiographic, scholarly history that also

³ This period also saw the general opening of the Iranian economy to capitalism primarily through extractive concessions granted to the British.

⁴ The Persian language served as a way in which Iranians could argue that they were closely related to Europeans and therefore distinct from their Arab and Turkic neighbors.

emphasized the racialized vision of Iranian nationality: for the new nationalists, to be Iranian is to be Aryan.⁵

As such, this thesis also demonstrates the shifting visions of Iranian nationalism, which moved from a vision of community rooted in language to one rooted in racial identity. However, the old nationalists and their civic vision of Iranian nationality were the leading ideologues in the period with which this thesis is concerned. Therefore, old, civic and cultural nationalism was the form of Iranian nationalism operationalized in the formation of the centralized nation-state under Reza Shah. The old nationalists were inspired by enlightenment thought and believed their project to be one of bringing civilization to Iran, which is especially demonstrated in the reign of Reza Shah. To emphasize only Aryanism in this period is to err, as the primacy of Aryanism to Iranian nationalism would only begin to be established with the end of Reza Shah's rule and intensify under the rule of Muhammad Reza Pahlavi.

The theoretical framework employed is heavily indebted to Bruno Latour's work in *We Have Never Been Modern*. In Latour's analysis, the establishment of modernity in a society is marked by the establishment of what Latour calls the constitution: the foundation of a separation between the sphere of what belongs to a society and state, and what belongs to nature and the study of science. The continuing expansion this gulf is termed the process of purification—the intensification of the purification process is a marker of the development of modernity. In the academic environment, this process of purification is especially marked by the separation between natural and social sciences. In the application of the Latourian framework to developments in Iran, this process can manifest itself through the establishment of the state and

⁵ Historiography and Philology emphasized the Aryan origins of the Iranian people, as the Persian language formed a branch of the Indo-European language tree and provided a sense of historical, ethnic, and ultimately racial continuity to those inhabiting the Iranian plateau.

its vast apparatus. It is also apparent in the establishment of educational institutions in Iran that focused on both scientific knowledge and the study of fields such as political science. It is also apparent in the connection made between modernity and the nationalist vision: to modernize further was to increasingly root community in the tenets of the nation as society further secularized and settled into towns and cities.

Historical developments in Iran serve as an organizing principle through which to trace the establishment and development of the Iranian nation-state. Ervand Abrahamian's work serves as a valuable resource. He is able to outline the major social changes occurring in Iran (namely, the development of a class system) in in the periods before and after the Constitutional Revolution. Contact with the European powers brought social change as a result of the economic connection between the Iranians and Europeans, but it also brought an awareness of European forms of government, which would intensify the calls for a new system of government—culminating in the formation of a constitutional monarchy. Ultimately, under both the ethnic Turkic, Persophone Qajars and Iranian Parliamentary rule, the state in Iran was weak and held little administrative capacity outside of Tehran. The rule of Reza Shah saw the development of a modern state out of an ancient conception of sovereignty. Ultimately, the tensions brought out in this thesis between modernity and tradition (nationalism and Islam), and the ancient imperial state and modern administrative state serve as better ways in which to understand the rejection of the ancient form of sovereignty represented by the fall of the Pahlavis in 1979, and the ways in which the events after 1979 represent a response to the historical events written about in this thesis.

The first chapter looks at the first modernizing reforms in Qajar Iran. These were defensive efforts, aimed at modernizing the military or a section of the military in order to

combat the growing threat of the European powers on Iran's borders. The first modernizing reform was the creation of the *Nizam-i Jadid* by the Qajar Crown Prince, 'Abbas Mirza. 'Abbas Mirza's reforms were a reaction to the military victories of the technologically advanced Russian military⁶ over the Iranians in the beginning of the nineteenth century, which resulted in the loss of Iran's territory in the Caucasus. Iran's military at the time was organized around tribal divisions, and ultimately, the *Nizam-i Jadid* fell apart because it also became subject to communal division.

Iran's Chief Minister, Amir Kabir, drove the next wave of modernizing reform. Amir Kabir's military reform entailed a light industrialization of Iran in order to produce the required equipment for a technologically advanced military, and promoted the education of engineers and technicians within Iran. Significantly, he established an institution of higher learning in Iran named the Dar al-Fonun, which educated students in the most recent knowledge arriving from Europe. This period also saw the increased economic penetration of Iran by the European powers. The concessions granted by the Qajars to the Europeans not only allowed the Europeans (specifically the British and Russians) to extract from (and potentially develop) Iran, but opened the country up to trade with the Europeans, and as such, had consequences for the traders in the bazaars, who would become important political actors in the Constitutional Revolution.

This period is also significant in Iranian history because the first Iranian students went to England in 1815. One of the students, Mirza Saleh Shirazi, brought the first printing press into Iran and developed the first newspaper. The development of the printing press led to the simplification of Persian prose, which would allow for the growth of a mass reading public in Iran. The intellectual encounter between Iranian students and the Europeans was also important

⁶ In relation to the Iranians.

because it exposed the Iranian students to European modernity and European scholarship. Most significantly, the Iranian students were exposed to European scholarship on Iran.

The European scholarship on Iran was conducted by Orientalists primarily in Britain, France, and Germany who used European historiographical methods to produce a narrative of Iran's pre-Islamic past, which was then attached to the Iranian people. European philologists also produced a linguistic discourse on the Indo-European family tree that contained Persian as a branch of the tree. This led to racial theories that connected the Iranians to the Europeans, specifically through the Aryan race theory. The Aryan race theory connected the history, race, and language of what could be conceived of as the Iranian nation together. In this way, part of the argument in chapter one rests on the notion that Iranian nationalism and the Iranian nation were actually created in Europe by scholars of Iran and philology in general, and brought back to Iran by these students. Iranian intellectuals and nationalists would then expand on these notions through their own work, which included the translation and transmission of European works on Iran. The Iranian students therefore brought back with them not only modern European scholarship, but the modernizing development of nationalism. Iranians therefore began to seek out the emulation of European modernity in Iran.

Chapter two looks at the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 in Iran. It begins with the uprisings of 1905 that led to the development of the Iranian Constitution and the Iranian Parliament. The period of the uprisings was significant because it led to the massive output of new journals and publications espousing political beliefs and contesting views of how to modernize Iran. The differing views on modernity in Iran were likely the result of the various means by which European knowledge and works could be transmitted into Iran. For one, students were still being sent to study in Europe, and they brought back their own understandings

of European modernity that they sought to emulate in Iran. Intellectuals in Tabriz were also able to receive the latest publications in the Ottoman Empire and Russia, as the city rested on the border of Iran with both countries. Additionally, Iranian intellectuals who were exiled published their journals from cities such as Istanbul, transmitting the latest developments of the Intellectual discourse in Istanbul into Iran.

The Constitution was established in Iran with the hope of emulating a contemporary European system of government in the form of a constitutional monarchy. In the Constitutional Monarchy that was established, the people legitimated the government and the Parliament held the most governing power in Iran. Although the intellectuals of the constitutional period sought to emulate European modernity completely, the establishment of modernity in Iran indicates that it was a reflexive modernity, in which local traditions and customs were also incorporated into the development of modernity. For instance, the Constitution still held governing positions for the ‘Ulama.

There was eventually a conflict between the Constitutionals and the Royalists, leading to the coup d’etat staged by Muhammad ‘Ali Shah and the Cossack Brigades in 1908 and the civil war. Ultimately, the Constitutionals won the war and forced the Shah to abdicate in favor of his young son, but the Parliament inherited the weak state of the Qajars that was further weakened by division and war. Not to mention, Parliamentary politics was itself in a deadlock and further weakened the capacity of the state. This increased the autonomy of the tribes in the provinces.

Additionally, the British and Russians divided Iran into Zones of Influence through the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907, which ultimately served as the dividing line between both powers when they occupied Iran in 1911, and continued to through World War I. The

occupation of Iran essentially ended with the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the withdrawal of Russian soldiers from Iran, but the issues of the Parliamentary government did not go away. The tribes were still powerful and the state held little coercive capacity outside of Tehran. The government was also on the verge of bankruptcy and survived on emergency loans from the Russians and British, further incapacitating the state. This led to a rather chaotic political situation that ended with the coup d'état of Reza Khan (who would become Reza Shah four years later) in 1921.

Chapter three focuses on the development of the Iranian nation-state under Reza Shah, who focused on building the coercive capacity of the state through the development and modernization of the military and a vast bureaucratic apparatus. The development of both these capacities entailed a reform of the administrative structure in Iran. Additionally, Reza Shah and his ministers began to employ the equivalence between Iranian-ness and civilization as a way in which to promote the settlement of the population and the contestation of tribal power. Ultimately, the tribes of Iran were sedentarized and brought under the aegis of the state—mostly by force.

Additionally, Iranian nationalism was further developed under the reign of Reza Shah through the development of the military, which wanted to use Persian terms in its administrative structure, and the Farhangestan (Language Academy). The Farhangestan worked to remove European and Arabic loan words from Persian, and coin new terms in Persian for scientific and technological terminology. These developments fell under the broader umbrella of Reza Shah's modernization project, which sought to bring European modernity to Iran, and helped increase the power of the state in Iran. Nationalism was a development of modernity that served as a vehicle through which modernity and its process was intensified, and this in turn increased the

coercive capacity of the state and the centralization of administration in Iran. Therefore, the development of the nation-state in Iran was not possible without the simultaneous development of modernity (and modernist thought) in Iran.

Chapter One:

The Establishment of Iranian Nationalism

For the foe of genius, the vastly, far-governing Persian,
Now for years has been counting the strength of his weapons and
soldiers,
Laughing at Greece, full of scorn at her handful of miniscule islands,
Less than a trifle to him, and still like a dream to that ruler
Seemed the fervent people of Greece, the divinely defended.
—Friedrich Hölderlin, The Archipelago

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the period of Iranian history from the establishment of the Qajar Dynasty in 1796 to the beginning of Muzaffar al-Din Shah's rule in the early twentieth century. This period is significant as it contained the first two state-led drives to modernize Iran. These modernizing reforms were conducted as defensive and military actions in response to the Qajar defeats at the hands of the Russian Empire and Iran's encounters with the European powers. This chapter focuses on the beginnings and development of Iranian nationalism, as the encounter with the Europeans exposed the Iranian students to European scholarship on Iran. European scholarship was significant for establishing the two major tenets of Iranian nationalism: the Aryan race theory, and the connection of the inhabitants of the Iranian Plateau to the pre-Islamic past of the empires and dynasties that populated the plateau. This chapter concludes with a discussion of modernity, as the students educated in Europe were also exposed to, and brought back with them, European modernity.

Iran Under the Qajars

Nineteenth-century Iran under the Qajar dynasty was a land of conflicts. These conflicts were between: “innumerable small communities: of clan against clan, tribe against tribe, tribe against village, tribe against town, town against village, village against village, village against town ward, and town ward against town ward.”⁷ The Qajars were a Turkic tribal confederation from Mazandaran that established their capital in Tehran and founded their dynasty in 1796 under the rule of Aqa Muhammad Khan Qajar.

The successors of Aqa Muhammad Khan: “tried to routinize their power by constructing a statewide bureaucracy; stabilize their position by creating an effective standing army; and legitimize their dynasty by imitating the court manners of previous emperors.”⁸ However, the attempt to create a centralized statewide bureaucracy failed because the Qajars were unable to finance an extensive administrative apparatus. This meant that local communities were relatively autonomous from both the power of the Shah in Tehran and his governors: “most governors remained powerless outside the immediate vicinity of their provincial capitals.”⁹ The Qajar shahs were also unable to recreate the Imperial pomp of the prior dynasties in Persia, even though they sponsored public readings of Ferdowsi’s *Shahnameh* as a way to form a connection between their dynasty and the pre-Islamic dynasties in Ferdowsi’s account of the Iranian plateau.¹⁰

⁷ Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 27-28.

⁸ Ibid., 38

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 2008), 19.

The inability of the Qajar shahs to recreate the Persian imperial notion of *Shahanshah* (king-in-kings)¹¹ was mostly due to the inability of the state to establish a functioning centralized bureaucracy with administrative capacity in the provinces. The Qajar shahs were unable to obtain the support of the Shi'a clergy, or at the very least, the impression of divine sanction for their rule. Although the Qajars gave up their nomadic ways: "performed religious rites, financed holy shrines, [and] patronized state-appointed imam jom'ehs and shaykh al-islams," the Shi'ia clergy was for the most part financially independent of the Qajars.¹² As Ervand Abrahamian continues:

Many of the mujtaheds¹³ openly claimed that the Hidden Imam had delegated the responsibility of guiding the public not to the temporal leaders but to the religious establishment. Although some members of the 'ulama, particularly the state-paid imam jom'ehs and shaykh al-islams were willing to identify with royal authority, most prominent mujtaheds remained aloof from the court and interpreted the early texts of Shi'ism to argue that the state was at worst inherently illegitimate and at best, a necessary evil to prevent social anarchy.¹⁴

The Shi'a 'ulama did not grant the Qajars with divine authority for their rule because of their own religiously motivated understanding of political legitimacy.¹⁵ The Qajars made claims to being God's representatives on earth or the Protectors of Shi'ism and Keepers of the Koran,

¹¹ The equivalent to the European notion of "Emperor".

¹² Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 40.

¹³ Mujtaheds are of high rank in the Shi'a 'ulama and are conferred the ability to interpret Islamic law.

¹⁴ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 40.

¹⁵ For more on the juristic foundations of the 'ulama's thinking on temporal authority, see: A. K. S. Lambton, "Justice in the Medieval Persian Theory of Kingship," *Studia Islamica* 17, no. 17 (1962). In Nikkie Keddie's analysis, the establishment of the 'ulama's authority in Iranian society was a result of the weakness of the coercive apparatus of the state in Iran: Nikki R. Keddie, "The Roots of the Ulama's Power in Modern Iran," *ibid.* 29, no. 29 (1969): 34. For more on the relationship between the 'ulama and the Qajars in general, see: Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

but they were: “viewed by the main religious leaders to be usurpers of God’s authority.”¹⁶ There was space for conflict between the ‘ulama and the Qajar shahs, which also pointed to the coercive weakness of the Qajar Shahs. This affected the manner in which the Shahs would govern Iran:

Having no military security, no administrative stability and little ideological legitimacy, the Qajars remained in power by systematically pursuing two concurrent policies: retreating whenever confronted by dangerous opposition; and, more important, by manipulating the many communal conflicts within their fragmented society. The Qajar dynasty ruled nineteenth-century Iran with neither the instruments of coercion nor the science of administration, but with the practice of prudent retreats and the art of manipulating all the possible variations in the complex web of communal rivalries.¹⁷

The Qajar Shahs resorted to the manipulation of communal rivalries as a manner in which to prevent significant internal opposition from arising (or to have rival tribes engage in coercive acts against one another in the name of the Shah). The weakness of the shahs prevented the establishment of a centralized administration operating out of Tehran, and as such, only perpetuated the internal divisions present in Iran at the time.

The Class System of Qajar Iran and the Role of Communal Ties

Ervand Abrahamian’s analysis of the Iranian class system rests upon Marxist definitions of class as existing in itself but not yet for itself, as opposed to being both for itself as well as in itself; this is an understanding of class as: “a simple sociological category to rank individuals with similar sources of income, similar amounts of revenue, similar degrees of influence, and similar styles of life.”¹⁸ The population of Persia could be classified into four major classes (*Tabaqat*):

¹⁶ Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 15.

¹⁷ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 41.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

The first, the landed upper class comprised a central elite and many local elites...The second major *tabaqeh* was formed of the propertied middle class. This included the urban merchants (*tujjars*) as well as the many shopkeepers and small workshop owners (*pishevaran*). Since many of these businessmen, traders, and craftsmen financed the bazaar mosques, schools (*maktabs*), seminaries (*madraseshs*), theaters (*takiyas*), and other charitable foundations (*vaqfs*), the commercial middle class was intricately connected to the ‘ulama...Often marriage reinforced this connection...The third class was formed of urban wage-earners, especially hired artisans, apprentices, journeymen, household servants, porters, laborers, and construction workers. Finally, the fourth major class consisted of the vast majority of the rural population (*ra’iyat*)—the tribal masses (*iliyat*) as well as the landless and nearly landless peasantry (*dehqanan*).¹⁹

What is of special interest is the connection between the ‘ulama and the middle class, as the ties between the merchants of the bazaars and the ‘ulama would play a major role in the Constitutional Revolution of 1906. Although as Abrahamian’s analysis indicates, socioeconomic classes did exist in Persia at this time, communal ties prevented the members of the classes from becoming aware of their class interests both of itself and for itself. The landed aristocracy did not combine against the central government, and as such: “Traditional Iran, in sharp contrast to feudal Europe, thus had no baronial rebellions, no magna cartas, no legal estates, and consequently no representative institutions.”²⁰ Communal rivalries prevented any major form of political action against the Qajars from taking place in Persia throughout the nineteenth century:

Communal ties—especially those based on tribal lineages, religious sects, regional organizations, and paternalistic sentiments—cut through the horizontal classes, strengthened the vertical communal bonds, and thereby prevented latent economic interests from developing into manifest political forces. Insofar as numerous individuals in early nineteenth-century Iran shared similar ways of life, similar positions in the mode of production, and similar relations to the means of administration, they constituted socioeconomic classes. But insofar as these individuals were bound by communal ties, failed to overcome local barriers, and articulated no state-wide interests, they did not constitute sociopolitical classes. This absence of viable classes had far-reaching political consequences; for, as long as the central government was not confronted by statewide forces, the Qajar dynasty was able to dominate society in the typical manner of, to borrow a nineteenth-century term, oriental despots.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid., 33-34.

²⁰ Ibid., 34-35.

²¹ Ibid., 36.

The Qajar shahs and central administration were able to take advantage of communal ties as a mechanism of governance. Communal rivalries proved useful as ways in which to rule Persia without the need to engage in coercive acts; the promulgation of communal rivalry also prevented legitimate rivals from arising and threatening Qajar legitimacy—especially since the Qajar shahs lacked the recognition of their legitimacy from the Shi’a ‘ulama to begin with.

The Dawn of Modernity in Qajar Iran

The drive to modernity in Qajar Iran occurred within the context of greater military aggression on the part of both the Russians and the British in the nineteenth century. As noted by Ervand Abrahamian: “Moving through Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Russians, equipped with modern artillery, easily defeated Iran’s faction-ridden tribal contingents, and imposed on Fath ‘Ali Shah the humiliating treaties of Gulistan (1813) and Turkomanchai (1828).”²² The Qajars, specifically under Fath ‘Ali Shah, lost Iran’s territorial possessions in the Caucasus to Russia—entailing the contemporary territorial boundaries of Azerbaijan and Armenia—over the course of fifteen years.

The British sought to balance the influence of the Russians by developing a buffer in Afghanistan, and invaded southern Iran.²³ This led to the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1857,

²² Ibid., 51. For two accounts of the Russo-Iranian Wars, see: Muhammad. I’timad al-Saltaneh, *Mirat-I Al-Buldan/ Mirror of Cities* (Tehran 1877). And: Reza Quli Khan Hedayat, *Tarikh-I Rawzat-I Al-Safa-Yi Naseri/ History of Naser’s Rawzat-I Al-Safa* (Tehran: Amir Kabir 1960).

²³ The British and Iranians were allies against the Russians in the early nineteenth century, while the Iranians were also allied with the French as result of the Treaty of Finkelstein in 1807 in order to curb British and Russian interests in Iran. However, both the British and Iranians feared the prospect of a French invasion of Iran under Napoleon I— who could use Iran as a territory from which to invade India and Russia. For more on

which: “granted a series of commercial capitulations to Russia and Britain. These capitulations enabled the two powers to open consular and commercial offices anywhere they wished, and exempted their merchants not only from the high import duties but also from internal tariffs, local travel restrictions, and the jurisdiction of shari’a law courts.”²⁴ These developments mitigated the legal powers of the Shi’a clergy/ulama²⁵ and opened Iran to trade with the European powers, foreign markets, and capitalism in general.²⁶

During the course of the century, the total volume of foreign trade increased, in real terms, by as much as eight times...Whereas at the beginning of the century Iran had been isolated from the world economy, by the end of the century it was well on the way toward incorporation into the European network of international commerce.²⁷

Though trade with the European powers brought the possibility of economic opportunity to the merchant class and elites of Iranian society, the Iranian encounter with Britain and Russia brought to the fore an anxiety amongst the elites (specifically that of the royal court) in the face of military defeat in both northern and southern Iran. The push for modernization was most significantly felt by the military, which lacked a solid army infrastructure and felt the need for technological modernization.

The formation of the Qajar dynasty in the late eighteenth century was the result of the Qajar tribal confederacy’s military power, which allowed Aqa Muhammad Khan Qajar to defeat

the relationship between Napoleonic France and Iran see: Iradj Amini, "Napoleon and Persia," *Iran* 37 (1999).

²⁴ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 51.

²⁵ The Twelver Shi’a ‘ulama in Iran always presented a threat to the legitimacy of the state.

²⁶ It should be noted that Iran began a trade relationship with the French during the era of Safavid rule in the eighteenth century.

²⁷ Ibid., 51-52. The volume of trade in Iran increased twelvefold in the nineteenth century, and as Guity Nashat notes, led to the rise of a newly wealthy capitalist class that was separate from the traditional bazaar merchants in Iran. Guity Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market: Foreign Trade and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Iran," *Iranian Studies* 14, no. 1/2 (1981).

the other tribes of the Iranian plateau. With the establishment of the dynasty, the Qajar monarchs began the nineteenth century with the: “Backing of their formidable tribesmen,” however: “the Qajars ended the [nineteenth] century having lost their nomadic warriors among the civilian population of Tehran.”²⁸ The Qajar military was organized along tribal lines.

The main military forces were the royal bodyguard, the mass militia, and the tribal cavalry. The bodyguard was composed of Qajar nobles that served as officers and approximately 4,000 Georgian slaves. The militia was organized by region: soldiers were recruited from local populations, led by local officers (normally tribal leaders), and financed by taxes collected locally—this force was estimated at 150,000 men. The cavalry formed the main fighting force and was composed of tribesmen organized into units led by their own tribal chiefs. This force was estimated to have 80,000 men.²⁹

The first major modernization drive under the Qajars was led by Crown Prince ‘Abbas Mirza, who was governor of Azerbaijan. ‘Abbas Mirza developed the *Nizam-i Jadid* (New Order) in Azerbaijan, which was modeled on the military reform conducted by Sultan Selim III in the Ottoman Empire. The *Nizam-i Jadid* was formed in the context of Iran’s experience in the first Russo-Persian War, which ended with the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813 and Iran’s military defeat.³⁰ ‘Abbas Mirza served as the commander-in-chief of the military and witnessed the defeat of the Qajar militia and cavalry at the hands of superior Russian technology and tactics. This new force was composed of six thousand soldiers: “equipped with mobile artillery and fairly up-to-date weapons, paid regularly by the state, dressed in uniforms, housed and drilled in

²⁸ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* 39.

²⁹ Ibid., 28.

³⁰ The *Nizam-i Jadid* was formed before the end of the First Russo-Persian War, but did not engage in combat during the war.

barracks, and trained by European officers.”³¹ In order to strengthen and supply the new force, ‘Abbas Mirza established: “in Tabriz a cannon factory, a musket plant, and a translation office for military and engineering manuals.”³² Tabriz would form the industrial and knowledge base of the *Nizam-i Jadid*, allowing for the production of European technologies in Qajar territories. ‘Abbas Mirza also established Iran’s first permanent missions abroad in Paris and London³³ so as to ensure French and British financial and technical support for Iran’s attempt at military modernization.³⁴ Court salaries and pensions were cut and protectionist barriers to trade, specifically in the form of tariffs, were raised in order to finance the *Nizam-i Jadid*.³⁵

‘Abbas Mirza also ensured clerical support for the *Nizam-i Jadid*, to avoid the possibility of religious revolt such as that which ended Sultan Selim III’s attempt at modernization in the Ottoman Empire. For instance: “the shaykh al-islam of Tabriz declared that the army reorganization was in full accord with Islam, for had not the Koran stated that ‘Allah loveth those who battle for His cause in ranks as if they were a solid structure’?”³⁶ Additionally, ‘Abbas Mirza’s court chronicler:

Argued that the prince, with his ‘penetrating mind,’ had rediscovered through the Europeans the military tactics invented by the Prophet: for while the Europeans had preserved these tactics, the followers of Islam had fallen victim to ignorance, laziness, pride, jealousy, and ‘uncoordinated battle-lines.’ The new army was, thus, an indirect but nevertheless legitimate heir of the Prophet.³⁷

³¹ Ibid., 52. The officers were primarily British.

³² Ibid.

³³ Iran’s first ambassador to England, Abu’l Hasan Khan arrived in London in 1809. He would play an influential role in bringing the first group of Iranian students to London in 1815. Nile Green, *The Love of Strangers: What Six Muslim Students Learned in Jane Austen’s London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 9.

³⁴ In 1810, Britain sent officers to train the Persian military. Ibid., 3.

³⁵ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 52.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 53.

These episodes speak to the presence of religious authority in Qajar Iran as a source of legitimation for the state, which relied on religious authority to justify its actions (and the monarch's presence as head of state in Tehran) to the tribal chieftains. The search for religious legitimation behind the formation of the *Nizam-i Jadid* spoke to the weakness of the Qajar state. Even as the modernizers (such as 'Abbas Mirza) sought to expand the power of the state,³⁸ tribalism prevented the *Nizam-i Jadid* (and later modernizing reforms) from developing successfully.

As Abrahamian notes, the infantry of the *Nizam-i Jadid* in Tehran: "was recruited predominantly from the Qajar tribes and certain clans from the mountains of Mazandaran," while the infantry in Azerbaijan was recruited from local Azeri tribes.³⁹ Though the pronouncements of the Shi'a clergy and court chroniclers prevented the immediate downfall of the *Nizam-i Jadid*, the *Nizam* was not immune from political factionalism. For one, the *Nizam* strengthened 'Abbas Mirza's political clout and aroused the suspicion and jealousy of his brothers and half-brothers, who sought to curtail his influence. The development of the *Nizam* also threatened the provincial rulers, which caused modifications in the plans for the *Nizam*. Eventually: "each regiment became a tribal contingent officered by its own tribal chiefs."⁴⁰ The original recruitment methods of the *Nizam* left it vulnerable to tribalism, and with time, it succumbed to tribal division (much like the Qajar state and the monarchs). Additionally, the austerity and protectionism put in place by 'Abbas Mirza aroused the ire of the courtiers and nobles, and angered the western powers. Finally, the defeat of the *Nizam* by the Russians in the Second

³⁸ The development of the *Nizam-i Jadid* was partially meant to avoid the regionalization and tribal conflict that had taken hold in the Qajar military, especially in the structure of the cavalry.

³⁹ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 28.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

Russo-Persian War⁴¹ convinced Fath ‘Ali Shah to no longer support the *Nizam*, thus: “‘Abbas Mirza saw the slow death of his *Nizam-i Jadid* long before he met his own natural death in 1833.”⁴² This ended the first attempt at modernized reform in Persia: the *Nizam-i Jadid* ceased to exist, the cavalry remained under the command of the independent tribal khans, and the militias continued to be controlled by local officers. However, ‘Abbas Mirza’s attempt to modernize the Qajar military had one major consequence: Iran’s first students were sent to Europe.

Amir Kabir’s Modernization Drive

The second major modernization drive was begun by Mirza Muhammad Taqi Khan Farahani, known as Amir Kabir (Great Lord),⁴³ he:

Revived the standing army, and established fifteen factories to supply this army and to cut foreign imports: factories for the production of cannons, light arms, uniforms, epaulets and insignias, woolens, cloths, calicoes, carriages, samovars, paper, cast iron, lead, copper, and sugar. He founded the country’s first *official* newspaper, the *Ruznameh-i Vaqa-yi Ittifaqiyeh* (Newspaper of Current Affairs)⁴⁴. And most important of all, he built the country’s first secular high school, the Dar al-Fonun (Abode of Learning).⁴⁵ The Dar al-Fonun offered its students, who were mostly sons of the aristocracy, classes in foreign languages, political science, engineering, agriculture, minerology, medicine, veterinary medicine, military sciences, and band music.⁴⁶

Like ‘Abbas Mirza’s drive for modernization through the establishment of the *Nizam-i Jadid*, Amir Kabir’s modernizing reform was aimed at establishing a Persian military that was self-sufficient through the formation of industrial capacity. Amir Kabir was also significant for

⁴¹ Ending in the Treaty of Turkomanchai (1828).

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Amir Kabir was Chief Minister to Naser Al-Din Shah.

⁴⁴ Emphasis added.

⁴⁵ 1851

⁴⁶ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 54.

establishing the first official newspaper, which was the culmination of a larger process in the formation of the literati in Iran beginning with the introduction of the printing press in Iran in 1819.⁴⁷ The Dar al-Fonun not only served as a viable institution through which to train future Persian (and later Iranian) elites, but it worked as the conduit of European knowledge and learning for new generations of students. Also like ‘Abbas Mirza, Amir Kabir funded his modernization drive through the reduction of court expenses and raised import duties. Additionally, Amir Kabir taxed landholders and sought technical assistance for his reforms from the French and Austro-Hungarians. As such, he raised the ire of the landholders and the British and Russians. Amir Kabir was dismissed from his position as Chief Minister in 1851 and executed soon afterwards: his plans for the future were cast aside, and his industrial factories, despite heavy investments, were left to wither away.”⁴⁸ This was the last attempt at massive state-led modernization in the nineteenth century.

The Rise of the Middle Class and Intellectuals

Economic contact with the European powers threatened the commercial interests of the traders and merchants in the bazaars throughout Iran. This: “gradually induced the scattered regional commercial interests to coalesce into one cross-regional middle class that was conscious for the first time of its own common grievances.”⁴⁹ The middle class always held close ties to the Shi’a ‘ulama and represented a religiously conservative force opposed to greater European presence in Iran, in addition to the anti-Qajar attitude already held by the ‘ulama.

⁴⁷ The introduction of the printing press and its implications will be discussed later this chapter.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 52.

The promotion of modern education through the delegation of students to Europe and the establishment of the Dar al-Fonun: “introduced new concepts, new aspirations, new occupations, and eventually a new professional middle class known as the intelligentsia.”⁵⁰ This new intellectual class was opposed to the intellectual class of the courts, in that the new intellectuals: “espoused not the divine right of kings but the inalienable rights of man. They promulgated not the advantages of royal despotism and political conservatism, but the principles of liberalism, nationalism and even socialism. They venerated not the Shadows of God on Earth but the triumvirate of Equality, Liberty, and Fraternity.”⁵¹ The intellectuals introduced political theories born in Europe to the public sphere in Iran, and as such, they expanded the political vocabulary of the Persian language through the importation of western words into Persian, such as: “*despot*, *fudal*, *parleman*, *sosiyal*, *demokrat*, and *aristokrat*.”⁵² The intellectuals also gave new meanings to old words: “*istibad* changed in meaning from ‘monarchy’ to ‘despotic monarchy’; *mellat* from ‘religious community’ to ‘secular nationality’ and *mardom* from the ‘people’ without any political connotations to ‘The People’ with its democratic and patriotic connotations.”⁵³ The educated middle class brought modern conceptions and a greater desire for modernizing reform, which combined with the commercial middle class’s religious conservatism and anti-state attitude, would eventually prove a fatal mixture for the Qajars.

Naser al-Din Shah’s Modernizing Reforms and the Groundwork of the Constitutional Revolution

The economic penetration of Persia by European powers—especially the British—was the result of concessions given out by the Qajar shahs. The economic presence of the Europeans

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

created social pressures that the Qajar state sought to respond to. As shown earlier in this chapter, the Qajars attempted two rapid defensive modernization projects (meant to oppose the European powers) led by the state in the first half of the nineteenth century. By the end of the century, the Qajars sought minor reforms that no longer attempted to oppose the Europeans, but were conducted in collaboration with the Europeans. The reforms pursued by Naser al-Din Shah (who ruled until 1896) brought modern innovations to Iran, but they were meant to help the Qajar state defend itself against internal enemies and not the Europeans; and economic reforms were no longer protectionist, but aimed at attracting European trade and capital into the Iranian economy. The British and Russians wanted the Persians to improve their communication systems, and Naser al-Din Shah required foreign investment for his projects: this was the beginning of the concessions era:

The first major concession granted was in 1872 to Baron Julius de Reuter, he was given: the exclusive right to finance a state bank, farm out the entire customs, exploit all minerals (with the exception of gold, silver, and precious stones), build railways and tramways for seventy years, and establish all future canals, irrigation works, roads, telegraph lines, and industrial factories.⁵⁴

This concession was opposed both domestically and by Russia and was, for the most part, overturned. Reuter was given banking and mining privileges in Iran, which later turned into the Imperial Bank of Persia. The revenue from the concessions granted to European financiers mainly supported the consumption of the royal court, however, it was also used to finance the projects Naser al-Din Shah hoped to begin. The establishment of the telegraph network in Iran allowed the Shah to remain in contact with the provinces and his administrators.⁵⁵ The establishment of the concessions era and the development of communication technologies also held important social changes and consequences for upheaval:

⁵⁴ Ibid., 56.

⁵⁵ The telegraph network in Iran also finally connected England with India. Ibid., 57.

The growth of foreign trade stimulated the rise of a small but wealthy comprador bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the influx of foreign goods, capital, and merchants initiated the decline of the native bourgeoisie. And this decline...together with improved communications, generated similar feelings of discontent throughout the country's bazaars."⁵⁶

With the help of the Russians, Naser al-Din Shah also established the Persian Cossack Brigade, which: "provided the shah with a small but disciplined palace guard...growing to nearly two thousand men by 1896."⁵⁷ Additionally: "the capital obtained a regular police force, a municipal civil service, a host of road sweepers, a medical clinic, a central mint to replace the many provincial mints, and a network of paved streets, gas lanterns, and horse-drawn trams."⁵⁸ As Abrahamian comments, the outward form of modernity had made its presence known in Tehran.⁵⁹ However, the development of the outward form of modernity also brought with it social upheaval that angered the classes in the bazaar.

Naser-Al Din Shah also sought to reinvent the Qajar state, as Afshin Marashi states: At the beginning of Naser al-Din Shah's reign, his claims of authority were tied to cosmic and sacred sources of power. The category of 'the state' had premodern roots in Iranian history...But despite its existence in premodern Iranian history, the state was also to a great extent characterized by a political solipsism, remaining largely self-referential, or more concerned with linking its authority to external, cosmic, and sacred points of reference than with any awareness of its relationship to 'society'.⁶⁰

The Qajar understanding of political authority and legitimacy was rooted in the Persian notion of the *Shahanshah*: an Emperor with divine authority to rule. As such, the state apparatus was rooted in the Shah's legitimacy as a sacred figure: a notion that was highly tenuous without the support of the 'ulama. As such, Naser al-Din Shah sought to legitimize his rule as the figure that tied state and society together—an appeal to popular support that replaced national solidarity

⁵⁶ Ibid., 60.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 57.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Afshin Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 12.

with loyalty to the Shah. However, this attempt at legitimacy would prove difficult with the simultaneous development: “of national identity and historical memory as the bases for a possible new form of identification mediating the relationship between state and society.”⁶¹ The end of Naser al-Din Shah’s rule coincided with the discovery, development, and perpetuation of Iranian nationalism by figures outside of the Qajar state.

Naser al-Din Shah’s tour of Europe in 1873 also exposed him to, and made him aware of, the political formations in Europe and the manner in which legitimacy was granted to: “the late imperial monarchies to create bonds of loyalty between themselves and the masses.”⁶²

Ultimately, the manner in which legitimacy was given to the shahs in the late Qajar period showed: “an uneasy coexistence between a traditional system of legitimation based on the old model of Persianate kingship and a new system conscious of the need to ground political authority in a popular-urban social base.”⁶³ Naser al-Din Shah’s attempt at state reformation moved the legitimacy-granting mechanism of the Persian state closer in line with that of the imperial monarchies in Europe, however, his attempt at reform only indicated the tenuous situation of the Qajar shah.

Naser al-Din Shah sought to prevent the ‘ulama from engaging in politics throughout Persia, in recognition of the threat their disobedience posed to his rule. He also allowed Catholic and Protestant missionaries to: “open schools, medical clinics, and printing presses in Tabriz, Urmiah, Tehran, Isfahan, and Hamadan.”⁶⁴ Dar al-Fonun was expanded and Naser al-Din Shah formed: “two military colleges, two official journals—one for military matters and one for

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 23.

⁶³ Ibid., 36.

⁶⁴ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 60.

scientific subjects—a translation school, and a new government printing office.”⁶⁵ These developments were significant in that over 160 works were translated and published, this included:

88 military textbooks, language manuals, and medical handbooks; 4 biographies of famous muslim leaders; 10 travelogues of the West, including Naser al-Din Shah’s own account of his European tour; to translations of European classics...10 histories of Iran, notably Malcolm’s *History of Persia* and Markham’s *Short History of Persia*—thus Iranians began to see their own past through the eyes of contemporary Europeans—and finally over 20 translations of European works on Western history...The shah commissioned many of these translations to glorify the monarchy; but the same translations, by inadvertently drawing contrasts for the Iranian readers between their shahs and the most famous kings of Europe, between the poverty of Iran and the prosperity of Europe, tended to weaken the Qajar monarchy.”⁶⁶

The work of translation and publication conducted in Iran under the rule of Naser al-Din Shah helped stoke social discontent, as Abrahamian writes:

The intelligentsia, anxious for rapid progress, expressed increasing dissatisfaction with the slow pace of modernization and the high degree of court corruption. The traditional middle class, left defenseless against foreign competitors, gradually realized that the Qajars were interested more in strengthening the state against society than in protecting the society against the imperial powers. Meanwhile, the general population, especially the urban artisans and the rural masses, suffered a slight decline in their standard of living.⁶⁷

Hosility towards the West and the Qajars increased in late nineteenth century Iran, especially amongst the urban population.⁶⁸ In 1891, Naser al-Din Shah sold a concession to an Englishman named Major Talbot: “In return for a personal gift of 25,000 to the shah, an annual rent of 15,000 to the state, and a 25 percent share of the profits for Iran, Talbot acquired a fifty-

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 57-58.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 70.

⁶⁸ For more on the views of Iranians towards “the West,” see: Farhang Jahanpour, “Reverse Orientalism: Iranian Reactions to the West,” in *Perceptions of Iran: History, Myths and Nationalism from Medieval Persia to the Islamic Republic*, ed. Ali M. Ansari (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

year monopoly over the distribution and exportation of tobacco.”⁶⁹ This led to the tobacco crisis of 1891-1892.

Shiraz’s bazaar shutdown in 1891 as a result of the concession, because Shiraz was the main tobacco-cultivating region of Iran: this led to a general strike across the major bazaars in Iran, along with a fatwa against the use of tobacco and the calls for a general boycott of consumer goods. This forced Naser al-Din Shah to cancel the concession in the face of a local uprising that spread across the country thanks to the new communication systems. The tobacco crisis also exposed the weakness of the Qajar Shah.⁷⁰

After the tobacco crisis, Naser al-Din Shah’s rule became politically oppressive and moved away from modernization. The growth of the Dar al-Fonun was stopped, he: “discouraged publication on the outside world...prohibited citizens, including relatives, from visiting Europe...Moreover, Naser al-Din Shah increasingly resorted to manipulating communal rivalries.”⁷¹ A former student of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani⁷² assassinated Naser al-Din Shah in 1896.

Naser al-Din Shah’s successor, Muzaffar al-Din Shah reopened the country to foreign investors and acquired loans from both the British and French, while increasing tariffs on trade for native merchants.⁷³ Muzaffar al-Din Shah also relaxed the political repression of his predecessor and promoted a policy of liberalism. However, this allowed for the opposition to

⁶⁹ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 73.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 74.

⁷² For more on the political and philosophical thought of al-Afghani, see: Nikki R. Keddie, "Islamic Philosophy and Islamic Modernism," *Iran : Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* 6 (1968). And: Carol S. Northrup and O. H. Air Force Inst Of Tech Wright-Patterson Afb, "Al-Afghani and Khomeini: A Study in Islamic Anti-Imperialism in Iran," (1995).

⁷³ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 74.

form organizations that would be important to the revolution of 1906 that established the Constituent National Assembly. Most significantly for the future political, economic, and social development of Iran: “He sold a monopoly to exploit oil in the whole of the central and southern provinces to an Englishman named D’Arcy [in 1901].”⁷⁴ The first oil well in Persia/Iran would be established in 1908.

Mirza Salih Shirazi, the Printing Press, and the Beginning of Iranian Nationalism

The first set of students sent by ‘Abbas Mirza to England were to study: “subjects such as military science, engineering, gun making, medicine, typography, and modern languages.”⁷⁵ One student in particular, Mirza Salih Shirazi was sent to study English in order to work as a translator for the government. Upon his return from England in 1819, he opened the first printing press in Iran. Mirza Salih published his *Safarnameh* (Travel Book), which described his travels in England his student life at Oxford and, significantly, gave: “the first description of constitutional governments in Iran.”⁷⁶ As Dabashi notes, Mirza Salih: “published the very first newspaper in Iran. He was instrumental in simplifying Persian prose in writing for this paper, and this was subsequently definitively important to the translation movement from French and English that ushered in a whole new vista on global history.”⁷⁷

The exchange of Persian students to England marked a critical phase in Persian cultural history: cultural production no longer remained the purview of the royal court. Mirza Salih’s simplification of Persian prose for the first newspaper *Kaqaz-i Akhbar* (Newspaper) follows in the footsteps of the: “active simplification [of the Persian language] by successive generations of

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 52.

⁷⁶ Ibid. For a description of Mirza Salih’s *Safarnameh* and the experience of the first group of Persian students in England, see Green, *The Love of Strangers*.

⁷⁷ Hamid Dabashi, *Persophilia: Persian Culture on the Global Scene* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 71.

merchants, diplomats, and students, all of them now emerging to form the nascent class of public intellectuals.”⁷⁸ Mirza Salih Shirazi’s contribution was to open the possibility of a public literary sphere⁷⁹ in Persian: “the Persian language was no longer the prerogative of the court-affiliated literati or the exclusive claim of the clerical class and their juridical preoccupations.”⁸⁰ The exposure of Persians to European culture came through both literature and the travel of students to Europe. This played a significant role in the drive amongst the elites (and intelligentsia) to modernize Persia: modernization and the call for reform in Iran was both a defensive tactic and a desire to imitate the Europeans, namely the French and the British.

As Mostafa Vaziri notes, there was an: “emerging consciousness of impending change among individuals such as Abbas Mirza, Mirza Saleh Shirazi, and Amir Kabir” which developed the framework for the gradual modernization and Europeanization of Iran.⁸¹ The students who studied in Europe brought back knowledge of European sciences and industrial techniques, and they played central roles in the administration of the country: “The student expeditions continued as an avalanche of European notions (as well as the sociopolitical development of the neighboring Ottoman Empire) inundated the system of government and awakened a new consciousness in Iran.”⁸² The presence of Iranian students in Europe was pivotal to the formation of national consciousness and the development of what would eventually become Iranian nationalism. The intellectual exchange between Europeans and Persians/ Iranians formed

⁷⁸ Ibid., 72.

⁷⁹ And a mass reading public in Andersonian terms.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Mostafa Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation: The Construction of National Identity*, 2nd ed. (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2013), 185.

⁸² Ibid., 185-186.

the basis of Iranian nationalism.⁸³ European orientalists produced a discourse on the people of the Iranian plateau based on the narrative construction of Iranian history tied to a pre-Islamic era that promoted a notion of national and ethnic continuity through the study of Persian.

The European understanding of the Persian language and the Iranian nation was brought back to Persia/Iran by the intellectuals through their studies in Europe and the translation of numerous works into Persian, which Iranian intellectuals and elites then carried on as the means by which the nation was constructed. Although Orientalists applied a scholarly methodology to the construction of the Iranian nation in their work, the European construction of Iranian identity was not limited to Orientalists. Persian literature was translated into European languages decades before the arrival of the first Persian students in 1815: “before Iranians had come to Europe as travelers, merchants, students, or diplomats, their literature and poetry had preceded them—such as through Goethe’s reading of Hafez, or FitzGerald’s reading of Khayyam, or Matthew Arnold’s reading of Ferdowsi.⁸⁴ Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters* also sees the use of Persian characters as a means by which to critique European society.⁸⁵ In Hamid Dabashi’s analysis, there was a bilateral exchange between European and Iranian intellectuals at the level of the public sphere that led to the formation of the Iranian subject. It is therefore important to look at the manner in which European Orientalists constructed the Iranian nation.

⁸³ It is also important to note that intellectual and reformist journals in Persian were written and published by Persian intellectuals in Istanbul. Istanbul was another location through which Persian intellectuals were exposed to the intellectual productions of the Europeans, and the city of Tabriz provided a major conduit of European knowledge into Persia, as it was the closest major city to both the Ottoman and Russian territories.

⁸⁴ Dabashi, *Persophilia*, 65.

⁸⁵ For more on Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters* and the use of the Persian other as a means by which to promote European modernity, see Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander and Steven Seidman, Cambridge Cultural Social Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 18-24.

The study of race and national identity were both central to the projects of the Orientalists studying Persia/Iran, in this regards, philology played a central function:

Philology covering the pre-Islamic period, and the philosophy behind a national identity concurrent with the appearance of vernacular languages for the Islamic era, accommodated both a vision and a theory of historiography of Iran. Delatinization and the escape from the Church's domination in the West were taken as an analogous form of historical expression to dearabization and the emergence of local dynasties to bypass the combination of the caliphate.⁸⁶

The development of local dynasties on the Iranian plateau around the end of the Abbasid caliphate and their use of Persian/Farsi were understood as: “expressions of national revivalism in its Iranian framework by the Orientalists.”⁸⁷ The Orientalists were able to apply the historical methodology developed in European scholarship in order to construct a historical narrative for the people of the Iranian plateau, based upon the mythic history of the Persian people found in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*.

The basis of European nationalism partially rests on the classification of populations by racial and national categories, as Vaziri states:

the European contribution to nationalism has been particularly harmful, since it makes use of pseudo-science to establish unalterable ‘factual’ categories by which all peoples are separated, labeled, and disposed of unequally in what is in reality an entirely arbitrary, self-serving, misanthropic way...Western social scientists of the nineteenth century developed an approved a racial theory that coincided with ongoing national prejudices in Europe.⁸⁸

Racial and national theories provided a method by which scholars began to study Persia/Iran. The race theory that gained traction under the work of the Orientalists was the Aryan race theory:

the Aryan race was singled out in pseudo-scientific treatises as the unique, able, talented, and fully-evolved race among all others. The initial identification of similarities between

⁸⁶ Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation*, 99.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 1.

Sanskrit and European languages by Sir William Jones in 1786 uncovered the Indo-European language family, a linguistic conception from which the Aryan racial model was conceived. The Aryan model...had a multilayered utility. First, it enabled the Europeans to invent an ancient proto-European civilization and antiquity for themselves along racial lines in Asia. Second, it promoted the invidious theory of the polygenesis of man.⁸⁹

The Aryan race theory allowed for the connection to be made between the notions of race and nationality, the connection being formed through the study of language and the presumed development of languages constituting an Indo-European language family, of which Persian was a branch. The development of nationalism and nationalist movements in Europe led to a model of scholarship that promoted historical narratives of continuity based on race and language: Orientalists, under the influence of mainstream Western academia and the Aryan model, began to look into the past of peoples with complex backgrounds and tried to work out (at times imaginatively) such modern issues as race and national identity for communities of the remote past whose consciousness was conditioned by non-modern ideas.⁹⁰

In this way, Orientalists conducted the original intellectual labor that formed the basis upon which the modernizing movement of nation-formation and the imagining of the nation was based. As Miroslav Hroch discusses in his study of European nation-formation, the national myth of origin was connected to conceptions of racial categorization, for instance: “‘Englishness’ was based on the image of Anglo-Saxon ancestors.”⁹¹ Additionally, the development of archaeology as a field of activity and scholarship made it possible to study make connections between the nation, race, and prehistory, and therefore, present a narrative of

⁸⁹ Ibid., 3.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 98.

⁹¹ Miroslav Hroch, *European Nations: Explaining Their Formation*, trans. Karolina Graham (London: Verso, 2015), 186.

national and racial origin. The European method of national and racial scholarship was extended out of Europe and into the Iranian plateau:

Iran as a geographical designation was taken by the European Orientalists and transformed into a ‘homogenous’ historical people endowed with all kinds of national and racial characteristics, in part to serve the ends of the political and racial consciousness being championed by authoritarian European Orientalism. The resulting interest in antiquity awakened (or perhaps engendered) the pre-Islamic and ancient national consciousness of Iran...Philological and archaeological finds were methodologically used in an Aryan context to reinterpret and vitalize a sense of Iranism, in contradistinction to the identities of neighboring Arabs, Turks, and others. The orientalist thus forged the name of *Iran* not only to stand for a people but also for a language family, a civilization, a culture, and a tradition, without fear of contradiction that in both the ancient and the Islamic periods there could not have been a homogenous Iranian world.⁹²

In Vaziri’s analysis, the notion of Iran and the Iranian nation was constructed by European Orientalists applying their method of scholarship to the Iranian plateau. During the Safavid, Zand, and Qajar dynasties, Iran served as an administrative title for the land, and was not used in a political context until the end of the Qajar period with the rise of *Iranian* nationalism. In Reza Zia-Ebrahimi’s analysis, the nationalism developed in Iran was a dislocative nationalism, in which: “Iran is presented as an Aryan nation adrift, by accident, as it were, from the rest of its fellow Aryans.”⁹³ The Aryan race theory therefore serves as the backbone of Iranian nationalism and the dislocative act, in which Iranians can racially differentiate themselves from their Arab and Turkic neighbors. In Zia-Ebrahimi’s analysis, the imagination of the Iranian nation entails a double imagination—this is not only the imagination of the nation as a cohesive unit, but also the imagination of the nation as Aryan and: “foreign to its natural environment.”⁹⁴

⁹² Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation*, 3-4.

⁹³ Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, *The Emergence of Iranian Nationalism: Race and the Politics of Dislocation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 5.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

During the Qajar period, history was a means by which to chronicle events, with the Shah serving as the organizing perspective of the chronicle. However, with the dawn of the twentieth century and the development of intellectual life and modernity in Iran the: “need for a new style of nationalistic historical writings [was] stimulated and acted upon.”⁹⁵ Orientalist historical and archaeological works and the later historical works written by Iranians worked to develop the notion of an Iranian nation rooted in history and prehistory that identified with an Aryan racial identity. The notion of an Iranian nation was developed by European Orientalists in Britain, France, and Germany and built upon by Iranian thinkers and elites as a way in which to support the modernizing project that would eventually intensify under Reza Shah Pahlavi. The Aryan race theory and the notion of the Indo-European language family served as the basis upon which the people of the Iranian plateau were classified as a homogenous race, ethnicity, and national group with a linear history tracing through the Islamic and ancient periods.⁹⁶

According to Afshin Marashi, there was a role played by Iranian intellectuals in producing the cultural and historical memory necessary to the establishment of modernity in Iran:

First, they carried out the philosophical labor of reconciling Iranian culture with the demands of modernity. The ‘discovery’ of modern values in the legacy of the ancient past was the philosophical sleight of hand needed to reconstruct Iranian culture in terms of now universalized values of modernity. Second, this new notion of Iranian history and culture, grounded in ancient, pre-Islamic authenticity, performed an important social function. The reconstruction of national memory during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced a new repertoire of symbols and memories to which all Iranians could make equal claim.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Ibid., 164.

⁹⁶ For more on the Aryan origin myth, see Johann Chapoutot, *Greeks, Romans, Germans: How the Nazis Usurped Europe’s Classical Past*, trans. Richard R. Nybakken (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 17-51.

⁹⁷ Marashi, 13.

The work of the Iranian/Persian intellectuals was conducted in a sectarian spirit, not only as a means by which to make intellectual production and knowledge imitate that of the Europeans, but also to:

Provide a new uniformity of memory and identity that could be applied evenly across society. It was the secularism of the historical memory being excavated and reconstructed by late nineteenth-and early-twentieth-century Iranian intellectuals which gave that historical memory the ability to function as a national culture, transcending ethnic, linguistic, tribal, and religious divisions.⁹⁸

The Persian language became the means by which to distinguish the Iranian people from their Turkic and Arab neighbors:

Farsi, as a transnational language was recognized by the Orientalists to be exclusively the national language and historical/cultural property of Iran; and subsequently this attribution gained momentum, particularly during the nationalist period in Iran. Concomitantly, other languages in Iran were trivialized. The history of a single language (in this case, Farsi) was linked to an entire geographical zone (Iran) in order to create the necessary nationalist basis between culture and territory (as well as between language and ethnicity).⁹⁹

Iranian nationalism was not a reawakening of a national consciousness, but it served a political purpose:

the ruling elites, the intelligentsia, the state, and eventually the clerics recognized a benefit in homogenizing the population by leading them toward nationhood. Historical heterogeneity in the continuing old imperial rule of Iran was immaterial to the process at hand, since modernization required that the unity of all communities whether religious, regional, or tribal under a single state territorial banner, be preserved. Under the influence of the European notion of nationalism the state territorial unit of Iran was used by the secularists to create a common feeling and identity among all the people. Consequently, the Turkish, Arab, Turkoman, Baluchi, Gilaki, Mazandarani, Kurdish, Luri, Armenian, Assyrian, and other religious, linguistic, and tribal communities that lay within the old administrative boundary demarcating the Iranian plateau during the transition to modernism were all termed Iranians.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation*, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 6-7.

The promotion of Iranian nationalism and the sense of homogeneity being developed amongst the people of the Iranian plateau served as a means by which to move beyond the fractured politics and tribalism witnessed during the Qajar period that prevented major reform from taking place and left the state apparatus vulnerable to attack from the European powers. More importantly, it allowed for the greater expediency of the drive to modernity in the land that would be called Iran by the international community. The development of the nation entails a relationship to modernization, and as such: “Any historical analysis will, explicitly or implicitly, address the connection between nation-forming and the process of modernization.”¹⁰¹ Bruno Latour’s analysis of modernity in *We Have Never Been Modern* provides an analytic through which to understand the development of modernity and the modern nation-state in Iran.

Latour and Modernity

Latour’s narrative of modernity begins with the projects of Robert Boyle and Thomas Hobbes, who were both able to begin the formation of a separation— the separation between the state and the laboratory, natural science and social science:

Boyle is not simply creating a scientific discourse while Hobbes is doing the same thing for politics; Boyle is creating a political discourse from which politics is to be excluded, while Hobbes is imagining a scientific politics from which experimental science has to be excluded. In other words, they are inventing our modern world, a world in which the representation of things through the intermediary of the laboratory is forever dissociated from the representation of citizens through the intermediary of the social contract. So it is not at all by oversight that political philosophers have ignored Hobbes’s science, while historians of science have ignored Boyle’s positions on the politics of science. All of them had to ‘see double’ from Hobbes’s and Boyle’s day on, and not establish direct relations between the representation of nonhumans and the representation of humans, between the artificiality of facts and the artificiality of the Body Politic.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Hroch, *European Nations*, 24.

¹⁰² Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 27.

The notion of modernity and the idea of the modern world are formed upon the work of distinction conducted by Boyle and Hobbes, this distinction and its process is referred to as purification. The distinction between the work of natural science and social science also created a separation between what is the realm of the humans (the social) and the nonhumans (the natural). However, as Latour states: “If the modern Constitution invents a separation between the scientific power charged with representing things and the political power charged with representing subjects, let us not draw the conclusion that from now on subjects are far removed from things.”¹⁰³ The distinction drawn between the work of the social and natural scientists (the modern constitution) is an attempt to separate subjects from objects; however, the modernist project is a process that continues to build upon itself, as shown in Latour’s analysis of the various philosophical movements born out of modernity:

The modernist project forms an overall structure, which allows the modernist thinkers to: make Nature intervene at every point in the fabrication of their societies while they go right on attributing to Nature its radical transcendence; they are going to be able to become the only actors in their political destiny, while they go right on making their society hold together by mobilizing Nature. On the one hand, the transcendence of Nature will not prevent its social immanence; on the other, the immanence of the social will not prevent the Leviathan from remaining transcendent. We must admit that this is a rather neat construction that makes it possible to do everything without being limited by anything. It is not surprising that this Constitution should have made it possible, as people used to say, to ‘liberate productive forces...’¹⁰⁴

Modernist thinkers continuously call upon the separation between nature and society, however, this separation can continuously be traversed in discussing the connection between nature and society. Therefore, Latour connects the modernist constitution and the separation between nature and society to the development of industrialism and industrial capacity. It is significant that the attempt at modernization by ‘Abbas Mirza—but especially Amir Kabir—

¹⁰³ Ibid., 29.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 32.

brought with it the development of industry in Persia, even though this industrialization drive would ultimately fail. Theorizations such as that of Aryanism also bridged the divide between society and nature, as the explanation for the composition of a given society was provided with an appeal to natural principles.

Modernity also contained an element of secularization, for it: “had to settle the question of God by removing Him for ever from the dual social and natural construction, while leaving Him presentable and usable nevertheless...No one is truly modern who does not agree to keep God from interfering with Natural Law as well as with the laws of the Republic.”¹⁰⁵ The thinkers behind the modernization drive in Iran were intellectuals with secularist leanings. Secularization would allow for the more rapid movement of modernity in Iran. Therefore, in establishing both state and nation in Iran, the aim was to secularize Iranian society by disestablishing the ‘ulama from its central role in said society. As the more inclusive civic nationalism of the old nationalists gave way to the racialized vision of the new nationalists, the calls to secularize Iranian society and the nation in general grew more powerful.¹⁰⁶ The development of nationalism in Iran was a matter of grounding community in a homogenizing conceptualization of what constituted the community away from the tenets of Twelver Shi’a Islam and the pronouncements of the ‘ulama that recognized no temporal authority besides that of the Twelfth Imam, for whom all lie in wait.¹⁰⁷

The drive for modernization and the process of purification is never as organized or apparent as Latour outlines, and as such: “the modern world has never happened, in the sense

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 33.

¹⁰⁶ The differences between the old and new nationalists in Iran will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

¹⁰⁷ For a discussion of the Twelver Shi’a doctrine of deputyship and its significance to the ‘ulama, see: Ali-Ahmad Rasekh, "Agents of the Hidden Imam: Shiite Juristic Authority in Light of the Doctrine of Deputyship" (Concordia University, 2015).

that it has never functioned according to the rules of its official Constitution alone.”¹⁰⁸ In this regards:

The moderns think they have succeeded in such an expansion only because they have carefully separated Nature and Society (and bracketed God), whereas they have succeeded only because they have mixed together much greater masses of humans and nonhumans, without bracketing anything and without ruling out any combination! The link between the work of purification and the work of mediation has given birth to the moderns, but they credit only the former with their success.¹⁰⁹

The drive to modernity in Iran occurred within the context of nationalism, which as shown later, served as a mechanism by which to bolster the strength of the Iranian state under Reza Pahlavi. But the establishment of modernity is never a clear-cut process, and modernity always contains its own tensions.

In Latour’s analysis, Modernity faces a crisis: “*The proliferation of hybrids has saturated the constitutional framework of the moderns.* The moderns have always been using both dimensions in practice, they have always been explicit about each of them, but they have never been explicit about the relation between the two sets of practices.”¹¹⁰

The greater dilemma facing the practitioners and theorists of social science and the social study of science relates to the relationship between nature and society: the question of to what extent society is subject to objective forces and objects.¹¹¹ In Latour’s terms: “Society is either too powerful or too weak vis-a-vis objects which are alternatively too powerful or too arbitrary.”¹¹² This is especially problematic in the study of what Latour calls quasi-objects: hybrids that arise as a result of the purification process of the modernist constitution (the

¹⁰⁸ Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 39.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹¹¹ The designation of what constitutes objects and objective forces is one of the roles of the natural scientist.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 53.

separation between society and nature/ state and laboratory). Quasi-objects are: “much more social, much more fabricated, much more collective than the ‘hard’ parts of nature, but they are in no way the arbitrary receptacles of a full-fledged society. On the other hand they are much more real, nonhuman objective than those shapeless screens on which society—for unknown reasons—needed to be ‘projected.’”¹¹³ The study of language provides a strategy in which to study quasi-objects and the development of modernity and the broader changes occurring in a society: “Instead of concentrating on the extremes of the work of purification, this strategy concentrated on one of its mediations, language...the object of all these philosophies is to make discourse not a transparent intermediary that would put the human subject in contact with the natural world, but a mediator independent of nature and society alike.”¹¹⁴

The work of the philosophers of language (or discourse) separated itself from the work done by modernizing philosophers, who sought to separate subjects and objects. They sought to separate language, even as a quasi-object, by writing on the autonomy of discourse. These philosophies were able to give primacy to the text and language, they: “make meaning; they even produce references internal to discourse and to the speakers installed within discourse.”¹¹⁵ However, these philosophies make it difficult to form connections between discourse and its referent—whether the referent is nature or the ‘speaker’ in terms of a subject or society. Philosophers eventually begin to argue for the primacy of discourse/ the text and the sign system, in which everything becomes: “reality effects gliding over the surface of the writing.”¹¹⁶ This is why the study of language should not be separated from the broader developments occurring in a society—and why this thesis is not only a study of the changes in the Persian language.

¹¹³ Ibid., 55.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 62.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 63.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Latour problematizes this philosophical project in the following: “When we are dealing with science and technology it is hard to imagine for long that we are a text that is writing itself, a discourse that is speaking all by itself.”¹¹⁷ The attempt at autonomizing language avoids the issue of overt naturalization or socialization—the work of the physical and social scientists, but this autonomy of language prevents it from becoming a way in which to understand the quasi-objects, which are: “simultaneously real, discursive, and social. They belong to nature, to the collective and to discourse.”¹¹⁸ The natural, the social, and the discursive can be united in the study of language. The study of semiotics and the philosophy of language had gone out of its way to separate language as a discourse to be studied separately, or even provide an explanation for the social and the natural through the employment of discourse and sign systems. In this way, it becomes possible to argue for the study of language as a way in which to unite nature, society, and discourse in their connections; however, Latour does not provide a means by which to go about this, but a problematic that philosophers should be aware of. This is very relevant to the study of nationalism and language, as the three elements of the natural, the social, and the discursive are all present.

If language is understood as a quasi-object, one can begin to situate language’s function in the broader process of modernization. In Iran, modernization entailed the establishment of the separation between state and society: the dawn of modernity brought with it the drive to strengthen the state¹¹⁹ and establish modern scientific knowledge and practices in Persia/Iran through institutions such as the Dar al-Fonun. Iranian nationalism served as the vehicle through which modernity was brought to Iran, but the nationalist vision was itself subject to change.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 64.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ And the knowledge of its administration through the field of Political Science.

Theorizations of Nationalism

In his survey of contemporary theorizations of nationalism, Anthony D. Smith notes the prevalence of perspectives that focus on varying institutional and cultural explanations and dynamics of nationalism. In combing various perspectives and paradigms: “the paradigm divisions are not set in stone, that scholars do in fact cross the divide, and that we can envisage fruitful permutations and research programmes which may produce further advances in our understanding of ethnicity and nationalism.”¹²⁰ The combination of perspectives in nationalism provides the best means by which to understand the complex dynamics of Iranian nationalism, especially in its foundation and shifting conceptions. This takes on the spirit of Eric Hobsbawm’s work in *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, who is especially concerned with the: “change and transformation of the concept [the nation].”¹²¹

Benedict Anderson begins *Imagined Communities*, his study of nationalism with the recognition that: “nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time.”¹²² Nationalism carries valence as a political force, but in Anderson’s analysis: “nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind”.¹²³ These cultural artifacts Anderson is concerned with were created in the eighteenth century as a: “spontaneous distillation of a complex ‘crossing’ of discrete historical forces,” however: “once created, they became ‘modular,’ capable of being transplanted...to a great variety of social terrains.”¹²⁴ Therefore, Anderson’s historical conception of the rise of nationalism and nation-ness in cultural milieus

¹²⁰ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 227.

¹²¹ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 9.

¹²² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition ed. (London: Verso 2006), 3.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

gives rise to the following definition of the nation: “it is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”¹²⁵ The formation of the community is therefore a matter of imagination and the manner in which comradeship is formulated: the formation of the community is not a matter of genuineness, even though the work of historians in formulating national histories seeks to ground the imagined community in genuineness.¹²⁶ In Anderson’s analysis: “nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which— as well as against which— it came into being.”¹²⁷ These cultural systems are religious communities and the dynastic realm: in the case of Iran, the religious community is that of the Twelver Shi’a ummah and the ‘ulama which leads the community and the dynastic realm is represented by the political system of the Qajar dynasty. Significantly, the political legitimacy of the community is recognized as limited and sovereign, and the developments of Iran at this time represent the movement toward a political system that recognizes limited boundedness and a changing notion of legitimacy grounded in the movement from monarchy towards legitimacy grounded in the nation¹²⁸—especially after the loss of the Caucasus in the Russo-Persian wars.

Anderson also grounds the formation of national consciousness in the rise of an early form of capitalism: book publishing. Book publishing expanded into new markets and began to produce cheaper books in vernacular languages throughout Europe, creating mass reading publics and print-markets in vernacular languages, and not Latin. As demonstrated, Mirza Saleh

¹²⁵ Ibid., 6.

¹²⁶ In *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World*, Anderson carries on his analysis from *Imagined Communities* to explore the: “persistence of a need for national narratives.” Margaret Scott, “Ulil’s Icon: Benedict Anderson and the Search to Rehabilitate the Nation,” *Times Literary Supplement* March 26, 1999, 6.

¹²⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 12.

¹²⁸ Or in Persian, *mellat*.

Shirazi's return to Iran in 1815 formed the basis upon which a mass reading public and print-market could be formed alongside the general development of capitalism in Iran.

For Ernest Gellner, nationalism is: "primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent."¹²⁹ Nationalism serves as a: "theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones."¹³⁰ The development of nationalism is connected to the formation of industrial society, and the ways in which industrialism imposes homogeneity on a society—especially manifest in the need for a division of labor. As Gellner adds: "the age of transition to industrialism was bound...also to be an age of nationalism, a period of turbulent readjustment, in which either political boundaries, or cultural ones, or both, were being modified."¹³¹ Nationalism: "becomes pervasive and dominant only under certain social conditions, which in fact prevail in the modern world, and nowhere else."¹³² In Gellner's presentation, the study of nationalism is the study of social change in the face of industrialism. In Iran, the reforms of 'Abbas Mirza and Amir Kabir likewise sought to bring industrial production to Iran, as production in Iran also began to move away from traditional handicraft production to mass production: a tension that was always present in the bazaar.

For Graham Day and Andrew Thompson: "Nationalism, along with the nation and national identity, are thoroughly sociological phenomena," and as such the analysis of nationalism involves: "consideration of the structural forces that contribute to its occurrence, and reflection on the ways in which people use the category of 'nation' to interpret the social

1. ¹²⁹ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006),

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 132.

world.”¹³³ The social foundations of nationalism are significant, for as Shirin M. Rai points out: “whichever form nationalism took, the processes of ‘othering’ remained central to it.”¹³⁴ The formation of Iranian nationalism was a project rooted in the formation of an Iranian subject whose language was Persian and was separated from his/her Arab and Turkic neighbors. The process of ‘othering’ in Iran began as the categorization of non-Iranians and the tribes opposed to Reza Shah’s rule as “Turadians,” the enemies of Iran in the *Shahnameh*, and eventually intensified with the classification of Iranians as Aryans, and non-Iranians as semitic peoples: a process that displays the movement away from civic nationalism towards ethnic nationalism.

Michael Ignatieff, in *Blood and Belonging*, provides definitions for both forms of nationalism. In general, nationalism seeks to root political sovereignty in the people (as occurred under the rule of Naser al-Din Shah in Iran). Civic nationalism: “maintains that the nation should be composed of all those...who subscribe to the nation’s political creed...it envisages the nation as a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values.”¹³⁵ This is a conception of nationality rooted in citizenship, which was the form of nationalism favored by the old nationalists in Iran, who aimed to bring enlightenment ideals to Iran. Ethnic nationalism is the belief that: “What gave unity to the nation, what made it a home, a place of passionate attachment, was not the cold contrivance of shared rights but the people’s preexisting ethnic characteristics: their language, religion, customs, and traditions.”¹³⁶ Ethnic nationalism is the prevailing vision of the new nationalists who were

¹³³ Graham and Andrew Thompson Day, *Theorizing Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 2.

¹³⁴ Shirin M. Rai, *Gender and the Political Economy of Development: From Nationalism to Globalization* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), 27.

¹³⁵ Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993), 6.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

finding a foothold in the *Farhangestan* during the reign of Reza Shah, and who rooted Iranian nationality and nationalism in a racialized vision of Iranian ethnicity: to be Iranian is to be an Aryan. The movement of Iranian nationalism away from civic nationalism and towards ethnic nationalism is the major movement occurring during the Pahlavi era.

Chapter Two: The Establishment of Constitutional Monarchy in Iran¹³⁷

I see what has to be, and choose the way
Of silence since there is no more to say:
But for the Persians I will weep, and for
The House of Sasan ruined by this war:
Alas for their great crown and throne, for all
The royal splendor destined now to fall,
To be fragmented by the Arabs' might;
The stars decree for us defeat and flight.
Four hundred years will pass in which our name
Will be forgotten and devoid of fame
—Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, 833.

Introduction

This chapter begins with the build-up to the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 and ends with the coup d'état of Reza Khan, a General in the Cossack Brigades, in 1921. The Constitutional Revolution established a system of governance based upon those of Europe in Iran. However, the period after the establishment of the constitution saw a civil war in 1908 and ineffective Parliamentary rule. Both of these events worked to further weaken the state and bolster the autonomy of the tribal contingents in Iran. The British and Russian Empires also occupied Iran in 1911, ending with the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917. The weakness of the Iranian state is especially apparent in this period.

Muzaffar al-Din Shah and the Establishment of the Iranian Constitution

¹³⁷ For a primary account of the events of the Constitutional Revolution from a participant, see: Ahmad Majd al-Islam Kermani, *Tarikh-I Inqilab-I Mashrutiyat-I Iran/ History of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution* (Isfahan 1972).

Muzaffar al-Din Shah implemented the policy of political liberalism with the hope of satisfying his opposition. However, this only allowed the opposition to form organizations throughout the country, especially in the cities of Tehran and Tabriz. There were five organizations that would play a central role in the eventual Constitutional Revolution, these were: the Secret Center, the Social Democratic Party, the Society of Humanity, the Revolutionary Committee, and the Secret Society.¹³⁸ The Secret Society's membership was composed of the middle class, whereas the other organizations drew from the intelligentsia.

The increased economic penetration of Iran by the British¹³⁹ also led to the establishment of the first stock company in Isfahan. This stock company's goal was to protect Iran's independence by investing in modern industry in Iran, while protecting traditional craft—such as textiles and carpet manufacturing.¹⁴⁰ The foundation of the stock company represents a response to the changing economic and political situation in Iran on the part of the merchant middle class.

At the same time, intellectuals in Tabriz published a journal in the Persian language known as *Ganjeh-i Fonun* (Treasure of Knowledge). The intellectuals in Tabriz held knowledge of Turkish that allowed them to follow the intellectual and cultural developments of the Ottoman Empire (especially Istanbul) and the Caucasus. In Tehran, intellectuals formed the *Anjuman-i Mu'aref* (Society of Learning) and established the National Library (*Ketabkhaneh-i Melli*).¹⁴¹

As Abrahamian notes, the political situation for the Qajars in 1905 was precarious at best:

Iran in 1905 was rapidly moving toward a political revolution. The traditional middle class, having coalesced into a statewide class, was now economically, ideologically, and politically alienated from the ruling dynasty. The modern intelligentsia, inspired by constitutionalism, nationalism, and secularism, was rejecting the past, questioning the present, and espousing a new vision of the future. Moreover, both the traditional middle

¹³⁸ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 76.

¹³⁹ Mostly through extractions that extracted resources from Iran.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

class and the modern intelligentsia, despite their differences, were directing their attacks at the same target—the central government. Both were forming their own secret and semisecret organizations, societies, and political parties. Both were aware that the Qajar dynasty was not only financially bankrupt but also morally discredited, administratively ineffective, and, most important of all, militarily incompetent.¹⁴²

An economic crisis in 1905 intensified the political tensions in Persia, especially as inflation continued to increase across the country. There were protests throughout the country that lasted most of the year, and the merchants in the bazaar of Tehran declared a general strike that further crippled the economy of Persia. Notably, the protests held in 1905 were also the first instance in which the term “Iran” was publically used to refer to a notion of the nation, specifically in the chanting of the phrase: “Long live the nation of Iran.”¹⁴³ In response to the violence brought towards the protestors in Tehran, the ‘Ulama also went on strike. As Hamid Dabashi notes: “The oppositional members of the Shi’i clergy were thus ‘revolutionary’ or ‘progressive’ ...because they allied themselves with the emerging Iranian bourgeoisie rather than with a dying Iranian aristocracy.”¹⁴⁴

Consequently, the members of the Secret Committee began to demand a National Constituent Assembly to draw up and establish a constitution in Persia.¹⁴⁵ On August 5, 1906, Muzaffar al-Din Shah appointed Mushir al-Dowleh (Hassan Pirnia) Prime Minister. Hassan Pirnia held politically liberal views and he signed the declaration to assemble the National Assembly.

The lead up to the election of the National Assembly was a period of intense political activity, especially on the part of the intellectuals:

¹⁴² Ibid., 80.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 82.

¹⁴⁴ Hamid Dabashi, *Iran: A People Interrupted* (New York: The New Press, 2007), 77.

¹⁴⁵ For details on the role of the Secret Committee in the Constitutional Revolution, see: Edward Granville Browne, *Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910).

The number of papers and journals published within Iran jumped from six on the eve of the revolution to over one hundred during the ten months after the Constituent Assembly. Many carried such optimistic, nationalistic, and radical titles as *Taraqqi* (Progress), *Bidari* (Awakening), *Vatan* (Fatherland), *Adamiyat* (Humanity), *Ittihad* (Unity), *Umid* (Hope), and *‘Asr-i Now* (The New Age). The most outspoken and popular were written by members of the secret organizations...*Azad* (Free) and *Mujahed* (Freedom Fighter). Nazem al-Islam Kermani, of the Secret Society in Tehran, came out with *Nida-yi Vatan* (Voice of the Fatherland). Five members of the Revolutionary Committee...edited popular newspapers named *Huquq* (Rights), *Sur-i Israfil* (Trumpet Call of Israfil), *Musavat* (Equality), and *Ruh al-Qods* (Holy Spirit).¹⁴⁶

As indicated above, the intellectuals took to the printing presses to elaborate and espouse their political beliefs. As Ali Mirsepassi notes: “the movement for reform and constitution was represented by a plurality of voices and visions about Iranian modernity.”¹⁴⁷ The differing visions of modernity were likely the result of geography, as: “Those who were influenced by Ottoman and Russian ideas imagined a more radical and critical modern project for the Iranian,” while those: “who were directly influenced by the colonial British idea of modernity, offered a more rigid and totalistic vision of modernity for Iran.”¹⁴⁸ Even with the differing versions of modernity at play, the intellectuals of the Constitutional Revolution mostly: “called for the imposition of the Western narrative of modernity in Iran. This resulted in a cultural capitulation and a concession of inferiority to European ideas.”¹⁴⁹ The Constitutional Revolution served as the moment in which the modernist vision of the intellectuals was established in Iran.

The Parliament opened in October. There were three groups formed in the Assembly: the Royalists, Moderates, and Liberals. The Royalists formed the smallest group, and were composed mostly of landowners and notables. The Moderates were the largest group in the Assembly, and were composed mostly of the propertied middle class. The Liberals were

¹⁴⁶ Dabashi, *Iran*, 87.

¹⁴⁷ Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*, 61.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

composed primarily of the intelligentsia. They were smaller in composition than the Moderates, however, they were the primary force calling for a constitution and the intellectuals in the Liberal group held knowledge of European constitutions.¹⁵⁰ The first action taken in writing the constitution was to establish and protect the role of Parliament.

The Fundamental Laws established the Parliament as: “the representative of the whole People,” and it held the right to: “propose any measure that it regards as conducive to the well-being of the Government and the People.”¹⁵¹ Parliament also held: “final determination over all laws, decrees, budgets, treaties, loans, monopolies, and concessions.”¹⁵² This was an especially significant move on the part of the Parliamentarians, as it prevented the royal court from granting further concessions to the European powers. Muzaffar al Din Shah ratified the Fundamental Laws on December 30, 1906 and died on January 03, 1907.

Muhammad ‘Ali Shah and the Civil War

Muhammad ‘Ali Shah came to the throne with the intention of emulating his grandfather Naser al-Din Shah’s iron rule. He removed Hassan Pirnia (Mushir al-Dawleh) as Prime Minister, and installed Amin al-Sultan, a conservative who wanted to emulate the state-building project of Japan in Iran. Amin al-Sultan argued that: “reforms could not be carried out without a

¹⁵⁰ The constitutionalists in Iran worked most closely with the Belgian constitution. As a result of Iran’s poor financial situation and the Qajar (and eventually parliamentary) reliance on loans from Russia and Britain in the late nineteenth century, customs receipts were required as collateral for these loans. Belgian administrators (because they were seen as a trustworthy third party) were brought to Iran and placed in charge of the customs ministry, with Joseph Naus serving as customs minister. Annette Destree, "Belgian-Iranian Relations," in *Encyclopedia Iranica* (1989).

¹⁵¹ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 89.

¹⁵² Ibid.

strong, and if necessary, autocratic, central government.”¹⁵³ Muhammad ‘Ali Shah also instructed his ministers to ignore the dictates of the Parliament, and he sought to revive the communal conflicts amongst the tribes of the Iranian plateau as a way in which to limit the cooperation amongst the Shah’s rivals—especially as the selection of delegates to the Parliament from the provinces was undertaken by provincial councils.

The greatest struggle between the Shah and the Parliament revolved around the structure of the government, as the Parliamentary deputies were further elaborating the Constitutional Monarchy they sought to establish. The Supplementary Fundamental Laws contained a Bill of Rights that guaranteed: “each citizen equality before the law, protection of life, property, and honor, safeguards from arbitrary arrest, and freedom to publish newspapers and to organize associations.”¹⁵⁴ The Supplementary Fundamental Laws also created a separation of powers between the executive and legislative branch, with power primarily held by the legislative branch. The nominal executive was the Shah, but administration was to be conducted by his ministers. Additionally, the budget of the Royal Court had to be approved by the Parliament, and the Shah’s immediate family was barred from the cabinet. The Supplementary Fundamental Laws also established that the sovereignty of the Shah was derived from the people, and not from God.

Though the Iranian constitution essentially emulated that of Belgium, modifications were made so as to reflect the political situation in Iran at the time. In the provinces, the provincial councils were given the ability to ensure the implementation of any reform established by the Parliament in Tehran. The importance of religion, specifically Twelver Shi’a Islam,¹⁵⁵ was also

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Recognized as the state religion.

established in the constitution. For one, the judicial branch of government was divided into: “civil tribunals and ecclesiastical courts with extensive jurisdiction over religious laws.”¹⁵⁶ The constitution also established a Supreme Committee composed of Mujtaheds that reviewed every bill in Parliament to ensure cooperation with the shari’a. As Abrahamian writes: “The traditional gospel of Shi’ism had been incorporated into a modern structure of government derived from Montesquieu.”¹⁵⁷

The establishment of the constitution in Iran serves as a vital marker through which to see the nature of the modernizing process occurring in Iran at the start of the twentieth century. The constitution forms the legitimating doctrine of a new form of government that is meant to resemble the modern, i.e. European governing styles of rule, complete with an understanding of the Shah’s sovereignty as being vested in the people. As Farzin Vahdat notes, this moment also brought with it a new term for citizen that brought with a new, French understanding of citizen:

Before the advent of modernity, the ordinary citizens of Iran were referred to using the Arabic word *ra’iyat* (literally, flock of sheep). The Persian word *taba’e* (follower) was later introduced to mean ‘citizen’ for which it is still the most common word; this was followed, on the eve of the Constitutional Revolution, by the introduction of the Arabic word *madaniun*, a direct translation of *citoyen*, the French word for “citizen.”¹⁵⁸

However, the pull of tradition, in this case that of religion, reflects the incomplete nature of the totalizing drive to modernize. Therefore, the constitution—and the modern system of government it sought to establish—also established a parallel system of traditionalist rule: the procession of modernity in Iran was not a complete imitation of European cultural and ideological practice.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 90.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Farzin Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut: Iran’s Intellectual Encounter with Modernity*, ed. Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Modern Intellectual and Political History of the Middle East* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 163.

As Ali Mirsepassi notes, the constitutional (*Mashruteh*) movement: “represents, in the end, a failed effort to ‘localize’ the totalizing tendencies of modernity.”¹⁵⁹ The constitutional movement was unable to form a lasting: “democratic modernity” in Iran, especially because of the: “call for unconditional capitulation to European social norms.”¹⁶⁰ The development of the Constitutional Revolution was not simply the result of Iran’s encounter with Europe, but modern ideas also came from Russia, India, and the Ottoman Empire; and many of the Constitutionals and modernizers in Iran were inspired by the development of Japan, especially as Japan recently defeated Tsarist Russia in military engagements.

Muhammad ‘Ali Shah refused to ratify the Supplementary Fundamental Laws, and he instead sought the establishment of a constitution resembling that of Germany, in which the head of state held real command of the armed forces (instead of just nominal command) and greater power to appoint ministers. The proposals of Muhammad ‘Ali Shah led to protests in the cities. The largest protests were in Tabriz and Tehran. In Tabriz, there was a general strike, and a threat to separate Azerbaijan¹⁶¹ from Iran if the constitution was not ratified. Notably, the telegrams sent to the Shah from the protestors were signed “*mellat-i Azerbaijan*” (The people/nation of Azerbaijan). In Tehran, there was a general strike organized by what became known as the Central Society (*Anjuman-i Markazi*), an organization formed out of the various clubs and associations in the city. The strike was mainly held in the bazaar and the bureaucracy, and the Central Society: “held a mass meeting of over 50,000 and mobilized 3,000 armed volunteers for

¹⁵⁹ Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*, 55.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Iranian Azerbaijan is separate from the Azerbaijan held by Russia that would become the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1991.

the defense of the National Assembly [Parliament].”¹⁶² Muhammad ‘Ali Shah ratified the Supplementary Fundamental Laws, and swore to accept: “August Comte’s concepts of equality, fraternity, legality, and modernity.”¹⁶³ The establishment and ratification of the constitution in Iran was the result of the cooperation between the Moderates and Liberals in Parliament, which indicated a broader cooperation between the middle class and the intellectuals. The intellectuals wrote the constitution, while the middle classes led the strikes in the bazaars that hindered the attempts of the Qajar shahs to limit the constitutional movement.

After the ratification of the constitution, the Liberals sought to engage in further reform by pushing for a balanced budget (including an austerity budget for the royal court) and an electoral system that was more representative of the provinces. Additionally, the country was facing rising food prices and a poor harvest. The Parliamentary delegates were neither willing to engage in price controls or lower taxes, and as such, they aroused the anger of the lower classes.

In December of 1907, a conservative mujtahed named Shaykh Fazallah Nouri formed an organization called the Society of Muhammad with royalist members of the ‘ulama in Tehran. Shaykh Fazallah led a march against the constitution in Tehran. However, this march was called countered by the public response in support of the National Assembly: this involved the presence of armed volunteers and a general strike in the bazaar. The Shah eventually asked the Royalists to end their protest, took another oath of allegiance to the constitution, and gave command of the Cossack Brigade to the Ministry of War.

At this time, the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 was established. The agreement partitioned Iran into zones of influence: the South was under British influence, while the North was under Russian influence. The Russians and the British held differing motivations behind the

¹⁶² Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 91.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 92.

agreement. For the Russians, Iran was open to economic exploitation and allowed for the Russians to pressure British India; however, it could also serve as a dangerous influence for the Muslims in Russian territories. Russian policy with regards to Iran was to: “endeavour to preserve Iran as a weak, independent state subject to Russian influence.”¹⁶⁴ The constitutional movement threatened the Russians as it represented a liberatory potential for the Muslim subjects of Russia (specifically in the Caucasus) and threatened Russian interests in Iran. The British were interested in promoting a strong state in Iran, as this would protect British India. They were also inclined to look favorably upon the constitutional movement, although Britain never provided support for it. Overall: “Britain’s overriding concern from the beginnings of her political connection with Iran was not to allow disagreements with Russia over Iran to upset the European peace.”¹⁶⁵ As such, the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 was signed in order to avoid the potential of a larger conflict between the British and Russian Empires from breaking out. The Agreement did not serve as a means by which to promote greater European authority over Iran, but: “Iranians saw it as inimical to their independence.”¹⁶⁶ As such, the Agreement deflated the Constitutionals and their movement, especially as they pushed for greater reforms through Parliament.

Muhammad ‘Ali Shah began to garner the support of magnates, elites, and landowners who felt threatened by the new budget established by Parliament. Additionally, he was also able to receive the support of a major branch of the Bakthiyari tribe in Southwestern Iran and the Shabsaven tribes in Azerbaijan. The support of the tribes provided the Shah with armed

¹⁶⁴ Malcolm E. Yapp, "1920-1921: The Last Years of the Qajar Dynasty," in *Twentieth-Century Iran*, ed. Hossein Amirsadeghi (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1977), 10.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

strength, while the actions of Shaykh Nouri and the Society of Muhammad garnered popular support for the Royalist cause. In June 1908, Muhammad ‘Ali Shah staged a coup.

The Shah declared martial law and named Vladimir Liakhoff, the Russian commander of the Cossack Brigade, the military governor of Tehran. Liakhoff: “banned all newspapers and public meetings” including religious processions and passion plays and: “issued arrest warrants for the leading deputies; and sent his Cossacks to occupy the telegraph office and to bombard the Majles building.”¹⁶⁷ The royalists had taken Tehran, but this did not end the conflict. Armed volunteers, led by the provincial councils throughout Iran, began to appear. Additionally, the mujtaheds in Karbala and Najaf expressed their support for the constitution and their rejection of the Shah. As Abrahamian notes: “In the past the capital had determined the course of events in the provinces. Now the provinces determined the course of events in the capital.”¹⁶⁸ The largest conflict of the Civil War took place in Tabriz.

The provincial council in Tabriz established itself as the Provisional Government of Azerbaijan in response to the dissolution of Parliament. There was a strike in the bazaar of Tabriz, expressing the support of the middle class in the city for the constitution and the Parliament. As Malek al-Shua’ra Bahar, a major poet in Persian literature and a participant in the Constitutional Revolution noted: “During the upheavals, the upper class and the lower classes supported despotism. Only the middle class remained true to constitutionalism.”¹⁶⁹ Constitutionalist and their armed volunteers (mainly from the Caucasus) took over the middle class districts of the city. The royalists were led by the ‘ulama of Tabriz and backed by the

¹⁶⁷ Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 51.

¹⁶⁸ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 97.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 96, citing: Mohammad Taqi Bahar, *Tarikh Mokhtassar-E Ahzab-E Siyasiye Iran/ a Brief History of the Political Parties of Iran* (Tehran: Sepehr Publishing Company, 1984).

armed support of the Shavsaven tribes—they held the lower class districts of the city. The constitutionalists, using weapons imported from the Caucasus (specifically hand grenades), broke through the royalist strongholds in Tabriz and defeated the Royalist forces in the city. The Shavsaven forces continued to siege Tabriz until an invasion by Russian forces in 1909 broke the siege.

There was less violence in other parts of the country, but the civil war was more decisive on the side of the Constitutionalists. Caucasian guerillas led by Yeprem Khan captured Rasht, and with the support of Muhammad Vali Sepahdar, the largest land magnate in Iran, marched the guerrillas and a group of Mazandarani peasants south to Tehran. In Isfahan, a leader of the Bakhtiari tribe named Samsam al-Saltaneh led his tribesmen to capture Isfahan, and marched north toward Tehran.

Royalist rule in Tehran was also declining in the face of military defeat. Foreign banks were no longer willing to lend to the royal court, and the Shah could no longer pay the Cossacks or his tribal supporters. There was a new strike in the Tehran bazaar as the opposition leaders who fled the coup began to reorganize. On July 13, 1910, the forces of Yeprem Khan, Sepahdar, and Samsam al-Saltaneh reached Tehran: “armed volunteers within the city ensured a swift victory by opening the main gates. As the royalists fled in disarray, the Shah took sanctuary in the Russian legation. The civil war was over.”¹⁷⁰ Interestingly enough, during the period of the Civil War: “The shah succeeded in reviving communal conflicts in only six cities.”¹⁷¹ This indicated the ability of the constitutional movement to operate beyond communal differences. This period also saw the publication of the first socialist manifesto in Persia by the *Jamiat-i*

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 100.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 99.

Mujahedin (Association of Fighters), a group of Azeri radicals in Mashhad, which were allied with the Social Democrats of Baku.

There was a Grand *Majles* (Parliament) formed immediately after the victory of the Constitutionalists in the Civil War. Muhammad ‘Ali Shah was deposed and sent into exile, his twelve-year old son Ahmad became Shah. The Ilkhan (chief) of the Qajar tribe, ‘Azod al-Mulk—who held liberal political views— was to serve as royal regent. Five of the leading Royalists who were opponents of the constitution were executed, this included Shaykh Fazallah.¹⁷² Finally, the Grand Majles created a new electoral law that expanded the franchise by lowering the property qualifications for voting (this would be entirely eliminated in the next year, creating universal male suffrage in Iran), and eliminated the representative structure in Parliament based on class and occupation. Additionally, the number of seats allocated to Tehran in Parliament were reduced from sixty to fifteen seats, while the provinces gained five seats overall: indicating a distribution of power in Parliament away from Tehran and towards the provinces. The religious minorities were also given four seats in Parliament. In November 1910, the second Parliament would meet, ensuring the establishment of the constitution in Iran. However, the rule of Parliament was not to bring an era of stability and prosperity.

The Era of Parliamentary Rule under Ahmad Shah

The rule of the Constitutional Monarchy in Tehran faced the same issue as the despotism of the Qajars: the state was not centralized and lacked the ability to administrate the whole of Iran. Additionally, the government was facing bankruptcy. The prior Qajar rulers took loans from the British and the Russians, while the Parliamentary regime was forced to rely on

¹⁷² Ibid., 100.

emergency loans from Britain and Russia. The Iranian Customs system was administered by the Belgians, who used customs revenues to pay off Iran's loans. Additionally, Iran did not receive any oil revenue until 1912, and what it did receive was meager.¹⁷³

In response to the situation, the British advised the Iranians to increase state revenues, specifically through the collection of land taxes. The collection of land taxes were especially difficult in Iran, as land owners, magnates, tribal chiefs, and governors sought to preserve traditional practices and refused to pay taxes on land. The only means by which the government could collect taxes was to develop a tax-collecting apparatus. The apparatus created by Parliament was a police force called the gendarmerie—parliament also hired thirty-six Swedish officers to train the gendarmerie. Additionally, an American named Morgan Shuster was hired as Iran's treasurer-general with the aim of developing financial reforms in Iran. The gendarmerie ended up becoming the largest cost in the Iranian budget, and of the stated goal of 12,000 men by Shuster, the gendarmerie numbered only 6,000 by 1914.¹⁷⁴ The weakness of the central government led to the increasing power of the provincial magnates, whether these were tribal chiefs or feudal landowners.

The Ilkhan of the Qashqa'i tribe, Sowlat al-Dowleh, began to take over the trade routes in the province of Fars that led to the Persian Gulf. The tribes of southern Iran were becoming independent of the government, and falling into conflict with one another over land jurisdiction. In the North, marauding Shahsaven tribesmen were pillaging cities and villages, while the Turkman chiefs began a rebellion in support of the deposed Muhammad 'Ali Shah. In addition, the brother of Muhammad 'Ali Shah began his own rebellion with the aim of taking the Qajar throne.

¹⁷³ Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 55.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

The tribal chiefs also held their own agreements with the foreign powers, specifically the British in southern Iran. Sheikh Khaz'al, the chief of the Ka'ab tribe in southwestern Iran arranged for the Anglo-Persian Oil Company to build its refinery on land belonging to the Sheikh in Abadan, without the knowledge or consent of the government in Tehran. He also held his own diplomatic talks with the Ottoman Empire and formed an agreement over the navigation of the waterways that form the current border between Iran and Iraq. The Bakhtiayari leaders also agreed to protect the oil installations on Bakhtiayari land in return for shares in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.¹⁷⁵

The government in Tehran lacked the ability to enforce its sovereignty over the provinces, especially in the tribal lands of the south. Parliament itself was mired in political deadlock between the two main parties, the Moderates and the Democrats. Universal male suffrage had bolstered the power of the tribes and the landlords in Parliament, increasing the support for traditional values and the shari'a in Parliament through the Moderate party. The conflict between the two parties intensified as they both sought to insert party members into cabinet positions. This led to a series of assassinations and the exile of the leader of the Democratic Party, essentially bringing parliamentary politics to a deadlock: the new parliamentary state was an impotent political force.

In 1911, Russia issued an ultimatum to Iran calling for the removal of Morgan Shuster. The Russians believed Shuster's actions were violating the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907, and the British were in agreement with Russia's demands.¹⁷⁶ In December 1911, the Russians invaded Iran and occupied the territory in northern Iran that was designated the Russian zone of influence in the 1907 agreement. Although Shuster was removed as a result of the Russian

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 57.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 58.

invasion, the Russians continued their occupation of northern Iran. The British likewise invaded southern Iran, with the aim of controlling the trade routes there. The occupation of Iran by the Russians and British would continue through World War I.

With the start of World War I, Parliament—now governing as a coalition amongst the Moderate and Democrat parties—declared Iranian neutrality in the war and moved Parliament to Kermanshah from Tehran, establishing the nationalist Government of National Resistance: community and political legitimacy was grounded in the opposition to foreign forces. The Ottomans invaded northern Iran and eventually occupied Tabriz. In response, the Russians bolstered the strength of their forces in Iran and supported the growth of the Cossack brigades. The British took over the neutral zone in Iran (which was established between the British and Russians in 1907) and created the South Persian Rifles. As a result of the revolution in Russia in 1917, the British also ended up taking control of the Iranian Cossack brigades.

The Germans and Ottomans were able to begin uprisings amongst the tribal contingents in Iran, resulting in the destruction of an oil pipeline in 1915.¹⁷⁷ The Germans also persuaded most of the Swedish officers in the gendarmerie to desert the force. Added to the war, a combination of poor harvest and epidemics led to the devastation of the rural population in Iran: further evidence for the weakness of the parliamentary state.

The end of the war opened the opportunity for Britain to attempt a takeover of Iran. George Curzon, the British foreign minister presented a new Anglo-Persian Agreement in 1919 with the aim of bringing northern Iran into the British fold. According to this agreement: “Britain obtained the sole right to provide Iran with loans, arms, advisors, military instructors,

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 60.

customs administrators, and even teachers.”¹⁷⁸ The British were to provide Iran with a large loan. Curzon had the support of the prime minister, Mirza Hassan Khan Vossuq al-Dowleh, who would attempt to pass the Agreement through Parliament. The political leaders and newspapers in Iran, along with the public, immediately denounced the agreement. Ultra-nationalists assassinated advisors to Vossuq al-Dowleh, who promptly resigned. Iran was left without a Prime Minister, as the assassins threatened to continue killing anyone who supported the Anglo-Persian Agreement.

The Soviets promised to withdraw from Iran if the British also left, while guerillas in the northern province of Gilan courted Soviet help in their attempt to establish the Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran. The major sentiment amongst the population was anti-British and pro-Bolshevik, convincing the British that their direct presence was driving Iran towards supporting the Bolsheviks. The Red Army held a presence in Gilan¹⁷⁹ and the prospect of its arrival in Tehran seemed quite possible. The apparatus of the state held little sway outside of Tehran in 1920, and the government was at a standstill because of the unpopularity of the Anglo-Persian Agreement. Many of the provinces were either under the control of the tribal chiefs (instead of the governors) or rebels as a result of the occupation and war.

Although the Constitutional Revolution brought with it the promise of a modern system of government coated in the language of liberty for the people against the despotic rule of the Qajar shahs, it only worked to further decentralize and weaken the Iranian state, which served as a balancing force in the communal and tribal politics of Iran. As Yapp writes:

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ For more on the developments of this period in Gilan, especially Mirza Kuchak Khan’s *Jangali* movement, see: Cosroe Chaqueri, *The Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran, 1920-1921*, Pitt Series in Russian and East European Studies (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995).

the events of the constitutional period increased the isolation of local communities as the breakdown of government authority made the roads unsafe and communications more difficult...From the point of view of the provinces the constitutional revolution was the struggle for local freedom from the power of the centre and it was this provincial view which prevailed...The decline of the central government was paralleled by the rise of local groups: nomadic tribes such as the Qashqai and Khamseh in Fars, Lurs and Kurds in the West, and especially the Bakhtiyaris in the South-West...The true history of Iran during these years is not the history of the fortunes of its central government but the agglomeration of the history of many local communities.¹⁸⁰

The devolution of the Iranian state's coercive capacity and the chaos of the constitutional period began with the Civil War initiated by the Coup d'Etat of Muhammad 'Ali Shah and the Cossacks under the command of Liakhoff in 1908. The chaos of the constitutional period would end—and the establishment of the Iranian nation-state would begin— with the coup initiated by a General in the Cossacks named Reza Khan on February 21, 1921; or as it is known in Iran, the liberation of the 3rd of Esfand.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Yapp, 16-17.

¹⁸¹ For more on the 1921 coup, see: Homa Katouzian, *State and Society in Iran: The Eclipse of the Qajars and the Emergence of the Pahlavis*, vol. 28, Library of Modern Middle East Studies (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. , 2000), 242-67.

Chapter Three:

The Rule of Reza Shah and the Establishment of the Modern Iranian Nation-State

I need to capture with my noose a horse
Of mountain size and weight, of mammoth force,
I need a crag-like mace if I'm to stand
Against Turan, defending Persia's land.
—Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, 131.

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the period of Reza Shah Pahlavi's rule from 1921 to 1941. This period marks the establishment of the Iranian nation-state. Reza Shah's rule saw the intensification of the modernization process in Iran. A modern administrative state with a large military and bureaucratic apparatus was established, and the state established its control in the provinces with the eradication of tribal autonomy. This period also saw the intensification of Iranian nationalism through the establishment of the *Farhangestan* (Language Academy) and reforms that sought to create a more cohesive, unified society.

At the time of Reza Khan's coup, the Cossacks were under the charge of the British, and the Russian officers were replaced with Iranians. Reza Khan revoked the Anglo-Iranian Agreement that had raised anger prior to his acquisition of power, and signed a new Soviet-Iranian Agreement that resulted in the cancellation of all loans made by the Russians under the Tsarist regime and ended the Russian concessions in Iran. In 1926, Reza Khan deposed Ahmad Shah and became Reza Shah, the first Shah of the Pahlavi dynasty. He would rule as the Shah of Iran from 1926 until his abdication in response to the Anglo-Soviet Invasion of Iran in 1941. The establishment of the Iranian nation-state would characterize Reza Shah's regime. At the time

of his coup, the Iranian state apparatus held little coercive capacity outside of Tehran and lacked an administrative structure.

The development of the Iranian nation-state under Reza Shah was centered on the growth of the military and the bureaucracy.¹⁸² In 1921, the Iranian military was composed of 22,000 men; by Reza Shah's abdication in 1941, there were 127,000 men in the Iranian military. Likewise, the Bureaucratic apparatus of the Pahlavi state was composed of eleven ministries employing 90,000 civil servants by 1941.¹⁸³ The state under Reza Shah was now open to new revenue sources, as the royalties from oil extraction by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company increased, and an American named Arthur Millspaugh took Morgan Shuster's position as treasurer-general of Iran. The Iranian state in the period of Reza Shah, with the revenue services under the control of Millspaugh, engaged in reform programs that sought to increase the amount of taxes extracted by the state—especially for land.¹⁸⁴ The extraction of taxes, especially on land, would become more efficient with the greater settlement of towns and cities and the forced sedentarization of the tribes in Iran. Additionally, Reza Shah's regime annulled the capitulations to the British given by the Qajars and developed the Trans-Iranian railroad.

¹⁸² For details on the process of centralization and the establishment of the coercive apparatus of the state as a response to protests and rebellions in the provinces, see: Stephanie Cronin, *Soldiers, Shahs and Subalterns in Iran: Opposition, Protest and Revolt, 1921-1941* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

¹⁸³ Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 67. For more on the modernization of the Iranian military, see: *The Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah, 1921-1941* (London: Routledge, 2003).

¹⁸⁴ Millspaugh and the Belgian customs officers still in Iran would eventually be removed from their positions by Reza Shah.

Reza Shah and Modernization in Iran

In taking on the surname Pahlavi and calling his dynasty the Pahlavi dynasty, Reza Shah sought to connect himself to the pre-Islamic past of Iran. A text called *Shahanshah Pahlavi* was published a year before he took the throne and provides a valuable explanation and discussion of the term “Pahlavi.” Pahlavi is the name for the Middle Persian Language spoken during the era of Sasanian rule before the dawn of Islam and the Muslim conquest of Iran,¹⁸⁵ but it is also: “an epithet ascribed to the most noble of Iranians, most obviously in this case the most outstanding of the Sasanian monarchs.”¹⁸⁶ As such, the usage of the term Pahlavi was meant to directly connect Reza Shah’s rule to that of the previous Sasanian monarchs. Ultimately, the term “Pahlavi” is defined in this text as: “civilised as opposed to barbaric, and settled as opposed to nomadic,” this allowed for the correlation of Reza Shah’s rule with the notions of: “city, civilization, and freedom.”¹⁸⁷ As Ansari notes, this was a presentation of a: “thoroughly enlightened form of despotism.”¹⁸⁸ This also indicates the intention of the Pahlavi regime to begin a process of “Authoritarian Modernization,” as Atabaki and Zurcher call it. Reza Shah’s governing ideology was grounded in the opposition between civilization and nomadism/barbarism: not the racialized language of Aryanism. What is at stake for Reza Shah’s rule is the establishment of a sedentarized, “civilized” national community inhabiting cities and towns over which the state apparatus could exercise greater coercion and more efficiently extract from. The Qajar and parliamentary states were constantly on the verge of bankruptcy and

¹⁸⁵ The Persian that is currently the official language of Iran is identified as the New Persian Language, indicating a change in the language spoken after the arrival of Islam and the Islamic caliphates in Iran.

¹⁸⁶ Ali M. Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, ed. Charles Tripp, vol. 40, Cambridge Middle East Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 82.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

survived on loans from Britain and France, which is the extraction of taxes was especially important to the establishment of the Pahlavi state.

The formation of the nation-state under the rule of Reza Shah followed the logic and motivations of the previous era of Constitutionalists, especially in their acceptance of European customs. The acceptance and importation of European customs into Iran was presented as the acceptance of European civilization, and the understanding of “civilization” entailed the establishment of modernized cities and towns in which populations were meant to settle.¹⁸⁹ This is especially apparent in the establishment of dress codes under the rule of Reza Shah. In 1927, all men were to wear what was called the “Pahlavi Hat,” and in 1928, a formal dress code was established, barring traditional and tribal clothing.¹⁹⁰ This dress code was passed by a Parliament that was filled with supporters of Reza Shah, as the opposition parties were barred from entering Parliament.¹⁹¹ Additionally, the introduction of the Pahlavi Hat occurred at the same moment in which Reza Shah and Parliament introduced conscription laws, and began the process of legal reform in Iran by developing a secular judicial structure complete with a Ministry of Justice. This also meant that a generation of students would need to study law in order to fill the necessary posts for the establishment of a modern, European-style legal system in Iran. As Ansari notes, the motivations for Reza Shah’s introduction of the dress code were likely martial as well:

¹⁸⁹ As M. Reza Ghods notes, the intellectuals saw Reza Shah as a modernizing reformer: M. Reza Ghods, "Iranian Nationalism and Reza Shah," *Middle Eastern Studies* 27, no. 1 (1991): 37. For an example of the intellectuals’ rationale for supporting Reza Shah, see: Bahar.

¹⁹⁰ Houchang E. Chehabi, "Staging the Emperor’s New Clothes: Dress Codes and Nation-Building under Reza Shah," *Iranian Studies* 26, no. 3/4 (1993): 213.

¹⁹¹ For more on the parliamentary politics of the Reza Shah period, see: Mehdi Qoli Mokhber al-Saltaneh Hedayat, *Khaterat Va Khatarat* (Tehran: Rangin, 1950).

the new dress code had much to do with imposing discipline and standardisation—the development of a uniform nation...For him the nation had to be built on the basis of a specifically military discipline, and this was reflected not only in the dress code (the early adoption of the Pahlavi cap), but in the encouragement of drill for students, the development of scouting, and a regimen of public physical exercise.¹⁹²

The push to modernize Iranian dress was a symbol of a larger process that aimed at constructing a unified sense of community across the burgeoning Iranian nation that was also secularizing. The development of the nation-state under Reza Shah was very much so centered on the construction of a nation that was both civilized and unified: nationalism was the vehicle through which modernity (especially a modern state apparatus) could be brought to Iran. As such, the development of cities and towns in Iran was a matter of developing a modern civilization, but it also allowed the state to increase its capacity to administer Iran, in addition to making it easier to extract taxes from citizens living in urban centers. The combined notions of modernity, civilization, and uniformity also brought Reza Shah and the Iranian state into direct conflict with the tribes:

Antipathy towards the tribes was fuelled not only by anxieties about internal security and a determination to monopolize the means of coercion but also by their increasing characterization as being beyond the pale of normative civilization, not only by European standards but by Iranian standards which identified them with the traditional enemy of the Iranians, the Turanians. This center-versus-periphery argument was to furthermore be increasingly defined in racial terms such that the ‘tribes’ were frequently, if incorrectly characterized as ‘Turkic’...The vocabulary of *tribalisation* could easily be juxtaposed against modernization as the epitome of all that was primitive and above all weak...The narrative was also reinforced by the historical analogy of the new Pahlavi state as a Sasanian successor to its weak—feudal/tribal—Parthian predecessor.¹⁹³

The tribes in Iran were not only presented as the enemies of modernization—therefore creating a dichotomy between modernization and tribalization—but they were racialized as

¹⁹² Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, 84.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 85.

Turkic enemies of the Iranian people, not the Aryans. The racialization of the tribes was further justified by drawing parallels to Iran's pre-Islamic and mythological history. As is a theme with the rule of Reza Shah, comparisons were drawn between his rule and that of the Sasanians. The comparison of the tribes to the Turanians drew a parallel to the mythological history found predominantly in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*.¹⁹⁴ the struggle between the modernizing Shah and the tribes took on an epic character in the narrative of the Iranian regime and the nationalist elite—mythic history still played a central role in the nationalist imaginary.

In Stephanie Cronin's analysis, the tribal politics of Reza Shah is a central component of Reza Shah's construction of the Iranian state. The constitutionalists and reformists of the generation prior to Reza Shah were of the opinion that the tribes needed to end their nomadic way of life and become agricultural—in a show of subordination to the state's authority.¹⁹⁵ In a series of maneuvers early into his rule, Reza Shah began to curb the independence of the tribal chiefs. From 1927 to 1929, the regime began a: “radical and rapid program of political, social and economic change aimed not at the khans but at transforming the lives and position of the ordinary tribespeople, and which finally provoked eruptions of violent tribal opposition challenging the regime's very grip on power in parts of the country.”¹⁹⁶ In the years after the uprisings of the tribal populations, the regime embarked on a campaign of forced sedentarization

¹⁹⁴ An example of the importance placed on mythic history during the rule of Reza Shah is the reconstruction of Ferdowsi's mausoleum in Tus in 1933, see: Marashi, 127.

¹⁹⁵ In the political ideology of this period, the 'ulama and the tribes represented forms of entrenched, traditional power in Iran that Reza Shah viewed as hindrances and the opposition to his centralization project. Cyrus Ghani, *Iran and the Rise of Reza Shah: From Qajar Collapse to Pahlavi Power* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 332.

¹⁹⁶ Stephanie Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran: Rural Conflict and the New State, 1921-1941* (London: Routledge, 2007), 3.

of the tribal populations.¹⁹⁷ The regime also engaged in political terror against the leaders of the tribes: this included the murder and imprisonment of many khans.¹⁹⁸ The Shah was victorious over the tribal populations, and to many modernizing thinkers, this represented the triumph of modernity over traditional forces. Overall, this worked to bring a major segment of the population of Iran under the coercive capacity of the state, even if they held animosity towards the regime.

The bureaucratic apparatus that developed under Reza Shah was centralized through the administration of regions, which resembled the military division of the country into six distinct regions. The military had six separate army groups in the six provinces, while the bureaucracy maintained twenty-eight governorships under the umbrella of the six provinces. This represented a greater rationalization of the system of administration in Iran. As Ansari points out, the rationalization of the state apparatuses held not only the French political system as a model, but the Pahlavi regime's practice resembled: "the Sasanian practice, applied by Khosrow I Anoushiravan (the Immortal Soul), of dividing the empire into four distinct military districts with their own command structure."¹⁹⁹ This was another instance in which the modernization project and the development of the nation-state were given a parallel and linked to Iran's pre-Islamic past.

The next object of reform for the Pahlavi regime was education, as the newly forming state and its bureaucracy required a literate population to operate it: "the ministries needed staff, the new judiciary had to be populated, and lawyers had to be trained to navigate the new rules.

¹⁹⁷ For more on the tensions between the development of Iranian nationalism and the varied cultures in Iran, see: Richard W. Gable, "Culture and Administration in Iran," *Middle East Journal* 13, no. 4 (1959).

¹⁹⁸ Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran*, 4.

¹⁹⁹ Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, 86.

At a much more basic social level, literacy and comprehension were essential for the new bureaucratic state to be able to operate effectively and for state-society relations to be cemented.”²⁰⁰ Education reform was a means by which the state could cement its foundation and growth—as the bureaucratic apparatus would continue to grow in the 1920s and 1930s.²⁰¹ As Abrahamian notes, the education reforms and expansion of the public education system were meant to: “Persianize the linguistic minorities.”²⁰² Haji Mirza Hassan Roshdiyeh was an important figure for education reform, as he established the first public schools in Tehran and Tabriz during the late Parliamentary period and early into Reza Shah’s rule.²⁰³ Reza Shah’s education policy was a continuation of the modernizing vision held by the leaders of the Constitutional Revolution.

Overall, the reforms of Reza Shah worked to develop a disciplinary society in Iran, with the newly formed state apparatuses working to ensure the rule of discipline in Iranian society—especially through the enforcement of the dress code. The figure of Reza Shah is not very different from the figure of Napoleon in Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*. Napoleon, and the Napoleonic character like Reza Shah, serves as an important figure in the historical development of disciplinary society, as he is: “the point of junction of the monarchical, ritual exercise of sovereignty and the hierarchical, permanent exercise of indefinite discipline...At the moment of its full blossoming, the disciplinary society still assumes with the Emperor [the *Shahanshah*] the

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 93.

²⁰¹ For more on education reform during this period, see: Amin Banani, *The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 85-111; *ibid.*

²⁰² Abrahamian *A History of Modern Iran*, 85. As Rudi Matthee notes, the development of an educational system in Iran at this time served as an agent of social change, especially as the nomadic tribes were sedentarized and educated to become Iranians who communicated in official Persian. Rudi Matthee, "Transforming Dangerous Nomads into Useful Artisans, Technicians, Agriculturists: Education in the Reza Shah Period," *Iranian Studies* 26, no. 3/4 (1993).

²⁰³ Dabashi, *Persophilia*, 73.

old aspect of the power of spectacle.”²⁰⁴ Reza Shah took on the ancient conception of the *Shahanshah* and began to develop the new state in Iran, which the Constitutionalists failed to do. In Foucault’s words, the development of the modern state in Iran was one in which: “the pomp of sovereignty, the necessarily spectacular manifestations of power, were extinguished one by one in the daily exercise of surveillance.”²⁰⁵ The disciplinary regime was now established in Iran under the guise of the sovereign and sovereign authority of the Pahlavi monarch.²⁰⁶ The further development of the disciplinary regime over time would lead to the collapse of the ancient throne and the sovereign authority of the *Shahanshah*. The establishment of the state and the various apparatus related to the disciplinary function of the state under Reza Shah Pahlavi would sow the seeds of the destruction of the sovereign in Iran in 1979. With the development of the disciplinary state, the sovereign would no longer be necessary, especially to those who sought the further modernization of state and society in Iran. This would form the eventual opposition of the modernists to royal rule.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, Second ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 217.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ The disciplinary apparatus would be intensified under Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, best exemplified by the establishment of the SAVAK in 1957.

²⁰⁷ The Shi’a ‘ulama were opposed to the legitimacy of any Shah on theological grounds, and as such, they represented the opposition of the traditional forces—including the Bazaaris and the formerly nomadic tribes in the provinces—to Pahlavi rule. The events of 1979 were therefore a convergence of opposition to Pahlavi rule by both those calling for a more modern and modernized society (especially the communists such as those of the Tudeh party and the nationalist Jebha-ye Melli whose leadership in Parliament under Muhammad Mossadeq saw the removal of Muhammad Reza Pahlavi from Iran in 1951) and the forces of tradition. The revolution was a coalition between those forces that called for the removal of the Shah for conflicting reasons: it was not a purely Islamic Revolution as it is so often portrayed. However, the establishment of this dynamic cannot be understood without studying the dynamics of Iranian society in the period with which this thesis is concerned. For more on Mossadeq and the 1953 coup, see the volume: James A. and WM. Roger Louis Bill, *Musaddiq, Iranian Nationalism, and Oil*, Modern Middle East Series (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988).

As industry grew in Iran, scientific education became a greater necessity, as engineers and technicians were required to run the new industries. This also had nationalist implications as major industries such as oil were under the control of foreign companies. As Ansari writes: “The continued existence of such institutions as the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and the British Imperial Bank of Persia not only contradicted the acute and growing sense of Iranian sovereignty but clearly contradicted also the nationalist ethos which a complimentary instruction in the humanities and social sciences sought to engender.”²⁰⁸ This led to the decision in 1934 to establish the University of Tehran, which opened the next year. The establishment of the University opened the possibility of scientific advancement in Iran, and for the elites in Iran: “there was a palpable sense that the establishment of a university meant that Iran could once again engage with the international scientific community as an equal.”²⁰⁹ This was also the formation of disciplinary education—born out of the enlightenment—in Iran.

The establishment of the University of Tehran²¹⁰ was an important moment for the Modern Persian language, the legislation to establish the University in Parliament: “was the first time that a new distinctly Persian word was used for the ‘university’: *daneshgah* (place of knowledge), whereas faculties were termed *daneshkade*.”²¹¹ Although this moment is an example of a type of language purification process in Iran like the one that especially took hold in Turkey under the Kemalist regime, language reform in Iran focused less on “purification” and

²⁰⁸ Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, 93.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

²¹⁰ For more on the establishment of the University of Tehran, see: David Menashri, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

²¹¹ Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, 97.

was meant to: “refine, define, and regulate a language which to some observers had an unhealthy appetite for adopting foreign words.”²¹²

This period also saw the publication of a multi-volume Persian language lexicon by Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, which aimed at providing cohesion for the Persian language in order to place the language at the center of national consciousness.²¹³ New Persian words were coined wherever possible, especially as a way in which to prevent the use of European loan words, even though this would be difficult in scientific and technical language. Many Arabic loan words were basic words of the Persian language, and as such, they were not replaced with Persian words.²¹⁴ Notably, the most zealous application of language purification was place names, where: “it was felt that Arabized names offended sovereign sensibilities, especially acute in border areas.”²¹⁵ The best example of this being the re-establishment of the name Khuzestan for the south-western Iranian province, as opposed to “Arabistan,” as it became known. Therefore, language purification was especially significant as a tool for sovereignty, in order to support the growing state as it sought to become present in all aspects of Iranian society. However, it was not a totalizing attempt at language purification, such as that of Turkey under the Kemalist regime.

There was also a *Farhangestan* (Language Academy) established in 1935, which worked to elaborate cultural nationalism in Iran.²¹⁶ The first director of the *Farhangestan* was

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation*, 151.

²¹⁴ Many of the Arabic loan words had taken on different meanings and/or pronunciations in Persian. Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, 97.

²¹⁵ Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation*, 98.

²¹⁶ The *Farhangestan* was modeled on the *Academie Française*. For more on the role of the *Academie* in establishing the prestige of the French language, see: Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 71.

Muhammad Ali Foroughi, a former Prime Minister of Iran who also wrote a popular Iranian history textbook prior to his political career. In a letter written to the *Farhangestan* in 1936, Foroughi: “gives an outline of his vision of the way the Persian language ought to serve the crucial function of unifying the nation and advancing Iran toward its future.”²¹⁷ For Foroughi, the Iranian nation is based on Iranian culture, and: “Iranian culture is squarely founded on the Persian language.”²¹⁸ As such, there were two major issues facing the Persian language, the degree to which Arabic loan words were present in the language, and: “that [Persian] lacks proper equivalents of vocabulary that correspond with modern discoveries in the sciences, philosophy, and technology.”²¹⁹ Foroughi’s solution essentially calls for a middle ground between the attempt to purify the language and complete immersion in other languages.

The dawn of modernity in Iran with the reforms of Reza Shah brought with it the development of both a modern state (with a vast technical apparatus) and modern science. Nationalism provided the tool through which the broader purification process of modernity could be implemented in Iran. As such, the intensification of nationalist sentiment and national cohesion would bring with it the intensification of the purification process, further strengthening the coercive apparatus of the state. The quasi-object of language serves as a means to view the development of modernity in Iran. As the implementation of modernity in Iran intensifies, the calls for language purification construed as a broader nationalist project likewise intensify.²²⁰ This is the basis of the conflict between the new and traditional nationalists in the *Farhangestan* and society in general. The development of modernity becomes a totalizing project that begins to

²¹⁷ Dabashi, *Persophilia*, 78.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 79.

²²⁰ As does the assertion of scientific racial categorizations, Aryan being the primary category in Iranian nationalism.

appear in realms (or, quasi-objects) outside of language, such as history.²²¹ As such, the nationalists begin to call for an expansion of projects that are construed as nationalist, when really, they are working to expand the presence of modernity in Iran. In simplest terms, the more modernity takes hold in Iran, the greater becomes the attempt to ground community in national identity and the calls for language purification increase—this increases the capacity of the nation-state, as both a coercive apparatus and the representative of the Iranian people. It is worth noting that the initial drive to use Persian terms was conducted by the military, prior to the project of the *Farhangestan*.

The *Farhangestan* became the grounds of a struggle between new and traditional nationalists. The traditional nationalists were inspired by the enlightenment and sought to produce a civic and cultural nationalism²²² for Iran, while the new nationalists were: “seemingly determined to push the ideological boundaries of Iranian nationalism such that it reflected...the uncompromising—even racial—doctrines of the contemporary cycle of European nationalisms.”²²³ It is the new nationalists who would equate Iranian identity with Aryanism, and it is under their aegis during the rule of Muhammad Reza Pahlavi that Aryanism would become the backbone of Iranian nationalism²²⁴. Under Reza Shah, the Persian language—not

²²¹ For an example of the connection drawn between Iran’s pre-Islamic history and literary tradition, see: Ahmad Tafasoli, *Tarikh-E Adabiyat E-Iran Pish Az Islam/ the History of Iranian Literature before Islam* (Tehran: Sokhan, 1376/1997).

²²² Civic nationalists maintain that the nation: “Should be composed of all those—regardless of race, color, creed, gender, language, or ethnicity—who subscribe to the nation’s political creed. This nationalism is called civic because it envisages the nation as a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens...This nationalism is necessarily democratic, since it vests sovereignty in all of the people.” Ignatieff, 5-6.

²²³ Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, 97.

²²⁴ For an example of the way in which historiography was used to produce an official history of Iran that connected contemporary Iran to its pre-Islamic, and Aryan past, see: Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country* (New York: McGraw-Hill 1961).

Aryanism—served as the central tenet of Iranian nationalism. For Foroughi and the traditional nationalists, the project of language reform bestowed on the *Farhangestan* served:

as a means to a broader cultural end which had little to do with the elimination of Arabic words and everything to do with enhancing Iranian civilization and developing national and civic culture. It was above all an educational process. For Foroughi, Persian language, culture, and civilization were inherently cosmopolitan, not particular, inclusive not exclusive. The national idea he identified with reflected the ‘commonwealth’ of the Constitutional Revolution in which ‘many’ might combine into ‘one.’²²⁵

The project the nationalists of the Constitutional Revolution wanted to establish was a unified culture through which a community composed of various communal differences could begin to unite. The nationalist project in Iran was ultimately a statist project: the development of a cultural nationalism that could begin uniting the population would serve as the basis of legitimacy for the state in Tehran, allowing it to exercise greater sovereignty over the rest of Iran—a quality the Parliamentary and Qajar states lacked. As the grew greater in capacity and society increasingly secularized, the need to ground a sense of community in national identity independent of theological doctrine intensified—and this would likewise give greater hold to wide-ranging nationalist project of the new nationalists. This is especially cogent when noting that the largest push for language reform began with the Iranian military, where the Ministry of War began creating a distinctly Persian terminology:

The term for ‘army’ for example switched from qushun to artesh, whereas the Commander-in-chief became artesh-bud (from farmandeh-i-kul-quva). Other terms were also encouraged such as keshvar in place of mamlekat (for country), and mihan in place of vatan for motherland. In some cases, the new word—parcham (flag)—easily supplanted the former, beiraq; in other cases, including a number noted above, both phrases remained in common usage.²²⁶

²²⁵ Ibid. See also: Mohammad Ali Foroughi, "Payam E-Man Beh Farhangestan/My Message to the Academy," (November 1936), https://issuu.com/shirazeh/docs/payam_be_farhangestan.

²²⁶ Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, 98.

The language of statecraft and governance also changed, as new terms were introduced for prime minister, mayor, governor, and even the ministries of Interior and Judiciary. Reza Shah also took on the title of *Shahanshah* when he became Shah. Although this was meant to connect his rule with that of the ancient Iranian kings, the conception of *Shahanshah* in this context was: “imperial power understood in thoroughly modern terms.”²²⁷ In the ancient empires, the *Shahanshah* served as the head of a system of local kings that held a vast amount of local autonomy. During the reign of Reza Shah, the use of *Shahanshah* indicated that the head of state was not opposed to multiple: “legally (not necessarily absolutely) subservient power centers.”²²⁸ An ancient term referring to a dispersed system of rule was used to indicate that the Shah now stood atop a vast state apparatus with varying functions. It was in this context in 1935, that a decision was made to officially enforce reference to the country as Iran in international correspondences.

Iran was the name used by the people who lived in Iran, even during prior dynasties, but the international community referred to Iran either as Persia or *Ajam* in its correspondences. Arguments against the use of Persia stated that Persia referred to the name of one Iranian province, and therefore should not be the name of the country; and Persia: “carried with it the burden of negative connotation, and moreover was a ‘Western’ term.”²²⁹ The popularity of the term Iran was also related to racial arguments beginning to gain popularity in Iran. For one, the Aryan race theory allowed Iranians to draw a connection between themselves and the Europeans as part of the master race. The simultaneous growth of archaeology in Iran, especially of the remains of the Achaemenid period, led to an increasing interest in Iran’s pre-Islamic history

²²⁷ Ibid., 101.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., 103.

dating past the Sasanians. Histories written in Persian began to incorporate the ancient histories and racial theories to a larger extent, and the history of Iran written by former prime minister Hasan Pirnia indicated the extent to which western-style historiography and the historical narrative centered on archaeology began to replace mythological history like that found in the *Shahnameh*. Reza Shah's rule became the period in which an Iranian history drawn from European/Western historiographical methods (and research) was officially constructed, narrativized, and implemented—the period of Reza Shah is also the expansion of public education in Iran. The establishment of western historiographical methods gave greater weight to Aryanism in Iranian nationalism, as the new nationalists would rely on Iranian history drawn from historiography and not mythic history in their imagining of the Iranian community.²³⁰ Even though Iranian mythological history was now the purview of literary studies, the symbolism and traditional role of mythological history was never completely deposed amongst the population:

the archaeological reality of Cyrus the Great could never be quite as relevant as the literary reality of Jamshid. A good example of this social conservatism may be gleaned by the fact that Iranians persisted in calling the greatest site of Achaemenid archaeology – Persepolis – by the traditional, mythological name of Takhte Jamshid (The throne of Jamshid). Even those who were obviously aware of the historical providence of the site retained the traditional name along with the new designation, reflecting perhaps that not only was displacement of this nature unnecessary, but on the contrary, that each tradition enjoyed a purpose and a function.²³¹

Even with the development of modernity and the intensification of the nationalist project in Iran under Reza Shah, traditional culture, mythology, and literature still played a major role in the nationalist project of the Iranians. The development of modernity in Iran was never a complete

²³⁰ For more on the development of historiography in Iran, see: Farzin Vejdani, *Making History in Iran: Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015).

²³¹ Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, 103-104.

application of European culture in place of traditional culture, but a reflexive modernity that sought to adapt modernity to traditional practices in Iran. As Hamid Dabashi states: “The postcolonial construction of Iran as an ‘imagined community’ was in part predicated on the active recollection of [Iran’s] imperial history.”²³² Once again, Muhammad Ali Foroughi commented on the importance of traditional history. For Foroughi: “An important aspect of the idea of Iran was predicated on a particular interpretation of the *Shahnameh* as the poetic repository of the nation’s myths. It may no longer be regarded as history but it was part of the overall historical inheritance and it was of cultural importance.”²³³ History served as a means by which to create a sense of national identity and unity, and for Foroughi, a shared history was the foundation upon which a nation could be formed. The shared mythical history of ancient Iran, complete with an identification of Iran’s enemies, the Turanians, served as a valuable basis upon which to form the national identity of Iran. Language could then serve an influential role in cementing the sense of national identity and unity created by an understanding of a shared history. The vision of a traditional nationalist such as Foroughi centered on the cultivation of a cultural nationalism that valued national unity and inclusiveness of communal difference over a dogmatic vision of the nation, specifically grounded in race. The degree to which traditional history played (and continues to play) a central role in Iranian nationalism speaks to the manner in which modernity is not a totalizing process, and contains its own tensions.

²³² Dabashi, *Persophilia*, 77.

²³³ Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, 104.

Conclusion

This thesis investigated the development of the Iranian nation-state, beginning with the Qajar dynasty in 1796 and ending with the abdication of Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1941. The analytic in the thesis focuses on modernity, and the attempt to bring modernity to Iran, as the contributing factor behind the development of the nation-state. This argument addresses the political science and Iranian studies literature on the development of nation-states in general, and that of Iran specifically. Modernism served as the larger process driving the development of both nationalism and statist growth in Iran.

The Constitutionalists sought to bring European modernity to Iran, even if it meant the complete imposition of European norms on Iranian society. Likewise, Reza Shah's reforms were aimed at driving the process of modernization so as to increase the capacity of the state apparatus, emulating the European-style bureaucratic state in Iran. In practice, the application of modernity to Iran was a reflexive modernity, in which local traditions, customs, and culture became integrated into the modern framework. The justification for the statist development of Reza Shah was driven by an appeal to the nation, what was really at stake was the ability to bring modernity to Iranian society—especially as the independence of the tribes increased during the prior period of Parliamentary rule. Nationalism as the causal mechanism for the development of the Iranian nation-state only provides a partial explanation, and confuses the dependent variable with the independent variable.

Nationalism drove the development of the Persian language through calls for the removal of loan words from European languages and Arabic in the Persian lexicon. The Persian language was the central organizing principle of Iranian nationalism, however, Iran did not witness an attempt at a systematic purification of the language such as that of Kemalist Turkey. Modernity

as a causal principle provides greater explanatory power for the processes occurring in Iran throughout this period. The intensification of modernity in Iran brought with it the greater calls for language purification as nationalism became more developed, and the state likewise grew under Reza Shah. The Qajar period is of special significance because the encounter of the Qajar despotic state with the European powers, especially Britain and Russia, formed the opening moment of the narrative in this thesis.

Qajar defeats at the hands of the Russians in the Caucasus led to the initial drive to bring modernity to Iran through the reforms of ‘Abbas Mirza, specifically, the creation of the *Nizam-i Jadid*. The modernizing reforms of ‘Abbas Mirza were militarily oriented and meant to defend Iran from further European invasions. This period also saw the arrival of the first Iranian students in Britain. This was especially significant as one student in particular, Mirza Salih Shirazi, brought the first printing press and began the publishing industry in Iran. In line with Benedict Anderson’s analysis in *Imagined Communities*, this moment represents the beginning formation of the mass reading publics in Iran, as the introduction of the printing press also results in the simplification of Persian prose for the purpose of mass publications. This is also the originary moment of formation of the “imagined community” of Iran. From this point in Iran’s history, students would begin to receive an education in Europe, and they were exposed not only to the latest scientific knowledge and technology, but the work of Orientalists on Iran itself. The Orientalists produced a discourse on the people of Iran that focused on the pre-Islamic history of Iran and garnered an understanding of national and ethnic continuity through the continuing presence of the Persian language in the Iranian plateau, even after conquests by groups such as the Mongols and the Arabs.

Iranian students brought the European discourse on Iran and the methods of European historiography back with them, translated them into Persian, and continued the work of the Orientalists by producing their own Iranian discourse on Iranian history and ethnicity that resulted in the continuing construction of the Iranian nation by Iranian intellectuals. The study of philology in Europe also led to the development of the notion of the Indo-European family of languages. The Persian language was classified as a branch of the Indo-European family, and this led to the classification of the population of Iran (that speaks Persian) as racially Aryan. The Aryan race theory therefore allowed for a connection to be made between the notions of race and nation in Iran. The Iranian nation was therefore beginning to identify as an Aryan nation. European and Iranian intellectuals therefore began to connect Iran's history (especially before the arrival of Islam in Iran) to the notions of race and nation, establishing a linear historical narrative of the Iranian people that would be elaborated upon later in the twentieth century.

The next phase of defensive modernization occurred under the aegis of Amir Kabir, who also sought to bring a semblance of industrialism through his modernizing reforms. Ultimately, Amir Kabir's reforms are influential for establishing the Dar al-Fonun, an educational institution that would serve as a vehicle of European knowledge into Iran, now making it possible for elite students in Iran to be exposed to modernity domestically. The increased economic penetration of Iran by the European powers led to the coalescence of the middle class in Iran, as it was centered on the industries and trades in the bazaar. The period of Qajar rule also saw the development of intellectuals in Iran, who continued to import European works and ideas into Iran, and expanded upon them. Additionally, these intellectuals began to publish journals for mass consumption in Iran, introducing new political concepts through the application of European terms or re-conceptualizations of old Persian terms. The period of Naser al-Din Shah's rule saw a

significant change in the nature of legitimacy for Qajar rule, as Naser al-Din Shah now legitimated his rule through the notion of the people. This was meant to emulate the legitimating mechanism used by the contemporary European royal households.

The era of Muzaffar al-Din Shah was marked by the beginning of the constitutional movement, as intellectuals inspired by Europe sought to bring a modern system of rule into Iran, primarily through the establishment of a constitution. The political turmoil of 1905 saw an increase in the amount of journals and publications in Iran, as various political beliefs and visions of modernity for Iran were being espoused. The competing visions of modernity for Iran were likewise the result of the varying encounters of intellectuals with modernity. Intellectuals had various means of exposure to the latest knowledge and writing from Europe, one as indicated above, was through their experiences as students in Europe. The other means intellectuals received the work of other intellectuals was through communication with neighboring populations, specifically those of the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Exiled Iranian intellectuals wrote and published journals in Istanbul for distribution in Iran. Intellectuals in Tabriz, through their knowledge of Turkish, imported the latest works written in Turkish in the Ottoman Empire into Iran. Additionally, the intellectuals of Tabriz were also able to import intellectual works from Russia, as the city bordered with Russia's territories in the Caucasus. There was also a native publishing industry that was not only translating and publishing European works of history and literature, but histories of ancient Iran and Orientalist scholarship on Iran. In this way, intellectuals in Iran were also able to see how their own history and governing system was perceived, and their increasing exposure to European history convinced the intellectuals of the need to emulate European governance, especially in response to the failures of the Qajar state. The publication of Iranian histories also began to coalesce a growing sense of national unity and

cohesion, as indicated by the marked use of the phrase “nation of Iran” in protests against Muzaffar al-Din Shah. This finally led to the establishment of the Iranian Constitution and the first Parliament in 1906.

The period of Muhammad ‘Ali Shah’s rule saw the staging of a coup d’état led by the Cossack brigades (a force created to emulate the Russian military), and a civil war that ultimately deposed him and shored up Parliamentary rule in Iran. The civil war also worked to further weaken the state, as it held little coercive power outside of Tehran, and the events of the war gave the tribes in Iran greater autonomy. Not to mention, the government was facing bankruptcy and survived on emergency loans from Britain and Russia. The Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 divided Iran into zones of influence. The zones of influence would serve as the dividing line of Iran, as the British and Russians both occupied Iran in 1911, and continued to through World War I. Ultimately, the Russian Revolution of 1917 ended the occupation of Iran, but the weakness of the Iranian state was still apparent, as the tribes continued to rule autonomously and Parliament was stuck at a standstill. This would change with the coup of the man who would eventually become known as Reza Shah in 1921, the moment at which the modern Iranian nation-state was established.

Reza Shah’s rule saw an intense period of modernization take hold in Iran, as he and his ministers oversaw the growth of the military and the bureaucracy and brought in more revenues for the state. Reza Shah established his surname as Pahlavi, which not only connected his rule to that of the ancient kings, but was meant to establish that his rule was one of civilization and settlement, opposed to what would be seen as barbaric and nomadic. This was especially significant in Reza Shah’s tribal policies, as he directly contested the autonomy of the tribes, and ultimately, forced sedentarization upon the tribes as he took away their political clout.

Significantly, the tribes were seen in racial terms, the Turkic Turanians who were the enemies of the Iranians and Iranian civilization as a whole. The notion of civilization and settlement played in to the broader movements occurring under Reza Shah's rule, as the facets of Iranian nationalism became more developed and the general population began to settle in modernized cities and settlements (which likewise eased the extraction of taxes from the newly settled populations).

This period also saw the establishment of the Farhangestan and the University of Tehran. The University of Tehran was established with the goal of developing scientific knowledge and research in a domestic context, with the aim of making Iranian science competitive with the rest of the world. The Farhangestan worked to develop the Persian language, as their original aim was to remove European loaned words and coin new words in Persian that may arise in scientific and technological terminology. Additionally, the acceptance and establishment of official Iranian history as the history produced through European historiography and archaeology indicated the importance of modernity and the academic methodologies that grew out of modernity, but this process was never totalizing. In the realm of history, Iran's mythological history continued to play an important role, even if it was seen as literary myth.

The tensions in the Farhangestan regarding language purification also pointed to a larger tension in Iranian nationalism between the new and traditional nationalists. The new nationalists sought to expand the scope of nationalist dogma to all spheres of life, while the traditionalists sought to create an inclusive civic nationalism based on the ideals of the enlightenment—which is why they were not as rigid as the Kemalists in purifying the language. However, as modernity began to take hold in Iran and intensify, the nationalist project would likewise intensify, as nationalism serves as the vehicle through which modernity could be established in Iran—

ultimately strengthening the coercive apparatus of the state. Consequently, the framework established in this thesis would carry through into the rule of Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, and show how the intensification of the nationalist project in Iran in both the linguistic and symbolic realms, was really an intensification of modernity in Iranian society. Concurrently, the establishment of the disciplinary society and the disciplinary state apparatus under Reza Shah would erode at the sovereign authority of the *Shahanshah*, whose rule by spectacle²³⁴ was no longer necessary. The challenge to the sovereign authority of the Shah was established with the modern Iranian state under Reza Shah, culminating with the revolution of 1979. The events of Iranian politics after 1979, including the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, can be read as responses to Iran's encounter with modernity. The historical events discussed in this thesis and the tensions of modernity in Iran serve as the background against which the Islamic Republic was formed.

²³⁴ The celebration of the 2,500th anniversary of the Persian Empire in 1971 serving as one of the grandest spectacles.

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Appendix A: Map of Iran Under the Qajar Dynasty



Source: Wikiwand

Appendix B: Political Map of Contemporary Iran



Source: University of Texas Libraries.