CHAPTER 10 POST WORLD WAR II (1944-53) NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS: THE TUDEH AND THE NATIONAL FRONT

The Tudeh (Masses) and the National Front

This chapter presents movement frames used by the *Tudeh* (Masses) and *National Front* to mobilize Iranians during the post World War II period (1944-1953). The frames introduced by the Tudeh party were the most innovative during this period. Likewise, frames used by the National Front, a rival of the Tudeh, also had considerable resonance among the Iranian public. Both organizations shared the goal of limiting the authority of the Pahlavi monarchy and the military that supported it.

The Tudeh was the first national communist party in Iran and introduced the concept of *social class* into the Iranian political discourse. Orthodox Tudeh leaders later supported establishing close ties with the Soviet communist party. The Tudeh was particularly popular among Azerbaijanis and non-Moslems, but had strong support among other Iranian ethnic and religious groups. Industrial workers in Iran supported the Tudeh more than the *bazaaris* and the peasantry. The Tudeh was outlawed in 1949, but its conceptions of social class outlived the dissolution of the party. Modern discussions of social class in Iran, now adopted by socialist oriented Islamic parties, are variations of the themes introduced by the Tudeh in the 1940s. Of course, most modern socialist parties in Iran now reject the secular orientation of the Tudeh.

A frame of sovereignty introduced during the Constitutional revolution included the idea of "equality" among Iranian "citizens." This frame was widely supported, but was extremely popular among ethnic and religious groups that had diminished political and social status in Iran. In this respect, the Tudeh party continued to use the resonant frame of "equality" among citizens to generate popular support for their movement. During the Constitutional

revolution religious and ethnic minorities found the frame of "equality" based on citizenship more compelling than governing ideas that granted Moslems more rights than non-Moslems. Similarly, ethnic and religious minorities were over-represented among Tudeh party adherents

The National Front, led by Mohammad Mosaddeq, was a coalition of social democratic, religious, nationalist and *bazaari* groups. Mosaddeq consistently linked his philosophy of governance to the re-establishment of the 1907 Iranian constitution. In particular, he wanted to limit the authority of the Pahlavi monarchy, the landed elite and the armed forces. The National Front consisted of several different political and social groups, but all members shared the common goals of establishing a non-aligned Iranian state, limiting monarchal authority, and asserting national control over the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). Control over the Iranian army—traditionally an institution that was an extension of monarchal authority—became an important goal of this movement. Most movement leaders in the National Front tried to accommodate various Iranian groups by advocating for political pluralism, but they steadfastly rejected forming alliances with groups that were not committed to a philosophy of non-alignment with the great powers (see discussion of "Negative Equilibrium" below).

Parties operating in the post-war period had to address how they intended to establish Iranian national sovereignty in the post-war world. Iran's strategic location necessitated that all movement groups establish their doctrinal relationship with the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and —due to its post-war strength—the United States. This debate was particularly intense due to the occupation of Iran by Soviet and British troops during the war that was undertaken to protect the southern border of the Soviet Union from invasion during World War II.

In 1941, following the allied troop invasion, Reza Khan Pahlavi abdicated the throne to his son, Mohammad Reza Shah. Foreign troops remained stationed in Iran directly after the war.

Movement positions with respect to foreign policy were often an extension of the work being done to create a national Iranian identity. For instance, some leaders of the Tudeh argued that the national system should eradicate class distinctions, and therefore advocated for closer ties with the Soviet Union. At the same time, there were other socialist groups (e.g. *The Toilers Party*) who also adopted the frame of equality and class-consciousness, but rejected the position that Iran should be aligned with the Soviets. Tudeh alignment with the Soviet Union caused many members to break with the party and form competing socialist parties.

The primary groups opposed to the National Front, the Tudeh, and other reform movement organizations, were a coalition of interests that included: 1) the Pahlavi monarchy; 2) the landed elite who were opposed to land reform policies advocated by liberal and communist parties; 3) the military elite who had been beneficiaries of policies enacted by the Pahlavi monarchy; 4) American and British policymakers who objected to the oil nationalization effort and Soviet influence in Iran; and 5) most the traditional religious elite who feared the growing strength of secular movements. This coalition of groups supported the monarchy of Mohammad Reza Shah during a struggle for political power with Mohammad Mosaddeq. This struggle revolved around three issues: 1) control over the armed forces, 2) electoral reform, and 3) the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (APEC).

Cycles of Protest and the Development of Master Frames

Resonant movement frames, negotiated during a cycle of protest, should both enable and constrain movement frames in a subsequent protest cycle. Likewise, the availability of a master frame facilitates protest activity. At the same time, movement groups introduce new concepts, and change previously negotiated frames, during a new protest cycle (Snow and Benford 1992). As such, movement frames used by groups during post World War II protests in Iran drew upon

concepts that were established during the Constitutional revolution. At the same time, movement groups introduced new ideas during this protest cycle.

Master Frames of Sovereignty: Individual Equality and Independence from the West
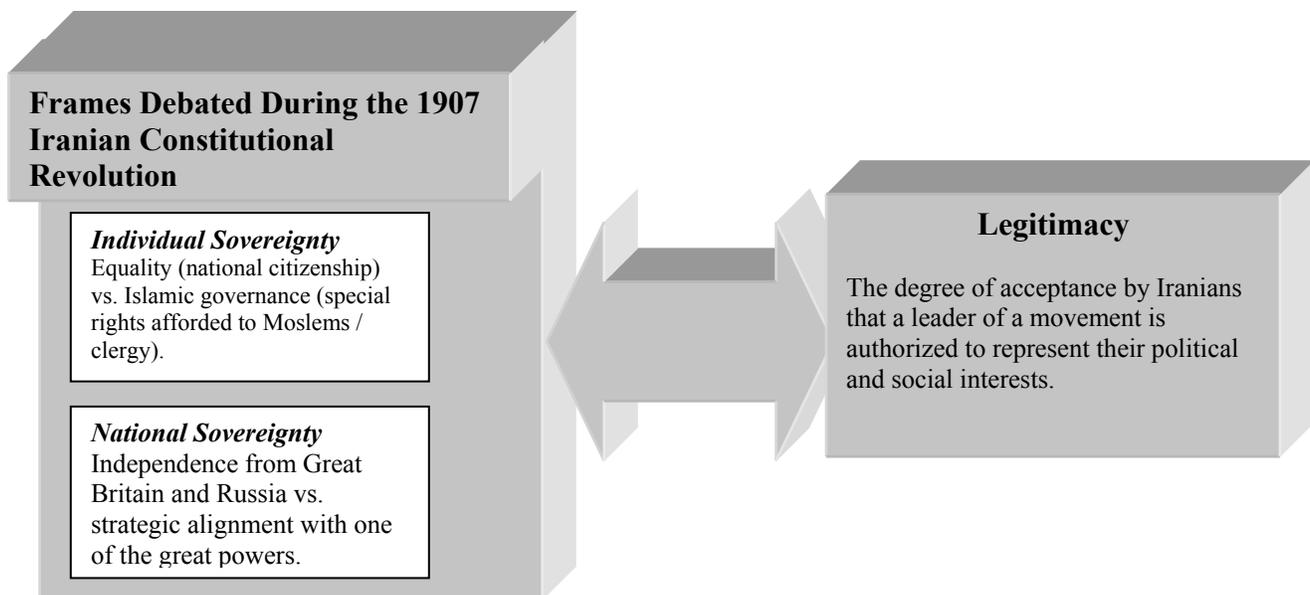
Iranian sovereignty was the master frame during periodic protests that occurred in Iran during the late nineteenth and twentieth century. Sovereignty was negotiated at two levels: 1) *individual sovereignty*, and 2) *national sovereignty*. Frames of sovereignty were also renegotiated during cycles of protest in Iran. To review, during the Constitutional revolution one frame of *individual sovereignty* used to mobilize protest groups was the concept of "equality" among Iranian national citizens. Members of the radical *anjomans* introduced the concept of individual equality and then codified this concept into the constitution. Nonetheless, some groups—women, ethnic and religious minorities—were excluded from participation in Iranian politics. This was due, in part, to the resonance of counter-frames adopted by conservative religious leaders such as Fazlollah Nuri that refuted the frame of equality. Other religious leaders drew upon egalitarian Islamic traditions so that the concept of "equality" could be conceived of as an Islamic idea. In effect, some leaders directly rebutted Fazlollah Nuri's contention that Islam was based on inequality (with more rights afforded to believers) and argued that Moslems, as God's vice-regents on earth, could exercise "free-will" and craft national law. Strict religious traditionalists considered God's law divinely ordained and codified in the Qoran and *sharia.* In effect, they denied that humanity had the ability to "make" law, which was only God's providence.

The other resonant frame of the Constitutional revolution was the conception of Iranian sovereignty at the level of national independence. Anti-imperial frames, directed against the

British and the Russians, were employed throughout the Constitutional revolution and were particularly resonant following the publication of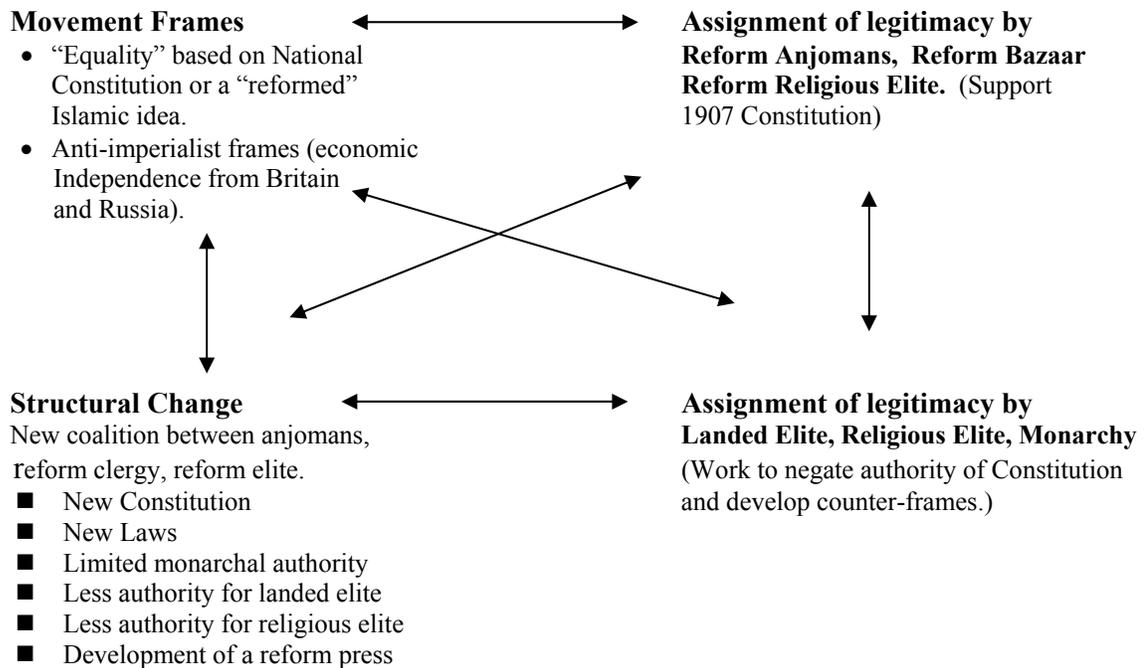 the 1907 Anglo-Russian Partition Agreement. Figure 10.1 conceptualizes the frames of sovereignty being negotiated during the 1907 Constitutional revolution.

Figure 10.1 The Master Frame of Sovereignty and the Affects on Legitimacy during the Constitutional Revolution

Frames Debated During the 1907 Iranian Constitutional Revolution

Individual Sovereignty
Equality (national citizenship) vs. Islamic governance (special rights afforded to Moslems / clergy).

National Sovereignty
Independence from Great Britain and Russia vs. strategic alignment with one of the great powers.

Legitimacy

The degree of acceptance by Iranians that a leader of a movement is authorized to represent their political and social interests.

Post-war movements worked within these negotiated frames, but also introduced new ideas associated with equality and imperialism. Before chronicling post-war movement frames, let us orient ourselves with respect to the dominant movement ideas that were negotiated during the Constitutional revolution. Figure 10.2 outlines the relationship between the reformist movement frames of "equality" and national independence from Russia and Great Britain.

Figure 10.2 Relationship Between Reformist Frames, Legitimacy and Structural Change During the Constitutional Revolution

Movement Frames
- "Equality" based on National Constitution or a "reformed" Islamic idea.
- Anti-imperialist frames (economic Independence from Britain and Russia).

Assignment of legitimacy by Reform Anjomans, Reform Bazaar Reform Religious Elite. (Support 1907 Constitution)

Structural Change
New coalition between anjomans, reform clergy, reform elite.
- New Constitution
- New Laws
- Limited monarchal authority
- Less authority for landed elite
- Less authority for religious elite
- Development of a reform press

Assignment of legitimacy by Landed Elite, Religious Elite, Monarchy (Work to negate authority of Constitution and develop counter-frames.)

Frames of Nationalism

Debates concerning Iranian nationalism during the post-war period fall within the framework of national sovereignty previously outlined. Movements in Iran in the post World War II period were all attempting to create an Iranian "national" identity. In Iran, concepts of nationalism had been introduced during the Constitutional revolution. For instance, Nazem al-Islam Kermani stated that during the triumphant return of the clerical elite following their *bast* in January 1906 that the crowd in Tehran greeted them with the cry, "Long Live the Nation of Iran," (see discussion in previous chapter). Traditional attachments to tribe and religion were also evident, but movement frames used during the Constitutional revolution introduced concepts of a "national" Iranian identity.

In the Middle East "nationalities" are often considered distinct from the concept of the "state" (Katouzian[1] 1999:258-267; Gheissari 1998:8-20). National identities are negotiated, and have different meanings to different groups of people. Indeed, there was, and is, considerable debate among movement groups as to how Iranian nationalism should be conceptualized. Theories of nationalism were contested frames during this period of post-war debate in Iran, but most participants in this debate would have agreed they were trying to create a governing ideal that would organize, and bind together, the people of Iran into an Iranian nation-state.
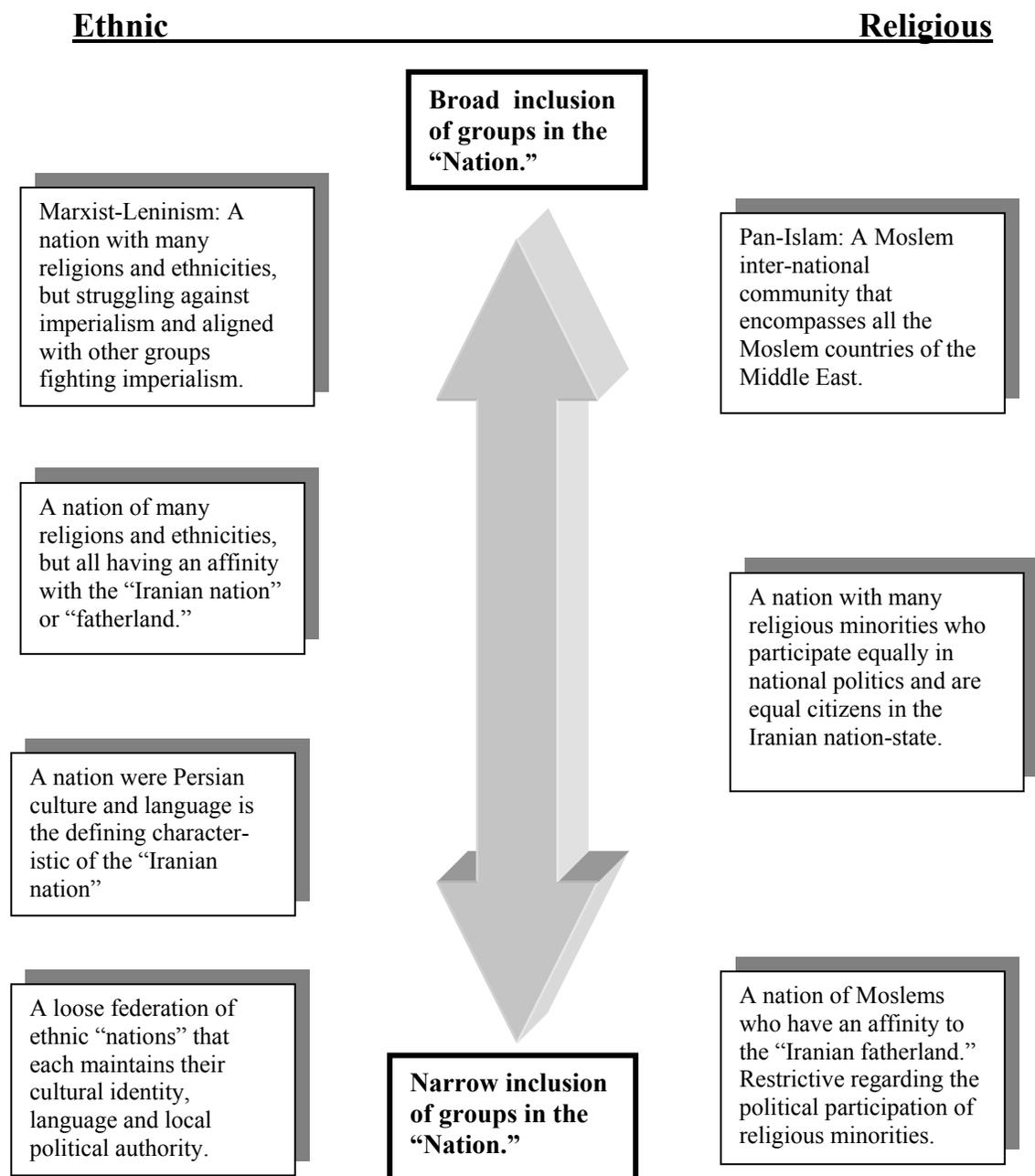
In Iran, the word *mellat,* and later *melli,* was used—and continues to be used—to describe "the people" who constitute the Iranian nation. The National Assembly during the Constitutional revolution was conceived of as a *majles-e shura-yi melli,* or an assembly of national consultation. But *mellat* also retained its traditional (religious) meaning. For instance, the *mellat-e Islam* would refer to the community of Moslems (Katouzian 1999:258). The linguistic construction of a word that denotes both "the people" and "the nation" is not different than the political rhetoric that developed during nationalist movements in the West. For instance, in the United States a rhetorical appeal to "the nation" (e.g. "the nation will not rest until justice is done!") is also a reference to the "people" of the United States. Still, in Iran, there has been a clearer distinction between the *melli*—the people of the nation— and the *dawlat*, those who are in control of the apparatus of the state (Gheissari 1998:20). One prominent scholar of post-war Iranian movements (Katouzian 1999), drawing on the traditional usage of the term *melli*, believes that the "National Front" (*Jidheh-e melli)* should not be described as a "nationalist" movement. Katouzian (1991) believes that in this case *melli* designates a "popular movement" of the people. He states the National Front was a movement of "democratic patriotism" and refers to it as the "popular movement" throughout his work (Katouzian 1999:260).

Katouzian makes this distinction because he regards other nationalist movements as being driven by a "hysterical passion to prove the superiority of the Great Nation, often through the denigration, humiliation and subjugation of other peoples" (260). Still, most characterize the National Front as a nationalist movement (see Cottam [1964] 1979). The analysis in this chapter also indicates that the National Front can be broadly conceptualized as "nationalist," particularly as it relates to its policy orientation to both the Soviet Union and the West. Moreover, the Pan-Iran party, a member of the National Front, was nationalist and fascist with respect to its ideology (Siavosi 1994:109-117). Mohammad Mosaddeq, leader of the National Front, received support from nationalist groups that did want to establish a "great nation." At the same time Mosaddeq was personally a social democrat.

In the West the concepts of the "state" and the "nation" are often lumped together. This is particularly true in the United States where there was not a long struggle between different ethnic groups (or "nationalities") concerning the development of the "nation-state." In Europe, and in other places in the world, "nationalities" refer to a collectivity that is bound together by ethnicity and language. Nations of people worked at establishing "states" that encompassed their traditional regions of influence, but as often as not, nations of people became scattered across many states. Likewise, many ethnic "nations" may inhabit a single state. The post World War I partitioning of the Middle East into "nation-states" was an attempt to draw national boundaries that conformed to traditional spheres of influence for nationalist groups favored by the Allies. Like the partition of Europe, this process corresponded with considerable unrest among the "nationalities" (e.g. the Armenians and the Kurds) denied a national state with which to organize their interests.

The nation-state of Iran, as established after the World War I, has a multiplicity of both religious and ethnic groups, although dominated by Shi'is and Persian linguistic groups. In this respect, there were many different conceptions of nationalism debated among groups in Iran during the post-war period. Figure 10.3 organizes competing concepts that were being debated within the general frame of Iranian nationalism.

**Figure 10.3 Competing Frames of Nationalism
in the Post-war Debate of Iran**

Ethnic .... **Religious**

Broad inclusion of groups in the "Nation."

Marxist-Leninism: A nation with many religions and ethnicities, but struggling against imperialism and aligned with other groups fighting imperialism.

Pan-Islam: A Moslem inter-national community that encompasses all the Moslem countries of the Middle East.

A nation of many religions and ethnicities, but all having an affinity with the "Iranian nation" or "fatherland."

A nation with many religious minorities who participate equally in national politics and are equal citizens in the Iranian nation-state.

A nation were Persian culture and language is the defining character-istic of the "Iranian nation"

A loose federation of ethnic "nations" that each maintains their cultural identity, language and local political authority.

A nation of Moslems who have an affinity to the "Iranian fatherland." Restrictive regarding the political participation of religious minorities.

Narrow inclusion of groups in the "Nation."

Islamic internationalism (Pan-Islam) is a "broad" conception of nationalism but it is also, simultaneously, a "narrow" conception of nationalism in that it excludes religious minorities, or designates them as second-class citizens. The concept of Marxist-Leninist internationalism is also a broad conception of nationalism. But, as formulated by Lenin, "nationalities" included groups with distinct ethnicities and languages, and these groups were theoretically guaranteed some local autonomy as Soviet republics. Still, they were also linked to a larger system that had the establishment of a classless, international society as a primary goal. For ethnic minorities in Iran the appeal of this idea was that it would allow them to be free of the central government in Iran. For example, many Azerbaijani separatists assumed they would have more independence as a Soviet republic, in terms of maintaining their language and culture, than as members of the Iranian nation (see Hassanpour 1994).

Despite these differences, the concept of the nation-state was largely taken for granted in the Iranian debate. For instance, devout Moslems in Iran, inclined to contemplate affairs in the broader context of the whole Moslem community, still make reference to the Iranian nation, to which they felt an affinity. Likewise, many Tudeh party members, while theoretically inclined toward communist internationalism, continually reinforced the idea that they wanted to establish a strong Iranian nation (see examples below). Some religious traditionalists changed their minds with respect to this issue. For example, Ayatollah Khomeini (1941) was active in the post-war debate and, at this time, generally accepted that the Iranian "nation" should be organized according to the 1907 constitution. Later, during his period of exile in Iraq, Khomeini (1970 [1981] rejected European constitutionalism and regarded the nation-state as a European construct fundamentally at odds with the conception of the broader Islamic unity. Still, Khomeini did continue to refer to the "people of Iran" as a distinct group.

The Iranian debate was not unique to the Middle East. As the states of the Middle East became independent following World War II, Islamic groups became engaged in a debate concerning whether the Moslem idea of absolute unity could accommodate the creation of distinct "nation-states" with Moslem majorities. Some were inclined toward an expansive view of the Islamic nation that included the entire Moslem community (see Rashid Rida 1982). Others developed systems of Islamic governance that accommodated the modern nation-state. In particular, Pakistani nationalists were at the forefront of this debate in that they fought for a state designed to realize national goals for the Moslem communities in colonial India (see Mawdudi [1976] 1982; Rahman [1967] 1982 in Donuhue and Esposito [eds] 1982).

The Religious Elite and Post-War Nationalist Movements

The traditional religious elite less prominent in the post-war debate when compared to their role in the Constitutional revolution. The strategy of clerical quietism was a decision of Ayatollah Borujerdi—the most esteemed *mojtahed* of the period—who called for a conference shortly after Reza Khan Shah's abdication that brought together all the prominent religious leaders in Iran. Well acquainted with the clerical divisions of the Constitutional period, Borujerdi regarded clerical activism in politics as a destructive endeavor that put religious institutions at risk during confrontations with the state. He instructed the religious elite to refrain from active support of political organizations. Nonetheless, Borujerdi ultimately sided with Mohammad Reza Shah and officially greeted him when he returned to Tehran following the coup against Mosaddeq that re-established Pahlavi monarchal authority. He also helped legitimize the Shah's return by appearing with him in the Tehran *bazaar* where support for Mosaddeq remained strong following the coup (Akhavi 1980).

One prominent clerical activist was Ayatollah Kashani, a long-time adversary of the Pahlavi monarchy who initially supported the National Front. He later withdrew his support and worked with traditional forces to overthrow Mosaddeq's government (Akhavi 1980, 1988; see also Richard 1983). Kashani's activism was an important factor in early National Front successes. He also had contact with a radical Islamic organization, the *Feda'iyan-e Islam* (those self-devoted to Islam). This organization periodically assassinated secular reformers throughout this period (Akhavi 1980:68-69; Richard 1983).

Despite Ayatollah Borujerdi's directive to the *oloma* to refrain from active political organizing, many resumed their traditional roles in Iranian society following the abdication of Reza Khan Shah. As such, many entered the post-war dialogue and generally championed the continued relevance of Islamic jurisprudence in Iran. For instance, a young Ayatollah Khomeini (1941) published his first clerical tract of note, *Unveiling the Secrets,*[2] which directly refuted secular conceptions of Iranian nationalism advocated by reformers such as Ahmad Kasravi, an Azerbaijani historian and secular nationalist. This debate was cut short when Kasravi was assassinated in 1946 by the *Feda'iyan-e Islam* (Kazemi 1984:158-176 see also Arjomand 1984:195-232; Fischer 1980:132-33). The *Feda'iyan* paper, which described the assassination in an article entitled, "A Foreigner is a Foreigner," stated:

> For the first time in 1324 [1946]], the sparkling fire of these manly youth burned the life and existence of Ahmad Kasravi, who was the greatest tool of the British imperialists and who was the agent assigned to create division among Moslems and to prepare the ground for further exploitive domionation… The bullet that struck his brain forced the British to retreat for a few years ("A Foreigner is a Foreigner." Translated by Kazemi 1984:162).

Khomeini later became the central figure in the Iranian revolutionary movement, so it is important to give a brief overview of *Unveiling the Secrets.* Khomeini (1941) argued that the Iranian clerical class was never given the constitutional authority outlined in the 1907 constitution. Moreover, that any post-war governing system should recognize that the intention of the 1907 constitution was to give the religious elite some political authority, and that this was necessary for legitimate governance:

> We do not say that government must be in the hands of the *faqih*; rather we say that government must be run in accordance with God's law, for the welfare of the country and the people demand this, and it is not feasible except with the supervision of the religious leaders. In fact, this principle has been approved and ratified in the Constitution and in no way conflicts with public order, the stability of the government, or the interests of the country. If it were implemented, everyone in the country, with no exception, from the religious leaders to the tradesmen, soldiers, and hawkers in the street, would cooperate with the government and strive to attain the independence and greatness of the nation. (170-171).

At this time, Khomeini's position appears fairly moderate with respect to the amount of clerical authority the religious elite should exercise. Later, during the revolution, Khomeini rejected constitutionalism as a European construct used to deceive the Iranian masses. Moreover, throughout this tract, Khomeini does return to the theme that "Westernization" has caused irreligiosity and muddled thinking among Iranian reformers. He states that foreigners, with respect to Iranian reformers, have "stolen their reason, intelligence, and all other senses" (172).

He then chronicles the idiocy of a number of European inspired reforms including the adoption

of Greenwich standard time:

> They have forfeited their faculties so completely to the foreigners that they even
>
> initiate them in manners of time; what is left for us to say to them? As you know,
>
> noon is now officially reckoned in Teheran twenty minutes before the sun has
>
> reached the meridian, in imitation of Europe. So far, no one has stood up to ask,
>
> "What nightmare is this into which we are being plunged? (172)

While this argument makes it appear that Khomeini is against scientific innovation, read

in the context of the entire work his main point is more that the Europeans have completely

gained control of the senses, and sensibilities, of the modernizing elite in Iran. In particular, his

conception of the West as a pervasive power, one that can rob people of their culture to the

degree that it tells them how to order the time of day, is similar to Jalel Al-e Ahmad's ([1963]

1982) concept of "Westoxification" (*Gharbzedegi*) (discussed further chapter 11). Moreover,

and this is an aspect of Khomeini's work that few comment on, his criticism, while caustic, is

often very humorous. For instance, regarding the Pahlavis' surreal preoccupation with head

gear—it first forced the implementation of the "Pahlavi cap" as a national "symbol," and a

decade later outlawed it, forcing the adoption of European hats with brims as a sign of

"modernization"—Khomeini states: "If a country's greatness depended on its hat, it would be a

thing very easily lost!"[3] (172).

Regional Movements in Iran During the Post-war Period

Several regional movements emerged in Iran between the Constitutional revolution of 1906-09 and the Nationalist movement of 1951-53. Some of these, particularly the development of Azerbaijani and Kurdish separatist movements (see Hassanpour 1992 and Lenczowski 1949)—whose leaders sometimes adopted a communist ideology inspired by the Russian revolution—played an important role in the development of Iranian national parties (e.g. the Tudeh) active in the post-war debate (Abrahamian 1982). Many separatist movements adopted a mobilizing frame based on the right of self-determination for ethnic minorities in Iran. In particular, self-determination was often framed as the right to adopt local languages in the state run educational system (Hasenpour 1992). These separatist movements in north Iran are not considered in depth in this chapter because they were adopting frames of nationalism that did not have widespread resonance among diverse groups in southern Iran.

The Inter-War Period and the Rise of Reza Khan "Pahlavi" Shah[4]

Most of this chapter is devoted to movement frames that were resonant in post-war World War II Iranian society, but a brief description of the inter-war period, the end of the Qajar dynasty, and the rise of Reza Khan "Pahlavi" Shah is outlined in order to place the post-war movement frames into their historic context.

Continued Intervention by the British and Russians: The Anglo-Iranian Treaty of 1919

The Anglo-Iranian treaty was negotiated during the post-World War I partitioning of the former Ottoman Empire into the "mandated" states of the modern Middle East. Some Arab tribal groups who aided the British during the war were granted national states, although these mandated states did not conform to previous agreements that had been negotiated during the war.

Before World War I Iran was theoretically self-governing despite ongoing interventions by the British and Russians. Most Iranians wanted to remain independent from the great powers following World War I, but the 1919 Anglo-Iranian Treaty, if it had been enforced, would have reduced Iran to a mandated state under the authority of the British. The new Soviet government immediately objected to the treaty and then actively supported separatist movements in the north. Public reaction to the treaty was swift. Different factions—particularly the separatists in the north—quickly employed the resonant frame that the national government was "selling" the Iranian nation to foreigners (see Abrahamian 1982; Keddie 1981).

During this period Reza Khan Shah, a military officer who had assumed command of the Cossack Brigade following the Russian revolution, marched these troops into Tehran. He was quickly made the commander of the national army and Sayyid Zia Tabataba'i—a supporter of the British during the war—became the new Prime Minister. They arrested prominent politicians in the National Assembly who opposed them, abrogated the unpopular treaty with Great Britain and signed a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union, in return, stopped supporting the separatist movements in north Iran. The British, facing opposition to the Anglo-Iranian Treaty from their World War I allies, allowed the treaty to be abrogated.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 had an impact on groups in northern Iran. One result was the establishment of a short-lived Soviet Republic of Gilan (1920-21). This coalition between the Soviet Union and the regional tribal forces in north Iran was an alliance among factions who were distrustful of the Iranian central government. In areas that became part of the Soviet sphere of influence (Soviet Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) the tribes were later violently suppressed. Still, many separatist leaders were sincere Marxist-Leninists. Furthermore, regardless of their politics, many Azerbaijanis—who had been among

the staunchest supporters of the Constitutional revolution—were disappointed with the national government in Tehran (Abrahamian 1982; Bayat 1991; Hassanpour 1992; Lenczowski 1949).

Reza Khan Shah (1924-41) and the Development of "Persian" Nationalism

Reza Khan suppressed the rebellions in the north, consolidated and updated the Iranian military, jailed tribal and nationalist politicians who did not support his government, and then consolidated control over the Iranian state using the military. A coalition of nationalist parties, sanctioned by the Reza Khan Shah, became dominant in the National Assembly after 1924 and rarely objected to his policies. Later, many nationalist intellectuals became increasingly disenchanted with the authoritarianism of Reza Khan Shah (see Gheissari 1998).

During the interwar period the primary debate among political factions in Iran centered on Iranian national development. The Constitutional revolution had theoretically reconciled the different Iranian conceptions of citizenship and religious belief, but ongoing tribal conflict, the continued influence of the landed elite and notables in rural areas, and the separatist movements in the north made it difficult to create a national Iranian identity that eliminated the allegiances to tribe, religion and ethnicity. Nationalists in the interwar period who supported Reza Khan Shah wanted to establish a strong central state and actively worked at fashioning an Iranian *national* identity, a love of country (the fatherland) that was not tied to religion or tribe. In general, the construction of a "Persian" linguistic and ethnic identity, often linked to pre-Islamic periods of Persian empire, became the legitimating national idea used by supporters of Reza Khan Shah (see Abrahamian 1982; Gheissari 1998; Keddie 1981).

Reza Khan Shah's legitimating national ideal was also based on his personal (monarchal) authority backed by a modern military. To this end, he constructed the legitimating myth that he

was of noble birth in an attempt to symbolically connect his reign to pre-Islamic periods of Persian empire. Iranian nationalism became closely associated with the codification of the "Persian" language into the modern educational system and state bureaucracy. This was supported by nationalist Iranian intellectuals who were active in the reclamation of Persian history as a legitimating national ideal (see Gheissari 1998). For instance, there were attempts to codify the Persian language so that it eliminated Arabic and Turkish words that had been integrated into the language during the periods of Arab and Turkish conquest into Persia. There was an increase in "epic" nationalist prose and poetry describing periods of Persian empire (Gheissari 1998). At this time, perhaps 70 %[5] of Iranians would have self-identified as being of Persian descent, and there was linguistic and ethnic diversity among these groups. It is interesting to note that some prominent nationalist intellectuals (e.g. Ahmad Kasravi) who were from the ethnically and linguistically distinct regions of Iran, nonetheless tacitly approved of "Persianization" as necessary in the creation of Iranian nationalism (see Gheissari 1998). Still, following the abdication of Reza Khan Shah there were several movements in Iran that were reactions against this policy, and which attempted to re-assert the right to use local language in the national curriculum.[6]

Reza Khan used the army, through a policy of universal national conscription, to indoctrinate young Iranian men with respect to his concept of Iranian nationalism. He later became increasingly influenced by the fascist doctrines espoused by the Germans. This led to the official adoption of the name "Iran"—as opposed to Persia—because it "invoked ancient glory and signified the birthplace of the Aryan race" (Abrahamian 1982:143). The adoption of pre-Islamic Iranian history as a legitimating political ideology was also adopted by the monarchy to reduce the authority of the Islamic clergy.

Reza Khan also outlawed traditional Iranian dress, except for members of the Iranian clergy who registered with the state. To this end, he outlawed traditional dress for Iranian women and forced all government employees to attend all public functions with their wives unveiled (Akhavi 1980). This may have caused traditional women to become more cloistered in their homes as they were reluctant to be observed in public without the traditional *hejab* (Gheissari 1998:49).[7] Access to public education for women increased, but women remained second-class citizens as it relates to meaningful participation in the workplace or in politics. Following the abdication of Reza Khan Pahlavi most women returned to wearing traditional dress in public.

Reza Khan Shah pursued a foreign policy designed to lessen the influence of the great powers in Iran. Often, the monarchy considered Americans as an honest third party with respect to Iranian conflicts between the British and Russians.[8] To this end, the Shah tried to broker an arrangement that would have allowed an American company, Standard Oil, to establish facilities in northern Iran. The Shah also attempted to secure a greater amount of compensation from the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), but the agreement he brokered actually extended the concession granted to the British oil company. This was later considered a detriment to Iranian national interests, and renegotiating this arrangement became a primary goal of nationalist groups in the post World War II period (see Abrahamian 1982; Keddie 1981).

Reza Khan Shah also outlawed trade unions, particularly the Central Council of Federated Trade Unions (CCFTU) that was dominated by Azerbaijanis (Abrahamian 1982). The repression of the trade union movement—and the jailing of opposition leaders en masse—helped facilitate the development of the Tudeh when these individuals met each other in jail. In particular, a group of reformers originally from different political persuasions—later referred to collectively as the "group of 53" —met in prison, translated and discussed Marx, and generally

adopted a socialist-communist program of action following the abdication of Reza Khan Shah (Abrahamian 1982).

In sum, Reza Khan Shah's policies were designed to destroy many Iranian cultural norms in an attempt to bludgeon the Iranian people into becoming, in his conception, a more "modern" nation. To this end, Reza Khan Shah did fashion a more modern Iranian state in that there was an increase in the central authority of Iranian government, greater access to secular forms of primary and secondary education, and greater stability enforced by a national army and police force. Likewise, there was a significant increase in state sponsored industrial development (see Moaddel 1993). This coincided with the ongoing development of the Iranian oil industry controlled by the British. Still, even among Iranians who supported these "modernizing" nationalist programs, there was increasing resentment of the Shah's invasive social policies. Moreover, Iranians who remained employed in traditional enterprises, still a majority of the population, felt little affinity with the ideology of nationalism that drew upon pre-Islamic history.

The Deposal of Reza Khan Shah

In 1941 the Allies invaded Iran for the strategic purpose of protecting the Soviet south from an invasion by Germany. There were several pro-German officers in the Iranian military and Reza Shah was personally enamored of the ideology of Aryan superiority. Remarkably, despite the anti-imperialist sentiment of the Iranian public, most Iranians—while not necessarily supporters of the Russians or British—did not demonstrate much popular support for the Pahlavi monarchy during this invasion. The British and Russians, expecting considerable opposition from the Iranian army and population, faced surprisingly little resistance as they established their military presence in Iran (see Abrahamian 1982; Keddie 1981).

Before leaving the country Reza Khan abdicated the throne to his son, Mohammad Reza (1941-1978). The new Shah was at first conciliatory toward the different political factions in Iran, but then moved to re-establish close ties with the Iranian military. Ultimately, Mohammad Reza Shah also adopted the concept of "Persian" nationalism as his legitimating national ideal, and used the same strategies as his father in an attempt to legitimize his own rule (see Abrahamian 1982; Akhavi 1980; Keddie 1981).

Cycles of Repression and Iranian Movements

Increased repression changes the conditions a movement operates under and alters movement narratives and goals [9] (Tilly 1978). Likewise, the development of the modern state increases a government's ability to repress social movement actors. Conversely, the conditions that make the modern state possible, such as increased telecommunications structures, also help facilitate social movement action (Tarrow 1998:80). Some have asserted that widespread repression can be causal to revolution in that competing social movements begin to form alliances with one another, and fix their primary movement goals toward deposing that national government (Goldstein 1983). At the same time, strategic openings after a period of widespread state repression can facilitate social movement activity (della Porta 1996). During Reza Khan Shah's reign (1924-41) the Iranian state developed the capacity to repress movement actors in Iran to an extraordinary degree. Dissent during the period of Reza Khan Shah was not tolerated.[10] The coercive ability of the centralized state was facilitated by the development of the national police and national army. After the deposal of Reza Khan Shah, the ability of the state the repress dominant movement factions—primarily nationalist and communist in their ideology,

dramatically declined. This was a structural opportunity for social movements, but they had to frame this opportunity so that in enhanced movement legitimacy (see Gamson and Meyer 1996).

Framing Opportunity: The Rise and Fall of the Tudeh (Masses) Party[11]

The end of Reza Khan's reign effected structural changes in Iranian society that dramatically increased *political opportunities* for movement groups Soon, competing political parties, competing movement frames, and competing ideologies, became part of the Iranian social discourse. Following the abdication of Reza Khan Shah every sector of Iranian society that had been repressed for nearly two decades became active. In effect, all movement factions felt that conditions in post-war Iran, in the absence of an authoritarian leader, represented an opportunity to create, or refashion, Iranian political and social institutions (see Abrahamian 1982:170-250 and Akhavi 1980:60-91 for an overview). Likewise, traditional groups—the tribes, the landowners, the notables—who had lost authority during Reza Khan's reign, used Reza Khan's abdication as an opportunity to re-establish their traditional authority.

The concept of *social class* introduced by the Tudeh was the most innovative new idea in the Iranian post-war discourse. Moreover, it forced traditional groups, inclined toward supporting the status quo, to directly refute communism as the organizing principle of the new Iranian governance. The frame of class equality adopted by the Tudeh had resonance with modern workers, both middle and lower class, who were wage earners in the modern Iranian economy. Moreover, Tudeh successes at negotiating labor demands, usually higher salaries and shorter working weeks, made an impression on all the political parties that were established during this period. The Tudeh eventually supported the oil nationalization effort, but was not supportive of the National Front, which was regarded as a bourgeoisie nationalist movement. This combative

relationship with the National Front was accompanied by considerable debate among Tudeh

adherents, and many later regarded the unwillingness to support the National Front as a mistake

(see Abrahamian 1982). The Tudeh was outlawed in 1949. The party remained secretly active in

Iranian politics until the 1978-79 revolution, although with considerably less influence (see

Abrahamian 1982; Gheissari 1998; Katouzian 1981; 1999).

The greatest Tudeh successes occurred in the 1940s when they were mobilizing industrial

workers in a series of labor strikes. The Tudeh leadership was the first to recognize that these

workers, and the changing economic conditions within Iran, represented an opportunity to

mobilize people on the basis of labor rights. Moreover, the Tudeh leadership's exposure to

Marxist-Leninism enhanced their ability to do both *prognostic* and *diagnostic* framing

concerning the condition of industrial and agrarian workers in Iran. Marxist-Leninism also

provided leaders with an innovative frame for describing the subjugation of Iranian national

interests to those of Great Britain. In line with their Marxist-Leninist ideology, they argued

Western capital had expanded into the developing world. Likewise, Western industrialists

needed to continually increase both production and consumption of oil in order to realize

continuing profits.

The following is an excerpt of a speech made by Iraj Iskandari during the First Party

Congress organized by the party in 1944. The quote is a good example of prognostic and

diagnostic framing. It clearly states Tudeh party goals, recognizing specific conditions unique to

Iranian workers, and then identifies foreign imperialism as a source of Iranian social malaise.

> The aim of the Tudeh party is to unite the masses—the workers, the peasants, the
>
> traders, the craftsmen, and the progressive intellectuals. Of course, these classes
>
> have economic differences. For example, while workers possess nothing but their

own labor power, craftsmen control their tools of production, and peasants either own some land or aspire to own it. *In contemporary Iran, however, these differences are overshadowed by the common struggle against imperialism, against absentee landlords, against exploiting capitalists, and against industrial robber barons*. Our duty is to unite the exploited classes and forge a party of the masses. (Iraj Iskandari "Address to the First Party Congress" *Rahbar* September 4, 1944. Translated by Abrahamian 1982:281)

Later that year several articles, anchored to the concept of social class, described how the landed elite and industrial elite continued to control Iran despite the abdication of Reza Khan Shah [italics added].

When we say our intention is to fight despotism and dictatorship we are not referring to specific personalities but to *class structures* that produce despots and dictators. In August 1941 many thought that Reza Shah's abdication had ended overnight the dictatorial system. We now know better; for we can see with our own eyes that *the class structure that created Reza Shah remains*. What is worse, this class structure continues to create petty Reza Shahs—oligarchs in the form of feudal landlords and exploiting capitalists who, through their ownership of the means of production, control the state. (Ahmad Qassemi *Hizb-I Tudeh-I Iran Cheh Miguyad va Cheh Mikuahad* [1944: 2-5]. Translated by Abrahamian 1982: 295).

The program established at the First Party Congress of the Tudeh was designed to attract support form all factions within Iranian society. The platform proposed, for peasants, a land reform bill, the formation of village cooperatives, the formation of village schools and clinics, and the implementation of state run irrigation projects. For laborers the Tudeh advocated an eight hour workday, overtime pay, liability insurance, pension plans, equal pay for the sexes and an end to child labor. For craftsmen and merchants the Tudeh wanted to provide state subsidies and protection from foreign competition. For middle class wage earners the platform offered job security, higher incomes, control of food prices and rents and a plan to employ all high school graduates. Finally, the platform "called for national independence from all forms of colonialism and imperialism." The party also promised to abide by the fundamental laws of the 1907 Constitution (Abrahamian 1982: 284-85).

Many of the party leadership recognized that an orthodox communist ideology would have little appeal in Iran. Therefore, they vowed to work with progressive elements within Iran, and opposed engaging in a premature revolutionary program (Abrahamian 1982: 285-6). In response to the criticism that the Tudeh was closely connected to the Soviet Union the leadership responded by negating their communist ideology:

> Is the Tudeh communist? Our enemies, especially Sayyid Zia, smear us with the label to frighten the capitalists and the traders. The Tudeh party is fully committed to the fundamental laws. Why? Because we believe that communism is an ideology suitable for social conditions that do not exist in Iran. A communist party will not find mass roots in our environment. We know that our immediate task is to unite the majority against the exploiting oligarchy and strengthen the forces of democracy. We support, therefore, the constitution. (Editorial "The Tudeh Party

and Partisanship in Foreign Policy" *Rahbar* May 17, 1944. Translated by

Abrahamian 1982: 285)

Abrahamian (1982) has studied the Tudeh party leadership and membership at different

administrative levels. The leaders of the organization were usually intellectuals and the modern

middle class (salaried workers). Arrest reports indicate that lower echelon members were also

disproportionately from the modern middle class and urban working class. In this respect, the

Tudeh was supported by modern workers—both lower and middle class—earning wages from a

job. The Tudeh recruited the rural peasantry, small-landowners, the *bazaar* and guild workers,

but these groups were not well represented in the party leadership or the party rank-and–file

(326-382).

The Tudeh could turn out large crowds. On October 21, 1943, the second anniversary of

the Tudeh, as many as 40,000 people attended the rally that was billed by the Party's official

paper (*Mardam*) as the largest demonstration in Tehran's history (Abrahamian 1985:126). In

1944, as many as 35,000 people were mobilized during a rally outside the parliament supporting

a Soviet oil concession arrangement in North Iran. Street demonstrations on the anniversary of

the 1907 Constitution, and on May Day in 1946, drew crowds as large as 60,000 people.

Following these demonstrations three Tudeh members briefly participated, as cabinet ministers,

in the Iranian government. Tudeh cooperation with the government contributed to fissures in the

party, and also helped erode nationalist support for Prime Minister Qavem (see Abrahamian

1982:299-304). The party was outlawed following an assassination attempt on Mohammad Reza

Shah in 1949, but the Tudeh mobilized on behalf of Mosaddeq during protest in 1952.[12] The

party may have placed similar numbers in the streets of Tehran at this time.
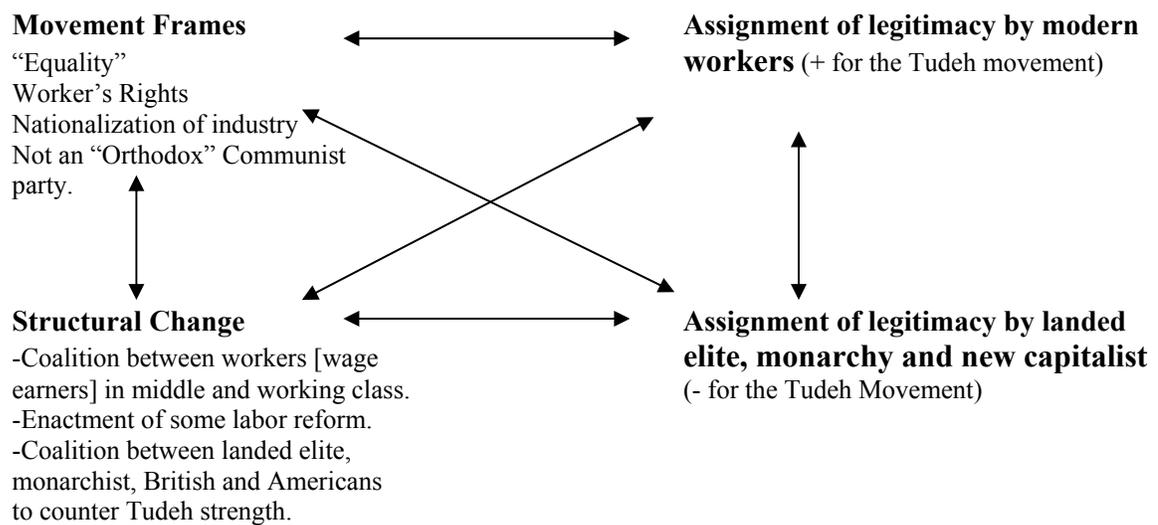
Tudeh conceptions of social class are now standard in modern Iran, but during the 1940s they had to educate Iranians on concerning Marxist conceptions of labor. For instance, while traditional Iranians divided society into different social groups— the nobles and notables, the peasants, the low and high *bazaaris*, the craft guild workers, and the low and high religious elites—the Tudeh offered a framework for interpreting distinctions within, and between, these groups using Marxist conceptions of capital, labor and social class. Still, the Tudeh leadership framed the concept of "social class" to fit both Iranian society and the struggle against the West.

The rise of the Tudeh party caused landowners, monarchist, and conservative religious groups to align with one another in an effort to limit Tudeh popularity. Coalitions opposed to the Tudeh framed the Tudeh movement as sacrilegious and rhetorically connected private property to the "sacred" rights of individuals. The following is an excerpt from an article in a conservative journal (*Ra 'ad-e Emruz*) that appeared following a popular protest in Isfahan that had a strong Tudeh organizing presence, and which coincided with Tudeh backed mill-workers strike [italics added].

> The Tudeh party, with its *satanical doctrine of class struggles*, has incited
>
> ignorant workers to violate the *sacred right of private property* and inflict social
>
> anarchy upon the industrial center of the country. The uprising proves that the
>
> Tudeh is an *enemy of private property, of Iran, and of Islam*. If the government
>
> does not stamp out the Tudeh, the local revolt will inevitably spread into a general
>
> revolution. (*Ra 'ad-e Emruz* "The Revolt in Isfahan" May 1944. Translation by
>
> Abrahamian 1982: 207)

The frames of the Tudeh generally increased the movement's legitimacy among wage earners, but decreased party legitimacy among the landed elite, the monarchy, and nationalist groups that wanted to be independent from the Soviet Union. Some breakaway socialist parties used Tudeh frames concerning social class and worker's rights, but left the Tudeh because of its support for the Soviet Union. Figure 10.4 represents the relationship between Tudeh social movement frames and legitimacy.

**Figure 10.4 Relationship Between Tudeh Frames, Legitimacy
and Structural Change**

Movement Frames
"Equality"
Worker's Rights
Nationalization of industry
Not an "Orthodox" Communist
party.

**Assignment of legitimacy by modern
workers** (+ for the Tudeh movement)

Structural Change
-Coalition between workers [wage
earners] in middle and working class.
-Enactment of some labor reform.
-Coalition between landed elite,
monarchist, British and Americans
to counter Tudeh strength.

**Assignment of legitimacy by landed
elite, monarchy and new capitalist**
(- for the Tudeh Movement)

The Tudeh party leadership maintained a movement frame that stressed independence from the Soviet Union, but contradicted this frame when they supported the establishment of a breakaway Azerbaijani Republic aligned with the Soviet Union. This action severely limited the appeal of the Tudeh among non-Azerbaijani Iranians employed in traditional occupations and suspicious of the Soviet Union. Adherents who had supported the party when they believed it was independent from the Soviet Union now abandoned the party. Some former movement

leaders in the Tudeh, such as Khalil Maleki, formed competing socialist parties that supported the National Front (see Katouzian 1999:97-112).

Re-framing Communism: Khalel Maleki and the Third Force (Niru-ye Sevvum)[13]

Khalil Maleki was an Azerbaijani intellectual who broke with the Tudeh party after it supported the separatist movement in the Azerbaijan. The movement group that Maleki formed advocated for an independent, socialist-nationalist philosophy of development. Among the groups that supported the National Front, Maleki's organization had the greatest appeal among university students and young intellectuals. Maleki gained prominence when he fashioned the movement ideology for a breakaway communist party, the Toilers party (*Zahmatkishan)*. Among the magazines he contributed articles to was the *Third Force* (*Niru-ye Sevvum*). Ultimately, the Toilers party (*Zahmatkishan)* party also splintered, with many pro-Mosaddeq supporters uniting behind Maleki and his conception of the "Third Force" (see Abrahamian 1980 and Katouzian 1999)

Maleki's "Third Force" was designed as a philosophy of national development. While this label was used to identify his supporters, the "Third Force" was never a modern political party. It was a movement, loosely organized, trying to win adherents through press activism and student activism. Most recently, the ongoing student movement in Iran has begun to refer to themselves as a "Third Force," but the specific meaning of the current slogan is now much different than its meaning during the post-war period (see chapter 12). Maleki designated two primary ideas associated with the philosophy of the Third Force as: 1) *The Third Force in general*, and 2) *The Third Force in particular* (Katouzian 1999:95-112).

The Third Force in general described countries pursuing an independent path toward national development that were non-aligned with either the Soviet Union or the United States. Ultimately, Maleki's philosophy is similar to positions adopted by nationalist movements in Egypt and India. For instance, in describing countries of the *Third Force* he stated:

> These masses of people in Asia, Europe, Africa and elsewhere wish—indeed most of them are determined—to co-operate with each other, and (despite the two world powers, and by taking advantage of conflict between them) protect their own national and social character. (Khalel Maleki: *Niru-ye Sevvum Piruz Mishavad* 1951:3. Translated by Katouzian 1999:101).

The Third Force in particular was an application of the "third way" to specific regional circumstances. For instance, Maleki was impressed by developments in Yugoslavia where Tito was pursuing a socialist policy of national development, but had asserted independence from the Soviet Union. Moreover, he predicted that China would also break out of the Soviet orbit and pursue an independent, socialist-nationalist policy of development. Likewise, Maleki felt that European nations, currently aligned with the United States, would eventually re-assert their independence and pursue a socialist agenda in their own state development (Katouzian 1999:101-104).

> Vis-à-vis American capitalism and its numerous European fellow-travelers, and Soviet state capitalism (which claims to be socialist, but which has destroyed economic, political and personal freedoms in Russia), a European road to socialism in the particular sense of the Third Force is now emerging and

developing (Khalel Maleki: *Niru-ye Sevvum Piruz Mishavad* 1951:26. Translated by Katouzian 1999:102)

The Third Force in particular, when applied to Iran, was defined as [italics added]:

An alternative social model, a mode of national and social living distinct from both the American and the Russian models which they try and impose on us. The Third Force is the modern manifestation of the will of freedom-loving people in Iran, itself a reflecting a great deal of historical experience through centuries of Iranian civilization (Khalel Maleki *Niru-ye Sevvum Piruz Mishavad* 1951:9 in Katouzian:1999:105 [Katouzian's emphasis])

Maleki does not conceptualize "the Third Force" as a party, but as a social condition that exists among all freedom loving people. In effect, Maleki feels that supporters of the oil nationalization effort who advocate for national independence are members of the "Third Force." He wrote:

All those who have no hope in the decadent ruling establishment, and no expectations from the leaders of the Tudeh party…, belong to the Third Force. All those who support the nationalization of Iranian oil everywhere in the country [i.e. not only in the south, as the Tudeh party wanted it], that is nationalization of all the resources and industries which either Britain or Russia hopes to possess at one and the same time, are part of the Third Force. All those who find it possible to maintain Iran's political and economic independence without its attachment to the Eastern or Western Bloc, who believe in the power of their own people, and the
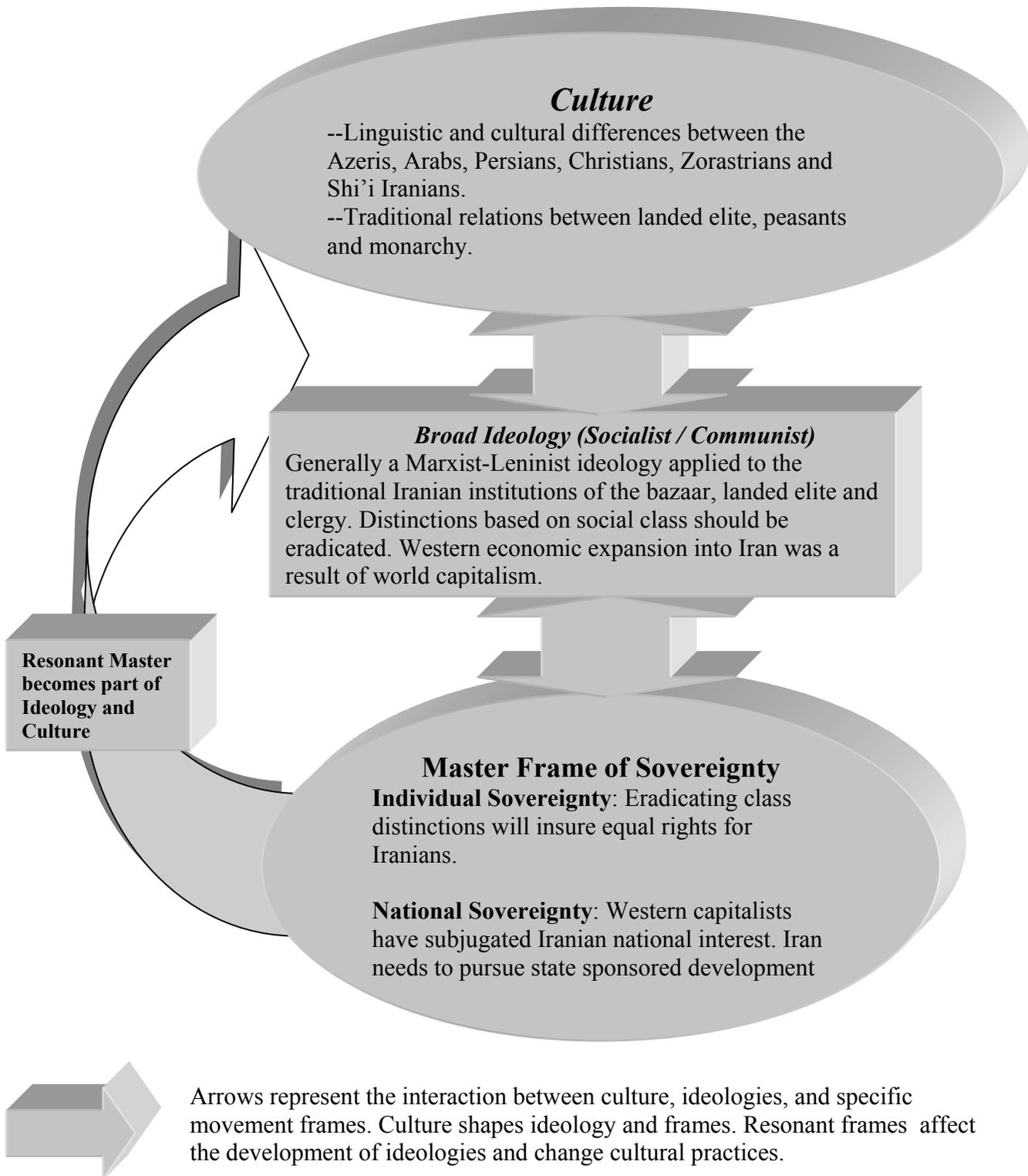
ability of their own leaders, and who think it is possible for the people of Iran to

hold their destiny without blindly following this or that foreign power, belong to

the Third Force… (Khalel Maleki: *Niru-ye Sevvum Piruz Mishavad* 1951:2.

Translated in Katouzian 1999:104)

Maleki's conception of the "Third Force" was a pre-curser of many "Third World"

nationalist ideologies later developed by leaders of recently liberated former colonies. Indeed,

Middle Eastern nationalists such as Egyptian President Gamel Abdel Nasser eventually

implemented socialist-nationalist programs similar to those that Maleki advocated for.

Figure 10.5 is a graphic representation of the socialist – communist frames of social class

and third world independence adopted by the Tudeh and other breakaway socialist parties in

Iran. Of course, many of these parties differed with respect to some of their specific movement

frames. In particular, the socialist parties in Iran were divided over support for Mosaddeq, and

support for the Soviet Union.

Figure 10.5 The Interaction of Culture, Ideology and Frames Among Iranian Communist and Socialist Parties

Culture

--Linguistic and cultural differences between the Azeris, Arabs, Persians, Christians, Zorastrians and Shi'i Iranians.

--Traditional relations between landed elite, peasants and monarchy.

Broad Ideology (Socialist / Communist)

Generally a Marxist-Leninist ideology applied to the traditional Iranian institutions of the bazaar, landed elite and clergy. Distinctions based on social class should be eradicated. Western economic expansion into Iran was a result of world capitalism.

Resonant Master becomes part of Ideology and Culture

Master Frame of Sovereignty

Individual Sovereignty: Eradicating class distinctions will insure equal rights for Iranians.

National Sovereignty: Western capitalists have subjugated Iranian national interest. Iran needs to pursue state sponsored development

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

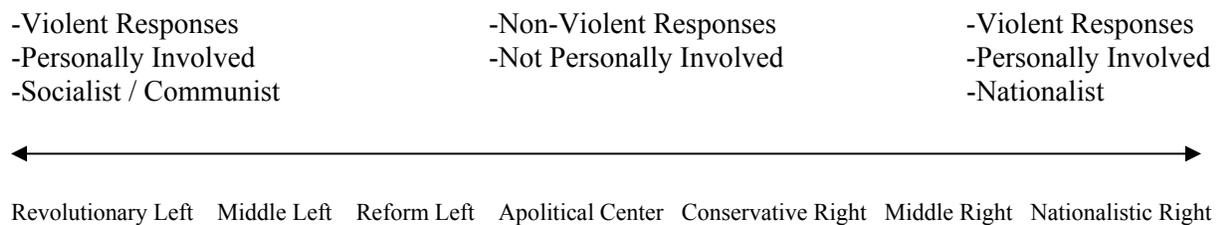***Resonance of the Frame of Social Class[14]***

Resonant social movement frames effect all challenging movements in a social system. Indeed, competing messages force competing movement leaders to modify their own messages in order to maintain, or increase, movement legitimacy. Obviously, the issue of class equality was resonant among Tudeh party members. More importantly, it became lodged in the political and social consciousness of Iranians who were participating in the post-war debate. In effect, all oppositional movements had to directly address positions related to class equality in order to maintain supporters. For example, Ayatollah Behbahani (son of the Constitutionalist leader)— suspicious of the Tudeh and the concept "social class"—stated during the oil nationalization effort that: "*All classes should get close to Almighty God* and, in accordance with the religious precepts, *put aside class conflict*" (*Ittila'at*, June 5, 1951. Translated by Akhavi 1988: 96 [italics added]).

Much social movement research concentrates on the movement messages articulated by leaders because their speeches and written work is widely available. More difficult is a determination of how movement adherents responded to these messages. In this respect, studies conducted by Columbia University's Bureau of Applied Social Research[15] (Ringer and Sills 1952a; 1952b) in Iran during the oil nationalization crisis offer some insights into how possible movement adherents were reacting to movement frames. Researchers conducted in-depth interviews of radio listeners[16] in Iran during May-July of 1951 when debate over oil nationalization was intense. Ringer and Sills (1952a; 1952b) used these data to do a secondary analysis that investigated the "political extremes" in Iran. Groups they identified as the "extreme left" and "extreme right" shared some social characteristics in that they had higher rates of urban residence, middle (non-elite) economic status, higher than average education levels and higher

than average levels of personal discontent. Paradoxically, political extremist had high levels of social detachment, but also high levels of social interaction.

The typology created by Ringer and Sills (1952a; 1952b) used levels of "aggression" and "personal involvement" in national political issues as a measure of political "extremeness." For example, respondents who proposed the use of violence to end the political crisis, and also indicated they were personally involved in ongoing social struggle, were labeled "extreme." Views on private property and foreigners were used to create the categories of the "left" and "right." Figure 10.6 shows the categories constructed, arranged from the "revolutionary left" to the "nationalistic right."

Figure 10.6 Ringer and Sill's Typography of Iranian Groups in 1951

-Violent Responses   -Non-Violent Responses   -Violent Responses
-Personally Involved   -Not Personally Involved   -Personally Involved
-Socialist / Communist   -Nationalist

Revolutionary Left   Middle Left   Reform Left   Apolitical Center   Conservative Right   Middle Right   Nationalistic Right

Ringer and Sills (1952a; 1952b) created their typology based on social-psychological variables as opposed to affiliation with political parties or movement groups. So it is hard to know, specifically, which political groups these individuals were affiliated with, but the researchers give examples of the Pan-Iran party as a "nationalist right" party, and the Tudeh as a "revolutionary left" party. The revolutionary left in this study were linked with socialist and communist groups in that they wanted to nationalize industry and redistribute private property. The nationalistic right was anti-communist in their affiliation. Judging from the excerpted interviews, individuals with a predominantly religious worldview were often considered part of

the "nationalistic right." For instance, one individual, a government employee in the Ministry of Justice identified as a member of the nationalist right, when asked to define himself stated:

> (I am) a Moslem – a holy warrior for my country and all other Islamic countries. A slave to Allah. Proud of myself and of my family who were followers of Mohammad's sayings… I usually study Islamic books and I believe that worship is nothing but helping other people. (Ringer and Sills1952b:49)

Of course, many on the nationalistic "right" (e.g. supporters of Sayyid Zia) did use traditional religious narratives concerning the importance of "individual" piety to offset communist frames that concentrated on the "collective" good.

The source of data for the BASR studies was in-depth interviews, some over two hours in length. The two BASR reports have excerpted examples from these interviews. Moreover, because the study measured degrees of "personal involvement," the "extremists" in this study were more likely to be movement adherents. Likewise, in the BASR report (Ringer and Sills 1952a) on Soviet and American partisanship it was found that partisans of the Soviets tended to be better educated, younger, and more activist than partisans of the United States.

There are some flaws in the study. In particular, it was undertaken from a functionalist perspective. This accounts for the designation of social movement activists as "extremist." Moreover, Ringer and Sills wanted to demonstrate that the "extremes" in Iran were "socially detached," which, in functionalist language, would be an indication that they existed largely outside the bounds of normal Iranian society. It is easy, using a conflict perspective, to invert, or "stand on its head," this basic assumption. For instance, it could be assumed that these men, who were chosen for the study because they were active radio listeners and consumers of print media,

were actually *the least socially detached members of Iranian society* in that they were engaged, judging from their consumption of media, in ongoing social debate. Indeed, Ringer and Sills found this to be true in their measure of *social integration.*[17] In general, because of the researchers' orientation they characterized both the extreme left and extreme right as individuals who were "alienated" from Iranian society (Ringer and Sills 1952-53:696-97). Likewise, the BASR studies characterize the extreme left as suffering from "complete alienation" (1952a:12). In a fundamental way, this conclusion is counter-intuitive when considering that the sample studied individuals who were active listeners of radio broadcast, and active readers of print media. This involvement in ongoing social debate eliminates the possibility of extreme alienation.

One other clarification concerns the identification of violent language used to identify the extremes. In some cases language coded as violent appears to have been employed as colloquial or allegorical expressions that would have been common in Iran. While this language was violent it was not necessarily overtly threatening. For instance, "we need to cut the hands of the British from our oil" was coded as violent. Other responses coded as violent included statements such as: "Hang the landlords" and "overthrow the government." (Ringer and Sills 1952-53: 691 footnote 7).

While some of the characterizations in these studies now appear, with the benefit of considerable hindsight, to be biased, the findings were prescient. In particular, the authors concluded that anti-American sentiment was increasing due to American support for the British during the oil nationalization effort.[18]

Frame Resonance of Social Class Among the Nationalist Right and Communist Left.

Among groups identified as the extreme left, social class had considerable resonance. It was routinely identified by the extreme left as the most pressing problem in Iran. The BASR report (Ringer and Sills 1952b) summarized the position of the members of the left as follows [italics added]:

> The extremists of the Left differ from other groups not so much in their identification of the problem as in the perspective thru which they view it. They see economic plight in Iran *in terms of class exploitation and struggle...*(4)
>
> They are quick to propose solutions for the problems of economic inequality, solutions which in many cases involve the use of violence. One solution to economic problems proposed by the Revolutionary Left is the nationalization of all industry. [Responses included]
>
> "(We should) nationalize our industry, dividing the lands which rich people would turn over to the Government" (4)
>
> "(We should) nationalize all our industrial centers (4).

Likewise, land reform was a dominant theme among the revolutionary left:

> "(We should) remove class discrimination by distributing the land among the peasants." (5)
>
> "(We should) give the right of every class to its own, so that the toilers would get their own and the capitalists would not ask for more." (5)

When asked specifically what the biggest national problem was, members of the revolutionary left consistently cited "class discrimination." For example, "a middle-aged skilled worker," stated:

(The biggest national problem is) class discrimination. Some of the people are

living most luxuriously and some are desperately poor (4)

Nationalist right adherents, while anti-communist in their orientation, also had "serious

reservations about the existing political and economic elite" (Ringer and Sills 1952b:17). They

indict the elite using the same language as the left, but this does not translate into support for the

communist factions. In fact, one common theme was that the elite—described in nearly identical

language that the left used—was dangerous because they were allowing the communists to gain

strength. The following is a quote from a staunch anti-communist nationalist who blames the

governing elite for the rise of the communists [italics added]:

> I wish I were a producer of movies depicting the wealthy classes, the landlords,
>
> and the usurers. *I would show them to the world so that the world can know about*
>
> *the hole through which communism has found root in Iran.* Haji M_____ D_____,
>
> who was a grocery peddler in the streets, has gathered millions by sucking the
>
> blood of the poor peasants of D _____, and has built a mosaic palace (Ringer and
>
> Sills 1952b:15).

An employee in the Ministry of Education, also anti-communist, when asked about likes and

dislikes of the local print media stated:

> (I dislike) editorials on the service rendered to the nation by the ruling class. This
>
> is just apple polishing (15).

And when asked later about a national radio broadcast:

It is not bad at all. I hope it will improve. Its shortcomings are in flattering the

government in power (15).

And when asked what he would change about the state controlled radio station:

I would encourage people to adopt truth-telling, piety, and unity, and I would

betray those blood-suckers who are always and only thinking about getting into

Parliament and having beautiful houses, dandy cars, and lands (17).

Resonant Counter Frames of Adherents of the Nationalist Right

Some interview responses among adherents of the nationalist right indicate support for

private property, but, repeatedly, these individuals return to issues of *personal piety* and religious

belief as the most common counter-frame against the communists. Still, these nationalists appear

to have absorbed some of the "class consciousness" that the Tudeh party was working to create.

Indeed, many accepted that the current economic elite was not good for the Iranian nation. So,

they generally argued against communism on the grounds that it was irreligious and denied the

importance of individual piety.

(I dislike) the leftist papers which are no more than dog's dirt in the ruins, and

they call our people "countrymen!" They lie and they bluff and they inculcate evil

and bad ideas in the people. They want to turn this country into a Communist

satellite and distribute everything except the air equally among the people. Most

of them curse and abuse in order to become known, *but they cannot impress the*

Moslem people of this country, for their religion is against Communism (22).

Anti-Imperial Frames of the Left and Right

The oil nationalization debate weakened pro-American sentiment, but generally strengthened the partisan feelings among Iranians already inclined to support the Soviets (Ringer and Sills 1952b). For example, a lawyer interviewed states:

> America is thinking of its benefit all of the time in any country. The United States wants to make Iran a military base, but it wasn't successful yet. The United States found a good market for its merchandise but unfortunately for us everything it sends us is junk (4)

With respect to American support for the British, responses among Iranians who were not Soviet partisans were often anti-American:

> Recently America has interfered against us and for the British in the oil dispute – that is why all the people dislike America (4)

> I had a good attitude about the United States government, but when it started to be in favor of the English government in the oil situation. I changed my attitude about the United States government (28).

Anti-British frames where common among all groups. For example, a "non-partisan" observer of the conflict stated:

> Since I remember, the British have always harmed us. One day they stimulate the tribes. Another day they take out our oil. Now they are treating the Iranians badly at Abadan. Of course they do the same thing wherever they can (24)

And an American partisan stated:

> England has made the world a plaything for its egoistic policy. No other country
> could be so dishonest as that country. In regards to Iran, they have never had a
> favorable attitude. The British are our enemy number one. They like to take the
> whole country and devour our wealth and resources (24).

These responses indicate that a strong anti-imperial frame, particularly as it relates to the British, was dominant in Iran during the oil crisis among all factions. Among some Iranians, the crisis made them more inclined to view the Soviet Union favorably. Moreover, the United States, whose policy some (Heiss 1997) have characterized as moving from being an "honest broker" to a "British partner" during this period, lost popular support among Iranians that had previously viewed the country favorably (77-106).

Frame Awareness: Competing Newspaper Messages among Movement Groups

The BASR studies also asked concerning newspaper preferences among the Iranians interviewed (Ringer and Sills 1952a; 1952b). Respondents were aware of the competition undertaken through the press to attract people to various movement positions.

> There is a great deal of evidence that the two extreme political groups do not each
> pursue its own goals without awareness of the other; the fact is that on many
> issues they come into direct conflict. This mutual rejection is illustrated very well
> by their attitudes toward newspapers, which, in Iran as elsewhere, serve as
> reference points for divergent opinions (1952b:21).

The left and the right consistently praised papers that corresponded with their views, and rejected newspapers that used competing movement frames. Moreover, adherents of the left and right both stated that foreign powers controlled their opponent's media. For the left, anti-communist papers were agents of imperialism. For the right, socialist and communist papers supported the Soviet Union over the interest of the Iranian state. For instance, a college student who disliked all of the right nationalist papers (*Shahed, Ettela'at, Keyhan, Baiktar Emruz, Teheran Mossawar*) stated that people who agreed with those papers:

> can be deceived and obtained freely and cheaply. Most of these people do not
>
> know that these newspapers distort the news and work for a group of parasites,
>
> and are servants of obnoxious imperialism (23)

Another student disliked *Ettela'at* because:

> It protects capitalism and is read by capitalistic people (23)

Conversely, a government employee in the Ministry of Information who disliked the socialist and communist papers, stated:

> (I least like) leftist newspapers because under the slogan of "Everything for the
>
> Nation" they want everything for the Kremlin (22).

Overall, the BASR studies indicate that Iranians were aware of the competition among movement factions in the Iranian press, and were actively responding to the movement frames concerning social class and national sovereignty. Wedge issues in this debate concerned group

affinity with the great powers and individual religiosity. All groups supported the oil nationalization.

The National Front Movement (1949-53)

The National Front was established after nearly a decade of post-war political and social debate. The National Front was a coalition of parties and traditional groups and not a uniform political party with a single ideological orientation. These parties and interests included: 1) *The Iran Party*, a professional association, largely of engineers and other professionals who were initially pro-Tudeh, but now nationalist and social-democratic, 2) *The Third Force,* led by Khalil Maleki and supported largely by university students. Some fledgling women's groups also supported this party. This party was largely communist and anti-monarchal in its ideological orientation, 3) The *bazaari* and craft guilds in Tehran that were concerned about the penetration of Western goods into Iran, 4) Middle to staunchly conservative Iranian nationalist parties that were anti-British and anti-Soviet Union, and 5) Religious and *bazaari* groups that supported Ayatollah Kashani (Katouzian 1999).

The composition of the National Front spanned the entire spectrum of social groups in Iran, but their primary unifying framework was: 1) The authority of the monarchy should be curtailed and, 2) Iran should be non-aligned with the great powers. All of these groups were enthusiastic supporters of the oil nationalization effort. Most had rejected the Tudeh as a possible governing partner. The National Front coalition unraveled when confronted with an organized opposition of pro-monarchy groups supported by the armed forces, the British and the Americans.

Mohammad Mosaddeq

Mohammad Mosaddeq, leader of the National Front, was a social democrat and Iranian nationalist deeply concerned with establishing an Iranian state independent from the influence of both the British and the Russians. He was a pious Moslem and used mythical Iranian religious and social allegories in his speech. He was familiar with the West. He was trained in Switzerland as a lawyer and spent long periods of time abroad in Europe. At the same time, during his long tenure in government that began during the Constitutional revolution, he held a series of positions related to his status in the Iranian land-owning class. His perspectives were anchored to both Iranian and Western cultural traditions. His education was predominately Western, his social background was that of a member of the Iranian rural elite (Diba 1986; Katouzian 1999; Bill and Louis 1988).

Mosaddeq's two primary goals throughout his long career in politics were: 1) to increase in authority of a democratically elected Parliament (*Majles*), and 2) to achieve a measure of independence and respect for Iran in the international community. Cottam (1988), a sympathetic observer of Mosaddeq, states:

> Mussaddiq was a devoted proponent of Enlightenment values and was dedicated to the task of bringing real independence and national dignity to his country. The normative system he hoped to establish in Iran was, in its central particulars, the same system that American and western Europeans claimed as their own. Indeed, as westerners described the cold war, then in its formative years, it was in essence a struggle to defend the very norms Musaddiq himself embraced (23).

Westerners and Iranians have commented on Mosaddeq's political style and personal habits.[19] In the Iranian cultural context, many of these habits were unexceptional. For example, weeping in public—particularly during an emotional speech—is not an exceptional event in Iran. Mosaddeq occasionally wept when delivered important speeches, and this was much commented on in the West (see McGhee 1983). But Mosaddeq's public persona, labeled "histrionic" in the West, clearly resonated with the Iranian public. Indeed, his public performances were part of what made him a popular politician in Iran.

One assertion of this work is that resonant movement messages adopted by movement adherents ultimately constrain the actions of movement leaders. Indeed, Mosaddeq's behavior and rhetorical speech throughout his time as Prime Minister, particularly after a series of popular protest in 1952, reinforces this point. Mosaddeq was never really in "control" of the crowds that mobilized on his behalf in 1952, although he had helped create, and then had to ride, the wave of a movement that had its own momentum. In particular, there is evidence that Mosaddeq was trying to disengage—as he had done in the past—from Iranian politics (see Katouzian 1999). In particular, he was looking for a symbolic event that would demonstrate the constraints of his office, and this would allow him to withdraw from active politics with dignity (see Bill and Louis 1988; Katouzian 1999). Mosaddeq had engaged in this pattern in the past during the reign of Reza Khan Shah, and this is a common strategy other social spheres of Iranian life,[20] but not necessarily a condition particular to "the East." Politicians in the East and West, after evaluating the political landscape, often make symbolic gestures that demonstrate the constraints they are operating under before disengaging from political life. Likewise, in the West, the act of disengaging from political failure, and than "reinventing" the political "self," is a common practice.

Electoral Reform: Mosaddeq's Bast and the Formation of the National Front

In 1948 popular support for Mohammad Reza Shah increased when he survived an assassination attempt while visiting Tehran University. There has been considerable rumor and innuendo as to who was ultimately behind this assassination attempt, but in its aftermath groups that were overtly anti-monarchal in their orientation, both the orthodox left and radical religious groups, were suppressed. The Tudeh party was outlawed and Ayatollah Kashani, associated with a revolutionary religious organization, was exiled to Lebanon (see Diba 1987; Katouzian 1999; Richard 1983).

The primary impetus for the formation of the National Front was Mosaddeq's assumption that Mohammad Reza Shah would use his new popularity, and his influence with the army, to fix the 1949 elections for the 16th Majles in order to insure that it would be staunchly pro-monarch. Indeed, it appears that the Shah was actively tried to prevent Mosaddeq's re-election. Related to concerns about the composition of the 16th Majles was the fact that the negotiated arrangement with the British concerning Iranian compensation from the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC)—the Supplemental Agreement Bill—had been introduced just before the 15th Majles concluded. The introduction of this bill late in the Majles term was an attempt to gain passage of the bill before the upcoming elections. Opponents of the bill managed to stall its passage (Katouzian 1999).

Mosaddeq was an advocate for placing restrictions, primarily literacy requirements, on voter eligibility. His reasoning for this position was that local landowners manipulated the peasantry during elections to insure their election to Parliament. In fact, many of the individuals elected to represent rural districts often resided elsewhere in Iran. Mosaddeq was a member of

this landholding class, but was respected because he often resided on the property he owned and had a good relationship with the rural workers who farmed his property (see Diba 1986; Katouzian 1999; Bill and Louis [eds] 1988).

Traditional landowners, generally supporters of the monarchy, controlled the elections in rural Iran. As such, the results of the 16th Majles election were largely pre-ordained. In larger cities the elections were harder to rig in favor of the monarchy. On Oct. 13, 1949 Mohammad Mosaddeq, with other oppositional Majles deputies and a large crowd of supporters, went to the Shah's royal palace and delivered a letter stating that the elections in the rural localities were fraudulent. The Majles deputies, and their supporters, requested permission to seek *bast* on the royal grounds. After a series of negotiations 20 people—Mosaddeq among them—were allowed into the palace grounds and began their *bast* (Azimi 1988; Diba 1987; Katouzian 1999)

The *bast* at the Royal Palace was not nearly the spectacular as those accompanying the Constitutional revolution, but it was nonetheless effective. After an attempt to have the *bastis* arrested failed (Azimi 1988), the strategy of the Shah was to wait the *bastis* out, allowing them to remain on the Palace grounds, but not engaging in a negotiation concerning the electoral process. The *bastis* later undertook a two-day hunger strike. Upon ending their hunger strike they issued a proclamation that rhetorically tied the possibility of electoral fraud to passage of the Supplemental Agreement. It stated that the passage of the Supplemental Agreement was not in the Iranian national interest and would be illegitimate if the Majles elections were fraudulent. The *bastis* then retired to Mosaddeq's residence where it was decided to establish an alliance between parties and interests that they called the "National Front" (see Katouzian 1999:73). The National Front members were far from being a majority in the 16th Majles, but they had

considerable influence on Majles debate and a disproportionate influence among educated

Iranians in Tehran (Abrahamian 1982; Katouzian 1999).

One of the more paradoxical events that later occurred when Mosaddeq became Prime

Minister was his abrupt interruption of the elections to the Majles in 1952. Initially, these

elections were billed by supporters of the National Front as the first in Iran that would be entirely

"free and fair." Mosaddeq likely assumed that he would enjoy widespread popular support in the

countryside and that the new Majles would be more amenable to his reforms. As the returns from

these elections came in there was a discernable split in support for the National Front in the

major cities as compared to the countryside. In Tehran and Tabriz there was strong support for

the National Front, although the specific candidates endorsed had different political

temperaments. The countryside voted overwhelmingly in support of the traditional nobles and

notables. Indeed, it appears regional landowners, as they had in the past, provided transportation

to peasants that worked on their land and instructed them as to how to vote. As the vote counts

came in (a long process), and the split became evident, Mosaddeq abruptly halted the process

once a quorum had been reached in the Majles that narrowly favored the National Front. This

was clearly an illegal act. At the same time, it would be hard to characterize the Majles that was

seated as a rubber-stamp legislature, and Mosaddeq continued to consult with the Majles

throughout his tenure as Prime Minister (see Bill and Louis [eds] 1988).

Confronting the West: Mosaddeq's Frame of Negative Equilibrium

Mosaddeq's program of *negative equilibrium* postulated that developing Iranian *national*

sovereignty would necessitate a policy of non-alliance with neither the United States nor Soviet

Union. Due to Iran's geographic position in the world, Iranian politicians were forced to

immediately to confront Cold War politics. The positions articulated by Mosaddeq and Khalil

Maleki, two important ideologues of the National Front, later became dominant in the "Third

World" as former colonial states confronted the global reach of the United States and Soviet

Union. In Mosaddeq's conception of negative equilibrium, "negative" was a reference to Iran's

non-aligned status. Mosaddeq believed that Iranian policy should not allow for the establishment

of military bases on Iranian soil, or take economic assistance from either superpower. In effect,

favoring neither superpower would establish an "equilibrium" assuring that neither could

intervene in Iranian affairs (see Bill and Louis [eds] 1988; Cottam [1964] 1979; Katouzian

1999).

Mosaddeq's conception of *negative equilibrium* was a refutation of Ahmad Qavam al-

Saltaneh's position of *positive equilibrium*. In some respects, Qavem's position seems better

situated to address the post-war realities of Iran in that he assumed the best way to maintain

Iranian independence was to engage in activist relations with both the superpowers and

effectively play one against the other. Mosaddeq countered that any agreements made with the

superpowers would act as an impetus for their continued intervention in Iranian affairs. His

policy was nationalist in that he argued that the "Iranian people," if they had faith in their

indigenous leadership, did not need outside help to develop economically and politically. Still, it

is possible that, given the new conditions of strict bipolarity in the post World War II period, that

a position of "positive equilibrium" could have been effective at extracting resources from the

West and East, and also pursuing an independent path of national development (see Bill 1978;

Bill and Louis [eds] 1988; Cottam [1964] 1979; Katouzian 1999).

Mosaddeq's position of negative equilibrium had more resonance than positive

equilibrium when translated into a movement frame of strict non-alignment. Iranians, having

endured a long period of British and Russian intervention, supported the establishment of a truly independent Iranian state. It is debatable whether "positive" or "negative" equilibrium was a more practical policy for engaging the superpowers, but the position of complete non-alignment had greater resonance for many Iranians. Indeed, when Qavem was Prime Minister he did, to degrees, craft an effective policy that used superpower animosity to his advantage. Still, whenever Qavem favored one superpower over the other, such as when he formed a strategic alliance with the Tudeh party in order to help facilitate the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the north, he lost support of nationalist factions that wanted Iran to remain strictly non-aligned.

Religiosity and the Nationalist Movement

While frames employed by many movement groups used Islamic narratives, most dominant movement ideologies were not tied to the establishment of Islamic governance. Nationalists, while they used connections with religious authorities to gain popular support, never considered inviting the prominent Ayatollahs into governance. For most, the division of religious and political authority had been resolved during the 1907 Constitutional revolution. In effect, while some religious authority had been codified into the constitution in the form of a four-person committee of prominent religious leaders that advised the Majles, these religious leaders exercised very little power in the legislative process. Moreover, the distinction between "national" law and "religious" law was largely accepted as a governing norm among nationalists. Indeed, Ayatollah Kashani, an activist cleric who organized support for Mohammad Mosaddeq during the oil nationalization effort, stated:

> So that… Dr. Muhammad Musaddiq will be completely at liberty in choosing his aides, from the very beginning I am refraining from giving any advice to him *and*

shall abstain from doing so hereafter so that he will not feel any constraints in

carrying out his responsibilities. (*Ittila'at* May 5, 1951. Translated by Akhavi

1988:95, his emphasis)

This statement was disingenuous as Kashani interfered considerably in political affairs, but

indicates the degree to which nationalist leaders expected the clerics to desist—as Ayatollah

Borujerdi had instructed them too—from interfering in national politics (Akhavi 1988 see also

Richard 1983).

The Assassination of Prime Minister Razmara

The oil nationalization issue, debated throughout the post-war period, became preeminent

in Iranian politics following the assassination of General Hajj Ali Razmara in March 1951 by the

Fediyan-e Islam. Razmara was the Iranian Prime Minister from June 1950 until his assassination

in March 1951. General Razmara was a capable administrator who had systematically

consolidated control over a fractious Iranian military. He was powerful, but was not a popular

man with the public. He was not averse to playing court politics. He pragmatically maintained

contact with the British and the Americans concerning policy, and even consulted with them

regarding the appointment of officials in his cabinet (see Azimi 1988: 226-239). Razmara has

been connected to a number of post-war Iranian intrigues, including the possibility that he was

involved in the assassination attempt on the Shah in 1949 (see Katouzian 1999). It is impossible

to know his actual involvement in this event, but given the rough and tumble nature of the

politics within the Iranian military he likely had an astute sense of political self-preservation.

Razmara was not well liked by many in the Majles, the court, or the public at large. This

was primarily due to his influence within the Iranian military, which produced fears that he was

planning to establish a military dictatorship in the country. The Shah appears to have both feared

and depended on him. Ayatollah Kashani, the primary clerical supporter of the National Front,

constantly sparred with Razmara in the press. After Razmara's assassination Kashani publicly

stated the assassin, Khalil Tahmasebi, a member of the *Fediyan-e Islam,* had done a great service

to the Iranian nation. Khalil Tahmasebi was later acquitted of the murder. Richard (1983) and

Kazami (1984) attribute this acquittal to Kashani's public support for Tahmasebi.

The assassination of Razmara was accompanied by large street demonstrations

celebrating the murder that were likely organized by supporters of Kashani. Indeed, as seen

during the Constitutional revolution, the open celebration of political assassination during

politically tumultuous periods in Iranian history was not unusual. Moreover, these

demonstrations obviously effected the Majles vote to nationalize the AIOC four days following

Razmara's assassination. Razmara had been, throughout his tenure as Prime Minister,

negotiating with the British and trying to put together a coalition that would ratify the

Supplemental Agreement. Following Razmara's assassination it was evident that many Iranians

in Tehran regarded any agreement with the British, short of nationalization, unfavorably.

Mosaddeq, whose anti-imperialist credentials were impeccable, and who was also staunchly anti-

Tudeh, was—a month after the assassination—reluctantly endorsed by Mohammad Reza to form

the new Iranian government.

Prime Minister Mosaddeq and the Crowd

Mosaddeq had stated previously that he was not interested in being Prime Minister before

he accepted the post in April 1951. In the past, Mosaddeq had alluded to the fact that his staunch

non-alignment would make him unacceptable to either the British or Russians (see Katouzian

1999). Mosaddeq accepted the offer in 1951 because the Majles, following Razmara's assassination, had passed legislation to nationalize the oil industry. His only condition for his acceptance the position of Prime Minister was that the oil nationalization bill be enacted. Mosaddeq's initial cabinet represented various Iranian political and social factions.

Mosaddeq simultaneously fought a case in the International Court of Justice brought by the British that would have rendered the oil nationalization illegal. His position was that the court did not have jurisdiction over a matter concerning Iranian national sovereignty (Ferrier 1988; Azimi 1988). Simultaneously, he pursued a quixotic effort to gain control of the Iranian military, traditionally an extension of the Shah's authority. Indeed, after the Shah refused to relinquish control of the military, Mosaddeq, citing this refusal, abruptly resigned as Prime Minister (see Katouzian 1999). Four days after his resignation the International Court of Justice ruled that it had no jurisdiction in the Iranian oil nationalization issue.

The outcome of the court case, following Mosaddeq's abrupt resignation, increased the popular support for Mosaddeq. This victory precipitated a series of massive street demonstrations that began four days after he resigned, with protesters calling for Mosaddeq's reinstatement as Prime Minister. States security forces killed as many as thirty people after the Shah ordered them to forcefully end the protest. During the protests, several large squares in Tehran that were located in close proximity to the Parliament, Tehran University and the *bazaar* became areas were different factional supporters of Mosaddeq gathered during the 1952 protest.

After Mosaddeq's resignation, the Shah had hastily attempted to rehabilitate a previous nationalist Prime Minister, Ahmad Qavam al-Saltaneh. With the protest ongoing, it was quickly apparent that Qavam could not muster a majority in the Majles to support his government. Mosaddeq, likely to his great surprise, was soon re-confirmed as Prime Minister with more

popular support than he had previously enjoyed. Pahlavi monarchal authority was radically diminished and Mosaddeq was formally given control over the armed forces. Many (including Ayatollah Khomeini) later suggested that Mosaddeq should have acted forcefully and ended the monarchy during this period. Mosaddeq actually attempted, to a degree, to rehabilitate the institution through a series of meetings with the Shah

Crowd activity is common in Iran, but the demonstrations on behalf of Mosaddeq in 1952 were out of the ordinary in terms of their scale. Certainly, Ayatollah Kashani and Khalil Maleki mobilized their supporters en masse and used the traditional *lutis* and *bazaar* to this end. In particular, a *luti* wrestler, Shayban "the brainless" Bimkoh, mobilized people on behalf of Mosaddeq. He would later change sides and mobilize crowds on behalf of the Shah. Moreover, it appears that the Tudeh, who had been rhetorically labeling Mosaddeq an "American agent" following overtures he had made to the American administration (Katouzian 1999), nonetheless mobilized in support of Mosaddeq (Abrahamian 1982).

It seems unlikely that Mosaddeq calculated that his withdrawal from politics would correspond with the popular demonstrations that forced the Shah to give him control of the military. Mosaddeq had not informed his supporters that he intended to resign so that they could plan, in advance, to turn out crowds. In fact, it was four days after his resignation, following the successful verdict in the International Court of Justice, that the crowds began to appear (see Katouzian 1999). Of course, following this largely spontaneous support for Mosaddeq he did begin to make statements that he would make his appeals directly to Iranian citizens. This led his detractors to brand him a "mob" leader rather than a statesman (see Abrahamian 1982:267-68).

The Decline of the National Front

The demonstrations in support of Mosaddeq and the oil nationalization mark the high point of support for the National Front. The oil nationalization appears to have been *the primary issue* that united the disparate factions established in post-war Iran. Even the Tudeh, inclined to regard the National Front as a bourgeois movement, moderated its tone toward Mosaddeq's government. Many religious leaders, although instructed to be apolitical, followed Kashani's lead and issued a series of *fatwas* that endorsed the nationalization effort despite their suspicion of secular nationalist parties. The *bazaar* merchants, fearful of the influx of Western consumer goods, also supported the nationalization effort.

The oil nationalization issue was important with respect to Mosaddeq's program, but he also pursued other reforms that were being pressed by the socialist-nationalist factions within his coalition. For instance, Maleki was pressing Mosaddeq on issues related to land reform and on extending the vote to women. These, and other issues, fractured support for the National Front. Extending the vote to women was not supported by most in the religious elite. These differences became more acute once the initial euphoria of the oil nationalization success was dampened when the administrations of United States and Great Britain organized an international boycott of Iranian produced crude oil. In effect, the Iranians managed to process and refine the oil, but could find no buyers for their product.

Ayatollah Kashani, the Speaker of the Majles following the 1952 protest, soon withdrew his support for the National Front and resigned as speaker in 1953. The clerical elite in Qom, afraid that the Qajar monarchy was going to be abolished due to continuing conflicts, was also pressuring Kashani to suspend his support for Mosaddeq (Akhavi 1980; 1988). Moreover, Kashani had personal conflicts with Mosaddeq concerning leadership of the National Front, and objected to Mosaddeq's increasing support for secular reforms. The specific reason Kashani gave

for his withdrawal of support was Mosaddeq's increasing reliance on emergency powers.

Mosaddeq did rely on extra-legal authority during the oil nationalization crisis, but continued to

ask for these special powers through formal request to the Majles deputies. As his popular

support waned he had a hard time maintaining the coalition of deputies that had initially

supported him. Moreover, the entire Majles had not been seated due to Mosaddeq's interruption

of the previous elections, and many opposition deputies engaged in the strategy of not attending

the Majles sessions so that a quorum could not be realized. The paradox of Mosaddeq's

government was that he was a sincere democrat who wanted to institutionalize a democratic

political process in Iran, but was forced to use extra-legal authority, clearly unconstitutional, in

order to affect real reforms.

Frames in the United States and Britain Concerning the Leadership of Mosaddeq

With respect to the United States press, Mohammad Mosaddeq was misunderstood,

caricatured, and otherwise treated as an exemplar of the irrationality of governing authority in

the Middle East. Some of this misunderstanding was related to cultural differences between the

East and West. Strategies that could have been described as innovative or "modernizing" in the

context of Iranian social traditions were derided in the American press. For instance, as the *Time

Magazine* "Man of the Year" in 1952 Mosaddeq was described as follows:

> Once upon a time, in a mountainous land between Baghdad and the Sea of
> Caviar, there lived a nobleman. This nobleman, after a lifetime of carping at the
> way the kingdom was run, became Chief Minister of the realm. In a few months
> he had the whole world hanging on his words and deeds, his jokes, his tears, his
> tantrums. Behind his grotesque antics lay great issues of peace or war, progress or

decline, which would affect many lands far beyond his mountains.

His methods of government were peculiar. For example, when he decided

to shift his governors, he dropped into a bowl slips of paper with the names of

provinces; each governor stepped forward and drew a new province. (*Time*

January 7, 1952).

And later in the same article:

Mossadegh, by Western standards an appalling caricature of a statesman,

was a fair sample of what the West would have to work with in the Middle East.

To sit back and deplore him was to run away from the issue. For a long time,

relations with the Middle East would mean relations with men such as Mossadegh,

some better, some much worse (*Time* January 7, 1952).

The Coup Against Mosaddeq

The first Cold War coup orchestrated by the CIA, operation Ajax, occurred in Iran. Soon

after the nationalization of the AIOC, following a Mosaddeq visit to the United States that failed

to mediate the dispute between the British and Iranians, both the British and American

governments actively worked at undermining support for Mosaddeq. They forged an alliance

with disgruntled officers in the military and the Shah, and then orchestrated several street

demonstrations that encircled Mosaddeq's residence. Rumor of the impending coup was rampant

in Tehran. There is some evidence that Ayatollah Kashani may have received payments from the

CIA (see Akhavi 1980; 1988). Recently declassified documents obtained by the New York

Times[21] (1998) indicate that the CIA ransacked the homes of the religious leadership in Tehran

and used graffiti and other written threats that attributed these attacks to Mosaddeq followers.

When the initial coup attempt failed the Shah fled to Iraq. But three days later, in a more coordinated effort among the army officers being organized by CIA operative Kermit Roosevelt, Mosaddeq's house was again surrounded by another crowd organized by Shayban "the brainless" Bimkoh who was accompanied by military officers (Roosevelt 1979). Mosaddeq nonetheless managed to escape capture for a couple days by sneaking into a neighboring residence, but was eventually arrested by the Iranian police while trying to organize a response to the coup.

It is impossible to know how much popular support Mosaddeq enjoyed during the period the coup was carried out. There is evidence, particularly given the wide coverage his trial received, that Mosaddeq continued to enjoy considerable support after the coup. Still, there were clearly indigenous groups in Iran, from the beginning of Mosaddeq's time as Prime Minister, which never supported him. Moreover, due to the ongoing economic hardships and the loss of some key supporters, the massive street demonstrations that marked the 1952 protest in support of Mosaddeq were not evident in 1953. Some groups, particularly elements in the *bazaar*, did demonstrate in support of Mosaddeq. It was only through considerable pressure, including a symbolic visit by Ayatollah Borujerdi to the *bazaar* with the newly returned Shah, that the *bazaar* merchants re-opened for business.

Mosaddeq was tried, twice, in military courts in which the initial outcome, and the appeal (eventually ratified by the Supreme Court) were preordained. Among the charges brought against him was that he had blasphemed Islam in his doctoral thesis (see Katouzian 1999: 201), a tactic likely designed to increase support from the clerical elite in Qom for the monarchy. Ultimately, Mosaddeq was confined to an in-house arrest for the remainder of his life. Mosaddeq was combative throughout this ordeal, consistently arguing that the courts had no jurisdiction in his case and that he had been unlawfully deposed as Prime Minister. Several overtures from the

Shah, essentially offering Mosaddeq the option of lenient treatment in return for an end of his

combative defense, were angrily turned down. Mosaddeq's spirited, and apparently much

admired defense helped cement his continuing popular appeal among many Iranians. Apparently,

some participants involved in the case, including one of the presiding judges, were embarrassed

by their role in charade (Katouzian 1999: 200-202). Mosaddeq ended his defense at his second

trial by stating:

> Throughout my whole life I have only had one aim, namely, that the
>
> people of Iran enjoy independence and dignity, and are not subjected to
>
> anybody's rule except the will of the majority. The remarkable struggle of the
>
> people against the former [Anglo-Iranian] Oil Company – of which I have been
>
> one of the leaders, and for which, by the grace of God, I can still speak from
>
> jail—has broken, and will break, the chain of colonialism in the Middle East.
>
> Apart from the economic aspects, [i.e.] that the company was appropriating our
>
> riches, the Popular Movement of Iran was launched in order to enjoy freedom and
>
> independence in the true sense of this term. Is there anyone who does not know
>
> that the governments before mine were captives in the hands of the political
>
> agents of the former [Anglo-Iranian Oil] Company? (Katouzian 1999:202-203)

Culture, Ideology, Framing and Counter-framing Among Nationalist Groups

Movement groups that were opposed to orthodox communist groups used concepts of

Iranian nationalism to frame their movement goals, but were as fractious as the groups on the

left. Like the Tudeh, nationalist groups believed the traditional Iranian elite engaged in practices

that were hurting the Iranian nation. Religious groups were distrustful of nationalist parties, but

found them less threatening than the communist left. Extreme religious groups consistently targeted secular nationalist, on the left and right, for assassination. Ultimately, most religious groups supported the monarchy because of the secularism of both communist and nationalist factions. Overall, religious belief was of secondary importance to nationalist groups.

Figure 10.7 represents the interaction of culture, ideology and frames with respect to nationalist groups. This representation is extremely limited with respect to the various factions that were active at this time in Iran. In particular, frames of *individual sovereignty* were variable, but the *master frame* was that the Majles, as a body of representatives voted to office by the Iranian people, should have more authority than the monarchy. At the same time, Mosaddeq was an advocate for curtailing *individual sovereignty* as it relates to his position concerning the establishment of literacy requirements for voting. Still, his position is consistent in that he argued that this policy was necessary to keep the Majles from being dominated by traditional Iranian landowners aligned with the Shah. Moreover, most socialist and nationalist factions supported extending the vote to women—but religious factions in their coalition steadfastly opposed this position. Overall, the unifying frames of *national sovereignty* had greater resonance than frames concerning *individual sovereignty*. In this respect, all nationalist movement factions supported non-alignment with the great powers. The specific issue that galvanized support for Mosaddeq became support for the nationalization of the AIOC.

Figure 10.7 The Interaction of Culture, Ideology and Frames of Among Iranian Nationalist Parties

Culture in Iran
--Safavid and Sassinid history.
--"Persian" culture and language.
--Islamic narratives concerning private property.
--Relations between nobles, monarchy and religious elite.

Broad Nationalist Iranian Ideologies (Variable)
* Persian culture was once strong during periods of past empire. The Iranian people need to use this fact to foster a strong national identity.
*A combination of Persian culture, Islamic faith, and Iranian National identity should be used to create a strong "modern" state.
* Political pluralism, based on the 1907 Constitution, should be the basis for political and social organization.

Resonant Master becomes part of Ideology and Culture

Master Frame of Sovereignty
National Sovereignty: Iran has been subjugated by Western capitalists and Soviet / Russian domination. Strict non-alliance will ensure sovereignty.
Individual Sovereignty: (Variable) Support for 1907 Constitution that establishes the strength of the Majles relative to the monarchy.

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

Frames of Sovereignty Introduced by the Tudeh and National Front

Frames of Individual Sovereignty in the Post-War Debate

The post-war movements were less "revolutionary" then the Constitutional revolution. Indeed, Mosaddeq consistently placed the National Front's movement goals into the governing framework that was provided by the 1907 constitution. From his perspective, the movement was not trying to establish a new governing system, but was an attempt to realize the ideals that had been established during the Constitutional revolution. *Frames of individual sovereignty* in this work are the requirements, as articulated by leaders, that individuals should fulfill in order to participate in governance. As a practical matter, *individual sovereignty* includes requirements concerning religious piety, ethnicity, gender, age etc… that individuals must fulfill in order to participate in governance. Both the Tudeh party and National Front, despite their opposition to one another, expanded upon the resonant frames that were established during the Constitutional revolution. In particular, the broad frame of individual sovereignty was based in limiting monarchal authority, and strengthening the strength of the democratically elected Majles. Paradoxically, one of Mosaddeq's assertions was that a limitation on individual sovereignty—the imposition of literacy requirements—would actually strengthen the democratically elected Majles. On the other hand, both Mosaddeq and the Tudeh both wanted to extend political rights to women and ethnic minorities in Iran. This orientation caused a decline in the support they received from traditional religious factions.

The Tudeh party adopted more overtly revolutionary rhetoric in its movement literature, but enjoyed far less popular support than the National Front. Still, the party leadership mobilized considerable numbers of people throughout the 1940s-1950s. The Tudeh extended the frame of individual equality by introducing frames of *class egalitarianism*. Despite the fact that the Tudeh

party was outlawed, the diagnostic frames that applied Marxist concepts of social class to Iranian

workers had considerable appeal for many groups in Iran. Even among groups opposed to the

communist parties the idea that the ruling class—the monarchy and nobles—was corrupt and

responsible for Iranian social malaise had considerable resonance.

Frames of National Sovereignty

In this work *frames of national sovereignty* are arguments articulated by movement

leaders, used to mobilize movement supporters, related to the Iranian government's relationship

with the East and West. Anti-imperial frames negotiated during the Constitutional revolution

constrained and enabled post-war movements. The most obvious constraint on the Tudeh party

was related to its relationship with the Soviet Union. Strong anti-imperial sentiment made

alignment with the Soviet Union—a position supported by much of the Tudeh leadership—

impossible to maintain. The Tudeh leadership downplayed its relationship with the Soviet Union

in its movement literature, and later lost considerable support when it became apparent that the

Tudeh leadership supported the breakaway Azerbaijani movement. Movement groups opposed to

the Tudeh consistently argued that it was an extension of Soviet imperialism. This frame clearly

had resonance with potential supporters of the Tudeh and limited the party's popular appeal.

All movement groups throughout the post-war debate used anti-imperial frames related to

the economic subjugation of Iran by the British. The *prognostic* and *diagnostic* frames related to

Western imperialism, often borrowed from Marxist-Leninist ideologies, were much more

sophisticated than those employed during the Tobacco movement and the Constitutional

revolution. In some respects, the sophistication of this framework can be seen in how easily the

anti-British sentiment—a function of the longstanding relationship that had existed between the

two countries—was seamlessly transferred to the United States following the coup that re-

established the Pahlavi monarchy. This was a stunningly rapid development in that the United

States—a country with no history of colonialism in the Middle East that was often regarded as an

"honest broker" by many Iranians—soon replaced the British as the primary imperial power that

stood between the Iranian people's aspirations for national independence. Indeed, during the

Iranian revolution of 1978-79, it was the rhetorical struggle against the West, reified and

personified by Uncle Sam and the United States, which bound many revolutionary movement

groups together.

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[1] Katouzian has explored this distinction in detail, particularly as it relates to the "national" front.

[2] Likely a response to "Secrets of a Thousand Years" written by Ali Hakamizadeh (see Arjomand 1984:205). Algar (1941) translates a section of Khomeini's work as "A Warning to the Nation."

[3] The pun stands on its own, but Algar (1981:307 footnote 6) also points out that refers to a traditional saying wherein "robbing someone of their hat" means to rob them of their "cunning."

[4] Two excellent sources on this period are Akhavi (1980) *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran*, and Abrahamian (1982), *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. They have different strengths. Akhavi (1980) offers an excellent account of clerical relations with the Pahlavi Shahs, and has detailed descriptions of the policies they pursued and the clerical responses. Abrahamian (1982), has an excellent account of the rise of the Tudeh party and other socialist factions. He uses more newspaper accounts, and offers a fairly detailed narrative history of the period between the Constitutional Revolution and the 1979 Revolution. For this section I primarily used these previous accounts, and Keddie (1981)

[5] It is hard to give an exact accounting of the ethnic make-up of Iranians because the state, as policy, was trying to push people into self-identifying as "Persian." Iranian officials were therefore reluctant to collect, or publish, any information that might contradict this legitimating national "idea." Of course, some "Iranians"—particularly if they supported the Shah—likely did attempt to conform to the national "ideal" and personally adopted, and felt an affinity with, both the language and legitimating stories of the new Iranian nationalism (see Gheissari 1998).

[6] Recently, many have commented on President Khatami's 1997 campaign that was the first in modern Iran to publish campaign materials in the indigenous languages of some distinct Iranian ethnic groups. As a practical matter, he explicitly recognized the "multi-ethnic" nature of the Iranian nation.

[7] Jalel Al-e Ahmad, a prominent Iranian intellectual, wrote a short story about a public official who used the tradition of "temporary marriage" to circumnavigate this rule. In effect, the government official married someone temporarily and took her to public functions rather than take his wife, uncovered, to official government functions.

[8] This had precedence. In particular, Morgan Shuster (1912), an American, had been called in by the national government shortly after the Civil War to reform and administer a national system of tax collection that would establish a means to pay the government's debts to Russia and Great Britain. He was generally oblivious, or chose to ignore, the geopolitics of the time in his attempt to assert Iranian state authority (primarily the right to tax) over regions controlled by the British and Russians. Regional tribes also resisted the central state. His text, *The Strangling of Iran*, is a recollection of his time in Iran. Some historians date the end of the constitutional revolution

as the day that the Russians demanded that Shuster be dismissed from his post. Following this demand the national assembly voted, defiantly, to retain his services, and the Russian Cossack Brigade forcefully closed the assembly. The national assembly remained closed until an Iranian government was formed that facilitated the firing of Shuster.

[9] See also Della Porta 1996 and Tarrow 1983, 1998

[10] Reza Khan was notoriously brutal, see Abrahamian (1982) fro some specific incidences.

[11] Abrahamian (1982) has the best account of the Tudeh Party, it's rise to prominence, and its decline. Most of the primary Tudeh documents presented in this chapter come from Abrakamian's (1982) study.

[12] There is some debate over the degree to which the Tudeh mobilized people in 1952. Abrahamian (1982) thinks the Tudeh mobilized on behalf of Mosaddeq, Katouzian (1990) disagrees. See Siavoshi (1994) for an overview.

[13] Most of primary documents used in this study written by Khalel Maleki appeared in the work of Katouzian (1999) and Abrahamian (1980).

[14] For much of this section I used two studies conducted by the Bureau of Applied Social Research (BASR) at Columbia University that looked at the media consumption of Iranian men in 1952. This was part of a larger project that was investigating the impact of media on individuals in countries though out the near and far east. It is possible, given the politics of the time, that the funding for this project was related to intelligence gathering by the United States at the beginning of the Cold War, but do not know positively how, or why, the research was funded. Still, this would account for the general tenor of much of the research, as well as the specific report chronicling the habits of "Soviet partisans." I did investigate whether the original data (the in depth interviews) was still at Columbia. I could not locate the original data, but the two BASR reports are located in the Columbia library.

[15] Summaries are available at the Columbia University library. I tried to obtain the original data, primarily in depth interviews, but, to date, have not been able to locate this data. It likely no longer exists. Still, it would be a remarkable find for anyone interested in this very important period in Iranian history.

[16] The sample was men in cities, and therefore not a representative of Iranian society.

[17] In identifying *social detachment*, Ringer and Sill's used measures such as "lack of family ties" as an indication of alienation. In this respect, it is possible to conceive of this condition as an effect of the individual's activism, as opposed to the cause.

[18] The original interviews would have been far better suited for this task. Again, if they could be located they would be a remarkable asset for anyone interested in a in depth analysis of this period of social movement development during this important period in Iranian history.

[19] See review by Hourani 1988 for Western characterizations of Mosaddeq.

[20] This periodic withdrawal from politics was a pattern in Mosaddeq's career. He spent periods of time as an active politician, but often withdrew from politics after making principled stands rejected during authoritarian rule. Likewise, the Iranian tradition of withdrawal is common in other social groups. For instance, members of the religious elite, when they faced local opposition (from members within their ranks) often relocated to other areas in Iran taking their most devoted followers with them.

[21] The CIA report, made available through the freedom of information act, was posted to the New York Times website in 1998. See http://www.nytimes.com/library/world/mideast/041600iran-cia-index.html