



The Dynamics of Religious Life and Secularism in Iran: Examining the Interaction of Religion and Politics in the Formation of the Islamic Revolution

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Abstract: The Islamic Revolution of Iran, as one of the most significant socio-political transformations of the twentieth century, differs from other modern revolutions in multiple aspects. This revolution not only challenged prevailing theories regarding the decline of religion in modern societies, but also demonstrated that in the age of modernity, religion could not only avoid decline but even lead to the establishment of a state founded upon religious values. This research, employing a descriptive-analytical method and utilizing library resources, examines the interaction between religious life and secularism in the formation of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. Various hypotheses have been proposed concerning the status of religion in the modern era, including the disappearance of religious beliefs, the transformation of the nature of religion into a contingent phenomenon, and the emergence of new religious and non-religious forms. This research demonstrates that secularism in Iran has not proceeded in a linear and monocausal manner, but rather as a complex and unpredictable process that, by providing a context for the emergence of novel forms of religious life, contributed to the formation of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. Accordingly, the Islamic Revolution of Iran, under the leadership of Imam Khomeini, was able, by synthesizing elements of religious, national, and civilizational identity, to offer a novel reading of the interaction between religion and modernity and to emerge as a unique model in the history of world revolutions.

Keywords: Islamic Revolution, Iran, Secularism, Religious Life, Politics.

Introduction

The Islamic Revolution of Iran, as one of the most prominent socio-political transformations of the twentieth century, profoundly challenged not only Iran's political structure but also the paradigms commonly used to analyze modernity and the place of religion in modern societies. While many theories of modernization and secularization predicted the inevitable decline of the social role of religion in the process of modernization, the Iranian Revolution showcased the emergence of a state founded upon religious teachings. This phenomenon raises fundamental questions about the nature of the interaction between religion and modernity, the complexity of the secularism process, and the possibility of the formation of novel forms of religious life in the new age. This research, aiming to analyze this complex interaction, examines the dynamics of religious life and secularism within the context of the formation of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. Various hypotheses are put forward concerning the state of religion and faith in the modern era:

- a. Religious beliefs and practices disappear because science will ultimately refute religion.
- b. Religious beliefs and practices acquire a contingent and non-autonomous nature and become subservient to various ends and purposes.
- c. The blow to the ancient world has negative consequences for previous religious forms and leads to the creation of new forms, both religious and non-religious.

The central hypothesis is that secularism in Iran has operated not as a linear, monocausal, and deterministic process, but as a multi-layered and context-dependent process. This process, while transforming the traditional bases of religion's influence, simultaneously provided the conditions of possibility for the emergence of novel religious readings and agencies – a phenomenon that ultimately became a catalyst for the occurrence of a revolution with a distinct religious identity. The method of the present research is descriptive-analytical, and the required data has been collected through the study of and reference to library resources.

1. Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations of the Interaction between Religion and Politics

Secular, etymologically, derives from the root *saeculum*, meaning century or age. Charles Taylor restricts the term secularism to three meanings. Secular, in the first sense, is in lexical opposition to the sacred and the transcendental; in the second sense, it is equivalent to the decline in participation in religious affairs and ceremonies; and in the third sense:

“It consists of a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace” (Taylor, 2007, p. 3).

It must be borne in mind that these three definitions of secularism are fuzzy in nature, and each phase, while being a different matter from its predecessor, also engenders forms of the preceding phases. For example, within the heart of the second phase of secularism in Iranian society, where religious ceremonies decline, the demarcation of the realms of the sacred and the profane still exists, and within the heart of the third phase, the others of the phases are also present.

1.1. Durkheimian Forms: The Theoretical Process of the Religion-Politics Relationship

The Durkheimian forms derive from Taylor’s division of the process of change in the forms of religious life and its relationship with politics. Taylor himself borrows and expands this idea from the sociological studies of the religion of Émile Durkheim. On this basis, the relationship between religion and politics can take three forms:

1.1.1. Pre-Durkheimian Forms

In this archetype, in accordance with ontological commitments, the individual is connected to the sacred and the transcendent only through the church (the clerical institution). Here, on the one hand, the institution of clergy and social sanctity, and on the other, belief in God and belonging to a political institution coincide and are united, and are understood in an organic totality (Taylor, 2007, p. 458).

1.1.2. Neo-Durkheimian Forms

A necessary condition for entering neo-Durkheimian forms is the right to choose and the non-acceptance of coercion in joining religious sects and denominations. Moreover, the individual, through membership in a larger church, connects to a range of identity-generating contexts; contexts in which the political institution operates based on a theology different from previous forms. This means that God is present as the creator of an original design for humanity within society, and society is organized by humankind precisely according to this divine design (Taylor, 2007, p. 470). In these neo-Durkheimian forms, religious belonging serves as the central signifier for political identity and has a direct relationship with civilizational identity. Civilizational identity is also the feeling of belonging to an original order, superior to foreigners—outsiders who are barbarians, savages, or non-Muslims (Taylor, 2007, p. 470).

1.1.3. Post-Durkheimian Forms

These post-Durkheimian forms decompose the neo-Durkheimian alignment of faith with political and civilizational identity. Here, the sacred has been disembedded from political commitments, and the individual sees no necessity for linkage to clerical and political institutions to pursue and advance his or her novel religious forms (Taylor, 2007, p. 500).

1.2. The Theoretical Foundations of Neo-Durkheimian Forms

What follows, encompassing theological, philosophical, economic, and moral imaginary provisions, explicates the principles and foundations of modernity that emerge around the axis of the “creative” in all human actions. The creative stands in opposition to the mimetic and constitutes a form of order based on a creative voluntary act, whereby the individual, in the position of self-authorization, establishes moral rules, or at the very least, affirms the moral order derived from the command of God and nature with reference to inner references; these inner references may be of the nature of rational, sensory, or universal principles.

1.2.1. Theological Provision

Article Eight of the Supplement to the Constitutional Law of the Constitution stated:

“The inhabitants of the realm of Iran shall enjoy equal rights before the state law.”

Accordingly, the transition from Farabian thought, in which the levels of felicity and wretchedness were realized respectively in the Virtuous City and the Wicked Cities, to a homogeneous society entailed a theological transition. Modernity is the age of transition from theist theology to deist theology; meaning that God created the world, and the divine plan for humanity is solely human flourishing and felicity. Nothing beyond human desire lies in human happiness, and the unseen world has no bearing on human ultimate felicity. In other words, divine ends and their transcendental supports give way to an order of common human interests (Taylor, 2007, p. 240). Now that the divine plan is dedicated to human felicity, reason bears the ability to discover and advance this mission; therefore, divine grace is no longer necessary. If God’s ultimate aim for humanity is solely its good, then no other secret remains, and if God has given reason to humanity to understand the laws of the world, then no room remains for miraculous intervention through intermediaries of grace (Taylor, 2007, p. 242). Through these interpretations, God’s role in the old world becomes confined to the initial and final points—that is, the creation of all that is other than God and the bestowal of reason upon humanity at the inception of creation, and the judgment on the Day of Resurrection with reward and punishment. Between these initial and final points, the human being, *fa’ālun mā yashā’* (active in whatever he wills), relies on the aid of the power of reason.

Since the executor of the divine plan is self-sufficient human reason, and there is no longer a need for interaction with the unseen world and its causal forces through an intermediary of grace (the Infallible Imam (AS) and the institution of the clergy), fear and piety of God also undergo change, and salvation becomes possible through faith without mediation. The shaking of the hierarchical levels of religion in terms of revealing and providing a path to the

transcendental matter leads to the expansion of individual agency towards salvation through non-collective piety and faith. In modernity, speaking of matters that mimetically reproduce a higher order is inconceivable, and the flourishing and felicity of the individual lie in the hands of his own creative act. The concept of divinization is eliminated from human destiny; meaning that transcendental duties and the limitations imposed on corporeal demands no longer constitute an obstacle to the individual's pursuit and flourishing, and the human being no longer fears engaging in non-conformist (non-ascetic) or even insignificant (frivolous) acts. With the waning of the necessity to control human desires, the effort toward securing the usual goals of life, such as welfare and security, becomes smoother.

The granting of this superior epistemological position to reason, as opposed to the overall divine plan and providence, was not necessarily and merely derived from the progress of science and instrumental reason; rather, according to Taylor, moral and normative considerations are at play. The ancient human, condemned to divine will, finds an opportunity to assert himself in the modernization process, and the sense of power and control arising from the creative act (freedom), alongside scientific and moral successes (the creation of order and discipline), propel him in this direction (Taylor, 2007, p. 303). Furthermore, based on the idea that human good is what God wills, divine love is distributed among human beings, and the individual must grasp and manifest love for God in love for humankind; it is here that the earthly demiurge of God becomes worthy of love, and humanism is formalized. Humanism, by severing reference to God except at the initial and final points, accepts only those transcendental references that confirm the new order; that is, the self-sufficiency of reason in framing moral, social, and political criteria. Another point is that this theological transition occurs parallel to the philosophical transition, and the two corroborate and assist one another.

1.2.2. Philosophical and Theoretical Provision

With the transition to deist theology and the decline of divine ends, the human demiurge now sees the preliminaries for the theoretical severance of the contingent existent from the Necessary Existent being

provided, and gradually, by tasting the sweetness and pride derived from his successes in establishing and improving normative and material institutions, prepares the ground within modernity for the transition to agnostic and atheist theology. Here, ends are external, and the world is no longer a manifestation of an order of normative patterns identifiable through the logic of mimetic action; rather, the world consists of elements that interact synergistically with one another and have predictable and measurable consequences. Thus, by understanding what each mechanism is designed for, ends can be identified. The mechanical order corroborated the prevalence of a focus on formal and material causes and, ultimately, instrumentalism. From this perspective, in the process of modernization, through the union of instrumentalism (formal and material causes) and rational agency (efficient cause), a product called “instrumental reason” was created that marginalized the final cause. With the emphasis on mechanism, the idea of boundary-setting and distancing between subject and object intensified, and the boundary between ethics and physics became more pronounced. In the process of modernization, norms are either understood instrumentally or posited in a constructivist manner (Taylor, 2007, p. 251; *ibid.*, p. 404). In other words, now that, according to divine providence, God’s sovereignty and kingdom have been entrusted to humanity, the human being, through his creative logic, bestows essence upon matters that lack a natural order (constructivism).

With the boundary-setting between subject and object, the perception of time also underwent a revolution. Time in modernity became life within the backdrop of ordinary time (*saeculum*); here, a transition occurred from *kairos* to empty, homogeneous time (*chronos*), and there no longer existed higher times for connection to and seeking aid from eternity and the unseen world. From this perspective—that time is empty and no *kairotic* moment exists—simultaneity occurs in events, and no individual is situated at a temporally higher or lower level than others; instead, each person, without needing mediation or intercession to attain a higher station, stands in an unmediated relationship with the whole (Taylor, 2007, p. 723).

Secular time, besides rendering various temporal levels coplanar and unrelated to elevated temporal points, also assumed the responsibility of preserving the element of continuity and cohesion in the modernization process and became a homogeneous essence and an all-encompassing whole. Now that time was emptied of meaning and disconnected from eternity, the human being, with the power of his creative act, set to work and created narratives within it, giving his life kairotic moments, such as biography writing or narratives of change and historical turning points. On this basis, the replacement of the Hijri calendar with the solar calendar by the Fifth National Consultative Assembly, and the replacement of the solar calendar with the Imperial calendar by the Twenty-Fourth National Consultative Assembly, become comprehensible. Festivals and gatherings, which by nature are a context for creating shared spatio-temporal experiences for individuals (Durkheim, 1982, p. 592), were previously in service of creating cohesion and fervor among the faithful to realize transcendental ends, but in the process of modernization, are transformed into ends in themselves, such as the narrating of grand national events or the establishment of various institutions.

Among the corroborations of the philosophy of linear history based on progress and evolution in the modernization process was the transition from a hermeneutics of the cosmos to a hermeneutics of the universe. This means that in the ancient world, the cosmos and all that is other than God, despite its infinity, was bound and contingent upon a specific divine plan, and its relation to humanity existed as a given; hence, despite its multiplicity, it possessed unity through a transcendental totality. In modernity, however, a changing and vast universe encompasses humanity, in which millions of galaxies exist. Unlike the ancient world, the Earth (the place of human habitation) is no longer at the center of the cosmos; rather, it is the sun that occupies the center, and the universe is identifiable by humanity based on exceptionless scientific laws. Accordingly, the transition from the Ptolemaic, "geocentric" system to the Copernican, "heliocentric" system was a consequence of the change in the view of humanity's place and divine providence alongside scientific advances;

scientific and industrial advances alone did not render the Ptolemaic system obsolete.

1.2.2.1. Humanism, Freedom, and Inner References

The logical outcome of the transition to deism and the epistemological preference for reason was the shift and transition from the mimetic to the creative. A creative act in which constraint and limitation had no place, and reason, free, was to be valued not only as a path to knowledge but also as an end in itself. Now humanity, having become the bearer of reason and divine love, relied upon the seat of self-authorization or *fa'ālun mā yashā'* (active in whatever it wills), and humanism became the axis of foundational, normative, and crediting activities. Self-authorization means determining norms and higher goals for oneself according to the requirements of reason and without regard to God, because the belief that our principles and values in choosing must be based on attention to God arises from the kind of certainty of childhood or the absolute values of the ancient world (Berlin, 1969, p. 303). In other words, divine or Aristotelian teleology (final cause) potentially constrains the freedom of the individual (efficient cause) for progress and the establishment of novel normative institutions.

With the discourse on humanism, controversy arose over the nature of its principles, and no longer, as in the ancient world, was everything a priori and readily available. Since humanism is meant to apply to the human species as a whole, the principle of universality must be observed in its formulation. The humanism existing in religion was rejected due to its claim of non-universality and its hierarchical nature. On the other hand, personal human desires and motivations, including self-love, constituted another obstacle to the universality of humanism. Two very important strategies were employed to solve this problem, which are turning points in the turn and tendency toward modernity. In the first step, the strategy of rendering desires and human motivation innocent was adopted, based on which human motivation is neutral but always possesses self-love and can be directed toward good or evil, and rational or irrational ends (Taylor, 2007, p. 270). In the next step, this neutral desire is guided along the

path of universal benevolence by references. Previously, outward reference (to the transcendent) was the basis and axis in regulating and consolidating the foundation of moral order, but in modernity, all references are inward and exclusive to the human being himself. These inner references, arising from the different readings of philosophical and theoretical schools, are limited to three: rational reference, reference to free will, and sensory reference (Taylor, 2007, pp. 23-30). These threefold references, in the position of extracting universal norm-generating principles, engaged in establishing purely crediting and abstract positions in which the human being lacks awareness of some of his personal desires and motivations, such as the original position or the veil of ignorance.

In fact, modernity gained superiority and prevalence over religion because of its form and configuration; that is, instrumental reason, alongside the new reading of the universe, corroborated materialism. On this basis, materialist ontology relies on the scientific successes of the human species, which are epistemological in nature, and presents itself as accessible and necessary (Taylor, 2007, p. 586). The spread of modern unbelief, through its more attractive epistemology, led to neglect and failure to identify the foundations of the ontological commitments of religion. However, this neglect of the foundations of ontological commitments did not mean their elimination or the absence of transcendental references.

1.2.3. Economy

With the transformation of the divine plan into one option among other available options, the benevolent and universal plans of humanity took shape around the axis of self-love and the necessity of forming associations to fulfill common human needs. In modernity, individuals entered associations not in a priori manner but based on consent, associations whose basis, instead of complementary hierarchical levels, was complementary equality. That is, the competition of equal individuals to enter a society based on mutual interests. The realization of this earthly human plan also required the redefinition of behavioral principles. Accordingly, the human being became engaged in a system of production, exchange, and

consumption that was interest-oriented and demanded its own specific normative and behavioral order. This novel behavioral pattern, which had to be orderly, peaceful, and productive, delegated, through a social contract, a domain of its authority and powers to political institutions (Locke, 1989, p. 174). Among the consequences of this behavioral pattern was the fading and decline of the principles of warrior ethics and heroism among the general populace, particularly among classes that relied on their military glory (Taylor, 2007, pp. 248-249). It was for this reason that tribal chiefs, nomadic leaders, and khans were gradually replaced by the merchant and trader class.

During the reign of Reza Khan, the face of capitalist production grew and prevailed, and the process of transforming the subsistence and share-based economy into a monetary economy continued at an accelerated pace, resulting in an increase in the volume of international trade and exchanges. The growing trend of commerce was pushing the self-sufficient and independent mode of production of the ancient world to the brink of collapse (Abrahamian, quoting Lambton, 1982, p. 18). Initially, the institution of monarchy became the pioneer and custodian of developing capitalism and industrialization in the country, among the most significant examples of which was the railway project. With the onset of the industrialization process, the growth of the class of industrialists, merchants, and large contractors intensified. This capitalist development in Iran was in accordance with the will of and accompanied by the support of the foreign institution (colonialism). First, a large portion of the capitalists and contractors active in Iran were foreign; second, and more importantly, the development of the capitalist economy generated and strengthened the influence of the foreign institution in Iran. This is because the mimetic logic of the foreign institution was based on the dispatch and spread of capitalist relations and mode of production in the target countries, which in turn led to a hierarchical division of labor in the world. For, given the accumulative and sedentary nature of capital, its primary profit and benefit accrued to the foreign institution, and the target country was subjected to "colonialism" (Trotsky, 1970, p. 19).

1.2.4. Social Discipline

In modernity, it was necessary for nature and human society to be reorganized with the aid of instrumental reason and human agency so that they would align with human goals (Taylor, 2007, p. 253). Understanding the world no longer dictates moral meaning and norms, and based on causal laws, it is predictable and manageable. With the internal arrangement of a normative order, it was now the turn of the outer; order had to replace the norms of the old world. The end of this order also had to guarantee a suitable context for the pursuit of human flourishing. Moreover, the progress of science and the specialization of affairs led to the specialization of roles and the social division of labor, and roles were liberated from constraints and were no longer specific to a particular stratum or class but became accessible options for all (Durkheim, 1997, p. 305).

Based on humanism, benevolence and care for others were considered among the individual ideals of the new order, and to operationalize this, a culture of discipline was the first step (Taylor, 2007, p. 117). The expansion of disciplinary methods, centered on self-control, self-improvement, and the creation of socio-political organizations, took place through reliance on the theory of “natural law”. The theory of natural law, which originates from a rational universal reference, sees respect for common interests in the form of life, property, and liberty as vital for laying an ethical foundation and background (Locke, 1989, p. 208).

1.2.4.1. The First Wave of Social Discipline

Among the first steps of social disciplining was active engagement in social homogenization and assimilation, for hierarchical levels had lost their meaning and now, due to equality, everyone stood on the same level. The transition from ancient collective contexts and membership in a modern order required a social contract. Absolute and interventionist states are an efficient and accessible option for shaping the economy, culture, and education, and they can draw people into the sphere of the social contract.

The Pahlavi monarchy, under the influence of modernization literature and with the motivation that the waves of discipline would

ultimately benefit the consolidation of the institution of monarchy, undertook this responsibility. This was also because, in the old world, the institution of monarchy enjoyed an organic order, but with the rise of the Pahlavi monarchy and given the collapse of traditional contexts, the institution of monarchy had to mechanically enumerate the legitimizing foundations of its order, including through a professional army, state bureaucracy, and the support of courtiers (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 169).

The requirements of the new behavioral pattern necessitated peacefulness and order, and it permitted the manifestation of the spirit of warfare and heroism only in a regular, modern army. On this basis, Reza Khan put a series of measures on the agenda to create and consolidate order through peace, not warfare. The policy of “Takhteh Qapu” (forced settlement) and the sedentarization of tribes and nomads, the conversion of khans into large landowners, and the disarmament of the tribes were among these disciplinary measures. On the other hand, the concentration of military power and the creation of a modern army itself required an increase in state production and revenue. The allocation of a huge share of the budget in those years to the military sector itself emphasized this point (Foran, 1993, pp. 332-331). The establishment of the “Renewal Party” (Hezb-e Tajaddod), composed of young, Western-educated reformers in the Fifth Majlis (1924), paved the way for Reza Khan’s disciplinary reforms (Foran, 1993, p. 308). Furthermore, to educate the new generation, increase a sense of participation and nationalist sentiments, and to prevent internal uprisings, the institution of monarchy passed and implemented the Compulsory Military Service Law in 1927. With this law, Reza Khan sought to transform the professional army into a national army that would be a supporter and backer of the institution of monarchy (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 164).

With the decline of the contexts for promoting and reproducing the spirit of warfare, the emphasis on techniques of peacefulness that served the common good spread through the establishment of schools, universities, and the training of a new generation of intellectuals. That is, to some extent, the economic and political foundations of the modern moral order influenced cultural transformation (Taylor, 2007,

p. 254). The prohibition of local attire in 1928, the compulsion of adult men to wear Western-style clothing such as the Pahlavi hat, the creation of identical and guild-specific uniforms, and the implementation of the Unveiling Law (*Kashf-e Hijāb*) in 1936 were among Reza Khan's measures aimed at homogenization and assimilation. The expansion of instrumental order, the social division of labor, and the development of education led to the swelling of the bureaucracy and officialdom within the institution of monarchy (Foran, 1993, p. 332). The training and growth of elites and intellectuals from within the institution of monarchy was one of the unintended consequences of the disciplinary reforms of the Pahlavi era. This class, given the growth of the ideal of modern life in their imagination, did not participate in popular culture and could not tolerate royal despotism either (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 66).

Reza Khan's police state, in addition to disciplining the civil sphere, also sought to alter the order of the institution of religion. Hence, normative restrictions on the action and intervention of the institution of religion emerged. Moreover, within the heart of disciplined life itself, there were processes and tendencies toward the decline of the rites and rituals of the institution of religion (Foran, 1993, p. 338). During this era, efforts were made to reduce the normative significations of the institution of religion to moralism; that is, the blending of goals and interests with others through emphasis on the new orderly, peaceful, and productive behavioral pattern. On the other hand, the religious order, except in cases that conflicted with the new behavioral pattern, was compatible with the civil order because good behavior was generally not separate from religion. For example, in the Civil Code enacted in 1934, most of the laws of the Islamic Sharia were affirmed. In fact, modernity, using the moral rules that the institution of religion itself had helped establish, confronted the religious order (Taylor, 2007, p. 283). Among the earliest such measures aimed at disciplining the institution of religion was the abolition of ritual ceremonies and religious practices such as preventing the holding of *Ta'ziyeh* (passion play) groups, *Rawḍa-khwānī* (elegiac recitation), the Feast of Sacrifice, and self-flagellation processions; this was because the nature of these ceremonies lay in the conformity of society

with the ancient spiritual world. These ceremonies were mechanisms of suspension in the ancient world, meaning that an individual, by transgressing God's commands and acting upon his base desires, committed a sin, and was then re-connected to the ancient spiritual world through the mechanism of "repentance and seeking forgiveness," which constituted the essence of religious ceremonies. Hence, the festival dimension of the institution of religion in the modernization process was anti-order and had to be controlled and disciplined.

The new order, in antagonism to the institution of religion, also entered the judicial and educational spheres, sending seminary students to compulsory military service, eliminating compulsory religious instruction in schools, interfering with endowed properties and lands, bringing the administration of endowments under control, seizing the lucrative notarial professions from the 'ulamā', granting the determination of whether legal cases were religious or customary to state judges, and placing Western-educated jurists at the head of judicial affairs instead of traditional judges (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 175).

1.2.4.2. The Second Wave of Social Discipline

After the first wave of social discipline, the second wave, which began with the "White Revolution," reached its peak with the establishment of the "Rastakhiz (Resurgence) Party of the Iranian Nation." The second Pahlavi monarch, in seeking mechanical legitimation for the institution of monarchy, faced challenges from the institutions of religion and modernity. To overcome these challenges, he placed both negative and positive strategies on the agenda. In the realm of negative strategy, the weakening and suppression of the sources of legitimacy and power of the institutions of religion and modernity were operationalized. Among these measures were:

- Expanding the scope of SAVAK's activities, arresting poets, writers, and directors, and establishing state-owned food import and distribution companies to control and eliminate the traditional bazaar guilds.
- Control over endowments, prohibition of the publication of religious books except with the permission of the Endowments

Organization, establishment of the Religion Corps with the cooperation of the Faculty of Theology of Tehran University, granting jurisdiction to secular courts to adjudicate family disputes, raising the legal age of marriage, and granting women the right to vote.

In the realm of positive strategy, the second Pahlavi monarch sought to establish a kind of neo-Durkheimian form; that is, the fusion of spirituality and nationality with a civilizational prospect. In this regard, recourse to the theology of ancient Persian religions and the claim of recreating the civilizational glory of ancient Iran in the new age gained relevance, and the Shah, as the spiritual and political leader, was to guide the nation toward the "Great Civilization" (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 547). The point is that within the heart of creating this neo-Durkheimian form, alongside reliance on non-religious ideas of the glory of state and nation, the inclination toward the foreign institution was also prominent (Foran, 1993, p. 336).

1.2.5. The Age of Mobilization

As noted, in the modernization process, religious forms assume a neo-Durkheimian guise, and it is movements that propel the individual toward membership in these forms; for this reason, modernity is also the age of mobilizations. The age of mobilization is a process in which people are drawn into new forms of society, religion, and institutions through persuasion or coercion (Taylor, 2007, p. 461). In neo-Durkheimian forms, through the linkage of religion, political identity, and a civilizational outlook, the individual enters a denomination that is a larger mosque and possesses a political institution that administers affairs based on a deist theology. In the modernization process, membership in a mosque in which one does not believe is not rational. In mobilizations, spirituality and methods of self-purification are linked to political identity and may crystallize in the form of political parties. Indeed, spirituality, discipline, political identity, and an image of a civilizational order are the four elements of faith in the age of mobilization (Taylor, 2007, p. 275). Now the question is, how do these movements and neo-Durkheimian forms take shape, and according to what logic do they operate?

With the individual gaining dignity based on humanism and the emphasis on common interests in the new behavioral pattern, the establishment of an institution such as the “public sphere” for identifying inter-subjective meanings and even constructing and forging a common mentality was not unexpected. The public sphere is a situation specific to debate aimed at reaching a common mentality through print media, books, newspapers, guesthouses, coffeehouses, cafés, and the like. Taylor, expanding on Habermas’s ideas in *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, believes that the public sphere is meta-political, meta-topical, and secular. It is meta-political because all members of society, regardless of the government’s view, can participate in it, whereas in the ancient world, due to the interconnectedness of the political and the social, people had no identity independent of a priori laws, and without laws, no government (polity) existed (Taylor, 2007, pp. 208-209). The reason for the secular nature of the public sphere also lies in the transition from an external source of dignity (the transcendent) to an internal status with a focus on common action (Taylor, 2007, p. 211).

Now that the public sphere is the crystallization of internal dignity within the realm of common interests, it is also the criterion of rightness and legitimacy, and it necessitates a theoretical process by which the political sphere is constructed. Here, the political is all those things that pertain to the executive guarantee of the contract. Hence, the state and all political institutions created through the social contract must gain the people’s consent as a permanent condition. The criterion of oversight is also based not on divine will and the order of nature, but on the power of reason. If the consent latent in the social contract is violated, the right to revolution, as a mechanism, returns the political sphere to the condition prior to the social contract – that is, the public sphere; this is the very idea of “libertarian anarchism” (Varden, 2015, pp. 173-175). The point is that in modernity, with the activation of the mechanism of revolution and the decline of the political sphere, the public sphere does not disappear, and the individual does not revert to the state of nature; for the public sphere, given its meta-political and meta-topical nature, exists independently, and there is a collective awareness of the common

interest. And since the public sphere exists independently, the individual is perpetually in a state of contract. Given what has been stated regarding the nature and functioning of mobilizations and neo-Durkheimian forms, it is now time to scrutinize the process by which Iranian society became a member of these forms, with careful consideration of the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

2. Analysis of Findings

The Islamic Revolution of Iran was one of the greatest socio-political transformations of the twentieth century and is distinct from all modern movements and revolutions. The Islamic Revolution of Iran was a refutation of most prevailing theories concerning the decline of religion in modern societies. Now the question is how, in the new world – the arena of modern literature – did the institution of religion, with its external and transcendental dignity, not only not decline but also expand the scope of its influence and structuring capacity by establishing a desired government? The answer to this question lies in understanding the mode of operation of neo-Durkheimian forms. With regard to the conceptual relationship between the political and public spheres, for any revolution to succeed, the existence of a common mentality in two areas is essential:

a. Formal Requirement: Consensus on the illegitimacy of the old forms.

b. Substantive Requirement: Agreement on the new forms.

For example, in the Constitutional Revolution, part of the difficulties were due to the fact that the transition from the rightness of traditional rules to constitutional and national rules was not widely agreed upon. There was also disagreement over the new customs and forms, such as the mode of operation of the National Consultative Assembly. The examination and scrutiny of the reasons for and the manner of the Islamic Revolution are pursued through these two requirements, formal and substantive.

2.1. The Formal Requirement

The formal requirement of the Islamic Revolution arose from the formation of the public sphere and the widespread antagonism toward

the institutions of monarchy and foreign domination. The prevalence of radio, television, and cinema; the growth and development of non-religious intellectuals; and the efforts of new and old elites for reform all contributed to the dynamism of the public sphere. With the collapse of the ancient world and the inefficacy of organic legitimizing principles, the institution of monarchy, by expanding bureaucracy, strengthening the army, and placing courtiers in economic-political chokepoints, sought to establish a mechanical order. In this context, the dual waves of discipline, by altering the behavioral pattern to secure and guarantee the rightness of the institution of monarchy, had an unintended and reverse consequence. As noted, the new behavioral pattern arose from the core of “internal dignity” and the granting of a self-authorizing status to the human being, and it would brook no a priori order, including the institutions of monarchy and foreign domination—the situation being somewhat different vis-à-vis the institution of religion, which will be addressed later. From this perspective, the waves of discipline acted as a catalyst, accelerating the formation of the public sphere and rendering modern order more accessible. Furthermore, in this formal requirement arising from neo-Durkheimian forms, the individual had the autonomy to independently join any sect and denomination and was no longer constrained a priori. The people of Iran, with the expansion of available options, joined parties, movements, rallies, and labor unions.

After the first wave of mobilizations, which culminated in the 1953 coup d'état and the political repression by the institution of monarchy, the currents and movements involved were able, in subsequent years, to continue their existence through political openings or clandestine activities and to play a crucial role in the years leading up to the Islamic Revolution. For, following every wave of discipline, an age of mobilization ensues: Reza Khan's disciplinary wave, during the period of political opening after the First World War, brought about the Oil Nationalization Movement and the 1953 coup; the disciplinary wave of the second Pahlavi monarch also corroborated the movements that culminated in the Islamic Revolution. These movements belonged to both the process of modernization and the institution of religion.

Within the modernity camp, the right wing of the National Front, the Freedom Movement of Iran, and on the left, the Organization of Iranian People's Fedai Guerrillas, the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, the Marxist Mojahedin, and the Tudeh Party played the greatest role in the Islamic Revolution (Abrahamian, 1982, pp. 555-593). The National Front and the Freedom Movement sought the legacy of constitutionalism and the implementation of the Constitution; the guerrilla organizations and the Tudeh Party called for anti-imperialist struggles leading to the dictatorship of the proletariat and thereafter a classless society. Within the institution of religion, Imam Khomeini and his companions and close associates were the vanguard of opposition to the despotism and dependency of the institution of monarchy.

The foreign institution also had dissonant prescriptions regarding the decline of the institution of monarchy: on the one hand, by prescribing respect for humanism and human rights, it caused the Shah to put the reduction of police-state policies on the agenda; on the other hand, this very humanism and political open space engendered antagonism toward the institution of monarchy and the necessity for police intervention. In fact, with the transition from the ancient world, a consensus on the illegitimacy of old forms of order was achieved between the institution of religion and the modernity camp, and the formal requirement dictated that the people, in the sphere of the public sphere, reject the previous forms and contract upon a political matter. The slogan "Independence, Freedom, Islamic Republic" in the early days of the Islamic Revolution represented precisely this formal requirement: independence from the foreign institution, freedom from the despotism of the institution of monarchy, and emphasis on the form of an Islamic government.

2.2. The Substantive Requirement

With the consensus among the forces involved in the Islamic Revolution on overthrowing the institutions of monarchy and foreign domination, it was time to agree upon the nature and foundations of the social contract. The substantive requirement necessitated that the revolutionary forces, relying on neo-Durkheimian forms, present their

reading of the linkage between religion, nationality, and a civilizational outlook, so that it might be agreed upon by others. The most contentious category in this regard arose from the perspective on religion in the new world. Amidst the waves of social discipline, there were different reactions regarding the new moral order and the religious order:

a. Some believed that religion must elevate the individual to a level higher than disciplined and self-sufficient life. The institution of religion, led by Imam Khomeini and some of his companions, including Martyr Beheshti, Allameh Tabatabai, and Martyr Motahhari, belonged to this category.

b. Some believed that religion must be reformed to align with civilization and discipline. Supporters of the National Front and the Freedom Movement, including Bazargan and Ali Shariati, were in this category.

c. Others sought to reject religion due to its conflict and enmity with civilization and discipline. The People's Fedai Guerrillas, the Tudeh Party, the Marxist Mojahedin, and some liberals were placed in this category.

Here, the nature of modernity reveals itself better: having moved beyond the limited and a priori options of the ancient world, we now face a spectrum of options, and religion has been transformed from the only available and a priori option into one option among others—and this is precisely what the present research means by secularism in Iran. Taylor also acknowledges that in the modernization process, religion has declined, but this is not the whole story. He writes on this matter, as a Catholic:

“My own view of ‘secularization’, which I freely confess has been shaped by my own perspective as a believer, is that certainly ‘religion’ has declined. Religious belief exists in a field of options which includes different forms of rejection and unbelief. Christian faith exists in a field where there is also a wide range of other spiritual options. But the interesting story is not simply about decline; it is also about a new placing of the sacred or spiritual in relation to individual and social life. This new placing is now the occasion for recompositions

of spiritual life in new forms and for new ways of existing both in relation to God and not in relation to God" (Taylor, 2007, p. 453).

In the dynamic interaction of competition and substantive preference of the revolution, ultimately, the reading of Imam Khomeini regarding the framework of the interaction between the modern moral order and the religious order was accepted and agreed upon by the masses, and on April 1, 1979, the people, entering into a social contract in the form of a referendum on the "Islamic Republic of Iran," posited and created the political sphere. But how, in the new world, was the institution of religion able to triumph over the modernity camp and structure the content of the revolution according to its specific reading? The answer to this question is summarized in two areas: a. The personality of Imam Khomeini; b. The nature of religion.

2.2.1. The Personality of Imam Khomeini

Imam Khomeini, given his personal characteristics, was not only a religious preceptor but also a charismatic national leader. Understanding the process of modernization, Imam Khomeini was cognizant of the fact that alongside the decline of religion, the possibility of its re-creation in novel frameworks also existed. On this basis, in explaining his desired government, he emphasized the "Islamic Republic"; that is, the infiltration of content into form. In other words, Imam Khomeini was the champion of linking faith, nationality, and civilization in Iran, and was able to triumph over rivals in the battle of neo-Durkheimian imaginaries. By rearranging a religion-based political identity and tying it to the advent of the Promised Savior, he established an image of a civilizational order that answered the revolutionary tendencies of the left, the justice-seeking spirits of the oppressed strata, and the liberal aspirations of the middle classes. The point is that by doing so, Imam caused the decline of faith, beliefs, and religious ceremonies during the modernization process not to occur, or at least to be postponed (Taylor, 2007, p. 474); that is, a "suspension" came about in the new world. In fact, this suspension takes place within the public sphere; for, as indicated, the public sphere is a secular and non-hierarchical space based on common action, and through this suspension, the possibility of the return of external and

transcendental dignity by resorting to divine rights is provided. The theoretical consequence of such a suspension makes possible the extension of the theory of the “Guardianship of the Jurist” (Wilāyat al-Faqīh) into the political sphere. Indeed, the suspension in the modernization process, by removing the neglect of the foundations of the ontological commitments of the institution of religion, marginalizes materialist ontology; this is while the epistemology of the modernization process, with all its attractions, continues to exist, and only content infiltrates form.

2.2.2. The Nature of Religion

The nature of the institution of religion during the throes of the Islamic Revolution was very effective in advancing Imam Khomeini’s reading of the post-revolutionary world. It must be noted that Imam Khomeini also played an irreplaceable role in motivating and organizing the institution of religion. At this juncture, with the gradual demise of the institution of monarchy, religion sought to fill the void. The modernity camp, for its part, with the opening of the political space from 1977 onwards, played a prominent role in the popular mobilization of the revolution, but the repression and suffocation by the monarchy had worn it down, and it no longer had the power it possessed in the years 1941–1953 (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 657). Although there were also restrictions for religious leaders and prominent scholars, other seminary students and clerics could, in a freer atmosphere, align the lower strata with the revolution. For example, with the dismantling of the ancient world, villagers and nomads were no longer involved in the old tribal and peasant hierarchies and had been freed from the bondage of khans, tribal chiefs, and absentee landlords, and could directly and without mediation be absorbed by the mobilizing forces of the revolution from the institution of religion. Villagers who had sought refuge in the margins of cities and had become alienated from their former hierarchical identity redefined themselves under the protective umbrella of the institution of religion (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 660). Hence, the expansion of the modernization process did not necessarily lead to the decline of religion. Moreover, the festival dimension of the institution of religion, through home-based

gatherings and rawdas, congregational mosque prayers, and other collective customs, could contribute to this. The holding of fortieth-day memorial ceremonies and funerals for the victims of monarchical oppression was another form of the festival dimension of the institution of religion. Shortly after the Islamic Revolution, the foreign institution imposed an eight-year war on Iran. In neo-Durkheimian forms, through the fusion and linkage of political identity with religion, sacred violence also took on a national hue. This war, besides being a crystallization of sacred violence, accelerated a new wave of discipline within the heart of Iran's socio-political developments. This new wave of homogenization took shape around two axes:

- a. Antagonism toward the principles and instances of the institutions of monarchy and foreign domination.
- b. Suspension in the modernization process and the spread of the institution of religion.

The sense of pride and solidarity present in the arena of the Iran-Iraq War could resolve the national-religious discomforts and frustrations arising from the previously humiliating wars (the Russo-Persian Wars, and the First and Second World Wars) and mend and improve the relationship with the past. In the end, and with the defeat of the foreign institution, Imam Khomeini, at the dawn of modern Iran, had been able to persuade the people to create new structures.

Conclusion

The Islamic Revolution of Iran succeeded in actualizing what the constitutionalists had deemed inconceivable and struck the institutions of monarchy and foreign domination from Iran's socio-political equations. This revolution, as a unique phenomenon in contemporary history, by challenging the prevailing theories about the decline of religion, demonstrated that secularism in Iran did not proceed in a monocausal manner but was a complex and multifaceted process. From the interaction between religious life and secularism in Iran, the possibility for the formation of novel forms emerged, in which religion and modernity continued their existence side by side. The question of this research was to examine the manner of the interaction between religion and politics in the context of the Islamic Revolution

of Iran. In this paper, using a descriptive-analytical method, the theoretical foundations of the interaction between religion and politics were pursued in three forms: pre-Durkheimian, neo-Durkheimian, and post-Durkheimian. This threefold categorization of the forms of social life revolves around three different readings of religion, politics, and civilization. In pre-Durkheimian forms, religious belonging is a priori accompanied by prescriptions regarding political and civilizational identity, and a nexus exists among these three elements. Neo-Durkheimian forms follow a similar pattern, with the difference that they are attained a posteriori; meaning that the individual is free to choose one from among various readings. In contrast, in post-Durkheimian forms, the nexus between religious, political, and civilizational identity has disintegrated. By examining the theoretical foundations of neo-Durkheimian forms in the guise of theological, philosophical, economic, and social provisions, it became evident that the Islamic Revolution of Iran, led by Imam Khomeini, experienced a transformation of the kind of transition from pre-Durkheimian to neo-Durkheimian forms. This means that Imam Khomeini, as the charismatic leader of this revolution, succeeded, by synthesizing religious, national, and civilizational elements, in presenting a novel reading of religious government in the modern world that was accepted by the majority of society. In fact, the decline of the religious forms of the ancient world into unbelief and novel religious/non-religious forms was due to the formal rather than substantive superiority of the modern world. This formal preference was rooted in the epistemological attractions of modernity rather than the ontological superiority of the institution of religion. Imam Khomeini, by understanding the exigencies of the modern world and harnessing these epistemological attractions (such as political participation, the rule of law, and national independence), was the champion of guiding the people of Iran toward the creation of new forms of religious life. This important task was accomplished through the provision of the two requirements, formal and substantive: in the formal requirement, consensus is reached on the illegitimacy of old forms; in the substantive requirement, agreement is reached on new forms, and the possibility of the social reproduction of religion with a new inclusivity,

based on the modern “public sphere,” is provided, and the theory of the “Guardianship of the Jurist” (Wilāyat al-Faqīh) is accepted by the majority as the content of the new political system.

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