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One Man – One Desire

A Study of the Reasons of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and its Mobilization Process

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Abstract

Iran, a country generally seen as abusing the laws of human rights in favour of the Islamic laws and where women is being punished if not wearing headscarves in public. However, the great opposition against this country's laws is probably not aware of the revolution in 1979 that formed the contemporary society of Iran. This study brings light to a revolution rarely mentioned nowadays. It analyzes the reasons possible for the making of the revolution and draws the conclusion that it was not because religion being put aside that made the revolution happen.

With the concept of contentious politics is then the actual mobilization process analyzed to answer how such a broad mass of Iranians could support a revolution that had the rallying cry to, in a modern western view close the society and isolate it to the surrounding world.

Through speeches and texts published by the front man of the revolution Ayatollah Khomeini has the mobilization been analyzed and concludes that the use of Marxist rhetoric and Islamic symbolism, especially the Shiite tradition of martyrdom attracted the people who risked their lives by protesting in the streets that eventually made the dictatorial Shah leave Iran in favour for the country's new supreme leader; Ayatollah Khomeini.

Key words: Iranian Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini, Mobilization, Revolutions, Contentious Politics

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1 Introduction

On the first of February 1979 Ruhollah Khomeini triumphantly arrived to the country he had been departed from fifteen years earlier. The arrival is seen as the ending of the dictatorial leadership of the Shah and the beginning of the Islamic Republic. The people had fought against the Shah's tyrannical leadership for several years but it was not until the Shiite cleric Ayatollah Khomeini began advocate an uprising that the people began risking their lives by protesting in the streets which subsequently, after a lot of bloodshed made the Shah go for a brief "vacation" where he never came back from. This revolution is interesting because it had such a great support among the people (Skocpol 1994: 266) and because of its difference from other revolutions. The big difference is that it was not a socialistic revolution, it was an Islamic revolution. Or was it? The rhetoric used by Ayatollah Khomeini is comparable to the leaders of socialistic revolutions such as the reference to the people as the oppressed (mostazafin) and the enemy the oppressors (mostakberin) (Abrahamian 1993: 26). It is though unquestionable that the big winners of the revolution were the clerics because they gained a lot of the political power especially Ayatollah Khomeini. He has been seen as the leader of the revolution and became Iran's supreme leader after the revolution. The following chapters will analyze why this revolution could happen in the first place, and how the people got indoctrinated by the cleric and Khomeini to make a revolution in the name of Islam.

1.1 Statement of Purpose and Problem

Iran was considered as one of the wealthiest countries in the Middle East during the 60s and 70s. The country's great oil resources attracted oil companies all over the world that wanted to establish refineries and have a piece of this black gold. The Shah of Iran, who admired the western lifestyle, welcomed the companies with open arms. Everything was in order but suddenly mass protests began escalating on the streets and created a chaos that eventually made the Shah flee the country and a new leader was installed; Ayatollah Khomeini. How did this happen? My purpose of this study is to locate and analyze the underlying reasons of what made the people protest in the streets and risking their lives. This country that on the surface was in perfect condition according to our western belief had a different reality the people were fed up with. The purpose is also to wake an opinion still in belief of that this shift of power was just some ordinary coup d'état. It was not an ordinary coup d'état, it was a mass based revolt against the Shah.

The research question I am supposed to answer with this study is two-parted where I suggest that you need an answer to the first question if being able to answer the second. The questions of my thesis are:

(1) "Why did the revolution in Iran occur?"
(2) "How did Ayatollah Khomeini mobilize the people to eventually do a revolution?"

These questions are to be answered with this study and the following sections will in detail present method, material and what theories that has been used to answer the questions.

1.2   Method

This chapter will outline what method I have used for my study and an explanation to why this method was preferable than others.

My research problem is divided into two parts. To approach the understanding to what the underlying reasons for the Iranian revolution were I used a theory consuming method were I focus on the actual case. This method uses already existing theories to try to explain what happened in the studied case (Esaiasson et al 2007: 42). Since my purpose with this research is to understand what the reasons were for one specific revolution I found this method better than a theory testing method which is more preferable when approaching a case or cases on a more abstract level (Ibid: 43). I am aware of that my choice of method limits the possibilities of making general assumptions of revolutions, but since all revolutions are all of unique design (Skocpol 1994:7), there are troubles generalizing revolutions at all. The second part of my research problem of how Khomeini mobilized the people to an eventual revolution is of a slightly similar design. To help me understand what made the people turn to Khomeini, I used Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow's theory concerning contentious politics which is described in an upcoming chapter. I linked the theory to events at the advent of the revolution in 1979 to try to realize how people from different backgrounds could unite to overthrow the Shah. I have based my material to the second section of the study from mainly texts and speeches from Khomeini to find out what things that were said or done that could attract such broad support.

1.3   Material Discussion

This section will bring light to the importance of evaluation of sources when dealing with studies of this kind and a discussion of the choice of material.

The Iranian revolution of 1979 has been studied frequently by scholars all over the world. A majority of these scholars have some relations to the country such as family-ties or other connections. In the introduction to the book Islamic Iran (1985), Asaf Hussain described how you could divide the authors about the Iranian revolution in different categories depending on their relation to the revolution (Hussain 1985: 3). Authors with any connection to Iran autonomously have some general opinion about the revolution since it is such a major event in the country's history. Their opinions are implicitly or explicitly outspoken in their books which put me in a position where I always needed to be alert of the possibility of wrong or misguided information because of the author's personal relations to the cause. This could rather provide as evidence for the hermeneutic statement that there is no such thing as an objective fact and that social sciences should not always have that as an aim (Lundquist 1993: 42). Wherever you turn and whatever you are doing research about, someone who has stated a fact has an direct or indirect opinion to it which is bound to be expressed the minute he or she pronounces it or puts his fingers on the keyboard of the computer and writes it or such and for that reason knowledge is a subjective matter and science should not always have an aim at stating the truth. Though I think the truth is in the eye of the beholder, a scholar should make a great effort to try to be as objective as possible and follow the rules provided to make an objective research. I am concerned of this and hence my study is not claiming a universal truth it seeks to understand the case of Iran with help of general theories.

The texts and speeches I have analyzed are simply a small part of what has been published by Khomeini but I have more or less limited my empirical data to texts and speeches concerning the advent of the revolution. All of the texts and speeches I have used are translated from Farsi[1] into English. I have had a reserved stance to these sources because of the possibility of translation errors and the translator revising the texts. I am aware of the subsequent lacking of validity of the study and that the optimal option would have been to read and analyze the texts and speeches in its original language but adversities such as language difficulties and logistical reasons have limited me to secondary sources. As for the first research question of what the underlying reasons of the Iranian revolution were, is secondary material used from several sources including scholars being supportive of the Shah's leadership and against his leadership. This mix of pros and cons do I think is useful because it gives me a chance to check information from sources of different opinion of the revolution before I states it in my thesis, which I think increases the validity of the study.

1.4   Theory

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[1] The Iranian language

In order to answer the questions of my study, Theda Skocpol and Jack Goldstone's theories concerning revolutions and reasons to their arising and Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrows theory of contentious politics have been used as a framework. These theories will be presented in detail together with a discussion concerning the reasons and relevance of usage in the text below.

1.4.1 Reasons of Revolutions

For answering the question of why the revolution in Iran happened, theories of Theda Skocpol and Jack Goldstone have been used to help understand the outbreak of the revolution in Iran. They both provide facts from countries who have been subjects of revolutions of some kind and among other things tries to analyze the underlying reasons of their outbreaks. Skocpol assumes with reference to empirical evidence that an authoritarian leadership makes a state more prone to a revolution (Skocpol 1994: 265f) Goldstone who has studied earlier revolutions draws the attention to that revolutions occurs more often in states who suffers great population increases which in turn often leads to urban migration and rural misery (Goldstone 1991: 25). These two scholars are supposed to provide me with a framework needed to answer the question of why the revolution in Iran occurred. I am aware of other possible theories concerning reasons of why revolutions happen but I think these theories could well fit my case.

1.4.2 Contentious Politics

The concept of contentious politics covers an extensive spectrum in the discipline of political contention from its causes and processes to outcomes. The concept is summarized by Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow (2007: 4) as follows:

> "Contentious politics involves interactions in which actors make claims bearing on someone else's interests, leading to coordinated efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs, in which governments are involved as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties. Contention politics thus brings together three familiar features of social life: contention, collective action and politics."

These three different features are most likely applicable to political processes where an actor A claims anything from actor C with help of the actor B. The criteria of the process or the event to fall in the concept of contentious politics, is that a government plays the role as either actor A, B or C. As previous mentioned, Tilly and Tarrow embrace an extensive spectrum of contention which ranges from the acting of small-scale lobbying groups to the events of civil wars and revolutions. Any of these events includes the processes of contention, collective action and politics. I will highlight the contention in the case of the Iranian revolution since it refers to the process of the actor, which in my case are the clergy and Ayatollah Khomeini, making claims in form of direct attacks on the

Shah's regime including demands of his resignation (Tilly and Tarrow 2007: 4ff). This process is important to underline when moving to the next part of the contentious politics; collective action. This part, as its name concludes, relates to the collective action where the actor A has mobilized the actors B and instructed them to react in a manner to collect the claims the entire process began with (Tilly & Tarrow: 5). Tilly and Tarrow concludes the concept of mobilization as "how people who at a given point in time are not making contentious claims start to do so" (Ibid: 35). The contentious claims could well be a call of a revolution. The mobilizing process includes the mechanisms of creating a collective identity of the group with forming boundaries and pinpointing its enemies (Ibid: 34). The concept of contentious politics is very wide and much of its contents do not contribute to my research problem. Therefore is the study limited to focus on mainly the mobilization processes where I think this theory would be very helpful to understand how Khomeini succeeded to mobilize the people of Iran.

The main reason for choosing this theory is because the concepts presented are rather applicable to my case, which therefore contributes to answer the question stated.

The critique of the theory could probably be its great generalizations of the cases used. It is apparent when making a distinction of countries as either democratic or undemocratic (Ibid: 55). The decision of stating a country as democratic or not is vague and relative to its compared part and should perhaps not be measured in such a polarizing manner. Though I am aware of when presenting such a broad and widespread theory you need to generalize to make it easier to apply it on empirical data.

2 Reasons of the Revolution

 The first question of my study was to find the reasons of the revolution in Iran. A great opinion has since the occurrence of the revolution had a belief that it was a basic coup d'état that surprised politicians and political scientists all over the world (Thomas 2005:1 & Skocpol 1982: 265). This was a mass-based revolution (Ibid: 266) but what did the people fought for? Was it against religious inequalities in the country like many people are in the opinion of or could you trace other inequalities or matters that could produce a frustration of the people that finally made a revolution happen? To enlighten why this certain revolution did occur, I have used theories presented by Theda Skocpol and Jack Goldstone. With their help have Iran been studied through three dimensions where I mean that you would find clear segments and events that create a more structural understanding of why the revolution occurred instead of assuming it based on religious inequalities. The three dimensions I have studied Iran from are the political, economical and the cultural dimension that is supposed to bring a more holistic light to the situation in Iran at the advent of the revolution.

2.1 Political Situation

In this section I will describe the political situation Iran before the revolution and then highlight on political actions and events made by the Shah[2] which likely could have rooted a great frustration of the people. My purpose is to link the events and actions of the political regime in Iran to what you call an authoritarian regime which according to Skocpol makes countries more susceptible to a revolution (Skocpol 1994: 19).

   Iran have a long history of its leaders coming from different dynasties from the Safavid dynasty beginning in 1501 (McDaniel 1991: 17) to the latest Pahlavi dynasty which came to an abrupt end in 1979. The Pahlavi dynasty began its reign during 1920 when Reza Khan, a military officer in a Persian Cossack brigade rose to power after a coup d'état. He seized politic control over Iran and added the title Shah[3] to his name which is the ancient Persian word for king. He gave himself absolute power and established the Pahlavi dynasty, which appealed to the

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[2] Muhammed Reza, the second Shah of the Pahlavi dynasty is referred to as the Shah in this study. The first Shah is referred to as Reza Shah or Reza Khan.
[3] The actual title was Shahanshah (Pahlavi 1961: 2) which means king of kings, but is in western texts shortened to simply Shah.

Iranians since they have a tradition of powerful single-handed rulers (Saikal 1980: 21). He was a nationalist with pro-western ideas and had visions of creating an Iran similar to the Turkey Kemal Ataturk had created. Reza Shah established good relations to countries such as Britain, Russia, France and Germany. The relation to the latter country would later become the fall of his reign. When the World War II broke out, Britain and Soviet occupied Iran because of their connections with Germany, despite Iran's proclamation as neutral in the war. This consequently made Reza Shah abdicate in favour of his son Mohammed Reza. In the coming years, Iran suffered from political imbalance including the forced rout of Mohammed Reza in 1953, the CIA-supported operation three days later of overthrowing the Prime Minister Muhammed Mossadeq and the re-appointment of Mohammed Reza to power (Saikal 1980: 44 & 214-5, Bakhash 1984: 10 & Naraghi 1994: 182).

The parliament of Iran (Majlis) had limited power before the Shah was appointed to power, and was weakened even more after the crowning of the Shah. In 1950 he constitutionally legal established the Senate which concentrated the power of the Shah and also gave him the right to dissolve both the Senate and the parliament, which he in May 1960 did (Hussain: 40f). In 1975 he abandoned the two-party system of Iran he once set up in favour of a one-party system. The only party allowed was the Rastakhiz (Resurgence) which the Shah called the Iranians to join and support whether leftist or rightist. Those who opposed the party were asked to cease their activities or leave the country or face the penalties (Saikal: 189). The Shah limited the parliamentary and democratically forum for critique against him by abolishing political parties and reducing the role of the parliament.

To prevent any critique being expressed by any individual the Shah found the national intelligence and security organization, SAVAK which was created to strengthen the Shahs power by keeping control over his opponents (Wright & Danziger 1989: 9). The whole organization had an estimated work-force of three million people operating both in the country and abroad (Hussain: 44). SAVAK arrested anyone who opposed the Shah and namely Marxists, political science students and mullahs and stands guilty for murdering and torturing over thousand people who opposed the Shah (Hussain: 44 & Time magazine 1979 - SAVAK). This Stasi-like organization was a significant instrument of oppression the Shah used against his people to wipe out any form of critique against him.

Furthermore the Shah consolidated his power by appointing people to public offices based on personal loyalties to him which consequently made all the political relationships personal and all in all strengthen the Shah's power even more (Hussain: 37). The handpicking of people to public office is one sign of a corrupt system Iran suffered from (Ibid: 37-40) which must have frustrated the educated in Iran since employment to office was not based on real proficiency but on personal loyalty to the Shah.

When Skocpol states that third world countries with authoritarian regimes are more likely to generate a cross-class political support of revolutionary movements, Iran is not set aside (Skocpol 1994: 19 & 265ff). You could well identify the Shah's leadership as an authoritarian regime, which I have tried to present in the text above. Cronyism and a more or less dictatorial leadership are

not surprisingly to find in other states political system that has been exposed to revolutions or uprisings, using Honduras and Cuba as examples. I do not think that simply an authoritarian regime will create an uprising or revolution. It could well be it that the regime creates a frustration of the people, but as Skocpol also has stated, it is hard to generally make assumptions of revolutions since you need to study them from a historical context based framework (Skocpol 1994: 7). This is interesting in the case of Iran because they have not a characteristic history of parliamentary rule as we may find in countries in Europe, but rather the opposite with despotic rulers as role models for their political leaders. I am not suggesting that the authoritarian leadership of the Shah was appreciated by the Iranians since they have not had any democratic leader before, but I rather mean that you need to have their historical heritage in mind when trying to locate what reasons making Iran more prone to a revolution or you could lower the validity of the study. That is why I also present how the economic and the cultural situation in Iran were at the time of the revolution and not limit it to just explain the political situation and consequently getting a wider understanding why the revolution occurred.

2.2   Economic Situation

This section will focus on the economic situation in Iran before the revolution in hope to get a broader understanding of why a revolution occurred. I will emphasize on the Organization Plan which was a development plan to modernize and industrialize Iran, how Iran's great oil resources and revenues were distributed and the so called White Revolution, a socioeconomic reform program that the Shah was hoping to change the Iranian society with which he consequently did but not in a manner beneficial for himself.

The Shah along with his father had a vision of westernising and modernising Iran and since the Shah were in great debt to USA for getting him back in to power in 1953 he hired American planners to formulate a plan to modernize Iran which was called the Organization Plan (Hussain: 45). This plan was aiming to modernize almost every field of the Iranian economy including industry, health and education (Ibid). Many American companies settled down all over Iran during this period which made it hard for especially peasants to make their business go round since many of the American companies were agricultural corporations that the peasants could not stand a chance competing with. This created a migration of people to the bigger cities, namely Tehran that along with the Organization Plan establishing a great amount of new industries (ibid: 47). From 1956 to 1976 the population of Iran made an increase of 75 per cent, from just over twenty million to nearly thirty-five million (Goldstone 1991: 472). Large increase of population and urban migration is one of Jack Goldstone's primary concerns of what could make a state more prone to an uprising or revolution. He draws attention to state breakdowns made from the sixteenth century to today and signifies that population growth often has led to expansion of armies and urban migration which makes states weaker since it creates higher state expenditures which often

means higher taxes or other actions that could frustrate the people and easily create an opposition to the state (Goldstone: 24-38). Goldstone points out that a population increase itself should not be seen as an event creating an uprising. Though the frustration a population increase often brings could well trigger an event that causes an uprising or revolution (Ibid: 35f). In the case of Iran the Organization Plan which consequently created an urban migration, namely to Tehran could well have triggered a frustration of the people who eventually made the revolution.

As mentioned earlier, Iran's great oil resources has made it very popular for big oil companies all over the world to get a share of it, and soon after the overthrow of Muhammed Mossadeq and the re-appointment of the Shah it was decided to split all the oil revenues in the country between the state owned National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and an international consortium of all major Western oil companies (Saikal: 48). The consortium had more capital and know-how than the NIOC and was therefore soon in full control of the Iranian oil industry and with its power to increase and decrease production and prices subsequently made the income grow steadily which affected Iran. The oil income grew from $ 22.5 million in 1954 to $ 285 million in 1960 (Ibid: 50f). However the increase of state income did not really affect the people of Iran because of the country's high expenditure concerning the military and the urban migration. Marvin Zonis, a Professor from the University of Chicago was sent by the American government to Iran to give a report of the country. In Barry Rubin's book Paved with Good intentions (1980: 143) Zonis concluded that:

> *"One can visit the Hilton La Residence, The Key Club, the Bargaud, the Imperial Country Club or one of the staggeringly large number of boutiques in Tehran and not realise that he is in one of the poorest nations in the world"*

The people's increased awareness of the state's growth of income which had little or no effect on the people did create a frustration among the people. When the Shah felt this frustration growing and threatening his leadership he launched a reform program which he called the White Revolution (Enqelab-e Sefid). The name of the program was supposed to attract people either conservative or radical, since the word *white* referred to that the accomplishment was to be through no bloodshed or disorder and *revolution* because the program was supposed to bring innovative changes in the Iranian society (Saikal: 79f). The Shah's vision was to reform the country in both political and economic manners. The political vision was to make Iran a "political democracy" which meant an implementation of a Western principle of parliamentary with the Persian monarchical tradition (Saikal: 80). In practise this meant the two-party system presented in the *political situation* section that however got removed. An actual referendum whether or not to ratify the reform program was also held in which the Shah-supported yes-stance won by achieving 99.9 % of the votes (Bakhash: 27).

The specific economy reforms included a full-scale land reform that redistributed land to 2.5 million families and later an industry reform that established new industries in the bigger cities (Saikal 84ff).

The Shah gained support through the White Revolution from people who were against him before, and the effort to fight illiteracy in Iran was probably the Shah's most successful reform (Saikal: 88). The land reform did not work out as it supposed to because of the government's failure of placing a support system for the rural families which led to a massive migration to the bigger cities, particularly Tehran where the industry reform was at full speed and in need of employees (Britannica-*Iran*). This urban migration consequently led to higher prices and worse living conditions in the bigger cities (Hussain: 106f).

The outcome of the White Revolution was not a success. Though the Shah gained support from parts of the people the failure of the land reform and the urban migration it created is seen as a setback because of the subsequent revolution a couple of years later.

The urban migration as a consequence of the Organization Plan and the White Revolution created overcrowded cities which I think fit well with Goldstone's assumptions of urban migration functioning as a trigger to an uprising or revolution. Though is it important not to draw any major assumption yet. In the next section I will present how the Shah's actions affected the cultural life of the Iranians which is meant to give the reader another dimension to the question why the revolution occurred.

2.3 Cultural Situation

To understand how the opposition against the Shah grew steadily in periods of economic boost I think you need to look at the changes the Shah and his father tried to apply to change the Iranians way of manners and culture and locate actions that could have created or enhanced the opposition against the Shah. I have had a focus on the Shah's vision of creating a modernized secular society with Western standards. Presenting this will probably get the reader another puzzle piece in the struggle to understand why the revolution occurred.

The Shah's father Reza Shah felt an attraction to the western way of life. He got his military training by Russians and had a good relation to the Brits who controlled some parts of Iran at the time of his rise to power. Through his relations with the Brits he got the first glimpse of the modernized Europeans. His vision was to introduce this way of life to the Iranians. As stated in the *political situation* section, Reza Shah tried to apply Kemal Ataturk's model of how he secularized the Turkish society (McDaniel 1991: 28). Reza Shah's son Muhammed Reza followed this vision and tried hard to achieve a modernized Iran. To make Iran a secular country, the Shah withdrew funding to the clerics in hope to seize their activities (Bakhash: 21). The clerics responded the opposite way. The Shah's opposition against the clerics was not trying to distrust the religion itself since it would be a political suicide because of the large proportion of Muslims in the country. On the other hand the clerics had to watch their tongues because opposing the Shah could pay them a visit from SAVAK, which many though did and either became imprisoned or exiled including Ayatollah Khomeini. The Shah

hoped to decrease the clerics status and increasing his own by claiming that he himself was a true Muslim and that God had given him the mission to lead Iran (Saikal: 71) which is quite ambivalent to his continuing focus of the importance of the monarchical leadership (Pahlavi 1961:47).

The Shah strived to modernize Iran in several sectors of the society. His father Reza Shah had already begun modernizing Iran by building schools and cinemas but also introducing the western way of life and dress. Referring to the way of dress, Reza Shah made it illegal for women to appear in public with the chadour, a form of dress that covers the whole body in one large piece of cloth. According to Islam it is a sin for a lady to let her hair be seen by men except for those of her family (Salehi 1988: 86). The banning of the chadour symbolizes the strive, more or less by force[4] to separate religion from the state and in this case also the streets since it limited the women to practice and express their religion in public. This blow against the clerics affected the relationship to Reza Shah negatively and it stayed relatively tense between them until and during the outbreak of the revolution.

The introducing of a western lifestyle in Iran was opposed by the clergy who thought it extinguished Islam from the Iranian people (Khomeini and Algar 1981: 27f) but also by leftist in Iran. They both saw the Shah's leadership as a symbol of imperialism and a protector of a class society and therefore they refused to accept that any progressive step taken by the Shah would make any radical change in the society, because the Shah would never take any action against his own interests (Salehi: 103f).

The western lifestyle boomed the Iranian society during Reza Shah's period of reign and had a positive response to the people. If it really had that positive effect is questionable because Reza Shah more or less forced the ideal to the people. However the people began to question these ideals of the western lifestyle claiming that the adopting to a western lifestyle would lose the Iranians own cultural independence, originality and intellectual creativity (Salehi: 120). This subsequently created the concept of "mass culture" (Farhang e tudeh) which is seen as a reaction of the western culture and ideals influencing the Iranian culture. The "mass culture" was a counter example of the westernized way of life. It referred to a way of life untouched by western influence, where sympathy and devotion to the lower class was essential rather than the appreciation to monarchs and princes that the Shah preferred (Salehi: 121f). This reaction to the westernization of Iran together with the rather negative outcome of the Shah's secularization, which all in all secularized the elite in Iran while the masses remained faithful to Islam (Hussain: 36) is a clear event that weakened the Shah's rule and what the opposing groups focused on to eventually mobilize the people to make the revolution.

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[4] If the police saw someone wearing a chadour in public they would be asked to pull it of their head and tear it up (Salehi: 86)

2.4 Summary

The Iranian revolution did not rise from nowhere. With my previous summary of the Shah's leadership and the economic and cultural struggles in Iran during the advent of the revolution, I have hopefully broadened the understanding of why the revolution could occur. Together with the theories by Skocpol and Goldstone you get an even broader perspective of why the revolution happened in Iran. Skocpol highlights the despotic leadership which is apparent in Iran which gives proof of Iran being more prone to a revolution. Furthermore Goldstone points out that the urban migration and its negative consequences could trigger a revolution or an uprising which also is very significant in the case of Iran with its rapid industrialization and the subsequent overcrowding of namely Tehran. Goldstone never uses culture as it could in some way affect an uprising or such. This made it hard to attract his theory fully since I think that Iran and probably other states were revolutions have occurred, culture is an important segment to study. The implementing of the western ideal and lifestyle in Iran was popular from the beginning but experienced a huge backlash together with the growing economical inequalities and the Shah's more despotic leadership. The people used the westernization of Iran as the reason for the economic inequalities and other grievances in the country. By blaming the implementing of western ideas and ideals they indirectly blamed the Shah's White Revolution for westernizing Iran even more, which gave the reform program the opposite effect destined for. The backlash for the public opinion of the western culture in Iran do I think is very important to highlight when trying to understand what made the revolution happen in Iran. The clergy preached an opposite to the western ideals and focused on an Islamic Iranian culture instead of anything else, which attracted the people. Skocpol states the culture's importance in the case of Iran but does not intensify this assumption which is rather unfortunate because I think it could well be an important factor in other revolutions as well. The most common examples of revolutions of our modern world are more or less made in the rubric of socialism with the Russian revolution of 1917 as a copybook display. The people were frustrated with the Tsar and his leadership including his modernizing ideas which also should be notified to the answering of the question of why that revolution could happen. The cultural understanding is hence important in that revolution together with other reasons too which I think should be put in focus even more, when finding out how a revolution could happen.

The Iranian revolution was broadly based because of the big resistance to the Shah. The peasants were frustrated since there was a great focus on industrializing the country and the failure of the land reform. The lower and middle class were frustrated of not getting any significant piece of the outcome of Iran's economical boost. The frustration by the lower and middle class grew even bigger when they experienced the great decrease of living standard in the cities as an outcome of the urban migration. The educated were frustrated because of the broad corruption, which made people suitable for certain jobs and positions step aside because of the Shah's handpicking to these jobs. The clergy was also frustrated because the

Shah forced a secular Iran by limiting the clergy's channels for expressing themselves and cutting back on its funding. The Marxists were frustrated because of the Shah's flirting with USA and other western countries and his back turning of Soviet and other communist countries. They opposed the implementing of the western ideals because they saw it as an imperialistic idea of USA trying to broaden their borders by colonizing Iran. With my text above I think I have highlighted events of the Shah's leadership that not just frustrated one part of the society in Iran but a broad part of Iranian people irrespective of class. I hope this text have marked those with the opinion of that the revolution occurred because of religious inequalities in the country. What we can not leave aside is the fact that the Islamic clergy got the power after the overthrow of the Shah and in my next chapter I will try to find out how the clergy with Ayatollah Khomeini as the front-man could mobilize the people and furthermore call the people to do a revolution.

3   Mobilization

The previous chapter is important to have concluded when moving on to this chapter. The previous chapter presented a view of Iran being susceptible to a mass based revolution because of grievances concerning the leadership, the economical- and cultural situation in the country at the time of the revolution.

By rejecting the belief of the revolution being made because of religious inequalities you now understand that several other events and actions probably made the revolution happen. Turning to the revolutionary event itself, I am of the opinion that a revolution or an uprising does not just happen automatically. It needs something or someone to mobilize and trigger the people to take action. The case of Iran is rather fortunate since the "triggerer" and the leader of the revolution could well be summarized to Ayatollah Khomeini[5]. He was born in 1902 in the city of Khomein in a family with great clerical traditions. Followed by extensive studying at the religious institutions in namely the city of Qom he received his religious title Ayatollah which is a title of a religious leader in the Shiite tradition in 1950s (Abrahamian: 5 & Britannica – Khomeini).

The following chapter will try to answer how Khomeini succeeded to mobilize people from different class-backgrounds and unify them under a single banner. Together with Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow's framework of contentious politics have texts, speeches and actions of Khomeini been analyzed to recognize the mobilization process of Iran. The texts and speeches presented are just a small selection of texts and speeches and are supposed to give the reader a clearer image of the mobilization process. The analysis of the mobilization process is presented in chronological order, first analyzing the events that made the clergy and Khomeini gain a broad support. Then analyzing the mechanisms used to unify the mass, including identification and border activation and lastly will the revolutionary outbreak be analyzed.

3.1   Gaining Broad Support

This section will analyze events and concerns that possibly could explain how Khomeini and the clergy gained such a broad support. Together with a linkage to

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[5] Ali Shariati is often mentioned in the literature as the person mobilizing the intelligentsia in Iran, since his interpretations of Islam was of a more symbolic manner which attracted the educated in Iran (Hussain: 66). However is my study based on the works of Khomeini since he mobilized a much broader mass and is therefore, in my opinion more interesting to study.

the earlier chapter and the rhetoric of Khomeini's earlier texts and speeches, will lead us to a possible answer of how Khomeini mobilized a broad mass.

As brought up in the previous chapter, the authoritarian leadership of the Shah was frustrating the people of Iran. The industrialization processes that resulted in overcrowded cities and the implementation of western standards in the society are also a selection of grievances in Iran that proved that there was a broad resistance against the Shah and his regime. These grievances are all together labelled, by Tilly and Tarrow as *repressions* because they all are rooted as action or actions by an authority that increased the potential cost of an actor's claim making (Tilly and Tarrow: 215). The claimants benefitting on the Shah's repressions was Khomeini and the clergy.

The clergy in Iran had a certain position in the society, since the long history of Islam in Iran. Though the Shah tried to lower their status by highlighting the monarchy's even longer history of Iran, the status of the clergy always remained high. A good example of a group that claimed the resignation of the Shah but did not achieve the same support is the Marxists in Iran. They had an influence of the people of Iran because their theories, in many ways are comparable to Islam which most of the peoples of Iran were followers of (Hussain: 120). The Marxists did however not achieve a broad support in Iran. The answer is probably found along Ervand Abrahamians (1993) analyze of Khomeini and the clergy's use of Marxist rhetoric. Khomeini used words most referred by Marxists such as the oppressed (mostazafin) and the oppressors (mostakberin) and stressing the clergy as against imperialism and other "isms" imported from the west (Abrahamian 1993: 26 & Khomeini and Algar: 28f). The big difference between Khomeini and the Marxists was the usage of Islam and the religion as an important part of the grievance. Khomeini and the clergy had a rhetorical weapon the Marxists could not compete against; God. The using of popular rhetoric from Marxism together with the will of God was unbeatable in the competition of mobilizing the masses. A population which has had a history of hundred years of Islam makes sense to feel more connected to the religion than an ideology once stated religion as an opiate of the people. Furthermore is it needed to add that Marxism is more of a excluding kind than Islam since the Marxist theory is generally about class struggle where a bourgeoisie are excluded and considered as enemies. Islam, interpreted by Khomeini, on the other hand does not talk about certain classes and recognizes other religions as well (Khomeini and Algar: 27). These elements could well be parts of the explanation how the clergy and Khomeini gained such a big support and the Marxist did not.

Khomeini used God as the highest authority and frequently told his audience that the claims made was the will of God:

> "By God, whoever does not cry out in protest is a sinner! By God, whoever does not express his outrage commits a major sin!" (Khomeini, October 27, 1964, cited in Khomeini and Algar 1981: 185)

God's will is a powerful tool when mobilizing a broad mass since it is hard to question God's authority. The preaching of God and Islam were more or less

exclusionary held in the mosques' in Iran, which during the advent of the revolution not only became a forum for preaching the Islamic belief. They also functioned as sanctuaries for the people as a place where they could express their frustration of the regime freely without the fear of presence from SAVAK (Hussain: 60-3). The Mosques' function had the comparable function as the football stadium Camp Nou in Barcelona had for the Catalans during the Franco regime, when it was a place for the people to actually speak freely and use their native language which was illegal to speak in public (Xifra 2008: 194).

Since the mosques had the function of a sanctuary, the clerics used these gatherings of people to mobilize them to their cause. The use of religion for claim makings is very common when mobilizing an opinion and it has a real advantage when comparing to other organizations concerning the communication. The churches and the mosques have their frequent gatherings, such as the Christian worship service on Sundays or the Islamic Friday sermon. These gatherings attract many people weekly and could use as a place where the priest or the imam can state more or less anything and in my specific case to attract an opinion and to make a claim. This opportunity gives the religious organizations a great advantage since their communication is more eye-to-eye and speaks direct to the people which increases the message efficiency (Wald et al 2005: 134f). The clerics advantages of communication in Iran were used in a successful manner since the people, who eventually began protesting in the streets claimed an Islamic Republic which was synchronized to the claims of Khomeini and the clergy had stated (Salehi: 147 & Khomeini and Algar: 27-149).

3.2   Unification

The identity process is very important when mobilizing the people. This is the part of the process when claimant A unites actors B with each other, which paves the way of making actors B do things they never had done before and is needed when taking further action in the process of claim making (Tilly and Tarrow: 78f). This section will highlight this process in the case of Iran and how Ayatollah Khomeini acquired a collective identity to his supporters.

The most significant in the identity process is the boundary formation. This involves, as the name predicts, the formation of boundaries in the group and creating an us-them distinction (Ibid: 215). To form your identity you most often state what you not identify with. An example is the identity formation of a Swede. He or she probably identifies themselves with things that Swedes occasionally do, that people of other nationalities does not, or at least not in the same extent. It could be language, customs or religion that plays the roles of this boundary tool which shapes ones identity (Brass 1991: 20f). To thicken these boundaries of a group you make clear of what you not are. This not only unifies the group itself but also states the criterions of membership of the group and pinpoints *the other*. The pinpointing of *the other*, who in the case of Iran embodies as the Shah and his regime, is a common occurrence in the identification of certain groups or

organizations. Examples of identity formations is found in the case of the Zapatistas in Mexico who identified themselves as "the poor people" or "the people used as cannon fodder" and used the "dictatorship" and the "Mexican federal army" to identify *the other* as well as the enemy (Tilly and Tarrow: 72f). Another example is the Muslims and the Hindus of South Asia, where the two parties uses references to each other for not stating who they are (Brass: 75-80). Khomeini had three major *others* that were connected to each other and were stated as the enemies in his texts and speeches and had a function of forming the boundaries of the supporters of Khomeini. Apart from the Shah and his regime, USA and Israel was frequently the targets of critique from Khomeini. The pointing at USA as the enemy was rather favorable in Khomeini's case since USA most often embodies the concept of westernization, which the people of Iran felt anger to. Khomeini had no fear in often explicitly stating America as the number one enemy of Iran and Islam and one clear example is found in a message to Pilgrims in Iran and over the world:

> "Defend fearlessly and unhesitatingly the peoples and countries of Islam against their enemies- America, international Zionism, and all the superpowers of East and West" (Khomeini, September 24, 1979, cited in Khomeini and Algar: 276)

Though America was the biggest enemy to Iran and often referred to as the "Great Satan" (Salehi: 34), the state of Israel suffered many derogatory statements from Khomeini who declared Israel, who were supported by America, Britain and Soviet both militarily and politically, as a derivation of America (e.g. Khomeini and Algar: 187, 210 & 214). Khomeini and the clergy's claims were to get rid of the Shah but because of the big risks of accusing and criticizing the Shah directly they often used his allies USA and Israel as the main targets of the critique. Khomeini himself experienced the harshness against Shah-critics after a speech where he attacked the Shah and his approval of a law making Americans diplomatically immune in Iran. A section from that speech is here cited which explicitly calls for an uprising against the Shah though thirteen years before the actual overthrow:

> "[…] Muslim peoples! Leader of the Muslim peoples! Presidents and kings of the Muslim peoples! Come to our aid! Shah of Iran, save yourself!" (Khomeini, October 27, 1964, cited in Khomeini and Algar: 185)

This speech caused Khomeini's forced deportation from Iran to Turkey where he continued to attack the regime in Iran but now also commenting on wider issues concerning the Muslim world (Bakhash: 35-8). The speech not only aims to attack the Shah, America and Israel but to unify the people, the Muslim people. Turning to the actual mechanism of Khomeini's unification, Islam is used as the base for the unification of the people. As brought up earlier the identity formation is often based on what you not are and referring to *the other*. It is important to locate what differentiates us from them. In the case of the ethnic identity of the Dayaks in Kalimantan, their identity was based on a more or less fabricated

history telling (Beik & Strinde 2008: 15). The Muslims and the Hindus of India used religion as their base of identity and unification which is the same tool used in the case of Iran. The Shah had the ancient monarchy of Persia as the role model for his leadership which the clergy and Khomeini opposed. Instead they propagated for a leadership based on Islam and their laws and implicitly claiming the supporters of the Shah as unbelievers, upholders of an imperialistic world order and violators of the commandments of Islam (Khomeini and Algar: 66 & Bakhash: 29). These claims not only points out the enemy but also forms the rules of membership in the Khomeini supporter group. You should be a believer and feel an aggression to the imperialistic world order to feel united with the group of people supporting Khomeini and the clergy. Another element frequently used in a mobilization process and especially in the identity formation is the use of myths and symbolism as unifying instruments the people can relate to (Brass: 62f). These myths are, if being harsh to the concept of religion, what the religion is all based on. This makes the use of myths and symbolism as a natural part of the speeches of Khomeini which he often used when stating Islam and its Imams as the legitimate rulers of the Muslim people:

> "Whenever a believer dies, the angels weep, together with the ground where he engaged in the worship of God and the gates of heaven that he entered by means of his good deeds. A crack will appear in the fortress of Islam, that naught can repair, for believers who are *fuqaha*[6] are the fortresses of Islam, like the encircling walls that protect a city" (Khomeini refers to a quote of Imam Abu ʹl-Hasan Musa the son of Ja'far, the seventh of the Twelve Imams. Cited in Khomeini and Algar: 73)

Another important event occurs when Khomeini compares Islamic symbolism to an event called the faiziyyeh massacre in 1963 when people attending an Islamic seminar in the city of Qom were attacked and killed by the police and military. In a number of speeches held a couple of months after these killings Khomeini draws comparisons to the martyrdom of Husayn and his 72 followers in the battle of Karbala to the people being killed at the faiziyyeh seminar (Khomeini and Algar: 177). This event together with another similar event called the black Friday when over hundreds of people got killed during a peaceful march in Tehran (Hussain: 127) is often brought up as time grew closer to the actual overthrow of the Shah. The significant strategy of glorifying people the opinion can relate to, as in the case of the martyrs in Qom is a well used strategy in the process of unifying a people or a group, e.g. in the case of the Dayaks in Kalimantan (van Klinken 2007) and is therefore in my opinion important to highlight in this case when trying to analyze the events of a mobilization process when the claimants unifies its supporters.

Khomeini used numerous references to the Islamic teachings in his texts and speeches both to legitimize the possible advent of an Islamic republic and to

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[6] Fuqaha is the plural term used of people being experts of the Islamic law and is by Khomeini said to be the leaders of an Islamic republic (Nationalencyklopedia-fiqh & Khomeini and Algar: 78)

signal what is expected from the supporters to achieve the claims of an Islamic republic according to the books of Islam. The use of Islamic symbolism is even more used when directly calling the people to rise up against the Shah and is analyzed in the following section when the actual exhortation to a revolution is reflected and analyzed.

3.3   Revolution

This section will give the reader the final puzzle piece in the understanding of how Khomeini could mobilize the people to do a revolution. I have focused on the speeches when Khomeini more or less explicitly calls for a revolution and analyze his rhetoric in terms of Shia Islam which Khomeini frequently refers to when gathering his supporters to for a collective action as Tilly and Tarrow (2007: 216) labels it.

When Khomeini was deported in 1963 the Shah hoped the accusing of his regime would seize to exist. Unfortunately for him the accusations from Khomeini continued but the tone was now fiercer and fearlessly pointed directly to the Shah. The tone to the people also changed to a more hortatory tone. Khomeini had at this moment of the process already gained a broad support and cleansed the possible competitors to his claims such as the Marxists. He had shaped an identity of the supporters and stated the enemies. The coming process was to make his supporters actually risking their lives for his claims. The mechanism Khomeini used for this purpose was Islam and primarily the Shiite tradition and its martyrdom.

The previous section brought up the massacre of faiziyyeh in 1963 and how the people who were killed in it became martyrs. The martyrdom is a very important part in the Shiite belief. It descends from Imam Husayn and his seventy-two companions who in the year of 680 fought a battle in the city of Karbala, which commonly is known as the "Karbala paradigm". Imam Husayn, the third Imam after Muhammad is in Shiite tradition seen as the symbol of struggle and resistance because of what happened in Karbala (Ram 1994: 61). He is often referred to by Khomeini as time draws closer to the revolutionary outbreak and one example is found in a speech delivered one year before the revolutionary outburst in a mosque in the city of Najaf in Iraq:

> "There are people among us who tell us we must swallow whatever poison the "holders of authority" wish to force us down our throats, simply because they are the "authorities" […] In a certain sense, God gave kingship to the Pharaoh, but did not Moses oppose him? […] And then Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) gathered up his family and fifty or sixty followers and rose up in revolt against another "holder of authority," Yazid. Why did he do that?" (Khomeini, February 19, 1978, cited in Khomeini and Algar: 225)

The usage of these Qur'anic references was probably very helpful when Khomeini called the people to rise against the Shah since he uses references to

events that people can relate to. You can however question the actual occurrence of the events, but they are though brought up in the Qur'an which must be seen as easier for a Muslim to relate to than anything else.

Actual callings for the people to rise against the Shah are not hard to find and are in 1978-9 stated explicitly without any fear for anything. The speeches from these years are very pathos-loaded and the use of Islamic symbolism appeals to the audience's emotions which is favourable in cases such as this one since the aim is to convince the audience to act in a certain manner (Bergström & Boréus 2000: 90). A great example is here used to try to capture Khomeini's rhetoric during the years before the revolution when he calls for an uprising:

> "My beloved ones, summon up all your strength and break open the chains of slavery! One after the other, remove the treacherous pawns of the Shah from the scene and cut off the greedy hands of those that manipulate them and their like in the Islamic countries. The way to happiness, freedom, and independence is barred by those pawns and those who manipulate them, so scatter their ranks and save the country!" (Khomeini, October 11, 1978, cited in Khomeini and Algar: 239)

The actual date when the revolution began is hard to pinpoint because there are numerous protests all over the country for a couple of months time that finally made the Shah leave Iran for a "temporary" stay abroad (Saikal: 3). Though there was a peak of activities all over the country during the holy month of Muharram[7] and especially during the first ten days of the month called the Ashura period (Hussain: 111). This period is important for the Shiites since it is a festival that commemorates the death of the Imam Husayn, the Imam earlier mentioned as the symbol of martyrdom in Shiite tradition. You should not leave aside the fact that it was not of coincidence that the people of Iran risked their lives by protesting in the streets during the festival of commemorating the death of an Imam who according to the Qur'an risked his life when protesting against what he thought was wrong. Khomeini had successfully indoctrinated the people of Iran to risk their life as the Imam Husayn did to achieve the claims of an Islamic republic.

The question to be answered in this chapter was how Khomeini succeeded to mobilize a broad mass that eventually made a revolution. This chapter has tried to highlight three important parts of the mobilization process that makes it easier to understand why Khomeini acquired such a broad support and eventually exhort these people to risk their own lives by protesting against the Shah and his regime and stating claims that in the end lead to giving the political power of the country to Khomeini himself.

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[7] Muharram is the first month of the Islamic year (Britannica – Ashura)

4 Conclusion

The research problems have hopefully been answered to the reader in a pleasant manner. The answer to the first question of why the revolution in Iran happened was perhaps clear for people with an insight of the case. The dictatorial leadership of the Shah, the corrupt system, the economic inequalities, the reform program that had negative consequences including the overpopulation of the cities and the westernization of the society. All these situations created a frustration of the people. A frustration that could escalate to a revolution in any state all over the world, but a revolution does not happen automatically. It needs a "triggerer", a person or an organization that sees and feels the frustration of the people. This person was Ayatollah Khomeini. The previous chapter has tried to answer the second question this study was supposed to answer; how Khomeini succeeded to mobilize the people of Iran and eventually made them do a revolution. He gained the people's support with a combination of the popular rhetoric of Marxism and traditional Islamic expressions. The Marxist rhetoric was favourable to make the people understand their oppressed position and the Islamic expressions including its symbolism were used because of its broader catchment-area and because it probably was easier for an undereducated person in Iran to relate to that instead of a rather unknown ideology. This also extinguished the competition from the Marxist groups in Iran that also claimed the resignation of the Shah. Then was focus turned to the identity formation of the supporters of Khomeini. The formation would well fit in other examples of identity formations including the Zapatista movement in Mexico or the Hindus in South Asia. These are all examples of identities often stating themselves what they not are, which forms the boundary of the group itself when issuing *the other*. The Shah together with USA and Israel was stated as *the other* in the case of Khomeini. This subsequently made the supporters of Khomeini people who did not identify themselves with both the leadership of the Shah nor the imperialistic principles USA and its offspring Israel stands for.

As turning to the actual outbreak of the revolution many of Khomeini's speeches used the reference to the Imam Husayn who risked his life in the battle of Karbala and become the symbol of martyrdom in the Shiite tradition. This was probably a triggering factor to why the people actually went out and protested in the streets during the festival of the commemoration of Imam Husayn which subsequently made the Shah leave Iran and a new order could establish where Ayatollah Khomeini was the leader.

When reflecting this study, you can not help to ask yourself what this could contribute to in a broader spectrum or for further studies. Concerning the first research question, the contribution to the discipline of political science could possibly be another persuasion that implies that states with authoritarian leaders, a

corrupt system, economical inequalities are more prone to a revolution than other states. I also suggest that hard implementations of new cultural influences in a country could have the negative effect as it had in the case of Iran. The second research question could be used as a guideline of how to unify a broad mass and exhort them to do things they probably never would do. It could furthermore work as an example of a successful mobilization campaign all in the concept of contentious politics. You could well fit this example together with other successful mobilizations such as the mobilization campaign in Serbia before the Balkan War or in Kalimantan, Indonesia before the ethnic cleansing of the Madurese people in 2001. These mobilization campaigns where issued by a small elite to make way for their own interests. If the case of Khomeini and the clergy's campaign had the same purpose do I leave aside, but the fact remains that the leader of the mobilization campaign, Ayatollah Khomeini later got the highest political and spiritual post in Iran. The use of religion in the campaign was very successful and could, because of the outcome of the revolution lead to further questions whether Islam was only used for instrumental purposes and that Khomeini and the clergy used Islam to attract the people and subsequently called them to revolt in the name of the religion so Khomeini and the clergy later could be installed to govern. However these questions could be answered in a future study.

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