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Political Inclusion and the Odds of Contentious Collective Actions in Authoritarian Societies: A study of contentious political mobilizations in Iran within a comparative context

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Political Science

by

Vahid Niayesh

Dissertation Committee:

Professor Carole Uhlaner, Chair

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Professor Roxanne Varzi

2021

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DEDICATION

To my wife, my parents and my two children Ava and Arvin

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Political Inclusion and the Odds of Contentious Collective Actions in Authoritarian Societies: A study of contentious political mobilizations in Iran within a comparative context

By

Vahid Niayesh

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Irvine, 2019

Professor Carole Uhlaner, Chair

The Contentious collective action and mobilization theories have had limited success in explaining why individuals mobilize for action in authoritarian societies. The theory of political inclusion provides a new perspective into a movement as a whole while remaining parsimonious. This theory provides a unified framework for understanding the past 120 years of Iranians' struggles for democracy within a political and historical continuum. As validated by the historical media data, this theory can provide an explanation for when the people of Iran join in contentious collective action and when they abstain. Such an explanation is achieved by focusing on the interplay of government and oppositional forces in Iran as a transformative element. Central to this interplay is a dynamic process which determines whether the opposition is included or excluded as a recognized political actor in the polity at that particular moment. When the opposition is recognized by both the people and the government as a collective voice, its existence lessens the people's impetus to mobilize and protest. Conversely, when the opposition groups are effectively excluded from the polity contentious mobilization could occur.

Chapter One: Introduction

Contentious collective action and mobilization theories have had limited success in explaining why individuals mobilize for action in authoritarian societies.[1] A theory or a model capable of explaining why and under what conditions individuals mobilize or do not mobilize under authoritarian rule can enhance our understanding of how contentious collective actions occur or periods of no action exist while grievances are pervasive in authoritarian countries. Not surprisingly, the literature focuses on retroactively explaining instances of contentious mobilization while ignoring periods of no action. These explanations include structural and contextual conditions, individual's incentives and (ir)rational behavior, level of government suppression as a factor of mobilization, and external inducements. However, understanding why a collectivity mobilizes for action, regardless of the presence of many or all conditions and incentives, is often willingly ignored or taken for granted due to methodological and/or measuring difficulties in a comparative politics. This dissertation intends to fill this gap in the literature by developing a theory that provides a better explanation for incidents of contentious collective actions and even periods of no action in authoritarian societies and then testing that theory by examining instances of contentious mobilization and the periods of no action in Iran over a 100-year span comparatively. Although this dissertation tests the theory only in Iran, it is generalizable and, adds to comparative politics an approach to understanding actions in authoritarian regimes more generally. For instance, this theory can be applied to Arab Spring or color revolutions in East Europe since they all experienced periods of no major contentious collective action and

[1] Authoritarian political systems are mainly characterized by limited political pluralism (Linz, 1964).

episodes of contentious mobilization while making an effort toward democratization through a popular push to impact public policy.

One of the major reasons for the gap in the literature on contentious political mobilization in authoritarian societies is that instances of contentious collective actions are relatively rare in those societies and are spread across different countries or regions with contextual differences. In order to identify a generalizable pattern, an ideal scenario for a comparative study would be to have multiple case studies with minimal contextual differences. It would be difficult to find instances of contentious mobilization across different countries with marginal contextual differences. However, finding a country with multiple distinct cases of contentious collective action presents the same opportunity to study contentious political mobilization as within a comparative context. The country of Iran throughout its struggle for democracy exceptionally qualifies to present such opportunity.

Iranian people have been pursuing democracy for over a century but their struggles have had narrow success so far. The June 2009 uprisings in Iran and the recent widespread protests in December of 2017 indicate that the country might once more be on the verge of an upheaval in its political landscape. The recent uprisings also called into question general perceptions about the causes and consequences of the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The Islamic Revolution ended the despotic rule of the Shah with the hope of developing a democratic republic under the guidance of Islam but many observers agree that the Islamic Republic has fallen short of creating an inclusionary political regime with respect for democratic values. What makes Iran an interesting case is that Iran is among a few countries who has experienced two revolutions in one century; the constitutional revolution (1905-1911) and the Islamic revolution (1979), and some argue that the recent widespread protests and the Green Movement of 2009 signified that another one is in the

making (Milani, 2010). Thus, it is important to investigate whether it is possible to identify a pattern in the Iranian revolts within contemporary history.

Before attempting to provide a better theory aiming at filling the gap in the literature, it is useful to review the existing theories. The current literature provides some insight into contentious action in authoritarian systems and thus into the Iranian revolts, but they are inadequate or at best incomplete. The remainder of this chapter will briefly summarize these approaches and use the frequently-cited 1979 Islamic revolution to indicate why they are inadequate and/or incomplete. Then, the next chapter will develop the theory of political inclusion and discuss how it can be empirically evaluated, the task which the subsequent three chapters undertake.

Existing theories and models enhance our understanding of the Iranian revolts, but fail to address the right question. Many argue that the Iranian revolutions were anomalies compared to other major revolutions. Keddie holds that both Iranian revolutions of the twentieth-century appear so aberrant that they do not fit very closely to widespread ideas of what modern revolutions should be like (1983, 580). Kurzman (2004) also considers the Islamic Revolution an anomalous incident, so confusing that it cannot be neatly decoded. Similarly, Katouzian (2009, 324) argues that the Islamic revolution, like the Constitutional revolution and the Green Movement, was 'deviant', and it should not have happened at all, or at least in the time it occurred.

These interpretations are inaccurate. It is very difficult to argue that Iran's contemporary history has suffered from a perpetual state of randomness. Contrary to that argument, it may be the case that the Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1906, the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and the widespread uprisings of June 2009 and the more recent ones are linked by a thread, knowable and explicable.

In order to identify historical patterns using a longitudinal comparison of incidents of revolt in Iran, it is imperative to search for patterns of invariance. Although this may not establish any necessary link between cause and effect, it will help to identify variables which are constant across all instances. This is why it is also imperative to study "no action" periods. If we find that the political inclusion theory predicts periods of contentious mobilization, we have only done half the work. We don't know if the same variables also occur when there is no activity. That can only be established by also examining periods of low contentious activity and seeing whether the factors identified here are different in the way the theory predicts. Unless we look at quiescent periods, too, it may be that the same conditions hold then. The theory will be supported if we find that in the quiescent periods these factors are missing, and most important that the opposition in those periods is not excluded.

Any longitudinal comparative analysis of multiple instances of revolt in Iran should seek to avoid the current conceptual crisis in the study of Iran -what Milani calls "theoretical glaucoma" (1994, 2). By this, he means that most systematic accounts of revolutions in Iran, in particular the 1979 Islamic Revolution, are heavily influenced by theories and models developed for cases with considerable contextual difference and often lack historical depth. Therefore, this research tries to study the dynamics of "why," "when" and "how" of contentious collective action in authoritarian societies through the lens of contextual historical patterns in Iran. So, the main question is under what conditions do contentious political mobilizations occur in authoritarian societies?

Individuals may be rational decision makers but they do operate within a system that is composed of ideas, beliefs, norms, institutions and culture, which are often beyond individual preferences and even help form them. Under most conditions, particularly in authoritarian societies, people do not undertake contentious collective actions primarily because of opportunity

costs and efficacy concerns. But under certain conditions they do. There is a substantial literature which has tackled why contentious collective action is surprising, how to achieve cooperation by repetition or convention, how micro-motives can lead to macro-behavior, how social institutions can spur cooperation and participation, and how group identity, reputation and trust can help solve the contentious collective action problem. Based on the above literature, we have learned whether people participate/cooperate or not and why they do so. We have also learned that context matters but we are not theoretically equipped to explain when and under what conditions people are more susceptible to cooperate or participate particularly when the cost of participation is high. Therefore, the question that needs to be addressed is why do people participate/cooperate in certain context and under specific situations and not others?

The current literature on social movement and mobilization, particularly the ones that have been predominantly used to explain the Iranian revolts, can be categorized into a few categories. Some scholars pay more attention to the social and economic structure of the society (structuralists) and some others put the emphasis on the action of the individuals (voluntarists) as agency for change. Structuralists such as Johnson (1966), Smelser (1962), and Huntington (1968) give little to no credence to public opinion and ideology. Most commonly, modernization is considered the cause of social breakdown. This approach has been widely contested. Many argue that "there is no reliable and regular sense in which modernization breeds revolution" (Tilly 1973, 447).

Unlike structuralists, voluntarists believe that revolutions do not come—they are made. One of the major voluntarist models is the resource mobilization model. The resource mobilization model assumes that "grievances are relatively constant and pervasive" (Jenkins and Perrow 1977, 266; also McCarthy and Zald 1977; Turner and Killian 1972). Tilly (1978) argues that

dissatisfaction and alienation exist in every society at all times and, therefore, dissatisfaction alone cannot be said to cause mobilization. Jenkins and Perrow (1977, 250) note that the variation giving rise to mobilizing action "is the amount of social resources available to unorganized but aggrieved groups, making it possible to launch an organized demand for change." However, this might not be the case in authoritarian societies where resources are not widely available to individuals and groups. The resource mobilization model covers a wider ground of political action dynamism deriving from a broadly defined notion of resources. But, as Thalhammer (2001) demonstrates, resources may be less important than other factors in affecting whether an individual becomes an activist or non-activist, at least in conditions of extreme repression. This model also fails to explain what causes a rise in resources, and therefore explanation of the process leading to such incidents.

Structuralists mainly focus on social destruction theories and voluntarists concentrate on the actions of agents in social movements. This reflects a theoretical dilemma in the social sciences which Wendt (1987) calls the agent-structure problem. This dilemma was the driving force behind the development of the political process model and the constructivist approach. The political process model focuses on political opportunity structures which includes elements of both agency and structure; and constructivists analyze social revolutions not through theoretical lenses but by studying people's beliefs and preferences. These approaches need further elaboration.

Structuralist theories posit that the presence of a severe disequilibrium among the members of the society or social strata can cause social revolutions as one or a coalition of two or more social groups may try to equalize the social structure through contentious collective action. Most commonly, modernization is considered the cause of social breakdown. Many analysts - including Tehranian (1980, 6), Green (1980, 32), Saikal (1980, 203-204), and Momayezi (1986, 77) - consider modernization as the main cause of the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Many others,

including Abrahamian (1980), Katouzian (1981), and Milani (1994), consider modernization only as one of the many causes of the 1979 revolution. These scholars mainly follow suit with Johnson (1966), Smelser (1962) and Huntington (1968) in arguing that large-scale modernization leads to expansive social transformations, industrialization and urbanization. These trends are expected to generate social disorganization, disorientation, and frustration, which may explode in collective violence and civil disorder. Similarly, Huntington (1968) hypothesizes that rapid social and economic transformation and the resultant disjunction or "gap" between political and economic development can produce disorder and violence in developing countries.

A number of analysts, including Stempel (1981, 9), Sick (1985, 159-160) Walton (1980) and Pipes (1983), have invoked the theory of rising expectations, Davies's J-curve, and relative deprivation, developed by Gurr (1970), to explain the Iranian Revolution of 1979. They argue that when oil revenues suddenly dropped in Iran a few years prior to the Islamic Revolution, rising expectations and the hope of an improved economic condition rapidly diminished, leading to violence and revolution. Keddie (1983, 588) contends that that Iranian revolutionary experience during the 1970s fits neatly into Davies's J-curve[2], which predicts revolution when rapid economic growth is followed by a sharp economic downturn. Similarly, Milani argues that presence of a J-curve condition is a prerequisite for modernization to cause revolution (1994, 16).

This approach has been widely contested. Many argue that "there is no reliable and regular sense in which modernization breeds revolution" (Tilly 1973, 447). For example, Huntington's gap theory has limited empirical support in developing countries where the gap often exists but

[2] The J-curve hypothesis, developed by James Davies, illustrates a condition when a period of economic development is followed by a period of sharp reversal which in turn widens the gap between expectation and gratification. The presence of such condition can lead to collective violence.

revolutions are rare. There is, however, a larger problem in the above approach, which is rooted in the structural analytic principle of social destruction models: they devote little space to the process of how human agents actually make a revolution. Social destruction theorists underestimate the fact that human beings' consciousness and action constitute a link between structural conditions and social outcomes. Therefore, they systematically undervalue the role of ideology, political organization and self-conscious collective action.[3]

Unlike structuralist theories, voluntarists believe that revolutions do not come - they are made. This approach asserts that agents of contentious collective action display rational behavior in their aims and action to create a revolution. Therefore, the focus is on human agency as the primary factor in causing revolutions. One major voluntarist model which has been utilized frequently to explain the Islamic Revolution of 1979, is the "resource mobilization" model.

This model assumes that "grievances are relatively constant and pervasive" (Jenkins and Perrow 1977, 266). As Tilly (1978) argues, dissatisfaction and alienation exist in every society at all times and therefore dissatisfaction cannot be said to cause revolution. McCarthy and Zald (1977), citing Turner and Killian (1972), claim that "there is always enough discontent in any society to supply the grass-roots support for a movement if the movement is effectively organized." What determines the timing of contentious collective action "is the amount of social resources available to unorganized but aggrieved groups, making it possible to launch an organized demand for change" (Jenkins and Perrow 1977, 250). Thus, revolutions occur because "their organizers had the capacity to organize all the necessary resources for a revolution" (Willer 2009, 5). Charles

[3] This underestimation of human agents is also apparent in Skocpol's analysis of peasant uprisings in China and the Bolsheviks in Russia. She argues that the degree of peasant autonomy and landlord power determines the potential for peasant revolts (Skocpol 1979, 115-6). Skocpol insists that “Revolutions are not made; they come” (1979, 17).

Tilly holds that it is the continuous struggle between those who have decision-making power and those who do not that is the base of political action (1978, 229). In this struggle, he argues, the key is "resources" which includes organization, mobilization, networks, interests and opportunity.

The model of resource mobilization has been widely used to explain the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the Constitutional Revolution of 1906. Throughout the making of both revolutions the role of Shi'a activism and the institution of *ulama*[4] in mobilizing masses were apparent and significant. Some analysts, such as Akhavi (1983, 195-8) and Algar (2001, 119-20), consider Shi'a activism as the main cause of Iranian revolts during the 20th century. Algar (2001, 119) argues that opposition to the *status quo*, the monarchy, and the foreign powers that stood behind it since the late 19th century has been "led, directed, and inspired by the most prominent of the Shi'i *ulama* in Iran." Varzi (2011) also argues that Shiite Islam not only provided a framework for protest during the Islamic revolution but also continues to remain a powerful form of protest against Islamic government itself.

Yet considering the Shi'i ideology and mobilization power of *ulama* as the underlying causes of contentious collective action in Iran is misleading. As Milani cogently argues, shi'a activism "was more a consequence than a principal precondition of the Islamic Revolution: its ascendency was neither predestined nor inevitable" (1994, 3). Milani (1994, 18) considers Shi'a *ulama* one of the main 'traveling salesmen' of Iran's Islamic Revolution. He argues that after the

[4] The word *Ulama* means 'the learned of Islam' and refers to those who are versed in religious sciences. Also, in the context of an Islamic state the word *ulama* is used to refer to a group of theologians who are versed theoretically and practically in Islam and are recognized as such by other authoritative theologians. It is sometimes called the institution of *ulama* due to its resulting hierarchical structure.

revolution, *ulama* became the "philosopher kings" of the Iranian theocracy but this does not mean that the Iranian revolution was created by *ulama*.

The resource mobilization model covers a wider ground of political action dynamism driven from broadly defined notion of "resources." But this model fails to explain what causes a rise in resources and grants little credence to the aggrieved population and their indigenous resources or what Selbin (2010, 6) calls shared stories such as folk tales, myths, symbols and narratives. It also underestimates the spontaneous character of social movements and is unable to explain why oppressive situations sometimes persist even in the face of increased resources.

Similar to the resource mobilization model, the *political process model* sees social movements as less mechanistic, and motivated by political rather than psychological goals. While the resource mobilization model focuses on the organizational strength of the discontented group, the political process model (McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1994) "puts the group into its political context" (Kriesi, 2008, 272). Similarly, Meyer (2004, 128) contends that "the political process approach is such that activists do not choose goals, strategies and tactics in a vacuum, but it is the political context that sets the grievances around which they are able to mobilize people." The political process model focuses on political opportunity structures and studies movements as a process rather than a discrete series of developmental stages (McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1994; Meyer 2004). McAdam studied the civil rights movements in the United States and believed that the political process model offers an improvement over collective behavior and resource mobilization approaches (1982, 90). For him, a social movement emerges when "the external circumstances provide sufficient openness to allow mobilization (1982, 94). McAdam (1996) conceives political opportunities to be based on four variables: increased access to a political system, presence of divisions within the elite, the availability of allies to the elites, and diminishing

state repression. These factors are said to expand the opportunities for mobilization, making revolutions possible.

In Iran during the 1979 revolution, the political opportunity structure has been viewed as favorable toward contentious collective action. Bashiriyeh (1984, 107) argues that political openness due to international pressure was a major and immediate factor that led to dissolution of the Shah's power. Similarly, Amuzegar (1991, 241) believes that "it was precisely the political vacuum created by the regime that attracted the opposition like a powerful magnet." However, some argue that although the Shah's repression was relatively relaxed in 1977, in reality, the opposition movement began to mobilize only after the Shah rescinded his political openness policies late in the year (See Kurzman 2004, Chap. 2). Although this may not contradict the political process model, it shows that the political opportunity structure cannot be evaluated by merely the level of political openness. As Meyer (2004, 141) puts it "the impact of openness on protest mobilization is curvilinear."

The political process model attempts to offer a systematic way to examine how social movements respond to, and affect, collective political action. But as Meyer (2004, 141) suggests, in order to be more useful this model should be able to "explicitly disaggregate and specify the outcomes political opportunities are meant to explain." Specifically, researchers must identify and compare "potentially discrepant outcomes among different outcomes and different sorts of movements." He also suggests that in order to improve the political process approach, analysts need to "adopt a process-oriented approach to political opportunities that explicitly examines how they work and how the responses that social movements provoke or inspire alter the grounds on which they can mobilize." However, even in light of such improvements to the model, there is no way of knowing when sufficient openness has occurred to allow mobilization; if contentious

collective action happens, one could argue that openness occurred, and if it does not happen, one could argue that openness did not occur. Therefore, this approach does not provide a framework to understand the process whereby individuals decide to mobilize. Political opportunity structure is also too broadly defined and is more of a defused and descriptive process, making it fit nearly all instances of mobilization. Following Meyer's recommendation, I specifically intend to adopt a process-oriented approach to answering "why" and "under what conditions" individuals turn grievances into mobilizing grievances in a systematic and explicable manner.

The *constructivist approach* to contentious collective action differs from the other approaches. Constructivists avoid any retroactive prediction and try to reconstruct the lived experience of the moment. This approach describes each individual incident separately and from within. According to Kurzman (2004, 5-6), these approaches "attempt to understand the experience of the revolution in all its anomalous diversity and confusion, and to abandon the mirage of retroactive predictability." The constructivist approach attempts to provide information regarding the ideas and the material forces that are involved in a particular incident of contentious collective action within a society. Constructivists believe that people act on their beliefs and preferences. Foucault, a constructivist, supported the Iranian revolution of 1979 - not to go against his own view that history naturally progresses from better to worse, but because he thought the Iranian revolution was one of the rare occurrences of contentious collective action where people acted based on their beliefs and preferences (See Afary and Andrson, 2005).

Some constructivists/interpretivists have taken a different route in studying the Iranian Revolution of 1979. They believe one should resort to the anti-explanation axiom and consider the Islamic Revolution an anomaly (i.e., Kurzman 2004). Some social movement scholars assign high levels of unpredictability to revolutionary moments and consider mass protests as

"unpredictable" (Kurzman, 2004, p. 170), "like a fever" (Polletta, 2006, p. 34) or people's "propensity to incendiarism" (Canetti, 1962, p. 77) and neglect systematic examination of the "why" and "how". However, the question for this camp is what makes the incidents of contentious collective action in Iran similar or dissimilar? And what determines their success or failure beyond randomness?

As the above literature suggests, the current literature fails to provide sufficient account of the processes by which grievances turn into mobilizing action. Among many scholarly attempts to explain this mobilization process, a small body of the literature on grievances focuses on message frames. The common core of framing as an intervening process is the idea that individuals may respond differently to public grievances depending on the types of message frames utilized by the movement. According to Snow and Benford (1988) "framing" is a process whereby movements "frame, or assign meaning to and interpret, relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists" (p. 198). Based on this definition, mobilizing the "potential adherents and constituents" and garnering "bystander support" are equally important for the movement while they are both contingent upon the creation of "collective identity" among movement participants. The most important aspect of this dynamics is the way frames are formulated, given meaning, and propagated within the "social context" (Klandermans, 1992, p. 85) and by "expanding cultural opportunities" (McAdam 1994, p. 39) to stimulate collective framing.

Framing literature has brought to light the importance of public opinion, ideas and perceptions but has fallen short of providing account of where these ideas come from and how they turn into mobilizing action. Schuman and Munro (2006), for instance, argue that it is the movement leaders who initiate the ideas and formulate grievances. Uhlaner and Niayesh (2015)

also found some limited empirical evidence that relational goods and socialization may play a role in mobilizing action. Further empirical research needs to be done in order to find out how these processes actually can lead to mobilizing action. Hamdy and Gomaa, (2012, pp. 203-204) found that the social media discussion in Egypt was heavily weighted towards accusations of Mubarak and of corruption under his regime, much more so than in the semi-official and even the independent media.

Personal frames have been examined before in other contexts such as media bias and human rights abuse. (Monroe 1996; Valkenburg et al. 1999; Hunt 2007; McEntire et al. 2015). Valkenburg et al. (1999) found that "respondents who had just read a story framed in terms of human interest emphasized emotions and individual implications in their responses significantly more often" (565). McEntire et al. (2015) empirically examined different frames and conclude that personal frames are the most effective in changing citizens' attitudes towards human rights abuses. They found that personal narratives, alone or in combination with other framing strategy, appear to be the most consistently successful in leading individuals to action: "Our results demonstrate that these frames are more effective at fostering consensus mobilization than they are at action mobilization. Personal narratives appear to be the most consistently successful, increasing individuals' knowledge on the issue, their emotional reaction to the issue, and as a consequence, leading them to reject the practice and participate in a campaign" (McEntire et al. 2015, p. 421).

Humanization of grievances have proven to have powerful effects on mobilizing grievances and mobilizing action. Mobilizing grievances resonate more with participants if targets are identified, whether they are individuals or entities (Gamson, 1992; Martin, McCarthy, and McPhail, 2009). Gamson (1992) notes that moral indignation is more likely to lead to contentious

collective action if individuals are able to identify the causes of their discontent and, most importantly, are able to put human faces on them.

Grievances alone may not lead to contentious collective action unless they turn into mobilizing grievances (Snow and Soule, 2010; Snow and Byrd, 2007). However, long-standing political (Huntington, 1968, 264–65), economic (Gurr, 1970, 13), or socio-cultural grievances (Johnson, 1966, 62) tend to make people more receptive to the idea of political change (Klandermans, Roefs, and Oliver, 2001). Jenkins and Perrow (1977, 266) state that "grievances are relatively constant and pervasive" (also see McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Turner and Killian, 1972). Similarly, Tilly (1978) argues that dissatisfaction and alienation exist in every society at all times and, therefore, dissatisfaction alone cannot be said to cause mobilization. As Trotsky (1932, 353) noted on the Russian Revolution, grievances alone are "not enough to cause an insurrection; if it were, the masses would be always in revolt." This argument seemingly obviates the need to identify a relationship between grievance and action.

The theories and models discussed above all address important pieces of the puzzle of protest, but none provides on its own a sufficient account of the process that moves individuals to action. That process begins with the formation of grievances which are then built into a moral consensus around an injustice frame which then somehow leads to mobilization for action. That last "somehow" embodies the major problem of explaining why individuals act. Moreover, existing theories provide an incomplete account of the absence of action in the presence of grievances.

The next chapter develops a new theory which addresses these shortcomings. It provides the foundation for a model of how mobilizing grievances turn into mobilizing action. The chapter

develops the theory of political inclusion, a new theory of mobilization which can examine the peaks (major incidents of contentious collective action) and the valleys (periods of no major contentious mobilization) at the same time. The theory places the interplay of government and opposition in authoritarian regimes at the center of the theory as a transformative element. A worthwhile theory must be testable and falsifiable. After developing the theory, the chapter discusses the operationalization of its concepts and its individual elements. Lastly, the chapter discusses case selection and explains why contemporary Iran provides a great opportunity to test the theory.

The subsequent chapters carry out the test of the theory. Each chapter focuses on one of the three major incidents of contentious collective actions, namely the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, the 1979 Islamic Revolution, and the 2009 Green Movement and more recent protests. But in order to accept this theory, it must also be able to account for lack of contentious collective action. Thus each chapter also applies the theory to a quiescent period either prior or after the major incident of contentious collective action. Each chapter begins by outlining an historical account of the revolution it addresses; that is, each chapter begins by describing each case. Each chapter then presents what the literature currently offers as explanations for the case. These generally are not incorrect, but they are incomplete, and as the reader will see, they are specific to each of the revolutions. Thus each chapter then turns to applying the political inclusion model to each case and evaluating its success, or failure, as an explanation.

If supported, the theory of political inclusion will provide a unified framework for understanding Iranian struggle for democracy for the past 150 years in a continuum. The theory also can be applied comparatively, in contexts outside of Iran. It intends to provide an explanation

for when and under what conditions people in authoritarian regimes join in contentious collective action and when they abstain.

Chapter Two: Political inclusion: A theory of collective action

Introduction

This chapter develops a theory of political inclusion, and discusses how it is different from the other theories and models of contentious action in authoritarian regimes. Central to the theory is a dynamic process in which a key independent variable is whether the opposition is included or excluded as a recognized political actor[5] in the polity. To that end, the second part identifies a transformative process that focuses on the inclusion or exclusion of the opposition from the polity as an independent variable. In order to test the theory against evidence, abstract terms need to be turned into observable measures. The next part of the chapter addresses case selection, and the final section discusses the operationalization and media data so that the theory can be tested in a systematic fashion looking at both periods of action and no action.

A NEW THEORY OF MOBILIZING ACTION

In authoritarian countries, contentious political mobilization – mass mobilization against the regime or ruler – is often erroneously believed to be contingent upon having a strong opposition that can mobilize individuals. I argue that, all else equal, contentious political action is actually less likely to occur in an authoritarian country where there is a significant opposition composed of one or more groups. This is because when the opposition is recognized by both the people and the government as a collective voice, its existence lessens the people's impetus to protest. If the opposition is included in the polity, it diminishes the desire to protest even further. Such periods are perhaps best understood as times of *political inclusion*. In this context, political inclusion

[5] Recognized political actor refers to political opposition group(s) within the country that are recognized by the public and the regime as an opposition. This is to exclude oppositions groups outside the country (resistance fronts), civil wars, insurrections, and separatist movements.

signifies having an organized, viable (sustainable and not temporal) and functioning (able to impact the feedback loop) opposition inside an authoritarian country, regardless of whether or not that opposition shares power with the ruling elite and whether or not power turnovers actually occur. By the same token, contentious political mobilization is more likely to occur when that organized opposition is excluded to the point of having no meaningful effect in the polity: this is the point at which political inclusion fades into political exclusion. In other words, the theory predicts that the likelihood of contentious collective action relates to the level of inclusiveness of the opposition in the system.

At its core, this thesis addresses the dynamic process through which the interplay of government and opposition in authoritarian regimes transforms the ways in which politics is conducted. In authoritarian societies, there are often no meaningful electoral systems in place, so the process of political transformation occurs largely through street politics, whether in the form of mass mobilization or of reforms driven by such pressures. This transformative process is primarily a function of (a) how and by what means citizens engage with the polity, (b) how the government responds to citizens' grievances, and (c) how the continued transformational interaction between the regime and the public advances.

The **first leg** of this process entails political action. Under most conditions, people do not undertake political actions primarily because of opportunity costs, efficacy concerns and free-rider problems. But under certain conditions, individuals do cooperate in order to achieve a goal or participate in a contentious political action. However, mobilization scholars are not theoretically equipped to explain when and under what conditions people are more susceptible to cooperate or participate in high-risk situations. Therefore, the question that needs to be addressed is: why do people participate/cooperate in certain contexts and under specific situations, but not others? In

other words, under what circumstances does contentious political mobilization occur in authoritarian societies?

The **second leg** of this process involves a feedback loop, which is a structured system with a channel or pathway that causes part of the output or effect from one node (a situation, for instance) to turn into new input that eventually influences the original node, generating either more or less of the same effect. There are two major types of feedback loops: reinforcing or positive feedback loops, and then balancing or negative feedback loops. Both types occur when the loop's output, or effect, comes back to the original node to cause a further change. A positive or reinforcing loop occurs when this further change is in the same direction as the original, and a negative or balancing loop occurs when the new change occurs in the opposite direction of the original.

One example of a positive or reinforcing feedback loop can be seen in the network effect. When members of the loop actively encourage others to join, this increases the network's reach and causes it to expand more rapidly. For example, a YouTube video goes viral only when more and more people get a chance to share it, thus helping it with more new audiences. In most cases, the only limit to a positive feedback loop is the size of the population who could potentially join and participate in it. In positive feedback loops, the systemic risk is high when the cause and effect loop are being amplified exponentially, which could lead to destructive or chaotic behavior in the system.

An example of a negative or balancing loop is a thermostat. When the thermostat is set to a desired temperature, there is a gap or difference between the actual temperature in the room and that desired temperature. The greater the gap between these two temperatures, actual and desired,

the more heat or cold flows into the system, and the more rapidly it does so. As the actual temperature gets closer to the desired temperature until the gap between them is zero, the direction will always be negative because the gap is decreasing, and zero is the point at which the system has reached its target. That is why a balancing loop is also called a goal-seeking loop. The voter feedback loop is another example of a balancing loop. In a healthy democracy, politicians' performance gaps (actual performance subtracted from promised performance) will be dealt with by voters in the next election. In many cases, though, a balancing loop has delays. For instance, the voter feedback loop and attendant information delay between elections mean that there will be some oscillation around the loop's goal, such as re-electing a high-performing official or replacing an under-performing one. Therefore, a balancing loop can overshoot or undershoot due to its inherent target-oriented structure. Oscillations are normal and usually insignificant to the survival of the system, but they can also pose a systemic risk, or vulnerability in system continuity.

In the context of this research, an *inclusion feedback loop* is very similar to the voter loop described above (see figure 2.1). A government's response to channeled grievances can lead to either a positive or a negative feedback loop.[6] In some cases, protests and the government's response to grievances could create a positive loop, leading to a system overhaul or a change of regime, but for the most part, positive loops are rare or short-lived. For this reason, the current thesis focuses primarily on the negative or balancing feedback loops, a collection that includes the inclusion feedback loop mentioned above due to its goal-seeking structure. By historical standards particularly, the presence of a significant opposition within an authoritarian country almost always leads to an inclusion feedback loop that will also be a negative or balancing one. These

[6] There are other possible scenarios such as foot-dragging on part of the government. This type of response fall within the negative feedback loop.

circumstances mean that protests are a function of systemic risk within a loop, and that risks are much lower in negative loops. The inclusion feedback loop can also increase our understanding of how different time periods can exhibit such a range of diversity, including those with no major contentious mobilization, those of relatively peaceful opposition, and those of apparent acquiescence.

The implications of a prolonged interaction between the opposition seeking political inclusion and the regime denying it to them has been largely overlooked in the literature on mobilization. An analysis of feedback loops can significantly enhance our understanding of the system risks involved, which in turn enables us to comprehend the processes by which mobilizing grievances can evoke various responses from an authoritarian government to address the channeled demands.

The **third leg** of this argument, which is heavily dependent on the performance of the feedback loop covered in the second leg, pertains to a political transformation in which a regime becomes more democratic over time. This transformation towards a more democratic society can be expected as sinusoidal rather than linear or even accumulative. Once a viable and functioning opposition exists within the country and the feedback loop continues to dominate the polity, over time the political inclusion should be expected to lead to a more democratic system, regardless of whether or not the feedback loop itself is contentious.

Authoritarian political systems are mainly characterized by limited political pluralism, but unlike totalitarian systems, they also have a functioning but limited civil society composed of different groups and identities. Although an authoritarian country could potentially become totalitarian, political mobilization in totalitarian countries typically takes an entirely different

course, and therefore is beyond the scope of this research. The theory of political inclusion will lose its explanatory utility the more a country moves toward totalitarianism. For instance, this theory will not be able to explain the contentious collective action or the absence of contentious political mobilization in China since the political environment in China is not pluralistic (as opposed to its relative economic pluralism). Most of the other remaining pathways toward political inclusion are set in motion with the power of human emancipation, often in trying to reach or create a political system in which general grievances are appropriately addressed by the government. For lack of a better term, most systems of this type are commonly identified as democracies.

Nevertheless, citizens' endeavors to affect the polity are not always met with success. I argue here that the key element in determining which path an authoritarian country chooses to follow depends heavily on the presence or absence of a viable and functioning opposition within it.[7] If there is an organized opposition, we might call this path toward more inclusion a "non-protest" pathway (path #1, See figure 2.1), while if the opposition groups are fragmented and they are ineffective or on hiatus then we call this approach a "might-protest" pathway (path #2, See figure 2.1).

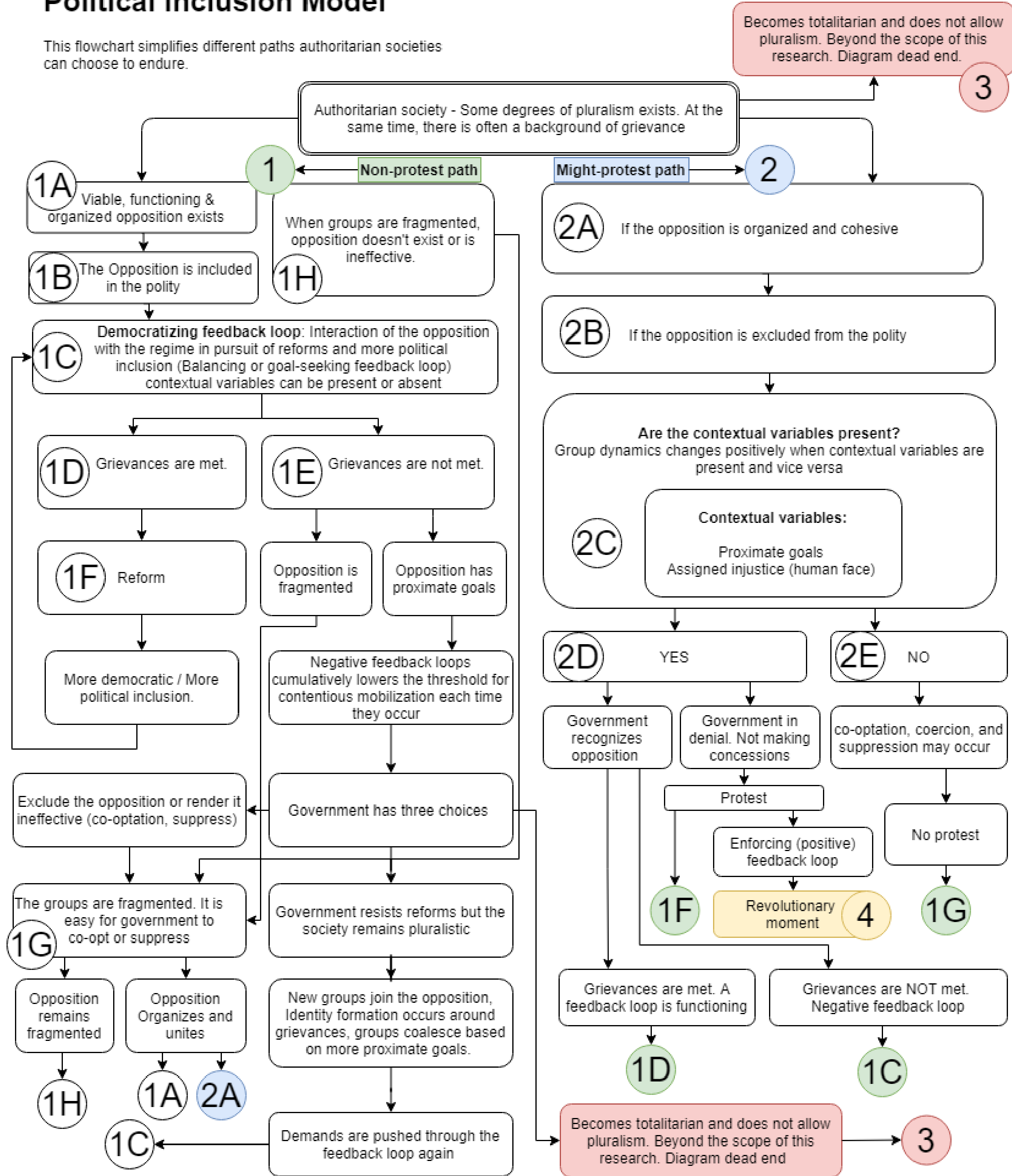
When opposition groups are fragmented and a broad coalition is nonexistent or ineffective, it is easy for the government to co-opt, coerce, or suppress the individuals who disagree with it. In some cases, the existing opposition groups in authoritarian countries are effectively excluded from the polity through means of coercion, co-optation or suppression. However, as opposed to what the current literature seems to suggest, if certain contextual variables (which will be discussed

[7] In some cases, the authoritarian governments have a great deal of influence on how opposition groups form but they rarely can fully control how opposition groups operate within the system.

below) are present, and the government still is not making concessions or in denial of such opposition demands, this could lead to protests (path #2 or the "might-protest" pathway, See figure 2.1). A positive loop triggered in this way can even upset the political system entirely. Alternatively, if the government recognizes the opposition and tries to alleviate or deflect its stated grievances, the stage will at least be open for members of the populace to engage with the polity through a goal-seeking feedback loop (path #1 or the "non-protest" pathway, See figure 2.1).

The presence of a viable and functioning opposition could also initiate a democratizing feedback loop (1C in figure 2.1). I prefer to call it an inclusion feedback loop because democracy will be the by-product of such a system rather than its end goal. Once the opposition's interaction with the regime in pursuit of political inclusion is initiated, the public's readiness for protest tapers off. If grievances are met after demands are made (1D), a system reform has occurred and the system not only survives but might also develop further avenues for inclusion and the resultant democracy over time.

Figure 2.1
Political Inclusion Model



If grievances are not addressed, though, (1E in figure 2.1) the immediate response will not be to protest, as opposed to what some of the literature on resource mobilization suggests. Instead, since this is a balancing or negative feedback loop, the opposition will try to push harder, thus cumulatively lowering the threshold for contentious mobilization with each new push. Provided that the government resists reforms but the society remains pluralistic, new groups may join the opposition over time, identity formation may occur around their shared or comparable grievances, and/or groups may coalesce based on more proximate goals, thus making the opposition even stronger and less deniable. Also, since the odds of achieving justice for the aggrieved groups runs lower if they are fragmented after each round of government denial and non-concession, it is more likely that opposition groups will coalesce. Consequently, demands can be pushed through the system again in the hopes that the government recognizes the opposition as the collective voice and changes followed suit (path #1 or the non-protest pathway).

It is possible, though, to switch from either one of these pathways to the other (e.g. path #1 to #2 or path #2 to #1). In fact, these pathways are not mutually-exclusive. It is possible that non-protest and might-protest outcomes may - under certain conditions- intersect across the model in response to government action. These paths are not distinct, that depending upon factors including the interplay between opposition and government and the context, events could jump from one pathway to the other. That is, a process that looked as though it would lead to protest could jump instead to less confrontation, and a process that appeared to be progressing non-confrontationally could jump over to protest. And in fact that feedback loops are an inherent feature of the process and key to the model, that is the end of the "2" path will often lead into path 1, and vice versa, depending upon among other things the actions of the government and the strength of the opposition. For instance, when the polity is engaged in a democratizing feedback loop (path #1)

and the group dynamics are not in favor of coalition-building, the government will try to exclude the opposition and resists reforms. During such times, as groups fragment or break apart from one another the government can then co-opt or even suppress the individual groups more easily. The coincidence of reform resistance and group fragmentation will then push the inclusion-seeking demands beyond the balancing feedback loop, thus leading onto the might-protest path (Path #2). Although path #2 does not necessarily lead to protest, it can certainly do so if certain contextual conditions are present.

In times of political exclusion, assuming that the plurality still exists, a widespread contentious political action is contingent upon the government's failure to incorporate, channel, and/or process grievances. However, certain background **contextual conditions** must exist in order for the decrease in political inclusion to produce forms of mobilization such as protest. These variables are often necessary but never sufficient. In other words, these conditions must all be present and they are not enough on their own to produce protests. First, members of the populace must identify with one or more groups that can form part of the opposition (identity frames). Second, the groups must agree on at least some proximate goals (coalition-building). Third, grievances must be attached to particular individuals (assigned injustice frames).

In authoritarian societies, grievances and the continual presence of a strong-handed government lays the groundwork for the formation of groups and identities based on the government policies, ideology or even loosely-defined narratives around the causes of grievances. More often than not, such group identities are being formed even before the actual members even meet. Just knowing that some people belong or others do not, begins to shape people's social identities. If such identity frames do not exist, then it is much harder for the opposition to achieve

group cohesion and make demands based on systemic grievances, since there is no sense that such grievances are relevant or even exist.

When multiple groups agree at least loosely on proximate goals and begin to cooperate with each other, particularly in the face of repression, then the opposition is one step closer to contentious mobilization, regardless of whether or not they are democratic forces and whether or not they will actually share power in future rather than challenging one another. When the channels of communication between aggrieved groups are open, it is much more difficult for the regime to manipulate them while also easier for the groups to organize themselves logistically. In such circumstances, too, the advancement of a group's agenda is now dependent upon cooperation in their demands for more inclusion in the polity. In other words, by creating broader coalitions formed around limited but common goals, different groups can cooperate to form a larger opposition more quickly and efficiently. This in turn leads to better consensus-building around current grievances and greater expansion of identity groups and attitude changes within the larger society. These changes are important because if the opposition is not built around common goals, then it becomes very easy for the regime to co-opt or suppress all of the groups involved. When co-option fails, though, protests may occur (path 2 to protest) or demands may be met (path 1B to no protest). Even failed protests produce stronger group identities that can then serve as the basis for organizing the next round of protesting (both above paths whether successful or failed will go through the democratizing feedback loop again (path 1C) as the cycle repeats, and with each round, people's perceptions of what is possible may shift and so does the regime's response.

Grievances are present in all societies, but not all grievances turn into potential drivers of mobilization (mobilizing grievances). Individuals are generally more receptive to the idea of political change when they, either personally or as a collectivity, suffer from an injustice. But

grievances alone may not lead to contentious collective action; instead, they resonate more with participants when the individuals or entities responsible for such injustices are identifiable, and particularly when they are identified by the public and/or opposition groups. As Gamson (1992) notes, moral indignation is more likely to lead to contentious collective action if individuals are able to identify the causes of their discontent, and, most importantly, can put human faces to them – that is, recognize certain people as the targets of opposition and mobilization.

In order to examine the above explanation, I have selected to study political inclusion in Iran over time, through multiple incidents of contentious collective actions and the quiescence periods in between them, that is to have multiple observations in my comparative study within one case. Further research can be done to examine similar patterns in the Arab Spring, in order to find wider applications (if any). The longitudinal comparison of cases of contentious collective action in Iran enables us to rise above the historical details of each incident and instead examine the root causes of the Iranian revolts while understanding periods that contain no mass contentious mobilization. The comparison of the three major cases of revolt provides a new explanation for how and why these incidents happened, how contextual variables contributed to their specific timing, and how the feedback loop advanced the political inclusion in each case. This study will enable us to expound these cases of contentious collective action in Iran and possibly see how the Iranian endeavor to transform toward a more inclusive political system will unfold. In this pursuit, I will try to identify: a) a background of grievances in Iran through historical lenses, b) when the groups and identity communes cooperated/coalesced around proximate goals, and c) when individuals and leaders were able to personalize grievances by putting human faces to injustices. This theory needs actual cases to be examined. As discussed earlier, Iranian incidents of contentious collective actions provide a great opportunity to test the model. By the same token,

the periods of no action can also be identified in contemporary history of Iran and this presents a chance to not only test the political exclusion but also political inclusion.

The historical progress of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1906 and the Islamic Revolution of 1979 can be studied using this model. The "unsuccessful" Green Movement during the Iranian uprising in 2009 can also be studied utilizing the political inclusion model, as these events "successfully" pushed the social and political agenda toward more inclusion through the feedback loop. Using this model, we are able to see "how" and "when" universal aspirations for political inclusion coincide with political opportunities (contextual variables and regime's response) and result in an increased chance for contentious mobilization towards that goal of inclusion. Similarly, this model of political inclusion enables us to understand and explain the periods during which no apparent significant contentious collective actions took place. For instance, a continuum of transformation can be identified throughout the Iranian struggle for democracy. Its phases, although curvilinear, range from the most un-democratic regimes during the Qajar Dynasty in the late 19th century to a pseudo-democratic system after the Islamic Revolution and eventually toward a more democratic regime, which was hinted at during the June 2009 and 2017 protests and embraced during the last two national elections as the pro-democratic candidate Rohani won in a landslide.

In order to test the theory against the historical evidence in contemporary Iran, the following section will discuss how I intend to measure and test the variables involved. The process of operationalization is crucial for this study as it will be almost impossible to test the hypothesis without such set up. Careful operationalization makes falsification feasible. Such operationalization also enables the model to be used and tested in other contexts, increasing the number of observations and thus the confidence in the tests.

Operationalization

Almost all the variables discussed in the theory of political inclusion are in abstract form and need to be operationalized in order to be measured accurately and comparatively across periods. In the following section, I discuss the central hypothesis and how it could be falsified. Then, the likelihood model of political inclusion and exclusion will be presented. Lastly, the variables will be identified and discussed and will be operationalized to the extent that the available data allows. I will also identify the periods of contentious collective action and no action based on available data and set the perimeter and the scope of the theory and the cases under study.

H_A Hypothesis:

Contentious political action is more likely to occur when an organized opposition is excluded from the polity. Similarly, contentious political action is less likely to occur when that opposition is included in the polity.

H_0 Hypothesis:

In authoritarian societies, contentious political action is independent of whether political opposition, is included or excluded from the polity.

Is the hypothesis falsifiable?

If I find that there is more protest when there is more political inclusion and less protest when there is more political exclusion, then I have falsified my hypothesis. My hypothesis could also be proven falsified if I find no relationship between inclusion, exclusion, and protest. Because I am making the assertion that there is a positive correlation between the political exclusion of

organized opposition and protest, the discovery of a zero or negative relation between these two items would thus falsify the hypothesis.

Likelihood of Contentious Political Action Model:

Likelihood of contentious political actions = degree of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition + Degree of political inclusion + presence or absence of contextual variables (Blame/human face + Proximate goals)

Contentious Political Action Model

Contentious political actions = high degree of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition + low degree of political inclusion + presence of contextual variables (blame/human face + proximate goals)

No Contentious Political Action Model:

Path 1:

Low likelihood of contentious political actions = high degree of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition + high degree of political inclusion

Path 2:

Low likelihood of contentious political actions = low degree of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition + low degree of political inclusion

Path 3 (rare in authoritarian regimes):

Low likelihood of contentious political actions = low degree of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition + high degree of political inclusion

Operationalization of the variables:

I. CONTENTIOUS POLITICAL ACTION:

What is contentious political action (protest) and how can it be measured?

There are many definitions for protest. In an authoritarian context, protest could range from activities that affect public policy to activities that lead to a change of regime. According to Tercheck (1974, p.133), protest generally "refers to public group activities utilizing confrontation politics to apply stress to specific target for the purpose of affecting public policy." This definition serves as an effective baseline for our model. It is important to note that this study examines only publicly organized political protests, and therefore private individualized grievances, civil disobedience, pilfering, foot-dragging as identified by James Scott (1985) are not considered protests. To measure organized political protests and to identify instances of contentious political actions, we utilize three indicators:

1) *The extent of protest mobilization.* The extent is measured by the number of events occurring during a certain time span.

2) *The intensity of protest mobilization*. The intensity is indicated by the size of protest events measured and the number of participants involved.

3) *The objective of protest mobilization*. In authoritarian societies, protests that are not targeting the central government policies or remain provincial or sector-based are sometimes tolerable. At

times, too, protests are manufactured by the government for specific purposes. We will have to adopt a mechanism to exclude those types of events from this analysis and only include the ones whose objectives are to a) challenge the central government and b) offer policy alternatives that will affect the majority of people in the country rather than pushing the government's own agenda.

For practical reason in this study, I exclude provincial/regional protests or sector-based protests (e.g. labor protests) and will only study the contentious political actions that target the central government and offer policy alternatives. Therefore, in this study, periods of no contentious mobilization do not necessarily mean there had not been any incident of contentious collective actions, but those incidents did not qualify as a major protest at the national level.

How to obtain this information consistently over time and how to assess it?

To obtain accurate information about the extent and intensity of mobilization events during the time in question, I will look at both news reports and historical records. Specifically, I will look at the *New York Times* archives (the TimesMachine™) to both obtain this kind of information but also to cross-check it with other Iranian data sources such as newspapers and historical books which often have a chronological event section at the end. There is no single domestic newspaper in Iran that runs across the time of our study but the digital archive of *Rooznameh Iran* or the "Iran newspaper," which started in October 1916, is available in DVD form and I have obtained all issues. The newspaper *Ettela'at,* which started in 1926 and has continued to this day, is also available through an on-demand digital database. I will examine these two newspaper records over the time period in question using the keyword "protest," looking at the numbers of protestors for each events and the number of events in a one-month time span in order to locate all instances of contentious collective actions within that timeline. I will only record protests that mobilized more

than 1,000 people (not necessarily in one location but in the same day) and occurred more than three times within a one-month timespan. The rationale behind this arbitrary cut-off number is that there have been many protests of small scale and including all of them in the analysis will not add much value.

For the period prior to and during the constitutional revolution of 1906, the three independent (non-governmental) newspapers of *Habl ol Matin*, *Hekmat,* and *Ghanoon* were available. I obtained the digital archives from the "Iran National Library," but they are not very useful in terms of events as they often did not want to date-stamp their prints; the reasoning here was that an unstamped paper would not look outdated and so would be passed on and read by more people. *Ghanoon,* for instance, did not even put issue numbers on its prints. For the period from 1890 until 1906 when constitutional revolution succeeded, the history chronology books provide a better account of events, particularly the books that include letters from the Russian and British embassies to their respective countries as independent reports of what was happening on the ground. I will also be using many books published in Iran covering this time span, including a two-volume book by Ahmad Kasravi entitled *Chronology of Constitutional Revolution* which provides one of the most comprehensive accounts of the events surrounding the Constitutional Revolution of 1906.

In order to gather information about the objective of protest incidents, I look at the same sources and identify the incidents that targeted the central government and offered policy alternatives. I sample the content of identified newspapers in a systematic way, from 10 days prior to and for 10 days after the identified protests that pass the "test of intensity and extent," looking at the first two pages of these major independent newspapers in order to qualify the protests as "targeting central government" or not. If the protests' demands would have had a general effect on

the member of populace if fulfilled, I will consider these events as targeting central government. For instance, if the opposition makes a request to have a referendum or pass voting laws, then the protest will be considered as targeting central government. If the demands are sector-based, like higher wages for oil company workers or provincial protests to include their local language in elementary schools, then I will consider these protests as not targeting central government policies. These examples demonstrate that the deciding factor or covering law would be to see whether the demands of protestors, if fulfilled, would have nation-wide effect on the polity or not. Ultimately, mass political protests that involve more than 1,000 people and target the central government or its policies with demands that will have nation-wide effect on the polity (inclusionary demands) are regarded as contentious political mobilization in this study.

Periods of no action

As discussed earlier, the goal of this comparative case study is to search for patterns of invariance to identify variables which are constant across all instances. This is why it is also imperative to study "no action" periods. The study of "no action" periods not only increases the number of cases within this comparative context, it will also support the theory if we find that in the quiescent periods the contentious mobilization's triggering factors are missing. For instance, if we find that the opposition in those low activity periods is not excluded from the polity, we have identified a variable with a significant theoretical explanatory utility.

The instances of protests under study are clearly identified as three major revolutions of 1906, 1979 and the Green movement of 2008 but the true test of the theory would be to see whether the change in the independent variables have any impact on the likelihood of contentious mobilization or not. The periods of no contentious collective actions are more abundant as

instances of contentious mobilizations are naturally rare. Since the time of study spans over 100 years, for logistic reasons and time restraints I will select three periods of five-year timespans of "no contentious action" to test this model. These five-year periods will be representative of the periods of no action in between major incidents of mobilization and will be selected on the basis of media data availability as described below.

My entire collection of media data per blocks of years are as follows: 1900 to 1905, 1916 to 1926, 1926 to 1933, 1961 to 1966, 1997 to 2001, 2006 to 2011. A simple 5-year selection prior to major instances of contentious collective action and periods of no major actions can be easily identified primarily because of availability of media data. The hiatus or the gap in media data is mostly because there had been interruptions in the publication of those newspapers. For example, Iran Newspaper only ran for five years from 1920 to 1925.[8] Similarly, Ettela'at Newspaper ran for 6 years starting 1927 but then closed until it resumed publication in 1961. The chart below shows the distribution of periods under study which by any standard is distributed quite nicely.

The scarcity of media content made it almost impossible to be selective based on their neutrality level to mitigate for political leaning of publications and possible biases of some newspapers within the country and even the ones outside the country such as New York Times' "Time Machine." Ettela'at, for instance, has shifted position many times throughout its history of publication. Many times these publications were shut down and were only allowed to run again with new editorial staff and new directions. During the Constitutional Revolution the state run media were entirely excluded in this study since they did not report any of the protest activities in order to prevent spread of the word. The media content that were used for this period were

[8] Unfortunately, some of the Iran newspaper's digital files were corrupt and not usable so instead the New York Times' Time Machine' along with other resources were used for that period.

primarily published outside the country and covered the events. Ettela'at newspaper during the 1961-1966 as it will be showcased in chapter four, enjoyed a period of freedom of press unlike no any other episode in Iranian history. The same newspaper during the Islamic Revolution and after the revolution was considered a moderate publication with a mild tilt towards conservatism. Almost 10 days after the green movement Ettela'at newspaper stopped even mentioning the green movement all together. Therefore, for those periods other resources (domestic and international) were utilized to crosscheck the information. Having said that, even if we assume the newspapers were biased in their analyses, it would not have made much difference in the assessment of the theory. Rarely there was a situation where, for instance, the number of participants in a protest were near a cutoff line to impact the analysis had a different media source was selected. The media content that was collected for this study were the only ones available but I recognize ideally a wider selection would have been preferred.

Table 2.1
Available media files (digital and physical copies)

Hand-Scanned LIMITTED sources	Iran Newspaper	Ettela'at Newspaper	Alternative online media/ Khomeini's speeches	Ettela'at Newspaper	Ettela'at Newspaper
1900-1905	1920-1925	1961-1966	1974-1979	1997-2001	2006-2011
Pre-Revolution / Action	No action	No action Land Reforms	Pre-Revolution / Action	No-action	Pre/during Green Move-ment / Action

II. ORGANIZATION AND COHESIVENESS OF THE OPPOSITION

What does political opposition mean in an authoritarian context?

Political opposition could mean many things in many different contexts. We need a limited and measurable definition that is relevant to political dynamics in authoritarian countries. Albrecht (2005) considers political opposition in the context of an authoritarian society as an institution that is located within a political system but is outside of the realm of governance. He defines political opposition as "a political institution with decisive organizational capacities whose interactions with the regime are of a competitive nature, yet based on a minimum degree of mutual acceptance" (p. 389). This is a practical definition, but it is also essential to be more specific in order to understand what opposition is and what it is not. Apter (1962) offers this more specific approach when he suggests that we need to identify a political opposition by its functions. He classifies these functions in three categories:

a. *Provision of information*. An important function of an opposition is to provide otherwise-unavailable information to the public and the government about public reaction to a particular policy. In this respect, the opposition keeps the government informed about the consequences of official policy.

b. *Interest representation*. The opposition has another important task in representing interests that have been overlooked by the government. This function is important because it often leads to an identity frame and group cohesion among the opposition members.

c. *Exercising criticism and provision of alternatives*. The opposition provides criticism of and poses alternatives to government policies.

With the above functional elements of political opposition, it is easier to operationalize it. I will, however, add the provision of "minimal degree of mutual acceptance" (Albrecht, 2005) to the above list in order to distinguish opposition from other forms of resistance.

How to obtain this information consistently over time and how to assess it?

The political opposition, if it is to be called one, should have a medium for spreading information and should also use this medium to offer policy alternatives or criticize current policies based on the social interests that it represents. Here I discuss how to obtain this information over time:

a- *Provision of information*. The opposition should have a medium for spreading information. If an opposition group does not have some means of communications with the public and the government, then it will be considered as a fragmented group rather than a political opposition. I will look at all the movements and incidents of contentious collective action that I have previously identified as "contentious political action" or "not contentious political action" and study the opposition behind these protests to determine whether they have had means of communication, such as a newspaper or bulletin. If so, then I will mark the event as "provision of information exists." If no such medium exists for a period of six months prior to an incident of contentious collective action, then I will mark it as "provision of information does not exist."

b- *Interest representation*. The opposition should represent interests that have been overlooked by the government, as otherwise, it cannot be considered an opposition. I will look at all the incidents of contentious mobilization that I have previously identified as "contentious political action" or "not contentious political action" and study the opposition behind the protests to see if they have represented any sort of public interest through their articles of association, publication, slogans, or texts of speeches. In cases where there is a party or institution I will look at the articles of association and official publications to see

if they have represented public interest or not. If no such institutions exist, then I will look at the text of speeches given by organization members or leaders as well as media reports. Specifically, I will be looking for keywords such as "for the public," "in public's interest," "most people agree," and "majority of people believe" in order to identify an opposition as fulfilling interest representation provision. If as the focus has been on "specifically representing a sector or an association," "regional agenda and interest," "labor grievances," and "linguistic interests", however, I will consider it as not fulfilling this provision of interest representation.

c- *Exercising criticism and provision of alternatives*. The opposition should be able to criticize the government and offer policy alternatives while also representing other interests within the society. I will look at all the incidents of contentious mobilization that I have previously identified as "contentious political action" or "not contentious political action" and study the opposition behind them in order to see if, prior to any incident of contentious mobilization, they had engaged in any criticism of the government and whether they provided policy alternatives or not. I will look at the official publications or newspaper of the opposition (if available) and the texts of speeches made by leaders or on any platform they have used to make demands or criticism for a one-month period prior to an incident of contentious collective action. Specifically, I will be looking for keywords such as "the government should or should not," "we offer a plan or alternative," "not in the public's interest," "the government is wrong," and "there would be economic hardship" in order to identify an opposition as fulfilling the provision of criticism and alternatives.

d- *Provision of minimal degree of mutual acceptance*. The purpose of this provision is to distinguish various forms of resistance from political opposition. Opposition is different

from resistance because resistance is not based on mutual acceptance between the government and its opponents. For instance, opposition groups outside the country are never recognized by the government as competitors. Similarly, militant groups do not recognize the government as a legitimate form of power. With this in mind, I will look at all the movements and incidents of contentious collective action that I have previously coded as "contentious political action" or "not contentious political action" and study the opposition behind them to determine whether, prior to any incident of contentious mobilization, any level of recognition had been present. The fact that a political opposition is making demands within the political system also means that this organization is accepting the rule of the game and recognizes the legitimacy of the power enjoyed by the government. However, government may not recognize a political opposition and may never mention or speak to them. In order to find out whether the government has recognized a particular opposition or not, I will study the official government statements or newspapers for a period of one month prior and one month after the protests to find out whether the government has addressed the opposition by its name, party, or the name of its leader(s). If so, then I will identify it as one of mutual recognition.

Once a political opposition fulfils all the provisions above, then I will interpret it as the opposition having a high degree of organization and cohesiveness. If these provisions are not fulfilled or only one or two are fulfilled, then I will rate the degree of organization and cohesiveness as "low," and if none are fulfilled then I will consider the opposition a fragmented one.

IV. POLITICAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

What does inclusion and exclusion from the polity mean in the context of a feedback loop?

In some cases, and during some periods, the opposition is included in the polity. For instance, when opposition groups are allowed to have a party platform and an official newspaper or other means of communication with the people they are enjoying inclusionary privileges. When members of the opposition groups are occupying seats in the parliament or the cabinet, one can argue that these are signs of political inclusion and they are effectively included in the polity. In such situations, a "feedback loop" between the government and the opposition (and in a sense the larger society) is functioning properly in the system. In other words, once the political opposition is included in the polity, this means that it is recognized by the government as a collectivity that represents the interests of a portion of the population and thus the government will allow debate or change policies to accommodate the opposition and their demands – or at least hint at doing so. In a scenario of inclusion, it appears that the public reaches closer to its goal and therefore its readiness for protest tapers off; this phenomenon is known as a goal-seeking feedback loop.

During times that the goal-seeking feedback loop is functioning properly, the public expects that the opposition is making their demands and grievances heard and taken into account or even maybe implemented as policy. A period of inclusion does not necessarily mean during that period reforms are constantly occurring. Instead, it means that the prospect of reforms and policy changes are in the horizon as the opposition makes its voice heard and pushes these demands through the channels for adoption. In such cases, the feedback loop is functioning properly and the odds of contentious collective actions runs low. The question, then, is how to measure political inclusion and exclusion. How do we know when a feedback loop is functioning properly, and therefore the opposition can be said to have been included in the polity? Similarly, how can we tell when it is excluded?

In order to be able to examine whether the political opposition is included or excluded in the polity, I have created three questions as indicators and proxies that can show the degree of inclusion or exclusion that the political opposition may enjoy during a certain time period. These questions are:

a. *Does the opposition have an institution and a means of communication within their network and with the extended society (i.e., a newspaper or a public forum)?*

b. *Is the opposition able to criticize the government or offer policy alternatives (claims-making)?*

c. *Does the opposition have any form of representation in the parliament or other significant representation within the regime?*

How to obtain this information consistently over time and how to assess it?

The political inclusion variable assumes that there is an organized opposition. If not, we are unable to measure whether there is inclusion or exclusion. Therefore, this variable only covers the time span in the contemporary history of the country during which there is an organized and cohesive opposition (which will be established by the variable above). This step is important because if the opposition is fragmented, then the test of inclusion will provide a false negative. There may be periods of no action when the opposition is fragmented or co-opted, and those periods should not be mixed with periods of no action during which the feedback loop identified above is functioning properly. So the above questions only apply to periods that we have identified

as those containing an organized and cohesive opposition. This make the operationalization of this variable much easier in terms of the time span studied.

For all three of the questions above, we examine the entire period of study including periods of no action, provided that we have already established that there is a strong opposition for at least a period of one year. We will assess the questions by looking at a few indicators based on the questions offered above respectively:

a. *The mere presence of an institution (e.g. party establishment) for the opposition and the presence of an opposition newspaper or a public forum platform where they can communicate with the larger society.* This information can be easily acquired by looking at the opposition's level of institutionalization. For this study specifically, I will be looking at the establishing documents of political opposition groups (if available) as well as the historical records in Qajar-era newspapers (identified previously) and *Iran* and *Ettela'at* newspapers in order to identify the presence of such institutions and news outlets.

b. *The opposition is able and willing to criticize or offer policy alternatives in a practical way*. Nothing can show whether the opposition is able to criticize the government more than its own practice. Thus, I will simply review the opposition's official newspapers or published documents by randomly selecting two issues per calendar month to see if they have engaged in criticizing the government or whether they have offered policy alternatives. I will do this for the period in which the opposition has been considered cohesive and organized by previous measures. If the opposition is included in the polity

in a practical and meaningful way, then we can expect that an interest-based opposition will engage in such activity.

c. *The opposition has some sort of representation in the government (particularly the parliament and/or executive branch)*. Assuming that I have already identified the organized and cohesive opposition groups throughout the period under study, I will study the level of engagement that the opposition groups bring within the polity; this will show whether they have any kind of representation in the system or not. Specifically, I will look at the composition of *Majlis* (parliament) and the cabinets since the Constitutional Revolution and identify whether any members of the opposition groups have been elected to parliament, been made cabinet members, or become prime minister. If the opposition is included in the polity then we can expect that an interest-based opposition will have some sort of representation in governance.[9]

Contextual Variables

The next two variables are contextual variables. They are a) blaming (putting a human face on grievances) and b) proximate goals (coalition building). These variables are transitory factors that are embedded into the setting in which an interaction occurs and therefore are expected to improve the explanatory power of the model in situations where there are few other independent variables available. Contextual variables are dependent on one or more independent variables, which themselves are necessary but not sufficient. As a result, I will only assess these variables

[9] Other available indices that have measured the level of political freedom in Iran such as the Freedom House Index and the Polity are not useful for this project because there is little variance in Iran's ranking over the relevant time period.

in selected periods of "action" and "no action" that present a high degree of organization and cohesiveness within the opposition and a low degree of political inclusion.

V. BLAMING AND PUTTING A HUMAN FACE ON IT

What does putting a human face on injustices mean?

When a grievance is publicly perceived to be associated with or caused by an individual or a group of individuals, it would be easier for the public to personalize these injustices. Grievances alone may not lead to contentious collective action; instead, they resonate more with participants when the individuals or entities responsible for such injustices are identifiable, and particularly when they are identified by the public and/or opposition groups. As Gamson (1992) notes, moral indignation is more likely to lead to contentious mobilization if individuals are able to identify the causes of their discontent, and, most importantly, can put human faces on them – that is, recognize certain people as the targets of opposition and mobilization.

How to obtain this information consistently over time and how to assess it?

Unlike some of previous variables such as contentious action, organization and cohesiveness of the opposition, and political inclusion, this one is less difficult to identify and assess, as it is easier to discover when the opposition leader(s) and independent media blame a person or removable entity as the main cause of injustice. This is particularly true when they do it the majority of the time and for a relatively long period.

For this variable I am specifically interested in keyword density (word cloud) as a means of finding the most important target for each period under study (action and no action). I will use randomized sampling over periods when a high degree of organization and cohesiveness of the

opposition and a low degree of political inclusion are present during both selected periods of "action" and "no action." If the opposition leaders and media are blaming a person or an entity most of the time during the time of study as oppose to vague rhetoric, then I will consider it as "blaming an individual or entity," but if the targets are dispersed or have no human face then I will regard it as "diffused." To obtain this information, I will have to look at two independent sources:

First, I will look at the text of speeches and written statements made by the opposition leaders over the suggested period and assess whether these have blamed a person or a removable entity for the majority of the time over a relatively long time period. For example, prior to the constitutional revolution, the primary objective of the opposition was not to remove the *Shah* but to limit his power by instituting a constitution and a parliament. One of the *Qajar* kings, *Naser al din shah*, was assassinated by liberal revolutionaries but as it was the tradition that his son became the king after him. This son was expected to follow the same direction as his father, and he did so. There was no other alternative in the Iranian political psyche, other than to have a constitutional monarchy like that of Great Britain, which they admired. Most of the opposition media involved in the constitutional revolution were either in Great Britain or its colonies. Therefore, having a constitutional monarchy meant to divest the power from Iran's shahs and give it to the people. In this case, I would consider the demands for constitutional monarchy made by individuals, leaders and associations as removing an unjust entity (the power of the king). I would look at the initial statements made by leaders of opposition in the form of secret statements and articles of association particularly the ones issues from the secret "Meykadeh Garden Association," and then later in public spaces that have been recorded in historical *Mashrooteh* books. For periods prior to and during the Islamic revolution, I will use the digital archives of *Sahifeh Noor,* which is the complete collection of Khomeini's speeches (available now in DVD form). For the periods prior

to and during the Green Movement, I will assess all the statements and speeches made by movement leaders Mousavi and Karoubi (available on *kaleme.com*) in order to evaluate whether a specific person or entity has been blamed or targeted.

Second, I will look at the available media files and see if such blame has also been reflected in the larger society.[10] Specifically, I will look at the news reports for the period prior to and during the constitutional revolution of 1906. The three independent (non-governmental) newspapers of *Habl ol Matin*, *Hekmat,* and *Ghanoon* were available and I obtained the digital archives from the "Iran National Library." For periods prior and during the Islamic revolution, I will use the digital archives of *Rooznameh Iran* "Iran newspaper," which started in October 1916, and the newspaper *Ettela'at,* which started in 1926 and has continued to date intermittently. For the periods prior to the Green Movement I will also use the *Balatarin* website (similar to Digg and Reddit with links to popular blogs) to evaluate whether a specific person or entity has been blamed or targeted. I will use the same sources for the periods of "no contentious action."

VI. PROXIMATE GOALS (COALITION-BUILDING)

When multiple groups agree at least loosely on proximate goals and begin to cooperate with each other, particularly in the face of repression, then the opposition is one step closer to contentious mobilization, regardless of whether or not they are democratic forces and whether or not they will actually share power once achieved rather than challenging one another. When the channels of communication between aggrieved groups are open, it is much more difficult for the

[10] As discussed earlier, there is no guarantee that these newspapers are unbiased or do not have an agenda of their own. Luckily, the New York Times' TimeMachine has been a great source to crosscheck the collected data and information from the Iranian media archives.

regime to manipulate them while also easier for the groups to organize themselves logistically. In such circumstances, too, the advancement of a group's agenda is now dependent upon cooperation with their demands for more inclusion in the polity. In other words, by creating broader coalitions formed around limited but common goals, different groups can cooperate to form a larger opposition more quickly and efficiently. This in turn leads to better consensus-building around current grievances and greater expansion of identity groups and attitude changes within the larger society. These changes are important because if the opposition is not built around common goals, then it becomes easier for the regime to co-opt or suppress all of the groups involved.

How to obtain this information consistently over time and how to assess it?

In order to measure this contextual variable, I will have to assess the statements made by major opposition leaders prior to each incident of contentious collective action in which the independent variables are present (i.e., a high degree of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition and a low degree of political inclusion).

I will look at the text of speeches and written statements made by the opposition leaders over the suggested period and assess whether they have reached out to other groups in the society and whether they have found proximate goals that they can all agree on. Prior to the constitutional revolution, I will look at the statements made initially by leaders of opposition in forms of secret statements and articles of association, particularly the ones issues from the secret "Meykadeh Garden Association," and then later in public space that have been recorded in historical *Mashrooteh* books. For periods prior and during the Islamic revolution, I will use the digital archives of *Sahifeh Noor,* which contains the complete collection of Khomeini's speeches, in one DVD. For the periods prior to and during the Green Movement I will assess all the statements and

speeches made by movement leaders Mousavi and Karoubi as available on *kaleme.com.* I will use these various texts to evaluate whether these leaders from various periods were able or willing to agree on proximate goals. I will use the same sources for the selected periods of "no contentious action."

In order to assess the theory's validity empirically, this thesis examines three cycles of political inclusions/protests in Iran. Contentious political mobilization in Iran has happened more frequently than just those three incidents, and their rate of occurrence is measured by a relatively qualitative method, which considers not only the size of the protestors but also whether or not they receive national coverage and whether they are targeting central government or national leaders rather than local, municipal, sector-based, or union protests. However, the key protests under consideration here are the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and the Green Movement in June 2009, though the periods in between these three specific occurrences were also a part of the feedback loop. This presents a most similar systems design in this comparative case study. By restricting this examination to a single country, multiple confounding factors are held constant enabling us to focus on the actual causes and effects. In addition, the dynamic interplay between the opposition and the regime, as well as the feedback loop part of this hypothesis, all require looking at a range of time and at those periods between major protests.

In order to examine the above variables, media content analysis (including both social media and traditional media) is utilized to assess the main independent variable (political inclusion) and contextual variables (political opportunities) in order to explain the changes as well as variations in levels of political inclusion. Archival materials such as texts of speeches made by various movement leaders will also be used in order to identify patterns of cooperation and confrontation among groups and patterns of assigned injustice frames. For instance, by analyzing

the media data and text of speeches made by opposition leaders we would be able to confirm or disconfirm whether any of the opposition demands had been met or any reforms had occurred. We would also be able to examine whether for a period prior to and during the incidents of contentious collective action assigned injustice frames had been created or not (for instance, whether or not or how frequently non-state-controlled media have blamed a specific person for the injustices). We can also observe whether opposition groups had cooperated with each other or whether they had compromised on proximate goals. Once all confirmations and disconfirmations are placed on a timeline parallel to one another, it becomes apparent whether we can identify patterns of political transformation/inclusion or any correlation between these variables and incidents of mobilization. It then becomes clear whether the theory is able to explain the events leading up to contentious mobilizing action.

Since the variables in this model such as contentious political action, political inclusion, organization and cohesiveness of the opposition, and contextual variables are limited and operationalized, it would not be ambitious to cover a long period of time in the contemporary Iranian history. In fact, the only way to confirm the validity of this theory is to be able to explain the "valleys," the periods of no contentious collective action, and not merely the "peaks." Once the model explains long periods of no mass mobilization or acquiescence, then it can claim to adequately explain the incidents of mobilizing actions. To this end, this study covers a span of over 100 years from 1900 (five years prior to the Constitutional Revolution) to 2009 when the Green Movement occurred. This period is coincidentally known as a period of Iranian struggle for democracy and it would be interesting to observe how the feedback loop has been transforming the society towards political inclusion and how the political opposition has succeeded or failed in pushing the transformation.

Chapter Three: The Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911

Introduction

The Persian Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911) was a landmark event in Iranian history, establishing a constitutional monarchy in a part of the world where constitutional government was elusive. The absolute monarchy had ruled Iran for centuries and, for the most part, failed to modernize like Western society. Iran's economy had been steadily declining during the latter half of the nineteenth century due to the ruling dynasty's selfish and misguided fiscal policies. Witnessing the prosperity and modernization of Europe and eager to limit the power of the absolute monarchy, Iranians moved to establish a constitutional monarchy, believing this to be the easiest route to reform and modernization. Although some were opposed to the modernization, namely the Islamic clergy, it was understood even among many clerics that the Qajar shahs' authority must be limited to ensure Islam was not further diminished in Iran due to the increasing influence of non-Muslim foreigners in Iran.

Three essential groups mobilized to make the revolution possible: the *bazaaris*[11], the *ulama*[12], and the intelligentsia. Emboldened by the success of the Tobacco Rebellion (1891-1892) and highly organized, these groups were integral to the upheaval of the absolute monarchy and establishment of a constitutional government, despite the differing concerns of each group. The years leading up to and during the revolution were characterized by new ideologies, national discontent, economic downturn, and violence. Notions of anti-monarchism and anti-imperialism became increasingly popular among Iranians and after large protests, the parliament was

[11] The merchants of the bazaar, the traditional marketplaces of Iran

[12] The Islamic clergy. The ulama was responsible for interpreting the Quran and well-respected in Islamic society. There were both Sunni and Shia ulama. This chapter refers to the Shia ulama

established and the constitution signed by the Mozaffar al-Din Shah. Although the newfound representative government was short-lived, the Persian Constitutional Revolution was noteworthy, marking the beginning of what is considered modern Iranian political history.

The existing literature offers a series of explanations for these events, briefly summarized here and discussed at greater length below. The general dislike of the Qajar dynasty created an environment that encouraged the revolutionary culture. While the discontent was brewing for several years prior to the revolution, the Tobacco Rebellion was the rehearsal or the backdrop, so to speak, for the 1906 revolution. Similar policies, concessions, and foreign influence plunged Iran into debt, causing the merchant class to struggle financially. Arguably, the economic downturn laid the basis for the revolution as it impacted most classes and exposed the government's lack of concern for the citizens. The religious class was also impacted by the economy but were more upset with the secularization of Iran under Qajar rule. As one will see in the events of the Tobacco Rebellion, the *ulama* were highly influential in Islamic society and necessary to gain the support of Muslims in the region. While the economy provoked nation-wide dissatisfaction, the intelligentsia brought the enlightenment theories of government, providing Iranians with the solution to the problems of the absolute monarchy. These groups allied to promote a limit on king's power.

This chapter will apply the political inclusion theory to the events of the Constitutional Revolution, and a quiet period in its aftermath, as a test of the theory. In order to clarify the usefulness of that theory, it needs to be compared with other explanations. Thus, the chapter will review the existing literature on the primary causes of the revolution. The chapter beings with a narrative account of the Constitutional Revolution and of the historical background that set the

stage for it. The historical account will provide the evidence used later in the chapter for discussion of the political inclusion theory.

Historical Background and Narrative

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Qajar dynasty had caused widespread discontent in Iran, poising citizens for the upheaval of the absolute monarchy. During the Qajar dynasty, Iran struggled in several aspects, suffering from economic decline, political weakness, loss of territory, and disputes between classes (Limbert, 1987, p. 75-79). Iran became a progressively weak nation, creating an opportunity for foreign powers to exploit its resources and generate enough instability to make the revolution possible. Furthermore, the Qajar dynasty shrunk Shiite Islam's influence to increase the Qajar's power. By the end of 19th century Nasser-al-din shah of Qajar initiated some reform that led to a decrease in the influence of religious authorities in the government which did not go very well with the clergies (Ivanov, 1977).

Lack of central power and control led foreign countries to intervene Although the central government was mostly unable to enforce the law in the provinces controlled by tribal chiefs, the public had long been critical of the dynasty's involvement with foreign powers, mainly Russia and Britain. Immediately after each incident of the Russo-Persian Wars (1804-1813 and 1826-1828), Fath-Ali Shah Qajar made huge territorial concessions by signing treaties, expanding the popular narrative of the corrupt and incompetent Qajar dynasty who had little concern for national interests. Shortly after the Russian treaties, Iran signed two treaties with Britain, giving the British Empire significant privileges that did little to benefit Iran (Abassy, 2008, p. 298). It was evident that the Qajar kings could not prevent foreign influence. This perception of the Qajar dynasty by the public helped formed liberal nationalism, which drove the Persian Constitutional Revolution.

The discontent within Iran devolved into public outrage when Nasir al-Din Shah agreed to the Tobacco Concession of 1890. The concession granted a British businessman, Major Talbot, a fifty-year monopoly on the tobacco trade in exchange for a "personal gift of £25,000 to the Shah, an annual rent of £15,000 to the state, and 25 percent of the yearly profits to Iran" (Abrahamian, 1979, p. 399). The contract stipulated that tobacco farmers must declare and sell their crops to Britain, and merchants were to be penalized if they did not obtain permits (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 597). Hundreds of thousands of Iranians were part of the tobacco industry, while ten million Iranians consumed tobacco daily (Milani, 1998, p. 48). According to the government, the concession would benefit farmers by "paying cash and freeing them from merchants' exactions," but this was fallacious reasoning as farmers had always received cash or advanced payment for their crops (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 597). Instead, the concession threatened the merchants' livelihood and others dependent on the tobacco trade, causing panic in Iran. Madani (1983, p. 24) argues that the economic causes were not the only reasons individuals didn't like the concession. He believes that people became angrier as they discovered suspicious activities such as transporting ammunition to the company's location in Tehran and bringing in about 100,000 workers who acted as religious missionaries resembling that of colonial East India Company. Many people started to express their satisfaction with the company according to Madani (p. 24) and merchants and farmers stopped trading with the company and some demonstrations in major cities occurred. Notably, the *ulama* were necessary for the success of the boycott.

The significance of the Tobacco rebellion in contemporary Iranian history cannot be emphasized enough. The success of this event showcased the power of *ulama,* which the people could to resort to when needed as they did during the Constitutional revolution. Therefore, this event needs to be studied as a background to the 1906 revolution. The *ulama* had long had

significant political influence in the Islamic world. The *ulama* were particularly hostile to the Qajar kings, critical of the dynasty's secularism under the influence of British and Russian imperialism (Varol, 2016, p. 132). The Qajar legal reforms lessened the *ulama's* judicial power, introduced Western education, favored modernization, and the frequent concessions were shrinking the realm of Islam (Hairi, 1996-1977, p. 127). There was constant conflict between the religious authority and the government as the Qajars sought to prevent the *ulama* from exercising their influence and disengage from Persian politics. Furthermore, Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar allowed Protestant missionaries to open clinics and schools in Iran's cities. Frequently, Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar interacted with, visited, and made deals with *kafir*[13], which outraged members of the *ulama*. The *ulama* viewed the Qajar dynasty as usurpers of Islam's authority (Abrahamian, 1974, p. 13), an important impetus to the *ulama's* participation in the Tobacco Rebellion and, later, the 1906 revolution.

The *ulama* provided their support for the boycott by issuing a *fatwa*[14] against tobacco use, effectively condemning the concession, preventing Muslim citizens from purchasing tobacco, and keeping revenue out of the hands of the British:

> In the name of God, the Merciful, the Forgiving. Today the use of tunbaku and tobacco, in whatever fashion, is reckoned as war against the Imam of the Age (may God hasten his glad advent) (Translation by Browne [1910] 1966).

The religious condemnation was vital to the annulment of the Tobacco Concession as it asserted that *kafirs* (the foreign powers, specifically) could not control Muslims under their

[13] Those who reject the authority of Islam. Often translated to *infidels*
[14] A formal ruling on a point of Islamic law by a qualified cleric

religious law. During the boycott, the *ulama's* support resulted from their concern that foreign influence would intrude upon the piety of Muslim Iranians, rather than economic concerns (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 598), although economics would play a role in their involvement in the revolution.

Tobacco merchants were the first to protest the concession, followed by thousands of Iranians encouraged by the fatwa. Muslims were averse to *kafir* handling tobacco, a product consumed intimately through contact with the body (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 599). Additionally, secret societies composed of the intelligentsia formed within Iran to contest the concession. These societies utilized pamphlets to propagate radical opposition against the Shah's authority. They were openly critical of Nasir al-Din Shah's greed, urging a national assembly that could make laws according to the people's will. The mounting opposition by Iranians and the religious elite forced the Shah to cancel the concession in 1892. The national rebellion exposed Iran's weak central state, and citizens discovered they had power against the Shah's authority, especially when supported by the clergy. The revolt was important, being the first time the "state had given into a public demand, rather than either suppressing it or being overthrown violently" (Katouzian, 2011, p. 760). The participation of the merchants, *ulama*, and intelligentsia during the Tobacco Rebellion would foreshadow the mobilization of the three classes that made the Persian Constitutional Revolution possible.

Although many Iranians had been discussing a potential constitutional government for years, the revolution's official genesis was Nasir al-Din Shah's assassination. The Shah had become increasingly oppressive after the Tobacco Rebellion, leading to his assassination on May 1st, 1896 by a political radical. The weak-will, incompetence, and fiscal policies of Nasir al-Din Shah's successor, Mozaffar al-Din Shah Qajar, further encouraged citizens' discontent and hastened the

downfall of the old regime. While negotiating loans from Britain and Russia, which were partially used for the Shah's European travels, Mozaffar al-Din Shah started a new liberal era in Iranian history (Abrahamian, 1979, p. 400). Mozaffar al-Din Shah, although well-meaning, was easily manipulated and an overall weak ruler (Katouzian, 2011, p. 760). Despite the reforms, Mozaffar al-Din Shah was unable to satisfy the opposition by Iranians. The Shah also inherited the financial issues caused by Nasir al-Din Shah and tried to solve the economic woes through foreign loans, resulting in controversial concessions that were "linked to conditions which were the detriment to the majority of Iranians" (Alikhani, 2020, p. 16).

The combined fiscal policies of the Shahs negatively affected "small merchants, shopkeepers, and trade guilds as well as some members of the *ulama*" (Afary, 1996, p. 23) and, as stated earlier, the economic downturn during the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century created widespread grievances. Imperialist Britain and Russia attempted to colonize Iran, but both countries could not do so for various reasons including their own rivalry. Instead, according to Ivanov (1977) Britain and Russia tried to control Iran by making the country a market for their products and provider of raw materials and supplies. The Shahs' deals and concessions were primarily to increase their personal wealth and fund their extravagant lifestyles, rather than improve Iran's economy. The concessions to foreign powers thereby accentuated the economic downturn.

Aside from the Tobacco Concession, the Reuter Concession (1872) and an 1889 concession with Britain were also met with public dissent. In 1872, Nasir al-Din Shah signed the "most complete grant ever made of control over its resources by any country to a foreigner" (Avery & Gershevitch, 1975, p. 187), the Reuter Concession. This gave Baron Julius de Reuter, a British businessman, a seventy-year monopoly over Iran's forests, mines, telegraphs, roads, railways, and

other public works (Avery & Gershevitch, 1975, p. 187). The ulama, who were already angry with the Shah over visiting Russia, a Christian territory, were infuriated that Nasir al-Din Shah would make a concession with a (formerly Jewish) Christian and European foreigner (Galbraith, 1989, p. 483). In addition to Reuter's religious affiliation, the ulama were particularly concerned when they discovered that a railway would be built to run through Tehran's holy shrine. Religious clerics claimed that the "new railway was the work of Satan, bringing corruption to Muslim lands" (Price, 2005, p. 337). The ulama were opposed to Westernization and saw this massive concession as a means for the Shah to westernize Iran, which threatened to reduce Islam's influence. The concession only lasted a year, however, due to public uproar and response from the ulama. Despite the failure of the concession, the Iranian government would work with Reuter again in 1889. Nasir al-Din Shah gave Reuter the right to create the Persian Imperial Bank, the first bank in Iran, and the right to exploit Iran's mines. The concession also gave Britain the "exclusive right to issue notes and tax fee status for sixty years" (Jones, 1887, p. 69). Through his concessions, the Shah gave the British a monopoly on Iran's banking sector and handed part of the job market (mining) to the British Empire, once again demonstrating little regard for Iranians' livelihood, a theme common in the late Qajar dynasty.

Mozaffar al-Din Shah continued using foreign powers for personal profit after his father's assassination and steadily headed towards bankrupting Iran. According to Katouzian (2009, p. 80) the physically ailing shah asked the newly elected chief minister, Amin-o-Dowleh, in 1897 to initiate financial reform and devise a development plan to lift up the country economically on par to that of neighboring countries. Amin-o-Dowleh, wrote to him in response that to raise the money needed to initiate reform would be impossible domestically and the only option left would be to borrow money from a neutral power such as Belgium hinting to avoid Russians and the British

(Katouzian, 2009, p. 81). One part of Amin-o-Dowleh's development plan was to reform education. The minister's plan to establish and expand elementary schools was not received well by the ulama who thought teaching western science would not be beneficial and instead a focus on Madrasas (Religious schools) would be more beneficial. The Shah could not risk a religious uproar and replaced him with Amin-os-Soltan. The new chief minister was quick to exile some of his rivals and oppositions. Amin-os-Soltan almost immediately sought a loan from Russia and later on the public outcry about these loans set off a few events that were important in building momentum for the constitutional movement which will be discussed below.

This background was required to understand the events leading up to the Constitutional revolution, which is the period under study from 1901 to 1906. We turn now to an analysis of those events.

The cash-starved administration needed to secure money from external resources for the development plans and ever-expanding shah's expenses. The first loan (1901) from Russia was contingent upon Iran paying its large debt from an earlier loan to the Imperial Bank. The terms of the loan forbad the Iranian government from repaying the loan in full before ten years had passed and prohibited Iran from contracting other loans without Russia's consent (Daniel, 2012, p. 120). Once the loan to the Imperial Bank was paid off, Mozaffar al-Din Shah used the remaining money for lavish European trips for himself and his entourage (Daniel, 2012, p. 120). Another large loan from Russian in 1902 was used to fund the Shah's travels to Europe. The loans' contingencies were a calculated move on behalf of Russia, as the two large loans "made the Iranian government at this time a virtual tool in Russian hands" (Keddie, 1969, p. 4)

When the public was made aware of the loans, there was considerable dissatisfaction among the *ulama*, the public, and government officials (Keddie, 1969, p. 5). While Mozaffar al-Din Shah used the remainder of the loan for personal trips, the loan was believed to be facilitated by the pro-Russian prime minister Amin os-Soltan, also referred to as "The Atabak." Many Iranians believed that Amin os-Soltan prevented Mozaffar al-Din Shah from hearing the British officials' offers, causing most Iranian citizens and government officials to distrust the prime minister. Although the brunt of the discontent appears to be placed upon the Qajar dynasty, Amin os-Soltan played a significant role in how the opposition, from this point on, linked grievances to chief ministers.

During his tenure, also, as opposed to what Amin-o-Dowleh recommended, according to Madani (1983, p. 54) forty different types of taxes were applied to farmers who constituted 80% of the population of Persia in order to raise money. However, the promised reforms really did not take place and individuals did not see any significant difference in their lives. Joseph Naus and two other experts from Belgium were placed in charge of customs and although they improved the customs revenue by about 35%, Naus caused an uprising by wearing a Muslim clergy's attire and taking a picture in a mocking way which circulated in the public quickly (Pourmohamad, 2014, p. 56). The Belgians and their domestic enablers, namely the chief minister, also were blamed for expansion of bars and importing alcohol which the *ulama* resented (Madani, 1983, pp. 55-56).

Orchestrated by Joseph Naus[15], the Iranian government raised tariffs, taxes and gave control of customs revenue to Belgium, replacing employed merchants and exacerbating the discontent within that class (Keddie, 1969, p. 12). Subsequently, the merchant class, bazaaris, were

[15] A Belgian official who acted as Iran's Minister of Finance

critical to the revolution's success and for articulating the increasing popularity of constitutionalist ideologies. It is unsurprising that the bazaars, namely the one in the capital of Tehran, would have a substantial influence on the course of revolution as they were a "central marketplace and production center…the primary arena (together with the mosque) for extra-familial sociability and the embodiment of traditional urban lifestyles" (Ashraf, 1980, p. 539). Being the social hub of Iranian culture and the seat of the ulama's political power, the bazaars allowed for the promotion of constitutionalist ideologies and the organization of individuals against the Shah. The bazaaris were concerned with Iran's economic status, the diminishing job market, foreign powers' influence, and the Qajar corruption. They vehemently rejected the government's trade and commerce policies, incensed by the Qajar dynasty's failure to invest in Iran's industry and the failing economy. The government attempted to solve the economic issues, but most of these measures were ineffective and negatively impacted the merchant class.

The reformed tax system caused financial losses for bazaaris. The merchants were particularly angry about a new tariff that imposed a 20% tariff and 5% consumption tax on exports, decreasing commerce and trade profits (Yapp, 2014, para. 2). The financial losses made it difficult for the merchants to cover the cost of transporting the goods and the inability of the merchants to follow the tariff caused Iran to rely on imported, rather than domestic, goods (Yapp, 2014, para. 2). Industry declined in Iran as Russia began taking over half of Iran's exports while giving a small number of their exports to Iran. Domestic products were too expensive for Iranians, while imported goods were cheaper. This meant little profit for the merchants but large profits for Russia. Many members of the ulama were also angry over the economic decline and tax reform. Those who held

property through *waqf* grants[16] were concerned about how the tax reform would affect them (Yapp, 2014, para. 3)

As the guilds (*asnaf)*[17] of the bazaar united into one large organization, the *Anjuman-i Asnaf,* the ulama were preparing to limit the Shah's arbitrary authority that reduced the ulama's power and Islamic influence. The alliance between these two groups was inevitable because of the relationship between the bazaar and the mosque. In addition to being the center of commerce, the bazaar was the "main public center of the community of believers" (Ashraf, 1988, p. 540), and the mosque relied on the financial support of the bazaar. Islamic ideas were inseparable from the concept of the bazaar: "The mutual relations between God and man are of a strictly commercial nature. Allah is the ideal merchant" (Khan & Sirageldin, 1991, p. 528). The ulama had multiple reasons to oppose the Qajar dynasty, and despite their long-established power, the ulama needed the public support of the bazaaris to reduce the Shah's authority. Simultaneously, the bazaaris needed the ulama's protection (Ashraf, 1988, p. 542). There were diverging goals within the ulama. According to Hairi, some religious clerics aimed for a nationalist state with a constitution, while some were less concerned with the constitution and more focused on their opposition to the Shah. Others viewed removing the Russians as a top priority. Although the specifics of their motivations to join the movement varied between clergy members, they all wished to limit the Shah's arbitrary power.[18]

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[16] Waqf is known as an inalienable religious endowment held by a charitable trust. It normally involves devoting a building or plot of land for religious or charitable purposes. Waqf plays "an important role in supporting the establishment of Islamic institutions such as mosques, Islamic educational institutions and hospitals" (Keskin 2011, 449).

[17] The guilds were organizations in the bazaar based on trade. These were composed of merchants and artisans.

[18] Importantly, not all members of the Shi'i ulama were in favor of limiting the Shah's authority and/or establishing a constitution. The anti-constitutionalist ulama members presented a challenge for the constitutionalists (Farzaneh). However, the support for the movement was significant enough to elevate the ulama to one of the most important groups during the revolution.

The third group critical to the revolution was the Iranian intelligentsia, which was in its infancy. The intelligentsia had only begun to develop in the second half of the nineteenth century when Malkom-khan introduced the theories of the Enlightenment. Western-educated, Malkom-khan was the "first Persian reformer to possess knowledge of liberal institutions in France and England," advocated for individual rights, and encouraged using a constitution to regulate the relationship between citizens and the state (Abassy, 2008, p. 300). Malkom-khan established the first intellectual organization, the *Faramushkhane,* in the 1860s. Based on the Masonic lodges, these were composed of Iran's educated elites, representatives of the aristocracy, and some royal family members (Abassy, 2008, p. 300). The intellectual elites believed that social participation was necessary for an effective government and promoted their Enlightenment-based ideology. Rather than espouse the Shah's divine right, they ascribed to the concept of man's inalienable rights, liberalism, socialism, secularism, and nationalism. They were instrumental in informing the public on the ideas of despotism, nationalism, and liberalism, which was necessary for the public to understand to gain support for a constitutional government. They articulated the problems with the Shah's rule for the public and presented the pathway to eradicating the absolute monarchy. It should be noted that this study only focuses on events and processes after 1900 and only discusses the prior events as background or developing narratives.

During the nineteenth century, some of the early intelligentsia's beliefs were declared heretical by the ulama. However, there was an evident shift as the ulama's less conservative members allied with the intelligentsia at the end of the nineteenth century. Perhaps this was due to some intellectuals asserting that Islam can be reconciled with the "spirit of modernization, rationalization, and scientific progress" (Abassy, 2008, p. 308), although certainly not all anti-monarchist ulama ascribed to this belief. Despite the differences in the ideologies of the ulama and

the intelligentsia, both groups wanted to balance the power within the government and end the absolute monarchy. The intelligentsia recruited members of the ulama, "seeing this as the only way to create a national coalition with broad mass appeal" (Afary, 1994, p. 23).

Secret societies, *Anjomans,* formed in the years before the revolution and would regularly criticize Mozaffar al-Din Shah and discuss strategies for social change (Kamrava, 1992, p. 33-34). Many of the Anjomans were composed of intellectuals, but several societies had members of the ulama and bazaar, serving as vehicles for the three classes to collaborate. The Anjomans were largely responsible for informing the public about the constitution via political propaganda in the early 1900s. "Clandestine leaflets, called night letters (*shabnameh*), were distributed by the Anjomans and were posted throughout the city's [Tehran] walls, calling for reforms and end to absolutism" (Kamrava 1992, p 36). One early Anjoman, The Society of Learning, provoked intellectual discourse on the impending revolution. Established in 1897, this group of liberal intellectuals founded the National Library and "privately financed modern schools…and the library became a center for political and social discussion where hundreds met regularly (Afary, 1996, p. 41). Similar to the coffeehouses of the American Revolution, the library allowed for the exchange and propagation of ideas related to constitutionalism. Another important Anjoman was the Revolutionary Committee, founded in 1904. This secret society was composed of progressive individuals who agreed that the absolute monarchy should be replaced with a more democratic government. They would publish secret leaflets that advocated political and social reforms and call for establishing a European style legislature (Afary, 1996, p. 41). The bazaaris, ulama, and the intelligentsia worked together to end the absolute monarchy in the years leading to revolution, and many united in the form of secret societies. Afary states that without the "hybrid coalition of forces, which included liberal reformers…the ulama…shopkeepers, students, trade guilds people,

workers, and radical members of secret societies," the revolution would not have been possible (1994, p. 21). Each group had individual roles within the revolution, but the broad support for anti-monarchism due to the coalition allowed for the organized mobilization against the government.

In the early 1900s, organized groups began acting against the government, as a nascent political opposition force, they were disgruntled with the Shah, the Atabak, and Russia's influence and exploitation. Specifically, the ulama led a movement against the Atabak-facilitated Russo-Persian loan through a threatening letter sent to the Shah, suggesting that "some kind of representative government or council, an idea which was beginning to spread by some of the modernized opposition and their secret societies," (Keddie, 1969, p. 21). The letter was one of the first signs of democratic influence expressed by government officials in Iran. Mozaffar al-Din Shah dismissed the request, approving the loan and causing unrest and seditious discussions throughout Iran (F.O. 416/9, Hardinge to Lansdowne, April 2nd, 1902, No. 54). As the anti-Russian sentiments spread, the Atabak was becoming unpopular among the public and government officials. From his decisions, citizens realized that the Atabak was not working in favor of Iranians, but rather his political status with Mozaffar al-Din Shah. As the Atabak's unpopularity grew among citizens, radical constitutionalists published political propaganda with extremist religious undertones. When a liberal newspaper in Iran published an intention by radicals to attack the Atabak, the government began a massive search for the perpetrators. This led to forty individuals' violent arrests, some of whom were influential figures in Iran (Keddie, 1969, p. 17). Seditious discussions were not reserved for the political radicals. Several organizations and secret societies expressed a desire to overthrow the prime minister, including those composed of the ulama, bazaaris, and intelligentsia. Despite the British being unwilling to support the opposition financially, British leaders were politically supportive of removing the Atabak considering his pro-

Russian policies. The mass mobilization indicated that many Iranians wanted to develop a republic in place of a sitting monarchy.

The largest and most violent push for a constitutional government by citizens occurred in 1905. The long-suffering Iranian economy was worsened by a bad harvest, disruptions in trade, the Russo-Japanese War, and other factors. This undoubtedly increased the opposition to the Iranian government, which had failed to protect Iran's national interests and was enforcing huge taxes and tariffs on citizens. The movement towards the revolution had been at a steady pace since the assassination of Nasir al-Din Shah but accelerated after the Russian defeat in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Constitutionalists believed that Russia was defeated because of its despotic regime, while the Japanese won because they had a constitutionalist government (Katouzian, 2011, p. 762).

The combination of the abysmal economy and the empowerment from Russia's defeat caused large-scale protests in Iran. These protests played an essential role in the revolution, as they garnered support from the public for the constitution. The ulama, bazaaris, and constitutionalists united in Tehran after the beating of sugar merchants in December of 1905. The merchants stated that their high prices were due to the high tariffs. Naus' tax reform required the sugar merchants to pay a 20% tariff, and the sugar merchants had to factor that into their prices (Gelvin, 2005, p. 139). Still, the governor beat the merchants' feet (*bastinadoed),* including those of a respected elderly merchant who was a *sayyid* [19] (Abrahamian, 1979, p. 400). The governor's violence quickly prompted outrage in the city, causing two thousand bazaaris to close their shops and convene with members of the ulama in Tehran's royal mosque to take sanctuary (*bast).* The protestors made four

[19] A sayyid is a Muslim descendent of the prophet Muhammad

demands: replacement of the Tehran governor, dismissal of Joseph Naus, enforcement of the *shari'ah,* and establishment of the House of Justice (*Adalatkhaneh*) (Abrahamian, 1979, p. 405). Of course, the state of the economy was also a concern for the protestors. The bazaaris' spokesperson told the government:

> The government must reverse its present policy of helping the Russians at the expense of Iranian merchants, creditors, and manufacturers. It must protect our businessmen, even if their products are not yet as good as those of foreign companies. If the present policy continues, our whole economy will be ruined. (Habl al-Matin, June 19th, 1905. Translated by Abrahamian 1982, p. 81).

The strike lasted a month, and the Shah finally agreed to the protestors' demands, dismissing Tehran's governor and promising to create a House of Justice. Scholars consider the 1905 protest to be the beginning of the revolution. Notably, when the protestors returned to Tehran, they shouted, "Long Live the Nation of Iran," the first time Iran was referred to as a nation (Abrahamian, 1979, p. 405). However, Mozaffar al-Din Shah did not fulfill his promise of creating a House of Justice, igniting another protest in 1906.

In the summer of 1906, a violent protest broke out in Tehran. Mozaffar al-Din Shah failed to create the House of Justice, and an anti-government preacher had been arrested in Tehran (Browne, 1910, p. 117). Again, the bazaaris went on strike, and the Anjomans printed newspapers denouncing the government's actions (Abrahamian, 1979, p. 405). Students in Tehran protested outside of the police station where one protestor, a sayyid, was shot and killed by the police. The next day thousands of bazaaris and students held a public funeral for the slain sayyid but were stopped by the Cossack Brigade[20] before they reached the mosque (Browne, 1910, p. 17).

[20] The Iranian calvary modeled after the Russian army

According to Browne, a melee ensued between the protestors and the Cossacks with fifteen people dying including another sayyid (1910, p. 17).

The ulama were perturbed by the bloodshed, comparing the Qajar dynasty to Yazid, a seventh-century Umayyad caliphate[21] who killed Imam Hussein, a martyr in Islamic culture (Abrahamian, 1979, p. 405). This caused the ulama to go on strike, with most religious leaders leaving Tehran for Qum (Browne, 1910, p. 118). Shortly after this, a protest of over 5000 individuals was held at the British embassy. The protestors demanded that the prime minister Ein-Od-Dowleh be dismissed, the implementation of a "Code of Laws," and the recall of the ulama from Qum (Browne, 1910, pgs. 118-119). The number of protestors grew to between 12,000 and 14,000 people in the summer of 1906. The ill Mozaffar al-Din Shah acquiesced to the demands to dismiss the prime minister and invited the ulama to return to Tehran, but the protestors, understandably distrustful of the government, demanded that the Shah sign a regular constitution and establish a National Assembly (Browne, 1920, p. 119). On September 17th, Mozaffar al-Din Shah agreed to the terms presented by the protesters, allowing "elections leading to the establishment of a national assembly (*Majlis),* which was duly convened in the autumn and drafted a constitution for Iran that the monarch signed on his deathbed at the end of December 1906" (Foran, 1991, p. 804). The opposition movement was now considered a populist alliance that was able to achieve a constitutional monarchy. In the following years, the revolution turned violent, but the *Majlis* enacted important laws and reforms.

To summarize, the 1906 Persian Constitutional Revolution was preceded by media blackout, suppression, governmental incompetence and greed, economic decline, an influx of

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[21] The dynasty that ruled the Islamic state after the death of the prophet Muhammad

Enlightenment ideology, and discontent among the social classes. One can argue that the economic downturn was the primary catalyst to the revolution as it stirred public outrage and exposed the Qajar dynasty's ineptitude and blatant disregard for the situation of the Iranians. Other related causes of the revolution were the resistance to Russian and British influence, dislike of the Atabak, ulama members' opposition to the dynasty, the introduction of enlightenment theories, and the dissemination of radical political propaganda by the secret societies through underground channels. The merchant class, the intellectual elite, the religious clergy, and other anti-monarchist sympathizers had different motives and often opposing ideologies but at eventually these differences were put aside to limit the arbitrary authority of the Shah and improve the dismal state of the nation.

Existing explanations

The Persian Constitutional Revolution has been the subject of many studies and a variety of theories have been utilized to explain it. The theories are narrow, only look at a frozen snapshot of history, and have been applied as the conditions have fit. This section provides an overview of the existing explanation of the causes of the Constitutional Revolution of 1906. There are some limitations to the existing explanations as they do not thoroughly address why citizens were moved to mobilize against the regime, nor do they examine periods of non-action before or post-revolution. These explanations, which can be categorized as either structural or voluntarist, do, however, provide valuable insight about the revolution.

The structural dynamics that led to the revolution are frequently discussed in the literature. Many scholars argue that favorable structural conditions and opportunities provided a fertile ground for a broad coalition among all affected groups, including merchants, ulama, and

intellectual elite (Alikhani, 2020; Delzendehrooy, Farid & Khoshsaligheh, 2019; Yapp, 2014; Matin, 2013; 2012; Abassy & Stanek, 2008; Keddie, 2008; 1969; Mansourian, 2007; Katouzian, 1998; Martin, 1989; Moaddel, 1986; Hairi, 1976; Abrahamian, 1972; 1969). Simultaneously, these groups' alignment was intensified by international events and forces during the years leading up to the revolution. These ideas are dissected to understand various scholars' views regarding the immediate and remote causes of the 1906 Persian Constitutional Revolution and the roles played by the different conditions between economic factors, religious influence, and disdain for international interference in Iranian affairs.

One of the factors that created the structural opportunity for mobilization during the Qajar reign was the economic downturn. Abrahamian (1972, 1969) claims that the economic crisis of early 1905, which was primarily created by limited trade with the North due to international events such as the Russo-Japanese War, and by the subsequent revolution in Russia, led to high levels of inflation in Iran. Simultaneously, the customs revenues declined in early 1905 and, consequently, Mozaffar al-Din Shah raised tariffs on local merchants to meet rising state spending while the cost of food was still rising due to scarcity.

In support of Abrahamian, Keddie (1969) states that one of the factors that created the mobilization during the Qajar reign was the economic downturn due to the Shahs' spending habits and increased taxation on merchants, particularly during Nasir al-Din Shah's tenure from 1848-1896. One of his long trips to Europe cost a minimum of $500 per day (p. 151). Consequently, business owners were unable to provide their customers with essential products. The price of a basket of basic commodities rose by 5.5 times between 1880 and 1900, with the price effect being felt in the northern cities of Qajar Iran, considerably affecting cities like Tehran (Martin, 1989, p. 43). Moreover, Tehran's inhabitants experienced a rise in taxes while Ein-Od-Dowleh was prime

minister, further worsening economic conditions in Iran (p. 63). Abrahamian (1969) quoted the Calcutta-based Persian-language newspaper *Habl al-Matin* as stating that one of the consequences of the inflation that struck the economy in 1905 was the increase in the price of wheat and sugar (p.130). Previously, bureaucrats attempted to manipulate grain prices in 1903, resulting in Tehran's bread riots (Yapp, 2014, p.250).

Yapp (2014, p.166) further adds that increasing unemployment rates, a devaluation of the currency, and a surge in rural-urban migration to cities like Tehran created immense antipathy toward the Qajar government. Furthermore, inflation brought about reduced revenue for silk traders. This had far-reaching consequences as silk production was the main cash crop and source of income in Iran. The economic decline continued with the ascension of Mozaffar al-Din Shah. Discontent among the masses, due to increased taxes and economic hardship, brought mass support to the movement. The government's decision to crack down on the *ulama's* control of the waqf properties—customarily exempted from taxation—was a catalyst of the constitutional revolution. Waqf is a popular vehicle to provide public goods, known in English as an "Islamic trust." They are often managed by religious authorities and not the government.

This economic crisis, for many structuralists, eventually triggered public protests, each stronger than the previous ones, and ultimately led to wider public support of the revolution. However, Abrahamian, along with other scholars mentioned above, does not examine in depth why and how the economic shared grievances led to contentious collective action under the Qajar regime.

Another structural cause was the impact of external effects on the relationship of the state and the society. The international effects on the Constitutional revolution were significant and

apparent. Matin (2013, p. 63) argues that "Russia's defeat by Japan and its subsequent 1905 Revolution had intensified anti-imperialist and anti-monarchical sentiments in Iran," bringing hope to people for the demise of the Shahs of Qajar." The Iranian economy, which had just opened to the international market, was vulnerable to external shocks. Abrahamian (1979, p. 391) encapsulates the external effect aptly by arguing that "the impact of the West undermined the fragile relationship between the Qajar state and the Iranian society." Matin (2012, p. 51) also demonstrates that the worldwide decline in the price of silver had an immediate impact on the Iranian economy, the currency of which, the Qiran, was pegged to silver. He argues that "the effect was particularly severe since the currencies of Iran's main trading partners, e.g., Russia, Britain, and India, were pegged to gold." This undermined public confidence in the Iranian currency and inflated the cost of imported products leading to higher prices on most consumable products.

The country was divided into two different spheres of influence, Russian in the north and Britain in the south and east (Ashraf, 1980, p.46). The Qajar dynasty was structurally weak, evident by the reliance on financial assistance from Britain and Russia (Foran, 2007, p.217). The quasi-autonomous status of Iran led to the granting of new concessions to foreign powers and the direct issuing of high-interest bonds in particular from Britain and Russia were the most common methods for financing the state's spending, which was becoming more expensive (Abrahamian, 2012, p.38-39; Abassy & Stanek, 2008, p.298). Scholars agree that the concessions and the acceptance of loans were opposed by many traders, bazaaris, clergy, statesmen, and new intelligentsia circles. Each group reasoned their antagonism from their perspective (Keddie, 2008, p.73; Moaddel, 1986, p.527).

Foreign influence by Britain and Russia also weakened the prerevolutionary state. Katouzian (1998, p. 1616) proposes that another cause of the Constitutional Revolution was the Qajar kings' incompetence in preventing foreign influence (mainly Russia and Britain) and the control of resources in Iran. Russia and Britain had significant influence over the Qajar kings through their embassies, even during the Constitutional Revolution.[22] Initially, the Russians supported the Qajar regime while Britain supported the ulama but eventually, both supported the revolution but tried to tone down the radical rhetoric of the clergy and intelligentsia.

While the economic downturn and external influence were critical factors in the revolution, it does not fully explain the contentious collective action incidents. Other structural opportunities partly caused the mass mobilization, particularly the institutional weakness of the Qajar regime, which was exacerbated by the Shahs' ineptitude as rulers.[23] During Mozaffar al-Din Shah's reign (1896-1907), he tried to fix the budget deficit and bring in new sources of income, particularly through *waqf* properties, taxation on merchants, and foreign debts, but his efforts were met with resistance and eventual failure (Katouzian, 1998).

As stated earlier, the structural conditions allowed aggrieved groups to organize and mobilize against the regime. The organized efforts to enact the revolution can be categorized primarily under the voluntarist theory. However, this theoretical framework does not adequately

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[22] The discussion on the Russian and British involvement in the making and diverting of the Constitutional Revolution through their respective embassies in Tehran plays well into the narrative of foreign involvement espoused here but its detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this paper and should be dealt with separately and thoroughly.

[23] The crown prince, Mozaffar al-Din, who had been assigned as the governor of a northern province for almost 35 years, did not have a good relationship with his father and was not often consulted on important state issues. Once he became the king after his father's assassination, he had to deal with several financial issues-particularly foreign debts due to his father's spending habits. He was considered a weak-hearted king who could easily be persuaded to make concessions, which allowed the constitutionalists to express their demands more freely and openly (Katouzian, 1998).

explain the relationship between grievances and action. Furthermore, there is little analysis of social resources. Nonetheless, the organized efforts described in the literature are critical aspects of the revolution that can be further utilized when testing the political inclusion theory.

It is evident through an analysis of the literature that the assassination of Nasir al-Din Shah provoked important conversations amongst the citizenry. The identification of grievances is an important precursor to subsequently mobilizing those grievances into contentious collective action. Katouzian (1998) states that Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar's assassination created conditions that made the revolution possible. First, his assassination became a hot news topic and was debated among the general public. After his death, people started talking openly about the causes of discontent and how to prevent it. Second, it ended a fifty-year despotic reign, thus undermining the government's hegemony and legitimacy, and people started seeing the monarchs as mere mortals like the rest of the people. Third, the assassination enabled the people to identify and discuss the source of their perceived injustices - the king who was responsible for incurring foreign debt for his personal use and making concessions on national territory and against the country's vital interests. For these reasons, many scholars (Delzendehrooy, Farid & Khoshsaligheh, 2019; Katouzian, 1998; Abrahamian, 1979) view the assassination of Nasir al-Din Shah as the genesis of the revolution.

Abrahamian (1979) explains why new policies provoked underground organization. Abrahamian (1979, p.400) discussed how Mozaffar al-Din Shah accelerated the downfall of the old regime by reversing the policies of his predecessor, Nasir al-Din Shah. He states that "while negotiating new loans from Britain and Russia, partly to finance his 'medical' visits to Europe and handing over the customs to Belgian officials as a financial guarantee, Mozaffar al-Din Shah inaugurated a progressive era. He relaxed the censorship, lifted the travel ban, and most

importantly, permitted the formation of commercial, cultural, and educational associations." The liberal policies the new Shah initiated were short lived and since they coincided with a weakening state and periods of turmoil and economic downturns, they merely led to the creation of underground organizations whose only goal was to limit the Shahs' power.

The intellectual revolution occurring simultaneously appears to have contributed to the human agency aspect of the revolution. In his acclaimed article "The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran," Abrahamian (1979, p. 384) postulated that classical Iranian historians of the constitutional movement have advanced that the Western ideas of freedom, liberty, and egalitarianism roused the "sleeping public" at the end of the nineteenth century and led the way to the "national resurgence" of the early twentieth century. Abrahamian asserts that contemporary Iranian historians also emphasized that the philosophical support of despotism was undermined by the introduction of the modern ideas of nationalism, secularism, freethinking, constitutionalism, and technology. He argues that the arrival of Western concepts created an intellectual revolution, which, in turn, produced the Persian Constitutional revolution. This, according to Nezam-Mafi (1989, p. 51), led to the establishment of *'Edalat Khaneh* or *adlieh* (House of Justice), to address public grievances against the monarchy and other perpetrators, domestic or foreign persons.

While the intelligentsia was organizing and strengthening, the ulama had their own personal grievances against the monarchy, notably about the *waqf* properties. The *ulama* became a surprising revolutionary class. Kuran (2001) asserts that under Sharia law, a religious waqf is an unincorporated trust established by a living person for the provision of a designated social service (such as a Mosque, hospital, or a school) where "its activities are financed by revenue-bearing assets that have been rendered forever inalienable" (p.842). However, the administrator(s) of *waqf* can use portions of the revenue for other public goods, as necessary. An increase in the number of

waqf properties and urban development on *waqf* lands (homeowners had to pay rent to the *waqf* trust for as long as their home stood on that land) made the Qajar kings see the ulama as an impediment to a stable source of revenue considering the king's increased expenses. This encroachment of the Qajar into the ulama's financial base was the last straw for the religious leaders, who realized that reforms were needed to reduce the power of the Qajar, and revolution was the most viable means to achieve that.

Hairi (1976, p.128) informs that the struggle between different groups (namely the constitutionalist allies versus the royalists) and the rise of the *ulama* also contributed significantly to the revolution's success. The ulama saw this as an opportunity to eliminate the absolute monarchy. The *ulama* paradoxically teamed up with the intelligentsia and other reform groups to bring constitutional changes. These changes would usher in a representative house and judiciary. This alliance continued through the Islamic Revolution and defined the opposition's broad ideology around the demand for meaningful participatory democracy. However, the *ulama* used the opportunity to propagate Islamic rule within the system through their mobilizing capabilities. This made their influence even greater, and as they realized and mastered their mobilizing capabilities, they grew stronger.

The political alliances that had helped the Constitutional revolution soon fragmented, allowing Muhammad Ali Shah Qajar, who became king after Mozaffar al-Din Shah died in January 1907, to exploit the divisions within the reformist alliance and eliminate the parliament. In August 1907, an Anglo-Russian agreement divided Iran into a Russian sphere of influence in the North and a British sphere of influence in the South. The British switched their support to Muhammad Ali Shah, abandoning the constitutionalists simply because they opposed the new deal (Mackey 1996, p. 152). The Russians also abandoned the constitutionalists as soon as they reached an

agreement with the British to split Iran into two equally divided spheres of influence (Foran 1991, p. 817). Reza Shah Pahlavi founded the Pahlavi Dynasty in 1925 by overthrowing Ahmad Shah Qajar (the last Shah of the Qajar dynasty, who came to office on July 16th, 1909). Reza Shah Pahlavi curtailed the power of the parliament and effectively turned it into a rubber stamp organization. The new Pahlavi dynasty denied the population fundamental participatory rights and inclusionary citizenship and suppressed aspirations for any form of democratic government that could put people's fates into their own hands.

In the upcoming chapters, certain periods under Pahlavi and Islamic republic will be assessed to see if the current literature can provide any guiding principle or has any predictive power to assess instances of contentious collective action and periods of no action in contemporary Iran. The existing explanations are important to understanding the revolution, but they are limited by their structural or voluntarist framework, and even if they provide an explanation for individual instances of mobilizing action they are limited to a frozen snapshot in history and are often non-falsifiable. Furthermore, scholars' narrow examination of these periods of mobilization, rather than a wider examination of contentious collective action and non-action, does not adequately portray the Constitutional revolution. By examining the revolution under the lens of the political inclusion theory, one can more adequately understand the causes and outcomes of the revolution and Iran's enduring struggle for democracy.

Testing the theory of political inclusion

Existing theories and models, as discussed in the previous section, are unable to present a full view of the causes and consequences of the Constitutional revolution and incidents of contentious actions. In particular, they fail to explain the events in a long term continuum of change

in Iranian politics. As discussed earlier, at the core of the events leading up to the Persian Constitutional Revolution was the struggle for limiting the scope of the power of the kings, but the question that none of the existing theories and models can answer is what conditions led to the timing of these mobilizing actions. The struggle to transfer some of the power to the people over time has transformed the ways in which politics have been conducted up to the present and the struggle still continues. A theory to capture this struggle over time will significantly improve our understanding of the past and perhaps future political processes in Iran, possibly with wider applications for similar authoritarian settings. This power struggle can be viewed as a tug-of-war between the status-quo seekers and a coalition of progressives and revisionists within the country. Since there have rarely been any meaningful electoral systems in place in Iran, the process of political transformation eventually occurred largely through street politics, in the form of mass mobilization and reforms driven by such pressures. The question is why then and how did it become possible for individuals to mobilize into action. This chapter intends to provide an explanation for the first of such major events: the Persian Constitutional revolution.

The political transformation in this episode of Iranian politics, and many major events thereafter, can be studied by identifying a) whether there were circumstances and conditions that allowed contentious political mobilization to occur, b) the government's response to such grievances and mobilizations, and c) how the interaction between the two played out. The purpose of this chapter is to apply the theory of political inclusion to a five-year period prior to the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 and to see if it is capable of explaining why pervasive and ongoing grievances turned into mobilizing action. Then, the same theory is applied to a five-year period from 1920 to 1925 to see if the theory still stands in that context. For organizational reasons,

this chapter and subsequent ones follow the structure below (the same as the operationalization section) in order to test the theory:

I. Identifying contentious political action

a) The extent of protest mobilization

b) The intensity of protest mobilization

c) The objective of protest mobilization

II. Assessing the level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition

a) Provision of information

b) Interest representation

c) Exercising criticism and provision of alternatives

d) Provision of minimal degree of mutual acceptance

III. Political inclusion and exclusion

a) Having an institution and means of communication

b) Criticizing the government and/or offering policy alternatives (claims-making)

c) Having any form of representation in the system (parliament and/or administration)

IV. The existence of contextual variables

a) Blaming and putting a human face on injustices

b) Proximate goals (coalition-building)

In the following sections, each of the variables outlined above will be examined for a five-year period prior to the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, utilizing available print media and digital archives gathered from the Iranian National Archives in Tehran. Then, the same method and assessment will be applied to a period of "no action" with available media data (1920-1925). A comparison of the two will then be made to test the validity of the theory. The table below summarizes the findings.

Table 3.1
Evidence from "contentious" period (1900-1906)

Constitutional Revolution of 1906 (1900-1906)			
	Variable	**Assessment/Evidence**	**Flowchart Path**
I. Contentious political action	a) The extent of protest mobilization	Frequent/widespread, particularly from December 1905-August 1906 Major incidents: May 4, 1903, and December 11 and 13, 1905	2
	b) The intensity of protest mobilization	Intense/sizable numbers May 4, 1903 and December 11 and 13, 1905	2
	c) The objective of protest mobilization	Targeting central government policies Removal of Chief Minister/ establishing *adlieh* and rule of law, limiting the power of the king, having a parliament (*Majlis*)	2
II. level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition	a) Provision of information	The *Anjomans* provide otherwise-unavailable information to both the public and the government about public reaction to a particular policy. They keep the government informed about the consequences of official policy, often by writing letters to the king.	2A
	b) Interest representation	They represent the interests of bazaar and average people, whom they believe have been overlooked by the government.	2A
	c) Exercising criticism and provision of alternatives	They provide criticism of government policies and pose alternatives.	2A
	d) Provision of minimal degree of mutual acceptance	Both the government and the opposition during and prior to identified incidents have been engaged in official communication, therefore the degree of mutual acceptance is fulfilled.	2A

III. Political inclusion and exclusion	a) Having an institution and means of communication	There are no official institutions or platforms of communication. Unofficial platforms such as religious sermons are the only means of communication. Also, *Anjomans* published occasional limited "secret notes" or *Shabnameh* to be disseminated among people. No newspaper or institution such as a party platform existed.	2B
	b) Criticizing the government or offering policy alternatives (claims-making)	The opposition is not able to criticize the government openly and publicly or to offer policy alternatives (claims-making) through official means, but they still have some unofficial channels and forums such as religious sermons. However, they are also sent into exile, leave out of fear, or are imprisoned because of their defiance.	2B
	c) Having any form of representation in the system (parliament or administration)	The opposition does not have any significant form of representation in the system.	2B
IV. The existence of contextual variables	a) Blaming and putting a human face on it	Grievances are given a human face. They target the chief of minister and indirectly the king as they want to limit his legislative power.	2C
	b) Proximate goals (coalition-building)/opposition not fragmented	The proximate goal is to limit the power of the Shah, having an *adlieh* who brings the *Ulama* and *Bazaar* together. The opposition is not fragmented.	2C

I. Identifying contentious political action

As discussed earlier in chapter two, this study adheres to a baseline definition of what constitutes contentious political action: contentious mobilization often occurs to apply stress to specific target(s) in order to affect public policy. Based on the assessment of the extent and intensity of protest mobilizations and their objectives (to challenge the central government and offer policy alternatives), multiple incidents of mobilizing action occurred during the period under study from 1901 to 1906. The evidence, as outlined in the next section, shows that contentious mobilization occurred during the period leading up to the Constitutional revolution and we can mark it as a period of "contentious political action." This is important because this periods of contentious mobilization will later be assessed in comparison to periods of contentious inaction.

The early days of the 20th century in Iran can be characterized by the anxiety of both the people and the elite over financial uncertainty, weak state institutions, foreign influence and the competence of the kings to rule during an age of colonialism and international rivalry. Under the reign of Mozaffar ad-Din shah, who ruled the nation from 1896 until his death in 1907, Persia[24] witnessed a period of tumults that set the stage for what would come for the rest of the century and on into the 21st century. Multiple instances of protest that occurred during this period pass the test of intensity and extent and were primarily targeting government policies at the national level. The passages below explain how these contentious mobilizations occurred and how the identified variables of the theory of political inclusion can be assessed and analyzed here.

The media records for the duration of the five-year period under study do not show any significant protests that could pass the tests of intensity, extent and national objective until 1903. In 1903, though, there were sporadic riots in Tehran, Yazd, Esfahan and Tabriz, particularly targeting the elementary schools, bars and Bhai people by *Tolab* (*madrassa* or religious school students) (Kasravi, 1978, pp. 30-31), but these rarely reached a critical mass. On May 4, 1903, *ulama* called upon bazaar to close in protest of Naus's mockery of Islam. However, many including Kasravi (1978) believe the high tariffs on imports, which made the bazaaris angry with Naus, was also another reason for these protests. Although this event fizzled out quickly, it was a prelude to what was to follow in the coming years.

On December 11, 1905, Ala-od-Dowleh, the governor of Tehran, arranged a public lashing of some merchants as a response to the price hike in sugar. This scapegoating response caused an

[24] The name of the country officially changed from Persia to Iran in March 1935 when Reza Shah Pahlavi asked foreign delegates to use Iran (meaning the land of Aryans in Persian) in formal correspondence as a more ethnically inclusive term because not all Iranians speak Persian.

uprising in the *bazaar,* and Ayatollah Behbahani and Tabatabaei, two major clergy members, marched toward the bazaar and joined the protests. The protesters were dispersed overnight by government forces under the control of Ein-Od-Dowleh, the chief minister (Katouzian, 2009, pp. 144-146). Katouzian (2009, p. 146), who personally attended the protests that day, reports that about 4000 people gathered at *Masjed Shah*. Madani (1983, p. 56) reports that the crowd was dispersed by force and a few protestors were killed. However, this was not the end of it. A few days later, on December 13, the two famous Ayatollah were joined by another well-known ayatollah, Sheikh Fazllolah-Nouri, and all three "took a refuge"[25] or *bast* to the Abdolazim mosque and announced that they would stay there until the governor of Tehran was removed and an *adlieh* (judiciary) was formed. The first coverage of the Persian constitutional revolution appeared in the *New York Times* (p. 1) on January 23, 1906 in an op-ed entitled: "Parliament for Persia. Merchants and mullahs compel the shah to grant reforms." The protesters stayed there for a month, until eventually Ala-od-Dowleh was removed and the *bast* was called off, but the chief minister did not follow through with promises for *adlieh* (Katouzian, 2009, p. 157). This failure to deliver on promises was not taken lightly, and it set the stage for another push by the leaders of the movement.

The catalyst for the next move was when Ein-Od-Dowleh exiled a famous clergy member and two dignitaries. Then, according to Katouzian, he decided to do the same to the leaders of the *bast.* Ein-Od-Dowleh ordered the arrest of any preacher who supported the movement (2009, p. 159). Kasravi (1978, p. 95) reports that people freed some of the arrested and one clergy died during the clash. This became a rallying cry, as thousands of people carried his body and went to the Adineh mosque, demanding *adlieh* and the removal of Ein-Od-Dowleh. Kasravi (1978, p. 97)

[25] This is an Islamic tradition known as *bast*. The clergy, often accompanied by people, take a refuge to a sanctuary until their demand is met while attracting public attention.

quotes Tabatabaei in saying that "the primary goal should be the *adlieh* and not removal of Ein-Od-Dowleh as he will have no power before justice." People joined in the protest but the mosque was surrounded by government forces. Kasravi points to the presence of women in the mosque for the first time in the movement (p. 97). According to Kasravi (1978, p. 106), the protestors gave the government three options to end the standoff: "Create *adlieh*, kill us, or allow us to exit the city safely." Kasravi writes that, in a letter signed by the king, the third option was accepted. About 1000 people exited the city and started marching towards the religious city of Qom on July 17, 1906. Kasravi, (1978, p. 107) blames Ein-Od-Dowleh for exacerbating the situation by only resorting to force and not foreseeing the power of *ulama*. He writes that "as soon as the rumors spread about the arrest or death of the clergies and the accompanying people who marched toward Qom, the unrest in Tehran was initiated. People wanted to protest but were afraid of arrest so they decided to *bast* (take a refuge or sit-in) in [the] British embassy starting on July 18, 1906" (Kasravi, 1978, p. 108). Initially, the embassy rejected the idea but later they agreed to allow the people in as they were asked by Ayatollah Behbahani to mediate the situation with the king (Kasravi, 1978, p. 109). Madani (1983, p. 57) writes that the number of people who joined the *bast* reached from 13,000 to 20,000 after a few days. The government surrounded the embassy for a couple of days but when reports reached the king that the soldiers stationed there might join the revolutionaries, the king ask the protestors to submit their demands.

In this case, the demands and the *objective of protests* were clear and outlined all along and were specifically providing alternative polices at the national level with universal effects on the populace. At the height of the protest at the British embassy, the protestors submitted five demands to the king, which included the removal of chief minister Ein-Od-Dowleh, the return of *ulama* to Tehran, the establishment of *adlieh*, the institution of *dar-alshoura* (a national council or

parliament), and the punishment of those who murdered protestors. Mozaffar ad-Din shah granted these demands and issued a decree to this effect on August 5, 1906; particularly of importance was to establish a parliament, and thus the Constitutional revolution succeeded (Madani, 1983, p, 57). The *New York Times* (August 11, 1906, p. 1) in a column entitled "Parliament for Persia" reported that "The recent reports that the Shah was about to grant a constitution to Persia turn out to have been correct."

II. level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition

The level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition in an authoritarian society is key to understanding how it will interact with the government and how it will engage the feedback loop for the ultimate goal of reform. Based on how this variable has been operationalized for this study, the provision of information (providing otherwise unavailable information to the public and the government), interest representation (representing people overlooked by the government), provision of alternatives (providing criticism of government policies and posing alternatives to them), and provision of mutual recognition all need to be examined in order to determine whether the opposition has been organized and cohesive during the time period under study.

This particular movement initially found its organizational strength during the anti-colonial tobacco uprising in 1890 but beyond that point up until 1904, when the Naus incident happened, the opposition was disjointed and movement leaders often had varying goals, such as personal grievances against certain government officials, advocating for the rule of law or *ghanoon*, the removal of chief ministers, or leaders' anti-colonial or nationalist sentiments, particularly against foreign concessions. According to two well-known historians who have logged the events of the

Constitutional revolution, Kasravi (1978) and Katouzian (2009), these sporadic demands were typically denied or ignored.

In order to assess the theory of political inclusion, it is crucial to understand whether the *provision of information,* as operationalized and described in chapter 2, had been satisfied during the period under study. The opposition did not have an official newspaper or affiliates in the media to transmit any information. However, the opposition played a role in transmitting information and grievances through other medium. The few domestic newspapers were managed by government agents and they were never critical of the shah, chief minister or their policies (Kasravi, 1978, p. 39). There were some newspapers that were published outside Iran, such as Akhtar in Istanbul, Hekmat in Egypt, Habl ol-Matin in Kolkata, Ghanoon in London and Thoraya in Egypt that were more critical of the government, but those publications were reaching a limited number of people and eventually they were banned from entering Iran, according to Ghasemi (2015, p. 47) in his book *The History of Published Media in Iran*. Kasravi (1978, p. 25) describes how once an editorial came out from Habl ol-Matin targeting the chief minister Ein-Od-Dowleh followed by an article in Thoraya discussing the same injustices, subsequently the chief minister banned the newspapers from entering Iran. Kasravi (1978, p. 51) reports that before the ban of Habl ol-Matin, the newspaper's representative came to Ayatollah Tabatabaei after the Naus incident and asked him to declare the opposition's demands so he could send it to the newspaper. However, that avenue soon was closed due to the ban, although the newspapers were still smuggled to Iran and secretly circulated among the people who could read and/or had an audience to transmit the information by word of mouth. This is why some of the newspapers that were published outside the country did not have a date printed on them, so that they did not look outdated and could be passed on.

A significant change occurred in May 1904 that changed the dynamic for the provision of information. A series of secret societies or *Anjomans* started to rise and grow. Madani (1983, p. 55) attributes the rise of *Anjomans* amongst educated and concerned citizens to a need for organization of the opposition. They needed to deliberate on how to affect public policy, limit the power of the shah and bring justice to wrongdoers, foreign or domestic. The *Anjomans* also eventually became an unofficial platform to disseminate information to the public using *Shabnameh* (translated to "letters published at night," referring to their underground publication and distribution at night to avoid authorities).

The first of these underground *Anjomans* of concerned citizens, which began operating on May 27, 1904, had three popular Ayatollahs on board: Behbahani, Tabatabaei and Fazllolah-e-Nouri. Soon the words of such *Anjomans* spread all over the country and more of them were created in major cities other than Tehran. Kasravi (1978, p. 48) points to the partnership of Behbahani and Tabatabaei in the creation of the *Meykadeh* garden[26] *Anjoman* as a seminal point for the Constitutional movement.

The fact that the most influential *ayatollahs*, Behbahani, Tabatabaei, and Fazllolah-e-Nouri, joined forces meant that movement-related information was disseminated much faster, as they all used their religious platforms in the mosques to reach larger audiences regularly. Katouzian (2009, pp. 144-146), who himself participated in the revolution, writes that almost every incident of injustice was brought up frequently by the *ayatollahs* and their followers were hyped to action as they chanted in support. For instance, the unfair loan agreement with Russia in 1901 and 1902 was brought up so many times to a point that after a sermon on November 25,

[26] *Maykadeh* Garden was the place where the first meeting of the first *Anjoman* was held.

1905, people attacked and destroyed the Russia-Persia Loan Bank.[27] Therefore, the opposition played a role in transmitting information and grievances although they did not have an official platform or official means to communicate with either the government or society. They often sent letters to the king and the chief minister to pass on grievances and discuss policy consequences. Such letters can be easily identified, as they have been recorded by Constitutional revolution historians such as Ahmad Kasravi and Mohammadali Tehrani Katouzian. Some of these communications will be discussed below alongside the provision of interest representation.

The opposition shifted course and moved away from making sporadic or singular demands in early 1901 and 1902 to an *interest representation* mode by 1904. Along with the development of associations and cooperation among the leaders of the movement, these leaders rose to represent the public interest in multiple occasions. By reviewing the opposition's demands in the form of letters to the king or chief minister, or through public announcements and speeches, one can conclude that they intended to represent the interests of the public. For instance, on December 11, 1905, when Ala-od-Dowleh, the governor of Tehran, arranged a public lashing of some merchants because of the price hike on sugar (which people blamed on the government and the tariffs slapped on these commodities by Belgian-controlled customs agents), the opposition acted swiftly to represent the interest of both the merchants and the general public. This scapegoating response by Ala-od-Dowleh created an uproar in the *bazaar* and Ayatollahs Behbahani and Tabatabaei quickly joined the protests. A few days later, on December 13, 1905, Ayatollah Sheikh Fazllolah-Nouri joined the other two prominent leaders

[27] Madani (1983, p. 56) claims that shah personally paid the reparation to reconstruct the bank.

to *bast* in the Abdolazim mosque[28] and announced that they will stay there until the governor of Tehran was removed and an *adlieh* (judiciary) was formed (Kasravi, 1978, p. 67). The followers of these outspoken leaders who happened to have a platform to reach the public soon joined forces and acted in coordination much like their *marja'* (religious leaders) now acted as one, representing their interests.

Word of mouth would travel fast through mosques and the bazaar, often in exaggeration, but it energized people about their leaders' plans. It was clear that after the *Maykadeh* garden coalition-building of *Anjomans* the opposition would act in a cohesive and organized fashion until their demands were met. The *Anjomans* provided otherwise-unavailable information to the public and the government about public reaction to a particular policy, such as domestic injustices or foreign influence and concessions. The opposition acted in unison to keep the government informed about the consequences of official policy, often by writing letters to the king or the chief minister. In effect, they represented the interests of the bazaar and the people, whom they believed had been overlooked by the government.

Another component to be assessed here is the *provision of alternatives*. In other words, did the opposition provide "official and public" criticism of the regime's policies and proposed alternatives to those policies? Since the opposition did not have an official media platform or access to an institution within the polity, we only can look at the speeches and letters that opposition leaders sent to the king and the chief minister. Kasravi and Katouzian both have

[28] The opposition's decision to exit the city as a means of protest is a religious tradition. The Prophet Mohammad had done so and recommended that when calamities or suffering were expected, people should migrate to safety, a practice known as *Hijra*. In this case, about 1000 people, including the three prominent ayatollah and their families and followers, exited the city and started marching towards the religious city of Qom on July 17, 1906, which lasted about a month. Kasravi (1978) and Madani (1983) both called this the "*hejrat-e-kobra*" (the great migration) as they called the first *bast* to Abdolazim mosque on December 13, 1905, which only lasted a few days and was called the "*hejrat-e-soghra*" (the small migration).

logged, quoted and/or discussed the criticism and policy alternatives suggested by these opposition leaders. Among those are speeches and letters from *Ulama* to the king and the chief minister. However, this course of action was not without the fear of exile or imprisonment, as many of the opposition leaders were exiled or had to *bast* for safety. Having said this, it is crucial to understand whether they were able to criticize the regime or offer policy alternatives through unofficial channels, otherwise the existence of an opposition will be questioned.

Ayatollah Behbahani and Ayatollah Tabatabaei were the most outspoken critics of the regime, particularly chief minister Ein-Od-Dowleh and Ala-od-Dowleh the governor of Tehran. In March 1906, the two *ayatollahs* decided to speak up against the rise of price of bread and meat after their Friday congregation prayers (Katouzian, 2009, p. 168). Katouzian explains that the criticisms were geared toward the lack of an *adlieh* and Ein-Od-Dowleh himself, as he had prevented the creation of a judicial system to deal with price hikes and other injustices. Katouzian claims that many of the Ayatollahs' students would disseminate the notes of their speeches across Tehran by the next day. He also suggests (p. 169) that due to the success of this strategy, Ein-Od-Dowleh implemented a curfew so that people would not go to the mosque after the dark, but the *Tolabs* (religious students) did not pay attention and commuted in large groups to avoid getting arrested.

The opposition leaders also communicated with the shah and the chief minister through writing letters, as discussed earlier. These letters often included demands and criticism, which also appeared in published media outside the country and made their way back to Iran in no time. For instance, after the public lashing of sugar merchants on December 11, 1905 and the start of the first *bast* in the Abdolazim mosque on December 1905, Kasravi (1978, p. 67) reports that the opposition leaders put together a letter and listed eight demands that included the

removal of Naus and Ala-Od-Dowleh and the creation of *adlieh* all over the country. These letters often were distributed and passed on secretly, and they also appeared on newspapers published outside the country. The opposition's demands during the second *bast* in Qom during June 1906 also appeared in many newspapers, including Hekmat newspaper (1906, June 7, No. 871, p. 3), and were widely distributed for a few months before the king succumbed to the demands.

Kasravi (1978, p. 42) argues that the connection between the media and the *ulama* started when one of the wealthy bazaaris paid for free subscriptions to *ulama* in Najaf and elsewhere so that Habl-ol-Matin would reach them free of charge. For instance, after *ulama's* encounter with the governor of Tehran over rising sugar prices in December 1905, Kasravi (1978, p. 51) writes that the representatives of Habl-Ol-Matin went to Ayatollah Behbahani and transmitted his demands to the weekly newspaper.

It is not clear whether the newspapers had more impact on the opposition leaders or vice versa, but the fact that they reinforced each other's messages is certain. For instance, the Chehrehnama newspaper[29] in its first issue on April 15, 1904, included in the political section (p. 6) – right after discussing the goals of the newspaper – a distinct reference to the country's lack of *Ghanoon* (constitution, law and rule of law) that prevented justice from prevailing. Chehrehnama continued to be a force for progressive ideas throughout the movement and transmitted the opposition's demands to the government and the general public. Hekmat newspapers had a similar format and almost a similar tone. In an op-ed on December 27, 1905, Hekmat specifically discusses forms of government and makes an argument against

[29] The first issue of Chehrehnama was printed on April 15,1904 and it played a significant role in spreading the ideas of Adlieh and Parliament over time.

republicanism, instead advocating for a constitutional monarchy. Hekmat (p. 2) also specifically lists the demands of the opposition on June 7, 1906. However, as discussed earlier, media published outside the country did not have a significant reach among the people.

Lastly, the provision of *minimal degree of mutual acceptance* is also fulfilled. As clearly demonstrated above, both the government and the opposition during and prior to identified incidents of contentious mobilizations had been engaged in official communication, therefore the degree of mutual acceptance is satisfied.

It is obvious that the level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition, particularly from December 1904 to the date when constitutional revolution succeeded, were very high by any standard. The opposition was able to spread otherwise-unavailable information quickly and effectively, criticizing the government and offering policy alternatives clearly and pointedly.

III. Political inclusion and exclusion

The centerpiece of the theory of political inclusion is to understand whether the opposition has been included in the polity during certain periods. For instance, when opposition groups are allowed to have a party platform, an official newspaper or are part of the government (in the parliament or cabinet), one can argue that these are signs of political inclusion. Based on this theory, in an authoritarian setting, the level of inclusion or exclusion is the key to understanding how the opposition will interact with the government and how it will engage the feedback loop in order to adjust the system for its goal: a successful reform process. Based on how this variable has been operationalized for this study, having an official institution and means of communication (with both the government and the general public), being able and willing to make official criticism

and providing official alternative policies publicly and lastly, having any form of representation in the parliament or other significant representation within the regime will be considered as a period of political inclusion in the polity. Therefore, all three indicators need to be examined in order to determine whether the opposition was included or excluded during the time period under study.

Based on the available historical and media data for the five-year period under study, from 1901-1906, one can conclude that the opposition did not effectively have an *official institution* such as a party platform or any official establishment through which to organize and cooperate on any plan of action. The opposition also did not have any *official means of communication* with both the government and the general public. As discussed earlier, the opposition leaders tried the use of secret societies or *Anjomans* in 1904, but these were not in any shape or form official, identifiable or publicly recognized. For instance, none of the available media data makes any reference to *Anjomans* by identifying them as an institution or means of communication between the opposition and the government or society at large. Instead, these were more of an organizational tool for a limited number of people within a trusted circle. Upon the review of media data for a three-month period after December 1904 (when *Anjomans* started to form), no mention of such *Anjomans* exist. Perhaps members thought that publicity would endanger the existence of such secret societies.

The provision of official *claim-making* or criticizing the government and/or offering policy alternatives publicly is taken as another indicator of political inclusion. During the period under study, the opposition did not have a platform or official means of communication, and thus was unable to officially criticize the government or offer policy alternatives publicly. While the opposition did offer policy alternatives and criticized the government policies, this was done through unofficial channels such as religious sermons and mostly directed at the people. These

leaders were often forced to exit the city, sent into exile or else imprisoned for their actions. The two *basts* in 1905 and 1906 were the result of such suppressions, further hampering the ability of the opposition to claim-making.

For instance, on February 7, 1906, Ein-Od-Dowleh sent Sayed Jamal-Od-Din, a famous clergy member, into exile. Two days later, two other dignitaries (Sa'ad-od-Dowleh and Sheikh Raeis) were also exiled (Katouzian, 2009, pp. 159-165). According to Katouzian, the chief minister intended to do the same to the leaders of the *bast* and Ein-Od-Dowleh ordered the arrest of any preacher who supported the movement (2009, p. 159). Kasravi (1978, p. 95) also reports that people freed some of those who had been arrested and one clergy member died during the ensuing clash. This clearly shows that the opposition was effectively excluded from claim-making.

Lastly, in order to assess the level of inclusion or exclusion we need to examine whether the opposition had any form of *representation in the government,* including parliament or a cabinet, or if they enjoyed any other significant representation within the regime. This indicator is very easy to examine for this period, because other than some occasional sympathizers in the king's court who often were sent to "work exile" quickly so they would be far away from the capital, in Tehran no member of the opposition was included in the system in the form of representation or advisor. In fact, according to Katouzian (2009, p. 173), Ayatollah Tabatabaei claimed that since the shah had been sick for a while, Ein-Od-Dowleh had prevented any communications with the shah and even limited any form of public feedback regarding injustices or undelivered promises.

In the five-year period prior to the constitutional revolution, the opposition is effectively excluded from the polity based on the historical evidence and media content review. In other words, during this period, a "feedback loop" between the government and the opposition - and the

larger society, is not functioning properly in the system. In such situations if certain contextual variables are available, the exclusionary policies may backfire and the likelihood of contentious mobilization will arise.

IV. The existence of contextual variables

The early days of 1900s grievances were pervasive but people mostly blamed the lack of a judicial system or *ghanoon* as the main culprit for ills in the society. Based on the review of the media published outside the country, which were more critical of the system, it became clear that the main target of the progressive movement, was not the removal of the shah or even blaming him for the grievances. The ideal political system at that time was not a republic but a constitutional monarchy like that of Great Britain (Kasravi, 1978, p. 48). Therefore, the goal of the system was a *ghanoon* and constitution to put a limit on the power of the king and prevent the sycophants around him from encouraging him to abuse his power, and not the abolishment or expulsion of the shah himself.

Shah Mozaffar ad-Din was considered soft and easily persuadable, if the people could get past the chief minister and reach him. By late 1904 and early 1905, then, it was clear that the movement had a clear human face as a target, the first contextual variable of our analysis. The general belief was that chief minister Ein-Od-Dowleh was preventing the development of a judicial system, as the king himself had hinted at creating an *adlieh* earlier (Kasravi, 1978, p. 71). Particularly after the success of the movement with removing Ala Od-Dowleh, the governor of Tehran, over the lashing of merchants, the opposition fixated on the new face of injustice: Ein-Od-Dowleh. His removal appeared on all lists of demands throughout the movement (Kasravi, 1978 p. 67) until he was finally removed when the constitutional revolution succeeded.

The second contextual variable that must be assessed is whether the opposition leaders were fragmented or proximate goals for the movement. By the time the movement matured in late 1904 and entered into a cooperative stage, particularly after the creation of the Maykadeh Garden secret society and coming together of Ayatollah Tabatabaei and Behbahani, the ultimate goals of the movement were to remove Ein-Od-Dowleh, create *adlieh* and limit the power of the king through *shora* (a parliament or council). The opposition leaders and their supporting allies were in full agreement on those goals, which brought together the ulama, intelligentsia, and bazaar together. By any standard then, the opposition was not fragmented. For instance, according to Kasravi (1978, p. 106), the protestors gave the government three options to end the standoff in December 1904: "Create *adlieh*, kill us, or allow us to exit the city safely." Kasravi writes that, in a letter signed by the king, the third option was accepted.

Based on the likelihood model of political action, as outlined in chapter two, when there is a high degree of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition and a low degree of political inclusion in addition to the presence of contextual variables of proximate goals and human face (blaming an individual), then the path will likely lead to contentious political action. As demonstrated above, the five-year period under study prior to the constitutional revolution fully coincides with the model of contentious political action:

Contentious Political Action Model

Contentious political actions (protest path) = high degree of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition + low degree of political inclusion + presence of contextual variables (blame/human face + proximate goals)

In order to assess this theory further, a period of "no major contentious mobilization" from 1920 to 1925 has been selected. The same method and model will now be applied to a subsequent but different period in order to assess the validity of the political inclusion model within a proximate timeframe.

Period of no contentious collective action from 1920-1925

The emergent attempt to create a more inclusionary system in Iran during the first decade of the 20th century, although embryonic, had lasting effects on the Iranian people's aspirations and desires for a better political system. However, a series of events led to multiple ups and downs after the constitutional revolution itself.

To begin with, the first parliament did not last more than two years, as the new Qajar king, Mohammad Ali Shah, sealed its fate and closed its doors with aid from Russia (Madani 1978, p. 63). However, the people who had fought hard to establish it did not want to be excluded any longer, so they rose up again and removed Mohamad Ali Shah on July 16, 1909 after he took refuge in the Russian legation, according to the *New York Times* (1909, p.1). Ahmad Shah, the youngest of the Qajar kings at the age of 12, was then crowned king. As the *New York Times* put it, "the boy shah" was in tears as he was "taken from [his] parents at [the] Russian legation and installed in [the] palace" (July 18, 1909, p. 1). In political terms, a boy king was the best thing that could possibly happen for those who sought to limit the power of the Iranian king. As a result, the political atmosphere following these events heavily shaped the political environment of Iran for many years to come. A five-year period after the end of the first World War (1920-1925), which coincided with the last five years of the Qajar dynasty, provides a stellar opportunity to test the

theory of political inclusion, as during this time Iranian society was relieved from many external pressures, such as foreign rivalries and the inducements of Russia and Great Britain.

In the following section, each one of the variables outlined and examined earlier for the period leading up to the Constitutional revolution will now be examined for a five-year period from 1920 to 1925 utilizing available historical resources, print media and digital archives. A comparison of these two periods will be made in order to test the validity of this theory. The table below summarizes the findings.

Table 3.2
Evidence from "quiet" period (1920-1925)

Period of no contentious collective action (1920-1925)			
	Variable	**Assessment/Evidence**	**Flowchart Path**
I. Contentious political action	a) The extent of protest mobilization	Frequent and regional but not widespread and national	1
	b) The intensity of protest mobilization	Not Intense/ no sizable numbers / not national (mostly regional)	1
	c) The objective of protest mobilization	Not targeting central government policies	1
II. level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition	a) Provision of information	The opposition provides otherwise-unavailable information to the public and the government about public reaction to a particular policy. The opposition also keeps the government informed about the consequences of official policy.	1A
	b) Interest representation	The opposition represents public and/or special interests that have been overlooked or ignored by the government.	1A
	c) Exercising criticism and provision of alternatives	The opposition provides criticism of government policies and poses alternatives to them.	1A
	d) Provision of minimal degree of mutual acceptance	Both the government and the opposition have been engaged in official communication.	1A

III. Political inclusion and exclusion	a) Having an institution and means of communication	There is at least one official institution and platform(s) of communication.	1B
	b) Criticizing the government or offering policy alternatives (claims-making)	The opposition is able to criticize the government and offer policy alternatives (claims-making) through official channels.	1B
	c) Having any form of representation in the system (parliament or administration)	The opposition groups are represented in the system, such as through the parliament and administration.	1B
IV. The existence of contextual variables	a) Blaming and putting a human face on it	Grievances do not have a specific human face associated with them.	1C
	b) Proximate goals (coalition-building)/opposition not fragmented	There are few, if any, proximate goals among opposition groups. The system resembles a multi-party or pluralist system.	1C

I. Identifying contentious political action

Working from the baseline definition of contentious political action adopted by this study, the extent and intensity of protest mobilizations and their objectives (to challenge the central government and offer policy alternatives) at this time do not fully qualify as contentious political action incidents, unlike the ones that occurred during and prior to the Constitutional Revolution. There were multiple incidents of uprisings during the period from 1920 to 1925, but upon further examination it becomes clear that either they do not pass the test of extent and intensity of protest mobilization or else their objective is not to challenge the central government and offer universal policy alternatives. The evidence, as outlined in the next section, shows that contentious mobilization did not occur during this period and thus we can mark it as a period of "no contentious political action."

From January 1920 to January 1925, the *New York Times* did not report any protests or uprisings within Iran, and this is notable because their global coverage was quite decent. With an archival search today, the keyword "Persia" (which almost inevitably includes all coverage of Iran at the time), brings up about 1300 entries, which was a manageable number to review and log in order to gain a comprehensive picture of their coverage. For instance, in 1923 the newspaper reported that 1000 people had been killed in Khorasan Province because of an earthquake on August 21 (p. 3). In the same year on September 27, the *Times* reported again that 125 people were killed by another an earthquake in Khorasan, Persia. Then the next year on March 22, 1924, *The Times* (p. 3) published another report that "monarchist mob attacks republican partisans in parliament house." These monarchists were those who opposed a republican system to replace the Qajar dynasty. Although the crowd did not exceed a couple hundred people, the *New York Times* still reported on it. This is a good indication that any protests taking place at the time were not major or else did not represent a large portion of Iranian society and had limited audiences: otherwise, they would have been reported in this coverage from the *Times*.

Many historical books refer to movements during the 1920s, but as Madani (1978, pp. 82-83) argues, these movements were not instances of contentious collective action but instead regional anti-colonial or pro-Bolshevik movements, which were popular because of Qajar ineptitude to dampen foreign influence in Iran. However, although their enemy was foreign, the opposition here often came into struggle with the central government of Iran as well. These regional riots had specific objectives. For instance, the Azerbaijan uprising on April 6, 1920 under the leadership of Kheyabani, the chairman of the Democratic party of Azerbaijan, was intended to quell pro-Bolshevik groups who wanted to establish the same system in Tabriz. Other examples include the Tangestan uprising in the south against the British in June 1920 and the Gilan province

red coup on July 30, 1920, which was made in cooperation with the Bolsheviks in an attempt to establish the North Republic but quickly defeated (Katouzian, 1994, p. 395). These regional struggles were eventually quelled by the central government, and all had been extinguished by 1922. For various reasons, none of these movements passes the test of national objective during the time period in question. In other words, the demands and *objective of protests* were not the central government of Iran and they did not offer alternative polices at the national level with universal effects on the Iranian populace. Instead, historians such as Bahar (2013) consider these movements not as social movements but as unsuccessful coup attempts.

II. level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition

The level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition is a major indicator in understanding how it will interact with the government and how it will engage the feedback loop for the ultimate goal of reform. Based on how this variable has been operationalized for this study, the provision of information (providing otherwise unavailable information to both the public and the government), interest representation (representing people overlooked by the government), provision of alternative (providing criticism of official government policies and posing alternatives), and provision of mutual recognition will be examined in order to determine whether the opposition had been organized and cohesive during this time period.

In order to assess the theory of political inclusion, it is crucial to understand whether the *provision of information,* as operationalized and described in chapter 2, had been satisfied during the period under study. Put differently, an important function of any opposition is to provide otherwise-unavailable information to both the public and the government about public reaction to a particular policy. In this respect, the opposition keeps the government informed about the

consequences of official policy. Looking at this particular time period, the opposition was able to satisfy the provision of information through official channels and media. According to Ghasemi (2015, p. 66), after Mohammad Ali Shah was deposed in July 1909, journalists moved back to Iran from abroad and many newspapers that were published outside the country started printing within Iran. Although there were episodes of media crackdowns, particularly during the tenure of Sardar Sepah[30] in the new government on April 24, 1921, for the most part journalists were under pressure but generally no political party or entity was deprived of having or creating a new media platform if one license was revoked (Shamim, 2014, pp 389-390). In addition, Ghasemi (2015, p. 67) also asserts that after the formation of political parties in 1908, the published media also reflected party politics and interests, a state of affairs that has continued into the 21st century. In other words, the major parties operating in Iran each had their own media platform.

In his two-volume book *The Brief History of Political Parties in Iran,* Bahar (2013, p. 8) explains the official development of political parties after the Constitutional revolution in 1908 as they presented themselves to the second parliament. Bahar (2013, pp. 9-13) explains that there were two major parties: one under the name of "Democrat-e Ameyoon," or Democrats for short, and one titled "Ejtemaeyoon Etedaleyoon," which was commonly referred to as Etedaleyoon. The Democrats were the party of progressives who advocated modernization and separation of church and state, while the Etedaleyoon consisted mostly of traditionalists, *ulama* and peasants. The Democrats, according to Bahar (2013, p. 10),[31] had better luck with the media because they tended to be younger and more savvy; they used their knowledge to start several newspapers, most

[30] Sardar Sepah, which means "Commander-in-Chief of the Army," was the title of Reza Khan's first role in the new government. He was Commander of the Iranian Army, which he combined with the post of Minister of War, who later became Reza shah Pahlavi.
[31] Malek ol-Shoara Bahar. the author of *The Brief History of Political Parties in Iran,* was the editor-in-chief of the *Iran-e Noo* newspaper.

notably *Iran-e Noo*[32] in Tehran, *Shafagh* in Tabriz, and *Noobahar* in Khorasan. The Etedaleyoon had their own newspaper called *Shora*. There were also some independent newspapers, such as *Raad,* that did not have any party affiliation (Bahar 2013, p 14). Thanks to such media, the opposition groups played a distinct role in transmitting information and grievances through official platforms or means of communication with both the government and Iranian society.

During the period under study from 1920 to 1925, the opposition was also able to provide *interest representation*. Along with the development of political parties, the opposition of this time period rose to represent public interests on multiple occasions. According to Bahar, (2013, p 9) the Etedaleyoon party advocated sharia law and considered the Democrats revolutionary and anti-religion. A large portion of Iranian society, Bahar argues, were traditionalist and religious. However, the Democrats were progressive and believed in ideas such as the separation of state and church, land reform or redistribution and compulsory education. Although they had a smaller constituency, this political party formed a progressive force that challenged the establishment and over time became the main opposition to the Iranian central government. During this period, the opposition groups ran for National Assembly or *majlis* with these policy narratives in order to represent certain interests in Iranian society.

Another component to be assessed here is the *provision of alternatives*. In other words, did the opposition provide "official and public" criticism of the regime's policies and propose alternatives to those policies? During the period from 1920-1925, the opposition groups had official media platforms as well as seats in parliament. By looking at the party legislation, measures and proposals in the Iranian parliament, it is clear that these oppositional forces were

[32] *Iran-e Noo* was eventually shut down and with the opening of the third national assembly, former editor-in-chief Bahar started a new newspaper as the official platform of the Democrats, called *Noobahar* (Shamim, 2014, p. 399).

both willing and able to provide official and public criticism and proposed alternatives. (Adding some legislations later). The opposition also used the media to criticize the central government. For instance, according to Ghasemi (2014, p, 77) on March 10, 1922, Farokhi-Yazdi published an article in *Toofan* magazine pointing out Sardar Sepah's disrespect for the rule of law.

The opposition leaders also communicated with the shah and the chief minister through sending telegraphs to *markaz* (central government). These letters often included demands and criticism that also appeared in published media outside Iran and made their way back to the country within a short time.

Lastly, the provision of *minimal degree of mutual acceptance* is also fulfilled. As clearly demonstrated above, both the government and the opposition during and prior to identified incidents of contentious mobilizations had been engaged in official communication, and therefore the degree of mutual acceptance is satisfied.

It is obvious that the level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition, particularly from January 1920 to 1925, were not very high by any standard. Despite this, the opposition was able to spread otherwise-unavailable information quickly and effectively, criticize the government cohesively and offer policy alternatives clearly and pointedly.

III. Political inclusion and exclusion

Based on the theory of political inclusion, the level of inclusion or exclusion is key to understanding how the opposition will interact with the government and engage the feedback loop in an authoritarian system. Here, a primary goal of the opposition is to adjust the system and induce ongoing reform processes. The way this variable has been operationalized in this study, various

elements will be considered for a period of political inclusion in the polity: these elements include a) having an official institution and means of communication with both the government and the general public, b) being willing and able to make official criticism and provide official alternative policies publicly, and lastly, c) having any form of representation in the parliament or other areas of the regime. Therefore, all three indicators must be examined in order to determine whether the opposition has been included or excluded from government during the time period under study.

Based on the available historical and media data for this period from 1920-1925, the opposition groups had *official institutions* such as a party platform or official establishment with which to organize and cooperate on any plan of action. The opposition groups also had *official means of communication* with both the government and the general public.

As discussed earlier Ghasemi (2015, p. 66) reports that although at points, there were media crackdowns—particularly during the tenure of Sardar Sepah on April 24, 1921—journalists often faced pressure but generally the political parties were not deprived of having or creating a new media platform if one license was revoked (Shamim, 2014, pp 389-390). Ghasemi (2015, p. 67) also asserts that after the formation of political parties in 1908, published media in Iran tended to reflect party politics and interests, and this state of affairs has continued to the present. In other words, the major parties operating in the country each had their own media platform. As discussed above citing Bahar (2013, p. 8) the parties started to officially form after the first parliament ended. The major parties who gained seats on the second parliament were the "Democrat-e Ameyoon," or Democrats for short, and the "Ejtemaeyoon Etedaleyoon," commonly referred to as the Etedaleyoon (Bahar, 2013, pp. 9-13). The Democrats were progressives but the Etedaleyoon consisted mostly of traditionalists, *ulama* and peasants. The Democrats, according to Bahar (2013, p. 10), started several newspapers, most notably *Iran-e Noo* in Tehran, *Shafagh* in Tabriz, and

Noobahar in Khorasan. The Etedaleyoon also had their own newspaper called *Shora* (Bahar 2013, p 14). With these papers, the opposition groups thus played a role in transmitting information and grievances through official platforms or means of communication with both the government and Iranian society at large.

Another indicator of political inclusion is official *claim-making,* which includes criticizing the government and/or offering policy alternatives publicly. During the period under study, the opposition had and used a variety of platforms or official means of communication, and thus was fully capable of fulfilling these two functions.

Lastly, in order to assess the level of inclusion or exclusion, we also need to examine whether the opposition had any form of *representation in the government,* including parliament, cabinets, or any other significant representation within the regime. For the time period in question, the oppositions were effectively folded into the systems of the regime and represented their interests in the polity through the form of being a parliament member or filling a position in the cabinet.

In the five-year period after WWI, it is evident that the opposition was effectively included in the polity, based on both historical evidence and reviews of contemporaneous media content. In other words, a "feedback loop" between the government and the opposition—and the larger society—was functioning properly at this time and had even become a part of the political and social systems. In such situations, even if certain grievances exist, the likelihood of contentious political action stemming from them is low.

IV. The existence of contextual variables

As opposed to the early days of the 1900s, during the period in Iranian history from 1920 to 1925, grievances were much less pervasive and were not directed at a specific person. Instead, grievances often involved a foreign element and this is why the riots that took place during this time were often either anti-colonial (such as the uprisings in the south against the British or the anti-Bolshevik/pro-Bolshevik riots in the north), which will be discussed in further detail below. Based on the review of surviving media content and historical documents, the main narratives of progressive (Democrats) and traditionalist (Etedaleyoon) movements at this time concerned Iran's relationship with the outside world and how much of westernization versus traditional values and Sharia law should be involved in the polity (Bahar, 2014, p. 9). These narratives and debates were battled out in the media and during national assembly debates.

The other contextual variable that needs to be assessed here is the provision of proximate goals and whether the opposition leaders were fragmented. During this time, the oppositions and their allies were not in full agreement on progressive goals, which often separated the ulama, intelligentsia, and bazaar. Thus, the opposition was fragmented and they often had only short-term goals. For instance, according to Bahar (2013, pp. 40-41), the Democrat party was divided on how to deal with the March 10, 1920 agreement between England and Iran on custom and financial reform, as opposed to how the opposition had been unified against Naus in earlier years.

All things considered, the period of no major contentious collective action here is almost diametrically opposite the period prior to the Constitutional revolution. Based on the likelihood model of political action, outlined in chapter 2, when there is a low degree of organization and cohesiveness among the opposition and a high degree of political inclusion in addition to an absence of contextual variables of proximate goals and a human face to grievances (i.e., blaming a specific individual), the path will likely lead to a no contentious political action route. As

demonstrated above, the five-year period under study from 1920 to 1925 in Iran fully coincides with the model of "no contentious political action:"

No Contentious Political Action Model (Path 1)

Low likelihood of contentious political actions = high degree of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition + high degree of political inclusion

Note: The absence or presence of contextual variables (blame/human face to grievances + proximate goals) does not impact the model when there is a high degree of political inclusion

Conclusion

The Constitutional Revolution of 1906 was the first democratic victory after 50 years of political exclusion exerted on Iranian society – and particularly the *intelligentsia*, *bazaaris*, and clergy – by Qajar rulers. Comparing these two periods of "contention political mobilization" and "no contentious political action," which together cover 10 years of the most important episodes in Iranian history during the first quarter of the 20th century throughout this chapter, enabled us to understand historical political events in a comparative context. As captured through media content analysis of the period from 1900 to 1906, high levels of contentious mobilization and high levels of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition were noticed while lower levels of political inclusion were identified. The frequent and widespread protests taking place then, particularly from December 1905 to August 1906, targeted central government policies including the removal of the Chief Minister, the establishment of *adlieh* and rule of law, limitations on the power of the king, and the creation of a parliament (*Majlis*). These attempts, along with the particular coalition of forces behind them, were not change that the Qajar dynasty could hold back for long. Indeed,

as the theory of political inclusion has confirmed, the pattern of exclusionary policies in place then led to a higher level of contentious mobilization during this period.

By contrast, the second period under study from 1920 to 1925 was marked as a period of no contentious collective action. Following the Constitutional Revolution, Iranian society attempted to create a more inclusionary system, and although embryonic, this attempt had lasting effects on the Iranian people's aspirations and desires for a better political system. The media content from this time confirms the existence of regional rather than national protests, which also had only low intensity and did not target the central government with demands regarding policies that affected Iranian society at large. Thus the political inclusion theory correctly points to lower degrees of contentious political action, a higher level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition, higher levels of political inclusion, and finally lack of specific human targets for people's grievances, as indicators of no contentious collective action here. The pattern identified above thus led to a lesser amount of contentious mobilization during this second period that was examined.

The theory of political inclusion tells a different story about the "Iranian struggle for inclusion" in the polity and Iran's march toward democracy. This approach also enabled us to rise above the ups and down of historical events and the currently limited scope of both analysis and explanations of incidents of contentious collective actions. Instead, this theory identified the cause of contention political action as primarily being exclusionary policies, at least during the periods discussed.

Further application of this theory to more recent periods of Iranian politics can offer benefits for both testing the theory further and providing a richer understanding of these specific

contexts. Of particular importance is this theory's potential capability to go beyond retroactive prediction and venture into real-time analysis, where it could predict the possibility, rise and progression of contentious political action in Iran or similar authoritarian settings. In upcoming chapters, the same method and media content analysis will be used to examine other five-year periods of contention actions and no contentious action in order to test this theory further and also facilitate further study of contemporary Iranian political realities.

Chapter Four: The Islamic Revolution of 1979

Introduction

Like the Persian Constitutional Revolution, the Islamic Revolution of 1979 was provoked by the Iranian public's desire to transform their society. Iran's rapid modernization during the 1960s and 1970s created favorable structural conditions for this revolution, while general discontent was pointed at Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. At this time, international forces once again played a role on how the ruling elite of Iran responded to public demands. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 culminated in the overthrow of the Western-backed Shah by a coalition of the intellectual elite, progressive religious forces led by Ayatollah Khomeini, and the traditional bourgeoisie – a coalition similar to the one that had arisen during the 1906 Constitutional Revolution. The 1979 Revolution also saw the installation of a new, more theocratic government modeled on religious principles and anti-secularism.

In the years before the Revolution, Iranian society experienced violent demonstrations, mass casualties, and mutiny among the Pahlavi army. The massive suppression of their opposition weakened the monarchy and as a result the Shah, like Louis XVI during the French Revolution, became an easy target. The Shah made little effort to fight the reformers with his military (Arjomand, 1986, p. 386), and his "closeness and subservience" to the United States further encouraged the reform movement (Arjomand, 1986, p. 388). The Shah's ineptitude in disintegrating the Shi'a hierocracy, coupled with bad economic decisions, created an alliance between the clergy and other, more economically-affected classes. Kurzman (1996, p. 153), citing de Tocqueville, adds that the Shah's regime had sidelined the middle class. The merchants, the tribal chiefs, and the newly-formed Iranian middle class quickly formed a coalition in response.

This new coalition was confident in the *ulamas'* power and trusted them as the next leaders of the country (Arjomand, 1986), poising Iran for a radical transformation in the government. While the opposition did not have a platform with which to mobilize and its leader was in exile, the Iranian people eventually resorted to street politics to bring about change, much as had happened with the Constitutional Revolution.

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 was a milestone in Iranian politics. First, in many ways the Revolution was the first of its kind in the Middle East because it formed the region's first republic. Secondly, Shi'ism came to the forefront as a progressive emancipator during this time. Shi'ism was highly appealing to all disgruntled parties, promoting egalitarianism, anti-establishment, and communitarian means against the tyrannical and agnostic Pahlavi regime (Ramazani, 1984, 446). With careful maneuvering, Ayatollah Khomeini managed to deceive both other Iranian liberals and the West, and in doing so, forge his way into power. As soon as Khomeini consolidated his power, though, he then purged the moderate and leftist factions of the coalition, ignored his promises of democracy, and later asserted that he did not mean what he said and that "white lies" were necessary in order to establish a pure Islamic system resembling *Madint'al Nabi* (the city of the Prophet).

Thus, the result of the Iranian Revolution was the formation of the first Islamic republic in modern times. However, the new regime leading it was anything but all-inclusive and democratic, as had been initially promised. Once again, the Iranian struggle for democracy had failed.

This chapter will apply the political inclusion theory to two separate periods prior to the Islamic Revolution: the first being a five-year period from 1961 to 1966 during which no widespread and intense contentious political action with national goals took place, and the second

five year-period is taking place from 1974 to 1979, during which the Islamic Revolution succeeded. Before discussing the theory's application, though, this chapter begins with a narrative account of the Islamic Revolution and the historical background that set the stage for it. This historical account will provide much context and evidence needed later when discussing the political inclusion theory and its applications. In addition, to properly clarify the usefulness of this theory, it must be compared with other existing explanations. Thus, this chapter will also review the existing literature on the primary causes of the Islamic Revolution and their flaws before proceeding to its own discussion.

Historical Background and Narrative

On January 16th, 1979, Mohammad Reza Shah fled the country, abruptly ending an Iranian monarchy that had lasted for over two thousand years. Fourteen days later, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a religious revolutionary and the Shah's greatest adversary, returned to Iran from exile and shortly thereafter established the Islamic Republic of Iran. In history, this event is known as the Iranian Islamic Revolution or, in Persian, the *Enghelab-e-Islami Iran*. However, unlike the Persian Constitutional Revolution, which had seen and mobilized support for Iran's modernization and enlightenment, the 1979 revolution reversed many of the effects of modernization and reinstated traditional Islamic values as the law of the land. In this way, the Revolution was remarkably different from most modern revolutions, as it abruptly ended the westernization and modernization of the nation undergoing it.

Unsurprisingly, the route to revolution was characterized by chaos, insurrection, and public discontent. The possibility of revolution had been brewing for years during the Pahlavi monarchy,

which had pushed heavily for Iran's modernization, secularization, and westernization, to the dismay and disdain of multiple influential groups. This push, along with the Shah's tyrannical regime, ultimately led to an uprising against the ruling government.

A review of the historical background from the end of the Qajar dynasty to 1961, which marks the beginning of the first five-year period under study here, will enhance our understanding of both time periods discussed in this chapter. Most notably, the Constitutional revolution experienced ups and downs, while the fall of the Qajar dynasty and the rise of Reza Shah Pahlavi changed the ways in which politics were conducted in Iran for many years to come.

After the Qajar dynasty was overthrown, powerful army officer Reza Khan Pahlavi assumed the position of Shah and was given power by the *majlis*. While discontent over Soviet concessions had been brewing during the reign of the last Qajar Shah, Reza Shah's actions arguably began sowing the seeds of the revolution, which would then be exacerbated by his successor. The new Shah envisioned a more secular, westernized Persia (then renamed Iran, as previously discussed). Thanks to these extreme, highly secular policies, Pahlavi clashed notably with the *ulama* and devout Muslims. These reforms, many of which were considered heretical, sacrilegious, and violating of highly-regarded Islamic beliefs, caused dissatisfaction across Iran from the time they began around 1935 and then ended with his reign. These reforms also signified the beginning of Iran's modernization, which would eventually become a major cause of the 1979 Revolution.

Reza Shah's reign would end in September 1941 in exile after his leaning towards Nazi Germany during World War II, although he declared Iran a neutral party during the war. "Convinced he was backing the winning side," (Blum, 2020, p. 73), Reza Shah's involvement with the Axis powers led to his downfall. After both the Soviet Union and the British invaded Tehran

in 1941 to protect their interests, the Shah was exiled, and his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, became the new Shah in a reign that quickly transformed Iran.

During Mohammad Reza Shah's reign, the nationalization of oil and the events that followed this attempt would become one of the most significant contributors to a complex buildup of grievances throughout Iran. However, it is also worth noting that the Shah was not responsible for the nationalization of oil, but rather, Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh was. From 1941 through 1953, Iran witnessed a surge of nationalist forces, which also gained the support of the communist Tudeh Party. According to *The New York Times* (February 10, 1952, p. 12), Mossadegh's men won the majority in the February election of 1952. To understand the significance of Mossadegh's nationalist movement and how it was in line with anti-colonialist movements of constitutional revolution, further historical background is needed.

In 1908, a significant oil reserve was found in Iran by a British company who had an exclusive right to prospect for oil there based on a 1901 concession to William D'arcy by Mozaffar al-Din shah. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company[33] took over the concession in 1909 and Iran agreed to an oil concession that gave Britain the right to search for oil in Iran and sell it if they found it (Madani, 1982, p. 49), but Mossadegh, the leader of the National Front Party, sought to nationalize oil and thus ensure that Iran received all the profits.

Mossadegh was a formidable threat to the failing British Empire, particularly because of his leadership to nationalize the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, revoking Britain's control of Iranian oil fields. His plan backfired, however, as Britain retaliated fiercely, struggling to protect a valuable asset. As Britain attempted to regain control, they came with force:

[33] The Anglo-Persian Oil Company later was changed to Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

establishing a large military presence in Iran, imposing economic sanctions, and closing the largest oil refinery. Oil production decreased dramatically and the value of Iranian currency, the *Rial,* plummeted. The attempt to nationalize oil thus proved to be catastrophic for the Iranian economy in short term (Kobrin, 1985, p. 22).

The United States, which had expressed fear of the possible Soviet influence in Iran by the Tudeh Party – the same political entity that had backed Mossadegh – was then convinced by British intelligence to join and plan a coup against the Prime Minister (McMurdo, 2012, p. 15). The influential *ulama*, who would be major players in the Revolution, were also supportive of this coup, fearing the effects that communism could have on both the clergy and Islam in general. Here it is important to note that the coup not only usurped Mossadegh but also overthrew all fledgling steps taken towards democracy in Iran as well. Although not selected by a national election, Mossadegh had been democratically elected by the *majlis,* who had also voted to nationalize oil. Following the coup, though, the anti-imperialist, pro-democracy Prime Minister was replaced by General Fazlollah Zahedi, who had played a significant role in suppressing Mossadegh loyalists (Madani, 1982, p. 325). Even after the removal of Mossadegh and the reinstatement of the Shah, Britain remained heavily involved in Iranian affairs, which would cause Iranians to question the legitimacy of the Pahlavi monarchy. Here again the dream of eliminating foreign influence in Iran had failed, along with the democratic experiment.

After his reinstatement, Mohammad Reza Shah would change tactics as a ruler. According to Skocpol, the Shah was an absolute monarch (1982, p. 268) and imagined that Iran could become a "Great Civilization" by the 1970s through autocratic rule. The Shah expressed as much in 1977, stating that "Believe me, when three-quarters of a nation doesn't know how to read or write, you can provide reforms only by the strictest authoritarianism – otherwise, you go nowhere" (Thiessan,

2009, p. 16). He envisioned himself as a monarch of an egalitarian and democratic society, implementing a series of draconic reforms that, somewhat ironically, were intended to modernize the country. However, to silence opposition, he also created SAVAK, the secret police, in 1957, who would arrest and torture anyone who criticized the Shah and his policies. The Shah also wanted to portray himself as a savior – or, as historian Ali Ansari phrases it, a "myth of savior" (2001) for the state, although by the end of his reign he would actually be seen as an enemy of the public.

Oil remained an important aspect of the Shah's reign, and after his reinstatement, Iran saw major financial growth due to increased oil revenues. During this time, Iran was the world's second greatest oil-exporting country, with Saudi Arabia being the first. Iran produced 6.1 million barrels of oil daily, and after the reinstatement, the state had unopposed control over oil sources and production (Watson, 1976, p. 23). This brought structural changes to Iran, propelling substantial petroleum reserves and tremendous economic growth. During Mohammad Reza Shah's rule from 1941 to 1979, Iran earned $54 billion from oil taxes alone. During the Second (1955-62), Third (1962-68), Fourth (1968-73), and Fifth (1973-78) development plans, nearly $30 billion of this new income was spent on the welfare of Iranian citizens. However, the Shah also maintained allegiance to foreign allies, to the resentment of Iranian nationalists, and there were significant disparities in the treatment of Iranians and Americans within the oil industry. More than 9000 US military advisors and over 60,000 workers were paid far more than their Iranian counterparts, a situation that fostered resentment among Iranians and offended their national and religious sensibilities (Rubin, 2005, p. 73).

In addition to the Shah's heavy reliance on oil to finance and lead the supposed 'improvement' of Iran, he also introduced a series of Western-pitched modernization reforms later called the "White Revolution" (Esposito, 1990). The Shah proposed a six-point Executive Order:

> "The interests of the nation override all other considerations. If we concern ourselves with impractical regulations and lose the favorable opportunity available to us now, we shall commit a great sin. The progress and development of the nation should be given priority over adherence to impractical laws and personal tests. With utmost speed the government should intensify its drive against corruption and uproot it in the shortest possible time. No obstacle should stand in the way of the government's translating this program into practice. I am confident that the intelligent and honorable people of Iran will cooperate sincerely with the government in carrying out this program and thus will add to the historic honors of the nation" (Shahbaz, 1963, p. 19).

The six goals proposed by the White Revolution in 1963 were land reform, acquiring investments from selling off state-owned factories, women's suffrage, nationalization of forest and pasture lands, an increased drive toward literacy, and the establishment of profit-sharing bodies for industrial workers (Wolfe, 2012). These reforms were all politically motivated: in this way, the Shah sought to legitimize the traditional Iranian aristocracy while also gaining support from the peasant class (Ansari 2001).

On the surface, there were clear benefits to the White Revolution, as it gave small farmers easier access to land, expanded education, and permitted women the right to vote, along with initiating other societal improvements. However, as this chapter will explore, these reforms would also have steep consequences for the Iranian monarchy.

Notable developments during the White Revolution included the growth of the middle and working classes, education initiatives, and more opportunities for minority groups via land reform. Economic expansion in particular encouraged the growth of the "salaried middle class and the urban proletariat" (Abrahamian, 1980, p. 22). In 1953 the modern middle class, which included professors/teachers, professionals, civil servants, etc., constituted no more than 324,000 or 5.4%

of the country's labor force of 5.8 million, but in 1977 this number amount increased to 630,000 or 6.7% of 9.4 million work force according to Abrahamian (1980, p. 22). The urban working class in the oil, transportation, mining, construction, and services industries also saw rapid growth, increasing from 5% in 1953 to 16% in 1977 (Abrahamian, 1980, p. 22). In addition to these changes, Iran also saw an increase in both non-urban laborers and general standards of living (Abrahamian, 1980, p. 22). Still, the Shah's policies failed to gain support from the general public, and Abrahamian (1980) identifies two reasons for such discontent.

First, along with the deposition of Mossadegh, the Shah also dismissed any associations organizations, and parties, which upset people across many social classes, including the newly-created middle classes. Second, the policies he instituted tended to benefit mainly the upper class, not the middle or working classes, who also had no channel through which to protest or counter these policies. Thus, despite the economic boom, many economic disparities only deepened. When explaining the cause of the Revolution as identified by Robert Graham, sociologist Roger Homan rightly notes that:

> The economic and social inequities that bred rising political unrest in the late 1970s were observable in extreme in the half-hour bus ride from suburban *Tajrish* to downtown Tehran: the dynamic of the Revolution existed in the complex opposition the communities settled round either terminus (Homan, 1980, p. 675).

Despite the economic growth and progressive vision of Shah, the society lacked in specific sectors. Although the Shah wanted to establish parity within the society, the gap between the rich and poor could not be bridged. According to Watson (1976, p. 25) "it is estimated that barely 10% of the population control 40% of the nation's wealth and the bottom 30% share only 8% of it." The Shah also saw education as a means of improving the Iranian economy and modernizing the state. The resulting boom in the education sector was startling, with "154,315

enrolled in higher education, over 90,000 in foreign universities, and 741,000 in secondary schools" (Abrahamian, 1980, p. 22). Hamid Mowlana (1979, p. 108), however, argues that the students who had studied abroad could not accommodate themselves back home, utilizing Al-e Ahmad's Westoxification[34] narrative. Hence, Iranian society was further divided by differences between its older and younger generations, a distinct precondition for structural breakdown. Similarly, these reforms provided the opportunity for students from lower-income families to study at universities. However, despite the new opportunities and increased exposure to a more secularized education, many students remained unwavering in their Islamic faith. Thus the Shah's education initiative unwittingly developed three distinctive kinds of Islamists: Marxists, Conservatives, and Centrists. Therefore, when the clergy called for a revolution, they all chose to save Islamic values.

Society also saw changes because of the land reform movement, which redistributed land and allowed members of the working class to purchase it, challenging old feudal structures. Although there were some initial benefits, the land reform also caused multiple issues across Iran. Firstly, it stirred resentment among nobles and landlords: "Landlords were particularly incensed by the notion that they were exploitative 'feudalists"…they argued that such a radical change in the socio-economic patterns of life could only harm agriculture and encourage migration to the cities" (Ansari, 2014, p. 195). There were points to these concerns: for one thing, landlords were correct in believing that land reform would harm agriculture. However, Vakili-Zad (1990, p. 7) has also pointed out that one reason for the land reform policies' failure was that introducing

[34] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, the author *Occidentosis: a plague from the West*, wrote in 1962 that Middle Eastern societies have been inflicted by a contagious disease of trying to mimic the West while losing their own cultural identity and only enabling pernicious imperialism of the colonial powers. See Jalal Al-I Ahmad (1984). *Occidentosis: A plague from the West*. Berkeley: Mizan Press.

capital-intensive technology to agriculture and bringing in many large agro-business enterprises, both Iranian and foreign, reduced the need for farm workers. Because of these specific elements of the land reform policy, many small farmers eventually lost their business, and in search of employment, migrated to the major cities. As a result, the capital city of Tehran became overcrowded. From 1956 to 1966, Tehran's population increased from 1,512,000 to 2,720,000, and this surge included the nomad community, as their routes were shut down by the central government (Vakili-Zad, 1990).

The *ulama* were also vocal in their opposition of the land reform. Not only did this reform affect their *waqf* properties, but also the *ulama* also viewed this bill (along with most of the other new initiatives) as a direct threat to the traditional values of Islam. Besides the fact that most of the *ulama* were staunchly opposed to westernization and secularization, they also believed that the land reform was unconstitutional and contradicted Islamic law as it had been implemented without a sitting *majlis* (Ansari, 2001).[35] As a result, the land reform movement was just one of the many issues that these clergy had with the new Shah.

Similarly, one of the symbols of Iran's modernization and secularization was the unveiling of women in 1936 by Reza Shah. His regime also encouraged women to participate in the education system. Women were granted further rights by Mohammad Reza Shah, who introduced women's suffrage in 1969, emancipating them and enabling them to participate in the workforce. All of these steps were often seen as a blow to the Islamic faith. Following American trends in particular, Iranian women participated in beauty pageants, were encouraged to wear western clothes, and could access and read western magazines. As Mowlana (1979) has pointed out,

[35] In 1961, Mohammad Reza Shah dissolved the 20th Majlis.

"girlie" magazines from the West were circulated throughout Tehran. Female sexuality was explored through visual media, opulent women were shown in various forms of media, and, as Mowlana (1979, pp. 107-112) describes it, they had not even bothered to "Iranianize." This media was not only influential on women, but also on the general public. The Shah's policies made the mass media a market for western products, and the Shah himself utilized the press to propagate his vision of that desired "Great Civilization." This approach affected relationships between the urban intellectuals and the government negatively, which resulted in the former forging an alliance with the *ulama*.

At this point, Iranian society could be divided into three broad sections: the religious clergymen (the Shi'ites), merchants and craftsmen (the *bazaar*), and the urban intellectuals. (It is also worth noting that this had been the case as well during the Constitutional Revolution several decades prior.) Shi'ism was at its peak during the nineteenth century, and *bazaaris* joined the clergy for financial benefit during the lead-up to the Constitutional Revolution. The coalition of these two groups devised protests and strikes and acquired a constitutional grant in 1906. Soon the religious head became the leader of the nation, but in 1907, Western intellectuals became more popular among the people and the clergy's attempt to establish an autocratic state was soon demolished. Eventually, even after helping Pahlavi acquire power, Iran's monarchy soon dismissed Shi'ite authority.

In large part because of this history, the Shi'ites countered that the White Revolution was illegal and anti-Islamic (Milani, 1994; Elwell-Sutton, 1979). Iran had always been a follower of the Shi'a branch of the Islamic faith: more precisely, this was Twelver Shi'ism (Hosseini and Tapper, 2006). This form of Shi'ism was the contribution of the Ismail Shah from the Safavid dynasty in 1501. According to Shi'a doctrine, the Imams were the leaders of the Muslims.

However, Mohammad Shah and his followers considered the Imams' customary laws backwards and wanted to establish a secular state. However, the Pahlavis were not always the enemy of religious institutions. In fact, Reza Khan acquired the throne from the Qajar dynasty with the help of the *ulama*. Later the *ulama's* collaboration, namely Ayatollah Kashani, with the C.I.A. over the Mossadegh affair was also crucial in ensuring that Mohammad Reza Shah was reinstated.

Nevertheless, both Pahlavi Shahs ignored these contributions of the clergy and steadfastly encouraged westernization and secularization. Along with their former political powers, the Shi'ite clergy lost all of their control over educational institutions, a two-fold change that denied their cultural importance in Iranian society. Then after the death of two grand *ayatollahs* in 1961, Ayatollah Khomeini came into prominence within the ranking *ulama*. He publicly denounced the White Revolution, stating that the reforms, particularly women's rights, were an attack on Islam. Likewise, he was critical of the Shah's desire to westernize the country. SAVAK arrested Khomeini and exiled him to Turkey (*The New York Times*, November 5, 1964, p. 8) on Security Charge. Interestingly, this exile allowed Khomeini to criticize the Shah even more freely, and as will be explained later, he would eventually become the face and voice of the Revolution.

However, the clergy was not the only opposition or the only group suffering from the Shah's rule at this time. Likewise, the *bazaars* were also suffering from the rapid-pace industrialization policies. Their grievances continued to build for many years, but the political maneuvering of the Shah endured throughout his reign, and so did its effects. For instance, in 1973-1974, Mohammad Reza Shah misused the funds gained from the increase in crude oil prices, which resulted in inflation. The economy was harshly affected, and among its many fallouts, housing prices rose steeply. Then instead of re-stabilizing the economy, allowing meaningful participation in government and society, or including alienated groups and individuals in the country's political

processes, the Shah in 1975 launched a single party called *Rastakhiz* and demanded that every Iranian either join the party or leave Iran. The *Rastakhiz's* purpose was to manufacture a façade of political participation and inclusion while also trying to establish control over the Iranian people, and in this way the monarchy turned into an absolute monarchy (Abrahamian, 1980, p. 25).

For the first time, the *bazaar* was on the government's radar. Previously the Shah had ignored the *bazaaris*, not considering them a threat to his regime prior to the oil boom of 1973.[36] At this time the *bazaar* consisted of about 250,000 shopkeepers and small-time traders, and around two-thirds of Iran's retail trade depended on them. The *bazaaris* could influence Iran's traders and workers, and they also had a hold on the women's workforce and rural employment as well. However, the *bazaar* would see major changes when the *Rastakhiz* was implemented, as their domain came under the prevail of wealthy businessmen and smaller traders were pushed out of the market. The *Rastakhiz* proposed a state-run market imitating London's Covent Garden) and new central roads, which required the destruction of the *bazaar* area. As a result, hourly wage-earners from the *bazaar* suffered while the newly-established big businesses flourished. There was also great disparity in how the state treated the *bazaaris* as compared to wealthy businesspeople. For example, the state-subsidized bank offered loans to prominent businesspeople at 6% interest and to the small merchants at 20% or even 30% interest (Abrahamian, 1980, p. 25).

On top of all of this, a state-sponsored daily blamed the *bazaaris* for consumer exploitation. According to Abrahamian, "unable to control the inflation, the regime used the small shopkeeper as the major scapegoat and declared war on the bazaars" (1980, p. 25). Soon after, the *Rastakhiz* party began an inspection on the "*bazaar* profiteers" and 8000 businessmen, shopkeepers, and

[36] Alternatively referred to as the "oil crisis" by Western scholars and journalists.

peddlers were jailed by government-appointed grand jurists. In addition, 23,000 *bazaaris* were exile from their home towns, and more than 200,000 were fined (Abrahamian, 1980, p. 25).

The Shah and his government's treatment of the clergy and *bazaaris* caused these influential groups to have proximate goals and form an alliance for two primary reasons. First, the *bazaars* and the clergy were in close proximity to one another and now had many of the same grievances as well. (Moreover, the *bazaaris* maintained their traditions during the wave of modernization, which earned them support from the clergy who upheld tradition.) Secondly, the mosques were dependent on many resources still provided by the *bazaaris*.

The Shah continued to make changes that upset Iranians well into the late 1970s. For example, in 1976 he implemented a new calendar, *shahanshahi*, which according to Buchan (2013, p. 421) "baffled or infuriated the Iranians" because its dates began with Cyrus the Great and moved away from the Islamic *Hijri* calendar. This change was a further demonstration of the Shah's eagerness to secularize the Iranian state.

Further changes in foreign involvement also complicated matters. During his reign, the Shah often used oppressive and violent tactics to silence any opposition, and as a result, the state of human rights in Iran was deplorable in the 1970s. The secret police routinely used tactics such as torture, assassinations, and bombings, and the Shah was able to carry out these tactics for years because the United States had supported his regime. After US president Jimmy Carter's election in 1977, however, the Shah was forced to change his brutal approach because Carter's human rights policy was in direct opposition to the human rights violations that the Shah had been committing for years. Fearing the loss of financial support from the United States, the Shah reduced restrictions against political protesters in 1977. This gave the Iranians an opportunity to campaign against the

Shah outside of official channels and the moderate decline in repression gave protesters a chance to grow.

Ayatollah Khomeini[37] also played a major role in the Revolution, uniting Islamic forces and others who were affected by the regime. The common thread among these different groups was radicalism, both religious and political, against the Shah's expansive westernization. These types of radicalism co-existed here because both impacted the middle class, the Muslim scholars and clergy, and most of all, conservative individuals including many *bazaaris*.

Intellectuals also made a significant contribution to the Revolution. Philosopher Ali Shariati, who died in 1977 two years before the Revolution, provided much important ideology for this event. A believer of Marxist-Islamic ideas, he believed that society should conform to Islamic values and that the government should guide society toward adherence with these values. To Shariati, this should be the *ulamas'* responsibility but it was the *intelligentsia* who could save Iranians from the shackles of westernization. As Abrahamian puts it, Shariati would say that:

> The task of carrying forth these two revolutions is in the hands of the intelligentsia – the *rushanfekran.* For it is the intelligentsia that can grasp society's inner contradictions, especially class contradictions, raise public consciousness by pointing out these contradictions, and learn lessons from the experiences of Europe and other parts of the Third World. Finally, having charted the way into the future, the intelligentsia must guide the masses through the dual revolutions (1982).

However, among many secular intellectuals who turned to Islam as a means of addressing Iran's problems, Jalal al-Ahmed was perhaps the most important. Ahmed, an ex-communist,

[37] Khomeini believed in '*velayat-e-faqih*,' or "guardianship of the Islamic jurist," which justified clergy ruling the state. This was the focal point of his mission to bring about an Islamic revolution globally. In the Muslim community, the hierarchy was deemed to be as follows: Allah, followed by Prophet Muhammad, then the Imams. However, Khomeini's view of power was an extension of power to a *faqih* (the supreme clerical leader). This modification in the power structure implies that in order to develop a world order based on 'justice,' the *faqih* needs to be a matter of both spiritual and secular mastery.

believed that the main issue at play was contradictions between western culture and Islam, so to him "a defense of Islam is the only path to national liberation and development" (Moaddel, 1992, p. 365). The situation could be summed up as follows: the conservatives countered westernization as a means of protecting Islam, the Marxist/communists fought against western consumerism, and the Muslim intellectuals stood for national liberty. In all of this, the common enemy was the West and, more specifically during this time, the United States.

Khomeini, the leader of the 1963 rebellion, was the son of a *mullah*. He carefully created a close-knit group to become an *ayatollah* (one of the highest ranks in Shi'ism) and soon became a grand *ayatollah*. However, when Iran went through a wave of secularism during the first Pahlavi Shah's rule, Khomeini as a junior *ayatollah* did not protest much. Even during the land reform of Mohammad Reza, he was silent. Then in October 1962, the announcement of women's right to vote in the local council election bill seemed to come as a major surprise to him. On that same day, Khomeini had a meeting with Ayatollahs Shari'atmadari and Golpayegani. Together these three declared a boycott on the White Revolution and publicly expressed their opposition of the Shah through the newspaper *Maktab-e-Islam*. This helped begin setting a tense atmosphere in Iran, particularly as other religious leaders in Iraq also supported the three *ayatollahs* and reminded the Shah that he could lose his throne (Moin, 2000).

Under Mehdi Bazargan, the pro-democracy Freedom Movement protested against the "un-Islamic" bill (Moin, 2000). This group consisted of twelve leading merchants of the *bazaar* who supported Prime Minister Mossadegh. This group of "liberal modernist Muslims" did not trust the clergy members because of their role in the conspiracy against Mossadegh. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Alam declared some concessions on the local bill while recognizing its blunders, but he

did not remove the focus on women's enfranchisement. By this time, though, the subject had already blown out of proportion, and Khomeini used this to his advantage.

Khomeini's timing and strategies were quite apt for his purposes. As Khomeini's biographer Baqer Moin writes:

> Khomeini had displayed an impressively accurate sense of timing. Thus encouraged, he now adopted an Islamic–constitutional recipe in his speeches to appeal to secular nationalist forces, just as in the early 1940s he had laced his language with Persian expressions to combat accusations that the clergy were influenced by Arab culture (Moin, 2000, p. 65).

With his loyal students or *tolab* (Amineh, 2007), Khomeini created a stronghold in the *bazaar*. Soon Khomeini became the leader of the different groups of *bazaaris* and united them under the flag of the "The Coalition of Islamic Societies." Twenty-one merchant members funded the group and also headed three distinct societies and study circles: one apiece at the Sheikh Ali mosque, the Amin od-Dowleh mosque, and the Esfahaniha mosque. Then in January 1963, Tehran and Qom saw the first strands of active protests against the current regime. In Qom, Khomeini asked his followers to protest against the Shah's coming to the city. The protestors in Tehran closed off the *bazaar,* and the religious men marched to the *mollas'* house to seek leadership (Moin, 2000). To ease tensions, the government bent to these demands. However, during these events, Iran also witnessed the revival of religious thought or *ehyay-e fekr-e dini,* which would eventually result in the Islamic Revolution of 1979 (Amineh, 2007).

Assuming leadership over the opposition, Khomeini reminded the public of the Shah's inability to rule. According to him, the regime was corrupt and the Shah was the blind follower of foreign powers who encouraged *gharbzadegi* (westernizing) against Islam (Wolfe, 2012). Khomeini considered the United States in particular an enemy of Iran, often referring to this nation as both the "Great Satan" and friends of Israel. He believed that with Israel's help, the United States

would come to dominate the Muslims (Algar, 1972). As a result, in his speech on New Year's Day of 1963, Khomeini threatened the Shah with the consequences of his actions:

> You don't know whether the situation will change one day nor whether those who surround you will remain your friends. They are the friends of the dollar. They have no religion, no loyalty. They have hung all the responsibility around your neck. O miserable man! (Moin, 2000, p. 85).

Soon afterwards the Shah declared martial law, and Khomeini was arrested: placed on house arrest from October 1963 to May 1964 until he was exiled to Turkey (Wolfe, 2012). While exiled, he spent thirteen years in Najaf, Iraq, where he built a religious network among the Iranians settled there (Corboz, 2015). Then in 1977, both Khomeini's supporters and the National Front began to protest the Shah. Attorneys organized themselves to question the judiciary system, and the banned Writers' Association wrote to the Prime Minister asking for acknowledgment and cultural freedom. The publishers established Free Book and Thought, which asked for relaxations in government censorship (Green 1980), and in November 1977, Mehdi Bezargan one of the members of Nationalist Front party founded a committee for freedom and human rights. Through all of this, Khomeini continued influencing his allies from exile. For example, he instructed the religious leaders to choose Islamic events as times for protesting. However, although he used Islam as a means to convince his religious followers to rise up against the Shah, collective hatred for Shah was also used as a means of convincing the already agitated young students (Green 1980).

Protests against the Shah erupted in the year prior to the Revolution. In January 1978, the seminary staged a protest at Qom after the Tehran daily *Ettela'at*, likely instigated by the Shah, published an article attacking Khomeini as a British agent. These demonstrations spread to other cities and often turned both violent and deadly. Perhaps the most pivotal of these demonstrations was "Black Friday," which took place on September 8th, 1978. After the Shah banned

demonstrations, thousands gathered in Tehran, demanding the end of the Shah's regime and the establishment of an Islamic Republic. These protestors clashed with the military, leading to several casualties. While the actual number of deaths is unclear, official records state that anywhere from 25 to 250 civilians died during the demonstration. However, according to the opposition, that number was closer to 2000 to 3000 people. The Shah's declaration of martial law and the subsequent protest was a turning point in the Revolution. It was evident that the Shah was unwilling to meet the public's demands, forcing Iranians to revolt violently.

The deaths during Black Friday did not deter Iranians and the protests continued. According to Ashraf and Banuazizi (1985), the protests of 1978-79 occurred in five consecutive stages or waves: "Non-Violent Mobilization" (June-Dec. 1977), "Cyclical Urban Riots" (Jan.-July 1978), "Mass Demonstrations" (Aug.-Sep.1978), "Mass Strikes" (Oct- Nov. 1978) and "Dual Sovereignty" (Dec.-Feb. 1978-79). Ashraf and Banuazizi (1985, p. 21) state that "with each successive wave, the number of participants in revolutionary activities increased dramatically. Beginning with 45,000 participants in the first wave, the number almost quadrupled in the second, leaped to 1,400,000 in the third, rose to 5,200,000 in the fourth, and finally involved some 29,000,000 people in the last."

In its three initial stages, the Revolution was led by three groups: the *ulama*, the *intelligentsia*, and the *bazaaris*. The newly-made middle class and the industrial workers joined much later. The working class, irrespective of urban and rural origin, took part in the protest demonstrations equally. Outrage towards the Shah and support for Khomeini grew substantially in the months before Khomeini's return. Eventually, soldiers mutinied against Mohammad Reza Shah, and in January 1979, the Shah and his family fled Iran, effectively ending the Iranian monarchy.

The transformation from the Shah's regime to Khomeini's Islamic state was not smooth. Dr. Shahpur Bakhtiyar, a long-time critic of the regime, had recently been appointed the prime minister by the Shah in hopes of appeasing the populace. After the Shah's exile, Bakhtiyar set out to create a new government, wanting to avoid a revolution in which the clergy gained control. In an attempt to accomplish this, Bakhtiyar stated that first, the Shah would leave Iran for an extended "vacation" abroad, and second that SAVAK would be disabled. Next he stated that any police and military members who shot protesters would be punished, and lastly, that the public would be responsible for Iran's foreign affairs. These attempts were not enough, though. Bakhtiyar, a member of the National Front until his premiership, was declared a traitor by Khomeini, who refused the Prime Minister's attempt to pacify Iranians. When Khomeini returned to Iran in February 1979, he was enthusiastically welcomed by millions of Iranians, and now-former prime minister Bakhtiyar fled Iran.

Khomeini's paramount ability was to gain support, which he did through deceit of nearly every facet of Iranian society. For instance, he made false promises to both the nationalists and the leftists to convince them to march with him: later he even admitted that he used a "white lie" to achieve his goal, which was to establish an Islamic government, and therefore that Islam permits such lies. According to Jahandarpour (1984), the Tudeh party was also used by Khomeini to achieve his goals, as he assured them that the party would hold a position in the post-revolutionary state. However, within five years of his taking power, most party members were imprisoned, and some were even tried and given life sentences. Moreover, as soon as the Shah left the country, the alliance between Khomeini and many of these various groups disintegrated. Only the religious men ruled the newly-built Islamic republic and secular leaders, such as President Abolhassan Bani Sadr, were often undermined.

Thus the 1979 Revolution was different from other revolutions in Iran because it was unanticipated based on conventional wisdom. For one thing, Mohammad Reza Shah, engrossed in his success as a statesman, ignored the seeds of revolution as if thinking that it was some small-scale fundamentalist organizing minor protests. The revolution took the United States by surprise as well, although one would imagine that the C.I.A., who was continually surveilling Iran, would have identified the protests the year before as an indicator of the direction Iran would take. More interestingly still, Khomeini himself may not have expected the revolution to succeed. This is indicated by the fact that the exiled Khomeini, whose French visa was about to expire, was looking for another country to take shelter in just months before the Shah fled. In other words, the future Supreme Leader of Iran was not yet expecting the revolution to take such a sharp turn in his favor and was already hedging his bets.

All in all, the actions of the Pahlavi dynasty gradually caused the 1979 Islamic Revolution by moving away from being responsive to the public's demands. The state also suffered major growing pains due to the rapid pace and uneven applications of modernization. While the White Revolution did make some improvements to Iranian society, these benefits were unequally distributed at best, with most going to the wealthy and further disenfranchising others. The White Revolution also attempted to supplant Islamic values that had been a fundamental part of Iranian society, not only to the resentment of the *ulama* but also to Muslims across the country as well. Finally, Mohammad Reza Shah's eagerness to erase, if not completely outlaw, traditional society and its structures proved to be a fatal calculation. In the face of these perceived threats, unlikely alliances would form to overthrow the Shah's authoritarian rule and implement a theocratic government with few democratic elements, though in the hopes of more political inclusion.

When considering the political freedoms that were promised during the Revolution by Ayatollah Khomeini compared to the current state of Iran that has resulted, one might certainly ponder how successful the 1979 Revolution truly was. It is evident that the desire for true democracy remained a goal long after the Iranian Revolution, considering the aspirations of the Green Movement in 2009 as discussed in the next chapter.

Existing explanations

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 has been studied by many scholars as one of the classic cases of revolution in the 20th century. However, most explanations of this revolution lack an adequate historical understanding of Iranian society and also ignore the struggles that Iran has undergone since the late 19th century in the people's attempt to have an inclusionary political system. Many other countries in the world followed the same path with different levels of success in achieving a more or less inclusionary system that can be studied using the theory of political inclusion comparatively. As a result, the existing theories regarding this revolution are overly narrow in scope and only look at these events in a frozen snapshot of history rather than in terms of the political process of change across Iran specifically. Moreover, most of these theories are also post-hoc, meaning they have been applied only as the conditions have fit.

To set up our own counter to such existing methods, this section provides an overview of the existing explanation regarding the causes of the Islamic Revolution of 1979. As discussed in the previous chapter on the Constitutional revolution: due to the lack of contextual understanding of both Iranian society and Iranian history, there are some limitations to most existing explanations, as they do not thoroughly address why Iranian citizens were moved to mobilize against various regimes. Nor do these theories tend to examine periods of non-action either pre- or

post-revolution. However, these explanations – which can be categorized as either structural or voluntarist – do provide valuable insight about the revolution that can help us identify gaps in the current explanation and enable us to identify how the theory of political inclusion can contribute to filling in these gaps. Below is a brief summary of these existing theories.

Treatments of the structural causes that are believed to have led to the Islamic Revolution are very prominent in the literature. Skocpol (1982p. 267), Arjomand (1986, p. 384), Keddie (1983, p. 583), Ramazani (1984, pp. 444-5), and Abrahamian (1980, p. 23) all argue that the root cause of the Revolution was, in one way or another, the collapse of the Iranian monarchy. For instance, Theda Skocpol contends that "the Revolution was straightforwardly the product of social disruption, social disorientation, and universal frustration with the pace of change" (1982, p. 267). Similarly, Amuzegar (1991, 241) believes that "it was precisely the political vacuum created by the regime that attracted the opposition like a powerful magnet." Ramazani (1984, pp. 444-5) also explains how the Pahlavi period crumbled systematically, starting with the nationalization of oil in the early 1950s and quickly followed by land reforms[38] and the exile of Khomeini in 1964 before further acceleration due to the socio-economic woes of the mid-1970s.

On the other side, many analysts within the structuralist tradition - including Tehranian (1980, p. 6), Green (1980, p. 32), Saikal (1980, pp. 203-204), and Momayezi (1986, p. 77) - consider modernization as the main cause of the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Many others, including Abrahamian (1980), Katouzian (1981), and Milani (1994), consider modernization as

[38] The land reforms, also known as the White Revolution, were launched in 1963 by Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and implemented in order to reduce the power of large landlords (Siavoshi 1990, p. 23). At the same time, however, these reforms cut off the *ulama* from the royalties they had been earning through land ownership, similar to how Naser al-Din Shah Qajar tried to take income away from the *ulama* by gaining control over the *Wafq* properties. As Abrahamian (2008, p. 133) points out, “The White Revolution had been designed to pre-empt a Red Revolution. Instead, it paved the way for an Islamic Revolution.”

only one of the many causes leading up to the 1979 revolution. Though their dependence on modernization as either the main or one of many factors do differ, these scholars tend to agree in arguing that large-scale modernization led to expansive social transformations, industrialization, and urbanization. Such trends are expected to generate social disorganization, disorientation, and frustration, which may explode into collective violence and civil disorder. In other words, as Huntington (1968) describes it, rapid social and economic transformation and the resultant disjunction or "gap" between political and economic development can produce disorder and violence in developing countries.

Other structuralist theories such as that of rising expectations, Davies's J-curve, and relative deprivation have also been utilized by many to explain the Islamic Revolution of 1979 (Stempel, 1981, p. 9; Sick, 1985, pp. 159-160; Walton, 1980; Pipes, 1983). These scholars tend to argue that when oil revenues in Iran suddenly dropped a few years prior to the Islamic Revolution, the people's rising expectations and hopes for improved economic conditions diminished rapidly, leading to violence and revolution. In particular, Keddie (1983, p. 588) argues that the Iranian revolutionary experience during the 1970s fits neatly into Davies's J-curve, which predicts revolution when rapid economic growth is followed by a sharp economic downturn. Similarly, Milani contends that the presence of a J-curve condition is a prerequisite for modernization causing revolution (1994, p. 16).

Some of these structuralist theories also emphasize external elements as a catalyst for the Islamic Revolution. Bashiriyeh (1984, 107), for instance, argues that political openness due to international pressure was a major and immediate factor that led to the dissolution of the Shah's power. Similarly, Evans (2009, pp. 14-17) argues that the Carter administration's stance and rhetoric on human rights was in direct opposition to many hallmarks of the Shah's regime, further

undermining the hegemony of the Iranian central government. David Snow and Scott Byrd (2007, p. 124) also argue that the ruling class in an "Islamic society was denounced by the people, not for their higher economic position but because they symbolized 'Westernization and its consumerism and moral laxity." Thus, citing Xavier and Nasir, Snow and Byrd argue that in Iran's case, condemnations of western influences were highly celebrated (p. 124). Although the external influences of major powers on the domestic affairs of other countries are not deniable, these type of analyses provide no useful understanding of the "why" people mobilize under certain conditions and not others. This emphasis on external influence undermines the will and agency of individuals and the complicated processes involved in the interplay between the opposition seeking political inclusion and the government denying it. These factors, even if influential, are hard to pinpoint as to how they changed the direction of the reform process by inducing a jump from one path (no action) to another (protest action) or vice versa. The theory of political inclusion can be more parsimonious by excluding factors such as external influences since their effect is often unknown or becomes known many years after or entirely ignored by domestic population. The rivalry between Russia and Great Britain during the constitutional Revolution may have had an impact but it was not alien to Iranian efforts, and without the struggle of the Iranian people the outcome would have not been achieved. Similarly, as explained above, Carter's human rights agenda, did not cause the Islamic revolution. Not to mention it would be almost impossible to operationalize the intention of major powers in a frozen snapshot of time. These post-hoc factors may only act as a catalyst and they only short-change the domestic sources of action as such a focus neglects key drivers of contentious mobilization within the system. The proponents of external influence as the cause of contentious action also fail to explain the period of no action. Similarly, the Green

Movement was obviously lacking an international inducement or sponsor as it was truly genuine and indigenous.

The voluntarists' theories have also contributed to our present understanding of the Islamic Revolution. As previously discussed, these approaches focus primarily on human agency instead of social and/or political structures. When applied to explaining the Islamic Revolution, these theories focus predominantly on Shi'a activism and the role of the *ulama,* including their mobilizing tools and tactics as these ranged from resource mobilization models to Shi'a ideology as the driving force for mobilizing action.

The model of resource mobilization has been used widely to explain the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the Constitutional Revolution of 1906. Throughout the making of both revolutions, the role of Shi'a activism and the role of the *ulama* in mobilizing the masses were both apparent and significant. Some analysts, such as Akhavi (1983, pp. 195-8) and Algar (2001, pp. 119-20), consider Shi'a activism as one of the main causes of Iranian revolutions during the 20th century. Algar (2001, 119) argues that opposition to the *status quo*, the monarchy, and the foreign powers that stood behind it since the late 19th century has been "led, directed, and inspired by the most prominent of the Shi'i *ulama* in Iran." Likewise, Varzi (2011) also argues that Shiite Islam not only provided a framework for protest during the Islamic Revolution but also continues to remain a powerful form of protest against Islamic government itself.

Historian Naghmeh Sohrabi (2018, pp. 2-3) identifies two types of historiographical trends- the *nihzat* and *Inqilab,* both of which focus on the agency element of causes behind the Islamic Revolution. The *nihzat* (movement) literature was produced by Khomeini supporters in the post-revolutionary state to emphasize the role of the *ayatollah* and his mobilizing power as imbued by

Shi'a activism. The *Inqilab* (revolution) literature was the work of scholars who took part in the Revolution, either from within or outside Iran. In most cases, these intellectuals were members or supporters of the leftist and nationalist Iranian organizations that mostly focused on leadership and resource mobilization. For example, Hamid Algar, the British-American professor and specialist of Iran, believes that Khomeini's religious ideas made the Revolution possible (Algar, 2001, p. 48). Here it is also interesting to note that Algar even met Khomeini when he was exiled in Paris.

While most Western scholars of the time feared the birth of an Islamic republic, Michel Foucault supported Khomeini and his movement. His interest in Islam began in *Corriere della sera* in 1978. Foucault correctly observed that the Iranian Revolution would be different from all other revolutions, though he also believed that it would give birth to 'political spirituality' (Affray, 2005, p. 4). He also believed that the Revolution's impact was much more than that of Marxism, Leninism, or Maoism (Affray, p. 108).

Despite the points made by many of these scholars, considering the Shi'a ideology and the mobilization powers of *ulama* as the underlying causes of contentious collective action in Iran is misleading. By contrast Sepehr Zabih, an ally of the Mossadegh government, in his study *Iran's Revolutionary Upheaval: An Interpretive Essay,* does not give much importance to religious organizations (as pointed out by Green, 1980, p. 44). Similarly, as Milani cogently argues, Shi'a activism "was more a consequence than a principal precondition of the Islamic Revolution: its ascendency was neither predestined nor inevitable" (1994, 3). Instead, Milani (1994, 18) considers Shi'a *ulama* one of the main 'traveling salesmen' of Iran's Islamic Revolution. He argues that after the revolution, *ulama* became the "philosopher kings" of the Iranian theocracy, but this does not mean that the Iranian revolution was created by the *ulama*.

While the existing explanations discussed above are important, they are also limited by their overt dependence on either structural or voluntarist frameworks. Other constructivist or political process-based models that bridge concerns with structure and agency have been utilized occasionally, but these also lack explanatory power about Iranian revolutions specifically, which as discussed in chapter one is foundational for truly understanding these movements.

In sum, none of these theories or models provide a holistic view of the Iranian struggle for political change, the transition to democracy, or any inclusion within a historical timeline. Instead, they only focus on events retroactively and in isolation. Furthermore, the narrow examination of these periods of mobilization, rather than a wider examination that also considers incidents of contentious collective action and periods of non-action, cannot adequately depict or explore the causes of the Islamic Revolution. However, by examining the 1979 Revolution through the lens of the political inclusion theory, which places the events into a wider political context, one can better identify the causes and outcomes of this historical event and thus understand Iran's enduring struggle for democracy more adequately.

Testing the theory of political inclusion

As discussed in the previous section, existing theories and models are often limited by their use of structuralist or voluntarist frameworks, or else they abandon retroactive prediction and consider the Islamic Revolution of 1979 to be an anomaly. Some theories such as political process model tried to bridge the two frameworks but had limited success in providing a falsifiable theory that could explain periods of action or inaction or transition from one to the other. These theories are thus unable to present a full view of the causes of the Islamic Revolution or of many other incidents of contentious actions in Iran. In particular, they fail to explain such incidents in a

continuum of change in Iranian politics. In other words, none of these theories or models truly provide a holistic view of the Iranian struggle for political change, transition to democracy, and expansion of political inclusion within a historical timeline. Instead, they often tend to focus on events retroactively and their narrow focus on periods of mobilization, rather than a wider examination of incidents of contentious collective action and periods of non-action as well, creates blind spots that cannot be overcome when attempting to discern the real causes of the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

As discussed earlier, at the core of the events leading up to the Islamic Revolution was the struggle for a more inclusionary system, but the question that none of these existing theories and models can answer is what conditions led to the timing of these mobilizing actions. However, the struggle to transfer some of the state's power to the people and new groups, special interests, and domestic social and political forces has over time transformed the ways in which Iranian politics has been conducted, even into the present. Having a theory capable of following and explaining this struggle over time will significantly improve our understanding of the past and perhaps future political processes in Iran, and may even offer wider applications for similar authoritarian settings.

This section is intended to provide an explanation for the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and to re-test the theory of political inclusion as a potentially viable approach to better understanding this event. As this section will demonstrate, examining the Islamic Revolution through the lens of political inclusion theory can help us understand not only the causes and outcomes of this revolution and Iran's enduring struggle for democracy in better ways, but also it can help explain the timing of such events and how they are made possible by particular social and political events.

Similar to how this same model was applied to the Persian Constitutional Revolution in chapter 3, the political transformation in this more recent episode of Iranian politics can be studied by identifying a) whether there were circumstances and conditions that encouraged and enabled contentious political mobilization to occur, b) how the government's response to such grievances and mobilizations took form, and c) how the interaction between these other two factors played out. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to apply the theory of political inclusion to two five-year periods – one prior to and one during the Islamic Revolution of 1979 – and in doing so, to see if this theory is capable of explaining why pervasive and ongoing grievances either did or did not lead to mobilizing action in different cases.

The first five-year period under study here will cover Iranian political history from 1961 to 1966. The second five-year period to be covered here spans from 1974 to 1979. By looking to both of these time periods, we will best be able to see whether the theory still stands within a near time range and the same social and political context. For organizational reasons, this chapter – like both previous chapter, the operationalization section, and all subsequent chapters, will follow the structure as outlined below in order to test this theory thoroughly and comprehensively.

I. Identifying contentious political action

a) The extent of protest mobilization

b) The intensity of protest mobilization

c) The objective of protest mobilization

II. Assessing the level of organization and cohesiveness demonstrated by the opposition

a) Provision of information

b) Interest representation

c) Exercising criticism and provision of alternatives

d) Provision of minimal degree of mutual acceptance

III. Political inclusion and exclusion

a) Having an institution and means of communication

b) Criticizing the government and/or offering policy alternatives (claims-making)

c) Having any form of representation in the system (for example, parliament and/or administration)

IV. The existence of contextual variables

a) Blaming and putting a human face on injustices

b) Proximate goals (coalition-building)

In the following sections, each of these 12 variables across four dimensions outlined above will be examined separately for a five-year period prior to the Islamic Revolution, utilizing available print media and digital archives (including the *Ettela'at* newspaper) gathered from the Iranian National Archives in Tehran. This same method and manner of assessment will also be applied to a period of "no major action" as ascertained using available media data[39] (1961-1966). A comparison of the two will then be made in order to test the validity of this theory. The table below summarizes these findings.

[39] The *Ettela'at* newspaper digital archives were available from 1961 to the present with only a few interruptions in publication.

Table 4.1
Evidence from "quiet" period (1961-1966)

Period of no contentious collective action (1961-1966)			
	Variable	**Assessment/Evidence**	**Flowchart Path**
I. Contentious political action	a) The extent of protest mobilization	Frequent but not widespread and not addressing national policy No broad coalition. Focused on specific sectors (i.e., protests of mainly groups such as religious, taxi drivers, students)	1
	b) The intensity of protest mobilization	Some intense instances but not sizable numbers. Also, not national (mostly regional)	1
	c) The objective of protest mobilization	No targeting of central government policies	1
II. level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition	a) Provision of information	The opposition provides otherwise-unavailable information to both the public and the government about public reaction to a particular policy. The opposition also keeps the government informed about the consequences of official policy.	1A
	b) Interest representation	The opposition represents public and/or special interests that have been overlooked or ignored by the government.	1A
	c) Exercising criticism and provision of alternatives	The opposition provides criticism of government policies and poses alternatives to them.	1A
	d) Provision of minimal degree of mutual acceptance	Both the government and the opposition have been engaged in official communication with one another and other political actors.	1A

III. Political inclusion and exclusion	a) Having an institution and means of communication	There are a number of official institution(s) and platform(s) of communication. (In fact, this is one of the freest periods for journals, as compared to the 10 years immediately prior.)	1B
	b) Criticizing the government and/or offering policy alternatives (claims-making)	The opposition is able to criticize the government and offer policy alternatives (claims-making) through official channels.	1B
	c) Having any form of representation in the system (such as parliament or administration)	The opposition groups are represented in the system, such as through parliament and administrative positions.	1B
IV. The existence of contextual variables	a) Blaming and putting a human face on grievances	Grievances are specific, often localized, and not universal. For the most part, they are also not assigned to a specific human face.	1C
	b) Proximate goals (coalition-building) and/or whether opposition is fragmented	There are few or no proximate goals among opposition groups. The late-stage anti-imperialist rhetoric created by Khomeini that dominated beyond 1964 resonated with many other groups, but it was not enough to be considered a rallying cry. Instead, it would take many years for the proximate goal to form, and more for it to be expanded and respected by multiple groups.	1C

I. Identifying contentious political action

As discussed earlier in chapter two and also applied to the assessment of the Constitutional Revolution in chapter 3, this study adheres to a baseline definition of what constitutes contentious political action. In this definition, contentious mobilization often occurs to apply stress to specific

target(s) in order to affect public policy. Based on our assessment of the extent and intensity of protest mobilizations and their objectives (i.e., to challenge the central government and offer policy alternatives), there were multiple incidents of uprisings during the period from 1961 to 1966. However, upon further examination it becomes clear that either they do not pass the test of extent and intensity of protest mobilization, or else their objective is not to challenge the central government and offer universal policy alternatives. Instead, the evidence outlined in the next section shows that contentious mobilization did not occur during this period and thus we can mark it as a period of "no contentious political action."

From January 1961 to January 1966, the *New York Times* reported many protests or uprisings in Iran. With an archival search for that time period, the keywords "Iran + protest" and "Teheran + protest" (which almost inevitably include all coverage of protests at the time in Iran) can give us a good sense of the intensity and scope of protests that occurred here from 1961-1966. Other keywords, such as "riot" and "uprising" also were searched but were not pursued much further because they were returning the same items. For instance, the keyword "Iran + protest" brings up about 107 entries, which was a manageable number to review and log in order to gain a comprehensive picture of the *Times* coverage.

The first entry within our first five-year period appeared in 1961 in the *New York Times,* reporting that 10,000 pro-Mossadegh students protested inside Tehran University and demanded free elections on January 27, 1961 (p. 5); it also reported that a few hundreds of people protested on February 6 following the same cause (p. 3). Later that same month on February 11, the *Times* reported again that 18 people were injured and 18 people arrested in an encountered between the police and protesters (February 12, 1961, p. 20). According to the *New York Times*, there were also protests on June 28, July 6, July 22, and November 6 in 1961. Then in 1962, the *Times*' coverage

shows that there were protests on January 22, June 6, and September 22. The protests of both years culminated in a major protest on June 6, 1963 during a religious holiday and then later in the taxi drivers' strike of December 1, 1964, which was less significant than its 1963 predecessor.

Other than the June 6 protests, though, none of the other protests logged in this way qualify as mobilizing action, as per operationalization of that variable in this study. Almost all of these protests (except June 6, 1963 religious protest and the December 1, 1964 taxi riot) were student protests, mainly held by supporters of ousted ex-prime minister Mossadegh and mostly concerning the parliament elections in Tehran. According to the *New York Times* again (January 27, 1961, p 5), the largest of these, which occurred on January 27 in 1961, reached a critical mass of 10,000 people but was mainly on campus and only increased because of the police assaults on peaceful protestors and the resignation of the head of the university. This did not engage a national conversation or draw in other major stakeholders such as the *bazaar,* religious establishment, or average Iranian individuals. Likewise, it also did not spark rallies and demonstrations on the national level.

The June 6, 1963 protests during *Ashura*[40] constitute one exception. As discussed earlier in the background section, the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini coincided with the White revolution, women's suffrage, and mandatory military service for religious scholars (*tolab*) in Iran, none of which sat well with the *ulama*. This came to a head on the holiday of *Ashura,* when people generally marched in the streets in groups coalescing at major squares, chanting against the oppression and killing of Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad. Somehow, in

[40] An important religious event for Shia Muslims which marks the day that Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, was brutally killed in the Battle of Karbala and since then Shia lament him as a sign of injustice to Shia Imams and Shia Muslims in general.

1963 Khomeini skillfully changed the narrative to focus on the shah's oppression of the Iranian people, so on this *Ashura,* the people chanted against the shah during the holiday march. Although the government had announced the day prior that political protests were prohibited due to excessive political slogans during religious ceremonies (*Ettela'at* Newspaper, June 5, p. 1), both the people and religious groups marching on June 6, 1963 still continued to chant political slogans against the shah and his cabinet members. The *New York Times* coverage of this event emphasized the religious undertone of the protests, as with the op-ed titled: "Iran quells riot by Muslim sect fighting reforms." Madani (1983, p. 357), however, considers this a more significant event, as it helped set the stage for the Islamic Revolution several years later. But, as we will discuss later, what this event lacked at the time was a broad coalition; also, many of these demands were then met by the central government.

Thus, in addition to their lack of intensity and national scope and spread, very few of these movements pass the test of national objective during the time period in question. In other words, the demands and *objective of protests* during these events were not aimed at the central government of Iran, and they did not offer alternative polices at the national level with universal effects on the Iranian populace. The one exception would be the June 6, 1963 incidents, where according to the *Ettela'at* newspaper (June 7, 1963, p. 1), 66 persons died during the protest and martial law was implemented in Tehran and three other major cities. Therefore, other than one incident that will be discussed further below, we can mark this period as one of "no major mobilizing action."

II. Level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition

The level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition is a major indicator in understanding how this group will interact with the government as well as how it will engage the

feedback loop in order to achieve the ultimate goal of reform. Based on how this variable has been operationalized for this study, the provision of information (providing otherwise unavailable information to both the public and the government), interest representation (representing people and/or groups currently overlooked by the government), provision of alternatives (delivering criticism of official government policies and posing alternatives), and provision of mutual recognition (that the opposition exists and the government recognizes its existence) will be examined in order to determine whether the opposition was organized and cohesive during this time period.

In order to assess the theory of political inclusion, it is crucial to understand whether the *provision of information,* as also operationalized and described in chapter 2, had been satisfied during the period under study. Put differently, an important function of any opposition is to provide otherwise-unavailable information to both the public and the government about public reaction to a particular policy. In this respect, the opposition keeps the government informed about the consequences of official policy.

The first five-year period under study from 1961 to 1966, witnessed certain macro-level events that opened up the political environment for further participation and inclusion. The 1960 election of US president John F. Kennedy sent a clear signal to the shah: he would need to liberalize. Homa Katouzian (1994, p. 258) argues that the combination of economic downturn, the shah's anti-communist rhetoric, and the election of Kennedy pushed the shah to open up Iran's political atmosphere. even publicly announcing that this time the elections would be free (which, however, was about as good as hinting that they had not been free the last time). Katouzian interprets these chances as a signal to the opposition, telling them that they had the opportunity to operate freely. For example, Ghasemi (2010, p. 108) in his book *Iranian Newspapers* argues that

for about 10 years prior to the election of Kennedy, severe censorship was the norm. He also reports that SAVAK (Iranian intelligence services) had to approve the content of newspapers before they could be printed and distributed to the people. Then in his more recent book *The History of Iranian Newspapers,* Ghasemi (2015, p. 130) showcases the boom in Iranian journalism since 1960, particularly referring to the publication of the *National Front of Iran Newspaper*, which was a pro-Mossadegh publication associated with the National Front party. During this five-year period, then, the opposition was certainly able to satisfy the criteria of provision of information through official channels and media.

Madani (1983, p. 344) has also discussed the development of the Nationalist party (*Melion*) and the People's party (*Mardom*) in 1957. He argues that the existence of two parties created the appearance of a healthy political system in Iran, but in fact both parties' operations were controlled by the shah's agents. However, regardless of whether or not the parties were actually controlled in this way, in the people's view they were major parties operating within the system; likewise, each had their own media platform from which to encourage this view. As an indicator of the level of organization evidenced here, we will see in more detail later how many of the individuals involved in these parties later became part of the opposition; some even joined the revolutionaries in 1978.

During the period under study from 1961 to 1966, the opposition was also able to engage in *interest representation*. Along with the development of political parties, the opposition rose to represent public interests on multiple occasions. For example, with the creation of the National Front party in 1960-1961, many pro-Mossadegh supporters and young people found a political party that they felt could represent them. According to Katouzian (1994, p. 261), the

Liberation Movement of Iran[41] (*Nehzat-e Azadi*) – which was still an offshoot of the National Front - was created six months later and included Mahdi Bazargan (who would later become the first prime minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran), Ayatollah Taleghani, and Yadollah Sahabi. These were three of the major advocates and revolutionaries of the nascent Islamic Republic. The *Tudeh* party and the Socialist Society were also active, and although Katouzian (1994, p. 262) reports that they lost their attractiveness, at the time they still had their own means of communication such as Peyk-e Iran Radio. They also continued to produce newspapers and other journalism publications in East Germany, which were printed there and then transported to Iran for distribution. During this period, the opposition groups ran for National Assembly or *majlis* with populist policy narratives, such as anti-colonialism, nationalism, or Islamism. In other words, they represented themselves as able to stand for certain interests in Iranian society.

Another component to be assessed here is the *provision of alternatives*. In other words, did the opposition provide "official and public" criticism of the regime's policies and propose alternatives to those policies? During the period from 1961-1966, it is worth noting that in addition to their official media platforms, the opposition groups also had seats in parliament. Likewise, the opposition certainly engaged in criticism of the government and provided policy alternatives. For instance, according to *the New York Times* (May 19, 1961, p. 11), the National Front party supporters demanded a re-election and 80,000 people rallied to make that demand heard and acknowledged. They eventually succeeded on May 18, 1961, as the shah commanded a collective resignation of several members of parliament and asked for re-election. In August 3, 1961, an op-ed by Dana Schmidt appeared in *The New York Times* (p. 5) with a bolded subheading that read "Opposition Is Widespread." This piece argued that the Iranian opposition

[41] *Nehzat-e Azadi* has also been translated to The Freedom Movement of Iran

was so outspoken about the proposed reforms on land, customs, and finances that this almost made it impossible for the regime to implement them. Elsewhere, the National Front party convention announcement appeared in the *Ettela'at* newspaper, which shows the opposition was able to organize freely in the midst of these controversies (*Ettela'at* Newspaper, May 17, 1961, p. 1).

Although critical of the National Front party for its conservative stands on land reforms, Katouzian (1994, p. 267) also states that this party only published a pamphlet once, in Fall 1962, arguing that since Iran had not experienced feudalism, therefore there was no need for land reforms. Regardless of how Katouzian feels about the party's response in that regard, this remains a good example with which to demonstrate that the opposition also used the media to criticize the central government and provide alternatives. Likewise, in 1965 when the regime was perceived to have the upper hand in political power dynamics, the opposition groups came together under the umbrella of the National Front. Madani (1983. p. 356) states that this time around the National Front was called the Third National Front because its composition was different and included more political parties: Nehzat-e Azadi, the People's Party of Iran (Hezb-e Mardom Iran), the Nationalist Party (Hezb-e Meli Iran), the Socialist society of Iran, and the Iranian Student Association of Nationalist Front. For the most part, then, the opposition could be unified and cohesive, though this largely depended on how the central government responded to their various requests.

Lastly, the provision of *minimal degree of mutual acceptance* is also fulfilled during this time period. This provision simply tries to limit the scope of what constitute as an opposition group. The opposition has to be recognized by the people and the government in the political apparatus as one and therefore separatist movements, resistance fronts and opposition groups

outside the country should be excluded. During this period, both the government and the opposition, including the Nationalists and other parties, had all been engaged in official communication and the opposition groups were running for parliament based on party platforms. Because of these circumstances, the degree of mutual acceptance is satisfied. For example, *Ettela'at* newspaper (May 20, 1961, p.1) announced that the National Front party was demanding re-election. The fact that an opposition party is mentioned in the front page of a national newspaper is indicative of a high degree of mutual acceptance.

Based on this assessment of the level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition provided above, one can conclude that the opposition was able to spread otherwise-unavailable information quickly and effectively, criticize the government cohesively, and offer policy alternatives clearly and pointedly. In fact, the number of protests and government action to arrest and exile certain members of the opposition is actually an effective indicator of the opposition's relative success in its role.

III. Political inclusion and exclusion

In authoritarian societies, the levels of inclusion or exclusion[42] faced by opposition groups constitute an important determinant in how they both interact with the government and also engage the feedback loop. Based on the theory of political inclusion, a primary goal of the opposition is to adjust the system and induce ongoing reform processes. Following the chapter 2 operationalization of variables for this study, various elements require assessment in order to identify a period of political inclusion or exclusion in the polity. These elements include having

[42] As discussed in chapter two, political inclusion signifies having an organized, viable (sustainable and not temporal) and functioning (able to impact the feedback loop) opposition inside an authoritarian country, regardless of whether or not that opposition shares power with the ruling elite and whether or not power turnovers actually occur.

an official institution and means of communication (with both the government and the general public), being willing and able to deliver official criticisms and provide official alternative policies publicly, and lastly, having any form of representation in parliament or other areas of power in the regime. Therefore, all three indicators must be examined in order to determine whether the opposition has been included or excluded from the polity during the time period under study.

Based on the available historical and media data for this period from 1961-1966, the opposition groups had *official institutions* such as a party platform or official establishment with which to organize and cooperate on any plan of action. The opposition groups also had *official means of communication* with both the government and the general public.

As discussed earlier, Ghasemi (2010, p. 108; 2015, p. 130) reports that after the election of US president John F. Kennedy, most of Iran's most severe censorship ended and a boom in newspaper and print publications began, which has continued from 1960 to the present day. Even the National Front party, which was not recognized as a party at the time because of its unsparing support for the ousted Mossadegh, published its own venue: The *National Front of Iran Newspaper*. Ghasemi (2010, p. 112) also documents how the freedom of the press in Iran reached historic heights from 1961 to 1962. However, after the 1963 religious uprisings and Khomeini's public criticism of the shah, the press came under more pressure and censorship, which gradually got worse until 1978. Therefore, based on these conditions during the five-year period under study, it seems clear that the opposition was able to satisfy the criteria of provision of information through official channels and media.

Since the success of the Constitutional Revolution, Iranian political oppositions never quite abandoned political parties. Although political parties' relationship with the central government

have often been fraught and tenuous, this kind of government actor has remained an important player in Iran's political scene, even through the darkest days of dictatorship. In relation to the specific period under study, the development of the Nationalist party (*Melion*) and the People's party (*Mardom*) in 1957 became even more significant during the 1960s, when Iran experienced several significant political and social changes. Although Madani (1983, p. 344) does not consider these political parties independent from the government, many other historical references – including those published by the revolutionaries after the revolution – do consider them in this light. For example, the *Islamic Revolution of Iran Handbook* (1997), which was a standardized and required textbook for the 3-unit general education prerequisite for all Iranian college students, considered these parties as "opposition" in its sixth chapter. This handbook was published under the guidance of the supreme leader (Seyyed Ali Khamenei) by a group of highly-vetted authors and provided an approved chronological review of the roots of the Islamic Revolution. Many of the individuals involved in these parties, such as Sahabi, Bazargan and Taleghani, eventually became very critical of the shah and joined the revolutionaries a few years prior to the Revolution of 1979.

Bashirieh (2016) outlines how the opposition groups had been organized institutionally since 1961. He states that in October 1961 even the *bazaar* created an association in order "to protect the constitution and personal freedom" and in their first stance advocated the suspension (re-election) of the parliament in line with pro-Mossadegh Nationalist party (Bashirieh, 2016, p. 46). Bashirieh also argues that Ayatollah Khomeini became known for his religious nationalism and was therefore celebrated by other nationalist parties because of his opposition to the shah's 1964 concessions to the United States (p. 47).

Most opposition groups were included in the polity fairly effectively. For example, Madani (1983, p. 355) reports that in 1961 about 80,000 people participated in a political meeting held by Nehzat-e Azadi (the Liberation Movement of Iran – a religious nationalist party that was an offshoot of the Nationalist Front party). The peaceful gathering of such a large number of people would have been impossible without far-reaching means of communication, strong organization, and effective logistics management. From this alone, then, it is easy to maintain that opposition groups were effectively included and recognized in the larger system.

These debates were also conducted within parliament. According to *The New York Times* (September 20, 1963, p. 5), in 1963 the progressive leaders of the newly elected parliament announced that within two weeks Iran's legislators would be working "with all speed and wholeheartedly" for the reform programs. From this it also becomes apparent that the opposition groups certainly played a role in transmitting information and grievances through official platforms or means of communication to both the central government and Iranian society at large.

Another indicator of political inclusion is official *claim-making,* which includes criticizing the government and offering policy alternatives publicly. During the period under study, the opposition both had and used a variety of platforms and official means of communication, and thus was fully capable of fulfilling these two functions. In addition, the White revolution agenda and other top-down reforms initiated by Shah Mohammad Reza gave the opposition ample material to work with, and all opposition groups were under public pressure to take a stance on the new proposals and changes, if they intended to claim that they represented the people's interests. As Katouzian (1994, p. 271) in particular demonstrates, the shah cornered these opposition groups by putting the White revolution on a referendum, thus trying to quiet the dissent by manipulating democratic means. Although historians such as Madani (1983) and Katouzian (1994) cast doubt

on the shah's supposedly democratic intentions and maintain that up to 90% of that approval was engineered by the shah himself to buy legitimacy for his programs, these things were certainly still able to cool many people's grievances.

Lastly, in order to assess the level of inclusion or exclusion, we also need to examine whether the opposition had any form of *representation in the government,* including parliament, cabinets, or any other significant positions of power within the regime. For the time period in question, the opposition groups were effectively folded into the regime's systems, meaning that they tended to represent their interests in the polity through elected parliament members or those who held positions in the cabinet. Of the many party leaders and their affiliates who were running for parliament on their party platforms, some were kept outside the government – such as ardent pro-Mossadegh allies – but other opposition members could be included in the cabinet. However, this treatment did not last long and the shah eventually moved to curb all forms of opposition in 1963 after Khomeini publicly and fervently targeted him, calling out the shah on his supposedly "fake" democracy. Many historians, including Madani (1983), Katouzian (1994) and Milani (1994) and Algar (2001), consider Khomeini's direct and continuous assault on the shah until he was exiled to have been a major starting point of the Islamic Revolution, which will be discussed further in future sections.

In the five-year period between 1961-1966, then, it is evident that despite a number of uprisings and instances of contentious collective actions, the opposition was effectively included in the polity: this impression is both based upon and supported by historical evidence and reviews of contemporaneous media content. Khomeini's exile gave a hint of political exclusion toward the end of this period, but the other opposition groups were still operating within the system and Khomeini was by no means assumed to be a leader at the time; in fact, as we discuss in the

contextual variables later, the opposition did not have a proximate goal at the time. In other words, a "feedback loop" between the government and the opposition—and Iranian society at large—was still functioning properly at this time. In such situations, even if certain grievances existed and instances of contentious collective actions can be observed, the likelihood of widespread contentious political action stemming from them is low.

IV. The existence of contextual variables

During this period from 1961-1966, grievances were much more regional or localized than universal. Likewise, they were also usually less pervasive and not directed at a specific person, at least until Khomeini's sharp attacks on the shah on October 26, 1964 for his decision to grant capitulatory right[43] to US persons residing in Iran – a decision that will be discussed further below. While this contention involved a foreign element, it was still quite costly for the shah domestically. However, other opposition groups did not share much of the other religious grievances that Khomeini was lamenting over at the time. Many supported his anti-colonial rhetoric, but they still believed they could work within the system and push reforms through while upholding the constitution.

In fact, one major characteristic of this period is the shared recognition of the constitution and the institution of monarchy, which we find among all opposition groups. Bashirieh (2016, p. 46) states that *ulama* and even the early Khomeini never challenged the monarchy or the constitution, instead trying to work within the political system. This meant that a mobilizing action

[43] The "status-of-forces agreement" between Iran and the US or "capitulation" law (as it is known in Iran) allowed members of the U.S. armed forces and their families in Iran to enjoy diplomatic immunity and in any civil or criminal dispute to only be tried in American military courts and not Iranian courts.

at the national level to overhaul the system was not even conceivable yet. However, the opposition did try to impact the feedback loop, and they succeeded in multiple cases.

As Milani (1994, pp. 49-50) outlines, though, Khomeini's opposition to the shah was limited to three issues. First, he opposed the Local Council Election Bill, which included women's suffrage and replaced the term "holy Quran" in the mandatory oath of office with "holy book" – a measure that was considered a means for religious minorities' infiltration into the central government. The second was the National Referendum, which Khomeini argued had no validity under Islam since many voters, including women, did not have the proper knowledge to make correct decisions. The third issue he opposed was the granting of capitulatory rights to US advisors, military personnel, and their dependents in 1964 (Ettela'at Newspaper (October 25, 1964, p. 1). This anti-imperialist rhetoric was impactful, though, because this successful narrative that had been tested during the Constitutional Revolution would resonate with the people even more almost half a century later.

On the verge of claiming himself a democratic force in the region while preparing to host the UN Human Right Convention in Tehran in 1964[44], the shah would not tolerate any opposition to his referendum. In fact, the shah's successful attempt to portray his march towards democratization with women's suffrage, the White revolution, and the referendum actually made him something of an international celebrity to herald a new wave of democratization in developing countries. On the domestic stage, though, this all came at the cost of removing a now-formidable opposition leader in Khomeini. According to Milani (1994, p. 52), Khomeini was forced to leave Iran for Turkey, then later he moved to Najaf, Iraq and stayed there until 1978. It seems certain

[44] The convention was a success and led to the UN proclamation of Tehran.

that the shah never expected what was yet to come from Khomeini, as he would later claim leadership of the opposition. creating proximate goals among all opposition groups and gaining popular support over the next decade. All of this culminated in events that will be discussed as part of the next 5-year period under study here.

Based on our review of existing media content and historical documents, the main narratives of both opposition groups and the progressive agenda from 1961-1966 was to uphold the constitution and push reforms through the system while representing their constituencies. Later during this period, Iran's relationship with the outside world (particularly the U.S) and the shah's support for Israel and upholding Sharia law would change the narrative slightly, but a few years later the main narrative against the shah would begin targeting him personally. In the early years, though, these debates were battled out in the media and during national assembly debates or in parliament.

The other contextual variable to be assessed here is the provision of proximate goals and whether or not opposition leadership was fragmented. The assessment of this variable during this particular period is sorely needed in order to understand the likelihood model of contentious mobilization. During this time, the oppositions and their allies were in almost full agreement to protect the constitution and the monarchy, as discussed above. Beyond this, though, opposition groups were not in full agreement on their progressive goals. However, the shah's myriad reform plans put all groups on the defensive, and several times one or more of them would respond by offering policy alternatives or protesting these plans' provisions. The only political narrative that found universal agreement was Khomeini's strong opposition to the capitulation agreement in 1964, which continued to provide ammunition for the opposition for many years to come. In other ways, though, the diversity of their demands and preferred policies often separated the *ulama*, the

intelligentsia, and the *bazaar*. For example, the land reforms actually garnered a lot of support from the poor, but the traditional powerful landlords were not happy about it and the *ulama* who advocated for social justice did not provide strong arguments either for or against them. Thus, the opposition was fragmented and they often had only short-term goals, at least until 1964.

All things considered, this period of no major contentious collective action was unlike what Iranian society experienced during the Constitutional Revolution. With the one exception of the religious uprising over the privileges given to US persons living in Iran – which led to a momentous reaction against the shah and his establishment – the rest of these incidents of contentious collective actions do not qualify because they do not pass the test of intensity (number of protestors) or extent (spread of protests) with a national policy goal agenda. Therefore, based on the likelihood model of political action as outlined in chapter 2, when there is a low degree of organization and cohesiveness among the opposition and a high degree of political inclusion in addition to an absence of contextual variables of proximate goals and a human face to grievances (i.e., blaming a specific individual), the path will likely lead to a route of no contentious political action. As demonstrated above, the five-year period under study, from 1961 to 1966 in Iran, fully coincides with the model of "no contentious political action."

No Contentious Political Action Model (Path 1)

Low likelihood of contentious political actions = high degree of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition + high degree of political inclusion

Note: The absence or presence of contextual variables (blame/human face to grievances + proximate goals) does not impact the model when there is also a high degree of political inclusion.

Period of contentious collective action from 1974-1979

In the following section, a five-year period prior to the Islamic Revolution of 1979 will be revisited and re-assessed in order to determine whether the political inclusion theory can provide new explanatory insights into it. The chart below summarizes these findings:

Table 4.2
Evidence from "contentious" period (1974-1979)

Leading up to Islamic Revolution of 1979 (1974-1979)			
	Variable	**Assessment/Evidence**	**Flowchart Path**
I. Contentious political action	a) The extent of protest mobilization	Frequent and widespread, particularly from December 1978 onward	2
	b) The intensity of protest mobilization	Intense/sizable numbers particularly from December 1978 onward	2
	c) The objective of protest mobilization	Targeting policies created, implemented, and enforced by the central government and aimed to remove the shah establishing *a republic*	2
II. level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition	a) Provision of information	The opposition provides much otherwise-unavailable information to both the public and the government about public reaction to particular policies, often through unofficial channels. They also keep the government informed about the consequences of official policy, often by writing letters to the king.	2A
	b) Interest representation	They represent the interests of the *bazaar*, Islamists, intelligentsia, and average Iranian citizens, whom they believe have been overlooked by the government.	2A
	c) Exercising criticism and provision of alternatives	They deliver criticism of government policies and pose alternatives.	2A

	d) Provision of minimal degree of mutual acceptance	Both during and prior to identified incidents the government and the opposition have been engaged in official communication.	2A
III. Political inclusion and exclusion	a) Having an institution and means of communication	There are no official institutions or platforms of communication. Unofficial platforms such as religious sermons and opposition leader's statements and speeches are the main means of communication. Also, *Shabnamehs* (secret publications) including Khomeini's speeches were distributed among the people. No official newspaper or institution such as a party platform existed for the opposition.	2B
	b) Criticizing the government and/or offering policy alternatives (claims-making)	The opposition is not able to criticize the government openly and publicly or to offer policy alternatives (claims-making) through official means, but they still have unofficial channels and forums such as religious sermons. However, those who take these actions are often also sent into exile, leave out of fear, and/or are imprisoned because of their perceived defiance.	2B
	c) Having any form of representation in the system (for example, parliament or administration)	The opposition does not have any significant form of official representation in the central government. Shah tried in his last days to offer positions but it was too late.	2B
IV. The existence of contextual variables	a) Blaming and putting a human face on grievances	Grievances are given a human face. The opposition targets Shah Mohammad Reza specifically, seeking to remove him from power and end the Iranian monarchy.	2C
	b) Proximate goals (coalition-building) and opposition not being fragmented	Three proximate goal included removing the shah, abolishing the monarchy, and overhauling the system of government by a referendum were agreed upon. Between these goals and beliefs, the opposition is not fragmented.	2C

I. Identifying contentious political action

For the purpose of this study (and as previously discussed in chapter two), contentious political action is defined as follows: contentious mobilization that is effected or that occurs to apply stress to specific target(s) in order to affect public policy. Based on assessments of the extent and intensity of protest mobilizations and their objectives (specifically, to challenge the central government and to offer policy alternatives), it becomes clear that multiple incidents of mobilizing action occurred during the period under study from 1974 to 1979 – particularly from 1977 to 1979, when clashes between protesters and government forces intensified. As outlined in the following section, the evidence taken from this time period demonstrates that contentious mobilization occurred throughout this time leading up to the Islamic revolution, and thus we can mark it as a period of major "contentious political action." As before, this study continues to utilize a unified and systematic method of media content analysis (outlined in chapter two), achieved by reviewing and logging the information found in media-generated and media-reported historical data.

Following the major protest on June 9, 1963, as discussed in the previous section, no major instances of mobilizing action occurred until 1978. During the period under study from 1974 to 1979, multiple instances of protest did occur, but a closer examination reveals that only some of these events pass the test of intensity and extent while also primarily targeting government policies at the national level. We now turn to explaining when and why these particular events occurred, how such contentious mobilizations became possible, and how those variables identified in the theory of political inclusion can be located and analyzed using available media and archival data from the period.

The media records for this five-year period under study do not show any significant protests that can pass the tests of intensity, extent, and national objective until 1978. However, certain

events that occurred in 1977 were a prelude to what was to come, though they themselves fizzled out quickly.

For instance, on January 1st, 1977, the United States identified six nations worldwide that they claimed were curbing human rights. This report stated that "Argentina, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran, Peru and the Philippines have violated human rights to varying degrees" (*New York Times*, January 2, 1977, p. 1 & 14). The coincidence of this report with President Carter's tenure in the White House – particularly because Carter ran US foreign policy on a platform of expanding democracy and protecting human rights – has been considered to form a turning point, though an often-exaggerated one, in the wave of protests that gradually engulfed the shah's regime during the last two years of his reign (Kurzman, 2004; Algar, 2001; Madani 1983; Katouzian 1998; Milani, 1994).

According to Kurzman (2004, p. 18), in January 1977 an open letter to the shah from Ali-Asghar Hajj-Seyyed-Javadi, criticizing the government and calling for reform, jolted the otherwise-quiet crowd and started a series of opportunities for the opposition groups to raise their voice. Then, according to *The New York Times* (June 24, 1977, p. 6), on June 23, the International League for Human Rights submitted a formal protest to Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi of Iran, claiming that they had evidence of mass arrests and torture of Iranians, as well as harassment of Iranian citizens living abroad by the Iranian government's secret police. In the same month, three other oppositionists published another open letter to the shah calling for him to respect the Iranian Constitution and human rights. Then, according to Kurzman (2004, p. 22), in a speech on November 1 that same year, Khomeini asked all opposition within Iran to write letters informing the global community about the injustices they were observing. Finally, in December of the same year, the National Front party created a committee to support human rights and uphold the Iranian constitution (Bashirieh, 1984, p. 158).

However, despite all of these political gymnastics and the ongoing revitalization of opposition groups, the first major protest of this period only occurred in January 1978. This took place in response to an article that appeared in the *Ettela'at* Newspaper (January 7, 1978, p. 7), which heavily attacked Ayatollah Khomeini's credentials and family roots and made a case for his connections to imperial Britain. These protests started in Qom and quickly spread to other cities, including Tehran. According to Madani (1983, p. 247), on January 9, between 80 and 90 people were killed in Qom. Kurzman (2004, p. 34) also reports that several hundred students started these protests and the crowd grew gradually but steadily. Milani (1994, p. 113) also reports that many *bazaaris* also closed their shops in support of the protests. Soon people in Tabriz and Yazd joined the protests and martial law was enacted in four cities: Isfahan, Najafabad, Shahreza, and Homayoon Shahr (Katouzian, 1994, p. 417). The *New York Times* (February 3, 1978, p. 80) also reports that the shah's trip to New York and India were met with protests by Iranian students studying abroad, who showed up to protest upon his arrival. *Ettela'at* Newspaper also reported that 2000 people protested in Abadan and 300 people died[45] in a mysterious premeditated fire at the theater there (August 23, 1978, p. 1). As these events demonstrate, the protests were becoming more frequent and widespread.

On September 8, 1978, a major protest broke out in Tehran. This event was later called "Black Friday" because, as Madani (1994, p. 262) reports, thousands of people were killed in Zhaleh Square that day. This event was a significant catalyst for the ongoing protests, increasing their numbers, strength, and duration. Later, after the revolution succeeded, Zhaleh Square was

[45] Cinema Rex fire incident is known as the largest terrorist attack in history until the 1990 massacre of Sri Lankan Police officers in 20th century. Although it is still unclear who did it (shah's SAVAK or Islamist) the narrative built around this event was a catalyst for the clashes that ensued (See Ali Ansari, 2014, p. 259).

renamed the Martyr Square as a memorial of this bloody day.[46] At the time, *Ettela'at* Newspaper (September, 9, p. 1) reported that the protest included over 100,000 people by the end of the day. Then a few days later, on Saturday September 10, *Ettela'at* (p. 1) reported that 58 people had been killed and 205 people injured in the September 8 protests in Tehran. Milani (1994, p. 117) reports that this number was actually highly suppressed: he claims that more than 3000 people were killed during the Black Friday protest, though official government reports suppressed those numbers and claimed that only 86 people had died. Madani (1983, p. 264) offers an even larger estimate of the death toll, asserting that based on data from the *Behesht-e Zahra* graveyard, more than 4280 people were killed in these protests, and that up to an additional 600 deaths were hidden when protestors' bodies were simply relocated to a different graveyard. Madani also points out that, despite this, the central government claimed only 95 people had been killed.

On December 10 and 11, 1978 (the dates of the two consecutive religious ceremonies of *Tasu'a* and *Ashura* during the religious month of *Moharam*), millions of people in Tehran and other cities across Iran marched and chanted slogans against the shah. According to Milani (1994, p.123), opposition groups interpreted the Millions March as an open referendum for the rejection of monarchy and dismantling of the shah's rule. The shah left Iran on January 16, just three days after the creation of the Regency Council on January 13, 1979. At the time, the plan was to announce this as an extended, two-month vacation for the shah, simply getting him out of Iran until the dust settled, but in the meantime, Khomeini went on the offence and declared the creation of a council of Islamic Revolution, which would coordinate all activities in opposition to the shah. Eventually this council arranged Khomeini's return to Iran after 15 years in exile. On January 26,

[46] *The New York Times* did not have a newspaper printed on this date, but this was unrelated to events in Iran. Due to a strike by numerous labor groups in the US, The *Times* did not publish issues for several months: specifically, between 08/10/1978 and 11/05/1978.

1979, the *New York Times* published a report stating that soldiers shot and killed "at least 15 civilians today and wounded dozens of others as more than 100,000 supporters of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini staged anti-Government demonstrations here in defiance of martial law" (January 27, 1979, pp. 1 & 4). This level of intensity continued until February 1, when Khomeini arrived in Tehran and was greeted by thousands of people. Based on the available data, as presented above, it thus becomes clear that many of the protests during this time period, particularly those occurring from 1977 to 1979, pass the tests of intensity and spread.[47]

The demands and the *objective of protests* are also clear and outlined at every stage of developing events. Specifically, most of these events specifically involved providing alternative polices at the national level in order to achieve universal effects for the Iranian populace. For instance, at the beginning of the protests in 1977, the objective was to force the shah to respect the constitution, human rights, and political freedom for the Iranian people. This list of demands also grew longer as the shah appeared willing to make concessions. On August 29, 1978, *Ettela'at* published a list of 12 demands compiled by the National Front Party. But at the height of the protests from September 1978 until February 1979, the demands grew ever more specific and more targeted, coming to include the removal of the shah and the dismantling of the Iranian monarchy. To justify this, Khomeini claimed that there was no supporting evidence in Islam that could possibly accept a monarchical system (Algar, 2001).

As opposed to his earlier criticism of the shah during the period from 1961-1966, during the 1970s Khomeini turned to focus specifically on the removal of the shah and the dismantling of

[47] Almost all newspapers in Iran, including *Ettela'at*, went on strike to protest censorship for 2 months, which lasted from November 6, 1978 to January 5, 1979. During this period, there is minimal coverage from inside Iran. However, Ghasemi (2015, p. 137) testifies that after the government's passage of prohibitions against media censorship, these daily newspapers re-opened and resumed operations.

the monarchy. The turning point for him was the 2,500-year celebration of the Persian Empire, officially known as the 2,500th Year of the Foundation of the Imperial State of Iran, which was held from 12–16 October 1971. On June 22, 1971, Khomeini called the celebration "Devil's Festival" (Sahifeh Noor, 1983, Second Volume, pp. 358-373). Shah threw an extravagant international celebration to mark the anniversary of the founding of the Imperial State of Iran and the ancient Achaemenid Empire by Cyrus the Great but his main goal as to remind everyone of a 2500-year continuity in monarchical system. Khomeini used this opportunity to denounce the monarchical system and he continued and build on that narrative until the revolution succeeded. Khomeini's speeches have been collected in a 22-volume book entitled *Sahifeh Noor* (1983), which documents these changes.[48] Throughout this period, Khomeini was also very active in publishing statements and rebuking the shah's efforts to defuse the standoffs. For instance, after the Yazd protests Khomeini announced publicly on March 29, 1978, that until a just Islamic government with respect to democratic values was established, he and the people of Iran would continue to fight the shah and his regime (*Sahifeh Noor*, 1983, Volume 2, p. 62).

II. level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition

The level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition in an authoritarian society is key to understanding how that opposition will interact with the government as well as how it will engage the feedback loop for its ultimate goal of reform. Based on how this variable has been operationalized for this study, the provision of information (providing otherwise-unavailable information to both the public and the government), interest representation (representing people and/or groups overlooked by the government), provision of alternatives (providing criticism of

[48] The volumes of interest for these periods are the second and the third Volumes. *Sahifeh Noor* is also readily available in digital format today.

government policies and posing alternatives to them), and provision of mutual recognition must all be examined in order to determine whether the opposition has been organized and cohesive during the time period under study.

After the heights it reached on June 6, 1963, in the earlier period this movement had fizzled out gradually. As Kurzman (2004, p. 17) aptly observes, the liberal opposition in Iran gradually became little more than a supper club. By the early 1970s, the movement, he argues, "consisted of a handful of writers and lawyers with no organization and no desire to build one" (p. 17). In and after 1977, though, the movement found new organizational strength in opposition to the shah's violations of human rights. The National Front Party also grew a significant religious and nationalist flank that became known as Nehzat-e Azadi (the Liberation Movement), as discussed earlier. The Liberation Movement was much closer to the position of the *ulama,* particularly Khomeini and his anti-colonial stance. In this vein, Bashirieh (1984, p. 171) argues that after the moderate opposition groups began becoming more radical after 1977, it was much easier for liberal parties to build new alliances with the more radical *ulama*.

In order to assess the theory of political inclusion in this complex environment, it is crucial to understand whether the *provision of information* – as operationalized and described in chapter two – had been satisfied during the period now under study. Here, it is worth starting with the fact that the opposition groups did not have an official newspaper since after the June 6 protests in 1963, when pressure on the media had mounted until almost all publications were filtered through, censored, and controlled by the central government to some extent. After the election of US President Carter, though, Milani (1994, p. 107) reports that the shah was pressured to allow further liberalization under his formerly autocratic rule. This change had significant effects on the freedom of speech and the presence of journalism in Iran. Ghasemi (2015, p. 136), for instance, points out

that since 1978, new waves of underground publications were created, while at the same time, the official newspapers were also able to transmit most information more freely. However, there was a 2-month period from November 6, 1978, to January 5, 1979, when most newspapers in Iran went on strike in protest of censorship. This blackout of information also had a tremendous effect on the transfer of information from Khomeini, then still in exile, to his supporters inside Iran; the newspapers' blackout made such transfers quicker and more sought after. Given these factors, though, there is minimal coverage from inside Iran available during this two-month period. However, Ghasemi (2015, p. 137) also reports that after the central government passed new prohibitions against media censorship, most of Iran's daily newspapers re-opened, almost 40 days after the Islamic Revolution succeeded.

However, these official daily newspapers were not the only sources of information available and flourishing at this time. In fact, after the January 9, 1978 uprising in Qom, which had been a religiously-inflected event, this immediately made over 80,000 mosques across Iran into centers for transmission of information. Kurzman (2004, p. 33) calls this the "mobilization of [the] mosque network." This new prevalence of information being communicated through mosques was a significant changed to the dynamic of information provision. As Madani (1983, p. 274) also writes, though, this relative freedom of expression did not last long; instead, pressure from the central government was soon mounting again. This time, Iran's official print media channels went on a 3-day strike from October 9 through October 11, 1978, and since the shah was under international and domestic pressure, he agreed to guarantee the freedom of press as per the Iranian constitution. While this may have seemed like a major concession, though, the reality on the ground was quite different. The official media, which were all state-controlled anyway, did not entirely reflect the truth, particularly around sensitive topics such as protests and uprisings. A

systematic[49] present-day review of the *Ettela'at* Newspaper's archive seeking media content and regular coverage of the protests since 1978 has provided sparse results, revealing that the paper did not cover these events methodically or objectively, if at all. Despite these changes to state-controlled media, though, Khomeini's speeches still travelled fast – oftentimes even faster than the traditional print channels did. This resulted from him being the most influential voice, the highest ranking *marja,* and the most outspoken *ayatollah*, and also from the fact that he was directly speaking to the people and other *ulama* inside Iran, encouraging them to disseminate these speeches as much and as quickly as possible. Oftentimes, then, Iranian citizens could expect to receive Khomeini's thoughts and words faster than they might receive something useful from the newspapers.

Because of these circumstances, the opposition played a major role in transmitting information and grievances, even though for the most part they did not have an official platform or means of communication with either the government or Iranian society at large during this time. In another new tactic, around January 1977 the opposition began sending letters to the shah and the premier, which they used to name their grievances and to discuss the consequences of unpopular policies. In particular, as discussed earlier, many open letters were sent to the shah

[49] All media content for this period was reviewed systematically for a period of six months prior to an incident of collective action, as per the operationalization section in chapter 2. For this provision, I studied the opposition behind these protests to determine whether they have had means of communication, such as a newspaper or bulletin. If so, then I had marked the event as "provision of information exists." If no such medium exists for a period of six months prior to an incident of collective action, then I had mark it as "provision of information does not exist." However, during this period, the media's contemporaneous accounts of events certainly underrepresented the momentum of events. For instance, *Ettela'at* Newspaper did not publish the number of protestors rallied during the last 3 years leading up to the Islamic Revolution; instead, their coverage was limited to phrases such as "the planned rally was held yesterday" or brief (and often underestimated) number of dead and injured. Because of these limitations, we turned to historical books and other media outside Iran, such as *The New York Times* in the US, for use in this study to verify the information needed.

admonishing him for the non-democratic path he had taken, moving away from the Iranian constitution and human rights.

Though the opposition was almost incapacitated initially by the shah's single-party platform *Rastakhiz* (Resurgence), it later received a new impetus after the events of 1977-1978. As a result of this, the opposition shifted course somewhat and began to fulfil its role of *interest representation* by 1978. This happened in close tandem with the development of associations and organizations such as the Committee on Human Rights created by the National Front Party and increased cooperation among the leaders of the various opposition movements, who rose to represent the public interest on multiple occasions. As reported by *Ettela'at* Newspaper (August 29, 1978, p. 1), the National Front Party published a list of 12 demands that included the freedom of political prisoners and freedom of the press, among other things. In several of his speeches from February to August 1978, compiled in the third volume of *Sahifeh Noor* (1983), Khomeini also claimed that the shah's policies exhibited little respect for the wellbeing of the majority of Iran's populace. For instance, in a statement released on May 31, 1978, to commemorate the anniversary of Black Friday, Khomeini claimed that the shah had no respect for college students, for culture and freedom, or for the independence of Iran. Khomeini's speech continued by calling the shah an American puppet, particularly because he continued to support US military personnel and act under the yoke of American generals. Khomeini's speech grew heated when describing what the poor and working class of Iran experienced, writing that although there were 44 regions in Tehran, many of the people lived at best in ghettos or at worst in underground holes like animals, while still the shah spoke of grand civilization, natural resources, and so on. As Khomeini's speech put it, Americans were the main beneficiaries of Iran's natural resources, such as oil, and it was never Iran's own people whose lives grew better; he also asserted that the

nationalization of forests and parks really only meant that they were being rented out to foreigners (*Sahifeh Noor*, 1983, Volume 2, pp. 65-69). Speeches such as this one were very popular, and were only highlighted further by their time of publication (like on the anniversary of Black Friday) and the way they had to be smuggled into people's hands, as if their truth was being suppressed by a regime that did not want the people to know better. So, from reviewing the opposition's demands and statements as they occurred in the form of letters to the king, or through public announcements and speeches, it becomes clear that the opposition were very successful in representing the interests of the Iranian public.

Another component to be assessed here is the *provision of alternatives*. In other words, did the opposition both provide "official and public" criticism of the regime's policies and also propose alternatives to those policies? Since, as we have seen, the opposition did not have an official media platform or access to any institution within the polity at this time, we only can look at the text of what they did have: i.e., those letters sent to the shah and those public speeches and statements. As discussed above, the opposition were specific about their demands and offered unmistakable policy alternatives: Khomeini in particular gave unambiguous alternatives to the monarchy itself, frequently calling for its abolishment and replacement. For instance, in a speech on May 31, 1978, Khomeini stated that Iran's constitution as instituted in 1909 recognized monarchy as the country's political system, but also that the majority of the Iranian people now rejected the monarchy and wanted a better political system (*Sahifeh Noor*, 1983, Volume 2, pp. 71, 74). Then in a November 5, 1978 interview with a Dutch reporter, Khomeini maintained that he wanted democracy for Iran, but also explained that his ideal was not a western-style democracy but an Islamic one, which would be much better than its Western counterpart (*Sahifeh Noor*, 1983, Third Volume, p. 13).

Lastly, the provision of *minimal degree of mutual acceptance* is also fulfilled during this time period. As clearly demonstrated above, the government and the opposition had been engaged in official communication, both during and prior to identified incidents of contentious mobilizations. Initially the shah did not want to recognize Khomeini as a member of the opposition, since he was outside the country, but later in 1978 during Bakhtiar's tenure as prime minister, the government was in direct communication with Khomeini. Bakhtiar even tried to meet Khomeini outside Iran to negotiate, though Khomeini did not accept the terms and the meeting was called off (Madani, 1983, p. 314-316). On January 27, 1979, the *New York Times* (January 28, 1979, pp. 1, 4) published a report on this event, stating that "Prime Minister Shahpur Bakhtiar will fly to France within 48 hours to discuss the future of the nation with Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Iranian television announced tonight." However, according to Madani (1983, p. 315) Khomeini called off the meeting because he considered Bakhtiar a traitor who was being played by the shah; he also considered the premier to be the shah's last resort as he tried to divert the coming revolution. *Ettela'at* had predicted similar results: a few months earlier, on October 25, 1978, the newspaper's front page ran a headline in large font saying: "Negotiations with grand ayatollah Khomeini is the best solution." As these situations reveal, then, a mutual degree of recognition existed prior to the Islamic Revolution, even though attempts to leverage such recognition for peaceful results were not often successful.

It is also quite obvious that the opposition's levels of organization and cohesiveness were very high by any standard, particularly from summer 1977 to February 1979, when the Islamic Revolution succeeded. During this period, the opposition was able to spread otherwise-unavailable information quickly and effectively, criticize the government substantially, and

offer policy alternatives clearly and pointedly, even when these activities did not always take place through official, sanctioned channels.

III. Political inclusion and exclusion

The centerpiece of the theory of political inclusion is the ability to recognize and understand whether or not the opposition has been included in the polity during certain periods. Based on this theory, in an authoritarian setting the level of inclusion or exclusion is the key to understanding how the opposition will interact with the government and how it will engage the feedback loop in order to adjust the system for its own goal of a successful reform process. Based on how this variable has been operationalized for this study, certain characteristics are considered signs of a period of political inclusion: these features include having a) an official institution and means of communication with both the government and the general public; b) being willing and able to offer official criticism and provide alternative policies publicly; and lastly, c) having any form of representation in parliament or other significant representation within the regime. Therefore, all three indicators must be examined in order to determine whether the opposition was included or excluded during the time period under study.

Based on the available historical and media data for the five-year period under study from 1974-1979, it is easy to conclude that the opposition of this time did not have an *official institution* such as a party platform or any official establishment through which to organize and cooperate on any plan of action. As discussed earlier, the shah dissolved the two-party system in Iran and creating one party (*Rastakhiz*) that he said would include everyone across the country: in doing so, he effectively moved to incapacitate the opposition groups. He even commented that "if you do

not want to become a member of the party you can leave the country" (Milani 1994, p. 69). However, during the last days of the Pahlavi dynasty, Shah Mohammed Reza made efforts to include the opposition in the polity in order to buy himself time and prevent a revolution, but by this point it was too late: Khomeini was set to oust him and topple the monarchy altogether, so he never negotiated or hinted to any conciliation with the shah and his government. At this point the shah appointed Bakhtiar, a former political prisoner and a member of the opposition himself, to create a reconciliation government, but Bakhtiar's tenure did not last more than 36 days, as Khomeini called him a traitor and an abomination to the opposition movement (Madani, 1983, pp. 313-323).

The provision of official *claim-making,* or of criticizing the government and/or offering policy alternatives publicly, is taken as another indicator of political inclusion in this operationalization. During the period under study, the opposition did not have a platform or official means of communication, and thus was unable to criticize the government officially or offer policy alternatives publicly. So, while they did offer policy alternatives and criticize many government policies, this was done through unofficial channels, from outside the country, and through religious sermons; it was also directed mostly at the people of Iran themselves, rather than at the central government. Due to lack of official public platforms, intellectuals and party leaders resorted to writing open letters to the shah, many of which were never responded to. Likewise, many opposition leaders and intellectuals were exiled or imprisoned for their actions, as was the majority of the Nehzat-e Azadi leadership. These circumstances make clear that no official claim-making or offering of policy alternative was really possible or welcomed within the system. While Khomeini continued to offer alternatives to the current system, he was not included within it and did not even pursue such inclusion. Instead, his claims were made while excluded and in exile.

Lastly, in order to assess the level of inclusion or exclusion, it is necessary to examine whether the opposition had any form of *representation in the government,* including parliament, a cabinet, or any administrative capacity. This indicator is very easy to examine for this period since the shah openly dismantled both the concept of and systems for opposition by demolishing the two-party system and implementing a forced, one-party system in its place. According to the shah, the people of Iran had two options of where to go if they did not join the newly formed joining *Rastakhiz* party: "jail or outside Iran" (Milani, 1994, p. 69). Likewise, the *New York Times* (July 10, 1977, p. 7) reported that although the Rastakhiz party was supposedly designed "to voice grievances," certain subjects still remained taboo; in particular, "no complaints against the system" were accepted, even though complaints about administration failures such as the lack of schools in certain areas were accepted.

In the five-year period prior to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, a review of both historical evidence and media content review quickly proves that the opposition was effectively excluded from the polity. Although it can be argued that the shah only made concessions and tried to include the opposition in the Regency Council when he already knew he would have to abandon the throne soon, it was too late for even these concessions to make enough of an impact. Khomeini now had both domestic and international support for his cause, and thus had no reason to make any agreements with the shah unless he abdicated the throne. During this period, in other words, the "feedback loop" operating between the government, opposition, and Iranian society at large, did not function properly and effectively within this system. In such situations, if certain contextual variables are available, then these exclusionary policies can backfire and the likelihood of contentious mobilization will rise.

IV. The existence of contextual variables

After the sudden surge in oil prices during the early 1970s, a sudden drop in these prices during the late 1970s left the shah's ambitious economic plans incomplete. Other issues also remained pressing, including his excessive violations of human rights and his perceived lack of respect for the Iranian constitution and freedom of the Iranian press. Likewise, the shah also made certain changes that turned the Islamists against him, which included trying to change the national calendar to the *Shahanshahi* (imperial) system instead of the Islamic calendar, implementing Daylight Savings time (which was considered as manipulating times for prayer), and finally, making concessions to the US in order to receive over $200M USD in military aid. Between these unpopular actions and those most affected by them, the shah quickly became the single most prevalent face and target of moral indignation among many aggrieved people and groups within Iran. Because of this, many saw his removal as the best scenario for the future of the country. In addition, Khomeini played a significant role in sifting the narrative from reforming the system to removing the system all together since the reforms were not possible, arguing that it should be replaced with a more inclusionary version, or what he called an Islamic democracy (*Sahifeh Noor*, 1983, Volume 3, p. 13). For example, after the events of Black Friday in 1963, Khomeini adamantly insisted that any reform would be futile without the removal of the shah, since he himself was the primary source of the injustices that the Iranian people faced (*Sahifeh Noor*, 1983, Volume 2, pp. 71, 74). By this point, the shah had reached a political dead end and, to continue the road metaphor, it was too late to make a U-turn since he had also destroyed all his bridges behind him. Khomeini also succeeded in portraying him as the primary cause of injustice in Iran, and the shah's departure under the excuse of an extended vacation was the signal for Khomeini to return to Iran. The *Times* reported that the shah's departure was hailed by Ayatollah Khomeini as he sent his congratulations to the Iranian people on having forcing their oppressor to leave the

country; he was also reported to have called the shah's departure "the first step" toward ending the 57-year reign of the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran (*New York Times*, January 17, 1979, p. 8).

The other contextual variable that must be assessed here is whether the opposition leaders were fragmented or had proximate goals for this movement. As discussed previously, the shah tactically incapacitated his opposition earlier, leaving them either fragmented or unable to prove their relevance to the Iranian people. Thus, after the events of 1977-1978, the various opposition leaders had no good option but to unite among themselves. However, after 1977 this new combined movement began to gain support as opposition leaders positioned themselves in conflict with the shah's violations and lack of respect for human rights. As we have also seen, the National Front Party grew a significant religious and nationalist flank that became known as Nehzat-e Azadi. The Liberation Movement was much closer to the position of the *ulama,* particularly Khomeini and his anti-colonial stance. Bashirieh (1984, p. 171) argues that since the moderate opposition groups started becoming more radical after 1977, it was much easier for the liberal parties to facilitate an alliance with the more radical *ulama*. In November 1978, the leaders of the Nationalist Front Party, Sanjabi and Bazargan (who became the first prime minister after the Islamic Revolution succeeded), traveled to Paris to meet with Khomeini and try to find a means of cooperating with him (Bashirieh, 1984, p. 171). During these talks, they agreed to Khomeini's leadership and announced that there was no way to make concessions with the shah. Then on November 5, 1978, these three published a joint statement that set one major goal for the movement, which was to have a referendum to determine Iran's new form of government after the removal of the shah. Thus, this proximate goal was a unifying factor.

Based on the likelihood model of political action as outlined in chapter two, when there is a high degree of organization and cohesiveness among the opposition and a low degree of political

inclusion in addition to the presence of contextual variables of proximate goals and human face (blaming an individual), then the path of events will likely lead to contentious political action. As demonstrated above, the five-year period under study prior to the Islamic Revolution of 1970 fully coincides with this model.

Contentious Political Action Model

Contentious political actions (protest path) = high degree of organization and cohesiveness among the opposition + low degree of political inclusion + presence of contextual variables (blame/human face to grievances + proximate goals)

Conclusion

The Islamic Revolution which ended the Pahlavi dynasty in 1979 was one of the most controversial and convoluted areas of Iranian political history and the causes of the Islamic revolution are still debated among scholars. The theory of political inclusion which was applied to this era in two separate five-year periods simplified the answer while putting the events in their proper context. The first period under study in this chapter covered Iranian political history from 1961 to 1966. Analyzing historical media content published during this period enabled us to draw on the theory of political inclusion and re-examine the early indicators and underlying causes of the Islamic Revolution. We were also able to consider whether the theory of political inclusion still held validity within a near time range as well as the same social and political context.

The period from 1961 to 1966, which was labeled as a "no contentious political action," only witnessed minor and mostly regional contentious political actions, as identified by the number

of incidents and their intensity and spread. Based on this analysis of historical media content, we could see that there had been a higher level of organization and cohesiveness among the opposition while higher levels of political inclusion did exist then. In fact, as discussed in detail earlier in the chapter, this period is now considered one of the freest periods for journalism in Iran, particularly as compared to the decade immediately prior. During this time, the opposition was also well represented in the political system, holding positions in places such as the parliament and cabinet. And finally, during this period there was a lack of proximate goals among opposition groups. While the late-stage anti-imperialist rhetoric created by Khomeini that dominated the narrative of the religious apparatus beyond 1964 did resonate with many other groups, it was not enough to be considered a true rallying cry for them. Thus, based on the theory of political inclusion, the above pattern predicted a lesser amount of contentious mobilization during the five years from 1961 to 1966, which was in fact what happened during that period. We hypothesized that this was due in part to expanded political freedom, and in part to the existence of a strong and cohesive opposition that was highly successful in pushing reformist agendas. The one major incident of contentious mobilization that occurred during this "no action" period, which took place on June 6, 1963, was not enough to constitute a true exception. As discussed earlier, the early rise of Ayatollah Khomeini coincided with the White revolution, women's suffrage, and mandatory military service for religious scholars (*tolab*) in Iran, none of which sat well with the *ulama*. But, as also demonstrated in detail earlier, this event still lacked a broad coalition as it mostly involved the clergy and their followers, and there was also the fact that many of these demands were then met by the central government.

Contrary to that first period from 1974 to 1979 media content analysis points to a much higher level of contentious mobilization. Among other factors, the analysis of historical media

confirmed higher levels of organization and cohesiveness among the opposition, who came to represent the interests of the *bazaar*, the Islamists, the Iranian *intelligentsia*, and average Iranian citizens, as each of these groups believed that they had been overlooked by the government. In this historical media content, there was also significant evidence pointing to the fact that levels of political inclusion were very low. For one thing, there were no official institutions or platforms of communication for the opposition during this time. Instead, unofficial platforms such as religious sermons and opposition leaders' statements and speeches were the main means of communication. *Shabnamehs* (secret publications) such as Khomeini's speeches were distributed among the people by activists. As documented in greater detail earlier, the opposition was not able to criticize the government openly and publicly or to offer policy alternatives (claims-making) through official means, and those who criticized the regime were often sent into exile, left the country out of fear, and/or were imprisoned because of their perceived defiance. The shah even claimed that anyone in Iran who did not want to become a member of his single-party platform could simply leave the country. In addition to this lack of official platforms, the opposition did not have any significant form of official representation in the central government. During his last days in power, the shah attempted to rectify this by offering certain opponents their own government positions, but by that point it was too late. The movement created a broad coalition under Khomeini's leadership based on proximate goals such as the removal of the shah and the establishment of a republic instead of a monarchy. In the midst of all this, the shah seemed like the perfect target to blame and his removal was positioned as the only solution to these various problems. As the theory of political inclusion has confirmed, the above pattern did lead to a higher level of contentious mobilization during this period, which occurred largely due to the prolonged exclusionary policies enacted by the shah.

Further application of this theory to more recent periods of Iranian politics can offer benefits both for testing the theory further and also for providing a richer understanding of these specific contexts. Of particular importance is this theory's potential capability for moving beyond retroactive prediction and venturing into real-time analysis, where it could predict the possibility, rise, and progression of contentious political action in Iran or similar authoritarian settings. In the next chapters, this same method and media content analysis will be used to examine other five-year periods of both "contentious actions" and "no contentious action" in order to continue testing this theory further.

Chapter Five: The rebellious uprisings of 2009

Introduction

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 induced a dramatic shift in the politics, economy, and culture of Iran. This revolution was initially considered a milestone in the drive toward achieving a more inclusionary system, one that could fulfil and enhance the ideals of the Constitutional Revolution, the nationalism of Mossadegh, and the Islamism of Khomeini alike, all of which had broad support among the Iranian populace. Having said this, though, political progress in any society is not always linear and has ups and down. Thus, instead of straightforward progress toward greater inclusivity, the political history of Iran after the Islamic Revolution is a tumultuous one that exhibits a constant balancing act between the aspiration toward reform on the one hand and the force to preserve the status quo on the other. This struggle is similar to much of Iran's struggle for democracy throughout the 20th century. The purpose of this chapter is to examine that balancing act during the post-revolution period and to explore whether the political inclusion model we have introduced in this work is capable of understanding these particular periods of quiescence and those of mobilizing action within Iran. This also presents an opportunity to consider whether the political inclusion model can support a greater understanding of what the future may hold for Iran.

Following the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and once Khomeini had consolidated his power, the ruling elite institutionalized their monopoly of political and governmental power through a constitutional amendment in 1989, which gave absolute power to the supreme leader of Iran. Since this change, no dissenting voice that challenges this rule has been tolerated, arguably because it challenges the core of the regime. Despite this, some reformist politicians and organized opposition

groups have been tolerated by the Iranian regime to a certain extent, so long as they do not challenge the supreme leader's authority. On the global stage, Iran has often been viewed as a corrupt regime with extreme means of suppression and coercion, but it has never been labelled a totalitarian society as its leaders tend to accept a certain level of pluralism. More recently, the contested election of 2009 was the catalyst that mobilized Iranian citizens to demand accountability from their government, in a drive often referred to today as the "Green Movement" which occurred in 2009 after the presidential elections. Among other factors, this movement was fueled by opposition media and reformists both within and beyond the inner circle of power in Iran's central government.

Here it is worth reiterating that, to a certain extent, the Islamic Republic is characterized by its paradoxical nature. One of the main challenges that its leaders face has always been how to consolidate the desire to modernize and create a more inclusionary system while also remaining under the guidance of Shia Islam, which focuses heavily on the continuation of guardianship.[50] Takeyh (2004b) outlines this paradox aptly, arguing that the 1970 revolutionaries imagined an order where temporal issues would align with divine mandates, and in order to pursue this vision, invested Iran's Supreme Leader with the power to both abrogate election results and also appoint judiciary and military leaders when the drafted the constitution in December 1979. From this point, the clerical estate's dominance over national affairs was increased far beyond its original bounds by the creation of the Council of Guardians in 1979, who uphold and enforce the dictates of the

[50] "Guardianship of the Jurist" is a concept developed and extended by Khomeini, which primarily maintain that the guardianship of people did not end with the death of Prophet Mohamad and instead continues through Shia imams (male descendants of Ali, who was Mohammad's son-in-law) and handed over to *ulama* after the 12th imam went into hiding centuries ago. Until the 12th Imam (Mahdi) returns (resurrect) to save humanity and bring justice, the highest-level clergy will be guardians in his place, having the same level of control and discretion over the life, relationships, and property of individuals in the Islamic community.

Supreme Leader and protect the office itself by vetting candidates and legislation. After the public uprisings of the Islamic Revolution helped to overthrow the monarchy, the opposition and the people's demands could not be entirely ignored by the new state; from then on, it seemed that local councils, parliament, and the president were to be elected. So although the clerical elite retained significant power, both collective will and popular representation remained a significant source of political legitimacy, forcing the theocracy to walk a fine line as they sought to balance divine authority with public will.

For two decades, the charismatic leadership of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini – in addition to the initial challenges of resolving the war and national reconstruction – obscured some of the underlying contradictions in both this new regime and its combination of types of government. Various political factions throughout Iran debated and accepted clerical decrees, while elections allowed the public to endorse the Ayatollahs' perspective. However, as the dust finally settled following the Islamic Revolution, it became apparent that the democratic promise of the Iranian Constitution was not being fulfilled or honored by the country's clerical oligarchs. Instead, Iranian politics came to be defined by unfulfilled revolutionary ideals of being an inclusionary republic and the opposition was constantly testing both the regime's conviction of its original goals and also its dedication to Islamism as a principle versus as a means of grabbing power and control. This paradoxical dynamic gradually eroded any remaining bonds between the regime and the populace.

Then, a few decades later, Iranian politics—and Iran—were fundamentally changed by the disputed presidential election in 2009. Between the Revolution and this particular election, Iran had been viewed by global peers as a regime of corrupt zealots; then, with this election as the tipping point, the country became a beacon of democratic hope in a movement broadly perceived

as a multi-class revolution fueled by internet technology and grassroots communities. According to Milani (2010, p. 41), the movement eroded the regimes façade of populist theocracy:

> "The movement was widely seen as a new non-violent, non-utopian and populist paradigm of revolution that infused twenty-first century Internet technology with people street power. In turn, the regime's facade as a populist theocracy, led by a divinely sanctioned "guardian" and supported by a deeply pious nation, was torn asunder"

From allegations of election fraud to broader leadership challenges, growing numbers of Iranians were questioning the ways in which their state was run, and even its legitimacy as well. Some of those who opposed the central government began calling for an Iranian republic, instead of an Islamic one, and even argued for the removal of the Islamic symbol from the Iranian flag, but as Robing Wright (2009) stated in her congressional testimony in 2009, the "uprising is not yet a counter-revolution."

Even before the outbreak of the Green Movement, the Islamic state and the clerical leadership had been facing an ongoing broad erosion of support. However, as Sundquist (2013, p. 40) correctly notes, it seems that any successful democratic reform strategy in Iran must combine a grassroots effort with the support for the reformist movement by moderate clerical forces and religious intellectuals as well as the bazaar. Thus, this chapter will examine whether such coalition and proximate goals were achieved while assessing other variables of the theory of political inclusion. This will help us understand not only the Islamic revolution through a historical lens but also whether we can identify a continuum or a pattern in contemporary Iranian history to explain why, how and when mobilizing grievances have turned into mobilizing actions. To better understand the emergence and evolution of the Green Movement, though, one must first comprehend both the movement's original purpose as well as the political forces that contributed to its rapid development.

The movement's name came from the green sash that former President Mohammad Khatami passed to reformist candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi. The Green Movement itself, though, began in 1999 with the student movements well before the June 2009 protests, originating instead in the *mowj-e-sabz*, or the "green wave" grassroots campaign that supported Mousavi's challenge to incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. This green wave campaign sought to shift the power of the executive office away from the control of radical hard-liners who were guided by ideological doctrine that limited civil rights, economic power, and practical foreign policy. The green wave tried to put in place another reformist like Khatami in the second highest office in the nation: the presidency. This campaign would also be bolstered by modern technology as it grew into the Green Movement; as Alimaham (2020) observes, new communications technologies in particular "empowered activists to document the history of the uprising as they were making it and to register the protest digitally" (p. 24). In addition, increasing popular dissatisfaction with the regime was exposed to the world, revealing to those beyond Iran how many people felt disenfranchised by the country's theocratic regime. Although there are disagreements on how successful the Green Movement was, the movement itself certainly led to public indignation and outcry that to this day continues to drive calls for democracy in Iran.

The ongoing reform movement that became stronger during the 1990s was about more than just political liberty; it was also a social engineering project as well. Part of its success stemmed from the way in which it fostered broad political participation and interest in order to reinforce government legitimacy against the countering forces of powerful conservative influence. The project of *eslahat* (reform) was largely an elite vision of society promoted to adjust the balance of power in society and state institutions favorably toward their ends. So, to generate popular support, the political elite reformist visionaries needed to co-opt some degree of social and political

participation and organizational support in order to reinforce their top-down political reforms. Paola Rivetti (2005, p. 5) defines *eslahat* as a project of the national elites, engineered for a top-down social influence. The Reform movement in Iran exemplifies this in interesting ways. While the Reform movement generated popular support, the limits and disciplines that it placed on the political imagination in Iran also had unexpected results.

Similar to other competitive authoritarian regimes, wherein certain political players did not have equal access to resources, incumbents in Iran's political atmosphere were driven by a survival logic with two main priorities, which could influence how various bureaucratic reforms were implemented. Bolkvadze (2015, p. 1) explains this well: First, politicians aimed to influence the larger political field in favor of their own efforts and influence, and secondly, they sought to gain and keep broader public support. Some efforts were made to boost the public sector as a means of achieving this latter goal, but some controls had been retained in order to maintain the first goal. This contradiction created an environment wherein bureaucratic reforms reached a saturation point – beyond which there was no room for further reform.

In order to follow the same pattern of assessment of the theory of political inclusion – and also to gain a better understanding of how the evolution of the Islamic Republic progressed – two five-year periods after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 will be examined here: one quiet period and one involving a major contentious action to compare them with each other (close proximity) and with other periods farther apart but contextually still similar. Similar to the set up in earlier chapters, our selection of a quiescent period is determined by the availability and completeness of media archives such as daily newspapers for a five-year period with no major contentious collective action incident or limited mobilization in order to support a systematic content analysis.

Thus, the first period under study which is a quiescent period falls from 1997 to 2001 and the second period will be from 2006 to 2011, which includes the Green Movement uprisings.

Historical Background and Narratives

Just a year after the Iran-Iraq war ended in 1988, Ayatollah Khomeini, the charismatic leader of the revolution, died of natural causes. These two separate but deeply-connected events were pivotal moments in the recent history of Iran, as together they ushered in the post-revolutionary era. Public policy became increasingly defined by public demands, whereas previously the war had subverted public demand under the guise of war exigencies (Mashayekhi, 2001, p. 293). However, after the eight-year war with Iraq ended, Iran's economy was in disarray. In order to try and recover the damages of war, Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani's administration had strong incentive to accelerate economic growth as well as the pace of reconstruction. However, while not quite bankrupt, according to Ansari (2010, p. 52). Iran's economy had contracted and was overbalanced by the prior government in its reliance on a strong military and state sector, paired with the demands of a growing population in search of employment.

The first term of Hashemi-Rafsanjani's presidency (1989–1993) was defined by new economic policies aimed at reconstruction of war-torn areas, renewal of infrastructure, and a refreshed focus on market economy, which itself included privatization, economic development initiatives (e.g., Five-Year Plans and establishing credit institutions), and reopening Iran's stock market.[51] Rafsanjani's foreign policy according to Mashayekhi (2001, p. 293) also prioritized reconciliation and collaboration with Western nations. Even cultural policies reflected a relaxation

[51] For more information on Rafsanjani's economic policies, see "Rafsanjani's Legacy: The Father of Neoliberalism in Iran," by Nozhan Etezadosaltaneh, 12 January 2017, *International Policy Digest*, https://intpolicydigest.org/2017/01/12/rafsanjani-s-legacy-father-neoliberalism-iran/

of strict wartime limitations and softened the emphasis on revolutionary ideology. Like many other places, economic modernization in Iran had its own social consequences and effects on the balance of society – in particular, the urban lifestyle began to shift from modest to luxurious. Then after this brief reconstruction period, in the 1997 presidential election the people did not vote for the candidate who wanted to continue Rafsanjani's liberal economic policies. The Islamic left and their supporters – in particular, Islamic Student Associations across university campuses – were more concerned about the burgeoning neo-capitalist culture that had resulted from Rafsanjani's economic policies more than economic development. These groups advocated for the need to reform both the state apparatus as well as society.

Moreover, those new policies implemented under Rafsanjani did not satisfy this new generation of Islamist students, who organized around the Office for Consolidation of Unity[52] (OCU). Instead, these left-leaning students perceived Rafsanjani's government policies as betraying revolutionary ideals. In 1996, the Islamic Left and their student allies found themselves surrounded by conservative forces, so they turned to the presidential elections as a strategic field of influence and sought to promote their ideal candidate, Mir Hossain Mousavi. Mousavi had served as prime minister during the Iran-Iraq war, and his statist economic policy positions would effectively counter Rafsanjani's market-oriented trajectory. However, Mousavi chose not to make himself a candidate for the presidential election, possibly under pressure from conservative factions. The OCU contingent then selected Mohammed Khatami, the former Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance from Rafsanjani's cabinet, as their candidate of choice. Khatami was a cleric

[52] It is also referred to as the Office of Strengthening Unity (OSU)

with a reputation for tolerance and open-mindedness that seemed promising to the Left and these young intellectuals (Mashayekhi, 2001).

During the 1990s, the discourse of democratic civil society also entered the public debate in Iran. At the time, some intellectuals and alternative thinkers – once loyal forces to the revolution – used the term "civil society" to condemn state authoritarianism. This generation of former Khomeini supporters also promoted Khatami's candidacy in 1996. Their public discourse emphasized civil society, democratization, and social participation as means of combatting the authoritarianism that they saw creeping into the state and representing a corruption of the revolution's original ideals.

Between 1997 and 2001, Iran witnessed two presidential elections won by a reformist, Hojjat al-Islam Sayyed Muhammad Khatemi. This era began when, in 1997, President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani's term ended. The popular belief at the time was that Khatami, a moderate cleric, would not stand a chance against the conservative parliament speaker, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri. However, although Nouri was backed by many of Iran's most influential organizations, Khatemi won the election with the support of certain sections of Iranian society – namely, the Islamic leftists, centrist pragmatists, and secularists (Keddie, 2006, p. 270). The American media conglomerate CNN reports, "Khatami won 20.7 million votes of the 29.7 million votes cast…" ("Moderate clinches victory in Iran presidential election," 1997). However, according to Faruqui (1998, p. 2072), it took Ayatollah Khamenei (the supreme leader) a week to legally approve the rule of a liberal government headed by Khatemi.

Khatemi's landslide victory as the main candidate from Islamic Iran Participation Front[53] is now known as the Khordad movement, named after the election month of Khordad (May). This victory marked the beginning of the reformist epoch. A free press seemed to be a top priority for Khatami, going by his first address upon taking office, in which he called for the creation of an independent press. In extended remarks, as Samii (2001) reports, Khatami also emphasized the need for greater democracy in Iran, pointing to the new post-war stability as a great foundation upon which to begin guaranteeing full constitutional rights to all Iranian citizens, and hoping to "gradually witness" a society with clear and defined legal rights and duties for both citizens and the government.

Khatemi's election campaign was primarily based on the "rule of law", dialogue with Iranian citizens, and similar approaches: basically, promises of 'freedom' and economic revivalism (Abrahamian, 2008, p. 186). Although Khatemi was the elected president backed by reformist members of the Parliament, the "physical power" of Iran (i.e., the army, the courts. and the revolutionary guards) still laid with Khamenei and his conservative peers (Mason, 2002, p. 72). Nevertheless, Khatemi's time in power changed the face of Iran in many important ways. For example, his government tried to recover Iran's economy, which targeted many of the conservative factions' important allies (Keddie, 2006, p. 274).

The process of attempting to liberalize important cultural spaces that had begun under Rafsanjani now continued with Khatemi's government (Wright, 2000, pp. 116-185). Under Khatemi, a scope for "public discussions" was created through newspapers like *Khordad* and

[53] Islamic Iran Participation Front is a reformist political party in Iran which was the most dominant party during the reform era and the Khordad movement. This party is now banned after its support of Green Movement in 2009.

Mosharekat. Terms like *demokrasi*, pluralism, *moderniyat*, *azadi* (liberty), *barabari* (equality), *jam'eh-e madani* (civil society), *hoquq-e beshar* (human rights), *mosharekat-e siyasi* (political participation), and more began to surface in the public domain as well (Abrahamian, 2008, 186). A new group of intellectuals emerged, who preached nationalism derived from both pre-Islamic Iran and from Shia Islamic ideas (Abrahamian, 2008, p. 187). The Islamic leftists' party, which had been banned previously, also came into the forefront at this time and women's rights, while still limited, were redefined within certain bounds.

The country's theocratic dominance faced a growing challenge when the Iranian public began to think beyond religion alone and instead demanded better economic, educational, and livelihood prospects too (Mason, 2002, p. 73). However, Iran was also polarized between the reformists and the conservatives. Soon after the first win, the reformists were attacked for voicing their opinion against the ruling class and working for the well-being of the less privileged. As a result, Tehran's reformist mayor, Gholam Hosein Karbaschi, was arrested and police charged the students who protested against this arrest. Many reformist newspapers were closed and a Press bill was passed to curb publishers' freedoms. Reformist journalists, writers, and activists were attacked, too, but the protestors called for the reopening of newspapers (Keddie, 2006, pp. 274-275). The protests did not last long and were not widespread. However, the idea of freedom was in the air, when at the same time, the Iran football team qualified for the 1999 World Cup, a major global sports event. The public, irrespective of gender or political affiliation, celebrated this record-setting event for Iran. However, as more and more people came out to celebrate on the streets, many began chanting slogans against the Ayatollah and the police as well (Faruqui, 1998, p. 2073). The Revolutionary guards moved in to repress and arrest the participants (Mason, 2002, p. 75).

Khatami was unable to restore order, and given the constant chaos, Khamenei replaced the judiciary head in an effort to return things to normal. Things eventually calmed down.

In the first municipal election of 1999, the reformists won again, and this victory was continued in the parliamentary (*majlis*) election of 2000 (Abrahamian, 2008 p. 188). However, whenever the new Parliament tried to bring up women's rights and other social issues, the Guardian Council vetoed them (Keddie, 2006, p. 280). Meanwhile, Iran was also undergoing an economic crisis and social misbalance. Despite this turbulence, Khatemi still won a second term in the next presidential election. His narrative and ideals resonated with so many Iranians who did not want to give up on their democratization dreams. As Keddie (2006, p. 280) puts it, "Probably Khatami's greatest achievement has been to help popularize the idea of democracy and make the government somewhat more open." However, this time as soon as he started his second term, more of the crucial powers were controlled by Khamenei, the conservative supreme leader.

At this point a coalition of 18 reformist political groups and parties, led by the Islamic Iran Participation Front (IIPF), established the Second of Khordad Front, named after "Khordad" or the Persian calendar date when Khatami was elected president (Nikou, 2010, p. 4). Formed in 1998 by mid-career politicians who led Khatami's presidential campaign, the Islamic Iran Participation Front's main slogan was "Iran for all Iranians" (Iran Data Portal 2011). The reformists won the majority of the seats (150 of 290) in the sixth parliamentary election in 2000, where political and cultural issues surfaced at the top of the list of priorities for parliament to address (Maloney, 2000, p. 64). The reformist block also passed legislations concerning freedom of the press and foreign investments, but the Supreme Leader and the conservative institution of the Guardian Council rejected majority of such reforms. This reformist coalition supported Mohammad Khatami again

in the 2001 presidential election, and with his second landslide victory, its members were able to control the executive branch for the next four years (Iran Data Portal 2011).

Improving relationships with the West, especially with the U.S., was a stated priority of President Khatami, evidenced as early as his 1997 swearing-in speech to parliament, when he expressed favor for "dialogue between civilizations" and a renewal of global relations. Given these signals of civility, a cautious optimism about U.S.-Iranian political relations began to spread. US stakeholders such as President Clinton, the US Congress, and US State Department officials, as well as Iranian citizens themselves, all anticipated greater freedoms after 18 years of contention and suppression. The American response to Khatami's comments was also positive and hopeful (Rubin, 2000). Sazegara (2006) reports that this led to mixed results, though, as "Democracy, human rights, civil society, and good international relations were the goals of the reformists. However, it became quickly apparent that reaching those goals within the framework of the present constitution was impossible" (p. iv).

As a countermeasure to Khatami's more liberal policymaking efforts, and in order to suppress any hopes of an opposition revival, Iran's intelligence officers began ramping up their earlier policy of physically eliminating any sources of intellectual or political opposition to the regime – the same sort of brutality that would later be seen again during the Green Movement about a decade later. In November 1998, several political activists and intellectuals who promoted public demands for accountability in government were brutally murdered by Ministry of Intelligence agents. Many in the student population, including Tabarzadi's EEADD and some few factions of the OCU, then began exhibiting greater sympathy toward various nationalist, secular, and leftist opposition groups. Repressive, authoritative pressure from both these events and many conservative sources only served to promote greater radicalization in the university system; in

particular, OCU chapters increased their public support for Khatami's reform through frequent protests. Any confrontation between the conservatives and Khatami provoked some sort of protest in Khatami's defense and also in support of socio-political freedom, human rights, and democratic action particularly at universities. The largest and most violent of these would be the July 1999 student protests, which were provoked by a police raid on a dormitory in which a student was killed. However, as it will be discussed in the next section these protests did not qualify as major and widespread uprisings targeting national policies of the regime although events in 1999 were among the first public challenges to the Islamic Republic and helped build a foundation for reformist movement that still is alive and active. The student protests in 1999 was a turning point in the history of the Islamic Republic and the students' confrontational narratives and challenges to the system, particularly pointing fingers at the supreme leader, had a long lasting effect on the reform movement and events leading up to the Green Movement protests. This incident cannot be ignored because of its uniqueness and long lasting effect but based on the definition and operationalization of the concept of contentious collective action, the student protests in 1999 does not qualify as a major instance of contentious mobilization with a national objective. The protests had specific demands and voiced their concerns within the university and the events did not involve a broad spectrum of people but students in Tehran, Tabriz and some other universities across the country. Also, since the reformists were in power at that time, many of these protests were organized for a show of support for President Khatami since he had promised he would bring to justice the invaders of the university dorms.

On July 7, 1999, the closure of the daily newspaper *Salaam* sparked a student protest in Tehran and 15 other cities that lasted over 10 days. *Salaam* was a Left-Islamic daily created by Ayatollah Mousavi Kho'einiha, a leftist cleric and a former member of the Assembly of Experts

for Leadership. *Salaam* had not only targeted and criticized the Islamic regime's major institutional tenets – most importantly, *Velayat-e Faghih* (Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist) – but also Kho'einiha, its founder, had been one of the only voices for students, women, laborers, and others who wanted their voices heard (Assoudeh, 2010, p. 1). Hot on the heels of banning *Salaam*, the regime also banned more than 200 other publications overnight (Assoudeh, 2010, p. 2). Then in April 2000, following the adoption of a new press law, the judiciary also banned 13 more reformist periodicals, including *Neshat* and *Gozaresh-e ruz* and the regime also arrested Akbar Ganji, a well-known reformist journalist (BBC, 24 April 2000).

While Khatami was loyal to the Islamic Republic's founding principles (including the rule of the jurist), his presidency itself represented a deep desire for change from within Iran. The reformist elite sought to change the governing model of the Iranian state and to highlight both the role and the participation of the people. As a *Hojatoleslam*[54] with an academic background, Khatami was a good candidate to lead reforms in Iran, and he had gained the favor of politicians, academics, students, and young people alike from his prior position as a relatively liberal Minister for Culture and Islamic guidance (Wastnidge, 2016).

The 1997 presidential election also introduced the Iranian people as a major player in Iranian politics. The ballot box became the catalyst for a population that previously had been a passive observer of clerically-led politics, and elections became events of newly increased significance. Khatami and his newly-elected representatives quickly organized to introduce accountability, rule of law, and pluralism into Iran's political processes. A revived press and tentative movement toward cultural liberalization followed these strategies, as well as a renewed

[54] An honorific title given to a middle-rank clergy in Shia Islam, meaning "authority on Islam."

interest in political life and activities from a population who had been previously frustrated by corruption, war, and religious power games (Takeyh, 2004a). One democratic social movement in Iran, the Second Khordad movement, exemplifies these competing images of flourishing and decline; this particular movement saw general success up until early 2000, at which point it seemed to wane as people did not see much tangible results from the reformists and realized the power rests with the supreme leader and not the presidency.

In 2005, though, the next elected president was Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a child of Khomeini's Islamic revolutionary believers. Ahmadinejad, who had also been a student activist during the revolution of 1979, later became a part of the *Basij*[55] during the war with Iraq. His ascent to power began with his 2001 co-founding of the Society of Devotees of the Islamic Revolution, or the *Isargaran* party, a political entity whose political activities became more serious with Tehran's second municipal elections in 2003. At this point, *Isargaran* was an important member of a right-wing coalition and Tehran's low voter turnout for this election (only 700,000 votes were cast out of roughly 7 million eligible voters) resulted in the coalition clinching all 15 seats on the Tehran Municipal Council and electing Ahmadinejad the mayor of Tehran. *Isargaran*'s political platform rejected democratic and liberal values and elevated the principle of Absolute Guardianship of the Jurist—i.e., the absolute authority of the Supreme Leader. Economically, they favored centralized decision-making. In the context of social actions, the controversial "Bill of Family Protection" proposed in Iran's 8th and stating that husbands could forego permission of their

[55] The *Basij* is a volunteer paramilitary organization operating under the Islamic Revolutionary Guards (IRG). It is an auxiliary force with many duties, particularly internal security, law enforcement, special religious or political events, and morals policing. The *Basij* have branches in virtually every town in Iran (The Iran Primer 2010).

first wife to marry a second, was authored by *Isargaran* members, though the bill was never passed due to widespread opposition and protest (Iran Data Portal 2011).

This experience subsequently pushed Ahmadinejad to become a presidential candidate. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and the *Basijis* backed him during the election, thus all but ensuring his win. He was also supported by the Developers (*abadgaran*), who, according to Arjomand (2009, pp. 149-152), were "mere copycats of Hashemi-Rafsanjani's Servants of Reconstruction." At this time, the Iranian military also aligned itself with the hardliners (Nazi, 2008, p. xii). Moreover, Khamenei was eager to counter Khatemi and his reforms, and a silent follower like Ahmadinejad seemed like a catch. So, after running on a conservative platform, and being endorsed and supported by parties such *Isargaran*, Ahmadinejad won the 2005 presidential election handily.

In comparison to his reform-minded predecessor Khatami, populism and international aggression marked Ahmadinejad's approach to both domestic issues and foreign policy (Faghihi, 2018). In the fall of 2005, Ahmadinejad launched a Cultural Revolution Council and banned western programs from airing on national Iranian television. Furthermore, he got rid of many liberal university professors across the country (Arjomand, 2009, p. 159). To protest such actions, a series of peaceful gatherings, workshops, and online awareness campaigns gave rise to the One Million Signatures Campaign in 2006. Government opposition to this campaign was swift and repressive, including restrictions on members' travel, online censorship, penalties and harassment, and arrests. Similar conflicts between resistance and repression escalated up until the events of the disputed 2009 presidential election (Khorasani, 2009).

Ahmadinejad's actions escalated in the months leading up to this second election. For instance, in March 2007, he sent off the British sailors (who were captured in Iran's territorial waters) to showcase Western hatred (Ansari, 2008, p. 697). In addition, his aim at this time was to become a populist leader, so he frequently visited small towns and provinces. He also circulated his personal contact details in order to keep in close contact with the public (Arjomand, 2009, p. 160) and introduced economic policies to help the less privileged. However, Ahmadinejad believed in rhetoric rather than reality, starting from believing in a hidden Imam to touting victory in the nuclear crisis (Ansari, 2008, p. 698). Thus, from 2007 to 2008, Ahmadinejad's policies faced a series of clerical criticisms (Alfoneh, 2008, pp. 5-6).

Then although Ahmadinejad won a second term in the 2009 election, the integrity of the electoral process was questioned. According to Milani (2011, p. 42) "hundreds of young women and men were tortured, dozens raped and thousands forced into exile for questioning the June 2009 presidential-election results. It was of course all, according to Khamenei, a sinister U.S. plot to create a 'velvet revolution' using Gene Sharp's model and George Soros's money." This election also showed the extent of IRGC's involvement in politics as many believed they overtly manipulated the election results (Safsekan, 2010, p. 543). However, Ahmadinejad's term would end soon, as Khamenei became hungrier for power and felt threatened when Ahmadinejad began to project himself as a messiah. Soon, Khamenei, along with IRGC, began to attack Ahmadinejad for his 'sin' when his term was about to finish (Milani, 2011, p. 47).

This would happen afterwards, though. In 2009, perceived electoral fraud was the first concern (Milani, 2011, p. 43). Shortly after the presidential election on June 14, 2009, millions of Iranians poured into the streets of Tehran and other cities, chanting, "where is my vote?" Under

the banner of the Green Movement, this opposition imposed the serious challenge to the Islamic regime since the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Among the memorable pictures from the days immediately post-election in 2009 were those of Iranian women and men walking side by side, not just denouncing the rigged election results but also refusing to bow to the government's oppressive presence in practically every area of their lives. Thousands of protestors were arrested by state security forces, including operatives of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and many were killed. Former presidential candidates and symbolic leaders of the Green Movement, Mehdi Karoubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi, as well as political activists such as Zahra Rahnavard (also, Mir Hossein Mousavi's wife) were also placed under house arrest, where many have remained since (Memarian, 2019).

Prior to these events, Iranian conservatives assumed that Mousavi had been absent so long from politics that he was almost irrelevant, and Mousavi himself was not a very charismatic figure. But the nascent civil society hibernating in Iran – as subverted in reform groups, the women's movement, and the student organizations – suddenly bloomed as networks of supporters connected through the internet and social networking, so that Mousavi's campaign was frequently greeted by large and energetic crowds (Milani, 2010). Mousavi was also an interesting candidate because of his involvement with the Islamic Revolution of 1979. According to Moussawi (2012, p. 195), "Mousavi's revolutionary credentials were regarded as his strongest asset during the campaign […]. Mousavi's supporters frequently highlighted the former prime minister's close relations with the late Ayatollah Khomeini, as well as his service to the country during the time of the Iran-Iraq war."

Importantly, Mousavi "did not represent the reformist liberal attitudes of his voters" (Lo, 2010, p. 132) but he still received support from many who saw his candidacy as a possibility for or a stepping-stone toward a more reformist agenda and a way to remove Ahmadinejad. While Mousavi had conservative tendencies and distanced himself from calls for radical change during the election campaign (Moussawi, 2012), he did make promises that would challenge the regime he sought to replace. For example, he promised to reform laws that were discriminatory towards women, disband Iran's "Morality Police," and advocate for privately-owned TV networks so the public could have access to information not controlled by the government. However, the fact that Mousavi was unable to create a broad coalition and define proximate goals to include all opposition groups (which Khomeini had done successfully prior to the 1979 revolution) was one of his biggest failures. Instead, Mousavi wanted to be the opposition leader for the groups who wanted to change the system slightly with a reform agenda, not the leader for those who wanted to overhaul this system.

All things considered, the 2009 election was a historic moment for Iran. According to the Iran Data Portal, the voter turnout rate this year was the highest in the history of the Islamic Republic' at an impressive 85.2%. Comparing this rate to the previous election in 2005, where only 62.84% of eligible voters had participated, it is evident that the 2009 election was of particular importance to Iranian citizens. The collective democratic will of Iranians was still thriving, thirty years after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 that never delivered on its promises. This democratic desire may also have been further encouraged by the election of US president Barack Obama, who had stated that he hoped to ease US tensions with Iran. Days prior to the election, Obama struck a positive tone of hope, prosperity, and democratic reform for both countries, stating that:

> "In the middle of the Cold War, the United States played a role in the overthrow of a democratically elected Iranian government. Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has played a role in acts of hostage-taking and violence against U.S. troops and civilians. This history is well known. Rather than remain trapped in the past, I've made it clear to Iran's leaders and people that my country is prepared to move forward. The question now is not what Iran is against, but rather what future it wants to build."

As Monshipouri and Assereh (2009, p. 37) explain, this speech from Obama' "gave the Iranian people tremendous hope that the June 12th, 2009, presidential election was their rendezvous with history."

However, the hope that the Iranian people were exhibiting during election day had turned to outrage by that same evening, where according to official figures, Mousavi lost the election by a landslide to the incumbent hardliner Ahmadinejad. The validity of these results was immediately questioned throughout Iran, and public unrest ignited in major cities nationwide. Mousavi himself also challenged these results, and his post-election statement forewarned against the establishment of a tyrannical system:

> "I personally strongly protest the many obvious violations and I'm warning I will not surrender to this dangerous charade. The result of such performance by some officials will jeopardize the pillars of the Islamic Republic and will establish tyranny." (Reuters, June 13th, 2009)

The "many obvious violations" that Mousavi hinted at in this statement are hard to ignore. The general perception was that some degree of transparency and electoral integrity still existed in Iran; that is why Mousavi was surprised and pointed out the discrepancies. For one thing, the speed at which the election results were delivered was suspicious, especially considering the record-breaking voter turnout. Likewise, although Iran at the time was using paper ballots that had to be hand-counted, Ahmadinejad was declared the winner a mere two hours after the polls closed. Furthermore, Iranians were concerned over the supposed margin of victory for Ahmadinejad, as Mousavi had enjoyed significant support during the election campaigns.

Following the suspiciously fast delivery of these results, analysts across the globe began crunching the numbers in an attempt to identify any statistical anomalies, of which there were many. Two major examples come up the most often in these analyses, as described in a study by Chatham House (Rintoul & Berman, 2009). First, the voting patterns being reported were vastly different from those evident in Iran's past elections, with Ahmadinejad now supposedly winning most of the votes in areas that rarely voted conservative. Second, Ahmadinejad would need to have won an unbelievable 44% of reformist votes in order for the reported results to be legitimate. With these anomalies, it is not shocking that the Iranian public would respond to the supposed election results with fury.

Over the following days thousands of voters, many carrying green flags or wearing green clothes, poured into the streets chanting, "Where is my vote?" People from all corners of Iranian society, many of whom had been part of the 1979 Revolution, marched and demanded a recount. Social media platforms made these events more widely visible to those outside Iran, so the world got to see the turmoil unfolding as protesters attended demonstrations and documented the happenings there. Then on June 15th, millions of Iranians defied the ban on protests announced by the regime a few days earlier and marched in the cities, a historic and violent moment. The *Basij* silenced protesters with beatings and firearms, similar to the violence of the Shah's regime during the 1979 protests. Clashes between the police and plainclothes security forces were documented in all their graphic imagery, with tech-savvy Iranians circumventing the government's internet filters to share videos, images, emails, and tweets about the violence that protestors faced.

Notably, the Iranian media itself reported very little about these protests, so international news organizations were utilizing footage from social media for their broadcasts. Many of these images and videos became icons of the movement. Among the most notable, demonstrators' chant

of "death to the dictator" seemed to take center stage once again after it was widely used thirty years earlier during uprisings leading to the Islamic Revolution of 1979. With the catalyst of the disputed election results, the Green Movement pivoted from a political campaign to one of protest campaign. Then as it crystallized into a bona fide movement, it took the restoration of the civil liberties promised in the Islamic Revolution of 1979 as a banner issue.

The uprising of the Green Movement has frequently been referred to as the "Twitter Revolution." This is because social media allowed the opposition in this highly-censored environment to communicate with one another and plan protests, publicize those protests globally to expose the regime's violence, and gave Iranian citizens themselves a voice in a climate where public, non-anonymous dissent could be fatal. However, some scholars have also criticized the term "revolution" being used in this sense, maintaining that the courage and risk required for a virtual revolution such as this one pale in comparison to other historical revolutions in Iran or elsewhere (Rothkopf, 2009). Furthermore, many scholars argue that social media does not significantly impact the initiation or success of a revolution (Gladwell, 2010; Rich, 2011; Anderson, 2011; Zuckerman, 2014). In particular, Malcolm Gladwell (2010, p. 7) writes that "high-risk social activism requires deep roots and strong ties." So although the importance of social media in Iran has been widely accepted as a valuable tool for political awareness, particularly in certain social contexts where organization and publicity of the cause are more difficult without it, there are also enduring disagreements regarding the degree to which social media made the Green Movement a successful revolution.

In summer 2009, though, the initial flare of post-election protests was quickly stalled by tactical blocking of cell phones, monitoring text messages, and a heavily-enforced ban on public displays of Green Movement symbols. Likewise, the Iranian central government adamantly

claimed there was no election fraud and blamed all violence on the opposition, the West, and Zionists. The Islamic Republic was quick in labeling the movement a "velvet revolution" financed by and directed from the West (Safsekan, 2010, p. 543). However, as Monshipouri and Assareh (2009, p. 38) demonstrate, the "Iranian people were well aware of the movement's homegrown origin." Monshipouri and Assareh also argue further that there was an apparent disconnect between the regime's narrative and the one constructed by the people. For instance, during the Green Movement when the government sponsor chant leader in a rally shouts into the loudspeaker, "Death to America!" The people respond, "Death to Russia!" to express their alternative narrative as they commonly believed that Russia provided technology to filter the internet and track political dissidents of the regime. The construction of alternative narratives heralded another episode in Iranian civic engagement. As Dabashi (2010, p. 53) puts it, "the Green Movement, in effect, returned and restored to Iranian political culture its cosmopolitan character and disposition." Dabashi considers this swing a crucial paradigm shift through which the "Iranian society has resumed its historic march towards democratic self-governance" (p. 62).

Despite the very real risks of being imprisoned, tortured, or killed, protesters staged public challenges to the regime and its leadership every few weeks throughout the rest of 2009. But by early 2010, most public demonstrations had been subdued by the regime, and the Green Movement subsided to regroup and strategize (Milani, 2010). However, rather than being suppressed by tyrannical tactics like show trials of opposing politicians and journalists and violence against public demonstrators, the Green Movement became ever more steadfast in its role of advocating for the rights of the Iranian people (Majd, 2010). In other words, the semi-decentralized networked organization of the movement was its greatest asset.

Mir-Hossein Mousavi founded The Green Path of Hope on August 15th, 2009, as the organizational body of the Green Movement. Although the Green Path of Hope was sometimes called a "political front" by the Iranian media, Mousavi himself describes it as a representation of the political body itself formed by self-initiated and independent social networks in many of his statements and speeches published on Mousavi's official media platform Kaleme.com website. Mousavi intentionally named his organization a "path," rather than a movement or a political party, because both of the latter entities would need to be authorized by the Interior Ministry under Iranian law. Distrustful of the regime and knowing the Interior Ministry was unlikely to endorse him, Mousavi chose the name "Path" specifically to bypasses this categorization.

As 2009 went on, organization officials delegated most of the Green Movement's functionality to campaigns led by social networks, political movements, and NGO's. Mousavi pointed to the autonomous and spontaneous social network communities that formed parts of the movement as an example of how the Green Path of Hope represents the Iranian people's active desire to reclaim rights denied to them by the current regime. According to Mousavi, the Green Path of Hope was dedicated to seeing the people's demands treated fairly by a government dedicated to promoting truth and accountability.[56]

After almost six months of struggle with the regime, the Green Movement published its manifesto on January 3rd, 2010. As Lo (2010, p. 135) summarizes, this document included demands such as: 1) Resignation of Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad [as the president]…abolish the vetting process of candidates [by the Guardian Council]…, 2) Releasing all the political prisoners…, 3) Free means of mass communication…, 4) Recognizing the rights of all the lawful

[56] All of Mousavi speeches and statements have been collected and presented in chronological order on this website: https://kadivar.com/2600/

political groups, university students and women movements…, 5) Independence of the universities [from political meddling and intervention]; …abolishing the illegal Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution [that interferes in the affairs of the universities]…, 6) Putting on trial all those that have tortured and murdered [people]…, 7) Independence of the judiciary by electing [rather than appointing] its head …, 8) Banning the military, police, and security forces from intervening in politics…, 9) Economic and political independence of the seminaries…, 10) Electing all the officials who must become responsive to criticisms… Not meeting these [legitimate] demands of the Green Movement … will also deepen the crisis with painful consequences, for which only the Supreme Leader will be responsible.

Then just a year after the Green Movement burst onto the scene, Mousavi published a proposed new covenant contextualizing the Green Movement as part of Iran's 100-year quest for democracy. While this publication was silent on the *Velayat-e Faghih* (Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists), Mousavi wrote that the current regime represented corruption masquerading as piety, and he stated upfront that a government can only be legitimized by the will and support of the people. He also posited that every article of Iranian law should be subject to discussion.

Mousavi's new covenant accused the current regime of disregarding and even violating its own laws. The Green Movement, by contrast, was a necessary voice of accountability in calling for laws that reflected international standards on human rights and democracy. This covenant also emphasized equality before the law regardless of gender, religion, or ideology, and made a demand for the separation of religious institutions from those of the state, while allowing space for religion to be present in Iran's democratic future. One of the greatest departures in the new covenant was in foreign policy: here Mousavi diverged sharply from the former regime's rhetoric by insisting that Iran would not seek nuclear power and should instead participate in all the rights allowed to

nations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. He also advocated for full transparency in Iran's dealings with other nations, and blamed U.N. sanctions on the current regime's adventurism, which was a similar stance to those of other Green Movement leaders.

While the Manifesto outlined some of the movement's general aspirations, it failed to acknowledge the diverse opinions in play there as well. Looking back, these opinions can be understood as belonging to two broad camps. One side desired radical change within the Iranian central government, such as the abolishment of the "supreme leader" role, while the other side would be satisfied with more moderate changes, such as fair elections and constitutional reforms under the current system. In this second sub-group, there was some hesitancy about overthrowing the regime through revolution, as many members had witnessed the violence of the Islamic Revolution and its undelivered promises (Lo, 2010, p. 129.) In addition to these two camps, the Green Movement also had both secular and religious members, which meant that there were vastly different opinions on the Islamic Republic itself. In the beginning, for instance, Mousavi himself was supportive of the continuation of an Islamic Republic and officially announced that he did not want to alter the political system, but instead, simply intended to return to its origins during Khomeini's era.[57] This stance cost Mousavi the support of many disgruntled groups who saw the existence of the Islamic Republic itself as the main problem. This also made it difficult for Mousavi and other Green Movement leaders to reach out to political dissidents, which in turn contributed to his failure to create a broad alliance of those who had problems with the undemocratic elements of both the Iranian constitution and the principle of *Velayat-e Faghih.*[58]

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[57] In February 2010, Mousavi publicly denounced the Islamic Republic for the first time after his nephew was murdered, describing it as "tyrannical" on Kaleme.com website.

[58] The theoretical foundation of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 was Khomeini's view of the relationship between Islam and the Iranian state as put forward in his book entitled *Velayat-e Faghih*. The principle of *Velayat-e Faghih.* which advocates for a guardianship-based political system as the best possible form of government in the absence of

As glimpsed earlier with discussions of social media's role in this movement, there have been numerous disagreements on whether or not the Green Movement was successful, particularly in the first few years after the 2009 election. Obviously, the Movement and its participants were unable to accomplish reform, and indeed as it progressed, the Movement "lost its direction, lacked a movement agenda, and was divided among demonstrators calling for various demands from the government, including the complete abolishment of the religious authority" (Lo, 2010, p. 133). Mousavi and Karroubi are still under house arrest and the reformists have not been able to reclaim their place in the polity and have been effectively excluded from the polity. But this does not mean the movement or the reform agenda has died away. The reformists very much now operate on the sidelines. They and are out of power and lack direct communication (at least their leaders) with the people. The Green Movement was also unable to achieve the objectives listed in Mousavi's Manifesto, but all the same, there are other documented achievements that should be attributed to it. For example, as Lo explains (2010, p. 137), the most significant achievement of the Green Movement was "the creation of a public sentiment – that was no longer refrained from expressing against a government described as illegitimate." Sahimi (2010) elaborates further on the successes of the Green Movement, which initiated three important changes. Firstly, the movement demonstrated the ineffectiveness of *Velayat-e Faghih* as a document of government. Secondly, the movement caused the fall of Ayatollah Khamenei's public image, whose actions following the 2009 election upset the opposition and his supporters alike. Thirdly, Sahimi credits the Green Movement with exposing how Iran's fundamentalists had been using their power to hold engineered elections in their favor. In these three ways, Sahimi maintains, the Green Movement

an infallible Imam, is the foundation of contemporary Shia political thought. For more, see Khomeini, Ruhollah (translated by Hamid Algar). 2002. *Islamic government: governance of the jurist*. Tehran: Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Work.

exposed the major failings of the Islamic Republic; likewise, the opposition this movement caused will be useful in Iran's continued quest for democracy.

The most notable structural problem that plagues the Islamic Republic is that every republican institution within the government is subject to clerical counterinfluence; so, for example, although the people may elect reformers, non-elected authorities have been intercepting reform movements since 1997. The expectation was that over time the reform movement will get stronger and force itself onto the system. This has not occurred yet. However, despite the despair that reform has not been accomplished yet, one significant reason why reform may ultimately prevail over the theocratic state model in Iran is that state authorities have lost their power over society. Although political reform movements have often failed to win elections or create broader coalitions with defined goals, the presence of social reform movements continues to indicate a growing consensus that there is no adequate alternative to a democratic state (Amirpur, 2006, p. 40).

In this sense, the 2009 wave of protests shed new light on the 1979 revolution. First, although Iran claims to be a democratic state with elements of a democratic government (including holding elections), the supreme leader is still the main decision-maker, in accordance with the principles of *Velayat-e Faghih*. This overrides the process of constitutionalism, which is what anchors a democratic state. The incompatibility of *Velayat-e Faghih* with republicanism came to public sight during the Green Movement uprisings.

The idea of the supremacy of a non-democratic institution over all others all aspects of Iran's political life is not unchallenged, though, and it has split Iran into various factions multiple times (Klein, 2009, p. 5). The polarization of the Islamic regime began immediately after the

Revolution of 1979 and has continued to the present day, only increasing in intensity and breadth as time passes. The central debate after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 concerned the balance between republicanism and Islamism as two ideals, and a version of this internal dispute was also seen with the 2009 uprisings. Today, most opposition groups agree that the republican elements of the Islamic Revolution have given way to Islamism and that the religious authority holding power has wanted to undermine or outright wipe out any lingering democratic elements achieved through the 1979 Revolution.

The desire to bring elements of republicanism back to the political system was why Mousavi announced that the Green Movement was the continuation of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and specifically, that it was trying to achieve the goals that had been forgotten or abandoned then. Many Iranians identified with Mousavi's cause, as they felt betrayed by the regime as it backed down from those original promises. However, any expectations of an all-out uprising and overthrow of the Islamic Republic were misguided and quickly proven incorrect. All the same, the Green Movement still succeeded in initiating yet another jumpstart to the civil rights movement that yet remains alive and flourishing. From its humble beginnings as a campaign to elect a reformist candidate in 1997, this effort has evolved into a civil rights movement that will continue to exert pressure for reform that the regime can only ignore to its own detriment.

Existing Explanations

Most analyses of post-revolutionary social movements in Iran are preoccupied with the 1999 student uprising and the Green Movement, emphasizing the roles that each played in terms of political opportunity (Mahdi, 1999; Mashayekhi, 2001; Kadivar. 2013; Assoudeh and Salazar.

2017). The 1999 student uprising received a lot of attention by scholars because it was the first major challenge to the regime after the revolution although it was short-lived, mainly inside universities, and was much smaller than the Green Movement in terms of protest size, scope and intensity. The Green Movement, however, was a major mobilizing action incident challenging the central government and it involved individuals from all walks of life and in almost all cities around the country. Most studies on the Green Movement also prioritize the role of the information and communication technologies (ICTs) used among the opposition and in contact with the world beyond Iran (Rahimi, 2011; Ansari,2012; Chatfield, Akbari, Mirzayi, and Scholl, 2012; Rahaghi, 2012; Honari, 2018), although there are exceptions such as Navid Pourmokhtari (2014), Kevan Harris (2017) and Paola Rivetti (2020) study the Reform and the Green Movements from unique perspectives. Rivetti's study is a departure from the usual literature as it presents a view of the Reform movement as an elite-led social engineering process. Then Pourmokhtari and Harris each view the Green Movement through a broader lens than just political opportunity, the oppression of the Iranian regime', and the role of ICT. While Pourmokhtari's work focuses on dissidents'" agency and the emergence of a multi-class grassroots movement, Harris's explores the structural factors, which leads him to view the Green Movement as an expression of a rising but frustrated urban middle class.[59]

Some of these studies are worth revisiting in further depth as well. For instance, according to Mashayekhi (2001), the elements most crucial to the emergence of the 2009 protests were combined in the structure of university campuses, the reformist/legalistic political culture of the Iranian student movement, and the political opportunities afforded by the Khatami administration.

[59] For a more comprehensive review of some of the studies cited in this section see: Tofangsazi, B. (2020). From the Islamic Republic to the Green Movement: Social Movements in Contemporary Iran. *Sociology Compass*, *14*(1), e12746.

In terms of its reformist/legalistic culture, the Iranian student movement in the 1990s is distinct from the revolutionary-era student movement. This characteristic also made the latter movement less susceptible to suppression by the regime. Then while Kadivar's general analysis (2013) does not focus on the 1999 student uprisings, it does highlight potential motivations for cooperation among various reformist groups early on in Khatami's administration: Kadivar concludes that these alliances were formed around a perception of political opportunity, which made cooperation necessary in order to bring about desired changes. In their longitudinal analysis of the students' and women's movements in Iran (1997–2008), Assoudeh and Salazar (2017) argue that both of these movements have become progressively more independent of the reformist elite despite their earlier association, which impacted the autonomous spirit of the Green Movement in particular as students and women played a major role in its emergence.

Finally, Arshin Adib-Moghadam (2006) explores the Reform movement through the lens of Foucauldian discourse. Michel Foucault's discussions of power offer a productive guide for studying the pluralistic momentum in Iran. Rather than identify a single focus of the momentum in "the state" or the "ruling elites" or analyze it as an interest or motive of political parties or institutions, Foucault's method as guide focuses on the organizational vehicles of pluralistic momentum in Iran; students, NGOs, women's rights activists, writers, artists, intellectuals, and more. This method according to Adib-Moghadam (2006, p. 671) establishes a "genealogy of reform" that contextualizes local Iranian society in the processes of differentiation, reification, deconstruction, theorization, and other sources of reformist thinking.

Political liberty was not the only aim of reformism in Iran, though; instead, it was also a project of social engineering as a means of fostering political engagement. Active political participation was needed in order to reinforce government legitimacy and create a network of

defense against the conservative opposition's constant pressures, as conservative factions feared losing narrative power over state ideology, institutions, and popular culture. As explored in Rivetti's work (2020), reform, or *eslahat*, can be understood 'as a project of engineered social and political change. In Iran, certain segments of the national elite envisioned and promoted this project in an attempt to generate a historical bloc that would redistribute the balance of power in their favor. Popular support of this project was deemed necessary by reformist elites, who needed to both allow and control political participation in order to co-opt civil society and political organizations to their own ends.

In the days and months following the 2009 election, the color green came to symbolize protest and dissent, but in addition to that context, this symbolism also had deep roots in Iranian history, culture, and religious practice/experience. To begin with, green is a sacred reference to the Prophet Mohammed and his family among Shia Muslims, and historically, green has also represented Shia opposition to the dominant Sunni sect of Islam. Likewise, Shia culture in Iran developed over centuries in response to the threats of various ruling party, forming networks of underground opposition often represented by displays of the color green. Thus, the color green has been a sacred symbol in Iran's cultural fabric for a long time before being adopted by the Green Movement in 2009. Thus, it is hardly surprising that urban middle class leaders took this symbol of religious pride and protest and adapted it to a political protest (Kazemi 2013, p. 14).

However, while the Green Movement certainly has distinctly religious overtones – particularly in terms of iconography and vocabulary – its participants also unmoored these elements from their initial religious significance quickly, redefining them by context instead. As Kazemi (2013, p. 13) notes, this is a good illustration of Michel de Certeau's concept of "tactics," which postulates that when people are denied a space of protest by the state, they will naturally

claim any space that is available to them and set up a protest platform there. In Iran, religion provided a freely-available and easily recognizable language and platform. However, this particular view of religion, which deeply influenced the Green Movement, went well beyond the ideological framework of religious intellectuals, and instead, a new type of religious sentiment separated politics from religion in function. And although reformist intellectuals formed most of their ideas in a religious context, the mass demonstrators of the Green Movement remained silent on religion, thus reinforcing the view that politics should be an autonomous field of human activity.

This 'Secular Islam' went a step beyond the revisionist Islamist mindset supported by Islamic Reformists. Instead, in the tradition of earlier Shia Muslims, Green Movement protestors used national and religious holidays like Student Day and Palestine Day to protest. Unofficial holidays, such as Green Friday Prayers or Green Mountain Excursion, also created additional protest opportunities. Post-religious social movements must be considered in order to better understand the Green Movement's deployment of religious iconography and vocabulary in its new context. But it is also important to remember that state power structures still retain their dominance, and when spaces and occasions are ideologically held or recaptured by the state, the momentum of resistance can be disrupted (Khosrokhavar, 2012, pp. 46-47).

The existing literature on Green Movement is sparse and heavily follows the popular social movement literature developed in different contexts. These explanations, similar to explanations of the Islamic Revolution and Constitutional Revolution, are limited to structural, voluntarist and constructivist frameworks. It seems no incident of contentious collective action can scape these post-hoc theories. They all invariably lack explanatory power to address the why, the how and particularly the when of these events. None of these theories or models can or claim to provide a holistic view of the Iranian struggle for political change, the transition to democracy, or democratic

inclusion within a historical timeline. The existing explanations only focus on events retroactively and do not see a connection between these major events stretching over a span of 100 years. Furthermore, the examination of protest events, instead of a wider examination of the larger movement is futile. Any serious effort to understand these events must include not only incidents of contentious collective action but also should incorporate the periods of "no action" or quiescent periods. The political inclusion theory can explain how and when the mobilizing grievances turn into mobilizing actions while comparing such events to quiescent periods within a proximate time span. This type of analysis will lead us to better identify the causes and outcomes of incidents of mobilizing actions and to understand Iran's enduring struggle for democracy more adequately.

Testing the theory of political inclusion

No major mobilizing action

As discussed in the previous section, existing contentious collective action theories are unable to present a full view of the causes driving incidents of contentious action in Iran over the past century. In particular, these theories fail to explain such incidents in a continuum of change in Iranian politics. Put differently: none of these theories or models provide a holistic view of the Iranian struggle for political change, transition to democracy, and expansion of political inclusion within a historical timeline. Instead, such theories focus primarily on incidents of contentious collective action from a retroactive position, and with this narrow focus on periods of mobilization, they tend to overlook periods of non-action and the insights that these periods offer.

As discussed earlier, at the core of the Iranian struggle for progress is a desire for a more inclusionary system. Thus, the particular question that none of the existing theories and models

have been able to answer satisfactorily is what conditions led to the timing of mobilizing actions in the 21st century. However, the struggle to transfer some of the state's power to the Iranian people as well as to new groups, special interests, and domestic forces both social and political has certainly occurred over time, though it has also been left unexplained from a theoretical standpoint. Thus, having a theory capable of following and explaining this struggle over time would significantly improve our understanding of the past and perhaps future political processes and events in Iran, and may even offer wider applications for similar authoritarian settings in the Middle East and beyond.

Thus this section is intended to provide an explanation for the reasons behind the Green Movement of 2009, its events, and its timing. These events also provide an opportunity to re-test the theory of political inclusion as a potentially viable approach to better understanding the current Iranian political struggle for democracy and change. In other words, examining post-revolutionary events through the lens of political inclusion theory can help us to not only understand the causes and outcomes of the Green Movement more thoroughly – particularly as a chapter in Iran's enduring struggle for democracy – but also to better explain the timing of such events and explore how they are made possible by particular social and political events.

Similar to how this model was applied to the Persian Constitutional Revolution in chapter 3 and the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in chapter 4, here the political transformation in post-revolutionary Iranian politics can be analyzed by identifying a) whether or not there were circumstances and conditions that encouraged and enabled contentious political mobilization to occur, b) how the government's response to such grievances and mobilizations took form, and c) how the interaction between the previous two factors played out. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to apply the theory of political inclusion to two five-year periods – one prior to and one

during the Green Movement of 2009 – and in doing so, to see if this theory is capable of explaining why pervasive and ongoing grievances either did or did not lead to mobilizing action during these different time periods.

The first five-year period under study here will cover Iranian political history from 1997 to 2001, while the second five-year period to be covered here spans from 2006 to 2011. By looking to both of these time periods, we will best be able to see whether the theory of political inclusion still holds validity within a more recent timespan and the same social and political context. For organizational reasons, this chapter – like both previous chapters, the operationalization section, and all subsequent chapters – will follow the structure outlined below in order to test this theory thoroughly and comprehensively.

I. Identifying contentious political action

a) The extent of protest mobilization

b) The intensity of protest mobilization

c) The objective of protest mobilization

II. Assessing the level of organization and cohesiveness demonstrated by the opposition

a) Provision of information

b) Interest representation

c) Exercising criticism and provision of alternatives

d) Provision of minimal degree of mutual acceptance

III. Political inclusion and exclusion

a) Having an institution and means of communication

b) Criticizing the government and/or offering policy alternatives (claims-making)

c) Having any form of representation in the system (for example, parliament, administration, and/or other areas of government)

IV. The existence of contextual variables

a) Blaming and putting a human face on injustices and grievances

b) Proximate goals (coalition-building)

In the following sections, each of the variables outlined above will be examined separately for a five-year period prior to the Green Movement, utilizing available print media and digital archives gathered from the Iranian National Archives in Tehran (including the *Ettela'at* newspaper) and the *New York Times'* Time Machine. This same method and manner of assessment will also be applied to a nearby period of "no major action" as ascertained using available media data. A comparison of the two will then be made in order to test the validity of this theory. The table below summarizes these findings.

Table 5.1
Evidence from "quiet" period (1997-2001)

No major mobilizing action period (1997-2001)			
	Variable	**Assessment/Evidence**	**Flowchart Path**
I. Contentious political action	a) The extent of protest mobilization	Not frequent, not widespread, and not addressing national policy. No broad coalition. Engaged mostly a specific sector (i.e., protests of mainly pre-existing groups formed along common lines, such as students)	1
	b) The intensity of protest mobilization	Some intense instances (ex: July 9-14, 1999) but no sizable numbers. Also, not national (only involved Tehran and Tabriz).	1
	c) The objective of protest mobilization	Not targeting central government policies	1
II. Level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition	a) Provision of information	The opposition provides otherwise-unavailable information to both the public and the government about public reaction to a particular policy. The opposition also keeps the government informed about the consequences of official policy.	1A
	b) Interest representation	The opposition represents public and/or special interests that have been overlooked or ignored by the central government.	1A
	c) Exercising criticism and provision of alternatives	The opposition provides criticism of government policies and poses alternatives to them.	1A
	d) Provision of minimal degree of mutual acceptance	Both the government and the opposition have been engaged in official communication with one another and other political actors.	1A

III. Political inclusion and exclusion	a) Having an institution and means of communication	There are a number of official institution(s) and platform(s) for communication. (However, one of the major opposition newspapers, *Salaam*, is shut down, leading to the main protests during this time period.)	1B
	b) Criticizing the government and/or offering policy alternatives (claims-making)	The opposition is able to criticize the government and offer policy alternatives through official channels.	1B
	c) Having any form of representation in the system (such as parliament and/or administration)	The opposition groups are represented in the system, such as through parliament and administrative positions. In fact, the reformers are in power.	1B
IV. The existence of contextual variables	a) Blaming and putting a human face on grievances	Grievances are specific and limited to freedom of press, localized and/or located in places such as universities rather than taking place at the national level. For the most part, they are also not assigned to a specific human face.	1C
	b) Proximate goals (coalition-building) and/or whether opposition is fragmented	There are few or no proximate goals among opposition groups. The immediate goal is to allow the *Salaam* newspaper to publish again and intruders to Tehran University dorms be identified and punished.	1C

I. Identifying contentious political action

It is important to note that the "no action" label for this period does not mean that no protests at all occurred during this time. In fact, the first challenge to the Islamic Republic did occur during this period and stemmed from university students. mostly in Tehran, from July 9 through July 14, 1999. However, as discussed earlier in chapter 2 and also applied to the assessment of the Constitutional Revolution and Islamic Revolution in chapters 3 and 4, this study adheres to a baseline definition of what constitutes contentious political action. According to this

definition, contentious mobilization tends to occur to apply stress to specific target(s) in order to affect public policy on a national level. Based on the assessment of the extent and intensity of protest mobilizations and their objectives here (i.e., to challenge the central government and offer policy alternatives), there were multiple incidents of uprisings during the five-year period from 1997 to 2001. However, upon further examination it also becomes clear that either they do not pass the test of extent and intensity of protest mobilization, or else their objective is not to challenge the central government and offer universal policy alternatives. Instead, due to these protests' differing locales and objectives, the evidence outlined in the next section reveals that major contentious mobilization did not occur during this period and thus we can mark it as a period of "no major contentious political action."

From January 1997 to December 2001, the *New York Times* reported some incidents of protest in Iran. With an archival search for that time period, the keywords "Iran + protest," "Iran + uprising," and "Teheran + protest" (which almost inevitably include all coverage of protests in Iran at the time) can give us a good sense of the intensity and scope of protests that occurred here during this period. Other keywords, such as "riot" and "uprising," also were searched but not pursued much further because they were returning the same items as the first sets of keywords. Following these efforts, the keyword "Iran + protest" brought up about 715 entries.

This period fell within the reign of reformist president Khatami, and other than the student protests of July 1999 and their immediate aftershocks, not many protests can be logged. In fact, the first archival entry within this five-year period appeared on July 10, 1999 in the *New York Times*, reporting a clash between students and the police with the title "Iran Students and Police Clash Over Press Curbs." The *Times* reported that "students were in a tense stand-off with security forces […] after protests against curbs on press freedoms led to violent clashes, for which the

Higher Education Ministry quickly blamed the police" (p. 3). According to the *Times* (July 10, 1999, p. 3), in a statement published by Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), the Higher Education Ministry said the security forces had raided the dormitories "without prior permission and coordination with responsible officials." An Interior Ministry spokesman also said the raid had not been authorized (*Ettela'at*, July 10, pp. 2-3). A day after the incident, the first page of the daily edition of *Ettela'at* (July 10, 1999, p. 1), claimed that "certain unknown forces have initiated the confrontation with the students in response to peaceful student gathering which followed by police intervention."

In recent memory, it was unusual for the Iranian government to blame the police rather than the protesters. However, the Khatami government took pride in freedom of press and advocating for tolerance. (As I specifically remember being a political science student in Tehran during those years, we were quite taken by surprise when plainclothes police invaded the dorms and brutally beat up our fellow college mates in a show of power that was also in defiance of the reformist government.)

Beyond the injuries inflicted and mistrust sowed, this event had two other major consequences. First, it showed the Iranian public that there were two sources of power that could project power over people – namely, the presidency and the supreme leader – and that these two sources could do so independently of, and even in conflict with, one another. Second, this event also determined the direction of the follow-up protests and gradually revealed the demise of the concept of republicanism in favor of Islamism within the so-called "Islamic Republic." Thus, even though it is not quite an example of contentious mobilization as we have operationalized that term here, this student demonstration against the closure of a pro-Khatami newspaper was still a major turning point that had long-lasting effects on Iranian politics through the present. In particular, the

Green Movement, which will be discussed in more detail shortly, was by and large an effort to restore republicanism in the Islamic regime.

The *New York Times* (July 12, 1999, p. 4) reported that 15,000 students took to the streets of Tehran on July 11 in what had become "a protest against a divided Government whose security forces remain in conservative hands." A day later the *Times* (July 13, p. 1) also reported that in solidarity with their colleagues in Tehran, "students demonstrated in 18 cities and towns, including major cosmopolitan cities like Tabriz, Shiraz and Isfahan." Then on July 14, 1999, a pro-regime rally was staged in support of the hardline supreme leader (the *Times*, July 15, 1999, pp. 1 and 10). According to the *Times* (July 18, p. 4), on July 17, 1999, Iranian student leaders announced "a temporary ban on pro-reform demonstrations, but pressed the Islamic Government on a long list of demands, including the resignation of the country's chief of police." Though this student movement fizzled out by July 18, 1999, it still proved to be a major challenge for the regime. After this, though, no other major protests occurred during the remainder of the period under study here.

In addition to its lack of both intensity and also of national scope and spread, this one-week standoff between Iranian students and armed forces does not pass the test of national objective either. In other words, the demands and *objective of protests* during these events were not aimed at the central government of Iran, and they did not offer alternative polices at the national level with universal effects on the Iranian populace. Instead, their initial objective was to protest against the closure of the reformist *Salaam* newspaper and the passage of a bill that could curb freedom of press. Then, after the crackdown, their only demand was to bring to justice those who had entered the Tehran University dorms and assaulted students during an otherwise-uneventful evening. Therefore, as this was the only major protest during this time, we can mark this period as one of "no major mobilizing action" since the events unfolded with no national objective and

escalated as a reaction to a specific, localized incident and the resultant tug-of-war between the reformist and conservative forces within the Iranian government.

II. Level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition

The level of organization and cohesiveness within the opposition is a major indicator of how opposition groups will interact with the government as well as how they will engage the feedback loop in order to achieve their ultimate goal of reform. Based on how this variable has been operationalized for this study, the provision of information (providing otherwise unavailable information to both the public and the government), interest representation (representing people and/or groups currently overlooked by the government), provision of alternatives (delivering criticism of official government policies and posing alternatives), and provision of mutual recognition (that the opposition exists and also that the government recognizes its existence) will be examined in order to determine whether the opposition was organized and cohesive during this time period.

In order to assess the theory of political inclusion, similar to the pattern in previous chapters as also operationalized and described in chapter 2, we need to understand whether the condition of *provision of information* had been satisfied during the period currently under study. In other words, an important function of any opposition is to provide otherwise-unavailable information to both the public and the government about public reaction to a particular policy. In this respect, the opposition keeps the government informed about the consequences of official policy. Here it is worth noting that during the 1999 student protests, the reformists (i.e., the former opposition from earlier time periods examined here) are in power and also have major newspaper and publications with which to disseminate information and discuss the students' demands. Also as discussed

earlier, the Office for Consolidation of Unity (OCU) was very active, publishing statements that were then picked up and circulated by mostly reformist daily papers. The OCU chapters also increased their public support for Khatami's reform through protests, one of which led to the standoff with police on July 9,1999. Therefore, there is no doubt that the criteria of provision of information is fulfilled here, given how information was collected and passed about freely. However, the events that occurred years later, which will be discussed in the next section, would then lead to significant restrictions on both freedom of speech and the freedom of the press.

All things considered, Iran experienced an intermission of freedom, pluralism, and democracy during Khatami's time in power from 1997 to 2005, particularly during the first term of his presidency when freedom of the press and freedom of associations were much respected. Many scholars believe that Khatami ushered in a new era of freedom of the press and expansion of civil society (Samii 2001; Abrahamian 2008; Keddie 2006, Ghasemi 2010; Ghasemi 2015; Mason 2002;). In particular, Ghasemi (2010), who has studied the history of Iranian newspapers extensively, also confirms that due to the sheer number of publications and the Iranian government's levels of tolerance toward them, this period deserves a category of its own when trying to map out the history of the Iranian press (p. 135). For instance, with the incidents discussed above, *Ettela'at* newspaper published the student's demands on its front pages for three consecutive days: July 10, 11 and 12, 1999. This example alone already demonstrates how information was publicly transmitted on a large scale across Iran during this time.

However, the freedom of the press did not remain steady for the entire period under study here. Instead, it gradually decreased. With the support of the supreme leader, the conservative faction initiated a process that led to the closure of the *Salaam* newspaper, and within a year of the student movement of July 1999, similar papers were also hemmed in by the regime. According to

Assoudeh (2010, p. 2), the regime banned about 200 publications at this point. Then in April 2000, following the adoption of a new press law, the judiciary (which is controlled, and its head is directly selected, by the supreme leader) also banned 13 more reformist periodicals, including *Neshat* and *Gozaresh-e ruz,* and the regime also began to crack down on outspoken reformist journalists such as Akbar Ganji (BBC, 24 April 2000). However, none of these events provoked mobilizing action, either due to fear or because the reformist writers with large readerships would find their ways into other publications or else simply start a new one, since Khatami's government was permissive about issuing new licenses for new publications. During this five-year period, then, the opposition was certainly able to satisfy the criteria of provision of information through official channels and media, despite facing hurdles and challenges in doing so.

During the period from 1997 to 2001 currently under study, the traditional reformist opposition was in power and therefore also able to engage in *interest representation*. For progressives and advocates of democracy, Khatami's election in 1997 was one of the greatest moments in Iran's recent history. According to Statista, the 1997 presidential election marked the then-largest voter turnout in the history of Iran at 79.92%. This was only surpassed during the 2009 elections, which saw an 85.21% participation rate – and which also coincided with the Green Movement. One of the reasons many believed the election was rigged since only reformist vote has historically increased the voter turnout so the participation rate did not correspond with the reported results.[60] Historically, the reformists tended to represent the interests of many individuals who otherwise feel unrepresented. During this time period, the reformists not only took the presidency, but also they won the first municipal election of 1999 in Tehran, and this

[60] Meanwhile, the recent presidential election of 2021 logged the lowest participation rate in the history of the Islamic Republic, at 48.8% by official numbers. See: https://www.statista.com/statistics/692094/iran-voter-turnout-rate/

victory was continued in the parliamentary (*majlis*) election of 2000 (Abrahamian, 2008 p. 188). Khatami's re-election in 2001 also meant that the provision of interest representation was fulfilled much better during this time than it had been during any other period in the existence of the Islamic Republic prior to 1997.

In trying to determine the level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition, the next component to be assessed here is the *provision of alternatives*. In other words, was the opposition of the time willing and able to provide "official and public" criticism of the regime's policies and propose alternatives to those policies? This provision is easy to discuss for the period from 1997 to 2001 since the largest opposition in Iran was then in power, represented for the most part by both the presidency and the parliament. They also tolerated smaller oppositions groups with more progressive agendas, such as the Office for Consolidation of Unity (OCU), which was the largest and the most progressive student opposition group, even as the OCU criticized the regime publicly and officially. Thus, the opposition certainly engaged in criticism of the government and provided policy alternatives. For instance, a day after the July 9 incident at the dormitory of Tehran University, *Ettela'at* (July 10, 1999, p. 1) quoted Shahidi, deputy minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance for press, saying that only a special press court should handle allegations against the press and make decisions about the closure of presses that had been deemed in non-compliance with the law. This was a direct criticism of the Iran's hardline Islamic revolutionary court, which had been the political body that issued a ruling for the closure of the *Salaam* newspaper. Likewise, although *Ettela'at* could not be considered a truly reformist newspaper, it could still be categorized as a moderate or centrist newspaper. This is worth noting because *Ettela'at* also published the students' demands, even while they were criticizing

Khatami's government and demanding that he bring to justice the perpetrators responsible for that incident of violence in their dorms (*Ettela'at*, July 11, 1999, pp. 1-2)

Meanwhile the *New York Times* report on the incident of July 10 revealed that at the time even the Iranian government was criticizing the plainclothes forces who had invaded the living spaces of peaceful student protestors. The *Times* (July 10, 1999, p. 3) reported that, according to the Higher Education Ministry, "This incident cannot be analyzed in simple terms, and it cannot be accepted that it was not part of a calculated plan with the motive of plunging the country into crisis by a number of willful forces." Elsewhere, the Higher Education Ministry defended the students as "wise and pious" and said that they "do not deserve such insulting treatment" (The *New York Times* (July 10, 1999, p. 3). *Ettela'at* (July 10, 1999, pp.1-2) also reported that the Higher Education Minister, Moeen, submitted his resignation after condemning the perpetrators of that attack.

Thus both opposition groups and even the Ministry of the Interior of the Khatami government condemned these invaders and were opposed to parliament's measures attempting to curb the freedom of the press. According to the BBC (July 7, 1999), these measures were denounced by top Iranian moderates including liberal Culture Minister Mohajerani, a staunch ally of President Mohammad Khatami, who had put increased press freedom at the heart of his reform agenda. According to the BBC report Mohajerani told the parliament "Freedom cannot be repressed by any law. We have to create laws in accordance with freedom, not freedom according to our laws." The report also confirms that the "President Khatami and his entire cabinet stated their opposition to the [new] law last week" (BBC, July 7, 1999),

The provision of alternatives criterion was also fulfilled by the opposition. For example, the *Times* (July 18, 1999, p. 4) reported that when student leaders announced a temporary ban

on pro-reform demonstrations, they also pressed the Islamic government on a long list of demands, including the resignation of the chief of police. Thus, the opposition was certainly able to criticize the regime and offer policy alternatives: a sign of a functioning feedback loop in a pluralist society.

Lastly, the provision of *minimal degree of mutual acceptance* is also fulfilled during this time period. Both the government and the opposition, including the OCU, had all been engaged in official communication. For instance, the *New York Times* (July 18, 1999, p. 4) reported that the OCU leaders "asked for meetings with Iran's top leaders, including Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the country's supreme leader, as well as President Mohammad Khatami and former President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who still wields considerable power as the head of an important overseeing body." Also, *Ettela'at* made multiple references to the student organizations behind the sit-ins and protests for four consecutive days: from July 10th through July 13th, 1999. The fact that an opposition group was discussed at length on the front page of a national newspaper in factual rather than combative terms is indicative of a high degree of mutual acceptance. Due to such circumstances, too, the degree of mutual acceptance is satisfied.

Based on this assessment of the level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition, it is easily concluded that the opposition was able to spread otherwise-unavailable information quickly and effectively, criticize the government cohesively, and offer policy alternatives clearly and pointedly. As also seen here, though, the fulfilment of these criteria does not necessarily or inherently translate to contentious mobilization itself.

III. Political inclusion and exclusion

Based on the theory of political inclusion, a primary goal of any opposition in authoritarian societies is to induce ongoing reform processes in the system in order to expand its chance of inclusion (i.e., share in power and ability to impact policy-making) and represent those whose interests have been ignored under the current system. The levels to which such opposition groups enjoy inclusion or exclusion in the current system and polity constitute an important factor in how the opposition both interacts with the government and also engages the feedback loop. Following the operationalization of variables for this study in chapter 2, it is necessary to assess various elements of this same variable in order to identify a period as being one of political inclusion or exclusion in the polity. Such elements include: first, having an official institution(s) and means of communication (with both the government and the general public); second, being willing and able to deliver official criticisms and provide official alternative policies publicly; and lastly, having any form of representation in parliament or other areas of power in the regime. Therefore, all three indicators must be examined in order to determine whether the opposition has been included or excluded from the polity during the time period under study.

Based on the available historical and media data for this period from 1997 to 2001, and following earlier discussion on previous variables, it becomes clear that the opposition groups certainly had *official institutions* such as a party platform or other official establishments with which to organize and cooperate on any plan of action. It is also evident that the opposition groups also had *official means of communication* with both the government and the general public. In other words, they were not only represented in the government; they were also in power, in at least some instances.

For example, according to Keddie (2006, p. 276), Khatami's interior minister "authorized political parties, and several reformist and centrist parties registered." Thus the reformists and their

supporting allies, such as the students' Office for Consolidation of Unity (OCU), already had official institutions and party platforms with all the modern elements that characterized such institutions. In another instance, the Islamic Iran Participation Front[61] was a reformist political party on whose platform Khatami ran; this was also the most dominant party throughout both the reform era and the Khordad movement. Likewise, the OCU was the largest student organization to date, and it had scheduled elections, regular meetings, and an official publication. The OCU also played a significant role in the occupation of the US embassy in Tehran, but during the reform era, came to be considered both a leftist and a pro-reform organization. The OCU had a chapter in almost every university across Iran, and at the time, both political parties and even the supreme leader courted them for their support. For instance, according to *Ettela'at* (July 12, 1999, p. 1), even Khamenei reached out to the OCU and members after the attack on the Tehran University dorms, condemning the attacks on sacred university space. (Today, though, the OCU has now been co-opted by the regime and according to their own website, the organization now works under the guidance of Iran's supreme leader.[62])

As for the means of communications during this period, much space for "public discussions" was created under Khatemi through newspapers such as *Khordad* and *Mosharekat* (Abrahamian, 2008, p. 186). For instance, *Mosharekat,* whose name literally means "participation," was the official newspaper of the Islamic Iran Participation Front. This newspaper was a household name during Khatami's presidency and it could be found everywhere. The OCU also had a bulletin, though they often published their statements in reformist newspapers as well for wider distribution. There was an abundance of newspapers during this era, to the point where

[61] The Islamic Iran Participation Front is now banned after it threw its support behind the Green Movement in 2009.

[62] See http://tahkimnews.ir/?page_id=6

some would say that almost every day a new name popped up on the counter at news kiosks. As discussed earlier, Ghasemi (2010, p. 135) – whose work focuses on the history of Iranian newspapers – confirms that due to the sheer number of publications available and opening during this time, as well as the government's overall tolerance of them, this period deserves a category of its own in the history of the Iranian press. The most often-cited example is that of *Ettela'at*, which from July 10th through July 12th 1999 ran students' demands on the first page during their standoff with the police. As these examples demonstrate, then, information was publicly transmitted on a large scale throughout Iran. Likewise, based on these conditions during the five-year period under study, it seems clear that the opposition was able to satisfy the criteria of provision of information through both official channels and media.

Also as discussed in previous chapters, since the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, Iranian political oppositions never quite abandoned political parties. Although certain parties have encountered gains and losses throughout the years, as has the multi-party system itself, these political bodies have remained an important part of Iran's political scene. Also, regarding the specific period currently under study, the reformist era under president Khatami enabled political parties and associations to grow exponentially as well as to communicate with the Iranian populace through associations, chapters, and media platforms. This period has come to be known as the most inclusive period in recent Iranian history. However, as Keddie (2006, p. 275) outlines, the assault on the freedom of press began to undermine Khatami's efforts to further democratize Iran during his second term. In April 2001, for instance, "over sixty members of Liberation Movement were arrested on dubious charges" (Keddie, 2006, p. 278).[63] During the same time, *Ettela'at* (April

[63] The Liberation Movement were members of the National Liberation Front during the last shah's regime who later joined the Islamic revolutionaries.

8, 2001, pp. 1 & 13) reported that the revolutionary court had arrested members of the Liberation Movement opposition group under the pretext of threatening national security, claiming that this group was trying to undermine the regime by encouraging anti-government gatherings and protests.

Another indicator of political inclusion is official *claims-making,* which includes criticizing the government and offering policy alternatives publicly. As already demonstrated, during the period under study, the opposition had a variety of platforms and official means of communication that they used quite effectively. Thus, the opposition was fully capable of fulfilling these two functions. In addition, the opposition also enjoyed freedom of press, freedom of association, and freedom of speech, at least for the most part of this five-year period. During the reformist epoch, claim-making and direct criticism of the government were possible so long as certain red lines were not crossed, and the only red line that inspired crackdowns was the principle of *Velayat-e Faghih* (the Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist), which was not a primary concern for the opposition at the time. Besides, the supreme leader portrayed himself as an impartial fatherly figure, and at least to the public eye, did not get involved directly with party politics so long as they did not relate to Israel, the United States, or the integrity of Islam. These three issues, though, were considered existential, and based on the Islamic Republic's constitution, fell squarely within the supreme leader's power.

Under these circumstances, reformist newspapers such as *Salaam*, *Mosharekat*, and *Neshat,* and even centrist newspapers such as *Ettela'at,* constantly offered policy alternatives and published claims and criticism from opposition groups. Although these policy alternatives were not aimed at overhauling the central system, they did represent a variety of interests still often overlooked in society at large, such as the perspectives of women, students, laborers, etc. *Salaam*

newspaper, which was a pro-reform Left-Islamic daily according to Assoudeh (2010), had not only targeted and criticized the Islamic regime's major institutional tenets – most importantly, *Velayat-e Faghih* (the Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist) – but also Kho'einiha, its founder, had been one of the only major voices for students, women, laborers, and other overlooked members of Iranian society who wanted their voices heard. Its bold policy alternatives eventually got *Salaam* in trouble, and the conservatives had it closed on July 6, 1999. But the other reformist newspapers continued to advocate for students and women's right, as seen with the way *Ettela'at* published protest coverage and students' demands three days in a row during the students' standoff with the police (July 10-12, 1999, p. 1). These examples demonstrate that, for the most part throughout this period, both the opposition and the reformists in government positions were able to offer policy alternatives and criticize macro-politics on a large scale throughout Iran.

Lastly, in order to assess the level of inclusion or exclusion, it is also necessary to examine whether the opposition had any form of *representation in the government,* including parliament, cabinets, or any other significant positions of power. A review of the situation during this time period will reveal that, for the first time since the inception of the Islamic Republic, the opposition reformists controlled the presidency, the parliament, and most of the city councils, including that of the capital city, Tehran. This reformist takeover is often referred to as the "wave of second Khordad" (as previously mentioned, "Khordad" refers to the month Khatami was elected president in 1997) because it was so overwhelming popular to be a reformist during those years. Therefore, the reformists had significant *representation in the government* in most places except the position of supreme leader and the heads of organizations that were selected either directly or indirectly by the supreme leader, such as the judiciary and the Guardian Council.

Thus it is evident that, despite a number of protests and police encounters, the opposition was effectively included in the polity during the five-year period between 1997-2001. Furthermore, this impression is both based on and supported by historical evidence and reviews of contemporaneous media content. However, the clampdown on the freedom of the press and arresting of journalists began occurring toward the end of Khatami's presidency, which offers a hint about what was to come with the Green Movement in 2009, as will be discussed next. However, during the reform era, and even during the tightening of freedom of press which started around 2000, a "feedback loop" between the government and the opposition—and Iranian society at large—was still operating in mostly functional and suitable ways. In such situations, even if certain grievances existed and instances of contentious collective actions can be observed, the likelihood of widespread contentious political action actually stemming from them is low.

IV. The existence of contextual variables

During this period from 1997 to 2001, grievances still existed but for the most part, things also continued to improve both economically and politically. According to Keddie (2006, p. 274), Khatami turned away from a neoliberal economy, "refusing to privatize various public sectors and retaining subsidies on necessities. He also raised the wages of public employees, some of whom, like teachers, were paid below the official poverty levels." Political grievances were also subsiding or else directed at the pace of reforms and not the reform policies driving them per se. For instance, the youth and students who were impatient and kept pushing for speedier reforms during a short period of time obviously created a backlash before the reforms could institutionalize in enduring forms. However, these grievances were usually less pervasive and also tended not to be directed at a specific person. Only after the violent crackdown at the Tehran University dorms did students begin organizing and chanting against supreme leader Khamenei, since they believed that the

perpetrating plainclothes security forces were under his direct command. (It is also worth noting that this is very similar to how the shah became the face of injustice after 1963, as discussed in chapter 4.) Then after the student protests and their clashes with security forces in July 1999, the narrative changed and Khamenei gradually became the face of undemocratic forces. This shift culminated in the Green Movement of 2009, which will be discussed in the next section, but all things considered, it is noteworthy to see the extents to which Iranian history repeats itself.

The other contextual variable to be assessed here is the provision of proximate goals and whether or not the opposition leadership was fragmented. During this time period in particular, deep assessment of this variable is needed in order to determine whether the oppositions and their allies were in agreement or else fragmented.

Even a brief overview reveals that the opposition groups were in agreement on at least the need for reform and democratization, which is how the coalition got Khatami elected. According to Mashayekhi (2001), the OCU chose to support Mohammed Khatami as their candidate of choice because he was a cleric with a reputation for tolerance and open-mindedness that seemed promising to the Left and young intellectuals. Beyond this coalition to defeat the conservative right, though, opposition groups were not in full agreement on much else. Instead, the different progressive agendas of each group, the speed with which they wanted to achieve them, and the diversity of their demands and preferred policies was representative of the polarization among groups such as the *ulama*, the *intelligentsia*, and the *bazaar*. For example, the young intellectuals wanted political development to take place first, but the *bazaar* was more interested in economic reforms and easing of tensions with the West that could lift economic sanctions on Iran and their livelihood. Then for the *ulama*, there were two groups. The first of these groups was more traditional and believed that things needed to change more slowly and in accordance with *sharia*

law, while the second group were more radical and even challenged the *Velayat-e Faghih* as an impediment to democracy. According to Keddie (2006, p. 274), in November 1997 Grand Ayatollah Montazeri "called for a sharp reduction in the powers of the leader, saying that the occupant of this position should supervise, not rule." For this he was placed under house arrest, but he also became the spiritual leader of the secular wing of the reformist movement.

Therefore, although the opposition was formed based on a coalition to elect a reformist president, beyond this they were fragmented and did not act at all in unison. This is why the OCU felt betrayed by the lack of action from the reformist government during the police raid on student dorms. Similarly, over 60 members of the Liberation Movement were arrested on dubious charges and Khatami's government did nothing to stop the assault, though these were reformists who had supported him. At the time, *Ettela'at* (April 8, 2001, pp. 1 & 13) reported that these arrests had happened because these people were threatening national security and trying to undermine the regime by encouraging gatherings and protests. However, these were actually the core principles that Khatami had run for his presidency on: freedom of speech and freedom of association.

All things considered, this period of no major contentious collective action was a period of relatively high inclusion. With the one exception of the student uprising that lasted no more than a few days in 1999, the rest of these incidents of contentious collective action do not qualify as major incidents because they do not pass the tests of intensity or of extent with a national policy goal agenda. Therefore, based on the likelihood model of political action as outlined in chapter 2, when there is a low degree of organization and cohesiveness among the opposition and a high degree of political inclusion in addition to an absence of contextual variables of proximate goals and a human face to grievances (i.e., blaming a specific individual), the path will likely lead to a

route of no contentious political action. And as demonstrated above, the five-year period from 1997 to 2001 in Iran, fully coincides with "no contentious political action" path.

No Contentious Political Action Model (Path 1)

Low likelihood of contentious political actions = high degree of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition + high degree of political inclusion

Note: The absence or presence of contextual variables (blame/human face to grievances + proximate goals) does not impact the model when there is also a high degree of political inclusion.

Period of contentious collective action from 2006 - 2011

In the following section, a five-year period including the years immediately prior to and the years immediately after the Green Movement of 2009 will be discussed and assessed, in order to determine whether the political inclusion theory can provide any explanatory insights regarding its causes and timing. The chart below summarizes the findings of this section:

Table 5.2
Evidence from "contentious" period (2006-2011)

The Green Movement of 2009 (2006-2011)			
	Variable	**Assessment/Evidence**	**Flowchart Path**
I. Contentious political action	a) The extent of protest mobilization	Frequent and widespread, particularly from June 2009 through February 2010	2
	b) The intensity of protest mobilization	Intense/sizable numbers, particularly in the months leading up to June 2009 and for several months afterwards	2
	c) The objective of protest mobilization	Targeting policies created, implemented, and enforced by the central government and pushing for significant democratic reform (i.e., bringing back republicanism)	2

II. level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition	a) Provision of information	The opposition provided much otherwise-unavailable information to both the public and the government about public reaction to particular policies through both official and unofficial channels. They also kept the government informed about the consequences of official policy, often through public statements and by writing letters to the supreme leader.	2A
	b) Interest representation	The opposition represented the interests of the "reformists," which at this time included a wide range of average Iranian citizens who believed their votes had not been counted by the central government following the recent national election.	2A
	c) Exercising criticism and provision of alternatives	The opposition delivered criticism of government policies and posed many alternatives.	2A
	d) Provision of minimal degree of mutual acceptance	Both during and prior to the Green Movement, both the government and the opposition leaders (in particular, Mousavi and Karroubi) had been engaged in official communication.	2A
III. Political inclusion and exclusion	a) Having an institution and means of communication	There were multiple party platforms and a number of official institution(s) and media for communication. In addition, unofficial platforms such as YouTube, Twitter, and opposition leaders' statements and speeches formed the main means of communication. The *Kalemeh* website was also a hub of transmission of verified information.	2B
	b) Criticizing the government and/or offering policy alternatives (claims-making)	The opposition was able to criticize the government and offer policy alternatives through official channels. However, those who took these actions were often silenced, jailed, or placed under house arrest.	2B
	c) Having any form of representation in the system (for example, parliament or administration)	The opposition did not have any significant form of official representation in the cabinet. The opposition groups were sparsely represented in the parliament, forming only a small and relatively powerless minority.	2B

IV. The existence of contextual variables	a) Blaming and putting a human face on grievances	Grievances were not specific and ranged from demands for an election recount to sentiment against the supreme leader and reformation of the Islamic republic constitution. Only some of the opposition groups targeted the supreme leader Khamenei specifically, seeking to change the way *Velayat-e Faghih* controlled Iranian elections.	2C
	b) Proximate goals (coalition-building) and opposition not being fragmented	There were few or no proximate goals among opposition groups, though the immediate goal was to allow a recount to expose the allegedly rigged national election. Otherwise, the opposition was deeply fragmented on the goals of their movement.	2E

I. Identifying contentious political action

Following the same pattern in previous chapters, we will first need to identify the occurrence of any contentious mobilization during the period under study, seeking those that occurred as a means of applying stress to specific target(s) in order to affect public policy. Based on assessments of the extent and intensity of protest mobilizations and their objectives (specifically, whether they aimed to challenge the central government and offer policy alternatives), many incidents of mobilizing action occurred during the period under study from 2006 to 2011 – particularly from June 2009 to February 2011, when millions of protesters took to the streets and challenged the regime. As outlined in the following section, contentious mobilization occurred throughout this period in what has since become known as the Green Movement, and thus we can mark it as a period of "major contentious political action." Likewise, following the same pattern of assessment in previous chapters, this study continues to utilize a unified and systematic method of media content analysis (as outlined in chapter two), which is

achieved by reviewing and logging the information on this event as located in media-generated and media-reported historical data.

From January 2006 to December 2011, the *New York Times* reported many incidents of protest in Iran, particularly around June 2009 when the Green Movement began picking up momentum. With an archival search within that time period, as conducted in previous chapters, the keywords "Iran + protest," "Iran + uprising," and "Teheran + protest" (which almost inevitably include all coverage of protests in Iran at the time) can give us a good sense of the intensity and scope of protests that occurred during this time. For instance, the keywords "Iran + protest" brought up about 2,007 entries from the *Times* database, while the keywords "Tehran + Protest" returned 754 results. All of these entries were logged carefully and systematically for further analysis.

However, upon a closer look many of these entries had to be filtered out because many of these protests were staged by the government itself, and for specific reasons. For instance, these keywords bring up several articles on protests regarding the publication of a cartoon depicting Prophet Mohammad in a Danish newspaper in 2006 (see February 7, 2006, p. A00005). Similar incidents that received *Times* coverage included regional protests in the northwest regions of Iran because Azari minorities were offended by another cartoon published in a different newspaper (*The New York Times*, May 29, 2006, p. A9). Other incidents whose coverage comes up in these searches include protests, often staged by the Iranian regime, in front of foreign embassies. For instance, the *Times* reported that about 200 students protested in front of the British Embassy to condemn British aggression against Iran: this was following the capture of several British sailors who, according to Iran were captured in Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf while Britain maintained that the sailors had been in Iraqi waters. According to the *Times* (April 1, 2007) "The protesters chanted 'Death to Britain' and 'Death to America' as they hurled stones into the embassy's

courtyard." These instances were worth noting because although these keyword search brought them to light, they do not describe the same type of mobilization that the remainder of this study has been examining.

Such conservative-led protests – mainly against the reformist agenda – became a popular phenomenon beginning when Khatami took power in 1997. Specifically, after the student movements in 1999 the conservatives started a new tradition of what is now known in street talks as "counter-protest rallies," which are mobilizations staged by the regime in support of its particular form of Islamic governance and as a means of preventing any true future protests. At the first sign of expression of grievance by a newspaper or a reformist, a group or a clergy member who are pro-supreme leader and pro-regime will invoke a rally to condemn dissenting voices against the supreme leader or regime. This public display of feigned anger and outrage is intended to show that the proposed reformist idea or grievance is not popular, since it supposedly triggered this outcry. Likewise, such mobilizations are also meant to demonstrate that Iran is a pluralistic society, and since they 'draw out' large numbers of supposed participants, the central government can point to these numbers as an easy means of quelling any dissent from the opposite side, on the pretext of having major popular support going the other direction. More specifically still, this approach is often adopted to kill the possibility of a proposed reform or a feedback loop. As an example, according to the article "Thousands Rally to Back Government" from the *Times* in December 2009 "a speaker at the demonstrations, Ayatollah Ahmad Alam Ol-Hoda, the Friday Prayer leader of the city of Mashhad, called opposition leaders 'Mohareb,' meaning enemies of God" (December 31, 2009, p. A10).

These examples aside, the *Times* archives show that there were also a few genuine anti-government protests prior to June 2009, but these were limited in size, intensity, and spread. Some

examples include the gas rationing riot that led to two gas stations in Tehran being set on fire (*Times*, June 27, 2007) as well as a student protest against Ahmadinejad[64] after his speech at Tehran University (October, 9, 2007, p. A14).[65] However, a closer examination of the media data thus collected makes it clear that prior to June 2009, none of these events quite pass the test of intensity and extent. The events of June 2009 itself, however, are unique and certainly qualify as major mobilizing action with a national objective. Here then the question becomes how such contentious mobilizations became possible, and how the variables identified in the theory of political inclusion can be located and analyzed using available media and archival data from the period.

Immediately after the presidential election on June 14, 2009, millions of Iranians poured into the streets of Tehran and other major cities, chanting "where is my vote?" This mobilization and its associated events and slogans posed the most serious challenge to the Iranian regime since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. According to the *Times* (June 12, 2009, p. A1), one primary cause of this mobilization was that "both sides claim victory in presidential election in Iran" while the officials were still counting the ballots. Soon afterward, election officials rushed to claim Ahmadinejad the winner, but many doubted the results were correct as ballots had to be counted by hand – which should have taken days, not hours.[66] According to the *New York Times* that month, "The streets of Iran's capital erupted in the most intense protests in a decade on Saturday, with riot police officers using batons and tear gas against opposition demonstrators who claimed that

[64] Mr. Ahmadinejad angered students and professors at the University after his election in 2005 when he appointed a cleric as the University's president (*The New York Times*, Oct. 9, 2007, p. A14).
[65] Iranian students continued to organize protests on campus even after the June 12, 2009 protest inside the universities where they felt much safer. For instance, in September 29, 2009, when students returned to campus they staged a large protest (*The New York Times*, September 30, 2009) and a few days later, 18 students have been arrested (*The New York Times*, October 3, 2009, p. A8).
[66] The election results were announced so fast that while I was waiting in line to cast my ballot in Irvine, California in support of the reform movement – as had many other Iranians abroad who showed up to vote for the first time – we all had to return home without casting our vote because they had already announced the winner.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had stolen the presidential election" (June 13, 2009, p. A1). The supposed landslide victory for Ahmadinejad came as a shock to almost everyone who watched the campaigns, particularly because, as the *Times* also reported, most polls were showing that Mousavi had a strong lead in the final days of the campaign (June 13, 2009, p. A1).

The contrast between the expectations and the reported election outcome was stark and therefore it was not taken lightly by the people who came out to vote by huge numbers. Worth and Fathi in an op-ed in the *New York Times* (June 14, 2009, p. A1) reported that the violence and acrimony over Iran's disputed election quickly intensified, with word spreading that "more than 100 prominent opposition members had been detained, riots erupting in Tehran and other cities, and the triumphant incumbent hinting that his top challenger risks punishment for questioning the result." On June 15th, millions of Iranians defied the ban on protests announced by the regime just a few days earlier and poured out to march in the cities in a both historic and violent moment. The *Basij* attempted to silence these protesters with beatings and firearms, similar to the violence enacted during the Shah's regime during the 1979 protests, but unsuccessfully during the first few days. Likewise, these protests also continued even after the elections were certified on June 29, 2009. The *Times* reported that after 11 days of tense calm in Tehran, on July 9 "thousands of Iranians poured into the streets of Tehran […] clapping, chanting, almost mocking the authorities as they once again turned out in large numbers in defiance of the government's threat to crush their protests with violence" (July 9, 2009 p. A4).

Ettela'at newspaper entirely ignored the uprising and Mousavi's rejection of the election results or the protests that ensued immediately after the elections. Ettela'at did not mention the Green Movement, Mousavi or the protests until four days after the election on June 16, 2009 when four million people poured into the streets of Tehran. On that day, Ettela'at (June 16, 2009, p. 1)

announces the meeting of Mousavi and the supreme leader and emphasizes on non-confrontational nature of the protests: "Calm rally of Mousavi supporters from Inqilab square to Azadi square." Ettela'at reports that millions of Mousavi supporters participated and Mousavi, Karroubi and Khatami all participated and met with the protesters.

Just a few months later on December 7 and 8, further large protests occurred and both the *Times* and Tehran's police chief announced that about 204 people had been arrested in the capital (*The New York Time*, December 9, 2009 p. A6). A few weeks later on December 26, Tehran police said they had made 300 arrests and there were several more deaths, one of which was Ali Mousavi, a 43-year-old nephew of opposition leader Mir Hussein Mousavi (*The New York Times*, December 28, 2009 p. A1). None of these events appeared in Ettela'at newspaper as the regime did not want to spread the protest information or legitimize the mobilizations. This level of intensity continued until February 14, 2011 when opposition leaders were put under house arrest. Not surprisingly, this move toward jailing and suppression coincided with the success of the Arab Spring in Egypt. Ettela'at (June 16, 2011, pp. 1& 4) reported that two people were dead and eight people had been injured on the February 14, 2011 protests.

At every stage of these developing events, the opposition's demands and *objective of protests* are also clear and outlined. Specifically, most of these events involved providing alternative polices at the national level in order to achieve universal effects for the Iranian populace. For instance, at the beginning of the protests in June 2009, the objective was to annul the election results because Ahmadinejad's landslide victory did not line up mathematically with realities both on the ground and in major polls. As time went on, this list of demands also grew longer, often in response to the government closing down newspapers and detaining protesters. During this time period, Iranian media reported very little about these protests, so international

news organizations often turned to utilizing footage from social media for their broadcasts. Among the most notable of these social media-sourced images, demonstrators' chants of "death to the dictator" and "where is my vote" seemed to take center stage once again after they had been widely used thirty years earlier during the uprisings that led to the Islamic Revolution of 1979. This resurgence of similar chants was taken to show that the Islamic Republic did not deliver on its promise; instead, the only difference that many people saw between this regime and its predecessor was that a shah had been replaced by an ayatollah. Then with the catalyst of the disputed election results, the Green Movement pivoted from being a political campaign to becoming a protest campaign. The movement also eventually took upon itself the objective of demanding the civil liberties that had been promised to all during the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Based on the available data presented above, then, it thus becomes clear that many of the protests during this time period, particularly those occurring from June 2009 to February 2011, easily pass the tests of intensity and spread.

II. Level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition

In the theory of political inclusion, the level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition in an authoritarian society can help us understand how these opposition groups will interact with the government as well as how they will engage the feedback loop for their ultimate goal of reform. Based on how this variable has been operationalized for this study, the provision of information (providing otherwise-unavailable information to both the public and the government), interest representation (representing people and/or groups overlooked by the government), provision of alternatives (providing criticism of government policies and posing

alternatives to them), and provision of mutual recognition must all be examined in order to determine whether the opposition had been organized and cohesive during the time period under study.

The Iranian uprisings in June 2009, which continued through February 2011 and were known collectively as the Green Movement, has also been referred to frequently as the "Twitter Revolution." This is because social media such as Twitter and YouTube allowed the opposition groups and protesters in Iran's often highly-censored environment to communicate with one another and plan protests, publicize those protests globally to expose the regime's violence, and gave Iranian citizens themselves a voice in a climate where public, non-anonymous dissent could be fatal. However, as also discussed earlier, some scholars have criticized the effectiveness of social media in such instances and even maintained that the term "revolution" should not be used in this instance (Rothkopf, 2009). So although the importance of social media in Iran has been widely accepted as a valuable tool for political awareness – particularly in social contexts where organization and publicity of a cause are more difficult without it – there are also enduring disagreements regarding the degree to which social media made the Green Movement either possible or successful, both as a revolution and even as a movement.

In addition to acknowledging that social media certainly played a role in providing otherwise-unavailable information to both the public and the government, though, in order to assess the theory of political inclusion in this complex environment, it is also crucial to understand whether the *provision of information* – as operationalized and described in chapter two – had been satisfied during the period currently under study beyond the effects of social media.

During the period under study from 2006 to 2011, the reformists were not in power, and despite the closure of many reformist newspapers during Ahmadinejad's first term, some of these publications remained in operation for a time. In fact, prior to these presidential elections, Iran had enjoyed a higher degree of freedom of the press,[67] particularly since Khatami came to power in 1997 as a reformist president. Also as discussed earlier, the reformist presidential campaign was very active, since for a time all reformists were unified in order to deny Ahmadinejad a second term. At this point, reformists had access to affiliated newspapers such as *Etemad*, and opposition leaders also published statements that were then picked up and circulated largely by reformist daily papers. Therefore, other resources beyond social media were also available to opposition groups, thus fulfilling the criterion of the provision of information, given how information was collected and passed about relatively freely. However, the events that occurred immediately after the beginning of the Green Movement, which will be discussed shortly, would then lead to significant restrictions on both freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

An early instance of this occurred when an Iranian court shut down three pro-reform newspapers. As the *Times* reports of October 6, 2009: "Iran's judiciary has shut down three pro-reform newspapers, opposition Web sites reported Tuesday, in what appears to be a new effort to prevent protests against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The closures came several days after the appointment of two hard-line military veterans to security-related positions. Together, analysts said, the moves reflected the government's continued determination to suppress the dissent that has risen in the wake of the disputed June 12 presidential election" (October 7, 2009, p. A12).

[67] People in Iran jokingly argue that they have democracy every four years prior to elections, as the regime considers higher voter turnout as a sign of legitimacy and an implicit referendum on the Republic.

Merely months later on March 1, 2010, the authorities also closed two more opposition publications. These closures occurred in close tandem with slowed Internet service, as the central government looked to crack down on various means of communicating dissenting information. At this point, the *New York Times* reported that "The Iranian authorities on Monday closed two major opposition publications, among the last to remain in circulation as the government has suppressed its opponents' communications in recent months. Earlier, the authorities had blocked most opposition Web sites inside Iran and slowed the Internet to a crawl to prevent protesters from organizing demonstrations. Both of the opposition publications, the daily newspaper *Etemad* and the weekly magazine *Iran Dokht*, were linked to Mehdi Karroubi, the outspoken opposition leader who challenged the government last week by calling for a referendum on the government's popularity" (March 2, 2010, p. A9).

During the same tightening against the freedom of the press, Iran's opposition also sought more help in their growing cyberwar with the central government. According to the *Times*, "Iranian democracy advocates welcome a U.S. decision to lift sanctions on some online services, but they say they need more help in overcoming government roadblocks to information" (March 19, 2010, p. A6). Then later the same year, security officials raided one of Iran's few remaining independent newspapers, arresting three journalists and a managing director (December 8, 2010, p. A18).

However, these constantly-under-pressure yet functioning official daily newspapers were not the only sources of information available at this time. In fact, after the June uprising, many wrote condemnatory open letters to the supreme leader, which were often passed around on social media and several popular websites. At this point, there were even some clerics calling for the supreme leader's removal. According to the *Times* (August 16, 2009, p. A4), "A group of Iranian

clerics […] issued an anonymous letter calling Iran's supreme leader a dictator and demanding his removal, the latest and perhaps strongest rhetorical attack on him yet in the country's post-election turmoil." Though both reported and anonymous rather than in person and attached to any particular clergy names, these condemnations were an effective start to the erosion of a powerful taboo. As the *Times* reported, the phrase "death to Khamenei" had also begun appearing in graffiti on walls around Tehran, and this was "a phrase that would have been almost unimaginable not long ago" (August 16, 2009, p. A4). As these examples demonstrate, the opposition were highly successful in transmitting information and grievances, even though they gradually lost their official platforms or means of communication with both the government and Iranian society at large. Still, they continued to challenge the regime during this time.

Here it is also worth revisiting the Green Movement's own background, as initially discussed in the background section and now with the addendum of its communication media and platforms. Mir-Hossein Mousavi founded The Green Path of Hope on August 15th, 2009, as the organizational body of the Green Movement. Although the Green Path of Hope was sometimes called a "political front" by the Iranian media at the time, Mousavi himself described it as a representation of the political body formed by self-initiated and independent social networks. This view was reiterated in many of his statements and speeches, which themselves were often published on Mousavi's official media platform, the website Kaleme.com. As also previously mentioned, Mousavi intentionally named his organization a "path," rather than a movement or a political party, because under Iranian law either of the latter entities would need to be authorized by the Interior Ministry. Distrustful of the regime and knowing that the Interior Ministry was unlikely to endorse him, Mousavi chose the name "Path" specifically to bypasses this categorization.

As the restrictions on media platforms and official means of communication grew tighter, opposition leaders delegated most of the Green Movement's functionality to campaigns led by social networks, political movements, and NGOs. Mousavi had wanted the Green Path of Hope to represent the Iranian people's active desire to reclaim the rights denied to them by the current regime, and he now called upon every individual to be a campaign manager and a broadcaster, since he knew official media would be banned soon. These circumstances also led to the development of other new means of communicating political ideologies and messages to the public.

Then after almost six months of struggle with the regime, the Green Movement finally published its official manifesto on January 3, 2010.[68] Then later, around the anniversary of the June 2009 protests, Mousavi published a proposed new covenant contextualizing the Green Movement as part of Iran's hundred-year quest for democracy. While this publication was silent on the *Velayat-e Faghih* (i.e., the Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists), Mousavi did write that the current regime represented corruption masquerading as piety, and he stated upfront that a government can only be legitimized by the will and support of the people. He also posited that every article of Iranian law should be subject to discussion.

Although the opposition was gradually being pushed to the side during this time, it also continued trying to connect further with the people, and with this shift began to fulfil the role of *interest representation*. This happened in close tandem with the development of the Green Path of Hope and increased cooperation among the leaders of various reformist opposition groups, who rose to represent the public interest on multiple occasions. For instance, in its manifesto

[68] The full text of the manifesto is available on Kaleme, the official website of the Green Path of Hope. See https://www.kaleme.com/1389/12/03/klm-48610/

published January 3, 2010, the Green Movement issued demands such as releasing all political prisoners, making free means of mass communication available to all, recognizing the rights of all lawful political groups (such as university students' and women's movements), guaranteeing universities' independence, putting all those who had tortured and murdered individuals during the protests on trial, and many more. Mousavi also continued to speak out strongly against the arrests and killings of protesters. According to the *Times*, After Mousavi talked about this blatant practice at one of his rallies, "Hours later, Iran's supreme leader ordered the closing of a 'nonstandard' prison, apparently in an effort to deflect rising criticism over the issue" (July 27, 2009, p. A8).

On July 19, 2009, the *Times* also reported that former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami was calling for "a referendum on the legitimacy of the government in the wake of last month's disputed presidential election," saying that this would be the only way to respect the will of all those who participated in the election (July 19, 2009, p. A4). According to the Iran Data Portal, the voter turnout rate that year was the highest in the history of the Islamic Republic to date, at an impressive 85.2%. Comparing this rate to the previous election in 2005, where only 62.84% of eligible voters had participated, it is evident that the 2009 election was of particular importance to Iranian citizens. Thirty years after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 that had never delivered on its promises, the collective democratic will of the Iranian people was still thriving. To represent that public interest, the reformists took upon themselves to fight for the people's rights, and so they did through various means. Thus, from reviewing the opposition's demands and statements – as these occurred in the form of statements, manifestos, open letters, and covenants or through public announcements and speeches – it becomes clear that the

opposition groups and their leaders were highly successful in representing the interests of the Iranian public.

Another component to be assessed here is the *provision of alternatives*. In other words, did the opposition both provide "official and public" criticism of the regime's policies as well as propose alternatives to those policies? A review of the events of this period reveals that this criterion was also fulfilled. For instance, looking to the Green Movement manifesto, this document specifically lays out the movement's demands to the central government and presents alternative and alternate policies.

Ettela'at (June 16, 2009, p. 1) reported that on June 16, 2009 during the rally of millions of people Khatami suggested two alternatives to solve the challenge and restore people's faith in the system and create national trust: 1) re-election or 2) assigning an independent fact finding committee to dig into the allegations of voter's fraud and manipulations. Almost a full year after the Green Movement's initial push for reforms after the allegedly "stolen" election, Mousavi published a proposed new covenant placing this movement in line with Iran's ongoing hundred-year quest for democracy. While this publication was silent on the problem of the *Velayat-e Faghih* political structure (i.e., the Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists), Mousavi wrote that the current regime represented corruption masquerading as piety, and he also stated upfront that a government can only be legitimized by the will and support of the people it is meant to govern.

Mousavi's new covenant also accused the current regime of disregarding and even violating its own laws. To take the place of these violations, the covenant called for laws that reflected international standards on human rights and democracy. This covenant also emphasized equality before the law regardless of gender, religion, or ideology, and demanded the separation of religious institutions from state counterparts, while still allowing space for

religion to be present in Iran's more democratic future. Mousavi's covenant also provided alternatives to existing foreign policy, insisting that Iran would not seek nuclear power and should instead participate in the rights allowed all nations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Then, another instance of providing alternative policies as reported by the *New York Times* was former president Mohammad Khatami's call for "a referendum on the legitimacy of the government in the wake of last month's disputed presidential election" (July 19, 2009, p. A4).

As these examples in demonstrate, then, the opposition was certainly able to criticize the regime and offer policy alternatives, a sign of a functioning feedback loop in a pluralist society – or at least until February 14, 2011 when both the opposition leaders, Mousavi and Karroubi, were placed under house arrest.

Lastly, the provision of *minimal degree of mutual acceptance* is also fulfilled during this time period. As demonstrated in great detail above, the government and the opposition had been engaged in official communication, both prior to and during identified incidents of contentious mobilizations. For instance, after the contested election results were announced and the opposition leaders called for protest, supreme leader Khamenei met with Mousavi to discuss his grievances. According to the *New York Times* (June 15, 2009, p. A1), Khamenei stepped in to try and calm the growing backlash, and he "called for the Guardian Council to conduct an inquiry into the opposition's claims that the election was rigged and then had that announcement repeated every 15 minutes on Iranian state radio throughout the day." This was a shift in Khamenei's tone after he met with Mousavi, as then "he promised the inquiry into the results" (The *New York Times*, June 15, 2009, p. A1). On other occasions, Khamenei addressed not only the opposition leaders but also the former reformist presidents. According to the *Times*,

Khamenei warned political leaders "to be cautious in addressing the country's recent unrest, in an apparent rebuke to two former presidents who have openly criticized the government's handling of the disputed June 12 presidential election" (July 20, 2009, p. A8).

Gradually, and particularly after both Green Movement leaders were placed under house arrest in February 2011, the Green Movement (but not all reformist political parties or their leaders) was not recognized as a legitimate political opposition and no mention of its leaders appeared in the media any longer. However, for most of the period under study, a mutual degree of recognition did exist.

It is also quite obvious that the opposition's levels of organization and cohesiveness were very high by any standard, particularly since Mousavi and Karroubi ran strong political campaigns with huge numbers of supporters and also had supporting organizations and structures in place, so that they could successfully mobilize people through their networks during the period from June 2009 through February 20011. Likewise, the opposition was able to spread otherwise-unavailable information quickly and effectively, criticize the government substantially, and offer policy alternatives clearly and pointedly, even though these activities did not always take place through official, sanctioned channels.

III. Political inclusion and exclusion

The theory of political inclusion hinges upon whether we can identify and understand whether or not the opposition has been included in the polity during the periods in question. As previously discussed, the level of inclusion or exclusion in an authoritarian setting is the key to understanding how the opposition will interact with the government and also how it will engage the feedback loop in order to adjust the system for its own goal of a successful reform process.

Based on how this variable has been operationalized for this study, certain characteristics are considered to be signs of a period of political inclusion: moreover, these features include having an official institution and means of communication (with both the government and the general public); being willing and able to offer official criticism and provide alternative policies publicly; and lastly, having any form of representation in parliament or other areas within the regime. Therefore, all three indicators must be examined in order to determine whether the opposition was included or excluded during the time period under study.

Based on the available historical and media data for the five-year period from 2006 to 2011, we can divide this time into two smaller sub-periods. The first of these shorter periods takes place from 2006 to 2009, when the opposition groups had official institutions, and the second comprises the years from 2009 to 2011, during which the opposition was gradually forbidden from having official institutions at all. This also explains why Mousavi call his a "path," i.e. the Green Path of Hope, rather than an institution or a party, in order to protect it from dissolution by the regime.

As 2009 continued, organization officials delegated most of the Green Movement's functionality to campaigns led by social networks, political movements, and NGOs. Mousavi also pointed to the autonomous and spontaneous social network communities that formed parts of the movement as an example of how the Green Path of Hope represented the Iranian people's active desire to reclaim rights denied to them by the current regime.

In September 2009, though, the opposition offices were raided. According to the *Times*, "Iranian authorities on Monday and Tuesday raided offices connected to two senior opposition leaders in Tehran, arresting their top aides and seizing documents, Iranian news agencies and the leaders… Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hussein Mousavi, ran against President Mahmoud

Ahmadinejad in the June 12 election, which they say was rigged by the government. Mr. Karroubi, a former speaker of Parliament, has further charged that men and women detained in the crackdown after the election were tortured and raped while in custody" (Sept 8 2009, p. A4). Just a week later Rafsanjani, a former president of Iran who was leaning towards the reformists' cause, was barred from a Friday prayer gathering in a move that according to the *Times* "suggests hard-line leaders fear it could turn into an opposition rally" (September, 16, 2009, p. A14). Events such as this can be interpreted as the central government taking steps to remove means of communication from opposition groups. In these ways, the majority of their official, sanctioned platforms and institutions were gradually taken away from the opposition.

In December 2009, one of Iran's most outspoken progressive journalists, Saeed Leylaz, was given a nine-year prison sentence in connection to his involvement with the Green Movement. According to the *Times*, Leylaz was " the latest prominent figure to be sentenced in connection with protests that followed June's presidential election" (December, 3, 2009, p. A14).

After Iranians' rising enthusiasm for the Arab Spring taking place in several neighboring nations, the conservative apparatus made a quick policy shift as opposition leaders called for a rally to support Egypt and Tunisia. According to the *Times*, "with democracy tremors rocking the Arab world, Iran's opposition has challenged its hard-line leaders to allow a peaceful demonstration — ostensibly in support of the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt." The report continues that "the request to hold a rally [...] falls short of an open call for supporters of Iran's "green" movement to return to the streets after more than a year, but it is the closest that Iran's opposition has come so far to trying to join in the historic events" (February 8, 2011, p. A11). Then on February 13, according to the Times, on the day of the planned protest the regime "uses force against protests as region erupts" (February 15, 2011, p. A1). At the same time, Iranian opposition

leaders Mousavi and Karroubi are placed under house arrest on February 14, which was only to be reported later as they were deemed "missing as tensions rise" (February 17, 2011). From this point on no means of communication, institution or association related to the Green Movement or protests would be tolerated unless sponsored by the regime or to benefit the conservative agenda, such as in support of the Shia population in Bahrain (April 9, 2011, p. A9) or when "Iranian protesters attack British embassy" (November 30, 2011, p. A6).

The provision of official *claim-making,* or of criticizing the government and/or offering policy alternatives publicly, is taken as another indicator of political inclusion in this operationalization. During the period under study, we can satisfy this provision with a close examination following the same timeline of inclusion and exclusion. In particular, as the opposition gradually lost its means of communications, political platforms, and institutions, they also gradually lost the ability to criticize the government officially or to offer policy alternatives publicly. However, for much of the period under study (up until February 2011), the opposition was still able to criticize the government and hope that the regime would back down or at least not retaliate. However, the opposition did offer policy alternatives and criticized many government policies through official and unofficial channels. This particular claim-making effort occurred through traditional media, social media and statements. The opposition leaders also resorted to writing open letters to the supreme leader. After the opposition leaders, their campaign managers, and many journalists had been imprisoned or fled the country, though, it became more difficult for the opposition to perform this action of offering policy alternatives.

However, Mousavi and Karroubi did not mince words and both continued to criticize the government up until their house arrests. According to the *Times*, "the Iranian opposition leader Mir Hussein Mousavi spoke out more strongly than ever before on Monday against the arrests

and killings of protesters, hours before Iran's supreme leader ordered the closing of a "nonstandard" prison apparently in an effort to deflect rising criticism over the issue" (July 27, 2009, p. A8). Meanwhile Khatami, Iran's former president, also made a fiery speech against the government, accusing its leaders of trying to smear their enemies and purge them from public life with "fascist and totalitarian methods" (*The Times*, Sept 6, 2009, p. A4).

Throughout this time, the Green Movement leaders provided criticism and policy alternatives in various forms. For instance, after almost six months of struggle with the regime, Mousavi published the manifesto of the Green Movement on January 3, 2010. As previously mentioned, this document included demands such as: the resignation of Ahmadinejad, the abolishment of the Guardian Council's vetting of candidates, the release of all political prisoners, the provision of free means of mass communication, the recognition of the rights of all lawful political groups, the protection of university students' and women's movements, the independence of universities from political intervention, the trials of all who had tortured and murdered people during the June uprising, the guaranteed independence of the judiciary (to be achieved through elections rather than appointments), and the banning of military, police, and security forces from political interventions. In addition, Mousavi also warned the supreme leader that there would be consequences if these legitimate demands of the Green Movement were not met: in particular, ignoring them would deepen the crisis with painful consequences, for which only the Supreme Leader would be responsible. Karroubi also offered many policy alternatives, though not as extensively. For instance, in February 2010 after harsh crackdown on political protesters in Iran, he "called for a national referendum to gauge the popularity of the government" (*The Times*, February 26, 2010, p. A6).

Following his manifesto, in June 2010 Mousavi also published a proposed new covenant contextualizing the Green Movement as part of Iran's hundred-year quest for democracy. While this publication was silent on the *Velayat-e Faghih* (the Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists), Mousavi did write that the current regime represented corruption and that a government can only be legitimized by the will and support of its people. He also posited that every article of Iranian law should be subject to discussion. Put differently, this covenant demonstrates how Mousavi was very clear and precise in his criticism of the regime. When publishing the new covenant, he also stated that "I personally strongly protest the many obvious violations and I'm warning I will not surrender to this dangerous charade. The result of such performance by some officials will jeopardize the pillars of the Islamic Republic and will establish tyranny" (Reuters, June 13th, 2009).

Despite the very real risks of being imprisoned, tortured, or killed for doing so, protesters staged public challenges to the regime and its leadership every few weeks for the rest of 2009. But by early 2010, according to Milani (2020), most public demonstrations had been subdued by the regime, and the Green Movement subsided in order to regroup and strategize. However, many observers believed that rather than being suppressed by tyrannical tactics like show trials of opposing politicians and journalists and violence against public demonstrators, the Green Movement simply became more steadfast in its role of advocating for the Iranian people's rights (Majd, 2010). In other words, the semi-decentralized networked organization of the movement, as devised by Mousavi, was its greatest asset.

Lastly, in order to assess the level of inclusion or exclusion, it is necessary to examine whether the opposition had any form of *representation in the government,* including parliament, a cabinet, or any administrative capacity. After the student movement in 1999, both Iran's

conservative faction and the supreme leader did not want a repetition of what had occurred at Tehran University, concerned that this could spread to the rest of the country. However, they also rejected most reformist candidates selected for parliament roles and the council of experts, and instead took full control of administrative and legislative power. There were a few reformists in the parliament, but they were effectively powerless and could risk losing their platforms if they lodged complaints against the system.

After the Green Movement protests in June 2009, the regime gradually began adopting a policy of exclusion. All living former presidents of Iran were disallowed from running or holding political power again (as remains the case today as well), and even clergy members were often excluded as well. In October 2010, *the New York Times* reported that "The web sites of the clerics, Grand Ayatollah Yusuf Sanei and Grand Ayatollah Asadollah Bayat-Zanjani, who are both 'sources of emulation,' the highest clerical rank in Shiite Islam, were first reported blocked by news sites linked with Iran's political opposition movement on Sunday. The official site of a third top cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali-Mohammad Dastgheib, was reported blocked early last month" (October 6, 2010, p. A6). Also according to the *Times,* Grand Ayatollah Montazeri "one of the most prominent critics of the Islamic republic and spent years under house arrest in the city of Qum" (November 3, 2009).

Thus, in the five-year period prior and during the Green Movement, a review of both historical evidence and media content review reveals that the opposition was excluded from the polity except for the short period prior to the election. However, this was due to specific reasons discussed earlier, including showcasing legitimacy by putting on a display of higher political participation than actually existed or in directions other than actual public sentiment seemed to run. During this period, the "feedback loop" between the government, the opposition, and Iranian

society at large did not function properly and effectively. In such situations, if certain contextual variables are available, then these exclusionary policies can backfire and the likelihood of contentious mobilization will rise exponentially.

IV. The existence of contextual variables

After conservative forces subdued the student movement in 1999 under the aegis of supreme leader Khamenei, chants such as "death to the dictator" never quite fully left the streets of Tehran and other major cities across Iran. Then later, the anti-Khamenei narrative grew stronger during the Green Movement in June 2009 and has only continued to grow in the decade since.

This is worth noting because it demonstrates how Ahmadinejad, despite being the presidential candidate whose election was forced through over the people's will, did not become the face of injustice. This is despite the fact that Ahmadinejad was the type of person that, from a reformist perspective, embodied all that was considered unfit in a president of Iran. At the time, Ahmadinejad's domestic and foreign policy alienated many Iranians and Iranian politicians alike, including Mousavi and Karroubi, who took upon themselves to deny him a second term. However, Ahmadinejad had an immense amount of support from the conservative faction, particularly the supreme leader himself. In response to this ongoing support, Mousavi announced his candidacy after a long hiatus in politics, positioning this choice as being his duty to make wrongs right. His message was one of defiance and confrontation with the power conglomeration that had nipped the reformist movements of Khatami's era in the bud.

That narrative was already in place before Mousavi made this decision, so he was able to harness an existing tide somewhat. For Khamenei, however, the entire reform movement, the

Khatami phenomenon, and the Green Movement alike were, as aptly summarized by Milani (2011, p. 42) "a sinister U.S. plot to create a 'velvet revolution' using Gene Sharp's model and George Soros's money." Thus, Khamenei did everything possible to halt the reform movement. In fact, one of the major achievements of this movement, as Lo (2010 137) has explained it, was the creation of a "public sentiment that was no longer refrained from expressing against a government described as illegitimate"(p. 137). Sahimi (2010) also argued that, if nothing else, then at least the Green Movement demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the *Velayat-e Faghih* as a governing document, caused a plummet in Khamenei's public image, and exposed how Iran's fundamentalists had been using their power to hold engineered elections that ended in their favor. In these three ways, Sahimi maintained, the Green Movement exposed the major failings of the Islamic Republic; likewise, the opposition and precedent that this movement created will likely prove invaluable in Iran's continued quest for democracy. Tait (2009) also maintained that, after the incidents of June 2009, many of those in power in Iran – including the Grand Ayatollah Yousef Sanei and other clerical leaders – were able to challenge Khamenei directly on issues of governance and authoritarianism. In this way, the Green Movement was able to progress beyond their first goal of reversing the fraudulent election results and instead, become more focused on democratization and reform beyond this single event.

As Tait (2009) has reported, then, popular sovereignty and its possibilities inspired Mousavi, Karroubi, Grand Ayatollah Yousef Sanei, and other clerical leaders to challenge Khamenei directly on issues of governance and authoritarianism. Thus, for the first time since 1979, a deep-seated and widening divide in beliefs among Iran's top clerics threatened to challenge both the theory and the Khomeini-led institution that maintained the absolute authority and guardianship of the jurist (i.e., the *Velayat-e Motlaghe Faghih*). As these possibilities demonstrate,

the quieted opposition – still led by defeated presidential candidates Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi – had thus moved beyond their first goal of reversing the fraudulently-reported election results, and instead become far more focused on widespread democratization and reform as these goals extended beyond just the 2009 election.

Media of the time also record Khamenei's slide into becoming the face of injustice. For instance, the *New York Times* ran an op-ed entitled "Clerics Call for Removal Challenges Iran Leader," which stated in part that:

> "A group of Iranian clerics has issued an anonymous letter calling Iran's supreme leader a dictator and demanding his removal, the latest and perhaps strongest rhetorical attack on him yet in the country's post-election turmoil. Still, the verbal attacks illustrate the erosion of a powerful taboo. Long unquestioned, Ayatollah Khamenei's status as a neutral arbiter and Islamic figurehead have suffered in the weeks since he blessed the June 12 presidential election, which many Iranians believe was rigged. The harsh crackdown on street protests that followed has only deepened public anger with him. In recent days the phrase "death to Khamenei" has begun appearing in graffiti on Tehran walls, a phrase that would have been almost unimaginable not long ago" (August 16, 2009, p. A4).

People's grievances were real, and multiple groups felt that they had been played by the regime – no longer just students or laborers, groups that the government could write off as disillusioned dreamers, but now the populace at large.

Likewise, the "many obvious violations" that Mousavi discussed in his initial statement were hard to ignore. For one thing, the speed at which the election results were delivered was suspicious, especially considering the record-breaking voter turnout. Yet Ahmadinejad was declared the winner just two hours after the polls closed, in a country where it usually takes days to hand-count the paper ballots. Likewise, the reported margin of victory for Ahmadinejad did not make any sense, since Mousavi had enjoyed significant support during the election campaigns, as shown by all major polls just days before the election itself. As Rintoul & Berman (2009) have

showed, Ahmadinejad would need to have won an unbelievable 44% of reformist votes in order for the results reported to have been legitimate.

With all of these anomalies in play, it only makes sense that the Iranian public would be suspicious of the supposed election results. It also makes sense that, as they tried to explain this injustice and seeks means of addressing or righting it, they would also be trying to find a face to put on it. And as they looked, it quickly became obvious that no matter what power other entities then in office might hold, no one other than Supreme Leader Khamenei had enough power to pull off such a stunt.

Since the Iranian newspapers of the day did not reflect any of the anti-Khamenei slogans and memes, the best way to gauge public opinion during the June 2009 uprisings retroactively is through the Balatarin archives. Balatarin is a social media site similar to Reddit.com, an example perhaps more familiar to users worldwide: like Reddit, Balatarin provides a platform for sharing ideas and functions by users up-voting and down-voting items. According to the site's own "About" page, Balatarin (which means 'the highest' in Persian) "is the first and largest Persian language interactive link-sharing news website. Founded in 2006, Balatarin's mission is to enable users to identify, share and provide access to news and views of the greatest interest to Iranians around the world."[69] Its use and applicability for this study are thus apparent already, but in addition, Balatarin has also made all of its historical database available free to researchers through their website. Thus we turn to this site to fill in the gaps we find visible in coverage by other Iranian media sources, particularly the highly-censored newspapers.

[69] See http://about.balatarin.com/

Upon looking at the Balatarin archives for activity during this time, we can see that the most highly up-voted links for the month of June 2009 are predominantly those targeting Khamenei; in fact, the entire month has one mention of Ahmadinejad, though he was the actual presidential candidate. More specifically, the top links from this time show the death of Neda Aghasoltan, a young girl whose murder was caught on camera and quickly became the symbol of the movement worldwide; these were at the very top of the lists. The other most prominent links upvoted for Iranian readers to see during June 2009 were on the following topics, whose framing is also worth noting:

- A coup orchestrated by the supreme leader;
- Mr. Khamenei! I will show you tomorrow (referring to the scheduled protest) who is closer to who
- Soroosh's fiery letter to the supreme leader;
- If Mousavi is responsible for the blood of protesters, then Khomeini is responsible; for the blood of 1979 martyrs not the shah (referring to Khamenei's speech that the leaders of Green Movement will be responsible for the bloods on the street);
- Even the prophet Mohammad did not have as much power as the supreme leader;
- Nourizad's brave and important letter to Khamenei: Step down;
- Mousavi and Karroubi it is your turn to *bast* (seek refuge) against Khamenei and people will join;
- Alavi: A letter from an average person to another average person (Khamenei);
- Nourizad's statement that only Khamenei enjoys freedom of speech in this country;
- How to defeat Khamenei's psychological warfare;

- Among the highly voted links were also links related to protest locations and footage of protests;
- links to statements by Mousavi and Karroubi;
- A few (about 3) top links targeting Ahmadinejad.

It is worth reiterating again that, among all these top links for the months of June and July 2009, Ahmadinejad was only mentioned once, even though he was the actual presidential candidate being brought to power. From this it becomes clear that people identified supreme leader Khamenei as the face behind the injustice of both these sham elections and the ensuing violence.

Then too, the comments that have been preserved beneath each of these links are also worth noting. The majority of these follow either the theme of "where is my vote" or slogans referring to Khamenei as a dictator or using other negative descriptions. Another of the most popular links here was one calling for a drug test for Khamenei, as many accused the supreme leader of smoking opium.

Between the results we can see from these most up-voted links and their comments as well, it becomes obvious that people's discussions online during the time were predominantly focused on rejection of both the *Velayat-e Faghih* and Khamenei himself. In fact, the most common slogan on Balatarin for the first five months following the contested election of 2009 was "down with the dictator," in reference to the supreme leader and not his favored presidential candidate.

The other contextual variable that must be assessed here is whether the opposition leaders were fragmented or had proximate goals for this movement. As we have seen from the previous examples, opposition groups at the time were initially in agreement on one goal, which was to unseat Ahmadinejad. Then, after the fraudulent election results proved that would be impossible,

they all agreed on reversing those election results. The Green Movement was at its strongest point here, as this proximate goal was a unifying factor. However, once the elections were certified, then the opposition leaders and the broad coalition of opposition groups that surrounded Mousavi and Karroubi could no longer agree on a unified goal. This is why many scholars, such as Lo (2010), consider the Green Movement to be a failed mobilizing action. In fact, Lo (2010, p. 132) has argued that Mousavi "did not represent the reformist liberal attitudes of his voters while he still received support from many who saw his candidacy as a possibility for or a stepping-stone toward a more reformist agenda and a way to remove Ahmadinejad." This helped him to create a broad coalition as he was the only choice for many who may have not agreed with him ideologically. Although, as Moussawi (2012) has demonstrated, Mousavi as the nominal leader of the Green Movement had conservative tendencies and distanced himself from calls for radical change during the election campaign, he *did* make promises that would have been considered milestone achievements towards a more inclusionary system. For example, during the election campaigns he promised to reform laws that were discriminatory towards women, disband Iran's morality police, and advocate for privately-owned TV networks so that the public could have access to information not controlled by the government. However, the fact that Mousavi was unable to create a broad coalition and define proximate goals that included all opposition groups (which Khomeini had done successfully prior to the 1979 revolution) was one of his biggest failures, particularly if he really sought to change how politics were conducted in Iran. Instead, as Moussawi (2012) put it, Mir Hossein Mousavi wanted to be the opposition leader for the groups who wanted to change the system slightly with a reform agenda, and not the leader for those who wanted to overhaul this system completely.

Two more factors are worth mentioning in this light. First, in July 2010, almost a year after the initial protests, Mousavi published the Green Movement's manifesto (with a second, modified edition on February 22, 2011 that added emphasis on the rights of women and minorities and reduced the use of religious undertones in its own language), but even this document was already too little, too late; Mousavi's attempts fell short of creating a broad coalition.[70] While the Green Movement Manifesto outlined some of the movement's general aspirations, it also failed to acknowledge the diverse opinions in play there, which ranged from radical changes such as the abolition of a supreme leader from the Iranian constitution to more reform-minded changes such as guaranteeing fair elections through constitutional reform (Lo, 2010, p. 129).

In addition to these two camps (one more radical, one more reformatory), the Green Movement also had both secular and religious members, which meant that there were vastly different opinions on the existence and purpose of the Islamic Republic itself. For instance, in the beginning Mousavi himself was supportive of the continuation of an Islamic Republic and officially announced that he did not want to alter the political system, but instead, simply intended to return to its origins as these existed during Khomeini's era. At the time, this stance cost Mousavi the support of many disgruntled groups who saw the existence of the Islamic Republic itself as the main problem. This also made it difficult for Mousavi and other Green Movement leaders to reach out to political dissidents, which in turn further contributed to his failure to create a broad alliance of those who had issues with the undemocratic elements of both the Iranian constitution and the principle of *Velayat-e Faghih.* This did change – in February 2010, Mousavi publicly denounced the Islamic Republic for the first time after his nephew was murdered, describing it as "tyrannical"

[70] BBC Persia ran a segment on the difference between the two editions, which remains accessible at https://www.bbc.com/persian/iran/2011/03/110306_l78_green_charter

on Kaleme.com website – but much like with the Green Movement manifesto, this change of heart from Mousavi was too little, too late, to be a truly unifying factor.

Based on the likelihood model of political action as outlined in chapter two, when there is a high degree of organization and cohesiveness among the opposition as well as a low degree of political inclusion in addition to the presence of contextual variables of proximate goals and human face (blaming an individual for grievances), then the path of events will likely lead to contentious political action. Moreover, as demonstrated above, the five-year period under study here – comprising years both prior to and during the Green Movement – coincides with this model for the initial stages of the movement. As discussed above, the proximate goals and cohesiveness of the opposition did not continue beyond about August 2009. However, the model can certainly still explain the mobilizing actions that led to these uprisings, which was the largest that the Islamic Republic has experienced since 1979.

Contentious Political Action Model

Contentious political actions (protest path) = high degree of organization and cohesiveness among the opposition + low degree of political inclusion + presence of contextual variables (blame/human face to grievances + proximate goals)

Conclusion

The assessment of these two periods of "contention political mobilization" and "no contentious political action," which cover 10 years of recent Iranian history during a tumultuous era, enables us to better understand that history in a comparative context. Such an assessment also

facilitates further study of contemporary political realities in Iran. It is also worth noting how the theory of political inclusion also tells a different story about the Iranian struggle for inclusion in the polity as well as Iran's ongoing movement toward democracy. Finally, this approach also enables us to rise above the ups and down of historical events and the currently limited scope enabled by other analysis methodologies and explanations of incidents of contentious collective action. Instead, and as bolstered by systematic analysis of media content throughout this chapter, the theory of political inclusion is able to identify the cause of contention political action, at least during the periods discussed.

During the first period under study in this chapter, which was labeled as a "no contentious political action" period, the media content analysis pointed to lower degrees of contentious political action (number of incidents, intensity and spread), higher level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition, higher levels of political inclusion based on identifying indicators, and finally lack of proximate goals and specific targets. Based on the theory of political inclusion the above pattern should translate into a lesser amount of contentious mobilization which is in fact what happened during that period. This was in parts because the reformists were in power and most opposition groups were included in the polity. Many were happy about the reforms and many others saw Khatami's administration and the reformist agenda as an avenue for more reform. The one major incident of contentious mobilization that occurred during "no action" period was in July 1999 in response to an exclusionary policy and event when the reformist *Salaam* newspaper was shut down and a bill was passed that could curb freedom of press. *Salaam*'s bold policy alternatives that were published on a regular basis eventually got *Salaam* noticed and banned, and the conservatives had it closed on July 6, 1999. However, the standoff got cooled down after about 10 days perhaps because, as demonstrated earlier, the other reformist newspapers continued to

represent the interests of reformists and advocate for students and women's right, as seen with the way *Ettela'at* published protest coverage and students' demands three days in a row during the students' standoff with the police. The protests provided much needed support for the reformists in the government and the parliament to stand stronger against the conservative forces. These examples demonstrate that, for the most part throughout this period, the opposition groups remained hopeful that there is a higher chance for the prospect of reform as long as they were able to offer policy alternatives and criticize macro-politics within the system.

In contrast, during the second period under study in this chapter, which was labeled as "contentious political mobilization" period, the media content analysis confirms a much greater amount of contentious mobilization (number of incidents, intensity and spread), higher level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition (due to political campaigns), and lower levels of political inclusion based on identifying factors. However, although the opposition identified the supreme leader as the primary target they lacked a broad coalition based on proximate goals around the specific target. Based on the theory of political inclusion the above pattern should lead to a higher level of contentious mobilization which is in fact what happened during that period. Based on the theory of political inclusion, the contentious mobilization occurred mostly because the exclusionary policies, mandated by the conservatives in power, slashed the hopes of the reformists and other progressive opposition groups to push for reforms.

Chapter Six: Findings and Prospects

Contentious political mobilizations – namely, mass mobilization against the current regime or ruler – are relatively rare, particularly in authoritarian societies. As defined in chapter 1, in this study contentious political mobilization refers to opposition groups' confrontational activities as enacted in order to apply stress to specific target(s) for the purpose of affecting public policy. This concept was then operationalized in chapter 2 so that it could be measured and authenticated using analyses of historical media content based on the intensity, extent, and objective(s) of protest mobilization(s). For the purposes of this study, it was imperative to discern why people support and/or participate in continuous political mobilization(s) in certain contexts and under specific situations, but not in others. As a test case, the theory needed to explain under what circumstances, and why, contentious political mobilization occurred in Iran.

For the most part, revolutions and major uprisings in this area seem to have taken both scholars and politicians by surprise. However, the reasons behind this lack of generalizable patterns from which to understand the mechanics of contentious political mobilizations in authoritarian societies are manifold. First, contentious political mobilizations are relatively rare, and therefore there are only a small number of cases available for in-depth study. Second, most of these mobilizations have occurred in different contexts – particularly in terms of environment and time span – and thus are not easily comparable. Third, the trend in both politics and scholarship tends to be that only successful incidents of contentious mobilizations are studied, rather than also including the unsuccessful ones or the periods of no contentious collective action.[71] Fourth, many

[71] There is a difference between unsuccessful collective action and no collective action although their outcomes is the same. What distinguishes unsuccessful contentious collective action from no contentious collective action is the fact that period of no major action may be the result of political inclusion but unsuccessful actions is an

theories that have tried to identify a generalizable pattern are not often falsifiable, and when employed as a retrospective lens, fit nearly all incidents of contentious collective action . However, by contrast with these four common issues, this systematic study of contentious mobilization in Iran over the past 120 years has demonstrated that the theory of political inclusion can address these various shortcomings through its own theories and models.

The theory of political inclusion was devised in order to provide a unified framework for understanding the past 120 years of Iranians' struggles for democracy within a political and historical continuum. As validated by available historical media data, this theory can provide an explanation for when the people of Iran join in contentious collective action and when they abstain. In addition, this theory of political inclusion explains not only the peaks (i.e., major incidents of contentious collective action, whether successful or unsuccessful) but also the valleys (i.e., the periods of no major contentious mobilization) within that historical continuum. Here, such an explanation was achieved by focusing on the interplay of government and oppositional forces in Iran as a transformative element. Central to this interplay-as-transformative element was a dynamic process in which key independent variables included whether the opposition was included or excluded as a recognized political actor in the polity at that particular moment. This focus on the opposition's inclusion or exclusion as the main independent variable opened up opportunities to study the implications of a prolonged interaction between the opposition seeking political inclusion and the regime denying it to them, a focus that has been largely overlooked in the literature.

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indicator of a failed attempt to enhance inclusionary policies and reforms. In this scenario the demands are pushed through the feedback loop system and if the opposition is growing stronger it is likely that the government cannot ignore the demands or risk a shift from the no-protest path to might-protest path.

This theory of political inclusion also rejects the idea that, in authoritarian countries, contentious political mobilization is contingent upon having a strong opposition that can mobilize individual citizens. Based on the historical data for Iran in particular, this theory demonstrates that contentious political action is actually less likely to occur where there is a significant opposition composed of one or more groups. As illustrated in previous chapters, this is because when the opposition is recognized by both the people and the government as a collective voice, its officialized existence lessens the people's impetus to mobilize and protest. In addition, if the opposition is included in the polity, then this diminishes the desire to protest even further, such as occurred during the periods of 1920-1925 and 1997-2001 in Iran. As this study has demonstrated, such periods can instead be identified as times of *political inclusion*. During these particular periods in Iran, an organized, viable (i.e., sustainable and not temporal), and functioning (i.e., able to impact the feedback loop) opposition existed alongside the regime, regardless of whether or not that opposition actually shared power with the ruling elite and whether or not turnovers of power actually occurred. By the same token, as the historical evidence this study examined has shown, contentious political mobilization was more likely to occur when that organized opposition was excluded to the point of having no significant effect in the polity: in fact, this was the point at which political inclusion transformed into political exclusion. In the case of Iran, then, the deployment of this theory has shown that the likelihood of contentious collective action was related most closely to the level of inclusiveness in the system that the opposition enjoyed at that particular moment.

One of the most distinctive features of this study was the case itself. The nation of Iran experienced two major revolutions in 20th century and hinted at another soon afterward with the Green Movement in 2009. The opportunity to study a country whose history allowed for multiple

observations over time within the same location and context was unique. In this case, the circumstances not only obviated the usual problem of contextual difference between cases in comparative studies, but also enabled us to study the periods of "no contentious mobilization" too in order to satisfy the concern of falsifiability and expand our cases to include both "unsuccessful" mobilizations and periods of no contentious collective action as well as the more visible mobilizations.

To assess the validity of the theory of political inclusion, six periods of five years' time each were selected based on the three major historical contentious mobilization events in recent Iranian history: the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and the Green Movement. In order to cover periods of no contentious collective action, an additional five-year period occurring near each of these events was also selected, based on the availability of media content published at the time. The assessment of these periods, both active and inactive in terms of contentious mobilization, has confirmed the validity of the theory of political inclusion. As this study determined, considering political inclusion as an independent variable can help explain the level and magnitude of change in Iran as affected by contentious political mobilization.

Iran's struggle for democracy began about 150 years ago. The Constitutional Revolution of 1906 was a response to at least 50 years of political exclusion exerted on Iranian society – and particularly the *intelligentsia*, *bazaaris*, and clergy – by Qajar rulers. The culmination of these groups' efforts, as captured through media content analysis of a period from 1900 to1906, points to a much higher level of contentious mobilization as well as higher levels of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition and lower levels of political inclusion, all as based on identified indicators. The frequent and widespread protests taking place then, particularly from December 1905 to August 1906, targeted central government policies including the removal of the Chief

Minister, the establishment of *adlieh* and rule of law, limitations on the power of the king, and the creation of a parliament (*Majlis*). These attempts, along with the particular coalition of forces behind them, were not change that the Qajar dynasty could hold back for long. Indeed, as the theory of political inclusion has confirmed, the pattern of exclusionary policies in place then led to a higher level of contentious mobilization during this period.

By contrast, the second period under study from 1920 to 1925 was marked as a period of no contentious collective action. Following the Constitutional Revolution, Iranian society attempted to create a more inclusionary system, and although embryonic, this attempt had lasting effects on the Iranian people's aspirations and desires for a better political system. The media content from this time confirms the existence of regional rather than national protests, which also had only low intensity and did not target the central government with demands regarding policies that affected Iranian society at large. Thus the political inclusion theory correctly points to lower degrees of contentious political action, a higher level of organization and cohesiveness of the opposition, higher levels of political inclusion, and finally lack of specific human targets for people's grievances, as indicators of no contentious collective action here. The pattern identified above thus led to a lesser amount of contentious mobilization during this second period we examined.

The third period under study here covered Iranian politics from 1961 to 1966. This period was a prelude to one of the most important episodes in contemporary Iranian history: the Islamic Revolution, which occurred in the next decade from 1974 to 1979. Analyzing historical media content published during this period enabled us to draw on the theory of political inclusion and re-examine the early indicators and underlying causes of the Islamic Revolution, one of the most controversial and violent revolutions in recent history. We were also able to consider whether the

theory of political inclusion still held validity within a near time range as well as the same social and political context.

Analysis of historical media content from 1961 to 1966, which was labeled as a "no contentious political action," quickly pointed to minor and mostly regional contentious political action, as identified by the number of incidents and their intensity and spread. Based on this analysis of historical media content, we could see that there had been a higher level of organization and cohesiveness among the opposition, which in turn means that higher levels of political inclusion did exist then. In fact, as discussed in detail earlier, this period is now considered one of the freest periods for journalism in Iran, particularly as compared to the decade immediately prior. During this time, the opposition was also well represented in the political system, holding positions in places such as the parliament and cabinet. And finally, during this period there was a lack of proximate goals among opposition groups. While the late-stage anti-imperialist rhetoric created by Khomeini that dominated the narrative of the religious apparatus beyond 1964 did resonate with many other groups, it was not enough to be considered a true rallying cry for them. Instead, it would take many years for a proximate goal to form, and many more years still for it to be expanded upon and respected by multiple opposition groups. Thus, based on the theory of political inclusion, the above pattern predicted a lesser amount of contentious mobilization during the five years from 1961 to 1966, which was in fact what happened during that period. We hypothesized that this was due in part to expanded political freedom, and in part to the existence of a strong and cohesive opposition that was highly successful in pushing reformist agendas. The one major incident of contentious mobilization that occurred during this "no action" period, which took place on June 6, 1963, was not enough to constitute a true exception. As discussed earlier, the early rise of Ayatollah Khomeini coincided with the White revolution, women's suffrage, and mandatory

military service for religious scholars (*tolab*) in Iran, none of which sat well with the *ulama*. But, as also demonstrated in detail earlier, this event still lacked a broad coalition as it mostly involved the clergy and their followers, and there was also the fact that many of these demands were then met by the central government.

Contrary to that third period, the media content analysis for the fourth period under study here – spanning the five years from 1974 to 1979 – all points to a much higher level of contentious mobilization. Among other factors, the analysis of historical media confirmed higher levels of organization and cohesiveness among the opposition, who came to represent the interests of the *bazaar*, the Islamists, the Iranian *intelligentsia*, and average Iranian citizens, as each of these groups believed that they had been overlooked by the government. In this historical media content, there was also significant evidence pointing to the fact that levels of political inclusion were very low. For one thing, there were no official institutions or platforms of communication for the opposition during this time. Instead, unofficial platforms such as religious sermons and opposition leaders' statements and speeches were the main means of communication. *Shabnamehs* (secret publications) such as Khomeini's speeches were distributed among the people by activists. As documented in greater detail earlier, the opposition was not able to criticize the government openly and publicly or to offer policy alternatives (claims-making) through official means, and those who criticized the regime were often sent into exile, left the country out of fear, and/or were imprisoned because of their perceived defiance. The shah even claimed that anyone in Iran who did not want to become a member of his single-party platform could simply leave the country. In addition to this lack of official platforms, the opposition did not have any significant form of official representation in the central government. During his last days in power, the shah attempted to rectify this by offering certain opponents their own government positions, but by that point it was

too late. The movement created a broad coalition under Khomeini's leadership based on proximate goals such as the removal of the shah and the establishment of an Iranian republic instead of a monarchy. In the midst of all this, the shah seemed like the perfect target to blame and his removal was positioned as the only solution to these various problems. As the theory of political inclusion has confirmed, the above pattern did lead to a higher level of contentious mobilization during this period, which occurred largely due to the prolonged exclusionary policies enacted by the shah.

The fifth and the sixth period under study here covers Iranian politics in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution. The media content analysis for the first of these two final periods, from 1997 to 2001, confirmed its label as a time of "no contentious political action," pointing to lower degrees of contentious political action (via number of incidents, intensity, and spread), higher levels of organization and cohesiveness among the opposition, higher levels of political inclusion based on identifying indicators, and finally, a lack of proximate goals and specific targets for grievances. Based on the theory of political inclusion, the above pattern should translate into a lessened chance and amount of contentious mobilization, which we verified did in fact happen during this period. As our analysis demonstrated, this was in part because the reformists were in power during the period in question and most opposition groups were already included in the polity. In fact, the one major incident of contentious mobilization that occurred during this "no action" period took place in July 1999 in response to the reformist newspaper *Salaam* being shut down. We noted that this does not constitute a major change in that overall pattern of no action though because interest representation continued even after the standoff cooled down in 10 days: other reformist newspapers continued to represent the interests of reformists and advocate for students' and women's rights. So this single event does not significantly alter the level of political inclusion during this time. In fact, the student protests provided much-needed support for the

reformists then in power, particularly those in parliament, helping them to stand stronger against conservative forces.

In contrast to the previous period of "no action," the analysis of historical media content for the period from 2006 to 2011, which was labeled as "contentious political mobilization," points to a much higher level of contentious mobilization, higher levels of oppositional organization and cohesiveness, and lower levels of political inclusion, all as based on identifying factors. What the movement needed to succeed but lacked at the time was a broader coalition based on proximate goals around a specific target: the supreme leader. As the theory of political inclusion confirms, the above pattern did lead to a higher level of contentious mobilization during this period, as motivated by the exclusionary policies mandated by the conservatives then in power. These slashed the hopes of the reformists and other progressive opposition groups as well as their ability to push for reforms or be included in the polity.

From today's vantage point, where does Iranian opposition currently stand after the Green Movement uprisings? While the opposition of the Green Movement was suppressed heavily and brutally, it still retains the moral high ground, both within Iran and on the global stage. And as this conflict between the regime and its oppositions has revealed, the true nature of the Islamic government as it exists today is problematic, to say the least (Jahanbegloo, 2011).

However, the anti-democratic pressures of the past half-century have also opened up a new era for social movements. The most prominent characteristics of these movements have included greater aspirations toward democracy and personal freedom, as well as desires for a less political and more spiritual Islam (reducing the influence of Islam in politics). Conflicts between the regime's forces and the student movement created sharp divides between the reform-minded

political elite and the old guard of the Islamic Revolution. The student movement that started prior to the Green Movement was, for the first time, neither leftist nor Islamist, but instead advocating for political reform and freedom more generally. As one of the most modernized groups within Iranian society, Iranian students thus became the vanguard for progressive action and demand – which in this case was the goal of a communist or Islamist utopian ideal, but in the name of political pluralism (Khosrokhavar, 2012, p. 48). However, the greatest structural problem that still plagues the Islamic Republic is the reality that, in Iran, every republican institution is subject to clerical counterinfluence; for instance, although the Iranian people may elect reformers, non-elected authorities have intercepted all reform movements since 1997. Despite that hopelessness that many feel because true reform has not been achieved yet, as Amirpur (2006, p. 40) observes, one constant reason why reform will eventually win over the theocratic model of the state in Iran is that the state authorities have lost their power over society. Although the political reform movement has failed to win elections for many years, its continued existence and popularity indicate a growing consensus that there is no adequate alternative to a democratic state.

At this early stage of its formation, the reformist movement that began in 2009 may not yet have gained enough power or public support to be in position as an ideal political alternative; in addition, external pressures on Iran from neighboring nations or other global forces might push internal factions to stand together in defense of what they perceive as essential national interests. Within Iran, though, general dissatisfaction with current forms of governance, combined with the regime's failure to either respond effectively or else generate real change, tend to emphasize the unmet needs and desires of the Iranian people.

By most measures of success, including reformers' own standards, the reform movement is far from thriving in Iran today. But Iranian reformism is deeper and more broadly-rooted in

Iranian history than its contemporary institutional infrastructure might indicate, going well beyond its current institutional and organizational frames. Even over a decade later, the long-term effects of the Green Movement have yet to be seen, but they are certainly real and impossible to suppress completely. From its beginnings as a campaign to elect a reformist candidate in 1997 to its expressions of popular sentiment and interest in 2009-2010, the Green Movement evolved into a civil rights movement that will continue to exert pressure for reform that the Iranian regime can ignore only to its own detriment (Majd, 2010).

Although the Iranian constitution gives predominance to *sharia* law and divine authority, popular sovereignty and the will of the people are also inarguably included in this central document. Iranian political frameworks are defined by this dual sovereignty to a significant extent, as well as by the high-level divergence between "quietist" and "absolutist" clerical leaders. In fact, the republican uprising's ideological roots grew from the soil of dual sovereignty. As Robert Tait (2009) has reported, popular sovereignty inspired clerical leaders such as Mousavi, Karroubi, Grand Ayatollah Yousef Sanei, and others leaders to challenge supreme leader Khamenei directly on issues of governance and authoritarianism. With the Green Movement and its predecessors, for the first time since 1979, a deep-seated and widening divide in beliefs among top clerics threatened to challenge both the theory and Khomeini-led institution of the absolute authority and guardianship of the jurist (i.e., the *Velayat-e Motlaghe Faghih*). This has been one of the main reasons why Khamenei has expanded his exclusionary policies. By 2009 the opposition, still led by defeated presidential candidates Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, had largely moved beyond their first goal of reversing elections, instead becoming more focused on democratization and reform.

But one thing is clear: the exclusionary policies of the supreme leader and his fundamentalist, conservative allies simply expanded, and were never retracted or withdrawn. All opposition groups and prominent outspoken politicians – even the ones who had been considered conservative at some point, such as Ahmadinejad, or who had only slight differences of opinion from Khamenei – have been effectively marginalized or else excluded from political power. For instance, in 2021 former president Ahmadinejad's candidacy for presidential election was rejected by the Guardian Council - an institution fully controlled by Khamenei in his role as supreme leader and whose duties include the pre-selection of candidates eligible to run for major political office.

Based on analyses of historical media and data from the past 120 years in Iran, the theory of political inclusion can lead us to conclude that the current exclusionary policies of supreme leader Khamenei and his conservative allies may lead to a higher level of contentious political mobilization sometime in the near future. Since the options available for opposition groups to participate in politics within the system and at the national level are becoming more and more limited, these groups may begin pushing harder for reforms, and if these demands are denied over time and the opposition groups come to agree on specific goals and build a broad coalition, they may conduct politics on the streets instead of engaging in the political system through elections and other conventional means. This may lead to further contentious political mobilization, and like their predecessors, these mobilizations will be violent. In fact, we predict that such a coalition may build around the most viable face of injustice that could potentially mobilize enough individuals: supreme leader Ali Khamenei. His removal and/or any significant change to his authority and rule will translate in seismic upheaval, similar to what happened with the Islamic Revolution itself. The current political atmosphere in Iran, with one party in full control, does not provide any space for the opposition groups to participate in politics effectively, to represent the interests of aggrieved

or unheard groups, or to advocate for popular public policy. With our historical evaluation to build from, we can even say that the current environment for the opposition groups resembles the last days of the Pahlavi dynasty, when the Shah's Rastakhiz party was the only means of political participation available.

The theory of political inclusion as we have identified, operationalized, and evaluated it in this study also can be applied comparatively to contexts beyond Iran. The only caveat to offer here would be to apply this theory to understanding authoritarian societies specifically. The theory of political inclusion can be utilized to study other cases and different countries as the logic remains the same within an authoritarian context. While such endeavors to further verify the validity of this theory in other contexts lay beyond the scope of the current study, I certainly recommend it be subject to further research. This theory removes the focus on the incidents of contentious collective action and looks at the larger picture of political endurance, survival and progress. This new feature in a theory of contentious mobilization opens up a huge opportunity for further research and resolves the classic lack of major mobilization cases. In fact, the other side of the contentious mobilization is peaceful reforms and transition. There is an abundance of information to suggest that when authoritarian regimes allow popular reforms or do not entirely close all the legal and political avenues for meaningful political participation, political transition, and political efficacy of groups and individuals, the impetus to resort to violence is subdued and the governments can certainly avoid street confrontation with people. In a way, the theory of political inclusion is a theory of transition to a more inclusionary society rather than predicting a contentious action. It is much readily equipped to predict "no action" periods in authoritarian societies if certain conditions are met. It is not dishonest to think of this manuscript as a *handbook for the dictators on survival*. Perhaps, that could be the title of a book based on this manuscript.

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