

A HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY APPROACH TO
IRANIAN NATIONALISM (1921-1979): AN IR PERSPECTIVE

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores the discourse of Iranian nationalism constructed by the Iranian state between 1921 and 1979. This study unravels the international connections of Iranian nationalism following a framework that sits at the intersection of Historical Sociology, Historical Sociology in International Relations and modernist approaches to nationalism. It argues that the creation and development of the definition of Iranian nationalism is interconnected with the modern state which is itself bound up with the international. In order to understand the nature of the meaning attached to *being Iranian/Iranianness/Iranicity* on the part of the state we should look into the specifics of international-domestic interaction, historicise that process and search for multiple causes rather than one single cause. This study shows how the Iranian nationalism has been subject to change alongside the changing dynamics born out of specific interaction between the domestic and international. The elevation of Western-like identity at the beginning of the Reza Shah period, the invention of supposedly racial superiority in the context of rising fascism in Europe, the anti-colonial movement swept through the world and its heavy impact on blossoming

of Mussaddeq's non-aligned nationalism, the Cold War and "Neither East Nor West" discourse of Muhammed Reza Shah, all of these turns of Iranian nationalism reflect the importance of incorporating the realm of international to the domestic historiography.

Keywords: Iranian nationalism, Historical Sociology in International Relations, Historical Sociology of nationalism, Pahlavi nationalism, Musaddeq's nationalism.

ÖZ

İRAN MİLLİYETÇİLİĞİNE TARİHSEL SOSYOLOJİK BİR YAKLAŞIM (1921-1979): BİR ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER PERSPEKTİFİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı 1921-1979 yılları arasında İran Devleti tarafından inşa edilen İran milliyetçiliği söylemini tahlil etmektir. Tarihsel Sosyoloji ve modernist milliyetçilik teorilerinin kesişim noktasına dayanarak kavramsal çerçevesini oluşturan bu çalışma İran milliyetçiliğinin uluslararası alanla bağlantılarını ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Çalışma, İran milliyetçiliğinin yaratılması sürecinin modern devletle, modern devletin ise uluslararası alanla direk bir ilişki içinde olduğunu savunmakta ve bu doğrultuda bu *İranlı olmak/İranlılık/İranyat* kavramlarına devlet tarafından yüklenen anlamı anlamak için iç ve dış arasındaki etkileşime ve ikisi arasındaki kurucu ilişkiye bakılması gerektiğini söylemektedir. Ayrıca bu analizde tarihselleştirme ve çoklu nedenselliğin önemi de vurgulanmaktadır. Çalışma iç ve dış arasındaki etkileşim nedeniyle oluşan değişen dinamiklerin İran milliyetçiliğine yüklenen anlamı nasıl değiştirdiğini göstermektedir. Rıza Şah dönemindeki Batı-benzeri kimliğin yükselişi, Avrupa’da yükselen faşizm bağlamında icat edilen ırksal üstünlük tezi, sömürge karşıtı hareketin dünyayı etkisi altına alması ve bunun Musaddık milliyetçiliği üzerindeki etkisi, Soğuk Savaş ve Muhammed Rıza Şah’ın “Ne Doğu, Ne Batı” söylemi iç-dış ilişkisi ekseninde analiz edilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İran milliyetçiliđi, Tarihsel Sosyoloji, milliyetçiliđin Tarihsel Sosyolojisi, Pehlevi milliyetçiliđi, Musaddık milliyetçiliđi.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Now, the important questions that arise are the following: where among these three cultures [Iranian culture, Islamic culture and Western culture] does our identity lie? What did those saviours and reformers mean by “salvation” and “identity”? What does “cultural identity” mean, anyway? Is it possible or desirable to aspire to a true and pure cultural identity, and in that case which of our three cultures would be closer and more loyal to us, which more faithful to our “true identity”? Which one subverts it and takes us away from ourselves? Is it a duty to remain loyal and to preserve the old culture? Is there such a thing as cultural repentance? Is any nation permitted rebellion against parts of its own culture? Is there an opportunity and an avenue for intercultural exchange, or must cultures keep their windows closed to one another? Is it right to advocate the hegemony of one culture over others? What does “returning to one’s authentic self” mean, and in whom and what does that “self” consist?¹

The questions that Abdulkarim Soroush poses reflect the puzzle that any nationalist, politician or intellectual tries to grapple with. These questions were at the heart of the intellectual and political debates dominating Iran’s ideological environment since the 19th century. It is nearly impossible to give “the” answers to these questions as the meaning attached to the concepts of identity, culture, authentic self has altered to a great extent not just across periods but also even within the same period. As in other nationalisms Iranian identity has been a source of contestation. The meaning attached to, what Sharifi called, *Iraniyat*, in other

¹ Quoted from Shabnam Holliday, *Defining Iran: Politics of Resistance* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2011): 1.

words *being Iranian* or *Iranianness* was constructed, challenged, debated, negotiated and reconstructed in the course of its modern history.²

This thesis is an attempt to investigate the narrative of the intense struggle for defining the national identity of Iran, of Persia becoming Iran. At the heart of this endeavour is the need to show that Iranian nation and nationalism, like other nations and nationalisms, as Fred Halliday suggests, is “the product of the new international and normative climate created from the early 19th century onwards, and of the process of state formation which has accompanied it.”³

Paying regard to the insight of Fred Halliday, this thesis will scrutinize the formation and development of Iranian nationalism constructed on the part of the state by taking the international and normative climate into account. It will focus on the role of the international in the formation of nation state and Iranian nationalism in the period of the 20th century. In this thesis, Iranian nationalism will refer to the nationalist policies and ideology as employed by the state of Iran and is used often in this work as a reminder of the exclusive focus of this work on the policies and discourse of the state rather than other nationalist actors such as minorities or opposition groups.

1.1. Scope of the Study

For a thesis that attempts to study Iranian nationalism, the theories of nationalism as a field seem to be the most obvious literature to resort to. The field is however unable to systemize the empirical research on Iranian nationalism and has shortcomings in including the international dimension as an integral part of the narrative. Although modernist theories of nationalism include macro international structures, such as capitalism or industrialization in their theory building, this

² Majid Sharifi, *Imagining Iran: The Tragedy of Subaltern Nationalism* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2013): 63.

³ Fred Halliday, *Nation and Religion in the Middle East* (Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000): 56.

macro level remains insufficient when one deals with the messy history of Iran in the 20th century. This thesis will tackle the following questions in a theoretically informed way: Why Iranian state nationalism developed the way it did; how Reza Shah could be successful in his nation state building attempt but failed to create a political community that identifies itself with the ruling state; why Musaddeq's redefinition of Iraniyat succeeded to capture the Iranians; and how Muhammed Reza Shah could not escape his ultimate toppling despite the strength of his regime. To be able to tackle these questions we need to go further than merely stating *in passim* the importance of the expansion of capitalism and imperialism. When the international is only reduced to these large scale, global context, a lot of other international connections that go into the shaping of domestic events are lost.

In this thesis the international will be taken to include these macro-contexts like the expansion of capitalism yet will not be limited to these. So, accepting validity of modernist theories of nationalism, this thesis will take inspiration from Historical Sociology (HS) and Historical Sociology in International Relations (HSIR) traditions that re-formulate the relationship between the international and domestic and will seek the theoretical tools to analyse the messy and multi-layered relation between the international and the domestic in the formation of Iranian nationalism.

Despite the complexity of providing a full-fledged definition of Historical Sociology, in the broader sense, it investigates development of societies through history. Generally, the founding fathers of modern social theory, like Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber are accepted also as the founding fathers of HS. These canonical figures aimed to understand the processes through which social structures and social actors were created and transformed over the course of the transition from traditional to modern.⁴ They also explored how those

⁴ Julia Adams, Elisabeth Clemens and Ann Shola Orloff, "Social Theory, Modernity, and the Three Waves of Historical Sociology," available at [https://www.russellsage.org/sites/all/files/u4/Adams,%20Clemens,%20%26%20Orloff_Social%](https://www.russellsage.org/sites/all/files/u4/Adams,%20Clemens,%20%26%20Orloff_Social%20Theory%20and%20the%20Three%20Waves%20of%20Historical%20Sociology.pdf)

processes are continuing to reshape the contemporary world. Although those scholars offered diversified theories, they “converged on a fundamentally historical project”.⁵ As one of the leading figures of the traditions, Philip Abrams states “it [HS] is a matter of treating what people do in the present as a struggle to create a future out of the past, of seeing the past not just as the womb of the present but the only raw material out of which the present can be constructed.”⁶

Skocpol eloquently describes main tenets of HS as below:

HS ask questions about social structures or processes understood to be concretely situated in time and space ... address processes over time, and take temporal sequences seriously in accounting for outcomes ... attend to the interplay of meaningful actions and structural contexts, in order to make sense of the unfolding of unintended as well as intended outcomes in individual lives and social transformations ... [and] highlight the particular and varying features of specific kinds of social structures and patterns of change.⁷

The potentials of Historical Sociology for IR started to be recognized by IR scholars especially with the various turns that the discipline underwent starting from 1980s. HS together with the interventions coming from constructivism, critical theory, feminism and postmodernism made its appearance in the discipline with the tradition named HS in IR.

HS offered a sound ground for IR scholars who criticized the mainstream ahistorical tendencies within the discipline. It also offered an important way out from the rigid boundaries between inside and outside. From the perspective of HS, as Michael Mann states, the different realms of the social life are not

[20Theory,%20Modernity,%20and%20the%203%20Waves%20of%20Historical%20Sociology.pdf](#) [Last accessed on 25 February 2016].

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Philip Abrams, *Historical Sociology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982): 8.

⁷ Theda Skocpol, *Theory and Vision in Historical Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984): 1.

‘external’ to each other but rather interrelated.⁸ So, the question of how IR should reflect on international-domestic interaction becomes a disciplinary debate inspired by HS.

Justin Rosenberg in a famous article, where he constantly defined the *international*, sums up the relation between historical sociology and the *international* when he describes the requirements for historical sociological approach within International Relations (HS in IR): “For it requires, in short, a conceptual framework which, proceeding from the relational structure of societies as *explanans* (sociology), systematically incorporates the causal significance of their asynchronous interaction (international) into an explanation of their individual and collective development and change over time (historical).”⁹

John Hobson, George Lawson and Justin Rosenberg argue that the departure point of HSIR is C. Wright Mills’ (1959) famous description of “the sociological imagination”. According to Mills classical sociologists constructed their analyses at the intersection of three dimensions of the human world: structure, history and biography. HSIR tradition reformulates this triangulation by replacing biography with international: Structure, history and international.¹⁰ As such, it adjusts the focus of “the sociological imagination” in line with the subject matter of IR and reaches a new triangulation that constitutes the intellectual agenda of HSIR itself.¹¹

⁸ Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power Vol.1: A History of Power from the Beginning to A. D. 1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989):18.

⁹ Justin Rosenberg, “Why is There No International Historical Sociology,” *European Journal of International Relations* 12, no. 3 (2006): 335.

¹⁰ John Hobson, George Lawson and Justin Rosenberg, “Historical Sociology,” in *International Studies Encyclopaedia*, ed. R. Denemark (Wiley-Blackwell: UK, 2010).

¹¹ Ibid.

The research question of this dissertation is inspired by HSIR that observes a reciprocal relation between the *international* and the *domestic* as well as by the modernist theories of nationalism¹² that treat nationalism as a form of politics, hence as open to the influences from the state and the international. The core research question is as follows: what were the characteristics of the specific interaction between the international politics and the domestic setting that enabled the specific characteristics of the Iranian nation state and Iranian nationalism?

From the 19th century onwards Iran, as we call it now, underwent a great transformation and the Qajar period, especially its last decades, remained a very contested period not only in the memories of the Iranian people but also among the social scientists studying this transformatory period. From the prism of modern centralized nation state, the Qajar state is a ‘non-state’ as it did not present the major characteristics of a modern nation-state and was short of being a centralized, agrarian empire like the Ottoman Empire.

Various international processes were at work in late 19th century that rendered the political, economic and social conditions of the Qajar Iran unbearable for people living in the territories that were to become the future Iran. The specific ways in which Qajars shaped the Iranian integration to the world market, the interventions and supremacy of the great powers, rapidly changing international political and economic structures, roaming ideas of constitutionalism, representation and

¹² It is important to note that the modernist theories of nationalism are not a monolithic field. There are diverse accounts of explanations within the theory yet they share the principle that nations and nationalism are modern phenomena and products of the modern processes such as capitalism and industrialism. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983); Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain* (London: Verso, 1982); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge University Press, 1990); Hobsbawm, *Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993); Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Hroch, “From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Process in Europe,” in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. G. Balakrishnan (London: Verso, 1994); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

justice all these turned Qajars into ‘backward rulers’ that either need to ‘modernize’ or be ‘toppled down’.

However, in this very process the international was not simply providing a model of development. It also made its very existence felt through unprecedented interventions in the Iranian territory not only at the state level but also at the societal level.

So, part of the main engine of this big transformation had been the international itself and that is why it should be integrated to the Iranian studies. When studying nationalism, the role of the studies of the international dimension should be on par with the role given to political elites, masses or the state institutions.

Moreover, this level of existence in the Iranian trajectory unavoidably made it also an inevitable factor in the formation of Iranian identity. International factored at every turn that *Iranian identity* took. The elevation of Western-like identity at the beginning of the Reza Shah period, the invention of supposedly racial superiority in the context of rising fascism in Europe, the anti-colonial movement swept through the world and its heavy impact on blossoming of Mussaddeq’s non-aligned nationalism, the Cold War and “Neither East Nor West” discourse of Muhammed Reza Shah, all of these turns of Iranian nationalism reflect the importance of incorporating the realm of international to the domestic historiography. Even today the international politics lies at the heart of Iranians’ agenda. Recently, Iranian people poured into the streets to celebrate the nuclear deal between their country and the P5+1 (US, Britain, France, Russia, China plus Germany). The meaning attached to *being Iranian/Iranianness/Iranicity* and the constituents of being Iranian have been conditioned by the specific interaction between the two realms of international and domestic.

Michael Billig underlines that nationalism is not an ideology which is linked to specific nation states; it is more generally an international ideology.¹³ In a similar vein Benedict Anderson highlights the modular and imagined nature of nationalism in order to emphasize its success in political ideology of human history.¹⁴ However, unless we untangle this specific interaction between the international and domestic, the international ideology of nationalism is doomed to be an empty signifier in different contexts. It indicates nothing more than replicas of the Western nationalisms which is verbalised by Partha Chatterjee as “what left to be imagined?”¹⁵. It is a well-established fact that both the Iranian and the Middle Eastern nationalisms were the product of the confluence of ideational and material conditions that world underwent especially after the global 19th century developments. However, the specific ideological contents of these nationalisms have been determined by the way different particularities interacted with the international processes. And in this interaction the international, as a thick concept, does not remain as a context relatively distant from domestic dynamics and developments but become endemic property of nations. So, it has not only a demonstration effect on relevant nations but constitutive role in the formation of any social phenomenon and national identity is one of them.¹⁶

¹³ Michael Billig, “Nationalism as an International Ideology,” in *Changing European Identities* ed. Glynis Marie Breakwell and Evanthia Lyons (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1996).

¹⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

¹⁵ Partha Chatterjee, “Whose Imagined Community,” in *Mapping the Nation* ed. Gopal Balakrishnan (London and New York: Verso Books, 2012): 121.

¹⁶ At this point we should mention that the role of identity has been the locus of constructivism in IR discipline. Constructivism argues that “material practices shall be analyzed within the social and normative context that gives meaning to them.” (Gülriş Şen, “Post-Revolutionary Iran’s Foreign Policy toward the United States: A Historical Sociological Analysis of State Transformation and Foreign Policy,” (PhD Diss., Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, 2013): 30. Although this thesis accepts the importance social and normative context, it departs from constructivism on several points. First is that as opposed to constructivism his thesis does not prioritize the role of normative context over material context. Secondly, rather than trying to find the identity of the Iranian state, this thesis claim that state identity has been subject to change according to the interaction of international and domestic dynamics. It aims at analysing nationalism in its relation to international political structure as well as modern state structure. Lastly, this thesis tries to provide political factors in explaining Iranian nationalism rather than resorting to cultural factors.

The focus on this interaction itself is an HS inspired IR trait. But what does *international* really refer to? The *international* will be mainly composed of those inter-societal and inter-state interactions that had a significant impact on the emergence and development of Iranian state nationalism: the world historical context including two world-wars, political and social developments in neighbouring countries and their demonstration effect on Iranian state and society; the general history of British and Russian and later American and Soviet encroachment to Iran on political, military and economic fronts; the specific agreements these powers had with state and non-state actors in Iran, such as their backing of tribes or opposition movements, as well as the impact of their overall presence in the country on the social fabric. Also included in the international is the more indirect but also influential world historical setting, such as the coinciding of the Bolshevik Revolution with this era of Iranian history and giving rise to socialist movements and even an attempt to establish a socialist republic in the north of Iran. These are not direct actions on behalf of foreign powers but are part of the constitution of the political conditions and actors in the country, such as the ideologies, political tactics and alliances that were available to the Iranian political actors.

So we can safely assert that the role of international was indeed two-folded: Firstly, *the international structural context*, namely the impact of the *longue durée* structural conditions such as capitalism and imperialism, coupled with in our case the growing tendency towards nation-state and the collapse of empires worldwide. The second on the other hand is *the international political context* that is composed of more short term, day-to-day inter-state and inter-society interactions stretching from *realpolitik* to local dynamics as in the case of the relationship between the state, tribes and the foreign powers. We can also categorize the impact of international as *ideational* and *material*.

However, there is another side of the equation namely how the Iranian actors reacted to the impact of *the international* and as we will see it is rarely a straightforward reaction in the form anti-imperialism or Westernization. Both

trends run through Iranian nationalism as enforced by the Iranian state and unless we untangle their causes we cannot truly understand their natures.

The claim of this thesis is that we cannot grasp why Iranian nation state and nationalism of that state developed the way they did without looking into *the specifics of international-domestic interaction*, without *historicising* that process and without allowing for *multiple causes* rather than one single cause such as the directionality of modernity.

1.2. Relevance of the Study to the Literature

Although last few years witnessed new studies, nationalism literature in the Iranian context remains far from in-depth scrutiny. There are limited number of works focusing on Iranian nationalism. One of the first studies on Iranian nationalism is Richard Cottam's book, *Nationalism in Iran*, which was published in 1964, that discusses the role of nationalism on political behaviour¹⁷. Susan Siavoshi's *Liberal Nationalism in Iran* (1989) is also among the first studies on nationalism and it discusses the nationalism of National Front¹⁸. Later in 1993 Mostafa Vaziri applied the theory of Benedict Anderson on Iran in his book titled as *Iran as Imagined Nation*.¹⁹ Then in 2000 *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation: 1804-1946* by Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet was published. In the book she discussed the role of geography in defining the nation.²⁰ David Nejde Yaghaubian (2000), in *Ethnicity, Identity, and the Development of Nationalism in Iran* examined nationalism through biographical analysis of Armenian elites.²¹ In 2000 and 2002 Touraj Atabaki, and Brenda Shaffer, published respectively

¹⁷ Richard Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1979).

¹⁸ Susan Siavoshi, *Liberal Nationalism in Iran* (Boulder: Westview Press: 1989).

¹⁹ Mostafa Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation* (New York: Paragon House, 1993).

²⁰ Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation: 1804-1946* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

²¹ David Nejde Yaghaubian, *Ethnicity, Identity and the Development of Nationalism in Iran* (PhD Diss., University of Berkeley, 2000).

Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and the Struggle for Power in Iran and *Borders and Brethren: Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity*.²² Afshin Marashi authored the book *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State* in 2008 and analysed nation building in Iran through public ceremonies, rituals and education.²³ The latest works in the field are Ali Ansari's *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran* (2012), *Imagining Iran: The Tragedy of Subaltern Nationalism* authored by Majid Sharifi in 2013 and Reza Ebrahimi's "dislocative nationalism" which was published in March 2016.²⁴ While the Ansari's study shows how different regimes sought to manipulate nationalist ideology according to their interests, Sharifi explores the rise and fall of Iranian regime and argues that each regime failed to nationalize its own narrative of Iranianness. Ebrahimi, on the other hand, tackles with the Aryan thesis and argues that it was used as a mechanism in coping with the trauma created by the encounter with the West.

As sophisticated as these studies may be, none of these works problematizes neither the role of international nor its interaction with the domestic conditions in the formulation of nationalistic policies and politics of the Iranian state. The study of Iranian nationalism still suffers from the lack of a conceptualized account of the emergence and development of Iranian nationalism from a political perspective that gives due weight to the co-constitution of the international and domestic. This claim is especially valid for the time period that this thesis will endeavour to cover.

Craig Calhoun states that there are many reasons to study Historical Sociology. First is the importance of studying social change. The second reason is to avoid

²² Brenda Shaffer, *Borders and Brethren: Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity* (Mass.: MIT Press, 2002); Touraj Atabaki, *Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and the Struggle for Power in Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

²³ Afshin Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power and the State: 1870-1941* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2008).

²⁴ Ali Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Majid Sharifi, *Imagining Iran: The Tragedy of Subaltern Nationalism* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2013); Reza Ebrahimi, *The Emergence of Dislocative Nationalism. Race and Modernity in Iran, 1860-1940*, forthcoming.

the “illusions of false necessity” by recognizing its contingency and lastly the need to grasp analytic categories in the historical contexts of their production and application.²⁵ We can enrich the list that Calhoun offers by adding studying the importance of nationalism from a historical sociological perspective. As Delanty mentions “that the contribution of a globally oriented historical sociology to the study of nationalism consists in linking these essentially political discourses of nationalism to a sociological account of the rise and transformation of modern society”.²⁶ This dissertation aims to link political discourses of state nationalism to the Iranian modernization in a globally oriented fashion as Delanty suggests.

Studying the Middle East from a historical sociological approach is important because there is a gap in the historical sociological works regarding the regions other than Europe. Historical sociology is built on theories of transitions to capitalist modernity, and those theories have been historically centred around versions of the European experience²⁷. The same holds true for studies of nationalism. Nationalism studies in the last decades brought a deeper understanding to case studies in Europe. This claim can be extended to the colonial-post colonial context, as well. As a matter of fact, post-colonial and subaltern approaches to nationalism have been a response to the Eurocentric character of studies on nationalism. At different levels, they problematize inside/outside antinomy and produced context-bounded analysis that requires careful theorization empirical research.

However, there are limited number of studies that reveal the formation and development of nationalist politics in Iran as a country which was not colonised formally yet deeply felt the presence of colonial powers. This thesis will attempt

²⁵ Craig Calhoun, “Why Historical Sociology,” in *Handbook of Historical Sociology*, Gerard Delanty and Engin İşin ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2003): 383-384.

²⁶ Gerard Delanty, “The Persistence of Nationalism: Modernity and Discourses of the Nation,” in *Handbook of Historical Sociology*, Gerard Delanty and Engin İşin ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2003): 287.

²⁷ Julia Adams, Elisabeth Clemens and Ann Shola Orloff, *Remaking Modernity: Politics, History, and Sociology* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005): 56.

to contribute to the study of the Iranian nationalism by locating the formation of Iranian nation state and the development of Iranian nationalism in their world-historical time and within the international political scene in a theoretically informed manner. Hence it will stay away from a narrow narrative that is confined to the details of domestic rhetoric about nationalism.

Indeed, this international level is the realm where this thesis will try to be most original as the literature on the nationalism in Iran does not go beyond the recognition of the importance of the international context. By focusing on the relations between the state and the nationalist politics, this thesis will be able to look at the dual functions of the state at the international and national level. Moreover, inspired by the historical sociology tradition, this thesis will also consider the circulation of ideas, political strategies, etc. at the international level to the extent that they relate to the choices of Iranian actors with regards to the formation and development of the Iranian nation state. Consistent with the attempt of conceptualizing Iranian nationalism, this thesis will take the international context seriously and treat it systematically. Thus, it will contribute to the discipline of International Relations and Area Studies by showing that a thorough and theoretical understanding of international politics is indispensable for explaining crucial social changes in single countries in order to avoid cultural essentialism, which sees cultures “as if they were natural givens, entities that existed neatly distinct and separate in the world”²⁸. As such, it will bring up new research issues as to how deeply connected nationalist politics is to state politics, and how influenced it is by the politics at the international level.

These major political events will be read from the literature on international history, history of the region as well as Iran. The sources will be limited to the literature published in English and Turkish. As a qualitative work, it draws its

²⁸ Uma Narayan, “Essence of Culture and a Sense of History,” *Hypatia* 13, no. 2 (1998): 88-90. “Cultural essentialism assumes and constructs sharp binaries between “Western culture” and “Non-western cultures” or between “Western culture” and particular “Other” cultures and presents the differences between the cultures as something pre-given.”

sources from the official statements, interviews, writings and memoirs of key actors; as well as from personal, journalistic and scholarly accounts of close contemporary observers of these processes. Indeed, a considerable number of books and academic articles that make up the extensive list of secondary sources used in this research also qualify as eye-witness accounts as they demonstrate the changing perspectives and analytical frameworks prevalent within the scholarly, journalistic and political circles in and outside of these countries during the periods under study.

As Fred Halliday points out, “there can be no purely national history of any states; equally there can be no theory of the economy, the state or social relations that deny the formative, not just residual or recent, impact of the international.”²⁹ This is the aim of this thesis: to contribute to a different, international history of Iranian nationalism from an HSIR perspective.

1.3. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation will analyse the formation and development of Iranian state nationalism in three historical epochs. Before starting the analysis, it will try to build a framework for analysing Iranian nationalism with a strong international lens. In order to do so, the following chapter, Chapter II, will first focus on the theories of nationalism. This investigation will not cover all the aspects of theories of nationalism; rather it will selectively read the field in the light of the central aim of the dissertation and evaluate the place of the international within those theories. The second part of the chapter will explore the studies on nationalism in the discipline of IR. Here the aim will be to understand how nationalism is studied in the IR. The last part of the chapter will aim to bridge the gulf between the studies of nationalism and IR and endeavour to develop a relational approach that appreciates the insights that the two fields could offer. The main tenets of this approach will be *historicisation*, *multi-causality* and *international-domestic*

²⁹ Fred Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1994): 4.

interaction as put forward by HS, HSIR and modernist school of nationalism. These methodological tools that the approach provides will give us the direction when analysing the case study at hand.

Under the guidance of the tools HS and HSIR provide this thesis will trace the emergence and development of Iranian nationalism and Iranianness in three case chapters. But before that in order to provide a historical background to contextualize the era of Reza Shah the last part of this chapter will briefly discuss the era preceding Reza Shah in which important developments such as the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 occurred. This part will address the politicization of the several segments of the Iranian people in the face of European encroachment and the transformation of the Iranian society in the rapidly changing international political scene.

Chapter III stretches from post-World War I to 1941, the period when Reza Khan transformed himself to Reza Shah and replaced the Qajar Dynasty to the Pahlavi Dynasty and started the process of consolidation of the Iranian nation state in 1925. After becoming the new shah, he introduced a modern bureaucratic state, nationalist and secularist reforms and changed the name of the country from Persia to Iran in foreign correspondence and all the while pursued a harsh Westernization programme. The last two years were also the years of the Second World War and indeed the foreign powers were involved in the Reza Shah's abdication, just as they were involved in his coming to power. This period is of significant importance for the aim of this thesis. As a thoroughly modern phenomenon, as elsewhere, the 'national' question in Iran, as a question of identity, rights and civil and democratic liberties, finds its roots in the construction of the modern state: that is, in the policies of territorial centralism and construction of a uniform Iranian national identity, pursued by force by the first Pahlavi state from 1926 to 1941.

The period under consideration is one in which frameworks for understanding the world and one's place in it included not only the local or national but also relatively distant elements as diverse as the work of Sigmund Freud in Vienna,

fascism in Italy or Germany, or Bolshevism in the Soviet Union, as well as those events, tendencies, or trends that had a direct impact on distant places such as the Great Depression. Ali Raza et al. call “the moment of internationalism”:

As the world attempted to remake itself in the aftermath of the Great War, the opportunity to imagine alternatives to the old states-and-empires system, to mould the world anew, presented itself to many people. And a problem solved or question addressed in one part of the world quite logically lent itself to replication, and to discussions as to its replicability and applicability in new contexts. With the seemingly imminent collapse of the old order, the emergence of a new one seemed to be not only plausible but inevitable.³⁰

Chapter IV, will start with the abdication of Reza Shah and end with the 1953 Coup d'état that ended the Musaddeq era. This period is crucial for the purposes of this thesis as it exposes two nationalisms in Iran: the one upheld by a great deal of state violence by Reza Shah and later will be upheld with a great deal of oil rent by Muhammed Reza Shah and the one that had the legacy of the Constitutional Revolution, reformulated under the leadership of Dr. Muhammed Musaddeq the popular nationalism of Iran. It is important to expose how the international is a great part of both nationalisms albeit in different fashions. Indeed the issue of imperialism is a key divergent between the two. Oil politics dominates Iranian scene at the time and issues of independence, identity, democracy and what defines Iranian nation are all struggled over the oil politics. It is also through oil politics that we get to reveal the role played by major powers in the consolidation and sustainment of Iranian nation state as an authoritarian monarchy. This chapter will expose the contentious politics of nationalism in the brief but crucial period between the end of the Second World War and 1953. The era of Muhammed Reza Shah will be analysed in Chapter V. This chapter will try to shed light on the discourse of Iranian nationalism reconstituted by Muhammed Reza Shah in three processes: the toppling down of Musaddeq that

³⁰ Ali Raza, Franziska Ray and Benjamin Zachariah, *Internationalist Moment: South Asia, Worlds, and World Views 1917-39* (New Delhi, London and California: Sage Publications, 2015): xvii.

prepared the ground for the reign of the Shah; the White Revolution and the rising regional power status of Iran starting with the withdrawal of Britain from the Suez Canal and finally from the Persian Gulf. In tandem with the framework used in this thesis both the international and domestic developments will be under scrutiny. These three processes will help us to understand the interconnectedness of the discourse of Iranian nationalism with the modern state politics and the international. They will also show how the discourse of Iranian nationalism was subject to change alongside the domestic and international developments. This chapter will grasp nationalism of Muhammed Reza Shah two-fold: nationalism inwards and nationalism outwards. With this double directionality Muhammed Reza Shah sought legitimacy both at home and abroad. The part that tackles with “nationalism inwards” will display the mechanisms the Shah used to build his version of Iraniannes. These are containing Musaddeq’s nationalism, elevation of the Monarchy and lastly the re-sacralisation of the Monarchy. The part that focuses on “nationalism outwards” will try to show how Muhammed Reza Shah also sought for international legitimacy.

The remaining part of this chapter will present an overture of Iranian politics in the beginning of 20th century in order to contextualize the main case chapters. As such it becomes possible to understand the background that set the stage for Reza Shah’s coming to power and the developments afterwards.

1.4. Iran in World Politics at the Beginning of 20th Century

During the Qajar Dynasty³¹, whose reign had started in the 18th century to 20th century, Iran was an important scene of great power rivalry especially of Britain

³¹ During the Qajar Dynasty, the main groups in the society were the royal family, tribal khans, non-tribal members of powerful families, high ranking ulama, the bazaar classes and nomads. Nikki Keddie, argues that “the Qajars had not a state, since tribes, city factions, local governors, and even members of the ulama class, had private armies and engaged in battles without the central government’s being able to intervene.” Qajar Dynasty was governing the society not through the bureaucratic mechanisms such as the army or administrative institutions but through directing and canalising societal divisions as clans, tribes, ethnic groups and regions systematically. Their authority was derived from the local power groups having their own power mechanisms. Following the discussion about the strength of the state, the Qajar state might look like the Oriental

and Russia. The international politics of the era, generally labelled as ‘new imperialism’³² gave rise to a significantly different ways of foreign policy thereby had an impact not only on the Great Powers but also their dealings with other parts of the world including Iran. As they competed among themselves over the world, their interest in Iran increased. One of the most significant developments was Germany’s entrance to this rivalry.³³ A French diplomat of the era put clearly that ‘in order to be or stay as a Great Power, you have to have colonies’³⁴. This understanding, therefore, shaped the international politics of the era and Great Power rivalry shifted intensively to non-European territories.

Among the rivalries between the European Powers, the one among Russia and Britain is of significant importance for Iran. Russian imperial interest in the Central Asia was a threat to Britain’s position in India. In order to secure the Indian frontier Britain needed buffer states such as Afghanistan and Iran. When France, under the leadership of Napoleon Bonaparte, turned its face to India, Iran became crucially important for Britain. Especially Lord Curzon³⁵ and his ever growing interest in Persia triggered the interest of Britain in Persia. He had a strategy to create ‘a Moslem nexus of states’ in the Middle East as a shield to ward off Russian expansion.

despotic state or it might look like a weak state unable to actually penetrate to society. According to Kazemi, “while the power of the state loomed large, its distance and remoteness provided groups and associations the needed minimum space for operation.”

Nikki Keddie, *Qajar Iran and the Rise of Reza Khan 1796-1925* (California: Mazda Publishers, 1999): 15-16; Farhad Kazemi, “Civil Society and Iranian Politics,” in *Civil Society in the Middle East*, Augustus Richard Norton ed. (New York: Brill, 2005): 120.

³² C.J. Bartlett, *The Global Conflict, International Rivalry of the Great Powers, 1880-1990* (London: Longman, 1994): 16.

³³ Anthony Best, Jussi Hanhimaki, Joseph Maiolo, Kirsten Schulze, *International History of the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 2004): 16-17.

³⁴ Anthony Best, *Uluslararası Siyasi Tarih 20. Yüzyıl* (Istanbul: Yayın Odası, 2008): 30.

³⁵ Lord Curzon was the Chairman of the Eastern Committee of the Cabinet and later he became the Foreign Minister of Britain. He was an expert on Persia. He wrote the book called *Persia and the Persian Question* which was valued as being a seminal work on the subject written in English. David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 1989): 455.

During these years, according to Ansari³⁶, the fundamental strategic interest of Britain and Russia in Iran was to ensure that it did not fall completely under the control of either power. This delicate balance had its consequences for Iranian politics. Firstly, Britain acted as a guarantor of Iran against Russia and thus Iran could maintain its independence. Secondly, this international context affected the Iranian foreign policy concerns. “The balancing of Anglo-Russian claims in Persia became a permanent feature of 19th-century diplomacy.”³⁷ This rivalry also had its impact on the Iranian economy. Since neither power wished to resort to arms, their competition came to crystallize in the domain of economy. Both powers tried to advance their commercial interest by a system of capitulations. The discovery of oil in early 1900s would further increase the strategic value of Iran and one power after another sought oil concessions from the central government.³⁸ “The primary foreign policy task of the Iranian government, in fact, became one of balancing concession granted the businessmen of the great powers.”³⁹ The deteriorating economic conditions for the people of Iran would be among the reasons that contributed to the Constitution Revolution.

This competition over the Iranian land created the opportunity for governments and Shahs to advance their financial interests by playing the two powers against each other. This also resulted in some Iranian officials to be bought off by

³⁶ Ali Ansari, *Modern Iran since 1921 The Pahlavis and After* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2003): 9.

³⁷ George Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1980): 45. Indeed balancing between several foreign powers and maintaining the territorial integrity of the country through delicate foreign policy was also a feature of the neighbouring Ottoman Empire. See Matthew Smith Anderson, *Doğu Sorunu* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2001).

³⁸ In 1901, a British citizen, William Knox D'Arcy, negotiated an oil concession with Mozaffar al-Din Shah Qajar of Persia. He assumed exclusive rights to prospect for oil for 60 years in a vast territory, 480,000 square miles. In exchange the Shah received £20,000 (£1.9 million today), an equal amount in shares of D'Arcy's company, and a promise of 16% of future profits. Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2003): 48.

³⁹ Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 159.

foreigners. As Cottam asserts, “most Iranians are sure that entire factions of politicians were owned body and soul by either the Russian or the British.”⁴⁰

An example of the consequences of such a system of administration was the Tobacco Protest of 1890-1891. A mass movement against the concession granted to Britain for a monopoly over production, sale and export of Tobacco occurred and indeed became successful. Started by bazaaris whose commercial interests were hurt by the concession it was joined by other segments most notably the ulama. Its success is attributed to a great extent to the fatwa issued by Mirza Hasan Shirazi, a high ranking ayatollah which banned the use of tobacco and hence influenced the Muslim population of Iran to enter a boycott against all tobacco products. This protest was an example of the reactions of the people against the economic diplomacy between Nasir al-Din Shah and the Great Powers and prepared the ground for the development of the Iranian opposition. As seen, this protest was a direct result of the interaction between Great Powers’ interest and rivalry over Iran and the actions of the Iranians in the face of that rivalry.

Apart from this international rivalry, there were others sometimes equally influential international factors in the road to Constitution Revolution. The international roaming of ideas such as constitutionalism and democracy resulted in the addition of this vocabulary to the lexicon of the Iranian intellectuals. Equally important were the demonstration effect of the revolutionary movements in the neighbouring countries especially the Russian Revolution in 1905, and the modernization attempts in the Ottoman Empire⁴¹. These inputs from the international context contributed to the articulation of an Iranian opposition.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 160.

⁴¹ Malkhum Khan was one of these elites who advocated modernization of the state via establishing the body of laws (qanun). Greatly inspired by the Ottoman political vocabulary he championed the idea of nationalism, restoring equality and justice. Another figure in the Iranian history was Mirza Husayn Khan Sepahsalar. As one of the eyewitnesses of the Tanzimat Reforms in the Ottoman Empire, he also defended the necessity of the reformation and prepared a proposal to the Shah. These initiatives could not be realized in the face of clerical opposition and the arbitrary rule. Nikki Keddie, “The Origins of Religious-Radical Alliance in Iran,” *Past and Present* 34 (1966): 71; Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation*, 181.

This political opposition were going to struggle for a constitution to be installed and thereby joining their comrades in Russia and in the Ottoman Empire. The Constitutional Revolution took place with the participation of almost all politicized actors but, “they did not strive for a sudden takeover and complete overthrow of the traditional structure of rule; rather they aimed to establish a lawful government.”⁴² This is indeed very similar to the Constitutional Revolution (1908) in the Ottoman Empire. There and in Iran the target of revolutionary upheavals was not the dynasty or even the monarchy as an institution. The demand was towards a constitutionalist regime and a representative body.

As epitomized in the Tobacco protests the capitulations given to Russia and Britain were much more than the symbols of dependency of Iran on the Great Powers and had far-reaching consequences for the Iranians. With the capitulations, Britain and Russia were permitted to open agencies in the country, were exempted from the local laws and tariffs and enjoyed low import duties. The volume of foreign trade had grown immensely during the era. Despite the fact that the economic integration to the global economy served well to particular strata of the society; the majority of medium and small traders could not compete with the foreign merchants. The undermining of handcraft sectors due to the competition of Western industrial goods affected the artisan’s livelihood immensely. The rising of the prices of essential commodities, the commercialization of agriculture and unemployment led to the decline in the standard of living for the urban poor, working class, and peasants.⁴³

⁴² Nader Sohrabi, “Historicizing Revolution: Constitutional Revolutions in the Ottoman Empire, Iran and Russia, 1905-1908,” *American Journal of Sociology* 100, no. 6 (1995): 1421.

⁴³ Ervand Abrahamian, “The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10, no. 3 (1979): 391; John Foran, “The Strengths and Weaknesses of Iran's Populist Alliance: A Class Analysis of the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911,” *Theory and Society* 20, no. 6 (1991): 800.

When the economic crisis which was resulted by high inflation hit the country in 1905, the government increased the tariffs on the Iranian merchants and triggered public protests. In May 1905 merchants went on strike, in December wider protests took place including the ulama, students, tradesmen and merchants. Finally in 1906, 14000 people took sanctuary in British Legation. The Qajar Monarch, Mozaffar al-Din Shah agreed to the establishment of the National Assembly, Majles, in 1906.⁴⁴

In 1906 the National Assembly was established after a period of the Constitutional Assembly, and it started to prepare the Constitution. The Assembly was composed of clerics, bazaaris, landlords, local elites and senior bureaucrats. These groups framed the Constitution which would prevail until 1979 and which established a constitutional monarchy in which the Assembly's approval, as the presenter of the whole people, was required on all important matters such as foreign loans, treaties, and budget etc. Moreover, the Assembly was given the right to choose ministers. Namely, the jurisdiction of the shah was limited and the Assembly was coming to the scene as the main decision making mechanism.

The literature on the nature of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution generally regards the Revolution as the result of introduction of Western ideas such constitutionalism, nationalism, and secularism.⁴⁵ So, they prioritize the ideational impact of international over its material repercussions. More recent studies show that the picture is more complicated. According to Abrahamian, it is not the ideological impact but the socio-economic impact of the West was the major determining cause in the Constitutional Revolution. Although the intellectuals

⁴⁴ Abrahamian, "The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran," 404- 405; Foran, "The Strengths and Weaknesses of Iran's Populist Alliance 1991," 803; Fakhreddin Azimi, *The Quest for Democracy in Iran* (Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008): 29.

⁴⁵ "The classical Iranian historians of the constitutional movement - Ahmad Kasravi, Mehdi Malekzadeh, Yahyai Dawlatabadi, and Nizam al-Islam Kermani - have all argued that the modern ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity, propagated by Westernized intellectuals, 'awakened' the 'sleeping public' at the end of the nineteenth century, and, thereby, led the way to the 'national resurgence' of the early twentieth century." Abrahamian, "The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran," 384.

advised the revolution, the propertied middle class- merchants, artisans and ulama- were the actual revolutionaries. Similarly, Foran argues that the alliance of classes- artisans, ulama, intellectuals, merchants, workers and marginalized urban classes- actually made the revolution. “The fundamental point is not the appearance of new ideas, but the appearance of conditions that made such ideas relevant.”⁴⁶ So, we can argue that both ideational and material impact of the international were at work in the happening of Constitutional Revolution.

The changing balance of power in Europe coincided with the aim of the new Shah, Mohammad Ali who succeeded to the crown after the death of his father Mozaffar al-Din Shah to restore his power and the Assembly was dissolved in 1908. From the beginning of the 20th century Britain’s relations with other Europeans powers began to change and altering dynamics of the world politics precipitated the Entente among Russia, Britain and France. The reflection of the Entente on Iran was to be the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907. As mentioned above, Russia and Britain were two rival powers that tried to dominate Iran. However, the rise of Germany as a new power and its concomitant interest in the Middle East was seen as an important signal of altering balances in the international politics.

Germany, with its foreign policy *Weltpolitik*⁴⁷, believed that in order to take part among the Great Powers of 20th century, it had to rise as a colonial power and turned its face towards the East. In doing so, the aim was to contain Britain and Russia. In reaction Britain and Russia signed a treaty to secure their interests that would end their rivalry over the Persian territory. The Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 divided Iran into three zones of influence: Russia in the north, Britain in

⁴⁶ Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (California: Stanford University Press, 1976): 291.

⁴⁷ *Weltpolitik* was the term that was used to describe the world politics of Germany. It did take its shape in the late 19th century when Germany was anxious about its place among the Great Powers. After Second Wilhelm coming to the power in Germany, *Weltpolitik* was comprehended as the programme that was able to turn Germany into an overseas empire. The programme should not be grasped merely as the feature of foreign policy it also had instrumentality for the domestic politics, when it was used as to unite the masses under the autocracy against the rising socialist threat in the country. So, it again displays the *interaction* of international and domestic factors. Best, *Uluslararası Siyasi Tarih*, 17-18.

the south and a neutral zone was created. The repercussions of this agreement in Iran were unreceptive since the Iranians were not included at any process of the agreement. Although Britain and Russia assured that the independence and the integrity of Iran would not be affected due to the agreement, proceeding developments revealed the opposite.

In the domestic scene counter-revolutionary forces, mainly Mohammed Ali Shah and the government were attempting to mobilize forces by exploiting the conflict that began to appear in the constitutionalist alliance. Russia's role in this process was evident. Although Russia and Britain terminated their rivalries with the Anglo-Russian Agreement, a subtle competition indeed remained. Before the Constitutional Revolution, while Russia had supported the reactionary groups, Britain had sided with the revolutionaries. The success of the revolution had threatened Russia's policy. Russia suspected that it was sponsored by Britain and would harm the Russian interests. So, Russia supported and encouraged the Shah to repudiate the constitution in a coup d'état. Internal instability came as an effective room of manoeuvre for the Shah and he closed the Assembly with a coup d'état in 1908 with the backing of Russia. The support of Russia was not confined to motivating the Shah; instead it was materialized in the form of the Cossack Brigade, which was established by Russian officers in 1879⁴⁸ and became the main military unit of Iran. It was the Cossack Brigade that attacked the Majles. Here we can safely argue that the *international* did not only give aspirations to the state but the international tensions even resulted in the establishment of military units which in turn had its own international implications. The Cossack Brigade would later become the main mechanism of the formation of centralized Iranian state.

The specific interaction of different levels of international and domestic dynamics hence suspended the constitutional hopes. The partition of Iran into spheres of influence accelerated the political turmoil in the country instead of assuring its

⁴⁸ Cyrus Ghani, *Iran and the Rise of Reza Shah* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000): 15.

integrity as the two powers claimed, mainly because it deprived the Iranian people of the administrative mechanisms by facilitating the closing of the Assembly.

Although the country fell into a deeper turmoil, the constitutionalist movement could continue its struggle against the Qajar absolutism by moving the centre of activities to Tabriz where the movement was strongest. When the Bakhtiari tribe from the Isfahan province joined the Constitutional forces, Russia and Britain could not save Mohammed Ali Shah, and he was replaced by his son Ahmad Shah (a teenager at the time). The very reasons behind the joining of the tribe were their conflicts with Qajars and their aim to attain power en route for the central government. The intersection of various actors' concerns led to the termination of the Mohammed Ali's reign, which is known as *Lesser Autocracy*. The Constitution was restored and the second Majles was elected in 1909.

There were two parties in the parliament of 1909: The Democrat Party who defended social democratic ideas and advocated a secular nationalist programme, and the Moderate Party, which was composed of notables, the old ruling class and the ulama and which had a conservative agenda⁴⁹. Although there was a sharp division between the programmes of these two parties, the government started to take the necessary steps to establish a centralized state. For that purpose, it started with negotiating with Russia for withdrawal of its troops, tried to obtain a loan to rebuild administrative structure, and hired foreign officers to organize a police force, Gendarmerie, and American experts to structure the tax system under the supervision of Morgan Shuster⁵⁰. However, differences between the parties in the Majles began to surface. While the Democrats had a more secular political programme advocating for a democratic regime and called for extension of the

⁴⁹ Keddie, *Qajar Iran and the Rise of Reza Khan*, 61.

⁵⁰ Morgan Shuster was a young liberal American financial adviser. The choice of an American expert to control and reform financial affairs of the country shows the government aim to cooperate with the third party not related to Russian and British officials. Shuster arrived Iran with a team and was appointed as Treasurer-General. Keddie, *Qajar Iran and the Rise of Reza Khan*, 62; Homa Katouzian, *State and Society in Iran: The Eclipse of the Qajars and the Emergence of the Pahlavis* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006): 62-63.

vote to all adult males; free, direct and secret elections; equality of all citizens irrespective of religion and birth; separation of religion and politics; state control of religious foundations; free education; and the distribution of land⁵¹; the Moderates were advocating a programme to preserve the law and order. Their programme included the strengthening the constitutional monarch, safeguarding the religion, protecting family life, private property; defending society against the terrorism of the anarchists, the Atheism of Democrats, and the materialism of the Marxists.⁵² The tension between the parties soon increased especially in the Majles on the secular reforms and on the election of the prime minister the result of which would move to streets of Tehran. Due to the presence of paramilitary forces the parties had turned Tehran into a battlefield in a short period of time.

This picture reveals an important factor regarding the Iranian state and history and it is, in the Weberian sense, the absence of the monopoly of coercion which goes in to the very definition of the modern state. The absence of an army and the foreign occupation of the existent military units, Cossack Brigade and Gendarmerie, are among the crucial determinants that rendered Iran so vulnerable to the interventions of the Great Powers and that conditioned the success and failure of the political movements. This also goes into the constitution of the politics and policies of Reza Khan who would base his system on strong army.

The following years displayed the inefficiency of the central government. Since the central authority was weak, the tribal and provincial leaders were seeking to retain their power. The tribes tried to take the advantage of the situation in Tehran and realize their interests with establishing alliances with the diverse sources of powers, international and otherwise.

⁵¹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982): 104.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 106.

Taking advantage of a weak Iranian centre Russia occupied the northern provinces of Enzeli and Rasht in 1911 and sent an ultimatum⁵³ requesting the dismissal of Shuster and objected Iran's engagement with any other foreigners without British and Russian consent. This ultimatum made clear that being an American, Shuster's employment in Iran was seen as an anti-Russian move. The government accepted the ultimatum despite the opposition of the Majles as well as the Iranian people that organized demonstrations throughout the country. In 1911, Russia did not compromise and the Majles was dissolved and Shuster was dismissed. This marked the end of the Constitutional Era in the Iranian history. As Homa Katouzian correctly asserts, "the conflict in Iran over the ultimatum was not a domestic matter."⁵⁴ Even the reform attempts of the Majles became an international issue.

It must be noted that although the Constitutional Revolution did not succeed in establishing a centralized state, it did succeed in undermining the Qajar Dynasty. This weakening in the monarchy prepared the ground for Reza Khan's success. In other words, the intersection of multiple factors rendered the Revolution unsuccessful but opened the way to the success of Reza Khan's attempt to build a modern nation state in Iran.

The period of Iranian history discussed above highlights the need to incorporate international factors in our analysis of events. The important task is, however, not only to account for the presence of the interaction between the domestic and international in this narrative but also to show how this very interaction played its role in the creation of the Iranian nation state and the development of its state nationalism. This point brings us to the importance of multi causal analysis regarding the theoretical insights drawn from HS in IR. It was not simply modernization or the expansion of capitalism that urged Iran to strive for creating

⁵³This ultimatum demonstrates that Russia and Britain had started to perceive Iran as their de facto protectorate since the 1907 agreement between them.

⁵⁴ Katouzian, *State and Society in Iran*, 66.

a modern state, but rather multiple factors, international and domestic, affected the course of history and conditioned the future. In the narrative so far, we could observe the general dynamics of world politics, the particular interests of foreign powers, the domestic developments in other countries, the direct invasions and economic encroachment as the factors that fed into the failures and success of Iranian actors in their aims to reach a centralized and constitutionalist regime in Iran. Reza Khan was going to build the Iranian nation state by allying with or opposing to the above mentioned Iranian actors who were shaped by these factors.

International did play a role in the development of Iranian politics beyond mere foreign policy concerns and this is obvious also in the case of the dismissal of Shuster in which even the nationality of the advisor could become a cause of further foreign encroachment and, it in turn, brought more radicalization of the opposition as will be displayed in the next section.

Another point is the nature of the relationship of the domestic and international. The encounter with the Great Powers brought different levels of interaction. So the trajectory of the developments in Iran should be grasped as a complex process of interaction rather than mere economic, political or ideological Western domination. The foreign rapprochement and encroachment brought diverse opportunities and obstacles for the Iranian actors. The Constitutional Revolution of 1906 is very much an example of these multifaceted interaction processes. On the one hand, material developments such as the economic hardships and the lessening political independence vis-à-vis foreign powers led to the formation of opposition against the Great Powers and the government; on the other hand, the Western originated ideas, such as constitutionalism and rule of law facilitated the culmination of those grievances into a Constitutional movement. Therefore, the international not only constrained the Iranian people but also opened new paths for them.

If the nature of relationship between the domestic and international is one of our concerns, the presence of several international contexts is another. The

international both in terms of international structural context like capitalist world system and international political context like shifting nature of international politics and foreign encroachment, external events elsewhere, immediate responses of European powers all combined and constituted the reflexes of both the state and society. The international context of ideas also went into the formation of agency. The actors, while responding to these developments in multiple ways, also re-constructed, re-identified, re-evaluated themselves in the face of these processes of interaction and change. Via these policies and practices Iranian political actors and masses developed their habits of interaction with the outside world and that these people were going to be the masses upon which Reza constructed the nation state.

The relationship between international politics and Iranian nationalism is a visible relationship, one that can be observed even in the brief history of the Constitutional era above. Iranian politics is dominated by the actual and perceived impact of the ‘international actors’. It is the aim of this thesis to unravel this complex interaction between the international and the domestic for the purposes of understanding the specific characteristics of the Iranian nationalism, such as its approach to minorities, to religion, to imperialism and to its own history. As we proceed through the case study chapters we will identify the specific moments in international and Iranian history that gave rise to these characteristics.

CHAPTER 2

TOWARDS A HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH OF NATIONALISM

2.1 Introduction

Studying nationalism in the Middle East in general and in Iran in particular is a double challenge. On the one hand, there is the danger that is inherent in studying any nationalist ideology. This is identified by Tom Nairn as taking the nationalist ideology ‘too literally and seriously’.⁵⁵ Secondly, there is the conventional idea of Middle East exceptionalism that holds the notion of impossibility of applying universal analytical categories in understanding Middle Eastern politics. The resilience of authoritarianism in the region in contrast to the foresights of, first, the modernization theory and then, theories of democratization gave way to exploring the politics of region with the prism of a “unique” Middle Eastern culture comprising of Islam, oil, patrimonialism and etc. What Hamid Dabashi points out for the Iranian context can be expanded to the region in general: the fallacy of analysing the societies as if they stuck between modernity and tradition.⁵⁶

Modernist school of nationalism is of paramount importance in studying nationalism in Iran to go beyond the above-mentioned challenges. Modernity of nationalism does not deny that distinct peoples and culture have existed for centuries but argues that nations as political entities are products of modernity. So for modernist school, when nationalism achieves a meaning, it is only within the political realm, which is directly and/or indirectly shaped by the state. As such modernist school of nationalism does not focus on the question of what constitutes

⁵⁵ Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain*, 93.

⁵⁶ Hamid Dabashi, *Iran: A People Interrupted* (New York: New Press, 2007).

nations but rather explores its very relationship with modern politics and nation state.

If modernist school of nationalism gives us a way out of the perennialism trap by pointing out the very linkage between nationalism and modern politics, an international socio-historical approach rescues us from falling into the traps of Middle Eastern exceptionalism. “Study of ideologies needs to be sociological, in the sense of looking at the relation of ideas to political and social interest and historical, as they are shaped by contemporary context.”⁵⁷

The first objective of this chapter will be to locate the subject matter within the broader debates of nationalism studies. The following section will tackle the main strands of literature on nationalism and explore their shortcomings as well as strengths and will pay special attention to the role of the *international* in these theories. This exploration will not aim to cover all aspects of the field. Rather, in coherence with the central aim of the dissertation it will attempt to provide a critical look towards the theories of nationalism and to grasp their understanding of the international dimension and how that understanding figures in their theory building processes. Thus, the chapter will try to comprehend what they understand from the concept and how these theories assess the role of the international.

My second objective will be to identify the ways in which the discussion on nationalism took place within IR scholarship. Although nation state and/or nationalism are among the central concepts of the discipline, they have received rather little attention from the field and are generally taken as given. There are a few scholars in the discipline such as James Mayall and Bruce Hall who grasp the issue of nationalism as a matter of concern.⁵⁸ However, rather than

⁵⁷ Fred Halliday, *Middle East in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 197.

⁵⁸ The number of scholars within IR whose subject of study is nationalism is few: Clemens Hoffman, “The Eastern Question and the Fallacy of Modernity,” (PhD Diss., University of Sussex, 2009); Frederick Guillaume Dufour, “Social Property Regimes and the Uneven and Combined Development of Nationalist Practices,” *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 4

problematizing the phenomenon of nationalism per se, these scholars tend to focus on the impact of nationalism/national movements on global politics. On the other hand, there are some scholars within the discipline, especially from the Historical Sociological stance, such as Fred Halliday⁵⁹ and George Lawson⁶⁰, who try to give the *international* its due weight in their studies on revolutions. Despite the presence of historical sociological approaches to such phenomena, nationalism studies still suffer from insufficient number of empirical studies within the discipline. In this dual neglect, the importance of the *international* in the formation of nationalism and nation state remain orphan.

Following the above mentioned discussions on IR and nationalism and inspired by the HS and HS in IR tradition, in the last part of the chapter, I will try to provide theoretical suggestions that are capable of understanding the very phenomenon of nationalism in a social scientific and historically grounded manner with a sharp international lens. Thus, this chapter endeavours to provide the necessary theoretical tools to analyse the emergence and development of Iranian nationalism. The aim of this exploration is to provide answers on the questions of nationalism such as how the *international* played a crucial role in the formation of nationalism and what would be the missing part if the *international* is not given necessary attention especially in specific relation to the Iranian context. Such an endeavour, with the angle that HS and HS in IR provides, will try to contribute to the understanding of time and place-specific nature of nationalism.

(2007); Bruce Hall, *National Collective Identity: Social Constructs and International System* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Martin Griffiths and Michael Sullivan, "Nationalism and International Relations Theory," *Australian Studies of Politics and History* 43, no. 1 (1997); Y. Lapid and F. Kratochwil, "Revisiting the "National": Toward an Identity Agenda in Neo-Realism?," in Y. Lapid and F. Kratochwil, *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* (London: Lynce Rienner, 1996); James Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁵⁹ Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999).

⁶⁰ George Lawson, *Negotiated Revolutions: the Czech Republic, South Africa and Chile* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

This task has importance at various levels. The first importance lies at the heart of the discipline of IR itself. A level headed understanding of nationalism, certainly contributes to IR understanding, which becomes clear when we think of the constitutive concepts of the field. The concepts of the Westphalian state system, national interest or sovereignty, obviously are concepts that are closely connected to the idea of nationalism. So, through historicisation of nation state and nationalism in a social scientific and historically grounded manner it becomes possible not only to provide a clearer understanding of the central concepts of the discipline but also by denaturalising⁶¹ these concepts, IR can reflect upon its ontological premises.

Secondly, a comprehension that evaluates the role of the *international*, specific causation, structural factors, historical contingency, and its specific application in the investigation of the case study at hand, contributes both to nationalism studies and the Middle Eastern studies. By demonstrating that the international plays a part in the constitution of the nation state and the respective nationalism in a detailed manner we will be able to assess the formation of Iranian nationalism and avoid the pitfalls of retrospective analysis and Middle Eastern exceptionalism. We will attempt to place the formation of Iranian nationalism in the international political scene as the two are integral to each other and this chapter will contribute to that aim by directing us where to start and what to look at.

2.2 Modernist School of Nationalism

There is an ever-growing literature on nationalism, with its competing theories. There are several social scientific questions involved in the field, such as when

⁶¹ The concept is borrowed from Fred Halliday. By denaturalising he means that the categories such as state, nation, war that are comprehended as given, eternal, namely natural are questioned and with the help of historicisation it is showed that rather than being natural and inevitable these categories are indeed the results of historical social and political processes and open to change in the course of the history. In this regard, the power of historicisation is not only analytic but also emancipatory. Fred Halliday, "For an International Sociology," in *Historical Sociology of International Relations*, ed. Stephen Hobden and John M. Hobson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 247.

nations emerged, what a nation actually is, by what criteria one can determine nation-ness', and what will be the future of nationalism. There are now at least three different schools of thought within the field and they even vary more within themselves. Broadly, we might mention primordialism,⁶² the approach that takes the antiquity of the nations as given; ethno-symbolism,⁶³ that argues for the antique myths, symbols and memories as the founding elements of the modern nations, and finally modernism⁶⁴ which claims that nations are modern phenomena and should be analyzed solely within the framework of modern politics. Despite the existence of the above-mentioned theoretical approaches in the study of nationalism, the dominant paradigm in the field is the modernist stance. The primordial account has almost faded away in the academic literature. Although ethno-symbolism understands the rise of nationalism and the emergence of nations "in the context of their ethnic background", it does not deny the modernity of nationalism and the nation state and in that sense it argues that "modernists are right."⁶⁵

This section will try to provide a critical look only at the modernist theories of nationalism. Since the modernist school is a broad one, this section will not include all modernist scholars but will adopt a selective reading of the field. Modernist school of nationalism is broadly composed of two lines of analysis. One that focuses on structural factors and one that scrutinises the cultural aspect of nationalism. In order to provide some level of order to the discussion I will follow the categorization brought forward by Manu Goswami⁶⁶ and discuss

⁶² Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Pierre van den Berghe, *The Ethnic Phenomenon* (New York: Elsevier, 1979).

⁶³ Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York: Blackwell, 1986).

⁶⁴ See footnote 4.

⁶⁵ Anthony Smith and John Hutchinson, *Ethnicity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 11.

⁶⁶ Manu Goswami, "Rethinking the Modular Nation Form: Toward a Sociohistorical Conception of Nationalism." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44 (2002): 770-799.

the modernist theories of nationalism under two broad categories: objectivist (structural) and subjectivist (cultural) approaches to the study of nationalism.

2.2.1 Objectivist Approaches

Albeit diverse in itself, objectivist approaches focus on the structural and sociohistorical processes and grasp nationalism as a product of modernization and as a response to the problems generated by modern society. In doing so, the research prioritizes the objective determinants and first causes of nationalism. For Gellner it is industrialization, for Hobsbawm it is capitalism and for Nairn it is the uneven and combined capitalist development that created nationalism.

Gellner follows the classical sociological traits that “seek to formulate a general theoretical outline of the socio-historical development of mankind”, and bases his theory of nationalism on the dichotomy between the traditional and modern societies⁶⁷. It is the transition from agrarian to industrial society that engendered nationalism and nation state. According to him, the changing conditions in the world historical context – industrialization - created a practical necessity that led to the emergence of nationalism and nation state and nationalism is defined as “primarily a political principle that holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.”⁶⁸ So, in order to understand how this transition produced nations and nationalism, one should first grasp the differences between two social structures: agrarian and industrial. The agrarian society is characterized by a relative stability, cultural heterogeneity and compartmentalized social structure. In this structure, people live in a local culture that is generally self-contained. Their values and beliefs correspond closely with their social location, so they are particular rather than universal. The differences among the members do not matter much as the fact that relationship with different localities is based

⁶⁷ Graham Day and Andrew Thompson, *Theorizing Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004): 42.

⁶⁸ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1.

on an economic relationship rather than a political one. The ruling elite, on the other hand, operates at a level above and is distinct from the local cultures. Since the cultural differentiation does not generate any problem in this structure, and even fortifies it, it is natural for the ruling elite to be part of a different culture or to speak a different language. However, the industrialization process breaks down this compartmentalized nature of the society. Modern society is characterized by the industrialization that requires a level of individual and social mobility.⁶⁹ Gellner finds the basis of modernity in changing economic relations, for him it is the labour market that lies at the heart of the modern economy. In this setting roles are open to everyone, fluidity is among the main principles and constantly changing division of labour is the major mechanism. The effective operation of this mechanism requires cultural homogeneity and mass literacy so each individual can fulfil the other's role in their absence. Thus, nationalism is born out of a necessity as a result of the cultural homogeneity that the transition process to the industrial society requires. All these necessities of the industrial structure need a central governing body that can carry out such a complex task. Thus, the need for the modern state appears.⁷⁰

As seen above, the birth of the modern state and nationalism are connected to historical developments. This, as a matter of fact, is the point in which Gellner's contribution and novelty lie. According to Day and Thompson, although his understanding of modernization does not have any novelty compared to classical sociological accounts as the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity of Durkheim or Tönnies' distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* the fact that he ties the process with nationalism is very important for nationalism studies.⁷¹ He explains the subject matter in relation to specific economic and social conditions. "It was not an aspect of the human condition that would last

⁶⁹ Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1997).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 80-90.

⁷¹ Day and Thompson, *Theorizing Nationalism*, 46.

forever, nor did it correspond to some inner need of the human psyche”; it is “genuine, objective, practical necessity.”⁷² Thereby, Gellner recognizes the political nature of nationalism and gives an explanation in the field of politics.

The objective accounts also acknowledge the invented character of nationalism. While Gellner stresses that nationalists fabricate historical narratives and memories, Hobsbawm’s focus is on the invented character of nations and nationalisms. He looks at how the traditions are invented in order to understand the very nature of the phenomenon. In this account, nationalism is the product of social engineering projects that are performed by the elites. In modern society, the national idea is invented by the ruling elites in order to restore order and uniformity. This way, the control of the masses under the rapid transition process becomes possible. The continuity with the past is assured with the help of invented traditions. He defines the term as follows:

‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.”⁷³

Inventing traditions is different from adapting the existing traditions to the new conditions. It creates traditions and presents them as if they existed from time immemorial. These traditions on the other hand fulfil multiple functions:

...establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities; legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour.⁷⁴

⁷² Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964): 160.

⁷³ Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in *the Invention of Tradition*, 1.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

The effort of above-mentioned scholars to prove the modernity of nationalism and nation state is a central task for the purpose of this thesis. This objective, on the other hand, leads them to resort to universal explanations. In doing so, they prioritize the question of ‘why’ over the ‘how’ in order to show the modern nature of the phenomenon. In order to grasp the universal they miss the particular and provide abstract explanations rather than analysing the detailed historical cases. As Day correctly points out:

That Gellner did not look closely at how nationalism took shape in any concrete instance leaves him open to criticism from historians for sometimes misconstruing facts, and generalizing beyond the evidence.⁷⁵

Tom Nairn’s work that investigates the formation of Scottish nationalism provides a more detailed account of the emergence of nationalism in a specific locality. Since he captures nationalism as a modern concept in direct relation with the modern historical processes, he starts his analysis with the period when Scottish nationalism began to emerge as a political movement in the 1920s. According to Nairn, the existence of nationalist precursors that can be dated back to the 19th century cannot explain nationalism as they are different from the thing itself.

For him, “nationalism, unlike nationality or ethnic variety, cannot be considered as a ‘natural’ phenomenon. But of course under these specific historical circumstances nationalism does become a natural phenomenon.”⁷⁶ The explanation of the development of nationalism should not be sought in the domestic dynamics of individual societies but in the general historical process. Any theoretical approach that seeks to explain nationalism should base itself in world history. With this theoretical claim, he places the dimension of the *international* in the issue of nationalism. So, what is this general historical

⁷⁵ Day and Thompson, *Theorizing Nationalism*, 45.

⁷⁶ Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain* 1982, 99.

process? According to Nairn the answer lies in the uneven character of the capitalist development. “In other words, ‘nationalism’ in its most general sense is determined by certain features of the world political economy, in the era between the French and Industrial Revolutions and the present day.”⁷⁷

The uneven nature of capitalist development creates acute problems for the peripheral countries. There is an intolerable gap between the centre and the periphery. In such a world, “the purpose of the subjectivity (nationalist myths) can never be anything but protest against the brutal fact: it is mobilization *against* unpalatable, humanly acceptable, truth of grossly uneven development.”⁷⁸ In order to resist domination, exploitation and discrimination, nationalism serves as a mechanism of struggle of the periphery, as an attempt against the uneven nature of the capitalist development. “Nationalism is in one sense only the label for the general unfolding of this vast struggle, since the end of the 18th century.”⁷⁹

As such Tom Nairn adopts a more mobilization-oriented approach in explaining the emergence of nationalism. Miroslav Hroch⁸⁰ also sees nationalism in a similar vein, in terms of processes of mobilization. According to Hroch⁸¹, nationalism is the idea that sees the nation as more important than all other values and interests. He determines three main keys to create a nation. The first is a sense of memory of a common past; the second, linguistic and cultural ties that enable high degree of communication within the members; and, lastly, a conception of the equality of all members of the group organized as a civil society.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 95.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 96.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 97.

⁸⁰ Hroch, “From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Process in Europe,” in *Mapping the Nation*, 80.

⁸¹ Hroch, “National Self Determination from a Historical Perspective,” in *Notions of Nationalism*, ed. Sukumar Periwal (London and New York: Central European University Press, 1995): 65.

For Hroch, there are three stages that a successful national movement should get through. In phase A, activists strive to lay the foundation for a national identity. They research the cultural, linguistic, social and sometimes historical attributes of a non-dominant group in order to raise awareness of the common traits—but they do this "without pressing specifically national demands to remedy deficits."⁸² In the second phase, phase B: "A new range of activists emerged, who sought to win over as many of their ethnic group as possible to the project of creating a future nation."⁸³ In the last phase, C, the movement forms a mass movement. Although the formation of a nationalist movement is necessary for the establishment of a nation, it is not sufficient. In order to form a mass movement, other accelerating factors should be there such as the crisis of legitimacy, the conflict of interest, high level of communication and social mobility.

Thus, Hroch accepts the fact that the formation of a discursive nationalist ideology does not directly result in the establishment of the nation. Rather, for these movements to be successful there should be other crises within the society whereby the nationalist ideology and movement can access the masses to mobilize. The problems within the society are thereby politicized via this nationalist movement. More important is the fact that Hroch does not necessarily tie these problems to the general concept of modernization. Here the strength of his theory lies: in the fact that he produced an account for the inner conflicts in the society, does not grasp nationalism as the compulsory trajectory for all human societies and considers the political nature of the phenomenon. Thus, he frees his theory from the linear stance of the modernist account. In his study, he analyses the development of nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe and endeavours to develop a theoretical approach that can account for the historically specific nature of nationalism. In order to do so, he differentiates nationalism between the Western and Eastern European societies. He acknowledges the importance of

⁸² Hroch, "From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Process in Europe," in *Mapping the Nation*, 80.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 81.

multi-causality and historical specificity and points out that “all defensible conclusions remain no more than partial findings and all theories should be taken as projects for further research.”⁸⁴

Another scholar who recognizes the diverse nature of nationalism is John Breuilly. At the beginning of his work⁸⁵ he points out the impossibility of developing a full theory of nationalism, as history is as diverse as nationalism. Instead he provides a typology of this very diverse phenomenon.

Nationalism can refer to arguments of intellectuals, ways people feel and talk, political movements and organizations, state policy, and much else. (...) It is a fantasy to suppose one could develop an argument which covered them all to produce ‘a theory of nationalism as a whole’.⁸⁶

In Breuilly’s approach, the roots of modern nationalisms are to be found in the territorial and monarchical states of Western Europe in the early modern period. As these states extended their authority over their subjects and diminished that of other institutions such as churches, estates and guilds, and as they came into increasing and more intensive conflict with one another, so they took on the character of nation states. Hence, the transformation of the institutions, especially the growing importance of parliaments in Western Europe, paved the way for the transformation of state-society relations, since the old buffers against state power and old ways to distribute power in general were diminished. “The idea that people are bound together by a shared culture which in turn divides them from other people became plausible as social divisions based on privilege broke down.”⁸⁷ Nationalism became the answer as to how to organize the state-society relations.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 78.

⁸⁵ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 1993.

⁸⁶ Quoted from *Understanding Nationalism* ed., Montserrat Guibernau and John Hutchinson (Oxford: Polity Press, 2001): 49.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 36.

In this framework, there are no long discussions about what constitutes the nation, or when a group of people can be considered as a nation. For Breuille, the category of nation in itself is meaningless from the historian's point of view. When it achieves a meaning, it is only within the political realm, which is directly and/or indirectly shaped by the state. Breuille's way of telling the story of nationalism manages to escape many questions regarding the entity called 'nation' as its structure is based upon the story of modern state formation and its impact on society in general. Breuille himself is very straightforward on this point from the beginning onwards:

I do not regard the nation (...) as a real group with an identity and consciousness which produces political effects such as nation states (...) Rather I treat the nation as a modern political and ideological formation which developed in close conjunction with the emergence of modern, territorial, sovereign and participatory state.⁸⁸

According to Breuille, in order to analyze such a diverse phenomenon a typology is necessary. Concomitantly with his main argument that sees the state as the main axis of nationalist politics, his typology is based on the relationship between the state and nationalist movement and the nature of the state. In his typology we find three types of opposition, separation, reform and unification. The nationalist movement may oppose to either non-nation states or nation-states. Thus, he acknowledges that the nature of the regime is an important factor that determines the relationship between the state and the movement.

After introducing this typology, he identifies three functions that a nationalist ideology plays: Coordination, mobilization and legitimacy. "Coordination is required where a heterogeneous set of political elites seek to act in common to challenge the state".⁸⁹ Mobilization is necessary to generate the support from the masses because an opposition that is confined to the existing political community

⁸⁸ Ibid., 32.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 382.

cannot succeed. Finally, legitimacy means “the use of nationalist ideas to justify the goals of the political movement both to the state it opposes and also to powerful external agents, such as foreign states and their public opinion”.⁹⁰

For Breuilly, the issues of language, culture, need of identity or developments such as war, invasion, under-development, cultural, political and economic changes cannot explain the phenomenon of nationalism by themselves; instead they are important elements of the context in which many nationalist movements develop. The following quotation demonstrating his understanding of ideology is a case in point.

Nationalist ideology matters, not so much because it directly motivates most supporters of a nationalist movement, but rather because it provides a conceptual map which enables people to relate their particular material and moral interests to a broader terrain of actions.⁹¹

As seen in the above discussion the strength of the school lies in their way of handling the phenomenon. As opposed to the primordialists, they try to analyse the issue through historicisation and thereby display the modern character of the phenomenon. This task has a paramount importance for the IR discipline. As Halliday mentions, this is an ‘emancipatory task’⁹² as they are denaturalising the central concepts like ‘nation’ and ‘state’ upon which IR based itself and opening new horizons for the discipline.

⁹⁰ Breuilly, “Approaches to Nationalism,” in *Mapping the Nation*, G. Balakrishnan Louis ed. (London: Verso, 1996): 167.

⁹¹ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 13.

⁹² Halliday, “For an International Sociology,” in *Historical Sociology of International Relations*, 247.

2.2.2 Subjectivist Approaches

In tandem with the “cultural” or subjectivist turn in the social sciences in 1980s the study of nationalism underwent a shift away from this macro level explanations of nationalism towards a focus on subjective and discursive aspect of nationalism, micro-level, without denying the modern character of nationalism. Like earlier modernist scholars they questioned the primordial credentials of nationalism yet for them “the nation” and its cultural history are not instrumental but the object of study. The cultural approach stresses the subjective and discursive provenance of nationalism.

In an interdisciplinary fashion, the cultural or subjectivist theories of nationalism focused on neither structures nor agency but on discourses, cultural models or cognitive frameworks. Nationalism for Benedict Anderson is an essentially cognitive model allowing individuals in modernity to interpret their society. As shifting the focus away from social and economic origins of nationalism this approach provides models of meaning, which is the essential tool-kit for the construction of collective identity. They searched for the embodied, constituting character of everyday practices and cultural categories of understanding.

From the point of view of cultural theorists, the nation is a dynamic symbolic system that is constructed and reconstructed to signify diverse cultural meanings. So, they focused on modern processes that work to make, reshape or construct a particular constellation of symbolic associations comprising a national identity. In order to reveal the cultural construction of national identity they analysed narrative forms of nationalism, the work of intellectuals in shaping of these new narratives and institutional practices through which these narratives are normalized in a given polity. For instance for Michael Billig, [banal] nationalism refers to the everyday representations of the nation which build a shared sense of national belonging amongst humans. Banal nationalism is reproduced through the use of flags in everyday contexts, sporting events, national songs, symbols on money and popular expressions.

While the subjectivist approach sharpened our understanding of the internal tensions within nationalist discourse, the disciplinary regimes that shape nationalist practices and the transformation of individuals and collectivities into normative national subjects, they pay less attention to the ways in which broader social processes shape the socio-political and discursive structure of nationalism. “In an attempt to direct attention to the local contours of specific nationalist movements they tend to overlook the transnational and global production of local.”⁹³

However, the objective and subjective aspects of nationalism is not separate. The macro conditions that create the formation of nationalism and ever changing political processes of a country undergo has a significance role in shaping the discursive aspect of nationalism. What we need is a framework that bridge the gap between these two approaches and that can account for the interplay between socio-political and discursive levels. As Manu Goswami argues, “a central task for scholars of nationalism is to fashion a framework that integrates and treats as methodologically inseparable the objective and subjective dimensions of nationalism as a modern social form”⁹⁴.

In the following section of this chapter, I will turn to the other side of the picture and try to briefly present how nationalism is treated in the discipline of IR. The aim here is to detect the strengths and weaknesses of the present approaches to nationalism within IR and thus have an idea of where to advance before we assess the merits of the HS tradition in IR.

2.3 IR and Nationalism

In this part, the scholars studying the issue of nationalism within the IR discipline will be under focus. Mainly derived from the writings of James Mayall and Bruce

⁹³ Goswami, “Rethinking Modular Nation Form”, 779.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. xxx

Hall, this time the nature of the relationship between the discipline and nationalism will be examined. “Its [Mainstream IR] inability to anticipate the end of Cold War forced the field to become more self-conscious of its theoretical limitations.”⁹⁵ Among the aims of this critical engagement with mainstream theory is to develop theoretical tools that can account for and explain the change and transformation of the international system. On this basis, scholars in the field began to re-question its basic and realist premises and new approaches to the nature of international system, states, social change, and the relationship between the domestic and international started to flourish. Thus, IR started to widen its borders towards sociology and history. The ‘historical turn’ within the field triggered the attention to the concept of nationalism. However, this growing interest in the subject is far from sufficient as will be seen in the discussion below. “In the vast literature on nationalism, so few books are written by students of IR, in the IR literature nationalism receives only scant attention.”⁹⁶ It is the aim of this chapter to scrutinize a thorough analysis of nationalism by asking and answering questions that indeed lie at the heart of the discipline. It is now necessary to first look at how the issue is treated within the discipline of IR.

Mayall in his book ‘Nationalism and International Society’⁹⁷ develops an approach that investigates the impact of the national idea on international society. According to him, international society has been the society of states in which all states recognize the sovereignty of others, obey international law and maintain diplomatic relations with each other. The underlying principle of international society is the idea of sovereignty. Mayall asserts that although the nature of sovereignty has altered through time -from Absolutist sovereignty to a popular one- the basic premises of international society have remained intact since the idea of international society was formed before the era of nationalism.

⁹⁵ Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, “The Role of History in International Relations,” *Millennium* 37 (2008): 361.

⁹⁶ Griffiths and Sullivan, “Nationalism and International Relations Theory,” 55.

⁹⁷ Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society*, 1990.

Nevertheless, it was the national idea that led to the modifications to the original conception of international society. The transition from traditional international society to modern one “arose primarily from its confrontation with the national idea”⁹⁸, despite the fact that this evolution has been influenced by other ideas such as the enlightenment and international division of labour. Mayall recognizes the vital role of nationalism in the transformation of international structure. However, he does not provide an explanation of the phenomenon.

According to him it is hard to define the national idea as the formation of nation states was a diverse process. For instance, in some parts of the world it arose in conjunction with liberal constitutionalism; in others it was a reaction to imperialism. Also he asserts that there are communities whose national identity has been preserved for centuries. So, even though Mayall regards the diverse nature of the phenomenon, he is not clear as to whether he understands the national idea and nationalism as constructed or eternal. This ambivalence stems from the fact that he does not problematize the issue of nationalism per se. Instead he deals “with the interactions of the ideas of nation and international society.”⁹⁹

Bruce Hall is another scholar in the discipline studying the issue of nationalism and the international system. In the light of the critical engagement with realist theory, Hall analyses the impact of nationalization of state actors on the international system through a constructivist lens. According to him, the current repertoire of IR is “opaque” to the resurgence of nationalism in the post-cold war international system. So, what should be done is to develop “a systemic theory that is action-oriented and capable of explaining historical change in the international system.”¹⁰⁰ Nationalism is captured as a convenient venue to discuss and criticize the realist premises.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 149.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁰ Hall, *National Collective Identity: Social Constructs and International System*, 5.

For Hall, the international system of national-sovereign actors and the system of territorial-sovereign actors are essentially different from each other. In the 19th century, the emergence of national collective identity and interest altered the underlying principle of the international system from *raison d'état* to national self-determination. This change did not arise merely at the systemic level. When the self-understanding of the people changed and they possessed sovereign identity in their own names instead of attributing it to the prince, and they acquired the role of social agency. This novel understanding, on the other hand, led to a change in the political structure and subsequently transformed the structure of state interests, practice and institutions and generated the system of national-sovereign actors. Hall's account, based on Alexander Wendt's concept of the 'structure of identity and interests'¹⁰¹ agency, finds a place in the building of the theory and is grasped as a significant determinant that has the capacity to generate and transform the systemic level, namely the international structure.

The approach of Hall is of importance for the aim of this thesis since it recognizes the constitutive role of agency and the historical nature of the international system and thus goes beyond the static and structuralist thinking of realism. In addition, he values the centrality of nationalism for IR. However, as in the work of Mayall, we cannot find a consistent definition of nationalism. In different parts of the book, he mentions the imagined nature of the nation by borrowing from Benedict Anderson¹⁰²; on the other hand, he also resorts to Anthony Smith when defining the characteristics of a nation¹⁰³ thereby citing two different if not contradictory scholars. Similar to Mayall, the aim of Hall also is not to problematize nationalism, but to analyze its impact on the international system. As such, the issue of nationalism is instrumentalised to refute the realist thinking of state-

¹⁰¹ Ibid., xiii.

¹⁰² Ibid., 4.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 9.

centrism and a-historic understanding. Again, the issue of nationalism remains trapped in the field of theories of nationalism.

As seen in the above discussion, IR scholarship centres on the impact of nationalism on international relations rather than engaging with the sociology of nationalism. Their merit is that it recognizes the crucial role played by nationalism in the transformation of the international system and thus put the issue among the central concepts of the discipline. However, this treatment remains partial for several reasons. First of all, although these scholars accept nationalism as an important element influencing the evolution of the international system, because they do not problematize the phenomenon and its origins, the crucial role of the international in the development of nationalism remains unanswered. Secondly, this partial treatment of scholars that does not account for nations and nationalism, leads to the exclusion of the subject from the field of IR. Thus, the constructed differentiation between the international and the domestic becomes fortified and the interaction between the international and the domestic has been missed. “International Relations sustains its identity and intellectual autonomy by relegating nationalism to the realm of domestic politics, which reduces it to a phenomenon on the inside of the nation state.”¹⁰⁴

Therefore, it can be argued that both the theories of nationalism and the discipline of IR, albeit in different ways, do not adequately present the theoretical tools to analyse the phenomenon of nationalism in the Iranian context with a special focus on its international dimensions. *While the theories of nationalism do not problematize the role of the international in the emergence of nationalism, IR scholarship does not problematize nationalism per se.*

Some scholars of nationalism, like Hroch and Breuilly, contend that building a general theory of nationalism is nearly impossible as history is diverse. Sami Zubaida takes this even further and questions whether a general theory is either

¹⁰⁴ Griffiths and Sullivan, “Nationalism and International Relations Theory,” 16.

desirable or necessary.¹⁰⁵ However, just because there cannot be a general theory of nationalism that does not mean we cannot develop an understanding of several nationalisms. What is needed is a theoretical framework that values the diverse and context specific nature of history, allowing for theoretical pluralism. Since the aim of this chapter is to provide the theoretical tools to analyze the case study at hand, we will turn to Historical Sociology and Historical Sociology in IR¹⁰⁶ whose main focus is on the epochal transitions such as the transition from feudalism to capitalism, the formation of the modern state and the revolutionary movements, and which recognizes the importance of multi-causality, historical peculiarity, contextuality and contingency and more importantly that advocates ‘a rejection of methodological nationalism’¹⁰⁷.

2.4 Historical Sociology, Historical Sociology in International Relations and Studying Iranian Nationalism

The central intention of this thesis is to understand the actual process of *how* the Iranian nationalism emerged and developed, how the definition of Iraniyat was framed on the part of the state, how this definition interacted with the position of the country in the international system and finally why it took the shape it did.

When we consider the theories of nationalism in the context of Iran or other late modernizing countries a number of conceptual problems arise immediately, as Afshin Marashi contends.¹⁰⁸ The generalizations derived from the experiences of the East and Central West remain limited when understanding other regions.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted from Halliday, *Nation and Religion in the Middle East*, 56.

¹⁰⁶ See footnote 3.

¹⁰⁷ Hobson and Hobden, *Historical Sociology of International Relations*, 268.

¹⁰⁸ Afshin Marashi, “Orientalism, Modernity and Historiography”, in *Rethinking Iranian Nationalism and Modernity* ed. Kamran Scott Aghaie and Afshin Marashi (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014): 10-13.

Starting from the late 19th century, the Middle East has been the locus of nationalist movements and ideologies employed largely by the power-holders, mainly by the states, in a from-above manner, to consolidate the nation-state. Sami Zubaida rightly points out that “the nation-state has been a ‘compulsory model’ at independence of former colonies and dependencies”.¹⁰⁹ Formation of nation state and concomitant nationalism in the Middle East was the very mechanism to integrate into the international state system and the response to the the 20th century global political and economic transformations.

However, here the problem is the question of *starting point* as Barrington Moore suggests. Unlike England or France that underwent modernization in the earlier phases, Iran participated in “a worldwide movement of nationalism and of government by popular mandate” in the beginning of 20th century.¹¹⁰ Richard Bendix, in his study *Kings or People*, argues that although the division of labour is a cause of change in the Western European countries, many countries with low levels of division of labour were open to change due to the uneven nature of global development.

Since the modern industrial revolution had begun in England, other countries followed the English model when they began to develop their own industry. But they wanted to follow the latest English development to which they could gain access, not the English practices of the 1760s with which English industrialization began. Countries were, therefore, less and less able or willing to repeat each other's development.¹¹¹

In each country, the "great transformation" encouraged the growth of an elite, which was sensitive to the new ideas developed elsewhere and ready to apply them at home.

109 Sami Zubaida, *Islam, People and the State* (London: Routledge, 1993): 121.

110 Richard Bendix, *Kings or People* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 1980).

111 *Ibid.*, 12.

This *demonstration effect* is of significance importance for late modernizing countries. The issue of how to tackle the “backwardness” was an immediate issue. The need for modernization and industrialization was not only a matter of inspiration but a matter of *survival*. Establishing a modern strong state was the only solution in order to be in the game of international system and to preserve independence in the face of overwhelming foreign involvement, the necessities of two world wars and the Cold War. As Geoffrey Hawthorn argues that late developing countries face two common problems: 1) consolidating state power rapidly and under difficult circumstances; 2) socio-economic development under adverse international conditions.¹¹² So, Iranian modernization was not started from inside out but outside in.

In fact post-colonial and subaltern theories of nationalism were developed as a response to the above mentioned conceptual problems of the nationalism studies. The scholars in the field, like Partha Chatterjee, Ranajit Guha, pointed out the European-centeredness or Eurocentrism of nationalism theories and made valuable contributions in theorizing extra-European context. They attempted to study nationalism from a different vantage point, from the eyes of subordinated. For Chatterjee, anti/postcolonial nationalism, albeit a derivative discourse, was never totally dominated by Western models of nationhood: “It could not imitate the West in every aspect of life, for then the very distinction between the West and the East would vanish and the self-identity of national culture would itself be threatened.”¹¹³ Post-colonial and subaltern approaches to nationalism aim to grasp the history-specific production of nationalism and nation state in the post-colonial world.

If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their
imagined community from certain ‘modular’ forms already made

¹¹² Geoffrey Hawthorn, “Waiting for a Text: Comparing Third World Politics” in *Rethinking Third-World Politics* ed. J. Manor (New York: Routledge, 1991):42.

¹¹³ Partha Chatterjee, *Empire and Nation: Selected Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010): 121.

available them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine?¹¹⁴

Post-colonial theories are of significance importance for nationalism studies as they point out the Eurocentric character of nationalism studies, reveal the hegemonic nature of comparison it induces when applied to extra-European context and pay attention to historical specificities of a given country in analysing any social phenomena. Despite those they remain limited for understanding Iranian nationalism. As Marashi argues, “Iran’s historic experience, as one of the few regions in Asia and Africa that never experienced a direct colonial presence, produced a set of fundamentally different political, ideological and social alignments which in turn would come to profoundly shape the material nature of its politics.”¹¹⁵ Similarly Ramazani states that as a new nation the experience of Iran is “quite different from the experience of most new nations (such as India, Pakistan, Syria, Lebanon and various others), which won their independence at a rather decisive moment of their history.”¹¹⁶

Halliday rightly reminds us that “there can be no purely national history of any states; equally there can be no theory of the economy, the state or social relations that deny the formative, not just residual or recent, impact of the international.”¹¹⁷ The formation of the modern nation state in Iran coincides in time with radical changes of various levels in international politics. If we reconsider the call of Goswami to fashion a framework that integrates objective and subjective dimensions of nationalism in the Iranian context, this reminder gains more significance. If one wants to produce a theoretically sound understanding of Iranian nationalism one needs to pay attention to the transnational and global

¹¹⁴ Chatterjee, “Whose Imagined Nation”, 216.

¹¹⁵ Afshin Marashi, “Orientalism, Modernity and Historiography,” in *Rethinking Iranian Nationalism and Modernity* ed. Kamran Scott Aghaie and Afshin Marashi (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014): 21.

¹¹⁶ Rouhollah Ramazani, *Independence without Freedom: Iran’s Foreign Policy* (Charlottesville and London, University of Virginia Press, 2013).

¹¹⁷ Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations*, 4.

production of local as much as the local contours of nationalism and this task is only possible through integrating the level of international into the analysis.

The picture of Iran at the beginning of the 20th century is an intricate one, so are the processes of nationalism and nation state formation that accompany it. There are multiple actors and, so, multiple interests and shifting alliances, domestic and otherwise. At this point several challenges arise: to identify various linkages that cut across manifold domestic and international actors and on what criterion those will be selected or which level(s) of the international will be included in the narrative. The tools that the theories of nationalism provide, however, cannot help us to grasp this complexity. What is required, therefore is more refined theoretical tools that can help us to make the context more understandable. So, this section of the chapter will resort to HS and IR in order to obtain the necessary tools for an international socio-historical approach to begin the case study.

Halliday contends that “nationalism like the state is two sided while it is directed inwards at the construction of a community and the legitimation of authority, it is also directed outwards towards co-operation with allies and against enemies, far and near, real exaggerated and imagined”.¹¹⁸ This thesis by exposing the international linkages that go to the formulation and evolution of nationalisms in Iran will show this dual directionality of Iranian state nationalism. This will most evident in the tensions between different nationalist agendas in Iran, in their differences of formulating discourses that address the ‘outside’ and ‘inside’.

The interaction of Historical Sociology and the discipline of IR opened venues for IR to re-evaluate its constitutive concepts, such as state, conflict, the international and so on. Inspired by the studies of historical sociologists, such as

¹¹⁸ Halliday, *Middle East in International Relations*, 200.

Max Weber¹¹⁹, Theda Skocpol¹²⁰, Michael Mann¹²¹ and Charles Tilly¹²², scholars of IR found the opportunity to transcend the disciplinary boundaries. So, what did Historical Sociology offer to IR thinking? With its emphasis on historicisation of any social formation and on large scale processes of change, and its aim of relating the broad currents of world politics with events on the ground, HS contributed to a wider discussion about the role, content and form of IR theory. The nexus between HS and IR, led to the formation of a research agenda in the discipline labelled as HS in IR. The result is as follows:

Conceiving the international as the simultaneously differentiated and interactive dynamics of historical development, it [HSIR] examines the substantive and methodological implications of the international for our conceptualizations of social structure and historical process, thereby advancing the distinctive contribution of IR to the social sciences as a whole.¹²³

¹¹⁹ H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005).

¹²⁰ Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

¹²¹ Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power Vol.1: A History of Power from the Beginning to A. D. 1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); *The Sources of Social Power, Vol. 2: The Rise of Classes and Nation States, 1760-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); also see special issue "The Work of Michael Mann," *Millennium* 34 (2), 2006.

¹²² Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, A.D.990-1990* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992). For excellent works on Historical Sociology see for example *Handbook of Historical Sociology*, ed. Gerard Delanty and Engin F. Isin (London: Sage, 2003). A famous examination is by Dennis Smith, *The Rise of Historical Sociology* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991). For an overview of HS in IR see Roland Dannreuther and James Kennedy, "Historical Sociology in Sociology: British Decline and US Hegemony with Lessons for International Relations," *International Politics* 44, no. 4 (2007): 369–389. For a critique of HS and HSIR, arguing for its continuing Eurocentrism see Gurminder K. Bhambra, "Historical Sociology, International Relations and Connected Histories," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 23, no.1(2010): 127-143. Historical Sociology as an approach is also not a stranger to the field of Middle East studies. For a seminal study see Halliday, *Middle East in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); for a recent work see Raymond Hinnebusch, "Toward a Historical Sociology of the State Formation in the Middle East," *Middle East Critique* 19, no. 3 (2010): 201-216.

¹²³ Hobson, Lawson and Rosenberg, "Historical Sociology", 3358.

Both HS and HSIR are not homogenous but include many approaches and methodologies¹²⁴. In accordance with the aim of this thesis, a selection will be made among the tools they provide. These tools will be utilized in two ways: in terms of methodology and in terms of substantive social scientific issues that HS and HSIR prioritize. “Our principal message is straightforward: although sociological concepts and approaches have often been repressed by the international imagination, their ‘outing’ has much to offer both disciplines.”¹²⁵ One of these sociological concepts, a crucial one given the history of the last century is indeed *the nation*. So, the study of nationalism from an HSIR perspective is very much in the spirit of this approach. Below are the prioritizations within HS and HSIR for the purposes of this thesis.

The most important theoretical insight of HSIR for the aim of this thesis is the rejection of the dichotomy between the domestic and international. “Domestic and international are part of one inter-related social whole.”¹²⁶ Hence, “international factors are juxtaposed, conjoined and connected with domestic variables with the aim of finding patterns that explain international processes.”¹²⁷ Not only the interaction of the international and domestic but also the nature of relationship between the two is among the issues HSIR touches upon. Halliday has pointed to the need for an inclusion of the analysis of an ‘interactive chain’ between international and domestic societies. “This allows the tracing of events through the international system to domestic systems and then back to the

¹²⁴ New PhD studies are written using the tools of HSIR and on cases in non-European parts of the world: Clemens Hoffmann, “The Eastern Question and the Fallacy of Modernity” and Derya Göçer, “Interaction between the International and the Domestic: The Case of the 1908 Constitutional Revolution in the Ottoman Empire,” (PhD Diss., London School of Economics and Political Science, 2009). Gülriz Şen, “Post-Revolutionary Iran’s Foreign Policy toward the United States: A Historical Sociological Analysis of State Transformation and Foreign Policy,” (PhD Diss., Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, 2013).

¹²⁵ George Lawson and Robbie Shilliam, “Sociology and International Relations: Legacies and Prospects,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 23, no.1 (2010).

¹²⁶ Stephen Hobden, “Theorising the International System: Perspectives from Historical Sociology,” *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 2 (1999): 269.

¹²⁷ Lawson, “The Promise of Historical Sociology in International Relations,” *International Studies Review* 8 (2006): 408.

international system.”¹²⁸ This quotation indeed speaks volumes to understand how HSIR conceptualizes this relationship. The international does not act only as a constraining force on the domestic but also creates new opportunities and avenues for the domestic actors. The international is influential at various levels in domestic realm. It affects the state, society and nation. The response of the domestic which is formed within the context of the international gives shape to the international. As such, the international and domestic are in such a relation to one another that allows for causal interaction.

Analysing Iranian nationalism within this relational international context in which it arose will help us to avoid the ‘methodological nationalism’ of some sociological theorists who explain domestic dynamics in isolation from international forces. This point is indeed what is under-theorised in the theories of nationalism. As in the work of Gellner who strictly separates endogenous and exogenous factors regarding Turkey, these theories truncate the meaning of the international.

As various studies in HS shows, modernization does not follow a single trajectory but different historical specificities lead to different paths and outcomes. As it is obvious in the Iranian case, the emergence and development of Iranian state building and nationalism took place in the phase of an overwhelmingly international context. This is extremely important when we consider the multiple alliances established in Iran, which vary from relations between a weak central state and great powers, to non-state actors’ relations with the foreigners and even include the sponsoring of military coups by foreign actors. So, ignoring this reality and explaining its development merely in national terms will lead not only to missing its actual causes, which are invisible otherwise, but also to falling into the traps of methodological nationalism.

If we go back to the question of Middle Eastern exceptionalism, the lack of democratic governance or stable institutions of modern state or an overarching

¹²⁸ Hobden, “Theorising the International System: Perspectives from Historical Sociology,” 268.

definition of Iranianness cannot be explained on the mere domestic grounds or lack of will or of culture. In Iran, starting from the Constitutional Revolution it is possible to trace the will of people for more democratic governance. At every revolutionary moment Iranians did raise their voice for the mandate of people yet every attempt remained incomplete partly from international interruption. This is not to say that Iranian politics can be explained merely by international factors. However, it is the interaction of the *international and domestic* that played a significant part in Iranian path of modernity and it conditioned the emergence and evolution of Iranian nationalisms. As Marashi reminds Iran's history of nationalism must be understood as emerging out of the specific context of Iran's position as a semi-colonial in the world system of nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Halliday¹²⁹ mentions that HS has indeed two claims, one of which is the historicisation of the state. He further argues that historicisation should not be confined to the state but should be broadened to include other aspects of social life. This methodological attempt is of paramount importance for the study of nationalism as "the historicisation of the state and nation challenges perennialism".¹³⁰ In order to accomplish this task properly history should not be viewed as a tool of theory testing.

History is not a factory for the manufacture of grand theory, like some Concorde of the open air; nor is it an assembly line of the production of midget theories in series; nor yet is it some gigantic experimental station in which the theories of foreign manufacturers can be "applied", "tested", and "confirmed". That is not its business at all. Its business it to recover, to explain and to understand its object: real history.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Halliday, "For an International Sociology," in *Historical Sociology of International Relations*, 244.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 244.

¹³¹ E.P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory* (Merlin, 1965): 228 in George Lawson, "Historical Sociology in International Relations: Open Society, Research Programme and Vocation," *International Politics* 44, no. 4 (2007): 364.

This task of historicisation is indeed what the modernist school of nationalism attempted to accomplish. By relating the development of nationalism to the broader world of politics, they aimed to reveal the historical nature of the phenomenon rather than capturing it as a given and timeless phenomenon. Thus, it is possible to avoid what Nairn calls ‘the ideology of nationalism’. The historicisation of nation and state also has vital weight for the discipline of IR. It is an emancipatory task, as it helps to denaturalise the supposedly eternal entity, the nation state, which is a chief actor in the terrain that IR is constituted upon. Another methodological tool that HSIR brings about is to search for multiple causes rather than prioritizing one monolithic cause. This method is especially crucial for the Iranian context in which there are multiple actors and ever-changing alliances, both domestic and international. “If world history is messy, complex and at times contradictory, then a multi-causal analysis that finds common patterns, trends and trajectories from empirical analysis rather than one that seeks to impose a monolithic order on historical ambiguities is likely to yield a richer picture.”¹³²

Nationalism theories generalized from the experiences of the Western or the postcolonial world, however, cannot help to unfold the messy history of Iran. In order to grasp the spatio-temporal divergences in the individual histories, a multiplicity of factors at play both within and among the micro and macro levels should be considered. Hence, what should be done is to catch the particular without being trapped by essentialism or exceptionalism especially in the case of the Middle Eastern studies.

The insights of HSIR are not confined to the above mentioned methodological tools. The approach is significant in terms of the social scientific themes that it focuses on for the purpose of thesis.

¹³² Ibid., 350.

As demonstrated earlier, the historicisation of the state is among the central task of the approach. This task, in return, requires developing an understanding of the state which, indeed, lies at the heart of the HSIR tradition. If nationalism, as is commonly agreed, is the very form of relationship between the state and the society, then this task gains more importance for nationalism studies. How we define the state, its role and relations with society also determinate how we approach nationalism. The HS and HSIR can contribute at this point as it has a particular concept of the state: the state captured not as autonomous entity but embedded in society. This conceptualization of state “allows us to examine how power is distributed between the institutions of state or society, what the relative balance of social forces inside a country is and, not least, how different factions or power centres inside the state affect policy. In order to understand any nationalism, religion or history we need to look inside the country itself, at this state society relationship.”¹³³ This approach offers a view that does not grasp the societies and the states as separate, self-contained entities and as homogenous within themselves also the resources and capabilities of actors are considered. In such a conceptualization the two-dimensional role of the state, as both domestic and international actor, can be appreciated. Another advantage of viewing the state and society in this manner is that it enables us to incorporate into our analysis the contradictions and conflicting interests within the state and societies. Obviously, those contradictions and ever-changing interests consequently bring about the change, whether gradually or radically.

Historical sociology, therefore, operates with a dual foundational toolkit: deep ontological realism and epistemological relationism. It understands there to be an underlying social reality, but equally clearly understands that all social relations exist in constitutive inter-relation with others, hence the need to problematize difference, multiplicity and interactions, to go beyond immediate context and to transcend narrow viewpoints. Rather than compare reified, static social facts, this mode of research involves the study

¹³³ Halliday, *the Middle East in International Relations*, 46.

of the relations, linkages and processes that make up the social world.¹³⁴

If we go back to the Iranian case we see the importance of the role of the state in the construction of Iranian national identity. The nationalist project was put into practice in Iran neither by the vanguard elite as in the case of East and Central Europe nor the nationalist elite who enjoyed the moment of political and discursive correspondence between elite and subaltern and could speak in the name of the masses as in the case of postcolonial nationalism in South Asia but by the state itself in a from above manner. In this sense Iran has more to share with the experience of Turkey which also embarked on a modernization and nationalization programme under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Both countries did not experience direct foreign control and in both cases the state monopolized the discourse of modernity and nationalism. The state managed to construct itself as the signifier of national identity. Namely, in Iran the systematic construction and reproduction of Iraniyat was started alongside with the modern state formation under the Reza Shah and it became the part and parcel of future nationalisms in Iran.

The approach of HS can also fulfil the task of explaining not only the emergence of nationalism but also its development. In other words, we can develop a view that also investigates the shape nationalism took and type of state it created, namely, the impact of the process of emergence of nationalism on the further development of that nation state and the nationalist ideology.

The tools and insights of HSIR that have been prioritized so far can be understood well with the help of the model of ‘Comparative Contingency’ that Fred Halliday asserts. According to this model, there are four tasks that should be undertaken to unravel the complexity of the phenomenon of nationalism. The first is to examine the *general historicity* of nation “in the sense that how recently it was

¹³⁴ Lawson, “Historical Sociology in International Relations: Open Society, Research Programme and Vocation,” 358.

formed, and the dependence of this formation on a broader, international context.”¹³⁵ Secondly, such a model should search for the *specific causation* with the aim of finding the particular “historical factors which contributed to the formation of this nation”¹³⁶ Another task is to delineate the *specific ideological content* of this nationalism and display the diversity, contradictions and change within it. The last task is to examine the *instrumentality* of nationalism by relating this nationalism to social and political groups. This is to examine “the history not of the emergence of a given or an essence, but of the creation of both ideology and movement by political factors.”¹³⁷

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter attempted to analyse the strengths and shortcomings of both the modernist theories of nationalism and the studies on nationalism in the discipline of IR with regards to the special questions posed by the case study at hand. It argued that both approaches remain limited in understanding the role of the international in the emergence and development of nationalism in Iran. This chapter looked at the tradition of HSIR for inspiration. It should be noted that this chapter did not try to provide a neatly refined theoretical framework since we believe that the refinement will only be possible when these tools conjoin with the actual case.

The following chapters dealing with the Iranian case study will endeavour to unravel the intricacy of Iranian state nationalism as demonstrated by insights from HS and HSIR and as such it is hoped that we reach a new reading of Iranian nationalism- formation. If we analyse the history of nationalism in the Iranian context with the help of the above mentioned methodological and theoretical tools

¹³⁵ Halliday, *the Middle East in International Relations*, 56.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

we can provide an understanding that shed light on the puzzle that extra-European nationalisms presents. By incorporating the international as explanan to the analysis, it becomes possible to see the linkages between a particular history and the international processes and we can rescue our analysis from the prism of exceptionalism which exposes itself especially with partial explanations in the Middle Eastern context such as Islam or irrational rulers.

If we follow the route that the comparative contingency model provides, the historicisation of the Iranian nation is crucial when we consider that even the most prominent Iranian historians evaluate the Iranian nation through perennial lenses.¹³⁸ The specific causation will reveal that the formation of nationalism is not a natural result of linear development. There were alternatives to nationalism that are specific to the region and Iran. A combination of a set of factors produced Pahlavi regime and its nationalist discourse. Only following the linkages between the international and domestic, between objective and subjective aspect of nationalism we can understand why Reza Shah leaned towards the German type of nationalism, why there were almost no protests when he was abdicated by Western powers in a country that is highly sensitive to the foreign interference, why the language of Muhammed Musaddeq could unite different segment of the society and finally why the definition of Iraniyat as neither Eastern nor Western by Muhammed Reza Shah could not rescue the Shah from his gradual alienation from the people. The analysis of Iranian national identity, as a form of relationship between the state and the society, that locates the formation development of Iranian nationalism in their world-historical time and within the international political scene in a theoretically informed manner will provide important answers to these questions.

In tandem with the third task of the model, the following case chapters will examine the political processes that Pahlavi nationalism passed through in order

¹³⁸ “Before the emergence of modern nationalism in Europe, all the constituting elements of nationalism were present and recognized in Iran.” Mansoor Moaddel, *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005): 171.

to investigate the contradictions and changes within it by assessing a long period of time starting from Qajar Dynasty. Lastly, by looking at the resources and capabilities of actors in the international and domestic context we will identify how nationalism was instrumentalised by various actors in the scene to attain power.

CHAPTER 3

INTERWOVEN STORIES: NATION AND STATE BUILDING AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN NATIONALISM

3.1 Introduction

The 1921 coup organized by Reza Khan and Sayyid Zia opened a new chapter for the Iranian society with its irreversible outcomes it caused on the Iranian rubric. These years witnessed the establishment of “modern nation state” in the country under the rule of Reza Shah. Unlike, other empires such as Ottoman Empire, Reza Khan did not inherit a centralized state apparatus and reform it along modern lines as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk did in Turkey. Rather, during his reign the institutions of the modern state were established largely from scratch. As modernist approaches of nationalism argue, formation of modern state institutions are not enough for creating a nation state, above all, state building also requires nation building. In our case, along with the formation of the modern state, this period, inevitably witnessed the construction of the definition of Iranianness.

Nation and state building has been well studied and theorized from a number of perspectives in the social sciences. As a matter of fact it is this juncture that modernist theories of nationalism built upon. However, in these theories, the subject of analysis remained largely the European world. The critical place of nationalism in the complex story of nation and state building in non-European world either remained under-theorized or as in the case of colonial nationalism was over theorized. Iran as part of non-European world but also as a country that did not experience formal colonial control still needs theoretically informed studies.

This chapter will explore construction of the discourse of Iraniyat along with the formation of modern Iranian state under the Reza Shah era. However, as Chernilo

asserts “as long as social theory presupposes that social change was internally driven it would always conceive its object of study as self-contained.”¹³⁹ Following Chernilo, this chapter will conceive the construction of national identity not as a self-contained field but as a product of the interaction between the international and domestic and try to understand the international dimension that went into the formation of Iranian nationalism. How international politics affected the formation of Reza Shah’s discourse will be the main node of this chapter.

In doing so, this chapter will not give a full historical account of the era at hand, rather work through the intricacies of the complex story of nation and state building in Iran at the beginning of 20th century. The construction of Iraniyat on the part of Reza Shah was a gradual process. The chapter will compose of two main parts. In line with the conceptual and methodological tools explained in the previous chapter, the first part will try to unravel the multi-layered factors that laid the ground for Reza Shah’s coming to the power. Following the research scheme provided by Fred Halliday, it will try to unravel *the general historicity* and *specific causation* of modern state formation in Iran. Inspired by the tradition of Historical Sociology this section will trace both material and ideational context that allowed Reza Shah to emerge in the Iranian political scene as a leading actor.

The second part will investigate the formation and re-formation of Iraniyat in relation to the interwoven story of nation and state building by locating these processes within the wider international context and explore the *ideological content* of Iranian nationalism and its *instrumentality*.

¹³⁹ Daniel Chernilo, *A Social Theory of the Nation State* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007): 12.

3.2 The Rise of Reza Khan

Debunking International

When the Great War ended with the victory of Allied powers its effects were palpable. Europe was struggling with post-war hardships, including the restructuring of world politics. While both the victors and the losers of the war were tackling their internal problems, the balance of power in Europe changed after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires and the rise of the Bolshevik Regime in former Tsarist Russia. The efforts of this revolutionary regime to shape the world politics and the resistance it encountered from great powers were visible as soon as the war terminated. At the same time, the War brought a new powerful actor to the international political arena, the USA. To counter the Lenin's 'Decree on Peace' in 1917, the US president Wilson declared the famous fourteenth points shaped by his principle of 'peace without victory' in 1918 calling for the right of self-determination, establishment of a collective security organization, the League of Nations and open covenants. The aim of the fourteen points was to reform the international system in order to secure the country's interests against Soviet Russia and Germany.¹⁴⁰ This principle, epitomized by the fourteen points, dominated the Paris Peace Settlement and the Treaty of Versailles accorded between Germany and the Allied Powers.

According to Eric Hobsbawm the prevailing objective of the Versailles treaty was to isolate Soviet Russia by a *cordon sanitaire*, to control Germany, to partite the regions of the collapsed empires and to prevent a future war.¹⁴¹ Bolshevism that perceives itself ecumenical rather than national was seen as the major threat against the global system and from now on the policies and politics of the Great powers were going to be determined to contain USSR. "Twentieth century

¹⁴⁰ Ross Kennedy, "Woodrow Wilson, World War I and the American Conception of Security," *Diplomatic History* 25, no. 1 (2001): 16-22.

¹⁴¹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Kısa 20. Yüzyıl* (Istanbul:Sarmal, 1994): 47.

international politics can best be understood as a secular struggle by the forces of the old order against social revolution epitomized by the USSR.”¹⁴²

Based on the new approach that US President Wilson introduced to the international diplomacy with his fourteen points,¹⁴³ new states were created in the Southern, Eastern and Central Europe from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Concomitant with the new principle of self-determination these newly established states installed nationalist policies to create their respective nations.

In the Middle East, on the other hand, newly established states which were created from the remnants of the Ottoman Empire came under direct control of the Western powers. The military control of Britain and France became stronger than ever before. If we look at the general picture of the region, British forces were present in Iraq, Egypt, Palestine, and Transjordan; while the French troops were in Maghreb, Syria, and Lebanon. This specific international setting gave rise to nationalist movements, given the international principle of self-determination and given the primacy of the nation state as a model. “The lesson for those who wanted to avoid such a degree of foreign control, and who had the resources to do so, was to adopt a similar pattern of administration within their own territories.”¹⁴⁴ The Egyptian, Turkish, Arab, Algerian, Tunisian nationalisms, whose seeds were present in the 19th century, developed especially during the interwar years. These years also witnessed the establishment of monarchical regimes in the region. For Britain and France, the Middle East was important not only because of their interest in the region but also for their position in the world. Therefore, in order to maintain their position, establishing monarchies under tight control instead of

¹⁴² Ibid., 77.

¹⁴³ David Thompson, *Europe since Napoleon* (GB: Pelican Books, 1982,): 622-625; Baylis and Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 54-55; William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth Century World: An International History since 1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 65-66.

¹⁴⁴ Charles Tripp, “The Political Setting,” in *Modern Literature in the Near and Middle East 1850-1970*, Robin Ostle ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1991): 80.

independent regimes was an efficient way. To this end, in Transjordan Abdullah and Faysal in Iraq became monarchs under the British supervision.¹⁴⁵

Debunking Domestic

Iran, albeit remained neutral, experienced the atrocities of the war as much as the belligerents. Multiple factors - the strong presence of Russia and Britain, the weakness of the state and the geographical importance of the country all contributed to Iranian territory's becoming a front in the war. When the Iranian political actors realized the inevitability of the war they developed strategies to deal with the situation which would produce sometimes unexpected outcomes. They sought to establish new alliance with Germany to balance Russia and Britain, but came face to face with further encroachment.

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 led to a new chain of events for Iran. The new regime in Russia pursued a totally different foreign policy in Iran in tandem with the Lenin's 'Decree on Peace' which called for self-determination, disarmament and open diplomacy. The Bolsheviks abrogated all the treaties and capitulations, declared that "the treaty for the division of Persia is null and void"¹⁴⁶, announced the secret treaties such as Constantinople Agreement made by the old regime and eventually began to withdraw Tsarist troops from the Iranian territory. Also to be added was Bolshevik call for unification of the Iranian people in order to liberate themselves from the "yoke of British imperialism."¹⁴⁷ The anti-imperialist policy of the Soviet regime that aimed to support national liberation movements provided a strong stimulus for Iranian opposition, especially for the leftist and nationalist wings.

¹⁴⁵ Albert Hourani, *The History of the Arab Peoples*(London: Faber and Faber, 1991): 315-328; M.E. Yapp, *The Near East since the First World War* (London: Longman, 1996): 51-139.

¹⁴⁶ Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions*, 150.

¹⁴⁷ N.S. Fatemi, *Diplomatic History of Persia* (New York: Russel F. Moore Company, 1952): 76.

In Tehran, the Democrat Party re-established their existence, in the words of the British Minister, “the first effect of the revolution [Bolshevik Revolution] was to allow the extreme Democrat Party in Tehran to reacquire much of its old power.”¹⁴⁸ In the north of Iran, in Gilan, Jangali (men of jungle) movement composing of pan-Islamist, nationalist, populist and leftist elements was formed and advocated the constitutional and parliamentary politics and national independence. This movement was opposing the central government that was seen as a puppet government of Britain and it was gaining new volunteers. By the end of 1917, they were a major force in the north and achieved fame because of their activities. They were ‘Robin Hoods of the Caspian Marches’.¹⁴⁹

In Baku pro-Bolshevik Social Democrats organized a conference and announced the formation of Justice Party and publication of Azeri-Persian newspaper named *Huriyat* (Freedom). In Tabriz a prominent Democrat, Mohammed Khiabani changed the name of the Azerbaijan branch of Democrat Party to the Democrat Party of Azerbaijan and sent four demands to the central government asking for democratic land reform, the appointment of a reliable governor general, the immediate reconvening of the Majles and the assembly of the provincial councils.¹⁵⁰

When the First World War ended, Britain was very much in control of the country in the absence of Russian intervention. The pro- British government was formed in 1918 under Vosuq al-Dauleh¹⁵¹ with the support of the Organizational faction of the Democrat Party as well as Moderates.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 112.

¹⁴⁹ M. Donohe, *With the Persian Expedition* (1919): 127 quoted from Abrahamian, *ibid.*, 112.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 113; Keddie, *Qajar Iran and the Rise of Reza Khan*, 75.

¹⁵¹ Vosuq al-Dauleh was a liberal democrat politician worked in eleven different cabinets of Iran. He was from a prominent family. Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 61.

¹⁵² Katouzian, *State and Society in Iran*, 91.

With the end of the war both the Ottoman and Russian troops evacuated Iran, and “by default, the British became the predominant foreign power operating there.”¹⁵³ South Persia Rifles were a major force; additionally there was the Cossack Brigade which was sponsored by Britain after the Bolshevik Revolution. Although there was a consensus among all political actors of the country regarding the need for order and stability, there was also great divergence about how to achieve this end. For the government the most viable option was to approach Britain for the purpose of centralization. However, the unfolding of events proved that the co-operation of the two would produce adverse outcomes for Britain and the Iranian government.

Although Britain and Tsarist Russia were rivals before, their policy logics were at least the same, imperialist expansion, but now, the rivals had a significantly different ideological stance which added to former rivalry. “The Foreign Secretary was trying to carry out a strong policy of 'intervention' in Persia as part of a general scheme of 'containing' Communist Russia.”¹⁵⁴ Also to be mentioned as a factor in the formation of Britain policy of Iran after the Revolution was the relative instability in Russia which was read by British as the proper time of manoeuvre.

By 1918, Britain began to prepare and negotiate their future policy towards the country. The first option presented by British Minister in Tehran, Sir Percy Cox was to obtain mandate status for Iran in the Paris Peace Settlement which was rejected by the government in India.¹⁵⁵ Then two different proposals were drafted by the Foreign Office, Curzon, and the India Office. While the former sought for a closer involvement in Iran, the Indian office looked for ‘limited scale assistance’. However, Curzon’s proposal was accepted despite the India’s fervent

¹⁵³ Patrick Clawson and Michael Rubin, *Eternal Iran* (New York: Palgrave, 2005): 49.

¹⁵⁴ Clermont Skrine, *World War in Iran* (Constable, 1962): 141.

¹⁵⁵ Katouzian, *State and Society in Iran*, 89.

opposition and the Anglo Iranian Agreement was signed by the Vosuq government in 1919. According to Katouzian, “Curzon imposed his plan single-headedly because the Foreign Secretary were at Paris Peace Conference, dealing with much more important European issues and giving almost a free hand to Curzon.”¹⁵⁶ The repercussions of the treaty were quite harsh both inside and outside due to the terms of the agreement aiming to establish a protectorate¹⁵⁷, and soon it became an international issue and concern for international public opinion.

The Soviet government denounced the agreement, later sent arms to Caucasus, and strengthened the Jangali movement; France and the US protested the agreement as it was giving exclusive position to the British. In the various articles of the press in both countries the British move was perceived as a blow to the new world order created after the war which was characterized by the League of Nations. Thus, the agreement became a part of international political agenda.

According to Curzon, it was ‘a great triumph’¹⁵⁸ and was designated to bolster Persian independence, but in reality, it was taking control of Iranian military and economic affairs. The immediate response of the Iranian people was the strengthening of opposition. The Prime Minister was seen as a pro-British politician; in the periodicals the agreement was badmouthed, poems addressed Vosuq and his triumvirate as the betrayers. Not only the political circles and intellectuals but also the ulema and religious community raised their voices against the Agreement. The ulema even issued fatwa against it.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 89.

¹⁵⁷ According to the agreement, British would give two million pounds sterling to Iran and the British officers were to construct a national railway, to reorganize the national finances, and to supervise the collection of custom duties. Keddie, *Qajar Iran and the Rise of Reza Khan*, 72.

¹⁵⁸ Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 456.

At the regional level, this was the period of the balkanization of the Arab Middle East and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. After the War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the map of the Middle East was redrawn by France and Britain and they divided the land according to the secret Sykes Picot agreement of 1916.¹⁵⁹ Taking into consideration of this regional unravelling of states, we can start to understand the radical response to the treaty. As Abrahamian asserts, Curzon misread the situation in Iran and thought that Iran was opposed to Russia and it would side with Britain as in the Constitutional Revolution, however, the anti-British sentiments had reached its peak at that time.¹⁶⁰ It is worth mentioning that despite the aggravated opposition in the country, the prominent journalist and politician, Sayyed Zia, who would stage the coup of 1921 with Reza Khan and then be the prime minister, was the most fervent advocate of the Agreement.

The Agreement radicalized the Iranian opposition that had already commenced from the beginning of the century. On the other side of the picture, there was a real devastation among the people of Iran due to famine and diseases, low agricultural production and shortages. “The impotence of the state was palpable and the sense of national humiliation was at stark.”¹⁶¹ Reza Shah’s efforts to establish a nation state would take place against such a background.

In Azerbaijan, the Democrats accused Tehran of selling the country. Khiyabani announced the establishment of a local government Milli Hukumat (National Government), changed the name of the title Province of Azerbaijan to Azadistan (freeland), and began to implement social reforms including “regulating prices, reforming taxes, opening schools and distributing to peasants land but not private domains.”¹⁶² Also, they recapitulated their previous demands of convening of parliament and called for the establishment of republic.

¹⁵⁹ Best, *International History of the Twentieth Century*, 92-93. Hence, France added the Levantine states of Syria and Lebanon to its existing mandates and Britain increased its sphere of influence by receiving responsibility for Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq.

¹⁶⁰ Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 64.

¹⁶¹ Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 22.

¹⁶² Keddie, *Qajar Iran and the Rise of Reza Khan*, 75.

The Justice Party, which was formed after the Bolshevik Revolution, changed its name as the Iranian Communist Party and became the first Communist Party in Asia. The leaders of the Jangali movement, which were the strongest power in Gilan attended the party congress. In the congress two major issues were debated regarding the future of Iran. The first was advocating ultra-left programme claiming that Iran was ready for socialist revolution, the second view, on the other hand, was argued that Iran was in fact leaning towards a national revolution rather than a socialist one. The congress accepted the first thesis and announced the establishment of Soviet Socialist Republic of Gilan in 1920 in alliance with the Jangalis. The concrete support to the Gilan Republic was given by Soviet regime at the Conference of the Eastern Peoples at Baku when Lenin declared their policy as supporting the national and anti-colonial movements. With this policy Communist party dropped the thesis of seeking for a socialist revolution and adopted the support progressive national forces in Iran. Moreover, the Soviet Socialist Republic began to prepare its march to Tehran with the backing of Red Army.

The revolts in Azerbaijan were “led by reform-minded individuals who believe that the establishment of democratic reforms in their own regions would lead to the basis for liberalization of the rest of the Iran.”¹⁶³ While the movements were the product of the dissolution of Empires and the international crisis that the war brought and it was the geographical proximity to the revolutionary Russia that facilitated their formation. “Gilan formed part of the broader crisis of established regimes after 1918 that was evident across Europe, in Hungary, Bavaria, northern Italy, and which stretched through Turkey to the northern Iran and on to Afghanistan.”¹⁶⁴ The responses of the Iranian actors, therefore, were not unique to Iran but were part of the broader context.

¹⁶³ Shaffer, *Borders and Brethren*, 41.

¹⁶⁴ Halliday, “The Iranian Left in International Perspective,” in *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran*, Stephanie Cronin. ed. (London: Routledge, 2004): 23.

Conjuncture of the International and Domestic: The Rise of Reza Khan

In 1920 Iran was in a turmoil which was aggravated by Anglo-Iranian Treaty. In a short period, the unpopular government fell. The British Minister in Tehran, Cox was replaced by Herman C. Norman. The successive government under the leadership of the Prime Minister Hasan Pirnia were to be on the horns of the dilemma: While the British were pushing the government into accepting the Treaty, the fervent opposition of the people was making it impossible. The government announced the suspension of the Anglo-Iranian Agreement but in turn was forced to resign by the Britain.¹⁶⁵

In Britain there was a growing indifference towards the Iranian question due to the economic difficulties that the British economy¹⁶⁶ went through. The uprisings against Britain in several Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt, Syria and Palestine put Britain in an uneasy situation.¹⁶⁷ The worsening position of Britain in northern Iran led to antagonisms within the British political cadres. The War Office and the British cabinet did not want to create a direct conflict with the Bolsheviks “The Treasury, War Office, India Office, and Colonial Office therefore urged withdrawal”; the cabinet decided to withdraw Norperforce despite the objections of Curzon and appointed General Ironside to command Norperforce.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Katouzian, *State and Society in Iran*, 200.

¹⁶⁶ British Economy, after the World War, was experiencing great difficulties. It was mainly dependent on world trade but the world trade was disrupted due to the state of war. Thomas Heyck and Stanford Lehmborg, *The History of the Peoples of the British Isles* (London: Routledge, 2002): 149.

¹⁶⁷ Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 461-462; Michael Zirinsky, “Imperial Power and Dictatorship: Britain and the Rise of Reza Shah,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24, no. 4 (1992): 658.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 644.

In Tehran, the Shah was fearful of losing his throne, the Iranian officials were negotiating for a treaty with Soviet Russia, and the government was dependent on Britain because the Norperforce was the only power to defend Tehran from the attack prepared in Gilan. Ambitious pro-British journalist and political broker Sayyed Zia al-Din Tabataba'i, who had supported the Anglo-Iranian Treaty, had been arising as an important figure with the support of the new British Minister, Norman. The Foreign Office was debating either to create a strong government or forming a government in the south with the backing of tribes which they could control.

While General Ironside came to the conclusion that “a military dictatorship might save the situation from chaos and/ or ‘Bolshevism’”¹⁶⁹, Sayyed Zia and his friends decided to bring the Cossacks to Tehran before the departure of Norperforce. The Cossack Brigade seemed as a viable option because the Russian Cossack officers had been removed and the Brigade had been trained and armed by Colonel Henry Smyth at Qazvin. When Norman, being unaware of the plan, suggested replacing the Tehran Cossack with Qazvin due to their undisciplined attitude, Smyth approved to send them under the Colonel Reza Khan who had been appointed to the position by Ironside. Meanwhile, Ironside met with the Shah to persuade him to appoint Reza Khan to a position of power but when the Shah refused his advice Ironside informed Norman about the plan but could not get Norman's approval. However, when Norman realized that the Cossacks were coming to Tehran, he accepted to co-operate.¹⁷⁰

In 1921 Reza Khan marched into Tehran with 2500 members of the Cossack Brigade and there he met Sayyed Zia. They did not encounter any resistance by the Gendarmerie who had been told by Norman not to resist, and seized power through a coup d'état. Evidently the British involvement and aid was crucial for

¹⁶⁹Katouzian, *State and Society in Iran*, 264.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., 264; Keddie, *Qajar Iran and the Rise of Reza Khan*, 79.

the coup. It was the British officers in Iran who acted as intermediaries between Sayyed Zia and the Cossacks, provided the equipment and money, and who prevented any potential resistance.¹⁷¹

When Cossacks under the leadership of Reza Khan and Sayyed Zia arrived to Tehran, they arrested large number of politicians and assured the Shah that their aim was to save the monarchy from revolution, and requested the appointment of Sayyed Zia as the prime minister and himself as the army commander. Thus, Reza Khan made his entrance to the Iranian political scene.

3.3 State and Nation Building: The Construction of Iraniyat

The visible order of things furnishes a self-evident demonstration of their reasons for being, that their order makes them intelligible¹⁷²

The coup d'état of 1921 was the founding moment for the formation of Iranian nationalism by the state. Although nationalist ideological discourse stretching back to the Constitutional Revolution was prevalent in the country, the systematic construction and reproduction of Iraniyat started in this era and became the part and parcel of future nationalisms in Iran.

After gaining power Reza Khan/Shah embarked on a programme of state and nation building. As much as state building, nation building was also an open-ended process conditioned by the combination of general historicity and the specific causation. Reza Shah did not come to power with a fully-fledged and unchanged definition of *Iranianness* in his mind. Rather, the content of *Iranianness* under the rule of Reza Shah was constructed and re-constructed gradually vis-à-vis the international and domestic politics.

¹⁷¹Zirinsky, "Imperial Power and Dictatorship," 645-646.

¹⁷²Simon Bromley, *Rethinking Middle Eastern Politics* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994): 8.

Here this study discerns **six** relational processes that were imbricated in the construction of the Reza Shah's nationalism. These processes unravel not only the formation of *specific ideological content* of nationalism and display the diversity, contradictions and change within it but also show the *instrumentality* of nationalist politics, how it was bounded by political factors. The **first** one is the elimination of contenders for power. The **second** process is the formation of the discourse of disintegration in which the rise of Reza Khan is presented as the national saviour of Iran. The **third** one is the process of secularization that became visible first in 1924 with the attempts of establishing a republican regime but then turned into mechanism for eliminating traditional powers, especially the ulema. The **fourth** process is the politics of concessions used by the regime as a proof of its nationalistic aspirations. The **fifth** one is the relationship between the new state and tribes that was presented first as a security and then as an identity problem by the official discourse. Finally **the last one** is the process of Westernization the meaning of which also shifted alongside domestic and international politics and culminated into Aryanism. It is the interweaving of these multiple stories that compose the specific content of Iranian nationalism.

3.3.1 Reza Khan and His Alternatives

The widely accepted narrative of the emergence of modern Iran, much like other nationalist accounts, is one of courage, perseverance, and suffering. This story typically starts at the end of the 19th century with a description of the sad state of Persia, which had long suffered at the hands of the European powers and duplicitous rulers. Financial hardship, corruption, and the World War I that the Iranians were thrown into soon brought the country at the brink of a collapse. Yet, Reza Khan with his nationalist zeal rescued the country from political chaos and the Iranian land came once again under the control of its true owners, the Iranians. This sequencing of Iranian history leads to a linear grasp of Iranian politics, as if the formation of modern Iranian state under the rule of Reza Shah was inevitable and natural. What is important here is to de-naturalise the process at hand by

showing the availability of different alternatives and the multiple domestic and international causes that brought the success of Reza Shah.

After the coup d'état of 1921, Reza Khan and Sayyid Zia asserted their aim as to save the country from foreign occupation, prevent a possible internal disintegration and to implement a social transformation, which aimed to introduce a national unity¹⁷³. Immediately after the coup Reza Khan's first aim was to obtain control of the government and the armed forces. In February 1921 he received the title of Army Commander.

Although much helped by the international politics that facilitated his rise, Reza Khan was not without rivals. The first attempt to possess more power was the forced resignation of Sayyed Zia. The policy of recruiting British officers to the Cossack Brigade to secure the British support annoyed Reza Khan who conceived this policy as a threat to his position in the army. In May 1921, in collaboration with the Shah, Reza Khan forced Sayyed Zia to resign from the post of prime minister and to leave the country. Thus Reza Khan acquired more control in the absence of Zia.

The most significant threat to Reza Khan came from another military unit, the Gendarmerie under the leadership of Colonel Taqi Khan Pasyan in Mashad. Pasyan was from a high-ranking family and well-educated and the key commander of the forces of the Provisional Government during the war. He had nationalist and secular ideas and was against the traditional Qajar elites. After the war he was exiled to Germany and in 1920 he returned to the country and was given the command of Khorasan. Pasyan, albeit known as anti-British, supported the 1921 coup, followed the orders of the centre and took control of the Mashad in coordination with the centre. However, when Sayyid Zia was forcefully resigned and replaced by Qavam with the backing of Reza Khan, Colonel Pasyan noticed the rising power of Reza Khan as the sole actor in the politics, considered

¹⁷³ Nikkie Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003).

the situation as a menace to democratic aspiration and started his rebellion against Tehran. He drew his support mainly from the cadres of Gendarmerie and also political support from nationalist, socialists as well as radical nationalists who favour Islamic unity. Reza Khan suppressed one potential candidate for the role of national saviour by using Kurdish tribes.

After the suppression of the revolt of Colonel Pasyan, Reza Khan turned its face to the north, Gilan Republic. The Gilan movement did not have the necessary support from the rest of the country and also it was divided among communist and nationalist elements. Their attempt to march to Tehran in 1920 had already failed. With the 1921 coup and consequent consolidation of power in the centre the only way of survival left was the Russian backing. However, the post-war conditions propelled the USSR to change its particular foreign policy. The deteriorating conditions forced the Soviet government to sign a trade accord with Britain and in accordance with the accord Soviet government withdrew its support from the Republic. On the other hand, Reza Khan maintained friendly relations with Russia and got the promise of evacuation of Russian armed forces. The power vacuum in the absence of Russians enabled Cossacks to occupy the region and terminated the Jangali movement which declared the establishment of Soviet Socialist Republic of Gilan in 1920.

After the successful suppression of the Jangali movement, Reza Khan started to implement a program of army building. In 1921, after removing the military and political threat of Colonel Pasyan, Reza Khan proclaimed Army Order Number One through which the Cossack Brigade and Gendarmerie were combined. This process was not smooth, however. Since the Constitutional Revolution, the Gendarmerie was respected and known with their discipline and well-education. These officers generally came from high ranking families of the society. They were known as pro-democratic and nationalist due to their battles against the British and Russians during the war. As a matter of fact, the first rebellion against Reza Khan had been originated from this unit under the leadership of Colonel Pasyan. However, given the lack of sufficient resources to create a strong army

approaching the Gendarmerie was the compulsory solution. By putting the Gendarmerie under direct control of the Cossacks, he aimed to vitiate the Gendarmerie as well as built a larger army. The new organization of the army and the unjust practices toward the Gendarmerie created resentments in the ranks of the unit and the differences between the two units surfaced soon. The privileged position of the Cossacks and the way through which the new army was constructed alienated the gendarmes and even some officers gave a visit to Reza Khan and demanded their payment.

In such an atmosphere the rebellion came from Tabriz among the Gendarmerie. The rebellion under the leadership of Major Lahuti soon got support from other gendarmes in the region, arrested their Cossack Colonels and marched on Tabriz. Soon they captured the control of the government departments, gained the support of the local Democrats and formed the committee called Tajaddud (Renewal). In a short period of time Lahuti declared their aim as to save the country from the people in power who were corrupt and favouring foreign interest. It was claimed that the gendarmerie “devotee of the Iranian nation, partisans of freedom and enemies of despotism” and aimed to implement the real reforms in the country. The growing power of the rebellion became the main concern of Tehran soon. The government was considering the option of negotiation with Tabriz. In the meantime, Reza Khan was acting as if he agreed to the negotiations but in fact was preparing Cossacks to capture the city. While the negotiations were carried out between the government and Lahuti, his forces approached the city and suppressed the rebellion.¹⁷⁴

So, after Reza Khan figured in the Iranian political scene there were alternatives for national leaderships. As Cronin mentions, the assertion that the Cossacks were the only effective military force in the country is in fact a myth.¹⁷⁵ Reza Khan,

¹⁷⁴ Stephanie Cronin, *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran*, 138-141; Steven Ward, *Immortal* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2009): 126-132.

¹⁷⁵ Stephanie Cronin, “Re-Interpreting Modern Iran: Tribe and State in the Twentieth Century,” *Iranian Studies* 42, no. 3 (2009): 361.

Pasyan and Lahuti defined themselves and their politics in similar terms that the Constitutional Revolution set forth. All referred to the necessity of social change that had been in circulation for decades, all claimed that their aim was to save the country from chaos and disintegration. What differed them was their actual resources stemming from their position vis-à-vis the Iranian political centre and the international politics. Reza Khan neither entered the Iranian political scene as a nationalist hero nor started a movement away from the political centre of Tehran but was directly brought to the centre to via the coup d'état with the support of Britain in the context of fast changing international environment. His acquiring of political power at the centre of Iranian politics and his legitimacy to do so was greatly conditioned by the state of international politics in the post-war setting of the world.

The process in which Reza Khan gained support from different segments of society underlines an important factor for nationalist politics. As indicated above during the era immediately preceding Reza Khan, there were diverse movements in the country with competing aims which had constituted themselves as nationalist. Reza Khan consolidated his power first by destroying the existing mobilisations in the country. He suppressed the revolts throughout the country either of which claimed to be nationalist. However, his suppression of mobilisation gave his policies 'inward legitimacy' and he could assure 'co-ordination' which means binding "heterogeneous elite circles to act in common to challenge state power."¹⁷⁶ As much as entering in the Iranian political scene, *the international* factored in his gaining legitimacy inwards and outwards. Inwards legitimacy came through military successes such as his suppression of the Gilan revolt. It was the change in Soviet policy that withdrew its support for the Republic that allowed Reza Khan to suppress the Gilan Republic. Outwards legitimacy was also crucial though. Both imperial powers Russia and Britain

¹⁷⁶ According to Breuilly, there are three functions of nationalism: co-ordination, mobilization and finally legitimacy. Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 382.

recognized Reza Khan as a legitimate political figure and that recognition was the corner stone of his rise as a leader of the state and national building processes.

The British minister thought he was indispensable for ending the chaos and Soviet ministers saw him as bourgeois nationalist leader trying to put down feudal reactionaries, most of whom were also agents of imperialism.¹⁷⁷

3.3.2 The Prince on White Horse: Reza Khan and the Discourse of Disintegration

Oliver Bast argues that “the established portrayal of those years [the period before Reza Khan] read as if the history of this period had been written backward from the coup down toward the year 1911”¹⁷⁸ regardless of the fact whether any one particular account has a positive view of Reza Khan/Shah and his subsequent dictatorship or not. Bast calls this narrative as the “discourse of disintegration”¹⁷⁹. This perspective is actually what Tom Nairn identifies: Taking the nationalist ideology “too literally and seriously”.¹⁸⁰ In order to escape from this linear outlook Bast proposes to focus on continuities rather than ruptures. Following the suggestions of Oliver Bast this part will try to account for continuities as well as changes. The discourse of rupture is, indeed, one of the most significant markers of the nationalist ideology. It provides a necessary discursive field in which history of a particular nation could be rewritten with a fresh start. However if we step back from the discourse of rupture for a moment it becomes possible to see the continuities as well. If one of the continuing aspect of Iranian politics is the effects of the international, the other one is the ideological atmosphere in the country that fervently advocated the formation of a modern centralized state. From this perspective perceived nationalist zeal of Reza Khan or the

¹⁷⁷ Touraj Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher, *Men of Order* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004): 20.

¹⁷⁸ Oliver Bast, “Disintegrating the Discourse of Disintegration,” in *Iran in the 20th Century* Touraj Atabaki ed. (London and New York: I.B Tauris, 2009): 55.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁸⁰ Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain* 1982, 93.

modernization programme he embarked on does not constitute a rupture but exposes how Reza Khan appropriated the prevalent nationalist and modernist agenda in the country imbricated especially since the First World War and how he gained legitimacy through utilizing this ideology.

Reza Khan mobilized the ‘discourse of disintegration’ which came to be dominant among the political elites especially after the World War I. The weakness of the centre vis-à-vis local and decentralized movements in the country was conceived as a state of chaos and a threat of territorial disintegration in the face of the developments taking place in the Ottoman or Austro-Hungarian Empires within the post war international system. If the international- World War I, Bolshevik Revolution, and foreign policy shift of Britain and Russia- set the stage in which Reza Khan could arise as a political actor in Iran, his consolidation of power in Iranian politics became possible through facilitating the prevalent “discourse of disintegration” which was rooted in the same international context.

This international context also conditioned the views of the elites. After witnessing the collapse of empires one after another, the urgent need for the political elite started to change as the world changes. Romantic sense of nationalism replaced by the fears of disintegration and preserving territorial integrity started to be conceived as the main mission of the state. In the context of this discursive transformation, which was heavily the product of the international and domestic, the ideals of the Constitutional Revolution such as social egalitarianism and liberalism was superseded by the ideas of modern and centralized state building and political authoritarianism. Some even argued that “being contemporary or modernized, would be attainable only when an ‘ideal dictator’ had set up the country for a social revolution by retaining power and concentrating his political authority through ‘banning the press, dismissing the parliament, and restricting the power of the clerics’”¹⁸¹.

¹⁸¹ Atabaki, “From Multilingual Empire to Contested Modern State,” in *Iran in the 21st Century* Homa Katouzian and Hossein Shahidi ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008): 47.

In this discursive transformation, the experience of the Constitutional Revolution was reconstructed as a well-intended but failed reform movement that put Iran in a harder position. “It was often depicted as an altruistic public effort that nevertheless triggered domestic chaos, foreign occupation and political betrayal; an upheaval that eventually brought to an end by Reza Khan, the savior of Iran.”¹⁸² Even the intellectuals such as Kasravi who were in favour of the revolution remained loyal to this dominant narrative. So, the post war years created a moment in which a political and discursive correspondence between elite, Reza Khan and main foreign actors developed. Here, “ideology appears both as a rationalisation of certain forms of political action and as an instrument of such action.”¹⁸³

The ideologues of the new regime conceptualized the pre-coup decades as a period of chaos, disorder and total anarchy:

Early morning on the 3rd of Esfand 2479... a passionate and strong-minded son of Iran [Reza Khan] rose and rescued the nation from the grip of foreigners, tribe chiefs, and poverty. Two years had not passed from the arrival of Reza Shah the Great on the political scene when peace and security were attained.¹⁸⁴

Then as a common pattern in the Iranian history, a shining star in the country’s dark sky brought integrity and prosperity to this ancient civilization.¹⁸⁵

The discourse of disintegration was the anchor that enabled Reza Khan to rise as the national saviour in the Iranian politics. The answer to why this discourse made sense for the Iranians should be again located into the context of the interaction

¹⁸² Abbas Amanat, “Memory and Amnesia in the Historiography of the Constitutional Revolution,” in *Iran in the 20th Century*, 25.

¹⁸³ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 383.

¹⁸⁴ Atabaki, “From Multilingual Empire to Contested Modern State”, 48.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

between domestic and international and the interaction between the material and ideational.

3.3.3 Republicanism versus Monarchy

Both during and in the aftermath of the Constitutional Revolution, there were occasional references to the possibility of change in the form of the government in Iran. Following the relative order in the country the regime change started to figure again. Talk of a republic became serious in October 1923 when Reza Khan became Prime Minister and Ahmad Shah left for Europe.¹⁸⁶ In the discussions while there were several eulogies to the Republicanism, it was depicted as the solution which could terminate the royal and clerical despotism in Iran.

On 20 January 1924, a newspaper in Istanbul came out in favour of the establishment of a republic in Iran, too. The article was well received in Tehran by newspapers that were supporters of Reza Khan. Subsequently, a serious press campaign began in support of establishing a republic system in mid-February 1924. “Articles in favor of the republic and in abuse of the Shah occurred daily with no evident steps to prevent them”.¹⁸⁷ Republican committees were formed and telegrams from the provinces poured into the capital.¹⁸⁸

*Iranshahr*¹⁸⁹ stated that “today almost all of Europe, including Russia, has adopted the republican system of government. There is no doubt in our minds that

¹⁸⁶ Vanessa Martin, “Mudarris, Republicanism and the Rise to Power of Riza Khan, Sardar-i Sipah,” in *The Making of Modern Iran*, Stephanie Cronin ed. (London and New York: Routledge: 2005): 71.

¹⁸⁷ Atabaki, “Agency and Subjectivity in Iranian National Historiography,” in *Iran in the 20th Century*, 82.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 82.

¹⁸⁹ Persian newspaper published between 1922- 1927.

in the modern age the republican form of government is the best system of government.”¹⁹⁰

Kazemzadeh argued in an editorial in *Iranshahr* that “the society should be liberated from the yoke of the clerics by getting rid of religious superstitions, separating religion from the state, and accepting religious principles in accordance with the parameters of modern times.

Subsequently, some conventional political parties changed their tendencies in favour of a republican form of government. The Independent Democrat Party of Iran, following a meeting of its board of leadership, declared the following:

1. As of now, by opting for the republican form of government in Iran, we announce that the monarchy and rule of the Qajar dynasty in Iran is illegitimate; 2. We call upon the Majlis to adopt a new Constitution altering the form of government in Iran from monarchy to republic; 3. We call upon our members and supporters throughout Iran to utilize their ultimate power in order to fulfill this demand; 4. In the Majlis, the Independent Democrat Party’s fraction ought to take all necessary measures to facilitate the ratification of new bills.¹⁹¹

As an actor of the era, these ideas had their weight on Reza Khan, as well. When he saw that there was suitable atmosphere in the country and that he was confident in his position, he came up with a proposal of a regime change from monarchy to republic. However, it would be wrong to assert that the move towards the Republicanism solely stemmed from Reza Khan’s emulation of Mustafa Kemal in Turkey. It is true that developments in Turkey had the demonstration effect on him; but there was already a debate regarding the regime change in the country since the Constitutional Revolution in concomitant with the developments elsewhere. As a matter of fact, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s policies and the Republic

¹⁹⁰ Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 37; Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 133.

¹⁹¹ Atabaki, “Agency and Subjectivity in Iranian National Historiography”, 84.

of Turkey were also the very products of these world-historical ideologies and processes.

However, the bill in question alarmed the ulema and the conservatives on the one hand the political rivals of Reza Khan like Mudarris on the other. Like Reza Khan and secular elites, the ulema were also following the developments in Turkey. According to them, with the abolition of the sultanate in Turkey in 1922, the caliphate was also abrogated in 1924 and Turkey became ‘a republic with no official religion’.¹⁹² So, it was a peril to Islam but beyond that the idea of Republic was intimidating the ulema’s social and political position. According to Ansari¹⁹³, even some members of the liberal intelligentsia opposed the idea of Republicanism but this time out of a fear of possible dictatorship. The ulema’s long influence on the bazaaris and the masses allowed them to mobilize the people against the Republicanism and they launched a campaign. The protesters were shouting one slogan: “We want to keep the religion of our fathers, we don’t want a republic. We are the people of Koran, we don’t want a republic.”¹⁹⁴ The Revival and Socialist Parties organized counter-demonstrations; however, they were weak in respect to the conservative protests.

In such an atmosphere, Reza Khan retreated from his desire of a Republic; he demanded the withdrawal of the bill. He declared that “institution of constitutional monarch was the best bulwark against Bolshevism” and also he agreed that the Republicanism was against the principles of Shi’a Islam. Furthermore, he went on a pilgrimage to the Qum in order to gain the support of the traditional classes that he had lost. These developments proved the prevailing power and importance of the traditional sources of authority.

¹⁹² Reza M. Ghods, “Iranian Nationalism and Reza Shah,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 27, no.1 (1991a): 40.

¹⁹³ Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 37.

¹⁹⁴ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 134.

Here, again it is possible to see the interaction of different dynamics. The very structure of the Iranian society coupled with the agential manoeuvres and international inputs, the Turkish example, did constrain Reza Shah for establishing a Republic but also they opened a new room for him: enabled him to be a monarch. In 1925, by the help of the re-alliance with the conservatives, the Majles drafted a bill that aimed to terminate the Qajar Dynasty. After the bill was accepted, he not only declared his sole aim as to implement “the true laws of sacred Isla”; but also banned the sale of alcohol, reduced the price of the bread, outlawed gambling, and urged women to be moral in their everyday account and restored good relations with the conservatives and the ulema. In 1925, he was appointed to the throne; which initiated the era of the Pahlavi Dynasty and opened a new chapter for Iran.

During the course of events Reza Shah did realize the weight of traditional actors in the Iranian politics and with his reform programme he aimed to gradually reduce their power. In 1927, the previous Ministry of Justice was dissolved and a new one was established which hired new personnel composing of Western educated people instead of former clerical officials.¹⁹⁵ With the new Civil Code the jurisdiction of Shari’a courts was limited in 1929. In 1932, the Assembly introduced a law stipulating that the registration of documents, including the registration of marriage and divorce, and property be carried out by the secular state courts. This way, the Shari’a courts lost not only their main area of operation but also one of the most important sources of their income¹⁹⁶. In 1936, a law concerning the reorganization of the judiciary system and the employment of judges was enacted and it eliminated many members of the ulema from the judiciary. As a result of these new legislations, the new state destroyed the independent sources of authority other than state authority. The government was apprehensive to the possible oppositions from the ulema and progressed

¹⁹⁵ Zirinsky, “Reza Shah’s Abrogation of Capitulations,” in *The Making of Modern Iran*, 86-87.

¹⁹⁶ Amin Banani, *The Modernization of Iran* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961): 73.

gradually. For instance, the law relating to the marriage and family were changed four times and each time the impact of the Shari'a principles reduced gradually.

The republican uproar also provided one of the most important features of Iranian identity. *The monarchy and monarch were included within the contours of Iraniyat*. As one of the historians of Pahlavi period Ibrahim Safa'i puts it, "the most profound reason for people's objection to a republic was the fact that the Iranians have principally identified themselves with a 2500-year-old tradition of practicing monarchy and have found the institution of monarchy the key to their survival."¹⁹⁷ As such, monarchy was redefined as the part and parcel of Iraniyat which will be taken even further during the Muhammed Reza Shah era.

3.3.4 Neither Britain nor Russia: The Politics of Concessions

From the 19th century onwards Iran started to interact with the capitalist world economy. Iran's trade with Europe increased substantially in response to the improved transportation system, new telegraph lines to Europe, the introduction of steamboats in the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, and especially the opening of the Suez Canal. During the nineteenth century, many merchants bought land and, along with some traditional landlords, began to meet Western demand by using their lands increasingly for export crops such as cotton and opium, which made them vulnerable to the economic fluctuations in the world market. The fall in agricultural prices on the international markets brought insecurity to many Iranian exporters.¹⁹⁸

The increasing economic interaction with the West included the undermining of many Iranian handicrafts, the turning of workers into wage labourers and the fall

¹⁹⁷ Quoted from Atabaki, "Agency and Subjectivity in Iranian National Historiography," 89.

¹⁹⁸ Charles Issawi, "European Economic Penetration," in *Cambridge History of Iran* ed. Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly and Charles Melville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 598.

of prices of Iranian exports as compared to European imports. “Given the favoured position of Western traders, who, unlike the Persians, did not have to pay internal customs, the impossibility of protecting infant industries or handicrafts due to the enforced low customs duties, and the lack of any serious government policy to help businessmen, Iran became economically heavily dependent on the West.”¹⁹⁹

These plus the difficulty of being a trader independent of Europeans and the impossibility of setting up protected factories led to growing economic discontent and resentment against European economic rivals. This resentment was also pointing out the Qajar state that failed to use tariff protection to protect local industry against the Europeans due to commercial treaties. The concessions granted by the monarch to foreign companies was intensifying economic pressure on the merchants tremendously. In the words of Abrahamian “hardly a day passed in the court without a sale of something to someone for some price.”²⁰⁰ Increasing Western political and financial control of Iran was also resented, and the numerous Iranian traders and workers who travelled to India, Russian Transcaucasia, and Turkey were able to witness reforms and hear liberal or radical ideas that suggested ways that governments could change in form and could undertake modernizing and self-strengthening policies that might help Iran and free the country of foreign control.”²⁰¹

The coming of the First World War and the use of Iranian territory as a battle ground added to this picture. In some provinces the war had caused serious dislocation of economic life. Agricultural production had fallen, the presence of the occupying forces had created acute shortages of basic commodities, while bad

¹⁹⁹ Nikki Keddie and Mehrdad Amanat, “Iran under the Late Qajars: 1848-1922,” in *Cambridge History of Iran 7: From Nadir Shah to Islamic Republic* ed. Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly and Charles Melville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 181.

²⁰⁰ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 57.

²⁰¹ Keddie and Amanat, “Iran under the Late Qajars,” in *Cambridge History of Iran*, 192.

harvests over extensive areas of the country, coupled with manipulation of the grain markets by speculators, had resulted in devastating famines.²⁰² In the words of a Pahlavi era historian Mahmud Mahmud:

During the last hundred and fifty years and following the arrival of the foreign political agents in Iran, the country has experienced many troubled episodes. Although our knowledge of our contemporary history of Iran is very limited, one can easily conclude that the miseries which Iran has suffered are the direct result of outsider's intervention.²⁰³

As much as the relative order brought to the country by Reza Khan, the economy was crucially important for Reza Khan in rising to power. Economic and political foreign encroachment was seen as an intervention to the nation's sovereignty and became an indispensable part and parcel of nationalist discourse. In the Tobacco Protest of 1890-1891 Iranian people protested *en masse* the concession given to Britain regarding tobacco trade. An important moment that eventually paved the way for the process of Constitutional Revolution was the decision of the government to increase the tariffs applied to the Iranian merchants in coping with the economic crisis at the beginning of 1905. So, it should not come as a surprise striving first for constitutionalism and later for a strong state that can shelter the people of Iran against Britain and Russia in the context of post war international setting. Although the ideas borrowed from the international ideational environment such as constitutionalism, and nationalism became the language of the battle between two fronts - Britain, Russia and the Qajar state versus Iranians, "the fundamental point is not the appearance of new ideas, but the appearance of conditions that made such ideas relevant."²⁰⁴

Following the successful coup of 1921, Reza Khan tried to counteract Britain's dominant economic position after witnessing the strong reaction that Anglo-

²⁰² Gavin Hambly, "The Pahlavi Autocracy," in *Cambridge History of Iran*, 213.

²⁰³ Atabaki, *Iran in 20th century*, 77.

²⁰⁴ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 291.

Iranian Agreement of 1919 received. So, he abrogated the Anglo-Iranian Agreement and also signed a treaty with the Soviet Russia that ended all the capitulations which were given to the Tsarist Russia.

Moreover, Reza Khan employed the policy of third power strategy, *muvazaenne*, and invited an American expert Arthur Millspaugh for reorganizing the finances. Millspaugh's mission was to control and restructure the financial affairs. His programme focused on "the increasing taxes and the efficiency of collection and attracting more foreign capital investment."²⁰⁵

The devastated economic situation felt a relative relaxation with the Millspaugh's restructuration policies, and widened the social base of Reza Khan. The open letter written by the bazaaris to Reza Khan illustrates their appreciation: "Before our commander saved us, the Islamic Empire of Iran was fast disintegrating. The army had collapsed, the tribes were looting, and the country was the laughing-stock of the world. Thanks to the army commander, we now travel without fear, admire our country and enjoy the fruits of law and order."²⁰⁶

The above mentioned moves of Reza Khan served many ends. First of all, beyond bringing economic relaxation to the country, he also showed that he was avoiding Britain and Russia whose names connoted with the main enemies of Iran and defending the nation's sovereignty. The alliance with US, a foreign policy manoeuvre not only did have material domestic consequences, the improvement of Iranian finances, but also implications for the tone that nationalist discourse would take. As such he facilitated the neither Russia nor Britain discourse that was to dominate Iranian nationalism for decades as we will see in the following chapters.

²⁰⁵ Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 84.

²⁰⁶ Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 34.

Another factor in Reza Khan's rising mandate and providing him legitimacy was the way in which he navigated the politics of concessions²⁰⁷ as a showcase for his nationalist aspirations. The vestiges of colonial control on Iranian territory was a focal point of bitterness for Iranian nationalist and became the first foreign policy priority of the new shah. He first forged an economic and commercial relationship with the Soviet Union that would end Iran's economic dependence on Russian markets. However his most important move was the annulment of capitulatory regime that had granted and extraterritorial jurisdiction to the Europeans.²⁰⁸

On 1 May 1927, the Iranian Prime Minister addressed the Majlis, informing the deputies of the Shah's 'desire to abolish as soon as possible the capitulations existing in Persia...[a] sacred aim , and that 'preparation of the grounds for the abolition of the capitulations will constitute the most important object of the Government's program'. The Majlis responded enthusiastically to this speech, the Legation reported."²⁰⁹

In the words of Ervand Abrahamian, his "campaign against foreign influence was impressive".²¹⁰ The annulment of capitulations burnished the nationalist credentials of Reza Shah tremendously.

Another issue for the economic as well as political independence was the issue of oil. Iran's oil industry was established in 1901 by the D'Arcy Concession and granted to Britain. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company was the main controller of

²⁰⁷ Capitulations, the 'unequal treaties' terminated by Reza Shah in 1927 to 1928, by which the west institutionalised its dominant role in Iran during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, may be traced to the 1828 Russo- Iranian Treaty of Turkomanчай which supplanted the 1813 Treaty of Gulistan. Following victory in war, Russia imposed on Iran 'rights' of extraterritoriality and consular jurisdiction for Russian subjects and preferential tariffs for Russian commerce. These privileges were soon extended to other powers by subsequent treaties which included most-favoured-nation clauses. Britain's treaty (Paris, 1857) also was imposed on Iran following victory in war.

²⁰⁸ Michael Zirinsky, "Riza Shah's Abrogation of Capitulations, 1927-1928," in *The Making of Modern Iran*, 81.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

²¹⁰ Quoted from Michael Zirinsky, "Reza Shah's Abrogation of Capitulations," in *The Making of Modern Iran*, 81.

the oil industry in Iran. In the 1930s the industry grew steadily with the number of oil workers rising to 31,500.²¹¹ The oil was important for the new regime for number of reasons. It was one of the most important sources of revenue especially in the face of growing expenditure of the army and massive projects such as the trans-Iranian railway. Yet due to the presence of APOC (Anglo-Persian Oil Company), the revenues it created were limited. More importantly, it was the last remaining of foreign concessions which were seen as the main threat for national independence. In this sense, the presence of APOC in the country was symbolizing the issue of sovereignty. The company was seen as a branch of British Government in Iran by Iranian circles including Reza Shah.

For the shah and for wider nationalist circles, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was no longer merely a symbol of imperial domination. It now appeared, by depriving the country of its fair share of the profits from Iranian oil, to be robbing Iran of the means to become a modern state and presenting a threat to the entire nationalist Project.²¹²

Conceptualized in such a way, the oil issue was to occupy the Iranian public for a long period of time. In 1927 Reza Shah sent Abdulhusayn Taymurtash²¹³ to London to discuss the concessions. The government also made use of the Iranian public opinion toward the company. A fervent nationalist campaign began to appear in the press. The company was criticised harshly due to bad working conditions for the Iranian workers, its dealing with the tribal leaders, and its attitude toward the Iranian government. Trade Unions, on the other hand, enjoyed the relative freedom in the country and started to organize clandestine activities in order to save the rights of the workers. In the May 6th of 1929 the

²¹¹ See Hassan Hakimian, "Industrialization: The Reza Shah Period and Its Aftermath 1925-53", *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. XIII, Fasc. 1, pp. 105-110, online available at: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/industrialization-i> [Last accessed on July 22, 2015].

²¹² Stephanie Cronin, "Popular Politics, the New State and the Birth of the Iranian Working Class: The 1929 Abadan Oil Refinery Strike," *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 5 (2010): 709.

²¹³ Minister of court.

strike began in the Abadan oil fields. “No worker from the day shift had entered the refinery that day.”²¹⁴

The Abadan oil workers’ strike in 1929 shows how the issue of oil and nationalism are intertwined. According to Cronin, the strikes were the result of different trends: Popular hostility to foreign concessions, a tradition of urban protest, the growing reach of modern nationalism which had been empowered by the new regime, and leftist ideas which had nationalist outlook. However, the most important reason was the need of the government of the formation of an anti-oil movement.²¹⁵ The close contact between the strike and nationalism was obvious in the leaflets, posters and broadsheets circulated.

They express “both a generalized sense of the company’s violation of the rights of the nation, and also a sense of a specifically Iranian identity. It repeatedly deploys concepts and a terminology drawn from the modern secular nationalism which had emerged in the late nineteenth century and was being vigorously promoted by the Pahlavi regime, and even verges on a Persian chauvinism.”²¹⁶ However, when the situation in the oil fields got intense, the Government sided with the oil company and repressed the strike. Most of the participant and organizers were arrested.

In 1931-1932, the revenues were even more reduced due to the Depression. Reza Shah demanded more revenue from its oil resources and in 1932 he cancelled original 1901 D’Arcy Concession. The oil dispute could threaten the British interest because, in addition to the economic interest, it could reduce the dependence of Iran on Britain in favour of the USSR. Hence, a compromise was reached and a new concession in 1933 was signed. As a result, the Iranian revenue

²¹⁴ Stephanie Cronin, “Popular Politics, the New State and the Birth of the Iranian Working Class”, 717.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 699-700.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 720.

was increased, only 16 to 20 percent of its annual profits, and Iran agreed to extend the concession for 32 years.²¹⁷ Thus the British monopoly over Iranian oil from production to shipment was preserved.²¹⁸

The attitude of the regime during both the Abadan oil strike and new oil negotiations received many criticisms and harmed the nationalistic credentials of Reza Shah Regime. Oil issue started not only to figure at the heart of each and every nationalist discourse but also became *the very mechanism* in measuring nationalist aspirations and questioning the legitimacy of any ruler which will be especially apparent during the era of Muhammed Musaddeq. The handling of the issue by Reza Shah when coupled with his authoritarian rule narrowed his base and alienated him from the society. Moreover, his anti-imperialist stance started to be questioned all over again starting from the way in which he came to power.

3.3.5 De-linking Identities: Tribes, Minorities and the New State

The relationship between the tribes and the new regime was a complex one. During the reign of Qajar Dynasty the tribes were not perceived as problem but conversely used as the guarantee of the state system. However, starting from the Constitutional Revolution and the state-building efforts that accompanied it, Tehran strove for suppression of the autonomous forces in the country most of which consisted of the tribal leadership to reach order, political stability and national independence. After the First World War and in the face of weakening central government the fact that the big proportionate of Iranian territory was under the control of tribes was conceived as a pressing problem for Tehran because various of the Kurdish tribes and their leaders, for example, were on the verge of developing an ethnic, regional pan-Kurdish and quasi-national identity.

²¹⁷ Akhavi, "State Formation and Consolidation in Twentieth Century Iran," in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics*, ed. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986): 204, Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 57. Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 101.

²¹⁸ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 144.

Other tribal groups, the Turkmans on the border with Soviet Central Asia, Khurasan and Baluchi tribes next to Afghanistan posing problems for political control and national sovereignty. But for Iranian nationalists, the situation in Arabistan was especially sensitive. Here the potential imperial reinvention of Khazal as the ruler of another British-protected Gulf Shaykhdome and the cross-border tribal ties of the local Arab population combined to raise real fears in Tehran of the absolute loss of the oil-rich province. The existence of independent power structures which had cordial relations with foreign powers was a significant problem for a state trying to centralize. So, the necessity of politics was translated into the discourse of politics and tribes were perceived as a matter of national survival.

In concomitant with the prevalent modernist discourse in the country since the late 19th century the tribes were portrayed by the Iranian prominent intellectuals as archaic, the reason for the Iranian backwardness and the main enemy of modernization and centralization.²¹⁹ The truth was rather different. The reopening of Majles after the Constitutional Revolution could be realized when the Bakhtiari tribe joined the revolutionary forces to give an example. Moreover, the khans of the tribes were actively involved in the political structures of the country. So, as in other political figures, the tribes did not act as a homogenous part separated from the rest of the society during the processes Iran underwent rather they acted as same as other modernist or traditionalist elites and acted according to the altering circumstances. For instance while the Bakhtiari tribe supported constitutionalism, Shahsevans fought for the monarchy.

However, the control of different power structures and accumulation of power in one hand was the main aim of Reza Khan and he tried hard to control tribal power and implement pragmatic tactical moves to this end. He did not hesitate to use their coercive capacity when needed or use coercive capacity on the tribes. As a military commander aware of the limited military resources at his disposal, he also used other measures like the policy of co-option. In the first years of Reza

²¹⁹ Kaveh Bayat, "Riza Shah and the Tribes," in *The Making of Modern Iran*, 228.

Khan in the 1920s, leaders of tribes were given government posts in their areas; the tribe leaders became deputies at the Parliament. Cronin asserts that the tribal elites also welcomed Reza Khan, “partly to ensure their own survival, partly in order to benefit from the largesse that was the reward for political support, and partly because they, in fact, approved of many of the regime’s policies, for example, its consolidation of landlordism” embraced the security brought by Reza Khan.²²⁰

Although the primary policy was pragmatism and co-option in dealing with tribal problem, Reza Khan and nationalist intellectuals presented it differently and a disparity occurs between actual politics and ideology. The nationalist discourse defined the tribes as presenting an existential threat to national survival and national unity and insisted on the necessity of building up military strength and authoritarian state structures capable of containing and eventually eradicating this threat. When Reza Khan started a decisive campaign against Khazal in January 1915, obstructing the shaykh’s bid to carve out an independent Arab state on a part of the Iranian homeland, nationalist press presented the operation as a victory for Iranian nationalism to the credit of Reza Khan and his army.

The scapegoating of the tribes can certainly be considered as what was cultivated in the promotion of the Iranian national identity, at a time when even the question of Iran’s territorial integrity was not settled. The question of tribes constituted a challenge for the formation of nation state not because tribes are hostile to modernity but because of the need to secure borders along which the presence of cross-cutting identities shared with neighbouring countries. The identification of Turkoman tribes with the Turkish state rather than the Iranian one, the possible proto-nationalist movement among Kurdish tribes or Arab tribes in the South may pose a problem for the nationalising state. Therefore tribes were conceived of from a perspective in which security and identity merged together.

²²⁰ Stephanie Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran* (London: Routledge, 2007): 25.

Cronin calls this process nationalist invention of the tribal problem. Just like the history of the country, tribal history of Iran was re-written and tribes were reconstructed as hostile to modern nation and state building. Tribal identities were marginalized, even demonized and their “languages and dialects were represented as inferior, backward and alien in comparison to Persian”.²²¹ Iranian nationalist opinion located the ‘tribal problem’ as a key weakness in Iran’s development, a ‘legacy of the Turco-Mongol hordes’.²²² They were portrayed as “pawns of foreign powers”. As such the new regime created its internal other through degrading existing identities.

However, especially after 1925 the tribal policy of the state became more and more brutal. The bloodiest military campaign was taken place in Luristan where proto-nationalism was not an issue unlike Kurd or Arab tribes. In Luristan the people revolted against the corruption of the road construction process but their revolt was presented as if they had been resisting the control of central state. Again in the process of sedentarization of nomadic tribes of the 1930s, the clashes occurred due to authoritarian approach, the corruption, the lack of planning, and the speed of implementation. For the nomads, sedentarization invariably entailed loss of livestock, a reduction in the food-supply and standard of living, disease, higher mortality, loss of freedom, and exploitation by both the military and local government officials. “For some tribes, only the abdication of Reza Shah in 1941 saved them from extinction.”²²³ In a country where “one –fourth of Iranian population are members of tribes” the authoritarianism and corrupt approach implemented by the regime to the tribes greatly undermined the popular base of Reza Shah.²²⁴

²²¹ Sharifi, *Imagining Iran*, 89.

²²² Cronin, “Re-interpreting Modern Iran”, 362.

²²³ Gavin Hambly, “Pahlavi Autocracy”, 215.

²²⁴ Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 51.

3.3.6 Negotiating for the Past: Modernization, Westernization and Aryanism

Keddie²²⁵ states that the broad template of modernization adopted in Reza Shah's Iran was one which had achieved widespread and largely unquestioning acceptance throughout the region in the inter-war period. Governments of the left and of the right, monarchies and republics, including such diverse regimes as Turkey under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Afghanistan under King Amanallah, Central Asia under the Bolsheviks, even Iraq under the Sharifian officers, all embarked on programmes of authoritarian modernization, characterized by rapid social change and statist economic development. This template included the establishment of a strong army, formation of state institutions, investment on modern transportation and telecommunications, new tax regime and modernization of the industry.

In accordance with this template Reza Khan embarked on a massive state building programme that was at the forefront especially since the post war environment in Iran. However, modernization required creation of a unified Iranian nation as much as modern roads, factories, telecommunications or modern state institutions. The discursive transformation, in which the creation of a strong modern state was prioritized after the First World War, also took place in the cultural realm where contested meaning of being Iranian was to be clarified.

In defining Iranian identity, Reza Shah and the ideologues of the new regime first start with stocktaking and pinpointing the perceived problems of Iranian-ness. The periodicals such as *Iranshahr*²²⁶ (Country of Iran) and *Ayandeh* (the Future) advocating nationalism and modernization flourished at that time. These journals propounded the ways to modernize the country: Iran had to be westernised in order to overcome its problems and backwardness.

²²⁵ Keddie, *The Making of Modern Iran*, 39.

²²⁶ Although *Iranshahr* were published in Berlin, it was distributed in the forty towns of Iran.

By absolute submission to Europe, through adaptation and promotion of European civilization, with no reservation and condition one could hope that our country would eventually become prosperous.²²⁷

We need to recognize that we have fallen behind the Western civilization both spiritually and physically by some hundred thousand *farsangs* [each *farsang* is equivalent to 6.24 kilometers] in knowledge, technology, music, poetry, manners, life, spirit, politics, and industry. We should therefore only strive to retain our *melliyat* (nationality), that is, our racial identity, language, and history, and beyond that seek to pursue the European advancements and civilization without the slightest doubt or hesitation. We must surrender to the Western civilization totally and unconditionally.²²⁸

These statements do not only reflect the direction of modernization and the contours of new Iranian identity - Western-like- unequivocally but also a sense of lack, a cultural deficiency vis-à-vis the West. So, the next step in the formation of nationalism is to find whoever responsible from this deficiency. As we have seen in the above sections while the internal other of being Iranian was having tribal identities, the external other was Arabs and Turks. According to this discourse, Iran has indeed has a glorious, developed and civilized culture. However, with the invasion of Arabs, Mongols and Turks and the Islam, the country underwent a transformation which eventually made the country under-developed, ignorant and vulnerable to foreign domination. What is to done is to remember and return to that glorious past. The words of an American missionary also reflect well the standard racial thinking of the day:

The Persians did not accept Islam of their own choice; it was forced on them at the point of sword. And they have been trying ever since to get rid of some of its teachings, against which the Aryan mind rebels.²²⁹

²²⁷ Kaveh, 1920, quoted from Atabaki and Zurcher, *Men of Order*, 12.

²²⁸ Mehrzad Boroujerdi, "'The West' in the Eyes of the Iranian Intellectuals of the Interwar Years (1919-1939)," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 26, no. 3 (2006): 394.

²²⁹ Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, 93.

As such the traitors and patriots of the nation was delineated. While the traitors were Qajar Dynasty, traditionalism, clericalism, tribalism, Turks and Arabs, the patriots were Reza Shah and his entourage, ideologues of the state and anyone who does not object to the modernization programme employed by the regime.

Fred Lawson states that “in the process of constructing a national identity, subtle differences between the prospective nation and outsiders tend to get exaggerated, while even the most glaring distinctions among members of the prospective national community are almost always minimized or ignored. As a result, innovative boundaries form that separate the nation from surrounding peoples.”²³⁰

In the eyes of the state elites, the European model of society presupposed a coherent entity, required a low degree of cultural diversity and a high degree of ethnic and linguistic homogeneity. *Ayandeh* took the task of yielding the necessary conditions for the *Persianization* of all Iranians²³¹. The journal was launched with an article named ‘Our First Desire: the National Unity of Iran’. In the article, while the national unity was championed, the way to attain this unity was described as follows:

...We will attain it by extending the Persian language throughout the provinces; eliminating regional costumes; destroying local and feudal authorities; and removing the traditional differences between Kurds, Lurs, Qashqayis, Arabs, Turks, Turkomans, and other communities that reside within Iran.²³²

Thousands of low-priced attractive books and treatises in the Persian language must be distributed throughout the country, especially in Azerbaijan and Khouzestan. Little by little the means of publishing small, inexpensive newspapers locally in the national language in the most remote parts of the country. All these

²³⁰ Fred Lawson, *Constructing Internal Relation in the Arab World* (California: Standford University Press, 2006): 7.

²³¹ Touraj Atabaki, “Pan-Turkism and Iranian Nationalism” in *Iran and the First World War*, 134.

²³² Ayendeh, 1925, quoted from Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 125.

require assistance from the state and should be carried out according to an orderly plan.²³³

Education and army became the two main pillars in minimizing these *most glaring distinctions* and reaching homogeneity. As in the words of the Minister of Education, “My mission is to make Iran of a single cloth.”²³⁴ As Afshin Marashi²³⁵ points out the state was a “pedagogic state” that would correct the cultural deficiency of Iranians through education and military service.

The most important attempt to establish a modern, standardized system of education was the foundation of High Council of Education in 1924 which served as a supervisory to the Ministry of Education. The preparation of new curriculum for the students and teacher training schools, and the writing and approval of textbooks were among the tasks of the Council. The production of standardized curriculum and textbooks are not only important for the aim of centralization but also of nationalism. “The ministry’s textbook policy followed the broader logic of Iran’s nationalizing project: textbook became conspicuous markers of modernity just as they were conspicuous markers of nationalism.”²³⁶

History textbooks are the best places that we can follow the vision of the new education policy. The task of preparing the history textbooks was given to Commission of Education. The members of the Commission were prominent constitutionalist and intellectuals such Hasan Taqizadeh, editor of Berlin-based Kaveh, Hasan Pirniya, Muhammed Musaddeq, and Abbas Eqbal. The first textbook produced in the Reza Shah era was *Iran-a Qadim*, which was the standard textbook for middle school students. In the book, the Iranian history was divided into three parts: ancient, medieval and modern. This periodization “present(s) a public history of Iran in the style of the collaborative histories

²³³ Ayende, 1925, quoted from Atabaki and Zurcher, *Men of Order*, 8.

²³⁴ Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran* Ibid., 91

²³⁵ Ibid., 93.

²³⁶ Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, 98.

produced by scholars in Europe.”²³⁷ The ancient was portrayed as the golden age in which the nation had its greatest political victories, the medieval era presented as the “dark age” that distinguished the greatness of the ancient Iran and the modern era was “the renaissance of that lost authenticity and an attempt to recapture Iran’s lost stature.”²³⁸

The new state did not confine its education policies to the first and secondary education. The nationalist history rewritten by the institutions of the state reached to the adults as well. With the collaboration of the Ministry of Education and the Department of Public Enlightenment (Sazman-e Parvaresh-e Afkar)²³⁹, the state tried to “provide adults with useful individual and social training conducive to good citizenship.”²⁴⁰ The aim of the Department, which was founded in 1938, was clear, in the words of Ahmad Matin-Daftari, the first head of the Department:

...the duty of the state in public culture is such that it must strive to strengthen the spiritual forces of a nation. It is for this purpose that the Ministry of Public Enlightenment has come into existence.²⁴¹

The government launched a campaign to promote adult education classes which would be conducted through the Department. The aim behind this campaign was not only to combat illiteracy, rather these classes served as the means of indoctrination and propaganda for masses. On the other hand, the Department of Public Enlightenment, similar to the Ministries of Propaganda in Europe in the interwar years, organized lectures, festivals, and ceremonies for the education of

²³⁷ One of the members of the committee, Abbas Eqbal, recalled this fact. Ibid., 100.

²³⁸ Ibid., 101.

²³⁹ The Department of Public Enlightenment was founded in 1938. It was a parallel organization to the Ministry of Education and was operating as a part of the Ministry of Culture. The founding purpose of the Ministry was “to instil and strengthen the love of homeland and monarchism in the people”. See Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, 104-109.

²⁴⁰ Issa Sadiq, *Modern Persia and Her Educational System* (New York: Columbia University Press: 1931): 53 in Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 104.

²⁴¹ Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, 105.

the masses.²⁴² Among the lectures there were the topics such as “Nationalism and the Love of Homeland among Iranian”, “The Love of Homeland among the Ancient Iranians” and “3000 Years of Monarch in Iran.”

Additionally, in order to construct a national culture on the ground of national authenticity; the new regime founded national library, ethnology and archaeology museums as well as a language academy in 1935, Farhangestan, whose role is to purify Persian from foreign words. Here, the foreign words, in most cases, referred to Arabic words. According to the passionate purists, Arab conquerors had invaded Iran and with their insidious secret agents, the Semitic words, destroyed the glorious Persian culture.²⁴³

Another policy that aimed to *make Iran a single cloth* was the establishment of tribal schools in the Turkoman areas, Kermanshah, and Baluchi, Lor and Qashqai territories. In these schools the medium of education was Persian. Thus, with the help of these schools the new regime sought to provide linguistic unity, and central control.

In doing so, with the centralized educational system it indoctrinated the Iranian nationalism, re-wrote the history and promoted a certain type of national culture. The aim of the educational reforms was evident in the words of the Minister of Education, Ali Asghar Hekmat, one of the architects of this project:

An educational programme must be built upon the following aims: to create in minds of the people a living consciousness of the past by showing the great achievements of the race; to train boys and girls to become good citizens of modern Persia, to teach the rural people and tribes how to live.²⁴⁴

²⁴² Ibid., 104.

²⁴³ John R. Perry, “Language Reform in Turkey and Iran,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17 (1985): 308.

²⁴⁴ Sadiq, *Modern Persia and Her Educational System*, 83-84.

Another way of making Iran a single cloth was through changing the dress code. With this step the state showed that even the private domain that had hitherto been left untouched was of its concern. Changing the dress code reveals tendency towards a Westernized and standardized culture. In Iran, different groups had specific clothing according to their regions, religions, tribes and classes. The developments in the 19th century and then, the Constitutional Revolution brought relative adaptation of western clothing especially among educated Iranians.

At the early stages of Reza Shah's career the issue of veil was not on the agenda. Yet, it gradually became the marker of the Iranian backwardness among the elite circles. Even an article suggesting the replacement of veil with headscarf like in Turkey was published. In 1927, inspired by the French képi, the "Pahlavi hat" was made the official hat for the Iranian men. Although the change was confronted by the ulema and bazaaris the government could control the situation. After a few months changing men's clothing totally became the aim of the government. In 1928, the dress code law passed that stipulated to wear uniform dress for men except the clergy. After Reza Shah's visit to Turkey in 1934, the issue gained more importance. Gradually, the state deepened the dress policy, first encouraged the unveiling and then banned the veil, after the visit of Reza Shah to Turkey²⁴⁵, in order to implement to policy effectively, the state resorted to arrests and punishment. "Popular reaction to the state's forced unveiling differed from class to class and from region to region."²⁴⁶ While the reaction among the educated urban Iranians was positive, it was not welcomed by the ulema and the masses. Protests emerged in several cities, especially in Meshed, but were suppressed brutally²⁴⁷. So what was the aim of this ardent policy despite the huge

²⁴⁵ See Afshin Marashi, "Performing the Nation: The Shah's Official State Visit to Turkey," in *The Making of Modern Iran*.

²⁴⁶Houchang E. Chehabi, "Staging the Emperor's New Clothes: Dress Codes and Nation-Building under Reza Shah," *Iranian Studies* 26, no. 3/4 (1993): 219.

²⁴⁷ Mohammad H. Faghfoory, "The Ulama-State Relations in Iran: 1921-1941," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19, no. 4 (1987): 424; Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 94-95.

reaction? The aim was clear in the words of Ali Akbar Siasi who was a Minister of Education and rector of Tehran University:

... it rests on the principle of the reciprocal influence of the physical and the moral [realms]. The national Persian costume, constantly worn by a tribal man, in a distant region, will give him the sentiment of belonging to a vast national unit and not to a particularist clan. Also, this common trait, precisely because it is superficial and visible, will bring together the different groups of Persians the Turks of Azerbaijan, the Kurds, the Lurs, the Arabs of Khuzestan, the Baluchis, etc.-who used to treat each other sometimes as adversaries, and will help to create sympathy among them. Furthermore, if the Armenian, Zoroastrian, and Jewish minorities used to feel uneasy in their relations with each other and with their Muslim compatriots, this was a little because of the visible particularities of their respective clothes.... Finally-and this is, we think, the main reason of this policy-the main social problem being the Europeanization of the Persian, it was felt that the imitation of [the Europeans'] external appearance would not fail to facilitate the adoption of [European] ideas; that the Persian, by abandoning his long robe, his cloak, his bonnet, all of which seemed to serve as a refuge for traditionalism, would definitely capitulate to the advance of Western civilization, to which he would thenceforth abandon himself without shame or constraint."²⁴⁸

However, as Michael Billig asserts, "a nation is imagined as a unique community, with its own historical destiny and homeland".²⁴⁹ So, *a sense of particularity* has to be constructed for Iranians. When the new regime was constructing this particularity it again resorted to the international reservoir of ideas and found the missing link between the two in Aryan race theories in Europe. As such it endeavoured to ease the tension between being Western-like and authenticity by linking Persianism and Europeanness through Aryanism.

²⁴⁸ Ali Akbar Siasi was a long time Minister of Education and rector of Tehran University and played an important part in Iranian cultural life. Chehabi, "Staging the Emperor's New Clothes," 226.

²⁴⁹ Michael Billig, "Nationalism as an International Ideology," in *Changing European Identities*, 187.

While legitimizing Westernization, it was argued that Iranians were from the same race with Europeans. So, the 19th century anthropological theories of race were revisited and it was claimed that Iranians were Aryans who migrated to the Persian Plateau.²⁵⁰ The history textbooks were re-written based on the European fivefold racial system, and argued that the white skinned race, the Aryans which included the Iranians, was the Indo-European peoples and migrated to this area long ago. Thus, Reza Shah took Iranian myth history and resituated it within a modernist historiography of nationalism.

In 1935 Reza Shah changed the name of the country from Persia to Iran which means the land of Aryans in Persian. “This would not only signal a new beginning and bring home to the world the new era in Persian history, but would also signify the Aryan race of its population, as "Iran" is a cognate of "Aryan" and derived from it.”²⁵¹

The Westernization was thus in the minds of the modernists not an alienation but a return to ‘the true self’. Also, with the Aryan thesis, the state was differentiating itself not only from their neighbours but also from the Qajars. This racist element was fed with the rise of fascism in Europe in general and the growing contact with Germany in particular. As Kamali²⁵² points out “the totalitarian European regimes established in Italy and Germany had exerted a pull” on the Pahlavist path to modernity and fed the ethnicist elements. The simple patriotism and unity of the earlier period turned into “an irrational sense of Iranian chauvinism and self-glorification.”²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Here we can trace the ideational support coming from the international. The academic works produced in Europe has also been utilized as a source for Iranian identity. For a detailed analysis of the impact of academic studies on Iranian nationalism see Vaziri, *Nationalizing Iran*.

²⁵¹ Ehsan Yarshater, “Communications: Persia or Iran,” *Iranian Studies* 22, no. 1 (1989): 1.

²⁵² Masoud Kamali, *Multiple Modernities, Civil Society and Islam: The Case of Iran and Turkey* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006): 156.

²⁵³ Homa Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran* (London: Macmillan Press, 1981): 105.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter tried to look back to the Reza Shah's nation state formation efforts at the beginning of the 20th century and aimed to show the nature of the new regime and *specific ideological content* of Pahlavi nationalism. Using a historical sociological approach, the aim was to locate the Iranian experience in a wider political context when analysing the nature and dynamics of the Iranian national development without overlooking its specific conditions. The post-war world historical moment, the establishment of new nation states both in the world and in the region, the dormancy of geopolitical competition on the Iranian territory, 1929 Depression, and the Second World War conditioned the general historicity of Iranian nationalism and this context enabled and inspired Reza Shah in the establishment of a centralized Iranian state. This general historicity interacted with Reza Shah's character, the responses of the actors to the policies of the new state and created the specific nature of Iranian narrative.

Reza Shah constructed the main pillars of Iraniyat alongside the process of state building. In doing so, he first facilitated the discourse of disintegration and presented himself as the saviour of the country. After failed attempt of regime change he included the monarchy as one of the founding elements of Iranianness. The imagining of the national community is also imagining of boundaries and thus an imagining of others beyond the boundaries. Reza Shah drew the internal boundaries based on Persianism and aimed to de-link the existing identities within. In this process having tribal identities was presented as hostile to the national unity and became the internal other of Iraniyat. The external boundaries on the other hand, was drawn especially with Arabs and Turks that were perceived as responsible from the backwardness of the country. In creating a new Iranianness the state adopted a morphological Westernization and Iranianness meant becoming Western-like which was conceptualized as a return to true-self. Moreover, the construction of Iraniyat by Reza Shah was very much in line with the world historical moment. It was the ways in which international processes

integrated to the domestic dynamics that shaped both the template of modern state formation and the ideological content of nationalism.

The unfolding of events in the Iranian trajectory showed that nationalism had massive importance in the state-building efforts of the Shah. As Matthee²⁵⁴ points out “if modernization was Reza Shah's goal and centralization his method, nationalism was the ideology that legitimized both.” It functioned as a crucial device: Reza Shah could accord different concerns of Iranian people and appropriate the political context to control the state power. “Nationalism, therefore, legitimised institutional changes and the use of force, helped incorporate some reformist opponents and maintained very substantial powers in the hands of”²⁵⁵ Reza Shah. However, when the degree of economic and political power the new state appropriated antagonized some social classes, the coalition began to scatter and the legitimacy of his regime was questioned. Therefore, as modernist theory of nationalism claims, it is not nationalism that determined the creation of Iranian state but the other way around. Indeed the nature of the regime intrinsically determined the specific content of Pahlavi nationalism. The interaction of domestic and international dynamics, especially the rising of Hitler in Germany created a more authoritarian regime and this regime adopted chauvinist nationalist discourse and practices.

Understanding the Reza Shah era, with its far-reaching consequences on the social and political realms, in the Iranian historiography is of significant importance for the subject matter of this study. Not only the reflexes of the state but also the reflexes of the oppositions were shaped in reference to this period. Although Reza Shah failed to nationalise his definition of Iraniyat, the nature of this comprehensive experience is essential for understanding the ways in which Iranian nationalism developed after the Second World War, which will be

²⁵⁴ Rudi Matthee, “Transforming Dangerous Nomads into Useful Artisans, Technicians, Agriculturists: Education in the Reza Shah Period,” *Iranian Studies* 26, no. 3 (1993): 329.

²⁵⁵ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 28.

elaborated in the following chapter of this study. Reza Shah could not create a political community identify itself with his state. As a matter of fact when he was abdicated in 1941 by Britain and the USSR, nearly no one, including military and bureaucracy which he had most invested upon, protested his abdication.

In the late 1940s and in the first three years of 1950s, Iranian nationalism took a special turn that culminated in the establishment of National Front government which was to be toppled down by one of the infamous coup d'états in the history of the 20th century. The chapter on these developments will provide us with the opportunity to weigh changing international political conditions and their interaction with changing domestic conditions and see their respective and combined effects on the course of nationalism in Iran.

CHAPTER 4

FROM ARYANISM TO NON-ALIGNED NATIONALISM

4.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies general historicity of Iranian nationalism, namely its relatedness to the broader international context during what is known as the nationalist period, and the specific causation which refers to particular historical factors at play during the era. It is the aim of this chapter to show that the trajectories of nationalism and nation state politics and the international are *overdetermined*. Michael Scriven gives the following definition of overdetermination: “Any cases of multiple causation where the causes are not mutually exclusive.”²⁵⁶ Hence, this chapter will disentangle this multiplicity of causes and also show the interconnectedness between them.

The creation of Iranian state nationalism is strictly interconnected with the formation of modern state which is itself bound up with *the international*. The shift in the ideological content of Iranian nationalisms that this chapter attempts to unravel, or the rise of an alternative nationalism which then captures the state at least for a few critical years indeed reveals on the one hand, the very linkage of nationalism with the nation state politics that rooted in the previous era of nation state building, and on the other hand, the international connection of nationalist politics. It is no coincidence that the first major nationalist overture of this period occurred in Iran under Allied invasion, facing yet another concession for oil. The nationalist intervention to great power politics was a popular one because the Iranian state nationalism, Aryanism was incapable to conversing with the public over what they deemed to be ‘Iranian problems’. Apart from the territorial

²⁵⁶ Michael Scriven, “Causes, Connection, and Conditions in History,” in *Historical Methods in the Social Sciences, Vol. II: Foundations of Historical Sociological Inquiry*, ed. John A. Hall and Joseph M. Bryant (London: Sage Publications, 2005): 371.

integrity of the state there is almost no common point between the nationalism of Reza Shah and that of the Dr. Musaddeq. This was the tension of this era and yet beyond that not only has defined politics of nationalism but Iranian politics in general at least up until the revolutionary rupture of 1979.

This period is a key example how politics of nationalism is the main node of oppositional politics in 20th century Iran and part of the explanation of the success of the revolutionary process in 1979. These explanatory tensions have their roots in the short but very complex period of intense political struggles to define where Iran should be in the world, and hence what it means to be an Iranian. These themes will be the key themes of opposition to Muhammed Reza Shah as well as in the post-revolutionary struggles over control of Iran in the period just after 1979.

The shift in the content of Iraniyat during the era unfolded in the context of a number of crisis that this chapter tries to analyse. In order to display multiple but not mutually exclusive causes of the rise of popular nationalism in Iran and its boundedness with the international, we will use two pivotal events in the period from abdication of Reza Shah and the fall of Musaddeq as the cases: the establishment of Azerbaijani and Kurdish Republics within the Iranian territory and the oil nationalization that paved the way for the rise of Musaddeq as the iconic figure of Iranian popular nationalism. These two cases, rather than being segregated, in fact complement each other and reticulate the politics of the era and hence the trajectory of Iranian nationalisms. With unravelling the meaning of these two momentums/crises in the period in terms of nationalism, we will be able to understand the very linkages between the modern state politics, nationalism and the international.

In doing so, each case will start with a subsection that explores the international and domestic environment surrounding the cases at hand. This seems necessary to for the purpose of contextualization as both the establishment of Azerbaijani and Kurdish Republics and the nationalization of oil took place in an immensely

complex international and domestic developments. The Second World War, invasion of Iran by Britain and the Soviet Union and increasing significance of oil and the intersection of these dynamics with the domestic conditions translated themselves on the cases this chapter tries to analyse.

4.2 Double Challenge: Oil and Ethnic Nationalisms

Debunking International and Domestic

The Second World War which started with the invasion of Poland by Germany involved the vast majority of world's nations including all of the great powers. In a total state of war every actor threw their economic, industrial and military capabilities in war efforts. While at the initial stages of the war main scenes were Europe and East Asia the Germany's declaration of war on the Soviet Union and Japan's attack on the United States broadened the scenes of the war. Gradually, almost every corner on earth dragged into the war and the Middle East in general and Iran in particular was among regions that felt the devastation the Second World War brought about. Hitler's eastward offensive to Stalingrad and North Africa and Nazi subversion in Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Iran and Turkey were the signs of his intention to control the southern Soviet Union, nearly the entire Mediterranean and Black Sea basins, and most of the Middle East. If this would be to happen, the Axis powers would have been in a position to dominate the Suez Canal and with it the shortest route to India. The possibility of such an extremely dangerous strategic situation obliged American, British, and Soviet leaders and military commanders to concentrate their attention on this region from an early stage of the war.

In the pre-war era, although Britain had a strong foothold, the US and the USSR had remained relatively aloof to the region in their foreign policy choices. However, the changing dynamics of the world politics made the Middle East extremely important for these two emerging superpowers. "The region lay at the junction of three continents; it bordered four major bodies of water, the

Mediterranean, the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, and the Indian Ocean; and it lay immediately to the south of the borders of Russia, Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Transcaspian.”²⁵⁷ The second aspect, besides its location on the southern flanks of the Soviet Union was its vital corridor role as a passageway for East-West transit. Third one is the increase of the importance of oil that became apparent with the World War. Before the War, The US had already signed agreement for the exploration and exploitation of oil reserves of Saudi Arabia that became the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO). Now in addition to the fleets of ships, growing fleets of trucks, tanks, and planes were dependent upon oil products. Although the USSR had its own reserves, starting from the early years of the war, it suffered a serious scare relating to their own oil supplies and facilities. With the War the importance of Iranian oil was proved once again. Iran at that stage was by far the largest oil producer in the Middle East.²⁵⁸

The two new superpowers' parallel moves regarding Middle Eastern oil, the defensive sensitivity of the Soviets regarding their own nearby domestic oil resources, and the projected targeting of the latter by United States strategic planners, were all clear signs of the dawning of a new age of competition for world dominance.²⁵⁹ “They marked an extension into the post war era of both sides' newly enhanced strategic concerns and fears regarding what is today called “energy independence,” fears born of their traumatic experiences involving threats to their own oil supplies in World War II”²⁶⁰.

The importance of oil in world economy and politics would be long lasting repercussions for Iran. Although Iran has never been colonized formally, the presence of multiple powers in the country was as acute as the colonized ones. Its massive oil reserves and its strategic location always made the country an

²⁵⁷ Khalidi, Rashid, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009): 43.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

inevitable playground for the Great Powers. For Iran the effects of the war were quite perceivable due to its proximity to the USSR and the presence of the Britain mainly via the AIOC. This even became more the case when in 1941 the USSR and Britain invaded Iran, the USSR from the north and Britain from the south echoing the 1907 Anglo-Russian Agreement that had shaped the turn of events in the beginning of the century. The Anglo Russian invasion was formalized by the Tripartite Treaty signed in 1942 and dragged Iran to the heart of the Second World War.

The aims of the Soviet Union and Britain were to turn Iran into a corridor for the shipment of military supplies to the USSR. The corridor through Iran was all the more necessary since, with the Mediterranean and Black Sea having become war zones, the Turkish Straits closed to naval vessels by Turkey under the terms of the 1936 Montreux Treaty, the Baltic controlled by the Nazis, and convoys to Soviet Arctic ports subject to constant German submarine and air attack from bases in the North Sea and Norway, Iran was indispensable as a supply route.

The rising US role in this period was also very significant. The US, with no colonial history in the Middle East, was more acceptable and thought as a balancer against the UK and USSR. Immediately after the Tripartite Treaty, the US started to establish close ties with Iran and the US officers started to take important roles. In 1943 Arthur Chester Millspaugh arrived to Tehran to re-organize finances and Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf came to organize the military forces²⁶¹.

Although the Tripartite Treaty promised “to respect the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Iran”, the results of the invasion were devastating. The first one is the power vacuum sprung upon the abdication of Reza Shah in favour of his son. Secondly, the Allies rearranged the Iranian economy through monetary policies comprising of devaluation of Iranian currency, the expansion of money supply and the extension of credit to Russia

²⁶¹ Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 108; Clawson and Rubin, *Eternal Iran*, 58.

and Britain and directed the main resources in order to meet the needs of the war including raw material, food, roads, railways and telecommunication. These led to high inflation, the prices of the goods tremendously increased. Bread shortages even in the cities and famine occurred.

The pressing problems, rising inflation, unemployment, high prices and food shortage in other words social realities of occupation were politicizing Iranian population along the way. It was not only the geopolitical competition but the actual presence of the two powers in the country left its toll on the Iranian people. Although the devastating effects of the war and invasion are obvious and imposed extra burdens on the country it also created new window of opportunities for the people. The situation after Reza Shah in the country was resonating the period before the Shah's coming to the power. In a short period of time, the country started to feel the relaxed political atmosphere in the absence of the strong monarch in the political realm. Reza Shah's rule was authoritarian and the security of the regime had been reached by almost merciless suppression of different political orientations. The fear of authority that Reza Shah had instilled in people melted away.

When one upper-class woman reprimanded her chauffeur for turning the wrong way into a one-way street, he replied, "Oh! It does not matter, now Reza Shah has gone."²⁶²

The politicization of the people and the abdication of Reza Shah led to the opening of political field. The Parliament acquired the constitutional role it had lost in the iron hands of Reza Shah. The era witnessed flourishing of newspapers, political parties, unions and social organizations. Diverse political and social groups- liberals, traditionalist, leftist, religious- suppressed earlier by the authoritarian rule started to be formed. One of the strongest leftist parties in the Middle East, Tudeh was established during these years. Apart from Tudeh, more traditionalist

²⁶² Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, 63.

National Will Party, liberal Iran Party and extreme nationalist Pan-Iranist Party were also established.²⁶³

The newly formed parties and groups had different and sometimes contradictory definitions of the concepts like independence, sovereignty and *Iraniyat*. For Tudeh independence referred to independence from capitalism not necessarily from the Soviet Union, whereas for National Will Party sovereignty meant being independent from the Soviet Union. While for Islamists *Iraniyat* found its real meaning in Islam, for liberals it meant having a European style, social democratic governance. In the political field actors challenged, debated and negotiated virtually every aspect of Iranian identity and were in intense struggle for defining political identity of Iran.

Moreover, as in the pre-Reza Shah era the political polarization of the country crystallized with strong foreign alignments: the left and the USSR, Britain and the conservatives and the Shah and the US. As a matter of fact, these alignments would condition the future political development in the country. However, they were not pure and rigid alignments. The weight of the history of Russian involvement in the Iranian affairs muddied any commitment to the USSR by the left. And alliance with Britain could not be as straightforward as it was in late 19th century. In this sense, Iran was not a typical case of a foreign power intervening and of the people resisting or cooperating. There were multiple foreign powers involved including the US. This had an impact not only on the nationalist movement and the left in the 1950s but also on the upheavals and alliances in the 1970s, that led to the Iranian Revolution of 1979:

What was perhaps most unique about Iran was this particular external context ... In most of the rest of the world this did not apply: nationalism was *either* directed primarily against the Western colonial powers, and the US, and hence sympathetic to

²⁶³ Katouzian, *Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 145-147.

the USSR or ... hostile to Russia and hence sympathetic to the West.²⁶⁴

Conjunctural Politics of the Establishment of Azerbaijani and Kurdish Republics

We have discussed the international political framework during the Second World War. However, it is the specific ways in which this framework interacted with the political framework inside Iran that gave rise to the developments central to this chapter. These developments were already conditioned by the previous interplay between the world politics, the efforts to build an Iranian nation state and the contingencies of the previous era. We will see below how the functioning of Iranian nation state and the nationalism it produced is crucially linked to the international developments and also how they will in turn have an impact on the international scene, as in the case of Azerbaijani and Kurdish Republics.

While all actors were trying to enlarge their sphere of influences according to their interests the geopolitical competition exacerbated when the Iranian government started to negotiate oil concession with the US without acknowledging the British and the Soviets. Given the increasing importance of oil, the USSR, which was already alerted by the growing American-Iranian rapprochement, demanded an oil concession. Thus, rather than balancing one power with the help of other, *muvaazanne*, Iran found itself in harder position. The response of the Iranian government to the demands of concessions was passing a bill that prohibited any oil concession with any company or person while Iran was under occupation. While the US' response to the bill was receptive, the USSR firmly denounced the bill. The Tudeh Party organized demonstrations and accused the Government of being imperialist. The USSR stopped the trade in Azerbaijan temporarily.

²⁶⁴ Halliday, "The Iranian Left in International Perspective," in *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran*, 29.

The aim of the Soviet Union was to have a permanent foothold in Iran to balance British interests through “achieving a modus vivendi based on mutually demarcated spheres of influence”²⁶⁵. After failing in achieving oil concessions it started to conduct more activist policy to preserve its position of influence. The policy include various moves ranging from the establishment of “democratic party in Southern Azerbaijan”, a “Society for Cultural Relations between Iran and the Azerbaijan SSR to strengthen cultural and propaganda work in Southern Azerbaijan” as well as the creation, in Tabriz, of a “Society of Friends of Soviet Azerbaijan”²⁶⁶. To this end the USSR refused to withdraw its troops from the country and breached the Tripartite Agreement and the Tehran Conference in which the date for the withdrawal of the forces had been established. The US Ambassador notified Washington that the aim of the USSR was not only to control Azerbaijan but also to form a pro-Soviet regime in Iran which would threaten the interests of both America and Britain. He continued that the US should take a stronger stand. According to Blake, “this memorandum shows that the Truman administration, unlike its predecessor, had a clear conception of its interests in the Middle East and saw Iran as a buffer state to its oil interests in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf region.”²⁶⁷ The message of Washington to the USSR clearly illuminates the policy of the US: “the decision of the Soviet government to retain Soviet troops in Iran beyond the period stipulated by the Tripartite Treaty has created a situation with regard to which the government of the United States, as a member of the United Nations and as a party to the declaration regarding Iran dated December 1, 1943, cannot remain indifferent.”²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ Vladimir O. Pechatnov, “The Soviet Union and the World, 1944–1953,” in *Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume 1: Origins, 1945–1962*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 93.

²⁶⁶ Decree of the Politburo of the Central Committee (CC) of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) to Mir Bagirov, CC Secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan on “Measures to Organize a Separatist Movement in Southern Azerbaijan and Other Provinces of Northern Iran,” July 6, 1945, *CWIHP Bulletin* 12/13 (Fall/Winter 2001): 311–312.

²⁶⁷ Kristen Blake, *The US–Soviet Confrontation in Iran* (MD: University Press, 2009): 31.

²⁶⁸ Kuross A. Samii, “Truman against Stalin in Iran: A Tale of Three Messages,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 23, no. 1 (1987): 98.

Thus, the US who had been avoiding direct involvement in Iran became one of the active actors in the country. The message of Truman however did not result in the Soviet withdrawal. The following months witnessed the growing Soviet activities in the north. The crisis accelerated with the establishment of the Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan and the Kurdish People's Republic in 1945.

The Republics asked for the autonomy - not the separation - and demanded land reform, the remaining amount of the large portion of tax in the region, self-government and the right to use Azerbaijani and Kurdish language in schools.

One dominant tendency in the literature is to explain the establishment of these republics on the sole ground of Soviet activities. This perception, however, tends to ignore the role of the indigenous factors and overlook the agential powers of the local actors (Azerbaijanis and Kurds) and the centre (Tehran). Obviously, without the Soviet help, it was hard to realize the establishment of the republics but on top of that it is the initial dispute between the North and the centre that made the Soviet actions meaningful. Reza Shah consolidated his rule via suppressing the mobilizations especially in the north. His centralizing policies that neglected the regional necessities, harsh measures to control the region and his definition of Iraniyet based on Aryanism alienated the people living in the region.

Another tendency, on the other hand, finds the reasons of the formation of the republics in the salience of Kurdish and Azerbaijani nationalisms as opposed to Iranian one. This account is also misleading if we pay closer attention to how the political authorities in these two republics framed their demands. They both hesitated to call for separation but autonomy. They demanded land reform, the remaining amount of the large portion of tax in the region, and the right to use Azerbaijani and Kurdish language in schools. They were not separatist but proto-nationalist.

The words of the leader of Azerbaijan Democratic Party, Sayyid Jafar Pishevari, are illuminating in this regard:

Azerbaijani's are Persians and wish to remain part of Persia but they cannot surrender the liberties which they have won with so many sacrifices.²⁶⁹

Similarly one of the leaders of the Kurdish Republic, Qazi Muhammad, said:

The Kurds would be satisfied if the central government decided really to apply democratic laws throughout Iran and recognized the laws now in force in Kurdistan.²⁷⁰

Thus, it is not the ethnic nationalism against Iranian nationalism seeking for separation that was the driving force, but achieving a more democratic governance dictated their moves. The disappointment with the Reza Shah's rule in terms of consolidating constitutionalism paved the way for the autonomy movements to be formed.

Here the puzzle is the level of analysis regarding the *role of international*. To a large extent the approaches of modernist theory of nationalism, in particular Miroslav Hroch and John Breuilly, consider the phenomenon of nationalism as a form of power politics. Much of this is applicable to the Iranian case. However, if we do not incorporate into the analysis the role of international, as tried to be done in this chapter, we cannot identify how actors obtain the resources and tools that are necessary to struggle.

Another issue is the existence of various gravities of power among the Azerbaijanis and Kurds themselves. Members of the provincial elite had reportedly left Azerbaijan for the capital at the time of the Soviet occupation and, though there were a few representatives from the middle and upper classes in the Azerbaijan Majlis, the majority were against greater provincial autonomy.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ Quoted from Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 91.

²⁷⁰ Quoted from John James Coyle, *Nationalism in Iranian Kurdistan*, unpublished PhD Dissertation, George Washington University (1993): 190.

²⁷¹ Louise Fawcett, "Revisiting Iranian Crisis," *Iranian Studies*. 47, no. 3 (2014): 393.

Referring to the ADP, one Majlis deputy claimed that “no patriotic Azerbaijani had a share in its formation.”²⁷²

Similar holds true for Kurdish Republic as well. There were competing forces, several tribes and organizations with different bases of identity. The ideal that united them, albeit shortly, under Kurdish Democratic Party against Tehran was the hope that KDP’s goal was an American democracy. The manifesto declared by the prominent Kurdish leader reveals the quest for democracy among Kurds: “Take advantage of the liberation of the world from Fascism and to share in the promises of Atlantic charter.”²⁷³

Single factor explanations, Soviet interventions or salience of ethnic nationalism, cannot qualify in piecing together the different layers of this story into a more comprehensive and integrated account. The story behind the formation of these republics lies both at nation state formation in Iran, as modernist school of nationalism contends and at different developments took place at domestic, regional and international, that confluence at one moment of Iranian history. The authoritarianism of Reza Shah’s regime, its contentious relations with the tribes, securitization of the state to the detriment of the democratic and constitutional rights of the Iranian people conjoined with the strategies of the Soviet Union in the dynamic climate of international politics and co-determined the political milieu in Iran.

Different than the south, however, the proximity to the USSR gave material opportunity and ideational impetus to the political circles of the region. So, when the central authority destroyed and the new international setting gave the necessary resources the actors for struggle, they could mobilize and were able to establish the two Republics. As McFarland claims “local unrest in Soviet occupied Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, encouraged but not created by the

²⁷² Ibid., 393.

²⁷³ Quoted from John James Coyle, *Nationalism in Iranian Kurdistan*, 176.

Soviets.”²⁷⁴ When the Soviet Union lost its appetite for Azerbaijani *oblast* after securing the oil agreement with Qavam- Stalin accepted to withdraw his troops in return of the establishment of joint Irano-Soviet Oil Company and agreed to withdraw its troops from the province. However, with the strong backing of the US, the new Majlis rejected to ratify the agreement. The Iranian government entered and suppressed the autonomy movement brutally in 1946.

Although the republics could not live long, they served as a reminder of the potentialities of alternative nationalisms especially if they were exploited in the hands of foreign powers. As a matter of fact discourse of nationalism dominated political rhetoric of the parties of the disputes. While the Soviet Union was making its point via representing itself as the saviour of Azerbaijani identity, the US was referring to the sovereignty and national interest of Iran. As in the words of Iranian Ambassador George Allen,

The United States has no proper concern with proposals of a commercial or any other nature made to Iran by any foreign government as long as those proposals are advanced solely on their merits, to stand or fall on their value to Iran. We and every other nation of the world, however, do become concerned when such proposals are accompanied by threats of bitter enmity or by a statement that it would be dangerous for Iran to refuse.... Patriotic Iranians, when considering matters affecting their national interest, may therefore rest assured that the American people will support fully their freedom to make their own choice.”²⁷⁵

Tehran, on the other hand, concerned about the territorial integrity of the country and tried to acquire its sovereignty by bringing the crisis to the attention of international public via diplomatic negotiations. The radical nationalists were producing counter discourse by arguing that Turkish was “simply a tongue left

²⁷⁴ Stephen MacFarland, “The Iranian Crisis of 1946 and the onset of the Cold War,” in *Origins of Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and David S. Painter (New York: Routledge: 1994) 247.

²⁷⁵ Gary Hess, “The Iranian Crisis of 1945-46 and the Cold War,” *Political Science Quarterly* 89, no. 1 (1974): 145.

behind by the Mongol and Tatar invaders”²⁷⁶. Kurds and Azerbaijanis on the other hand did not see their ethnic identity as contradictory to their *Iraniyat*.

4.3 The Combination of International and National: The Rise of Musaddeq

As they [political actors] contested, compete with and confronted each other they also related each other, not in one battle, but in several different battles and each battle with a contingent political frontier of contestation.²⁷⁷

Debunking International and Domestic

The end of Second World War brought profound changes in the international state system, bringing about a massive redistribution of power, ending centuries of European dominance and influencing the evolution of the Cold War.²⁷⁸ During the war and in the following years, the influence of the US increased in various domains and it replaced centuries-old power of traditional western countries. The British government was trying to restore their position in world politics and the USSR, despite the harms inflicted by the War was strong in the Eastern Europe. After the war, France was forced to grant independence to Lebanon and Syria and faced challenges in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. The position of Britain was also challenged by the military revolt in 1941 in Iraq, resistance from the Egyptian government in 1940s and in Palestine by both Arabs and Jews. After the war, the Japanese lost their extensive holdings in Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria; the British ceded independence to India, Burma, and Ceylon. Mao Zedung declared the establishment of People’s Republic of China in 1949.

²⁷⁶ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 218.

²⁷⁷ Sharifii, *Imagining Iran*, 110.

²⁷⁸ Melvyn P. Leffler and David S. Painter, *Origins of Cold War*, 3.

The strategic importance of the Middle East coming to the fore during the Second World War was further established with the onset of the Cold War. As a matter of fact the first crisis of the Cold War occurred when the autonomous Azerbaijani and Kurdish republics were established with strong backing of the Soviet Union and then the reluctance of Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from northern Iran. The aggressive moves of the Soviet Union were not only motivated by oil but also by a desire to push its defensive perimeter as far south as possible.²⁷⁹

The reason of deep concern in Washington and London, on the other hand, was not confined to the importance of Iran in terms of its strategic position and oil resources. These moves of the USSR were instigate the fear that these Soviet moves might be part of an aggressive post war pattern.

The strengthening of US position in the Near East and the establishment of conditions for basing the American navy at one or more points on the Mediterranean Sea (Trieste, Palestine, Greece, Turkey) will therefore signify the emergence of a new threat to the security of the southern regions of the Soviet Union.²⁸⁰

The United States had “almost doubled its GNP during the conflict: by 1945 it accounted for around half of the world’s manufacturing capacity, most of its food surpluses, and almost all of its financial reserves.”²⁸¹ Militarily, it emerged as the most powerful global power at the end of WWII.

While the Soviet Union perceived more assertive policy of the US on the Middle East as a threat to its security of its southern flanks as well as a sign of the American intention of being a world hegemon, the US interpreted the aggressive moves of the Soviet Union unfolding with the Iranian crisis as rival to their increasing power in the world. Hence from the onset of the War the US and the

²⁷⁹ Kristen Blake, *The US-Soviet Confrontation*, 27.

²⁸⁰ Khalidi, *Sowing the Crisis*, 67.

²⁸¹ Leffler and Painter, *Origins of Cold War*, 3.

Soviet Union actively involved in the world affairs and their rivalry started to reshape the politics of all the corners of the earth.

However, the Cold War was different from the previous global struggles with its highly ideological tapestry. For the US policy makers, with its increasing power it was the US responsibility to prevent another catastrophe like the Second World War. Moreover, since it was concerned about developments that were taking place in East Asia- in 1949, Mao Zedong and the communists had taken over China and the Soviets and the Chinese were supporting North Korea in its quest to take over South Korea- the US strive to contain “international communism”.

Hence the US adopted a series of policies aiming to constitute a chain of military alliances around the Soviet periphery through the Truman Doctrine announced in 1947 and later the establishment of NATO in 1949. With the Truman doctrine the US concretely showed its intention of being a global power and the significance of the Middle East in pursuing this intention. It was also “one of the first major landmarks of the Cold War”.²⁸² It also actively support the Treaty of Brussels signed by Western European states with the aim of establishing collective defence upon the fall of Czechoslovakia to the communists and the imposition of the Berlin blockade by the Soviets in 1948.²⁸³

The positioning of world politics in two blocs reflected on the politics of Iran as well. While the power of the left was growing with strong backing of the Soviet Union, Britain was invigorating its foothold through mobilizing some tribal leaders in the south against Tudeh and the US was on the way to strengthen its relationship with the young Shah to counter the menace of communism.

²⁸² Khalidi, *Sowing the Crisis*, 41.

²⁸³ Kathleen Britt Rasmussen, “Great Britain and American Hegemony”, in *Companion to Harry S. Truman* ed. Daniel S. Margolies (West Sussex Blackwell, 2012): 305; Kristen Blake, *The US-Soviet Confrontation*, 26.

‘The game in town’ was not different from the earlier periods in which all actors accused each other of being a puppet of foreign powers. “Few Iranians believed in the intellectual autonomy and integrity of activists, or accepted that genuine left or right-wing leanings could exist independently of links with the Soviet or British embassies.”²⁸⁴

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the tendency to explain the political orientation and choices of the actors on the bases of international politics was an idea that was largely shared by the Iranians themselves. However, the rift in the society was not something imposed on the Iranian actors but “expressed something very real, the depth of the tensions within that society and between Iran and the outside world.”²⁸⁵

The bitter experience of the war and the formation of two autonomous republics showed that the country was weak and vulnerable to the Soviet and the British influence. The national struggles elsewhere²⁸⁶, the realities of overwhelming foreign domination and the economic hardship in the country combined and politicised Iranians even further. This time different from the pre-Reza Shah era, political consciousness was more mature because Iranian people had experienced an immense modernization program under the rule of Reza Shah as the nation state was taking its roots in the country. The urbanization, industrialization, the formation of new classes or groups such as modern bourgeoisie and the augmentation of middle classes with the creation of bureaucracy, the growing intelligentsia, and the increasing number of industrial workers, the indicators of the rise of modern nation state, all went into the texture of the country.

²⁸⁴ Azimi, *The Quest for Democracy in Iran*, 135.

²⁸⁵ Halliday, “The Iranian Left in International Perspective,” in *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran*, 34.

²⁸⁶ See Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations*; Hourani, *A History of Arab People*, 353-365; John Lewis Gaddis, *Soğuk Savaş* (Istanbul: YKY, 2007): 40-44.

The rule of Reza Shah, on the one hand, constrained the political space with its authoritarian nature but on the other hand, provided people with modern tools of politics. The developments in the country after the Second World War had proved that the existence of a strong securitized state is not enough to protect the country from occupation and menace of disintegration. However, the young Shah was following his father's footsteps. After securing the Northern provinces he attempted to re-institutionalize the monarchy. When the country was in dire need of social and political reforms, he, by exploiting an assassination attempt to his life in 1949, began to silence his opponents. Soon after, in order to enhance his powers he succeeded to amend the Constitution, gained the right to dissolve the parliament and embarked on a programme to improve and control the military apparatus with the aid receiving from the US.

Conjunctural Politics of the Rise of Musaddeq

The rise of Musaddeq as one the most influential political figure in the Iranian history started with the oil politics. During the negotiations for oil concession demanded by the Soviet Union, he firmly rejected the idea and said that "giving such a concession is like asking a one handed person to cut off his remaining hand so that he can have balance."²⁸⁷ Although the first battle of the Cold War was won in Iran by the US and Britain, this did not prevent the Soviet Union from furthering its demands from Iran. It repeatedly asked for oil concession and oil exploration rights. However, the Iranian government refused all the proposals and rebuffed the Soviet government. Britain, on the other hand, continued its presence in the oil industry through AIOC.

The existence of oil in Iran was at the heart of Iranian society that affects various layers with different levels. It renders the country vulnerable to all kinds of foreign intervention that inhibits the state to exercise its sovereignty and to adopt an independent policy both in economic and political realms. Moreover, the

²⁸⁷ Siavoshi, *Liberal Nationalism in Iran*, 55.

results of foreign intervention could reach a point that put the territorial integrity in danger as became apparent with the establishment of two autonomous republics of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan.

For Iranians, the existence of oil in the country and its exploitation by AIOC was not only a matter of high politics that remains aloof from the people and that merely involves the Iranian and British governments. The social repercussions of the existence of oil were at the centre of the everyday lives of Iranians. The severe conditions in the oil fields in Abadan was the epitome of the inequality Iranians felt and experienced everyday vis-à-vis the Westerns. Farmanfarma wrote,

wages were fifty cents a day. There was no vacation pay, no sick leave, no disability compensation. The workers lived in a shantytown called Kaghazabad, or Paper City, without running water or electricity, let alone such luxuries as iceboxes or fans... In the British section of Abadan there were lawns, rose beds, tennis courts, swimming pools and club.²⁸⁸

In contrast to British employees, the conditions were severe for the Iranians. In the words of an Israeli working in Abadan for months:

The Iranians there were the poorest creatures on earth... They lived during the seven months of the year under the trees. In the winter these masses moved into big halls built by the company, housing up to 3000-4000 people without wall or partition between them. Each family occupied the space of one blanket. There are no lavatories...²⁸⁹

Hence, the existence of oil created the feeling of inequality and resentment against western powers. The fact that Musaddiq voiced his objections fervently against the oil concessions that would be given to any foreign power caught Iranian people from various angles.

²⁸⁸ Manucher Farmanfarmaian and Roxane Farmanfarmaian, *Blood and Oil: inside the Shah's Iran* (New York: Modern Library, 1999): 52.

²⁸⁹ Kenneth Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America* (New York: Random House, 2004): 52.

The feelings of inequality and resentment deepen even more due to the actual presence of foreign powers during the war. Economic dislocation, hunger and even famine, rising inflation, fuelled further the perceived cultural differences and disparities between the West and Iranians. For instance French films and American gangster movies, which started to dominate Iranian cinema screens were perceived as dangerous to traditional Iranian values and encouraged the growth of a distinctive national consciousness.²⁹⁰

Hence, when the general strike erupted in 1946 in Abadan, the Iranian population was sympathetic to it in part because of the British dislike and in part because they know the conditions of the Iranian workers working in the oil fields.

The Majles demanded to increase the Iranian share of oil profits. Iran was given only 16 to 20 percent of its annual profits according to the 1933 oil concession.²⁹¹ The existing resentment towards the company, war experiences and the situation of the Iranians working in the oil fields combined and the oil issue started to dominate the political agenda of the country. The increasing pressure of the Majles and the politicised situation in Abadan forced the British government to revise the agreement. When they made a new offer which would be called as Supplemental Agreement, the Prime Minister invited them to negotiate the new deal but Britain did not accept negotiation. This attitude increased the tension and most of the deputies denounced the agreement.

In such an atmosphere Muhammed Musaddeq formed the National Front with loose unification of various segments of the society ranging from liberals, conservatives and Islamic modernizers. The Front's main objective was to oppose foreign domination and autocratic rule and defend the constitution, political self-determination, and political freedom. In the next elections in 1950 seven members of the National Front were elected to the Parliament and the Prime

²⁹⁰ Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 98.

²⁹¹ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 144.

Minister changed. The new Prime Minister Haji-Ali Razmara, again offered the British to revise the Agreement but London declined the offer. The attitude of the British government enabled the Front to expand its base. Now, the religious groups and the leftists who have been critical to the Tudeh's position joined the Front. In his terms in the Majles, Musaddeq brought the idea of oil nationalization arguing that it was the independence at stake due to the British control over the oil industry.

The news came from Saudi Arabia dropped like a bombshell to the country. The American- Saudi Arabian oil company, ARAMCO, had made a new deal with the Saudis which would give them the half of the company's profits (50/50 share of royalty). The news encouraged the opposition and in the following days huge demonstrations took place to nationalize the AIOC. In the demonstrations mullahs as well as secularists took leading roles. When the British revised the offer and came up with the new deal that would share the profits evenly, Iranian Ambassador replied, "a fifty-fifty arrangement might have been accepted a little while ago, but now something more would be required."²⁹² In 1951, the Majles passed the bill that nationalized the Iranian oil. The constraints that the very loaded oil issue imposed on Iran also provided a window of opportunity for Musaddeq to form a political community:

Sometimes great opportunities arise for nations which, if exploited intelligently, will change the course of history to their advantage and will end centuries of privation, misery and despair.²⁹³

During this intense process of oil nationalization and the immediate aftermath Musaddeq constantly use the words like national interest, sovereignty, and independence. He formulated a discourse standing on *three legs*: *First* one is the framing of the process of oil nationalization as a "war of independence". He

²⁹² Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, 79.

²⁹³ Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 31.

presented the political choices that were made by him and his entourage as a holy war. Thus he created a way to escape from criticisms especially arose when his politics antagonized different social groups. “The appeal to national identity provided a basis on which their criticisms and eventual opposition could be justified.”²⁹⁴

Tom Nairn in his study of Scottish nationalism argues that nationalism serves as a mechanism of struggle of the periphery, “nationalism is in one sense only the label for the general unfolding of this vast struggle, since the end of the 18th century.”²⁹⁵ What Musaddeq succeeded was exactly the one Nairn described. For Musaddeq the oil nationalization was the struggle for independence against the imperialist patron.

Until the emergence of national movement, they [British] thought we exist only for being humiliated and exploited by the looters , now the nation is united ... we are the symbol of national resistance against the world imperialism.²⁹⁶

This is needless to say, the world has witnessed that, the national resurrection and the national achievement has been founded by no one but the nation itself. This is the immense strength of the nation that despite being empty handed and despite being subjugated by imperialism for 150 years; we managed to bring an end to the exploitations by the old thieves.²⁹⁷

Anyone who aims to belittle the holy struggle of our nation by assessing the achievements of the Iranian movement in economic terms and by comparing the independence of our country with a few million pounds has undoubtedly perpetrated by blunder.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁴ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 230.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 97.

²⁹⁶ The Mossadegh Project, [online] Available at: <http://www.mohammadmossadegh.com/biography/> [Last Accessed on 18 October 2015].

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 31.

Secondly he located this war of independence into the wider politics of imperialism and colonialism.

No nation has succeeded in shaking off foreign yoke without struggle, as can be testified by ancient and modern histories of nations and freedom movements... Our movement served as an aspiration to national risings of other peoples, and today peoples of north and south Africa anxiously await our success.²⁹⁹

Yes, my sin- my greater sin and even my greatest sin is that I nationalized Iran's oil industry and discarded the system of political and economic exploitation by the world's greatest empire... with God's blessing and the will of people, I fought this savage and dreadful system of international espionage and colonialism... I am aware that my fate must be an example throughout the Middle East in breaking chains of slavery and servitude to colonial interest."³⁰⁰

In the 1950s the Iranian national identity was based on the distinction between us and them as Reza Shah did and indeed, as all nationalisms do. The difference was that in the discourse of Musaddeq, the benchmark of *us* was the 'humiliated and exploited Iranian nation' irrespective of ethnic, sectarian and tribal differences not the Aryans. *Them*, on the other hand, referred to the imperialists.³⁰¹ This discourse was more unitary and civic than the Reza Shah's one because it did not include racist elements but conceptualized the Iranian nation as people living in Iran. The enemy which was responsible for the bad situation was the imperial other, not the Arabs or Turks as the conventional nationalist history argues³⁰².

²⁹⁹ Ibid, 31.

³⁰⁰ Mohammad Musaddeq and Homa Katouzian, *Mosaddeq's Memoirs* (London: JEBHE, 1988): 428.

³⁰¹ See Afshin Shahi, "Iranian Nationalism: A Theoretical Dilemma," 2009. <http://www.e-ir.info/?p=605>.

³⁰² In conventional nationalist history the Turks and the Arabs were portrayed as 'the yellow and green hazards'. The Arabs were seen 'as savage Muslims, they are looting, abusing and massacring the 'civilized' Zoroastrian population of the ancient Iran.' Also, it was claimed that the Arab invasion in seventh century was among the causes of backwardness of contemporary Iran. The following quotation illustrates the attitude of the conventional nationalist history well: "Europeans resemble neither barefoot, hungry and nomad Arabs, nor bloodthirsty and drunken

Musaddeq's location of Iran's war of independence on the wider debates of decolonization redefined the counters of Iraniyat not vis-à-vis Arabs and Turks but vis-à-vis the imperial other. As much as this meant a feeling of solidarity built up with the rest of the colonized world and made Iranians feel not alone in their fight; by presenting Iran as an inspiration or an example in front of the colonized world fuelled romanticised, Great Nation perception of Iranians.

Thirdly, Musaddeq linked the monarchy directly with the imperialism. If the external other was the imperial powers, the monarch, as the internal other was their cohort. He continually said that “the Shah should reign not rule” and in his speeches he underlined the corrupted nature of Shah's rule and pointed out the regime as the main enemy in front of national emancipation.

The fundamental cause of our country's misery is the existence of two distinct classes. One is a social burden, living in lust, corruption, and waste. The other has been ground down by hunger, oppression, and exploitation. If we do not remedy this dismal situation, history will inevitably catch up with us and destroy our country. History teaches us that oppression, exploitation, and injustice destroys states, nations, and empires.³⁰³

He did not hesitate to directly target Muhammed Reza Shah. When his demands of getting control of the army and military were refused by the Shah, he resigned and gave the following speech to the public.

In the course of recent events, I have come to the realization that I need a trustworthy war minister to continue my national mission. Since His Majesty has refused my request, I will resign and permit someone who enjoys royal confidence to form new government and implement His Majesty's policies. In the present situation the struggle started by the Iranian people cannot be brought to a victorious conclusion.³⁰⁴

Turks and Mongols who come off their horses and rest a while after their incursions and massacres and are amazed by our carpet motifs and garden festivals.”

³⁰³ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 271.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 270.

With this three legged discourse he redefined the meaning attached to Iraniyat and managed to wrap fragmented definitions of Iraniyat up in one canvas. The ideological content of this nationalism, on the other hand, was very different than the Reza Shah's. Musaddeq did not refer to the great Persian history rather he used the vocabulary of anti-imperialism.

This ideological shift in the content of nationalism was part of a wider pattern of nationalism in the Third World which appeared during the era of decolonization. The discourse of nationalist politics that incorporated anti-imperialism could mobilize broader segments of the society in the face of overwhelming foreign domination.

John Breuilly identifies three functions that a nationalist ideology plays: Coordination, mobilization and legitimacy. "Coordination is required where a heterogeneous set of political elites seek to act in common to challenge the state".³⁰⁵ Mobilization is necessary to generate the support from the masses because an opposition that is confined to the existing political community cannot succeed. Finally, legitimacy means "the use of nationalist ideas to justify the goals of the political movement both to the state it opposes and also to powerful external agents, such as foreign states and their public opinion".³⁰⁶ The formation of the National Front showed the strength of nationalist politics for mobilization, coordination and legitimacy. The shift in the ideological content of nationalism during the 1950s indeed speaks volumes for nationalist politics in general.

Modernity condemns everyone to having a national identity, but it also constantly shifts the terms and context of such a definition. The most important factor is politics:

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 382.

³⁰⁶ Breuilly, 1996, "Approaches to Nationalism," in *Mapping the Nation*, 167.

political movements and states shift their definitions and combination of elements as they see fit.³⁰⁷

The nationalist discourse of Musaddeq which was symbolized by the issue of oil could coordinate and mobilize people and in turn provided legitimacy to him. If in the early 1920's Reza Shah could address the needs of people, by referring the need of creating a strong state, in the 1950s Musaddeq's politics addressed the needs of the people at that time. By making references to themes such as anti-imperialism, by defining nation as the only source of power who could end the long-lasting foreign humiliation, Musaddeq could make a connection between nationalism and emancipation in the eyes of Iranians.

Moreover, with his policy of negative equilibrium, he could escaped from the accusations of being a pawn of any foreign power. He managed to constitute himself as a non-aligned, authentic, genuine patriot whose sole aim is to defend the interest of his nation.

The themes of the rule of people but not the Shah, national dignity, and sovereignty were in the political lexicon since the Constitutional Revolution. These hopes helped Reza Shah when coming to the power but remained unanswered during his realm. It is important to note that Musaddeq appealed to these themes when there were foreign troops in the country, when the economic hardship created burdens on the life of Iranians, when there were crucial differences between the living standards of the Iranians and foreigners. Therefore, not the content of Pahlavi nationalism but the content of Musaddeq's nationalism provided the conceptual map so that Iranian people could "relate their particular material and moral interests to a broader terrain of actions."³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ Halliday, *Nation and Religion in the Middle East*, 48.

³⁰⁸ Breuille, *Nationalism and the State*, 13.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter endeavoured to analyse the decade after the abdication of Reza Shah with the help of two cases in order to provide an account of the development of Iranian nationalism. As stated at the onset of this chapter, the evolution of Iranian state nationalism overdetermined by the interaction of domestic and international politics. The aim here was to understand how the specific interaction between the international and the domestic contexts and the Iranian nation state that was born out of this interaction effected the developments thereafter.

Here three important observations can be made: the first one is linked to the nationalism studies. As the Iranian case proved, there is nothing fundamental in the definition of nationalism. It is not the language, great history or race but the very necessities of modern politics that define the content of nationalism. The content of nationalism is subject to change and this change is shaped and reshaped by the very conditions of the politics, domestic and international, in its totality.

The social realities of Second World War and its repercussions for Iran, the nature of the regime created by Reza Shah and his abdication, the increasing importance of oil for the great powers, changing balance and paradigm of international politics, decolonization process conjoined and deeply affect the politics and society and hence the content of nationalism in Iran. In the face of these developments Iranian actors strove to redefine and negotiate the meaning of Iraniyat. Sitting on this conjuncture Musaddeq created a conception of Iranianness based on anti-imperialism, anti-Shah and pro-Iranian people. Highly politicized people of Iran experiencing the same conjunctural politics embraced this Iraniyat. As opposed to Reza Shah's nationalism, Musaddeq succeeded to nationalize its conception and could build a political community that gave him legitimacy and resources to nationalize Iranian oil.

The similar conclusions can be drawn for the establishment of two autonomous republic under the name of ethnic nationalism. They were a representation of the

tensions inherited in the modern nation state building process in Iran. When the geographical proximity to the Soviet Union, the Soviet interest combined with these tensions such as, the denial of constitutional rights by the regime, and the demands of reform which was barely unique to the region, they used the identity card as a way of voicing their grievances against the centre. However, this local patriotism could not yet be described as a proto-nationalist movement which proved insufficient when the centre intervened.

Secondly, Iranian people were not mere recipients but amongst the agents that created the development occurred in Iran. Both in the Second World War and the Cold War they played active roles as in the case of the establishment of two republics or oil nationalization. They exploited the gulf both between the interests of great powers and in the society itself.

Thirdly, as much as the international constrained and imposed itself on the Iranian actors, it provided material and ideational resources for mobilization. With the tools the HSIR offers us, this chapter traced the decisive role of the combination of international and domestic factors in the formation of a national movement and in the changing tone and vocabulary of Iranian nationalism. Thus, we could escape the ‘methodological nationalism’³⁰⁹, furthermore the ‘methodological internationalism’³¹⁰ Neither the domestic as the former claims, nor the international as the latter argues, but a combination of the both determined the evolution of Iranian nationalism just like it determined its emergence.

³⁰⁹ Halliday, “For an International Sociology,” in *Historical Sociology of International Relations*, 247.

³¹⁰As Halliday insists on the need to dispense with methodological nationalism, Hobson adds the methodological internationalism as well, by which he means the tendency to explain all the social phenomena by international factors. Hobson, *Historical Sociology of International Relations*, 271-278.

CHAPTER 5

FROM NON-ALIGNED POPULAR NATIONALISM TO ROYALISTIC NATIONALISM

5.1 Introduction

The history of any nationalism is at once national and international, so changing nature of the international system should be scrutinized as much as Iran's domestic developments in order to understand the Iranian national identity framed by Muhammed Reza Shah. As asserted in the previous chapter the politics of nation state and intrinsically related content of nationalism was not free floating but developed in the global and regional political and strategic context. The context of the Cold War helped shape the political, economic and social conditions of other nations. "The interconnected tapestry of domestic histories and international history is one of the most salient features of the Cold War era."³¹¹

This interconnected tapestry would be the main axis on which the Shah built up his definition of Iranianness. During his term, he strived to deconstruct the content of Iranian nationalism articulated with the leadership of Musaddeq and to give a new meaning to Iranian nationalism that justifies the rapid development at the expense of democratic governance. The Shah equated the institution of monarchy with himself and represented this regime as the agent of a national desire defined in terms of economic and military development. As in other modernizing countries, however, he had to confront the tension between national identity, authenticity and creating a strong state. At this point he consecrated his authority by rewriting the Acheamenid past in which the role of the Shah comes to the fore.

³¹¹ Leffler and Painter, *Origins of Cold War*, 2.

Roger Brubaker asserts that nations should be conceived not as a tool of analysis but as an object of analysis; not as fact but as claim. “Nations are constituted by the claims themselves to change the world, to change the way people see themselves, to mobilize loyalties, kindle energies and articulate demands.”³¹² The object of analysis of this chapter will be the discourse of Iranian nationalism reframed by Muhammed Reza Shah and the main tool of our analysis will be the claims of the Shah that will be found in his memoirs, interviews or statements. However, it is not used to describe a world that exists independently of the language used to describe it. The language of the Shah was not something fixed or readymade but formed in the process of interplay of domestic and international domains. So, in addition to the claims of the Shah, this chapter will explore *the world* that conditioned the claims of the Shah by paying attention to the fact that neither the claims nor the world was static but in flux.

In order to understand the formation of Iranianness on the part of the Shah, we will use three processes through which the Shah formed the Iranian state nationalism. These three cases will help us to crystallize the interconnectedness of the discourse of Iranian nationalism with the modern state politics and the international. They also display the in-flux nature of nationalism by showing how the Shah’s definition of nationalism had evolved in time.

The first of three cases is the toppling down of Musaddeq that prepared the ground for the reign of the Shah. These years witnessed increasing US-Iranian rapprochement and fuelled the perception that the Shah was merely a client of the US, a perception that undermined the Shah’s legitimacy to a great extent, a perception he strived to refute. The second case is the White Revolution that put into practice due to regional and international dynamics but eventually became the main fabric upon which the Shah weaved his nationalism. Finally the last case is the rising regional power status of Iran. This process that started with the withdrawal of Britain from Suez Canal first and reached its peak with the

³¹² Roger Brubaker, “In the Name of the Nation: Reflections on Nationalism and Patriotism,” *Citizenship Studies* 8, no. 2 (2004): 116.

announcement of withdrawal decision of Britain from the Persian Gulf. This process can be read as an example of the increasing confidence of the regime and the claims of the Shah of being a superpower that would be a model for the world.

Through these three processes Muhammed Reza Shah redefined the identity of Iran and its place in the world. With the new meaning attached to Iran and Iranianness he did not only search for legitimacy on the domestic level but also on the international level. This chapter will trace the Shah's search of legitimacy and the content of nationalism he redefined on the both levels.

5.2 Musaddeq, Muhammed Reza Shah and International

Debunking International

The world in 1950s and afterwards witnessed the acceleration of Cold War politics and positioning of countries one after another along the two rival blocs that dominates the world system. The triumph of Mao Zedong in China and the revival of Communist parties in many Third World countries as well as in Europe, and the invasion by North Korea of its southern neighbour, the strength of communism in Greece and Czechoslovakia were the signals of the perceived strength of the Soviet Union. Moreover, they showed that the USSR's focus was not limited to Europe but included the areas where the turbulent political environment provided a unique opportunity for the advancement of Russian objectives.

The Middle East was among the regions in which the corollary of this rivalry had far-reaching consequences. In the 1950s, the Middle East saw a unique interplay among policies, commitments, and conflicts, including American Cold War strategies, local pressures for self-determination, Soviet plans for expansion, the remnants of British colonialism and the apparently intractable Arab-Israeli

conflict.³¹³ In the previous chapter the significant importance of the region – strategic location and the rising importance of oil in the world economy- for the US and the USSR was discussed.

In 1956, Middle East oil accounted for almost one-half of the free world's (excluding American) requirements. The ready availability of relatively cheap oil from the Middle East was vital to the economic wellbeing of the NATO powers. Any denial of that oil to the West would cause severe economic and social dislocations.³¹⁴

The new administration in the US gave way to a new foreign policy under the Eisenhower administration. Eisenhower sought to incorporate the Middle East in its global alliance network through economic and military assistance and use of armed forces to protect Middle Eastern nations against communism with the Eisenhower Doctrine. In 1955 the Baghdad Pact, became the political expression and provided the institutional framework for the new strategy. However after the overthrow of monarchy in 1958 in Iraq, the pact became CENTO with the membership of Iran, Turkey, Pakistan and Britain. One of the factors that went into the foreign policy choice of the US was the changing administration in the USSR. With the death of Stalin, the USSR shifted its policy of aggression as exemplified in the Iranian crisis of 1946 away to a more moderate orientation especially towards Afro-Asian states. With the Khrushchev coming to power two years later, it endeavoured to establish relations through supporting nationalist movements in the region, trade and military assistance agreements to preserve its southern flank and to contain the US and its allies.

At the regional level, these years saw the Free Officer's revolution in Egypt, rise of Nasser as a regional leader, the increasing strength of Arab nationalism, nationalization of Suez Canal, the establishment of United Arab Republic by

³¹³ Michael J. Cohen, *Strategy and Politics in the Middle East 1954-1960: Defending the Northern Tier* (New York: Routledge, 2004): 215.

³¹⁴ April R. Summitt, "For a White Revolution: John F. Kennedy and the Shah of Iran," *Middle East Journal* 58, no. 4 (2004): 567.

Egypt and Syria and the toppling down of monarchy in Iraq. Even if these events were conceived of as the examples of the strength of the Soviet Union by the West, - that is how the US perceived as it read everything that happened in the region from the prism of the CW- the US and Britain were trying hard to protect their position in the region. In 1958 under the framework of Eisenhower Doctrine the US deployed its forces in Lebanon and Britain in Jordan to protect the regimes against communism.

Debunking Domestic

The broad coalition formed under the leadership of Musaddeq started to fall apart when economic hardships and Musaddeq's own ideas about Iran forced him to take unpopular measures especially for the upper classes. Without the oil revenues, and foreign aid the Iranian economy faced a deep crisis in the 1950s. The main challenge was to deal with the budget deficit, to stop the balance of payment from deteriorating. A number of measures were taken in this respect. The first measure was to increase non-oil exports while decreasing the imports. The imports decreased through import quotas and the increase in customs duties. But a more important factor was the depreciation of the currency. The revenues were increased through higher taxes, which made the upper classes uncomfortable.³¹⁵ The increase in non-oil exports was also partly due to the depreciation of the rial. "As a result, Iran even managed to accumulate a trade surplus on its non-oil trade account, which, in the second and last year of Musaddeq's premiership, even became substantial."³¹⁶

To increase the revenues, Musaddeq increased taxes, yet to collect them was another difficulty that the government faced. He created commissions to collect

³¹⁵ Patrick Clawson and Cyrus Sassanpour, "Adjustment to a Foreign Exchange Shock: Iran 1951-1953", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (1987): 1; Homa Katouzian, "Oil Boycott and the Political Economy," in Musaddiq, *Iranian Nationalism and Oil*, ed. James A. Bill and WM. Roger Louis (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1988): 213.

³¹⁶ Katouzian, *the Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 184.

the tax debts. However, these measures of Musaddeq government were opposed by the upper classes and the landed elite. They also antagonized the bazaaris “and contributed to the decline in the bazaar’s support for Musaddeq.”³¹⁷ The cordial relationship between Musaddeq and the ulema during the oil nationalization began to break after his assumption to the office. The refusal of Musaddeq to employ the Shari’a laws and the fear of secular republicanism made the ulema one of the fiercest opponents of his regime.

His policies did not only antagonize different segments of the Iranian society but also Britain. To the British, the Iranian oil was of crucial importance for the British economy. The nationalisation of oil was perceived as an insult and Britain appealed to the UN to solve the problem but could not be successful. As a result, Britain withdrew its employees from the company and imposed an extensive oil boycott, which reduced the oil revenues of the Iranian government to nearly zero. The oil boycott indeed inspired Musaddeq to develop non-oil economy. In addition to these measures, Britain used various tactics to mobilize opposition to the new Prime Minister such as bribery of deputies, journalists and manipulating religious circles by emphasising secular reforms.

The US was cautious to the developments in Iran and Washington was searching for solutions to settle the crisis. When Britain threatened Iran with invasion, to Washington, such an invasion “might split the free world, would produce a chaotic situation in Iran, and might cause the Iranian Government to turn to the Soviet Union for help.”³¹⁸ On the other hand, the Iranian movement could be model for other countries such as Venezuela and Saudi Arabia whose oil was crucial for the US. Thus, the US was also involved in the British oil boycott and made Iran more vulnerable and yet opposed to a military intervention by Britain.. Eventually, in 1953 Musaddeq would be overthrown with a series of events that start to unfold with the coup attempt organized by the US and Britain. However,

³¹⁷ Moaddel, *Class, Politics and Ideology in Iranian Revolution*, 49.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

as Halliday noted, “Imperialism can promote coups, and regime change, but only where there is significant support for this”³¹⁹ and this support was available in the Iranian case. As mentioned above the tactical alliance between the different segments of the Front had started to break down due to political and economic policies of Musaddeq. Darioush Bayandor argues that the overthrow of Musaddeq on 19 August had essentially an indigenous character and resulted from Iran’s internal dynamics.³²⁰ The right wing opposition to Musaddeq, including right wing politicians, clerical establishment and army officials, was consolidated before the coup attempt. Military and civilian crowds gathered on 19 August after the Shah left the country brought about the downfall of Musaddeq.

Conjuncture of the International and Domestic: Consolidation of Power and Second Modernization

The confluence of the international and domestic shaped the politics of Muhammed Reza Shah and his definition of Iranian nationalism to a great extent. Given the fresh memories of Musaddeq era, the Shah embarked on an intensive programme of creating a strong state without jeopardizing his monarchical position in the country.

If Musaddeq followed the footsteps of Constitutional Revolution to restore the mandate of people through constitutionalism against one man rule, Muhammed Reza Shah would follow the footsteps of his father in building a strong state albeit in very different international and domestic conditions.

When he took office, the Soviets were leading the space race and Americans feared they also led the missile race. Fidel Castro had

³¹⁹ Halliday, “The Iranian Left in International Perspective,” in *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran*, 26.

³²⁰ Darioush Bayandor, *Iran and the CIA: The Fall of Mosaddeq Revisited* (London & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): 175.

taken over in Cuba in 1959, and Nikita Khrushchev had declared Soviet support for wars of national liberation around the world.³²¹

The early years of the Shah witnessed the accelerated pace of industrialization associated with Westernization, building a strong army perceived as a sine qua non for a strong state, silencing of oppositional forces and great transformation of Iranian rubric due to massive reform programmes. However it was the wider Cold War context that gave a room to Shah for undertaking such a massive programme which paved the way leading to his overthrow with the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

As soon as restoring his power, the Shah had to confront the pressing problems one of which was the closure of oil issue starting with oil nationalization. In 1954 the Majlis ratified the Consortium Agreement in which Britain received 40 percent of the shares in the consortium, 40 percent went to American oil companies, 14 percent to Shell, and 6 percent to the Compagnie Française des Pétroles. The 1954 consortium agreement gave Iran a 50 percent share of profits.

The first years of the Shah witnessed a growing trend of shrinking of political field in favour of the Shah. He tried to eliminate alternative contenders of power starting from the most obvious ones, namely the National Front and the Tudeh. He banned political parties, suppressed Tudeh and National Front, enacted a law that criminalize public gatherings. “Less than two months after the coup there were, according to some estimates, 13,000 political prisoners in Iran, consisting of supporters of Mosaddeq and of the Tudeh Party.”³²² He also amended the constitution, giving himself the authority to appoint prime ministers. He also increased the size of the Majles to 200 deputies.³²³

³²¹ Summitt, “For a White Revolution”, 562.

³²² Azimi, *the Quest for Democracy*, 158.

³²³ Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 128.

In 1957 he established the notorious intelligence agency SAVAK which was the eyes and ears of, and where necessary, his iron fist.” In fact SAVAK was the complimentary of the Shah’s relying on armed forces as the backbone of his regime. Establishing a technically strong and loyal military force was the priority of the Shah for the process of consolidation of power and he could realise this priority with the generous military aid coming with the Eisenhower doctrine.

In the economical realm the Shah espoused a program of rapid development mainly by seven year development plans that had conducted with the state economic agencies like High Economic Council and Economic Bureau within the Plan Organization.

The pattern of development in the era was putting emphasis on economy as in Shah’s terms the “economic democracy”. Although the Shah claimed that development went hand in hand with democracy it was actually symbolizing the triumph of economic development and order over democracy. The model he followed was a “selective Westernization” in his words.³²⁴ In this type of westernization technological and economic development prevails political development. For the Shah the degree of Westernization can be measured by the presence of roads, railways, airports and advanced communication technology. Social democracy on the other hand was equal with the welfare state in which every man had food, clothing, housing, medical care and education. Here, there were no room for freedom thought or freedom of associations. In fact he replaced the exiting unions and associations with the state sponsored ones. The political field was to be dominated by the Shah and his government otherwise it became open to foreign infiltration.

Muhammed Reza Shah utilized the concept of backwardness especially in his definitions of democracy. He continually represented himself as a genuine democrat however his definition of democracy was framed in the context of Iranian backward conditions. Trotsky’s term “the privilege of backwardness”

³²⁴ Muhammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961): 140.

acquired a new meaning in the discourse of Muhammed Reza Shah. He desperately underlined the challenges of political development in a state like Iran. After the massive political suppression programme he entailed, in April 1957 he told senators that now that “traitors and foreign stooges had been eliminated,” the Iranian people could enjoy the “blessings of democracy,” through a two-party system, the Mardom and Iran-e Novin Parties.³²⁵ However when he was criticized because of his deep involvement in politics he stated that

People sometimes criticize our new parties by saying that they have been imposed from the top rather than rising from the rank and file of the people. Some cynics even claim that the parties are mere puppets of the Government or the Crown. That of course misses the whole point about how you can foster parties in a newly developing country such as Iran.³²⁶

He also asserted that people could establish political parties other than the ones he actively engaged their formation. “Anybody who desires can, without fear or hindrance, form additional parties so long as they do not serve foreign masters.”³²⁷ However, any attempt to voice oppositional ideas whether in the form of party politics or in civil society was stigmatized as being pawn of foreigners and hence an act of betrayal.

It is important to note that as much as the Shah could resume his power through the intersection of the international and domestic, he could put his ambitious second modernization in practice again with the new international setting that provided the necessary room for that. The changing administration in Washington, the fear of the USSR foothold in Iran, AIOC’s importance for Britain, internal political antagonisms and Musaddeq’s policy choices combined and the Shah could resume his power. In the Cold War context the Eisenhower

³²⁵ Azimi, *Quest for Democracy*, 161.

³²⁶ Muhammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, 154.

³²⁷ Ibid. 157.

administration's aid made consolidation of the Shah's power possible through securing Iran against the Soviet Union and the aid it provided for industrialization.

5.3 White Revolution

Debunking International

Although the importance of oil remained to dominate the Cold War calculations of Great Powers, there were also additional dynamics and perceptions that necessitated policy shifts in order to navigate increasingly competitive environment. The first shift was the emergence of immediacy of containment policy and related to this was the second: to navigate the need of containment in the face of changing regional conditions. So, the question of how to contain was came to the fore for US policy makers. The US involvement in the region which began with the Second World War and concomitantly with the Truman Doctrine was further established with the consecutive Eisenhower and Kennedy and Nixon Doctrines each of which corresponded to changing condition in the region as well as in the wider world historical setting. Among those Nixon Doctrine had particular implication for Iran.

However, the revolutions in China and Cuba, the Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the rise of Nasser as the regional leader of Arab nationalism would lead to a foreign policy shift in the new US administration and set the stage for course of development in Iran in the beginning of 1960s.

Kennedy Doctrine of 1961-1963 sought to create an island of stability through pushing for a selective reform programme to co-opt opposition in countries such as Iran, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia in the face of rising nationalist and to some extent socialist movements. "The quest to achieve collective liberation led the nationalists to oppose not only great power interference but also the traditionalist

regimes that were aligned with.”³²⁸ In such a context, Kennedy administration focused on modernisation programmes like they employed in Latin America and were “charting a course for the continued expansion of American power”.³²⁹ Soviet Union, under Khrushchev, announced and realized its support for nationalist movements in the region and the world.

Additional to this is that both the US and Soviet Union saw the region as vulnerable due to its instable political conditions. For them the region was open to manipulation which created constraints as well as opportunities. “Their perceived vulnerabilities in the Middle East explain in part the concerns of both superpowers about this region, concerns that were perhaps more acute than regarding any other region of the world.”³³⁰

Debunking Domestic

By the 1960s an economic crisis was about to hit Iran because the oil revenues and the aid coming from the US could not afford the development plan and military expenditures of the Shah. The cost of living index had begun to climb rapidly. The instability in Iran intersected with the regional developments and led the Kennedy administration to press for reform. Number of strikes rose from 3 to 20 in the period between 1955 to 1960. Despite the brutality of SAVAK, National Front and Tudeh had still significant social base.

The Kennedy doctrine aimed to promote stable countries in “ensuring the Free World’s access to oil” as well as in “withstanding communist advances”.³³¹

³²⁸ Ray Takeyh, *The Origins of the Eisenhower Doctrine: The US, Britain and Nasser's Egypt, 1953-57* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000): xiv.

³²⁹ Quoted from Victor V. Nemchenok, “In Search for Stability Amid Chaos,” *Cold War History* 10, no. 3 (2010): 343.

³³⁰ Khalidi, *Sowing the Crisis*, 110.

³³¹ Nemchenok, “In Search for Stability Amid Chaos”, 344.

Alongside the intersection of regional and imperial dynamics, the political choices of the Shah was determined to change. However, the core aim of the Kennedy doctrine was “neither democratisation nor political liberalisation, but was a complement to economic development to co-opt the anti-shah opposition”³³².

The overt pressure towards reform from the US conjoined with the Shah’s anxiety regarding the possibility of a social mobilization from below and created a reform package which would be the constituent of the discourse of the regime regarding Iraniyat, White Revolution in 1963.

Conjunctural Politics of White Revolution

The White Revolution was a process. In the first phase the Prime Minister Amini, with the Minister of Agriculture Arsanjani, was in charge of forming and employing the reform package. According to Azimi, Amini was the last prime minister to govern with a real measure of effective authority independent of the court, to allow a degree of political freedom, and to give the impression that the government genuinely sought to combat corruption and injustice. The conflict between the Shah and Amini ended up with the resignation of Amini in 1962. The Shah was concerned about the credentials of Amini and conceived him “as having been virtually “imposed” by President John F. Kennedy”³³³. Although the land reform was initiated by Premier Amini, in 1963 the Shah took the control and altered it to a great extent.

The reform package, composed of six points and to be accomplished in stages, aimed to break up the power base of the landowners, to expand the social base of the regime through creating landholding peasantry beholden to the regime. It involved land reform, privatization of state-owned companies, nationalisation of

³³² Ibid., 360.

³³³ Azimi, *the Quest for Democracy*, 167.

natural resources, establishment of literary corps and freedom of women including right of vote.

The transformation that the White Revolution brought would have far-reaching repercussions for Iran. It “implanted and consolidated capitalist relations in the vast Iranian countryside, liquidated big landlords, and extended state authority to rural Iran.”³³⁴

The White Revolution is an important example of the confluence of the international and domestic. While the requirements of the international politics put pressure on the Shah towards a reform programme, the Shah turned this pressure to his benefit and used as a tool for consolidation of his power. Moreover, as one of the landmarks of the Shah policies, the White Revolution served as the main tool for redefining the Iranian identity in the proceeding era. Iran was “neither Eastern nor Western”, so the Iranians. Portrait as revolutionary, the Shah tried to prove that radical transformations could be brought forward not by the social forces in the country but by the Monarch himself. According to Azimi “by seeking to place socioeconomic development more firmly on the agenda of Iranian politics and to expedite its implementation, the regime hoped to bypass, ideologically disarm, or render irrelevant the civic-nationalist and other opponents of the regime”³³⁵. However, it gave way to the emergence of an opposition bloc of the religious establishment.

5.4 Framing Iran as a World Power

Debunking International

With the assassination of John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson took over the presidency in the US. The main concern of Johnson administration was the Vietnam War and the growing domestic discontent about the social and political

³³⁴ Kamran Matin, *Recasting Iranian Modernity* (London & New York: Routledge, 2013): 111.

³³⁵ Azimi, *the Quest for Democracy*, 180.

cost it created. Also to be added is the growing international opposition to the conflict in the Southeast Asia. So, the administration remained preoccupied largely by the Southeast Asia during its term. The successor of Johnson administration, Richard Nixon, on the other hand, was again to compile a doctrine that reflects the shift in foreign policy choices of the US especially stemming from the consequences of Vietnam War. With the Twin Pillars Policy, Nixon tried to adapt U.S. foreign policy to the pressures of the Vietnam War, and with the Nixon doctrine United States would expect its allies in different regions of the world to provide the manpower necessary for their own defence. The United States would only intervene directly in case of a treaty obligation or if a nuclear power threatened an ally or a nation considered vital to US security.³³⁶ As such, it sought to avoid becoming directly involved in the region. However, at every opportunity it would encourage friendly local powers, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and especially Iran, to act.

These years witnessed further retreatment of Britain from the world power status. The economic problems starting from the Second World War deepened during 1960s with the growing budget deficit and seesawing of sterling. The Labour government, which came to power in 1964, tried to overcome the deficit by seeking financial assistant, mainly from the US and by cutting the defence budget cuts especially in overseas military commitments. As a corollary of this Britain declared that it would gradually withdraw its overseas military forces starting from Aden, then Malaysia and Singapore and finally Suez Canal. In concomitant with these withdrawals the White Paper in 1967 declared that the aim of British policy was “to foster developments which will enable local peoples to live in peace without the presence of external forces.”³³⁷ However, it does not mean that Britain decided to end his influence in the region. Rather it terminated the policy of active involvement in the region.

³³⁶ James Goode, “Assisting Our Brothers, Defending Ourselves: The Iranian Intervention in Oman, 1972–75,” *Iranian Studies* 47, no. 3 (2014): 442.

³³⁷ Faisal bin Salman Al-Saud, *Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf: Power Politics in Transition* (I.B. Tauris, 2003): 19.

The rivalry was complimented by a strong ideological element with its two different models of development. As Halliday mentions, “the Cold War was a competition between two rival social and political systems, each of which sought to present itself as the solution to the problems of the world.”³³⁸

Debunking Domestic

After the White Revolution the regime encounters a series of protest in the major cities of Iran with the involvement of various segments of society including the National Front, left and ulema. In fact, the leading figure of the 1979 Revolution, Khomeini entered the politics of Iran as one of the most important critics of the Shah’s regime. The regime with the help of SAVAK brutally suppressed the protests.

The Revolution and rapid industrialization and expansion of state bureaucracy combined and altered the social rubric of Iranian society. They together led to rise of the bazaar, petty bourgeoisie which constituted a traditional middle class; a modern middle class composed of white-collar employees and college-educated professionals and urban working class with the massive rural-urban transformation.

Although Iran succeeded to catch a rapid growth rate during the 1960s, these years witnessed intensification of social tensions that laid the ground for further antagonisms between the state and the society which eventually led to revolution in 1979. There was the obvious gap between political and economic development.

Another international factor would further the gap with the oil boom. Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) took advantage of the 1973 Arab–Israeli War to quadruple international oil prices. Iran’s oil revenues rose from \$34 million in 1954–55 to \$5 billion in 1973–74, and further to \$20

³³⁸ Fred Halliday, “The Middle East, the Great Powers, and the Cold War,” in *The Cold War and the Middle East* ed. Yezid Sayigh & Avi Shlaim (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): 4.

billion in 1975–76. In the course of these twenty-three years, oil provided Iran with more than \$55 billion.³³⁹ The oil revenues shifted the pattern of economic development away from import substitution and rise of the private sector towards oil income supported large scale public projects. The new pattern of development provided a relative freedom for the state and led to greater concentration of power in the Shah’s regime and severed the ties between the state and the society. State institutions were increasingly unable to cope with growing political demands that the increased urbanization and social mobility had brought.³⁴⁰

In order to prevent a social crises, the regime sought new ways of channelling potential discomfort. An example of this was the Alashtar Project that aimed to introduce grassroots democracy to rural areas.³⁴¹

In 1975 the Shah outlawed the two party system and formed the Rastakhiz Party that would bridge the gap between the state and society. It was hoped that it would bring alienated urban Iranians into the political process and be a controlled venue of representation. It announced that it would observe the principles of “democratic centralism,” synthesize the best of “capitalism” and “socialism,” establish “dialectical” links between government and population, and assist the Great Guide (Rahbar) and Great Leader (Farmandandar) in completing his White Revolution and in leading his People towards the new Great Civilization. In a handbook entitled the Philosophy of Iran’s Revolution, the party announced that the shah had eradicated from Iran once and for all the concept of class and class conflict.³⁴²

³³⁹ Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 123.

³⁴⁰ Ali Gheissari and Vali Nasr, *Democracy in Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006): 63.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

³⁴² Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 132.

Conjunctural Politics of Framing Iran as a World Power

Since the Constitutional Revolution Iran underwent series of attempts for modernization and Westernization. Muhammed Reza Shah took these to a different level. The contingent elements of historical personalities notwithstanding, this difference in the pace and content of Westernization under the second shah had roots in international politics, the context of the Cold War. Although his father tried to modernize Iran following the Western model it remained incomplete due to foreign intervention in the context of the Second World War. Muhammed Reza Shah, on the other hand, took advantage of the race between two superpowers. However, the context of the Cold War was not only a matter of aid or loans, equipment or technical support and/or building alliances with one or other super powers for Iran. It was also offering two different development models. The Shah tried to merge two models of development and created his own model that would be the discourse of White Revolution in the 1970s: *Neither Eastern nor Western*. He developed a model which was the combination of selective Westernization, capitalist economic and technical development and selective Soviet political system as exemplified in the formation of Resurrection Party. As such he sought to redefine the contours of Iranianness and Iran. In this definition Iran was reframed not as a developing country but as a candidate of global power with its impressive growth figures. As a matter of fact, the perception of vulnerability, as stated earlier, was complimented by another dimension of international politics. As Khalidi mentions, starting from the Concert of Europe the people in the Middle East was perceived not as subjects but rather as objects.³⁴³ The perceived hierarchy was resented by the countries of the region including Iran.

However, Cold War was different than the two world wars. “It was not about imposition but integration”³⁴⁴. Middle Eastern countries were regional players in

³⁴³ Khalidi, *Sowing the Crisis*, 73.

³⁴⁴ Halliday, *Middle East in International Relations*, 76.

the game and they succeeded to benefit from the structure of the international system. The foreign policy adopted by the Shah exemplifies the agential role that Middle Eastern countries acquired in the Cold War era. Although Iran substantially remained in the Western camp, the Shah did not hesitate to build relationships with the Soviet camp. He sometimes used the sole prospect of Iranian-Soviet rapprochement as a leverage to retain American aid and in other times he actually built ties with the Soviet Union. The Shah successfully built mutually beneficial partnerships with European powers and, in the 1970s, with the Soviet Union, China, and India.³⁴⁵ He had built good relations with Saudi Arabia, President Sadat of Egypt, King Hussein of Jordan, and working relations with Israel.

His regional policies were important in understanding the Shah's ambition of being a strong power. Having established close relations with the US and improved relations with the USSR, Iran began to adopt more assertive regional policy especially in the Gulf. In fact, Iran was more preoccupied by the challenge from the south. The Iraqi revolution of 1958, and the fall of the monarchy in Afghanistan in 1973 alarmed the Shah to a great extent. The British withdrawal from the Gulf and the US administration's preoccupation with the Vietnam War combined and led the Shah to project Iran as the new dominant power in the region. By playing the card of communism, again, he stated that the power vacuum with the absence of Britain could be replaced by the Soviet Union which would threaten the smooth flow of oil and hence the global economy.

In tandem with its growing power, Iran displayed its dominant position with the operations it conducted in the region. The Shah sent troops to Oman's Dhoffar region in 1973 in order to contain the rebellion which was started by the Popular

³⁴⁵ Alidad Mafinezam, and Aria Mehrabi, *Iran and Its Place among Nations* (Praeger Publishers, 2008): 48.

Front for the Liberation of Oman.³⁴⁶ Another operation was ‘Operation Ararat’ in which the Shah provided support for the Iraqi Kurds in 1974-1975.³⁴⁷

So, the Shah managed to render himself as the policeman of the Gulf. Prime Minister Hoveida said that “we face this historic new phase with great confidence”;³⁴⁸ Muhammed Reza Shah said that

The time has come for us to take reciprocal action to foreign attitudes. We will not satisfy with showing friendship and receiving perhaps only a benevolent glance in return. I warn even our present friends that if they ignore Iran’s interests in any respect, especially in the Gulf, they should expect from Iran treatment of befitting their attitude.³⁴⁹

5.5 Nationalism Inwards

The above mentioned developments both at the levels of regional and international went into the discourse of nationalism that Muhammed Reza Shah formed. The Shah had not only to contain the non-aligned nationalism coalesced into a political community but also to replace it with his definition of Iranian identity. As a matter of fact during the process of consolidation of his power he strived for first containing and then appropriating the legacy of Musaddeq and his popular based nationalism. He did not eschew to use the same lexicon Musaddeq utilized but during his reign he constantly deconstructed the meaning attached to the words such as imperialism, democracy, neutrality and then reconstructed them and articulated his definition of Iranian national identity.

³⁴⁶ Christin Marschall, *Iran’s Persian Gulf Policy: From Khomeini to Khatami* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003): 9.

³⁴⁷ Kaveh Farrokh, *Iran at War* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2011): 315; Mafinezam and Mehrabi, *Iran and Its Place among Nations*, 32.

³⁴⁸ Al-Saud, *Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf*, 27.

³⁴⁹ Quoted from Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 178.

Owing his throne to the coup d'état of 1953, one of the most important problems of the Shah was to prove people his legitimacy and he had to prove his authenticity to nationalise his version of Iranian identity. As previous chapter showed Musaddeq articulated his discourse of nationalism on three legs of war of independence, anti-imperialism and anti-monarch. Starting from the beginning of his reign Muhammed Reza Shah, first, endeavoured to deconstruct Musaddeq's three legged discourse to legitimize his rule. Secondly he struggled to give a new meaning to the institution of monarchy and to present this revised version of monarchy peculiar to Iran. In this sense the political regime was made intrinsic to national identity. Lastly, in order to preserve the political system in the face of regional developments he consecrated the institution of monarchy as a continuation of Persian culture blended with divine rule and paternalism.

Containing Musaddeq's Nationalism

If Musaddeq framed the process of oil nationalization as a war of independence, the young Shah framed the 1953 coup as the true struggle of liberation and started to celebrate the date of the coup 19 August as the moment of National Resurrection.

On 19 August each year, my country celebrates Nation Day, commemorating the fall of Musaddeq and the routing of alien forces that came within a hair's breadth of extinguishing, our independence.³⁵⁰

It takes much more than money to impel people to do what Iran's loyal citizens did during those days. In overturning Musaddeq and the Tudeh, they staged a revolution that was inspired by indigenous nationalism. I have told how many of them advanced unarmed against the fire of tanks and machine-guns. Women and children as well as men gave up their lives in that way.³⁵¹

³⁵⁰ Muhammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, 110.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

Similarly one of the architects of the coup Prime Minister General Zahedi stated as follows:

My dear compatriots, I hope his majesty's words healed a thirty month old injury inflicted by a few who neglected our national interest and misunderstood their patriotic obligations.³⁵²

Our dear compatriots, the August 19 Resurrection succeeded because Muslim tailors and citizen patriots sacrificed their lives and freed themselves from the terror of Musaddeq's government, which had become the horrific house of foreigners and Bolsheviks... these hired hands of foreigners are like poisonous snakes lying in their hidden dens and ready to strike our country and contaminate our environment.³⁵³

The connecting thread in these speeches and statements are the malign nature of Musaddeq's government that put Iran in the hands of foreign domination. For the Shah there were two nationalisms, malign and benign. While the former was corresponding to Musaddeq's type of nationalism, negative, the latter was referring to his true positive nationalism.

If for Musaddeq the means of achieving independence was neutrality in foreign policy, negative equilibrium, for Muhammed Reza Shah the only solution was establishing a strong state through rapid development. In the Shah's words:

In two world wars we learned the fallacy of neutrality for a country so strategically located as Iran, for in neither case did it keep us from being overrun. And after both great conflicts we became a happy hunting-ground for foreign interests. Under Musaddeq, our weakness and our negative foreign policy allowed us to become the victim of widespread infiltration and subversion directed from outside our borders.³⁵⁴

Positive nationalism, as I conceive it, implies a policy of maximum political and economic independence consistent with the interests

³⁵² Quoted from Sharifi, *Imagining Iran*, 124.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 126.

³⁵⁴ Muhammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, 124.

of one's country. On the other hand, it does not mean non-alignment or sitting on the fence. It means that we make any agreement which is in our own interest, regardless of the wishes or policies of others. We are not intimidated by anybody who tries to tell us whom we should have for our friends, and we make no alliances merely for the sake of alliances or of vague principles, but only in support of our enlightened self-interest. We cultivate the friendship of all, and are prepared to take advantage of every country's technical skills if to do so does not prejudice our interests or our independence.³⁵⁵

Lastly, it was not the struggle of Iranian people against anti-imperialism that would be the model for other Third World countries as Musaddeq articulated, instead Iran would be a model with its pace and success of development. As such, he redefined the core of true nationalism in terms of national development and progress. He espoused a pragmatic approach in foreign policy in which receiving help from advanced countries was not perceived as in conflict with sovereignty. On the contrary it was vital to revive the national dignity that was lost during the Musaddeq era and achieve the place that Iran deserves.

We welcome American Point Four and military assistance, but only because it helps us to develop and strengthen Iran and to help ourselves and the wider cause of freedom.³⁵⁶

The Shah also tried to tame the idea of anti-imperialism by declaring that Persia was one of the oldest empires in the world. Although he stated that “we remain vigilant to join with our friends in resisting any form of imperialism”³⁵⁷ he differentiated old and new imperialists as he did for nationalists. For him the greatest danger for less developed countries was this “new imperialism”.

Advancing under false colours, the new imperialism pretends that it supports the genuine nationalism of each newly-developing country; works its way into native nationalist movements; and then

³⁵⁵Ibid., 125.

³⁵⁶Ibid., 130.

³⁵⁷Ibid., 131.

proceeds to subvert them. It concentrates on negative, destructive nationalism and thrives on the chaos that follows.³⁵⁸

As such just like Musaddeq linked the Shah with imperialism, the Shah linked Musaddeq with this new imperialism, and created his internal imperial other. Through the process of differentiation between old and new imperialisms he also created the external other of his regime: Communist imperialism. And he did not alone in this conceptualisation and would not be in the phase of implementation. Musaddeq did not only pose a threat to the Shah, he was also a concern for the US. “But all Rusk [ambassador of the US] and others wanted to talk about was the National Front, whether or not it was growing stronger and posed a serious threat to the Shah.”³⁵⁹

Elevation of the Monarchy

After deconstructing the nationalism defined by Musaddeq, Muhammed Reza Shah endeavoured to reconstruct the monarchy as a modern institution that was able to offer solutions to the problems of the modern world.

Milani points out that Muhammed Reza Shah considered the 1953 coup the beginning of his elected monarchy. “I knew they loved me, before I was merely a hereditary monarch but today I really have been elected by my people.”³⁶⁰ As Bendix asserts the repertoire of previous modernizations and industrializations other countries underwent offers different models of development. However, new comers do not want to follow the same course that early modernizers went through and try to avoid the social cost of transformation. This is the “privilege of historical backwardness” in Trotsky’s terms. Muhammed Reza Shah espoused a similar understanding, he imported modern especially military technology, relied on oil based fast economic development but he also wanted to prevent the social

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 131.

³⁵⁹ Summit, *For a White Revolution*, 2004.

³⁶⁰ Abbas Milani, *The Shah* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): 174.

dislocations and disruptions that modernization and industrialization create. In order to do this, he represented the monarchy as the agent of development, democracy and constitution.

If I ever felt that Persia's monarchy had outlived its usefulness, I would be happy to resign as a king and would even join in helping to abolish our monarchical institution.³⁶¹

... every nation must find its own system of government by and for people.³⁶²

However, these words acquired a new meaning in the rule of the Shah. "My programme of democracy involves making the best use of science," he stated. So, democracy was again defined in terms of development. He represented himself as a true democrat but his understanding of democracy was extremely "controlled democracy" in which the opposing voices were defined in terms of betrayal to the nation. At the beginning of his rule, he states that "men have found that genuine individual freedom can be attained only through democratic system, which allows ordinary people actually to control the society in which they live"³⁶³ The constitutional monarchy in this sense was not in conflict with appeals of democracy. Above all he was elected by his people, there was the parliament and elections. However, he also acknowledged that the term democracy was open to abuses. "By democracy, they may mean a so-called dictatorship of the proletariat."

However, as he consolidated his power and gained a relative freedom thanks to the oil boom his tone would dramatically change.

Freedom of thought. Freedom of thought. Democracy, democracy!
With five-year-olds going on strike and parading in the streets!...

³⁶¹ Muhammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, 327.

³⁶² Quoted from Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 160.

³⁶³ Muhammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, 161.

Democracy? Freedom? What do these words mean? I don't want any part of them.³⁶⁴

In 1975 he outlawed the multiparty system and established the Resurrection Party.

A person who does not become a member of this new political organization has two choices. Such a person belongs to either an illegal organization or the illegal Tudeh Party, both of which mean such a person is traitor whose place is in one of Iran's prisons. However, such a person can leave the country and go anywhere he may want without even paying exit taxes. Because such a person is not an Iranian and thus not part of this nation, therefore his/her activities are illegal and punishable by law.³⁶⁵

As such by the 1970s Iraniyat was defined in terms of being in compliance with the political aspirations of the regime.

The Shah not only appropriated the words like democracy associated with the Western values but also the terminology of the left. It is especially clear in the framing the discourse of the reformed programme of 1963 labelled as White Revolution. As it is already clear in the choice of the label, Muhammed Reza Shah tried to construct himself and the monarchy as the agent of revolution. With the pressures originating from the intersection of the international- the momentum left gained in the world, the Kennedy doctrine of the US- and the regional- the overthrown of monarchies in the Middle East- he embarked on a programme of transformation in order to prevent a possible movement from below, namely to avoid the social cost of modernization. The conversation with a journalist in an interview in 1973 is illuminating in grasping how he attempted to contain not only Musaddeq but also the left and the Tudeh. As Azimi suggested "they hoped to bypass, ideologically disarm, or render irrelevant the civic-nationalist and other opponents of the regime."³⁶⁶

³⁶⁴ Quoted from Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 440-441.

³⁶⁵ Quoted from Sharifi, *Imagining Iran*, 131.

³⁶⁶ Azimi, *The Quest for Democracy*, 180.

Fallaci: Are you telling me that, in a sense, you are a socialist?

The Shah: Certainly. My White Revolution is an incentive to work.

It is a new original kind of socialism.³⁶⁷

So, the Shah not only aspired to be a democrat but also a revolutionary and described the land reform as one of the most revolutionary measures in the 3,000 years of recorded Iranian history. The people opposing to the White Revolution on the other hand were labelled as *reactionaries*. While the term black reactionaries was designed for ulema, red reactionaries was representing the left. Especially after consolidating his power the Shah, “who occasionally claimed to be a socialist, had assigned a special task force of intellectuals, including Marxists, to formulate an original ‘dialectical philosophy’ of the White Revolution. An expression of the Shah’s genius, the new philosophy was to be based on a unique global vision, ‘Neither Western, Nor Eastern.’”³⁶⁸

Re-sacralisation of the Monarchy

The last aspect of Muhammed Reza Shah’s discourse of nationalism was related to the unique nature of Iranian monarchy and his transcendent powers. As other modernizing countries experienced, the Shah had to face the tension between progress and national identity. He had to cope with the question of why he strictly to Westernize Iran in order not to be seen as another foreign pawn given the fact that he owed his throne to the joint coup organized by the US and Britain. He would sought to overcome this dilemma by inventing traditions through mobilization of Achaemenidian past and Cyrus the Great. He used the past for two purposes: one the one hand the identity of Iran originating from this past was presented as in complete coherence with the values then the West present.

³⁶⁷ Interview with Oriana Fallaci, December 1, 1973
<http://www.newrepublic.com/article/world/92745/shah-iran-mohammad-reza-pahlevi-oriana-fallaci>, last access December 10, 2014.

³⁶⁸ Afshin Matin-Asgari, “Marxism, historiography and Historical consciousness in modern Iran: a preliminary study,” in *Iran in 20th Century*, 219.

Democracy, tolerance etc. was already the values inherited to Iranian identity even before the advent of democracy in the West.

Fortunately, democracy is not without roots in Persia. It is in harmony with the spirit of my country... While Iran at a time knew nothing of democratic political institutions, Cyrus nevertheless demonstrated some of the qualities which provide the strength of the great modern democracies.”³⁶⁹

Secondly he used the history as an act of re-sacralising authority. Appeals to the Great Iranian people, to Iranian nationalism, and to the pioneering role of Persian civilization have supplemented the reconsecration of the Shah’s authority. The system of monarchy was reconstructed as intrinsic to Iranian national identity.

In Iranian culture, the Iranian monarchy means the political and geographical unity of Iran in addition to the special national identity and all those unchangeable values with which this national identity has brought forth.³⁷⁰

To the people of Iran, the institution of monarchy is not a mode of government but is rather a way of life which has become an essential part of the nation’s very existence. The Iranians have always considered monarchy and nationhood to be synonymous.³⁷¹

The monarchy has a special meaning for Iranian families. It is in our way of life. It has been an integral part of our history for 2,500 years.³⁷²

The monarchy that was portrait as a continuing entity for 2500 years was the linchpin of Iranian national identity and the secret of this continuity lies at the heart of the institution of monarchy.

³⁶⁹ Muhammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, 164.

³⁷⁰ Quoted from Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Iran*, 173.

³⁷¹ Quoted from Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 175.

³⁷² Quoted from Abrahamian, *Modern Iran*, 123.

Over this great time-span, the monarchy has brought unity out of diversity. We have always had differences of race, colour, creed, and economic and political situation and conviction; but under the monarchy the divergencies have been sublimated into one larger whole symbolized in the person of the Shah.³⁷³

To justify the role of Monarchy and his iron grip on the political field, the Shah redefined the understanding of monarchy as such. As opposed to Musaddeq's statement that the Shah should not rule but reign, he reconstructed the meaning of the monarch as well. In his discourse the monarchy was like a family in which he was the father, leader and the spiritual guide. "The people and their King are so close, that they feel as the member of the same family."³⁷⁴

Christensen, the Danish orientalist, has rightly said that a real king in Iran is not so much a political head of a nation as a teacher and leader. He is not only a person who builds roads, bridges, dams and canals but one who leads them in spirit, thought and heart.³⁷⁵

Thus he personified the institution of monarchy and he represent this personification as the founding element of the Iranian monarchy. As such he not only sought for legitimacy for his actions but also distinguished Iran from other monarchies that were already toppled down or in danger of overthrown.

The secret of Iran's economic and social success lay in the fact that it did not follow baseless schools of thought, not was inspired by East or West, the revolution was inspired by national traditions and the Shah's revolutionary ideas.³⁷⁶

This was also apparent in his discourse of White Revolution which symbolizes a development model "Neither eastern nor Western". Thus he did put Iranian way

³⁷³ Muhammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, 327.

³⁷⁴ "Interview with the Shah." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imilIiIpIYA>, last access December 10, 2014.

³⁷⁵ Quoted from Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 185.

³⁷⁶ Quoted from Joseph J. St. Marie and Shahdad Naghshpour, *Revolutionary Iran and the United States: Low-intensity Conflict in the Persian Gulf* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011): 99.

of development in a unique place, a role model that was able to inspire other less developed countries.

Another tool for re-sacralisation of authority was the appeals to the transcendent powers. Muhammed Reza Shah occasionally refer the God as his source of authority.

No, because I believe in God, and that I have been chosen by God to perform a task. My visions were miracles that saved the country. My reign has saved the country, and it has done so because God was on my side.³⁷⁷

As in compliance with the regime he created, the Shah redefined the Iranian identity different from both East and West. He tried to make a bond between the state and society through mobilizing an Iranian identity defined in terms of monarchy dating back to Acheamenid. However he did not succeed to nationalize his definition of identity and to justify his political choices. Albeit behind the closed doors, the society continued to contest his content of nationalism and the state he created which eventually led to open and total negation of this newly defined Iraniyat and the Iranian state in 1979.

5.6 Nationalism Outwards: International Legitimacy

It is possible to see the double directionality of nationalism that Halliday reminds us during the reign of Muhammed Reza Shah. The Shah did not only strive to prove his legitimacy in the domestic level but also in the international level given the fact that he witnessed his father's deposal by foreign powers. He also saw the toppling down of a popular leader, Musaddeq. So, just as domestic legitimacy, international legitimacy was proved to be of significance importance for the Shah to preserve his position of power. To this end, the Shah endeavoured to the use

³⁷⁷ Interview with Oriana Fallaci, December 1, 1973.

every possible venue. However, as much as in the domestic politics, the extent of this concern was to change as he consolidated his power and gained confidence to his state apparatus.

During his early years in power the Shah paid strict attention to depict his regime as in full compliance with the values of the Western world. In his speeches he underlined that “At the same time we resolutely stand for the ideals and principles of the United Nation.”³⁷⁸

After assuring the Western world that he will stand by their sides, he often used the enemy of communism to receive financial and military assistance. He was well aware the Iran’s strategic location in the context of the Cold War as much as the US. So, he used American fears of communism to gain increased financial aid, military support, and influence in the United Nations. The Shah, however, mostly sought to bolster his faltering regime by exaggerating the external threats to his power.

I am convinced that one of the essentials for preventing international communism from realising its ambitions with regard to Iran is for us, with the help of great free nations, particularly the US, to strengthen our armed forces to the extent that would render them capable of putting up an honourable defence if Iran is attacked.³⁷⁹

To strengthen our defensive and military powers is not only in the interest of Iran but also that of the Middle East and the free world.³⁸⁰

So framing Iran as one of the leading fronts in the war against communist imperialism had a double function for the Shah. He guaranteed his regime both

³⁷⁸ Muhammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, 125.

³⁷⁹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 136.

³⁸⁰ Quoted from Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 137.

inside and outside through highly advanced military apparatus. With the financial and technical aid he received he established one of the most strong intelligence agencies and armies in the world. As a corollary of this he would flatten the political field, silence any opposition inside Iran. With the military power he succeeded to build a strong and stable regime and rendered this regime as an influential international actor.

With the card of communism at his disposal he also justified his extravagant expenses mainly for military equipment both inside and outside. "Once, Farmanfarma told the Shah that the money for just one military aircraft could build a number of hospitals and clinics. The Shah laughed at this suggestion, arguing that no one really understood Iran's outside threats but him."³⁸¹

However, in the private he mentioned that the real threat to Iran was not the Soviet Union but Iraq. Other than the card of communism he also gave examples from other countries like Switzerland or Sweden which allocated more budget for military spending.

However, as he managed to consolidate his power inside and outside he would prove to the world that he had no intention of staying at the peripheries of world politics. His foreign policy choices was the showcase of the role the Shah casted for Iran in international politics.

As mentioned previously in the early years of his reign the Shah adopted a dependent development policy mainly relying on the US aid. However, starting from the 1960s he sought to diversify Iran foreign policy and asserted independence from the US. When Kennedy administration pushed the Shah for reforms he said that "we are not your stooges". When the US failed to support Pakistan in Indo-Pakistan War of 1965, he did not hesitated to criticise the Western bloc publicly: "We see now what CENTO really is. It is a device to

³⁸¹ Summitt, *For a White Revolution*, 567.

protect the West only.”³⁸² When the US encouraged him to spend less on military equipment and to cut the aid in favour of credits he threatened them with Soviet-Iranian rapprochement. It is ironic that in his early years he was at pains to use the communism card to receive more grants but know the US was trying to persuade him that rather than the Soviet Union, Iraq and Egypt was posing a threat for Iran.

Then he visited Moscow signed trade and arms agreements with the USSR. With the diversification of foreign policy, the Shah aimed to shield himself from domestic and regional criticism. In the domestic scene the SOFA agreement that granted extraterritorial privileges to US military personnel working in Iran had triggered a wave of protests that includes various political spectrum. Khomeini had called the agreement as “a document of enslavement that would destroy the dignity, integrity and autonomy of Iran”³⁸³. Even there were heated debates in the Majles. One deputy had stated that, “they say that if they go out with their wives and an American sergeant happens to pinch one of their wives there will be no place for us to file our complaint... That is how people get mad.”³⁸⁴ So, the foreign policy choice of rapprochement with the Soviet Union was to serve him as a venue for manifesting sovereignty and independence of Iran which is a delicate issue for Iranian politics. In the words of American ambassador “an affront to national dignity”.³⁸⁵ Hence, the Shah tried to put a distance with the US and underlined the independence of Iran.

Iran must stand on its own feet, militarily and economically. Iran cannot surrender its destiny to whims of foreigners even if they are very close friends... we cannot subject our destiny entirely on

³⁸² Sepehr Zabih, “Change and Continuity in Iran’s Foreign Policy,” *World Politics* 23, no. 3 (1971): 536.

³⁸³ Andrew Johns, “The Johnson Administration, the Shah of Iran, and the Changing Pattern of US-Iranian Relations: “Tired of Being Treated like a Schoolboy,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9, no. 2 (2007): 71.

³⁸⁴ Quoted from Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism*, 164.

³⁸⁵ Johns, *The Johnson Administration*, 77.

decisions of other who can one day help us and another day not help us.³⁸⁶

What these foreign policy orientations and related statements show was the self-confidence the regime gained by the mid-1970s. Iran was no longer a less-developed country but a strong state. As a matter of fact the Carter administration was to state that: “Iran, because of the great leadership of the Shah, is an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world.”³⁸⁷ He postured as a leading international actor as opposed to being a mere puppet. He succeeded to manipulate the realities of international system and made use of it to improve Iran’s position.

Another recurrent feature of the Shah’s response to international system was related to status and prestige. He sought to challenge the strict hierarchical international system which remained the same since the Concert of Europe and tried to be an object of the system rather than mere subject. “Nobody can dictate to us,” he told newsmen on a state visit to Australia and New Zealand.³⁸⁸ When he was accused of rising the oil prices and damaging the British economy by a British journalist he replied that “we are just defending our chips. For such a long time we have just been exploited.” He accused the British of being permissive and undisciplined and lazy. When he was asked about the lack of democracy in his country he said that “who says my people are demanding the democracy that you have in Britain. Iran is different than other monarchies. People love their monarchy.”³⁸⁹

³⁸⁶ Quoted from Johns, *The Johnson Administration*, 77.

³⁸⁷“Tehran, Iran Toasts of the President and the Shah at a State Dinner” December 31, 1977 <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=7080>, last access 12.12.2014.

³⁸⁸ Mafinezam, *Iran among Nations*, 26.

³⁸⁹ “Interview with the Shah.” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imilliIpIYA>, last access December 10, 2014.

As a matter of fact the Shah claimed to restore Persian imperial power he found in Cyrus the Great which, as Ansari asserts, was the fundamental principle of government ideology. The Shah claimed to be the one of the greatest powers in the world. In an interview given to BBC, he stated that

Our country in the next ten years will be what you are today. And in the next 25 years will be among the 5 most prosperous countries of the world.”³⁹⁰

With the celebrations of 2500th anniversary of Iranian monarchy he put his success, modern Iran and its Great Civilization at the international stage. Hoveida argued that “It is an honour that Iran’s revolution put an end to backwardness and has placed us on the course of a bright change to the realms of a great civilization.”

Not only did the Shah had succeed to catch up with the West, he also had provided a new model of development that could inspire other nations of the world. As in his discourse of White Revolution, Iran, as one of the oldest Great Civilizations, was the unique model of the synthesis of East and West. “I foresee that my country may help provide leadership in the worldwide quest for a fresh synthesis of East and West, old and new.”³⁹¹

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter tried to look back to the Muhammed Reza Shah’s second modernization starting from 1953 to 1979 and aimed to show the nature of the new regime and *specific ideological content* of Iranian nationalism as defined by the Shah. Using a historical sociological approach, the aim was to locate the Iranian experience in a wider political context when analysing the nature and dynamics of the Iranian way of development without overlooking its specific

³⁹⁰ “Interview with the Shah.” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imil1iIpIYA>, last access December 10, 2014.

³⁹¹ Muhammed Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, 132.

conditions. The Cold War, the rise of Arab nationalism against the traditionalist regimes, the oil boom of 1970s,(there should have been more on this) evolving foreign policies of the super powers conditioned the general historicity of Iranian nationalism and this context enabled and inspired Muhammed Reza Shah in creating a modernized Iran and Iranian nationalism. Neither the nature of the state he created nor the content of nationalism was static. During his term these concepts were redefined and renegotiated alongside evolving domestic and international context.

The peculiarity of the Shah's reforms and the tactics of foreign and domestic policy that he developed cannot be fully explained without showing their international causes. As the Cold War was accelerating with the two development models it offered, the Shah was trying to create an Iranian way of navigating in international and domestic politics. Among his several moves to create more manoeuvring space for his regime in the Cold War era was a model that subsumed these two different models in a Persian synthesis. By selective use of both Westernization and Soviet political system he did not only redefined Iran but also the content of Iranian nationalism. By the end of his reign Iraniyat means for the Shah being neither Western nor Eastern but Iranian derived from an excessive commitment to the institution of monarchy which was seen as the mechanism of continuation of Persian imperial power stretching back to Cyrus the Great. The Shah's aim in representing Iranian way of development as a unique one was an act of self-legitimization at home and abroad.

So, the Cold War was more than a race between super powers, it served as an ideational source of new Iranian state and Iranian nationalism. Here we can also understand the significance role of international for domestic trajectories. The international was indeed domesticized. The foreign policy choices of the Shah, leaning with the US or rapprochement with the Soviet Union and the context of the Cold War were to become the components of Iranian state and identity as the Cyrus the Great.

As Halliday contends, “The Cold War did provide the context and spur to many developments in the region: but the initiative all too often lay not in Moscow or Washington, but with the local states.”³⁹² Muhammed Reza Shah was one of the very actors of the international relations and aspired to prove his agential powers inwards and outwards. His inward and outward nationalism was in an open dialogue. His accumulation of power inside buttressed his agential role outside and his rising an important actor outside buttressed his role inside. However, the problematic here is that he only gave room for one agential power inside, himself, and ignored the agency of the Iranian people. He could not represent his particular temporal rules as a moral order through inventing traditions or applying to transcendental powers. Even though he claimed the right of people to govern themselves he eventually attenuated and excluded Iranian people but also unintendedly strengthen the opposition the fruits of which were to bear during the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

³⁹² Halliday, *Middle East in International Relations*, 128.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: TRACING THE INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS OF IRANIYAT

The emergence and transformation of the Iranian nationalism between 1921 and 1978 is still part of the story of Iran under the Islamic Republic. This path set by various actors created its dependencies with regards to how freedom, independence, unity, and identity is understood in Iran throughout the 20th century and in the first decades of the 21st century. It also shaped in distinct ways the way Iranian state, Iranian Islamist, leftist, nationalist opposition and later the Islamic Republic and its many contenders perceived international politics and where they located Iran in the globe. Due to the revolutionary nature of the foundation of the Islamic Republic, the very act of overthrowing Muhammed Reza Shah was meant and perceived by the international society as a move against the international system. So, the story of Iranian nationalism and the story of Iranian interaction with the globe are two distinct but interwoven stories. There are multiple international connections of Iraniyat, from Aryanism to modernization, from militarism to secularism, many aspects of Iranian nationalism and its struggle against alternative nationalisms is coloured by these interactions.

This thesis traced these international connections of Iraniyat and pursued the answers to the puzzling aspects of Iranian nation and state building processes in these very connections.

In doing so, it had two connected departure points: Firstly, it resorted to the Historical Sociology in International Relations (HSIR) which expands the analytical terrain of the concept of “the international” and conceptualizes the two realms of “domestic” and international” as not separate but mutually co-constitutive. The second point of departure was the modernist school of nationalism that argues that nations are products of modernity, that nationalism

achieves a meaning only in the political realm and is directly and/or indirectly shaped by the state. With using these two theoretical frameworks I tried to transcend methodological nationalism, perennialism and Middle Eastern exceptionalism and show how Iranian nationalism defined by the state has been subject to change alongside the changing dynamics born out of specific interaction between the domestic and international. I argue that the creation of Iranian state nationalism is strictly interconnected with the formation of modern state which is itself bound up with the international.

As such it remained firmly within the context of international politics of nation and state building, contributing to the agenda of HSIR. It handled a case of non-European nationalism and in that respect it responded to the calls within the discipline to question the Euro-centrism of IR. It also sustained a theoretical engagement throughout shying away from explanations of Iranian nationalism that are heavily based on Iranian exceptionalism.³⁹³

This study laid out *the general historicity* and *specific causation* of modern state formation in Iran as well as the formation and re-formation of Iraniyat in relation to the wider international context and explored the *ideological content and instrumentality* of Iranian nationalism.

This thesis tackled the following key questions: what explains the failure of Pahlavi rulers in consolidating their narrative of Irannianness, especially in the face of other definitions of Iranianness such as that of Dr. Musaddeq, Ali Shariati, Khomeini, et; how can we analyse the existence of multiple nationalisms in Iran; what explains the peculiar features of Iranian nationalism such as the co-existence of secularism and monarchism that is very rare in the Middle East. These seemingly domestic questions were answered by locating the actors, their connections, their ideational repertoires and material capabilities and limitations within the international history of their respective periods. Set up against a

³⁹³ See Katouzian, "Arbitrary Rule: A Comparative Theory of State, Politics and Society in Iran," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 24 (1997).

background of the history of Constitutional Revolution and constantly told by debunking the international and domestic politics of the era, we witnessed the centralization of a decentralized rule, the unification of diverse ethnic, religious, socio-cultural elements, the disarmament of large segments of the population and perhaps most importantly for our purposes the ideational struggle over the content and meaning of Iranian nation. Following the historical sociological principle of staying “in” the history this thesis analysed state nationalism in Iran in *longue durée*, in three epochs, and thus could identify the changes and continuities in the content of Iranianness.

First epoch discussed the political context of the rise of nationalism as the ideology of the newly founded Pahlavi Dynasty. Agreeing with the broad modernist claim that nations are political constructs, the study situated the construction process within the international politics of the era starting from the end of the first world war continuing to coming of the Reza Khan as the ‘national saviour’ and his transformation to an enlightening monarch, secularising, Westernising while also centralizing his rule. The analysis debunked this ‘saviour’ myth as the founding myth of modern Iranian state in need of a nation which in turn needs to be saved and united. The thesis argued that from discussions of republicanism, to the consolidation of Aryanism in Iraniyat, from the suppression of tribes to the way foreign concessions and oil production were managed, Iranian nation and state building was a thoroughly international process. We have seen that this is the case for ideational and material aspects; for structural and agential elements.

Having this approach to Iranian nationalism provided us with a clear answer to the question of why Iran had experienced such a harsh, authoritarian rule and did not become like the still centralized and at times authoritarian but republican Turkey. Looking from the HSIR perspective as employed in this thesis, the general historicity and specific causation of Iranian nationalism is much clearer. The arguments that resort to any kind of exceptionalism with regards to Iran do not hold up. Iran did not incline to Aryanism or held on to monarchy after

constitutional revolution because it is not suitable for civic nationalism or republicanism. It also did not fail at Westernising or modernising by a measurable degree compared to for example Turkey. Nation and state building processes are not matters of technical application of Western concepts, they are not subject to better or worse performance on the part of the 'Easterners'.

As we have seen in great detail in Chapter Three, the general historicity and specific causation of Iranian nation and state building lie in the interaction between Iran and the world, between various factions of Iranians, their neighbours, their wider region. Nation building is not a performance by locals but it is born out of their agential choices in the face of complex web of relations. Military, economic, political and socio-cultural issues relevant to the world also compose the texture of Iranian politics by way of informing, shaping, contesting, negotiating with and at times defeating the Iranian actors. This point also explains the commonalities and differences between the Iranian and Turkish cases at the same period. The two cases shared the general historicity: the world-historical time of their era, the rise of nation-state as a political form, the need for the Western powers to tackle the newly founded Bolshevik regime as the contours of regional politics, the need to disarm their populations and build a new legitimizing discourse after the collapse of ancien regimes. However, they diverged in their specific causation, since they were certain path dependencies in each case that was only valid for them: the existence of great number of tribes for Iran and the existence of central rule and army for Turkey. But their specific causation was only domestic. The way Iran had been intervened by foreign powers, the presence of British around the time of Reza Khan's coup, the presence of oil and the mode of international interactions that brings to Iran are all part of the explanation of Iran's difference. So, the international is used in a systematic and historical fashion to explain difference not to reify the difference. This is one of the ways in which HSIR help us break our not methodological nationalism.

The second epoch included the brief but complex period between Reza Shah's abdication and 1953 coup. Following the historical sociological framework

allowing for the existence of multiple causes overdetermining one event or phenomenon, the thesis showed that Iranian nationalisms are overdetermined by domestic and international politics. Centring on what it defined as the key tension of the era, the clash of two nationalisms, the chapter dugged out the differences between Pahlavi dynasty's nationalism and Musaddeq's popular nationalism. It analysed the reasons behind the success of Musaddeq's nationalism and argued that the success was based on three pronged framework: framing of the process of oil nationalization as a "war of independence"; connecting this "holy war" with the international processes of imperialism and colonialism and linking the monarchy directly with the imperialism. Shaped by the post-war era tensions and the context of decolonization, Iranian nationalism redefined its other, from its neighbouring nations to the 'imperial powers'. The old struggle over territorial unity was now fought over the oil nationalization. Internally, Iranian popular nationalism problematized monarchical rule as the facilitator of imperialism.

The chapter was crucial in showing that the international context is not simply a restraint on domestic agency shaping them in way of contestation. On the contrary it is at times carrying a great enabling effect for the rise of new ideologies or new actors. This study also revealed that the international runs not through the nested hierarchies of scale, from local, regional, national to international. The international context has a constitutive effect transversally through the whole society and not just through the state. The oil workers or the middle classes were also in interaction with international politics at various levels throughout the 1951-53 period and they felt the impact of the international in their everyday lives.

The last epoch that this thesis covered was the era of Muhammed Reza Shah. Tackling such a long and complex period through a selection of three cases, the study presented the details and the reasons for the ideological reproduction of Iranian nationalism in the late 1950s, 60s and 70s. The three cases were the toppling down of Musaddeq and the rise of US influence in Iran; the White Revolution which the Shah was reluctant to begin and only did so under international pressure but which he then turned into the cornerstone of his

nationalism; finally changing regional power status of Iran with the withdrawal of Britain from the Suez Canal. This study argued that together with the oil boom, these developments led to the international bids of the Shah which then had domestic repercussions. Shah framed Iran as a regional and global leader with a military might and civilizational supremacy over its neighbours. Monarchy was sacralised for this and other purposes including the absolute suppression of all opposition to the regime. These three cases all required a heavy dose of nationalist discourse, a re-imagination and re-definition of Iranian nation in every decade. The study revealed that struggling with left-wing anti-imperialist nationalism; restructuring Iranian rural economy with pressures from outside; and turning Iran to a regional hegemon all indeed needed new discursive shifts along the way. Still relying on the army, monarchy and the Persian/Aryan identity (legacy of Reza Khan), Muhammed Reza showed creativity and a great deal of agency in his reshaping of the nationalism in Iran.

This thesis discussed at great lengths how Muhammed Reza Shah was enabled and at times constrained by international politics. The international aspects of Iranian politics at this era were as complex as the previous era. Cold War provided the world-historical context of the era. It provided development models, rooms of manoeuvre for local actors and at times outright pressures, ideological binaries that helped define internal and external 'others' such as the red and green in the Iranian context. However more specific developments also left their marks such as the Kennedy Administration's coming to power and their ideas of rural development for the territories in danger of Soviet dominance; the oil boom of 1973; the regional politics of 1960s and 1970s. The latter developments and the Cold War in general allowed Muhammed Reza Shah to develop a much more autonomous discourse for Iran, a more pronounced claim for independency. He promoted Iran as a strong state, a strong nation and strong and old monarchy dating back thousands of years. This was markedly different from the Westernizing country of the 1920s and 1930s; or the defiant country of 1950-53; or indeed the client of US in the 1960s and early 1970s. Indeed the slogan 'neither East nor Western but Iranian' was already in the discourse of his nationalism

before it was appropriated to the Islamist defiance against international system in the 1980s.

That Muhammed Reza Shah equated the Iranian nation with the monarchy and hence either postponed or outright dismissed all concerns regarding popular representation and democracy could only be possible in this international context which first gave rise to his power and then challenged and enabled him in ways that led him to his authoritarianism. It is far too easy to attribute all the peculiarities of Iran's authoritarianism under Muhammed Reza Shah to his personality, as it is often done with authoritarian rulers. But personality alone cannot account for the reasons of different aspects of his nationalism, his success in enduring in power as long as he did and his ultimate and absolute failure. The reasons for his failure are closely connected again to the changing international context in the late 1970s; the ideological developments in the world and in the region; to the changing nature of Cold War environment. When looked from this HS perspective that historicizes and allows for multiple causes, Iran does not look peculiar at all and becomes comparable to its neighbours and other relevant cases in other regions in terms of its interaction with the 'international'.

This thesis did not analyze the Iranian nationalism in the Iranian Revolution of 1979 even though the impact of international was as heavy as the previous eras. The most important reason of such a periodization, which starts with Reza Shah era and end with the period of Muhammed Reza Shah, that did not include the Revolutionary years is that the Revolutionary era is not monolithic but a process which displays several patterns of nationalism within the era. However, the framework produced in this dissertation can be applied to the Revolutionary era in order to unravel the international connection of Revolutionary nationalism in Iran. Such a study would contribute to the Iranian studies immensely in terms of understanding the ruptures and continuities of the newly established regime which presents itself as totally new.

Concluding Remarks: Denationalizing Iranian Nationalism

Nationalism is one of the most enduring ideologies running through the history of modern Iran. Starting with the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 it made its entrance to the political lexicon in the country and occupied a significant place in the Iranian politics. Both the rulers and opposition movements applied to the vocabulary of nationalism when voicing their demands despite the plurality of diverse, many times clashing meanings attached to Iranianness. The ideology of nationalism has served as a political tool in modern Iranian history, either in the hands of westernised intellectuals as part of a nation-building process, dynasties aiming at self-legitimation or opposition movements to mobilize the masses. It is also served as the catalyser of demands of independence,

Despite the importance of its centrality in Iranian history there is a limited number of works on Iranian nationalism. Moreover, although nationalism in the Iranian context has been approached from different angles few studies attempt to unpack “the international dimension” of this seemingly domestic issue. Following the research agenda that HSIR brings about this study attempted to unravel the international connections of Iranian nationalism. In doing so, the theoretical backbone of the study was the critical juncture between HSIR and modernist approaches to nationalism.

As such the study contributed to different research fields including HSIR, nationalism and Iranian studies.

The last decade witnessed growing literature on HSIR as we explored in Chapter II. As sophisticated this literature may be in theoretical terms, there are limited number of studies that apply this sophistication to the actual case studies. Although the literature discusses the merits and potentials of HSIR for social sciences and IR scholarship in a detailed manner, sometimes even in a manifesto style, there is a significant gap in terms of materialization of this highly theoretical discussions. This study addressed to this gap and applied the theoretical tools of

HSIR to the Iranian case. In doing so the main tool of analysis has been the co-constitution of domestic and international in the formation of Iranian nationalism by the state. International-domestic interaction as a productive level of analysis is put forward by the HSIR tradition. The historicisation and multi-causality are hallmarks of historical sociology tradition as a whole. This thesis focused mainly on these two research directions and on this understanding of politics as a whole rather than the inside/outside division.³⁹⁴ These were the tools that this study attempted to refine and thereby contribute to the future research of seemingly domestic developments in single countries within the field of IR from a historical sociological perspective.

These tools came to the fore because Iranian nationalism is not systematically examined, with a clear theoretical direction and with a consistent modernist understanding. The idea that Iranian nation is perennial has still currency among the academic circles. It may be argued that the seeming territorial continuity of the country creates a “territorial trap” for nationalism studies in the Iranian context. Rather than analysing nationalism in its relations with modern politics scholars fall prey to the appeal of ethno-symbolism. “Before the emergence of modern nationalism in Europe, all the constituting elements of nationalism were present and recognized in Iran.”³⁹⁵

But as Breuilly reminds, as social scientists, it is meaningless to strive for determining what constitutes the nation or when a group of people can be considered as a nation because nationalism achieves a meaning for a social scientist in the political realm.

This fact itself directs us to the need to use modernist theories of nationalism in the Iranian case in an organized fashion. These tools also came to the fore because

³⁹⁴ RBJ Walker, *Inside/Outside International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993).

³⁹⁵ Moaddel, *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism*; See also Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*.

despite the tendency to produce international conspiracies in the explanation of Iranian history within and outside of Iran, a social scientific location of Iranian politics within the world history of the 20th century is still needed.³⁹⁶ One has to move beyond the clouded picture of the conspiracies and assess the weight of international actors, international ideologies and geopolitics from a perspective of IR.

So, on the one hand there are theories of nationalism as an established field of social science with a lack of interest in world politics, with the exception of a few scholars, such as John Breuilly (as it was discussed in Chapter 2). On the other hand there are a few scholars in the discipline of IR who are interested in nationalism but only when it becomes an issue of international politics. This thesis attempted to combine the modernist understanding of nationalism with an IR perspective and for that purpose it based itself on the general principles of HSIR.

International-Domestic Interaction

Since the first premise of this study is that nations are modern constructions and are part of a general transformation in the society (from the modernist school of nationalism) and the second premise is that transformations of this magnitude have partial causes in the international arena it follows from these premises that how nationalism as a political movement and nation state as a modern political institution emerged is tied to the international realm. The thesis showed evidence for this conclusion by revealing first the importance of international structural conditions, such as the encroachment of Western capitalism upon the rest of the world in an accelerated pace which had an impact on Iranian economy (revenues of various sorts, including oil were monopolized by foreigners); on Iranian administration (foreign advisers sent, foreign laws adopted in Iran); on Iranian political culture (the idea of citizenship, of nation, of constitution, of republic, of communism and socialism roaming around the country); and on Iranian territory

³⁹⁶ Maryam Panah's and Kamran Matins's works is a nice exception. Panah, *the Islamic Republic and the World*; Matin, *Re-casting Iranian Modernity*.

(the big power rivalry that was a direct product of the expansion of capitalism to the other parts of the world resulted in several invasions of Iran by foreign powers). Following Fred Halliday's comparative contingency model this impact was also labelled as *general historicity* as these factors have a weight on the world in general rather than Iran in particular. Secondly, this study insisted that the interaction between international politics and domestic politics cannot be limited to the macro-level, as it usually done in the field of nationalism. The expansion of Western capitalism with the above mentioned impacts is only one aspect of this complex interaction. The reality of day-to-day international politics, the treaties, the armistices, the international public opinion, and also revolutions elsewhere such as Bolshevik Revolution, political transformations elsewhere such as Ottoman modernization and later the foundation of Turkish Republic, all went into the *specific causation* of Iranian nationalism.

It is only when we escape methodological nationalism that we can clearly identify these influences. Without this focus on the international-domestic interaction, Iranian nationalist uprisings, Reza Shah's or later his father's determination to build a strong Iranian nation state seem stem from, encouraged and facilitated by domestic developments only. That kind of narrow outlook would prevent us from explaining the timing of certain developments, as well as how they were possible in the first place. Since the issue is not simply to identify that there is an Iranian nation and nationalism in the modern era but to explain how they came about, the field of nationalism studies is greatly bolstered by this focus on international-domestic interaction. Also if the merit of the modernist school of nationalism is to emphasise the political nature of nationalism, the focus on immanent connections to world politics substantiates this emphasis further. It is only through revealing the intricate interaction between international and domestic politics that one can have a complete picture of the politics of nationalism (and Breuille claims that it is the only kind of nationalism that we can analyse in a social scientific fashion anyway)³⁹⁷. So, the focus on the international-domestic interaction proved

³⁹⁷ Breuille, *Nationalism and the State*.

to be very productive, indeed indispensable in terms of applying modernist understanding of nationalism to the Iranian case and an insistence on this focus is one of the suggestions of this study for further research.

This focus is also important in assessing the suggestions of this study for the field of IR. It was not long ago that revolutions started to be accepted as legitimate IR topics, although they were always considered to be international processes by historical sociologists.³⁹⁸ The issue with nationalism is indeed similar. Although no one would deny the international character of the emergence and development of nationalism worldwide and the particular international aspects in specific cases, a systematic treatment of cases of nationalism from an IR perspective is yet to come. The insistence of this thesis on the causal role of international events in the formation of the nation state and the respective nationalism should also be perceived as a suggestion for IR. The discipline would contribute to the study of nationalism and nation state formation as topics within the discipline, similar to revolutions. This is not only because nationalisms and the rise of nation states in specific countries do have repercussions for the international politics later, but more so because it is only with international interventions such as World Wars, change in balance of power, change in the polarity in global politics, and regular diplomacy that nation states and nationalisms were constructed and shaped, so they are international events. They also have vast regional importance, which is crystal clear in the Iranian case, as Iran is strategically located between Central Asia, the Middle East and Asia. Reza Shah's militaristic understanding of nationalism had international reasons as well as international consequences, as his son Mohammed Reza Shah built the strongest army in the Middle East (with the immense help of the US).

³⁹⁸ For studies of revolutions in IR see Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*; Lawson, *Negotiated Revolutions*.

So the inclusion of studies on nationalism to IR is a suggestion of this thesis for further research within the field. The focus on international-domestic interaction as an integral part of the explanation of nationalism leads to a second suggestion as well. Since domestic politics forms the second part of this interaction, a closer look into the details of domestic politics would bolster the attempts of those IR scholars that seek to escape the state-centric approach in IR. Hobson's arguments against methodological nationalism and internationalism alike are relevant at this point. With the systematic treatment of domestic politics as they relate to IR the tendency to approach international factors as explanatory of all politics as well as the reverse tendency of building explanations solely from domestic politics would be undermined.

The inner conflicts of a society also come to the fore as it is not always the state that interacts with international politics, but also opposition forces, other contenders to power, students, men of religion, tribe leaders and so on as we have detailed out in the Iranian case in the preceding chapters (one clear example is the relations between Soviets and the movement in Gilan, another clear example is the instable but ever-present relations between Great Britain and local forces, most notably certain tribes of Iran). So, the inclusion of nationalism within IR through this historical sociological lens leads to the inclusion of non-state actors to the international scene.

Historicisation

The *sine qua non* of the historical sociology tradition is historicisation. Put in other words: "If there is a motif that lies behind historical sociology, it is 'never forget time and place'."³⁹⁹ The historicisation of the international system as well as particular events and themes within international politics is one of the chief objectives of HSIR approach, a good example of which is Rosenberg's work on

³⁹⁹ Lawson, "Historical Sociology in International Relations", 359.

anarchy and its historicisation.⁴⁰⁰ For the purposes of this study we shied away from this kind of historicisation and rather focused on the historicisation of seemingly timeless notions: the Iranian nation, nation state, and nationalism. Historicisation was necessarily accompanied by being space specific. This thesis focused on the specific causation of Iranian nation state and nationalism. The moment when in 1921 Reza Khan and Sayyed Zia produced a very much nationalist discourse for their attempt to capture and transform the state should be located within its specific history, that of foreign involvement and domestic protests of several decades. It should be located in its specific historical context because the danger of not doing so is to produce ‘natural histories of nations’ as argued by Delanty and Isin. They claim that HS was always about escaping national histories and historicising the modernity that brought nations about which would then shed light upon the present day.⁴⁰¹ Also historicisation of the state in particular is a trait of the neo-Weberian historical sociology very well represented by Michael Mann’s seminal work.⁴⁰²

Here, using historicisation as a clear research tool led this thesis to expand its time span. Although the development of a full-fledged nation state and nationalist ideology was in the era of Reza Shah’s rule (1921-1941), the investigation at hand stretched back to the late 19th century to understand the conditions that made Reza Shah’s rule possible and successful in the first place. This was so because it is not the modernity of the Iranian nation or nationalism that is the topic of social scientific curiosity, that is a given when one works with the modernist theories of nationalism. It is how it was successful and how it developed the way it did that attracts the real attention in this study. For that purpose and in parallel with historical sociology tradition change is understood to be a process over time. Also, the thesis investigated the period after Reza Shah in order to achieve an understanding of the implications of the kind of nationalist politics that the Shah

⁴⁰⁰ Rosenberg, *The Empire of Civil Society* (London: Verso, 1994).

⁴⁰¹ Gerard Delanty and Engin F. Isin, “Introduction: Reorienting Historical Sociology,” in *Handbook of Historical Sociology*.

⁴⁰² Mann, *the Sources of Social Power, Vol. 1&2*.

pursued. And the implications included further entanglement with foreign powers during the Second World War and the result in the rise of communist and nationalist opposition in the form of Tudeh Party and National Front.

However, historicisation is not exhausted by merely including the conditions and implications of a moment of change. It also includes, especially since this thesis aimed to utilize the tools of HSIR, the location of the phenomenon to be explained within international history. In that regard, the emergence and development of Iranian nation state and nationalism was linked to ideological, political and social developments worldwide within the time-span explained above. Here the criterion for selecting the events from international history was their obvious relevance to the issue at hand but that relevance was not understood in narrow fashion to include only very obvious international events such as the First and Second World Wars, invasions of Iran and so on. But also other subtle developments such as regional developments that only had an impact on Iran in an indirect fashion were included. As such historicisation transcends mere narration and periodisation and becomes a substantial research choice, one that this study recommends for further research in the field of nationalism as studied in IR.

Historicisation in this context has a specific advantage for modernist theories of nationalism and that is as mentioned in the preceding pages the denaturalizing effect it has on the seeming 'national' histories. Although the field of nationalism usually proceeds with comparisons of small or large number of cases and uses the denaturalizing effect of such comparison as they stress on the universality of certain experiences, the location of the emergence, development and full implication of a nationalist movement within international history is capable to produce the same effect within a single case study. It can be said that single case studies on nationalism would gain a lot of substance by historicisation used in this wider fashion.

Historicisation has further implications for the discipline of IR. All the critical approaches in the discipline point out the ahistorical character of the mainstream

IR.⁴⁰³ It is almost certain that there is a long way to go in terms of reaching the awareness on historicisation and history writing that is already present in other disciplines within the discipline of IR.⁴⁰⁴ So, single case studies on nationalism in IR would contribute to that effort of problematizing the use of history and periodizations. A challenge that this thesis faced was how to periodize as periodization is much more substantial research issue than an organization division of a topic. It stresses certain elements as opposed to others. In the Iranian case, analyzing the long transformation of the late 19th century not until 1914 but until 1921 when Reza Shah assumed power was a choice made and it stressed the importance of not World Wars nor change of governments but change of state structure from a monarchy to a nation state and the discourse from a vaguely anti-imperialist semi-nationalist rhetoric to a full-fledged nationalism. So this study humbly suggests further theoretical contemplation on historicisation and actual applications in detailed case studies.

Multi-causality

Along with historicisation, another classic methodological orientation of historical sociology used in this thesis was multi-causality. Holton explains how Weber understood and applied multi-causality:

There was not sustainable general causal theory able to undergrid historical sociology. What was required instead was analysis open to the interplay of different elements in the constitution of a particular problem in question. The precise nature of this interplay needed to be arrived at in each case through empirical research

⁴⁰³ For a discussion of the timelessness of realism see Barry Buzan, “The timeless wisdom of realism?,” in *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁴⁰⁴ For a discussion on this topic see Martin Hall, “International Relations and Historical Sociology: Taking Stock of Convergence,” *Review of International Political Economy* 6, no. 1 (1999), 101–119. “The argument here is not that Historical Sociology of International Relations should recreate a theory or philosophy of history, but that periodizations at least should be problematized, and that the theoretical consequences of specific periodizations should be discussed.” 107.

guided by hypotheses stimulated through the construction of ideal-types.⁴⁰⁵

So, multi-causality is not listing several causes with no interaction or hierarchy between them but it is about making sense of the ‘interplay’ between different causes, a sense that can only come empirically in the details of the case. In the Iranian case, we have explained how ideological, political and economic causes cross-cutting international and domestic realms created the conditions for the rise of Iranian nation state and Iranian nationalism. Combined with the time and specific nature of historical sociological research, the generalizations one can reach from the Iranian case or any other case for that matter remains rather limited. This is an important juxtaposition against the generalizing tendencies found in the modernist school of nationalism especially in the founding texts of the school such as Gellner’s. It also intervenes to the linear understanding of history and problems of retrospective analysis. If different factors are at play for each case with only very broad tendencies covering them all, the directionality of modernization fades away. Again historicisation and multi-causality protects the scholar from the traps of retrospective analysis by prioritising the respective frameworks of each case, and each moment of transformation within the case. Since nationalist movements are generally the result of a long and slow transformation this is particularly important. Also, as noted within the study there is a tendency to perceive the outcome, the modern Iranian nation state as an inevitable outcome of this modernization process. However, when one takes into consideration that there is no single cause to this outcome, it becomes easier to dispense with that argument.

Historicisation and multi-causality are also effective tools against the Middle Eastern and/or Iranian exceptionalism. What is denaturalised and put in its complex context cannot be used to argue for the uniqueness of case, as every case is only as unique as any other. The general theoretical and methodological

⁴⁰⁵ Robert Holton, “Max Weber and the Interpretative Tradition,” in *Handbook of Historical Sociology*, 32.

applications on the other hand are universal. Since nationalist myths are one of the arenas where exceptionalist arguments are employed by Europeans and non-Europeans alike it is important to emphasise a perspective that has solid ground in IR; that contextualizes the case in international history; and is sensitive to the many factors at play.

Without locating the Iranian nationalism in its historical and international context, Reza Shah and Muhammed Reza Shah would look as an omnipotent figure that awakened and crowned the sleeping beauty called Iranian nation overnight. Without looking into how Iran interacted with the world around it, Iranian nationalism would appear to arise out of the essence of the immortal entity called the Iranian nation. Without investigating different realms of political life around the globe and in Iran, politics of nationalism would look natural and simple: the battle of those who are for or against the nation. However, Iranian nation-state and nationalism were modern constructs, products of a longer transformation that was conditioned by global politics, involved several actors rather than lonely heroes. This particular state formation and ideology were in the middle of intricate political relations that went beyond the immediate content of nationalism. This thesis showed that HSIR is able to disentangle the myths from the facts of political history and at the same time it was a call for the IR scholars with a historical sociological outlook because IR has a lot to contribute to the correction of the image of sleeping beauty.

Reinterpretations of history are not just different interpretations of the same facts; they also bring into being new facts. These new facts should cause us to rethink our accepted frameworks of explanation, which have often been established on the basis of much narrower histories. In so doing, they also transform the meaning of preestablished facts whose status as facts (and also for whom they are facts) is brought to light.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁶ Bhambra, "Historical Sociology, Modernity, and Postcolonial Critique," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 3 (2011): 655.

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APPENDIX A: CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

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EDUCATION

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2015 | Ph.D. Area Studies
Middle East Technical University |
| 2011 | MPhil International Relations
London School of Economics and Political Science |
| 2008 | M.Sc. Sociology
Middle East Technical University |
| 2007 | M.Sc. International Politics
School of Oriental and African Studies |
| 2003 | B.S. Sociology
Hacettepe University |

WORKING EXPERIENCE

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 2011 – 2015 | Researcher, Centre for Black Sea and Central Asia
Middle East Technical University |
| 2010– 2011 | Consultant, Grand National Assembly of Turkey |
| 2009 | Research Assistant, Centre for Black Sea and Central Asia
Middle East Technical University |

2004 – 2006 Research Assistant, Graduate School of Social Sciences
Middle East Technical University

SCHOLARSHIPS and AWARDS

2006-2007 British Council Chevening Scholarship
2006 Travel Grant, Middle East Technical University

PROJECT EXPERIENCE

2012 – 2016 *Bordering, Political Landscapes and Social Arenas: Potential and Challenges of Evolving Border Concepts in a post-Cold War World (EUBORDERSCAPES)*
European Commission 7th Framework Program

2013 – 2015 *Gezi Protests and Turkish Foreign Policy toward the Middle East*
Scientific Research Project Middle East Technical University

2011 – 2015 *EU External Borders and the Immediate Neighbors: Analyzing Regional Development Options through Policies and Practices of Cross-Border Cooperation (EUBORDERREGIONS)*
European Commission 7th Framework Program

2011 – 2013 *The Impact of Constitutional Courts on Democratic Consolidation: A Comparative View on Turkey and Germany*
The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey

2010 EUROMED *International Junior Short Term Expert for the Project “Expansion of the European Turkish ABiGEMs (ABiGEMs) Network Project, Turkey, Lot1”*
EuropeAid/125171/D/SER/TR

2009 *Faith-based Organizations and Exclusion in European Cities (FACIT)*
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PUBLICATIONS

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“Revolutionary Situations and International Relations”. *25 Years of Revolution: Comparing Revolt and Transition from Europe 1989 to Arab World 2014*, CASAW, January 8-9 2014, Edinburgh, UK.

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APPENDIX B: TURKISH SUMMARY

İRAN MİLLİYETÇİLİĞİNE TARİHSEL SOSYOLOJİK BİR YAKLAŞIM (1921-1979): BİR ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER PERSPEKTİFİ

İran kimliğine ilişkin sorular, 19. Yüzyıldan itibaren İran'ın ideolojik ortamında hâkim olan entelektüel ve politik tartışmaların merkezinde yer almıştır. İran kimliğinin içeriğine ilişkin tek bir cevap vermek imkânsızdır çünkü bu kimlik, hem farklı dönemler içinde hem de aynı dönem içerisinde farklı anlamlar taşımıştır. Diğer milliyetçiliklerde olduğu gibi İran'da da İran kimliğini tanımlamak bir mücadele konusu olmuştur. Bu kimlik tartışılmış, müzakere edilmiş ve modern İran tarihi boyunca yeniden inşa edilmiştir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı 1921-1979 yılları arasında İran Devleti tarafından inşa edilen İran milliyetçiliği söylemini tahlil etmektir. Tarihsel Sosyoloji ve modernist milliyetçilik teorilerinin kesişim noktasına dayanarak kavramsal çerçevesini oluşturan bu çalışma, İran milliyetçiliğinin uluslararası alanla bağlantılarını ortaya çıkarmak amacı taşımaktadır. Diğer milletler ve milliyetçilikler gibi İran milliyetçiliği de, Fred Halliday'in altını çizdiği üzere "19. yüzyılın başlarında itibaren ortaya çıkan yeni uluslararası ve normatif iklimin ve buna eşlik eden devlet oluşumu sürecinin bir ürünüdür."⁴⁰⁷

Bu tez, Halliday'in söz konusu analizini dikkate alarak İran milliyetçiliğini uluslararası ve normatif iklimi dikkate alarak incelemektedir. 20. Yüzyılda İran ulus devletinin ve devlet milliyetçiliğinin oluşumunda uluslararası alanın rolüne odaklanmaktadır. Bu tezde İran milliyetçiliği ile devletin bu milliyetçiliği

⁴⁰⁷ Fred Halliday, *Nation and Religion in the Middle East* (Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000): 56.

tanımlamasında etkili olan politikalar kastedilmektedir. Dolayısıyla bu tezde sadece İran devletinin oluşturduğu milliyetçilik söylemi ele alınacaktır.

Çalışmanın Kapsamı

İran milliyetçiliğini incelemek için yola çıkan bir tez olarak ilk önce milliyetçilik teorilerine başvurulacaktır. Ancak milliyetçilik teorileri İran örneğinde yeterince zengin değildir. Aynı şeyi milliyetçilik analizinde uluslararası alanın rolü için söylemek de mümkündür. Modern milliyetçilik kuramları kapitalizm ve sanayileşme gibi makro uluslararası yapılara yeterince vurgu yapmakta ancak bu alandan gelen daha küçük ve gündelik müdahaleleri analize dâhil etmemekte yetersiz kalmaktadırlar. Bu tez ise modern devlet- uluslararası siyaset ve milliyetçilik üçgeninde hareket ederek, İran kimliğinin İran devleti tarafından neden bu şekilde tanımlandığı; Rıza Şah'ın modern devlet kurma girişiminin neden başarılı olduğu ancak kendini bu devletle tanımlayan bir halk yaratmada neden başarısız olduğu, Musaddık'ın yarattığı İranlılık kavramının halkı neden yakaladığı ve tüm gücüne rağmen Muhammed Rıza Şah'ın halk tarafından devrilmekten neden kurtulamadığı gibi sorulara cevaplar aramaktadır. Tüm bu süreçlerde uluslararası rolünü anlamak için sadece küresel ölçekli, emperyalizm gibi, makro yapılara bakıldığında mikro uluslararası bağlantılar gözden kaçırılır.

Bu çalışmanın kuramsal çerçevesini milliyetçiliği modern devlet ile ilişkisi içinde ele alan modernist milliyetçilik kuramları ve “uluslararası” kavramının analitik kapsamını genişleten Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplinindeki Tarihsel Sosyoloji yaklaşımı oluşturmaktadır. Uluslararası ve ulusal kavramları arasındaki ilişkiyi yeniden formüle eden bu iki yaklaşım İran milliyetçiliğini analiz ederken gereken teorik ve metodolojik araçları sağlayacaktır.

Tarihsel Sosyoloji yaklaşımına ilişkin tam teşekküllü bir tanım vermenin zorluğuna karşın, Tarihsel Sosyoloji en geniş anlamıyla toplumların tarih boyunca nasıl geliştiğini araştırır. Genellikle, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber

gibi modern sosyal teorinin kurucuları, Tarihsel Sosyolojinin kurucuları olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu önemli figürler gelenekselden moderne geçiş süreci boyunca toplumsal yapılar ve sosyal aktörlerin nasıl değiştiğini anlamaya çalıştılar. Hepsi farklı kuramlar sunsalar da temelde, "tarihsel bir proje üzerinde birleşmektedirler".⁴⁰⁸

Sosyolojinin özellikle ABD'de kurumsallaşması sonrasında sosyal ve kültürel değişime ilişkin daha tarihdışı yaklaşımlara doğru bir kayma yaşandı. Bu tarih dışılığa karşı 1970 ve 1980'lerde canlanan Tarihsel Sosyoloji zamanla Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplininde de tartışılmaya başlandı ve disipline getirilen en büyük eleştirilerden tarih dışılığa karşı bir çözüm olarak değerlendirildi. Aynı zamanda uluslararası ve ulusal arasındaki sert sınırları aşmada da önemli bir çıkış yolu sundu.

John Hobson, George Lawson ve Justin Rosenberg⁴⁰⁹ birlikte kaleme aldıkları makalede C. Wright Mills'in "sosyolojik hayal gücü" (1959) kavramından yola çıkarlar. Mills'e göre klasik sosyologlar analizlerini insan dünyasının üç boyutunun kesişim noktasında inşa ederler: Yapı, tarih ve biyografi. Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplininde yapılan tarihsel sosyolojik çalışmalar ise biyografi yerine uluslararası kavramını koyarak yeni bir formülasyon geliştirirler. Böylece "sosyolojik hayal gücünün" odak noktası Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplini doğrultusunda yeniden ayarlanır ve yaklaşımın entelektüel gündemini oluşturan yeni bir nirengiye ulaşılır.

Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplinindeki tarihsel sosyoloji yaklaşımı ve modern milliyetçilik kuramları bu çalışmanın araştırma sorusunun ilham kaynağını oluşturmaktadır. İlk yaklaşım uluslararası ve ulusal kavramları arasında karşılıklı bir ilişki olduğunu söylerken, modern milliyetçilik kuramları ise milliyetçiliğin

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⁴⁰⁹ John Hobson, George Lawson and Justin Rosenberg, "Historical Sociology," in *International Studies Encyclopaedia*, ed. R. Denemark (Wiley-Blackwell: UK, 2010).

bir siyaset biçimi olduğunu ve dolayısıyla ulusal ve uluslararası alandan gelen etkilere açık olduğunu belirtir.

19. yüzyıldan itibaren İran büyük bir dönüşüm geçirmeye başlamıştır. Kaçar dönemi, özellikle de bu dönemin son yılları sadece İran halkı için değil bu dönüşüm dönemini çalışan sosyal bilimciler açısından da tartışmalı olmuştur. Modern, merkezi devlet parametresinden bakıldığında Kaçar dönemi aslında bir devlet değildir. Çünkü modern ulus devletin özelliklerini taşımamaktadır.

Kaçar İrani'ndeki siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyal şartları bu topraklarda yaşayan insanlar için katlanılamaz kılan uluslararası süreçler 19. Yüzyıl sonlarında ortaya çıkmaya başlamıştır. Kaçarların ülkeyi dünya pazarına ekleme biçimi, büyük güçlerin müdahaleleri, hızla değişen siyasi ve iktisadi yapılar, anayasacılık, temsil edilme, adalet gibi dünyayı etkisi altına alan fikirler Kaçarları, modernize edilmesi veya yıkılması gereken, geri kalmış yöneticilere dönüştürmüştür.

Bu dönemde uluslararası alan sadece bir gelişme modeli sunmakla kalmamış, İran topraklarına hem devlet düzeyinde hem toplum düzeyinde bugüne kadar hiç görülmemiş müdahalelerde bulunmuştur.

Dolayısıyla, İran'ın geçirdiği bu büyük dönüşümün en büyük nedenlerinden bir uluslararası alan olmuştur ve bu yüzden de bu alan İran'a dair yapılan çalışmalara dâhil edilmelidir.

Bu durum milliyetçilik çalışmaları için de geçerlidir. *Uluslararası İran kimliğinin yaratılması ve yeniden yaratılması süreçlerinin de ayrılmaz bir parçadır.* Rıza Şah döneminin başlarında hakim olan Batı-benzeri İranlılık tanımı, dönemin sonlarına doğru yükselen ırksal üstünlük tezi, dünyayı kasıp kavuran ve Musaddık'ın İranlılık tanımını oldukça önemli şekillerde etkileyen sömürge karşıtı hareket, Soğuk Savaş ve onun yarattığı ideolojik ortamda ortaya çıkan "Ne Doğu ne Batı" söylemi, bunların hepsinin ortaya çıkış süreçlerinde ulusal ve uluslararası yapıların ve siyasetin kesişimi hayati bir rol oynamıştır.

Uluslararası ve ulusal siyaset ilişkisinin İranlılar için ne kadar önemli olduğunu bugün bile görmek mümkündür. Bunun için nükleer anlaşma sonrasında kutlama yapmak için sokaklara dökülen İranlılara bakmak yeterli olacaktır.

Michael Billig⁴¹⁰ milliyetçilik ideolojisinin belirli bir ulus devlete bağlı olmadığını, milliyetçiliğin daha ziyade uluslararası bir ideoloji olduğunun altını çizmektedir. Benedict Anderson⁴¹¹ da parallel bir biçimde milliyetçiliğin insanlık tarihindeki başarısını vurgulamak için milliyetçiliğin modüler ve hayal edilmiş olma özelliklerinin altını çizer. Ancak ulusal ve uluslararası arasındaki spesifik etkileşim ortaya çıkarılmadıkça uluslararası bir ideoloji olarak milliyetçilik tam bir anlam ifade etmez ve içi boş bir gösterene dönüşür.

Genelde Ortadoğu özelde ise İran milliyetçiliği dünyada 19. Yüzyılda ortaya çıkan fikinsel ve materyal şartların birleşiminin bir sonucudur. Ancak bu milliyetçiliklerin tikel içerikleri farklı özgüllüklerin uluslararası ile etkileşime girme biçimiyle belirlenmiştir. Uluslararası ile bu etkileşim ise ulusal dinamiklerden bağımsız bir arka plan olarak kalmamış bu ülkelerin özgül gelişimlerinin kurucu bir parçası haline gelmiştir. Kimlik oluşumu da bu etkileşim sonucunda oluşan süreçlerden biridir.

Ulusal ve uluslararası arasındaki bu etkileşimin tarihsel sosyolojik bir araç olduğunu belirttik. Peki uluslararası ile kastedilen nedir? Bu çalışmada *uluslar arası*, temel olarak devletler ve toplumlar arasındaki etkileşimler anlamına gelmektedir: İki dünya savaşı, komşu ülkelerdeki siyasi, ekonomik ve toplumsal gelişmeler ve bunların İran devleti ve toplumu üzerindeki etkileri, İran'daki Britanya, Rusya ve daha sonrasındaki Amerikan ve Sovyet müdahaleleri, bu güçlerin İran devleti ve çeşitli toplumsal kesimlerle kurdukları ilişkiler ve yapılan

⁴¹⁰ Michael Billig, "Nationalism as an International Ideology" in *Changing European Identities* ed. Glynis Marie Breakwell and Evanthia Lyons (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1996): 187.

⁴¹¹ Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

anlařmalar ve yabancı güçlerin varlıęının toplumsal dokudaki daha geniş etkileri gibi. Bunlar dıřında daha dolaylı etkiler de mevcuttur. Örneęin Bolřevik Devrimi'nin getirdięi fikri evren, devrimin sosyalist hareketlere ivme kazandırması vb. Dünyanın içinden geçtięi sosyal, politik ve siyasi durum İranlı aktörler için de kurucu olmuş ve bu anlamda da İranlı olmak kavramına atfedilen anlamı etkilemiştir.

İran Çalışmaları ve İran Milliyetçilięi

Son birkaç yılda yapılan yeni çalışmaların varlıęına rağmen, İran bağlamında milliyetçilik literatürü çok zengin deęildir. İran milliyetçilięi üzerine odaklanan sınırlı sayıda çalışma vardır. İran milliyetçilięine iliřkin ilk çalışmalardan birini Richard Cottam'ın 1964 yılında yayınlanan *İran'da Milliyetçilik* [*Nationalism in Iran*] adlı eseri oluřturmaktadır. Bu çalışmada Cottam, milliyetçilięin siyasi davranřl üzerindeki etkisini incelemektedir.⁴¹² Susan Siavoshi'nin 1989 tarihli *İran'da Liberal Milliyetçilik* [*Liberal Nationalism in Iran*] isimli çalışması da ilk çalışmalardan biridir ve Ulusal Cephe Partisi'nin ortaya koyduęu milliyetçilięi tartışmaktadır.⁴¹³ Daha sonra 1993'te Mustafa Vaziri Benedict Anderson'ın kuramını İran örneęine uygulamıř ve *Hayali Bir Ulus Olarak İran* [*Iran as Imagined Nation*] isimli bir çalışma ortaya çıkarmıştır.⁴¹⁴ 2000 yılında Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Sınır Kurguları: İran Ulusunu řekillendirmek* [*Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation: 1804-1946*] isimli çalışmayı kaleme almıştır. Kitapta ulusu tanımlarken coęrafyanın rolü tartışılmaktadır.⁴¹⁵ David Nejde Yaghaubian (2000), *Etnisite, Kimlik ve Milliyetçilięin Geliřimi* [*Ethnicity, Identity, and the Development of Nationalism in Iran*] adlı çalışmada, Ermeni

⁴¹² Richard Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1979).

⁴¹³ Susan Siavoshi, *Liberal Nationalism in Iran* (Boulder: Westview Press: 1989).

⁴¹⁴ Mostafa Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation* (New York: Paragon House, 1993).

⁴¹⁵ Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation: 1804-1946* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

elitlerin biyografik analizi aracılığıyla bir milliyetçilik incelemesi yapmaktadır.⁴¹⁶ Sırasıyla 2000 ve 2002 yıllarında önce Touraj Atabaki *Azerbaycan: İran'da Etnisite İktidar Mücadelesi* [*Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and the Struggle for Power in Iran*] sonra da Brenda Shaffer, *Sınırlar ve Kardeşler* [*Borders and Brethren: Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity*] isimli çalışmalar yapmışlardır.⁴¹⁷ Afshin Marashi 2008 yılında *İran'ı Uluslaştırmak* [*Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State*] adlı çalışmasında İran'da ulus oluşumunu toplumsal seremoniler, ritüeller ve eğitim üzerinden incelemiştir.⁴¹⁸ Alandaki son çalışmalar Ali Ansari'ye ait *Modern İran'da Milliyetçilik Politikaları* [*The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*] (2012), Majid Sharifi'nin 2013 tarihli *İran'ı Hayal Etmek* [*Imagining Iran*] ve Reza Ebrahimi'nin Mart 2016'da yayınlanan çalışmasıdır.⁴¹⁹

Bu değerli çalışmaların hiçbiri milliyetçiliğin oluşmasında uluslararası alanın rolü ve ulusalla etkileşimine odaklanmamaktadır. Bu anlamda iç-dış arasındaki ilişkiyi göz önünde bulundurarak İran milliyetçiliğini analiz eden tarihsel sosyolojik bir çalışmaya halen ihtiyaç vardır.

Craig Calhoun Tarihsel Sosyoloji yaklaşımıyla çalışma yapmak için pek çok neden olduğunu söyler. Bu nedenlerin ilki toplumsal değişimi çalışmanın önemidir. İkincisi, tesadüfiliğin önemini kavrayarak “hatalı zorunluluk ilüzyonunundan” kaçınmak ve üçüncüsü analitik kategorileri içinde oluştukları ve uygulamaya kondukları tarihsel bağlam içinde ele alma ihtiyacıdır. Bu listeye milliyetçiliği tarihsel sosyolojik bir perspektifle çalışmanın önemi eklenebilir.

⁴¹⁶ David Nejde Yaghaubian, *Ethnicity, Identity and the Development of Nationalism in Iran* (PhD Diss., University of Berkeley, 2000).

⁴¹⁷ Brenda Shaffer, *Borders and Brethren: Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity* (Mass.: MIT Press, 2002); Touraj Atabaki, *Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and the Struggle for Power in Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

⁴¹⁸ Afshin Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power and the State: 1870-1941* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2008).

⁴¹⁹ Ali Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Reza Ebrahimi, *The Emergence of Dislocative Nationalism. Race and Modernity in Iran, 1860-1940*, forthcoming.

Delanty'nin belirttiği gibi "Küresele önem veren tarihsel sosyolojik bir çalışmanın milliyetçilik çalışmalarına katkısı milliyetçiliğe dair siyasi söylemleri modern toplumun yükselişi ve dönüşümüyle ilişkilendirilecektir." Bu çalışma İran devleti tarafından oluşturulan milliyetçilik tanımını İran modernleşmesiyle ilişkilendirmeyi ve bunu da uluslararası bağlantıları göz önüne alarak yapmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Ortadoğu'yu tarihsel sosyolojik bir yöntemle çalışmak önem taşımaktadır çünkü bu literatürde çok sınırlı sayıda çalışma Avrupa dışı coğrafyaları ele almaktadır. Tarihsel Sosyoloji kapitalist modernleşme teorilerine dayanır ve bu teoriler de temel olarak Avrupa deneyimini merkeze koyar.⁴²⁰ Aynı şeyi milliyetçilik çalışmaları için de söylemek mümkündür. Son yıllar bu alanda yapılan ve Avrupa üzerine odaklanan derinlemesine araştırmalara tanıklık etmektedir. Bu gözlem sömürge ve sömürge sonrası bağlamlar için de geçerlidir. Resmi olarak sömürgeleştirilmeyen ancak sömürgeci güçlerin varlığını derin bir şekilde deneyimleyen bir ülke olarak İran'da milliyetçilik politikalarının ortaya çıkışı ve gelişimini ortaya koyan az sayıda çalışma mevcuttur. Bu çalışma bu söz konusu eksikliğe bir katkı yapmayı hedeflemektedir.

Fred Halliday'in işaret ettiği gibi, "hiçbir devletin tarihi tamamen ulusal olamaz; aynı şekilde uluslararasıının kurucu rolünü görmezden gelen ekonomi, devlet ya da toplumsal tarih de mümkün değildir." Bu çalışma da İran milliyetçiliğine dair uluslararası bir analiz yapmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Üç Dönem-Üç Farklı İrânlılık

İran devleti tarafından 1921 ve 1978 yılları arasında tanımlanan İrânlılık kavramının ortaya çıkışı ve gelişimi, günümüz İran'ının bir parçası olmaya devam etmektedir. Çeşitli aktörler uluslararası alandan gelen katkılarla özgürlük, birlik, kimlik gibi kavramları tanımlamakta, uluslararası siyaset ve İran'ın bu resimdeki

⁴²⁰ Julia Adams, Elisabeth Clemens and Ann Shola Orloff, *Remaking Modernity: Politics, History, and Sociology* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005): 56.

yerine dair algıları şekillendirmektedir. İran milliyetçiliği ve İran'ın dış dünyayla entegrasyonu birbirine bağlı iki olgudur. Aryan tezinden modernleşmeye, laiklikten İslami kimliğe devlet tarafından tanımlanan İranlılık kavramının pek çok yönü ulusal ve uluslararası arasındaki etkileşimin etkisi altındadır.

Bu çalışmada İranlılık kavramına devlet tarafından yüklenen anlam üç dönemde tahlil edilmekte ve her bir dönem içinde bulunduğu uluslararası yapısal ve siyasi faktörler ışığında tahlil edilecektir.

İlk dönem, yeni kurulan Pehlevi Hanedanlığı sırasında devletin ideolojisi olarak ortaya çıkan İran milliyetçiliğinin siyasi bağlamını tartışmaktadır. Birinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan başlayarak Rıza Şah'ın 1941'de devrilmesine kadarki dilmi ele alan bu bölümde Rıza Şah'ın ulus ve devlet kurma sürecinde milliyetçiliği nasıl tanımladığı açıklığa kavuşturulmaktadır. Buna göre Rıza Şah öncelikle rakiplerinden sıyrılarak kendisini parçalanmakta olan İran ulusunun kurtarıcısı olarak resmetmiştir. Savaşın yıkıcı etkilerinin yarattığı fikri ve maddi iklimi kullanarak ilk defa devlet düzeyinde bir ulusal kimlik yaratma işine girişmiş, ulusal ve uluslararası dinamiklerin spesifik etkileşiminin İran siyaseti ve toplumundaki değişen etkilerine göre önce rejimi değiştirmeye çalışmış başarısız olduğu noktada ise monarşiyi İranlılık tanımına dahil etmiştir. Tek bir kimlik yaratma çabası içinde ülkede varolan kimlikleri geçersiz kılmaya çalışmış ve bunları modernleşme karşıtı olarak konumlandırmıştır. Batılılık Rıza Şah döneminde gerçek İranlılık benliğine dönüş olarak sunulmuş, ülkenin geri kalmasının nedeni ise Araplar ve Türkler gibi komşu ülkeler olarak belirlenmiştir. Avrupa'da yükselen faşizmin de etkisiyle Aryan tezi canlandırılmış ve Avrupalı olmak ile İranlı olmak arasındaki ilişki bu tez aracılığıyla kurulmuştur.

Bu tezin yoğunlaştığı ikinci dönem Musaddık dönemidir. Musaddık dönemi aslında rejime karşı muhalif bir milliyetçilik anlatısının kısa bir süre için de olsa devlet düzeyinde etkili olduğu bir dönemi yansıtmayı nedeniyle inceleme altına alınmıştır. Musaddık tarafından kurulan İranlılık kavramı Rıza Şah'inkinden oldukça farklıdır. Kavramdaki bu kayma, dönem içinde bir dizi kriz yoluyla

gerçekleşmiştir. Popüler milliyetçiliğin yükseliş nedenlerini anlamak için bu dönemde iki süreç ele alınmıştır. Bunlardan ilki, özerk Azerbaycan ve Kürdistan Cumhuriyetleri'nin kurulması; ikincisi de petrolün millileştirilmesidir. Musaddık milliyetçiliğinin oluşmasında merkezi olan bu süreçler uluslararası alan, modern devlet ve milliyetçilik ilişkisini anlamada temel olarak kullanılmaktadır. Bu iki olay da oldukça karmaşık uluslararası bağlamda tezahür etmiştir. İkinci Dünya Savaşı, İran'ın Britanya ve Sovyetler Birliği tarafından işgal edilmesi, petrolün dünyada ve bölgede artan önemi ve bunların ulusal şartlarla kesişimi bu bölümün analiz ettiği iki süreçte de oldukça etkili olmuştur.

İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda İran'ın işgaliyle iki güç, Britanya ve Sovyetler Birliği, İran'daki etki alanlarını genişletmeye çalışmışlardır. Bu durumu üçüncü bir güçten yardım alarak dengeleme amacını taşıyan İran hükümeti, ABD ile petrol imtiyazı görüşmelerine başlamıştır. Bu görüşmeler Britanya ve Sovyetler Birliği'ni tedirgin etmiştir. Sovyetler Birliği talep ettiği petrol imtiyazını elde edemeyince etki alanını elinde tutmak için Tebriz'de çeşitli örgütlenmelere gitmiştir. Birliklerini İran'dan çekmeyi reddederek Tahran Konferansı'nda alınan kararı ihlal etmiştir. Sovyetlerin bu kararı, ABD İran Büyükelçisi tarafından sadece Azerbaycan'ı kontrol altında tutmaya çalışmak olarak anlaşılmamış, İran'da Sovyet dostu bir rejim oluşturma girişimi olarak adlandırılmıştır. Bunun üzerine ABD, Başkan Truman'ın Tahran Konferansı kararları uyarınca Sovyetler Birliği'nin İran topraklarından çekilmesi gerektiği mesajı ile İran-SSCB ilişkisine müdahil olmuştur. Bu mesaj SSCB'nin geri çekilmesini sağlamamıştır. Tam tersine SSCB kuzey bölgelerde etkisini artırmıştır. Bu etkinin en önemli sonuçlarından biri İran topraklarında Azerbaycan ve Kürdistan Özerk Cumhuriyetlerinin Sovyet desteğiyle kurulması olmuştur. Ancak iki özerk cumhuriyet de bağımsızlık talep etmemiş özerklik talebinde bulunmuştur. Literatürde bu iki cumhuriyetin kurulması ya sadece Sovyetler Birliği'nin desteğiyle ya da İran milliyetçiliğine karşı yükselen Azerbaycan ve Kürt milliyetçilikleri ile açıklanmaktadır. Ancak bu iki açıklama da yeterli değildir. İlk açıklama gerek Azerbaycan gerekse Tahran'daki aktörlerin rolünü yok saymaktadır. İkinci eğilimin eksikliği ise bu cumhuriyetlerin Tahran'dan

taleplerine bakarak anlaşılabilir. Hem Azerbaycan hem de Kürdistan Cumhuriyetindeki hareketin liderleri İranlı olduklarının altını çizmiş ancak daha demokratik ve katılımcı bir yönetim talebinde bulunmuşlardır.

Sonuç olarak bu iki girişimin SSCB'nin yardımı olmadan gerçekleşmesi mümkün değildir. Uluslararası ve ulusal dinamikler eklemlenmiş ve bu girişimleri doğurmuştur. Bu olay yekpare bir İran milliyetçiliği ile rekabet edebilecek farklı milliyetçiliklerin varlığını göstermesi bakımından önem taşımaktadır.

Bu dönemde ele alınan ikinci süreç Muhammed Musaddık'ın yükselişidir. İran siyaseti için çok büyük anlamlar taşıyan Musaddık'ın sahneye çıkışı petrol siyaseti ile yakın bir ilişki içindedir. SSCB ile petrol imtiyazı görüşmeleri yapılırken Musaddık buna şiddetle karşı çıkmıştır. İranlılar için petrol meselesi sadece devlet düzeyinde deneyimlenen bir politika olmanın çok ötesindedir ve oldukça önemli toplumsal yansımalara sahiptir. Petrol rafinelerinde çalışan işçilerin durumu, Britanya vatandaşlarının ülke içindeki dokunulmazlıkları farklı sosyal grupları farklı şekillerde etkilemektedir. İran halkı ve İran'da yaşayan ve petrol sektöründe çalışan İngilizler arasındaki derin yaşam standartlarına ilişkin farklar derin bir eşitsizlik duygusu yaratmaktadır.

Nitekim petrol rafinelerindeki kötü çalışma şartları 1946 yılında büyük bir greve neden olmuş ve Britanya'ya uygulanan petrol imtiyazı siyasi gündemin en tepelerine taşınmıştır. Ülkedeki baskı nedeniyle Britanya hükümeti yeni bir teklif yapmaya karar vermiştir. İran hükümetinin bu teklif konusunda pazarlık yapma talebi Britanya tarafından reddedilince ise konu son derece politik bir hal almış ve Meclis'teki milletvekillerin çoğu anlaşmayı reddettiklerini açıklamışlardır. İşte bu ortamda Musaddık Ulusal Cephe adında şemsiye bir parti kurmuştur. 1950 yılında yapılan seçimlerde Meclis'e giren Parti'de solcular, İslamcılar gibi farklı gruplar yer almıştır. Musaddık petrol konusunu bir bağımsızlık meselesi olarak adlandırmış ve ülkede oluşan Britanya karşıtı iklimi petrolün millileştirilmesi gündemi için değerlendirmiştir.

Emperyalizm karřıtlığına dayanan ve ırksal baęlantılar yerine İran topraklarında yařayan herkesi İranlı sayan bu tanım halka yayılabiymiř ve buradan ıkan hareketle İran devleti petrolü millileřtirmiřtir. Musaddık'ın bařarısı üçlü bir çerçeveye dayanmaktadır. Musaddık petrolün millileřtirilmesini bir “kurtuluř savařı” olarak resmetmiř ve bu kutsal savařı emperyalizm ve sömürgecilik řeklindeki uluslararası süreçlerle iliřkilendirmiřtir. İkinci Dünya Savařı sonrası ve sömürgecilik karřıtı hareketin güçlü olduęu bu dönemde İran milliyetçilięi öteki olarak komřu kimlikleri deęil emperyal güçleri iřaret etmiřtir. Rıza řah dönemindeki toprak bütünlüęü mücadelesi bu dönemde petrolün millileřtirilmesi mücadelesine dönuřmüřtür. Monarři rejimi ise emperyal güçlerin bir uzantısı olarak görülmüř ve İran kimlięinin ulusal sınırlar içindeki ötekisi halini almıřtır. Bu dönem uluslararası alanın sadece aktörleri kısıtlamadıęını aynı zamanda yeni imkânlar sunduęunu göstermesi bakımından hayatidir. Bu bölümde uluslararası ile ulusal arasındaki iliřkinin sadece devletler ya da elitler arasında gerekleřen bir etkileřim olmadıęını göstermesi aısından önem tařımaktadır.

Bu alıřmanın ele aldıęı son dönem Muhammed Rıza řah dönemidir. Bu kadar uzun ve karmařık bir dönemi analiz edebilmek için İranlılık kavramının tanımında hayati olan üç örnek dönem seçilmiřtir. Bunlar, Musaddık'ın bir darbe ile devrilmesi, Beyaz Devrim ve Britanya'nın Süveyř Kanalı'ndan çekilmesi kararıyla bařlayan ve İran'ın kendini bölgesel bir güç olarak tanımlamasına neden olan süreçtir. Tüm bu dönemlerde, ulusal ile uluslararasıın spesifik etkileřimi doęrultusunda İranlılık kavramı dönüřüm geirmiřtir. Bu geliřmeler ve petrol fiyatlarının ani yükseliřiyle Muhammed Rıza řah daha baęımsız iç ve dıř politika geliřtirmiř ve bu durumun İran kimlięi aısından önemli sonuçları olmuřtur.

Muhammed Rıza řah İranlılıęa dair kendi tanımını yaparken öncelikle Musaddık'ın yarattıęı İranlılık kavramını yapı söküme tabi tutmuřtur. Emperyalizm ve İran'ın emperyal güçlerle iliřkisi farklı bir řekilde yeniden tanımlanmıř ve modernleřme ve kalkınma aęırlıklı bir politika çerçevesinde bu hedefler gerek milli abalar olarak resmedilmiřtir. Musaddık'ın baęımsızlık

politikasını şekillendiren “negatif denge” kavramı “pozitif milliyetçilikle” değiştirilmiştir.

Rıza Şah’ın tanımladığı gibi monarşi rejimi yine bu dönemde de İranlılığın ayrılmaz bir parçasıdır. Ancak bu dönem Rıza Şah dönemindekinden farklı bir düzeye taşınmış ve kutsallaştırılmıştır. Böylece rejime karşı tüm muhalefeti baskı altına almak amaçlanmış ve rejimi eleştirmek hain olmakla eş tutulmuştur. Soğuk Savaş döneminde şekillenen bu milliyetçilik anlayışında sol milliyetçilik de denetim altında tutulmaya çalışılmış ve tabandan gelen bir muhalif hareketi engellemek amacıyla kırsal ekonomi dönüştürülmeye çalışılmıştır. Maddi ve askeri olarak güçlü bir rejim yaratan Şah zamanla bölgesel bir hegemon olma çabasına girişmiştir. Ülkenin içinden geçtiği derin dönüşüm farklı bir milliyetçilik anlatısına ihtiyaç duymuş, bu uğurda da Şah İranlı olmayı yeniden tanımlamıştır.

Bu çalışmada uluslararası alanın Muhammed Rıza Şah’ı bazen nasıl sınırlandırdığı bazen ise kendisine imkân sunduğu analiz edilmektedir. Şah’a yeni bir milliyetçilik anlatısı yaratmasında Soğuk Savaş’ın getirdiği fikri ve maddi ortam etkili olmuştur. İki kalkınma modeli sunan Soğuk Savaş döneminde Şah önce Batılılaşma modeli üzerinde durmuş ancak rejimini konsolide ettikçe bu model yerine kendi kalkınma modelini sunmaya girişmiştir. Bu modelde Soğuk Savaş’ın iki tarafının da etkisini görmek mümkündür. İran’ı güçlü bir ülke, güçlü bir ulus ve güçlü ve oldukça kadim bir monarşi olarak resmetmiştir.

APPENDIX C: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enformatik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>

YAZARIN

Soyadı: ÖZDEMİR
Adı : ZELAL
Bölümü: BÖLGE ÇALIŞMALARI

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce): A HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH
TO IRANIAN NATIONALISM: AN IR PERSPECTIVE

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: