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**MODERNIZATION THROUGH ARCHAIZATION, POLITICAL IDEAS IN IRAN IN  
THE 20TH CENTURY**

ABSTRACT

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The growth of the political role and importance of Islam in recent decades has led to increased interest and rethinking of traditional scientific approaches to the role of religion as an ideological system in recent times. The Islamic Revolution in Iran, as the first successful attempt to create a theocratic state in the twentieth century, has aroused serious scientific interest. The dynamics in a declaredly modernizing country and the changes after the world's first religious revolution raise many questions. It is important to map the internal and external factors determining the rise or erosion of a given ideological matrix, paradoxically modernizing itself through modified archaic models. After the Islamic Revolution, explanatory models are sought for why and how, in modern times, an old ideological system, with all the mechanisms for its functioning, denied by progressive humanity, will determine the future of millions of people for a long time.

### **Relevance of the study**

The main reasons for writing this work can be sought in several directions. First, despite its comparative geographical proximity, the Islamic Republic of Iran remains not only poorly known, but has also not focused the attention of scholars on it as a major problem of history and political anthropology in Bulgaria. There is a lack of detailed research on the use of cultural heritage by the Pahlavi dynasty and the dynamics of this use after the Islamic revolution. There is a lack of focused research that would outline the theoretical approaches to the causes and results of the revolution of 1978-79, which seriously changed the concept of modernization in the second half of the twentieth century.

The Russian Federation's war against Ukraine (2022 - 2025) has highlighted the lack of specific research on the success/failure of the export of ideologies, characteristic of the imperial policy of the Russian/Soviet elite. The example of the creation, development and policy of the Tudeh party is an excellent research object in this scientific field. The question arises: how can different cultures be and are activated in times of crisis? The scientific interest in the barely visible but constant resilience of one of the old local religions - Zoroastrianism, which, despite historical vicissitudes and its relatively small number of followers living on the territory of Iran, opens up new fields for research. The complex dynamics of the Zoroastrian community complement the attempt to outline the modern/archaic opposition in the field of religious affiliation and political games. One, almost anonymous for Iranian researchers, religious minority are the followers of the Baha'i faith. Like the Tudeh party, the Baha'i religious doctrine is a product of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike the communist idea imported from abroad through the Tudeh party, the Baha'i Faith originated in Iran and for a number of reasons spread beyond its borders. The attempt to compare three, at first glance, incomparable ideological systems is a serious scholarly challenge.

### **Main goal and tasks**

The main goal of this work is to obtain qualitatively new knowledge about the processes and phenomena related to the recent history of Iran, placing them in the context of modernization through archaization as part of the multi-layered ideological processes. The goal is specified in several tasks:

First: to study the state and development of Iran in the twentieth century, taking into account internal and external factors (political and economic development, military conflicts, social tensions, etc.).

Second: To study the complex interplay between the cultural heritage of Persia, the modernization of the country desired by Shah Reza Pahlavi, but within the framework of Persian identity, and the real, everyday Muslim (Shiite) culture, with an older matrix of Zoroastrianism visible in it.

Third: To analyze the phenomenon of the “first Islamic revolution” in the context of the general attitudes and expectations of different social groups and their leaders, bearers of different cultural models. Here, a key question is to what extent can the rise of an old religious system (archaization) fit into the intensive process of declared modernization of the country and the region?

Fourth: To analyze three ideological systems – the ancient, local Zoroastrian, the Baha’i faith created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the imported – communist, following the example of the Tudeh party.

Fifth: To present a model for understanding the complex dynamics of the relationships between modernization processes and archaic matrices that are adapted in modern times. The ambition is that this model, with some refinement, can be applied to the study of other countries in the region.

The goals thus set and the tasks for their achievement imply a consistent chronological study of the phenomena and processes. The chronological framework conditionally closes the period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The problems of the dynamics of the various ideological matrices require probing studies back in time. The available academic literature and the author's personal observations make it possible to trace processes and phenomena during the first 20 years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Methods and methodology**

Due to the limited opportunity to study the archives in Iran on site, most of the documents discussed in the text are extracted from publications by world-renowned scholars. Whenever possible, access to the original sources was sought. Documents from the Stasi Records Agency, the annual reports on religious freedom of the US government in the section dedicated to Iran, documents from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and various news sites were studied. During the author's two visits to Iran, empirical ethnographic information was collected in the form of semi-structured interviews.

The topic and tasks of the proposed work defined two large, interrelated problem areas for research:

- The dynamics of the recent history of Iran;
- Political anthropology of modernization through archaization.

A review of the state of research in Bulgaria, as well as the available literature in Farsi, English, and Russian, was made.

The main methods used in this dissertation are historical method, analysis and synthesis, comparison method, classification method and generalization method. The approaches of political anthropology are important. This work is guided by the premise that *politics* or *the political* should not be considered as a separate area or field, but should be

studied as an articulation between power relations, cultural processes and historical trajectories. The work is guided by the neo-Boasian approach. Applied through observation and short free interviews with local people, both in the capital and in the significant historical sites that also shape the Iranian identity. The hierarchy of places of memory is clearly visible in personal contact with specific spaces. Without entering the field of visual anthropology, but applied to the hierarchy of images and space, the self-reflexive method also yields relevant results. The study uses a wide range of methods, well developed by various academic disciplines. Bulgarian science is already moving beyond narrow disciplinary limitations and showing the fruitfulness of this approach.

The specific methodological statements related to the problems under consideration are presented in each separate chapter of the work. The proposed text uses the categorical apparatuses and achievements of contemporary science. Key to the development of the doctoral thesis are the two terms: *modernization* and *archaization*. The author presents different points of view of different research schools on the two terms and defines his position.

## **CHAPTER 1.**

### **THE COMPLEX PATH OF THE NEW ANCIENT NATION**

This chapter sets the general historical framework in which the processes and phenomena under study are situated. The aim is to present them chronologically and to outline the context of their emergence in a given historical period.

#### **1.1. Earliest Inhabitants**

This section presents the results of archaeological excavations from the sixth millennium BC, with a focus on Susiana (today Khuzestan Province). The major migration waves of small groups of nomadic, horse-riding peoples speaking Indo-European languages from the late second millennium BC are traced. Three main groups are identified - the Scythians, the Medes and the Persians. The Persians settled in three areas: south of Lake Urmia, on the northern border of the Elamite kingdom and in the vicinity of modern Shiraz, to which area they gave the name Parsa. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Persians were led by Hakamaneesh, the ancestor of the Achaemenid dynasty. His descendant, Cyrus II, led the combined forces of the Medes and Persians to create the most extensive empire known in the ancient world.

#### **1.2. The Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BC)**

In 546 BC, Cyrus defeated the Lydian king Croesus and secured control of the Aegean coast of Asia Minor, Armenia, and the Greek colonies along the Levant. He conquered Parthia, Khorezm, and Bactria. Cyrus besieged and captured Babylon in 539 BC and freed the Jews who were being held captive there. When he died in 529 BC, his kingdom extended eastward to the Hindu Kush in present-day Afghanistan. Darius I attacked mainland Greece, but his defeat at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC forced him to withdraw the borders of his empire to Asia Minor. Cyrus and Darius perpetuated the greatness of the Achaemenids through prudent and far-sighted administrative planning, successful military maneuvers, and a relatively humane worldview.

In 330 BC, After a series of defeats by Alexander the Great, the last of the Achaemenids, Darius III, died. At its height, the Persian Achaemenid Empire was the largest state the world had ever known. Charismatic conquerors, ideologists, and builders, the Achaemenid rulers—Cyrus and Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes—represent the archetype of the "great man," and the stories of their exploits, defeats, and patterns of rule have been told for centuries.

### **1.3. Alexander the Great and his successors**

In 334 BC, the army led by Alexander the Great advanced into Asia Minor (Achaemenid satrapy). He captured Egypt, Babylon, Susa, Ecbatana, and Persepolis. Darius' family was returned to the palace and the satrap remained in his post, but a Macedonian garrison commander and treasurer were attached to him.

Alexander entered Persepolis victoriously and remained there for four months. He showed his admiration for the founder of the Persian Empire by visiting the tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadae. During this time, Alexander learned that Darius III, whose title had been stripped by his satraps, was being held captive by the viceroy of Bactria, Bes, who had fled east. Alexander set out in pursuit; near Damghan he found the dying Darius stabbed by the satrap (330). Alexander is said to have covered the dying king with his own cloak. Because of this, and because he respected and preserved the culture of Iran, Alexander was given the status of an "Iranian" king by Persian tradition.

Alexander married Roxana, daughter of the most powerful of the Bactrian chieftains. In 323 BC, Alexander was struck by a fever and died in Babylon without leaving an heir. He took the title "King of Kings" introduced by the Achaemenids. Authors in the Iranian tradition call Alexander "The Last Achaemenid". His empire was divided between four of his generals. One, Seleucus, who became ruler of Babylon in 312 BC, gradually conquered most of the territory of modern-day Iran. He founded the Seleucid dynasty. By building one of his capitals near Babylon, Seleucus began the tradition of building new capitals.

### **1.4. Parthians (247 BC – 226 AD)**

Soon after the secession of Bactria, around 239, the former province of Parthia declared its independence. Seleucus II tried to stop the expansion of the new invaders, but he also had to deal with the rebellion of Antiochus. Under Mithridates I (171-138), partly due to the advance of Rome into Asia, many provinces were united under the Parthian crown. Between 160 and 140, Mithridates conquered Media, Elymais, Persis, Charakena, Babylonia and Assyria, to which he added Gedrosia, Sistan and perhaps the Herat region to the east. A Parthian garrison city was built on the left bank of the river Tigris, which would later become the capital. Mithridates restored the Achaemenid tradition, calling himself "Great King", but he also added the name Philelinos to his coins to emphasize his favoritism towards the Hellenic population. But when Demetrius II tried to regain the eastern provinces of the Seleucid Empire, the Hellenes in the cities revolted and sided with the one they called "The Conqueror" (Nicator). After Demetrius II was captured, Mithridates did not vent his anger on the Hellenic subjects, but severely punished Elymais and plundered the temples of Athena and Artemis, from where he carried off an enormous amount of treasures.

### **1.5. The Sassanids 224–642**

The next long-ruling dynasty was the Sassanids, who created an empire roughly within the boundaries achieved by the Achaemenids, with its capital at Ctesiphon. The Sassanids sought to revive Persian traditions and to eradicate Hellenistic cultural influence. The rulers adopted the title of shahinshah (king of kings), as sovereigns over a multitude of petty rulers known as shahrdars.

Sassanid rule and its system of social stratification were aided by Zoroastrianism. It originated in Persia between 1500 and 1000 BC, but it did not become the state religion until the Sassanids. The Zoroastrian priesthood was given extraordinary power. The head of the priestly class, along with the military commander and the head of the bureaucracy, were among the first men of the state.

At this time, the Roman Empire replaced Greece as the main Western enemy. Shapur I (241–72), son and successor of Ardashir, led successful campaigns against the Romans and in 260 even captured the emperor Valerian. Towards the end of the reign of Khosrau II (591–628), Persian power declined, further weakened by economic decline, heavy taxation, religious unrest, serious social stratification, the growing power of provincial landowners, and rapid succession of rulers. These factors would facilitate the Arab invasion in the seventh century.

### **1.6. The Arab Invasion**

The first caliph, Muhammad's successor, Abu Bakr, defeated the Byzantine army at Damascus in 634 and began the conquest of Persia. The Islamic conquest was aided by the material and social bankruptcy of the Sassanids. The local population had nothing to lose by cooperating with the conquering power. The Muslims offered relative religious tolerance and fair treatment to the population, which had voluntarily accepted their rule. The adoption of Islam spread most frequently among the urban population and more slowly among the peasantry. The majority of Persians did not become Muslims until the 9th century. As the new state religion, Islam imposed its own system of beliefs, laws, and social relations. Arabic became the official language of the court in 696.

Unlike the Sasanian period, which, together with the Achaemenid period, was distinguished by a certain monarchical legitimacy and continuity, the Muslim invasion caused profound upheavals, imposing a new language for official communication – Arabic – and a new religion for the majority – Islam. However, it would be wrong to believe that this invasion swept away all the remnants of ancient ideologies. It should be borne in mind that the change of religion was slow and did not cover the entire population. Small Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian communities have survived to this day. Some regions, for example, on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, retained relative independence for a long time and practiced their old religions. A significant part of the large landowners retained their property, some of them became vassals of the newcomers, and others made attempts to proclaim themselves independent principalities.

The 13<sup>th</sup> century was marked by the brutal invasion of the hordes of Genghis Khan. A significant part of the infrastructure was destroyed, many people, especially men, were killed; between 1220 and 1258, the population of Persia decreased dramatically.

In 977, a general named Seboktigin founded the Ghaznavid dynasty. Although at that time they still recognized the supremacy of the Samanids, the emir gained fame and great wealth, undertaking a series of raids on the principalities of neighboring India. Taking the title



of sultan for the first time in Muslim history, his son Mahmud Ghaznavi received the recognition of the caliph in Baghdad and began in 998 a long reign (until 1030), marked by numerous conquests and laying the foundations of a dynasty that ruled for about two centuries. Ghaznavi remained in history as the man who commissioned the writing of the Shah Nameh.

### **1.7. Abu al-Qasem Fyrdowsi-e Tusi (934-1025) and his “Book of Kings” (Shâh-nâme)**

Fyrdowsi (or Ferdowsi) was born around 934 in the vicinity of Tus, in Khorasan, into a family of the small agricultural aristocracy. He probably began his monumental work, the Book of Kings (Shâh-nâme), when he was about 40 years old. By 994, he had completed the first draft of the book. In its completed form, the poem consists of about 50,000 couplets and is probably the longest epic poem in world literature.

The Book of Kings tells the history of Iran from the creation of the world and the mythical eras to the Arab invasion in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. It consists of two parts: the first is based on myths and legends; the second introduces historical figures such as Alexander the Great. The entire poem is filled with a strong “national” feeling and is an apology for the Iranian spirit. Over the centuries, this text became a true emblem of the Iranian rulers; Especially in the Mongol era at the beginning of the 14th century, illustrated manuscripts of the poem multiplied.

### **1.8. The Safavid Dynasty**

The Safavids, who came to power in 1501, were leaders of a Sufi order. From their home base in Ardabil, they recruited followers among the Turkmen tribes and turned them into an effective fighting force and instrument of territorial expansion. In the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, the Safavids adopted the Twelver Shia Islam. In 1501, under their leader Ismail, they seized power in Tabriz, which became their capital. Ismail was proclaimed Shah of Iran. The Safavid Empire was dealt a fatal blow in 1524, when the Ottoman Sultan Selim I defeated its forces at Chaldaran and occupied its capital. Although Sultan Selim was forced to retreat, his invasion destroyed the belief in the Shah as a semi-divine figure and weakened his influence over the Qazalbash chieftains. In 1533, the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent occupied Baghdad and then extended Ottoman rule into southern Iraq. Except for a brief period (1624–1638) when Safavid rule was restored, Iraq remained in Ottoman hands. The Ottomans contested control of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus, until the Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin in 1639 established borders that remained largely unchanged.

Complex games of control and retreat characterized the rule of the most successful Safavid Shah, Abbas (1587–1629). Serious investments in the construction of mosques and support for Islamic institutions had an unexpected result for him: the clergy became increasingly independent of the central government. The Shah moved the capital to Isfahan. The decline of the Safavid dynasty was followed by a period of anarchy, open conflict, and poverty.

### **1.9. The Qajar Dynasty, 1795-1925**

A series of power struggles between the Zand, the Qajar, and other tribal groups disrupted economic life and plunged the country into chaos. Agha Muhammad Qajar defeated the last Zand ruler outside Kerman in 1794, thus establishing the Qajar dynasty, which ruled

until 1925. The Qajars revived the concept of the Shah as a shadow of God on earth and exercised absolute power over civil servants. They appointed princes as governors of provinces and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century increased their power over that of the tribal chiefs, who provided warriors for the Shah's army.

The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was marked by complex diplomatic and economic games with the two most aggressive superpowers, Britain and Russia. However, efforts at modernization were often thwarted from within. An example is Mirza Khan Shirazi's fatwa banning smoking, which ended a British tobacco concession to the detriment of Persia.

The last absolute monarch of the Qajar dynasty, Muzaffar ad-Din Shah (1896–1907), was a weak ruler. Public anger was fueled by the Shah's tendency to make concessions to Europeans in exchange for generous payments to him and his officials. The people began to demand limits on royal power and the establishment of the rule of law, as their concerns about foreign, and especially Russian, influence grew.

Before the constitutional revolution, traditional Iranian society had a dual system of power, in which clerics, tribes, and local nobles checked the king's patrimonial powers. Two sets of laws were in effect: Sharia and custom. The Shah failed to respond to protests from the religious establishment, merchants, and other classes. In August 1906, the Shah was forced to issue a decree promising to draft a constitution. In October, an elected assembly convened and drafted a constitution that provided for strict limits on royal power; an elected parliament (Majlis), with broad powers to represent the people, and a government with a cabinet subject to the approval of the Mejlis. The Shah signed the constitution on 30 December 1906. He died five days later. Additional fundamental laws, approved in 1907, provided for limited freedom of the press, speech, and association, as well as security of life and property. The constitutional revolution marked the end of the medieval period in Persia.

His successor, Muhammad Ali Shah, was determined to crush the constitution. After disputes with the Mejlis, in June 1908 he used his Persian Cossack brigade, led by Russian officers, to attack the Mejlis building, arrest many of the deputies, and close the Assembly. Resistance to the Shah coalesced. In July 1909 Constitutional forces advance from Rasht and Isfahan to Tehran, overthrow the Shah, and restore the Constitution. The former Shah flees into exile in Russia.

Hopes that the Constitutional Revolution would usher in a new era of independence from the Great Powers died when, under the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907, Britain and Russia agreed to divide Persia into spheres of influence. The agreement was unilaterally violated by Russia. In response to its attempt to seize the capital, the chieftains of the Bakhtiari tribe dissolved the Majlis, suspended the Constitution, and seized power.

### **1.10. World War I and the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty**

Although Persia declared neutrality during World War I, its territory became a field of confrontation between the warring parties. Britain took advantage of the temporary withdrawal of Russia, preoccupied with its internal problems, and established control through the Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919. It was accepted that this established a British protectorate over Persia. However, it provoked serious resistance and the Majlis refused to approve it. In February 1921, the officer of the Persian Cossack brigade Reza Khan, in cooperation with the prominent journalist Sayyid Ziya ad-Din Tabatabay, entered Tehran and seized power. Tabatabay became

prime minister, and Reza Khan became commander of the armed forces in the new government. He quickly emerged as a dominant figure. After only three months, Tabatabay was forced to leave the government and sent into exile. Reza Khan became Minister of War.

In 1923 Ahmad Shah, who had succeeded his father as Shah in 1909, agreed to appoint Reza Khan as prime minister and to leave for Europe. In October 1925, the Majlis overthrew the Qajar dynasty. In December, the Majlis presented the crown to Reza Khan and his successors. He was crowned Reza Shah Pahlavi in April 1926. The Shah adopted the dynastic name Pahlavi, a sign that he wished to infuse Persia with a new spirit of nationalism. With the help of a group of army officers and younger bureaucrats, he launched a program of change that would bring Persia into the modern world. In 1935, the country was officially named Iran.

With the help of the renewed army, the Shah secured control over the entire territory. He developed and launched a program to build a school network, and the University of Tehran was established to prepare personnel for the modernizing country. Special attention was paid to road infrastructure and light industry. In order to limit the power of the clergy, he undertook a codification of laws, creating a corpus of secular law, applied and interpreted by a secular judicial system outside the control of religious institutions. The Shah excluded clerics from judicial positions and created a system of secular courts. The state even administered the administration of waqfs (religious charitable organizations). Women's rights began to be guaranteed - girls' schools were opened, their inclusion in the labor market was encouraged. The desire for women's emancipation led to a ban on wearing the veil (chador) in 1936. Although the unveiling of women was a huge blow to the ideological authority and beliefs of the clergy, its resistance remained ineffective. As his power stabilized, Reza Shah clashed with the Iranian clergy on many issues. He introduced a law requiring everyone (except Shiite jurists) to wear Western clothing. By the mid-1930s, Reza Shah's rule had caused great discontent among the Shiite clergy. The faithful were angered by policies that allowed for the mixing of the sexes and ordered all citizens to bring their wives to public events without head coverings. The Shah limited public mourning ceremonies to one day and required mosques to use chairs during these ceremonies instead of the traditional floor seating.

Reza Shah secured his power through the Majlis, but also with the help of the security services, which were notorious for their brutality, especially against disgruntled clerics. However, the clergy maintained their positions outside the major cities.

Through a series of measures, Reza Shah limited the influence of Britain and the USSR. To counter their influence, he encouraged German merchants. On the eve of World War II, Germany was Iran's largest trading partner.

### **1.11. World War II**

World War II followed the pattern of World War I – Iran declared neutrality but was pressured to limit German activity. After a series of ultimatums, the Allied armies invaded Iran on August 25, 1941. The army capitulated three days later. A new prime minister, Mohammad Ali Foroughi, was appointed. On September 16, 1941, Anglo-Russian troops entered Tehran and forced the ruler to abdicate. The Majlis was convened for an extraordinary session, at which his son was proclaimed Reza Shah's successor. The next day, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was sworn in before parliament, and his father went into exile.

In implementation of the Lend-Lease Act of 1941, Iran's territory became the main supply point for the USSR with ammunition and equipment from the Allies in 1943. As World War II raged in Europe and Asia, intense diplomatic activity for a new order was taking place. After the first conference in Cairo, Churchill and Roosevelt traveled to Iran for the Tehran Conference with Joseph Stalin, Premier of the Soviet Union. The three leaders agreed to meet on November 28, 1943, to discuss military strategy for D-Day and how to defeat Japan. Although the three leaders had different goals, the main thing they agreed on was the opening of a second front against Germany. They agreed to respect Iran's independence and to support Turkey if it was attacked by Axis forces.

The war affected the economy and the standard of living in the country. A serious gap opened between the poor and the rich, which strengthened the positions of the Tudeh party, which was strongly connected to and dependent on the USSR. The oil concession demanded by the USSR led to a serious crisis. The Majlis and Mohammad Mossadegh, who succeeded Prime Minister Pishevari who had fled to the USSR, terminated the Soviet oil concession. In 1947, Iran and the United States signed a military aid agreement. In February 1949, Tudeh was accused of an attempt on the Shah's life, and its leaders fled abroad or were arrested. The party was banned.

#### **1.12. Oil – the key to politics**

The extraction and trade of oil, increasingly important for the world economy, linked external and internal political tensions. The opening of the market and embargoes, imposed mainly by Britain, alternated. The tension escalated to an attempted coup and dethronement of the Shah in 1953. Prime Minister Mossadegh's policy was characterized by an attempt to nationalize the oil industry and escape from the influence of the United States and Britain. The Shah went on a long trip to Europe with his family to avoid the political crisis. On August 19, 1953, the Iranian military carried out a coup against the government of Mossadegh, overthrowing him and restoring the Shah. During the clashes, members of the Tudeh party were involved in anti-state actions and after the failure, many were arrested and sentenced to death. The Shah's policy tied the country's future more and more closely to the United States and Britain. In the atmosphere of the Cold War, relations with the USSR were correct, but not close. The Shah relied more and more seriously on the secret police service SAVAK.

New modernization projects were launched, which relied on educational reforms, increasing the attractiveness of army service and secularization. The Shah called the reforms the “White Revolution”. In June 1963, Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini was arrested after a fiery speech in which he directly attacked the Shah. The arrest caused three days of unrest. The Shah brutally suppressed the riots.

Years of arrests and exile followed for the charismatic leader. The state severely limited the political power of the clergy, but allowed Islam to exist at the grassroots level. Khomeini published and distributed his book of religious instructions, which regulated the lives of the Shiites and answered their religious questions. His work was a defense of the Muslim community against modernization.

#### **1.13. Iranian nationalism – is a united nation possible?**

On 21.1.1965, Prime Minister Mansur was assassinated by members of a radical Islamic group linked to clerics close to Khomeini. In April, an assassination attempt was made on the Shah, organized by a group of Iranian graduates of British universities. But the rule of the new Prime Minister Hoveyda was marked by relatively long stability and prosperity in all spheres of public life.

In 1960, Queen Farah Diba Pahlavi gave birth to an heir to the throne. In 1967, steps were taken to legalize the succession procedure, providing that the Queen would automatically become regent unless the Shah appointed someone else. On 26.X.1967, the Shah celebrated his long-delayed coronation and lavish celebrations marking the 2,500th anniversary of the establishment of the empire of Cyrus the Great.

Of the National Front parties that survived the 1963 repression, the most prominent was the Freedom Movement of Iran, led by Mehdi Bazargan. He worked to establish links between his movement and the moderate clerical opposition. Khomeini's activism in exile won him new supporters. Younger Iranians, disillusioned with what they saw as the weakness of the legal opposition to the regime and drawn by the example of guerrilla movements in Cuba, Vietnam, and China, formed underground groups for armed struggle against the regime. Most of these groups were exposed and crushed by the repressive apparatus, but two survived: the Fedayeen, or People's Warriors, and the Mujahedeen, or People's Fighters. The Fedayeen were Marxists, while the Mujahedeen relied on Islam as an ideology of political struggle.

In 1975, the Shah introduced a one-party system, called the Rastakhiz Party, and banned all other political parties. The goal was to establish absolute autocracy. Opposition groups began to form, including a religious reform movement led by intellectuals led by Dr. Ali Shariati. The controversial modernization policies and excessive spending by the ruling elite created new tensions in the country. The foreign presence intensified the feeling that the Shah's modernization program threatened Islamic and Iranian values and identity. Increasing political repression and the establishment of a one-party state in 1975 alienated the educated classes. The issue of civil rights came to the fore. A cycle of protests began, first by intellectuals and then, in 1978, by religious leaders. Protesters use calculated violence, attacking and destroying targets that represent unacceptable characteristics of the regime. They aim for fundamental change: the removal of the Shah, Khomeini as leader, and the Islamic state as an ideal..

#### **1.14. The Islamic Revolution**

Khomeini, expelled from Iraq, went to France in October, which gave him access to the world media and telephone communication with leaders in Iran. His return on February 1, 1979, marked the beginning of the end of monarchical rule. Khomeini founded the fundamentalist "Iranian Republican Party" to suppress opposition parties and created the "Revolutionary Guard" or "Pasdaran", a political police force to marginalize the secular left. The "Pasdaran" soon forcibly liquidated the council, purged committees, and repressed Kurdish separatists and women's organizations. The "Party of God" - Hezbollah was created as a destructive force of bandits. Iran once again fell into the grip of an autocratic regime, this time with strong fundamentalist religious beliefs.

#### **1.15. Demography**

This paragraph presents the demographic picture of Iran based on data from the 2007 census. The ethnic and religious composition of the country is tracked.

## **CHAPTER I I.**

### **PERSIAN NATIONALISM**

#### **(Case Study – Iran in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century)**

The main sources for this text include archival documents, academic works published during or after the celebrations, official programs, and articles in various media. The illustrative material is drawn mainly from online publications, as well as from the author's two visits to Persepolis in 2005 and 2011.

The working hypothesis is that primordialism is a convenient political tool that is used for the specific goals of the rulers or, an attempt is made to modernize through archaization.

The Persian language and culture form the ideological core and consciousness of the modern state and its unified concept of national identity. This involves the subordination of politico-cultural configurations of non-Persian peoples and their ruling elites, who have high levels of autonomy in a decentralized, semi-confederal system. The project of defensive state formation that the Iranian ruling classes embarked on under colonial and imperial pressure involves the construction of a culturally defined political hierarchy. The nation and its interests are defined in terms of only one of several cultures, languages, and religions, i.e., Persian Shiism. From the very beginning, the capitalist socio-economic hierarchy contains an ethno-cultural hierarchy that determines its dynamics and consequences, as well as the conditions and forms of resistance to it. Class divisions are thus embedded in a complex cultural-political field, giving rise to a pattern of regional inequality and uneven development that largely coincides with the distribution of non-Persian ethno-linguistic communities.

### **2.1. Theoretical frameworks**

The doctoral thesis briefly presents the specific theses of those founders of the concepts of nations that determine the theoretical framework of the study: Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm R. Guénon, Maurice Halbwachs, Miroslav Hroch, Abner Cohen, Stefan Dechev, Nematollah Fazeli. The emergence and development of the concept of the “Aryan” origin and belonging of Iran is commented on in detail, as a powerful political concept that has a remarkable influence on the construction of ethnic and national identities in both the European and non-European worlds. The sources, world and Iranian works that stabilize the idea of the Aryan race are traced.

Specific policies and actions that present the Persian language as pure Indo-European or Aryan are presented. The new official name “Iran” (Iranshahr) is related to Aryan and is designated as “the land of the Aryans”. Efforts to homogenize the nation simultaneously generate centrifugal forces and multiple new nests of identity.

The magnificent celebrations that affirm the ruler's power through a demonstration of military might, impressive architectural monuments, a series of entertainment events and through festive overabundance of food – are also in the focus of interest from researchers. It is now an indisputable fact that since ancient times, public celebrations, everywhere on the planet, have been a serious tool for achieving specific political and social goals. Many layers and

different messages can be read in commemorative celebrations, so their study cannot rest on only one explanatory model. Radcliffe-Brown's statements on ceremonies as a means of maintaining social order are briefly presented. In the coronation ceremonies of the Shah and his wife, as well as in the celebration of the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the different layers, strongly colored by modern Persian nationalism, stand out clearly. Persian nationalism is understood as a political ideology focused on national identity and culture, based on the cultural heritage of ancient Persia, with the aim of legitimizing the actions of the Pahlavi Shah dynasty in Iran.

## **2.2. Archaic**

This section traces the emergence and dynamics of interest in and research into the ruins of Persepolis, Pasargadae, Susa and Isfahan by foreign travelers, historians and archaeologists, as well as Persians. The importance of deciphering the Behistun Inscription is commented on. The first historical texts and their place in the formation of the meta-narrative of Persia and Iran are presented. The development of the idea of the roots of the nation in time is traced, as well as the main drivers for its formation. It is shown how the emergence of the Achaemenid myth, reinforced by the legacy of the Safavids, can be traced back in time to the late Qajar period and its flowering under the Pahlavi dynasty. The three pillars of modern thinking in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe are commented on: nationalism, modernization and constitutionalism. Nostalgia for the pre-Islamic cultural heritage lies at the heart of part of the new thinking and identity. The role of archaeological research in different periods and the connection with the preservation of material cultural heritage to the present day is commented on.

Reza Shah's policy towards the humanities is presented, through which he glorified ancient Persia, especially the Achaemenids and Sassanids, and glorified Zoroastrianism as the original religion of Persia. Reza Shah's policy is based on three ideologies: nationalism (archaism), modernization (Europeanization), and secularism (de-Islamization). His policy of modernization does not include changes in the despotic monarchical political system.

The celebration of 2500 years of the monarchy. is aimed at affirming the idea of Iran's greatness in human history. The monarch's messages are built on symbols and values unfamiliar to most of his subjects. The "White Revolution" not only undermined the foundations on which the Pahlavi dynasty rested, but also contributed to its ideological destabilization. Islam has for centuries encompassed all spheres of Muslim life and Islamic law, and views on the ways of governing the ummah directly influence the attitude of the clergy and ordinary Muslims to power, which they increasingly view as unjust and vicious.

## **2.3. Back to the Future**

This section traces in detail the policy of institutionalizing Persian, pre-Islamic (archaic) identity through science, architecture, festive calendar, linguistic figures, royal regalia. Attention is paid to the elevation of the role of Ferdowsi's "Shahnameh" as the best source for Iranian myths.

## **2.4. The Coronation**

This paragraph presents the coronation ceremony (26.X.1967) and the events surrounding it. The reasons for the delayed coronation are commented on, the ritual actions, the royal regalia and the officials are described. The coronation is situated in the context of the

drive for modernization through archaization. The Shah emphasizes in particular that the Pahlavi dynasty belongs to the European monarchical institution and by reproducing the accepted European practice together with the Iranian custom, he tries to present his monarchy as belonging to both the Western and Iranian traditions. The coronation of Queen Farah has a profound significance, both as a reflection of the rising status of women in Iran and for shaping foreign attitudes towards the Iranian monarchy.

What is new about the Shah's coronation is the worldwide broadcasting of the event and the efforts of Iranian embassies for foreign participation.

## **2.5. The Celebrations**

This paragraph presents the concept of the Achaemenid Darius for the new capital in Persepolis, as the leader of conglomerates of people to whom he gave a new, unified identity. However, the Shah chooses another historical figure to glorify the new identity – Cyrus the Great. The ideas and concrete actions in the preparation for the celebration of the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Empire are commented on. The official events, personalities, festive space are traced in detail. The lavish expenses are presented. The symbolism of the performances, fireworks, the historical-military parade, and festive events in Tehran are commented on.

## **2.6. The reaction of Muslims**

This paragraph discusses the anti-Islamic nature of the celebrations and their repercussions in the centuries-old Muslim state. The lavish ceremonies, compared to the extravagance of Hollywood, the practical exclusion of Iranians from celebrations in which the guests of honor are foreign heads of state, and the obsessive praise of the Shah's personality in official propaganda, have given rise to numerous and contradictory comments in society. The reaction to the change of the Muslim calendar to the date of the coronation of Cyrus the Great (in 1975) is particularly painful.

## **2.7. Specifics of Iranian culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.**

This section presents the essential characteristics of Iranian culture: the opposition between the internal and the external, the contrast between hierarchy and equality. The attitude towards the obligations of status and the behavioral patterns of the participants in the hierarchies are commented on. The specific communication principles at all levels of power are presented.

Attention is paid to the complex contemporary Iranian national identity. The study reveals complex networks composed of multifaceted identity connections that serve foreign policy goals.

## **2.8. Cultural heritage after the Revolution**

This paragraph presents the dynamics of the policy for establishing a new identity after the Islamic Revolution, which, however, cannot (and does not want to) abruptly change the relationship with the pre-Islamic cultural heritage. The interests for the development of cultural tourism and relations with UNESCO are commented on. Based on personally collected empirical material, the new visible benchmarks of identity are outlined. Elements of the archaic are identified, which are paralleled by contemporary Islamic practices and norms. The attempt



at historical amnesia by building a new, Islamic in essence, holiday calendar, new places of memory is commented on.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION IN IRAN - FUTURE IN THE PAST**

This chapter presents various theories that attempt to explain the processes and phenomena that led to the events of 1979, which changed Iran for decades to come.

##### **3.1. Conceptual framework of revolutions**

This section outlines the main concepts of the revolution as a historical act and process. The socio-economic situation in Iran is presented, with an emphasis on the Shah's agrarian reforms, which particularly affected the Shiite nobles, who were the largest landowners in the country thanks to the waqf system. The main political actions that defined the "White revolution" are presented, with a special emphasis on increasing women's rights.

The reasons for the failure of most modernization actions are commented on. The role of the ulema and the leader Ayatollah Khomeini in directing popular discontent against the Shah's policies is commented on.

##### **3.2. Background of the unexpected (unidentified) process**

This paragraph comments on the general attitudes of the ruling elite in Iran and the USA, which exclude any crises and changes in the country. The total surprise of the Islamic Revolution is described due to its religious nature or the fusion of the revolution with religion. None of the modern revolutions up to that time was on a religious basis.

The participation of religious figures and institutions in public and political life is traced. The Iranian revolution asks two main questions:

- How was the Shah's regime completely destroyed in just a few months?
- Why is this movement so tied to religion?

In this case, it is not a question of ordinary political resistance to a government, which is a common phenomenon in Iranian history and lends itself easily to description and classification.

##### **3.3. Conspiracy theory**

The researchers of this first group are most often followers of the overthrown regime, the so-called "monarchists". They do not recognize the Islamic revolution as an original movement that emerged from the will of the people, but view it as a planned and externally inspired conspiracy. The supporters of this theory are unanimous that the Western powers - especially the USA and Great Britain - are responsible. However, they do not have a common opinion about the motives of these powers to overthrow it.

The paragraph presents different versions of the conspiracy theory.

##### **3.4. Modernization theory**

The second group of theories is the Theory of Modernization. According to it, the main reason for the outbreak of discontent is the hasty and poorly planned modernization reforms of the Shah's regime, which are trying to quickly change the essence of Iran. Despite these

attempts, due to the traditional structure of Iranian society, many people are not ready for change. The result is cultural and social alienation and many face an identity crisis. As the gap between the population and the Shah's regime increases, the identity crisis grows into a political and religious confrontation. The Islamic Revolution is born from its depths.

The paragraph traces variants of the theory and its main criticisms.

### **3.5. Economic theory as a cause of Revolution**

The idea of economic problems and the resulting chaos as the main factors for the birth of the Islamic Revolution has many followers. The supporters of this theory can be divided into two groups: One part believes that the Shah's economic problems began in the early 1970s after the fourfold increase in oil prices on the world market. The second group, which consists mainly of supporters of more radical Iranian movements, does not distinguish between the periods before and after the rise in oil prices and insists that the fall of the regime was a consequence of a combination of economic crisis and its dependence on world imperialism. The works of Soviet / Russian Iranists can be identified as a separate group. They adhere to the economic theory of the revolution.

The paragraph critically presents the ideas of each of the mentioned groups of researchers. The real economic situation of the country is shown with specific data. Contrary to what is promoted in the economic theory of the revolution, objectively the real situation of the people has not worsened. According to most accounts from the era of the revolution, the main demands of the people towards the regime were political.

### **3.6. Religion as a cause of Revolution**

The fourth group of analyses can be summarized as the “religion as a cause of revolution” theory. In modernization theory, the role of religion is assessed indirectly, by indicating the religious class as the most important social group opposing the modernization programs of the Shah.

During the constitutional revolution (1906-1911), in the movement for the nationalization of the oil industry in Iran (1940s-1950s), and in the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962), Muslims took an active part. Almost all the key figures in these three processes were either clerics or pan-Islamists. However, none of these movements aimed at establishing religious power, nor were they carried out in the name of Islam.

Contrary to the other theories, in this one religion plays the main role. According to her, the main reason for the revolution is the de-Islamization policy, which hurts the feelings of Muslims and makes them oppose the regime. The reason for the discontent, opposition and rebellion is the fact that the Shah “acts against Islam”, the people want his overthrow in the name of Islam and the creation of an Islamic state. This theory, as part of the doctrine of the Islamic Revolution, is the most widespread and generally accepted in modern Iran.

### **3.7. The religious leader**

This section presents the concepts of leading scholars on the importance of religious leaders. It comments on the specifics of leadership among the Twelver Shiites, also called Imamites, and on Ayatollah Khomeini's affiliation with the Usuli school of Shiite Islam, which supports the concept that the clergy should not stay away from power because they best know

the messages of the hidden imam and can best determine policy. The role of the religious leader is presented through the prism of Iranian-American relations.

### **3.8. The common and the different so far**

The paragraph critically comments on the general ideas and differences of the presented theories. It is emphasized that none of the presented theories takes into account the past of Iran, since it is not compatible with their analyses. The reason for this is that the Islamic Revolution is considered a phenomenon separate from the modern history of Iran, and not as its organic part and continuation.

A brief history of the resistance against the regime and the main supporters of power is presented. The key to understanding the reasons for the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution lies in the reasons for the people's discontent. The roots of this discontent also lie in the political nature of the regime.

### **3.9. The Roots of Revolution, Despotism and Dictatorship**

This paragraph critically comments on the weaknesses of the presented theories. These theories describe the revolution as a transformation separated from the general process of political and social change in Iran, without taking into account the need to bridge the gap between the 1977-1978 conflict and the contemporary history of Iranian society. According to them, regardless of what happens in and to Iran, the causes of the transformation can be traced back to the last 10 to 15 years at most of the existence of the regime of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

If we assume that the opposition to the regime, created and manifested in one form or another, is a continuous process that always exists (regardless of the economic conditions in the country), the main question arises: what is the reason for this dissatisfaction and lack of popularity of the Shah's regime. The answer to this question points to the most important reason for the outbreak of the Islamic revolution.

The following is a comment on the applicability of the theory of the duration of resistance. The social and political composition of the bearers of discontent, their similarities and contradictions in different periods are presented.

What are the reasons why opposition and discontent against the Pahlavis were as widespread in the 1950s as they were thirty years earlier? The answer to the questions raised, in my opinion, concerns the political nature and the way the regime was run. It is this nature that, despite economic and social changes, maintains an environment in which elements of opposition are constant and passes them on from generation to generation. The Shah's regime can be seen as a dual political entity. On the one hand, there is development and economic progress. On the other hand, there is a political structure that does not undergo any changes. The modern Iran of the Shah is not much different from the backward Iran of Nasreddin Shah, a hundred years earlier.

Although the theory of despotism as the cause of the revolution fits best with the ideas of classical historical works, it also has its weaknesses. The biggest of these is the denial or neglect of some aspects presented in previous theories.

### **3.10. Political culture**

Ignoring an important variable like culture in the study of political behavior is impossible because revolutions rely almost entirely on the culturally shaped behavior of the masses. Although culture is a broad term referring to various dynamics, it works well in large-scale movements related to behavior, such as revolution. The elements that form or reject certain values constantly come to the fore, as already outlined in the previous chapters.

The literature has expressed the opinion that the absolutist nature that the Iranian monarchy has adopted over time leads to the development of a revolutionary culture among Iranians. Policies that are aimed more at gaining more power for the ruling dynasty than at protecting and providing for the Iranian people definitely contribute to its revolutionization. The monarchical traditions of the past are no longer as important as ideals such as social justice.

Of course, these statements also require serious evidentiary materials. Thus, the combination of a complex set of factors led to the outbreak of the Islamic revolution in Iran.

### **3.11. Iranian women**

This paragraph traces the recorded manifestations of Iranian women as an important social force. The development of the boycott of European textiles in the early twentieth century is traced. The modern action in its essence returns communities to the archaic.

The steps towards the Europeanization of clothing with an emphasis on the uncovering of women are critically presented. The reactions of women from different social classes are commented on.

Another important problem is related to women's employment, which is mainly in teaching and midwifery. The accessible fields of education are traced. Although many laws have gradually been changed to give more rights to women, they are rarely known or used in practice. Many of the reforms do not penetrate Iranian Muslim society as a whole.

The women's organizations that emerged between 1941 and 1973 are presented in detail. They all share a common demand for women's suffrage, since they cannot yet vote. The fate of the 1962 Decree, which gave women the right to vote and run for office in provincial and city elections, is traced. The strong resistance of Ayatollah Khomeini invalidated the Decree. The 1975 Law on the Protection of the Family, which severely restricted polygamy, is also commented on.

The changes that the Islamic Revolution imposed on Iranian women have been widely commented on in the literature. The authors' opinions are polar opposites. The paragraph critically comments on both the participation of women in the revolution and the attitude of the clergy from a moral point of view.

## **CHAPTER IV. COMPARISON OF (APPEARINGLY) INCOMPARABLE PHENOMENA**

This chapter attempts to study three phenomena that are at first glance difficult to compare – the existence of three ideological systems, whose roots and reasons for existence are in many ways opposite. The history and contemporary existence of the Zoroastrians, as bearers of the ancient local religious system, of the Baha'is, as a modern religion with enormous missionary potential, and the followers of the Tudeh party – bearer of a communist ideology imported from abroad, are briefly described. Their functioning in small communities in the country and in the diaspora is comparable, to a certain extent. The degree of intolerance on the

part of the Islamic state after the Islamic Revolution, but also to varying degrees before it, is comparable. Their visibility in Iranian society in the twentieth century is comparable. As has been shown, the goals, methods of functioning and, ultimately, the reactions of the authorities in different periods of time to the leaders and members of the three communities are incomparable.

#### **4.1. ZORROASTRIANISM**

The key question here is: How to encompass the complex interplay between religions, politics, and modernity and explain the dynamics of a small group scattered around the world but maintaining its connection to an ancient (religious) identity? Obviously, a holistic approach, such as that inherent in political anthropology, is needed, but with a strong emphasis on historical processes and phenomena.

##### **4.1.1. A Brief Introduction to Zoroastrianism**

The paragraph presents the history of Zoroastrianism and its philosophical essence, expressed through the sacred texts. The persecutions against the Zoroastrians and their initial displacement to India are traced.

##### **4.1.2. The tangible cultural heritage of the Sassanids**

As described in the previous chapters, the tangible cultural heritage of Zoroastrian Persia has been the focus of nearly two centuries of research, excavations, and collecting. The functioning of archaeological centers for the construction of the new symbolism and identity under the Qajar and Pahlavi dynasties has already been presented. It has been commented that after a 10-year hiatus, the Islamic rulers turned to the development of tourism and the popularization of the remains of the ancient palaces.

##### **4.1.3. Dynamics of intangible cultural heritage**

This paragraph presents the mythology and related practices that influence the daily lives of Zoroastrians. Religious beliefs about animals and, accordingly, food are commented on.

The belief in the ongoing struggle between light and dark forces within each human being, the concept of ritual purity, and how modern times change beliefs and practices are presented.

##### **4.1.4. The complex identity of modern Zoroastrians**

The paragraph critically traces the problems associated with the discreet demonstration of both the ancient and modern genealogy of Zoroastrian identity. It extols the status of its followers as true Iranians, emphasizes their historical and spiritual ties to distant Persian history, and returns them to the glorious past of the Persian Zoroastrian state. The Shiite tradition is understood as a form of resistance against the Sunni Arabs, therefore emphasizing their similarity to Shiism as an “Iranized” religion. It comments on the lack of fundamentalist aspirations of believers to change society through force or through political lobbying to protect the boundaries of their identity.

The many challenges facing Zoroastrians in modern times are presented.

## **4.2. A NEW RELIGION – THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH**

The paragraph begins with a commentary on the reasons why the Baha'i community has not been recognized or seriously studied, despite the fact that since its establishment in the mid-19th century, the Baha'i Faith has been the largest religious minority in Iran and despite the important role that members of this community have played in various areas of the country's modern history. Contemporary studies are presented that treat the Baha'is either as conduits of foreign influence or as monarchists.

The dynamics of policy towards the Baha'is in different periods are traced.

### **4.2.1. A Brief Introduction to the Baha'i Faith**

The theosophical foundations of the Baha'i Faith, which emerged from two main currents in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are presented.

The successive persecutions against members of the Baha'i Faith from the time of its emergence to the present day are commented on. The Baha'is lack even the status granted to other religious minorities in the Islamic state. Particularly drastic is the intrusion into the most intimate experience of the death of a loved one and the destruction of Baha'i cemeteries.

### **4.2.2. The Tangible Cultural Heritage of the Bahá'ís**

The paragraph presents the special reverence for art, elevated to religiosity. Architectural monuments and the basic symbolism embodied in them are commented on.

### **4.2.3. Dynamics of intangible cultural heritage**

The paragraph presents the organization and structures of the Baha'i communities. The main events in their spiritual life are traced. The refined ritualism is commented on.

## **4.3. “TUDEH” PARTY**

This paragraph is based on both the research of leading scholars and recently published documents that have not yet been introduced into regular scientific circulation.

Important for understanding the phenomena and processes in a historically long period is the geopolitical situation of the country. Iran borders Russia, later the USSR, and this, together with the rich natural resources, determines the interests of imperial-minded politicians. The working hypothesis is that left-wing ideology was introduced in the course of the systematic development of communist imperialism. The relatively weak presence of communist ideas and actions in Iran is due both to the definitely narrow segment of society that is committed to them, and to the sharp contradiction of atheistic communism with the Islamic basis of the everyday life of the majority. Left-wing ideas have a very limited social base and have never produced a government.

### **4.3.1. A Brief History of Socialism in Iran**

This paragraph presents a chronological history of the emergence and development of left-wing party organizations in Baku, strongly influenced and closely connected with the Bolsheviks. The party building and the reaction of the central government are traced. After 1941, with the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran and the release of the prisoners, the surviving

members of the “Fifty-Three” created a communist party – “Tudeh” (The Masses). Since then, the “Tudeh” party has existed as the main left-wing political organization in Iranian politics, openly oriented towards the USSR.

Documents are presented in detail, unequivocally proving the role of the Comintern and Georgi Dimitrov as a leading figure in creating the image and policy of the "Tudeh" party. The money flows, support in emigration, including in Bulgaria, are traced. The actions of the party members and the countermeasures of the authorities are commented on chronologically.

#### **4.3.2. Tudeh and the Islamic Revolution**

The paragraph begins with the USSR's reaction to the Islamic Revolution. The Tudeh's participation in the Islamic Revolution of 1979 was insignificant. The official policy of the Tudeh was to support the clerics and those who insisted on the establishment of an Islamic republic. The turning point in 1983, when the rejection of Soviet influence began, the persecution of communist leftists and Soviet-oriented groups, is commented on. By May 1983, the entire leadership of the Tudeh and over 1,000 members were arrested. The government officially banned the party and accused its top leaders of conspiratorial activity. The party was punished for its subservience to the USSR at a time when relations between Iran and the Soviet Union were reaching a critical point, due to differences over the Iran-Iraq War and other related issues.

#### **4.4. DISCUSSION**

Comparing the three ideological systems shows the following:

1. The three systems have dynamic, but very different scales of values, identify a different main “Enemy” and build radically different strategies and tactics for the implementation of their goals;
2. The three systems allow the influence of Shiite Islam to varying degrees and in different fields, and accordingly enter into different forms of cooperation in different periods;
3. The three systems identify as important different historical periods and different elements of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Accordingly, attempts to use cultural heritage are of varying importance for the construction of the identity of their followers.
4. The three systems rely on resources of different origins for their existence. While Zoroastrianism is fueled by internal resources and periodically emerges on the national stage as an important element of Iranian identity, the Baha'i Faith is mainly stimulated by diaspora branches and a declared openness to all religions, and the Tudeh party is initially and increasingly clearly fueled by foreign (Soviet and Russian) resources. Its followers carry their Iranian identity, but they have never been recognized as part of the grand narrative of the modern Iranian nation.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Conclusion presents the achievement of the main goal and the fulfillment of the tasks set. An important conclusion is that the entire twentieth century is marked by the complex relationship between the archaic and modernity.

The cultural matrix of the Twelver Shiite Islam has penetrated tightly into the fabric of Iranian society for 13 centuries. Despite the revival of interest in ancient Persia in the 18<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> centuries and the introduction of many new ideas in the course of the country's incipient modernization, the main ideological system continues to have a key influence on the everyday life of millions of Iranians.

The complex interplay between the cultural heritage of Persia, the modernization of the country desired by Shah Reza Pahlavi, but within the framework of Persian identity, and the real, everyday Muslim (Shiite) culture, with an older matrix of Zoroastrianism visible in it, has been studied. Despite the declared secular nature of the state under the Pahlavi dynasty and despite the known restrictions imposed on the clergy in the fields of law, education and military affairs, the shahs were unable and unwilling to reject the Islamic heritage. Smaller religious communities (Baha'is, Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, etc.) have had varying levels of religious freedom at different times, but they are always subject to restrictions and remain "hidden" in the general appearance of the country. There is no reason to claim that the Zoroastrian clergy had periods of superiority over the Islamic clergy, even during the brilliant celebration of the 2500th anniversary of statehood, brightly marked by the tangible and intangible Persian cultural heritage, although it is Zoroastrian.

The phenomenon of the "First Islamic revolution" is analyzed in the context of the general attitudes and expectations of different social groups and their leaders, bearers of different cultural models. The pros and cons of different theories of the reasons that led to the collapse of the power of the Pahlavi dynasty are commented on. From the point of view of political anthropology, the unchanged despotic essence of the regime stands out in the foreground. Efforts to create a modern, rather secular state, with a distinctly Persian basis of the identity of the nation, open to the Western world and economy are annihilated by despotic rule. The study of the dynamics of opposition forces in different periods of the twentieth century leads to the conclusion that the Pahlavis rely on the inherited despotic matrix in a complex game with the Islamic clergy.

Three polar ideological systems are analyzed – the ancient, local Zoroastrian, and the new ones – the Baha'i faith and the communist (following the example of the "Tudeh" party), created in the XIX century. The three systems have dynamic, but very different scales of values, identify a different main "Enemy" and build radically different strategies and tactics for the implementation of their goals. They allow the influence of Shiite Islam to varying degrees and in different fields, and accordingly enter into different forms of cooperation with the leading political forces in different periods. The three systems identify different historical periods and different elements of archaism and modernity as important. Accordingly, attempts to use cultural heritage are of varying importance for the construction of the identity of their followers. The three systems rely on resources of different origins for their existence. While Zoroastrianism is nourished by internal resources and periodically appears on the national stage as an important element of Iranian identity, the Tudeh party is initially and increasingly clearly nourished by foreign (Soviet and Russian) resources.

The problem of the leading national narrative (meta-narrative) has long been among the central ones for world historiography. It is undeniable that its purpose is to build and affirm national identity in the modern and post-modern state. But not only that - containing basic elements such as language, territory, history, it can be indicative of the national/state strategy.



The meta-narrative is especially important for ethnically and religiously mixed states, which, to varying degrees, all are in the postmodern era. In our global world, it is also appropriate to take into account the presence/absence of a strong overseas lobby (lobbies) that supports or destroys the meta-narrative.

The historiographical review finds an impressive number of monographs, articles and reviews of publications devoted to issues of identity in contemporary Iran, which is the basis of the national narrative. This interest is provoked by the dynamic and at times apparent dichotomy ancient, Persian heritage/Shiite Islam. The focus of the researchers is on the problems related to the end of the Iranian monarchies and theocratic rule after 1979.

Iran has always felt like a special case in the Middle East, surrounded by "barbarians" since the 7th century. Because of this, its Shiite (Iranian) character was strengthened and through it it was identified. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a strong Babist (later Baha'i) movement emerged, which aimed to rethink the Shiite character of the state and return it to the sphere of a just state. This also happened under the Pahlavi dynasty.

By the mid-twentieth century, Iran was in the position of a victim of the Great Game between Britain and Russia, followed by the growing rivalry between the USSR and the USA. The monarchy made serious efforts to balance between the great powers, sacrificing in various areas in order to preserve the country's independence. In the seventies, thanks to the changed geopolitical situation, the Shah took the traditional path in an attempt to dominate the region. His aspirations were interrupted by the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution. The twentieth century in the region was marked by two major revolutions - the Russian and the Iranian. Although the events in Iran in 1979 do not fully cover the definition of the term "revolution", it is certain that they continued to keep the region firmly in the news broadcasts and scholarly interest. Although indeed in the initial period of the revolution, calls for help for the suffering around the world were common, an unbiased look shows that in fact the new authorities did not take real actions that went beyond traditional Iranian interests. The question of whether there have been any fundamental changes in Iranian foreign policy since the revolution is important. Careful study shows that even the clash with Israel and the US, which is still in the news today, falls within the framework of the Iranian tradition of controlling areas of interest.

In its entirety, the Shiite belt remains an important lever for projecting Iranian interests in the region and at the present time. For Iran, especially after the Abbasids, Shiism equals Persia/Iran. The thesis of the need to develop a doctrine of the neo-Osefism type is expanding its influence in Iranian circles. The idea of Iran acting as a bridge or gateway to Central Asia is also key in Iranian geopolitical thinking. However, despite the advantages of geographical and, in some cases, cultural proximity, Iran has not yet fully established itself as a regional power in Eurasia in the same way as it has done in the Middle East.

As a result of the study of the processes in Iran in the twentieth century, the following parameters for studying and understanding the countries in the region have been outlined:

1. Longevity of the operation of a strong (Islamic) religious system, creating a sense of belonging to a strong and prosperous world (ummah), capable of opposing the important "other" ("Christian") world;

2. Longevity of the functioning of inherited social relations and hierarchies - at the level of family, clans, administration, supreme government;

3. Dynamics of the value of natural resources and their importance in determining the political orientation of the country. Position (strong/weak) of the country in periods of important international conflicts (world wars, Cold War, etc.);

4. Ability of favored or neglected elements of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage to adapt to the politics of the day and to function in a mode of tolerance in the dynamic construction and renegotiation of national identity;

5. Ability of various minority groups (Zoroastrians, members of opposition parties, women, etc.) to dynamize their representative identity and secure niches of tolerance, even in very difficult times.

This model, with some refinement, tailored to specific historical processes and phenomena, can be a working matrix for understanding the countries in the region.

## LIST OF NIKOLAY KARAMIHOV'S PUBLICATIONS

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## **AUTOREFERENCE FOR THE SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE DISSERTATION**

1. A new scientific field has been created in Bulgarian science for the study of the history of political ideas in Iran through the application of a complex of trans-disciplinary methods.
2. Qualitatively new knowledge has been achieved about the processes and phenomena related to the recent history of Iran, placing them in the context of modernization through archaization as part of the multi-layered ideological changes. The use of cultural heritage is presented through different approaches in the individual parts.
3. In order to achieve depth and significance in the study, a large number of sources and historiographical studies that are not in academic circulation in Bulgarian science have been used. The translated sources can be the basis for future research.
4. The terminological apparatus is critically presented in order to be useful for future research.
5. An author's Conceptual model for the study of contemporary processes and phenomena in the countries of the region, as from the so-called Shiite belt, as well as those belonging to the world of Islam.