

*Islam and Nationalism(s) in Iran**

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(OUTLINE)

I--Introduction

A-My main concern in this presentation is to show

- that Islam is intertwined with nationalism,
- that nationalism in Iran is not uniquely Persian
- that Iranian nationalism cannot be conceptualized correctly because the Iranian society is comprised of different ethnic-racial groups, of which the Persians are but one category yet divided among themselves.

-even in pre-Islamic times, religion and state(and nationalism and religion) were intertwined in Iran.

(The Umayyad and Abbassid interest in, and adoption of, many Iranian pre-Islamic royal traditions to their own dynastic benefit should partly be attributed to this same affinity between the sacred and the secular and how the former is used by the latter.)

B -Although "no theory can account for every sparrow's fall," I hypothesize that

the forceful encapsulation of the former Iranian/Persian empire into the modern Persian nation-state, together with the ethnic homogenization policies imposed, has caused a multi-dimensional ethnic/identity crisis in the country.

This is especially true if certain characteristics of this same system are taken into consideration.

First, by design and purpose, this same pattern of national society is unitary, in the interest of what is Aryan in general and what is Persian in particular.

Second, be it structural or cultural, while pluralism is not incompatible with the nation-state organization, unpluralistic traditions have been its placenta since its very conception in the country.

Third, while freedom of expression would have served as a safety valve for ethnic groups, deprived and alienated, Iran has always been undemocratic in both political and economic terms.

*Cottam (1964)
J. Azari (1993)*

*Ch. 10
(1993)*

*Iran's
National*

C-Methodology (curiosity, skepticism, objectivity):

1-Participant observation, an insider-outsider (~~value-free or not?~~) approach. (with Max Weber's *verstehen* concept in mind, a value-free approach may be valueless in reality for biases may not be controlled at all or even may not need to be controlled when it comes to complex situations and sophisticated analysis.)

2-Research in Iran

3-Membership in the "Group".

4-Dissertation

5-The literature

4-D

II-What Is and Where Is Iran?

A-From an empire dominated by Persians to an empire dominated by Arabs, Turks, or Mongols, to a nation-state comprised of a rainbow of ethnic groups.

B-Iran's strategic location and myriad of adversaries

III-Who Are the Iranians?

A-Aryans, including

B-Non-Aryans, including

C-Admix (biological assimilation), including Sayyids, and the 4000 Imam-zadeh!

IV-Who Is the "Average" Iranian? (Ralph Nelson's "The One Hundred Percent American"

(1937); as the average American is not necessarily WASP, the average Iranian is far from being Persian. (Dr. James Bill's last year presentation)

Based on this ethnic categorization, the Iranian can be defined as anyone who identifies himself/herself as an Iranian, and/or speaks the Farsi language as his/her mother tongue, and/or is born in Iran, and/or lives in the country as fellow citizen, and/or relates to and identifies with the ethnically diverse Iranian history and cultural heritage locally or universally in one era or the other.

V-Political Ideologies In Iran:

A-Islamism: the functioning of Islam in Iran

1-The universal functions of religion, namely, unity, meaning to life, psychological relief/support, social control (and source of identity in the case of Islam)

2-But what/which/whose Islam?--Shiism (Safawi vs. Alawi vs. (two!)
Khumeniesms) vs. Sunnism

B-Nationalism: What is it?, and Whose Nationalism?

C-Communism (as reformed or as socialism; the equivalent of communism in the Russian language is socialism) (The communist, Gennedy Zyuganov, is the leading candidate for the President of Russia.)

D-Ideological superimposition or interrelatedness? (e.g., religious nationalism in Iran, and in Iraq, is linked to patriotism)

VI-Societal Consensus In Iran:

A-Religion (Islam as tradition of worship, way of life, philosophy, political culture)

B-Persian language (native or imposed; national or official medium)

C-Historical experience (relevant, sweet, or bitter to one group or the other)

D-Territory (international Iran)

E-Patriotism (Sa`di vs. the Hadith)

(But not "national culture" or national character or Farhang-i Melli in Farsi/Persian)

VII-Conclusion: Where Is Iran Heading? (Somewhere and no where)

Islam and Nationalism(S) In Iran

I-Introduction

The plural "s" in "nationalisms" relates to the underlying theme of this presentation. The Iranian peoples are not only *Persians* or even *Aryans* as some may hold. They belong to several nationalisms within both what is *Aryan* and what is not. Further, Shii Islam and nationalism (as such) are linked together practically, though, they are not necessarily consistent ideologically.

As a consequence, Islam has not been in peace with itself in Iran since the Arabs' Islamic conquest of the country. Although Iranians have contributed tremendously to the religiopolitical culture of Islam, one can easily speak of the agony of Islam in the country. This state of affairs is reflected on the public policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran as to how to reconcile together religion, ethnic ideals, secular socialist and nationalist thoughts, and social class in a society that has never been homogeneous in any sense, in any era.

Specifically, since ancient times, the Iranian society has been composed of different ethnic groups who have come together as conquerors or conquered at one time or another. Irrespective of (1) territorial expansion or shrinkage, (2) the ethnic-dynastic origin of the elite, and (3) the geographic location of the center of power, until the early 1921-5, Iran was practically ruled as an *empire*, containing many *autonomous* nationalities and ethnic groups. But, even when a powerful central regime once existed in (the Islamic) Iran, neither did an ethnic "melting pot" emerge in the country nor was the identity of the many autonomous ethnic groups contained affected seriously. Historically speaking, such concepts as *shahinshahi*(empire) *muluk al-tawa'f*(tribal kingdom), *mamalik-i mahroosa-ya Iran* (the protected states of Iran), *Iran-ikathir al-milla* (Iran having many nations), *anjuman-ha-ya lyalati va vilayati* (the provincial and local councils), and *Iran mihan-i Islami* (Iran as the Islamic homeland) provide evidence for ethnic formation in a society, whose current ethnic diversity cannot be denied or simplified.

Marked with conflict and confluence in changing times, this ethnic diversity was associated with chronic ethnic-nationalist tension, which ultimately culminated in an acute *buhran-i hoviyyat qawmi* (crisis of ethnic identity) under the Pahlavi regime (1921-79). Beginning in 1921, through a military *coup d'etat* and countrywide anti-ethnic military operations, the new Pahlavi regime created a modern, but fabricated, *nation-state* wherein only what was *Persian*, such as history, nationalism, language, literature, culture, and majority rights, was emphasized at the cost of what was *not*.

Actually, evidence exist from the period to the effect that one of the ultimate purposes of the nation-state of Persia, later (1934) Iran, as such, was to cleanse not only ethnic political culture, but also ethnic languages and traditions.

Experience shows that, although it is the prevailing pattern of social organization today, the *nation-state* system has not necessarily been a comprehensive definer, but a controversial divider, of many sociocultural realities world around. Since the late 18th century, in its birth place of Europe, this nation-state system has been responsible for a variety of crises, conflicts, and wars, including World Wars I and II (by which the Middle East region was affected greatly). (In retrospect, this is one of the main reasons for West European nations to regroup in the cast of NATO, the European Parliament, and the European Economic Union. Yet, in addition to the ongoing ethnic conflict in Eastern Europe, ethnic unrest in Northern Ireland, Spain, and France has not been settled to date.)

In the case of Iran, this nation-state system has been reductionist ethnically, and in connection, it has not been able to accommodate Iran's historical ethnic diversity. Stated differently, contrary to the old regime's intention, this model of social organization failed to achieve its ideals in the political process.

First, it did not create a Persian "WASP" or a Persian "melting pot" in Iran even though it has partially succeeded in Persianizing ethnic groups linguistically against their wishes.

Second, in spite of its military strength, its sophisticated body of political elite and intellectuals, its ample economic resources, official international support, and about 58 years of nation-state-based administrative experience, the Pahlavi regime, which was responsible for the transformation concerned, failed to circulate--it was ironically overthrown by a popular Revolution (1978-9).

Third, one of the many causes of this same Revolution that put an end to the old regime, was ethnic strain. In addition to the universal ideal of dethroning the Shah, which they shared with other Iranian masses, the oppressed ethnic groups also aspired to achieve autonomous rights in the revolutionary process. The traditional Kurdish cry of "independence for Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan" represents this same ethnic aspiration, though, it has recently been changed to that of "self-determination."

While the same pattern of social organization of nation-state is maintained by the new regime, the Islamic Republic of Iran, ideological emphasis has been placed on

universal *Islam* instead of the parochial and ethnically divisive Persian nationalism. In reality, though, (Shii) Islam in Iran transcends Persian nationalism--not necessarily in the tradition of the Pahlavis, the National Front, Iran's Freedom Movement, the pan-Iranist Party, and others. Although it is neither denied nor confessed, this (Shii) Islamism in Iran can be understood as *religious nationalism*, especially after the eruption of the Iran-Iraq War, the death of Ayattollah Khomeini in 1989, and the relative failure of the religious revolutionaries to fulfill their ideological and constitutional promises. This failure may have been caused by many factors, including defined public policy, administrative priority, accommodating the sacred and the profane, and overseeing both internal diversity and external pressures.

II--What Is, where Is Iran?

A-From an empire dominated by Persians to an empire dominated by Arabs, Turks, or Mongols to a nation-state composed of a rainbow of ethnic groups

B-Iran's strategic location and myriad of adversaries

III--Who Are the Iranians? (Ethnic Diversity)

From antiquity different ethnic groups existed in the land before it fell in the hand of the invader Iranian groups. As in the present, a plethora of ethnic groups comprises the society of Iran. Ethnic multiplicity is one main source for the claimed crisis. These groups, who in several cases share nothing *nationalistic* in common, but have been put together by circumstance, can be identified as follows:

(a) The *Aryans*

This Caucasoid group includes the Bakhtiaris, Baluchis, Gilanis (Jangali's Republic of Gilan and their usage of the Gilaki language), Kurds (the Republic of Mehabad), Lurs, Persians, and Taleshis. Each of which do not necessarily comprise a homogeneous group by physical characteristics, sub-culture, dialect, and even language.

For example, the Persians of Gilan, Mazindaran, Hamadan, Isfahan, Yazd, Kerman, and Fars manifest a great difference in dialect, subculture, life-style, and attitude. Further, each category of them is subdivided because of localized circumstances in historical context. Politically and culturally, the (Sunni) Kurds of Kurdistan are not the same as the (Shii) Kurds of Kirmanshah. The Lurs scattered in Ilam, Luristan, and Khuzistan are not an ethnically unified group today. The Bakhtiaris, who are mixed with other Iranian groups, have fought the establishment at times, but supported it in another. Even though they are classified as Aryan by origins, the Baluchis have more in common with the Afghanis and Pakistanis, and their Pashtu language, than the Persians. The fact that the Baluchis are divided in the main between Pakistan and Iran, and with a minority group in Afghanistan, has intensified their ethnic crisis; they aspire to ethnic unity, which used to enjoy until recently.

(b) The Non-Aryan Iranians, which comprise several ethnic categories.

The Azarbijanis or the Azari Turks or Turani Turks or a mixture, who may consider themselves or are considered by others as Mongoloid proper. However, some educated members among them perceive of themselves as Turkicized Iranians or Aryans. (the Republic of Azerbaijan)

The Qashqa'is, who are of Turkish descent but are different from any other

Turkish group in Iran. This difference is caused by two intertwined factors. One is geographic distance from the main Turkish/Azari elements in the north and northwest of the country. The other is the influence of non-Turkish neighbors in the south. (Their famous opposition to the Pahlavi regime)

The Turkomans, who are Turkic people and who have much more in common with their fellow ethnic members in the neighboring Republic of Turkmenistan in the former Soviet Union than any group of Iranians.

The Arabs (Sheikh Khaza`l), the Jews, the Assyrians, and the Sabians, who are "Semite" people even though Semitic people do not form a race but they are of a mixed origin--Mesopotamian, phoenician, and Caucasoid.

The Armenians, who are Caucasoids and do not not share neither religion nor language with mainstream society.

The non-Arab *Sayyids*, who claim descent from the Prophet Muhammad and who are of mixed racial background, which may be Caucasoid or Mongoloid. However, they can be defined as status group, but not necessarily as fully independent social class or ethnic minority per se. Interestingly, some individual *intellectual Sayyids* are among those who curse Arabs and/or Islam altogether! (4000 Imam-zadeh)

The Taymuris, who relate to different ethnic groups, namely Mongoloid and Turkic, and who possess different ethnic genetic traits, which make them visibly different from others.

The point is, each of these non-Aryan ethnic groups does not necessarily identify with a homogeneous ethnic character because some of them are partially Persianized *linguistically* while others are not. This within ethnic differences is a source of ethnic crisis, even conflict on occasions.

Ethnic diversity in Iran has led many Iranian observers to ponder as to who is an Iranian after all.

- "Irani Keyst?" (who is an/the Iranian) is the topic of a detailed interview

with Muhammad-Ali Islami Nadooshan may be cited as an example.

- "Afsaneh va vaqiyyat-i millat-i Iran" (the myth and reality of the nation of Iran) by Bezhan-i Rezaie is another.

-In *Iran As Imagined Nation*, Mustafa Vaziri (1993) analyzes how Iran as country, people, language, and land has never been defined or agreed upon throughout its history.

This diversity may be compared with "who is an Arab" in the Arab world--a question I have asked and attempted to answer in an unpublished paper presentation some years ago. While one can easily trace "authentic" Arab groups in different Arab countries, different Arab citizens have either been Arabized in different times or like the Kurds of the Middle East and the Berbers of North Africa are not ethnic Arabs.

IV-Who Is the "Average" Iranian?

Based on this ethnic diversity, the Iranian can be defined as:

Anyone who identifies himself/herself as an Iranian, and/or speaks the (standard) Farsi language as his/her mother tongue, and/or is born in Iran, and/or lives in the country as fellow citizen, and/or relates to and identifies with the ethnically diverse Iranian history and cultural heritage locally or universally in one era or the other.

(Ralph Nelson 's "The One Hundred Percent American", 1937); as the average American is not necessarily WASP, the average Iranian is far from being Persian. (Dr. James Bill's last year presentation)

What most Iranians have in common is the circumstance that they all belong to an historical "empire" called Persia/Iran, which became a "nation-state" in 1925. In that time, the Elephant of the remnant of the Empire of Iran was forcefully put into the nation-state" cup" or "tea pot" of social organization pattern, which does not explain the sociohistorical reality of the ethnically and ideologically diversified society.

V-Political Ideologies (No End To Ideology)

A-Religious, Islamic=Shiism, not Sunnism, but Sunnism exists in the country.
Sunnism as practiced by Kurds, Baluchis, Arabs along the Iranian side of the Gulf, but not Arabs of S.W. Iran, who are Shiis
Religious nationalists

1-The Politics of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the verge of the 5th Parliamentary Election of the:

- The Veto of Mujtahidin in the 1906-7 Constitution
- The religious ideology (Qura`n: Hujurat, XLIX: 13)
- (In itself, Islam is flawless Any flaw that might be there, is ours)
- The First victim of the IRI is Islam itself.

2-Current political wings:

Even though they all do not represent a conventional political parties and lack a written platforms, in general, these different factions can be categorized as

Interference
a-The **Right wing** or the traditional conservatives, who are the majority in the Majlis and identifies with the *Jame`h-i Mubarez-i Tehran*, which includes Kany and the current speaker, Natiq-i Nouri.

- The Bazaris religious community relates to this wing.
- They support the status quo and are oriented towards classic capitalism.

b-The **Radicals**, including some top cleric and a variety of followers in different social strata. They usually preach mixed economy, and identifies with *Majma`-i Rouhanian-i Mubariz*, which includes Karroobi, Muhtashmi, and Kho`iniha.

c-The **New Right**, which mostly consists of non-cleric, who are more open-minded

and change-oriented than the traditional right wing; this is why they speak of socioeconomic panning and justice, and foreign commerce, which includes workable relationship with the U.S.

d-~~The New (religious) Left~~, which opposes the resumption of diplomatic relationship with the U.S., but the strengthening of interaction with Iraq, Lybia, Yemen, Algeria, and Korea. Not substantially represented in the government, this group attempts to penetrate to the 5th Majlis, operate as its own think tank. This Wing also includes Mujahidin-i Inqilab-i Islami headed by Engineer Salamati.

e-The Liberal Wing (religious nationalists) however weak, which is still predominantly represented by the late Mahdi Bazergan's the Liberation/Freedom Movement.

Religious Tech. vs. Secular Tech.

f-The newly emerging Technocrats (Independent or Middle Wing), who advocate free election, human rights (women certainly included), industrialized, not traditional, production, distribution, and consumption economy, establishing good relations with all countries, except Israel. This Wing also attempts to refine image and to manage the often negative perception of a technocrat, which is Westernized and captive at the hand of Western technology. Members of this Wing attempts to gain power in the Majlis to facilitate their take-over. (The MPs Dr. Raja`i Khurasani and Dr. Shu`la Sa`di, are among leading member of this group.) The Technocrats have many followers among government employees, university students, and industrial sectors.

Another grouping could go like this:

- Radicals (Majma`-i Ruhaniyyat-i Mubarez, Mujahedin of the Islamic Revolution): socialist, anti-Western

- Conservatives (Jame`h-ya Ruhaniyyat-i Mubariz): Status quo, anti-U.S.

- Rafsanjaniites (Khedmatgozaran-i Sazendagi): Free enterprise, end confrontation

- Liberals (Liberation Movement of Iran, National Front, People's Party): Socialist-Free enterprise, end confrontations, democracy and civil rights

B -Nationalisms of every mentioned ethnic group.

-Richard Cottam (1964). Nationalism in Iran (but not Iranian or Persian nationalism)

-Mustafa Vaziri (1993). Iran as Imagined Nation

-Bezhan-i Rezaie (1994). "Afsaneh va Vaghiyyat-i Millat-i Iran" (the myth and reality of the nation of Iran)

-Dr. Roushangar (1990). Cyrus The Great and Muhammad Ibn Abdullah.

1-A marriage of substance or convenience between religion and nationalisms has always existed in Islamic Iran. This political connection is based on legitimacy and public support to the benefit of one side or the other.

2-Without cohabitation with Islam or Socialism, Iran's nationalism is both diverse, fragmented and divisive.

3-Nationalism alone is unsuccessful in Iran as recent history of the country indicates. Every nationalist move in Iran has not been successful unless it was accommodated to or supported by religion.

(The Pahlavi regime is a good example. The Shah's ideological principle was weak and vague; it was dynastic and mostly oriented at the accumulation of wealth and power within a corrupt Court and government.

4-Each of Islamism and communism is more attractive, comprehensive, inclusive, and socioeconomically responsive than the narrow-minded/one-sided nationalism, which is laden with chauvinism and ethnocentrism.

(President Nasser and the Ba1thists' experience with nationalism--socialism-freedom, liberalism, democracy.)

5-The more "Persian" nationalism is stressed the more alienated the non-Persian nationalities would become and the more ethnic strife and activism towards national independence or separatism would follow.

6-If it is represented by Iran's National Front and the late Muhammad Mosaddiq, Iran's (Persian) nationalism has not made any conspicuous mark in the country.

Musaddiq did not have a popular base, nor a defined ideology, nor a known national policy. His ideal was the nationalization of oil, that's all. This is why not only under his tenure the economy came close to collapse, but he was easily overthrown by the \$750,000.00 that the CIA spent to put an end to him, in a day.

The "nationalist" Ahmad-i Madani and his confessed \$500 thousand from the CIA to overthrow the regime!

Ganji & Baheri

What both Hussain-i Makki and Dr. Kamal Qa`imi said about Musaddiq.

7-In Islamic Iran, non-Persians have been in power more than Persians and they contributed to Iran's culture, philosophy, literature, art, architecture, music, etc. more than the Persians.

8-Conversion from Islam to Zoroastrianism has not taken place in Iran even though sporadic converts are most likely to adopt Christianity or Baha`ism.

As scholars, writers, poets, politicians, and laypersons, some "Persian" elements contradict themselves by emphasizing their contribution to Islamic culture, but at the same time ridiculing Islam and/or the Arabs.

C-Leftists, Feda`iyn, Tudeh, Maoists, Independents (new communist revival as socialism or reformed communism). Dr. Shapoor-i Rawasani, 1991, The Great Oriental Community.

D-Mujahedin (nationalism, religion, socialism)

VI-Bases for Societal Consensus In Iran

Mostly maintained by political pressure, current *societal consensus* in Iran is ostensibly based on shared (1) religion (Islam), (2) language (Persian/Farsi), (3) historical experience, (4) territory (international Iran), and (5) patriotism, each of which may also be questioned critically from an ethnic perspective. To begin with, *slam* in Iran, along with "*Iran [as] mihan-i Islami*," has not yet given full meaning to their ethnic identity either. As the state language and the mother tongue of the Persian groups, Persian is only a *lingua franca*. Even different Persian strata do not speak the same colloquial language, but only the formal version--and that only when they learn it through the schools. Furthermore, none of the native languages of other Iranian ethnic groups, such as Arabs, Armenians, Assyrians, Azarbijanis, Bakhtiari, Baluchis, Jews, Kurds, Qashqais, and Turkomans is Persian. Shared historical experience varies from one ethnic-national group or the other; some may relate to pre-historical Iran while others identify with a certain era of the Islamic Iran as according to their ethnic dominance in the country.

As their ethnic names are attached to respective geographic provinces, Iran's different ethnic groups usually identify with territories they have inhabited for ages and have developed nativistic and atavistic sentiments accordingly. Finally and as a result, irrespective of political socialization, in terms of form and function, patriotic identification with the universal Iran varies ethnically throughout the country, and it is limited in scope and simplified in meaning and implication in many cases. The overriding sentiment among the people is localism, nativism, activism, sectarianism, but not *Iraniyyat* or Iraninism as Persianism. (Persian literature, Qum vs. Kashan, etc.)

VII-CONCLUSION: Where Is Iran Heading? (Somewhere and no where)

1-After 14 centuries, Islam should not be considered as being imported to Iran any more; it is an indigenous phenomenon befitting society, irrespective of how a religious regime functions there. Islam is a tradition of worship, way of life, source of identity, a philosophy, and a code of conduct within and across the community of its followers.

The late Murtaza Mutahhari (1356/1977): Khadamat-i Mutaqabil-i Iran va Islam (the mutual services of Iran and Islam to one another), 8th ed.

2-Iran's social, national, and ideological groups vacillate between clash and blend of cultures. This is not an easy acculturation and assimilation process because it may have the potential for fractional disintegration and civil war of a kind in the future.

Clash, blend, or a little of each? (Samuel Huntington and R.K. Ramazani)

3-Iran's different ethnic groups have both social class problem and national problem.

4-Iranian society is a microcosm of both Arab society and American society (Dynamic approach to the formation of ethnicity, identity, and ideology)

5-Confrontational Acculturation

6-A future Turkish dominance in Iran may be eminent, again? (three Turkish-Iranian points of view)

7-The rise of religious nationalism caused by convenience and substance

8-U.S.-Iranian Relations:

(1) Either pawn for Iran's recognition of Israel (Ayattollah Khomeini's reaction to the Shah authorities' conditions.)

(2) Or for the justification of the U.S. military presence and influence, these relations will be kept antagonistic on behalf of different U.S. administrations, which the regime in power in Iran does not dislike.

Containing Iran and Iraq by isolating them as "pariah states" is neither objective nor is it in the interest of the United States. The European states (e.g., Germany, France) and others (e.g., Japan, China, Russia) reap the fruit.

Engagement but not isolation (by spending \$20 m.)

*Crane Brinton 1968
Edwards 1927*

No faction remains radical in Iran to export revolution, but each faction attempts to play moderation or radicalism to accommodate itself within Iran, to gain legitimacy and support.

Ibn Khaldun: "When the natural tendencies of royal authorities to claim all glory for itself and to acquire luxury and tranquility have been established, the dynasty approaches senility." (The Muqaddimeh, trns. by Franz Rosenthal, edited and abridged by N.J. Dawood, 1981, p. 133).

Crane Brinton's The Anatomy of Revolution (1938) and the sociologist L. P. Edwards' The Natural History of Revolution (1927): The Thermidor, a convalescence from the fever of revolution." (p. 205)

Federalism, Pluralism, which are congruent with Islamism and socialism, even realistic nationalism.

Sociologically, it is safer to speak of Iranian society, not the nation of Iran.

I doubt that that civic society could be the solution to the Iranian and Middle Eastern societal problems.

Keeping the fall of the Shah in mind, the opposition groups seem to have come to realize that they may not successfully challenge the regimes in power until they join forces. Interestingly, even the regimes themselves are forced by circumstances to cohabit ideologically with their opposition. While on the flag of the ultra-nationalist Iraq Allah-u Akbar ("God is Almighty") is flying now, the Islamic Republic of Iran exploits today Iran's pre-Islamic past, which it once rejected outright. Given the interplay of different social, political, and historical forces, Iran's political culture should be analyzed dynamically. In this approach, ethnicity, identity, and ideology on the one hand and the sacred and the profane on the other hand are not conceptualized as fixed but rather flexible, undergoing a process of desired and undesired change, whose *legacy* may not be judged *bitter* or *sweet* entirely, but, say, sweet and sour simultaneously.

"If God had consulted me in advance, I would have advised him to create the world differently." True for all Middle East, including Iran.

Nelson Mandela: "...we are human together or nothing at all."

Factors Responsible for Societal Crisis:

I-Social:

- A-Ethnic diversity and Ambiguity
- B-Linguistic-dialectic diversity
- C-Religious,-Sectarian diversity
- D-The ethnic heterogeneity of military-political elite
- E-The questionable legitimacy of the elite
- F-Ethnic prejudice and discrimination
- G-Disunited-disoriented opposition
- H-Drafting Intellectuals

II-Economic Factors:

- A-Highly stratified society
- B-Lack of policy for redistribution of income and transfer payments

III-Political-administrative Factors:

- A-Changing seat of government/Capital throughout history
- B-Prejudiced administrative division in the country
- C-Poor transportation-communication networks
- D-Poor Mass communication networks
- E-Savakization of the people

IV-Educational-Socializational Factors: nationalist and/or Islamic values/ideals

V-Natural factors (climatic, Geographical, topographical)

VI-Nonexisting Unifying Universal Principles (religious, socialist, nationalist)

VII-Ambiguous Patriotism (Sa`di vs. the Hadith)

VIII-The Three Fallacies:

- A-2500 years Imperial/royal rule
- B-The Sugar Persian language
- C-The pure Aryan race

Iran before Islam

-The Medes, the Persians, the Parthians (Turani & Irani admix), the Sassanis relating to the Persisn group

-Shahinshahi

-Religion, Zoroastrianism, and State--Din va Davlat

The Islamic Iran

Before the Safawis: Sarbadaran

Under the Safawis

After the Safawis

Under the late Qajar period

Under the Pahlavis

Under the Islamic Republic

Nationalisms in Iran

A-Before Islam, the Persian Empire: Religion and different Nationalisms

B-Early nationalistic opposition to the Arab Islamic dominance: al-Sha`ubyya

C-The Samanis, Taheris, Saffaris, Ziarian, The Buwayhis/Daylamis, Safawi

nationalism-tribalism in the cast of Shiism, Afghanis, Afsharis, Zandis, Qajaris, Pahlavis, The Islamic Republic of Iran's functionaries

Generally speaking, the success of a government in mobilizing resources to attain goals, requires a flexible *organization*, pragmatic *ideology*, and visionary *leadership*, to lead and to *mobilize resources*. In the case of Iran, each of these elements can be examined critically from an ethnic perspective. First of all, the incapability of this organization, namely the nation-state system, in accommodating ethnic realities in Iran has already been addressed as a failure. Second, be it sacred or profane, nationalist or socialist, a homogenizing belief system has not been experienced in the country to the satisfaction of all. Third, save for two conspicuous but paradoxical cases, the leaders in Iran have either been imposed by international forces or have not necessarily assumed power through popular vote and consensus. Finally, the state's resource mobilization efforts have always been oriented against ethnic autonomy rights and ambitions.

It is within this same frame of conceptualization that an ethnic identity crisis can be envisioned in Iran. This is caused by a myriad of elements relating to sociological, philosophical, international, regional, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, ideological, intellectual, administrative, geographic, topographic, and climatic nature. By design or circumstance, directly or otherwise, this composite of elements operates together to bring about, contribute to, enhance, complicate, and exemplifies the crisis impinged upon Iran. Practically, this crisis is not confined to ethnic minority groups, but also covers the Persian layers in society as well.