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"The Diversity of Theoretical Classifications: Scholarly Treatment of the Monarchic Political Formula in the Analysis of Modernization Efforts in Pahlavi Iran"

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Abstract

The study of the Iranian monarchy under Mohammad Reza Shah from 1941 to 1979 is assumed to rely on the monarchic political formula as a determining factor for policy analysis. However, the monarchic political formula is not consistently or universally understood as an influential factor in social and political modernization efforts under the Shah. In fact, scholars at times apply their own definitions of the term "monarchy" inconsistently, potentially causing confusion among students of Iranian history and international relations. In this study, four influential theorists' work is examined in relation to their understanding of the monarchic political formula during Mohammad Reza Shah's modernization efforts in Iran. Their treatments of the Shah's modernization efforts are studied in conjunction with their definitions of the term "monarchy", providing the foundation for critical analysis of scholarly treatment of this important topic in political science.

Keywords

Social Sciences, Political Science, Lustick, Ian, Ian Lustick

**The Diversity of Theoretical Classifications:
Scholarly Treatment of the Monarchic Political Formula
in the Analysis of Modernization Efforts in Pahlavi Iran**

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I. Introduction

The twenty-first century has witnessed an increase in American interest in Middle Eastern politics and a subsequent swell in scholarly research on the topic. In the aftermath of the September 11th attacks and the United States' campaigns into Afghanistan and Iraq, the region's political history has increasing salience to future Western policy.

The Middle East as we know it today resulted from the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the Central Powers in the First World War. The Ottomans' centuries-long control of the region ended when Great Britain and France signed the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement, in which the two colonial powers divided the Middle East between them.¹ France gained control of Syria and Lebanon, while Great Britain administered Iraq, Palestine, and the Emirate of Transjordan. In this game of colonial conquest, European powers established puppet monarchies modeled on their European counterparts who could remain loyal to Western interests. Iraq, Transjordan and Egypt in the first half of the twentieth century were all examples of this kind of contrived political formula applied to the region. This early establishment of monarchy set a precedent that ensured the importance of this political formula to the region and its foreign relations in the coming decades.

The discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia and Iran in the first half of the twentieth century gave the region new meaning to the United States and Europe, especially in the technology-charged Second World War. As monarchs raked in profits from petroleum concessions and exploration, they were able to capitalize on Western dependency and secure their positions in regional politics. The importance of the monarchic political formula was uncontested, as it allowed centralized control over the body politic and gave regional leaders unquestioned power to allow Western investment.

¹D. Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. (New York: Owl, 1989), 287.

The Second World War distracted the European powers and allowed further monarchical consolidation on the Arabian peninsula, resulting in the withdrawal of European forces from Transjordan, Iraq, Libya, and Egypt by 1947.¹ The interaction of these former colonies with the West increased after the Second World War, namely due to their respective monarchic governments. This was because centralized monarchy was a foreign concept in the Middle East, and these regimes relied on Western money and military power to secure their positions and authority over volatile and rebellious bodies politic. Middle Eastern monarchies' contact with the West is extensive to this day. In the case of Iraq and Egypt, revolutionary groups that overthrew Kings Faisal and Fuad ushered in political regimes that have been immensely important to the United States, in the forms of friend and foe. Conversely, Jordan and Saudi Arabia's monarchies, which remain in power, have proven to be key allies of the West and some would argue are stabilizing factors in the region due to their conciliatory attitudes towards non-Muslim actors, specifically Israel.

Monarchies that survived the twentieth century have retained much of their original power in the Muslim world. Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Jordan are testaments to the power of strong monarchical legacies. However, several dynasties have collapsed in the last century, including those in Libya, Iraq, and Iran. The stability and potential collapse of dynastic powers in the region is of particular import to the West, namely the United States, since many of its strongest alliances exist with absolute monarchs in the region. Strong alliances with the Saudi royal family as well as the Hashemites in Jordan have allowed the United States to maintain a presence in the region. Additionally, we have seen the extent to which American primacy can suffer after an ally's collapse. In 1979, the overthrow of Mohammad Reza Shah by the fundamentalist movement of Ayatollah Ruollah Khomeini demonstrated that regimes can be replaced by leaders who not only diverge on policy issues, but are vehemently opposed to the United States on moral and cultural grounds.

¹ J.A. Kechichian, *Power and Succession in Arab Monarchies: A Reference Guide* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2008), 57.

In addition to Iran, the Iraqi and Egyptian royal houses were overthrown, begging the question of the place of the monarchical political formula in the Middle East. In order to understand the relationship or correlation between the political formula and regime outcome, I will examine existing scholarship pertaining to the monarchic political formula and identify analytical tendencies and predispositions with which researchers operate. Theorists' treatment of certain factors in a failed monarchy and their relation to the political formula can suggest whether the regime's collapse had anything to do with its being a monarchy, or whether it was the result of other factors that would have incited revolution in any country, regardless of its political formula. Moreover, such an examination will alert researchers to certain characteristics of existing political science scholarship on the Middle East and theorists' systemic analytical positions regarding monarchy in the Muslim world.

However, current scholarship has not analyzed the role of Muslim monarchies in the landscape of global politics. Relevant theorists such as Robert Brownlee and Barbara Geddes focus on authoritarian regimes in general, but do not specify their studies to concentrate on the monarchic political formula or monarchy as an institution. This lack of published research on this topic raises two important questions: why have monarchies not been analyzed by political scientists, and what does this tell current students about the nature of the monarchic political formula? The lack of research may indicate a difficulty in easily categorizing or characterizing monarchies in the context of the Muslim world.

In light of the sparse scholarship on the monarchic political formula, as well as its salience to international politics and political science research in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, I want to ask the following questions: What is the relative importance given by political science theorists of the monarchic political formula to a Middle Eastern monarchy's success or failure, and how does it explain its political trajectory? Does the formula even make a difference to the regime's longevity? Such a determination could lead a theorist to argue that the monarchic political formula in fact prolonged the regime's life or that it expedited its demise, or that it had nothing to do with the country's political

trajectory at all. I will be studying the regime of Mohammad Reza Shah in Iran from 1941 to 1979 and scholarly treatment of modernization and democratization efforts, both political and social, under the Shah. I will examine four theorists' work: George Lenczowski, Zhand Shakibi, Said Amir Arjomand, and Ervand Abrahamian. This is not a discussion of the causes of the Iranian Revolution, but rather an examination of existing scholarship and the amount of importance it places on the monarchic political formula in Pahlavi Iran's downfall. An identification of whether the theorists attribute the success of cultural and political liberalization efforts to the monarchic political formula, or other social and cultural factors, will indicate the level of importance they place on the monarchic formula and what analytical predispositions they have when examining Pahlavi Iran.

In addition to the four theorists whose work I will be discussing, I will consult academic sources, such as historians and theorists who specialize in Middle Eastern history and politics. Due to the recent occurrence of the Islamic Revolution, I will be consulting sources who wrote soon after the collapse of the Shah, as well as during his reign. This will allow me to examine the differing views of writers before and after the collapse of the monarchy.

The most profound result of examining the scholarly treatment of a regime's collapse is to gain a deeper understanding of academic treatment of the Iranian Revolution, which can be helpful to current researchers who consult these scholars during their own studies. Patterns that can be identified as strong precursors to a monarchy's collapse or significantly correlated to its downfall can prove useful to political scientists studying the Middle East today. Conversely, if theorists argue that liberalization and modernization in Iran had little to do with the monarchic political formula itself, then it suggests no correlation between the monarchic political formula and the political outcome. The nature of the political formula is the impetus for this research, and studying scholarly treatment of the formula will yield conclusions about the analytical tendencies of researchers of which students of Middle Eastern politics should be cognizant.

II. Hypothesis

I hypothesize that monarchy as a political formula greatly contributed to the political trajectory of monarchical Iran, and that the theorists at hand will emphasize the importance of the monarchic political formula and the monarchy as an institution given the Shah's pervasive power and influence over political and cultural affairs in Iran. I believe that the Shah and the monarchy as an institution were inextricably linked. The Shah's molding of the monarchic political formula and the application of his perceived role as king precipitated conditions that set the stage for the revolution in 1979. The evolution of the formula in a distinctly Iranian context under Mohammad Reza Shah greatly influenced the people's perception of the monarch and the strength of his regime. Therefore, what mattered was not the fact that Iran was a monarchy, but rather what kind of monarchic political formula the Shah created and executed in Iran. That political formula's effect on modernization and liberalization efforts was undeniable due to its pervasiveness in citizens' everyday lives in Pahlavi Iran.

III. Definitions

In order to most effectively communicate my results and assessment of the theorists' work, I will lay out specific definitions of the terms "monarchy" and "political formula" here. When I use these terms in my discussion and conclusion, I will do so according to the definitions I present in this section.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, a monarchy is:

"...a form of government in which sovereignty is vested in a single person whose right to rule is generally hereditary and who is empowered to remain in office for life. The power of this sovereign may vary from the absolute to that strongly limited by custom or constitution."¹

A king need not have unlimited political power, as many constitutional monarchies such as the United Kingdom and Thailand are still monarchies. A universal characteristic of monarchies is hereditary rule, but elective monarchies exist, such as the Pope, who is sovereign of the Vatican City State and elected by the College of Cardinals. A 1914 edition of *Bouvier's Law Dictionary* states that "Monarchy is contradistinguished from republic," and gives this definition:

"We cannot find any better definition of monarchy than what this is: a monarchy is the government which is ruled (really or theoretically) by one person, who is wholly set apart from all other members of the state's (called his subjects); while we call republic that government in which not only there exists an organism by which the opinion of the people,

¹ Encyclopedia Britannica. (2009). *Monarchy*. Retrieved January 3, 2009, from Encyclopedia Britannica

or of a portion of the people (as in aristocracies), passes over into public will, that is, law, but in which also the supreme power, or the , returns, either periodically or at stated times (where the chief magistracy is for life), to the people, or a portion of the people, to be given anew to another person; or else, that government in which the hereditary portion (if there be any) is not the chief and leading portion of the government, as was the case in the Netherlands.”¹

For the purposes of this discussion, I will equate the term “Shah” with “king” and “monarch”. If we take the above definition, the Shah was in fact a monarch, albeit an absolute one. Therefore, Iran between 1941 and 1979 was indeed a monarchy. Even during calls for a constitutional monarchy in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Shah, though his powers were curtailed, remained the sovereign of the state. We can progress with an analysis of the theorists’ work with an understanding that Pahlavi Iran was in fact a monarchic state.

A “political formula”, as defined by nineteenth century legal theorist Gaetano Mosca, is:

“...a doctrine or body of belief that legitimizes the political structure and the authority of the ruling class; there are, for example, the doctrines of divine right, and of democracy...the political formula that legitimizes the authority of the ruling class may be accepted by all members of the society.”²

This understanding of the political formula is useful for this study because of its emphasis on the ruling class, and the social stratification and political hierarchy that characterized monarchic Iran was dominated by the economic elites and the ruling class, headed by the monarchy.

¹J. Bouvier, *A Law Dictionary*. (Philadelphia: G.W. Childs, 1859), 996.

²G. Mosca, *The Ruling Class*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939), 117.

IV. Research Methodology

In order to study Abrahamian, Arjomand, Lenczowski, and Shakibi's analysis and treatment of modernization under Mohammad Reza Shah and their arguments in favor or against the importance of the monarchic political formula in Iran, I will establish my treatment of the term "modernization" and its implications for my research.

The term "modernization" is too broad to use in the case of monarchic Iran, and was two-fold under Mohammad Reza Shah. Modernization does not simply indicate domestic social reforms, but also political changes inside the country and in the state's interaction with other actors in the international community. Consequently, I will divide modernization into cultural and political, and then whether or not the theorists believe these were affected by the monarchic political formula. In order to adequately define "cultural" and "political", I will define the two parameters based on major events during Mohammad Reza Shah's reign. Cultural modernization consisted of domestic social initiatives: namely efforts at secularism. Political modernization, on the other hand, consisted of both domestic and international policy initiatives: the rise of Mohammad Mossadegh, the White Revolution, and Iran's relationship with the United States. Theorists' treatment of these factors and their classification of these initiatives in terms of their impetus and aftermath will provide the subject for the discussion in the following section of whether existing scholarship treats the monarchic political formula as relevant or immaterial to Iran's political trajectory. I will organize the theorists' treatment of political and cultural modernization in the matrix below.

	Affected or Influenced by the Monarchic Political Formula	Not Affected by Monarchic Political Formula
Cultural Modernization		

Political Modernization		
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V. Explication of Hypothesis

In this section, I will lay out the background of my hypothesis, starting with the Shah's cultural modernization and continuing on to his domestic political reforms and modification of foreign policy. In the discussion of these aspects of modernization in monarchic Iran, I will make references to analogous trends or movements in the Middle East, mostly in other monarchic countries so as to give the reader a similar example to which to refer when studying the Iranian question. This will be useful in understanding the nature of the monarchic political formula in the Middle East and its more specific application to Iran.

a. Cultural Modernization

As discussed earlier, cultural modernization consisted of domestic social initiatives: namely efforts at secularity. Political modernization, on the other hand, consisted of both domestic and international policy initiatives: the rise of Mohammad Mossadegh, the White Revolution, and the relationship with the United States. Theorists' analyses of these factors indicate the level of importance given to the monarchic political formula and whether tensions arising from modernization were unique to Iran because of its monarchy or other factors. In this vein, I will explicate my hypothesis with a discussion of the cultural and political modernization efforts in Iran and other Middle Eastern monarchies.

The first facet of the Shah's cultural liberalization effort was a push towards a secular Iran. This campaign led to a head-on clash with the religious establishment, the *Ulama*. The *Ulama* acted as a legitimizing factor in many cases of absolute monarchy in the Middle East, especially in Iran prior to the rise of Reza Shah.¹ In those monarchies without the backing of the religious establishment, power has

¹ S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 83.

been tenuous. A prime example to illustrate the dichotomy between monarchies with and without the public support of the *Ulama* is the secular Shah of Iran and the theocratic monarchs of the al-Saud family in Saudi Arabia. The latter have asserted their power by capitalizing on their position as Custodians of the Two Holy Places of Makkah and Madinah. The current King Abdallah's use of *Shari'a* law and reliance on the *Qur'an*, coupled with his adherence to conservative *Wahhabi* principles allows him to rule with an iron fist while silencing those who oppose his family on the basis that they are doing God's work. Additionally, the ruling Hashemite family of Jordan claims to be direct descendents of the Prophet Mohammad himself, thus assuring their place in the political hierarchy. Thus, this relationship between the monarchic political formula's legitimacy and its ties to the religious establishment serve as the foundation for the study of theorists' views of Mohammad Reza Shah's efforts at secularity.

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and his father tried to distance themselves from Islamic heritage and instead emphasized Iran's pre-Islamic history, highlighting the country's Persian culture, rather than religious history.¹ Like Ataturk in Turkey, the Pahlavis tried to emphasize secularity despite the fact that the majority of their constituency was strongly *Shi'a* Muslim. The Islamic revival as led by Khomeini against the Shah was in many cases analogous to Imam Husain ibn Ali's fight against the tyrannical Yazid I, who, like the Shah was seen as militaristic and corrupt.² Further confounding the Shah's efforts at secularity was the fact that he underestimated the Islamist movement led by Khomeini. He consistently believed that the Ayatollah posed a minor threat, and could be dealt with by being exiled.

Related to the Shah's efforts at secularity was his campaign for women's rights. He expanded appointed several female judges in an effort to break the cycle of conservative Islamic oppression of

¹ Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 24.

² J. Amuzegar, *The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 23.

women in *Shi'a* communities. He also extended suffrage to women and encouraged women to shed the veil, which further angered religious conservatives.

b. Political Modernization

Political modernization, or lack thereof, in Middle Eastern monarchies has been heavily influenced by interaction with the international community and crackdowns on internal dissent. In the case of Libya, King Idris I oversaw extensive economic growth and progress due to the country's oil wealth and subsequent foreign investment. The presence of the American Wheelus Air Base also helped funnel money into the country. Despite Idris's power, Libya had a bicameral legislature, and though the monarch was hereditary, it was also constitutional, with the king needing to take an oath in front of the Senate and House of Representatives upon his coronation. However, the king had the power to install and remove prime ministers, as well as conduct foreign policy.

Saudi Arabia's first elections were held on a local level in 2005, with participation reserved to males only.¹ Legislation is ratified by royal decree, and must be harmonious with *Shari'a* law. This reliance on Islamic law has led many human rights and government agencies abroad to decry the lack of basic prerogatives for many Saudi citizens, especially women, who cannot drive or leave their house without a male companion. Stunted democratization and political reform may be helpful in explaining the al-Saud's ability to stay in power for nearly a century. The tendency of a monarchy to repress opposition and demand full loyalty in a police state may prove to be an important factor in its ability to stay in power, despite calls from the international community for political liberalization.

There was an international impetus for political liberalization in Iran. In many former European colonies' cases, the lack of infrastructure and foreign domination of arable land and businesses caused

¹ M. Weston, *Profits and Princes: Saudi Arabia from Mohammad to the Present* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley, 2008), 117.

many, such as Libya's Gaddafi, to call for socialist reforms. Additionally, Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal and promote pan-Arabism signaled a movement to topple the existing elite's domination in the region and quickly redistribute wealth. In the case of Saudi Arabia, it has one of the highest-growing per capita incomes in the world, thanks to its oil wealth. Many low-skilled workers come from the developing world, especially South Asia, but oil wealth is controlled by ethnic Arabs. Moreover, the monarchy has invested in long-term educational and economic initiatives. To offset its reliance on petroleum wealth, the royal family has promoted economic diversification, including business interests.¹ The fact that Saudis appreciate their reliance on oil wealth and have made efforts to provide increasing services to its citizens may represent an effort on the monarchy's part to placate the public and ensure that volatile economic and social movements do not erode its power.

While foreigners did not openly dominate the Iranian economy, the Shah's reliance on oil and his consequent relationship with the West made him vastly unpopular.² Moreover, the lifestyle differences between the Iranian elite and the masses incensed religious conservatives and the working class alike. For the Iranian aristocracy who benefited from European investment and foreign educations, financial opportunities existed at home and abroad that were not afforded to the lower classes. The majority of Iranians who were members of the working class did not benefit from the vast oil wealth that the country earned, especially in the 1960s and 1970s. The Shah's mismanagement of the country's revenues furthered the divide between the privileged few and the impoverished many. A difference that one can discern between the failed Pahlavi regime and the existing al-Saud rule is that of Saudi Arabia's investment in education and an effort to funnel the wealth from oil back into the country to promote development. Iran had the financial wherewithal to ensure technological and social development, but for

¹ M. Weston, *Profits and Princes: Saudi Arabia from Mohammad to the Present* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley, 2008), 77.

² Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 182.

some reason it did not take advantage of its resources. The political formula must ensure the future stability of the formula by fostering equality and facilitating the long-term development of social and economic programs from which all citizens can benefit.

Aside from the different sources of political success and failure in the comparison which I conduct, it is important to make note of the government that replaced the collapsed monarchy. If there are identifiable similarities between the two regimes, it may help discern a pattern in the types of regimes that have long-term survival potential in the Middle East. Moreover, it may speak to the appeal of certain kinds of political formulae for the region's citizens.

In the case of Iran, the Revolution of 1979 gave rise to a fundamentalist government that exists to this day. Ayatollah Khomeini ruled based on the *Qur'an*, and his political formula saw a reversal of previous liberalizations and relationships with Western countries built by the Shah. After Khomeini's death in 1989, liberalization occurred under Iran's democratically-elected presidents, but the Supreme Leader and Islamic Council still make foreign policy, defense, and national security decisions. Iran's current president, Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, is notoriously conservative, and has raised fears in the West of Iran's return to stringent fundamentalism. Nevertheless, men and women can both vote, a sign of increasing democratization that did not exist under the secular Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Theocracy as a political formula was used as a guarantee for equality and prosperity during Khomeini's movement in the late 1970s and it could be used again. The replacement of the monarchy by a theocratic government is important to keep in mind in conjunction with the arguments of scholars so as to better understand the how a particular political formula is best suited for a particular body politic. Khomeini's movement was not just a religious one, but also an effort with nationalist implications to have Iranian citizens regain control of the country. Interestingly, Khomeini himself adhered to the principle that temporal governments are meaningless, and relied on the idea of the *Dar-al-Islam*, literally the house of Islam, as being the ultimate goal, rather than a particularly Iranian independence movement. Thus, the monarchic

political formula was overturned for a thoroughly religious political formula that relied on the *Qur'an* for guidance and direction.¹ Khomeini's regime was as oppressive as the Shah's. Therefore, it will be imperative to examine why the Iranian people decided they could not stomach a monarchy any longer. Was it something endemic to the political formula itself? Was it due to a flaw in the Shah's ruling style? Was it a social issue that manifested itself in the form of revolution? Or was it a combination of these factors? These considerations will clarify arguments of the four scholars that I will compare, allowing the reader to better understand the theorists' understanding of Iran's political formula and its importance to the country's political trajectory.

As I discussed earlier, the most profound result of examining theoretical treatment of the collapse of a past monarchic regime and the failure of the political formula to engender public support is to better understand its applicability to contemporary politics in the region. Patterns that can be identified as strong precursors to the formula's collapse or significantly correlated to its uselessness in a particular country can prove useful to political scientists studying the Middle East today. Examining scholarly treatment of issues that faced a failed monarchy in its dimming years may strengthen the academic reliance on those issues as causes of its failure. Conversely, such an examination may also prove the opposite; simply that the monarchic political formula can have little effect on a state's political trajectory. The study of Iran will be helpful in determining whether theorists hold the political formula to have anything to do with the effectiveness of governance. The nature of the political formula is the impetus for this research, and understanding scholarly treatment of it will be beneficial to those studying Middle Eastern politics and political science.

¹ P. Daneshvar, *Revolution in Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 130.

VI. Results and Discussion

Zhand Shakibi's analysis of Pahlavi Iran indirectly treats the monarchic political system as central to Iran's political trajectory. He argues that revolutions in monarchic countries are primarily due to the personalities of their respective monarchs. Iran is no different, and Mohammad Reza Shah's personal ambitions and interpretations of his role as the monarch influenced the political environment and the ruling formula of Iran under his reign.¹ Thus, he believes monarchic political formulas are contingent upon the monarchs' individual personalities and understandings of what the monarchy is supposed to be. In this manner, Shakibi generally treats cultural and political modernization trends under Mohammad Reza Shah as a function of the Shah's appreciation of his role in a long line of monarchs. Thus, the monarchic political formula was principal in the political trajectory of Iran. As defined earlier, monarchy is a form of government in which sovereignty is vested in a single person whose right to rule is generally hereditary and who is empowered to remain in office for life. The power of this sovereign may vary from the absolute to that strongly limited by custom or constitution. Therefore, because monarchy as a political formula inevitably puts enormous weight on the personality of the individual who is set apart from all others as king, the monarchic political formula is the driver of the country's political identity and future by way of the monarch himself.

¹ Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2007), 2.

Said Amir Arjomand emphasizes the role of the regime in the years leading up to the Islamic Revolution, but he does this in a manner that highlights the state and its bureaucracy rather than the monarchy.¹ Therefore, he places importance on the Shah, not as a king, but the driver of the political machine. He analyzes political and cultural modernization as policies that were affected by the authoritarian nature of the regime rather its monarchic characteristics.

George Lenczowski treats the cultural and political modernization efforts in Iran as inextricably linked to the monarchic political formula. He unabashedly defends the Shah, unlike many theorists and analysts of pre-Revolution Iran, and analyzes Mohammad Reza Shah's reign in the context of the country's history. He emphasizes the historic relationship that the Iranian body politic has with the monarchic political formula, and treats it as integral to the political trajectory of the country in the late 1970s and the eventual fall of the Shah. Lenczowski argues that the monarchy is inextricably linked to the Iranian political and even cultural identity due to its historical omnipresence and influence over people's lives.² Its importance during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah is therefore undeniable.

Ervand Abrahamian dismisses the political formula as irrelevant to the political trajectory and identity of Iran under Mohammad Reza Shah. Instead, he underscores the importance of the economy and vested class differences as the driver for Iranian politics.³ Rather than the monarchic political formula influencing the various forms of political and cultural modernization, the economic demands of an industrializing Iran decided its political fortunes. He treats efforts at reform as products of the monarchy, but driven by economic considerations and demands of the people.

¹ S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 4.

² G. Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), xxii.

³ E. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 5.

The matrix I presented in Section IV consists of two axes. On the x-axis are two options: influenced or not influenced by the monarchic political formula. On the y-axis are two categories: cultural modernization and political modernization, which refer to secular policies and domestic and foreign policy reforms, respectively. Based on this matrix, it appears as though of the four theorists discussed, only Lenczowski and Abrahamian maintain their stances on the importance of the monarchic political formula. Shakibi and Arjomand's treatment of certain issues in Mohammad Reza Shah's modernization campaigns emphasizes the monarchic political formula and then diminishes its importance in others.

Shakibi emphasizes the Shah's personal definition of monarchy as imperative to an understanding of the political formula, but underplays its importance when discussing foreign policy. Similarly, while Arjomand dismisses the monarchic political formula as irrelevant to cultural and political modernization, it is important in discussing the development of Iran's foreign policy under the Shah.

Shakibi argues that all aspects of cultural modernization and domestic political liberalizations under Mohammad Reza Shah were unique to the Iranian monarchic political formula. However, foreign policy and international political modernization were not influenced by the monarchy but rather by global power politics in which Iran was simply a disadvantaged state actor.

Lenczowski's approach and application of his understanding of the monarchy is more consistent than that of Shakibi. He argues that all aspects of cultural and political modernization were unique to the Iranian monarchic political formula and would not have occurred had it not been for the monarchy.

Arjomand believes that all aspects of cultural and political modernization were not influenced by the monarchic political formula except, a view shared by Abrahamian, who puts uniform emphasis on the economy than the political formula.

	Unique to the Monarchic Political Formula	Not Affected by Monarchic Political Formula

Cultural Modernization	-Lenczowski (secularization) -Shakibi (secularization)	-Abrahamian (secularization) -Arjomand (secularization)
Political Modernization	-Lenczowski (land reform, political oppression, foreign policy) -Shakibi (land reform, political oppression) -Arjomand (foreign policy)	-Abrahamian (political, oppression, foreign policy) -Arjomand (land reform, political oppression) -Shakibi (foreign policy)

The theorists who maintain a consistent emphasis on the monarchic political formula, Lenczowski and Abrahamian, espouse extreme views regarding the monarchy. Lenczowski is unabashedly sympathetic to the Shah, and he is confident that the monarchic formula was a source of stability in Iran. Conversely, Abrahamian barely addresses the monarchic political formula and instead emphasizes the importance of the economy and class conflicts in the Iranian political trajectory. Neither of the theorists defines a monarchy so as to adequately argue whether or not the political formula was important to Iran. Shakibi and Arjomand tend to use the definition of monarchy depending on which argument they put forward.

The lack of uniformity or clearly delineated parameters of analysis frustrates the efforts of researchers to clearly understand the analytical methods and predispositions with which scholars treat the Iranian monarchy. They all place importance on the monarchic political formula variable save for Abrahamian, but they do so inconsistently, and rely on a dynamic definition of what a monarchy is, applying it in a manner that is not always clear to their readers. In the following discussion I will discuss the theorists' views of modernization in greater detail.

A. Cultural Liberalization

i. Efforts at Secularity

Max Weber once said:

“Whenever hierocratic charisma is stronger than political authority it seeks to degrade it, if it does not appropriate it outright. Since political power claims a competing charisma of its own, it may be made to appear as the work of Satan.”¹

The hierocracy to which he refers is the religious establishment, commonly known as the *Ulama* in Muslim countries. Religion was a unifying factor in the region for centuries prior to the rise of Mohammad Reza Shah and had a dynamic relationship with the monarchy.

The historical narrative provided below is not meant for debate or discussion of the theorists. Rather, it is meant to provide the reader with an understanding of existing factual knowledge of the *Ulama*'s role in monarchic Iran. Examining the rise of *Shi'a* Islam provides important contextual understanding of theorists' examination of the *Ulama*'s rise in Iran. Scholarly treatment of the *Ulama*'s role in politics will reveal the analytical predispositions with which the theorists examine the monarchic political formula, as well as the impact of religion on state politics.

In 628 CE, the Sassanid ruler Khusrau II was assassinated after overseeing several wars with the Byzantine Empire. He led a decidedly Zoroastrian Persia, and his death resulted in a power vacuum with a myriad of claimants to his seat. In the four years after his demise, ten kings and queens ruled the Persian empire, demonstrative of the political disorder that enveloped the region. In 628 CE, the Prophet Mohammad allegedly sent letters to leaders throughout the non-Muslim Middle East, urging them to

¹ S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 75.

convert to Islam. Some scholars argue that Khusrau II himself received a letter from the Prophet, but that has been disputed, as the intricacy of the Sassanid court ceremony would have made it unlikely for the Shahenshah himself to read a letter from a minor regional power.¹ Regardless of whether he read the letter himself, Khusrau was furious with Mohammad's suggestion, thereby preventing the spread of Islam in Persia during his reign. Khusrau's untimely death left the Sassanids in a weak and vulnerable position. Four years later, his grandson Yazdegerd made an effort to resist the onslaught of Arab Muslim invaders, but was unsuccessful.

In 1501, Shah Ismail I founded the Safavid dynasty. Under the Safavids, *Shi'ism* became the state religion of the Persian empire, and would continue to influence the region's politics for the next five centuries. Ismail I made mandated conversion from Sunni Islam to *Shi'a* Islam after his ascent to the throne. It is important to note that Ismail I brought in *Shi'a* religious leaders and members of the clergy to the capital in order to strengthen his conversion campaign. In exchange for their loyalty to the Shah, clerics received land and money, thus setting the foundation for a mutually beneficial relationship between the Shah and the religious establishment.² This early relationship between the crown and the *Ulama* would be replayed most prominently during the Qajar dynasty's rule of Persia.

The Qajars came to power after the Hotaki, Afsharid, and Zand dynasties failed to maintain control over Persia. Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar was crowned Shah in 1796, but was assassinated one year later and succeeded by his nephew, Fath Ali Shah Qajar. The Qajar kings' relationship with the *Ulama* demonstrated how the strength of the religious establishment could shake the foundations of the monarchic political formula and the extent to which religion was tied to the state. Mozzafar-e-Din Shah, who came to power in 1896, is an interesting case study in the history of royal-religious relations. Though moderate and a generally amiable individual, he proved ineffective at ruling Persia in the face of a

¹ E. Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 182.

² G.R. Garthwaite, *The Persians*. (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 2.

technologically advancing and politically interfering West. The most prominent European power in Persia during this period was Russia, and the Shah's inability to curb Czarist interferences resulted in angry protests by the *Ulama* and the merchant class. A related constitutionalist movement demanded a curb to the Shah's power, but the crown failed to deliver on its promises to liberalize. The *Ulama* were further angered by the occupation of Persia by Russia during the First World War. They saw this as an attack on their religious and political sentiments, and when Reza Khan, Commander of the Persian Cossack Brigade, staged a coup d'état, the Qajar family fell from power.¹

Reza Shah, as he became known after his coronation, though an initial ally of the *Ulama*, initiated policies that incensed religious leaders. Much like Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey, the Shah sought to modernize Iran so it could shed what he saw as the shackles of religious and cultural traditionalism. Thus, Reza Shah redefined the Persian monarchic political formula. In previous regimes, the Shah was the head of both politics and religion, seen as the protector of traditional *Shi'a* Islam. The Pahlavi dynasty instead was seen by citizens as a family of rapid modernizers. For example, in December of 1928, Reza Shah instituted a law that required all Iranians to wear Western clothing, angering the clergy and many devout Muslims who felt that Western clothing was inappropriate. Additionally, he pressured women to abandon the veil and banned public school teachers from wearing head coverings. He brought the Iranian monarchy further into the twentieth century when his wife, Tadj ol-Molouk, and daughters wore Western clothing and did not cover their heads or faces in public. Tadj ol-Molouk became the first Iranian queen-consort whose face was seen by the public. He further angered the *Shi'a* clergy by having police forcibly remove chadors, the traditional robe-like covering of Iranian women, from women on the street. He also instituted heavy fines for public places and businesses that did not open their doors to both men and women, thus ensuring the mixing of sexes. This move was yet another insult to the *Shi'a* clergy, for whom pre-marital interaction between unrelated men and women was forbidden. The monarchy hence

¹ C. Ghani, *Iran and the Rise of the Reza Shah: From Qajar Collapse to Pahlavi Power*. (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2000), 17.

became not just about the Shah, but Reza Shah's family became the ultimate manifestation of his cultural modernization campaign.

The monarchy's relationship with the *Ulama* was definitively damaged when Reza Shah ordered Azerbaijani troops to storm a shrine in Mashhad where merchants, villagers, and clergymen were taking refuge after denouncing the Shah. After this incident, Reza Shah's political formula could never again rely on the *Ulama* as a stabilizing force or supporter in Iran. This trend establishes that there was a relationship between Iran's religious body politic and the monarchic political formula. Had the monarch not been adamant about abandoning Muslim practices, the clerics would likely have buttressed his rule, thereby lending him legitimacy.

Anti-clericalism was clear a factor in Reza Shah's monarchy, and his son had less incentive to rapidly change the political formula his father had established. Mohammad Reza Shah was a close ally of the United States due to his opposition to Communism, and after socialist forces nearly overthrew him in the early 1950s, he became more tyrannical. However, due to his animosity towards communism, an atheistic ideology, many religious leaders took the ascension of the new Shah as a clean slate for the monarchy and an opportunity for the *Ulama* to influence the political formula during the first monarchic period of 1941 to 1951. This did not happen, as Mohammad Reza Shah had his own plans for the monarchy and the political future of Iran, hoping to continue his father's trend of disengaging religion from the state.

The modification of the monarchic political formula so that it did not rest on religion would not bode well for the Shah. Conservative Iranians harshly criticized the monarchy for allowing a non-Muslim power, the United States, to exert so much control over Iran. The Iranian public's dislike of the United States began when the American Central Intelligence Agency orchestrated the ouster of the widely popular Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh. The leftist prime minister's popularity between 1951 and 1953 was the first time the Shah faced a limited monarchic power. To reassert his absolute power, the

Shah sought the United States' help in ousting Mossadegh, thus ushering in an enhanced monarchy in 1953.

Following the coup, a more socio-cultural movement took hold in Iran: the Islamic Revival. The Islamic Revival was preceded by the energy crisis of the 1970s. The formation of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was seen by many Muslims, including Saudi Prince Saud al Faisal, as a gift from God in the form of petroleum revenues that flowed into the Middle East. This newfound wealth and power resulted in a call to fundamentalism. No longer needing the West for economic aid, and in fact being in a relative position of power, conservative Muslims argued for a return to *Shari'a* law and dismantling of Western influence in the region.¹ Iran too was affected by this movement.

Though it was most publicized due to its effectiveness in 1979 and its rise during the Shah's final period of monarchic supremacy, fundamentalist *Shi'a* Islam was present in Iran for decades prior. In 1946, the *Fedayan-e-Islam* was founded by Navab Safavi to transform Iran into an Islamic theocracy. The group assassinated noted intellectuals and secular prime ministers who spoke out against the *Ulama*. In the 1960s, another organization, *Mujahedin-e-Khalq*, hereafter referred to as "MEK", was formed with the objective of offering a revolutionary brand of Islam to Iranians, which would mix Muslim and Marxist ideologies. The MEK was decidedly anti-Western and attacked American military personnel in Iran in the 1970s.² Groups like *Fedayan-e-Islam* and MEK demonstrate the underpinnings of political fundamentalism in Iran prior to the monarchy's fall. Each group offered their own take on the political formula that would most adequately benefit Iran.

¹ G. Kepel, *Jihad: On the Trail of Political Islam*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2003), 42.

² G. Kepel, *Jihad: On the Trail of Political Islam*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2003), 51.

In the 1970s, after growing disenchantment with the West and the monarchy, the *Ulama* gained a new voice in the form of Ruollah Khomeini. Born in 1902, the Ayatollah was vehemently anti-West, and propagated the idea of *gharbzadegi*, which was that the West was a plague that alienated Muslims from their roots and true identity. After publicly denouncing the Shah, Khomeini left Iran in 1964 for Turkey, then Iraq, and eventually for France for the last year of his exile in 1978. The Ayatollah spread his ideology remotely, recording dictations and speeches on tapes which would be circulated throughout Iran. He, followed by conservative members of the *Ulama*, insisted that clerical rule was necessary to prevent injustices exacted by the Westernized monarchic political formula.¹ The Shah, whose power and reputation had taken on mythic proportions, was humanized and weakened in the eyes of the Iranian people by Khomeini's diatribes. Thus, the *Ulama* played a significant role in bringing the Shah's flaws to light and perhaps even exaggerating them to expedite the collapse of the monarchic political formula.

Interestingly, in the 1940s Khomeini said that limited monarchy in conjunction with *Shari'a* law was permissible.² Eventually, his views became extreme, and he said that the state should be run by an Islamic jurist who had the power to overrule even the *Shari'a* law in the interests of Islam and the state. The most important facet of Khomeini's ideology and his rise was his belief that the monarchic political formula, along with all secular governments, was illegitimate. He made no theoretical distinction between monarchy and any other kind of non-Islamic regime. His ideology was therefore contrary to my hypothesis that the monarchic political formula shaped Iran's political trajectory. Theocracy was the most desirable form of government, but even that was not the ideal situation, since *Shi'a* scriptures declare all temporal governments to be illegitimate. The only true ruler is God and therefore leaders on earth should be well-versed in His teachings so they can instruct the body politic in such matters and avoid damnation for the entire country. Khomeini saw himself as the guardian of God's word and the enforcer and

¹ B. Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 122.

². B. Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 72.

protector of the Iranians. The monarchic political formula seemingly had an effect on the *Ulama*'s role in Iranian society, since the monarchy's dynamic relationship with the *Ulama*, as discussed above, demonstrated the latter's influence on politics and the inextricability between state and religion in a country as devout as Iran.

The unique nature of the *Ulama*'s relationship with the Crown and the former's role in the monarchic political formula in 1970s Iran was manifest in the cult of personality surrounding Khomeini. The Ayatollah is the only member of the Iranian *Ulama* to bear the title of "Imam", a distinction reserved for the early leaders of the early *Shi'a*. In 1978, a rumor swept through Iran that Khomeini's face could be seen in the full moon, demonstrative of the mystique that surrounded the leader.¹ Many Iranians saw him in a messianic light, further contributing to his appeal and success during the late 1970s. Many secularists, even those who were most heavily persecuted by the Islamic Republic, felt that Khomeini gave Iranians a sense of nationalist pride that they had never experienced under the monarchy.

The *Ulama*'s role in the downfall of the monarchic political formula is apparent, forcing the question as to whether the monarchic political formula had become undesirable, or even perhaps irrelevant, to the Iranian public. I argue that the Iranian people had come to a point in their history in which they needed a nationalist force to reinstate their lost confidence in the government. They received this in the form of Khomeini's fundamentalist movement. It was not necessary that the government that replaced the monarchy be a theocracy. This is apparent by the popularity of the socialist Mossadegh in the 1940s, who was significantly more secular than Khomeini. Monarchy as a political formula had not become irrelevant, but rather diminished in its ability to centralize authority given the Shah's tendency to allow foreign influence and campaigns to downplay the strong religious undercurrent in country.

¹ B. Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 33.

a. Lenczowski

Lenczowski's tone in his analysis of the Iranian monarchy is generally sympathetic towards the Pahlavi shahs, especially Mohammad Reza Shah. In regards to the secularity campaign that the Shah initiated, Lenczowski concedes that the policies suffered a backlash given the deep religiosity of the Iranian body politic. However, he is quick to emphasize that if religion was one pole of Iranian culture, then the monarchy was the other.¹ Therefore, while the Iranian body politic relied on religion as source of personal and familial unification, it also depended on the monarchy as a source of stabilization and constancy in public and political matters. In making this argument, he unequivocally states his belief in the importance of the monarchic political formula, relying on the historic relationship between Iran and the monarchic institution and arguing that the monarchic political formula defined and influenced Iran's modern national psyche.

Lenczowski identifies the tradition of sacred kingship as one of the driving forces of the Pahlavi monarchy, arguing that the assumption of the title *Aryamehr*, light of the Aryans, by Mohammad Reza Shah, established the idea of a monarchy that was deeply rooted in ancient traditions while transforming Iran into a modern state.² The Shah's undercutting of the *Ulama* and his efforts at secularity are seen by Lenczowski as his duty as a monarch that was improving Iran rather than let it remain backwards and old-fashioned.³ Thus, the *Ulama* would not have had the same experience or opportunity to galvanize the Iranian people had it not been for the monarchic political formula. The religious establishment was a hindrance to the Shah, and the very nature of the monarchy as a Perso-secular institution was blasphemous to arch-conservatives in Iran. The Shah's glorification of the pre-Muslim past and the

¹ G. Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 56.

² G. Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 57.

³ G. Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 80.

revival of the Persian sacred kingship ideal were distinctively monarchic because of the king's power to shape and emphasize culture and history, according to Lenczowski.

Throughout the tumult of the 1940s during the Second World War and the rise of Mossadegh, Lenczowski argues the one consistently surviving institution was the monarchy, thereby demonstrating its importance.¹ However, he fails to address the fact that at times when the monarchy's power waned, namely in the 1940s and then in the early 1950s, when he required Western assistance to ensure his survival, thus casting doubt on the strength and adequacy of the monarchic political formula. Only after the CIA ousted Mossadegh did Mohammad Reza Shah buttress the monarchy by cracking down on the opposition and evolving into a patrimonial autocrat rather than the constitutional monarch the Iranians had called for. Moreover, he dismisses the religious establishment as counterproductive to progress, but one might argue that religion was such a large part of Iranians' lives that the Shah's policies that seemed to go against the *Qur'an* in fact hindered his policies and curtailed his reign.

b. Arjomand

Arjomand's analysis of the Islamic Revolution as well as the preceding political climate in the late 1970s is based on the argument that a theocratic revolution was completely unexpected in monarchic Iran. He focuses on the tension between what he calls "statism" and "*Shi'ism*", two forces that were inextricably linked during the Revolution and its aftermath.

Arjomand's treats secularization under Mohammad Reza Shah in the same framework as that of a centralized, bureaucratic state.² The monarchic political formula was evidently irrelevant to the outcome of revolutionary fervor or the development of the *Ulama* in Pahlavi Iran. In fact, Arjomand argues the exact opposite of my hypothesis regarding the importance of the monarchic political formula, stating

¹ G. Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 56.

² S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 5.

instead that the *Shi'a* “hierocracy” was the stable player in Iranian politics throughout the last four centuries since its establishment as the state religion in 1501 rather than the monarchy.¹ He does not analyze Mohammad Reza Shah’s initiatives or policies in the context of the monarch’s intentions or the framework of the monarchic political formula, but rather in the context of the *Shi'a* clergy’s involvement or role in the campaign. Secularization in the “Pahlavi state” is treated as a factor in lending importance of the *Shi'a* hierocracy rather than the monarchic political formula.²

Arjomand argues that the Islamic Revolution was not so much about the glory of Islam and Khomeini as much as it was about the vilification of the monarchy.³ Therefore, one could say that a cult of anti-personality developed, where the Shah was hated as an individual rather than the monarchic political formula. However, because the Shah was seen as a tyrant, the masses abandoned a relatively secular monarchy in favor of a theocratic system. In essence, even though the monarchic political system was not the object of contempt, Iranian citizens equated the Shah with the monarchy, and thus they were adamant that such a political formula was too unbearable. Arjomand treats the *Ulama*’s development and role in monarchic Iran as independent of the monarchic political formula, and believes that Shah-driven secularization did not have any significant bearing on the *Ulama*’s reaction or resurgence during the late 1970s.

c. Shakibi

Shakibi emphasizes the importance of human agency in the making of revolution in monarchic

¹ S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1.

² S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 83.

³ S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 103.

Iran.¹ Interestingly, he analyzes the *Ulama*'s role in Iranian society in such a way that indicates that the monarchic political formula was extremely important to Iran's political trajectory. Unlike other theorists who examine the relationship between the monarchy and religious establishment as an interaction of systems or institutions, Shakibi examines the monarch from a personal perspective. For example, he discusses Mohammad Reza Shah's level of religiosity, mentioning that the king prayed daily while in boarding school in Switzerland for over five years. The Shah also felt that he was being protected by a divine force, a belief that was reinforced after two failed assassination attempts. This belief in divine protection was linked to the Shah's belief in celestial guidance. He felt that God would protect the monarchic political formula and lead him to the right policies.

Shakibi ties in his analysis of the Shah's policies towards clerical power to the former's insecurity regarding the Pahlavi position as a monarchy. Members of the Iranian aristocracy initially scoffed at Reza Shah's non-elite background, making the classification as "royal" a stretch. When Mohammad Reza Shah came to power, he felt he had to overcompensate for the newness of the Pahlavi royal house by emphasizing Persian history and thus closely associating his reign with that of Cyrus I and other great kings.² The Shah thus portrayed the Pahlavis to be the latest in a long history of dynasties in a country in which royal cycles were commonplace. In doing so, he upset religious conservatives who decried the understatement of Islam to Iranian and monarchic development. Thus, the monarchic political formula had a direct and unique influence over the *Ulama*'s status and sentiments under Mohammad Reza Shah that may not have existed under a non-monarchic leader who would not have had to emphasize his claim to the Peacock Throne.

¹ Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 2.

² Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 84.

In analyzing the role of the *Ulama*, Shakibi states that the religious establishment was the main opposition force towards cultural modernization and the Pahlavis' consolidation of power. Still, upon his coronation, Mohammad Reza Shah loosened many of the restrictions placed on the *Ulama*, and made wearing the veil optional, as opposed to banning it completely like his father had. In fact, in the 1940s and 1950s, the *Ulama* had actually allied itself with the monarchy in order to combat potential communist infiltration into Iran. The Shah understood the level of influence the clergy had over the body politic, and felt that an alliance would secure the monarchic political formula's continued stability.¹ The *Ulama* also understood the need for the monarch to be legitimized in the eyes of the people vis-à-vis the religious establishment, further proving Shakibi's argument that the clergy's role in Iran was affected by the fact that it was under a monarchic political system.

Mohammad Reza Shah and the royal court gave gifts to the clergy to shore up support, but this ended in 1977 when the government tried to curb spending. Shakibi points out that ending this practice in 1977 likely eliminated the last ties that the monarchy had with the *Ulama*. When the religious establishment's vested interests were threatened with the Shah's land reform, they became disgruntled, according to Shakibi.² He argues that critics of the Shah's modernization efforts tended to use constitutional and religious rhetoric in order to elicit mass support for the opposition. The *Ulama*'s role in instigating opposition and organizing resistance to the monarchy indicates the level to which the *Ulama* were affected by the political formula and its political byproducts.

From a cultural perspective, the Shah's desire to associate himself with his Persian, non-Muslim, predecessors alienated him from the religious establishment as his reign went on. Moreover, his self-

¹ Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 206.

² Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 206.

image as the father of a secular Iran figured prominently in the *Ulama*'s reaction to the monarchy and its policies, thus proving the former's importance in the country's political trajectory.

d. Abrahamian

Ervand Abrahamian is a well-known analyst of Iranian history and politics. His emphasis on the sociological aspects of the Islamic Revolution and the years leading up to it highlight the economic underpinnings to events in 1970s Iran. Abrahamian examines Iran under Mohammad Reza Shah in a manner unlike the other theorists discussed. He uses the Shah's government as points of reference in his timeline of his reign, starting with Prime Minister Ahmad Qavam in the 1940s.¹

Abrahamian's examination of the *Ulama*'s power and the Shah's secularization efforts in Pahlavi Iran are primarily discussed in relation to the system of political parties and coalitions, sometimes frustrating the analysis of the monarchy's role in Iran's political trajectory since he does not discuss the monarchy directly. However, this treatment indicates that Abrahamian does not believe the monarchic political formula had very much influence on the success of the *Ulama*. Rather, it was the middle-class's political development and the religious establishment that defined the *Ulama*'s role in Iranian politics.

In Abrahamian's conclusion, he discusses the reasons why he thinks Ayatollah Khomeini was successful in wooing the middle class, a key victory for the revolution. He argues that Khomeini actually divorced himself from the clergy that were too concerned with theological issues and was forthright in his beliefs and denunciation of the Shah. Additionally, though the Shah encouraged secular government and openly distrusted high-ranking members of the *Ulama*, neither he nor his government prevented lower-

¹ E. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 225.

ranking mullahs from working among the urban poor, allowing them to organize neighborhood prayer meetings and “flagellation processions”.¹

In regards to the religious establishment, Abrahamian employs a sociological method of examining the *Ulama*’s role. He argues that religion provided the urban poor with a sense of community and solidarity, something they needed and craved when they left their villages for larger cities during the White Revolution. Needless to say, urbanization occurred because of the Shah’s policies in the White Revolution, but Abrahamian does not argue that the poor were put into such dire circumstances because of the political formula itself, rather its resulting policies. Land reform, or the White Revolution itself, were not direct results of the monarchic political formula, according to Abrahamian.

Therefore, Abrahamian does not examine the *Ulama*’s role in Iran in the context of the monarchic political system, but instead in the context of the social and economic issues that plagued Iran. The revolution was borne out of socio-economic ills and the religious establishment’s recognition of how to mitigate, or at least promise to mitigate them; not out of the monarchic political formula.

e. Comparison of the Theorists’ Treatment of Efforts at Secularity

Both Lenczowski and Shakibi emphasize the importance of the monarchic political formula in the *Ulama*’s role, while Arjomand and Abrahamian attribute the *Ulama*’s status and influence to other, non-monarchic factors. Of the latter two theorists, only Abrahamian maintains his reliance on a non-monarchic factor for the results of modernization efforts. Arjomand’s emphasizes domestic political development to varying degrees and is an excellent example of the seemingly non-uniform method of analysis employed by both Arjomand and Shakibi at different points of their discussions.

B. Domestic Political Liberalization

¹ E. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 535.

i. Land Reform

Land reform is the first major facet of domestic political modernization I will discuss. The historical context of this campaign in Iran will help the reader understand the nature of the theorists' commentaries.

Mohammad Reza Shah's monarchy ran counter to what many felt the Iranian Constitution guaranteed. The Pahlavi monarchic formula developed in the wake of the Constitutional Revolution that took place from 1905 to 1911. Angry at Mozzaffar-al-Din Shah for granting repeated concessions to Great Britain and Imperial Russia, merchants and clergymen protested, eventually demanding the establishment of a parliament. Mozzaffar-al-Din Shah capitulated, and the first *Majlis* met in October of 1906.¹ The Qajar Shah's health was rapidly declining, and he signed the constitution five days before he died. However, the constitution did not alter the interclass dynamic or sociopolitical hierarchy in Iran. Landed elites remained in power, and in many cases they presided over the *Majlis*, thus guaranteeing continued dominance of the aristocracy. When tension was rising in Iran during the 1970s, some revolutionaries called not for a complete dismissal of the monarchy, but rather the enforcement of a constitutional monarchy as outlined in 1906.² However, the extent of the political formula's unpopularity prevented that idea from gaining widespread support. Many Iranians felt that Mohammad Reza Shah had used his authority and the monarchic political formula to damage the country, which could only be reversed by abandoning what can best be described as a Shah-altered political formula.

The Shah felt that the ultimate solution to poor farmers' and peasants' problems was land reform. Scholars and historians agree that Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi helped to curb the power of large estate

¹ C. Ghani, *Iran and the Rise of the Reza Shah: From Qajar Collapse to Pahlavi Power*. (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2000), 76.

² J. Amuzegar, *The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 131.

owners by devolving land and resources to nearly four million small farmers. In 1963, the Shah launched the ill-fated White Revolution, a series of nineteen reforms that were introduced over a period of fifteen years. These included land reform, the abolition of feudalism, privatization of government-owned enterprises, the formation of literacy corps, and the extension of suffrage rights to women. However, the White Revolution was met with strong opposition by the clerical and landed elites. Economic growth vis-à-vis infrastructural development was also a concern of the Shah's, as the White Revolution called for the rapid industrialization of the private sector.

The monarchic formula relied on the White Revolution as a vehicle by which the modernization and economic success of urban centers could be applied to the countryside. The Shah did this by consolidating large landowners' property and then redistributing it to small farmers. However, by trying to give power to the underprivileged, he stripped them of their livelihood. Without the landlords, irrigation systems were not maintained, and the land could not be farmed. Therefore, the Shah did not provide an adequate infrastructure to support the small farmers after the eradication of the landowning elite. Farmers became unemployed, and they flocked to the cities. The period beginning in 1963 was meant to usher in a voice for the small farmers, but instead resulted in their joblessness. When they fled poverty and went to the cities, the political formula again did not account for them. The government had not foreseen the failure of the White Revolution, and did not make adequate arrangements for the influx of citizens in Tehran and other urban centers. This class of people was essentially forgotten, and the only force that sheltered them in the cities was the religious establishment. Mosques served as a unifying and protective force, again underlining the influence of the *Ulama* over the power structure in society. In this case, the flood of farmers to the city had little to do with the monarchic political formula itself, but rather was a byproduct of the monarch's policies.

Essentially, the manner in which land reform was carried out was flawed. Peasants received inadequate amounts of land on which to survive, and irrigation networks that were formerly maintained

by the large landowners were neglected. The lack of government oversight and planning for what would happen to peasants without the services, albeit limited, that landlords provided, resulted in widespread unemployment for farmers due to the unusable land.¹ The elimination of the landed elite in an effort to create equality ended up hurting the peasants and the monarchy did not recover from the backlash. In fact, Ayatollah Khomeini first came to prominence as a harsh and outspoken critic of the White Revolution. His appeal and popularity would only continue to burgeon.

Regardless of the Shah's failure to incite support from the masses, his economic liberalization and industrial campaigns led to the creation of a certain sector of society who would ultimately result in his downfall: the middle class.² The monarchy's desire to create a modern state created a burgeoning middle class that decidedly rejected the Shah's overtures and failed reform efforts in favor of the clergymen in the late 1970s.

a. **Lenczowski**

Lenczowski treats the land reform effort as the solution to a problem inherent to Iran, indicating that while he displays utmost sympathy for the monarchy, land reform would have had to have been executed regardless of whether the monarchy was absolute, constitutional, or nonexistent. Land redistribution was unsuccessful on the whole, but the flawed methods of the White Revolution were not unique to the Iranian monarchy. Rather, the extensive bureaucracy of the government hindered the efficient redistribution of land.

Therefore, Lenczowski believes that failed land reform policies and the peasants' reactions to them had little to do with the monarchic political formula. In fact, the Shah's role in land reform was little

¹ J. Amuzegar, *The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 77.

² S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 108.

more than that of an authoritarian ruler who had the power to redistribute property.¹ However, he portrayed himself as a fatherly figure giving land to peasants as if they were his children, enacting his role as a patrimonial king and thereby inextricably associating his name and image with the White Revolution. When the domestic initiative failed, the political formula was the only one to blame.

b. Arjomand

Land reform campaigns under the Shah had little to do with the monarchic political system, according to Arjomand. This is evidenced by the fact that he does not discuss the initiatives, including the White Revolution, in the context of the monarchy, but rather in the context of the clergy's role in the campaign. In regards to the White Revolution, Arjomand highlights its failures, specifically the massive urbanization that occurred in the wake of failed land distribution. The hierocracy lost control over much of its privately held land, thus diminishing its economic clout and disengaging it from the Pahlavi regime.² He analyzes this period of Iranian history as a point during which the hierocracy, though economically less influential, solidified its influence on everyday Iranians, especially the marginalized poor, by providing safe-houses and shelters for those who had recently migrated to the cities. Farmers who were strangers to the bustling metropolis would be socialized and introduced into a community by the religious establishment.

Arjomand argues that increasing urbanization has historically been associated with heightened religious orthodoxy, and that this is what occurred in Iran in the wake of the White Revolution.³ One reason for this trend could be the fact that the monarchy did not make an adequate effort to integrate

¹ G. Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 104.

² S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 101.

³ S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 143.

marginalized newcomers into the political system or make them a functional part of the political formula. Rather, recent migrants relied on networks of friends, and most notably religious associations, who provided security and inclusion. Thus, the peasantry was left to the wayside, especially by the inadequate land reform efforts of the White Revolution. The Iranian monarchic political formula employed a policy of divide and rule, according to Arjomand, and the Shah did not capitalize on the potential support he could have received from the farmers. In fact, he once called them “an extravagance the country can no longer afford”.¹ The White Revolution was meant to be a step forward for the Iranian people and for the monarchy as well as a way to ingratiate it in the eyes of the people.

Arjomand acknowledges the potential benefits of the White Revolution.² However, he treats the catastrophic failure as an instance in which the religious establishment stepped in to make up for the monarchy’s mistakes, thus legitimizing the former in the eyes of the working class. The monarchic aspect of the political formula had proved inadequate, and Arjomand argues that since it could not sufficiently provide for its citizens, the religious hierocracy took its place, paving the way for a theocratic revolution.

c. Shakibi

Shakibi examines the agricultural reforms during Mohammad Reza Shah’s reign as a function of the Shah’s self-perception, thus establishing the idea that the monarchic political system had a unique effect on modernization that may have taken place under any other kind of ruler. It was the Shah’s perception of himself that influenced the political formula, and hence domestic modernization efforts.

The threat to the religious establishment’s vested interests caused the *Ulama* to become even more skeptical of the Shah and his personal motivation for land reform in the wake of the White Revolution. The *Ulama* knew that the monarchic political system had a place for them, but what troubled

¹ S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 107.

² S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 73.

the clerics was what that place was. Used to wielding large social and economic clout, the land reform significantly curtailed clerical property ownership.

Shakibi identifies two interacting forces that shaped the land reform projects under Mohammad Reza Shah: his desire to be judged by history as the monarch that modernized Iran, and his conviction that all agricultural reform successes that had occurred to date were due to him and him alone.¹ The belief in the monarch as the beginning and end of all political initiatives is what contributed to the Shah's exaggerated perception of the monarchic political formula, and therefore he became the spokesperson and eventual scapegoat when the White Revolution failed. Shakibi states what many other theorists have discussed, which is that the Shah's insistence on being the champion for a failed land reform initiative gave the people no one to blame but him. The monarchic political system set the Shah up for criticism and public resentment when initiatives as large and far-reaching as the White Revolution failed. According to Shakibi, he had "blurred too much the line between the government and himself personally and thereby could not escape unscathed".²

d. Abrahamian

Abrahamian's discussion of land reform in monarchic Iran centers around the economic crisis Iran entered in the early 1960s. The United States began to call for land reform, and President John Kennedy made it a condition of American aid to an embattled Shah. Mohammad Reza Shah was actually successful at redistributing land vis-à-vis the prime minister, Dr. 'Ali Amini, an American favorite.³ Shortly thereafter, the Shah kicked off the White Revolution, whose failure sparked widespread riots in

¹ Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 193.

² Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 213.

³ E. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 422.

1963. The White Revolution's aftermath included a dearth of staple harvests, and eventually Iran began importing food for the first time since the Shah's ascension. Urbanization created slums in large cities such as Tehran, and the monarchy was widely criticized and blamed for the agricultural stagnation that followed.

Once again, Abrahamian discusses this aspect of monarchic Iran in relation to class conflict and the economic climate. Land reform was undoubtedly an economically motivated decision, but Abrahamian's treatment of it indicates that land reform would have happened regardless of the regime type. In fact, the Shah is not the one who took the first steps towards land redistribution, but rather it was his slew of prime ministers and mounting international pressure. Abrahamian shares the opinion of other theorists that the monopoly of land was such a glaring problem in Iran that it would have been redistributed regardless of whether the system was monarchic or not. Its failure destabilized the monarchic political formula, but its failure was not due to a systemic flaw in the political formula. Rather, it was because of bureaucratic oversight and a lack of infrastructure.

e. Comparison of Theorists' Treatment of Land Reform

Lenczowski insists that land reform, though not unheard of, was intrinsic to the monarchic political formula when done on such a large and far-reaching scale. He argues that the White Revolution's failure was due to an inadequate bureaucracy, a problematic claim since the Shah was the driver of the entire campaign. I agree that the White Revolution could have arisen under any form of government, because the problem it sought to solve would have faced any leader of Iran. However, the manner in which it was executed and the image the monarch imbibed of himself was unique to the monarchic system. The Shah was omnipotent when he gave the land, but disappointingly infallible when the reform effort failed. The Iranians' sacred king was not only mortal, but in their eyes he was too far removed from the masses to adequately design relief programs for them. Lenczowski emphasizes the role of the bureaucracy in the land reform campaign, thereby shifting the weight of accountability from the

monarchy to the rest of the government. The difficulty in making such a claim however, is that he does not prove that a monarchy is less apt to have an effective bureaucracy and more likely to implement land reform poorly.

Arjomand dismisses the importance of the monarchic political formula in relation to land reform and rather focuses on the role of the religious establishment, placing more importance on the latter in driving Iranian politics than Mohammad Reza Shah or the monarchic institution. Shakibi maintains his argument that monarchy is defined not by politics but rather by the monarch's self-perception. In the case of land reform, the Shah saw it as his fatherly duty to redistribute land to better the lives of his subjects, and end the domination of landed elites. Abrahamian takes a similar path as Lenczowski, which is surprising given their generally opposite emphasis on the monarchic political formula, arguing that land reform would have occurred in Iran regardless of whether there was a monarchy or not. The decision to kick off the White Revolution was an economically motivated one, as were so many events in Iran's political and cultural history, according to Abrahamian.

The four theorists maintain their relative stances and definitions on monarchy, although it is not yet obvious to the researcher what those are for Shakibi and Arjomand. This becomes clearer during the discussion of domestic political modernization in the following section, when their analytical tendencies seem to diverge from their previous paths.

ii. The *Sazeman-e Ettela'at va Amniyat-e Keshvar* (SAVAK)

The second major facet of the Shah's domestic liberalization record in Iran was the *Sazeman-e Ettela'at va Amniyat-e Keshvar*, otherwise known as the National Intelligence and Security Organization, and hereafter referred to as "SAVAK". The following discussion of SAVAK's development and role in

monarchic Iran will allow the reader to better understand the nature of domestic political modernization in Iran and theorists' treatment of it.

SAVAK was established in 1953 in order to strengthen the monarchy's grip on power and silence the Shah's opposition and political dissidents, most notably the Marxist *Tudeh* political party. The American Central Intelligence Agency was closely tied to SAVAK, and at the height of the latter's power the agency conducted domestic surveillance as well as monitored Iranians living abroad, specifically in the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. SAVAK was also responsible for press censorship, torture, and interrogation of political dissidents. It became a major factor in the monarchy's strength and longevity under Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. The political formula relied heavily on the secret police to secure its stability, and despite the Shah's efforts to liberalize, SAVAK's strong presence and the undercurrent of fear in the body politic prevented the monarchy from being seen as protective or approachable.

In addition to SAVAK, the Shah strengthened the army, expanding it to nearly half a million troops, all equipped with the latest American weaponry and technology. The monarchy became unapproachable and widely hated, as it was associated with a lack of democracy. Many theorists argue that the Shah's transition from monarch to dictator likely occurred when the CIA launched Operation Ajax to oust Prime Minister Mossadegh and buttressed the Shah's weakened stature.

a. **Lenczowski**

Lenczowski discusses SAVAK in passing, but leaves questions of the secret police's brutality unanswered by broadly arguing that Iran, though technically a constitutional monarchy, was:

“...a royal tutelary system that subordinated formal legality to the major goal of nation building and modernization.”¹

His treatment of the monarchy’s use of force and brutality seems to condone human rights transgressions as a necessary part of the political formula in a developing nation. Lenczowski further states that criticism of an authoritarian monarchic political formula is short-sighted, as it oversimplifies the complex picture of Iranian history. He argues that authoritarian rule is permissible when it is effective, comparing the “weak” Qajar shahs to the productive Pahlavi dynasty as an example of the benefits of authoritarianism.² Therefore, SAVAK was a consequence of the need to maintain order and stay focused on liberalization and modernization. Royal authority in Iran allowed the Shah to use whatever means necessary to ensure that the country was on the right track, and therefore resentment of SAVAK was directly linked to the monarchic political formula and its necessities, or any authoritarian regime’s necessities, underlining the political formula’s importance in the conditions that precipitated the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

b. Arjomand

Arjomand argues that the political formula morphed from a monarchy into a neo-patrimonial dictatorship after the establishment of SAVAK.³ His use of the term “dictatorship” indicates the level of importance he places on the monarchic political formula and Mohammad Reza Shah’s position as king, since apparently the Shah was only a monarch on paper after he established SAVAK. Arjomand describes the latter half of the Shah’s reign as period in which he strengthened his personal power and completed the centralization of power in the state bureaucracy.

¹ G. Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 463.

² G. Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 463.

³ S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 73.

His discussion of SAVAK, though cursory in his overall focus on the *Shi'a* religious establishment, serves to highlight the struggle between the state and Shi'ism. While other theorists have equated the state with the monarchy and its associated political formula, Arjomand is deliberate in his specification of the state as the locus of centralized power, and he pays very little attention to the monarchic political formula. SAVAK was a manifestation of Mohammad Reza Shah's authoritarian style of government, having little relation to a monarchy or its political formula. Arjomand maintains his belief that the central player in Iranian politics was the *Shi'a* religious establishment, not the monarchic political formula. The monarchic political formula of the temporal state had little bearing on the supremacy of the theocratic undercurrent that surfaced in the late 1970s.

c. Shakibi

Shakibi briefly discusses the creation of SAVAK, but discusses it as an apparatus of the monarchic political formula that was independent from the rest of the government, thereby labeling it as inherent to the Iranian monarchic political formula.¹ SAVAK arose in response to a need to preserve the monarchic political formula, and Shakibi treats the agency matter-of-factly.

This treatment demonstrates that Shakibi believes this aspect of domestic political modernization, or lack thereof, to be intrinsic to the monarchic political formula, since it was established to weed out opposition to the monarchy. It functioned as the enforcing arm of the Shah's government, and its chief reported directly to the Shah, thus underlining its importance in the political formula, and highlighting Shakibi's opinion that the political formula was important to the development of SAVAK.

d. Abrahamian

¹ Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 190.

Abrahamian discusses SAVAK only in passing, and his mention of it is in reference to the Shah's consolidation of power after Mossadegh's ouster.¹ He calls the Shah's regime a "military monarchy", and places much emphasis on the role of the Shah as an individual rather than the monarchic political system.

As I discussed in the introduction, the monarchic political system in every country is distinctive, and in Iran it depended on its Shah-driven evolution. Abrahamian agrees with this point. His treatment of the Shah and his policies is one of individual analysis, not of systemic examination. This indicates that political oppression in the form of SAVAK was a result of consolidation, not necessarily of the monarchic political formula. If anything, it was another way in which the Shah distanced himself from everyday Iranians and made the monarchy even harder to stomach.

e. Comparison of the Theorists' Treatment of SAVAK

In regards to SAVAK, Lenczowski again defends the monarchic political formula by saying that its authoritarianism under Mohammad Reza Shah was justified by the latter's need to defend the institution of monarchy. Shakibi treats the agency as independent of the monarchic political formula, but nevertheless as an extension of the Shah's personality. Arjomand believes that the establishment of SAVAK made the monarchy a technicality when in reality the regime was that of a patrimonial dictator. Arjomand challenges the legitimacy of monarchic Iran as a monarchy, though he does not offer an alternative definition to the one that I presented at the start of this discussion. Abrahamian treats SAVAK in a similar manner, emphasizing the Shah's militaristic tendencies. The latter theorists' challenge of the monarchy's legitimacy in the wake of SAVAK's establishment indicates their understanding of "monarchy" is different than that of the widely-accepted definition I laid out. However, they leave it to the reader to infer what seems to be their belief that only constitutionally limited monarchies are legitimate.

¹ E. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 426.

iii. Domestic Liberalization vis-à-vis Class Politics in the Monarchic Political Formula

In order to adequately examine the role of specific classes in the monarchic political formula, it is important to understand the nature of social stratification in monarchic Iran. The historical narrative of class interaction and dynamic in monarchic Iran will provide the reader with the context of not only economic modernization, but also political modernization which all four theorists discuss.

Despite growing wealth disparity under Mohammad Reza Shah, upward mobility was possible.¹ Many theorists emphasize the importance of individualism in Iranian society and personalities. Due to geographical isolation and being subject to foreign rule for centuries prior to the rise of the Pahlavis, the body politic was insecure and thus looking for ways to facilitate their individual survivals.² This fear of attack and desire for personal gain played out in the political and social dynamic. Numerous government leaders, including Khomeini himself, rapidly constructed and modified alliances to ensure their political success. This same pattern was reflected among the Iranian classes.

Mohammad Reza Shah believed that without the monarchy, the working and lower-middle class would remain unproductive, backwards, and idle. Thus, drawing from the paternal factor of the political formula, he decided to industrialize and modernize Iran for the betterment of the masses. He truly believed that economic prosperity would benefit and satisfy all classes of Iranians, including the right and left extremes. Detractors and critics, however, were to be ignored.

“Let the moon shine,” the Shah would say, “and ignore the dogs that bark.”³

¹ J. Amuzegar, *The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 102.

² J. Amuzegar, *The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 106.

³ J. Amuzegar, *The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 126.

When Reza Shah came to power in 1925, he embarked on an extensive campaign of domestic modernization. He built roads throughout Iran, established schools and universities, and also started the industrialization that his son would continue. After his deposition and the coronation of Mohammad Reza Shah, money and land was concentrated among clerical elites and large property-owners. Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah both encouraged Iranians to study abroad in Europe and the United States, a privilege that was reserved for the aristocracy. Upper-crust Iranian society struck business and social alliances with the numerous foreigners that lived in Iran, and being the Shah's good graces meant a life of exotic holidays, world-class educations, and political sway.

In 1951, the elites' power over society and the government was threatened by the appointment of Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh to the prime minister's seat. Following the assassination of Prime Minister General Ali Razmara, who vehemently opposed oil nationalization, Mossadegh was appointed his successor by a reluctant Shah. Mossadegh was most popular with the working class and the *Tudeh* party.¹ Due to his support for oil nationalization and his nationalist sentiments, Mossadegh was beloved by the public, and the bane of the Shah's existence during the early 1950s.

“...the worst years of my reign, indeed of my entire life, came when Mossadegh was Prime Minister...every morning I awoke with the sensation that today might be my last on the throne.”²

Mossadegh nationalized the oil industry and prohibited any British involvement in the Iranian petroleum industry. However, nationalization meant the loss of skilled workers and technicians. In response, British naval ships formed a de facto blockade of the Persian Gulf and the British government threatened legal action against anyone who purchased oil from the formerly-British refineries. These actions, collectively

¹ J. Amuzegar, *The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 151.

² Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 185.

known as the Abadan Crisis, brought the Iranian oil industry screeching to a halt, decreasing production from nearly 250 million barrels in 1950 to just over ten million barrels in 1952. The lack of previously abundant petroleum wealth brought Mossadegh's promised domestic reforms to a standstill. Popular in urban centers, Mossadegh's allies lashed out against the landed elites, while his opponents refused to give the prime minister special powers to combat the economic crisis.¹

In 1952, Mossadegh asked that the appointment of the Minister of War and Chief of Staff be the prime minister's prerogative, a right hitherto reserved for the Shah. Mohammad Reza Shah refused, resulting in Mossadegh's resignation and appeal for public support. The Shah appointed Ahmad Qavam prime minister, who duly announced the resumption of negotiations with Great Britain regarding Iranian oil. Protests and riots broke out across Tehran, and the Shah hastily reappointed Mossadegh and gave him control over the military after Qavam resigned. Newly energized, Mossadegh took aim at the monarchic political machine, curbing the Shah's foreign policy powers and dismissing his politically active sister, Princess Ashraf.

Despite land reform efforts by the prime minister, poor Iranians were suffering more and more due to the British boycott, and support for Mossadegh began to wane. Eventually, the British enlisted in the help of the CIA, who launched Operation Ajax to overthrow Mossadegh. Fearing a dismantling of the monarchy after Mossadegh demanded the departure of the Shah and full control of the government, Mohammad Reza Shah fled to Baghdad, Iraq, and then to Rome, where he awaited the outcome of the coup. He signed two decrees, one dismissing Mossadegh and the other appointing Fazlollah Zahedi prime minister. Consequently, violent protests broke out, the military intervened, and pro-Shah forces stormed into Tehran. Mossadegh was arrested and imprisoned for three years in solitary confinement after which he remained under house arrest.

¹ J. Amuzegar, *The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 112.

The Shah's weakness and the power of the working class were most apparent during the Mossadegh era. The monarchy's powers were curtailed, and the working class temporarily unseated the landed elite and aristocracy as the determinant of domestic politics. In fact, the withdrawal of the *Shi'a Ulama's* support for Mossadegh is seen as one of the precipitating factors in his political demise. This highlights the importance of the religious establishment in the political formula. The fact that the *Ulama's* power was emphasized even during a period of limited monarchy is indicative of the fact that the religious establishment was a prominent factor in the Iranian political formula that was independent of the regime in place. When Mossadegh's policies appeared too communist, the *Shi'a* clerics quickly turned against him, fearing the institution of an atheist political ideology in the country. The unique nature of the populace's devotion to the religious establishment established the fact that the one constant in the Iranian political formula was the *Ulama*. All other factors, including the upper, middle, and working classes, and the Shah himself, were variable.

In the wake of the coup against Mossadegh, the Shah became increasingly paranoid about the popularity of his political rivals. The period from 1953 to 1963 marked the start of the increasing rigidity in the political formula. The Shah banned Mossadegh's party, the National Front, in addition to the communist *Tudeh* party. SAVAK orchestrated a brutal crackdown on all party-members, though factions continued to function underground.

Mohammad Reza Shah demonstrated this increasing authority by tapping into American aid to finance large-scale industrialization in Iran. The Shah's policies of economic liberalization and industrialization led to the creation of a middle class which continued to grow for the remainder of the Shah's reign. During this ten-year period, the landed elites remained in power due to their monopoly over arable land. This dominance would end in 1963.

His establishment of the *Rastakhiz* Party, of which all Iranians were required to be members, contributed to the disillusionment of many previously apolitical citizens, especially many middle class

members. Despite the establishment of a political party, Iran remained a monarchy. In fact, it was after the rise of the *Rastakhiz* Party that the Shah's control became even more acute since no other forms of political participation were allowed. The *Rastakhiz* Party maintained a monopoly on all political, social, and religious aspects of citizens' lives.¹ The disallowance of multiparty politics in the Shah's political formula, though meant to increase political participation, actually had the opposite effect. This system angered many middle-class and young Iranians, and the National Front and *Tudeh* parties, banned after Mohammad Reza Shah's restoration in 1953, continued to flourish underground.

Despite claims to the contrary by the Shah's government, the monarchic political formula did not include enough democratic reforms to make the changes effective or long-lasting. Women's suffrage aside, the Shah was criticized for failing to implement a way to increase democratic representation in the Executive branch of the government. Additionally, the Shah promoted the election of non-Muslim minorities to offices, and this represents a maturity on the part of his government. On the other hand, it was likely a calculated political move in the monarchy's ongoing formula to ensure that the Iranian people avoided equating state and mosque. By having non-Muslim representatives, not only could minority voices be heard, but then the body politic would not feel the need to associate religious and temporal law.

a. Lenczowski

While other theorists are quick to criticize the establishment of the *Rastakhiz* Party, Lenczowski argues that Mohammad Reza Shah's move towards a single-party system was precipitated by what he recognized as an artificial and ineffective multi-party system.² In fact, Lenczowski's treatment of the

¹ G. Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 453.

² G. Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 452.

Shah's political oppression is similar to his dismissal of the SAVAK as a necessary control measure. He states:

“Iranians are a highly individualistic people; they do not accept the notion of discipline easily.”¹

Such an expression of the Iranian tendency to live and work for oneself is common among political science theorists. However, Lenczowski uses that tendency as a scholarly justification for the Shah's oppressive measures and establishment of a single-party state.

Therefore, one can extrapolate from his emphasis on the importance of the monarchic political formula that he believes that the political oppression was a result and necessity of the monarchic political formula. The Shah needed to be iron-fisted against his opposition if he wanted to ensure the continued stability of the monarchic political formula. For Lenczowski, this essentially means repression by the state is justified if it induces stability, albeit artificial in the case of monarchic Iran.

b. Arjomand

Arjomand discusses Mossadegh's ouster and the ensuing political crackdown in passing. His treatment of the deposed prime minister in his struggle against the Shah is undoubtedly sympathetic:

“...he forced a showdown with the Shah in July 1952 and won...the Shah...lost his nerve and fled the country.”

He concedes that the rising popularity of communist parties alarmed the hierarchy given the former's atheist agenda. As the Shah's industrialization policies led to economic panic, especially in the 1970s, Arjomand argues that the religious establishment, though previously distanced from the mass

¹ G. Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 453.

hysteria surrounding Mossadegh, reaffirmed its relationship with the people by demonstrating its influence over popular opinion.¹

The Shah's political crackdown and establishment of a single-party state demonstrated the extent to which the monarchic political formula had evolved beyond a monarchy into an authoritarian dictatorship. Arjomand seems to argue that party politics would not have played out in the way they did if it had not been for the Shah's ouster of Mossadegh and ensuing crackdown. Thus, in regards to political modernization, Arjomand believes the monarchic political formula had little to do with its development, and rather it was the dictatorship that the Shah ran that impacted the political climate of monarchic Iran.

c. Shakibi

Shakibi argues that the Shah mistrusted the Iranian aristocracy and used bribery to keep them in check much as he had used bribery to keep the religious establishment happy early in his regime. Coupled with this mistrust was his fear of communism. His establishment of a single-party state was mainly due to his fear that allowing multiple parties would give the communists a stage upon which to relay their message to the masses.

The Shah believed that communism's attractiveness stemmed from "material deprivation", not from the country's political conditions.² Therefore, Shakibi treats the Shah's shutdown of political parties as the manifestation of Mohammad Reza Shah's interpretation of his duty to provide material wealth for his people. The Shah understood and referred to himself as a constitutional monarch, but did not seem to execute his office in the appropriate manner, according to Shakibi. Statewide oppression is not unique to

¹ S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 131.

² Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 200.

the Shah's regime, but it was precipitated by the political formula in which Mohammad Reza Shah went beyond his constitutionally defined role to control the economy and political identity of Iran.

d. Abrahamian

Abrahamian is sharply critical of the Shah in relation to what he calls "political underdevelopment" in Iran. Mohammad Reza Shah, like his father,

"...based his power on the three [Pahlavi] pillars: the armed forces, the court patronage network, and the vast state bureaucracy."¹

The monarchic political formula called for an expanded Iranian military drastically, and Abrahamian argues that the monarchic political system in Iran relied on these forces for strength and stability. In addition to the military, the Shah used court patronage to ensure support for himself and the monarchy. Oil revenue also allowed the royal family to store vast sums of money in foreign bank accounts and have stakes in various industrial and commercial endeavors in Iran. The final pillar, the state bureaucracy, allowed the government to penetrate into the remotest regions of Iran, something that previous dynasties were not able to achieve. Therefore, a function of the monarchic political formula under the Pahlavi was a campaign for unity and centralization, which the Shah intended to carry over to political participation.

Abrahamian commends the monarchic political formula for at least being able to stabilize the state. However, he argues that the 1975 decision to establish a single political party was fatal for the monarchic political system, indicating that he believes the political system at least existed prior to this initiative. The *Rastakhiz* Party was designed by two divergent groups: foreign-educated political

¹ E. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 435.

scientists, and former communists who had left the infamous *Tudeh* party in the early 1950s.¹ It is in this discussion that Abrahamian's understanding of the Shah's regime becomes most clear. He argues that the *Rastakhiz*'s origins are irrelevant, and rather its goal is of great importance. This was to transform the military dictatorship into a simple dictatorship. It is crucial to note that the monarchy had importance not necessarily as a monarchy, but rather in the form of an authoritarian regime. The *Rastakhiz*'s effect was greatest on the urban middle class. It extracted donation from its members and even began to make plans for uprooting the bazaars and building highways through Tehran, a move that would have devastated the economic livelihood of many Iranians.

The new party also attacked the *Ulama*, emphasizing the use of secular law in family matters rather than *Shari'a* law, and discouraging female college students from wearing the veil. Needless to say, members of the religious establishment protested. The oppression of other political parties and the promotion of the *Rastakhiz* Party were actions meant to strengthen the monarchy. However, the party monopolized all points of interface between the government and the public and attacked traditional bazaars and the religious establishment. Consequently, the monarchy was even further cut off from society and the target of much resentment.

Abrahamian's description of Pahlavi Iran's political system as underdeveloped indicates his support of the Constitution of 1906, in which a limited monarch would rule alongside a more powerful secular government. From a monarchic perspective, the Shah had managed to consolidate power and was able to promote economic development and cultural liberalization, hardly underdeveloped. The Shah's regime stands to be underdeveloped if the theorist is a firm believer in the importance and necessity of a legislative branch independent of the Shah. Thus, the monarchic political formula could exist had it existed in the form in which it was prescribed. Abrahamian's treatment of political reform indicates that

¹ E. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 429.

he believes that the political system, not necessarily the monarchy itself, caused extreme disillusionment and was counterproductive to Iran's political maturation.

e. Comparison of the Theorists' Treatment of Domestic Political Reforms

Lenczowski continues to insist upon the importance of the monarchic political formula to Iran's political trajectory during his discussion of domestic political reforms. Shakibi has a similar perspective, and attributes the establishment of a single-party state to the Shah's personal insecurities, and by association the monarchic institution itself. Arjomand and Abrahamian continue to dismiss monarchy as a deciding factor in Iranian politics, and instead comment upon the evolution, or devolution depending on how one looks at it, from monarchy to dictatorship. Their definition of monarchy becomes clearer in this discussion, as they argue that dictatorship and monarchy are mutually exclusive. They seem to consider a monarchy a legitimate monarchy only when it is limited by a state's constitution.

iv. Political Liberalization in Foreign Policy

Pahlavi Iran's relationship with foreign powers is well-known and a historical discussion of will help the reader understand not only the context of the political modernization in foreign policy that the four theorists discuss, but its relationship to modern Iranian-American relations

Iran's relationship with the West began during the Second World War when Great Britain and the Soviet Union, hereafter referred to as the USSR, jointly invaded and forced Reza Shah Pahlavi to abdicate in favor of his twenty-one year old son, Mohammad Reza Shah, in 1941. The Allies wanted to use Iran as a supply route for petroleum and for providing resources to a forlorn USSR.¹ When the war ended and the USSR refused to remove its forces from Iranian Azerbaijan, the Iranian monarchy was powerless. Consequently, Mohammad Reza Shah realized that only strong American words could convince the

¹ Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 54.

Soviets to leave the area. During the ensuing occupation, Great Britain sent troops into Tehran to send a signal to the *Majlis* that the governing body should keep European interests in mind. The Shah saw the role of monarchy as that of preventing military weakness and economic hardship for his people, and therefore he engaged in rapid modernization as he felt this was the best way to curb the aforementioned evils.

Modernization and industrialization occurred with American financial support. The Shah recognized that foreign support was going to be a hallmark of the Iranian monarchic political formula, and he capitalized on the United States' intense fear of communism in the Middle East by getting money funneled from the United States to bolster his regime. The Shah was consistently suspicious of Soviet ambitions or efforts of subversion in Iran, the Middle East, and the Horn of Africa throughout his reign.¹ As discussed earlier, Iran's pivotal geopolitical location is what likely incited an American intelligence interest in the kingdom. The United States was essentially trying to buy the Shah's promise that Iran would not become the next Korea or Vietnam. Courting American and European world leaders was a tactic used to bolster the Shah's support abroad and a way for the monarchy to lead the Iranian people triumphantly into modern times. The depth of the Shah's relationship with the United States, and the latter's reliance on him, became apparent in the early 1950s during the rise of popular Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh.

Mossadegh nationalized Iranian oil reserves and called for a limited, constitutional monarchy as discussed in greater detail in the previous section. It is rumored he wanted to be known as Iran's Mahatma Gandhi, and hence led an effort to rid Iran of foreign intervention and influence.² This alteration of the political formula may have been palatable to foreign powers if it were not for the outwardly socialist

¹ J. Amuzegar, *The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 125.

² J. Amuzegar, *The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 111.

leanings of the new prime minister. The United States and the USSR were at the height of the Cold War, and American officials were unwilling to accept anything less than containment, especially in a region where much of the world's energy reserves were concentrated. The coup against Mossadegh had three major effects. The first was that the images of the Shah and the United States were badly damaged. Secondly, the United States began to play an influential role not only in Iranian foreign policy, but in domestic issues as well. Lastly, and this effect is the most pertinent one for the purposes of this discussion, was the realization on Mohammad Reza Shah's part that the United States could end his reign and undercut his regime if it so desired. The monarch understood the need for an American alliance to ensure the stability of not only Iranian politics, but Iran's position in the Middle East. The Shah personally monitored the country's relationship with both the United States and United Kingdom, and prohibited all Iranian politicians from having any contact with the two countries. In fact, ambassadors to the United States were prohibited from being in direct contact with the Iranian prime minister. This hierarchy and network of relationships in the Iranian political machine is telling in terms of the monarchic political formula under Mohammad Reza Shah, in the sense that it can be called a neopatrimonial dictatorship. The monarch reigned supreme and controlled all matters related to foreign policy, going so far as to determine the level of contact between his branches of government. Additionally, it seems as though the Shah was doing whatever he saw fit so as to preserve the monarchic political formula and his regime.

The relationship between the United States and Iran appeared to falter when Jimmy Carter was elected president of the United States in 1976. His human rights and foreign policy platform worried Iranian elites, and some feared that the American tryst with the Shah was coming to a close. After Carter's election, the Shah began new liberalization plans, sensitive to the shift in U.S. policy. However, even these reforms, aimed at democratizing Iran so as to preserve the monarchic political formula in some form after Mohammad Reza Shah's death were seen as an example of Iran's dependence on the United States. Critics argued that the Shah was not liberalizing because he felt it would be best for the people, but

rather due to American pressure.¹ Shakibi argues that the Shah felt insecure in his relationship with Carter and his administration from the beginning.² Unlike the relationship he shared with previous presidents such as Eisenhower and Nixon, the alliance became tenuous. When sectors of the Iranian working class rioted in 1978, the Shah looked to the United States for support and direction. However, he was disappointed by the Carter administration's disorganization and apparently nonexistent policy when it came to Iran. Mohammad Reza Shah took this as a sign that American support had ended, and without this major source of strength, the monarch became indecisive. American support would not come. The Shah left Iran in January of 1979, and Khomeini returned to cheering throngs the following month as the Islamic Republic of Iran was established with him as its Supreme Leader.

Just as the monarchic political formula evolved in Iran, so did the monarchy's relationship with the United States. Iran's foreign policy was determined primarily by its relationship with its Western ally. American interests in a non-communist Iran sparked the alliance, and multiple U.S. administrations were willing to overlook the corrupt and authoritarian Shah's missteps with his people to ensure that Iran did not succumb to Soviet influences or pressure. In the end, the Shah chose to side with the United States because he felt it would prove advantageous for Iran's political formula and hence its stability. However, this strong alliance and apparent influence is the same factor that made the Iranian public suspicious of the Shah. Monarchy became associated with capitulation and foreign domination, while Mossadegh, and later Khomeini, who both railed against Western interferences, were seen as nationalist leaders who could restore Iran to its previous glory, albeit the two leaders had different ideas of what that was. Similarly, Mohammad Reza Shah had his own conception of what political formula would benefit Iran and his dynasty, and that was one of strong foreign alliances and Westernization. As mentioned in the discussion

¹ Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 214.

² Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 184.

of the religious establishment, one of Khomeini's contentions against the Shah was the idea of *gharbzadegi*, or that Shah-perpetrated Western influences were destroying the cultural and religious fabric of the nation.

a. Lenczowski

Lenczowski views the foreign policy trajectory of Pahlavi Iran as a function of the country's necessity to ensure its place in global politics vis-à-vis the monarchic political formula. Only an institution as stable and unifying as the monarchy could bring Iran to prominence in international affairs. He analyzes the Shah's foreign policy decisions as a function of the monarchic political formula in which a leader was gingerly navigating a bipolar global landscape.¹ Moreover, his arguments in support of the monarchy indicate that the international political modernization that occurred under Mohammad Reza Shah could only have occurred in a monarchic political formula. For example, when the Shah celebrated the 2500th anniversary of the Iranian monarchy in a lavish ceremony, he did so to demonstrate Iran's power and wealth to the world. In essence, monarchy and its associated political formula had brought Iran this far, and would continue to carry it into the future.

b. Arjomand

Arjomand's analysis of monarchic Iran's foreign policy and its relationship with the political formula focuses primarily on the economic relationship between Iran and the West, specifically the United States. He draws on his experience in Iran in 1978, stating that the Shah's regime had a noticeable "lack of any moral commitment" to the adequate usage of oil revenue, demonstrating the impact of the economy on Iran's foreign policy.²

¹ G. Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 467.

² S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 111.

The Shah's insistence upon modernizing the armed forces and importing the latest technology into Iran led to the arrival of numerous European workers. This bred resentment among middle class employees, as well as government-employed workers in the oil industry. Arjomand's cursory analysis of the Iranian economic situation emphasizes the well-known fact that Iran and the United States were closely connected during Mohammad Reza Shah's reign. In fact, Arjomand begins his treatise by quoting various American foreign service officers, who stated that in the years leading up to the Islamic Revolution, it was virtually unimaginable that the Shah would be toppled, much less by a fundamentalist movement. Therefore, his treatment of Iran's foreign policy is one that highlights the nature of monarchic Iran's relationship with the international community, and the West's reliance on the Shah as a bulwark against communism. Arjomand disputes the unexpectedness of a theocratic revolution in Iran, arguing that given the pervasiveness and importance of religion in the socio-cultural identity in Iran and its history.

Therefore, while the monarchy was responsible for Iran's foreign policy decisions, the revolution that followed in 1979 was not wholly unexpected. It is speculative to argue whether a non-monarchic regime would have pursued similar foreign policy objectives, although given the rise and popularity of anti-foreign leaders such as Mossadegh and Khomeini, it is plausible that leaders uneager to please the United States could have gained footing and steered Iran in a different direction if it were not for the monarchic political formula.

c. Shakibi

According to Shakibi, Mohammad Reza Shah felt that American support was directly proportional to the monarchic political formula's security, and the scholar agrees.¹ He analyzes Iran's

¹ Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 182.

foreign policy decisions under Mohammad Reza Shah as decisions made by a political leader for the betterment of his own position and that of his country.

Shakibi treats Iran's relationship with the United States as an exchange between a greater and lesser power, but does not indicate the level of importance of the monarchic political system. For example, in discussing the American role in the ouster of Prime Minister Mossadegh, he examines it from the perspective of the United States' security interests in the region and their reliance on the Shah. Shakibi therefore does not think the American reliance on the Shah, a defining characteristic for a large period of his reign, had anything to do with the monarchic formula as much as it had to do with the Shah's ability to put down opposition in his country. Shakibi argues that the Shah had no real reason to depend on the United States, and had instead psychologically tied himself to the West, making himself think he needed American power to secure his own.¹

Nevertheless, he treats the Shah's foreign policy perspective as a direct result of his definition of himself as the monarch and father of the nation and his understanding of the monarchic political formula. Therefore, the foreign policy of Iran during this time was influenced by the monarchic political formula, thereby communicating Shakibi's belief that the monarchy was both an institutional and personal tradition that wielded considerable influence over Iran's political trajectory.

d. **Abrahamian**

Abrahamian does not examine the foreign policy of monarchic Iran in the context of the monarchy. Rather, like Shakibi, he treats the relationship between Iran and the West, notably the United States, as that of one country in a weaker position than that of its powerful ally.² The United States is described

¹ Z. Shakibi, *Revolutions and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia and Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 184.

² E. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 500.

as having influence over Iran's domestic policies, including its pressure for land reform in the early 1960s, but not its relationship to the monarchic political system.

Abrahamian argues that one of the major factors in the Shah's downfall was not the monarchic political formula, but rather the cooling of relations between Iran and the United States after the election of Jimmy Carter.¹ Intelligence officials believed that by 1978, the Shah would not survive, but assured American leaders that Khomeini, who was fiercely anticommunist, would help the United States fight Russia and provide an uninterrupted supply of oil to the West. Thus, foreign policy was not decided based on regime-type, but regime-necessity.

e. Comparison of the Theorists' Treatment of Foreign Policy Reforms

Lenczowski argues that the monarchic political formula shaped Iran's foreign policy, and that the West relied upon the monarchic political formula for a stable and friendly Iran. I argue the Shah was trying to demonstrate the world's, particularly the West's, reliance on the Iranian *monarchy* for a stable Middle East, not just the Iranian government. Thus, the monarchic political formula was not only the driver for the Shah's foreign policy decisions, but a method by which he ensured Iran's vaulted status in the international community. Abrahamian disagrees, treating the relationship between Iran and the United States as that between a greater and lesser state actor. The United States allied itself with Iran because it suited its purpose to halt the spread of communism, while Iran extracted benefits from its ally in return for a commitment against the USSR.

While Lenczowski and Abrahamian consistently apply their previous analytical framework in the case of Iranian foreign policy, Arjomand and Shakibi switch camps, so to say. Arjomand, who in previous discussions of political and social modernization downplayed the monarchic political formula's role or

¹ E. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 500.

influence, now argues that Iran was able to maintain its relationship with the United States and build its foreign policy in the way it did *because* of the monarchic political formula. He points to Mossadegh and Khomeini, arguing that if nationalist leaders had gained a foothold in Iran, its foreign policy would have been radically different, as it became after 1979. Meanwhile, though Shakibi has not veered off the course of equating personal beliefs with institutional monarchy, he actually agrees with Abrahamian in this case, saying that foreign policy was not a result of the monarchic political formula, but rather due to the circumstances that played out in global politics.

VII. Conclusion

Based on the matrix, scholarly analysis of modernization efforts under Mohammad Reza Shah places little uniform emphasis on the monarchic political formula, contrary to my hypothesis that there would be a wide scholarly reliance on the monarchic political formula as impactful on Iranian politics. Shakibi, Abrahamian, and Arjomand approach different aspects of Mohammad Reza Shah's regime with the understanding that though he was a monarch and Iran was a monarchy *de jure*, the Shah was a

patrimonial dictator and Iran evolved into an authoritarian police state by 1979, which could not make Iran a monarchy.

Unfortunately, those theorists' arguments that dictatorships cannot be monarchies are unconvincing in many cases. Contemporary analysts of monarchic Iran under Mohammad Reza Shah do not clearly define the term monarchy. Rather, they interpret it in a seemingly European, constitutional manner in which the sovereign has limited power. Arjomand, Shakibi, and Abrahamian classify the political formula of Iran as that of a patrimonial dictatorship at different points in their arguments. However, it appears that they approach the argument with an analytical framework that predisposes them to equate monarchy with limited, rather than absolute, monarchy. I agree that Mohammad Reza Shah was dictatorial, but how was that political formula different than those under Louis XIV of France or Russia's Nicholas II, who are accepted as monarchs? Shakibi himself compares monarchic Iran to these two states, but does not question the importance of the monarchic political formula in the latter cases, when in fact monarchy was much older in Iran than in France or Russia and would ostensibly have a more publicly accepted role in state politics.

It appears that the factor that causes this tendency to deemphasize the monarchic political formula among analysts of the Iranian monarchy is the inadequate recognition of what I believe is a kingdom-specific monarchic formula. Monarchies, whether European, African, or Asian develop their own, individual monarchic political formulas. Theorists' willingness to dismiss the monarchic political formula in Iran because it does not fit the mold of a contemporary, Western constitutional monarchy ignores the fact that "monarchy" is vaguely defined and thus is flexible in its manifestation, whether as a constitutionally limited monarchy or an absolute one. The monarch can be a ceremonial figurehead or involved in every aspect of the state's functioning, and the monarchic political formula is dependent on that role.

The lack of emphasis on the monarchic political formula by prominent theorists stands in contrast with those who definitively argue that the regime-type directly influenced Iran's political trajectory. Scholarly research on monarchic Iran should thus take into account the tendency of theorists to emphasize or deemphasize the monarchy, and also the level to which this influences their research and arguments. I do not argue that there needs to be uniform emphasis on the monarchic political formula between theorists. However, what I discovered was a lack of uniformity within theorists' own arguments and a failure to establish definitions of the term "monarchy" for the purposes of their discussions. Arjomand and Shakibi's inconsistent application of their framework, coupled with Abrahamian and their assumption of what a monarchy should be, can mislead their readers. Researchers should understand that these three theorists are approaching Mohammad Reza Shah with the belief that he could not be a true monarch because he was a dictator, though I do not agree with that analytical tendency.

Through the course of my research and the discussion of scholarly treatment of the monarchic political formula in Iran, I came across an issue that has the ability to frustrate proper analysis of this topic: the distinction between the Shah's policies as the policies of an individual leader versus those that are functions of the monarchic political formula. I could not have accounted for this distinction prior to my research, as it developed as I learned more about the monarchic political formula in Iran and its relationship with the individual monarch. My argument in favor of kingdom-specific monarchic formulae equates those policies that are the king's with those that are the function of the political formula, since the political formula is shaped by the king and its cultural context. This understanding is not unlike Shakibi's argument that monarchy is shaped by the monarch.

For students of political science and Middle Eastern history, understanding where their research and knowledge is coming from and the unstated analytical tendencies of scholars is extremely important. The diversity of viewpoints and ideas presented by Lenczowski, Arjomand, Shakibi, and Abrahamian, allows the reader to study different perspectives and use his or her own critical thinking to synthesize his

or her opinion about the importance of monarchy in Iran. This can be done most successfully with these theorists and other sources of scholarship by being aware of the analytical patterns and frameworks with which research is conducted and presented. This not only enhances the scholarship, but is more useful for future study of Middle Eastern politics. Theorists' treatment of the monarchic political formula in Iran, though at times inconsistent, provides researchers with an assorted set of analytical frameworks that will benefit not only current studies of Middle Eastern politics, but also their potential future application on regional policy.

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