

The strengths and weaknesses of Iran's populist alliance

A class analysis of the constitutional revolution of 1905–1911

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Between 1905 and 1911 Iran was convulsed by a mass upheaval known as the Constitutional Revolution, the first in a series of complex social movements culminating in the extraordinary revolution of 1979. The ruling Qajar dynasty (1800–1925) was shaken to its roots by a determined coalition of social classes that I designate a “populist alliance.” One shah was forced to grant a national assembly (the *majlis*) and a constitution, and another was compelled to abdicate in favor of his young son. Political life assumed a level of freedom unseen until then in the Middle East, with a proliferation of parties, clubs, newspapers, and popular expressions of resistance to the state and foreign capital in Iran. Initial successes, however, were followed by the fragmentation of the alliance that had initiated the revolution, and capped by the intervention of Tsarist Russian troops in 1911 to prop up the weakened monarchy. The consequences of failure would be grave, as the door was opened for the political disintegration of the country in World War I, followed by the rise to the throne of an untutored cavalry commander named Reza Khan Pahlavi, whose son would gain notoriety as a repressive modernizer after World War II.

The Constitutional Revolution matters for its place in Iran's troubled history, but also raises questions about twentieth-century revolutions on the peripheries of the world capitalist-system. The early twentieth century witnessed revolutionary upheavals in Mexico, Russia, Turkey, and China, as well as Iran; later in the century, Cuba, Iran (again), and Nicaragua would join the list as seemingly more successful cases. Attempts to fit these movements into the mold of either “bourgeois” or “peasant” revolutions founder on the complexity of the social forces actually involved. The one safe generalization that can be sustained is that these were all multi-class, popular or populist social movements, involving loose coalitions of aggrieved social forces. The case of the

Constitutional Revolution in Iran suggests two keys that may shed light on the others as well: these social movements are rooted in complex social structures in transition, with internal and external dimensions; and their dynamics point to the importance of grasping political culture and consciousness alongside political economy to understand more fully their polyvalent meanings and ambivalent outcomes.

In the present essay I present a class analysis of the forces that made the Constitutional Revolution, arguing that a proper understanding of the causes, course, and outcome of the conflict requires careful consideration of the social structure of Iran in a period of rapid change. Accordingly, in the first part I investigate the process of class formation in nineteenth-century Iran in terms of the articulation of pre-capitalist modes of production with an expanding capitalism carried by England and Russia. The resulting picture of a social structure in transition pinpoints the principal actors on both sides of the revolution, and the diverse grievances they brought to it. In the second part, I engage the complex debates that exist on the nature of the revolution, and propose a model of the dynamics of this multi-class populist alliance as the key to conceptualizing the sequence of initial success followed by fragmentation and defeat.

Several writers, including Val Moghadam and Kambiz Afrachteh, have referred to the 1978–1979 events in Iran as “populist.”¹ In contrast to Afrachteh, who uses the term strictly in the sense of a political ideology, I use it to denote the popular, mass social bases of participation. The purpose of the present essay is to elucidate the particular dynamics of such alliances, their capacity for coming together to score revolutionary successes under certain conditions, and their tendency to splinter once a modicum of power has been won.² What is of theoretical interest here is the tracing of these coalition dynamics to their underlying determinants in changing social structures on the one hand as a source of revolutionary outbreaks, and to the concatenation of internal and external factors in Third World contexts to explain their outcome. Along the way, political culture is treated as a key element to incorporate into class analysis of the processes of coalition breakdown. In this way a case is built for a new interpretation of what proves to be a recurrent pattern in Iranian history, with potentially wide-ranging implications for the theory of revolutions in the Third World.

Class formation in Qajar Iran

The sociology of development has been plagued by sterile contention over the relative merits of the several neo-Marxist successors to the previously dominant paradigm of modernization theory. On the one hand, the modes of production school has followed Marx's lead in positing internal class struggles as the key to social structure. On the other, the world-system and dependency schools have extended Marx in the direction of examining relations among national economies as the locus of surplus extraction. My own approach builds on the insights of Ian Roxborough and Aidan Foster-Carter that both solutions are *partial*, and that a theoretical synthesis is long overdue.³ Figure One suggests a model for understanding the contribution of each perspective. This suggests that the dependency paradigm provides the overarching framework for the consideration of the relation between the most encompassing external and the basic internal units of analysis – that is, the relation of the world economy to the social classes of a given Third World country. World-system theory is necessary to explain the external impulses that emanate outward from the core to the social formations of the periphery, while modes of production analysis accounts for how these external pressures are mediated within the social formation itself. All three levels of analysis must be identified and related to provide an adequate account of Third World social change and development over time.

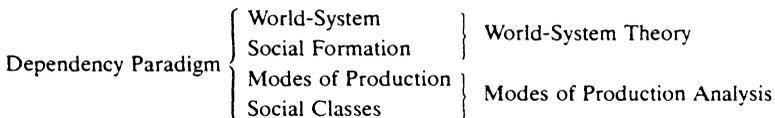


Fig. 1. Levels of articulation.

In applying this model to Iran, we may begin with a “snapshot” of social structure in about 1800, shortly after the Qajar dynasty came to power by triumphing in the tribal civil wars of the eighteenth century. This provides a baseline from a period *before* Iran had extensive contact with the West.⁴ Figure Two suggests a mode of production approach to the Iranian social formation, ca. 1800 (the percentages in each box indicate an estimate of the proportion of the population in each sector). The social structure of pre-capitalist Iran is here conceptualized not as some unitary mode of production (either a variant on feudalism or an Asiatic mode of production), but rather as a complex articulation of three modes of production – a pastoral-nomadic sector

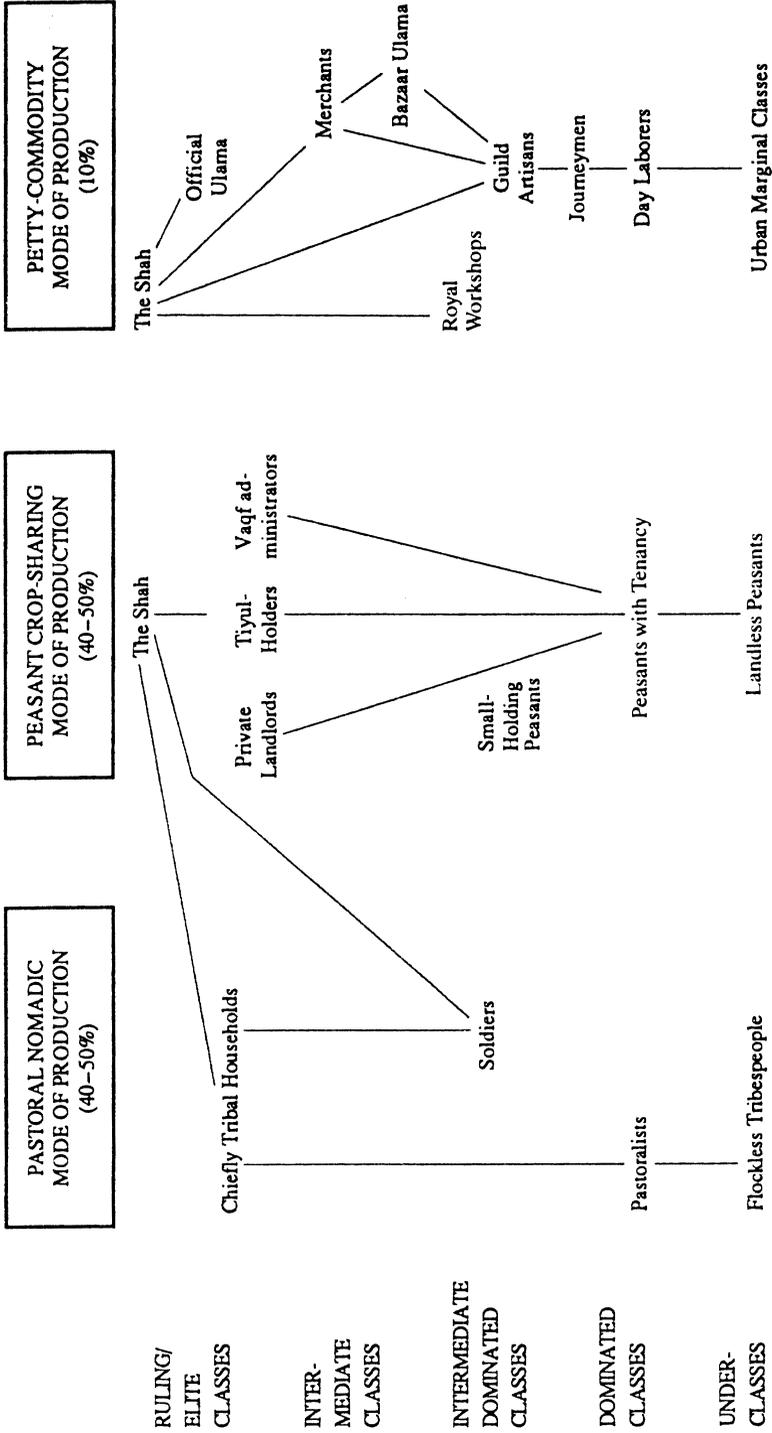


Fig. 2. The Iranian social formation ca. 1800.

of tribespeople who lived by grazing herds of animals (and providing soldiers to the state), a peasant crop-sharing mode of production (on which, more in a moment), and in the urban economy, a petty-commodity mode based on guild production and trade. The need to coin a “new” mode of production in the agrarian sector requires brief comment.⁵ The absence of juridical serfdom, hereditary nobility, and widespread labor services rule out characterization of any feudal mode here, while the actual method of surplus extraction in the form of a share of the crop produced by hereditary peasants with security of tenure suggests the new name I propose. This surplus was appropriated by three kinds of ruling class – private landowners, holders of state lands assigned by the shah (called *tiyuls*), and clerical administrators of charitably or privately endowed properties (known as *vaqfs*). It can be readily seen that the Iranian elite as well as the dominated classes were spread across these modes of production, thus suggesting a parsimonious explanation for the shah’s paramount position in society as the tapper of several sources of surplus, and the difficulties of uniting the exploited classes in nationwide social movements.

All of this would change in the course of the nineteenth century, during which it may be said that Iran crossed the threshold of dependence.⁶ Russia and England engaged in a political, economic, and military rivalry for pre-eminence in Iran, with disastrous results for the country’s room to maneuver. The Tsar’s armies won military victories over Iran in 1801–13 and 1826–28, forcing favorable commercial concessions and acquiring much territory and population in the Caucasus and Central Asia. England twice threatened war if Iran were to pursue its claims on Afghanistan. The two European powers established banks in Iran, gained control over the customs receipts as collateral for loans, and were given valuable concessions to operate the Caspian fisheries and prospect for oil (the former falling to Russia and the latter paying off handsomely for Britain after 1908). By 1914 Russia’s trade with Iran was 12 million pounds sterling, Britain’s 4.5 million; Russia accounted for 55.5 percent of Iran’s imports and took 71.6 percent of exports, while Britain had 27.8 percent and 13.5 percent respectively.⁷ Iran’s foreign trade had grown 15–20 times since 1800, but the balance of payments was 2.8 million pounds in deficit by 1911–1913.⁸

The composition of Iran’s trade also shifted decisively during this period in the direction of a classic “colonial” pattern. Exports of hand-loomed textiles fell to negligible proportions, while those of raw silk, wool, cotton, rice, and opium rose. Imports of European manufactured

textiles, processed sugar, and tea predominated in exchange.⁹ The Qajar economy thus moved from the external arena of the world-system in 1800 and before, to the periphery by the turn of the twentieth century, subject to the more powerful rhythms of English and Russian capitalism.

This process of incorporation wrought significant changes in the social structure over the course of the century, as indicated in Figure Three. Both quantitative and qualitative transformation had occurred. The tribal sector had fallen in relative terms from 40–50 percent of the population to 25 percent, with both the settled agricultural sector and the urban sector growing at its expense. Tribal provisioning of soldiers had declined in importance (hence its appearance in parentheses), as had the small-holding peasant class and the royal workshops of guild craftspeople in the urban economy, largely superseded by foreign imports. Qualitatively, a small new capitalist mode of production had emerged in the cities, consisting of Iranian, foreign, and royal capitalists operating a handful of factories and a working class formed both in Iran and as migrant labor in nearby Russia.

Moreover, each of the classes under the elite level had developed grievances in the course of this transformative process. Thus, merchants had watched while their control of the export trade and some internal markets fell into Western hands; though a few large-scale ones had enriched themselves through profitable collaboration with foreign companies or internal monopoly of a product, the vast majority of medium and small traders had lost much of their standing. Artisans had suffered the collapse of their livelihood in many sectors, especially the formerly central area of handicraft textiles, under a flood of European imports. The lower urban classes and working class labored (when they could find work) in a setting characterized by high prices for food and by unemployment. Peasants saw their standard of living inexorably decline as cultivation shifted from food staples to exports crops and rising land values enmeshed them in a cash-based relationship to their landlords that increased their indebtedness. Tribespeople witnessed the circumscribing of their economic activity by the new premium placed upon urban and agricultural production, compounded by diminishing political-military roles in the nineteenth century and the ravages of natural disasters such as drought-induced famines. Two key groups – the ulama and the nascent intelligentsia – increasingly conceptualized these disasters as signs that Islam itself was in danger or that Iran was falling prey to a more economically powerful, industrialized West; in either case the

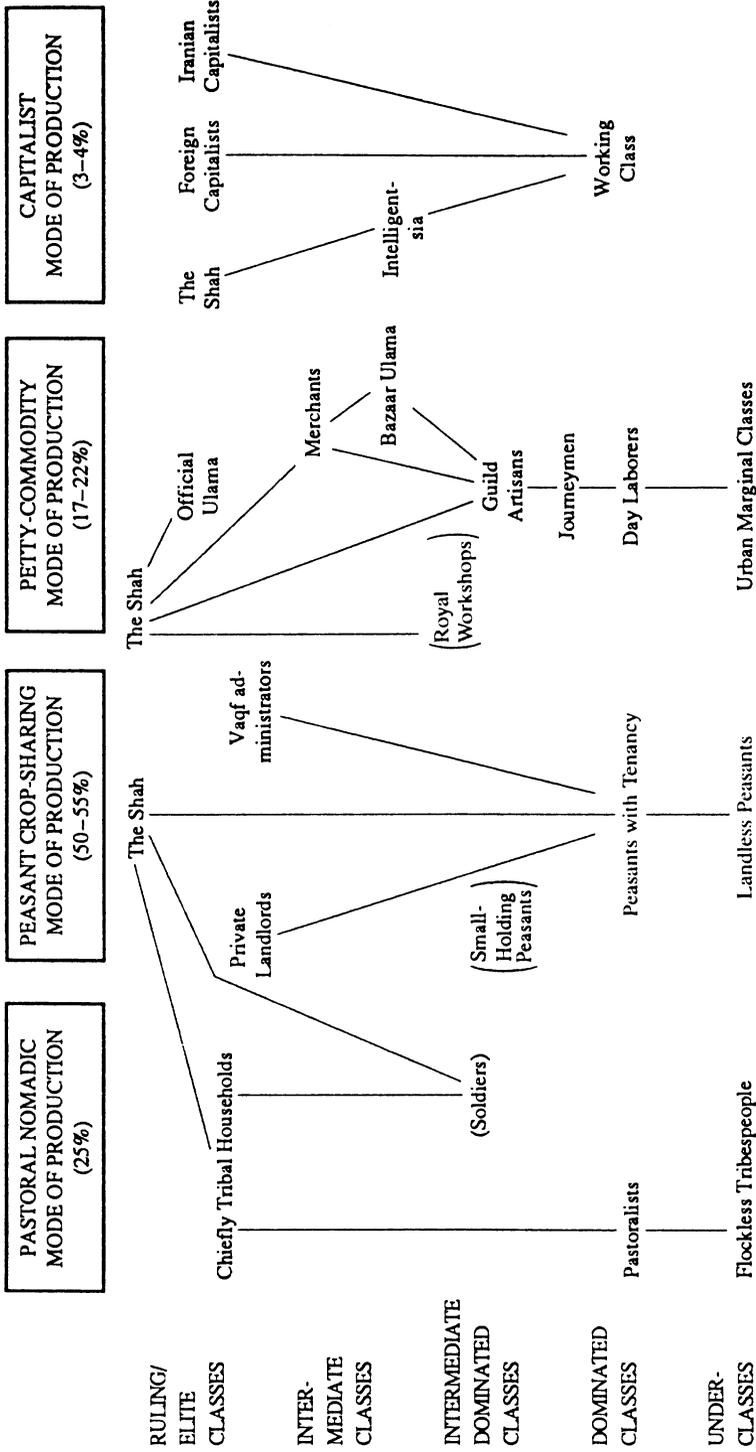


Fig. 3. The Iranian social formation in 1914.

Qajar state and foreign powers were perceived as the responsible parties. Dependence, then, was an economic process with far-reaching political consequences, experienced and filtered through the value systems and cultural beliefs present in Iranian society. The stage was set for the emergence of a broad coalition of aggrieved forces by the turn of the twentieth century.

The populist alliance in the Constitutional Revolution

Quite interesting and complex debates exist regarding the nature of the Constitutional Revolution and the social forces that contended in it. The standard interpretation for many years in both the basic works of Iranian historians such as Kasravi, Kirmani, and Malikzadeh, as well as most Western accounts, stressed the role of ideas, and in particular, Western concepts such as constitutionalism and nationalism.¹⁰ This view highlights the role of intellectuals in the revolution. Orthodox Marxists, both Iranian and Soviet, by contrast, have generally interpreted the events as a bourgeois revolution led by a merchant class blocked in its aspirations for democracy by landed classes and imperial powers.¹¹ These positions, paradoxically, are not incompatible if one considers the intelligentsia's ideas as representing the Iranian bourgeoisie, a line of reasoning suggested by the work of Milani.¹²

More recently historians of several perspectives have constructed more complex explanations. The works of Keddie and Lambton, outside the Marxist tradition, correctly identify the several classes in alliance in the revolution, though more in empirical fashion than with an underlying theoretical model.¹³ Closer to the Marxist paradigm, Abrahamian argues that the key social forces were two "middle classes" – a traditional bazaar-centered one that he terms "the propertied middle class" (including merchants, artisans, and ulama) and a modern intelligentsia, with the former far more powerful.¹⁴ Afshari radicalizes this position by stressing that the core of the movement was made up of the *pishivaran* – artisans, traders, and small shopkeepers.¹⁵ This represents an advance in that it breaks down Abrahamian's "propertied middle class" into its constituent elements, not all of whom had similar interests or outlooks.

My basic position is that if we examine the actions of each class or group in the Constitutional Revolution we find that it was fought above all by the artisans and intelligentsia, against the court, foreign powers,

and landlords, and that the merchants were divided and ultimately wavered, as did the ulama, many of whom went into opposition to the movement. The tribal chiefs fought on both sides, as did probably the urban marginal classes. Peasants and tribespeople were largely not involved, although some peasants were active in their local areas, and some tribal armies were engaged on either side. The working class gave its support to the revolution but was numerically limited in impact. So, rather than a bourgeois revolution, it was more of a popular, democratic, mass *urban* movement fought by a pre-capitalist class in decline (the artisans) and two small capitalist classes in formation (the intelligentsia and working class), and *led* by two classes/groups that were divided (ulama and merchants). The revolution thus reposed on a *mixed*, “populist” alliance in terms of classes and their constituent modes of production.

The line-up of social forces then consists of a constitutionalist alliance (artisans, intelligentsia, and workers, and some merchants, ulama, and marginalized urban classes), the royalist social base (the court and its retainers, landlords, and some of the ulama, tribes, and marginalized urban classes), the mostly uninvolved peasant and tribal masses, and the foreign powers (England at best neutral, Russia actively counter-revolutionary). I now consider the ebb and flow of events in light of the contours of these class alliances, evaluating such data as participation in crowds and strikes, representation and positions adopted in the majlis, the formation and activities of organizations such as the *anjumans* (political clubs), unions, parties and armed groups, ideological positions among the leadership, and some of the available evidence as to political culture and consciousness.

The populist alliance and the victory of 1905–1906

The outbreak of protest in 1905 was preceded by an economic downturn, widespread dissatisfaction over foreign control of Iranian resources, and a governmental crackdown on the ulama’s control over vaqfs.¹⁶ Meanwhile, Japan’s defeat of Russia in their 1904–1905 war both diverted the Tsar’s attention from Iran (as did the 1905 Russian uprising) and gave hope to Iran’s intellectuals that Russia could be contained; the fact that the only Asian constitutional state had defeated the major Western non-constitutional one also suggested the desirability of having a constitution. So many groups and classes had particular grievances that it was fairly easy to magnify a series of incidental confronta-

tions in 1905–1906 into a large mass movement opposed to the state. Merchants led strikes in Tehran in April 1905 demanding reforms; in December a wider protest involving ulama, students, tradespeople, and merchants was mollified by the promise of an *adalatkhaneh* (House of Justice). Matters came to a head in the summer of 1906, when a large crowd of up to 14,000 people from the same classes sought sanctuary (*bast*) in the grounds of the British Legation. Faced with a disciplined and determined general strike of the central market place (the bazaar), coupled with the refusal of the ulama to provide their normal religious, educational, and legal services, the shah wavered. Prompt Russian support was not forthcoming as the tsar was still preoccupied with the repressive tasks of putting his own house in order; in the absence of clear instructions from London, the local British representatives seemed to give tacit support to the oppositional movement headquartered on their embassy's premises. Unable or unwilling to rally his scattered elite supporters and few available repressive instruments, the Qajar monarch, Muzaffar al-Din Shah, backed down. He agreed to elections leading to the establishment of a national assembly (the majlis), which was duly convened in the autumn and drafted a constitution for Iran that the monarch signed on his deathbed at the end of December 1906.¹⁷

The populist alliance of merchants, ulama, artisans, and intelligentsia had thus scored a signal victory in forcing a transition from a despotic state to a constitutional autocracy. They were supported after 1906 by Iran's small working class, which organized its first unions among printers, telegraphers, fishery workers, and others, and engaged in vigorous strikes for better pay and working conditions.¹⁸ Urban marginals played some role as well, with Browne recording the July 1906 actions of "tradesmen, artisans and people of yet humbler rank."¹⁹ The presence of women is also noted at the 1905–1906 protests, and the first Iranian-run school for girls was formed in 1907.²⁰ Students of both the religious schools and the new Western-style schools participated in these events, with the latter, according to Nazim al-Islam Kirmani, converting the British Legation into "one vast open-air school of political science" by giving lectures on European constitutional systems and expressing ideas that had been too dangerous to express before in Iran.²¹ The issue of peasant participation is a complex one; the standard account holds them to have been uninvolved, while more recent historiography is challenging this.²² Overall, the lack of articulation of peasants' interests on the national level and the difficulties of organizing across scattered villages did keep the role of the peasantry as a class from escalating much beyond local refusals to pay rent and taxes.²³

The movement that brought about the creation of an assembly and the drafting of a constitution then represented a multi-class, urban populist coalition. In 1906 it enjoyed the support of the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the major cities of Iran – Tehran, the capital; Tabriz, the largest commercial emporium; and other key centers both in the north and south of the country. Linked together by the new telegraph network, these urban actors constituted the first sustained nation-wide social movement in Iranian history. A key structural factor in the emergence of this coalition was the growth of the urban sector of the economy from ten percent of the population in 1800 to 25 percent by the outbreak of the revolution (compare figures two and three). Given the difficulties of transport and communication in rural Iran, this 25 percent of the population can be said to have constituted a *mass* movement of the politically active segment of society. Its continued success would depend on its ability to hold diverse constituent elements together in the face of royalist and foreign counterattacks.

The multi-class, populist nature of the movement is further reflected in both the organizations that were created and in evidence about the political cultures upon which the actors drew. The main organizational form established was that of the *anjuman* (meaning association, society, or council). Originally secret societies of concerned individuals, after 1906 they sprang up all over the country to debate political issues and in some cases to dispense welfare services, conduct literacy classes, and even run local governments. Class-specific anjumans of artisans, merchants, religious students, and intellectuals all formed, in addition to mixtures of these based instead on ethnicity, political orientation, or some other shared identity.²⁴ The first majlis (1906–1908) was the other organizational embodiment of the populist alliance. Elected along occupational and status lines, it was composed of ulama (29.2 percent), government officials/urban notables (22.3 percent), guildspeople (18.0 percent), merchants (17.4 percent) and Qajar princes (5.0 percent).²⁵ As it defined the major issues facing it, royalist, moderate, and progressive wings took shape, mostly personalized associations with loose organization and no explicit ideology. The royalists were few in number and unpopular, while the moderates consisted of the ulama and most of the merchants, officials, and guildspeople. The progressives came mostly from the northwestern, Turkish-speaking province of Azarbaijan, and drew on the intelligentsia, supported by some of the Tehran guilds and merchants. The moderates had by far the majority, but the 20 or 21 progressive delegates (out of 160) had influence beyond their numbers.²⁶ In 1907 and 1908 there was a great deal of

cooperation: the progressives knew they needed the influence of the ulama and bazaar classes, while the latter were compelled to follow the popular movement.

The available evidence on the political consciousness and cultures of the participants also strengthens our thesis on the movement's mass, popular social base. Religious imagery played a definite role in mobilizing the masses, particularly the themes of martyrdom and revolt.²⁷ Anti-authoritarian attitudes and resistance to state power also thrived in their own right. By May 1907 the British minister Sir Cecil Spring-Rice was reporting:

One after another, unpopular Governors have been expelled. ... A spirit of resistance to oppression and even to all authority is spreading throughout the country. ... The sentiment of independence in the widest sense, of nationality, of the right to resist oppression and to manage their own affairs is rapidly growing among the people. It is strongest in Azerbaijan. It is very strong in the capital.²⁸

Popular attitudes toward the elite underwent a change too, as an Iranian correspondent told Browne:

A certain builder came to the house of a Minister to repair an iron fire-place. On entering, he saluted the Minister. The Minister's servant bade him do obeisance. He replied, 'Knaves, do you not know that we now have a Constitution, and that under a Constitution obeisances no longer exist?' A strange independence and freedom are observable in the people, and it is impossible to say how this change in their character has been so suddenly effected.²⁹

The shah himself was taken down off his pedestal in the popular imagination, as a revolutionary proclamation of 1907 warned him not to forget

...that he was not born by his mother possessed of crown and signet-ring, nor does he hold in his hand a warrant of absolute sovereignty from the Unseen World of Spirits. Assuredly if he had but reflected for a moment that this sovereignty depends only in the acceptance or rejection of the People, and that those who have elected him to this high position and acknowledged him [as King] are able also to elect another [in his place], he would never have swerved aside to this extent from the straight Path of Justice and the requirements of constitutional monarchy.³⁰

A common means of self-expression were the innumerable *shab-namehs* ("night letters") that were posted anonymously; their themes constituted clarion calls against foreign intervention and domestic

oppression.³¹ The press also played a role in this process, with some newspapers electing to write in a simple, unadorned style, and using cartoons whose message would be evident to all.³² Popular poetry and satire became common literary forms as well. In each of these ways a political culture of opposition and resistance was elaborated and spread widely, at least in urban settings, during the revolution.

Internal class struggles and the fragmentation of the coalition, 1907–1909

From January 1907 to June 1908 a sharp conflict developed between the new, more autocratic Muhammad 'Ali Shah and the increasingly self-confident and politically aware mass movement. The majlis moved in the autumn of 1907 to limit the monarchy's powers constitutionally, to reduce court pensions, and to abolish state land grants and tax-farming. The shah reacted in December by inciting a royalist crowd to threaten the majlis building. The majlis was defended however by armed volunteers, and the bazaar went on strike, forcing Muhammad 'Ali to back down. In the summer of 1908, the shah succeeded in closing down the assembly by using the army backed with the threat of Russian intervention. Leading constitutionalists fled, or were arrested, exiled, and executed.

The locus of resistance now shifted to Tabriz where a constitutionalist militia, the *mujahidin*, drove the shah's forces from the city. The royalists blockaded the city in early 1909, however, and the populace, reduced to starvation, agreed to let Russian troops enter the city to stabilize the confrontation. Leading mujahidin took refuge in the Turkish consulate. Though it ended in failure, the resistance of Tabriz bought valuable time for other provinces to revive the constitutionalist opposition, especially at Rasht on the Caspian in the north, and in the Bakhtiari tribal area around Isfahan in the south. Thus began an unlikely set of alliances: at Rasht local social democrats with radical ideas invited a wealthy landowner known as the Sipahdar ("Commander") to assume control of their movement, while in Isfahan, the Bakhtiari tribe declared for the constitutionalist cause. These northern and southern armies converged on Tehran in the summer of 1909. After two days of fighting in which 500 men were killed or wounded, Muhammad 'Ali took refuge at the Russian legation, while his army, the Russian-trained Cossack Brigade, surrendered to the new minister of war, the Sipahdar. On July 18 the 11-year-old son of Muhammad 'Ali was crowned

Ahmad Shah, and a regent was appointed by an extraordinary grand council of constitutionalist deputies and military leaders, ulama, princes, and notables, thus bringing Muhammad 'Ali's counterrevolutionary reign to a close.³³

The events of 1907 to 1909 reposed on the activation of a royalist class coalition and the weakening of the initial populist alliance. The backbone of Muhammed 'Ali's royalist coalition was based on the court and its retainers, the Russian-officered Cossack Brigade and the remnants of the state-controlled royal workshops – “the thousands employed in the royal palace with its extensive gardens, stables, kitchens, storehouses, armories, and workshops.”³⁴ The urban marginal classes could also be mobilized on occasion for the shah; the presence of “hired ruffians” and “unskilled workers and the poorest of the poor from the Tehran bazaar” has been noted in the June 1908 coup.³⁵ In the civil war at Tabriz in 1908, the royalists came from the poorer districts of Davachi and Sarkhab, “crowded with dyers, weavers, coolies, laborers, muleteers, and the unemployed.”³⁶ Both material and ideological factors played a role. The high price of bread was an issue no matter whether the government was constitutional or despotic, as far as the poor were concerned. It is also plausible that the urban marginal classes accorded traditional respect to the monarch and to their local ulama, who could mobilize them when necessary. A final social base for the shah was found among certain of the tribes, whom Muhammad 'Ali spurred on by promises of booty and plunder. Although taken all together the court and its supporters were not powerful enough to hold onto power after reversing the tide in 1908, they did slow down the forward momentum of the Constitutional cause in this period.

The multi-class populist alliance itself permuted significantly in this period as well. Remaining firmly committed were the small shopkeepers and artisans who formed the mass base of the Tabriz mujahidin, which swelled with “the poorest and most downtrodden elements of the *pishivaran* population” (the *pishivaran* were the *menu people* of the bazaar, its small traders and guildsfolk).³⁷ A radical organization known as the Secret Center administered the city during the resistance to the 1908 coup and the ensuing blockade. Consisting of merchants, artisans, ulama, and intellectuals this *anjuman* assumed responsibility for defense and internal security, ran the schools, put out a newspaper, repaired the bazaar, established contact with the foreign consulates and operated bakeries that provided bread for the armed volunteers and their families. Proximity to Russian social democratic

currents in nearby Baku helped radicalize sentiments in northern Iranian cities such as Rasht and Tabriz. This was overlaid in Tabriz by the resentment that Azari Turkish speakers felt toward the Persian-speaking central authorities in the capital.³⁸ The reputedly "uninvolved" peasantry also engaged in dramatic actions in these years, although only in the more densely-populated and commercialized province of Gilan in the north was there an actual peasant movement. There some peasants attacked and drove off their landlords, who telegraphed the majlis that the peasants thought "Mashrutiyyat" (constitutional rule) meant complete freedom. These actions were sometimes abetted by social democrats and radical artisans, but the local anjumans and national majlis put the brakes on the mobilizations, insisting that taxes be paid. On the other side, there is evidence that some peasants, especially near cities, were persuaded by the ulama or coerced by their landlords to oppose the revolution.³⁹ Thus the accepted interpretation of peasant noninvolvement, while it must be emphatically qualified to include the radical local events that did occur, is basically sustainable at the level of national politics. Meanwhile, in the south, certain tribes, notably the Bakhtiari of the Isfahan area, achieved national prominence in 1909 by fighting to restore the constitution. Their leaders were motivated in a few cases by genuine liberal views, but also by alliances with the British seeking to weaken Russian influence, and naturally by the loss of revenues from the disrupted trade in their areas. The confused images that inspired the ordinary tribesman to participate in this undertaking have been suggested by Bausani: "It is even said that, in order to persuade the Bakhtiārī to fight for the constitution (Mashrūtè), they were told that this mysterious Mashrūtè was a venerable old man, who was a saint and a close friend of the *shah*."⁴⁰

A more serious development was the deterioration of the unity among the constituent elements composing the populist alliance. The key split occurred at the leadership level of the ulama and the intellectuals. The role played by the ulama was complex, contradictory, and shifting, which has led to conflicting interpretations. According to Browne they were constitutionalist, and to Algar they were anti-shah, while Arjomand argues that though they may have started with these orientations, many ended up anti-constitutional and pro-shah. The best way to reconcile these positions is to note the different factions, different periods, and salient issues within the ulama. Many – perhaps most – of the ulama, from the leading mujtahids to lesser clerics to the young students – were at some point on the side of the revolution. Ulama had both ideological and material motivations to support the movement,

especially in its early stages. It will be recalled that pensions had gone unpaid for three years by 1905–1906. As Algar has shown, the ulama of Qajar Iran had for several generations opposed the state on a variety of popular issues, especially the threats posed by foreign penetration of society; Arjomand notes that many constitutionalist ulama felt that the majlis and constitution would further this cause.⁴¹ The agreement of “the two sayyids” ‘Abdullah Bihbihani and Muhammad Tabatabai, in early 1905, to work together for change is considered by Kasravi the start of the constitutional movement.⁴² They took leading roles in the three bast (strikes) of 1905–1906. Popular preachers, such as Malik al-Mutakallimin and Sayyid Jamal al-Din Isfahani, were active in anjumans, and very adept at mobilizing crowds into action; Sayyid Jamal al-Din in particular “had an enormous influence with the “*kuláh-namadís*,” or felt-capped artisans and humble folk of the *bázárs*, to whom he spoke in graphic and forceful language which they could understand, and who loved him accordingly.”⁴³ Both he and Malik al-Mutakallimin (whose name means “King of the Orators”) were executed by the shah after the 1908 coup. In the provinces, two constitutionalist mujtahids were tortured and killed by the brutal royalist governor of Maragheh in 1906, ulama led protests in Mashhad and Isfahan in 1908, and some joined in the actual fighting in the Tabriz resistance.⁴⁴ In Najaf, three of the four leading mujtahids were constitutionalist; in 1908 they effectively excommunicated the shah in a telegram, charging

...that his conduct ‘wounds the heart of the believer and is an offense against the absent Imám,’ and that they would ‘leave no stone unturned to obtain a representative government,’ and ending ‘God has cursed the tyrants; you are victorious for the moment, but you may not remain so.’⁴⁵

These top-ranking ulama would remain in the constitutionalist ranks through 1911.

In the fall of 1906, Browne’s eyewitness reported: “The *mullás* and the more Europeanized classes are on the best and most cordial terms.”⁴⁶ By 1907, however, there was an anti-constitutionalist current led by Shaikh Fazlullah Nuri that launched a traditionalist, anti-parliamentary movement to defend Islam. Three hundred Tehran ulama took bast (sanctuary) to protest provisions of the constitution such as the equality of all religious groups and the extensive jurisdiction of the secular courts (even the constitutionalist ulama were uneasy at these provi-

sions, and became somewhat more passive in their support). They formed their own *anjuman* and joined with Muhammad 'Ali against the *majlis*. Some, such as the chief Friday prayer leader of Tehran, had ties of wealth and family to the court; some could be bribed. Others wanted to protect their judicial prerogatives, while still others had material interests as landlords to make common cause with the shah.⁴⁷ Nuri himself seems to have been motivated largely out of jealousy for “the two sayyids,” to whom he considered himself superior in learning. The defense of Islam endangered by “reprehensible innovation” (the following of Western constitutional ideas) provided an ideological motivation as well. Nuri and other *ulama* roused the royalist crowd in the failed coup of December 1907, calling the assembly’s delegates infidels, atheists, and *Babis* (a heterodox offshoot of Islam). A number of *mujtahids* and clerics – Arjomand believes “the great majority of middle- and high-ranking *'ulama*” – were won over to Nuri’s position in 1908, and they in turn caused some members of the bazaar to waver in their support, providing the shah a base for his June coup.⁴⁸ Nuri thus pronounced himself for the monarchy in 1908, excommunicating all journalists and the constitutionalist high clergy of Najaf. As the revolution’s forces regathered strength in 1909 however, many of Nuri’s followers began to distance themselves from him, and after the deposition of the shah in July, most quietly withdrew from politics, while Nuri himself was hanged. The *ulama* as a whole seemed discouraged from participating to as great an extent as before, and the constitutionalist ones who did tended to the conservative side in the *majlis*, especially after a secular radical assassinated Bihbihani in August 1910. In summary, the *ulama*, who had been instrumental in winning the battles of 1905–1906, thereafter split, aligning on both sides from 1907 to 1909, and becoming less of a factor on either side in the last two years of the struggle. The royalist *ulama*, significantly, were able to take with them out of the coalition some members of the bazaar classes among the merchants, artisans, and urban marginals, which would hurt the populist coalition.

Thus emerged a split that widened into one between secular and religious aims for the movement. The intelligentsia had originated the demands for a *majlis* and a constitution, rooted in ideals of equality among all citizens and an end to arbitrary absolutism, as well as nationalist appeals to extricate Iran from its political and economic dependence on the West. The vehicles for these new ideas were the newspapers that sprang up during the revolution, with names such as *Taraqi* (Progress), *Bidari* (Awakening), *Adamiyat* (Humanity), *Azad* (Free),

Huquq (Rights), *Adalat* (Justice), *Musavat* (Equality), and *Nida-yi Vatan* (Voice of the Fatherland), among others.⁴⁹

Ideological development within a religious framework was split on the issues raised by the revolution, just as the ulama themselves were. Even among the constitutionalist ulama, who like the intellectuals opposed the tyranny of the shah and his reliance on outside powers, there was a difference of emphasis: arbitrary rule was seen in terms of the shah's authority versus that of the *shari'a* (Islamic law), while foreign interference was a question of infidels in the abode of Islam rather than of imperialism per se. Meanwhile, anti-constitutional ulama such as Nuri considered the constitution a direct threat to Islamic law, and ended up supporting the reactionary Muhammad 'Ali, maintaining only the anti-Western side of the ideology. Although Nuri's positions failed to pull the ulama as a whole into the opposition, they did undercut the unity of the constitutionalist sentiments of 1905–1906 and had an impact on the religiously-minded masses of the bazaars, causing a muting of the mobilization of some key groups – merchants, artisans, and lesser ulama.⁵⁰

The second majlis from 1909 to 1911 clearly indicated the changing balance of forces. Reflecting the tribal and landed interests than had combined to depose Muhammad 'Ali (that is, the Bakhtiari and the Sipahdar), it was far more conservative in social composition than the first majlis had been: Mehraïn has it as 83 percent landowners, Qajar landed bureaucrats and tribal chiefs, 12 percent ulama and bazaar classes, and five percent intelligentsia.⁵¹ This time two parties emerged, more formally than in the first majlis. The Moderate Party generally got two-thirds of the vote or more, while the Democrat Party was in the minority. The smaller Democrat Party had 27 delegates, including eight civil servants, five journalists, five ulama, one doctor and one landowner. These men had connections with the Tabriz Secret Center, and other social democrats and radicals. Their program emphasized equality before the law, separation of religion and politics, free education with emphasis on women, progressive taxation, land distribution, industrialization, and a ten-hour limit on the working day. Articles in their paper *Iran-i No* (New Iran) identified the enemies as oriental despotism, the feudal ruling class and Western imperialism. The Moderate Party was led by the clerics Bihbihani and Tabatabai, the landlord Sipahdar and a constitutionalist Qajar prince of the Farmanfarma family, and its 53 deputies included thirteen ulama, ten landlords, ten civil servants, nine merchants, and three tribal chiefs. Its program reflected

these more conservative social bases, calling for strengthening constitutional monarchy, upholding the shari'a, protecting family life and private property, assisting the middle class in the bazaar, "instilling 'a cooperative attitude' among the masses through religious education ... and defending society against the 'terrorism' of the anarchists, the 'atheism' of the Democrats, and the 'materialism' of the Marxists."⁵² The party acquired to some extent a popular base in the bazaar, a fact that portended the key shift in the political sympathies of the bazaar merchants. The fact that the Moderates had a clear majority in the second majlis undoubtedly slowed down the forward advance of the revolution, and ultimately limited the resistance of the majlis to the Russian ultimatum of 1911.

External intervention and the logic of defeat, 1910–1911

The year 1910 provided a lull in the dramatic events that had transpired in each of the five previous years, but ominous tensions arose both within the constitutionalist ranks and between the majlis and foreign powers. Britain and Russia demanded various concessions, and Russia moved 3,000 troops into northern Iran to guarantee the safety of its citizens there. In the summer the assassination of a leading cleric, Sayyid 'Abdullah Bihbihani, exacerbated the growing split between radicals and moderates in the majlis. The declaration of a state of siege in Tehran led to the forcible disbanding of a troop of constitutionalist volunteers. Meanwhile, tribal unrest plagued the provinces into the fall, in part stirred up by ex-shah Muhammad 'Ali.⁵³

In early 1911 the majlis approved the appointment of 16 American financial experts under W. Morgan Shuster to organize the tax administration. Shuster's independent stance toward Britain, Russia, and the Iranian landed elite led to various confrontations in the course of the year. Further preoccupying the government was the appearance of Muhammad 'Ali at the head of a tribal army, which was eventually defeated in the autumn. At this point, however, a new crisis erupted, setting in motion the train of events leading to the success of the counterrevolution. Shuster's tax agents clashed with Russian troops, prompting a Russian ultimatum demanding his dismissal and indemnities for the costs of maintaining Russian forces in the north. The majlis unanimously refused, and huge anti-Russian demonstrations took place in Tehran as Russian troops advanced toward the city. As the crisis deepened the Russians softened their terms slightly, and the Iranian

cabinet, backed by a select majlis commission of conservatives, finally accepted their demands. Resistance to Russian coercion was initially widespread, but it was met with brutal repression, including executions. Up to 20,000 Russian troops remained in northern Iran to disband anjumans, establish press censorship, and restore landlord control over rural areas. Futile armed resistance soon turned to sullen resentment. After six tumultuous years, the Constitutional Revolution was finally checkmated.⁵⁴

The class logic underlying this counterrevolution turned on the further decomposition of the populist alliance and the stiffening of the royalist coalition by outside forces. Merchants vacillated in this last period, and ultimately the larger ones and those tied to foreign capital went into opposition, feeling threatened both as landowners and as businessmen. The replacement of the guild artisans and progressive ulama by landlords, tribal chiefs, and Qajar bureaucrats in the second majlis further sapped the momentum of the constitutionalist cause. The artisans themselves remained the backbone of the revolution; in the repression at Tabriz in 1911-1912, 18 out of the 35 citizens executed were artisans and shopkeepers, along with six merchants, six ulama, and four civil servants.⁵⁵

The royalist social base thus expanded at the expense of the populist alliance. On the eve of the coup in 1911 the German ambassador in Tehran wrote: "At the bottom of their hearts the great landowners of the country, the clergy, the wealthier businessmen, are all sick and tired of the ruling parliamentary demagoguery..."⁵⁶ Qajars and other landed magnates retained most of the provincial governorships throughout the 1905-1911 period. In more isolated provincial settings the revolution penetrated only obscurely, and conservative elites were able to run things much as before by ignoring the constitution and majlis and dampening the spread of institutions such as anjumans and independent newspapers. To this end they often played on sectarian divisions in the cities among religious and ethnic groups, or mobilized local tribes against the constitutionalists.

Standing behind these conservative forces were two powerful external actors. Of these, England played the subordinate role. At first hospitable to the constitutionalist cause in 1905-1906, and later checking Russian aggression in 1908, British support finally melted away in 1911 and no objections were raised to Russian intervention. The reasons were undoubtedly several: British material interests, such as oil;

the desire to safeguard its Indian colony from constitutionalist ideas; and the need to make common cause with Russia against German expansionism. This left the field open to the Tsar's forces in Iran. Although its hands were tied during the crucial 1905–1906 events by problems internally and with Japan (and this contributed to the early success of the revolution), by 1908 Russia was supporting Muhammad 'Ali's coup diplomatically and with the Iranian Cossack Brigade commanded by Russian officers. In 1911, after all else had failed, Russian troops intervened directly to bring about the dismissal of the reformer Shuster, the dissolution of the majlis and the end of the revolution.⁵⁷

Conclusions

The Constitutional Revolution ultimately failed due to a double determination of the internal instability of its shifting alliances and the force brought to bear on it from external intervention. We see here the articulation of the complexities of the Iranian social formation and the dependence imposed on it within the world-system. The changes wrought in class structure over the course of the nineteenth century both increased the proportion of the urban population available as a critical mass base from ten to 25 percent of the total, and impacted adversely on its several constituent parts – artisans, workers, the unemployed among the lower echelons, and merchants, intellectuals, and ulama in the middle classes. By 1905 these groups and classes had significant (but various) grievances against the Qajar state and its foreign supporters. What would happen over the next six years was not the result of further changes in the social structure (which does not operate at such short intervals), but rather a process of coalition dynamics and the alternate loosening and then retightening of foreign controls.

Our analysis of the social forces involved indicated the importance of the attempt to build a viable opposition coalition and the shifting vicissitudes of the struggle for the hearts and minds of the major social classes. Splits in the alliance and key turning points in the revolution underline this process. Figure Four allows a comparison of political shifts over time. From 1905 to early 1907 a working, if uneasy, coalition of intelligentsia, artisans, merchants, and ulama united to confront the state. During the course of 1907, the drafting of the constitution and the exact definition of the relations between secular and religious laws and their respective spheres breached this unity and led to Nuri's split within the ulama. Even if the majlis had been more unified, it still

Populist Alliance

1905	1911
Most merchants	Some medium and small merchants
Intelligentsia	Intelligentsia
Ulama	Fewer ulama
Artisans	Fewer artisans
Workers	Workers
Urban marginals	Fewer urban marginals
British slightly supportive	

Royalist Alliance

Wavering shah	Figurehead with Russian support
Landed elite	Landed elite
Russians preoccupied at home	Large merchants
	Some ulama
	Some marginals who could be 'bought'
	Russian tsar and army
	British acquiescent

Fig. 4. Coalition changes, 1905–1911.

had to work with no control over certain institutions of the state (notably the monarch who still possessed the court, cabinet, and a modicum of legitimacy) and had to face growing foreign pressure without an army or real control over the budget. Outside the majlis, the anjuman movement maintained its opposition to the shah, but proved no match for the brutal coup of June 1908 carried out by the Cossack Brigade.

The year of Muhammad 'Ali Shah's restoration of autocracy, during which the majlis was disbanded from June 1908 to July 1909, set back the revolution markedly. Although the resistance of Tabriz was courageous and new social forces with more radical ideas entered the fray, the restoration stalled all legislation passed between 1906 and 1908, from budget reforms to land and tax measures, and broke their momentum, forcing the second majlis to reconstitute itself and begin anew. The post-1909 period saw a sharpening of class conflict in some respects but a muting of it in others. The state was now "constitutional" but conservative in its social bases, reflecting the tribal and landed elements that had combined in the leadership of the movement to depose Muhammad 'Ali. In the provinces, old elites remained in place and tribal disruptions continued apace. The majlis was now controlled by a conservative majority of landowners, large merchants, and ulama scared by the possibility of a more radical turn of events, while the con-

tinued support of the progressive ulama and the bazaar classes outside the majlis weakened somewhat due to all these developments. This provided an opening for the Russians to step in and quash the attempted reforms that were still being proposed by the radical Democrats and Shuster. The Russian state had regained its equilibrium after the repression of its own internal opposition by 1907, coupled with its 1907 agreement with England on spheres of influence in Iran, and the 1910 Potsdam Convention with Germany. The Russian army found willing collaborators in counterrevolution and repression in the Iranian cabinet, court, conservatives in the majlis, and landlords, large merchants, and some ulama in the population at large.

The Constitutional Revolution ended then in a defeat, but it stands out as a revolutionary movement that attempted to change the balance of power and nature of Iranian society. Rather than a bourgeois revolution led by the merchant class, we have seen it as an urban, multi-class populist revolution of artisans, progressive ulama, merchants, workers, and lower classes. The institutions they created – majlis, constitution, anjumans, trade unions – were new in the history of Iran. The means they found to struggle for them – general strikes, mass demonstrations, basts, and when necessary armed defense of rights – were Iranian adaptations of the methods of modern social movements, and were conducted with determination, vigor, and imagination. Failure came because the coalition that carried the revolution was a shifting one that could not hold itself together politically or ideologically, rooted in a complex class structure that had experienced the Western impact in divergent and not fully congruent ways. After both the constitutional alliance and the monarchy it opposed had exhausted themselves, the ultimate guarantors of Iran's dependence stepped in to preserve the system and suppress the popular movement.

The basic dynamic of Iran's populist alliance goes well beyond the case of the Constitutional Revolution in its historical-sociological and theoretical implications. Subsequent social movements in Iran would repeat this pattern, both in the 1951–1953 oil nationalization struggle led by prime minister Muhammad Mussadiq, and in the more recent “Islamic” Revolution of 1978–1979. The first of these achieved notable early successes in limiting the authority of Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and in establishing Iranian control over the British-operated oil industry. The broad coalition of Mussadiq's supporters in the National Front would splinter in 1952–1953, however, as some of the ulama and merchants fell away to the right, while the communist Tudeh Party and the

trade union movement gave only half-hearted support on the left. This provided the opening for the new world power on the Iranian scene – the United States – to engineer a coup that restored the shah to the throne in August 1953, aided by royalist mobs incited by certain ulama. The 1978–1979 revolution would appear to have escaped the pattern of failure to the degree that the monarchy was definitively overthrown and the “special relationship” of the United States with Iran was severed. Nevertheless, the populist alliance that made the revolution has been seriously eroded since 1979, as workers, secular intellectuals, professionals, ethnic minorities, and women have received nothing of what they fought for, while the peasantry and urban marginal classes have been extolled by the regime but not greatly benefitted materially. Nor has dependency come to a sudden end in Iran, as both the Iran-Iraq war and the need for armaments and industrial inputs have revealed Iran’s limited room for maneuvering in the world-system. The revolution has been far from a clear-cut success, then, and the dynamics of the populist alliance explain no small part of this.

Another intriguingly apposite set of cases for comparison is the chronological conjuncture of early twentieth-century attempted revolutions in Russia 1905, Turkey 1908, Mexico 1910, and China 1911. All – including Russia – were set in developing agrarian societies with proto-capitalist sectors emerging; all were ruled by autocratic figures. In terms of process, each witnessed some version of a multi-class alliance with constitutionalist as well as populist aims, while in terms of outcomes several failed altogether (Iran, Turkey, and Russia) and two are ambiguous or “incomplete” (Mexico and China). A systematic comparison and contrast of these cases could yield rich insights into patterns of revolutionary outbreaks and failure.⁵⁸

Finally, it may be speculated that the findings of this paper extend further into other Third World cases of revolution and attempted social change. Wherever a complex class structure exists – and the Third World, with its combinations of pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production is a prime site with numerous variations – social movements must necessarily be carried by coalitions of social forces. Broad-based movements stand the greatest chance of success, but then face the problem of agreeing on what to construct in place of the old regime, and here the heterogeneity of their constituent elements presents daunting obstacles to surmount. Dependent locations in the world-system, moreover, add external pressures into the political equation. The cases that avoid both internal fragmentation and external intervention

are few indeed; the results to date in such cases as Mexico, Cuba, Nicaragua, Grenada, and Chile have offered us the image of a series of courageous, but imperfect efforts at social revolution.

Notes

1. See Val Moghadam, "The Revolution and the Regime: Populism, Islam and the State in Iran," in *Social Compass*, volume 36, number 4 (1989), 415–450, and Kambiz Afrachteh, "The Predominance and Dilemmas of Theocratic Populism in Contemporary Iran," *Iranian Studies*, XIV, 3–4 (Summer-Autumn 1981), 184–213. Moghadam's framework is much closer to the one adopted here.
2. Numerous writers have noted that no single class can make a revolution. One who documents this in the specific context of populist coalition dynamics is Scott G. McNall, *The Road to Rebellion: Class Formation and Kansas Populism, 1860–1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).
3. Ian Roxborough, *Theories of Underdevelopment* (London: Macmillan, 1979), and Aidan Foster-Carter, "The Modes of Production Controversy," *New Left Review*, 107 (January-February 1978), 47–77. A recent survey suggesting a somewhat different theoretical synthesis is found in Alvin Y. So, *Social Change and Development. Modernization, Dependency and World-System Theories* (Newbury Park, Cal.: Sage, 1990).
4. This figure draws on my research on seventeenth-century Iran. See John Foran, "The Modes of Production Approach to Seventeenth-Century Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 20, 3 (August 1988), 345–363. Iran had indeed been subject to the world-economy in this period, but with negligible impact on social structure, and an extensive period of minimal contact followed in the troubled eighteenth century, when Iran was plagued by tribal civil warfare. For an analysis of Iran's strong but declining position in the world economy, see John Foran, "The Making of an External Arena: Iran's Place in the World-System, 1500–1722," *Review* (Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations), XII, 1 (Winter 1989), 71–119.
5. See Foran, "The Modes of Production Approach."
6. For a detailed treatment of this process, and indeed for the analysis that the entire present essay rests upon, see my dissertation: "Social Structure and Social Change in Iran from 1500 to 1979," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley (1988). A shorter, more accessible version is found in John Foran, "The Concept of Dependent Development as a Key to the Political Economy of Qajar Iran (1800–1925)," *Iranian Studies*, XXII, 2–3 (1991), 5–56.
7. Marvin L. Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations, 1828–1914* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1965), 8–9, 64.
8. Charles Issawi, editor, *The Economic History of Iran: 1800–1914* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 132 [hereafter this work is referred to as *EHI*]; Bahran Esfandiari Yaganegi, "Recent Financial and Monetary History of Persia," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Economics, Columbia University (1934), 61, 89.
9. See Ernst Otto Blau, *Commerzielle Zustände Persiens* (Berlin, 1858), extracts translated in Issawi, *EHI*; Gad G. Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," *Die Welt des Islams*, 19, 1–4 (1979), 177–211: 210; Lord George

- Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, 2 volumes (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1892); Lucien Rey, "Persia in Perspective," *New Left Review*, 19 and 20 (March-April 1963 and Summer 1963), 32–55 and 69–98: 45–46, and Issawi, *EHI*, 135–136.
10. See Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh-i Iran* [History of the Constitutional Movement of Iran] (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1965); A. Majd al-Islam Kirmani, *Tarikh-i Inqilab-i Mashruiyat-i Iran* [History of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution], 3 volumes (Isfahan: Isfahan University Press, 1972); and M. Malikzadeh, *Tarikh-i Inqilab-i Mashruiyat-i Iran* [History of the Constitutional Revolution of Iran], 5 volumes (Tehran: Suqrat Press, 1949).
 11. M. S. Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Novin-i Iran* [The History of Contemporary Iran] (Stockholm: Tudeh Publishing Centre, 1977).
 12. Abbas M. Milani, "Ideology and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. The Political Economy of the Ideological Currents of the Constitutional Revolution," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Hawaii (1975).
 13. Nikki Keddie, *Roots of Revolution. An Interpretive History of Modern Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); idem, "Iranian Revolutions in Comparative Perspective," *American Historical Review*, 88, 3 (June 1983), 579–598; and Ann K. S. Lambton, "The Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1905–6," ed. P. J. Vatikiotis, *Revolution in the Middle East and Other Case Studies* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972), 173–182.
 14. Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 80, and "The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 10 (1979), 381–414: 403, 412–413.
 15. Muhammad Reza Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution within the Framework of Iranian History," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Temple University (1981), 187.
 16. On this background, see Gad G. Gilbar, "Trends in the Development of Prices in Late Qajar Iran, 1870–1906," *Iranian Studies*, 16, 3–4 (Summer-Autumn 1983), 177–198: 197; idem, "Demographic developments in late Qājār Persia, 1870–1906," *Asian and African Studies*, 11, 2 (Autumn 1976), 125–156: 156; idem, "The Big Merchants (*tujjār*) and the Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1906," *Asian and African Studies*, 11, 3 (1977), 275–303: 302; Edward G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1910), 108, 112, 235; and Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785–1906. The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 242.
 17. Browne, *The Persian Revolution*; Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*.
 18. Willem Floor, *Labour Unions, Law and Conditions in Iran (1900–1941)*, Occasional Paper Series, number 26 (University of Durham: Center for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1985), 9–11.
 19. Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 118.
 20. Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 69; Mangol Bayat, "Women and Revolution in Iran, 1905–1911," Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie, editors, *Women in the Muslim World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 295–308: 301.
 21. Quoted in Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 84.
 22. Compare Farhad Kazemi and Ervand Abrahamian, "The Nonrevolutionary Peasantry of Modern Iran," *Iranian Studies*, 11 (1978), 259–304, with Janet Afary, "Peasant Resistance, Rebellion and Consciousness in the Iranian Constitutional

- Revolution: The Case of the Caspian Region 1906–1909,” paper presented at the meetings of the Middle East Studies Association, Toronto, Canada (November 1989). A version of the latter paper will appear in 1991 in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* under the title “Peasant Rebellions of the Caspian Region During the Iranian Constitutional Revolution: 1906–09.” Some evidence on the nature of peasant actions is presented later in this article.
23. Michel Pavlovitch, “La situation agraire en Perse à la veille de la révolution,” *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 12, 2 (December 1910), 616–625: 622; Afshari, “A Study of the Constitutional Revolution,” 240, 250, 299 note 1, 300.
 24. On the anjumans, see Ann K. S. Lambton, “Secret Societies and the Persian Revolution of 1905–6,” *St Antony's Papers*, Middle Eastern Affairs, 4 (New York: Praeger, 1959), 43–60; idem, “Persian Political Societies 1906–11,” *St Antony's Papers*, Middle Eastern Affairs, 16 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1963), 41–89; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 87; Afshari, “A Study of the Constitutional Revolution,” 218–219; and Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 244.
 25. Ahmad Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi-yi Rushd-i Sarmayehdari dar Iran: Daureh-i Qajariyeh* [Historical Obstacles to the Development of Capitalism in Iran in the Qajar Era] (Tehran: Payam Press, 1980), 119 table 4.
 26. Afshari, “A Study of the Constitutional Revolution,” 121; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 140, 146; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 88.
 27. Abrahamian, “The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution,” 413; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 120; and Hamid Algar, “The Oppositional Role of the Ulama in Twentieth-Century Iran,” ed. Nikki R. Keddie, *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions Since 1500* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), 231–255: 233.
 28. Quoted by Lambton, “Persian Political Societies,” 54–55.
 29. In Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 127.
 30. Quoted in *ibid.*, 169.
 31. Milani, “Ideology and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution,” 149–150; Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 122–123.
 32. Afshari, “A Study of the Constitutional Revolution,” 214 note 1; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 143; idem, *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1914 [Reprint Los Angeles: Kalamât Press, 1983]); Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905–1920. The Shaping of National Identity in a Muslim Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 56, 57, 61, 67.
 33. On the events of 1907–1909, see Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 247–253, 292–332; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 89–92, 96; Lambton, “Persian Political Societies,” 56–60, 75–86; Afshari, “A Study of the Constitutional Revolution,” 208–211, 225–244; Browne, *The Press and Poetry*, 313–318; and Robert A. McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission and the Persian Constitutional Revolution* (Minneapolis: Biblioteca Islamica, 1974), 76–78.
 34. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 94.
 35. *Ibid.*, 94–96, and Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 163, 166.
 36. Ervand Abrahamian, “The Crowd in the Persian Revolution I,” *Iranian Studies*, 2, 4 (Autumn 1969), 128–150: 143.
 37. Afshari, “A Study of the Constitutional Revolution,” 235–236.
 38. *Ibid.*, 214, 231–233.
 39. On peasant mobilization, see Faridun Adamiyat, *Fikr-i Dimukrasi Ijtima'i dar*

- Nazhat-i Mashrutiyyat-i Iran* [Social Democratic Thought in the Iranian Constitutional Movement] (Tehran: Payam Press, 1975), 66–74; Afary, “Peasant Resistance, Rebellion and Consciousness”; and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 99, note 111. Iran’s pattern of rural revolts thus partly bears out the resource mobilization views of Tilly and Skocpol that peasants must possess certain collective organizations and traditions in order to rebel (here the denser village pattern of the north and proximity to radical ideas), but also the competing perspective of Wolf and Moore that rural revolt is most likely during transitions to capitalist or commercial agriculture (Gilan was the most commercialized agricultural region of Iran, but not the only one). See Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1978); Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions. A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966); and Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper, 1969). Walter Goldfrank identifies both factors as important in his “Theories of Revolution and Revolution Without Theory: The Case of Mexico,” *Theory and Society*, volume 7 (1979), 135–165.
40. Alessandro Bausani, *The Persians. From the earliest days to the twentieth century*, translated from the Italian by J. B. Donne (London: Elek Books, 1971), 171. A somewhat different confusion on the meaning of constitutionalism in another tribe is recorded by Savory: “In the mouth of a Lur the word *Mashruteh*, constitution, is simply a synonym for ‘disorder.’ He will say ‘So and so is making ‘constitution,’ i.e., he is playing Old Harry somewhere””: Roger Savory, “Social Development in Iran during the Pahlavi Era,” ed. George Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 85–128: 87, quoting C. J. Edmunds, “Luristan: Pish-i Kuh and Bala Gariveh,” *Geographical Journal*, 59 (1922), 342.
 41. Algar, *Religion and State*; Said Amir Arjomand, “The Ulama’s Traditionalist Opposition to Parliamentarianism: 1907–1909,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 17, 2 (April 1981), 174–190: 185. A recent study that discusses the ulama’s role in the Constitutional Revolution in considerable detail is Vanessa Martin, *Islam and Modernism. The Iranian Revolution of 1906* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., Ltd., 1989).
 42. Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 49. A sayyid is a descendant of the Prophet.
 43. Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 116.
 44. Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, “Social Hierarchy in Provincial Iran: The Case of Qajar Maragheh,” *Iranian Studies*, 10, 3 (Summer 1977), 129–163: 139–140; McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 85; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 271.
 45. Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 262.
 46. Quoted in *ibid.*, 127.
 47. *Ibid.*, 113, 148 note 1, 262; McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 67, 73; Homa Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran. Despotism and Pseudo-Modernism, 1926–1979* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1981), 62; Arjomand, “The Ulama’s Traditionalist Opposition,” 177–186.
 48. Arjomand, “The Ulama’s Traditionalist Opposition,” 174. See further 183–187.
 49. See Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 128, 143 note 1; *idem*, *The Press and Poetry*, 26; and Milani, “Ideology and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution,” 142–172.
 50. Arjomand, “The Ulama’s Traditionalist Opposition,” *idem*, “Traditionalism in Twentieth-century Iran,” ed. Said Amir Arjomand, *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 195–232.

51. Fattaneh Mehraïn, "Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States in Periphery Formations: A Case Study of Iran," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison (1979), 192.
52. On the Democrat and Moderate parties, see Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 103–106 (for the quotations in the text); Willem Floor, *Industrialization in Iran 1900–1941*, Occasional Paper Series, number 23 (University of Durham, England: Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1984), 10; and McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 173.
53. Browne, *The Press and Poetry*, 321–327; idem, *The Persian Revolution*, 349; McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 106–112; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 107.
54. McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 124–202; Browne, *The Press and Poetry*, 327–336; idem, *The Persian Crisis of December, 1911; How it Arose and Whither it May Lead Us* (Cambridge: University Press, 1912); Nikki Keddie, "The Impact of the West on Iranian Social History," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of California, Berkeley (1955); Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 268–270; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 102–111; W. Morgan Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia* (New York: The Century Co., 1912).
55. Ahmad Ashraf and H. Hekmat, "Merchants and Artisans in the Developmental Processes of Nineteenth-Century Iran," ed. A. L. Udovitch, *The Islamic Middle East, 700–1900: Studies in Economic and Social History* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, Inc., 1981), 725–750: 743. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 98 note 10, presents slightly different figures, but similar proportions.
56. German archives quoted by McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 190 note 1.
57. McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 135–196; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*; idem, *The Persian Crisis*.
58. For a brief and somewhat atheoretical, but otherwise admirable exploratory comparison of Iran with China, Russia and Mexico, see John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico. The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 187–234.