

22

CHARISMATIC AUTHORITY IN A HYBRID STATE

Reading Max Weber and beyond in post-revolutionary Iran*

Mojtaba Mahdavi

Introduction

What does a charismatic authority mean in a hybrid state? How does it affect state–society relations? And to what extent do socio–political dynamics shape and transform a charismatic authority? The hybrid nature of the state and dynamics of state–society relations in post-revolutionary Iran provide an excellent case to answer and address these questions.

After the Iranian Revolution of 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini established the Islamic Republic of Iran, which transformed Iran from a monarchy into a republic, but the regime he founded was a complex mixture of Islamic clericalism and secular republicanism. He created a *hybrid* regime, which has undergone five consecutive phases—five republics—and simultaneously combines elements of authoritarian, semi-totalitarian, and semi-democratic politics.¹ Iran’s post-revolutionary polity, to use Max Weber’s typology, is a mishmash of traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational authorities.²

Ayatollah Khomeini’s *complex charisma* played a profound role both in the making of the Islamic Republic and in the regime’s survival. In post-Khomeini polity, however, a massive transformation in state–society relations has changed the nature and function of charisma in politics. This chapter examines the rise, multiple crises, and the many faces of charisma and charismatic authority in post-revolutionary Iran. It demonstrates the transformation and deformation of revolutionary and religious charisma under Ayatollah Khomeini to the “routinization” and *bureaucratization* of charisma under his successor Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, highlighting the political economy of deceptive *petro-populist charisma*, and an amalgamation of coercion and consent in the complex picture of charismatic authority in post-revolutionary Iran. Finally, the chapter asks whether charisma can serve democracy and concludes that contemporary Iranian civil society has gone through a profound structural and discursive “post-Islamist” transformation in which no charismatic leader or institution is omnipotent.

Charisma in context: Weber and beyond

Charisma, from the Greek word *khárisma*, and the Persian word *farr*, or *farr-e izadi* (*farr/ah-e izadi*) refer to gift of grace. While *farr/ah* is said to be exclusively a God-given fortune or divine

illumination, charisma may have divine roots or be rested in a person's qualifications.³ Charisma, Weber argues, is "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional qualities."⁴ The recognition of this charisma, however, may take place "in times of psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious, political distress," or, broadly speaking, when there is a "distinctive moral fervor." The charismatic situation is the "total antithesis of 'routine'" social relations.⁵ In other words, charisma is context-dependent; it is *relational*, not primordial. While personal qualifications matter, they do not naturally and automatically turn into charisma. Specific social contexts/relations between the leader and his followers would materialize, nourish, and empower charisma. "Charisma," as a new Weberian perspective suggests, "is a process that exists only in social relationships."⁶ Furthermore, charisma in the Weberian tradition is a neutral phenomenon and maybe manifested in multiple directions.⁷

There are three ideal types of legitimate domination, Max Weber argued: legal-rational authority, traditional authority, and charismatic authority. A legal-rational legitimacy rests "on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands"; thus, obedience based upon this authority "is owed to the legally established impersonal order." A traditional legitimacy rests "on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them"; hence, "the obligation of obedience is a matter of personal loyalty within the area of accustomed obligations." And a charismatic legitimacy rests "on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him." For Weber,

it is the charismatically qualified leader as such who is obeyed by virtue of personal trust in his revelation, his heroism or his exemplary qualities so far as they fall within the scope of the individual's belief in his charisma.⁸

"In traditional societies," Max Weber wrote, "charisma is *the* real revolutionary force."⁹ For Weber, the test of charisma is the recognition of leader by his followers. This recognition goes beyond the leader's personal character and qualifications. It relies on the social conditions within which charisma is "'awakened' and 'tested.'"¹⁰ The 1977–79 revolutionary conditions awakened and tested Ayatollah Khomeini's charisma. His personal character and religious status as a respected grand ayatollah turned him into a popular and charismatic revolutionary leader.

When spiritual "disenchantment" takes place in "moments of distress—whether psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious, or political," society needs "re-enchantment" or "other-worldly" experiences.¹¹ In such historical moments of "anomie" or moral/spiritual isolation, to use Émile Durkheim's concept, charismatic leaders respond to the need for re-enchantment.¹² Similarly, Antonio Gramsci argued at a "certain point in their historical lives, social classes become detached from their traditional parties," making the field open for "the activities of unknown forces, represented by charismatic 'men of destiny.'"¹³ The "crisis of mass society" in pre-revolutionary Iran "was sufficiently disruptive to impel nearly all urban social groups to mobilize in their quest for charismatic experience and leadership."¹⁴ Iran's social conditions awakened Ayatollah Khomeini's charisma.

Ayatollah Khomeini, however, "was not the manufacturer of his own charisma. His lifelong immersion in mysticism, combined with an enduring fervor to defend his fellow Shi'ites against unjust rulers, endowed him with a genuine sense of his own divinity."¹⁵ And yet "this charismatic sensibility by itself could have no *social* consequences." The "fusion of a profound crisis of social dislocation with this magical sensibility" contributed much to the making of his charisma.

Moreover, “beyond the structural conditions that melted the institutional and symbolic walls between elites and masses, Khomeini’s charisma intensified the longings of his followers because it articulated a messianic sensibility deeply rooted in Shi’ite, and possibly Persian, culture.”¹⁶ Ayatollah Khomeini’s charisma was both cultural and political. His religious authority allowed his followers to transform the nature of a political movement into a test of the religious emotion of the people confronting the Shah’s regime. People chanted history witnessing three “idol-breakers”: Abraham Khalilollah, Mohammad Rasoullollah, and Khomeini Ruhollah.¹⁷ Ayatollah Khomeini assembled a wide spectrum of social forces behind himself. He was an unusually unorthodox ayatollah, and a personalization of many syntheses and contradictions. To the people, he represented all that was traditional, and to the young idealistic intelligentsia, he represented unorthodoxy and revolutionary resistance. Thus, he reached members of all social classes.

Ayatollah Khomeini, Ahmad Ashraf argues, “exemplified in his own person the presence of a multiple charisma in the course of his ascendance, first, to the position of the highest Shi’ite authority and, later, to the theocratic position of the national political leadership”¹⁸ He represented a charismatic revolutionary leader—a carrier of personal charisma with the “gift of grace”—acquired the “office of charisma,” introducing a new institution of the guardianship of jurist (*vilāyat-i faqīh*), assumed the political position of the Supreme Leader, and a unique religious and sacred “title of the Imam.” He exemplified “a rare case of a genuine charisma in the modern time.”¹⁹

Ayatollah Khomeini: from revolutionary charisma to coercive charisma?

Charisma often “first operates as a pivotal revolutionary force to either end or transform” the old order and then it “smoothly metamorphoses into a pivotal reactionary force at depersonalised-bureaucratized hegemony’s service, devoted to maintaining the *new* status order.” In other words, charisma has “two phases: it initially operates for individual or group or mass mobilisations and eventually for the hegemony of a corporate body.”²⁰ The story of post-revolutionary polity under Ayatollah Khomeini manifests a gradual transformation of a revolutionary charisma into a coercive charisma.

The first republic of the post-revolutionary polity (1979–89) remained under Ayatollah Khomeini’s revolutionary and coercive charisma. Khomeini’s charismatic personality, the revolutionary fever, the boost in global oil price, the regime’s anti-imperialist rhetoric, the hostage crisis involving American embassy personnel (1979–81), the Iran–Iraq War (1980–88), and the legacy of Third Worldism were all instrumental in mobilizing the masses, consolidating a populist charismatic revolutionary polity. For Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran’s post-revolutionary state could only be an Islamic republic, but the nature of this republic remained undefined. He moved to implement his theory of *vilāyat-i faqīh* (guardianship of the jurist), merging clericalism and republicanism. Hence, both concepts were redefined.

Khomeini’s theory of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, which was developed through a series of lectures in Najaf in the early 1970s, challenged the conventional Shi’i doctrine of the imamate, which states that the legitimate leadership of the Muslim community belongs to the Prophet and his twelve successors, the Shi’i imams. He redefined the role of the clergy, suggesting that in Islam there is no distinction between temporal and religious power. He rejected the prevalent notion that the jurists’ task should be limited to understanding and interpreting Shari’a law, but rather stipulated that their duty is to implement the law. The role of the imam, he suggested, “should be represented by a *Faqih*, as the sole holder of legitimate authority.”²¹ For Khomeini, the structure of authority was divine, and the state was instrumental in the implementation of

Shari‘a. He proposed the novel idea that “our duty to preserve Islam” by establishing an Islamic government “is one of the most important obligations incumbent upon us; it is more necessary even than prayer and fasting.”²² He suggested the task of creating an Islamic government justified on the basis of the “secondary ordinances,” (*ahkām-i sānaviyeh*), where the “primary ordinances,” that is, Shari‘a law, are silent or non-explicit.²³ For Khomeini, Shari‘a law cannot be fully implemented without an Islamic state; Islamic government is the only legitimate tool to put the Islamic rules into practice. The just *vali-ye faqīh* is the only qualified ruler to undertake this task after the Prophet and imams.²⁴

Ayatollah Khomeini also redefined the concept of republicanism in accordance with clerical rule. The people’s participation in politics, or republicanism, resembled for Khomeini the traditional Islamic concept of *bay‘ah*, meaning the vote of allegiance to authority. Khomeini combined his theory of *vilāyat-i faqīh* with the republican institutions inherited from the Iranian Constitution of 1906. But, the republican institutions are subordinated to the rule of the *vali-ye faqīh*. The Majlis (parliament) in the Iranian state must share legislative authority with the Guardian Council, whose jurist members are appointed by the *vali-ye faqīh*. Constitutionally, in the absence of the Guardian Council, the Majlis is devoid of authority. The Majlis must also share its legislative authority with the Expediency Council, whose chair and most members are appointed by the *vali-ye faqīh*. Similarly, the president in the Islamic Republic is ranked next to the *vali-ye faqīh*. Furthermore, the *vali-ye faqīh* holds many institutional “extended arms,” ranging from the powerful revolutionary and religious foundations (*bony‘ad*) to the parallel institutions accountable not to the republican institutions but to the *vali-ye faqīh*.²⁵ Ayatollah Khomeini masterfully utilized his *complex and multiple charisma* to turn the post-revolutionary state into a hybrid “clerical oligarchy,” a polity with popular elections—*consent*—and the repressive apparatus of ideological, military, and economic control—*coercion*. In other words, the decentralization of Islamic faith and relative diversity of opinion, together with pragmatism and the elite factional politics, contributed to the development of limited pluralism in the Iranian state and overruled the success of totalitarian tendencies.²⁶ The Islamic Republic remained a hybrid regime.

The legacy of the Iran–Iraq War (1980–88) was contradictory. The war provided Ayatollah Khomeini with a historic opportunity to consolidate his vision of the revolution and eliminate or neutralize the state’s rivals and enemies, and yet the war changed relations between the state and society as it simultaneously created a mass society with unfulfilled demands. By 1987, it became “too clear that the regime’s emphasis on Islam, war, revolutionary discourse, and the persona of Khomeini were insufficient for governing Iran.”²⁷ The crisis in the economy, the frustration and alienation in society, and the systematic deadlock and ideological factionalism in politics alarmed the regime, pushing the state to take some initiatives for change. The change was aimed at the institutionalization of the *vilāyat-i faqīh*, manifesting Ayatollah Khomeini’s *coercive charisma* and making him into an absolute (*mutlaqeh*) *vali-ye faqīh*. Three issues of factional politics, the ceasefire in the Iran–Iraq War, and the succession exemplified this transformation.²⁸

First, the hybrid nature of the Islamic Republic brought to the fore divisions and factional politics. The conservative or traditional Right, backed by the *bāzārī* merchants and the orthodox clergy, held a conservative position on the nature of the Islamic state and “wanted strict implementation of shari‘a in the sociocultural spheres.”²⁹ The revolutionary elites, by contrast, “supported state-sponsored redistributive and egalitarian policies.”³⁰ Ayatollah Khomeini trusted both factions, but by 1987, his policy of “dual containment” was no longer effective, given the ever-increasing disagreements over economic, sociocultural, and military policies between the two factions.³¹ From December 1987 until his death in June 1989, Khomeini issued various decrees to clarify his socio-political positions and sided with the revolutionary camp. Khomeini

also created the Expediency Council (*Majma' -i Tashkīh-i Maṣliḥat-i Niẓām*), an institutional mediator between the two factions in the Majlis and the Guardian Council, paving the way for further institutionalization of the *vilāyat-i faqīh*. In January 1988, he made it clear that:

the [state] that is a part of the absolute vice-regency of the Prophet of God is one of the primary injunctions ... of Islam and has priority over all other secondary injunctions, even prayers, fasting, and *haj'*. ... The government is empowered to unilaterally revoke any shari'a agreement.³²

A charismatic Khomeini provided the state “with the authority to not only intervene in the economy but the right to use its discretion to suspend even the pillars of Islam.”³³

Second, Ayatollah Khomeini accepted the ceasefire in the Iran–Iraq War in summer 1988. He subsequently expressed his “absolute” authority—a *coercive charisma*—in three specific events. Following the end of the war, the Mujāhidīn-e Khalgh Organization (MEK), the opposition group based in Iraq, launched a military attack against Iran. The regime's response was harsh: the Mujāhidīn's forces were massacred on the battlefronts and several thousand jailed political opponents were executed in the prisons.³⁴ Then came Ayatollah Khomeini's *fatwa* (decree) against Salman Rushdie's novel *Satanic Verses*, which created tension between Iran and the West. Finally, after a decision made by the Assembly of Experts in 1985, Khomeini's loyal student, Ayatollah ḥusayn-ʿAlī Muntazirī, was expected to succeed him. Muntazirī was the only high-ranking cleric who supported Khomeini's theory of *vilāyat-i faqīh* and contributed to its institutionalization. However, Muntazirī frequently criticized the violation of human rights by the regime. He challenged the regime's new reign of terror in the summer and autumn of 1988. Consequently, Ayatollah Khomeini asked him to resign and ordered the Assembly of Experts to meet and plan on the future leadership of the republic. The purge of the only ayatollah loyal to the doctrine of the *vilāyat-i faqīh* set the stage for the revision and the redefinition of this core institution.

Third, the 1979 constitution was explicit on the theological qualifications of the *vali-ye faqīh*, indicating that only one among the grand ayatollahs, as the prominent *marj' a-e taqlīd*, or “source of imitation,” could hold the office. None among the grand ayatollahs was sympathetic to Khomeini's theory of *vilāyat-i faqīh*. Moreover, the leading grand ayatollahs lacked the personal charisma or political qualifications required for the office. However, a number of middle-ranking clerics accepted Ayatollah Khomeini's theory and held the necessary political requirements. The pragmatic solution was to revise the constitution to save the state. The amended constitution of 1989 expanded the power of the *faqīh* by transferring the president's task of coordinating the three branches of government to the office of the *vilāyat-i faqīh*. It made explicit that the *vali-ye faqīh* holds an “absolute” power by adding the phrase *mutlaqeh* to Articles 107–110, defining his absolute authority. Article 109 of the amended constitution separated the position of the *marj' a* from that of the *faqīh*, setting the stage for the selection of a new *vali-ye faqīh* who could be a middle-ranking cleric. The *vali-ye faqīh* no longer needed to hold the religious qualification of the *marj' a-e taqlīd* (source of emulation). Ayatollah Khomeini's priority for the interests of the state led him to revise his own theory of *vilāyat-i faqīh*. He died on June 3, 1989, and the Assembly of Experts appointed Ali Khamenei as the new leader of the Islamic Republic.³⁵

Post-Khomeini era: the bureaucratization and routinization of charisma

The second republic (1989–97) began immediately following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in June 1989, and lasted for two consecutive presidential terms of ʿAlī Akbar Hāshimī Rafsanjānī.

Ayatollah Khomeini's death left the country with no obvious successor and the state with a crisis of legitimacy. The main challenge after Khomeini was to institutionalize, or using Weber's phrase, the "routinization" of Khomeini's charisma.³⁶ The Assembly of Leadership Experts knowing well that the senior ayatollahs distrusted Khomeini's theory of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, dropped the *marj' a-e taqlīd* requirement so that Khomeini's position could be inherited by middle-ranking clerics loyal to Khomeini's doctrine. They quickly appointed *Hojjat-al Islam* Ali Khamenei—a middle-ranking cleric who was neither a senior religious jurist, a *marj' a-e taqlīd*, nor at the time even a generally accepted ayatollah. Most important, Khomeini's successor who was designated by the ruling clergy had no charismatic personality, in Weber's terms, to be "awakened" or "tested." Khomeini's charisma was not transferable to a successor. Charisma, as Weber argues, "can only be 'awakened' and 'tested'; it cannot be 'learned' or 'taught.'" ³⁷ Ayatollah Khomeini, writes Milani, was "a unique product of unique historical circumstances" and thus "irreplaceable." It was Ayatollah "Khomeini who made the institution of the Velayat-e Faqih powerful, not the other way around."³⁸

The term "charisma," Weber indicates, is applied to certain qualities of an individual personality by virtue of which he is treated as a "leader"; however, the validity of charisma or the basis of legitimacy for charismatic authority is subject to recognition of a leader by his followers. There are no such things as appointment or dismissal, career or promotion.³⁹ "In its pure form, charismatic authority has a character specifically foreign to everyday routine structures. The social relationships directly involved are strictly personal, based on the validity and practice of charismatic personal qualities." If charisma "is not to remain a purely transitory phenomenon, but to take on the character of a permanent relationship," Weber seems to argue, it needs to be institutionalized.⁴⁰

Given his lack of personal charisma and strong clerical credentials, Khomeini's successor was perceived to be at most one among equals. Hence, unlike Khomeini who depended on his own charismatic authority, Khamenei was dependent on his conservative peers. The ruling conservative clergy centralized and institutionalized the power of *vali-ye faqīh* in the "office" of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, with all formal and informal power centers associated with the office. For example, the Expediency Council by a constitutional amendment became the leader's advisory body, and the Assembly of Leadership Experts, unlike the case with Ayatollah Khomeini, stood above Khamenei, for it held the authority to dismiss or choose the leader. The principal motive underlying such a transformation by the ruling conservatives, as Weber would argue, was the *ideal* and *material interests* of the disciples of the original charismatic leader (in this case, Ayatollah Khomeini) in the continuation of their positions in the post-charismatic era. These interests, Weber argues, become conspicuously evident with the disappearance of the personal charismatic leader and with the problem of succession. Weber also suggests that the way in which this problem is met "is of crucial importance for the character of the subsequent social relationships."⁴¹ The Islamic Republic met the problem of succession by assigning an "absolute" power to the office of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, filling the personal charismatic gap on the part of Khomeini's successor.⁴²

As Weber indicates, charisma recognizes no one in a position of power on the basis of membership in a socially privileged group—"the only basis of legitimacy for it is personal charisma so long as it is proved; that is, as long as it receives recognition."⁴³ Being a member of the ruling privileged clergy, Khamenei was designated by the other members to maintain the legacy of Khomeini. According to Milani, Khamenei's

lack of an independent base of support was the critical factor in his selection as the *faqih*; he did not seem threatening to the rival factions. Aware of his shortcomings, Khamenei in the early stage of his rule stayed above factions.⁴⁴

And yet, because he lacked the character required for mediating between the rival factions and balancing their power, he became closer to the conservatives with whom he shared attitudes and was indebted to their support. The conservatives in exchange insisted that Khamenei, although not a *marj' a-e taqlid* (source of imitation), remains above the leading clerics whom they obliged to obey the *vali-ye faqih*'s political rulings.⁴⁵ In short, lacking charismatic authority, the office of *vilayat-i faqih* came to rest on traditional authority, giving more emphasis to "piety toward tradition and toward the master."⁴⁶ The Islamic Republic of Iran after Khomeini displayed some *patrimonial* characteristics in that its fundamental features, to use Weber's typology, are the personalized character of power and material maintenance of the leader.⁴⁷ This resembles the doctrine of the conservatives who believe in the subordination of republicanism to the clerical/religious features of the constitution. A leading conservative cleric, Ayatollah Ahmad Azari-Qomi, once made this explicit:

The powers delegated to the leader in the constitution are the [extension of the] monopoly of the leader in his duties and responsibilities and do not impose restrictions on his power. ... [The leader] is like the head of the family who, although in the division of labor [he] takes the responsibility of outsider shopping, leaves for himself the right to interfere in the house where he has delegated the housework to his son.⁴⁸

The conservatives pushed for a new interpretation of Article 99 of the Constitution, suggesting the authority of the Guardian Council be extended from supervising and observing elections to judging candidates' eligibility, and succeeded in making an "approval supervisory," or *nez'arat-e estesv'abi*. In 1991, having amended the election law, the Majlis also made absolute loyalty to the new *vali-ye faqih* a necessary condition for running in future elections. They managed to purge some members of the revolutionary faction of the Islamic Republic. Ayatollah Khazali, the outspoken conservative hardliner, made it clear that "so long as we have the power, we will not allow such morons [*avazi*] to enter the Majlis and we will spray them with DDT!!!"⁴⁹

Moreover, the *baza'ari* merchants' interests were protected under Ayatollah Khomeini in the first republic (1979–89). Nonetheless, the Iran–Iraq War, the revolutionary fever, and Khomeini's populist and revolutionary charisma were obstacles to the complete hegemony of the traditional merchants. In the post-Khomeini era of the second republic (1989–97), however, the merchant class expanded the scope of the traditional trade in the oil, carpet, and pistachio industries. The state apparatus in general, and the revolutionary foundations in particular, were instrumental in consolidating mercantile capitalism. All powerful and parallel revolutionary-financial institutions run by the conservatives were exempted from either taxation or public inspection. They also received state subsidies and patronage, resulting in the "development of a two-tier economic system."⁵⁰ Such institutions as the Foundation of the Dispossessed (*Bony'ad-e Mostaz'afan*), which dominated some 40 percent of the Iranian economy, remained beyond the control of the public inquiry. As such, president Rafsanjani's "'free market' policies in reality meant a market dominated by mercantile interests not open to competition and ignorant of any notion of social justice."⁵¹

Furthermore, in post-Khomeini Iran, Khamenei's lack of charisma made him a "weaker partner of the post-Khomeini diarchy."⁵² The political authority was divided between the president and the Supreme Leader. This "dual leadership seemed quite appropriate for the emergent system of post-charismatic, collective clerical rule."⁵³ Khamenei, however, managed gradually and smoothly to change the balance of power in favor of his office, becoming a stronger partner of the power structure in late 1990s. He extended his power through formal and informal powers, including his appointees and personal representatives at various political, financial, and

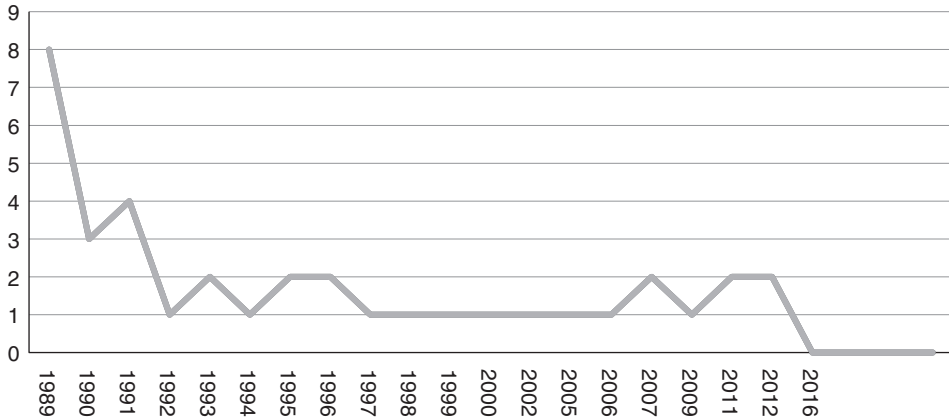


Figure 22.1 Number of offices and institutions created after 1989.

Source: Figure created by author using information taken from Mehrzad Boroujerdi and Kourosh Rahimkhani, *Postrevolutionary Iran: A Political Handbook* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2018).

religious institutions. As shown in the chart, the number of offices and institutions controlled by the office of the *vilāyat-i faqīh* was significantly increased under the leadership of Ayatollah Khamenei in the post-1989 period. Using an “institutional” approach” to analyze Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei’s *post-charismatic* leadership, Boroujerdi and Rahimkhani argue that “Khamenei’s religious and charismatic liabilities forced him to rely more and more on ‘power institutions.’” In other words, “whereas Khomeini used his charisma to consolidate the office of the Supreme Leader, Khamenei strengthened this office through bureaucratic aggrandizement, reliance on security forces, and informal politics.”⁵⁴

Despite several attempts by his conservative aids, Said Amir Arjomand argues, Khamenei neither succeed to assume Ayatollah Khomeini’s “traditional juristic authority”—a position of Grand Ayatollah and a major/sole source of emulation/imitation (*marja’ iyyat*)—nor the title of *Imam* inside Iran. Hence, his *marja’ iyyat* and the title of Imam were used for non-Iranian Shi’i communities abroad. Inside Iran, however, Khamenei initiated a systematic bureaucratization and reorganization of religious seminarians of the Qom Learning Center (*hawza*)—the most important religious seminaries inside Iran. The goal was to control financial resources of the seminaries, extending his surveillance over the seminaries and standardizing the syllabi in favor of his students.⁵⁵ “Khamenei realized that he needed to dilute the power of rival Shi’ite ‘ulama’ to bolster his own standing. One way to marginalize the Shi’ite hierocracy was to extend his bureaucratic and financial control over the religious institutions.” Hence, in 1995, the Supreme Council of Religious Seminaries of Qom (*Showra-ye ‘Ali-ye Howze-ye Elimiyyeh-ye Qom*) was created to monitor, modernize, and “standardize the content of the curricula” as well as supervising and bureaucratizing the seminaries. “Today, most of the 228 to 270 residential seminaries (*madresehs*) in Iran follow the educational curriculum” set up by the Supreme Council of Religious Seminaries of Qom.⁵⁶

Moreover, “the bureaucratization of the Friday Prayer institution,” monitoring the country’s more than “seventy thousand mosques” through organizations such as the “Islamic Propaganda Organization,” the Supreme Leader’s “personal representatives to each of Iran’s thirty-one provinces,” and to “a number of foreign countries (Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom),” and most important of all, his access to “substantial governmental and special funds” through “parastatal institutions such as Foundation for the Dispossessed

(*Bonyad-e Mostaz'afan*),” are indicative of a systematic expansion of the office of Supreme Leader in post-Khomeini Iran.⁵⁷

Khamenei’s “economic muscle” is of a special significance to showcase how his authority works.

The combined budget of four important formal institutions (Headquarters of the Armed Forces’ General Command, Expediency Council, Guardian Council, and the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting) is less than half of the budget of one single social welfare organization, the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (IKRC).⁵⁸

The IKRC “assists more than four million Iranians with service,” including elderly, women-headed households, and the rural poor. The Imam Reza Foundation (*Astan-e Qods-e Razavi*) is another parastatal organization controlled by the Supreme Leader with “an annual budget of \$2 billion, mostly from the alms given by pilgrims.”⁵⁹ Another example of the Supreme Leader extended financial arm institution is a cartel of the Headquarters for Implementations of Imam’s Order (*Setad-e Ejrayi-e Farman-e Emam*), Iran’s “second largest economic cartel” next to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) with “\$40 billion” assets.⁶⁰ Revolutionary Foundations, or “*bonyads* own some 20 percent of the asset base of the Iranian economy and contribute 10 percent to the country’s GDP.”⁶¹

The routinization and bureaucratization of charisma and the succession, in sum, brought some significant changes to protect the conservatives’ *ideal* and *material* interests under Khamenei’s authority. First, the religious power shifted from the institution of the *vilāyat-i faqīh* to the traditional religious seminaries, and yet Khamenei extended his bureaucratic and financial control over the religious institutions, and the political authority of the *vali-ye faqīh* remained over and above the religious authority of the *marj’ a-e taqlīd*.⁶² Second, political power was centralized in the office of the *vilāyat-i faqīh* and in the more conservative faction of the state. As such, the office of the *vilāyat-i faqīh* was dominated by the politically authoritarian and ideologically traditional conservative faction. Third, the conservatives gained more control over the economy through the parastatal organizations controlled by the office of the *vilāyat-i faqīh*.

Like other post-charismatic politics, as Max Weber argued, the Iranian polity in the post-Khomeini era experienced the crisis of the “routinization of charisma.”⁶³ Having been concerned about Khamenei’s lack of charismatic authority, the clerical oligarchy emphasized an absolutist version of the *vilāyat-i faqīh*, suggesting a complete and full obedience to the *faqīh*, or “melting into the *vilāyat*” (*zob-e dar vilāyat*). Iranian society, however, was moving toward a different direction, resisting the clerical cultural codes. Independent intellectuals managed to publish journals such as *Iran-e Farda*, *Goftego*, and *Kiyan*, posing serious challenges to the state doctrine of *vilāyat-i faqīh*. Abdolkarim Soroush and Mojtabeh Shabestari, among others, argued that the *vali-ye faqīh* is not divine and has to be subjected to democratic procedures. Ayatollah Montazeri came up with a more accountable interpretation of the *vali-ye faqīh*, whose main responsibility is to *supervise*, not to rule.⁶⁴

If Ayatollah Khomeini’s death and the end of the Iran–Iraq War terminated the first republic, the explosive demands for greater pluralism and freedom put an end to the second. The unexpected presidential election of Mohammad Khatami, a moderate and *charismatic* reformist cleric, on May 23, 1997, marked the beginning of the third republic (1997–2005). Khatami became the candidate for change and received the people’s protest vote twice in 1997 and 2001. The reformist republic (1997–2005) stood on three intellectual pillars of Islamic constitutionalism, the promotion of civil society, and Islamic democracy. All three were bound to the legacy of

Ayatollah Khomeini, which created a limited and inchoate subjectivity never independent of the *vali-ye faqih*.⁶⁵

Khatami's *soft personal charisma* and his passion for reforming the republic was too fragile to challenge Khamenei's institutionalized and bureaucratized charisma and its extended arms in military and mega financial foundations. The reformist republic under Khatami suffered largely from an ineffective presidency. Khatami was neither an extension of the will of the political establishment nor an opposition to the establishment. He belonged to the establishment and yet was determined to reform it, without harming it. As a result, he remained in a difficult and paradoxical position, making him marginal for both the state and the reform movement. Incapable of meeting the public demands and unable to deal with the counter-reform forces, reformists in power began to lose public support in three major elections: the February 2003 second municipal elections, the February 2004 seventh parliamentary elections, and eventually the June 2005 ninth presidential elections. The reformist republic gave birth to the fourth republic of post-revolutionary Iran (2005–13), a republic of hardliner conservatives.⁶⁶

Tohfeh-ye Elahi: the rise of deceptive and petro-populist charisma

The office of the *vilāyat-i faqih* and Ayatollah Khamenei himself played a significant role in the rise of the president of the fourth republic. Khamenei managed a modicum of “negative integration” of the reformist camp as a loyal opposition after Khatami left office in 2005, and played a crucial role as balancer between the traditional conservatives and the new/hardliner conservatives inside the military–security apparatus. He helped the *new loyal* conservative political class from the military–intelligence apparatus assume political office in three branches of state. The conservatives have always been blessed by “economic empire around the military–industrial–commercial complex.” Nonetheless, such a “network of economic clientelism” never ensured the smooth functioning of the system, hence Khamenei's intervention has played a crucial role in balancing the position of the traditional and new conservatives in the post-Khatami era.⁶⁷

Moreover, the Islamic Republic of Iran is an *oil-centered rentier state*, which provides the state relative autonomy and the Supreme Leader Khamenei enormous power. Hence, Iran's post-revolutionary parastatal organizations controlled by the Supreme Leader “receive large subsidies, often are exempted from taxation, and are not subject to parliamentary supervision” and “financial audits.” In other words, “Iran's vast religious machinery is oiled”;⁶⁸ and the provision of “social welfare programs has become an important instrument of social control.”⁶⁹ It is only in this context that one can analyze and understand the rise of neoconservatives in the fourth republic (2005–13). The president of Iran's fourth republic, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was a product of the state–security apparatus, the office of the *vilāyat-i faqih*, and Iran's neoconservatives to challenge the reformists. He appeared to have a *populist charisma* for sections of the urban and rural poor, given the failure of the reformist republic to address social justice and adopt egalitarian politics in their socio-economic policies. Ahmadinejad's populist and *deceptive* rhetoric was instrumental to replacing the old oligarchy with a new one backed by portions of the lower classes and sponsored by petrodollars. In other words, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad personified a *petro-populist and deceptive charisma* backed by the *vilāyat-i faqih's coercive charisma* and its extended arms in military and mega financial foundations.

The fourth republic under Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was founded on the twin pillars of the populist rhetoric of “bringing oil money to people's dinner table” and politics of deception/superstition.⁷⁰ As Ali Rahnama argues, “the promotion of superstition during Ahmadinejad's tenure was carried out in the name of serving the fundamentals and principles of Shi'ism.”⁷¹ He adds,

The public claim of connectedness to the hidden world of metaphysics and intangibles for the sake of obtaining popularity, recognition, power, wealth and status, sometimes derogatorily referred to as setting up or opening a business or shop (*dokkan*), has had a long history in Iran. The history of the so-called “men of faith” who take advantage of the piety, simplicity and ignorance of the common folk and try to first impress and mesmerize them and then control them by falsely claiming a “special connection” is, however, regularly paralleled with those other “men of faith” who try to lift the haze of stupefaction and occultism by decrying and condemning such outlandish claims as charlatanry, obscurantism and illusory nonsense (*vahm*).⁷²

Ahmadinejad’s repeated call and prayer for the return of the Twelfth Shi’i Imam—the promised Messiah—including during his address at the 60th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on September 17, 2005, is a case in point.⁷³

Relying on the eyewitness report of his aid, Ahmadinejad asserted that, from the moment he began his speech with the words “In the name of God” until he finished, he had been enveloped in a ray, *column or halo of light*.⁷⁴

Ahmadinejad elaborated “on the *supernatural circumstances of his experience*,” confirming that in such a metaphysical aura “every single delegate seated in the General Assembly had his eyes fixated on him and seemed incapable of blinking.”⁷⁵ Ahmadinejad may have wished to convince his fans and followers that his indirect claim of a supernatural experience and contacts with the hidden world and the Hidden Imam are a testimony to his “special status” as a political leader “chosen by the hidden world to fulfil a mission.”⁷⁶

Ahmadinejad was blessed by the hardline cleric Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi, who was a significant source of religious inspiration and “the religio-ideological mastermind” behind his rise to power. Mesbah Yazdi famously argued that the people are obliged to obey the *vali-ye faqih* only because “he is a designated successor of the Twelfth Imam.”⁷⁷ He then argued once the president is confirmed by the *vali-ye faqih*, obedience to him is “the same as or on par with obedience to God.”⁷⁸ Ahmadinejad’s presidency was described as a “Divine gift (*tohfeh elahi*), Divine plan or design (*tadbir elahi*), and full of miracles (*mashhun be keramat va mojezat*).”⁷⁹ More specifically, “the Mesbah Yazdi–Ahmadinejad Axis” launched a *deceptive politics* of the “Hidden Imam/World,” implying a *superstitious and deceptive* idea of the Hidden Imam’s intervention in the affairs of the state—the management of *Aqa Imam Zaman* [the Twelfth Imam]—through his trusted agents. The Mesbah Yazdi–Ahmadinejad Axis were also involved in “commodification of faith” and “marketing superstition” through the supernatural events related to the Hidden Imam that are said to occur at the Jamkaran mosque in the religious city of Qom. They encouraged pilgrims who wish to establish contact with the Hidden Imam to visit the Jamkaran mosque, and drop their petitions and letters in two wells—one for men and one for women—for the Hidden Imam.⁸⁰ Adorno and Horkheimer famously problematized the “culture industry” and “mass deception” in post-Enlightenment societies.⁸¹ In the same tradition, we may argue that the *religion industry* and charisma were instrumental in *mass deception* at this particular episode of Iran’s complex and hybrid post-revolutionary polity.

Charisma serves democracy?

The popular pro-democracy Green Movement in 2009 demystified the *deceptive petro-populist* rhetoric of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In the disputed June 2009 presidential election, the

incumbent president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad claimed victory in the election, but the reformist candidates Mir-Hossein Mousavi, a former prime minister, and Mehdi Karroubi, former speaker of the Majlis, disputed the election results. While the *vali-ye faqih* Khamene'i supported Ahmadinejad and endorsed the election results, Ayatollah Montaziri gave his blessing to the pro-democracy Green Movement. In several street demonstrations, millions of religious and secular Iranians, chanted *Ra'ye man kojāst?* (where is my vote?), waving green banners of Mousavi's campaign. For the first time in the Islamic Republic, the public and the reformist elites openly challenged the authority and legitimacy of the *vali-ye faqih* during the popular democratic Green Movement in 2009.

The Green Movement was suppressed; however, the public figures and symbolic leaders of the movement Mir-Hossein Mousavi, Mehdi Karroubi, Ayatollah Montaziri, and Mohammad Khatami invested their relative and soft personal charisma in people's demand for democracy. Hence, the Green Movement seems to have manifested a unique historical moment when *charisma serves democracy* and legal-rational authority in post-revolutionary Iran. In his statement, known as a working draft of the "Covenant of the Green Movement," Mir-Hossein Mousavi advocated the separation of "religious institutions and clergymen from the state," although he acknowledges the "presence" of religion in the future of Iran. He "opposes the use of religion as an instrument and coercing people into an ideology." People wanted nothing short of "popular sovereignty."⁸² Similarly, Mehdi Karroubi questioned the authority of the *vali-ye faqih* Khamenei. In his last public speech in support of the Green Movement, Ayatollah Montaziri boldly argued that the regime was neither Islamic nor a republic; it was a mere dictatorship.⁸³ The Green Movement, in sum, signified a radical epistemic shift in Iran's political culture toward celebrating pluralism, coexistence of religious and secular agents, and embracing nonviolence.

In the presidential elections on June 14, 2013, Hassan Rouhāni was elected as the seventh president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, marking the beginning of Iran's fifth republic (2013–21). A pragmatist politician and aid to Hāshimī Rafsanjāni, Rouhāni challenged the domestic and foreign policies of Ahmadinejad. The electorate cast their vote twice for his campaign slogans of "moderation" (*e'tedāl*), "hope" (*omid*), and "wisdom" (*tadbīr*), hoping for normalizing Iran's relations with its neighbors and the West, resolving the nuclear issue, pushing back the rising power of the state-security apparatus in the economy and politics, fixing the economy, easing political repression, and releasing political prisoners, including the public figures of the Green Movement. However, his government has faced multiple domestic and international crises, pushing him closer to the conservatives. President Trump's unilateral withdrawal from Iran's nuclear deal and the crippling economic sanctions regime have pushed the centrists and reformist camps into the corner, giving more space to the conservative hardliners inside the republic. It is important to underline the impact of the global structure of power on Iran's domestic politics. The current global politics serves the conservative hardliners inside Iran, deepens systematic corruption and mismanagement, and weakens civil society's quest for democratic legal-rational authority.

Conclusion

There is an elective affinity between Antonio Gramsci's concept of *hegemony* and Max Weber's notion of *charisma*. In both cases, authority derives from a combination of consent and coercion. "Hegemony, for Gramsci, serves to stress the cultural and moral dimensions of the exercise of political power." This exercise of political power requires the *consent* of society. But would hegemony be a "purely consensual process"? At least one reading of Gramsci suggests that hegemony "walk on two legs', namely those of free choice and constraint," or consent and

coercion.⁸⁴ Likewise, Weber's notion of charisma may consist of choice and constraint, popular consent and sociocultural coercion. The Islamic Republic of Iran as a hybrid state has manifested many faces and multiple phases of charismatic authority under Ayatollah Khomeini and his successor Ayatollah Khamenei. Khomeini's revolutionary and religious charisma was gradually transformed into a coercive charisma, paving the way for another transformation, or bureaucratization of charisma in the post-Khomeini era.

Ayatollah Khomeini's charisma was the backbone of his policy of "two-handed way," hiding the constitutional contradictions in the institutional setting of the first republic. Nonetheless, "this inherent tension remained hidden" as long as the public supported the post-revolutionary regime, the nation was in war with Iraq until 1988, and most importantly, Ayatollah "Khomeini with his charisma was omnipresent."⁸⁵ In the last few years of his leadership, however, Ayatollah Khomeini's omnipotent religious and revolutionary charisma was in decline, pushing him toward more coercive charismatic authority. Khomeini as the absolute *vali-ye faqih* came to the view that all aspects of Islam were subordinate to the interests of the Islamic state. "From now on religion would serve the Islamic state rather than vice-versa."⁸⁶ He provided the state "with the authority to not only intervene in the economy but the right to use its discretion to suspend even the pillars of Islam."⁸⁷ This was a paradigm shift in his discourse and polity, turning Khomeini "as a primary routinizer of his own charisma."⁸⁸ Ayatollah Khomeini as the absolute *vali-ye faqih* "by design or default" lay the foundations for greater tensions over his legacy and "the very nature and role of the state." The revolutionary faction of the regime "sought to routinize Khomeini's charisma in the *Majles* and government," while the conservatives "tried to rescue the idea of charismatic rule by defending the investment of all authority in the *person of the faqih*."⁸⁹ In the end, both factions of the Islamic Republic achieved partial fulfillment and the regime remained a hybrid state. The reformist republic under Khatami (1997–2005) and the fourth republic under Ahmadinejad and his populist neoconservative camp manifested such hybridity and different faces of routinization of charisma.

Nonetheless, Khamenei's leadership marked a major transformation from a revolutionary charismatic authority to a post-charismatic era and the bureaucratization of charisma. Sayyed Ali Khamenei, the first clerical president of the Islamic Republic, the Islamic Republic's third president and then secretary general of the Islamic Republican Party, became the future successor of Ayatollah Khomeini as *vali-ye faqih*. Khamenei's important political career in government (not in religious seminary) and his credentials as a president (not as an outstanding religious/revolutionary figure) resulted in a different leadership style. Having multiple and complex personal, religious, and revolutionary charisma, Ayatollah Khomeini was not interested in the "micro-management" of the state, but in defining the ideology/ethos of the post-revolutionary state. But Khamenei's lack of charisma and a reputation in "bureaucratic circles for his attentiveness to details" provided a different leadership style with more interference in everyday state functions and its micromanagement.⁹⁰ "Khamenei compensated for his lack of charismatic qualities and religious credentials by being a consummate micromanager with an intimate knowledge of the Iranian political machinery."⁹¹

Although the amended Constitution in 1989 transferred even more power to the new Supreme Leader Khamenei, his authority in today's Iran is not omnipotent or almighty. The Islamic Republic still remains a hybrid regime with elements of authoritarianism and semi-democracy. Ayatollah Khamenei managed to neutralize and suppress the Green Movement in 2009, marginalize the reformist faction, and brutally crush waves of anti-state demonstrations in 2017–2019. His extended military and financial arms contributed to the rise of a deceptive petro-populist charisma—a *religion industry*. And yet, the regime under his leadership is not entirely a *one-man one-show politics*, and his will has occasionally been challenged by multiple

voices of conservative and centrist/pragmatist factions. He seems to have played a balancer role among the closed circle of the competing ruling oligarchs, with the help of his autocratic personality blessed by enormous institutional and financial power. Besides, Iranian civil society has already entered into a “post-Islamist” condition, a new structural and discursive transformation in which no charismatic leader or institution is omnipotent.⁹²

Notes

- * Earlier versions of some sections of this chapter were published in the following works: Mojtaba Mahdavi, “Ayatollah Khomeini,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*, eds. John L. Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin (Oxford University Press, 2013), 180–201; Mojtaba Mahdavi, “Iran, Islamic Republic of,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Politics*, ed. Emad El-Din Shahin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).
- 1 Houchang E. Chehabi, “The Political Regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Comparative Perspective,” *Government and Opposition* 36, no. 1 (2000): 48–70.
 - 2 Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, trans. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), 215–216.
 - 3 Josef Wiesehofer, *Ancient Persia: From 550BC to 650AD*, trans. Azizeh Azodi (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), 30.
 - 4 Max Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building*, ed. Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968), xviii.
 - 5 *Ibid.*, xxiii and xix.
 - 6 John M. Jermier, “Introduction: Charismatic Leadership: Neo-Weberian Perspectives,” *Leadership Quarterly* 4, nos. 3–4 (1993): 221.
 - 7 Jane M. Howell, “Two Faces of Charisma: Socialized or Personalized Leadership in Organizations,” in *Charismatic Leadership: The Elusive Factor in Organizational Effectiveness*, eds. Jay A. Conger and Rabintra N. Kanungo (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988).
 - 8 Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. 1 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), 215–216.
 - 9 *Ibid.*, 245.
 - 10 *Ibid.*, 242 and 249.
 - 11 Weber, *Economy and Society* (1968), 1111–1112.
 - 12 Kenneth Thompson, ed., *Readings from Emile Durkheim* (Chichester: Ellis Harwood, 1985), 129.
 - 13 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, eds. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 210.
 - 14 Daniel Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 90.
 - 15 *Ibid.*, 96.
 - 16 *Ibid.*
 - 17 Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 104.
 - 18 Ahmad Ashraf, “Theocracy and Charisma: New Men of Power in Iran,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 4, no. 1 (1990): 113, 114, and 146.
 - 19 *Ibid.*
 - 20 Ali Kemal Özcan, “The Messianic Charisma: How and for Whom it Operates,” *Ekonomik Yaklaşım* 18, no. 63 (2007): 122.
 - 21 Ayatollah Khomeini, *Velayat-e Faqih, Hokomat-e Islami [The Rule of the Jurisprudent, Islamic Government]* (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1978), 28–40 and 77–79, quoted in Hossein Bashiriyyeh, *The State and Revolution in Iran, 1962–1982* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984), 63.
 - 22 Hamid Algar, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini* (Berkeley, CA: Mizan Press, 1981), 75.
 - 23 *Ibid.*, 124.
 - 24 Mojtaba Mahdavi, “Iran, Islamic Republic of,” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Politics*, ed. Emad El-Din Shahin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).
 - 25 *Ibid.*
 - 26 Chehabi, “The Political Regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” 56–59.

- 27 Mehdi Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 72.
- 28 Mahdavi, "Iran, Islamic Republic of."
- 29 The Society of Combatant Clergy (Jāme'eh Rūhānīyat-i Mubārīz) and the Allied Islamic Society (Jam'īyāt-i Mo'talefeh-i Islami) supported the conservative faction of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, 48.
- 30 The Mujāhidīn of the Islamic Revolution Organization (Sāzmān-i Mujāhidīn-i Enghilāb-i Islami) and the Society of Combatant Clerics (Majma'-i Rūhānīyūn-i Mubārīz) supported the revolutionary faction of the regime. The central committee of the Islamic Republican Party, until its dissolution in 1986, was more inclined to the revolutionary faction and less to the conservatives. They believed that primary Islamic ordinances (*aḥkām-i awaliyeh*), derived from two Islamic sources of the Qur'an and the Tradition of the Prophet (the *sunnah*) were insufficient and therefore Muslims living in modern times needed to issue secondary ordinances (*aḥkām-i sānaviyeh*). Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, 48.
- 31 Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, 65.
- 32 *Ettela'at* Daily, April 14, 1988, quoted in Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, 74.
- 33 Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, 74; Mahdavi, "Iran, Islamic Republic of"; and Mojtaba Mahdavi, "Ayatollah Khomeini," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*, eds. John L. Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 187–188.
- 34 Ervand Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions: Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).
- 35 Mahdavi, "Iran, Islamic Republic of" and Mahdavi, "Ayatollah Khomeini," 189–190.
- 36 According to Weber, three forces impel the routinization of charisma: The first is the resolution of the crisis, which led to re-enchantment. The second is the development of economic interest among the leader's disciples, which encourages the leader to address socio-political and economic problems and to redefine the leader's ideological legacy, given the competing factions within the ruling elite. The third is in the succession. For Weber, charisma is routinized by three mechanisms: hereditary rule; modern law; and the transfer of the leader's power to the traditional office or ruling institution; see Weber, *Economy and Society* (1978), 246–254 and 1121–1122. The latter corresponded to the case of post-Khomeini Iran. For further discussion of the routinization of charisma, see Weber, *Economy and Society* (1978), 249.
- 37 Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building*, 58.
- 38 Mohsen Milani, *The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 225.
- 39 Weber, *Economy and Society* (1968), 241–243.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 246.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 246.
- 42 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, "Article 57," July 28, 1989, www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/eoir/legacy/2013/11/08/Constitution_2.pdf.
- 43 Weber, *Economy and Society* (1968), 244.
- 44 Milani, *The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution*, 224.
- 45 Asghar Schirazi, *The Constitution of Iran: Politics and the State in the Islamic Republic*, trans. John O'Kane (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997), 78–111.
- 46 Weber, *Economy and Society* (1968), 1008.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 1014.
- 48 Ayatollah Ahmad Azari-Qomi, quoted in Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, 100–101.
- 49 *Salam* Daily, February 13, 1992, quoted in Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, 184.
- 50 Ali M. Ansari, *Modern Iran since 1921: The Pahlavis and After* (London: Pearson Education, 2003), 245.
- 51 *Ibid.*, 246.
- 52 Said Amir Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran under his Successors* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 178.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 37.
- 54 Mehrzad Boroujerdi and Kourosh Rahimkhani, "The Office of the Supreme Leader: Epicenter of a Theocracy," in *Power and Change in Iran: Politics of Contention and Conciliation*, eds. Daniel Brumberg and Farideh Farhi (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2016), 135.
- 55 Arjomand, *After Khomeini*, 175–177.
- 56 Boroujerdi and Rahimkhani, "The Office of the Supreme Leader," 142.

- 57 Ibid., 143–144.
- 58 Ibid., 146.
- 59 Ali A. Saedi, “The Accountability of Para-Governmental Organizations (Bonyads): The Case of Iranian Foundations,” *Iranian Studies* 37, no. 3 (2004): 483.
- 60 Boroujerdi and Rahimkhani, “The Office of the Supreme Leader,” 149.
- 61 Arang Keshavarzian, *Bazaar and State in Iran Politics of the Tehran Marketplace* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 168.
- 62 Ayatollah Mohamad Yazdi, a prominent conservative cleric and then chief judge, clearly argued that “the leader should be guided only by the Quran, the *Hadiths*, and the Prophet’s teachings. The vote of the people cannot overrule the representative of the Prophet” (Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, *Iran Times*, May 25, 2001).
- 63 Weber, *Economy and Society* (1968), 246–254.
- 64 Mahdavi, “Iran, Islamic Republic of.”
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Arjomand, *After Khomeini*, 182.
- 68 Boroujerdi and Rahimkhani, “The Office of the Supreme Leader,” 146.
- 69 Mahmood Messkoub, “Social Policy in Iran in the Twentieth Century,” *Iranian Studies* 39, no. 2 (2006): 251.
- 70 Djavd Salehi-Isfahani and Navtej Dhillon, “Can the Middle East Build a Global Middle Class?” *Brookings*, May 19, 2008, www.brookings.edu/opinions/can-the-middle-east-build-a-global-middle-class.
- 71 Ali Rahnama, *Superstition as Ideology in Iranian Politics: From Majlesi to Ahmadinejad* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 37.
- 72 Ibid., 113.
- 73 *IRNA: Islamic Republic News Agency*, September 17, 2005, quoted in Rahnama, *Superstition as Ideology in Iranian Politics*, 35.
- 74 Rahnama, *Superstition as Ideology in Iranian Politics*, 38 (emphases are added).
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 Ibid., 58.
- 77 Mesbah Yazdi, M.T. *Hokumate Eslami va Velayat Faqih* (Tehran: Moasseseh-ye Tanzim va Nashr-e Asar-e Imam Khomeini, 1369), 60–162, quoted in Rahnama, *Superstition as Ideology in Iranian Politics*, 111.
- 78 Etemad Melli, 22 Mordad 1388, quoted in Rahnama, *Superstition as Ideology in Iranian Politics*, 20.
- 79 *Partov-e Sokhan*, 15 Tir 1384, quoted in Rahnama, *Superstition as Ideology in Iranian Politics*, 45.
- 80 Rahnama, *Superstition as Ideology in Iranian Politics*, 57 and 65–80.
- 81 Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (London: Verso, 1997), 120.
- 82 Mir-Hossein Mousavi, “Bayanya 18 Mir-Hossein Mousavi wa manshur sabz” [“The 18th Statement by Mir-Hossein Mousavi and the Green Charter”], *Kaleme*, June 2010, www.kaleme.com/1389/03/25/klm-22913.
- 83 *Jaras*, “Akhrin sokhanranie ‘amuma rahbar ma’nuwa jonbesh sabz Ayatollah al-‘azimi Montazeri” [“The Last Public Address by the Spiritual Leader of the Green Movement, Ayatollah Montazeri”], February 2010, www.rahesabz.net/story/8775.
- 84 George Hoare and Nathan Spenser, *An Introduction to Antonio Gramsci: His Life, Thought and Legacy* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 118 and 122.
- 85 Ervand Abrahamian, “Empire Strikes Back: Iran in U.S. Sights,” in *Inventing the Axis of Evil*, eds. Bruce Cumings, Ervand Abrahamian, and Moshe Ma’oz (New York: The New Press, 2004), 115–116.
- 86 Baqer Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 260.
- 87 Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, 74.
- 88 Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini*, 140.
- 89 Ibid., 136–137.
- 90 Ali Gheissari and Vali Nasr, *Democracy in Iran: History and the Quest for Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 110.
- 91 Boroujerdi and Rahimkhani, “The Office of the Supreme Leader,” 137.
- 92 Mojtaba Mahdavi, “Post-Islamist Trends in Postrevolutionary Iran,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 31, no. 1 (2011): 94–109.