

The influence of Islam on the stability and adaptability of the political system in the Islamic Republic of Iran

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ABSTRACT

In Iran, for more than 40 years, there has been an atypical political system created on the basis of Shiite Islam. The system is characterized by the dualism of secular and religious power, as well as the presence of dual legitimacy of religious institutions of power. The purpose of the article is to determine the efficiency and adaptability of the existing religious and political system. It is clarified how Islam directly affects political institutions and organizations, and accordingly is a factor of political stability and viability of the political system. In modern Iran, there are republican and religious authorities, that is, the Western understanding of democracy and the Shiite understanding of the Muslim community's life are combined. All republican authorities are elected, but religious institutions retain control over them. The last four decades were characterized by a greater concentration of power in the hands of the country's Leader and religious institutions in general. Republican elected bodies of power are subjected to increasing control by the religious side, and the very leaders (President) of these bodies have gradually become natives of religious elites. Thus, the difference between secular and religious institutions is increasingly blurred, and the mass protests of citizens are directed not at a certain type of government (religious or secular), but at the government in general. The central element of this system's stability is the Leader of the country, who simultaneously combines divine and democratic legitimacy, and according to this index is unique in the system of the state power. Political processes in Iran demonstrate that religion is not able to effectively directly influence political events and processes, however, religion is integrated into the political system, where it is dominant, is able to create an efficient state mechanism. At least temporarily, such a system is able to ensure the stability, adaptability and dynamism of political life within the boundaries of an individual country. However, the tendency towards usurpation of authority by the religious power is gradually destroying the very essence of Iran's dualistic religio-political system. And therefore, the advantages of such a system, in terms of ensuring political and socio-economic justice, are lost.

KEYWORDS

Islam,
political system,
Islamic Republic,
Iran,
protests,
legitimacy,
Faqih.

Introduction

Iran is a multinational, but monoreligious state, whose political system is built on the basis of Islam. The religio-political system of state management has been existing for more than 40 years, despite the sanctions and self-isolation of the country. Moreover, Iran is becoming an important player in the international arena at the regional level. Accordingly, the problem arises about the stability, adaptability and ability to transform a political system based on the priority of the religious authority of Islamic clerics.

Regarding the political system of the Islamic Republic of Iran (hereinafter abbreviated IRI), there are thorough domestic studies. In particular, the works of I. Osadchuk are devoted to the evolution and essence of the political sys-

tem of Iran after 1979, important for determining the essence of the religio-political system of the state and its ability to adapt. In general, the analysis of the Iranian state system's atypicality and the emphasis on its uniqueness is useful (Osadchuk, 2020).

Also important for this study is the article by K. Semchynskiy, which examines issues at the intersection of religious studies and political science. The ideological and historical-political background of the processes of Islamization and democratization in modern Iran is studied, which is important for understanding the adaptability and legitimacy of the Islamic republic's political system (Semchynskiy, 2010).

The fruitful works are devoted to the reform of the political system of Iran (Kushnirenko, 2002), the evolution



and role of the Shiite clergy (Prorochenko, 2019), the constitutional foundations of the state system of the Islamic republic (*Orda, 2010, Dorosheva, 2013*).

However, the aspect of the direct influence of Islam on the adaptability, stability and ability to transform the religio-political system of IRI was not covered.

The novelty of this work is that we are not interested in specific political processes, religious dogmas, cult actions, etc., but primarily in the direct influence of Islam on political processes and the stability of political institutions and organizations.

The purpose of the article is to study the influence of Islam on the stability of political institutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran. To implement the purpose, the following tasks must be performed. First, to find out how religious life, religious dogmas are connected with the political system, in particular in the legislative sphere.

Next, it is necessary to find out whether there is a political, economic, social reason why Islam is connected with the execution of political power in Iran. Thirdly, it is necessary to analyze the crisis situations of political life that occurred after 1979, and how the political system was transformed in connection with the use of religious arguments, religious dogmas and the religious sphere of life in general.

Research methods

The structural-functional method is used to analyze the constitution of the IRI and the impact of its provisions on the functioning of the main power structures (Leader of the country, the Council of Defenders of the Constitution, the president, the government, the Mejlis, and others) in the state. The Comparative analysis is used to study the efficiency of the religio-political system of Iran in different historical periods of time (terms of presidents and leaders of the country). The historical method is used to understand the origins of the Shiite attitude to power and politics, the essence and function of Muslim clerics and their organizations in modern Iran.

Results and Discussion of the research

The preamble of the Constitution seems to lead us to believe that there will be no discoveries and revelations in the study of the Islam's influence on the functioning of the state mechanism. And we will come to the conclusion that the political system of IRI was created in accordance with the rules of Shariat, where the Muslim community is idealized, which rules of life are spread over the entire state. And in this way, the primacy of religious life over social, political and economic life is maintained, which must correspond to the spiritual and socio-political principles of Islam. Thus, already in the first paragraph it is stated: "The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran develops the cultural, social, political and economic institutions of Iranian society, based on Islamic principles and norms, which is the true aspiration of the Islamic Ummah (community)" (*The Constitution..., 1979: Preamble*). That is, the term Muslim people is used to refer to Iranian society and the dominant role of Islam in the formation of the state as a management institution and organization is emphasized.

However, further analysis of the legislative foundations of state management and the features of nation-building and political life in Iran indicates a complex and ambiguous system, which is not devoid of contradictions and dynamics, which makes it interesting and appropriate for research.

So, let's start with the first task of the research: determining the constitutional foundations of Iran in relation to

the formation of the state administration system. In fact, the system here is built on the Shiite tradition of respect for Ulema (spiritual teachers, authorities) on the one hand, and efforts to create mechanisms of control over power on the part of the people and to build a system of counterbalances to prevent the usurpation of power on the other. In the structure of the organization of power, the Shiite concept of the primacy of spiritual leadership over the purely secular and political can be clearly traced. In particular, already in the second article, the dogmatic principles of Islam, according to which the spiritual leadership of the Muslim society is carried out, are listed (*The Constitution..., 1979: Article 2*).

Central to understanding the role of the Leader of the country are the concepts of Magdi and the hidden imam (*Semchynskiy, 2010: 171*). The constitution itself enshrines the Shiite understanding of the simultaneous unity of spiritual and political power and the primacy of the spiritual over the political. Moreover, it should be understood that this is not an opposition of two spheres, but rather an understanding of their unity and inseparability, because the Imams are the heirs of the Prophet, who should rule Muslims, because they know how to lead people to God, their development in the direction of the divine order (*The Constitution..., 1979: The Form of Government in Islam*). There is a separate article of the Constitution to indicate the subordination of economic, political, financial, cultural, and military laws to Islamic norms. Moreover, this article states that it is superior to other articles and laws in general, and all articles and laws are created on its basis (*The Constitution..., 1979: Article 4*).

The main institutions in the structure of state power are the Leader of the country, the President, the government, and the Mejlis (parliament). Government institutions can be divided into two types: 1) those in which the main role is played by ulema (Islamic theologians); 2) those that are formed by the people through the electoral system and ensure the participation of the people in the management of the state, justifying the word "republic" in the full name of the country. The President, the Mejlis, the government are republican institutions of power, and the Leader of the country, the Council of Experts, the Council for the Protection of the Constitution, the Assembly for the Determination of State Expediency are those where the main role is played by spiritual persons (ulema, faqihs, mujtahids, etc.).

The main position in the IRI is Faqih (Leader of the country), who leads the country and Muslims until the coming of the Messiah (hidden imam, Wali-e-Asr, Magdi). The main powers of the country's leader are: determination and control over the implementation of the state's general policy; declaration of war and peace, command control of the armed forces, appointment of their leadership; appointment of the judiciary heads and Faqihs of the Council for the Protection of the Constitution; resolution of conflicts between branches of the power and the right to dismiss the president from the power; appointment of the state television's Head (*The Constitution..., 1979: Article 110*).

The Leader of the country's authorities are extremely powerful, especially considering that he does not belong to any of the three branches of power recognized by the Iranian constitution (executive, legislative and judicial). Moreover, he was given the right to form the judicial power and significantly limit the executive and legislative powers. In particular, the leader of the country not only determines and controls the general policy of the state, but also appoints the military leadership, the head of the Guardians of

the Islamic Revolution, and through the Council for the Protection of the Constitution has a lever of control over the Majlis (Parliament), because it is the Council for the Protection of the Constitution that must approve all laws that are adopted by the Majlis (*Osadchuk, 2020: 58*).

Such broad rights of the country's leader are based on the Shiite understanding of Islam and the historical practice of the social and political life of the Persian state. This is the principle of *Velayat-e Faqih* (*Velayat-e Faqih*), according to which a purely secular, non-religious authority cannot govern the Islamic community (people) (*Mirzayi, 2015*). Leadership should be carried out by the descendants of the Prophet Mohammed, who was both a spiritual person and a leader of the people, in fact it is about the unity of spiritual and political power and the decisive role of ulema in leading society and the state.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini did not simply use the works of Islamic thinkers regarding the unity of religious and secular power, but created his own systematic vision of this issue, which became decisive for the construction of the IRI. He organized, systematically substantiated these views and integrated them into the anti-Shah revolutionary activity. Khomeini actually created the state structure of the future Islamic state and combined it with Western notions of the power separation into three branches (*Shia Ali & Zare, 2018*). In 1970, his book "*Velayat-e Faqih*" (*The Rule of the Faqih. Islamic Rule*) was published, which detailed the basic principles for the creation and functioning of the Islamic state (*Khomeini, 1970*). *Faqih* is an Islamic theologian-jurist, an expert in the theological and legal complex (*fiqh*), and the term is also used to denote the highest position in Iran – the Leader of the country. The constitutional powers of the authorities in IRI are related to Ayatollah Khomeini's understanding of the Muslim state's principles, which are stated in his book.

Conceptually, we will consider the republican bodies of state power, which should ensure the participation of the Islamic community in the management of the state. In the constitution, the authorities of the President, the government and the Mejlis (Parliament) are quite broad, but there is a system of purely religious authorities that are meant to balance and direct, and in fact limit the republican authorities that are formed through national elections. The proper Shiite understanding of control over republican governing bodies is not an invention of Khomeini and the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In particular, it is worth mentioning the first constitution of Iran in 1906-1907, which was adopted as a result of the revolutionary events of 1905-1911 with the active participation of the Shiite clergy, which was one of the drivers of radical changes in the state. Thus, the first article of the constitution proclaimed Islam (of the Shiite sect) as the official religion of Iran, which legally established Islam as the center of the citizens' spiritual life. It was also envisaged to create a special committee of five mujtahids in the parliament, who could reject laws if they contradicted Islamic norms, sharia courts were kept alongside civil ones, and the press, education and public organizations had to conform to the spirit of Islam (*Martin, 2011*).

However, the first constitution remained largely a theory about the priority of Islam and the ulema over secular power. That is, there was no experience of the "Islamic state's" functioning in Iran. It was Khomeini who theoretically and functionally specified the idea of an Islamic state in his book, and already in the 1979 constitution of IRI, he procedurally created a system of an Islamic state with a

system of checks and balances called the Islamic Republic. Thus, he simultaneously emphasized the priority of Islam and the importance of the Western understanding of the state as people's rule. The presence of national elections, through which republican authorities are formed, is a strong lever for the formation of the legitimacy of the President, the Mejlis and the government. That is, they have the highest degrees of legitimacy, which is classic for the Western understanding of democracy.

However, the Iranian model of people's rule is primarily the people's rule of the Islamic community, and therefore the constitution prescribes the country's leader's levers of influence and religious nature state structures' effect on the republican authorities. It is important to note that according to the traditions that have developed in the Muslim community of Iran, it is the religious figures (ulema) and the collegial bodies of the ulema that have the highest legitimacy. After all, their legitimacy does not come from people, who can make mistakes, and who are actually supposed to be guided by the ulema on the right path, but from Allah (God). That is, the sacred legitimation of power is stronger than the republican legitimation.

A detailed examination of the authorities and functioning of republican power organs will be carried out on the example of crisis and conflict situations in the political life of the IRI.

Let's focus on the second task of the work, namely, find out whether there are political, economic, social and other reasons for affirming the idea of the determining role of Islamic ulema in state life and at the same time postulating the unity of religious and secular power.

There is a widespread opinion that since Iran is not a nationally monolithic, but a multi-ethnic country, Islam is the ideological basis for the unity and stability of the state. Of interest in this context is Alam Saleh's research on the problematic nature of national identification in Iran (*Saleh, 2013*). Actually, Persians (50-61%) who speak Farsi can be considered the titular nation. This language is the state language and is used in government institutions. Other nationalities are significant and have territories of compact residence. In particular, Azerbaijanis live in the north of Iran, they are about 15-25 percent of the total population. There is a significant national minority of Kurds (5-10%), who live compactly on the border with Turkey. Actually, the Iranian state had conflict situations with these two national minorities; attempts at national autonomy were stopped violently with the use of the police and the army. It is difficult to name the exact ethnic composition in percentages, as data from different sources differ.

Therefore, it is a completely logical step to unite the citizens of the country not on national, but on religious grounds. And here we turn to the ideological reasons for the existing state system in Iran. The ideology that would be able to unite people is Islam of the Shiite sect. Therefore, the Islamic revolution focused on the implementation of Islam in all spheres of political, social and economic life. Actually, this is a simplified view of the reasons for the emergence and functional load of the Islamic Republic in Iran.

However, a detailed consideration of this issue highlights points that do not fit into this rather simplified concept. Thus, Iranians, especially Persians, should first of all consider and feel themselves Muslims, and only then Iranians. Existing sociological surveys on this issue are not in favor of this assumption. In particular, a sociological survey was carried out in some Arab countries and Iran, where the

purpose was to find out the self-identification of citizens of different Muslim countries. In particular, it was found out whether people consider themselves primarily representatives of a certain country or members of the Muslim community. Iran had the highest percentage of citizens who consider themselves primarily Iranian (24%), followed by Muslims. That is, the nationalism of Iranians is higher than that of their neighbors from Arab countries (Egypt - 10%, Jordan - 14%) (Jordan, 2002).

This is especially paradoxical considering the fact that one of the main theses on which criticism of Arab countries was based is the issue of their nationalism and pan-Arabism. In particular, Ayatollah Khomeini criticized Saddam Hussein for this, pointing out that Iraq was moving away from Islam and focusing primarily on national identity, which distanced people from Allah (Massarrat, 1993). Therefore, it is hardly possible to draw an unequivocal conclusion that the need for ideological unification of Iran's multi-ethnic population is the reason for the establishment of the Islamic republic.

Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran is not related to purposeful statecraft or a plan for socio-political transformation. There were no meta-level political problems here. This is in no way similar to an attempt to artificially unify the country through a common ideology, as, say, it was in the USSR through the ideology of communism. First of all, historically there was a situation when Muslim institutions and organizations existed in the state in parallel with the official ones and had a significant influence on the population. Accordingly, a social group emerged that became experts in the application of Islam in everyday life, through which social regulation took place, in particular the judiciary (*Prochenko, 2019: 61*). And this actually became a prerequisite for the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran. That is, it was a natural process of struggle for power between two social groups claiming the role of political elite. On the one hand, it is the aristocracy, the Shah and his family, and on the other, the ulema, who were the leaders of Muslim communities and experts in the application of the Koran norms. Actually, the legitimacy of both the first and the second came from God, because the power of the Shah was sanctified by Allah, and the ulema were part of the religious structure associated with the practice of Islam. Considering the high religiosity of the citizens and the existence of Islamic institutions that de facto ruled the local communities, the victory of the religious elite, which became political, seems to be a natural process.

Now it is necessary to find out whether the implementation of Islam in the bodies of political administration provided stability, adaptability and efficiency to the state.

In fact, it is necessary to find out whether political life adapts to the created political system or whether the political system adapts to the challenges of real political life. If an efficient socio-political system was created on the basis of Islam, then the constitution, which spells out the functionality of the main political institutions and organizations, should not change, since it efficiently regulates social, political, cultural and economic processes in the state. That is, the immutability of the political system created on the basis of the priority of religion (Islam) is proven by its ability to maintain the stability of society.

If there are reforms of the existing political system of Iran, changes are made to the constitution, then this shows that the system is inefficient and needs to be adjusted according to changes in social and political life. In fact, it can

be argued that amending the Iranian constitution and reforming the authorities is evidence of the inefficiency of a political system based on the dominance of religion.

However, a detailed examination of the political life of Iran from 1979 to the present day shows that there is no simple formula for evaluating the efficiency of the IRI political system. After all, when we examine the details, we discover complex and mutually dependent processes. That is, the Marxist simplification of the consideration of society, where one sphere of life determines another, will not work here.

In particular, changes to the Iranian constitution were made in 1989, 10 years after the adoption of the constitution. Should it be understood as an era of ten years stability or a crisis of the political system, which was only able to reform itself after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, who artificially restrained reform with his authority?

Actually, in order to answer the main question of the study, it is necessary to analyze political crises and events in the context of the influence on them by religious institutions integrated into the power system of Iran.

In 1989, amendments to the Constitution were adopted, eliminating the position of prime minister and giving the power to form the government to the president. These laconic changes were based on complex political processes that took place 10 years after the adoption of the constitution in 1979. That is, there were direct causes of constitutional changes that lay on the surface, but on the other hand there was the Iran-Iraq war, competition within the ruling elite, political assassinations, mass discontent of citizens, and the struggle with opposition movements.

Actually, the first president of Iran, A. Baniadr (*February 4, 1980 – June 22, 1981*), who was the closest associate of Ayatollah Khomeini, was forced to finish his short term and emigrate to France. Regarding him, the parliament adopted a decision on impeachment, and Fakih signed a decree of dismissal for activities directed against the Islamic clergy. It is also paradoxical that the first president of IRI advocated the disbandment of any Islamic revolutionary committees, since the revolution won and there was no need for them (*Osadchuk, 2020: 109*). That is, disbanding the same Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (hereinafter IRGC) was a logical step under the new constitution, but it clearly weakened the power of imams and ulema, and therefore was not acceptable for Khomeini. Therefore, the corps is mentioned in the constitution and seems to compete with the army, the only thing that distinguishes the corps from the army is the duty to defend the Islamic revolution (*The Constitution..., 1979: Article 150*).

That is, formally, the constitution formalizes a specific state system, where religious power is combined with republican governing bodies, but in fundamental matters, religious power not only controls the republican one, but also directly duplicates its functions. And this caused dissatisfaction even among the elite who carried out the Islamic revolution.

The second president of Iran M.A. Rajai (*August 2, 1981 – August 30, 1981*) died as a result of a successful attempt (explosion), according to the official version, organized by the Iran Liberation Army (Peter Kihss, 1981).

Only the third president A. Khamenei (*October 13, 1981 – August 17, 1989*) was able to serve two full terms, but it should be noted that, unlike his predecessors in this position, he was a representative of the clergy. That is, he had maximum control and mutual understanding on the part of the Leader of the State, Ayatollah Khomeini. Actu-

ally, his current Fakihs chose him as his successor, accordingly, Ali Khamenei became the second leader of the country in 1989. However, even during his tenure, the political system created on the priority of Islam and the ulema did not work efficiently as envisaged by the constitution. In particular, there was a conflict between the president and the prime minister. The country's leader tried to distance himself from the conflict and did not dismiss M.Kh. Mousavi, who was the head of the government. One of the reasons may be that Mousavi was the only one of the triad of senior officials in the state who did not belong to the clergy. His dismissal would be a recognition of the sham and invalidity of the constitution's principles, according to which there should have been a harmonious combination of the power of the Islamic clergy and popular forms of government in the state. It is also symptomatic that the government did not engage constructively with the parliament, which generally adopted only one law at the government's proposal. And it was despite the fact that both the Leader of the country and the president directly intervened in government affairs (*Osadchuk, 2020: 109*).

In general, a process of political stabilization took place in the country after the revolutionary events and also in the conditions of the great war. Various political forces that participated in the revolution were taken under the control of Fakihs, or destroyed, and controlled forms of opposition and political processes were created. And all this formally worked within the framework of the constitution, but actually it did not correspond to the spirit of the constitution, as power was increasingly concentrated in the Leader of the country.

Great changes were brewing, which would be logical to carry out after the end of the war. However, in essence, the changes to the 1989 constitution were not radical and constructive from the point of view of restructuring the existing model of public administration, which began to lean towards theocratic authoritarianism. Actually, the revolution took away the hereditary power of the shah, who ruled the state alone, creating the illusion of participation of the parliament and other democratic institutions in the political life of Iran. Given that the power of the Faqih was for life, and Khomeini increasingly concentrated power, it began to resemble the authoritarian monarchy against which the Islamic Revolution was carried out.

The changes concerned the abolition of the prime minister's position, which introduced contradictions into the state apparatus, complicating the system of higher state bodies' subordination, which was already complex and regulated. However, the most important thing was that the leader of the country could be an ulema who did not necessarily have the same titles and qualifications as Ayatollah Khomeini. In this way, they changed the constitution for a specific person whom Fakihs chose as his successor (*Osadchuk, 2020: 58*).

However, the power of the country's Leader does not look unambiguously authoritarian and prone to usurpation of power. The fact is that the successor to Ayatollah Khomeini is appointed by the Council of Experts, who can dismiss him from his position if he does not meet the requirements. Of course, the Council of Experts consists of authoritative Islamic ulema, but the members of the council are elected by nation-wide vote every 10 years (*The Constitution..., 1979: Article 107*). Thus, the Leader of the country has not only divine legitimacy, but also democratic legitimacy, which actually makes him unique compared to

other positions. It turns out that no one else in the state has such a high degree of legitimacy.

Further, since the fundamental points of real political life were not taken into account in the constitution and its implementation, political crises with mass protests, which were a manifestation of citizens' dissatisfaction, periodically occurred in Iran. However, the system of public administration based on the priority of religious institutions over republican ones has coped with all crises until recently, that is, it proves its efficiency. How does this happen and why is it efficient?

Let's consider the main political crises. The most significant crises by mass occurred in the following years: 1999, 2009, 2017-2018, 2019-2020, 2022.

They can be divided into two types: systemic and spontaneous. The actual criterion for selection is the role of politicians, former or current officials in the emergence and course of protests. The protests of 1999 and 2009 were associated with well-known politicians who were targeted by the protesters, they had a relatively formulated ideological and political agenda.

These actions were a reaction to the reforms that were planned or carried out by the republican authorities, in particular by the president and the government, the role of the parliament was significant but secondary. In 1999, the protests were associated with President M. Khatami (1997–2005). Citizens had high expectations regarding the liberalization of socio-political life. In particular, this concerned limiting the influence of the clergy through the Council of Defenders of the Constitution on the vetting of candidates for the parliament and for the post of president; increasing the role of women in politics through provision of positions in the government; condemnation of the policy of "Islamizing" higher educational institutions; protection of the freedom of press (*Osadchuk, 2020: 61*).

The political system of IRI is built on the basis of the religious and republican power dualism. That is, the system itself allows discussion and conflicts of the power vertical, which are impossible without freedom of press (which accepts Islam as the center of the country's political life). The religious component of power is actually created to balance the republican authorities, which must feel the limit of their own freedom. Therefore, although the president and parliament can carry out reforms and execute legislation, laws must be approved by collegial bodies of the clergy, partially elected by citizens.

Thus, Fakihs as the Leader of the country can stop any reform of the secular power on the basis that a certain law does not correspond to the principles of Islam (*Rivetti and Cavatorta, 2013*). Moreover, by decision of the clergy, the president, members of the government, and members of the Majlis can be dismissed from their positions. And before the elections, candidates must be approved by the Council of Defenders of the Constitution (*The Constitution..., 1979: Article 99*).

In the event of conflicts, the issue must be resolved by the judiciary, but the head of the judiciary is appointed by the Leader of the country, that is, under the control of the religious authority (*The Constitution..., 1979: Article 110*). Accordingly, religion in this system stabilizes political processes, formally not denying freedom of speech and political, democratic rights of citizens. And it is thanks not only to his authority, but also to the double legitimacy that the secular authorities do not have, the country's leader is able to play a decisive role in the stabilization of political life.

It was according to such a scenario that the events of 1999 unfolded. The religious authorities, through controlled courts, closed down newspapers opposing Fakihi's position, after which mass demonstrations by students and riots began in the cities. The Council of Defenders blocked President M. Khatami's laws as incompatible with the principles of Islam. And though the president supported the student protests from the beginning, he was forced to renounce this support under the threat of dismissal from the position for anti-Islamic activities. Since the army and the IRGC directly obey the country's leader (Fakihi), the president had no levers for counter-struggle, neither force nor legal.

Events unfolded in a similar pattern in 2009. The situation unfolded around the presidential elections. Former Prime Minister M. Mousavi opposed the acting President M. Ahmadinejad (2005–2013), who was noted for his radicalism and the full support of the clergy. Mousavi did not recognize the election results, declared them falsified, mass riots began in the largest cities of Iran. One of the reasons was the reaction of citizens to the conservative policy of the current president and the desire of citizens to liberalize social and political life. In fact, it was about the same reforms as in 1999. Mousavi led mass rallies, even though anti-government demonstrations were banned after the events of a decade ago (*Filin, 2022*).

This time, leaders of opposition parties and movements were arrested, and Mousavi himself was placed under home arrest. This time, the stabilization levers provided for by the constitution did not work and the authorities acted more brutally and decisively. In particular, it was announced that the protests were connected with the activities of foreign media and the attempt of foreign interference in the affairs of Iran up to the overthrow of the regime. Mass arrests, a ban on rallies, and restrictions on Internet access were carried out to disrupt the communication of protesters (*Kurzman, 2012*).

Despite the overt violent actions of the religious authorities against the citizens, the protests gradually came to naught. The dual legitimacy of the country's Leader and the collegial bodies of the clergy worked again. In fact, Fakihi legislatively blocked the opposition of the republican authorities, and through his control over formal and informal power structures, he isolated protest leaders and active participants. The divine legitimacy of the country's leader remains a decisive argument for the majority of citizens to support his actions.

And since the Leader himself is also elected by the Council of Experts, which itself is elected by nation-wide vote, this makes him untouchable in the political system. That is, Fakihi cannot appoint the president, but has leverage over the candidacy of the president and the president himself. In fact, the secular government performs the role of the one who is held responsible for the troubles in the country, at the same time, the secular government is deprived of real political weight and opportunities to reform society and to solve problems in the state.

But since the president and the parliament are directly and nationally elected by the citizens, this makes them de facto the center of responsibility for the socio-economic and political development of Iran. And in this context, Islam efficiently stabilizes the political life of the country, while encouraging a turbulent political life that should give competitiveness and efficiency to public administration. And this is exactly what, according to the creators of IRI, did not exist in monarchical Iran.

It seemed that these two protests and the religious authorities' reaction to them nullified the constructive potential of the IRI constitution. Because it was shown that the real power in the country is held by Fakihi and the clergy in general, and parliamentarians, the government, and the president turned out to be de facto deprived of subjectivity. In this way, the dualism of secular and religious power, on which the political system was built according to the 1979 Constitution, disappears.

Accordingly, the subsequent protests of 2017–2022 had no political leaders to lead them, since the secular authorities were disorganized and was in a subjugated state. Supporting the protest means for the politician to be accused of anti-Islamic activities and an attempt to overthrow the government, which is punishable by death. Accordingly, the leader of the country achieved the purpose of a significant concentration of power, but lost the mechanisms of legal non-violent resolution of political conflicts.

The new protests were related to socio-economic problems and gradually turned into political and ideological demands. However, it is important to note that in the minds of citizens, the constitutional dualism of secular and religious power continued to operate. President Hassan Rouhani (2013–2021), during his re-election in 2017, promised reforms and improvement of life, but he was physically unable to do so by authority. However, in the minds of the citizens, he was the one to blame for the difficult economic situation, and the first protests were against him, when people expressed their disappointment that they had voted for him.

He even tried to link the increase in food prices with the fact that additional oil profits go to religious organizations, and not to people's needs. However, he quickly abandoned this position under pressure by the clergy (*Gambrell, 2018*).

And actually at the initial stage of the protests, religion once again worked as a stabilizing factor, because it transferred the responsibility for the difficulties to the secular authorities, which did not have sufficient powers to influence the situation.

Based on the logic of the IRI Constitution, the Supreme Leader and the collegial bodies of the clergy appear as if they are arbitrators who resolve conflicts between republican authorities, while they are in charge of the situation. Their authority and double legitimacy should be enough for this. However, it has worked in the Iranian context, if the religious authority was separated from the socio-economic bloc and was focused as much as possible on national and internal security and the provision of fair justice and cultural policy. However, it turned out that significant economic organizations and resources were subordinated to Fakihi and religious bodies. In particular, IRGC is one of the largest owners of property and enterprises in the state. And all this led to accusations of corruption, usurpation of power by Fakihi, spending money on wars abroad in conditions of an internal economic crisis (*Fathollah-Nejad, 2020: 9–12*).

The involvement of religious institutes in political and economic activities also placed on them responsibility for the state of affairs in the country, and deprived them of the authority of an indisputable arbiter. And actually, not only anti-government slogans appeared, but also slogans against the Leader of the country and the religious authorities in general. Plus, there was dissatisfaction with the mandatory wearing of the hijab, which was already directly associated with Islam. Slogans became radical and anti-

clerical, that is, against the power of Khomeini as the Supreme Leader and the system of power in general (*Fatholah-Nejad, 2020: 12-14*).

How did they manage to overcome massive and long performances? This is actually not a constitutional dualism, but mostly decisive force methods. The use of the police, arrests, the use of informal Islamic power groups including the IRGC, total blocking of the Internet, banning of messengers, torture and murder, accusations of treason, blaming Western countries for organizing riots, organizing alternative pro-government rallies (*Shahi, and Abdoh-Tabrizi, 2020*).

Accordingly, this time, Islam has not been so efficient as a tool to stabilize society, because the religious institutions of the world have been protested. The problem was resolved by violence and preservation of the legitimacy of the government through the Leader of the country as a religious factor and the elections to the republican organs of the government, which emphasized the legality of the government and its acceptance by the citizens.

Mass protests in Iran in 2022 were provoked exclusively by a religious factor, in particular the rules of wearing the hijab. A girl of Kurdish origin who wore the hijab incorrectly in Tehran was tortured and killed by the local morality police. Actually, this provoked the largest mass riots not only of the urban but also of the rural population (*Wintour, Strzyżyńska, 2022*). The social base also expanded, if the first uprising in 1999 was a student uprising, now it included the middle class, students, rural population, and workers.

Mass protests in Iran in 2022 were provoked by the electronic factor of the print: by the rules of wearing hijab. A girl from the Kurdish program, who carried tents in Tehran, was tortured and killed by your moral police. In fact, this provoked the largest mass riots not only of the city but also of the poponisium (*Wintour, Strzyżyńska, 2022*). Your social base has changed because the uprising of 1999 was a student uprising, then it was the middle class, students, the powerful, workers.

And since the situation was provoked by a religious reason, the slogans immediately became radical and anti-Islamic. That is, they were directed against the theocratic system in Iran: the power of the clergy, Islamic power organizations such as the IRGC, which were accused of corruption schemes and associated with human rights violations.

The response of the authorities was classically brutal and included what happened during the protests of 2017-2020, that is, violent dispersal of demonstrations, beatings, torture, arrests, total blocking of the Internet, messengers, the use of informal power structures (*Pourahmadi, Celine Alkhaldi, Adam, 2022*). And it had its effect and at the moment the protests have stopped.

However, this indicates that the religio-political system of Iran no longer copes with political conflicts and discussions that arise in society. The dualism of secular and religious power can be considered finally overcome, because now citizens identify power not with the government, the president and the parliament, but directly with the country's leader and clerical organizations, which have a decisive influence on decision-making in the state.

The following facts also speak of the protests' strength and, at the same time, the inability of the clerical authorities to systematically work with them. On the one hand, the current president of Iran, Ibrahim Raisi, in 2022, during the riots, said that changes to the Iranian constitution are possible to resolve the most conflict situations (*V Irani mozhut*

vnesty zminy do Konstytutsii, 2022). This can be perceived as the restoration of dialogue and the efficiency of the constitution of Iran, but in fact it should be understood that this proposal is made by a representative of the secular government, not a religious one, and the final decision on changes to the constitution is taken by the religious leader, i.e. the country's Fakih Leader. Therefore, this statement was more of a manifestation of weakness in a situation where you don't know what to do.

It is also significant that the Prosecutor General of Iran announced the liquidation of the morality police, as it is not provided for by the constitution and legislative acts (*V Irani mozhut vnesty zminy do Konstytutsii, 2022*). Actually, this is a partial concession to the protesters, but again this statement is made by the secular authorities, and the religious authorities do not comment on it. It may be said that the religious authorities are in control of the situation, but the point is that the secular authorities are destroying the organization that the clerical authorities control.

In fact, we are talking about the loss of religious legitimacy due to the deep involvement of the religious authorities of Iran in political processes. According to Roy Oliver, "the politicization of supranational Shiism leads to de facto secularization and actually undermines the traditional basis of strength and independence of the Shiite clergy" (*Roy, 1999*).

In this context, it is not appropriate to think that Islam is looking for new humane approaches to integrate into the political system of Iran to resolve conflict situations, provide stability and efficiency to the state.

Especially given that, following calls for the abolition of the morality police and possible constitutional changes, a clerical-controlled judiciary has been ordering the death penalty for specific citizens involved in the 2022 riots (these death sentences have been carried out) (*Sud v Irani ukhvalyv pershyi smertnyi vyrok, 2022*). That is, the force method of solving the issue still turned out to be a priority, although we cannot ignore the fact that there is a certain combination of methods for solving the issue of instability in Iranian society.

Conclusions

So, does Islam define the political system of the state, provide stability, adaptability and at the same time competitiveness, and therefore efficiency for the Iranian state? In general, the answer to the question is affirmative. That is, a political system can be built on the basis of Islam. Such a system was built under the name of the Islamic Republic of Iran, where there is a dualism of secular and religious power, that is, there are simultaneously republican authorities and clerical authorities.

Moreover, clerical authorities, which have tools for control both at the stage of elections to republican authorities and at the stage of decision-making by these authorities, are decisive, for which committees, councils, positions are formed that control the adoption of laws and appointments to certain important positions. Such a system is efficient in resolving conflict and debatable situations in political life, as it assumes that the religious authority is an arbiter who stands over the situation and resolves political contradictions that arise in elected authorities.

The authoritativeness of the religious authority's arbitration is achieved by double legitimacy. Because in Iran, on the one hand, the Faqih (Leader of the country) has divine legitimacy, but also because he is elected by a council of experts, elected by the people, and democratically

elected legitimacy. It is also important to note that under such a system, all the troubles of the problem fall on the responsibility of the secular government, since it is directly elected by the citizens, and the religious government is thus protected from manifestations of destruction by the people, since it actually acts as a guard (safeguard) that protects the people from possible abuses secular power. However, it is important to note: if the dualism of secular and religious power disappears, and the secular power turns out to be de facto subordinate to the religious one, then the political system ceases to be efficient, capable of transformation and adaptability. This happens because citizens understand that the real power belongs to clerical structures, and therefore these structures are also the cause of socio-economic and political troubles, which means they can no longer be arbiters.

That is, religion cannot determine the stability or instability of the state, its competitiveness or adaptability. Islam (religion) can be a decisive factor in socio-political life if it is integrated into the political system. And the degree of efficiency and benefit of Islam, in this case for the Iranian state, is determined by the degree of completeness and expediency of the created religio-political system, and not by the features of Islam itself.

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Вплив ісламу на стабільність та адаптивність політичної системи Ісламської республіки Іран

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В Ірані понад 40 років існує атипова політична система, створена на базі ісламу шиїтського напрямку. Система характеризується дуалізмом світської та релігійної влади, а також наявністю подвійної легітимності релігійних інституцій влади. Метою статті є визначення ефективності та адаптивності існуючої релігійно-політичної системи. З'ясовується, як іслам безпосередньо впливає на політичні інститути та організації, і, відповідно є фактором політичної стабільності та життєздатності політичного ладу. В сучасному Ірані існують республіканські та релігійні органи влади, тобто поєднується західне розуміння демократії та шиїтське розуміння життя мусульманської общини. Усі республіканські органи влади є виборними, однак над ними зберігають контроль релігійні інституції. Останні чотири десятиліття характеризувалися більшою концентрацією влади в руках Лідера країни та релігійних інституцій загалом. Республіканські виборні органи влади піддаються все більшому контролю з боку релігійних, а самі керманічі (Президент) цих органів поступово стали вихідцями з релігійних еліт. Таким чином все більше стирається різниця між світськими та релігійними інституціями, а масові протести громадян скеровані не на певний вид влади (релігійну чи світську), а на владу загалом. Центральним елементом стабільності даної системи є Лідер країни, який одночасно поєднує божественну та демократичну легітимність, і за цим показником є унікальним в системі державної влади. Політичні процеси в Ірані демонструють, що релігія не здатна ефективно безпосередньо впливати на політичні події та процеси, однак релігія інтегрована в політичну систему, де вона є домінуючою, здатна створити ефективний державний механізм. Принаймні тимчасово, така система здатна забезпечити стабільність, адаптивність та динамічність політичного життя в межах окремої країни. Проте тенденція до узурпації повноважень релігійною владою поступово знищує саму сутність дуалістичної релігійно-політичної системи Ірану. А отже і переваги такої системи, відносно забезпечення політичної та соціально-економічної справедливості, втрачаються.

Ключові слова: іслам, політична система, ісламська республіка, Іран, протести, легітимність, Факіх.

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