predominantly *Shi'i* Islam, and a patriarchal society. While leading a secluded life, its women were differentiated by class and were culturally and politically diverse. Focusing on women's lives, this historical chapter discusses women's experiences in the family and their work, religion, and politics at the turn of the twentieth-century. The underdeveloped economy and polity and patriarchal tendencies intimately defined a woman's position, although a few women's political activism culminated in, what might loosely be called, feminism.[2]

VEILING

Women were primarily confined to the household and reproduction. Their three-piece dress consisting of the *chador* (a long veil that covered them from head to toe), the *rubandeh* (a short veil that masked the face), and the *chaqchur* (very loose trousers) that signified their separate world; it assured them space and identity as *zai'feh*, or the weak sex and status as *moti'eh*, or those obedient to men's will. Strictly safeguarded from the public domain or men's world, their houses or rooms had no windows facing the streets and the outside world, and their mobility was severely controlled. Elite and wealthy women seldom went out – the men of their class would not approve. When they did, eunuchs accompanied them or they sat in a closed carriage alone or with other women or children. Feminist activist of the time, and subsequently my school Principal, Badr al-Moluk Bamdad, wrote that in Tehran, after four in the afternoon, the streets would be sex segregated, with men walking on one side and women on the other; should a woman need to cross the street to reach her home, she was required to obtain authorization from the street police. Even then, she would be scolded: "walk faster *zai'feh* and tighten up your veil," the police would say.[3]

Women spent most of their lives in the private world of the family. Indeed, a common name for a wife was *manzel* (the home). Rich or poor, women were confined to, and devoted their entire lives to the family. Affluent men might support an *andaruni*, the Persian equivalent of harem. A daughter of a powerful Qajar prince who grew up amidst her father's harem of eight wives described the intimate dynamics of such a separate

[2] "Long live," Malekzadeh, 62.

[3] Wealthy women, Rice, 168 and 193. When prosperous women went out, they mostly visited European shops and public baths where their servants carried bathing accessories, food supplies, and musical instruments so they could enjoy their half a day or the entire day. See Haas, 165; and "Walk faster *zai'feh*," Bamdad, Zan-e I, 68.

establishment by noting that "the wives in the compound looked upon each other's children as their own" and "Everyone there was linked with everyone else." It was common for men of royal families to have "100 or 200 or even 300 wives." Some of the wealthy landlords had over "400 servants, half of whom were women." Besides the legitimate wives, an *andaruni* might contain concubines and temporary wives (*siqehs*) as well as children and servants. In lesser households, husbands lived with their families as economic insecurity encouraged monogamous marriages, and many families were forced to share a room. But whether or not she was secluded in separate quarters, a woman's world was that of the *pardeh-neshin*, one who sat inside behind the curtained windows.[4]

From birth to marriage, women experienced disapproval. Unless girls were born into well-to-do families, their birth was less enthusiastically welcomed. Among the less-privileged classes, the birth of a baby girl usually meant disappointment to the father and fear in the mother, who might face abandonment or punishment by her husband or his close relatives or her own father. In some families, it was traditionally a *nang* (social disgrace) to give birth to girls, who were sometimes buried alive inside walls, whereas boys' birth would be celebrated with joy. Wealthier families showed greater tolerance toward their daughters – they provided child care and hired private tutors to teach them reading and writing in Persian, Arabic, and French as well as sewing and embroidery. Regardless of their social background, families required their daughters to remain virgins until marriage. As they grew up, girls learned that their sexuality, reproductiveness, and their labor were their only assets, though in fact, as women they exercised little control over their own body or labor. At puberty, even at the age of nine or ten, with no consideration for their wishes, parents would betroth and marry their daughters. They would then live out the life cycle for which they had been socialized, a life that repeated their mothers' experiences.[5]

The marital system ensured patriarchal domination. Patriarchy denotes a system of male control over women's labor and sexuality, both in the private and public spheres. As in *Shi'i* Islam, permanent marriage is analogous to a commercial transaction, in which the woman, the object of the contractual transaction, is exchanged for the *mehr* (brideprice). The

[4] "The wives" and "everyone," Farman Farmaian, 6–7; "300 wives," Soltanzadeh, 105–106; and "400 servants," *Ibid.*

[5] *Nang*, a story that I recall from my father's mother, Tehran, about 1960; and betroth and married, Bamdad, Zan-e II, 57–58.

brideprice specifies *saman-e boz'* or the price for a woman's sexual organ. The marriage contract approximates a commercial contract in Islamic Law, where *saman* (price) is exchanged for the *mabi'* (object for sale). Marriage is thus a contract for the legalization of sexual intercourse, not for love or even reproduction.[6]

The marriage contract legitimized the exchange – "immediate or deferred, symbolic or actual" – of a price for the bride's sexual organ. The indispensability of the *mehr* to the marriage contract and its interpretation as the distinct claim of the wife over husband, related especially to divorce, will be discussed later. In reality, however, divorces were rare. When they did occur, women's lack of social power prevented them from reclaiming their *mehr*. The marriage contract was in reality executed by two men, the father or the guardian of the bride and the groom or his family, without her consultation but with her consent executed the transaction. In so doing, the father transferred his authority over his daughter to the husband with the payment of a price through which the groom compensated the bride for the loss of her control over her sexuality and became the owner of her sexuality and "by extension herself."[7]

Such transactions or the traffic in women refers to the commercial exchange of women's sexuality between men, which ensures and enforces patriarchal domination while devalorizing women's position. Writing at the turn of the nineteenth-century, a British observer reported that "the men deem it obligatory to make a profound apology whenever they make mention to their companions of a dog, a hog, a donkey, or a *woman*. With them, [a] woman is no more than an idol of sensuality and a slave of passion." Men required women to be submissive, obedient, gracious in walk and speech, patient, caring, and loving. Paradoxically, their most private demands were superficially at odds with this picture. As a Qajar prince in his *Ta'dib-ol Nesvan* (Disciplining Women) instructed women, "in bed, put aside all bashfulness and innocence, move without shame and embarrassment. Do not think it exceeds your fame and reputation. If you do, what is your status then?"[8]

Patriarchal relations and control over economic resources reinforced men's power over women. Islam granted women property rights, but women had hardly any economic resources of their own. Even elite women complained about their financial situation and their dependence on men.

[6] *Saman* and *Mabi'*, Helli, 428.
[7] "Symbolic or actual" and "extension," Haeri, 34–38.
[8] "Slave of passion," Yonan, 18; and Qajar prince, Javadi, 78.

Data is scarce on property ownership, but where there was property, legal inheritance rights favored men. *Shi'i* Islam assigned a daughter a share half as large as her brother's, while a wife's share was one-eighth as large as her son's; the husband's share of his wife's legacy, on the other hand, was one-fourth that of her children. What little information is available points to women's limited ownership and control over economic resources or property.[9]

In sum, despite variations in different classes, women were primarily confined to the private and secluded world of the family. Growing up with little social esteem, most girls gained some economic and social value through the sale of their sexual organ in marriage contracts; in marital life, they became the virtual property of their husbands, paving the way for patriarchal control in the household and over economic resources. Patriarchal power also varied by class. The higher women were on the social scale, the more secluded and less mobile they were. By contrast, less-privileged women were more mobile and less secluded. Class and patriarchy acted together to shape women's lives; together, they affected women's work both within and outside the family.

WOMEN AND WORK

Women's work in the household and in the marketplace is intertwined, not distinct and separate. The narrow methodological approaches often adopted by scholars of Iranian political and economic history neglect the value of women's domestic work for the society and economy because it is wageless and contains no exchange value. Similarly, the scattered economic data offer aggregated information on employment as a whole, thereby failing to provide specific knowledge on the work patterns of women and men. Thus, women's work and their contribution to Iran's economy of the early twentieth-century remain underestimated.[10]

During the early 1900s, Iran's overall economy experienced a slow transformation from a subsistence to a market economy. One of the features of societies undergoing such a change is that household production is still united with production for the market; the two are not separate spheres as they are under advanced capitalist systems. As a result, women's work in the market, to the extent that it exists, remains an extension of their work at home and their reproductive activities. Depending on

[9] "Financial situation," Farman Farmaian, 18–19.

[10] Economic data, Issawi; Bhahrier; Baldwin; Katouzian; Amuzegar; and Looney.

feminists' avowed dream, it now seemed to be the strong state that was achieving it with the cooperation of women who aspired to this symbol of autonomy.[44]

The Center's activities in many ways remained consistent with the intentions of earlier feminists. Although the evidence, which would fully explain women's cooperation with the state is missing, the history of women's rights movement in Iran may shed some light on their motives. Some women may have feared the state's power and its vicious and brutal activities that they had observed. On the other hand, they probably thought that they could win their battles by working with a state that intended to Europeanize the society and emancipate women. It is also possible that feminists' nationalist ideology played a role in their readiness to collaborate with the state that had achieved national sovereignty. Driven by personal and political ambition, some women undoubtedly saw an advantage to side with a state that appeared willing to respond to some of their concerns. A more complex picture is required than the contention that "Ideologically, [the Center] was proestablishment and too [moderate] on feminist issues . . . the Center's work was geared toward social and charitable activities for women." In particular, the 1930s feminists exerted little choice but to coordinate their activities with the state that was promoting unveiling. As positive gains were achieved, women referred to expanded educational and some employment opportunities as examples. On the negative side, women's unveiling came through coercive means. Thus state intervention shaped the nature of Iranian feminism in the 1930s.[45]

UNVEILING

Scholars of Reza Shah's reign refer to the unveiling edict as an extension of his reforms, as the influence of Attatürk and his gender policies, as a project in state-building, or as a manifestation of repression, or

[44] Official feminism does not refer to the state's interests in representing and promoting women's interests. Nor does it connote the idea that the state is gender neutral. Here, it refers to the state's actions in promulgating measures that helped improve women's position, which benefitted state's interests, first and foremost – see subsequent chapters, and to some extent, women's suffrage. Asqar Hekmat, Hekmat, 85–102; and Doulatabadi was offered, Bamdad I, 52 and 58; and Sheikholeslami, 113 and 120. The Center's aims included women's education and training; teaching them home economics and childrearing; encouraging them to engage in sports and athletics; establishing charity organizations for poor women and foster children; and inspiring women to live within modest means. See Bamdad I, 88–91.

[45] "Ideologically," Sanasarian, 68.

in terms of women's emancipation. One study denied the emancipatory nature of unveiling: "But in a society where men themselves were helpless objects of manipulation by the organized lawlessness of the state, would it not be grotesque to regard this act of persecution of women as their emancipation? . . . would women be emancipated by going out without [veils]?" My focus is on the centrality of unveiling to Reza Shah's policy and politics. I view unveiling in the context of state-building, state-clergy relations, and women's responses to them. As indicated earlier, Reza Shah's aims were to Westernize and strip the clerics of their power, in particular over women, at first slowly, then more swiftly in the 1930s. Many women resented authoritarianism in silence, while a minority fervently embraced the monarch and his gender policies.[46]

Unveiling was a gradual process as the *chador* was not abolished overnight. Reza Shah formulated his policy of banning the veil after his state visit to Turkey in the summer of 1934. But Reza Shah's campaign was integral to his Westernization policies which had begun long before his trip to Turkey. At the beginning of his reign, he introduced somewhat modest changes in women's status but later, he stepped up changes – especially those concerning women's public appearance. In 1926, he provided police protection for women who chose to appear unveiled publicly, but with a scarf or a hat to cover their hair. In a dramatic episode in 1928, the monarch attacked and humiliated religious authorities who had admonished the Queen for exposing part of her face in the holy shrine at Qom. In 1928, the Law of Uniformity of Dress outlawed men's traditional garb in favor of Western clothing though some religious authorities and *chador*-wearing women were exempt. When police began to enforce the 1935 rules pertaining to men's hats in the holy city of Mashhad, bloody clashes occurred between officials and the crowd who had other political grievances as well. There were many casualties, with hundreds dying.[47]

[46] Reforms, Banani, 39; gender policies, Abrahamiam, *Iran*, 144; state-building, Najmabadi, "The Hazards," 53–54; and Chehabi, "Staging," 209–229; repression, Azari; emancipation, Bamdad, *Zan-e* I, 94; and "persecution of women," Katouzian, 127.

[47] Turkey, Hekmat, 87–102; and Filmer, 367–368; Qom, Banani, 84; and Akhavi, *The Politics*, 42; and Law of Uniformity, Chehabi, "Staging." The Law of Uniformity assigned uniforms that were to be made with domestic fabrics for the army, schools and institutions. It outlawed the tall hats and traditional headdresses that men wore and replaced them with the new "Pahlavi hat," which resembled the French military cap. It also encouraged European-style suits, already worn by wealthy men in the capital, especially in the Court. In 1935, a second hat directive introduced a style modeled after Turkish men's hats. Resembling the French brimmed chapeau, it was not welcomed by all men, especially not the clergy, who found that it hampered their touching the ground with their foreheads during daily prayers.

Public mixing of women and men, prohibited by the clerics, became part of the unveiling campaign. After the Qom incident, the government issued police regulations to guard women who attended cinemas, theaters, restaurants, and other public places in men's company. Women were also permitted to speak to men in the streets and to ride with them in carriages – of course, with the carriage hood down. In 1935, the ruler's daughters inaugurated women's cultural centers in Tehran, and the wives of high officials and cabinet members appeared unveiled in a tea party given by the Prime Minister. Later, at a reception in Golestan Palace, Reza Shah "condemned the superstitions encouraged by mullas (mullahs)" while criticizing the *chador* "by contemptuously mimicking the gestures of a woman covering and uncovering her face as a man approached."[48]

Unveiling became a state policy upon Reza Shah's address at a ceremony held in Tehran Teachers College on 17 Day 1314s./ January 7, 1936, thereafter known as *Hefda-he Dey* or *Rooz-e Azadi-ye Zan* or Women's Emancipation Day. An advance order had been issued to all women teachers and wives of ministers, high military officers, and government officials to appear in European clothes and hats, rather than *chadors*. Prior to the ceremony, Reza Shah admitted to his family that the unveiling decision was "the *hardest* thing I've ever had to do." He then asked his daughters and wife to attend the ceremony unveiled and "serve as an example for other Persian women."[49] He then announced his proclamation of women's emancipation. He said that:

> Previously Iranian women could not exhibit their talents and render services to the country. . . . But now, they can enjoy other advantages on top of their remarkable duties as mothers. . . . We must not forget that in the past half of the population was unemployed and was not taken into account. At no time women's potential was utilized. . . . You ladies should take advantage of the opportunity to work . . . and to educate. . . . you have now entered the society, have moved ahead to guarantee your own happiness and to contribute to the welfare of your country. Remember, your duty: work. . . . Be good educators of the future generation and train good students. . . . Serve your country. Save, avoid luxuries and be useful to your nation. . . .

An eyewitness reported that some older women who were showing their faces for the first time were so embarrassed that for most of the ceremony

[48] Public mixing, Filmer; 367, and Frye, 6; and mimicking, National Archives, American Ligation Dispatch 613, October 3, 1936, as cited in Wilber, *Riza*, 168.

[49] *Hardest* [Emphasis added], and "serve," Pahlavi, *Faces*, 25.

they hugged and stood in front of the walls, perspiring and hiding their faces from men. Other women cheered.[50]

With outlawing the veil, European fashions replaced Iranian women's clothing in public. Soon after the unveiling proclamation, by order of the state, schoolgirls paraded in the streets in Western athletic costumes, unveiled female teachers appeared before their classes, and medical and law schools admitted women. Business boomed for seamstresses and beauty salons, and shops specializing in European hats became noticeable in Tehran's streets. A trade commission was sent to Europe to buy quantities of clothes and hats from France and Germany.[51]

Unveiling edict was implemented ruthlessly. The state dismissed high-level officials whose wives appeared in public in *chadors*. It fined low-ranking government employees if their wives accompanied them veiled. It also prohibited veiled women from cinemas and from public baths, the only bathing places available for a large majority of women. An eyewitness interviewee from Tehran recalled that even a woman who wore a scarf in public was stopped by police who would joke with her and then without explanation, pull off the scarf or tear it into shreds. Another eyewitness commented that, without prior notice, officials would sometimes break into private homes or search door-to-door and arrest women wearing *chadors* in the privacy of their homes. A report from the city of Tabriz stated that only unveiled girls could receive diplomas or their degrees with honor.[52]

Many women resented the unveiling act. The veil symbolized the "sign of propriety and a means of protection against the menacing eyes of male strangers"; thus, "for the majority of Iranian women, removal of the veil meant committing a major sin and disgrace." But the meaning of the veil changed according to social class and local traditions. Generally,

[50] Women's emancipation, Amuzegar, *Maqam-e Zan*, 483–487; and Sadeghipoor, 41; and eyewitness, Bamdad I, 94.

[51] Parade, Filmer, 378; salons, Bamdad, I, 94–96; and trade commission, Wilber, *Riza*, 174.

[52] Eyewitness, Sedghi's interview with Shahjoun Alavi in Huntington, New York, November 25, 1992; another eyewitness, Sedghi's conversation with her mother, Afsar Shishehchi in Baltimore, Maryland on February 16, 1992; and Tabriz, Woodsmall, *Moslem*, 151. To begin to understand the impact of forced unveiling, one might imagine the following allegorical tale: one day as American women stepped out of their homes to go shopping or take a bus or taxi to work, they were arrested on the spot by local police. Store managers and drivers were made liable to pay fines if they served these women. Charged with disobeying new laws requiring women to appear nude in public, they were told that neither they nor their husbands would be entitled to collect their salaries unless individually or in the company of their husbands, they appeared nude at the payroll office!

urban women wore the veil, whereas rural and tribal women covered their hair with long and wide scarves. Unveiling was primarily enforced in larger cities as centers of Westernization and capitalist development; it had little effect on tribal, small town, and rural women, who wore different costumes than urban women. Except for a few affluent and educated women in larger cities, most urban women abhorred the new policy as creating a space between women and the cosmos; the *chador* gave them protection and security, and physical comfort. While the majority of urban women felt psychological and physical safety with the *chador*, unveiling, by contrast, symbolized insecurity and estrangement, perhaps in the way nudity would for many Western women.[53] Thus, one interviewee questioned: how could women be stripped of their clothes overnight? How could women who had no power to defend themselves against the state and police bear the disgrace and humiliation? The same interviewee recalled that women protested in silence and sought refugee in their homes. Another interviewee indicated most women went out only to visit the public baths once a week; they did so, at night, in their *chadors*, taking long routes and passing through frightening, dark and narrow alleys, hoping to remain unnoticed by police. Many older women refused to accompany their husbands in public, sending their daughters instead.[54]

Some women liked the unveiling edict. Less culturally and personally attached to the veil, the generation of daughters exhibited a greater tolerance toward unveiling than their mothers; many of them were happy to abandon their *chadors*. Most of the women who immediately took advantage of the new rulings came from privileged backgrounds; some had resided abroad and had already abandoned the *chador* in favor of European clothing. Similarly, Westernized, middle-aged, educated and elite women, including a number of participants in the constitutional movement, welcomed unveiling. Some ignored the brutal means by which the edict was implemented and proudly referred to it as *Farman-e Bozorg* or the Great Order.[55]

Unveiling may have seemed in some ways even more catastrophic to men than to women, although some men favored it. Photos from the 1930s portray men with their unveiled female family members. One interviewee

[53] "Sign of Propriety," and "sin," Nashat, *Women*, 27. Regarding nudity, see note 52, above.

[54] Same interviewee, Sedghi's interview with S. Alavi; and another interviewee, Sedghi's discussions with her mother, who recalled her older sister, not her mother, accompanying her father in public.

[55] Daughters, Sedghi's discussions with her mother; and Order, Bamdad I, 94.

recalled that her uncle was so ebullient that he took his three daughters, unveiled, out to the streets immediately when he heard the proclamation of unveiling. But for many men, their honor had long been associated with their hold on women. The source of a man's personal power, indeed his masculinity, resided in women's seclusion, restrictions on their physical appearance, and control over their sexuality and labor. At the time, many men resented the edict, yet they abided by it publicly. A governmental interpreter stated that the king had "made much progress [regarding women], but he went too fast. Persia needed a dictator, it was already too late to go slowly. There was too much to do. People were angry in their hearts, but they had to advance." Bystanders continued to harass and humiliate unveiled women in the absence of police. Available sources do not reveal much information on men's behavior toward women at home. But on a deep emotional level, unveiling must have produced a sense of personal fearfulness and powerlessness on the part of many men: fearfulness over losing control over women; and powerlessness for being unable to neutralize the power of the state.[56]

Unveiling represented a critical blow to clerics' power. Privately, they shared with other men the power to control women through the household, family, sexuality, and the socialization and training of children. What men concealed was now being revealed; what was private for them was now public; and what men owned was now being taken away. Publicly, the clergy had already lost some control over institutions that held power over women, for example, the educational system, and to a lesser degree, marriage and divorce laws, and property relations. Unveiling further challenged the clerical domination over women, and especially their power over female sexuality. The religious communities in Tehran, Tabriz, and Mashhad waged drawn-out battles to recover social legitimacy and control over women and the state, although all their attempts were ruthlessly suppressed.[57]

In sum, the state succeeded in its unveiling initiatives. Unveiling transferred some patriarchal power of the clergy to the state, and the state itself assumed the role of patriarch. Although Middle Eastern patriarchy falls within the patterns of the classical model, Iranian patriarchy was immutable. It transcended specific social and political contexts as some of it shifted from the men's domain to that of the state's in the 1930s. Indeed,

[56] Photos, my relatives' photos in possession of the author; interviewee, Sedghi's interview with M.S. in New York City, January 1999; and "dictator," Woodsmall, *Women*, 50.

[57] Tehran, Bamdad I, 96; and Nashat, 27.

unveiling was carried out more coercively than comparable clothes and hat policies for men. Hardly a feminist or a champion of women, Reza Shah "was never subject to feminine influence, and never displayed a sentimental affection for the fair sex," his daughter acknowledged. His gender reforms did not intend to undermine women's actual oppression and exploitation.[58] His primary aim was the establishment of a centralized and superficially Westernized state that required emasculating the religious establishment. Women's emancipation was thus a means, not an end. Nahid Yeganeh indicated that Iranian feminist critiques of "traditionalism" and patriarchy were forcibly challenged by the powerful actions of the state and wielded against the clergy in an effort to weaken its power. Since gender policies required neutralizing the clerics' power, women who had long been active against the veil and their backward situation, found themselves confronted with the possibility of "emancipation" and unveiling overnight. Unveiling became the symbol of the clergy's "emasculation" and women's liberation from clerical patriarchy. Yet unveiling was a far cry from real democratic change. Women still remained subordinated. Thereby Reza Shah became his own gravedigger, as World War II began.[59]

WORLD WAR II, DYNASTIC CHANGES, AND NEW FEMINISMS

The Allies invaded Iran in August of 1941. Iran provided a strategic route to the Soviet Union, and the Allies sought to protect oil installations and avert pro-German activities. Unlike the constitutional period, foreign invasion provoked little popular resistance. Given his alliance with the Germans during the war, the Allies pressured the monarch to relinquish power in September 1941. Within three weeks, they deported Reza Shah to South Africa, where he died in 1944. Reza Shah abdicated in favor of his twenty two year old, Swiss-educated son, Mohammad Reza (1919–80), who retained the crown until the 1979 Revolution. The abdication brought an end to autocracy and state control of society, at least

[58] Middle Eastern patriarchy, Kandiyoti, *Women*, 1–21; and fair sex, Wilber, *Riza*, 236; and Pahlavi, *Faces*, 23–24. It is unclear whether Reza Shah had a distinct idea about what constituted a "Western" state and society; in many ways, he promoted autocracy, which paralleled many developing societies of his own time. Nor was he sympathetic to women, especially his own daughters who could not even choose their own schooling or select their own husbands.

[59] Yeganeh, Yeganeh, "Jonbesh-e Zan."

the revolutionary state introduced new forms of gender relations, veiling practices, and gender segregation measures, paving the way for the building of an Islamic and *Shi'i* identity. Reveiling became one of the major objectives of revolutionary leaders. Despite their active participation in the social movement, women became a critical locus of the struggle for political power. Reversing and replacing many of the previous gender laws with stricter rules and curtailing decades of opportunities that had accompanied unveiling and gender policies for some women, the new clerical authorities sought to reshape the society according to their precepts. Women began to experience an upsurge of patriarchal norms in their private and public lives. Although the backlash and diminished possibilities could not send women back to the *andaruni* and their secluded lives at the turn of the century, reveiling became a new force in women's lives, symbolizing and fostering different meanings at different times.

REVEILING

During the revolution, wall grafitti, posters, the media, and stamps depicted vivid and colorful portrayals of the new veiled Islamic women. For the first time in Iranian history, a woman appeared on a stamp, costing 20 rials ($.03). At its center, the stamp had a sketch of a round-faced woman that was carved inside an oval-shaped empty shell.[16] She had no body, only a face cloaked in black, a face without wrinkles or lines, a face with a closed mouth and serious eyes looking into infinity. Except for a gun showing from behind her head, the background looked cold. There was no feeling, or passion. Only because her hair was covered, she could not be mistaken for a man. But this was the revolution's ideal woman: a pious Muslim and a militant fighter; more importantly, she was masculinized or perhaps, a de-sexualized woman. This reveiled woman whose sexuality was concealed became a centerpiece of the revolution and subsequently, the Islamic state.

Unlike Jamalzadeh's early twentieth-century women, the idealized revolutionary woman was more utilitarian and purposeful. Like ancient Persia's powerful Zoroastrian women, who guarded the sanctity of the temple by keeping and maintaining the fire, the new Muslim woman acquired new responsibilities: she became the guardian of religion, state, and society, all of which required veiling or the *hejab*, and she epitomized

[16] Stamp, Farhi also discusses the images of this stamp within the context of the male revolutionary culture – see her "Sexuality."

nationalism and anti-Western ethos. In a unique way, this new woman represented distinct images: as an embodiment of the illusion of an historical cultural authenticity based on Islamic and *Shi'i* history; as an alternative to the "immoral" West that had seized power from the East; and as an enforcer of social control over women through religious law, culture, and tradition. Thus, the Islamic Republic drew on reveiling to redefine women's sexuality as a kernel of the state and its legitimacy.

Iranian religious and feminist thoughts shed different light on women and sexuality. In their religious and political texts, major *Shi'i* scholars offer diverse views on gender relations, rules of sexual conduct, women's ascribed private and social behavior, and women's sexuality and its function for reproduction, family relations, and men's sexual desires. Exalting Fatemeh, the Prophet's daughter and the wife of his successor, Emam Ali, they glorify her as the role model of the real Muslim woman. In today's Iran, Fatemeh's birthday is celebrated as the Woman's Day. She is commemorated as the paragon of motherhood and wifely virtues, above all, a heroine who was an authentic and devout Muslim, devoid of anything impure, foreign, and alien to Islam.

Devoting particular attention to postrevolutionary developments and the backlash against women, Iranian feminist scholars see sexuality as an integral aspect of the state's ideology. Some consider the state's perception of women's sexuality in terms of continuity with the past: violent and culturally patriarchal as ingrained in the *Shi'i* and monarchical traditions of male domination and female submission. Others argue that the *Shi'i* jurisprudence has been ideologically ambivalent toward women and their sexuality, especially in marital relations, both permanent and temporary. Yet another critique of the revolutionary culture considers the rejection of women's sexuality and the hiding of women's bodies as the focus of politics derived from "the defense of revolutionary purity" and the uniqueness of *Shi'i* tradition, which eventually "rests on the shoulders of those women cloaked in pitch black veils."[17]

But reveiling is far greater than realized during the early stages of the revolution. In its various manifestations, it plays critical roles in politics and society. First, as a powerful political symbol, it legitimizes the Islamic state, almost as significant as the idea and practice of the nation itself, or the national anthem or even its flag. In their implementation

[17] *Shi'i* scholars, Khomeini; Motahhari; and Shari'ati; Fatemeh, Farhi, "Sexuality," 16–17; Some consider, Azari; and Moghissi; others argue, Haeri; and yet another critique, Farhi, "sexuality," 15–16; and Paidar, *Women*, entire.

of reveiling, clerical leaders condemned not only "unveiling" (*bi-hejabi)*, but also "improper-veiling" (*bad-hejabi*). Moreover, they assigned severe punishments to disobedient women. During the first few years of the revolution, state agents harassed, scorned, arrested, fined, and lashed many women for bad-veiling. In addition, the vigilantes, security forces, revolutionary committee members, members of the Party of God and the gender police (*zanan-e basiji*) scolded, interrogated, attacked, or intimidated women they considered improperly-veiled. By dismissing women's will or their desires to choose or not to choose the cloak, new pronouncements and coercive actions of the militia and state and non-state forces made reveiling obligatory and an important emblem of statehood[18] and its representation.

Second, reveiling fosters social order by regulating women's sexuality. From the outset, unveiled women became a social anathema but veiled women acquired revolutionary credentials. Extolling the concealed women, women's bodies were ordered to be disguised like "pearls protected inside a shell," as street murals conveyed and communicate today. Veiling guarded Islam, but significantly, it hid women's sexual power/energy from eliciting public disorder by distracting and arousing men sexually. Underscoring the necessity of the new dress code, in his February 1979 interview with Oriana Fallaci, Khomeini stated:

> The women who contributed to the revolution were, and are, women with the dress, not elegant women all made up like you, who go around all uncovered, dragging behind them a tail of men. The coquettes who put on make up and go into the street showing off their necks, their hair, their shapes, did not fight against the Shah. They never did anything good, not those. They do not know how to be useful, neither socially, nor politically, nor professionally. And this is so because, by uncovering themselves, they distract men, and upset them.[19]

On March 6, 1979, he declared the *hejab* edict, and devout women readily supported the measure.[20]

Most other religious leaders endorsed reveiling. Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari, a highly respected *Shi'i* scholar, defined the veiled Muslim

[18] "Unveiling" and "improper-veiling," Sciolino, "From the Back Seat," A4; and scolded, interrogated, attacked, and intimidated, "Andar Hekayat-e" [In Stories], 5–6; "Khatar-e Birun Budan-e Dast" [The Dangers of Not Covering], 13; "Rafsanjani: dar Barabar-e Hejab" [Rafsanjani: There is Resistance], *Ibid*., 5; and "Ekhraj-e 'Bad-Hejab" [The Ousting of the Improperly-Veiled], 5.

[19] Fallaci, "An Interview With Khomeini," 31.

[20] Devout women, "Interview with Esmat Abad," in www.BadJens.com (May 13, 2000).

woman as one who "covers herself when associating with men, one who is not seductive and inviting." Similarly, the Islamic Republic's first President, Abolhasan Bani-Sadr, indicated in 1981 that "Research proved female hair had a kind of radiance" that required it to be fully covered. In 1986, Hashemi Rafsanjani, then Speaker of the Parliament and later the Iranian President, following an injunction from the *Qoran*, warned women to cloak themselves well: "Women can only keep uncovered their faces and hands," he said, "not their neck, their ears, bosoms, arms and legs." Then he cautioned women against the manner in which the feminine voice was sexually stimulating: "in their conversations, women should not speak in a tone that their voice and their tone would be arousing and seductive to men." The perceived danger in the power of women's sexuality and their body necessitated its concealment.[21]

Third, reveiling affirmed the requirement of modest and virtuous behavior expected of Muslim women.[22] The *hejab* is an institution with its own set of rules regarding women's conduct and their actions and interactions, in particular with men. This meaning of the *hejab* is not distinct and separate from its dress form, rather it is its adjunct. An observant woman is covered and restrained. She is chaste and obedient in private and public: at home, she is a subservient wife, a sexual servant and a nurturing mother, and if single, she is at fault socially and sanctimoniously; outside the home, she is diligent in how she walks, what she wears, how she talks, sits, and smiles, and how she moves her body and displays her ornaments. In a Friday Sermon, Hashemi Rafsanjani indicated that the *hejab* should "cover head, neck, breasts and especially the curves of the breasts definitely." Even if women cover themselves thoroughly, he ordered women should not wear

> . . . tight clothing to visibly exhibit their bodies to the extent that they are eye-catching and attract men's attention; this is *bad-hejabi* (bad covering); . . . Clothes must be so loose that they won't excite men. Nor should women speak in such a manner and such a tone of voice to excite and invite the opposite sex.[23]

[21] "Not seductive," Motahhari, *Masa'leh*, 79–83; "Research proved," Sciolino, "From the Back Seat." A4; and Rafsanjani, "Ra'ies-e Shoray-e Eslami Hodud-e Hejab" [The Speaker of *Majles* Announced], 5.

[22] Modesty, Mernissi's *Beyond* is one of the earliest books that showed that the sex-segregated institutions in the Muslim world intended to contain women's sexually induced behavior.

[23] "Tight clothing," "Ra'ies-e Majles-e Shoray-e Eslami [The Speaker of the Majles Announced], 5 and 12.

Despite Rafsanjani's warnings, the color, the form, and how much of the hair and the face the *hejab* could mask became the subject of great controversy.[24] *Zan-e Ruz*, a women's magazine, discussed bad-veiling or improper-veiling as:

> . . . uncovered head, showing of hair, make-up, uncovered arms and legs, thin and see-through clothes and tights, tight clothes such as trousers without an overall over them, and clothes bearing foreign words, signs or pictures. The importers and traders of the latter type of clothes were also threatened with fines, imprisonment and flogging. The clothes women could wear in public [are] limited to the standard Islamic uniform of long, thick and loose overall, trousers, thick stockings and large headscarves folded in the front to cover every string of hair. These should be in small prints like the rest of the quote preferred colors [are] . . . dark blue, black, gray and brown.[25]

In today's Iran, the black *chador* is a form of the *hejab* that is preferred by the stricter religious orders, and it is worn by high-level female officials or street demonstrators or some who participate in religious gatherings. Another form of the *hejab* combines a wide head scarf with loose and long tunics and loose trousers, usually in dark colors. In 2002, many young women in Tehran wore matching striped or colorful scarves and knee-high, light color, and tightly fit tunics over slim pants in public and private offices. In 2005, in larger cities, short and tight jackets substituted tunics, sometimes sandals were worn instead of shoes and more women wore make-up in public. Women working in international organizations appeared unveiled, but those in government facilities continue to dress up in dark *maqna'eh*, loose tunics, and trousers. Although substantial changes in the shapes and shades of the *hejab* are visible in today's Iran, modesty continues to depict and define devout Muslim women and thus the Muslim state itself.[26]

[24] *Hejab*, see some of the earlier works that were published both in Iran and the United States, including *Islamic Revolution*; *Mahjubah*; and *Message of Revolution*. Refer also to the American publication of *Women and Struggle in Iran*. For other works see Paidar, *Women*, and recent issues of *Zan-e Ruz* and *Zanan*.

[25] *Zan-e Ruz*, 60, 1988, cited by Paidar, *Women*, 344.

[26] Cloak, or the veil has never been a monolithic "Islamic" dress code for women or a symbolic representation of women. Historically and culturally specific, the veil's meaning has changed in different social and political environments subject to diverse women's views and their lifestyles. In Iran, literally denoting a "curtain" or one who sits behind a "curtain" (*pardeh neshin*), the *hejab* has commonly and traditionally come to refer to a piece of cloth by which a woman must protect her body from the men who are forbidden by religious authorities to glance at her. Prior to the 1979 Revolution urban women from all classes, in particular the middle-class and the wealthy abandoned the