

Iran's societal assessment

[Government](#), [Military](#)



How the of Iran Controls Its Masses How the of Iran Controls Its Masses The 1900 are often seen as a decade of economic reconstruction and political reform in Iran. Intellectuals, businessmen and technocrats dominated the public sphere as the country seemed to be distancing itself from its revolutionary heritage. How to blend distinct ethnic, linguistic and tribal clusters into a united state has always been problematic in Iran.

Conventionally it was the shared Shi'a religion of the majority and allegiance to the dynasty that marked the identification with the Empire, the foremost loyalty being bestowed to the local tribal and linguistic as well as religious group. Iran was a conglomerate of sundry semi-autonomous regions, tribes and classes which were weakly maintained together by the dynasty who depended upon tribal allegiances as well as military power to continue and uphold their rule.

In the 20th century, collective denominators have been arranged and supported by the state in an endeavor at creating a modern national Iranian identity for all inhabitants, notwithstanding language, religion or culture. This was to be founded on a secular nation-state, a centralized national government governing over a well-designed territory, pride and honor in Iran's pre-historic history, its culture and Farsi (Persian) enacted by the state as the official language are some of the unifying tools that the state of Iran is using to control its masses and which this paper will cover.

Iran has predominantly used Islam as an instrument to create, foster and maintain national cohesion. More specifically, the Islam religion has been sanctified by the state and enshrined in the constitution. This has been safeguarded and any criticism is suppressed (Hiro, 2001, pg. 243). Islam has

provided an extremely 'inclusive' identity which has overflowed its national boundaries into the broad concept of the ummat, the community of Islam beyond Iran, a sort of religio-imperialism which has united Iranians.

A common culture, rather than any strong feeling of national unity binds the Iranians together. It is the culture that lends unity and the apex of its expression is found in poetry. The architectural beauty and fame of the blue-domed mosques, the workmanship, design and color of Persian carpets- all these are considered important expressions of a common and glorious heritage and have cemented the unity of Iran as it gives them a sense of common history. In light of this, the state has recognized the importance of culture to its citizenry and consequently promoted it to encourage national cohesion and group think.

The state has also deployed and made use of the police, especially the basij militias and pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards) which have been used to arrest any reformist and instill a climate of fear (Institute for Middle East Strategic Studies, 2010). The strength of these two state tools were especially seen during the popular movement of the " Persian spring" which was tamed as suddenly as it had burst into the open.

The government has also allowed for representation for minority groups in the government system in order to co-opt them into the larger governmental machinery. 5 seats in the Iranian Parliament, from the 290 available seats are reserved for the representation of Iran's recognized minorities. This step was meant to remove any political threat that such groups may pose to the Islamic republic.

Whereas the government has not granted official recognition to the

languages of the ethnic communities, they have encouraged the use of minority languages amongst relevant religious minority communities. The Iranian constitution in Article 15 specifies Persia as the official language and script, the use of regional and tribal language is allowed in the press and mass media and the teaching of literature in schools. However, the state has refused the teaching of Kurdish in any level in schools, print and electronic media. This is predominantly because of the Kurdish quest for autonomy which is threatening the stability of the regime (Zeidan, 2011).

Ayatollah is also seen and used as a symbol of a unifying force in the country. The paranoid style of the politics in Iran has enabled Khomeini to manipulate the fears of the masses and eliminate any political rivals who may act as sources of any ideology which is unpopular in the face of the state (Zeidan, 2011).

Other tools being used and are proving to be more and more effective in this day and age of economic war fair is the aspect of a common enemy in the name of westernization. The perception that the western world is an enemy of Iran whose only intent is to destroy the country. This has been the latest tool and it is proving to be invaluable especially to the Islamic hardliners who make majority of the population.

In conclusion, the state has to a great extent succeeded at influencing and gaining the moral support of its citizenry and extending its missions.

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