

**Realism, Rationalism and Revolutionism in
Iran's Foreign Policy:
The West, the State and Islam**

Dissertation

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For my family

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List of Abbreviations

AIOC	Anglo-Iranian Oil Company
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BOP	Balance of Power
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (U.S.)
DAC	Dialogue Among Civilizations
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
EU	European Union
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GPM	Great Power Management
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICDAC	International Centre of Dialogue Among Civilizations
IICDCC	International Centre for Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations
IL	International Law
IRGC	Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps
IRP	Islamic Republican Party
JCM	India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
RCD	Regional Cooperation for Development
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USD	United States Dollars
WAVE	World Against Violence and Extremism
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

1 Introduction and Related Literature Review

1.1 Central Thesis

Iran's association with terms such as 'rogue state, pariah state or axis of evil' had ascribed negative attributes to the country, which extends to the way Iran conducts its foreign affairs. This complicates international relations with Tehran as the political elites are regarded with heavy scepticism and their foreign policy as highly questionable. Suspicion regarding Iran's real intent on having a functioning nuclear program is a case in point. Iranian leaders have persistently claimed it is solely for peaceful purposes. 'Due to the important fatwa of its leader and its defence doctrine, [Iran] has never had the intention of producing a nuclear weapon' and yet mistrust has prevailed.¹ I developed this research within this context of ambiguity surrounding Iranian foreign policy, wherein I answer the question: *How can we explain the dynamics of Iran's foreign policy?*

I argue that *Iran's foreign policy is consistent and is fundamentally realist with a revolutionist vision while the means are rationalist*. Iranian statesmen, like most statesmen in the world, shape their policies within the institutional and normative parameters of the modern international society of sovereign states adhering to the traditions of realism, rationalism and revolutionism. Iranian statesmen participating in international affairs utilize the institutions of international society and follow normative guidelines on how to effectively conduct themselves in pursuing their foreign policy objectives. These objectives are simultaneously realist, rationalist and revolutionist in nature showing the complexity and dynamism of Iran's foreign policy. Iran's foreign policy results from the interplay and balancing of the 'traditions of thought' of the international society by the Iranian statesmen, proving it is similar to foreign policies of all the other countries in the world. My analysis of Iran's foreign policy relies on a different and multi-faceted approach as compared to most research on the topic while at the same time supporting the conclusion of most studies on Iranian foreign policy. I show that Iran's foreign policy is consistent by providing a different understanding of it using the English School approach. Furthermore, I use both the quantitative and qualitative methods, taking into

¹ Hassan Rouhani, "Address by Mr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2015)," United Nations, accessed December 17, 2016, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a/70/pv.13

account both foreign policy discourses and actions, while weaving together the realist, rationalist and revolutionist traditions in Iran's foreign policy, making this research unique.

Iran's foreign policy and its relationship with the 'traditions of thought' and the institutions of the contemporary international society is at the centre of the following dissertation.² The reflection of the three traditions of international society – realism, rationalism and revolutionism – and the classic institutions of the English School – are argued to be present within the discursive structure of the political elites in Iran, demonstrated by an analysis of the statements of the supreme leader and presidents aimed at international audiences as well as in Iran's foreign policy actions.

The English School puts forward the three concepts of realism, rationalism and revolutionism as the central traditions of the international society, which shape the interactions of states with one another. Such interactions are facilitated by the core institutions of diplomacy, international law, balance of power, great power management and war.³ These concepts provide useful analytical instruments to understand and explain the underlying reasons of Iran's seemingly inconsistent foreign policy. Central to this study is how the three 'traditions of thought' have operated within the Iranian foreign policy apparatus through the institutions and discourses, thereby creating a framework wherein Iran's foreign policy manoeuvres are executed.

The time frame for this dissertation stretches from Khatami's presidency (1997-2005) until the first term of the Rouhani government (2013-2017), focusing on Iran's political elites' view of the West, particularly the United States, and the ramifications of this on Iranian foreign policy. Khatami was the first reformist president elected in Iran who introduced the 'dialogue among civilizations,' signifying Iran's initial step to engage with the Western world. He opened avenues where Iran could define itself against an international order where the nuclear program served as Iran's token to negotiate with the international community. The most dynamic interplay of realism, rationalism and revolutionism at work within the Iranian foreign policy is demonstrated within the two decades chosen for this research.

² I borrow the term 'tradition of thought' from N. J. Rengger, *International relations, political theory, and the problem of order: Beyond international relations theory?*, The new international relations (London, New York: Routledge, 2000). There are alternative terminologies that can be applied to 'traditions of thought' such as 'international political culture' or 'schools of thought' in international society, however, for the purposes of simplicity, I shall remain with the term 'traditions of thought'.

³ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002)

1.2 Historical Background

My research begins in the year 1997 for it represents a dramatic change in Iran's foreign policy strategy. Former president Khatami was elected to the presidency on a platform of reform where advocated cooperation, dialogue and diplomacy in dealing with Iran's international affairs. Within this period, the Iranian government presented itself to be ready to engage with the international society, making it a crucial year in Iran's foreign policy. Due to Khatami's moderate stance and diplomatic gestures, a rapprochement with the United States seemed possible. His approach was so effective that by March 2000, the former Secretary of State Madelaine Albright issued an official apology to Iran for its involvement in the 1953 coup ousting the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh, who nationalized Iran's oil to the dismay of the West. 2001 was designated the year of the Dialogue Among Civilizations, an initiative put forward by Khatami at the start of his presidency. Hopes were high but, ironically, tragedy struck the United States as terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. It shook the international community and prompted Washington to militarily intervene in Afghanistan beginning the 'war on terror'. A few months later, in his State of the Union Address, President Bush dubs Iran as a member of the 'Axis of Evil' together with Iraq and North Korea, effectively undermining the efforts of the Khatami administration to reconcile with the Washington.

Tensions increased as Iran's nuclear program was exposed in 2002 while the unilateral military intervention of the United States in Iraq the following year intensified Iran's state insecurity with talks of regime change increased Tehran's threat perception. Towards the end of his presidency, Khatami's government faced many difficulties both outside and inside Iran to by the time Ahmadinejad was elected, Khatami's 'Dialogue' was reduced to a voiceless notion. Iran wanted access to nuclear energy prompting Iranian leaders to demand their country's rights under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons or Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). With Ahmadinejad's confrontational approach, the United States and its allies were convinced Iran was after nuclear a weapons program and Tehran must be stopped. Years of negotiations on Iran's nuclear program resulted in a deadlock with devastating sanctions being imposed on the Islamic Republic for its persistence in enriching uranium within the country. Ahmadinejad simply had an unconscious talent for escalating conflicts at home and abroad. With the 2009 Green Revolution in Iran and the Arab Uprisings which followed a year later, instability within the country and the region mounted having profound consequences for the political landscape.

Optimism on Iran only returned to the international community with the election of another moderate figure into Iran's presidency, Hassan Rouhani. Dialogue was once again favoured in Iran's foreign policy, with diplomacy and cooperation being the backbone of the Rouhani government's approach to its international affairs. He ended the deadlock and resumed talks on Iran's nuclear program, filling every opportunity with positive gestures in hopes of reciprocation. The United States, China, Russia, France, United Kingdom and Germany (P5+1) did not miss the window of opportunity and negotiated a nuclear deal with Iran in 2015. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) became Rouhani's legacy proving Iran's capacity be rationalist by resolving conflicts peacefully. However, beneath the friendly smiles of President Rouhani and his Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, Iran's realist dimension surfaced describing the country as a power in the region. Such a move in combination with the revolutionist Islamic vision of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader, shows the multi-dimensional constitution of Iran's foreign policy. This simultaneous co-existence and interplay of realism, rationalism and revolutionism is the focus of my research. For now, let us turn to the literature on the topic.

1.3 Perspectives on Iran's Foreign Policy

Iran's foreign policy has been subject of much attention especially since the nuclear program was disclosed in 2002. There is a significant amount of studies focusing on this topic as is discussed below, but in terms of the complexities of Iran's foreign policy using a multilateral approach there is limited research. More needs to be done to establish a holistic analysis taking into consideration all aspects of foreign policy. Due to the lack of holistic analysis of Iran's foreign policy, the word 'schizophrenic' has been associated with it as attempts to understand how Iran's actions fall out of the mainstream discussions on the topic.⁴

A multi-faceted approach to analysing Iran's foreign policy, which this study is based on, is important for two reasons. The first is about the practical relevance. In analysing multiple avenues and dimensions shaping Iran's foreign policy, a better and more accurate understanding of Iran's foreign policy is drawn. This can help policy-makers and their advisers to make suitable decisions about their interactions with Iran mitigating misunderstandings resulting from a single interpretation of Iran's foreign policy. The three traditions of thought and their

⁴ Ehtesami stated, there is a: "...schizophrenia that the state seems to manifest in so many other areas" in a lecture at the LSE: Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Iranian foreign policy after the election of Hassan Rouhani" (Wolfson Theatre, LSE, London, November 27, 2013), accessed February 7, 2015, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/website-archive/newsAndMedia/videoAndAudio/channels/publicLecturesAndEvents/player.aspx?id=2150>

interplay explains the dynamics of Iran's foreign policy. It is vital that these three traditions and their relationship with each other are taken into consideration before dealing with Iran. Scholarly relevance is the second important aspect of using a multi-faceted approach. Few studies are made using multiple methods and even fewer present multiple interpretations of Iran's foreign policy in one study. Using such an approach, scholarly bias is minimized and a holistic picture of Iran's foreign policy is painted integrating several themes in one study. I have divided the related literature into two recurrent themes prominent in the study of Iranian foreign policy. The first and more dominant theme is fundamentally identity-based advancing the argument of Iran's foreign policy being understood through a study of Iranian identity consequently binding policy-making to the domestic dimension. The second theme is concerned with interest-based arguments asserting the primacy of geopolitics in Iranian foreign policy. The following sections will discuss these themes.

1.3.1 *Identity-based Perspectives*

Scholars such as Moshirzadeh and Holliday have bound Iran's foreign policy to Iranian identity crucially drawing on nationalism and fusing it with state identity.⁵ Iranian foreign policy has then become a domestic concern and hence the role of Iranian identity matters.⁶ Therefore, to comprehend Iranian foreign policy, one must understand the formation of this national identity.

Ansari argues Iran's national identity is 'both *modern* in conception and ancient in lineage', meaning there is a distinct 'Iranianness' in the country's foreign policy, which conflates both old and new ideas.⁷ At times, however, leaders pursue contradictory identities instead of 'the articulated state identity'.⁸ For instance, although it has become a part of the Islamic Republic's identity to articulate their animosity towards the United States through the Friday prayer's weekly chants of "death to America", there are times when the decision-makers are more temperate to their American counterparts. The "death to America" chants stopped for a while after September 11 and Iranians were even lighting candles. In 2013, the warmth in the speech of President Rouhani after the historic phone call with President Obama proves this point. Hence, as we can see articulations of state identity have its limitations when it comes to Iran's

⁵ Shabnam J. Holliday, *Defining Iran: Politics of Resistance* (Farnham, Surrey, England, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 7–8

⁶ Ali M. Ansari, *Confronting Iran: The Failure of American Foreign Policy and the Next Great Crisis in the Middle East* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 4, [Italics in original].

⁷ Ali M. Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, Cambridge Middle East studies 40 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 230

⁸ Brenda Shaffer, ed., *The Limits of Culture: Islam and Foreign Policy*, BCSIA studies in international security (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2006), 4; 220

foreign policy although despite these limitations, Iranian national identity is central to the country's foreign policy configuration.⁹ Shabnam Holliday contends that Iranian identity is dichotomous, necessitating two distinct political systems: *Islamiyat* and *Iraniyat*.¹⁰

Islamiyat refers to 'being Islamic' and it has its roots in the Islamic religion introduced by the Arab invaders in the 7th century A.D..¹¹ It is important to note that Iran adopted Shi'ism, a variant of Islam, instead of the dominant Sunnism practiced by the majority of Muslims. This is the type of identity propagated by the clerical leadership allowing Islamic codes to govern both domestic and foreign policies.¹² Shi'a Islam is dominated by the Twelver Imam doctrine. In this doctrine, there are twelve divinely ordained Imams of Islam, starting from Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of prophet Mohammad and ending with Mahdi. Mahdi, the last Imam or the Vali Al-Asr [Governor of the Epoch] is believed to have gone into occultation and will return together with Jesus Christ. The Twelver Imam doctrine governed the period following the Islamic revolution through Khomeinism, where instead of focusing on the interests of Iran as a nation-state, Iranian foreign policy rested on Khomeini's interpretation of the Twelver Shi'ite Islam.¹³ Khomeini aimed at exporting the ideology of the Islamic revolution much to the disappointment of the states in the region leaving Iran to be 'an isolated pariah'.¹⁴ But with the progress of time, modified versions of Iran's Shi'ite ideology have been utilized to attain certain foreign policy goals.¹⁵ This demonstrates a 'spiritual pragmatism' existing in Iran's foreign policy.¹⁶ Along these lines, Fürtig and Sick discuss Iran's aspirations under a distinct form of Islamic universalism where the export of the revolution in the immediate aftermath of the Islamic Revolution was a priority.¹⁷ They argue that although the sentiment has changed and

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Holliday, *Defining Iran*, 7–8

¹¹ Ibid., 23

¹² Homeira Moshirzadeh, "Domestic ideational sources of Iran's foreign policy," *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs* 1, no. 1 (2010): 168–69, accessed November 11, 2012, <http://www.isrjournals.ir/en/iran-foreign-policy/28-domestic-ideational-sources-of-irans-foreign-policy.html>

¹³ John L. Esposito and Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran at the Crossroads*, 1st ed (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 214

¹⁴ Ray Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3

¹⁵ Moshirzadeh, "Domestic ideational sources of Iran's foreign policy"

¹⁶ Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Independence Without Freedom: Iran's Foreign Policy* (University of Virginia Press, 2013)

¹⁷ Henner Fürtig, "Universalist counter-projections: Iranian postrevolutionary foreign policy and globalisation," in Ansari, *Politics of Modern Iran*; Gary Sick, "Iran's foreign policy: A revolution in transition," in Ansari, *Politics of Modern Iran*, 4; Gary Sick, "Iran's foreign policy: A revolution in transition," in Ansari, *Politics of Modern Iran*, 4

Iran has abandoned active exportation of the revolution in favour of more nationalist and accommodationist policies, there are traces of this project remaining in Iranian foreign policy.¹⁸

Generally, Iranian Shi'ism involves principles such as 'opposition to foreign hegemony and arrogance as well as support for Muslims and the oppressed', which has successfully penetrated aspects of Iranian foreign policy.¹⁹ This has its roots in the Islamic tradition of resistance against any tyranny and fighting for justice. 'Struggling against oppression and defending the oppressed,' as well as following the 'principle of prohibiting dominance (ghaede nafy-e sabil)' are 'important religious duties' according to Moshirzadeh.²⁰ This is exemplified by Iran's non-yielding confrontation with the United States amidst threats and sanctions.²¹ Nia supports this argument and contends that Iranian foreign policy is operated by such 'revolutionary values and ideological perspective' rather 'than the logic of nation state'.²² Iranian foreign policy is based on ideological objectives stemming from a transnational ideological responsibility.²³ Tehran publicizes a transnational ideological responsibility through its anti-Zionist campaign and support of the Palestinians and Islamic resistance movements.²⁴ These undertakings highlight the government's Islamic identity. Moshirzadeh presents this Islamic identity in the context of the nuclear policy and its development over the past decade. She argues the uncompromising aspect of Iran's nuclear policy could be traced to an identity constituted of three central discourses— independence, justice and resistance associated with historical narratives shaped by the discourses within the society.²⁵ The three discourses justify Iran's actions in the eyes of the people and the decision-makers.

Islamiyat in an actor-specific approach is highlighted in the work of Sajadpour. He suggests Khamenei direct influence on Iran's foreign policy since he has been the supreme leader since

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Firoozabadi, Seyed Jalal Dehghani, "Ontological security and the foreign policy analysis of the Islamic Republic of Iran," *Institute for Strategic Research Journal* 2, no. 2 (2011): 32, accessed April 5, 2014, <http://www.isrjournals.ir/en/iran-foreign-policy/244-ontological-security-and-the-foreign-policy-analysis-of-the-islamic-republic-of-iran.html>

²⁰ Moshirzadeh, "Domestic ideational sources of Iran's foreign policy," 171

²¹ Firoozabadi, Seyed Jalal Dehghani, "Ontological security and the foreign policy analysis of the Islamic Republic of Iran," 32

²² Mahdi M. Nia, "A holistic constructivist approach to Iran's foreign policy," *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, accessed November 11, 2012,

http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol._2_No._4;_March_2011/31.pdf, 279

²³ Ibid., 283

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Homeira Moshirzadeh, "Discursive foundations of Iran's nuclear policy," *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 4 (2007), accessed November 11, 2012, doi:10.1177/0967010607084999

the death of Khomeini.²⁶ Khamenei's Islamic vision has dominated both domestic and foreign policies and this is evident in his rhetorical successes over the changing Presidents of different orientations.²⁷ Some instances include his resistance of Rafsanjani's efforts 'to reach a modus vivendi' with the United States, his opposition to Khatami's democratic reforms as well as disputing Ahmadinejad's desire to confront Washington.²⁸ Since in power, Khamenei has consistently reinforced Khomeini's virtues of the revolution in his speeches—'justice, independence, self-sufficiency and Islam'—accurately reflecting the objectives of Iran's domestic and foreign policy.²⁹ Such coherence in domestic and foreign policy issues has been a result of the constant evolution of the ideological deployment of Iran's Islamic identity.³⁰ 'Priority is accorded to man's pursuit of justice, in the sense of achieving a more equitable distribution of wealth and power, and to the admonition of oppression'.³¹ These values have made Khomeini's fight against the Shah very attractive to the masses, which still serve the same purpose regardless of the president in office.

Iraniyat, on the other hand, 'means being Iranian' and it is essentially a pre-Islamic concept.³² It is an identity predominant during the Shah's rule and was closely knit to an Iranian traditionalism prior to the arrival of Islam in the country.³³ This identity has continued its subtle existence in Iranian politics.³⁴ The interpretation and practice of Iraniyat is not very distinct from Islamiyat since both have been intertwined and influenced each other and Iranian national identity is always in a state of constant change.³⁵ Depending on the conditions, Iraniyat resurfaces at certain points in time having a stronger influence on politics. On the one hand, Ramazani argues it is rooted in an 'independence seeking' and a 'culture of resistance against foreign forces'.³⁶ On the other hand, Moshirzadeh asserts it is the numerous 'encounters with and experience of the West' along with diverse other factors significantly shaping Iran's discourse of identity, which have repercussions on the country's foreign policy.³⁷

²⁶ Karim Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader* (Washington, D.C: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009), 3

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Shibley Telhami and Michael N. Barnett, *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 99

³¹ Ibid.

³² Holliday, *Defining Iran*, 24

³³ Ibid., 49

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 23–24

³⁶ Ruhollah K. Ramazani, "Understanding Iranian foreign policy (Dark-e siyosat-e khareji-ye Iran)," *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs* 1, no. 1 (2009), accessed August 15, 2013

³⁷ Moshirzadeh, "Domestic ideational sources of Iran's foreign policy"

Although domestically appealing and coherent to the values of the revolution, Shireen Hunter believes persistence on the revolutionary values has been an impediment for Iran in conducting itself in international affairs.³⁸ She calls this Iran's 'ideological baggage', enabling Tehran to maintain its animosity towards Israel as well as inhibiting open negotiations with the U.S. 'in accordance with the rules of international diplomacy'.³⁹

In his most recent work, R.K. Ramazani presents a blueprint of Iranian political culture using detailed historical analysis. Iranian political culture is for him divided into three: pre-Islamic, Islamic and Modern.⁴⁰ He identified them to be products of various eras of Iran's long history dating back to the 6th century BC containing particular aspects still being practiced in Iranian foreign policy.⁴¹ Furthermore, he explains the key drivers of Iran's foreign policy 'by trying to place them in the deeper context of...Iran's "diplomatic culture"'.⁴² By diplomatic culture he means 'those values, norms, mores, institutions, modes of thinking, and ways of acting that have developed over centuries, have survived change, and continue to shape Iran's foreign policy making'.⁴³ They are identity, independence, power, authoritarianism, factionalism, environment, democracy and instruments such as subversion, soft power, hard power and procrastination.⁴⁴

These identity-based arguments drawn from the literature discussed above have been compelling as they attempt to pin down Iran's behaviour to the country's identity, which explain certain ambiguities of Iran's foreign policy to an extent. However, the study of identity largely remains within the realm of the domestic and further research needs to be undertaken to demonstrate the concrete effects of such identities on foreign policy-making in Iran. Apart from this, certain limitations surface as identity alone is unable to address the full spectrum of complexity of Iran's foreign policy as elements such as domestic economy, national security and geopolitical factors cannot be systematically ignored. The sudden shift in policies from the Ahmadinejad government to Rouhani's government regarding the nuclear program, for instance, illustrates the limitations of identity being the foundation of foreign policies. Ahmadinejad anchored the nuclear issue to Iranian identity justifying the government's

³⁸ Shireen Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Resisting the New International Order* (Santa Barbara, Calif: Praeger, 2010)

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 239

⁴⁰ Ramazani, *Independence Without Freedom*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 354

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 354–57

unwillingness to negotiate uranium enrichment despite sanctions. If Iranian identity is indeed unyielding, then it cannot account for the sudden change of tone towards the West as well as the preparedness to negotiate about the nuclear program once Rouhani took office. In this particular example, one could consider an alternative having more to do with economics. The costly effects in the form of sanctions could have eventually opened a bargaining space, which was less a product of their national identity than a matter of material and financial concern.⁴⁵ This vindicates the notion of countries regulating policies completely contradicting 'their formal cultural identification, dictates and consequent state ideology'.⁴⁶

1.3.2 Interest-based Perspectives

Another prevailing argument in the literature is related to geopolitics. Realists justify their classification of Iranian foreign policy by taking into consideration the geopolitical factors surrounding the country. Iran's disposition presents a 'strategic nightmare' as it is situated 'in a war-infested region', surrounded by antagonistic neighbours, faced with anti-Shi'a movements and kept in a long-standing 'face-off' with Washington.⁴⁷ In addition, Iran 'lacks Great Power alliances', which they have attempted to strengthen in the past decade by fostering relations with other powerful global players.⁴⁸ Ahmadinejad government's 'Look to the East' policy has especially aimed at forming strategic partnerships with China and Russia through regional and economic cooperation.⁴⁹

Due to the drastic change in the regional structure of the Middle East after 9/11 the United States has been able to establish their presence on Iran's doorstep.⁵⁰ With the American military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq, Iranian foreign policy became 'governed by the dictates of realpolitik'.⁵¹ After 2003, religious identification became an instrument of manipulation in order to build security alliances with the Shi'a factions across the region.⁵² The controversial

⁴⁵ Lukas Kasten and Laleh Gomari-Luksch, "An eye for an eye: bargaining theory, mistrust, and the Iranian nuclear crisis," (unpublished manuscript, 2014)

⁴⁶ Shaffer, *The Limits of Culture*, 4

⁴⁷ Nasser Hadian, "Iran's Nuclear Program: Contexts and Debates," The Nixon Center, accessed November 11, 2012, 55–56

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Afsaneh Ahadi and Naser S. Ameri, "Iran and look to the east policy," *Iran Center for Strategic Research*, 2008.05.25, accessed June 11, 2012,

<http://irfajournal.csr.ir/WebUsers/irfajournal/UploadFiles/OK/139409081425395000180-F.pdf>

⁵⁰ Shah Alam, "Nuclear and foreign policy calculations of Iran," *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs* 64 (2008), accessed April 29, 2014, <http://iqq.sagepub.com/content/64/2/109.citation>

⁵¹ E. Yazdani, "United States' policy towards Iran after the Islamic Revolution: An Iranian perspective," *International Studies* 43, no. 3 (2006): 284, doi:10.1177/002088170604300302

⁵² Kayhan Barzegar, "The Shia factor in Iran's foreign policy," 2008, accessed December 3, 2012, <http://www.csr.ir/departments.aspx?lng=en&abtid=07&&depid=74&semid=1421>

‘Shi’a Crescent’ in the media refers to this ideological sectarian block against Sunni Islam.⁵³ Kemp and Nasr, on the other hand, have explored the implications of the war on Iraq and concluded the fall of Saddam has led to a significant change of the regional landscape in the Middle East. Kemp insists Iran’s need for a nuclear bomb is a ‘result of complex ideological and geopolitical circumstances’.⁵⁴ In ‘The Shia Revival’, Nasr argues that the Shi’ite communities have been able to establish fresh ‘cultural, economic and political ties across the Middle East’—the most compelling being the relationship of Iran and Iraq.⁵⁵ This is supported by Slavin claiming Iran’s plans for Iraq involves creating a ‘zone of influence and a buffer against U.S. attack’.⁵⁶ Moreover, the strategy of Tehran of turning Iraq into a friend facilitates the creation of a ‘political block,’ which ‘can weaken the traditional security system of the region...essentially centred in the interest of outside powers and not Iran’.⁵⁷ Apart from power politics, the Shi’ite communities ‘have access to around 30 percent of the world’s oil reserves’.⁵⁸ The amount of literature focusing on the alliance of Iran and Iraq is plentiful and quite compelling, especially when it is linked to the nuclear program and oil. With the developments in the Middle East since the fall of Saddam Hussein and the Arab Spring, the arguments may well prove Iran’s greater ‘Shi’ite’ agenda for the region.

Iranian foreign policy, can also be viewed as a defensive move towards ‘relative security based on compliance and agreement as well as alliance and coalition’ to minimize the threats emanating from its immediate borders.⁵⁹ It has to expand its influence in the region in order to survive and maintain a favourable environment for its revolutionary principles.⁶⁰ To achieve this goal of securing its survival, Iran has ‘exploited all instruments at its disposal such as Islamism and the Islamic-worldism, Shi’ism, Third-worldism, nationalism, geopolitics, even Holocaust denial and so on in different conditions’ demonstrating an opportunistic behaviour in foreign policy.⁶¹ But in the perspective of Razavi and Juneau, Iran ‘remains a “normal”

⁵³ Parvin Dadandish, *Shia Geopolitics in the Middle East: Grounds for the Proposition of a Shia Crescent* (Center for Strategic Research, 2007), accessed November 11, 2013

⁵⁴ Geoffrey Kemp, ed., *Iran's Bomb: American and Iranian Perspectives* (Washington, D.C: The Nixon Center, 2004), 3

⁵⁵ Nasr, Seyyed Vali Reza, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam will Shape the Future*, [Paperback ed.] (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007)

⁵⁶ Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: Iran, the U.S., and the Twisted Path to Confrontation*, 1st ed (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 18

⁵⁷ Barzegar, “The Shia factor in Iran's foreign policy,” 94

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ali A. Assadi and Firoozabadi, Seyed Jalal Dehghani, “Revolution and foreign policy of Iran: the first decade (revised),” *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs* 4, no. 1 (2013), accessed April 4, 2015

⁶¹ Amir M. Haji-Yousefi, “Iran's foreign policy during Ahmadinejad: From confrontation to accommodation,” Annual Conference of the Canadian Political Science Association, accessed November 11, 2012

country' when examined from a realist angle.⁶² For them, 'the maximization of its perceived national interests' and 'traditional element of power and security' are the main operators of Iranian foreign policy.⁶³ Similarly, Ehteshami says Iran 'has always been a "rational actor" in a classic realist mold' conducting its foreign policy accordingly.⁶⁴ He explains that Iran has been historically paranoid of foreign intervention and independence as a sovereign state has been a widely-accepted goal by the political elites.⁶⁵ At the same time, the quest for supremacy has been ingrained in Iran's national aspirations in the region.⁶⁶

In contrast, Hunter suggests Iranian foreign policy has been unrealistic and naïve, emanating from failing 'to appreciate dimensions of systemic change' in the post-Soviet environment.⁶⁷ The combination of an unrealistic foreign policy and Tehran's inability to yield its 'ideological baggage' has sabotaged their own security 'by encouraging key players to destabilize it'.⁶⁸ Anoush Ehteshami shares Hunter's view of Iran still being in the process of comprehending the post-Soviet systemic changes.⁶⁹ However, as mentioned earlier, he claims the Islamic Republic to be a rational and realist actor, which 'has much to do with Tehran's calculations about its standing' as it plays a 'more assertive role expected of a regional middle power in the Middle East'.⁷⁰

Apart from external geopolitical factors, internal actors are claimed to play a role in Iranian foreign policy.⁷¹ Farhi and Lotfian contend that internal political actors determine Iranian foreign policy.⁷² They neatly divide these internal political actors into the Islamic idealists,

⁶² Thomas Juneau and Sam Razavi, *Iranian Foreign Policy Since 2001: Alone in the World*, Routledge studies in Middle Eastern politics 55 (Routledge, 2013), 10

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "The foreign policy of Iran," in *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States: Between Agency and Structure*, ed. Raymond A. Hinnebusch, The Middle East in the international system (Boulder [u.a.]: Rienner, 2002), 284

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid. Interestingly, years later, Ehteshami calls Iran's actions 'schizophrenic' in his speech as I mentioned earlier.

⁶⁷ Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era*, 240

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *After Khomeini: The Iranian Second Republic* (London, New York: Routledge, 1995)

⁷⁰ Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "The foreign policy of Iran," in Raymond A. Hinnebusch, ed., *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States: Between Agency and Structure*, The Middle East in the international system (Boulder [u.a.]: Rienner, 2002), 284

⁷¹ Farhi and Lotfian 2012; A. Fathollah-Nejad, "Why sanctions against Iran are counterproductive: Conflict resolution and state-society relations," *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis* 69, no. 1 (2014), accessed April 6, 2014, doi:10.1177/0020702014521561; Ali Mohammadi, *Iran Encountering Globalization: Problems and Prospects* (London, New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003)

⁷² Farideh Farhi and Saideh Lotfian, "Iran's post-revolution foreign policy puzzle," in *Worldviews of aspiring powers: Domestic foreign policy debates in China, India, Iran, Japan, and Russia*, ed. Henry R. Nau and Deepa M. Ollapally (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012)

regional power balancers and global power balancers, wherein the latter two are composed by the majority of policy-makers.⁷³ On the one hand, the Islamic idealist's classification Farhi and Lotfian provided falls into the constructivist category as it stresses the significance of the Islamic identity. On the other hand, the regional power balancers and the global power balancers, are confined to a purely realist framework. Security and survival are the top priority of the two groups urging the country to form regional and international alliances to balance threats and increase their material capabilities.⁷⁴ Fathollah-Nejad shares a similar stance. He stresses the foreign policy of Iran to be 'characterized by realism and a policy of détente'.⁷⁵ The defensive realists have gained power in Iran through the election of President Hassan Rouhani in 2013, which is comparable to the foreign policy of the Rafsanjani administration—'détente and rapprochement with the West' and 'neighbouring Arab States'.⁷⁶ They believe Iran's foreign policy—specifically towards the West—has the potential to be a win-win situation and not to be strictly bound to a 'zero-sum game'.⁷⁷

Hunter, however, advances the idea of Iranian foreign policy driven by a strong incentive to collaborate with China and Russia in order to deflect Western imposed economic and political sanctions.⁷⁸ Fostering relations with Beijing and Moscow then becomes a priority of the government to acquire certain economic advantages.⁷⁹ This 'Look to the East' policy has proven to be a fruitful alliance for all three countries.⁸⁰ Economic benefits aside, Iran further instrumentalizes the policy to balance the American threat.⁸¹ The Iranian political elites have 'forsaken' attempts to restore a functional network with the West as their efforts have usually been shattered, especially since the revelation of its nuclear program in 2002.⁸² 'Look to the East' policies are primarily promoted by internal interest-groups linking the government and Iranian economy, thus penetrating foreign policy.⁸³ For instance, the Association of Militant

⁷³ Ibid., 123

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Fathollah-Nejad, "Why sanctions against Iran are counterproductive: Conflict resolution and state-society relations," 63

⁷⁶ Ibid., 63–64

⁷⁷ Ibid., 64

⁷⁸ Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era*

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ahadi and Ameri, "Iran and look to the east policy" Sanam Vakil, "Iran: Balancing east against west," *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (2006),

https://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/washington_quarterly/v029/29.4vakil.html; Robert O. Freedman, "Russia and Iran: A tactical alliance," *SAIS Review* 17, no. 2 (1997), accessed April 3, 2014, http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/sais_review/v017/17.2freedman.html

⁸¹ Ahadi and Ameri, "Iran and look to the east policy" Vakil, "Iran: Balancing east against west"

⁸² Vakil, "Iran: Balancing east against west"

⁸³ Mohammadi, *Iran Encountering Globalization*

Clergy, not only supports the ‘look to the East policy,’ they also encourage forming alliances ‘with independent governments to take advantage of the conflict between major powers’.⁸⁴ Motallefeh, another influential group, on the other hand, reject the ‘restoration of law and order in the economy, foreign policy and internal affairs’ as ‘the rule of law would jeopardize the extensive privileges that they enjoy’.⁸⁵ Interest-based arguments as discussed in this section places power, security and maximization of material gains as the foundations of Iranian foreign policy.

1.3.3 *The Holistic Perspective Approach*

The interest-based arguments mostly emphasize national interest and the role of power while marginalizing ‘ideational and institutional factors, such as the role of key agents’ identities and interests’.⁸⁶ The identity-based arguments, in contrast, underscore ‘ideational dynamics’ to be the key unlocking policy-making behaviour, ignoring ‘the fact that often ideas are used to serve purposes determined by power calculations’.⁸⁷ Each of the approaches write out the obscure facts irrelevant to their view making a thorough examination less possible. Thus, a complete picture of foreign policy with all its dimensions and edges are usually left to the imagination which does not fit the reality of foreign policy governed by dynamism.

There are two problems in categorizing Iran’s foreign policy into either interest-based or identity-based. First, it results in one-sidedness and fails to capture the complexities of the debates as well as multiple engagements within foreign policy playing a crucial role in analysis. The literature tends to minimize these complexities by assigning them to a single paradigm or to a single theory. As such, there is a ‘monopolistic claim of truth for’ one’s ‘own world view’ as well as ‘teleological biases’.⁸⁸ Instead of supplementing each camps weakness, they have successfully established themselves to be each other’s binary opponent for uncovering the truth about Iranian foreign policy. Thus, a comprehensive explanation of Iranian foreign policy can never be achieved. Second, both interest-based and ideological-based accounts focus on the ‘ends of action: “rational”, individualistic, arbitrary preferences or “irrational”, consensual, cultural values’.⁸⁹ Consequently, they deliberately ignore ‘the normative context of the process

⁸⁴ Ibid., 235

⁸⁵ Ibid., 230

⁸⁶ Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era*, xiv

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ James Manor, *Rethinking Third World Politics* (London, New York: Longman, 1991), 2

⁸⁹ Thomas Berger, “Norms, Identity and National Security in Germany and Japan,” in *The culture of national security: Norms and identity in world politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein, New directions in world politics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 267

by which interests are defined’, playing a crucial role in foreign policy making.⁹⁰ These actions are based on ideas and norms instilled in the psyche of the decision-makers, forming the foundation of their behaviour. Ideas, norms and institutions constitute the larger structural machinery wherein policy-makers operate. The structural machinery—the institutions of international society—and its corresponding ‘traditions of thought’ are normally overlooked by most of the literature despite its significance for analysis. To address the limitations of the literature, a holistic theoretical framework is needed to integrate the two perspectives and provide a pluralistic approach effectively explaining policies. In his book, the *International Politics of the Persian Gulf*, Adib-Moghaddam discusses certain elements of the international society and its operationalization in the Gulf region. However, he does not expound on Iran’s role as a sovereign state operating within the parameters of the institutions of the contemporary international society, which is a feature of this dissertation.

The English School approach appropriates itself in filling this gap as it can combine both perspectives. It can ensure the integration of ‘essential liberal concerns with a respect for a fair amount of realist prudence’ as well as ‘locate structural pressures in specific historical contexts’.⁹¹ It can conveniently occupy the middle ground and step outside the competitive game of paradigms to ‘cultivate a more holistic, integrated approach’.⁹² Moreover, as Dunne had observed, the English School avoids ‘the conflictual ‘either/or’ choices of realism versus idealism and explaining versus understanding by offering an approach that combines agency and structure, theory and history, and morality and power’.⁹³ Secondly, through the English school, I can focus on the ‘normative context’ of Iranian foreign policy making. An examination of the institutions where statesmen operate, yet another feature of the English School, can facilitate the identification of the traditions the statesmen employed in Iran’s foreign policy. Knowing how the traditions, institutions and the respective discourses attached to them are connected through the English School perspective allows us to fully map the framework in which Iran’s foreign policy is outlined. Using a different theoretical approach gives us a fresh and holistic perspective on a seemingly polarized debate on Iran’s foreign policy. The issue of ambiguities then goes beyond the either-or dichotomy as all perspectives can be encompassed

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Barry Buzan, *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations: The Societal Approach* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 25

⁹² Barry Buzan, “The English School: an underexploited resource in IR,” *Review of International Studies* 27, no. 3 (2001): 472, accessed May 12, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20097749> .

⁹³ Timothy Dunne, “The English School,” in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Christian Reus-Smit, 1. publ. in pbk, The Oxford handbooks of political science [5] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Buzan, *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations*, 23

into one theory. Iran's foreign policy is thus interpreted as not solely a matter of identity or interest but both.

At a more practical level, the contribution of this research is seen in the actual application the English School as a theoretical framework. Much of the research on the English School remains at the theoretical level and this study is an attempt to give the English School a more practical expression making it more relevant to real-world issues. Iran's foreign policy in this sense becomes an example where the English School as a theoretical and analytical framework is applied. The English School has highly relevant concepts easily traced in the discourses of the world's political elites as well as reflected in their actions making it ideal in analysing any country's foreign policy. Translating this theoretical approach to the practice of foreign policy can be made visible through the statements of statesmen of any country. To this end, I have created a database of keywords and concepts relating to the three traditions embedded in a personalised text mining software to analyse speeches turning the theory into a tool of analysing foreign policy. While being able to extract quantitative data from speeches through the concepts of the English School seems notable, it is nothing new as it resembles text analysis software already available in the market. But it is an approach trying to connect existing theoretical concepts in International Relations to practical usage. In addition, the qualitative analysis of foreign policy statements seeks to unveil the linkages and relationships of the theoretical concepts of the English School with the practical discourses the statesmen use to justify their foreign policy. I further link the argumentations in the speeches with Iran's foreign policy actions making it a holistic attempt to explain Iran's foreign policy.

I want to provide a different yet familiar explanation of Iran's foreign policy. I make use of the English School and its core concepts arguing realism, rationalism and revolutionism exist in a dynamic interplay in Iran's foreign policy as reflected in the speeches and actions of Iran's statesmen. In terms of familiarity, it supports some arguments in the literature regarding Iran's foreign policy, incorporating them into this study's explanation of Iran's foreign policy. The use of both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis allows my research to stand out in comparison to many studies on the subject. I make a survey of thousands of speeches using the personalised software while a certain number of speeches is selected for a closer reading. I use both results in analysing Iran's foreign policy while presenting my results in a theoretically different way from most of the related literature. The English School theory integrates most of what has been said about Iran's foreign policy under one framework providing the much-needed interpretation of the complexities and dynamism of foreign policy. Moreover, in terms of levels

of analysis, I make use of both texts and actions, providing solid support for my argument. In many ways, despite its difference in using an all-encompassing and multi-faceted approach, my research strengthens and supports most of the studies already done on the topic weaving them all together in one complicated web called Iran's foreign policy. Let us keep in mind the core argument of this thesis is: *Iran's foreign policy is consistent and is fundamentally realist with a revolutionist vision while the means are rationalist.*

The dissertation is organized as follows:

Chapter two discusses the theoretical framework of this research introducing the English School theory elaborating on the three traditions – realism, rationalism and revolutionism – as well as the five classical institutions of diplomacy, international law, balance of power, great power management and war.

Chapter three is about the methodology of this study, describing the quantitative and the qualitative phases of the analysis.

Chapter four presents the results of the quantitative analysis derived from running all the collected speeches online on a personalised software. Graphs show the existence and development of the three traditions in the statements of Iran's political leaders.

Chapter five, six, seven and eight detail the foreign policy discourses of Khamenei, Khatami Ahmadinejad and Rouhani respectively resulting from the qualitative analysis of selected speeches. Each chapter details the argumentations used by each political figure and its relationship with the three traditions and the five institutions of the English School.

Chapter eight connects the foreign policy discourse of Iranian statesmen and their foreign policy actions organized in the prism of the three traditions.

Chapter nine is the concluding chapter, which reviews the main findings and deliberates potential avenues for future research.

2 Theoretical Framework

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Iranian foreign policy is generally considered to be inconsistent due to the differences in Tehran's political manoeuvres such as how the nuclear issue has been negotiated. At times, Iran's political elites were vocal against talks with the United States but they simultaneously exhibited a reluctant submission to dealing with Washington. To understand this phenomenon within Iranian foreign policy, I have made use of the English School as a theoretical framework to provide an explanation of the ambiguities surrounding the subject. This approach helps us understand the inconsistencies of Iranian foreign policy. For instance, despite Ahmadinejad's harsh rhetoric against the United States, rationalism existed in his statements at the United Nations (UN) indicating the window of diplomacy was not dead. This accounts for the rounds of negotiation talks regarding Iran's nuclear program during the period of Ahmadinejad's presidency – an impossible move if only his harsh rhetoric is considered.

Most literature on the topic of Iranian foreign policy has been divided between two opposite poles. One side considers Iranian foreign policy to be a product of pure realism or rationalism based on interest while the other end of the spectrum perceives it to be a product of identity.⁹⁴ Only a handful of studies have approached Iranian foreign policy as a multi-layered product, often taking into consideration various perspectives of international relations theory such as the works of Hunter and Ramazani. Great intellectual benefits have been reaped from the works of these great scholars effectively inspiring this research. Along the same lines, I apply a holistic and all-encompassing theory in analysing Iran's foreign policy to reveal its dynamics. I want to demonstrate Iran's capability of being realist, rational and revolutionist simultaneously. Rationality here means adherence to the rationalist tradition of the English School, meaning it follows the prescriptive behaviour of the rationalist institutions such as diplomacy, balance of power, international law, great power management and war, that have evolved in the international society of modern sovereign nation-states to facilitate order and peace. It is this simultaneous interplay of the three traditions within Iranian foreign policy, which tends to be misinterpreted as inconsistencies and ambiguities.

This chapter discusses the English School as the theoretical framework of the research ultimately guiding the conception of the analytical approach of this study. The chapter begins

⁹⁴ For pure realism or interest-based rationalism, see Ehteshami and Chubin. For identity, see Ansari, Holliday and Moshirzadeh

with an introduction to the English School approach and the three traditions—realism, rationalism and revolutionism. It details the relevance of the ‘traditions of thought’ in the study of international affairs as well as its affinity to Iran. The next part discusses the concept of contemporary international society and the relationship between norms and institutions of this society. A brief explanation of the basic norm of sovereignty and the principles of non-intervention and self-determination attached to it follows. Then an introduction of the core institutions of diplomacy, international law, balance of power, great power management and war is discussed. In the final section of this chapter, I elaborate on the five institutions and their relevance to analysing Iranian foreign policy.

2.1 The English School Approach

Three key concepts are crucial in using the English School approach: international system, international society and world society, are parallel to Wight’s three traditions of Realism, Rationalism and Revolutionism.⁹⁵ Realism refers to the Hobbesian system of anarchy and sees the state as the actor striving to survive in the given conditions of such a structure; however, he refers to Machiavelli in terms of state actions. It emphasizes ‘military power and competition, the primacy of the state, the role of great powers and the interstate function of wars’.⁹⁶ In this ‘tradition of thought’, the state is considered the primary actor on a world stage affected by systemic power configurations and the main goal is to survive. Rationalism, on the other hand, is seen through a Grotian institutionalist perspective and mainly emphasizes the ‘creation and maintenance of shared norms’.⁹⁷ This tradition posits ‘that interstate competition and the incidence of war are mitigated, in some instances at least, by the acceptance of shared values, of a formal, legal, and informal, ‘institutional’ character, where institutional refers not to what are normally regarded as established organizations, but rather regular, normative, legal and shared principles’.⁹⁸ Examples include international legal conventions and economic agreements providing a framework for interaction taking into consideration common norms and principles binding states together. The core of an international society is found in the significance of these shared norms and institutions facilitating the interaction of states. Revolutionism, conversely, is viewed through Kantianism where individuals and their morals

⁹⁵ Dunne, “The English School” Dunne, “The English School”; Buzan, *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations*, 23; Buzan, “The English School: an underexploited resource in IR,” 474–76

⁹⁶ Fred Halliday, “The Middle East and Conceptions of ‘International Society’,” in *International society and the Middle East: English school theory at the regional level*, ed. Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez, Palgrave studies in international relations series (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 2

⁹⁷ Buzan, “The English School: an underexploited resource in IR,” 476

⁹⁸ Halliday, “The Middle East and Conceptions of ‘International Society’,” 3

play a significant role, which has the capacity to transcend the state system.⁹⁹ World religions can be classified under this ‘tradition of thought’ especially when considering their missionary character. They call for the establishment of world society and the removal of state barriers to unite humanity into one equal organism.

I elaborate more on these three traditions in the following sections of this chapter to give the reader a clear interpretation of the concepts used in this research. I contend that the three traditions together provide a holistic theoretical framework for analysing foreign policy and with an all-encompassing model, we can explain how Iran shapes its foreign policy agenda. Other advantages of the English School are its pluralist methodology as well as its historicist and constructivist approaches giving it attractive features to be used for analysis.¹⁰⁰ The profound utility of combining ‘recognition of the self-interest and structurally intrinsic competitiveness, which is present in the international system, with an insistence on the other factors, be they customary, legal or ideological, which mitigate and to some degree shape such relations’ is yet another point to be considered as a strength of the English School.¹⁰¹

In its classical version, the English school theory is conceptualized here as ‘a set of ideas which fill the minds of people as they think about and/or participate in world politics.’¹⁰² These ideas can ‘be found in the minds and language of those who play the game of states’.¹⁰³ They guide the politician’s rhetoric and actions with regard to other states and they help shape policies and relations. Hence, the ideas stemming from the three traditions of the English School are manifested in the political rhetoric and messages of statesmen. Wight drew his ‘three categories of international thought...from writings by international lawyers, political philosophers, diplomats and statesmen’.¹⁰⁴ For this reason, the people who ‘think and act on behalf of the state and its institutions’ play a significant role in this approach.¹⁰⁵ Access to their understanding of the world is gained through an analysis of their language and their justifications. Furthermore, the context where the ‘actors take decisions’ must be elaborated in order to understand ‘their’ world for us to comprehend ‘values are often irreconcilable, and

⁹⁹ Buzan, “The English School: an underexploited resource in IR,” 476

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 472

¹⁰¹ Halliday, “The Middle East and Conceptions of ‘International Society’,” 3

¹⁰² Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation*, Cambridge studies in international relations 95 (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 24

¹⁰³ Buzan, *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations*, 18

¹⁰⁴ Buzan, *From International to World Society?*, 24

¹⁰⁵ Timothy Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith, *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 2nd ed (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 133

terrible choices have to be made' in terms of foreign policy.¹⁰⁶ As Wight articulates: 'Statesmen act under various pressures, and appeal with varying degrees of sincerity to various principles'.¹⁰⁷ The three traditions set out 'the primary positions that are always in some sense in play in discussions about foreign policy and international relations'.¹⁰⁸ It is important to note though that the three traditions of realism, rationalism and revolutionism as conceptualized by Wight are 'not like three railroad tracks running parallel into infinity'.¹⁰⁹ Rather, 'they are streams, with edges and cross-currents, sometimes interlacing and never for long confined to their own river bed. They both influence and cross-fertilize one another, and they change, although without...losing their inner identity'.¹¹⁰ They demonstrate an intricate interplay of many ideas existing at the same time.

The focus of this dissertation rests on the rationalist concept of the English School, namely, the international society. However, as the three traditions are in constant interplay, by working with the idea of an international society heavily based on a rationalist 'tradition of thought', an engagement with the other two traditions of realism and revolutionism cannot be negated. The implications of such will be apparent as the chapter progresses when discussing the institutions of international society. The analysis proper of this dissertation demonstrates how these institutions are affected by the other traditions. For instance, when dealing with the institution of diplomacy of the international society, despite the legal and normative framework accompanying it, the realist and revolutionist 'traditions of thought' are nevertheless expressed in the statements made by the political elites involved in the process of diplomacy, demonstrating the interplay of the three traditions. This means the structure where the states operate adhere to the normative framework of rationalist 'tradition of thought' while not completely diminishing the capacity of the two other traditions to influence the ideas, beliefs and behaviour of statesmen. The most basic premise is that the three traditions of international relations have existed for enough time for all the modern nation-states to be influenced by them through the course of historical experiences each country has been subject to. The following section will elaborate more on the three traditions of realism, rationalism and revolutionism.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 132–33

¹⁰⁷ Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, with the assistance of Gabriele Wight, and Brian Porter (Leicester: Leicester University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1991), 258

¹⁰⁸ Buzan, *From International to World Society?*, 24

¹⁰⁹ Wight, *International Theory*, 260

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

2.2 The Three Traditions

There are three ‘traditions of thought’ prevalent in politics since the dawn of human history. Wight contends that at any given point, three competing positions in international relations—realism, rationalism and revolutionism—continuously and perpetually coexist as demonstrated through an interplay with each other.¹¹¹ As mentioned earlier, realism deals with the classic anarchic structure of the international system, rationalism has to do with the establishment (and maintenance) of norms and institutions while revolutionism showcases the cosmopolitanist transcendence of the state system.¹¹²

Since the three ‘traditions of thought’ are historically situated, the narratives of realism, rationalism and revolutionism can be traced in the present international political affairs of any country in the international society. I agree with the scholars of the English School in that rationalism in international society, with its established rules and shared norms, has become dominant in the past decades thus exerting its influential narrative in the normative framework of international affairs. This has enabled the states of the international society to operate within a normative framework rooted in the rationalist tradition, which effectively guides their interaction. Diplomacy and international law are only two of the many institutions guiding states’ behaviour anchored within the rationalist tradition as I discuss in the next sections of this chapter. Despite being heavily influenced by the rationalist tradition, nevertheless, these institutions are never devoid of realist and revolutionist influences. Each of the three traditions project patterns of thought embodying ‘a description of the nature of international politics and a set of prescriptions about international conduct’.¹¹³ Thus, although states operate within the normative framework of a rationalist international society manifested through the institutions, the statesmen’s beliefs, thoughts and actions cannot be completely devoid of the realist and rationalist ‘traditions of thought’.

I argue that the three traditions of realism, rationalism and revolutionism constitute the ideas of Iranian political elites, and consequently their actions, in the realm of international relations. Like other political elites from other countries, Iranian statesmen subscribe to all three in conducting themselves in international society accounting for their seemingly inconsistent foreign policies. The political rhetoric of the statesmen regarding their international affairs demonstrates the very existence of these three traditions and the respective institutions of

¹¹¹ Barry Buzan, “The English School as a research program: An overview, and a proposal for reconvening,” (unpublished manuscript, 1999), 4

¹¹² Buzan, “The English School as a research program,” 4; Wight, *International Theory*

¹¹³ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 26

international society. Mention has already been made earlier about these traditions being sets of ideas within the minds of statesmen as they ‘play the game of states’ and these concepts used in the English School were drawn from the written work of those involved in policy-making.¹¹⁴ I explain the intricacies and how I extract the vital components needed for this research from the speeches of these political elites in the methodology chapter. The following section elaborates on the three traditions of realism, rationalism and revolutionism, in exactly this order.

2.2.1 *The Realist Tradition*

Perhaps the most popular ‘tradition of thought’ in international affairs belongs to realism as countless studies have explained state relations using this approach since the time of Thucydides. A constant state of war in international relations wherein conflict between states inevitably becomes part of international life, resembling a zero-sum game, comprises the realist doctrine.¹¹⁵ The logic of anarchy and self-help as well as the elements of power politics and warfare are the basic principles of international relations according to this tradition.¹¹⁶ In such a hostile anarchical international setting, a state must relentlessly pursue its own survival and in doing so can undertake political manoeuvres harming other states in the system. Domination over one or more states ensures the prosperity as well as the survival of the state and so there is a constant struggle among states to achieve this status. Wight and Bull both provided comprehensive accounts of the realist tradition, including their foundation as well as prescriptions of conduct, as they relate to the theoretical concepts of the English School.

Biology is argued by Wight to be one of the utmost foundations of the realist thought as its existence is embedded in nature and thus is part of being human. Unsurprisingly, this originates from Darwin’s work ‘The Origin of Species’ and his ‘survival of the fittest’ thesis deluging to international relations as ‘the struggle for existence’.¹¹⁷ Survival is a primitive instinct of every human being, and all other living beings on this planet, so it has most likely been part of state affairs much longer than the conceptualization of the modern nation-state. Despite the hardships, surviving in a world of anarchy is nearly universal as all wars in history have been fought in one way or another to survive and prosper favouring the strong to dominate the weak if not eliminated altogether. The very goal of survival shapes the way the state behaves in the

¹¹⁴ Buzan, *From International to World Society?*, 24; Buzan, *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations*, 18

¹¹⁵ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 26

¹¹⁶ Wight, *International Theory*, 15

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 20

international system and Bull sketched a prescription of state conduct in international affairs using the realist ‘tradition of thought’:

‘The Hobbesian prescription for international conduct is that the state is free to pursue its goals in relation to other states without moral or legal restrictions of any kind. Ideas of morality and law, on this view, are valid only in the context of a society, but international life is beyond the bounds of any society. If any moral or legal goals are to be pursued in international politics these can only be the moral or legal goals of the state itself. Either it is held (as by Machiavelli) that the state conducts foreign policy in a kind of moral and legal vacuum, or it is held (as by Hegel and his successors) that moral behaviour for the state in foreign policy lies in its own self-assertion. The only rules or principles which, for those in the Hobbesian tradition, may be said to limit or circumscribe the behavior of states in their relations with one another are rules of prudence or expediency. Thus, agreements may be kept if it is expedient to keep them, but may be broken if it is not’.¹¹⁸

In his *Leviathan*, Hobbes has explicitly characterized mankind as greedy for power. ‘I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death’.¹¹⁹ Such a ravenous desire for power has inevitably undesirable consequences as competition becomes fierce. Hobbes explains: ‘Competition of riches, honour, command, or other power, inclineth to contention, enmity, and war: because the way of one competitor, to the attaining of his desire, is to kill, subdue, supplant, or repel the other’.¹²⁰ Thus, the state of nature is unforgivingly harsh and chaotic where survival means attaining more power than the others. This view of man in the realist perspective extends to the nature of the state. States should be greedy for power if it intends to survive in the international system. Survival, independence and self-sufficiency constitute the main goals of the state based on the realist tradition, discounting any restrictions based on values and morality. Such a self-oriented state should be empowered to pursue interests to sustain its very existence including the pursuit of expedient actions at the international level.

In antiquity, most systems were fundamentally based on the realist tradition allowing works of Thucydides to be written as they describe the dynamics of an anarchical system where war determines the order of the day. Realism is arguably one of the oldest theories of international relations as war has constituted most of the history of mankind driven by their empires’ relentless pursuit of power. From the Persians, Greeks and the Romans, countless cases can be

¹¹⁸ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 26

¹¹⁹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Reiss. as paperback, [Nachdr.], ed. John C. A. Gaskin, Oxford's world's classics (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998 [erschienen ca. 2008]), 66

¹²⁰ Ibid.

drawn where realism prevailed as the defining tradition of international politics albeit it can be argued the settings were distinguishably different from contemporary era. The desire for power and the use of war to attain it has nevertheless remained a constant factor throughout history. Take Western imperialism as an example, which maximized the power of a handful of states in the system at the expense of exploiting the resources of the rest of the world with staunch disregard for the morality, giving rise to institutions such as slavery and colonialism. Wealth in most parts of the globe was plundered and inhumane treatment and killing of people from indigenous communities was standard practice leading to the eradication of indigenous civilizations. Although slavery has been abolished and the imperialist order has somewhat been replaced, the realist tradition prevails as a vital component of state-policy, especially the remaining world powers at the core of the international society of modern nation-states. The core-periphery model of international society with powerful nation-states constituting the core has been an idea circulating in the English School. For the weaker, peripheral members, survival, independence and self-sufficiency is more restricted to the material capacity remaining to them after calculating the influence of the more powerful states in the system. Survival for the weak means withstanding threats to existence to promulgate resilience ensuring the state remains intact.

The Western influx of modernity introduced both the concept of the nation state and power politics in the international system. Iran's experiences under British, Russian and American domination galvanized Iranian leaders to think and act in accordance with realism in certain areas of their foreign policy. The Iran-Iraq war had also impacted Iran's realist foreign policy as it undermined the very existence of the Islamic Republic from its inception. Thus, the realist quest for survival and security is etched in Iran's foreign policy. The nuclear policy, for instance, demonstrates vestiges of realism as Iranian leaders justify their nuclear program to be a matter of self-sufficiency in an ever more precarious world relying heavily on energy. However, due to the pre-eminence of rationalism and the institutional and legal constraints accompanying it, the realist fervour of Iran's nuclear program has been slightly mitigated. Iran's actions in Syria as well as Iraq are also indicative of the realist tradition, although political elites in Tehran are cautious to mention their exact influence on these two states. Most of the statements of Iranian statesmen typically include a reference to realism but not as part of defining their actions but rather pointing to the domination of the West over the Middle East, particularly citing the military intervention in the region. Realism has become part of the vocabulary of the Iranian elites when speaking to an international audience even though they

merely refer to it as a force to be reckoned with proving their knowledge of this tradition. Knowing is a step towards understanding and acting, which is why we see Iran's foreign policy actions to be in sync with the realist tradition despite the elites avoiding to directly associate Iran with this tradition.

2.2.2 *The Rationalist Tradition*

The rationalist 'tradition of thought' occupies the middle ground between the realist and revolutionist traditions. It is an attempt of the English School to provide an alternative to the realist-constructivist divide in the study of international relations. Rationalism is a departure from realism in the sense that states are more inclined to cooperate instead of competing to achieve their interests. It could also be related to power but is dependent on the common goals. Bull argues it has an inherently internationalist approach to international relations and 'describes international politics in terms of a society of states or international society'.¹²¹ Struggles between sovereign states are acknowledged by the rationalist tradition but it contends their conflicts are restricted 'by common rules and institutions'.¹²² Rules and institutions resulting from patterns of interactions of states in the system become accepted by the international society providing a blueprint for their relations. Limited conflict among states of the international society is expected but the main goal of each state beyond survival and having common rules and institutions is to allow an order to be formed where all states can more or less benefit from adhering to these rules and institutions. International activity means 'trade—or more generally, economic and social intercourse between one country and another'.¹²³ Exchanges, whether for the economy or the society of the states, are deemed the usual type of relationships among the states of international society, which are secured by common rules and institutions. Each member-state of this modern international society is engaged in trade and their states' economic security is a vital component of their foreign policy. Trade and economics are essential features of the rationalist tradition as it is the stepping stone for a state to engage with other states in international society. It is usually in the interest of a state to have economic ties with another state due to the mutual benefit it brings in the form of prosperity. Such mutual interests prompt states to cooperate and in the course of time, the cooperation stretches to more than trade and economics. States are deemed to be attuned to the rationalist tradition when looking at their trade relations since they are normally executed through negotiations. It is here where the institution of diplomacy plays a role, a point I discuss later in this chapter. To ensure

¹²¹ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 26

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

international activity, such as trade, is efficient and happens with minimal friction, certain rules and patterns are normally followed by states.

For every state action in international society, there is a corresponding rule attached to a certain type of conduct and institution. Institution here is distinct from regimes such as the United Nations Organization and is based on patterns of interaction as I explain below in the section on institutions. Bull elaborates on the conduct of rationalists:

‘The Grotian prescription for international conduct is that all states, in their dealings with one another, are bound by the rules and institutions of the society they form. As against the view of the Hobbesians, states in the Grotian view are bound not only by rules of prudence or expediency but also by imperatives of morality and law. But, as against the view of the universalists, what these imperatives enjoin is not the overthrow of the system of states and its replacement by a universal community of mankind, but rather acceptance of the requirements.’¹²⁴

Now let us turn to Wight’s description of rationalist. He argues that rationalists emphasize the rationality of mankind (and thereby, states) and ‘concentrate on, and believe in the value of, the element of international intercourse in a condition predominantly of international anarchy’.¹²⁵ Anarchy is still accepted as an environment at the international level, but the goals of states are to maintain an order instead of creating conflict for successful economic and social exchange to operate ultimately benefitting the state. More is to be gained by each state through cooperation with the other states in the system and such a cooperation is based on reason. Reason, for the rationalist, is the very ‘source of knowledge in itself, superior to and independent of sense perceptions’.¹²⁶ Wight points out ‘the element of reason contained in the conception of natural law’ is vital in the rationalist tradition allowing for state behaviour, which defies the realist tradition.¹²⁷ This combines a belief in two factors: the first is in the ‘cosmic, moral constitution, appropriate to all created things including mankind; a system of eternal and immutable principles radiating from a source transcending earthly power (either God or nature)’.¹²⁸ Second, ‘it is also a belief that man and woman has some inherent correspondence with this law, some inherent response to it, because of his or her possessing a rational faculty’.¹²⁹ Thus, ‘reason is a reflection of the divine light in us: ‘Ratio est radius divini luminis’’.¹³⁰ Such reason led mankind and states to develop patterns leading to norms and institutions aimed at

¹²⁴ Ibid., 25–26

¹²⁵ Wight, *International Theory*, 13

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 14

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

guiding the interaction of states in international society. Since norms and institutions constitute the definition of international society, I discuss them separately below.

The order created after the Second World War reflects this tradition as sovereign nation-states formed the contemporary international society. Codes of conduct as well as norms of proper behaviour in dealing with other sovereign nation-states were enshrined in international agreements such as international law and diplomatic practice, which have become predominant in international politics. As such, the invasion of one country by another can be highly condemned. Adib-Moghaddam gives an example: ‘By advocating regime change in Iran and realizing that goal in Iraq without a decisive international mandate to legitimate these actions, the Bush administration negated one of the principal foundations of international political culture – that legitimacy requires international recognition or multilateral consent’.¹³¹ This action provoked opposition from Russia, China and France and was heavily criticized by the international community.¹³² In the context of Iran, traces of rationalism have been paramount to the eventual engagement of Tehran with the international community to negotiate the nuclear program. The negotiations were part of every presidential era since the Khatami administration and rationalism surfaced in most of the statements of the presidents and although it was limited in the Ahmadinejad presidency, it nevertheless existed. The limitation of rationalism can be attributed to the overwhelming influence of the revolutionist tradition dominating Iranian foreign policy during the Ahmadinejad period and this was reflected in their actions with the nuclear negotiations ending in a deadlock by 2010.

2.2.3 *The Revolutionist Tradition*

Revolutionism is based on the fundamental inclination of mankind to behave morally and follow virtues. Interestingly, although famous for coining the term ‘survival of the fittest’, Charles Darwin has also discussed the lenience of mankind to follow virtue instead of instinct. In his book, *The Descent of Man*, he says: ‘Looking to future generations, there is no cause to fear that the social instincts will grow weaker, and we may expect that virtuous habits will grow stronger, becoming perhaps fixed by inheritance. In this case the struggle between our higher and lower impulses will be less severe, and virtue will be triumphant’.¹³³

¹³¹ Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, *The International Politics of the Persian Gulf: A Cultural Genealogy*, Routledge studies in Middle Eastern politics 3 (London, New York: Routledge, 2006), 130

¹³² *Ibid.*, 97

¹³³ Charles Darwin and Michael T. Ghiselin, *The Descent of Man*, Abr. version of the work publ. by J. Murray Publ., London, in 1871 (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2010), 62

Focus is given the individual instead of the state and it is not a self-centered interest. The revolutionist ‘tradition of thought’ holds there is a community of all mankind instead of a community of states tending towards a universalist cosmopolitan approach to international affairs. States are then dissolved and become of little or no use as such system is transcended by something greater than itself and individuals are directly linked to the whole system instead of being a member of a specific state. Loyalty to other human beings supersedes allegiance to any nation-state in the revolutionist tradition and one of the most significant goals of this approach is to unite all humanity under one banner of moral ideology according to Bull. Interests of all human beings become one and the same and international politics is a ‘purely cooperative or non-zero-sum game’.¹³⁴ It is only through working together and uniting where mankind should co-exist and transform the world order into a system benefitting the entire humanity although the path to it is not easy as there are those who will oppose such a system. International activity is turned into a ‘horizontal conflict of ideology that cuts across the boundaries of states and divides human society into two camps - the trustees of the immanent community of mankind and those who stand in its way, those who are of the true faith and the heretics, the liberators and the oppressed’.¹³⁵ International morality entails an imperative of replacing the system of states with a cosmopolitan society, this means overthrowing the state system all together.¹³⁶ These features of the revolutionist state behaviour can be found on Table 1 on page 42, featuring the uniqueness of each of the three traditions.

Immanuel Kant was one of the main proponents of this cosmopolitanism and, as such, the English School’s revolutionist tradition has been made synonymous with the term ‘Kantianism’. His conception of cosmopolitanism had legal, moral and theological dimensions. However, it is the theological dimension of cosmopolitanism Iran has most been engaged with in the speeches of the political elites as the term is closely knitted with the Islamic discourses evident in Ahmadinejad’s statements. The theological dimension of cosmopolitanism in Kant’s work involves the ‘Kingdom of God’ based on morals, which can be “undertaken by human beings only through religion”, and needs to be “represented in the visible form of a church”.¹³⁷ Cavallar notes:

¹³⁴ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 26

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Kant states: ‘The true (visible) church is one that displays the (moral) kingdom of God on earth inasmuch as the latter can be realized through human beings’ 6:101, Immanuel Kant, Allen W. Wood and George Di Giovanni, *Religion and rational theology*, 1st pbk. ed., The Cambridge edition of the works of Immanuel Kant (Cambridge, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 135, 175, [Italics in original]

Kant hopes that gradually the true religious faith, natural religion or the pure faith of moral reason will spread across the globe; he sees his own century as an epoch in the process of Enlightenment when at least in Christianity ‘the seed’ of this faith is growing unhindered, so that the ‘invisible Kingdom of God on earth’ is continuously approximated, finally encompassing and uniting ‘all human beings’.¹³⁸

This can be interpreted as Kant’s “realization of the cosmopolitan society’ wherein charity, reliability and love of honour will extend to ‘nations in their external relations towards one another’.¹³⁹ Kleingeld observes that Kant’s ‘idea of a cosmopolitan community is to inspire a ‘moral disposition of brotherly love’’.¹⁴⁰ Establishing a community of all mankind in the revolutionist tradition is the highest moral endeavour in international affairs as interests of all human beings are considered one and the same. Rules of coexistence, then, and ‘social intercourse among states should be ignored if the imperatives of this higher morality require it’.¹⁴¹ Revolutionism was precisely defined to be embodied by ‘those who believe so passionately in the moral unity of the society of states or international society, that they identify themselves with it, and therefore they both claim to speak in the name of unity, and experience and overriding obligation to give effect to it, as the first aim of their international policies’.¹⁴² ‘For them, the whole of international society transcends its parts...and their international theory and policy has a missionary’ attribute.¹⁴³ Such a ‘tradition of thought’ promoting a transcendence of the state system in favour of the unity of all mankind on the basis of moral values has always been present in human history.

Excellent examples include ‘the religious Revolutionists of the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries; the French Revolutionists, especially the Jacobins; and the totalitarian Revolutionists of the twentieth century’.¹⁴⁴ Taking these into account, one can draw similar characteristics in Khomeini’s Islamic Revolution as it was likewise composed of religious dimensions as well as elements of the French revolution.¹⁴⁵ Particularly following the Arab Uprisings that began in Tunisia in 2010, such comparisons must be studied carefully as it is seen as an unprecedented

¹³⁸ Georg Cavallar, “Cosmopolitanisms in Kant's philosophy,” *Ethics and Global Politics*, no. 5 (2012): 105, accessed July 19, 2016

¹³⁹ Immanuel Kant, Allen W. Wood and George Di Giovanni, *Religion and Rational Theology*, The Cambridge edition of the works of Immanuel Kant (1st pbk. ed.) (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 307

¹⁴⁰ Pauline Kleingeld, “Kant's moral and political cosmopolitanism,” *Philosophy Compass*, no. 11 (2016): 15, accessed July 19, 2016; Kant, Wood and Di Giovanni, 214

¹⁴¹ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 26

¹⁴² Wight, *International Theory*, 8

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Scholars such as Varzi (2011) compare the French Revolution and the Islamic Revolution. See R. Varzi, “Iran's French Revolution: Religion, philosophy, and crowds,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 637, no. 1 (2011), accessed May 7, 2014, doi:10.1177/0002716211404362

movement affecting the entire Islamic world much like the spread of the enlightenment in Europe. The Christian and Protestant revolutionaries of the 16th and 17th centuries believed in their ‘rights or duties both of intervening in other states, and of liberating the adherents of one’s own faction who are under the rule of other faction’, that is ever present in Iranian affairs for instance in support of Shi’ite factions in the region.¹⁴⁶ ‘Theocracy in practice is the rule of those who claim to speak ‘in the name of God’’, which is an ‘assertion of exclusive representativeness’ is ‘a constant feature of Revolutionist doctrine’ according to Wight.¹⁴⁷ This very characteristic is embodied by the Islamic Republic since its conception in 1979. The Islamic Revolution in Iran, although Shi’ite in conception, was not seen in Iran as a Shi’ite Revolution spreading Shi’ism. Rather, it has promoted the ‘bringing together’ of Muslims – for the Iranians at least – despite all the suspicion surrounding it. Taken on its own, theological cosmopolitanism based on Kant can be traced in Iran after the Islamic Revolution since religion, in the form of Islam, has conquered the political system infiltrating all aspects of life as well as appointing God as the ultimate sovereign. The Revolution delegitimized non-religious forms of governance within the country and as such democracy can only be realised through Islam – an Islamic democracy. Thus, guiding principles both in politics and in the society, are largely based on Islam, as reflected by constant reference to Koranic scriptures in most of the speeches of all political figures in the Islamic Republic.

Christianity as a religion informed Kant’s conception of a theological cosmopolitanism enabling the idea of such a cosmopolitanism to be applicable to Islam and, for the purposes of this research, Iran. The universalist view of man and the ‘Kingdom of God’ in the Kantian cosmopolitanist tradition is perhaps best reflected by Khomeini’s concept of *Touhid* or monotheism, which he propagated during Iran’s Islamic Revolution particularly exporting the revolution in attempts to unify mankind or at least the Muslim world. Khomeini’s vision of uniting mankind through *Touhid* can be equated with the revolutionist tradition based on Kant’s cosmopolitanism, likewise aimed at uniting humanity into one organism through religion. Along these lines, ‘world citizen’ becomes synonymous with the term the *Ummah*, the community of the faithful or the community of the people for as long as monotheism is concerned.¹⁴⁸ As such, these two words form part of the keywords of revolutionism are used

¹⁴⁶ Wight, *International Theory*, 9

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 12

¹⁴⁸ In some cases, though, *Ummah* is equated with the term Islamic Community, entailing that the revolutionist vision of world society is seen through an Islamic perspective as the discourses of Khamenei suggest.

for the analysis chapter.¹⁴⁹ Terminologies in Islam referring to the revolutionist tradition are drawn from the combined works of three scholars of Islam in Iran, namely, Suroosh Irfani, Najibullah Lafraei and Vanessa Martin as their works represent a comprehensive account of the Islamic tradition as it is applicable to Iran.¹⁵⁰ Irfani traces the origins of Islamic thought as well as events influencing the Iranian revolution, Lafraei discusses the revolutionary ideologies of the most influential religious and political figures who shaped the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini, Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleghani, Ayatollah Murtaza Mutahhari, Engineer Mehdi Bazargan, Dr. Ali Shariati, Abul-Hasan Bani-Sadr as well as provides an overview of Koranic values while Martin elaborates on Khomeini's political philosophy drawing on both Western and Islamic ideas. This collection of scholarly literature generates a blueprint for revolutionist concepts utilized in Iran since its establishment in 1979 providing us with a set of keywords that can be integrated in the revolutionist tradition with the concepts given by Wight, Bull and Buzan. For instance, the word Jihad, referring to a fight related to militancy is discussed by Lafraei, is quite relevant to the kind of battle between faithful and heretics. It is a significant keyword I added to the list for analysing the speeches of Iranian statesmen. Thus, the revolutionist tradition could be made applicable to the case of Iran as religion being the foundation of this framework gives us the concepts relevant in examining the political discourse of the Iranian leaders bearing in mind Iran is an Islamic Republic established on religious premises.

2.2.4 *The Three Traditions Together*

This section elaborates on the three concepts of realism, revolutionism and rationalism, which I argue are all present in Iranian foreign policy. To summarize the differences among the three traditions, I have put together Bull and Wight's arguments on the table below. Certain prescriptive principles, behaviours are promoted by the three traditions conceptualizing the elements of interaction among states, simultaneously forming the basic logic of states being free to choose from and follow accordingly in pursuit of their interest. On the table below you

¹⁴⁹ Keywords for realism, rationalism and revolutionism are taken from the works of Bull and Wight and is used for the analysis of statements of Iranian officials. However, for the revolutionist tradition, I had to involve the works of Islamic studies scholars to enrich the keywords list.

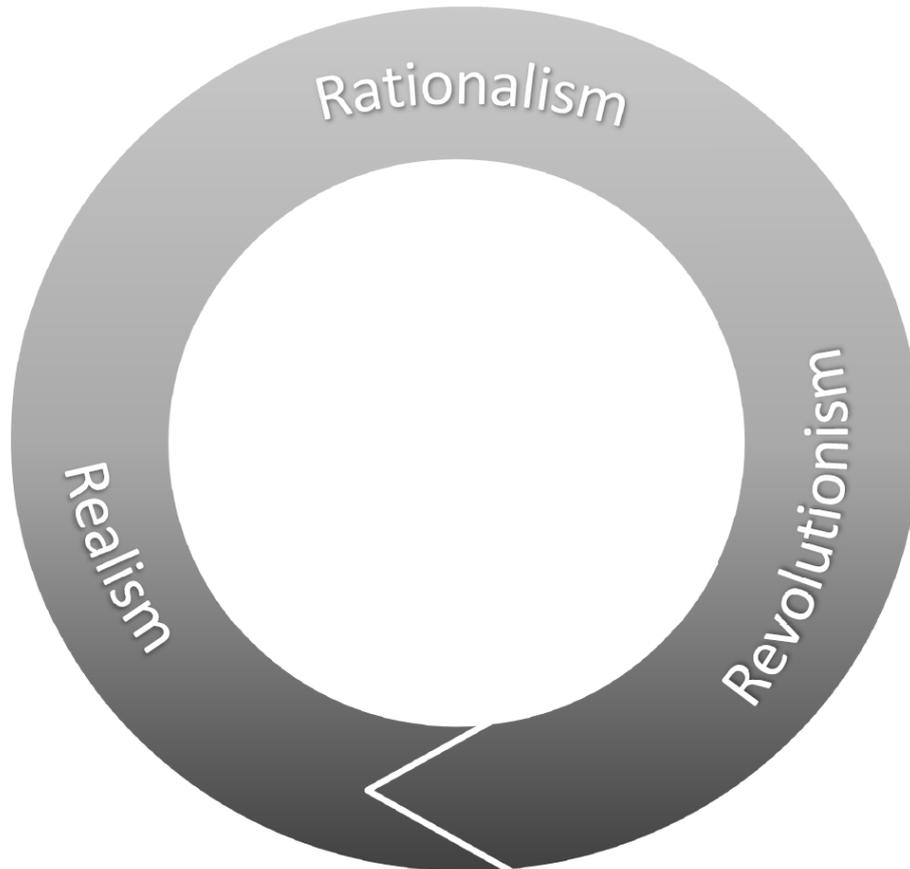
¹⁵⁰ Suroosh Irfani, *Revolutionary Islam in Iran: Popular Liberation or Religious Dictatorship?*, Third World Studies (London, Totowa, N.J.: Zed Books, 1983); Najibullah Lafraie, *Revolutionary Ideology and Islamic Militancy: The Iranian Revolution and Interpretations of the Quran*, International library of Iranian studies 13 (London, New York, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2009); Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran*, New ed (London, New York, New York: I.B. Tauris; In U.S. distributed by Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

can see the distinctive principles and behaviours of the three traditions forming the logic of which the statesmen form their decisions.

Traditions of IR	Principles	International Relations	International activity	International conduct
Realist	Prudence or expediency to secure survival	State of war, pure conflict	War	Freedom to pursue goals without moral or legal restrictions
Rationalist	Both rules of prudence and expediency and imperatives of morality and law	International Society of Sovereign States	Trade; economic and social intercourse	Legal restrictions / Law
Revolutionist	Imperatives of morality, international morality	Universal community of mankind (cosmopolitan society)	Ideological conflict between two camps of faithful/heretics; liberators/oppressed	Moral restrictions

Table 1. Summary of the Three Traditions based on Wight and Bull

These three ‘traditions of thought’ are involved in an intricate interplay within the policy-making sphere and can influence the actions of statesmen, making the actors take certain decisions. I first pinpoint the traditions within the foreign policy discourse of the statesmen and identify the main arguments associated with realism, rationalism and revolutionism. The three traditions in the foreign policy discourse of each political figure show how intertwined the traditions are with each other and with the main arguments. This gives us a hint of the arguments and justifications Iranian statesmen use to decide and act upon a policy issue. The foreign policy discourses are ‘speech acts’ in themselves, meaning they represent an action simply by being uttered by the political leaders. To further verify these ‘speech acts’, I connect the argumentations of Iranian statesmen with their actual foreign policy action, meaning the country’s international activity as carried out by the officials of the Islamic Republic. By doing so, I exhibit how the three traditions, which coexist in the discourses of the statesmen, shape their decisions and actions as based on the logic of the traditions. To understand the relationship of the three traditions with each other, I have created this graph below to visualize it.



Graph 1. Visualization of the three traditions

The three traditions are seen here to be part of a cycle with realism as its starting point, progressing towards rationalism and then revolutionism, which eventually reverts to realism where the cycle begins again. However, it is not a solid linear process where realism completely turns into rationalism and rationalism to revolutionism. Rather, the three traditions are liquid points of concentration in the circle, like different currents flowing in a river. This means all three traditions can exist simultaneously anywhere in the circle but they are more concentrated in certain areas and they influence each other. Realism is more concentrated at the beginning, rationalism is more concentrated in the middle while revolutionism is more concentrated at the end and, given the right conditions, flows into realism once again.

Realism is a good starting point for two reasons. First, it reflects the state of nature. In international relations, this means survival of the fittest, the Machiavellian or Hobbesian way, as explained earlier. Second, it is the oldest tradition among the three and had been practiced since the dawn of the history of mankind. *Raison d'état* is the most common foundation of a state's foreign policy and without it, the state won't survive in the international system. Thus, all states have this element in their foreign politics. Mention has already been made that all

three traditions exist in a country's foreign policy, thus justifying the realist element as well as the rationalist and revolutionist ones. To mitigate war and maintain order, rationalism has become widespread practice especially following the Second World War with norms of sovereignty and non-intervention being upheld for as long as states can help it. The five classic institutions, particularly diplomacy and international law, have entered the mainstream of international affairs standardizing the ways of doing foreign policy. Revolutionism serves as a vision for states encouraging a different order compared to rationalism connecting mankind and nations instead of states changing the rules of the games of international affairs into a more ethical and moral one serving the individual.

From realism to rationalism

Realism begins with the relationship of a state, or empire, with power. The more power a state has, the higher its chances to survive. Survival is the most fundamental objective of the state and since survival rests on power, then power must be acquired at all costs. There are many ways of acquiring power and with many states in the system, it is inevitable to interact with most of the states. To survive, states are in constant conflict with each other in the system due to the desire for power. But sometimes, survival strategies force states to cooperate when common interests are at stake (patterns of interactions develop) giving way to a certain set of institutions or 'standard practices' as Keohane calls it. As mentioned earlier, realism favours go-it-alone state policies where individual states fight for survival in the anarchical international system. Each state pursues its own interests with little or no regard for the interests of other states, making immorality permissible in pursuit of the state's goals. Since states interact with each other due to their interests, such as security, certain patterns develop and common interests surface. For instance, as the adage goes, 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' and states start to interact more closely. State interaction normally leads to patterns of reciprocity, giving rise to the fundamental norms sovereignty and non-intervention, providing the foundation for the establishment of 'standard practices' or, as the English School calls it, institutions of international society. Thus, the realist current yields to the rationalist tradition.

From rationalism to revolutionism

The institutions are meant to provide a certain order among the sovereign nation-states of international society. The classic institutions of diplomacy, international law, balance of power, great power management and war, regulate and facilitate the relationship of the many states in the system. As order becomes more common through the institutions, the question of justice

and the function of states emerge in the pluralist-solidarist debate of the English School. Buzan defines them as follows:

‘Pluralism represents the communitarian disposition towards a state-centric mode of association in which sovereignty and non-intervention serve to contain and sustain cultural and political diversity. It is in this general sense status quo orientated and concerned mainly about maintaining interstate order. As a rule, pluralists, following Bull, will argue that, although a deeply unjust system cannot be stable, order is in important ways a prior condition for justice.’¹⁵¹

‘Solidarism represents the disposition either to transcend the states-system with some other mode of association or to develop it beyond a logic of coexistence to one of cooperation on shared projects. In principle solidarism could represent a wide range of possibilities (Buzan 2004: 121, 190–200), but in practice within the English School it has been linked mainly to liberal cosmopolitan perspectives and to concerns about justice. Solidarists typically emphasize that order without justice is undesirable and ultimately unsustainable.’¹⁵²

The pluralist-solidarist debate is very complex and deserves a whole dissertation on its own to give it justice. However, for the purposes of this research, knowing the basic definition of the terms pluralism and solidarism is useful in understanding how the rationalist tradition could progress towards revolutionism. As justice becomes increasingly significant in the international society, the idea of an arrangement weakening the role of states or dissolving it altogether in favour of uniting mankind as individuals within one large world society becomes apparent. It is at this boundary where the rationalist current is overtaken by the revolutionist tradition.

From revolutionism to realism

Ideally, international society progresses towards the vision of a revolutionist world society supporting an order based on the unity of mankind with the individual, instead of the state, as the centre of all affairs. Morality becomes law and ethical cosmopolitanism is the norm as Kant envisioned this happily-ever-after scenario – the ultimate utopia of mankind. Irresistible as it is and despite efforts to achieve such an order, with the European Union being the best example by far, it remains an unattainable vision. The reality is, pursuing such a vision is a double-edged sword, as the Iran case shows. Such a vision can be distorted in favour of the realist traditions with claims of morality being propagated while killings are made in the name of God. The institution of war plays a key role in this transition. In the revolutionist tradition, a missionary war is waged against the infidels. The cause is noble, to defend morality and the human utopia. But once the missionary war gets out of hand, as most wars do to establish a victor, power

¹⁵¹ Buzan, *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations*, 16

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

becomes tempting to those who wage the war. Thus, victory and triumph can either maintain the utopian revolutionist state or it can slip into the establishment of an empire by those greedy for power, restarting the cycle of realism, rationalism and revolutionism once again.

To chart the utterances of the statesmen in greater detail, I elaborate on the other aspects of the English School facilitating the analysis proper by providing properties and structures within the three traditions which Iran's foreign policy operates with. This is the focus of the next section.

2.3 The Contemporary International Society: Norms and Institutions

Another key argument of the English School apart from the three traditions mentioned in the previous section is the existence of an international society. In this study, the international society is perceived as the community of actors playing the game of international relations. It is a social entity materialized in the form of norms and institutions. By thinking in the way of international rules and institutions, actors have a framework they can draw upon to make a foreign policy decision relevant to their state. This makes the 'practice' of foreign policy guided by the parameters set by the international society. The actors are the political elites within each nation-state of international society and they ideally interact with each other within the confines of these norms and institutions, typically anchored in the rationalist tradition. These norms and institutions bring about an order to maintain peace enabling states, through their respective actors, to engage in social as well as economic exchanges to benefit their respective states as well as the entire international society. Such an arrangement is quite new in relation to the history of mankind on this planet as it was established after the Second World War. This contemporary international society has evolved from the Westphalian states system in Europe, which integrated elements from previous states systems that historically stretches to the ancient times.¹⁵³ In the book, 'The Expansion of International Society', Bull and Watson, provide a detailed account of this historical development.¹⁵⁴ At different times, different systems prevailed but the end of the Second World War ushered in an era wherein powerful states within the system promoted peace and thus regarded all nation-states to be part of an international society. According to Hedley Bull, 'a *society of states* (or international society) exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations

¹⁵³ Adam Watson, *The evolution of international society: A comparative historical analysis* (London, New York: Routledge, 1992), 13

¹⁵⁴ Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, *The expansion of international society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)

with one another, and share in the working of common institutions'.¹⁵⁵ This has been the central feature of the post-World War II world and 'today everybody is an insider of international society...and all member states have rights of juridically equal sovereignty no matter how unequal they may be in other respects'.¹⁵⁶ This implies Iran is a member of the contemporary international society of sovereign states.

Jackson provides an accurate definition of international society evolving as a reaction to the increasing interaction among states:

'international society is an institutional response to the fact that the earth's population is divided among separate territory-based political communities which are deemed to express the will of local populations to an independent political existence and to conduct their domestic affairs according to their own norms and values. Because those political communities exist side by side and even cheek by jowl, their leaders are obliged to arrange a normative framework of some kind for conducting their relations—if they wish to deal with each other in an orderly way as fellow human beings'.¹⁵⁷

The fundamental structure upholding international society is constituted by two norms, namely, sovereignty of a state with defined territorial boundaries and non-intervention. The standard feature of the contemporary international society preserved from its European origins, is that the society of states 'recognize each other's sovereignty, engage in diplomatic relations with one another and uphold international law'.¹⁵⁸ The acknowledgement nation-states being distinct from one another yet have the same entitlement to sovereignty and principles suggests the international society is pluralist. Buzan refers to this pluralist constitution as a thin 'body of positive law' or 'a lower degree of shared norms, rules and institutions' as opposed to the solidarist conception of international society, which has a higher degree of shared norms, rules and institutions or a thick 'body of positive law'.¹⁵⁹ A key aspect of international society therefore is the existence of fundamental norms wherein sovereignty is the most fundamental – each state is sovereign in its own right entailing the fundamental norm of non-intervention. At this point, I shall elaborate on the conceptualization of norms and institutions as well as their

¹⁵⁵ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 13, [Italics in original]

¹⁵⁶ Robert H. Jackson, *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 13–14

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 36

¹⁵⁸ James Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society*, Cambridge studies in international relations no. 10 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 145

¹⁵⁹ Barry Buzan, "Rethinking Hedley Bull on the Institutions of International Society," in *The anarchical society in a globalized world*, ed. Richard Little and John Williams (Basingstoke [England], New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 83

relationship with one another and how they are associated with the broader context of this dissertation.

It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by norms and institutions of international society as there is enormous ambiguity surrounding these two concepts. The term norm is generally understood to mean a ‘standard of proper or acceptable behaviour’¹⁶⁰. For Jackson, norms have two dimensions: sociological and legal.¹⁶¹ The sociological element is ‘conceived to be a pattern of behaviour’ while the legal dimension defines a norm as ‘a standard of conduct by which to judge the correctness, rightness or wrongness, the goodness or badness, of human activity’.¹⁶² In the literature on international society, however, the term norm tends to be used to refer to basic norms or procedural norms, focusing on the legal aspect of the term. ‘It is a legal or moral obligation or requirement or expectation, a standard of human conduct’.¹⁶³ It is this definition guiding this research as norms are considered the basic principles of interaction. Norms are the building blocks of international society, without it, nothing larger could be established and operationalized. Norms are powerful as they represent shared understandings among groups of individuals. Simply put, norms are the rules of conduct facilitating our social interaction with each other and with the world around us. The existence of sovereignty and non-intervention as fundamental norms of international society has been legally fortified by their explicit status in the United Nations Charter. These norms are not enshrined as a law but are nevertheless generally accepted by all members of the international society and it acts as the foundation wherein all institutions are based upon particularly in the rationalist tradition wherein order in pursuit of maintaining peace is the goal of the international society thereby encouraging states to follow the norms. Below is a graph visualizing how norms and institutions are regarded in this research.

¹⁶⁰ I have derived this definition from Merriam-Webster online dictionary. See: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/norm>

¹⁶¹ Jackson, *The Global Covenant*, 108

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 78

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 50

Fundamental Institutions of International Society	Diplomacy	International Law	Balance of Power	Great power management	War
Fundamental Norms of International Society	Non-intervention				
	Sovereignty				

Graph 2. Visualization of the relationship between norms and institutions of international society.

When states adhere to these fundamental norms of international society, it inherently means the states are knowledgeable of it and therefore enact it. Through this adherence to norms such as sovereignty, certain institutions emerge since once norms are adapted over a prolonged period of time, patterns of interactions develop. Being the bedrock of all interactions, norms provide the basis for the creation of institutions. If states follow the norm, eventually certain practices on how to interact among each other within international society emerge, effectively turning these regular and consistent practices into institutions. Institutions are referred to here as ‘those practices which have the greatest time-space extension within’ societies sharing the procedural norms.¹⁶⁴ It is a form of engagement and interaction among states with shared norms and values or what Keohane calls ‘fundamental practices’.¹⁶⁵ This engagement among nation-states is governed by a normative framework consisting of a set of rules, effectively regulating behaviour and facilitating interaction. The English School refers to institutions ‘as constitutive of both states and international society in that they define the basic character and purpose of any such society’.¹⁶⁶ Such institutions ‘have structural properties in the sense that relationships are stabilized across time and space’.¹⁶⁷ Hence, norms and institutions are ‘historically situated’ and ‘arise in the evolving historical context of the modern sovereign state’.¹⁶⁸ By historically situated, I mean it was established, developed and has existed in history and its conceptualizations, functions and relationships stabilized across time and space. Through the attainment of such stability, institutions have managed to provide a social structure facilitating

¹⁶⁴ Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Polity Press, 1984), 17

¹⁶⁵ Robert O. Keohane, “International institutions: Two approaches,” *International Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (1988): 385, doi:10.2307/2600589; Buzan, *From International to World Society?*

¹⁶⁶ Buzan, “Rethinking Hedley Bull on the Institutions of International Society,” 77

¹⁶⁷ Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, xxxi

¹⁶⁸ Jackson, *The Global Covenant*, 85

these interactions of states sharing common procedural norms and understand the value of such norms.

Bull provides a very articulate description of institutions, which will be applied to this research as his definition captures it perfectly:

‘By an institution we do not necessarily imply an organisation or administrative machinery, but rather a set of habits and practices shaped towards the realisation of common goals. These institutions do not deprive states of their central role in carrying out the political functions of international society, or serve as a surrogate central authority in the international system. They are rather an expression of the element of collaboration among states in discharging their political functions - and at the same time a means of sustaining this collaboration. These institutions serve to symbolise the existence of an international society that is more than the sum of its members, to give substance and permanence to their collaboration in carrying out the political functions of international society, and to moderate their tendency to lose sight of common interests.’¹⁶⁹

The common interests Bull mentions refer to the rights of each state to sovereignty, non-intervention and is discussed below.

In this section I elaborated on the concept of international society as a community of states sharing common norms and institutions. Norms were defined to be the shared values forming the building blocks where institutions have evolved. Institutions were distinguished to be ‘fundamental practices’ that are historically situated and provide a social structure facilitating interaction among states. The next part discusses the foundational norms of international society—sovereignty and non-intervention—as well as the five institutions of diplomacy, international law, balance of power, great power management and war.

2.3.1 Sovereignty

This section of the research focuses on the norms of sovereignty and non-intervention as fundamental norms and how they are applied in the broader context of international society. Both norms as properties of Iran as a state will also be elaborated and the implications of such is discussed towards the end.

Before we proceed, it is important to define the concept of sovereignty in order to understand its function as a norm in the contemporary international society.¹⁷⁰ According to Hinsley, sovereignty is ‘the idea that there is a final and absolute political authority in the political

¹⁶⁹ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 71

¹⁷⁰ Buzan refers to sovereignty as core primary institution while Bull refers to it as the ‘basic rule of co-existence’ but for the purposes of clarity and consistency, I shall remain with Jackson’s definition of sovereignty as a procedural norm.

community...and no final and absolute authority exists elsewhere'.¹⁷¹ The Charter of the United Nations mentions 'sovereign equality' meaning each state is eligible to the same legal rights as all the other member states of international society. Member states in themselves are thus portrayed as being sovereign, capable of running themselves and being able to claim rights at the international level. Jackson says this 'most important procedural norm' of sovereignty 'is clearly expressed by Article 2 of the UN charter'.¹⁷² Article 2(4) states: 'All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state'.¹⁷³ Hence, sovereignty inherently becomes a property of each independent state underpinning the foundation of an international society. This makes it the most fundamental norm regulating all international affairs and stressing on the equality of states as being sovereign regardless of actual capabilities of the state. Refraining from the use of force implies respect for other sovereign states as well as the principle of mutual recognition must be practiced when interacting with another state. This indicates that the role of sovereignty is vital to all the other institutions, thus demonstrating a regulative function. Sovereignty serves to 'contain and sustain cultural and political diversity'.¹⁷⁴ It essentially constitutes the state and is the most fundamental property of international society defining international affairs.¹⁷⁵ Sovereignty has been 'a structural property shared among most regional states and reinforced by international society'.¹⁷⁶ Without the acceptance of sovereignty, the other institutions cannot retain their operative capacity. From this angle, the state cannot exist in international society without having sovereignty, making the fundamental norm of sovereignty an essential property of the state, permitting it to be a unit capable of interacting with other states.

Sovereignty in this manner has been a subject of interest in Iran for more than a century. In Farsi, one of the translations of the word sovereignty means 'kingship' (*padeshahi*), indicating the notion of sovereignty rests on the authority of the king.¹⁷⁷ This conceptualization may well

¹⁷¹ F. H. Hinsley, *Sovereignty*, 2nd ed (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire], New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 26, [Italics in original]

¹⁷² Jackson, *The Global Covenant*, 18

¹⁷³ United Nations, "Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice," accessed May 2, 2015, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/ctc/uncharter.pdf>

¹⁷⁴ Buzan, *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations*, 16

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 139

¹⁷⁶ Adib-Moghaddam, *The International Politics of the Persian Gulf*, 13

¹⁷⁷ *Padeshahi* is one of several translations of the word sovereignty in the dictionary, which can also be found using google translate. In the Mahmoud Hessaby Dictionary published in Tehran, only the word '*Shahi*' appears while the word '*Khodayegani*' translated as 'one God' or 'monotheism' appears at the beginning of page 500. The word for sovereign, however, is still '*padeshah*' or king, so there might have been some political influence in the publication of the dictionary. On page 2137 of the Aryanpour dictionary, however, sovereignty is translated as independence ('*esteghlal*') and makes no mention of kingship ('*padeshahi*', '*shahi*')

have its roots from the first encounter of Persian kings with the sovereign monarchs ruling Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century. The Qajar kings of the time, were not oblivious to the progressive developments on the European continent as diplomatic envoys constantly reported back their experiences abroad. An international society was developing within Europe at the time changing the international system and this society of states was accompanied by protocols unfamiliar to those outside it. As a non-European, an official visit to Europe provided the Persian kings to ‘present themselves on the same level as the European monarchs’, prompting them to include such a journey into their agenda.¹⁷⁸ ‘Their involvement with the rituals and ceremonials of a state visit gave expression to the monarchs’ dynastic legitimacy and their country’s national sovereignty’.¹⁷⁹ Such ‘visits offered non-European rulers a way of integrating themselves and their countries into a system of international relations that was dominated by the European powers’.¹⁸⁰ Membership to the international society developing in Europe during the Qajar era was not a restricted one as it accommodated ‘few independent non-European sovereigns’, and in order to be ‘recognized as equal and legitimate’ member of the ‘family of civilized nations’, Persian kings visited Europe in an attempt to ‘demonstrate sovereignty and consolidate Persia’s global position’.¹⁸¹ It can be said the presence of the Qajar kings in European royal courts laid the foundations of the Iranian nation’s right to sovereignty at a time when European society was about to expand. The notion of sovereignty as kingship in Iran, however, has ceased to exist in reality as the concept of sovereignty has evolved to mean ‘the right to rule’ (*hagh-e hakemiat*), which is more relevant when looking at Iran after the 1979 revolution. It can be argued, nonetheless, that the political system replacing the Shah (king) is not very different from the previous one with the introduction of the concept of supreme leadership (*Vali-e faqih*).

2.3.2 *Non-intervention*

For the fundamental norms to function, states must generally mutually recognize and respect one another as sovereign states as it is essential for their coexistence in the contemporary international society.¹⁸² After all, as already mentioned, sovereignty is the basis of all interactions within the international society. This highly important norm of sovereignty is normally accompanied by the norm of non-intervention. Together, they both constitute the

¹⁷⁸ D. Motadel, “Qajar Shahs in Imperial Germany*,” *Past & Present* 213, no. 1 (2011): 194, doi:10.1093/pastj/gtr013

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 195

¹⁸² R. J. Vincent, *Nonintervention and international order* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), 14

fundamental logic of relations among states in the international society.¹⁸³ The norm of non-intervention is a vital factor in the constitution of the contemporary international society and maintaining order and peace after the Second World War. Although there is a tremendous debate about the parameters of non-intervention, I discuss it here briefly as it applies to the case of Iran without diverting to these issues. A useful way to define non-intervention is by looking at the meaning of the concept of intervention. According to Vincent, intervention is:

‘...the activity undertaken by a state, group within a state, a group of states or an international organization which interferes coercively in the domestic affairs of another state. It is a discrete event having a beginning and an end, and it is aimed at the authority structure of the target state. It is not necessarily lawful or unlawful, but it does break a conventional pattern of international relations.’¹⁸⁴

This simply implies that non-intervention is opposite to the meaning of intervention. Vincent explains:

‘If a state has a right to sovereignty, this implies that the other states have a duty to respect that right by, among other things, refraining from intervention in its domestic affairs. The principle of non-intervention identifies the right of states to sovereignty as a standard in international society and makes explicit the respect required for it in abstention from intervention.’¹⁸⁵

Once again, this norm is expressed in the Charter of the United Nations according to Jackson.¹⁸⁶ Article 2(7) declares: ‘Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state’.¹⁸⁷ Although the Charter does not explicitly mention that the member states are to practice non-intervention in their affairs with other states, the intention to enshrine the norm of non-intervention indicates the international society must somehow share a degree of commitment to this shared principle.

Historically, however, the United States have directly intervened in Iranian internal affairs such as in 1953 when a coup (Operation Ajax) was organized to oust Prime Minister Mossadegh following the nationalization of Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). From then on until the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran has been subject to heavy Western attempts to interfere into its internal affairs. Such bitter encounters with Great Britain and the United States in the first half of the twentieth century remains fresh in the memories of the statesmen, encouraging them

¹⁸³ Buzan, *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations*, 16; Bull, *The Anarchical Society*

¹⁸⁴ Vincent, *Nonintervention and international order*, 13

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 14

¹⁸⁶ Jackson, *The Global Covenant*, 18

¹⁸⁷ United Nations, “Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice”

to reiterate the principle of non-intervention in their rhetoric, especially following the harsh labelling of Iran by the Bush administration. The former transgression of the United States in the affairs of Iran as a sovereign state had clearly become one of the issues affecting Iranian foreign policy as the procedural norm of non-intervention was violated.

Ideally, when sovereign states uphold the norms of sovereignty and non-intervention, the threat posed by other states becomes thwarted contributing to the sense of security of each state within the international society despite the absence of a central authority to enforce the principles.¹⁸⁸ ‘Small states do not interact with international society with the constant fear that they will be annihilated by more powerful actors. If this *relative* security would not be there, small states would not constitute a considerable part of the international system’.¹⁸⁹ The fundamental norms mentioned here do not provide a prescription of abiding and protecting these norms, rather, the activities of protecting these norms involve significant collaboration among states ‘in what may be called the institutions of international society: the balance of power, international law, diplomatic mechanism, the managerial system of great powers, and war’.¹⁹⁰

In sum, sovereignty and non-intervention are the fundamental norms the international society is contingent upon as they facilitate the co-existence of states and the concepts of sovereignty, non-intervention are the building blocks of the institutions of international society.

2.4 Institutions of International Society and the Three Traditions

Institutions as ‘fundamental practices’ is the focus of this section, how they are related with the three traditions and how Iran has been engaged with them. I first elaborate on the choice of approach and then move on to describe the five classic institutions of international society as well as Iran’s engagement with them in the past.

Let us recall the definition of institutions. It is the historically situated habits and practices, or fundamental practices, providing a structural framework of interaction and collaboration among states within international society.¹⁹¹ These institutions, together with the fundamental norms, ‘carry out positive functions or roles in relation to international order’ meaning they ‘are part of the efficient causation of international order, that they are among the necessary and sufficient

¹⁸⁸ Adib-Moghaddam, *The International Politics of the Persian Gulf*, 132

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., [Italics in original].

¹⁹⁰ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 71

¹⁹¹ It is Bull (2002) who refers to institutions as habits and practices, Keohane that terms it as fundamental practices while Giddens emphasizes it to be historically situated. To read the details of this summary, please refer to the section on norms and institutions of the contemporary international society on page 36.

conditions of its occurrence'.¹⁹² In short, institutions provide a certain international order among the states of international society. The most influential form of this international order, as manifested in the institutions of international society of sovereign nation-states, is rationalist in conception but nonetheless affected by realist and revolutionist traditions.

Bull defines international order as 'a pattern or disposition of international activity that sustains those goals of the society of states'.¹⁹³ He believes the members of the modern international society of sovereign nation-states to have common goals. First is the 'goal of preservation of the system and society of states itself. Whatever the divisions among them, modern states have been united in the belief that they are the principal actors in world politics and the chief bearers of rights and duties within it'.¹⁹⁴ The second goal corresponds to the maintenance of independence or external sovereignty of every state.¹⁹⁵ Third 'is the goal of peace' albeit not in the way of 'establishing universal and permanent peace' but rather 'the maintenance of peace in the sense of the absence of war among member states of international society as the normal condition of their relationship, to be breached only in special circumstances and according to principles that are generally accepted'.¹⁹⁶ The last goal concerns the limiting of violence resulting in 'death or bodily harm' as well as 'the keeping of promises and the stabilization of possession by rules of property'.¹⁹⁷

Institutions are profoundly influenced by the three traditions of realism, rationalism and revolutionism. The three traditions constitute the ideas of statesmen while the institutions serve as the stage wherein the statesmen play their role according to the tradition they are following. The nature of each institution differs depending on tradition they are at. In the rationalist tradition, the institutions are fully present with rules pertaining to rationalism. However, in the realist and the revolutionist traditions, the institutions change or are completely dissolved altogether. To be clear, institutions are perceived in this research as stretching in a continuum from the realist end to the revolutionist end with all five classic institutions only being fully intact in the middle wherein the rationalist tradition lies. I explain this below and provided a table in section 2.5.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 16

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 17

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 18

¹⁹⁸ This refers to Table 2. Visualization of the Institutions under the continuum of the three traditions based on Bull and Wight

In the affairs of two states, for instance, one might be playing realist diplomacy while another rationalist diplomacy but both are within the institution of diplomacy. The political discourses of the statesmen show the tradition they adhere to, affecting their language. The meaning of the statements could thus be deciphered to be dominated by one of the three traditions or that there are two competing traditions based on the repetition of words and phrases. The three traditions operate like currents within every institution meaning the nature of the institutions for the statesmen may change depending on the gravity of the tradition within the institution. Hence, the potential for realist diplomacy, rationalist diplomacy and revolutionist diplomacy can occur at different points in time during a given issue. In Iranian foreign policy, the dominance of the rationalist tradition in the institution of diplomacy can be demonstrated by negotiations with an outcome related to signing agreements such as the conclusion of the Iranian nuclear program negotiations in July 2015.

I elaborate on the framework of the classic institutions of the English School as presented by Bull since they represent the standard institutions of the international society promoting clarity within the context of Iranian foreign policy analysis. I chose to work with the Bullian approach for two reasons. First, the classic institutions of Bull—balance of power (BOP), diplomacy, international law (IL), great power management (GPM) and war—have preceded the institutions introduced in the literature by other scholars of the English School such as Buzan. Thus, there are more comprehensive accounts and the documentation regarding the utility of the classic institutions while the remaining institutions remain subject to debates potentially complicating this study. Second, as they are classic institutions, I can employ the descriptions of Bull (2000) and Wight (1990) to further establish these institutions to the extent of their utilization as analytical tools in examining Iranian foreign policy.

It is important to consider that these institutions of international society were not inventions suddenly surfacing after the Second World War. Diplomacy, international law, balance of power, great power management and war had been features of the international system prior to the advent of the contemporary international society of sovereign states. In different periods and in various regions of the world, the institutions had operated and facilitated relations among countries but perhaps due to the disparate contexts, they might not have been anchored in the rationalist tradition as other traditions may have been more dominant in any given time frame. The five classic institutions have become highly influenced by the rationalist tradition since the Second World War as the fundamental norms of sovereignty and non-intervention were introduced in the Charter of the United Nations and relations among states started having a legal

dimension based on a set of international agreements. Let us now turn our attention to the five institutions of international society as described by Bull and Wight discussed below.

2.4.1 Diplomacy

The word diplomacy literally means ‘the conduct of relations between sovereign states through the medium of officials based at home or abroad, the latter being either members of their state’s diplomatic service or temporary diplomats’.¹⁹⁹ Another definition of diplomacy refers to a practical skill applied conducting diplomacy.²⁰⁰ Bull’s definition is very similar to the former two, he defines diplomacy as the ‘conduct of relations between states and other entities with standing in world politics by official agents and by peaceful means’.²⁰¹ He emphasizes the peaceful aspect of diplomacy, which is of particular interest in this study. Diplomacy as an act is ‘the conduct of international relations by persons who are official agents; hence the importance in diplomacy of letters of credence or other tokens of representative or symbolic status’.²⁰² Diplomacy has several functions in maintaining the international order due to its peaceful nature. First, it ‘facilitates communication between the political leaders of states—and other entities in world politics’.²⁰³ Second, it negotiates agreements among states and other political communities.²⁰⁴ Third, it allows ‘the gathering of intelligence or information about foreign countries’.²⁰⁵ Fourth, it minimizes the ‘effects of friction in international relations’.²⁰⁶ Finally, it ‘fulfils the function of symbolizing the existence of the society of states’.²⁰⁷ Diplomacy, in the contemporary sense is predominantly influenced by the rationalist tradition of international affairs. The function of diplomacy as a rationalist institution is to maintain order through peaceful means entailing that solving conflicts through the logic of rationalism is possible. However, both the realist and revolutionist traditions have not been absent in this rationalist-oriented institution. Wight distinguishes three types of diplomacy based on the traditions, providing a description of their operational capacity in international affairs.

For Wight, the protocol of diplomacy in the Realist tradition has four key features:

1. ‘Flux or change (adapt, forestall, facilitate and control)
2. Fear and greed

¹⁹⁹ Geoff Berridge and Alan James, *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*, 2nd ed. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire [England], New York [N.Y.]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 69–70

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 156 Bull, *The Anarchical Society* (2002),

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 157

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 164

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 165

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 166

3. Negotiation from strength
4. The technique of bargaining'.²⁰⁸

Yet 'when stripped off the niceties of protocol, diplomacy is seen to proceed by coercion and bribery, by stick and carrot and these pressures and bribes can be economic, political or military'.²⁰⁹ The grip the United States had on King Hussein and the previous Shah of Iran are two good examples illustrating this point.²¹⁰ Three strategic propositions arise from the protocol:

1. 'Improve your position and increase your strength as the opportunity offers
2. Brinkmanship. The belief that threats of the final coercion are not out of place. Taking the calculated risk of war is often necessary
3. Firmness through fatalism. One who is confident of negotiating from a preponderance of strength, and who is prepared to face war, acquires a fatalistic freedom from fear'.²¹¹

A realist diplomacy necessitates the use of power and coercion to obtain favour and dominance about an issue, which is an application of realist concepts of international politics. Military threats in order to get a state to follow another state, for instance, falls into this category of realist diplomacy as material power becomes the ultimate tool for coercion.

A rationalist diplomacy, on the other hand, is based on the use of peaceful negotiations based on mutual respect as well as agreements between or among sovereign states. Upon the establishment of the modern international society of sovereign states, this type of diplomacy has become standard practice in dealing with conflicts. The aim is to bring both parties to the table and negotiate their terms peacefully to come up with an agreement securing mutual compliance and responsibility. It is not without difficulties and the realist tradition among statesmen usually surface to disrupt the peaceful processes the rationalist diplomatic conduct insists on. But, more often than not, diplomatic outcomes present peaceful solutions to many of the problems plaguing the international society today. The rationalist type of diplomacy expects two conditions to be met to consider diplomatic negotiations a success:

1. 'Material or physical' condition allowing the parties to deal on 'equal terms'
2. Moral condition, 'the possibility for the parties of mutual confidence'.²¹²

Such conditions allow for parties to a conflict to deal on a basis of mutual respect of sovereign states, one without diminishing a party in favour the other, which in turn provides a sense of

²⁰⁸ Wight, *International Theory*, 189

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 192

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 193–94

²¹² *Ibid.*, 180

security for all those involved. The moral aspect of this condition stems from honouring the fundamental norms as well as achieving outcomes in the form of agreements favourable to conflicting parties.

The revolutionist diplomacy is considerably different as revolutionists do not believe in diplomacy. Attention is diverted to protesting, meaning under certain conditions of international relations, the need arises to abate tension in order to negotiate. The revolutionist tradition upholds the notion that ‘something ought to be done and can be done to reduce tension’ and this is to ‘make a gesture’, either collective or individual, which ‘has nothing to do with security but to gain the psychological improvement of an atmosphere of lessened tension’.²¹³ As a sovereign state, Iran has diplomatic relations with most of the countries of the world and it should be examined to disclose patterns useful to the understanding of Iranian foreign policy.

Diplomacy as defined by the parameters of the contemporary international society has become an essential tool in Iran’s foreign affairs ever since the establishment of Iran as a modern nation-state after the Second World War.²¹⁴ In most aspects related to Iranian external affairs, Tehran constantly engages with this institution. Some examples include the diplomatic negotiations surrounding the nuclear program as well as the diplomatic envoys sent by Tehran to Oman, Pakistan, Tunisia, Algeria and Lebanon to tackle the crisis in Yemen.

2.4.2 *Balance of Power*

Balance of power is an institution engaging the sovereign states of the contemporary international society. In the rationalist tradition, it pertains to an arrangement wherein not one powerful state can dominate and subject the other states to its rule. Bull identifies three functions of balance of power. Firstly, its existence ‘has served to prevent the system from being transformed by conquest into a universal empire’.²¹⁵ Second, local (regional) balances of power have protected ‘the independence of states in particular areas from absorption or domination by a locally preponderant power’.²¹⁶ Third, balance of power has ‘provided the

²¹³ Ibid., 198

²¹⁴ Iran has been a ‘nation’ with defined territorial boundaries as early as the 16th century as the Safavid ruler’s official title was ‘The Guarded Domains of Iran’ (in Persian ‘Mamalek-e Mahrusaye Iran). Abbas Amanat, “Iranian identity boundaries: a historical view,” in *Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective*, ed. Abbas Amanat and Farzin Vejdani (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) in *Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective*, ed. Abbas Amanat and Farzin Vejdani (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 13

²¹⁵ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 102

²¹⁶ Ibid.

conditions in which other institutions on which international order depends (diplomacy, war, international law, great power management) have been able to operate'.²¹⁷

This institution is likewise influenced by the three traditions but both Bull and Wight focused on the rationalist dimension, especially following the establishment of the modern international society of sovereign states. The rationalist tradition has an idealist aspect dictating the 'need to 'take thought for tomorrow', and to take responsible decisions; balance of power is policy, not law'.²¹⁸ This means, when taking the norm of sovereignty and non-intervention into consideration, a state must be mindful of its actions and avoid violating these fundamental norms. Thus, balance of power becomes an order wherein no state could be subject to another's power. Cooperation policies and agreements between states demonstrate the rationalist dimension of balance of power.

The realist tradition questions the validity of the rationalist argument pertaining to this institution of an '*even* distribution of power on the grounds that there is no way of measuring relative power' and, hence, 'remains at a linguistic level'.²¹⁹ Realists think in terms of the present circumstances, have little regard for idealism in international affairs and thereby are of the view that balance of power means the state has to strive to be the most powerful in the system in order to impose its will on the others. Domination and preponderance regulates state behaviour where weaker states in the system bend to the rules set by the powerful states. Once a state is powerful enough within the system, breaking the rules becomes a possibility thus 'disregarding the rights of other states'.²²⁰

For the revolutionists, balance of power is considered 'unreliable and unmanageable in practice', thus rejecting the institution altogether.²²¹ 'There is no agreement or clear-sightedness about what one is meant to be measuring' in the institution of balance of power making it irrelevant in the revolutionist tradition.²²² Revolutionists ultimately aim to establish a revolutionary state and balance of power is one of the prime obstacles to be overcome otherwise the revolutionist endeavour becomes impossible.²²³ If mankind could be united into one

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Wight, *International Theory*, 165

²¹⁹ Ibid., 169; 176

²²⁰ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 104

²²¹ Wight, *International Theory*, 173

²²² Ibid., 176

²²³ Ibid., 178

organism, states would dissolve as a consequence and balance of power will be rendered meaningless.

In the contemporary era, Iranian statesmen conform to the institutional arrangements of balance of power and operate within the rationalist framework. Tehran has invested on its relationship with China and Russia to thwart the preponderance of the United States to balances the power structure in international affair in an attempt to forge policies favourable to Iran, particularly regarding the nuclear issue.

2.4.3 *International Law*

International law generally refers to the ‘rules and principles of actions which are binding on sovereign states in their relations with each other’ derived ‘from two main sources: international custom (of the sort which creates customary international law) and treaties’.²²⁴ Bull ascribes three functions to international law for the maintenance of international order. First, it determines the sanctity of the society of sovereign states and identifies it ‘as the supreme normative principle of the political organization of mankind’.²²⁵ Second, it articulates ‘the basic rules of coexistence among states...in international society’.²²⁶ Lastly, it facilitates the mobilization of ‘compliance with the rules of international society’.²²⁷ A related concept to this set of rules represented by international law is the notion of international obligation and it is discussed by Wight. Legal treaties and conventions agreed upon by sovereign states could be categorized under the rubric of international law, necessitating the compliance of the parties involved.

Rationalists aim ‘at the codification of decisive rules of international law and its administration by effective international courts’.²²⁸ International human rights law as well as conventions against genocide are examples of such codified rules and the International Criminal Court an example of an international court. ‘International law is conceived as the existing practices and treaties of states, constantly refined by references to certain fundamental standards and norms of which they are the imperfect expression’.²²⁹ The Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) for instance is a treaty among states of the international society aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons while facilitating the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In quoting the NPT, Iran has

²²⁴ Berridge and James, *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*, 143

²²⁵ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 134

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 135

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ Wight, *International Theory*, 234

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 237

been showcasing its right under an international treaty to have a peaceful nuclear program serving civilian purposes, which stems from a rationalist tradition of thought. With regard to international obligations, the rationalist tradition places emphasis on the binding nature of contracts and treaties or *pacta sunt servanda*'.²³⁰ Signing treaties becomes as important as the implementation of the treaty, with the parties abiding by the rules set by the agreement. The rationalist tradition promotes adherence to the law as well as treaties to promote order and peace among the sovereign states of international society. The treaties and laws are deemed to be a source of security and stability regarding matters potentially endangering or harming the international community.

For the realist, 'international law operates in the domain of subsidiary importance. The state is prior to international law, both logically and historically'.²³¹ This entails the primacy of the state and its right to disregard international law altogether in pursuit of national interest. They conceive international law 'as the sum of treaties agreed to by sovereign states who ex hypothesi will abate no essential of their sovereignty'.²³² Laws and treaties are seen as factors constraining the sovereignty of the state. As such, this practice is used sparingly for a temporary resolve of an issue such as after a defeat in war. In terms of international obligations, realists tend to regard treaties and contracts as temporary and observance of it is conditional or '*rebus sic stantibus*'.²³³ For instance, the party who lost a war would yield into signing a treaty with the victor but will only abide by the rules as long as they remain weak and violate the rules once they are powerful enough to challenge the victor regarding the treaty. These types of treaties were prevalent between the Ottoman Empire and the Persian Empire where treaties were signed and implemented temporarily.

Revolutionists insist international law 'is an ideological weapon for the prosecution of holy war by the Revolutionist state'.²³⁴ International law is a prime hindrance to the realization of the revolutionary state or world society as it deems the revolutionary action as crimes. They uphold the notion of '*Cum haereticis fides non servanda*' or promises made to heretics cannot be kept in the realm of international obligations.²³⁵ Disregarding international law and treaties is regarded necessary for the revolutionary state to materialize and as such the practice of a rationalist international law is unnecessary. Individual rights in the revolutionist tradition stem

²³⁰ Ibid., 241, [Italics in original]

²³¹ Ibid., 235

²³² Ibid., 238

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid., 241

from morals set by the revolutionist state designed for individuals. Hence, individual rights as stated in the institution of international law are overwritten by individual morals. Universal moral principles of mankind are the rules in the revolutionist tradition, thus replacing international law altogether.

Since the revelation of Iran's nuclear program in 2002, Tehran has insisted on its legal right to a peaceful nuclear program under the Non-Proliferation Treaty it has signed in 1968. Iran's pursuit of nuclear technology has shown the multifaceted nature of international law and the options at the states' disposal in achieving their national interest. This demonstrates the utility of the institution of international law and, its corollary, international obligations, in analysing and understanding Iranian foreign policy.

2.4.4 *Great Power Management*

It is important to define the term 'great power' before proceeding with a discussion on what 'great power management' is as well as its function in maintaining international order as an institution of international society. Wight does not discuss this institution as such and so reference will come from the work of Bull. There are three implications upon using the word great powers.²³⁶ First, there is no singular power and an exclusive club facilitated by special rules exist.²³⁷ Second, these countries have similar, if not equal, military capabilities.²³⁸ Third, these powers are 'recognized by others to have, and conceived by their own leaders and peoples to have, certain special rights and duties'.²³⁹ Such a conceptualization of the terminology of great powers 'presupposes and implies the idea of an international society as opposed to an international system, a body of independent political communities linked by common rules and institutions as well as by contact and interaction'.²⁴⁰ This indicates that great powers, having the capabilities as well as accepting their duties in the international society, have a significant contribution to the preservation of international order through the management of their relationship with each other and through the exploitation of their predominance in directing international affairs.²⁴¹ There are six distinct ways they manage their relationship with each other to preserve order.²⁴² First, they preserve the 'general balance of power'.²⁴³ Second, they

²³⁶ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 194

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid., 195

²³⁹ Ibid., 196

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 200

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

seek ‘to avoid or control crises in their relations with one another’.²⁴⁴ Third, they attempt ‘to limit or contain wars among one another’.²⁴⁵ Fourth, they unilaterally exploit ‘their local preponderance’.²⁴⁶ Fifth, they generally agree ‘to respect one another’s spheres of influence’. Lastly, they engage in ‘joint action, as is implied by the idea of a great power concert or condominium’.²⁴⁷ Taking military capabilities into account in determining the great powers in the international society today, we may count the United States, Russia and China to be part of this exclusive club. This setting entails means that powerful states in the system must engage with one another to maintain order and mitigate conflicts. They exert their influence over the weaker states in their spheres to prevent conflicts as each great power has a responsibility toward its own sphere of influence. This way, international affairs are managed and regulated for peace to be maintained.

Neither Bull nor Wight have discussed the realist and revolutionist dimensions of the institution of great power management implying it does not exist in these traditions. However, great power management in the realist tradition can arguably be understood as being related to the institution of war since great powers tend to use war against each other in a quest for dominance. Great powers then neither manage nor cooperate since cooperation is not part of the realist doctrine. Rather great power rivalry comes to the fore creating conflict and war in the international system. Hence, great power management can technically be renamed as great power rivalry making war the constant state of international affairs. As for the revolutionist tradition, great power management cannot possibly exist as the foundation of this institution is the state which is likewise non-existent in the tradition. Since the revolutionist world society are made up of individuals in one society, neither engagement nor rivalry is foreseen rendering great power management meaningless.

2.4.5 War

War is defined as ‘organized violence carried on by political units against each other’²⁴⁸. There are three different perspectives on the function of war depending on the points of view of an ‘individual state’, a ‘system of states’ and ‘society of states’ each corresponding to one of the three traditions.²⁴⁹ First, from the perspective of an individual state war is an instrument of

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 178

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 180

policy—a means to attain certain objectives.²⁵⁰ When fused with the revolutionist tradition of thought wherein a world society of mankind exists, this perspective becomes adopted as a means to maintain the just cause and violence will be directed at the dissidents of the world society. Second, taking on the perspective of an international system, war becomes an essential determinant of the system at any given time following the realist tradition.²⁵¹ It is this function war has served for most of the history of mankind. ‘It is war and the threat of war that help to determine whether particular states survive or are eliminated, whether they rise or decline, whether their frontiers remain the same or are changed, whether their peoples are ruled by one government or another, whether disputes are settled or drag on, and which way they are settled, whether there is a balance of power in the international system or one state becomes preponderant’.²⁵² Third, through the perspective of an international society, it has a dual function referring to the rationalist tradition.²⁵³ On the one hand, war functions as the ‘manifestation of disorder in international society’ threatening to disintegrate the society ‘into a state of pure enmity or war of all against all’.²⁵⁴ For this reason, the contemporary international society has persisted in limiting and containing war, keeping ‘it within the bounds of rules laid down by the international society itself.’²⁵⁵ On the other hand, war functions as ‘an instrument of state policy and a basic determinant of the shape of the international system – is a means which international society itself feels a need to exploit as to achieve its own purposes’.²⁵⁶ Though this second aspect may appear to reflect the function of war from the perspective of an individual state, its role is significantly different as it aims to maintain the international order, and should be regarded positively.²⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the contemporary international society operates within the first aspect since the society of sovereign nation-states have ‘been impelled to restrict and contain war’²⁵⁸ As a matter of fact, the first line of the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations refers to this and it states: ‘We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war...’.²⁵⁹

The Iran-Iraq war from 1980 to 1988 was the last interstate war Iran has fought to date with severe ramifications for the country, proving the dual function of war in the ‘society of states’:

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 181

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 182

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ United Nations, “Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice”

it showed a disorder while at the same time, it functioned as an instrument of Iran's state policy. Considering Iran's eight-year-war as well as the military intervention of the United States in neighbouring Iraq and Afghanistan, there is good reason for the Iranian administration to take the threat of war, present in the U.S. administration's rhetoric, very seriously. The paranoia of Iran in engaging with the institution of war is self-explanatory and it has serious implications on Iran's foreign policy. Since the 1979 revolution, the United States has had difficulties recognizing the Islamic regime in Iran, which was used to justify Washington's support of Saddam Hussein in the Iran-Iraq war. Iran, being a sovereign state and a member of the international society, certainly perceived this as a threat to their sovereignty and territorial integrity as the regime was not mutually recognized as the sovereign entity in Iran. The ramifications of such an insecurity has certainly influenced Iran's foreign policy, especially in terms of seeking recognition. There are indications, nonetheless, that through the para-military Hezbollah group, Iran has somehow involved itself indirectly with the institution of war despite its paranoia in engaging with the institution. This is in part due to the perceived security threats in addition to the insecurities of not being fully recognized as a sovereign nation-state by the United States. From Bush's 'Axis of Evil' speech until 2009, the threat of regime change in Iran was not completely off the table in Washington and hundreds of millions of dollars were being invested by the United States on funding domestic opposition groups intensifying such efforts by 2006.²⁶⁰

Awareness of this has naturally provoked a backlash from the conservative factions of the Iranian government, strengthening the capabilities of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) within Iran and in the Middle East to prepare for possible attacks, culminating in the bloody crackdown following the 2009 presidential campaign in Tehran. Violent scenes gripped the world beginning from the shooting of a young woman called 'Neda' resembling inter-state war despite it happening domestically, reflecting the transformation of the institution of war. Similar developments can likewise be observed in Iran's involvement in the Syrian war as the government relentlessly support Bashar Al-Assad while the West primarily backs the opposition groups unfolding one of the few proxy wars Tehran is engaged in. Yet another such war is with Saudi Arabia in Yemen as part of the regional rivalry games between the two countries. The nature of wars has fundamentally changed in a way as Bulls' 'political units'

²⁶⁰ Guy Dinmore, "Bush seeks funds to weaken Iran from within," February 16, 2006, accessed October 8, 2015, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/6bab2414-9e90-11da-b641-0000779e2340.html?ft_site=falcon&desktop=true#axzz4hWDYEmx8; Ewan MacAskill and Julian Borger, "Bush plans huge propaganda campaign in Iran," The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2006/feb/16/usnews.iran>

now includes non-state actors targeting mostly civilians with the goal of inflicting as much casualties as possible to weaken the opponent echoing Mary Kaldor’s concept of ‘New and Old Wars’ demonstrating that Iran’s support for para-military groups across the Middle East is an engagement with the institution of war.²⁶¹

2.5 Joining the Three Traditions and the Classic Institutions

Being an integral part of the institutions, the three traditions operate within each of the institutions as currents, each guided by their own logic. Adhering to their own characterization of interactions among states, the three traditions bestow specific qualities to each the institution, which shapes the meaning of the institutions and their functionality. To illustrate this, let us consider the three traditions to be a continuum starting from realism, moving on to rationalism and ending with revolutionism. The institutions are conceived to have different definitions and functions depending on their place in the continuum.

	Realism	Rationalism	Revolutionism
Diplomacy	Self-sufficiency, survival, independence; Negotiation through coercion	Cooperation, policy; Negotiations on equal terms	Must be abolished
International Law	Unimportant; Conditional adherence to legal obligations	Codification of rules; Treaties are binding	Only universal moral principles of mankind must be adhered to.
Balance of Power	Preponderance, dominance	Equal distribution of Power	Unreliable, Non-existent
Great Power Management	Can only be understood in terms of war	Engaging with other powers to maintain order	Non-existent
War	Constant a state of war to determine the system; Means to achieve national interest	Indicates disorder; Must be avoided or used only in emergencies	Missionary war

Table 2. Visualization of the Institutions under the continuum of the three traditions based on Bull and Wight

Such an exposition of Iran’s adherence to a dominant tradition can help us understand and explain their justifications for pursuing certain policies regarding their interaction with other nation-states of international society. Relations with the West and the countries in the region can be comprehended more thoroughly through deciphering their perspectives using the three traditions and the institutions as analytical tools.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the main framework of this dissertation through an elaboration of the theory guiding this research. Two key features of the English School were presented: the three traditions and the norms and institutions of international society. The three traditions of thought, realism, rationalism and revolutionism, are considered as currents in a constant

²⁶¹ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 178; Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, 3rd [fully rev. and updated] ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2012)

interplay within international politics, informing statesmen on how to approach foreign policy. The second feature, international society, refers to the contemporary international order of the community of sovereign states emerging after the Second World War. This contemporary international society is constituted by fundamental norms at the very basic level and institutions. Institutions are the fundamental practices regulating interaction among states and are defined to be the shared understanding among all the members of this society. The norms of sovereignty and non-intervention are considered as the building blocks of the institutions and are thus crucial aspects determining the interactions between states. The five classic institutions of diplomacy, international law, balance of power, great power management and war are social structures and fundamental practices where the states operate. The synergy of both the three traditions and four of the five institutions—diplomacy, international law, balance of power and great power management—form the analytical tool I use to examine the speeches, and official statements and other texts of Iranian statesmen to provide a comprehensive analysis of Iranian foreign policy. Taken together the three traditions and the five classic institutions of international society determine a country's foreign policy.

3 Chapter three: Methodology

To answer the question: *'How can Iran's inconsistent foreign policy be explained?'* and prove *Iran's foreign policy is consistent and is fundamentally realist with a revolutionist vision while the means are rationalist.* I have set two goals for this research. First is to prove *Iran's foreign policy is consistent* and follows a certain logic effectively explained by the three traditions of the English School. By analysing both the statements of Iran's statesmen and Iran's foreign policy actions the three traditions at work can be demonstrated. Second is to show the simultaneous coexistence and interplay of the three traditions in the statements and actions of Iran's statesmen. This aims to confirm the second part of the research statement: *Iran's foreign policy is fundamentally realist with a revolutionist vision while the means are rationalist.*

The previous chapter discussed the theoretical and analytical framework of this study arguing that Iranian statesmen who engage in foreign policy are influenced by three traditions of thought as reflected by the English School's realism, rationalism and revolutionism. These traditions manifest themselves as a dynamic interplay of ideas and are evident in the five classical institutions of international society – diplomacy, international law, balance of power, great power management and war – which Iranian statesmen operate in. Being a member of the contemporary international society of sovereign nation-states established after the Second World War, Iran is not devoid of knowledge and understanding of these institutions. Failure to recognize the existence of an interplay of the three traditions within these institutions can mislead us into conjecturing Iran's foreign policy to be a product of a single theoretical framework. In such a case, Iran's foreign policy may at times seem inconsistent since following a strictly realist, neo-liberalist or constructivist framework does not leave room for dynamism in terms of policy. Foreign policy is, nonetheless, very dynamic and inconsistencies can be explained logically if we use a multi-faceted approach. Iran's foreign policy can simultaneously consist of all the three traditions of realism, rationalism and revolutionism and the use of the English School.

I began by collecting speeches of Iran's statesmen delivered to international audiences while compiling a list of key words and phrases from the work of English School scholars, mainly Wight and Bull as well as Islamic Studies scholars such as Irfani, Lafraei and Martin, to generate a table of the three traditions to guide the research. This table has three columns representing the three traditions of realism, rationalism and revolutionism. Once the dataset has been completed and the table finished, I moved on to find a software to quantitatively analyse

the data by means of counting the repetition of these words within the statements. Unfortunately, I have not found the appropriate software for the task, and so I asked a programmer to create a software specifically for my research. Percentage values measuring the dominance, i.e. the repetitiveness, of the words representing the traditions and institutions from the period since 1997 emerged in the results and are discussed in the quantitative chapter of this research. A further step involved a qualitative analysis of the data, wherein I had a close reading of the materials to examine whether new themes and discourses within the same traditions could be revealed or if the Iranian statesmen have a completely new perspective altogether separate from the pre-supposed three traditions. Both results were combined together to present holistic evidence based on the political discourse of the statesmen framing the parameters where they base their foreign policy decisions on. Then, I look at Iran's foreign policy actions and connect their discourses with their international activity to show the consistency of Iran's foreign policy in terms of it following the logic of the three traditions as well as verifying the statesmen 'mean what they say'.

3.1 The Political Discourses of Iranian Statesmen

As opposed to the conventional method of choosing one political institution, such as the Office of the Supreme Leader, in analysing Iranian foreign policy, I have chosen three main political institutions to provide more inclusive results. These three institutions together are responsible for the foreign policy of Iran. One may be more powerful than the other but nonetheless all are vital in the country's foreign policy-making process. I work on the political rhetoric from the Office of the Supreme Leader, the Office of the President and the Foreign Ministry Office, particularly the Iranian delegation to the United Nations.

The Office of the Supreme Leader is the most influential body in terms of decision and policy-making processes in the country. It is the highest political and religious institution established by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 to uphold and safeguard the revolution. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Khomeini's successor, has held this permanent position since Khomeini's death in 1989. Khamenei is considered the most powerful political figure in the country and his decision penetrates all of the political, economic and social institutions in Iran. Thus, he has played and continues to play a major role not only in the domestic politics of Iran but also the country's foreign policy. For this reason, all his speeches are of great relevance for this research. I have downloaded them from his official website: www.khamenei.ir as well as www.leader.ir. These websites provide digital archives of all the speeches of the supreme leader since 1987.

The Office of the President ranks second in terms of power after the supreme leader in the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is an institution playing a significant role in foreign policy-making, which makes it an important source of data for the study. This position has been held by three prominent personalities since 1997: Mohammad Khatami, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Hassan Rouhani. I have collected the key speeches and interviews made by the three presidents but also included statements made by Hashemi Rafsanjani from 1997 onwards. Rafsanjani's political rhetoric also carry a substantial weight in Iranian foreign policy as he was the president of Iran from 1989 until 1997. Furthermore, he has been involved in Iranian politics by holding different positions in the government under all the presidents after the end of his term. Most of the speeches and interviews of the president are archived in the website www.president.ir while those addressed to the international community directly are likewise available in different news agencies websites and the website of the Iranian delegation to the United Nations: <http://iran-un.org/en/>. This website has an archive of all the statements made by Iran's official delegation to the United Nations, Iran's presidents, foreign ministry officials and other political elites to the United Nations and other international organizations.

The third source of data is the Iranian Foreign Ministry since it is the main political institution directly involved in foreign policy. The only issue is that the website of the foreign ministry does not publish the full version of statements made by their officials prompting me to turn to the special department of the foreign ministry: the Iranian delegation to the United Nations. This department not only publishes the speeches made by the foreign ministers since 1997 but also other important figures involved in Iranian foreign policy such as the ambassador to the United Nations, the deputy foreign minister, permanent representative to the United Nations, Deputy Director of Disarmament and International Security Department of the Iranian Foreign Ministry to name a few. All their speeches and correspondence are available from the United Nations website: <http://iran-un.org/en/>.

In addition to those websites I have previously mentioned, I have included various news agencies websites as well since certain materials are available only through these channels. For instance, CNN has interviewed Iran's presidents several times since 1997 and the transcript of these interviews are only available from their website and not the official website of the Iranian president. I extensively use a wide variety of news agencies and research institutions in collecting reports of Iran's international activity linked directly to their foreign policies. These reports are useful in the last phase of the qualitative analysis where I attempt to classify Iran's foreign policy actions under the three traditions.

In terms of the political statements, I have gathered those specifically aimed at international and regional audiences. As such, the documents had officially been translated into the English language and are made available to the public through the official websites earlier mentioned.²⁶² Since foreign policy is typically about external politics, I have chosen to analyse those political statements aimed at regional and international audiences. External politics refer to the politics beyond a state's own borders, the way in which a state decides to interact with another state is its foreign policy. External actions of a state are regulated from within the state but are practiced outside the state. Although foreign policy can be used for domestic consumption in a country, the focus here rests on external affairs and the message Iran wants to send to the world. Hence, I have not included political statements addressing the Iranian local audience since they are also mostly available only in Farsi. Nevertheless, I have likewise collected copies of the Iranian political rhetoric especially from Khamenei since some of the speeches are only available in the abridged version. Thus, I had to double check with the original Farsi texts whether the important contents remain intact in the English version.

3.2 Digital Data Gathering and Mixed-Methods Analysis

Collecting data from the internet may rather seem straightforward but it requires a lot of effort much in the same way as the traditional method of going to old dusty archives and digging up speeches from decades ago. One is spared from the physical logistics of having to travel to Iran and going to the library of the respective offices once a permit has been obtained to access the archives and copy the relevant speeches, making the work of digital data gathering much more attractive, particularly considering the potential danger of conducting such research. Still, it is not so much easier to obtain the statements needed for this study as digital security mechanisms are in place to prevent people from taking advantage of the online archives in the official websites of the Iranian statesmen. Since the supreme leader wants to expand his popularity and audience abroad, his two websites contain all his speeches translated in English but there are set limits as to how much a certain IP address can download, a problem I have encountered quite frequently, which I elaborate on in the section on limitations of the study below.

Downloading problems aside, the digital data gathering process proved to be tedious and complicated with problems presenting themselves at different stages. First, it took a couple of years to collect all the speeches. Second, the speeches did not have the same format. So, all of the speeches had to be converted into one single format to ensure the smooth running of the

²⁶² By the time this dissertation was submitted, some of the websites have taken down their documents. However, I have saved digital copies of all the speeches for reference.

analysis software. For some speeches, relying on the good-old copy-paste method to convert some of the speeches on the websites as well as the PDF attachments to a text (.txt) file was the only option. Third, the date the speech was uploaded did not always correspond to the date the speech was delivered. For instance, a speech made by the supreme leader in 2003 was only uploaded in the 2006 folder of the website. To ensure the speeches were dated at the time they were delivered by the speaker, I went through and checked the files by reading them one by one. Fourth, I renamed each of the downloaded speeches for them to have the same format as those files I have converted to .txt, which took as much time as checking whether the dates were accurate. It took an enormous amount of time and patience to be meticulous about the data considering there are 1,930 speeches. Fifth, all the speeches were not in the same website. Some speeches have been deleted in the official websites but were available on third-party websites. Interviews of presidents for instance were mostly unavailable at the official websites but were found at the media outlet's website like CNN and other news channels. Using the google search engine was not straightforward in digitally digging for the missing speeches as they were not usually in the mainstream websites appearing at the top of the results list. Lastly, noting the context of which the speaker was speaking to be able to find out at what event it was made was challenging since it required another reading of the 1,930 speeches. Due to the timeframe of this study, from the 1,930 speeches, only 1,888 were used for the analysis as these were the speeches from 1997 to 2015.

The data used for the quantitative chapter ends in December 2015 while the speeches read for the qualitative chapter, includes two speeches from 2016. The main reason for this being the completion of the quantitative part of the analysis in the first six months of 2016 using documents gathered only until 2015. I have attempted to download the data for 2016 from Iran's official delegation to the UN website in 2017 only to find out they have eliminated their archives due to the construction of their website. I have checked for many months but the archives remain unavailable. Apart from the problem of unavailability, if the data were available, it would still require a significant amount of time to download the archives and go through the entire process of making sure the files are dated accurately and converting the files into a single format as well as noting the context of the hundreds of files from 2016. As I do not have the luxury of time, I have limited the dataset to 2015 at least for the general purposes of the quantitative chapter. But for the qualitative chapter, I added two easily accessible and available speeches. The two speeches are Khamenei's Hajj speech in 2016 and Rouhani's statement at the United Nations General Assembly respectively. They are both added to the graphs discussing the Hajj speeches

and the UN General Assembly speeches of the presidents and foreign minister but not included in the yearly summary graphs as they are only two speeches of 2016 out of the numerous data available for the period. Apart from their accessibility, formatting and analysing the two speeches from 2016 did not consume so much time. Reading these two speeches from 2016 were vital to the qualitative part of the analysis as they contain significant themes and argumentations useful for this research.

The digital files I have collected were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. I aimed to show how the three traditions are reflected in the political rhetoric of the statesmen providing them with a roadmap of their foreign policy and using mixed-methods can generate a more holistic analysis. The quantitative phase provides the first indications of the three traditions through the percentage of shares, meaning the number of words per tradition divided by the total number of words within the text multiplied by one hundred. Meanwhile the qualitative phase deals with the careful examination through a close reading of the texts to reveal the themes, strategies and meanings, bringing the three traditions together thereby explaining Iran's foreign policy manoeuvres.

3.3 The Quantitative Phase of Analysis

The quantitative phase of the analysis is the first phase of the study, which seeks to quantify the data found in the texts. My aim is to look at the percentage of the traditions in each of the text I have gathered to determine the most dominant and the dormant traditions. First, I had to devise a table containing all the keywords related to each of the three traditions. Second, I had to find a software to be able to analyse the data. Third, once the software 'read' the texts and found the number of keywords, I had to organize the data it generated and derive the percentage values.

3.3.1 *Establishing the key phrases from the theory*

The three traditions English School – realism, rationalism and revolutionism – as well as the five institutions of international society as discussed in the theory chapter were used to extract key words and phrases for the analysis of the speeches. I created a table by carefully choosing words and phrases related to the three traditions from Hedley Bull's 'The Anarchical Society' and Martin Wight's 'International Theory: The Three Traditions'. These books led to the establishment of the English School of international relations making them the most appropriate and elaborate primary sources of the words and phrases. Moreover, the two books represent the classical perspective of the English School, which minimizes the possibility of getting entangled in the debates originating from the later discussions of the theory. Hence, the choice

of key words and phrases was based on a basic classical understanding of the English School theory. Realism and rationalism were extensively elaborated in the words of Bull and Wight, yet the revolutionist strand suffered from some shortcomings in terms utility as my research focuses on an ‘Islamic’ revolutionist tradition. Revolutionism in the English School was based purely on the Christian tradition and thus, I had to add terminologies capable of transforming the revolutionist tradition to a utility compatible with my research – an Islamization of the revolutionist tradition. My own interpretation of Iranian revolutionism, which is inherently Islamic in nature, has been a secondary source for the key words and phrases of the revolutionist tradition.

I made a table with three columns representing realism, rationalism and revolutionism and listed down beneath them all the relevant phrases used by the authors in defining and describing the respective traditions. To maximize the key words and phrases in creating an exhaustive list, I have also included the synonyms of certain concepts as well. With regard to revolutionism, I have added Islamic concepts and words I found to be equivalent of those described by Bull and Wight. For instance, apart from ‘world society’ and ‘world community’, I have added ‘Islamic society’ and ‘Islamic community’ as well as ‘Ummah’ (Islamic Community) and ‘tuhid’ (Monotheism) or ‘tawhid’, a different spelling variation of touhid, to the list of revolutionist terms. Thus, certain terms such as jihad, are also to be found as I equate it with the term ‘missionary war’. Such additional words and phrases complete the essence of the revolutionist tradition within the Iranian political sphere, which is fundamentally drawn from Islamic political philosophy. As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, I have drawn from the works of three scholars, Irfani, Martin and Lafraei for they give a summarized account of the most prominent political Islamic philosophers and discuss the revolutionist aspect of Iranian political philosophy. The philosophy stems from the Iranian Islamic Revolution is valuable for my research. I have provided a segment of the table below to illustrate the keywords chosen for each of the three traditions. The full version of the two tables, including synonyms and abbreviations are available in the appendix.

<i>Realism</i>	<i>Rationalism</i>	<i>Revolutionism</i>
anarchy	abide	abolish diplomacy
annihilate	abide by the law	adherence to morals
arena	abide by the rule	against hypocrisy
arms	accord	against tyranny
arms race	act responsibly	all humans are equal
assert	adhere	amoral
bandwagon	adjust	assimilate
bargaining position	adjustment	balance of power is non-
battle	agree	existent
be ahead	agreement	balance of power is
be independent	amend	unmanageable
be self sufficient	arrange	balance of power is
be self-sufficient	avoid crises	unreliable
belligerence	bind	believer
bribe	chaos of war	brother
brinkmanship	commit	brothers and sisters
coerce	compliance to convention	charity
coerce state	compliance to treaty	civil rights
combat	compliance with the rule	collective

Table 3. Part of the table of keywords used for this research

3.3.2 *The Software: Compount*

I initially looked around for a software that could count the number of keywords of each of the traditions within the text realizing I can make use of text mining software available online for free. I came across Orange, an open-source datamining software which also has a text mining tool that could be utilized for analysing text documents but once I learned to operate it, I faced more challenges than opportunities in using it for my data. After many attempts in testing softwares such as MAXQDA and Nvivo, I realized that none could help me with my project. Either I faced the problem of not having free access to them or if they were free of charge, such as Orange, they were quite complicated to learn. Moreover, the amount of time learning to operate the software was not a price I was willing to pay since there were also not guarantees I would be able to extract my data right as the possibility of not learning them correctly increased the chances of getting a false outcome. Thus, to save time and money, I asked a programmer to

develop a simple program to analyse the speeches in the easiest way possible. Compount is the resulting software program made through the programming language python. Compount can generate the data I needed for this research by creating a comma-separated values (.csv) file which can be opened by Microsoft Excel. Before it could generate results, I had to follow several steps. First, I had to compile my data in one folder and make sure all the files are text (.txt) files. In this folder, there are two separate folders, one for 'speeches' and one for the 'keywords' and the software Compount. The folder for keywords have three .csv files called realism, rationalism and revolutionism. Each file represents the list of keywords corresponding to the tradition representing is its filename. The other folder called 'speeches' contains all of the speeches in the form of .txt files. I could only run the program by opening the Windows command window of the folder with the respective files for analysis and I had to run the program twice in two different folders as I wanted to separate the findings of Khamenei and those from the UN website Khamenei's speeches were in a folder simply called Khamenei while the others were in a folder named UN dataset, which corresponds to the presidents and foreign ministry official statements taken from Iran's official delegation to the UN website.

Once the software had run through all the speeches in a folder, it created a folder of 'results' wherein three other sub-folders were to be found, 'daily, monthly and yearly' indicating it had counted the keywords and organized the results based on the day, month and year. The most specific results are in the daily folders as details for each speech are stated while the monthly results mean it is the accumulated tally of the keywords for all the speeches within a given month while the yearly refers to those tallied speeches of a certain year. Within each sub-folder were three .csv files corresponding to the three traditions – realism, rationalism and revolutionism – albeit in an alphabetical order. In each .csv file, one could see how many times each word was mentioned in a speech and could tally all the words of a tradition. I transferred the figures into a Microsoft Excel workbook wherein I could rearrange and organize them the way they were needed for this study. Compount is a very basic software entailing me as a researcher to do much of the rearrangement of the results, but it is more flexible and I am certain the results are what I need and I can organize them according to my criteria. You may say that a software is meant to remove the bulk of work of rearranging the data for you but I had specifically asked for Compount to work this way as I see it to be more manageable despite a significant amount of time being spent on organizing the figures. Compount is relatively easy to learn and use in comparison to all the other text mining software I had to learn, which is an advantage for a social scientist like me.

3.3.3 *Deriving the percentage values of each of the traditions*

Once I had the figures I needed with Compount doing the job of counting all the keywords of each of the traditions in every document, I rearranged them in Microsoft Excel workbooks. This way, I can keep track of the developments, make comparisons and graphs based on the results. For the daily results, I made a table in Excel showing the date of the speech, which also happens to be the filename of the .txt file, the total number of realism, rationalism and revolutionism within the text as well as the total word count of the entire speech. The initial table looks like this:

Date	Realism Word count	Rationalism Word count	Revolutionism Word count	Total number of words in text
2013_09_24	47	75	55	2658
2013_09_25 (2)	5	40	6	1075
2013_09_25	74	152	58	5950
2013_09_26 (2)	27	34	5	1031
2013_09_26	62	122	60	6399
2013_09_27 (3)	23	75	14	1187

Table 4. Sample tally of the three traditions in the text of the speeches.

I derived the percentages by tallying the number of words per tradition as used in the text and divided it by the total number of words within the file. I then multiplied the result by one hundred and organized them in the same row on the same table. I added the following to the table:

Date	Realism percentage	Rationalism percentage	Revolutionism percentage	Event
2013_09_24	1.768247	2.82167	2.069225	Rouhani UNGA
2013_09_25 (2)	0.465116	3.72093	0.55814	Rouhani WP interview
2013_09_25	1.243697	2.554622	0.97479	Rouhani CNN Amanpour
2013_09_26 (2)	2.618817	3.297769	0.484966	Rouhani on behalf of NAM
2013_09_26	0.968901	1.906548	0.937647	Rouhani council on foreign relations
2013_09_27 (3)	1.937658	6.31845	1.179444	Rouhani NAM ministerial mtg

Table 5. Percentage values derived from the word count tally (see Table 4 above).

Having these values, I can compare them with each other to see the percentage value each tradition has at specific dates enabling me to see the most dominant tradition at a given point in time. With such a table I can quickly identify the most prominent tradition during specific international events, for instance, the table above shows Rouhani’s speeches to be predominantly influenced by the rationalist tradition shortly before having the historic phone call with the former president of the United States, Barack Obama. Using the daily results, we

can effectively zoom in on a text on a specific date, for instance, the president's speech at the United Nations General Assembly on September 24, 2013 and look at the percentage values of the three traditions and then compare it with his UN speech in 2014.

The monthly and yearly results are also used in much the same way but have a much larger scope as they represent the figures of the traditions accumulated in months and years and can be specifically help in identifying patterns across a longer span of time. As an example, for the year 2008, the percentage of realism based on all the texts collected from the same year is specified and contrasted with the percentage of rationalism and revolutionism. Then the findings of the year 2008 could be compared to those in 2000 or 2015. This way, variations over time could easily be traced.

The quantitative method provides us with a more general overview of the distribution of the three traditions highlighting the dominance of a tradition based on the percentages. Simultaneously, competing traditions could be recognized with less difficulty since those with similar percentages could be singled out and the dormant tradition is also made visible for if it has a value above 0.0, it means the tradition is present in the speech. After all, the three traditions are supposed to be co-existing with each other at the same time in the speeches at least according to the English School theory. This approach ultimately produces the first traces of the three traditions in the form of percentages of the total word count as it relates to the three traditions touching upon the surface of the analysis. Nevertheless, such an approach in combination with qualitative analysis has seldom been used and I believe it to have distinct advantages benefitting this research.

3.3.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Quantitative Analysis Method

The primary advantage of quantitative analysis lies in the amount of data processed allowing for a more exhaustive use of all the resources available. The speed at which the data is analysed is also a positive advantage. Extensive amounts of data are generated since all the related documents are included, amounting to about two thousand, instead of simply choosing a sample of a few hundred texts. This eventually gives a thorough summary of the enormous amount of texts enabling me to make comparisons across time periods. Moreover, it allows for a more objective analysis since I keep my distance as a researcher, thus minimizing unintentional and unconscious biases, since the texts are analysed by a software. The results are objective and hard facts, bestowing the potential of the research to be replicated as the conclusions are more generalizable.

Nevertheless, I am aware of the disadvantages of this approach. Its limitation lies in its strength as well since percentages as outcomes could not provide a detailed narration of the three traditions, thus making the discursive context become irrelevant. Furthermore, there is also a degree of a structural bias present as I have pre-selected the key words and phrases on the table, not permitting new ideas to be discovered. For this reason, the qualitative approach as a supplement for a deeper examination of the texts is beneficial.

3.4 The Qualitative Phase of Analysis

The qualitative phase of this dissertation follows the quantitative phase. I have used the same material as the quantitative one but approached these differently by examining the political rhetoric closely, resulting in a deeper analysis. It is through the qualitative method where underlying themes, argumentations and meanings are revealed from the data explaining Iran's foreign policy at the discursive level.

3.4.1 *Choice of Texts*

Forty-two speeches were selected for the qualitative analysis part of this research as these were the most important documents holding the key to understanding Iran's foreign policy discourse. The main criteria in choosing the documents were: type of audience, length of document and the event the speech was made for. A large international audience consisting of representatives, in the form of political elites or simply citizens, of many different countries is a prerequisite for the speeches to be chosen. Since we are discussing foreign policy here in this research, these speeches aimed at large international audiences make sense in so far as the speaker wants to spread his ideas in the form of argumentation and themes giving them meaning and thereby showcasing their foreign policy perspective. It gives us a glimpse of the important matters for the speaker, which he is trying to address by speaking to the world about it. The event where the speaker delivered the speech also matters as it must be an international event, attracting wide international audience for the speech to be an effective tool for spreading Iran's foreign policy ideas. The length of the document also matters as a mere paragraph can only reveal so much and is limited in terms of providing argumentation and themes. The minimum length I have set for the speeches is two pages, with the normal font (TNR 12) since it is long enough to contain the vital arguments and themes related to foreign policy whilst anything shorter has less contents.

With such criteria in mind, I have included all the president's speeches at the United Nations General Assembly as they address the international community and are have the appropriate

length, while I left out the Iranian delegation's explanation of vote on draft resolutions speeches as they are generally only a few sentences long. The annual United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) debate is an event attended by all world leaders and is televised across the globe for many viewers are keen to hear what the countries want to say thereby allowing the speakers to reach a greater international audience. There are twenty-one statements made by the former and current presidents and former foreign ministers and I read them carefully to properly analyse them. As for the supreme leader, I have chosen the annual Hajj pilgrimage speeches since they are delivered to a wide international, albeit predominantly Muslim, audience. However, due to the enormity of the event, with about two million pilgrims attending it each year, it attracts worldwide attention and Khamenei's speeches may well reach non-Muslim audiences as well, especially political elites interested in the politics of the region. Like the UNGA speeches, there are twenty-one statements made by the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei since 1997.

3.4.2 Potential Bias

There is always a potential bias in every research and this dissertation is not exempt from it. Two types of potential bias are present in this study. First is the selection bias. The forty-two texts selected from the pool of speeches were picked due to the assumption that they are the only ones relevant for the purposes of this study based on their audience and their lengthiness. It may be the case, though, where the other speeches with a local audience also contain information useful for the analysis. Hence, the full spectrum of arguments may be left incomplete. To mitigate such a problem, I have randomly selected other speeches for a close reading to check whether new arguments may be present in them related to this dissertation, specifically to Iran's foreign policy issues. Luckily, the content of most of the speeches are repetitive, particularly those I have selected randomly as well as those used for the qualitative analysis.

Another, second form of bias, is the confirmation bias and it is quite common in research. For the qualitative phase of the analysis, certain arguments may be picked due to their relevance to the argument and so there is some possibility of other arguments being left out. To address this problem, I have broken down all the forty-two speeches into single sentences and made a table out of them where I identified and classified each of the sentences based on the content and specified which category they may belong to (three traditions and institutions). I read the sentences multiple times to challenge the type of category they belong to and to check whether they present something new minimizing the confirmation bias.

3.4.3 Questions for the qualitative analysis phase

I have devised a set of questions for the very purpose of analysing the texts. These questions guided me in reading the text to draw the important details regarding the three traditions exposing their interplay within the speech as well as connecting them with Iran's foreign policy actions.

1. What are the main themes in the speech?
2. What are the argumentations used for each theme?
3. How do these argumentations and themes relate to the three traditions?
4. How do the arguments and themes relate to the five institutions?
5. How are the three traditions and five institutions reflected in Iran's foreign policy actions?

The general aim is to trace how the speeches of the statesmen or what they say officially are linked with their foreign policy actions and pinpoint how the traditions and institutions play out in Iran's foreign policy. Being able to map out the answers to the questions and highlighting the relationship of the three traditions and institutions in the texts and in the actions of statesmen crucially proves Iran's foreign policy is consistent and yet very dynamic.

3.4.4 Connecting the discourses with Iran's foreign policy actions

By foreign policy actions, I mean the activities wherein prominent Iranian statesmen are involved in internationally, such as the supreme leader, the president and the foreign minister as well as other top officials of the government, be it in the form of sending an official letter, diplomatic exchange or signing deals. Three important criteria should be fulfilled to be regarded as international activity:

1. Top government officials from Iran and, if possible, the other country should be involved, such as a president, prime minister, supreme leader, foreign minister or deputy foreign minister or key military personnel. In the case of Iran, for instance, General Major Qasem Soleimani has been greatly involved in Iran's operations in Iraq and Syria and thus is regarded to be a top official executing Iran's strategy in the two countries.
2. The activity causes a significant change in the two country's relations, economically, socially or politically.
3. The activity should make headlines around the world and is widely discussed in the academic and non-academic literature.

Having these points in mind narrows down the international activity relevant for the analysis of Iran's foreign policy here in this research as day-to-day diplomatic exchange is left out in favour of extraordinary and unique events usually mentioned in the statements of the statesmen.

With the help of news articles published online by various news agencies such as the BBC, the Guardian, Tehran Times and many more, I made a timeline of Iran's foreign policy actions and then connected them with Iran's political discourse. I looked for relations between the arguments of the Iranian statesmen, which comprised of the three traditions, and the actions Iran has pursued as a state to show how they are linked. There are two reasons for this. First, connecting Iranian statesmen's argumentation to foreign policy actions demonstrates the three traditions at play. This proves Iran's foreign policy is consistent as it follows the logic of the three traditions and these are enacted simultaneously. Second, another point of consistency can be seen through this method as it exhibits that Iranian statesmen 'mean what they say'. Such an addition to the qualitative phase is beneficial and can enhance the analysis since it considers all the components of foreign policy.

3.4.5 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Qualitative Analysis Method

A close reading of the texts has enabled me to trace the themes and argumentations related to the three traditions and the discourses. Moreover, I could identify additional expressions regarding the three traditions I was unable to capture on the table. Reading the texts can disclose hidden meanings and themes vital to understanding Iranian foreign policy by being linked to the three traditions. Secondly, it allowed me as a researcher to explore fresh ideas and insights into realism, rationalism and revolutionism as understood by the Iranian statesmen. It opened pathways to new themes that can be classified under the three traditions not been previously considered when dealing with the theory alone. Furthermore, categorically new information had emerged leading to alternative perspectives in terms of understanding Iran's foreign policy as it is different from what has been presented in the theoretical framework of this research.

These advantages, nevertheless, are the very source of the weakness of the approach as the results cannot be generalized and it makes it more difficult to make comparisons over time as the varying contexts are taken into consideration. Such an approach also permits some unconscious biases in terms of interpretation as I closely immerse myself in the texts and it cannot be regarded positively. Nevertheless, combining the qualitative approach with the quantitative one could circumvent the weakness of both approaches precisely by being used together on the same set of data giving the research the best of both worlds.

3.5 Limitations of the study

There are three limitations with regards to this dissertation, one concerns the dissertation itself and the other two concerns the data of this research.

Being able to discuss the policies of Iran from a limited time frame of 1997 onwards is but a small window into the foreign policy apparatus, standing for the first limitation. To date, research regarding a multi-dimensional Iranian foreign policy is minimal, making this research unique and timely. It is important to remember though, the results presented here only captures a minute explanation of Iran's foreign policy discourse as 'uttered' by Iran's statesmen and reflected in their actions. The research does not involve all the documents related to Iran's foreign policy as access to all of them is almost impossible. In addition, only forty-two statements were read closely. Hence, the scope of the data is relatively small limiting the study to this specific aspect of research involving only the political discourses of the supreme leader, presidents and foreign ministers. However, as these three political positions largely determine Iran's foreign policy, the chance is high that the documents analysed reflect the realities of Iran's foreign policy both in terms of statements and actions.

English being the official language of the data used for this research has also limited the outcome of the study as the software could only 'read' English texts and not Farsi ones. There were occasions when I had to refer to the Farsi version of the texts but they were seldom and did not affect the results as I have resorted to them only to double-check when I was in doubt regarding the translation of certain words. By using only English, certain themes might have been missed in the case some of the official translations are weak but during a closer reading of the text, this was not the case. Including Farsi texts in this research, nevertheless, would have created its own set of problems which have been avoided by sticking to just one language.

The second and more practical challenge my dissertation had faced concerns the data gathering process. It was particularly difficult to obtain the complete set of electronic copies of the speeches. I have experienced being blocked several times by the president.ir website for downloading some speeches. Apparently, after a certain number of downloads, the computer's IP address is automatically blocked. Nonetheless, I started downloading from other computers with different IP addresses. Naturally, after a number of downloads had been reached, I was got blocked once again but the availability of the computers in the libraries of both St. Andrews and Tübingen Universities have helped me circumvent this problem. Apart from being blocked, the websites of the Iranian officials were at times disabled and their functions limited. In some

occasions, access to the archives were impossible due to their servers, but with time and patience, the collection of data was completed. It took about a year to complete the data set and at some point, it involved me getting help in using another python software to download the speeches at the same time in some websites to avoid getting denied access after several separate attempts. It is important to note some speeches were downloaded in its abridged version where the first paragraph pertaining to the religious formalities were already omitted. In such cases, I had to cross-check the speeches with the original Farsi (Persian) to ensure that important details vital to the speech itself and this research were not excluded.

By May 2017, I realized the Iranian delegation to the United Nations website, <http://iran-un.org/en/>, has completely removed all the documents I have previously downloaded. This means all the statements of the former presidents and foreign ministry officials no longer exist in their online version thus affecting the referencing stage of this dissertation. Since I downloaded the files earlier, I still have the complete set of statements formerly available on their website although in a .txt format. Despite the format being stylistically weak, it is, nevertheless, legible and can be used for analysis. The snapshots of some of the documents from 2013 onwards can still be accessed through the website archive.org: https://web.archive.org/web/*/http://iran-un.org/en/.

The www.president.ir website has also presented some problems as they do not keep an archive of previous presidents, thereby prompting me to look for alternative sources of the speeches of the presidents. Luckily, those statements necessary for the study were made available through the website of the Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations, which I have downloaded before the documents were deleted. The two official websites of the supreme leader - www.khamenei.ir; www.leader.ir – likewise had given me some difficulties. After using the software to download some speeches, I have noticed several of them got deleted. Whether this action was directly linked to my acquisition of files, bypassing their download limits per day and their blocking mechanism I previously mentioned, remains uncertain. Fortunately, although some are no longer available online, I have managed to keep copies in my computer for the analysis.

The third and last limitation of the study lies on the margin of failure regarding the quantitative data of the research. Since the software cannot distinguish the words from the context whether it is suited to be in a respective tradition, there is the possibility that there may be some mistakes. For instance, the word 'arms' is listed to be under the realist tradition but since the program cannot take the previous and the word following 'arms' into account, it could be counted as

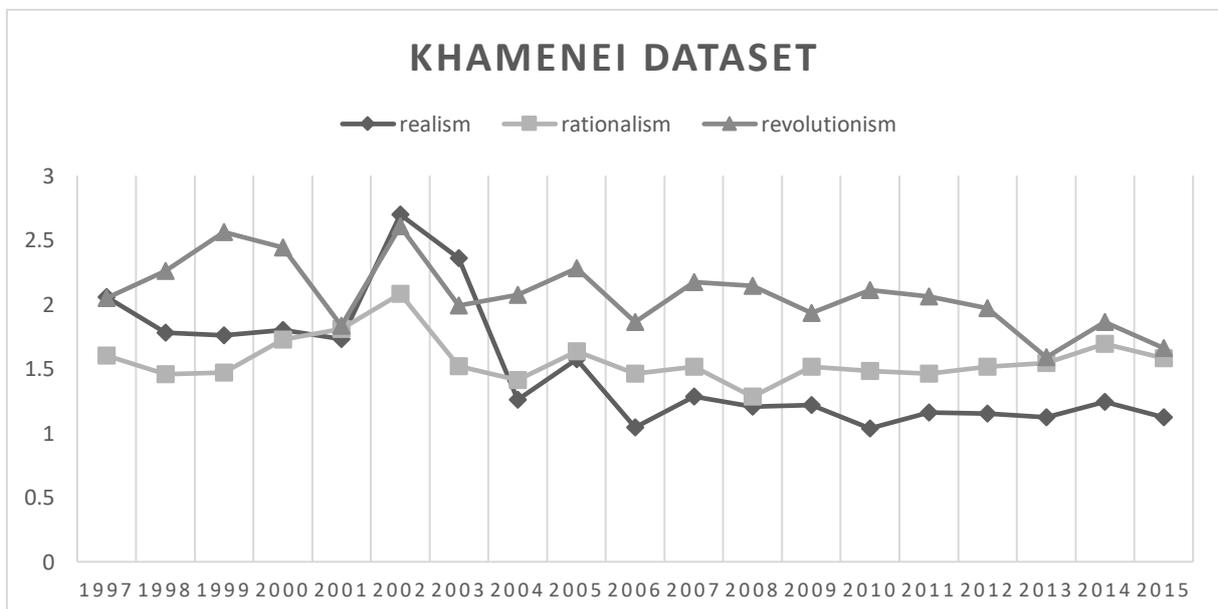
belonging to the realist tradition. In the complete sentence, though, it says ‘we condemn arms race’ and hence, the word should be listed under the rationalist tradition instead. For this reason, it is important for the qualitative part of the thesis is supplemented by qualitative analysis to minimize such errors through a close reading considering the context of the words. The results derived from the software constituting the quantitative phase of the analysis are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

4 Quantitative Analysis

In this chapter, I present the quantitative findings of the documents I have run through the software. The results show the presence of realism, rationalism and revolutionism in all the statements I have collected. Each tradition has its own unique trajectory and these trajectories vary significantly when certain statements are disentangled from the entire sample. The statements were divided into two based on their download origin and these are the Khamenei dataset and the UN dataset. First, I provide an overview of both datasets, accumulating the yearly counts of the three traditions in all the texts of the respective dataset, which I have converted into percentage values. I describe the findings and discuss them analytically elaborating both the similarities and differences of the datasets. Second, I take a closer look at each dataset. The speeches I ran in the software ends in December 2015 with the exception for two documents from 2016 that were vital for the qualitative analysis. For the reasons behind this discrepancy, please refer to section 3.2 Digital Data Gathering and Mixed-Methods Analysis of the Methods Chapter. Thus, in some graphs such as the general overview, as you shall see below, the data ends in 2015 but in those graphs indicating the speeches of Khamenei at the Hajj and the UN General Assembly speeches, the two additional documents are included.

4.1 General Overview of Sample

A description of the overall sample as well as a brief analysis between the Khamenei dataset and the UN dataset is the focus of this section. I first look at the general findings from each dataset discussing interesting developments and then I elaborate on the differences and similarities of both datasets.



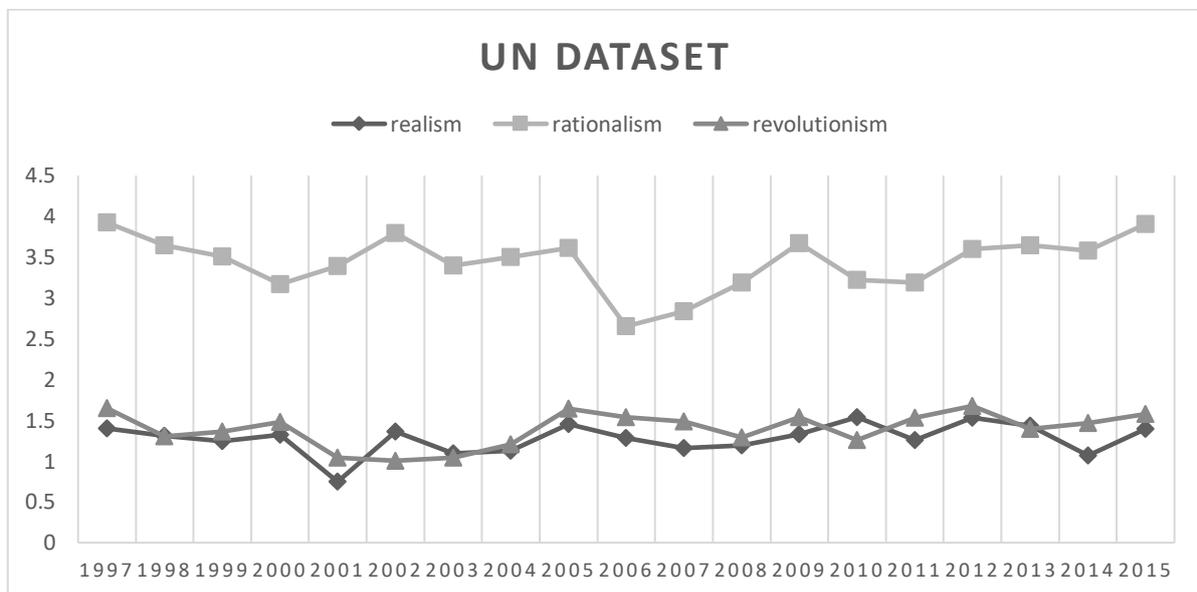
Graph 3. Yearly Khamenei Dataset 1997-2015

The Khamenei dataset (Graph 3) above shows the general findings from the documents I have gathered including all the speeches of the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, in its full and abridged versions from 1997 until the end of 2015. The number of documents analysed accounts to a little over half of the UN dataset documents. The graph represents the accumulated values of each of the three traditions within a given year in the form of percentages. To understand how I have arrived at these percentage values, please refer to section 3.3.3 'Deriving the percentage values of each of the traditions' in the Methods Chapter. As we can see, revolutionism significantly dominates over the other two traditions and it is consistent throughout the selected time frame except for the years 1997, 2001-2003 and 2013-2015. 1997 was the year the moderate President Khatami was elected in Iran under the platform of reform. In the years 2001 until 2003 the September 11, 2001 attacks on US soil occurred followed by Iran being designated to be part of the 'Axis of Evil' by Bush and the US military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. From 2013 until 2015, Rouhani, another moderate political figure was elected to the presidency who advocated dialogue and had direct talks with the United States to resolve Iran's nuclear program. It is perhaps due to these events the graphs show the dominance of revolutionism to be undermined by the other two traditions accounting for the fluctuations.

Revolutionism reaches its peak value in 2002 with about 2.6%, but this is slightly surpassed by realism, which was also at its peak value, with 2.69%. In general, the years from 2001 until 2003 were marked by fluctuations, particularly challenging the dominance of the revolutionist tradition making it an interesting period for a closer examination below. In 1997, realism and revolutionism almost reached equal percentage values with realism having 2.05% and revolutionism having 2.04%. Although realism had 0.01% more, the difference is too small to indicate realism's dominance over the two traditions. 2001 marks the beginning of a telling fluctuation when the percentage value of revolutionism (1.83%) almost amounted to rationalism (1.81%) once again as in 1997. However, a year later in 2002, it was realism at the top reaching its peak at 2.69% with revolutionism having a little less at 2.6%. In 2003 realism likewise dominated with 2.35%, while revolutionism reached a modest 1.98%. By 2004, revolutionism regains its position and dominates over the other two traditions once again and this trend continues until 2013 where rationalism comes close with 1.54% while revolutionism was minutely higher in percentage value with 1.58%. Revolutionism maintains only a small lead from rationalism in the next couple of years, deviating from the norm wherein revolutionism dominates with a huge margin from the other two traditions, which I call a strong

domination. Thus, although revolutionism has been the dominant tradition in most of Khamenei’s speeches, it does not remain unchallenged and unchanged. Before 2004, realism competed with it and won over it in 2002 and 2003 while from 2013 onwards, rationalism seems to gain more percentage value to challenge revolutionism, preventing revolutionism from achieving a strong dominant position over the other two traditions. Another interesting point as we can see in the graph is that realism seems to have been more prevalent in the speeches prior to 2004 whilst after that period, rationalism prevails over realism. There seems to be a correlation between the events happening in the international stage, especially in the Middle East. By 2004, Saddam had already been ousted and it is perhaps only through a revolutionist rhetoric that Khamenei could gain the support of the Iraqi nation and turn it into an ally. At the more extreme end of the revolutionist tradition is the idea of forming a coalition of the believers against the heretics to wage a missionary holy war with the aim of conquering evil and establishing a moral system.

Such developments prompt the question of how such changes and fluctuations came to be and how were they negotiated in the speeches of Khamenei if dominance is allocated to revolutionism? The answer to this question lies in the qualitative chapter as it involves a close reading allowing me to elaborate on the themes, argumentations and discourses, which may also contain the contexts strengthening the dominant tradition. I zoom in on the periods of fluctuations in the next sections of this chapter aiming to show supplementary evidence of the exact occurrences of the fluctuations and to find the respective speeches that need to be analysed qualitatively. For now, let us turn to the UN dataset.



Graph 4. Yearly UN Dataset 1997-2015

The UN dataset (Graph 4) presents a clear-cut dominance of rationalism over realism and revolutionism as the percentage of the shares of rationalism far exceeds the values of the other two traditions being consistent throughout the time frame of this research. Rationalism peaks in 1997 with 3.92% and in 2015 when it reached 3.90% and despite its lows in 2006 (2.65%) and 2007 (2.83%), rationalism retained its dominance over the two traditions. Realism and revolutionism in the UN dataset are clear rivals as their values were almost always but a few points away from each other and their positions in the hierarchy of the three traditions are quite interchangeable all throughout the time frame. Revolutionism peaks in 1997 with 1.64% and 2012 with 1.67%, is too little to challenge rationalism. The same modest amounts of peak percentage shares can be seen with realism, peaking at 1.53% in 2010 and 1.52% in 2012. It is important to note, the graph represents the entire collection of speeches taken from the UN website including the presidents and foreign ministry officials, particularly those representing Iran to the United Nations. The speeches of the presidents and the foreign ministers are not disentangled from the entire sample. I allocate a section on specifically mapping the three traditions in the statements of the presidents and the foreign ministers, which you can find in section 2.5 of the Theoretical Framework chapter. Separating the speeches of the president and foreign ministers is important as they show more variety in terms of fluctuations of the interplay of the three traditions and are not as monotonous as the general yearly findings where rationalism overwhelmingly dominates the two traditions. Moreover, these are the speeches used in the qualitative analysis chapter as they successfully meet the criteria I have set in choosing the statements to be analysed.

The dominance of revolutionism in Khamenei dataset and rationalism in the UN dataset can be foreseen due to the context of the speeches. The Supreme Leader's office of Khamenei is directly linked with revolutionist tradition, since it is through the Islamic Revolution of 1979 that revolutionist discourses were strengthened and institutionalized in Iran's political discourse. Khamenei's role as the supreme leader was likewise a product of the Islamic Revolution with the aim of keeping the Revolution alive in the Islamic Republic. Revolutionary values and ideas reflecting the revolutionist tradition is expected to be evident in his speeches since the existence of his office is tied to the revolutionist discourses. Without the revolutionist nature of his speeches, his office may cease to exist as it is those discourses forged the creation of his position.

As we have seen in the graph, there is room for manoeuvre in terms of the three traditions showing their interplay in Khamenei's dataset, which is absent from the UN dataset. In the case

of the UN dataset, as was expected and shown in the graph above, rationalism strongly dominates over the two traditions. The very fact that most of these speeches were delivered at the United Nations by Iranian officials related to the UN implies that the statements must conform to the standards of the organization. After all, the United Nations was established in the spirit of the rationalist, or Groatian, tradition reflecting the five classic institutions of diplomacy, international law, balance of power, great power management and war, generating order in the international society. As such, it is not surprising that these speeches delivered at the United Nations, related to the issues debated within the Organization, have a strong rationalist dimension. This allows the rationalist tradition to dominate over realism and revolutionism but not eliminating the other two weaker ones. The phenomenon where the institution related to the speeches – the Office of the Supreme Leader for Khamenei and the United Nations for the rest of the documents – affect the dominance of a tradition as an inevitable characteristic of the data I have collected. What makes the effort of quantitatively looking at the dataset worthwhile is that there are fluctuations in the micro-level, defying the general trend of a specific tradition constantly dominating the others. Differences across the dominant traditions across the datasets and speakers, as well as the varying percentages of each of the traditions, are also interesting information to convey in this research.

The dominant tradition in each of the dataset is one of the major differences the samples have. Mention has already been made that the Khamenei dataset is dominated by revolutionism whilst the UN dataset is dominated by realism due to their respective contexts. Values relating to the dominance of a tradition in the dataset are higher in the UN documents averaging at 3.44%, highlighting the sheer strength of the dominance of rationalism. The gap between rationalism, which is the dominant tradition, is strikingly wide and it seems as if rationalism is on a different level altogether. However, in the Khamenei dataset, although the dominance of revolutionism is strong, the values are significantly lower than in the UN dataset with revolutionism having an average of 2.07%. The gap between the dominant revolutionist tradition and the other two traditions in the Khamenei dataset is comparatively smaller from that in the UN dataset. Another significant difference between the two datasets relates to the low values of the respective dominant tradition. Whereas in the Khamenei dataset, the low points of the dominant revolutionist tradition meant that another tradition gained prevalence over revolutionism, the lows of rationalism in the UN dataset didn't translate to a fluctuation in the dominance of the rationalist tradition. Consequently, there are more fluctuations in the Khamenei dataset as compared with the UN dataset. Such an observation may change once the speeches of the

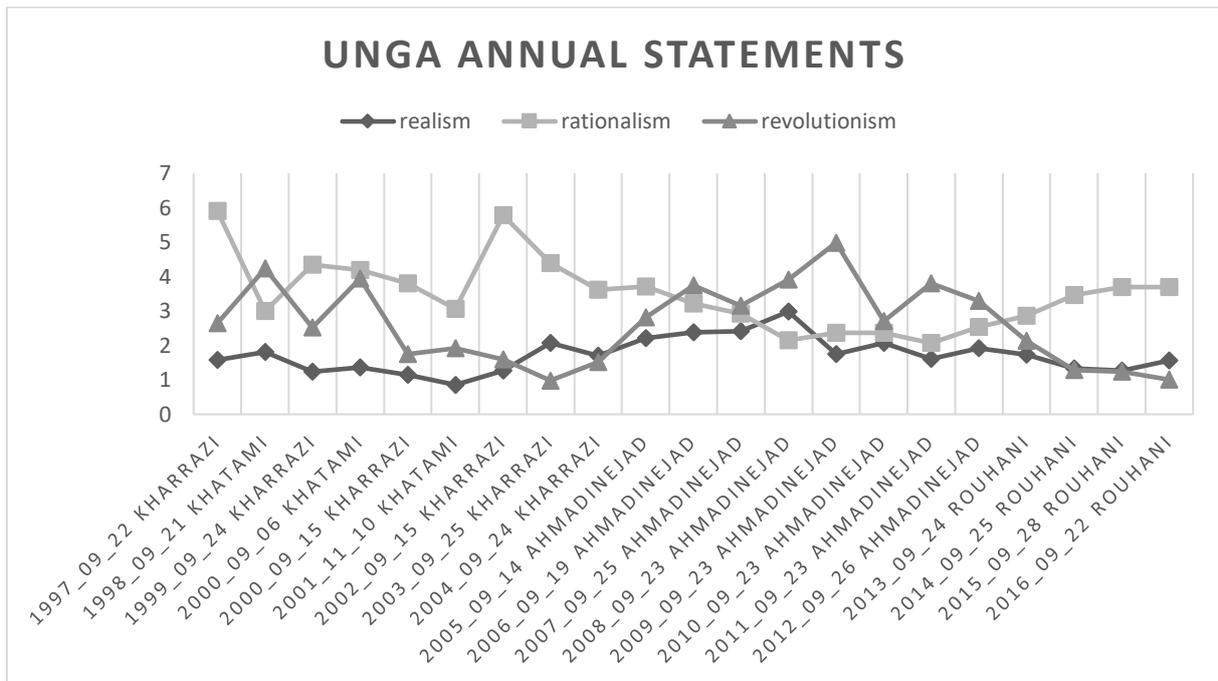
presidents and foreign ministers are separated from the general sample. Additionally, apart from the fluctuations, the Khamenei dataset exhibits a change or a shift in the development of the three traditions. For instance, the dominant revolutionist tradition has become significantly weaker over time. By weaker, I mean the values of revolutionism are not so much higher than the tradition following it – the gap between revolutionism and rationalism from 2013 until 2015 has been miniscule in comparison to the previous years. Realism in the Khamenei dataset has also undergone a noticeable change being much stronger before 2004 and significantly left behind since that point, while the opposite goes for rationalism, which was weak prior to 2004 gaining strength afterwards. Such changes are non-existent in the UN dataset due to the strength of the rationalist dominance. The rationalist tradition has managed to trump the other two traditions that the consistency of the dominance has been maintained over time.

4.2 Speeches of the Presidents and The Foreign Minister

The development of the three traditions in yearly statements of the Iranian presidents and foreign minister at the United Nations General Assembly are significantly different from the overall UN dataset sample as the dominance of rationalism is not pronounced (see Graph 6 below). Rather, the tendency of the revolutionist tradition to challenge rationalism is demonstrated, with revolutionism reaching peaks higher than rationalism with 4.99% in 2000 and 4.88% in 2009. Both rationalism and revolutionism managed to dominate for an accumulated duration of eight years respectively indicating the potency of the two traditions to challenge each other. Revolutionism was more prevalent prior to Rouhani's presidency in 2013, particularly during the Ahmadinejad period. Ahmadinejad's Iranian foreign policy is a telling sign that that revolutionism may well have had a better hand as his government tended to prioritize making alliances by having a confrontational stance against the United States and its Western allies. Ahmadinejad had gained widespread popularity in the Arab world as he was a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause and the unity of the Ummah, the community of the faithful, referring to the Muslim community, which contributed greatly to the percentage values of the revolutionist tradition during his presidency. During the Khatami era, this was not the case as the moderate former president invested more on diplomacy and cooperation, thus allowing the rationalist tradition to dominate.

From 2013 onwards though, the situation changes from revolutionist dominance to that where rationalism became the stable predominant tradition. This can be traced to Rouhani's approach to foreign policy issues, which are very much like Khatami's wherein cooperation, diplomacy and dialogue are encouraged to resolve issues. Realism in these statements is, in terms of

percentage values, almost identical to the entire UN dataset sample as it has the least percentage shares. Apart from 2004 and 2007, such a trend has been quite consistent. In Khamenei’s speeches (Graph 3), realism is the weakest tradition, sliding down to being the dormant tradition since 2004 onwards, which accounts for a partial similarity with the speeches of the presidents. The peaks of revolutionism in 2000 and 2009, its lows in 2014 and 2015 as well as the dominance of rationalism from 2001 to 2005 and 2013 onwards is examined more closely in the next sections as their fluctuations could reveal something useful for the qualitative chapter.



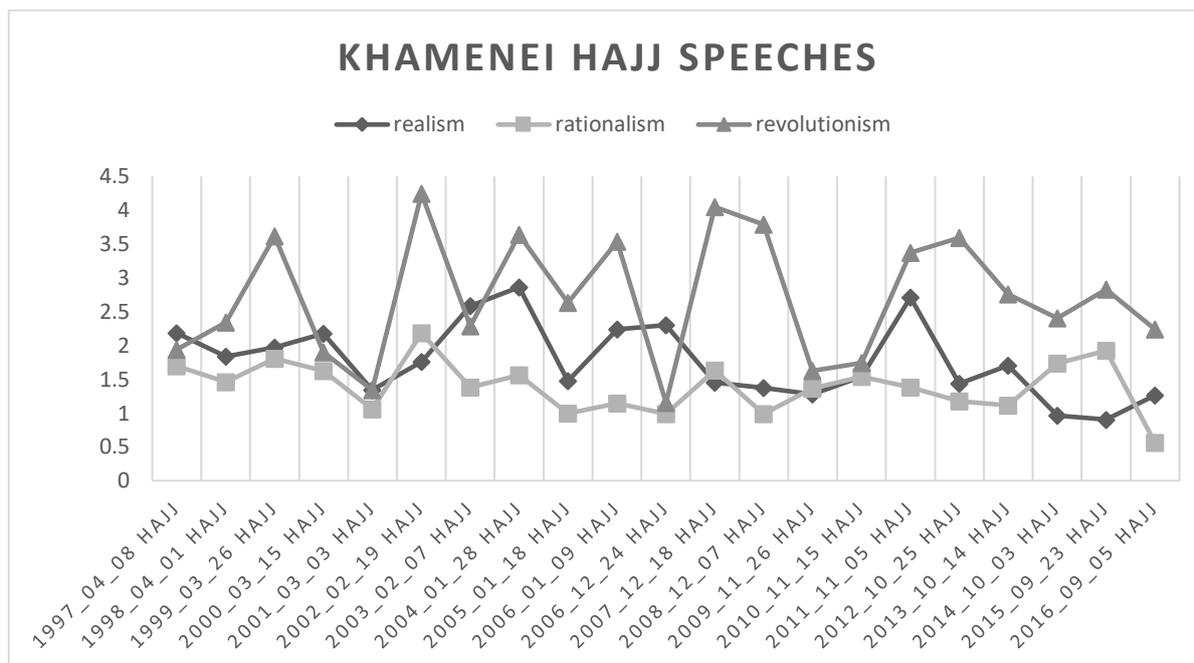
Graph 5. Speeches of the Presidents and Foreign Minister at UNGA from 1997 to 2016

In separating the annual speeches made by the presidents and a foreign minister at the United Nations General Assembly, we see that more fluctuations occur particularly in conjunction with rationalism and revolutionism suggesting an interplay throughout the duration of the sample. Since the presidents provide the argumentation and negotiate Iran’s foreign policy together with the foreign minister but with reference to the Supreme Leader Khamenei, who is responsible for the country’s policies, it is more likely that fluctuations occur in their speeches compared to the entire UN dataset sample. Revolutionism peaked and dominated on two occasions in the speeches at the UN General Assembly, in September 2000 with 4.99% and in September 2009 with 4.98%, which is something not demonstrated by the UN dataset that shows the general yearly summary of the three traditions. This already shows how substantially different the speeches of the presidents are from the entire sample. Interestingly, not only did revolutionism manage to dominate the statements but also its peaks were much higher than rationalism at its respective peaks. Rationalism peaked and dominated in 1998, a year after Khatami’s election–

the advocate of the rationalist tradition. Realism was unable to dominate any speech despite its peak in September 2007 of 2.37%.

The only true contender of rationalism in the annual statements of Iranian officials at the UN General Assembly seems to be the revolutionist tradition, due in part by the propagation of specific foreign policy agendas of the political figures. Such a tendency of revolutionism to affect the supposed dominance (from the results of the entire UN dataset sample) of rationalism in the speeches of the president shows a link with the Office of the Supreme Leader, which harbours a more revolutionist approach. Nevertheless, a similar occurrence after 2013 is exhibited in both the presidents and the supreme leader's speeches, which is related to revolutionism. In Khamenei's speeches, revolutionism's dominance grew weaker while in the president's speeches, it has been replaced by rationalism altogether. This implies, among others, how intertwined the Office of the Supreme Leader is with the Office of the Presidency.

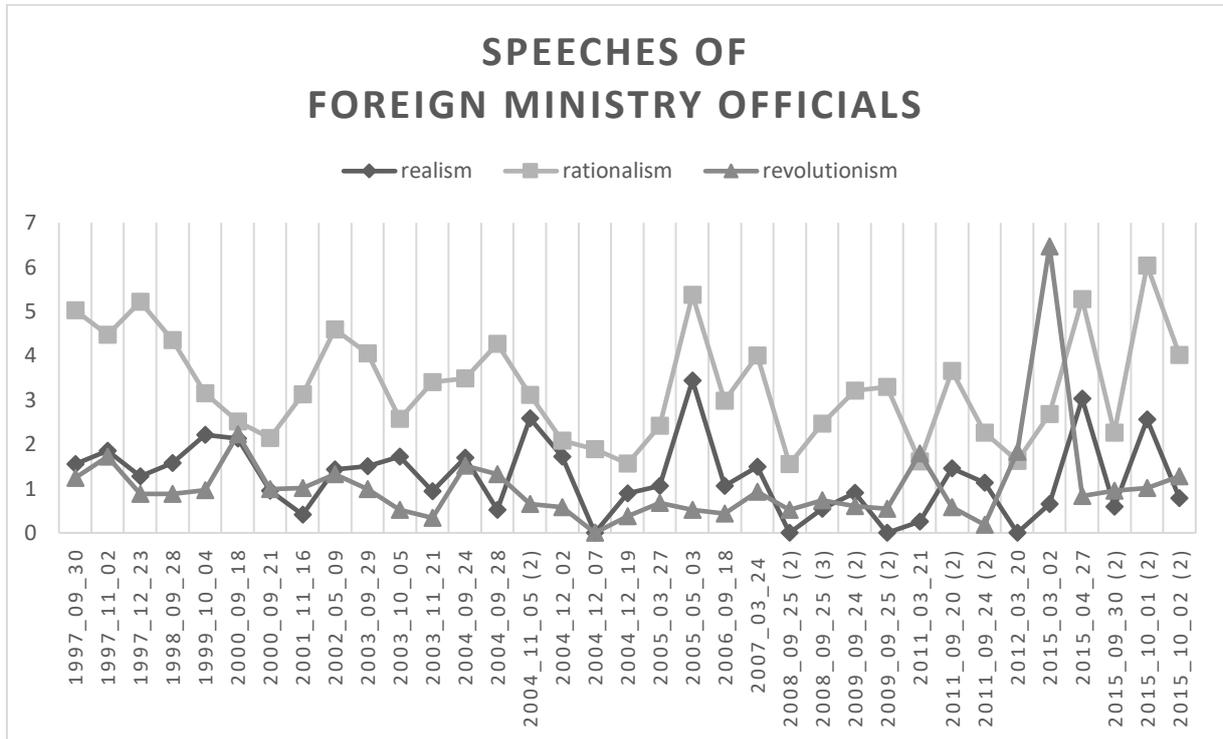
To provide a clearer picture of the similarities and differences between the annual statements of the presidents and foreign minister at the UN General Assembly from the UN dataset and the Khamenei dataset, I have segregated the Hajj speeches of Khamenei from the Khamenei dataset. This way, a more accurate comparison could be made as the speeches occur in quite a similar context. Whereas the president's annual remarks at the UN General Assembly addresses the international political community, the Hajj speeches of Khamenei appeals to the international religious community. Both speeches have an international audience and are made each year marking international events – the difference being only in the nature of events, one political and one religious. These statements made at the UN and at the Hajj are analysed in the qualitative chapter.



Graph 6. Khamenei’s Hajj Statements from 1997 to 2016

The Hajj pilgrimage is one of the most important occasions in Islam and in his capacity as the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Khamenei delivers an annual speech aimed at the Muslim community. The graph shows the overall general predominance of revolutionism in his speeches from 1997 until 2015. Revolutionism peaks in 2002 with a 4.24% percentage share and in 2007 with 4.05%, which are quite remarkable as they go over 4%. This tradition enjoys a relatively high margin in comparison to the two traditions, demonstrating the strength of its dominance in most of the statements. Revolutionism is only overtaken in four occasions by realism: 1997, 2000, 2001 and 2003. Realism is the next favoured tradition after revolutionism, peaking in 2004 with 2.86% share and in 2011 with a 2.7% share although both peaks were not able to surpass the shares of revolutionism. Nevertheless, the trend has not been consistent since after 2013 as rationalism has become significantly stronger leaving realism at the bottom. This tendency can be observed, although with a smaller margin of difference, in the years 2002, 2007 and 2009. In general, revolutionism plays a dominant role in the annual statements of Iran’s presidents and foreign minister at the UN as well as the supreme leader’s speeches. However, in the President’s speeches, rationalism usually follows revolutionism, which is unlike the supreme leader’s speeches where realism usually comes in second. In the years 2006 until 2012, both the annual speeches at the UN General Assembly and Khamenei’s Hajj speeches were dominated by revolutionism, indicating a possible similarity in terms of the content of the speeches, verifying the linkage between the Office of the President and the Office of the Supreme Leader. Rightly so as the foreign policy of the Ahmadinejad government

follows Khamenei’s agenda of uniting the Ummah, justifying Iran’s actions in its predominantly Shi’a neighbour, Iraq and intensifying confrontational rhetoric against the United States largely due to Iran’s nuclear program.



Graph 7. Speeches of Foreign Ministry Officials 1997-2015

In contrast to the president’s speeches, the speeches and remarks of the foreign ministry officials (Graph 7), including the foreign ministers, follows the results of the entire UN dataset where there is a distinct dominance of rationalism. This could be due to the fact that the foreign ministers were discussing issues set by the United Nations making them follow the language of rationalism. Their speeches are distinct from the annual speeches at the General Assembly made by the presidents and a foreign minister as they focus more on issues such as reporting on human rights situation in their country or speaking on behalf of their group, for instance Iran was head of the NAM and had to issue statements on behalf of the NAM. The annual General Assembly speeches, in contrast, are aimed at discussing Iran’s foreign policy agenda and the issues related to it, explaining the difference between the two.

Apart from March 2015, when revolutionism had a peak percentage share of 6.46% dominating over the two traditions in the speeches of the foreign ministry officials, rationalism had maintained the top tradition in most of the speeches. Rationalism has had a strong dominance over the other two traditions as its percentage shares were significantly higher giving it a bigger lead throughout the entire time frame. Meanwhile, revolutionism and realism competed for

second place for most of the time with realism never managing to overtake the two other traditions. Developments such as rationalism's strong dominance as well as the struggle of revolutionism and realism at the bottom are features likewise observed in the entire UN dataset. This also indicates that unlike the Office of the President, which is linked with the Office of the Supreme Leader, the Foreign Ministry is more independent in terms of the similarity of the traditions as they represent a stark rationalist tendency. In a way, instead of being pulled towards the supreme leader's office, the administrative language of the United Nations seems to affect the statements of the foreign ministers.

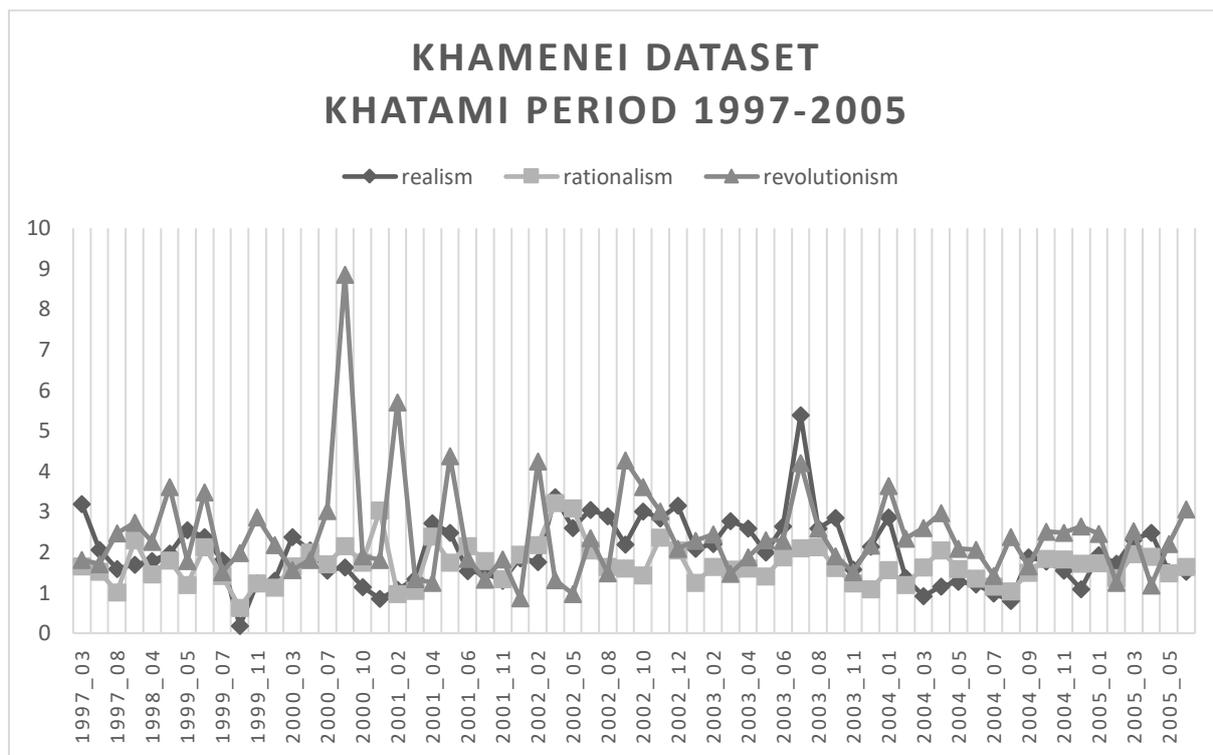
The three graphs in this section provide a snapshot into Iran's foreign policy since 1997 as they reflect the three traditions in the statements of the three most prominent political figures responsible for Iran's foreign policy: the supreme leader, the president and the foreign minister. In comparing them, we can see similarities as well as differences the speeches have in terms of prevalent traditions and fluctuations, implying how closely linked these positions are with each other. The next section discusses the two datasets separately from 1997 until 2015, comparing and contrasting the development of the three traditions within the respective dataset. The speeches are divided based on the presidential periods usually beginning in August of the election year (2001, 2009, 2013).

4.3 A closer look at the Datasets

In what follows, I present the accumulated monthly percentage values of the three traditions from the respective datasets, explaining why certain values are much higher in comparison to the overall values in the first section of this chapter.

4.3.1 *The Khamenei Dataset*

Khamenei's speeches, as we have already seen above, have been mostly dominated by the revolutionist tradition and the same is true when we break down the graph into smaller periods. Yet, despite the prevalence of realism, the speeches are more complex and much more fluctuations can be observed at this level.

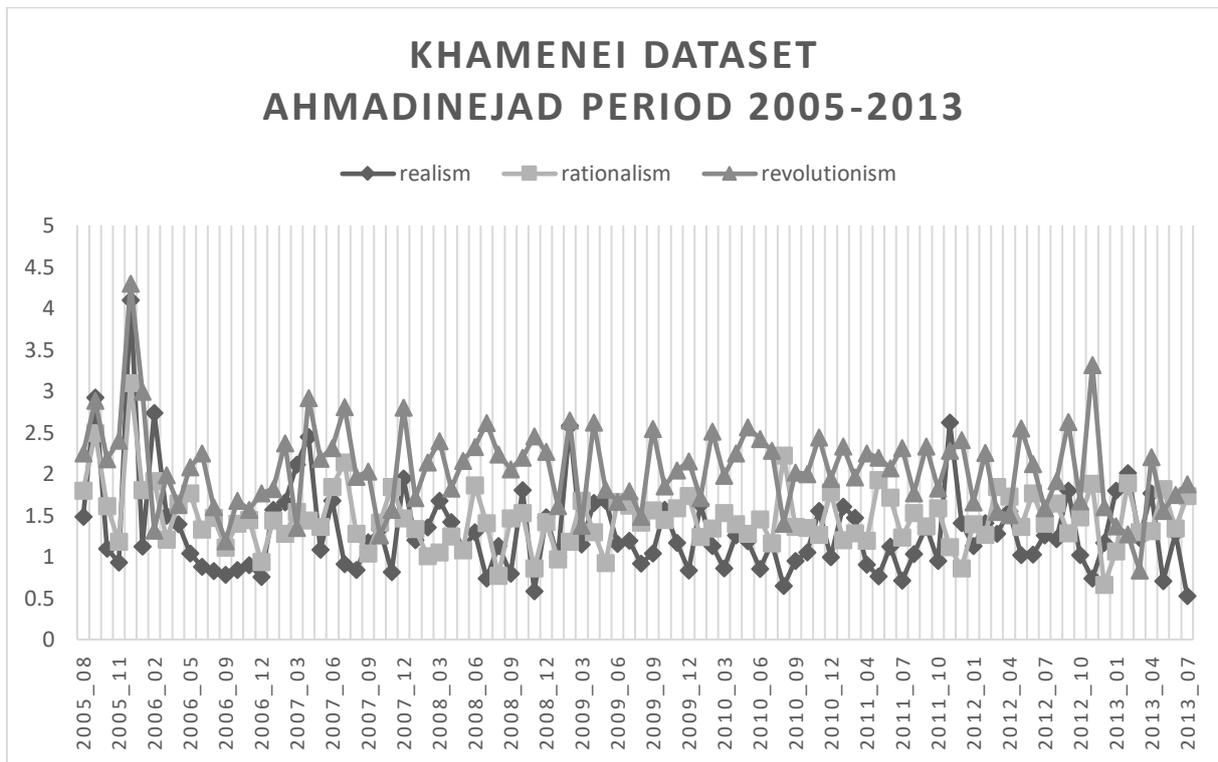


Graph 8. Khamenei Dataset Khatami Period

In the Khatami period of Khamenei’s speeches (Graph 8), the revolutionist tradition was able to achieve an extraordinarily high peak of 8.86% in August 2000, while other more modest peaks can be observed such as in February 2001 with 5.69%, in May 2001 with 4.37%, in February 2002 with 4.24%, in September 2002 with 4.27% and lastly in July 2003 with 4.21%. Nevertheless, the revolutionist peak in July 2003 was surpassed by realism with its own extraordinary peak of 5.39%, an incident which can be only observed during this presidential period. Rationalism only managed to climb up to 3.22% at its peak in April 2002, which is relatively low in comparison to the peaks of the two traditions. The dominance of revolutionism is exhibited by its average for the entire Khatami presidency, reaching 2.3% with realism following at 1.98% while rationalism’s weakness is demonstrated by its average of 1.70%. These results coincide with a period in time when Iran was under scrutiny for its nuclear program, which was disclosed following the terror attacks of September 11, 2001. Moreover, due to the attacks, the United States had embarked on a ‘war of terror’ initiating military offensives in Afghanistan and Iraq – both countries being Iran’s immediate neighbours.

The correlation of realism’s relative strength in the speeches of the Supreme Leader Khamenei is understandable especially considering the geopolitical context unfolding in the Middle East at that time. Iran was facing a direct military threat since the message of being branded as part of the ‘Axis of Evil’ and then attacking another member of the ‘Axis of Evil’ group, in this case

Iraq, is easily interpreted as a threat. The Bush administration also had plans for a regime change in Iran during that period, justifying the Iranian governments fears of a military intervention by the United States. Tehran needed to stress their readiness to fight for their country in case they were attacked next and Khamenei ensured that the nationalist rhetoric anchored in the realist tradition remained high to keep patriotism alive. Preparing the country for war implicates the use of terminologies stemming from the realist tradition as the main priority of the country is its survival. With such a threat perception, it is not unjustified for the West to become suspicious of Iran’s nuclear program since if Iran felt that its survival is at stake by being part of the ‘Axis of Evil’ with one of the members being attacked by the United States, it makes logical sense that Tehran would want to pursue better military capabilities by creating a nuclear weapon, hence the suspicion regarding its nuclear program. However, the percentage values of realism plummet after 2004, replaced by revolutionism.

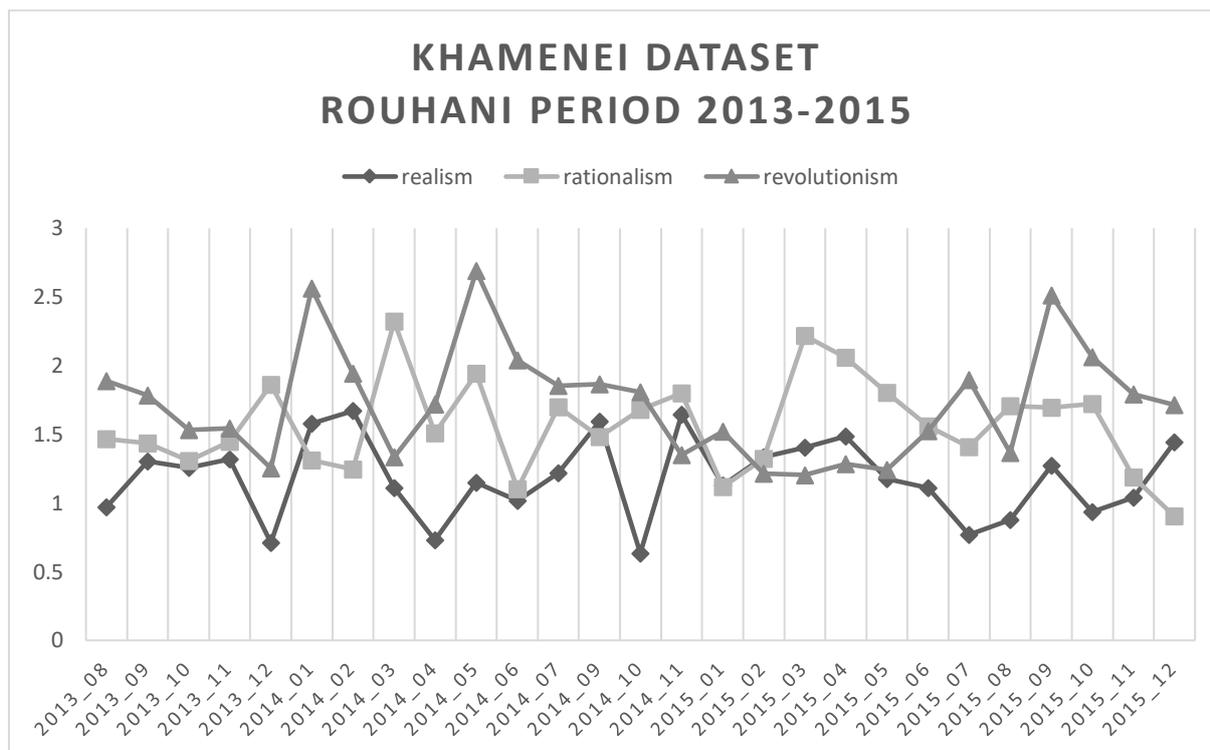


Graph 9. Khamenei Dataset, Ahmadinejad Period

During the Ahmadinejad era (Graph 9), revolutionism continued to dominate, this time mostly with a higher margin than during the Khatami period. The prevalence of revolutionism is more pronounced as its dominance was overtaken only on rare occasions. For instance, rationalism toppled revolutionism in August 2010 with 2.22% while revolutionism only managed to reach 1.39% but such instances are seldom during the entire presidency of Ahmadinejad. Revolutionism peaked in November 2012 with a 3.31% share and in December 2015 with 4.3% share. The peaks of both realism and rationalism coincide with the revolutionist peak in

December 2005, realism reaching 4.1% and rationalism 3.1%. In this presidential period, rationalism generally fared better than realism with a mean average of 1.45% and realism having 1.30% while revolutionism triumphed reaching an average of 2.06%. Yet realism still managed to dominate on two occasions, in February 2006 with 2.73% share and November 2011 with 2.62%. Mention has already been made in the previous section that the reason accounting for the predominance of revolutionism is the fact that Saddam's government had already been overthrown by the US military intervention. By 2004, revolutionist rhetoric had to be increased by Khamenei to appeal to the Iraqi Shi'ites to strengthen the alliance between Iran and Iraq using religion as their bond. Such revolutionist rhetoric of course legitimizes Iran's foreign policy in Iraq, making it less questionable for the general Iranian population as if it is stressed that they share the same religion and perhaps history, then supporting Iraq and turning it into an ally makes it more acceptable for the Iranians. The prevalence of revolutionism, then, may have been used by Khamenei to legitimise his foreign policy agenda.

The Ahmadinejad administration was also marked by Iran's controversial nuclear program and sanctions combined with harsh political rhetoric towards the United States. Further US military intervention in the Middle East, particularly in the immediate neighbourhood of Iran, was contained within Afghanistan and Iraq. As such, the results reflect that the percentage shares of realism are much less as compared to the Khatami period, perhaps due to the geopolitical developments as well as the attention of Iran being focused on the nuclear program, going hand in hand with negotiations and talks. Diplomacy was underway during the Ahmadinejad era although without little success, leading to a deadlock in the nuclear talks and, later in his presidency, the devastating sanctions on Iran. Since diplomacy is linked with the rationalist tradition, it could be argued that it affected the relative strength of rationalism in the speeches of the Khatami era in comparison with the previous presidential period. Another issue linked to the rationalist tradition regarding the nuclear program that could have increased its values is the fact that under the rationalist institution of international law, being a signatory of the NPT, Iran had the right to access nuclear technology for civilian purposes. A point most likely reiterated by the supreme leader in his speeches contributing to the strength of rationalism.



Graph 10. Khamenei Dataset Rouhani Period

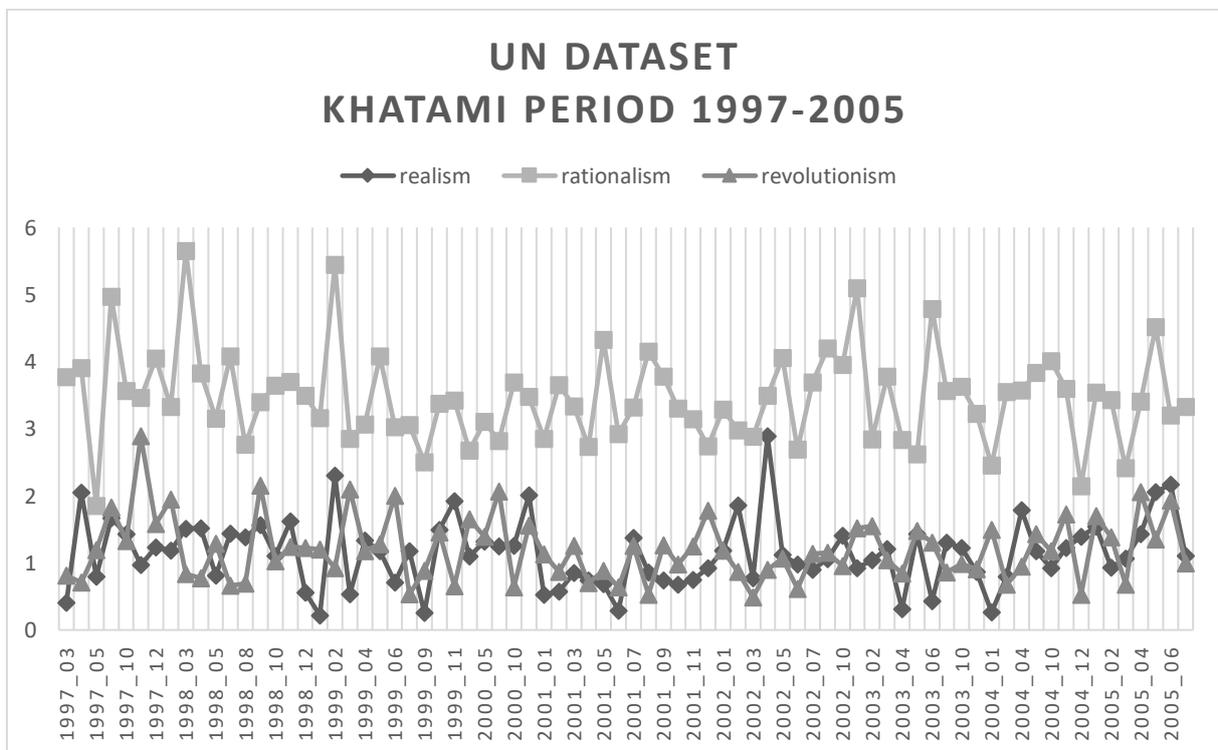
In the Rouhani administration on Graph 10, Khamenei’s speeches have been likewise dominated by revolutionism. But unlike the previous presidential period, rationalism could overtake revolutionism in some years and dominate the three traditions. In fact, for three consecutive months, from March 2015 until May 2015, rationalism dominated, while a month before and after this period, rationalism had approximately equal percentage values as revolutionism. Perhaps this could be attributed to the supreme leader’s efforts in justifying Iran’s foreign policy of directly negotiating with the United States. It was the period prior to the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and he must have discussed the diplomatic endeavours of Iran to finally find a solution to the nuclear dilemma, and by doing so, the rationalist keywords are used. This in turn strengthens the case of rationalism giving it higher percentage values in the speeches as the tradition was utilized by Khamenei to legitimize Iran’s actions abroad to his audiences. After all, the main rationalist themes that could have seeped into Khamenei’s statements involve negotiations, diplomacy and especially Iran’s legitimate right to obtain a civilian nuclear program.

Revolutionism reaches several peaks: 2.56% in January 2014, 2.68% in May 2014 and 2.51% in September 2015. Rationalism’s peak is observed in March 2014 with 2.32% and 2.21% in March 2015, wherein both cases rationalism was the dominant tradition. Realism barely managed to reach a decent peak although in February 2014 it went as high up as 1.67%. The

overall average of the three traditions indicate that revolutionism was relatively dominant with 1.72% share, followed by rationalism with 1.56%, while realism struggled to gain only 1.18%. Considering the developments during the Rouhani period, the historic phone call with the United States, where Iranian and US Presidents talked directly for the first time since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, as well as the negotiation of the nuclear program and the lifting of sanctions, it can be argued that Khamenei’s speeches were made in a different political context as the two previous presidents. Just as the Ahmadinejad administration, the speeches during the Rouhani period had seen significantly weakened realist tradition and the dominance of revolutionism albeit a much stronger rationalist tradition, reflecting the political environment.

4.3.2 The UN Dataset

Unlike the Khamenei dataset in the previous section, at a closer look the UN dataset reveals a more consistent trend all throughout the three presidential periods as we will see below. This consistency points to the dominance of rationalism in most of the statements of the presidents and foreign ministry officials.

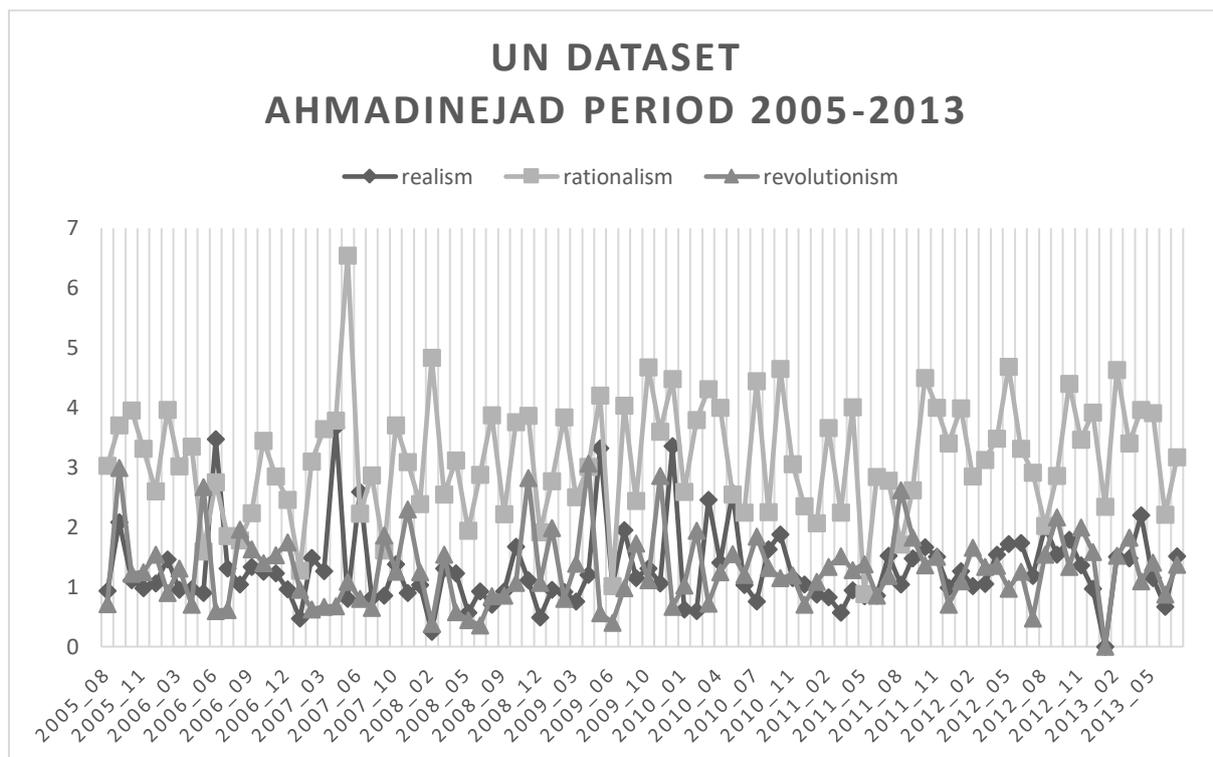


Graph 11. UN Dataset Khatami Period

Rationalism has been the most dominant tradition of the entire UN dataset as we have seen earlier. This has not changed looking at the data more closely. In fact, the dominance is more pronounced particularly during the Khatami period (Graph 11) perhaps due to the administration’s commitment to the rationalist tradition as the former president outlined a

foreign policy approach based on diplomacy, cooperation and dialogue. Apart from rare occasions where rationalism was experiencing a low, the data shows how prevalent the rationalist tradition is in the statements of Iran's president and foreign ministry officials. Rationalism reached peaks exceeding 5% several times such as in March 1998 with 5.65%, in February 1999 with 5.44% and in November 2002 with 5.05%. The other two traditions managed only to reach peaks of 2.88% for realism in April 2002 and again 2.88% for revolutionism in November 1997. Nevertheless, their peaks were unable to overtake the dominance of rationalism. Such a profound dominance of rationalism is distinguished by the overall average of this time frame with 3.46% share while revolutionism had 1.19%, just a few points higher than realism at 1.15%.

During the Khatami presidency, rationalism was practically unchallenged and the competition can be observed only between the realist and revolutionist tradition. This success of rationalism in the statements can be attributed firstly to the language used by the officials that follow the regulations of the United Nations as a rationalist institution as the themes discussed are largely diplomatic international issues. Secondly, the Khatami government was already known to be moderate and an advocate of cooperation, dialogue and negotiations, whose terminologies can be traced from the rationalist tradition, strengthening its dominance throughout the entire period of his presidency. It was also in Khatami's watch when certain diplomatic successes were achieved as Iran opened itself to the world and attempted to have a rapprochement with the West and its neighbours. The Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), for instance, was hosted in Tehran for the very first time in 1997 indicating Iran's efforts to diplomatically re-establish and strengthen ties with the countries of the region, a rationalist feat. Due to Khatami's foreign policy of easing tensions and achieve a certain degree of rapprochement with the United States, Madelaine Albright, the former US Secretary of State reciprocated Khatami's efforts by issuing an official apology for American historical interference in the coup of 1953. Through a CIA operation called 'Operation Ajax', the United States together with some local groups within Iran, the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh was overthrown. Mossadegh was a stark nationalist who nationalized Iran's oil much to the dismay of the West. The apology issued by Albright highlighted the success of the Khatami governments moderate and conciliatory approach to Iran's foreign policy. However, due to the terrorist attacks on US soil on September 11, 2001, the efforts were undermined as the Bush administration went on an offensive and labelled Iran as part of the 'Axis of Evil'.



Graph 12. UN Dataset Ahmadinejad Period

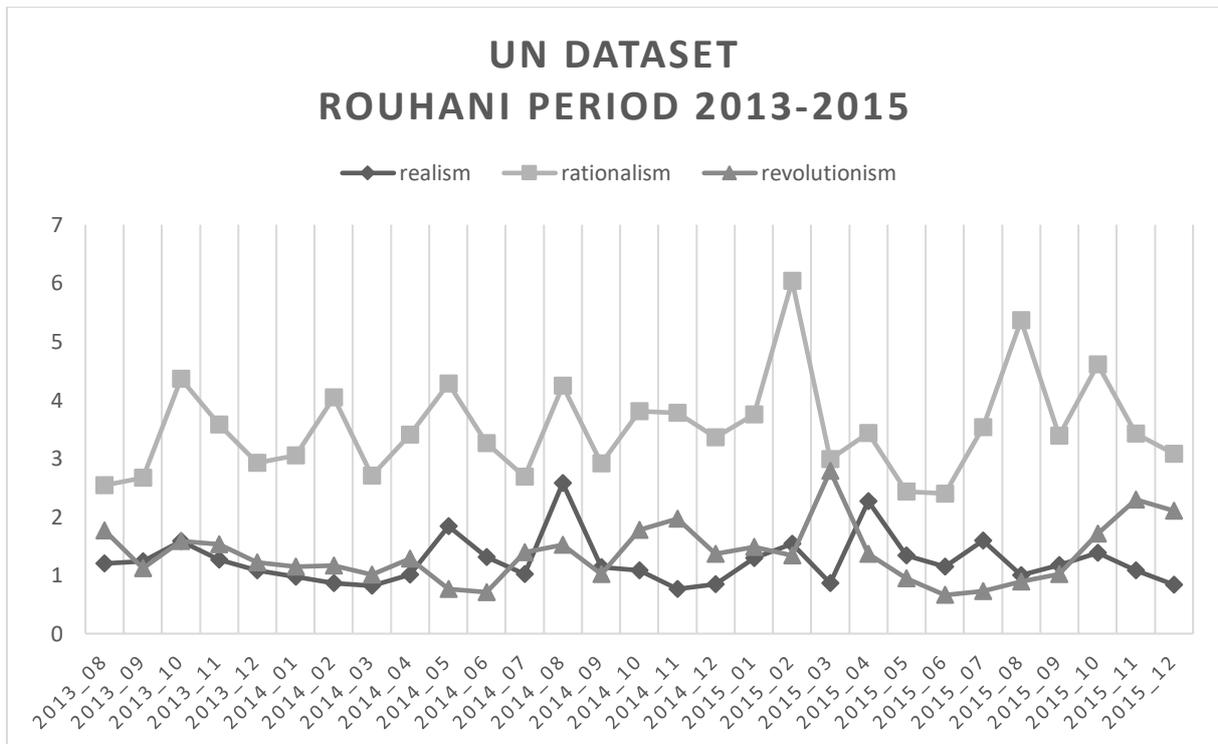
During the Ahmadinejad period on Graph 12, the UN dataset exhibits similarities to the previous presidential era as rationalism maintains its dominance over the other two traditions in the speeches. Still, unlike the time of Khatami administration, rationalism is challenged in the Ahmadinejad period on several occasions such as in May 2006 when revolutionism reached 2.67% while rationalism had 1.59%. A month later, realism dominated at its peak with 3.47% while rationalism was at 2.75%. Two other occurrences show a weak dominance of revolutionism: in August 2006 where its shares reached 1.96% with rationalism having 1.78% and in September 2009 where revolutionism was at 1.86% while rationalism had 1.61%. In other cases, rationalism’s dominance was challenged as another tradition’s percentage shares came very close to the values rationalism had. Examples include September 2005 with revolutionism getting to 2.99% while rationalism was at 3.7%, April 2007 where realism reached 3.67% and rationalism was at 3.78%, in April 2009 rationalism had 3.01% and revolutionism slightly dominated the month having 3.06% and a month later realism reaches 3.32% while rationalism had 4.20%. The same pattern is seen in December 2009 where realism was at 3.36% and rationalism had 4.48% and in August 2012, we can see that realism manages to get close to rationalism with 2% while rationalism had 2.02%. But despite these instances, rationalism had a strong dominance and at times, it enjoyed high margins from the other two traditions such as in August 2005 when rationalism was way ahead at 3.03% and the other two were below 1%, in May 2007 when rationalism hit an all-time high of 6.55% while

revolutionism had 1.08% and realism just 0.8% and lastly in April 2011 when rationalism was at 4% and revolutionism had 1.28% and realism struggled at 0.94%. These occurrences where rationalism's dominance was marked by having distinguishably high values from the other two traditions were more common in the Khatami period and although rationalism is still dominant in the Ahmadinejad period, the challengers were more able to get closer to the top unlike in the previous presidential era.

These fluctuations in the Ahmadinejad period represent how different his foreign policy approach is in comparison to his predecessor. It does not take wild imagination to conclude that with such confrontative rhetoric, complicated debates and issues questioning Iran's political behaviour were brought up in the United Nations. For instance, following the controversial Iranian presidential elections in 2009 wherein the government responded through a violent crackdown on the protesters who took to the streets claiming that there had been an election fraud, the issue of human rights may have been raised at the United Nations wherein the official delegation of Iran had to respond to. The mere discussion of human rights could potentially raise the values of revolutionism and rationalism, accounting for more fluctuations during the Ahmadinejad era. The nuclear program of Iran is yet another issue that prompts much debates within the United Nations thereby affecting the development of the three traditions. Thus, the three traditions at varying degrees reached peaks during the Ahmadinejad period which are inconceivable in the other presidential eras. Realism reached several peaks above 3% during the Ahmadinejad period. In June 2006, it reached 3.47%, in April 2007 it reached 3.67%, in May 2009 with 3.32% and in December 2009 at 3.36%. Revolutionism reached a peak above 3% only in April 2009 with 3.06%, this was before the disputed presidential elections in Iran. The overall average of the three traditions reflect the dominance of rationalism with an average of 3.14% while realism followed with 1.29% but was not far off from revolutionism having 1.28%. The results are like in the Khatami administration with rationalism leading in the speeches albeit the values of the other two traditions were slightly higher.

UN dataset speeches in the Rouhani era (Graph 13), like the previous presidential periods, exhibit the dominance of rationalism, which has been quite consistent throughout the entire research time frame. In this particular period, we see similar patterns to the Khatami's presidency where rationalism remains unchallenged and starkly dominant. Rationalism reached an extraordinary peak of 6.03% of shares in February 2015 and 5.36% in August 2015, indicating that the period surrounding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) the rationalist tradition was prevalent in Iran's foreign policy as the nuclear program was

negotiated. Realism and rationalism barely made it to 3% with realism peaking at 2.57% in August 2014 and 2.26% in April 2015 while revolutionism reached up to 2.78% in March 2015 and only 2.29% in November 2015. In the time covered in the graph, we can observe only one instance where two traditions came close to each other, that of revolutionism at its peak in March 2015 with 2.78% getting close to rationalism with 2.99%. For this reason, such a pattern with a strong dominance of rationalism is likened to the Khatami era since rationalism enjoys a higher margin in terms of percentage values all throughout the period. The average of each of the traditions though, are more like the Ahmadinejad period as the values of the non-dominant traditions were slightly higher than at the time of Khatami’s administration. Rationalism had a remarkable average of 5.51% share, which is much higher than the other two periods, while revolutionism had 1.36% and realism managing 1.24%. Rouhani’s era signified, as Khatami’s presidency did, Iran’s rationalist approach to foreign policy accounting for the consistent dominance of the tradition. With the principles of cooperation, dialogue and diplomacy being the imperative of Rouhani’s policies, it is not surprising that his officials at the United Nations would reflect the same rationalist values.



Graph 13. UN Dataset Rouhani Period

4.4 Conclusion

We have seen that more fluctuations exist in the speeches of Khamenei as opposed to the UN dataset. The dominance of a tradition in Khamenei’s speeches seem to correlate with

geopolitical events as we have seen in the description of the years 2002 and 2003 above. As the overall graph at the beginning of this chapter has demonstrated, Khamenei's speeches are largely dominated by revolutionism while the UN dataset is dominated by rationalism. By looking at geopolitical events and taking snapshots of the speeches, certain differences can be concluded. Since Iran was named a member of the 'Axis of Evil' and a U.S. military intervention was underway in the neighbouring Iraq, it is plausible to assume that such a disposition is correlated with the rise of realism as a dominant tradition in those two years in Khamenei's statements. However, since the same fluctuation from the norm cannot be observed in the UN dataset, it can be assumed that this is more likely to be caused by institutional factors such as the affiliation of the speakers with the UN. As we know, UN's very existence is founded in the spirit of the rationalist tradition and for this reason, it is likely that those affiliated with it must adhere to the normative framework of the institution in their speeches.

To verify these assumptions, we must turn to the qualitative phase to uncover whether certain argumentation can be linked to either geopolitical or institutional factors. Apart from argumentations, the qualitative phase aims to identify the themes and discourses the argumentations are attached to allowing certain traditions to prevail in specific periods. Pinpointing these can show us how certain traditions are negotiated and in what context, framing and forming Iran's foreign policy at different time periods. Such detailed outcomes taking the very statements and discussions of Iranian statesmen into consideration to provide us with the full picture of Iran's foreign policy cannot possibly be delivered by the quantitative phase alone, which is why it is vital to have a closer reading of the documents in order to step away from surface generalizations that the quantitative phase offers.

5 Khamenei's Foreign Policy Discourse

At first glance, Khamenei's foreign policy statements at the Hajj seem to be comprised of entirely revolutionist discourse. He often speaks of unifying the Ummah, the community of the faithful, referring to the Islamic community. To attract audience and potential followers, he points to the actions of the United States and the West as the cause of all the suffering and the problems in the Muslim world. He presents such issues as a certainty and explicitly describes the actions of the United States and the West to be evil and immoral. Hegemony, domination and exploitation are only some of the terms he attaches to these evil antagonists and enemies of the Islamic world. In contrast, Islam and Iran are depicted in a positive light bestowing heroic qualities to convince the audience that the Ummah can do something about the problems in the Islamic world caused by the enemy if they are to unite. It is a dichotomy between good and evil, a very revolutionist strategy to bring about a missionary war that will establish justice. However, as argued earlier, it is easy to slip from the revolutionist tradition into the realist one by aiming for the extreme revolutionist vision of winning the missionary war and establishing an empire through Islamic cosmopolitanism. In many ways, Khamenei speaks of this 'empire' in the form of restoring the 'Islamic Civilization', requiring the unity of the Islamic Ummah. This demonstrates that the demonization of the United States and the West is ultimately realist in conception, manifesting the revolutionist-realist axis of Khamenei's foreign policy discourse. Rationalism though, is not entirely cut out of his statements as it is a vital component in showcasing Iran's potential to lead the Islamic world in Khamenei's campaign against the United States and the West. Showcasing Iran's rationalist dimension creates a positive image less threatening to the states in the Islamic world since rationalism dictates adherence to the rules and institutions of the international society. Even at the level of discourses, as we explore below, the main argument: *'Iran's foreign policy is consistent and is fundamentally realist with a revolutionist vision while the means are rationalist'* can already be traced.

For the Muslim community, the Hajj is one of the most essential of all gatherings as it brings together Muslims of all sects from across the globe, making it an important platform for Khamenei to express his views as the Supreme Leader (Vali-ye Faqih) or Guardian Jurist. The creation of Khamenei's position, was one of the key features of the Islamic Republic that Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini established following Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979 consequently subduing the state to religion. The supreme leader was conceived to be responsible for guarding and protecting the country 'with a divine mandate' drawing on

Islam.²⁶³ Whilst Khomeini focused on Iran, as we see here in this chapter, Khamenei's speeches reflect his assumed guardianship of the Islamic world in its entirety even though he belongs to the minority Shi'a sect and is not considered to be an official leader of Islam outside Iran. Regardless of the broadening of his guardianship role to include all Muslim countries with his insistence on unity and solidarity, Khamenei has maintained and propagated the worldview of his predecessor since it has the potential to attract other Muslim countries to his cause. To this end one historical factor joins the Muslim world – the experience of Western imperialism. For Khomeini Islam is the bastion against imperialism and he identified 'imperialism and Western materialism with the figure of Satan – and the greatest exponent of capitalism, the United States being accorded the title of 'Great Satan'.²⁶⁴ Such narratives form the very foundation of Iran's Islamic revolution and has been increasingly spread in the Islamic world through the statements of Khamenei bestowing on it a revolutionist twist as he attempts to engage other Muslim states. But beneath the revolutionist surface of Khamenei's speeches are strong realist currents, which I discuss below.

One of the key points of this chapter is to demonstrate how revolutionism with its narratives and discourses is entangled with the realist tradition generating arguments guiding Iran's foreign policy. It supplements the quantitative data, exhibiting the dominance of revolutionism with realism not far behind. Furthermore, despite the dormancy of the rationalist tradition, its argumentations are still visible and intertwined with both realist and revolutionist traditions in Khamenei's statements. At one level, discourses rooted in revolutionism such as solidarity, monotheism and universal moral values drawn from Islam are regularly expressed indicating the worldview of a unified whole albeit within the confines of the Islamic world. Islam is the binding element transcending nation-state boundaries where individual Muslims can identify with regardless of their sect in an Islamic cosmopolitanism viable through the revolutionist tradition. On another level, this revolutionist vision is defined against Western imperialism, bestowing a realist dimension to it as Khamenei elaborates on the capacity of this unified religious whole, subsequently referring to it as one Islamic nation, to challenge the materialist West. The nature of this challenge, despite its realist aspect and rationalist elements, stems from the revolutionist tradition and for the revolutionists, the world is divided into binary oppositions. With the faithful, or liberators, in one camp – the Islamic camp – and the heretics, or oppressors, in the other, the ideological background of the conflict comes to the fore, thus

²⁶³ Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, 195

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 197

justifying Iran's foreign policy within the Islamic world as propagated by Khamenei. What is surprising is that despite the emphasis on revolutionism, rationalism still plays a role though it is much less pronounced.

The chapter is arranged based on the main themes of Khamenei's annual Hajj statements and I discuss the three traditions and their respective institutions within each of the themes. I point out the arguments and discourses that relate directly to the traditions and institutions, labelling them accordingly while elaborating on the policies they constitute. After all, rationalism is the means to which Iran can achieve its essentially realist, and to an extent revolutionist, goals.

5.1 The West versus Islam: the realist pretext for revolutionism

To advocate the starkly revolutionist notion of unity of the Islamic world to achieve Islamic cosmopolitanism, we should understand the issues plaguing the Islamic world as described by Khamenei in his annual Hajj statements. Most of these issues involve the encroachment of the West on Islamic countries taking on many forms from plunder to violence, which are tied to the realist principle of expediency and dominance from the side of the powerful. Since the realist tradition is essentially devoid of morality regarding the actions of the powerful on the weaker state and highly favours expediency and dominance, it makes sense to identify the issues of the revolutionist-rooted Islamic world to be caused by the materialistic West embedded in the realist tradition creating the binary opposition necessary to contextualize Iran's foreign policy. This is a view strongly shared by former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. To challenge the immoral realist camp of the West, the revolutionist moral Islamic world must be consolidated with the leadership of Iran. A moral revolutionist vision can mobilize resources to fight an ideological battle with realist intentions of conquering the enemy and establishing an Islamic cosmopolitan civilization akin to an empire. Hence, the problems caused by the West solidifies the reasoning for the pursuit of a united Islamic whole, which simultaneously strengthens the material capacity of the Islamic community to confront the United States and its allies.

Another way of interpreting this realist dimension is that Iran's capabilities as a nation-state alone are not sufficient to challenge the West and it therefore uses Islam to gain more allies and consolidate power through advocating Islamic unity making Khamenei's statements drastically lean towards the revolutionist tradition. To achieve the goal of uniting the Islamic world behind Iran, the suffering inflicted by the West upon the other Islamic countries becomes a necessary factor as it taps into the discourse of resentment, eliciting strong emotions such as anger and frustration stemming from historical grievances from the Muslims. The two opposing camps of

the faithful and heretics then is respectively defined to be the Islamic World led by Iran and the West led by the United States, each country tied to a realist cause of a nation-state but at the same time transcending their own territorial boundaries forming a greater whole. Thus, the anti-imperialist discourses come into play with its argumentations, which I discuss below. The next sections elaborate on this interplay of revolutionism and realism through the different discourses as well as the core messages of Khamenei's statements representing his worldview that can be traced in Iran's foreign policy. In each segment, I introduce the arguments underlined by Khamenei in spreading his message targeting imperialism adhering to the principles and institutions of the realist tradition. Then, I go on to discuss the corresponding revolutionist discourses meant to provide the anti-imperialist antidote to the sufferings experienced by the Islamic countries. It is important to remember that although Khamenei frequently mentions 'the West', he specifically means the United States or 'the Great Satan' and that most of the argumentation draws on the discourse of resentment, which is strongly anchored in the anti-imperialist narrative. At the end of this chapter, I highlight the instances wherein rationalism plays a role in Khamenei's statements proving that the supreme leader cannot entirely disentangle his political worldview from the rationalist currents embedded in the international society.

5.1.1 Hegemony of the West: The Evil realists

Powerful countries, particularly the United States, in the international system are delegated a prominent role in the Hajj statements of Khamenei as he attempts to draw on their actions to define the importance of Islam and unity of the Muslims with Iran as the muse. According to Khamenei, Iran's experiences – from eliminating U.S. influence on the government to fighting imperialism – are meant to provide inspiration to other Muslim countries being the first Islamic state established through an Islamic Revolution. Iran's supreme leader's message to the entire Muslim world is simple: follow us. He boasts of Iran's multifaceted liberation and independence from the West, claiming that the country has rid itself of tyranny, suffering, oppression and materialism since the establishment of the Islamic Republic. Hence, those states experiencing the pain inflicted by the imperialist powers have no other choice but to follow Iran's footsteps on the path to freedom and salvation through Islam.²⁶⁵ This imparts the foreign

²⁶⁵ Ali Khamenei, "Imam Khamenei's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.khamenei.de/imam_gb/speeches/speech1997.htm#08.04.1997; Ali Khamenei, "Message of His Eminence Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Addressed to the Haj Pilgrims of the Holy Mecca (2002)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.khamenei.de/imam_gb/speeches/speech2002.htm#31012002; Ali Khamenei, "Leader's message to this year's Haj pilgrims (2003)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.khamenei.de/imam_gb/speeches/speech2003.htm#090203a

policy goal of Iran as Khamenei speaks to the whole Islamic world during the Hajj. Tehran wants to build alliances at the very least, in the realist sense, and at the very best, in a revolutionist sense, lead the Islamic Ummah once unity has been attained. While the most favourable scenario lies on the horizon, attention is mainly centred on issues plaguing the Islamic world at present, which are caused by the West and its imperialistic aims victimising Muslim countries and its people, in hopes of getting a step closer to the best scenario.²⁶⁶

Coercion is a standard norm in the realist tradition and coercive diplomacy is a significant feature of powerful countries since negotiation is based on material capabilities and, often, is largely on unequal terms resulting in weaker states to submit to the wishes of the powerful one. Using Iran's previous experience during the Pahlavi monarchy, Khamenei points out that many countries in the Islamic world are subservient to imperialist powers.²⁶⁷ The imperialists and colonizers have plundered the resources of Muslim states to satisfy their own interests referring to the realist balance of power institution.²⁶⁸ As such, the U.S. military intervention in Iraq was meant to establish American dominance in the region by controlling the oil and conspiring against Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia.²⁶⁹ This foreign intervention exhibits sheer disregard for international law, corresponding to the realist understanding of the institution of international law – an action which only the most powerful in the international system could afford. Instigating wars in the Middle East has likewise triggered tragic experiences for the Islamic world, giving way to sectarianism and extremism, a purely realist institution exercised by the imperialist powers.²⁷⁰ The most influential element of Western domination, however, is not restricted to military capabilities and political power as it involves cultural and ideological aspects such as materialism and capitalism, which are corrosive to Islamic countries in terms of destroying religious spiritual values.²⁷¹ Nevertheless, taking into account the capabilities and greed of the imperialist powers, particularly the United States, the Islamic world must anticipate

²⁶⁶ Khamenei, "Imam Khamene'i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)" Ali Khamenei, "Message of Ayatollah al-Odhma Khamenei on the auspicious occasion of Hajj (1998)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.khamenei.de/imam_gb/speeches/speech1998.htm#01.04.1998

²⁶⁷ Khamenei, "Imam Khamene'i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)" Ali Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2001)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.khamenei.de/imam_gb/news/news2001/mar2001.htm#LeaderHajjMessage03032001

²⁶⁸ Khamenei, "Leader's message to this year's Haj pilgrims (2003)" Ali Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2004)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.khamenei.de/imam_gb/speeches/pdf/hadsch1424.pdf; Ali Khamenei, "Islamic Revolution Leader Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims (2009)," accessed May 23, 2015, <http://leader.ir/en/content/6135/The-message-of-H.-E.-Ayatullah-Khamenei-to-the-Hajj-pilgrims->

²⁶⁹ Khamenei, "Leader's message to this year's Haj pilgrims (2003)"

²⁷⁰ Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2004)" Ali Khamenei, "The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2005)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.khamenei.de/imam_gb/speeches/speech2005.htm#18012005

²⁷¹ Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2001)"

further attacks of the West, both material and ideological, to curb the progress of Islamic countries, especially the spreading of Islamic awakening.²⁷²

Due to the hegemony of the United States, the Great Satan, Muslim countries have been suffering, solidifying the position of the U.S. as the enemy in the speeches of Khamenei. Primarily, nonetheless, such enmity is directed towards Iran since the establishment of an Islamic Republic in Tehran as the American regime lost all influence on the government.²⁷³ But despite the U.S. enmity against the Islamic Republic, Khamenei stresses that Iran was able to remain independent and simultaneously progress, showcasing the country's invaluable achievement made possible by marrying Islam with the state apparatus.²⁷⁴ By harnessing the power of Islam, Khomeini was able to liberate Iran from the grip of the United States and the West, enabling the country to achieve ultimate freedom and so the rest of the Islamic world must follow his example and turn to Islam as a way to freedom from Western domination to end the suffering and pain of the Muslims.²⁷⁵

By painting such a dire picture of the United States and the West as being driven by pure national interest with little regard for other countries in the system, the supreme leader wants to imply the wrongness of their behaviour. It shows that he is aware that such acts are based on the selfish interest of the great powers, which is interpreted in realist terms as he points out the evils of imperialism. This can only be possible if he holds an alternative view of international affairs, suggesting the criticism comes from his belief that the situation could be better, perhaps in a rationalist understanding of the world where the weaker states are not dominated by the powerful ones and their resources are not plundered leaving them to suffer. Sovereignty of a weaker country, meaning freedom from the domination of a powerful state, indirectly resonates

²⁷² Khamenei, "Leader's message to this year's Haj pilgrims (2003)" Khamenei, "The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2005)" Khamenei, "Islamic Revolution Leader Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims (2009)" Ali Khamenei, "Ayatollah Khamenei's Message to Hajj Pilgrims (2011)," accessed May 23, 2015, <http://leader.ir/en/content/8862/AYATOLLAH-KHAMENEI%E2%80%99S-MESSAGE-TO-HAJJ-PILGRIMS-2011>

²⁷³ Khamenei, "Message of Ayatollah al-Odhma Khamenei on the auspicious occasion of Hajj (1998)"

²⁷⁴ Ali Khamenei, "Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.khamenei.de/imam_gb/speeches/speech1999_1.htm#26.03.1999; Khamenei, "Message of His Eminence Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Addressed to the Haj Pilgrims of the Holy Mecca (2002)" Ali Khamenei, "The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2006.12)," accessed May 23, 2015, <http://leader.ir/en/content/3491/The-message-of-H.-E.-Ayatullah-Khamenei-to-the-Hajj-pilgrims-from-the-whole-world>; Ali Khamenei, "The message of H.E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2008)," accessed May 23, 2015, <http://leader.ir/en/content/4460/The-message-of-H.-E.-Ayatullah-Khamenei-to-the-Hajj-pilgrims-from-the-whole-world>

²⁷⁵ Khamenei, "Imam Khamene'i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)" Khamenei, "Message of Ayatollah al-Odhma Khamenei on the auspicious occasion of Hajj (1998)" Khamenei, "Message of His Eminence Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Addressed to the Haj Pilgrims of the Holy Mecca (2002)"

in Khamenei's message, which is a vital norm in the modern international society of sovereign nation-states subscribing to the rationalist tradition. To prove his point of a weak country being able to be independent and gain their own sovereignty back from foreign influences, he relentlessly refers to Iran as an example.

5.1.2 The Power of the Islamic Revolution and sovereignty

Islam as a tool to take back sovereignty from the hands of a foreign power like in Iran is an argument Khamenei repeats over time. Internal meddling of the United States in Iran's political affairs in the period preceding the Islamic Revolution of 1979 had resulted in corruption, suppression, violence and the plundering of Iran's wealth and Khamenei points this out as a common ground with other Muslim countries suffering from the same problems.²⁷⁶ The situation in Iran during the Pahlavi monarchy was everything Islamic teachings rejects, thereby making it a potent force for regime change, a force that Ayatollah Khomeini had employed in establishing an Islamic Republic. Islam was then placed at the apex of political power, transferring sovereignty from man to God and the position of the Supreme Leader was created to guard this new order. What made Islam so powerful was the universal moral principles it upheld such as justice, freedom from oppression and salvation, appealing to the people as these values were a compelling force against the West allegedly responsible for all the problems in the Islamic world. By discussing Islam and its potential to change the political situation in a country, Khamenei expects the Muslims to find inspiration in Islam to bring about regime change in their own countries and integrate religion into politics just as in Iran with one major difference – that he remains the supreme leader. He makes no mention of what happens once such a move is taken and a country becomes an Islamic Republic, but it is safe to assume based on current events that he would not encourage the establishment of a multiplicity of supreme leaders in such a unified Islamic whole. In any case, expanding the sovereignty of God to other Muslim countries effectively transforms them into a unified 'Islamic nation', exhibiting revolutionist tendencies as the idea of transcending the nation-state come into play. This of course entails that under the pretext of monotheism, the one God entrusts the task of guardianship to just one supreme leader, embodied in his position. Despite the questionable feasibility of realizing such a goal, traces of revolutionism are evident with Islam being the foundation of the envisioned 'great Islamic Ummah', a point I tackle below. Hence, the seemingly immoral hegemonic powers led by the United States can only be challenged by

²⁷⁶ Khamenei, "Imam Khamene'i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)" Khamenei, "Message of Ayatollah al-Odhma Khamenei on the auspicious occasion of Hajj (1998)"

embracing Islam and universal moral principles harboured in the revolutionist tradition aimed at unifying the Islamic Ummah. Interestingly, he is claiming that a rationalist norm such as sovereignty can be put in place by using a revolutionist instrument such as religion, in this case Islam, for which he provides extensive supporting arguments to prove it as an effective tool.

A comprehensive account on the Islamic teachings and values Khamenei insists could save other Islamic countries suffering from the United States and the West, leading them to a path of progress and development, was coincidentally discussed less than three weeks after Bush's infamous 'Axis of Evil' speech in 2002:

Islam is a religion of life with dignity and liberty, it is a religion of 'logic and rationalism...unity, fraternity and world peace...realism...innovations and new ideas...sacrifice and tolerance...civility, science and development...of Jihad...dignity, power and sovereignty...is the guardian of human rights and nobility...guarantees and protects ethical precepts and moral decency...is the staunch supporter of peace and security'.²⁷⁷

Such a profound statement on Islam, to protect the sanctity of Islam as a religion being a force of good, comes at a time when the suspects of the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 were proven to be Muslim extremists, which was immediately followed by Bush's statement declaring a 'war on terror'. Reference to Islam as the ultimate impetus for removing corruption, overcoming plots of enemies (the United States) and surviving hostilities in addition to achieving development and progress sounds like a superhero solution in achieving sovereignty within a state.²⁷⁸ Khamenei, however, skips the valuable rationalist benefit of using religion and goes a step further in inviting all of mankind to Islam, momentarily seeming to turn Islamic principles and values to fit into global cosmopolitanism, a remarkable feature of the development of the institution of international law in the revolutionist tradition. Arguing that ethics and morality are collapsing in the West, Khamenei puts Islam forward as the sole path to salvation for all mankind inviting 'each and every member of the human races'.²⁷⁹ People in Western societies are said to be trapped in materialism and lust for power and are in 'dire need' of Islam, as it is the only ideology that can deliver 'justice and freedom long-aspired by the

²⁷⁷ Khamenei, "Message of His Eminence Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Addressed to the Haj Pilgrims of the Holy Mecca (2002)"

²⁷⁸ Khamenei, "Message of Ayatollah al-Odhma Khamenei on the auspicious occasion of Hajj (1998)" Khamenei, "Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)" Ali Khamenei, "Message to the Hajj prigrims of the Muslim Ummah (2000)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.khamenei.de/imam_gb/speeches/speech2000.htm#15.3.2000

²⁷⁹ Khamenei, "Imam Khamene'i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)" Khamenei, "The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2006.12)" Khamenei, "Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)"

free-minded people of the world'.²⁸⁰ Such sentiments in the supreme leader's statements are brief, nonetheless, and are mostly targeted towards demonizing the West as much as glorifying Islam in the eyes of the Islamic world and those sympathetic to Islam due to disappointment with the West. The core message though, lies on how Iran was transformed by Islam turning it into a sovereign state free from foreign intervention, a very rationalist arrangement underpinning the respect for the plurality of states in international society. Thus, Iran's successes must be elaborated to convince the Islamic world and Khamenei wastes no time in discussing Iran's achievements.

5.2 Follow Iran – the champion of self-sovereignty and rationalism

Iran's achievements regarding completely liberating itself from the Great Satan, surviving decades of hardships including the eight-year-war with Iraq as well as the sanctions regime imposed on Iran, holding the United States into account, enjoy a great deal of repetition for good reasons. By being able to free itself from foreign influence, Khamenei wants to prove Iran could gain its sovereignty back from the United States – a success story of using Islam to gain freedom from domination. But the rationalist ideal stops there as he refers to the independent Iran, surviving a long war with Iraq. Footprints of the realist tradition make itself visible in such statements through an elaboration of the actions of the West and Iran's reaction to it. War as a realist institution is invoked in Khamenei's recollection of the events with the United States harbouring imperialist intentions, prompting Washington to militarily support Saddam during the eight-year-war by providing him with all sorts of weapons. Iran's engagement in this realist institution can be seen in the reality of Iran fighting back and eventually ending the war through a ceasefire. Yet despite the inherently realist nature of the war with Iraq, Khamenei calls the ceasefire a victory attributing Iran's success to Islam and combines it with the doctrine of martyrdom as known in the Shi'a tradition, adding a revolutionist element to it. After the war, the United States placed consecutive sanctions on Iran for various reasons, indicating the function of the realist institution of diplomacy where powerful states use coercion, including economic sanctions to achieve certain goals. Iran did not yield to the economic pressures for decades while sanctions added up particularly after the disclosure of Iran's nuclear program, showing independence, the resistance to the sanctions system as well as self-sufficiency, on the part of Tehran, to survive marking the Islamic Republic's commitment to the realist tradition. Khamenei proudly proclaims this resistance underlining how Iran could reconstruct itself after

²⁸⁰ Khamenei, "Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)" Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2004)"

the war and stand up against all the mounting pressures much to the dismay of Washington until finally negotiating directly and reaching a deal with the West in 2015.²⁸¹ Such a negotiation though, is rationalist in perception as Iran as a sovereign nation-state sat on the same table to diplomatically find a solution to exercise their right to have a nuclear facility for civilian purposes.

The importance of emphasizing Iran's strength as a sovereign country is paramount to the goal of marketing Iran's Islamic revolution for purposes of either gaining allies or being propelled to the leadership of the Islamic Ummah. The goal of gaining allies could be translated in all three traditions. The realist interpretation means forming a front to stop the imperialist threat, the rationalist one could mean he wants further cooperation and simply to be part of the regional international society predominated by Arab countries who dislike Iran or he wants to form an alliance in the revolutionist sense of the word. If it is a revolutionist interpretation of finding allies, then Khamenei must be after the creation of a front to combat the evil West. For that, the supreme leader needs to show how strong his country is to lead this battle.

Strength, stability, confidence and perfection are some of the key words Khamenei uses to describe Iran. His discussion of Iran's strength is always in relation to all the pressures and hostilities of the powerful West drawing on a rich source of realist principles since they involve manoeuvres that can be attributed to the realist tradition such as coercion in form of economic sanctions, psychological warfare and false propaganda. In all these scenarios, Iran has engaged itself in retaliation to ensure the survival of the Islamic regime, reiterating the presence of the realist tradition in Iran's foreign policy.²⁸² As a matter of fact, at the height of the nuclear crisis, Khamenei boasted about nuclear know-how and that such technology is within their reach referring to Iran's capabilities as if playing a game of chicken with the United States.²⁸³ This achievement, alongside other scientific and technological developments within Iran are very much publicized as hallmarks of the success of Islam in Iran.²⁸⁴ It is symbolic since it exhibits the increase in Iran's aggregate capabilities, which in turn emphasizes the country's self-sufficiency and determination to survive and prosper in this hostile international system

²⁸¹ Khamenei, "Imam Khamene'i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)" Khamenei, "Message of Ayatollah al-Odhma Khamenei on the auspicious occasion of Hajj (1998)" Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2004)"

²⁸² Khamenei, "Islamic Revolution Leader Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims (2009)"

²⁸³ Ali Khamenei, "Imam Khamenei's Message to Hajj Pilgrims (2010)," accessed May 23, 2015, [http://leader.ir/en/content/7577/Imam-Khamenei's-Message-to-Hajj-Pilgrims-\(1431-A.H.\)](http://leader.ir/en/content/7577/Imam-Khamenei's-Message-to-Hajj-Pilgrims-(1431-A.H.))

²⁸⁴ Khamenei, "Imam Khamene'i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)" Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2004)" Khamenei, "The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2006.12)" Khamenei, "The message of H.E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2008)" Khamenei, "Islamic Revolution Leader Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims (2009)"

dominated by great powers conveying a purely realist approach. These arguments strengthen Khamenei's insistence on Iran's potential to lead the Islamic Ummah as he stresses:

'Iran has shown its mettle in administering the affairs of a large country. In addition, it has proved its capability in mobilizing the masses of the people, in foreseeing and confronting great events and in its successful presence in the international scene. The Islamic republic has also shown its competence and genius in the areas of construction and reconstruction, despite many hostile international confrontations and without receiving any political or economic assistance from others'.²⁸⁵

Such strength and progress is often conflated with the ideology of Islam, particularly Ayatollah Khomeini's teachings, displaying a harmonious interplay of realism with revolutionism.²⁸⁶ Islam effectively is described as the source of power for Iran without which the country would not have succeeded in its endeavours. The power of religion for Iran is so meaningful to a point where Khamenei insists it was the 'establishment of the glorious Islamic system which turned Iran into a strong fortress for the idea of Islamic rule and civilization', once again presenting Iran's Islamic Republic as the leader of the Islamic world.²⁸⁷ He says Iran is the ideal Islamic nation that should be expanded to include other Muslim countries – a sheer display of the interaction of realism and revolutionism. Hence, Iran's noble example must then be followed since it is the only path to prosperity and progress, as Khamenei puts it: 'There is no other path of prosperity for other nations except this one', resembling the message of Islam that there is no other God, except Allah.²⁸⁸ The supreme leader is direct in saying the valuable experiences of Iran set 'very good examples for others to follow', straightforwardly conveying the main message of: follow us.²⁸⁹ Iran is determined to establish 'an ideal Islamic society' by 'holding up the flag of Islam as the religion of noble teachings, enlightenment, salvation and liberty' grooming Iran for a position of leadership within the Islamic community.²⁹⁰ There are rarely any speeches that do not mention Iran as the prime example of the ideal 'Islamic state', although with the rise of Islamic militancy in the form of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as Daesh, who are also competing for leadership, the phrase may need to be reconsidered for its appropriateness.

²⁸⁵ Khamenei, "Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)"

²⁸⁶ Khamenei, "Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)" Khamenei, "Message to the Hajj pilgrims of the Muslim Ummah (2000)"

²⁸⁷ Khamenei, "The message of H.E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2008)"

²⁸⁸ Khamenei, "Imam Khamene'i's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)"

²⁸⁹ Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2004)"

²⁹⁰ Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2001)" Khamenei, "Message of His Eminence Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Addressed to the Haj Pilgrims of the Holy Mecca (2002)"

5.2.1 *Iran's Democracy and Diplomacy*

For Iran to become the true ideal leader worthy of being followed by other countries, it must first establish ties with its neighbours, requiring moderate policies and demonstrating that the country can offer a system better than the demonized West. At this point, Khamenei introduces the concept of an Islamic democracy as exemplified by Iran as well as diplomacy to establish friendly relations with its neighbours and the wider Muslim world. This shifts the arrangement of the traditions to one constituted by an intertwining of rationalism and revolutionism instead of the realist-revolutionist interplay discussed so far.

The value of Iran's sovereignty and independence from the West as a nation state is frequently mentioned in the Hajj speeches of Khamenei, which is of course tied to Islam. After all, Iran is an Islamic Republic and its present state would not have been achieved without the religion. The republic aspect is then securely tied to elections as a vital part of a religious democracy, where the people vote freely. The supreme leader often talks about the elections in Iran and in other countries trying to rebuild themselves such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Tunisia, and Syria.²⁹¹ He stresses that in Iran, elections determine the government and 'a sovereign state as that of the Islamic republic', is 'a unique model of the strongest ties between the people and their government, whose constitution, every legal organ and establishment have been decided on free will and the free election of its people'.²⁹² The explicit description of a system agreeable to the international society, i.e. a democratic arrangement where citizens have the right to choose their leaders, aims to boost Iran's appeal in the region. It shows Iran's government is legitimate as the people have chosen their leaders and that it is modern – admirable qualities that should be followed and respected.

Iran's diplomatic moves have also been stressed by the supreme leader to showcase Iran's friendly face and downplay the threat it poses to the region. He aims to establish strong relations with its neighbours and offset the memory of the past where Iran went on an offensive in exporting the revolution. Iran is a diplomatic nation, which can be as good for the Middle East states as the United States and thus can be trusted is his main message. Khamenei reminded the Muslims prior to the 'war on terror' that the Islamic Republic of Iran 'has never attacked another country' – a very rationalist claim.²⁹³ He wanted to stress that Iran is a well-behaved actor in

²⁹¹ Khamenei, "The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2005)" Khamenei, "Ayatollah Khamenei's Message to Hajj Pilgrims (2011)" Ali Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2012)," accessed May 23, 2015, <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/1709/Leader-s-Hajj-Message-2012>

²⁹² Khamenei, "Imam Khamene'i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)" Khamenei, "Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)"

²⁹³ Khamenei, "Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)"

international society, following the norms of sovereignty and non-intervention in hopes of dampening the mistrust of its neighbours. The supreme leader spoke at a time when a moderate government was in place, with former President Mohammad Khatami introducing the ‘Dialogue among Civilizations’, which became increasingly popular worldwide. This period reflects the most rationalist moment of Khamenei’s speeches where he discussed its aim of establishing and fostering friendly foreign relations.

‘The Islamic Republic has proved that it is not after creating tensions in his relations with other countries, and does advocate the sorts of relations in his foreign policies that are based on the three principles of dignity, wisdom and expediency, it has shown that its main guidelines and criteria for such material and moral relations are the interests of the country, respects for the dignity and good of this great nation and maintenance of peace and security in the world's political climate. Our relations with our neighbours and other countries of the world including the European countries are clear, expressive, evidence of the policies. Our unflinching efforts at brotherly dialogues with every Muslim country, some of which are producing sweet results at present are there for all people of the world to see’.²⁹⁴

‘In all sincerity, I extend my hand of friendship towards all Muslim states and welcome their co-operation and mutual understanding in solving the problems of the Islamic world’.²⁹⁵

True enough, the time he made those statements regarding diplomatic relations with Muslim states, particularly in the region, coincided with Iran’s rapprochement with Saudi Arabia. Iran also hosted the Conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) soon after Khatami took office in 1997. Speculations were made that due to the reformist government in Iran, not only does Iran seem ready to normalize relations with its neighbours but perhaps ties with the United States may be re-established. However, nothing more could be farther from the truth as the supreme leader continued to speak of the U.S. as an enemy:

‘How is it probable for the Iranian people and government extend a hand of friendship to an enemy who is still, with a heart full of spite and vengeance and angered at its repeated failures, striving hard to strike a blow at Iran and the Iranian people? How could we be deceived by an adversary who, even today while smiling spitefully holds a poisoned dagger in his hand? The United States of America, that is a great Satan, and the arrogant leader of the global trouble and tensions, we shall always consider it our enemy, as long as it adheres to its present places, and never, stretch out a friendly hand to it’.²⁹⁶

Following the rationalist institution of diplomacy, Iran wanted to negotiate with the United States on equal terms as the last part of his statement indicates—Tehran was reluctant to

²⁹⁴ Khamenei, “Message of Ayatollah al-Odhma Khamenei on the auspicious occasion of Hajj (1998)”

²⁹⁵ Khamenei, “Imam Khamene'i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)”

²⁹⁶ Khamenei, “Message of Ayatollah al-Odhma Khamenei on the auspicious occasion of Hajj (1998)”

negotiate with the United States for as long as the U.S. administration sticks to the same policies. At the time, apart from accusing Iran of supporting terrorism, many restrictions and economic sanctions were imposed on Iran, exhibiting the realist coercive diplomacy exercised by Washington. The weight of the sanctions and accusations aggravated the historical grievances Tehran had against America such as the CIA coup on Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister in 1953, U.S. support for Saddam Hussein in the eight-year Iran-Iraq war as well as Washington not acknowledging the atrocities caused by using chemical weapons on Iran during the war to name a few. Such message from Iranian leaders in conjunction with Khatami's proposal of a 'dialogue among civilizations' prompted a symbolic response from the White House. Former U.S. Secretary of State, Madelaine Albright, admitted taking part in the 1953 coup indicating perhaps the willingness of U.S. to re-establish diplomatic ties.²⁹⁷

The rationalist momentum was lost, nonetheless, since two events halted the potential rapprochement with the West. First, the internal power struggle within Iran where the people favoured the reformists, caused a conservative backlash. Second, the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 in the U.S., effectively changing the international political atmosphere. Reference to diplomacy with the West diminished in the speeches of Khamenei and was replaced with strengthening ties with Muslim countries to 'find solutions to the current disputes or conflicts in the Islamic world' especially after 2001.²⁹⁸ It was nonetheless still rationalist to talk about regional cooperation to find solutions to the problems in the Middle East. The supreme leader's focus, however, from the outset of the 'war on terror' has been kept within the Islamic sphere as he revived and intensified his rhetoric against the West to appeal more to the Muslims to strengthen ties for cooperation.

There is a great schism in Islam between the Shi'ites and the Sunni's and Khamenei's goal is to downplay it and unify the Islamic world through establishing and strengthening ties around its neighbourhood as a first step. For this to work, he needs to use the United States or the West as the scapegoat and after the 9/11 events, this strategy has been constantly practiced by Khamenei in his statements. The world was different after the attacks in the United States as the supreme leader described the division of the world among the Muslims, who are oppressed by the West and yet collectively accused of terrorism, and the West and their supporters. He effectively turned the schism in Islam into something bigger to that of the West and Islam in

²⁹⁷ Madelaine Albright, "Secretary of State Albright announces easing of U.S. trade ban on Iran (speech transcript)," March 17, 2000, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0003/17/se.01.html>

²⁹⁸ Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2004)"

attempts to unify the greatly divided Islamic Ummah against an external enemy that threatens to dismantle the Muslims. After 2001, he found a solid base for his claims as Muslims became more marginalized worldwide and the ‘war on terror’ brought about chaos in the region. Such negative developments in the Islamic world naturally feed the discourse of resentment and heightens the grievances against and hatred of the Muslims towards the West, manifesting the continuation of the anti-imperialist narrative, which began before the establishment of the Islamic Republic. To increase the effectiveness of his claims further, Khamenei tends to magnify the failures of the ‘war on terror’. This effectively segregates the world into two camps of oppressors, or the heretics, and the believers, the liberators, signalling the influence of the revolutionist tradition. He makes this division official in 2011 when he calls the U.S. and the West ‘the camp of the unfaith and arrogant powers’.²⁹⁹ On the camp of the faithful, though, he bestows a rationalist twist by promoting Islamic democracy and rationalist diplomacy exemplified by Iran, the liberator, demonstrating a moderate, peaceful façade appealing to the rest of the Muslim world. Hence, we see how the rationalist component of Khamenei’s foreign policy discourse has been reserved largely for the Muslim world, excluding the West. Whereas, the West is the enemy in a struggle for justice and morality framed in the revolutionist tradition.

5.2.2 Criminality of the Great Satan: breaking international law

The United States, ‘the Great Satan’, is the embodiment of evil and cruelty against mankind.³⁰⁰ It is depicted as a largely inhuman character, with claws and fangs.³⁰¹ This makes it capable of sheer animosity and horrendous acts of violence, which Khamenei condemns to be criminal due to the widespread suffering of those affected, usually the weaker states in the Islamic world. By characterizing the United States as such, Washington is stripped off all human values that follow moral principles invalidating America’s campaign for democracy and freedom with Khamenei branding the country and its allies ‘hypocritical Western powers’.³⁰² Without regard for moral values, just as realist principles dictate, in pursuit of national interests the United States commit atrocious crimes inflicting suffering on the Muslims, increasing particularly after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Prior to 2001, the U.S. animosity was restricted and directed only towards Iran for transforming into an Islamic Republic, the response of the Washington after the terror attacks, however, triggered an expansion of this animosity towards the rest of the Islamic world. The main ‘evil purpose’ of the United States was limited to provoking Iran

²⁹⁹ Khamenei, “Ayatollah Khamenei’s Message to Hajj Pilgrims (2011)”

³⁰⁰ Khamenei, “The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2006.12)”

³⁰¹ Khamenei, “Islamic Revolution Leader Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims (2009)”

³⁰² Khamenei, “Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)” Khamenei, “Ayatollah Khamenei’s Message to Hajj Pilgrims (2011)”

into a confrontation but as time progressed this purpose turned into an ‘evil power’ as Washington and its allies targeted a collective in its ‘war on terror’.³⁰³ The war exposed the ‘brutal and merciless nature of the powers’ looking at the catastrophic outcomes of foreign intervention in Iraq, Afghanistan and later Syria.³⁰⁴ It also simultaneously unleashed ‘tragic scenes here and there across the Islamic lands’.³⁰⁵ Thus, the demon has ‘bloodstained claws’ for many Muslims die as a result of the ‘war on terror’ and that civil wars such as that in Syria have broken out from it together with other ‘mischievous policies of America’ in the region.³⁰⁶ This characterization of the United States as the main antagonist in the Islamic world since the outset of the ‘war on terror’ once again discloses the influences of the realist tradition. The supreme leader identifies the moves made by the West as an attack on Islam based solely on Western interests, such as controlling the oil in the region.³⁰⁷ The realist understanding of international law is likewise reflected by the military intervention in Iraq since abiding by international law significantly impedes the freedom of states to pursue their interests whatever it may be. As such, disregard for and violation of international law is considered a criminal act when looking at it from a rationalist and even a revolutionist perspective where Khamenei has positioned Iran, earning the Islamic Republic the right to condemn such illegal and criminal acts of the United States.³⁰⁸ As admitted by former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, the military intervention in Iraq was in fact illegal as it was not approved by the Security Council and violates the United Nations Charter.³⁰⁹ Here we are seeing an interplay of the rationalist and revolutionist traditions challenging the West’s realist manoeuvres, giving us an insight into the worldview of Khamenei since it validates the existence of the three traditions in his political discourse. Khamenei’s condemnation of the activities of the United States, which were against international norms and defying international law exhibits his understanding of the rationalist tradition wherein sovereignty and non-intervention must be upheld by all countries and that nation-states must abide by international law. In contrast to the United States,

³⁰³ Khamenei, “Leader's message to this year's Haj pilgrims (2003)” Khamenei, “Leader's Hajj Message (2004)” Khamenei, “The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2006.12)” Khamenei, “Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)”

³⁰⁴ Khamenei, “Leader's Hajj Message (2004)” Khamenei, “The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2006.12)” Khamenei, “The message of H.E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2008)” Khamenei, “Leader's Hajj Message (2012)”

³⁰⁵ Khamenei, “Islamic Revolution Leader Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims (2009)”

³⁰⁶ Khamenei, “Islamic Revolution Leader Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims (2009)” Ali Khamenei, “Supreme Leader’s Hajj Message (2015),” accessed January 10, 2016, <http://leader.ir/en/content/13647/Supreme-Leader%E2%80%99s-Hajj-Message-2015>

³⁰⁷ Khamenei, “Leader's message to this year's Haj pilgrims (2003)”

³⁰⁸ Ahmadinejad uses the very same arguments in his statements.

³⁰⁹ Ewen MacAskill and Julian Borger, “Iraq war was illegal and breached UN charter, says Annan,” *The Guardian*, accessed March 3, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/sep/16/iraq.iraq>

the supreme leader has mentioned Iran's merit of never attacking another state indicating that the Islamic Republic has abided by international standards framed by the rationalist tradition whereas the United States had not.³¹⁰

The biggest crime of the United States, however, according to Khamenei rests on its support of the Zionist regime, the occupiers of the Palestinian territories who have imposed a cruel and inhumane regime of suffering on the Palestinian people for many decades.³¹¹ The issue of Palestine lies at the heart of the Muslim world and injustices committed by the Israeli government are frequently voiced out by Iran's political elites.³¹² The theme appeals to the rest of the Islamic world strengthening the Islamic Republic's claim of leadership. The Zionist 'usurper' and 'enemy' supported by the United States and the West is normally mentioned in conjunction with the suffering of the Palestinian people in most of Khamenei's statements, denoting a continuity of Ayatollah Khomeini's campaign of fighting for the oppressed. The campaign symbolizes the revolutionist strand enabling Iran to connect with the rest of the Muslim world despite its predominantly Shi'a background. This makes it an essential component of Khamenei's speeches and a point of consideration in Iran's foreign policy. The victimisation of the Palestinian people is constantly recapitulated in each speech to remind the Islamic world of the common pain that they share. 'Palestinian people continue to be the target of the most barbaric and brutal crimes of the Zionists. As a consequence of the 'occupation of their land' they are being massacred, tortured, humiliated, with their property being pillaged and their houses demolished' despite their 'the inalienable rights'.³¹³ With a historical record of the Great Satan supporting the 'brutal' Zionist regime and the 'war on terror' ongoing, Khamenei expands the victimisation of Muslims, formerly restricted to Palestine, to include Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria claiming such plots are a joint project of the United States and Israel.³¹⁴ While the American and Zionist regimes are moving based on the dictates of the realist tradition, destroying and making the Muslims in the region suffer, the Islamic Republic of Iran capitalizes on the revolutionist tradition as a force to defeat the enemies in the supreme leaders political discourse. The very notion of wanting to defeat the enemy though, has a very realist

³¹⁰ Khamenei, "Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)"

³¹¹ Khamenei, "Imam Khamene'i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)" Khamenei, "Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)"

³¹² Khamenei, "Imam Khamene'i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)"

³¹³ Khamenei, "Leader's message to this year's Haj pilgrims (2003)" Khamenei, "Message of His Eminence Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Addressed to the Haj Pilgrims of the Holy Mecca (2002)"

³¹⁴ Khamenei, "Message of His Eminence Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Addressed to the Haj Pilgrims of the Holy Mecca (2002)" Khamenei, "The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2006.12)"

aspect to it as we see below since Khamenei propagates the consolidation of power within Islam. Extending the suffering of the oppressed Palestinians to the Iraqis, Afghanis and Syrians is meant to incite the feeling of solidarity within the Islamic world as the anguish of the ‘war on terror’ has now spread out throughout the entire region. The main reason for all these sufferings is attributed to the powerful evil enemies, i.e. the United States and its main ally in the region, the Zionist regime, but another part is attributed to the weak and subservient governments of some Muslim countries, a phenomenon Khamenei calls ‘postmodern colonialism’.³¹⁵

Khamenei’s concern is to keep the momentum and the feeling of resentment and the anti-imperialist discourse alive to propagate the consolidation of the Islamic power desperately needed to fight the forces of darkness and end the pain of the Muslims. Iran of course, in the supreme leader’s perspective, is a very strong Muslim country, as he describes, in comparison to many other Muslim states since 1979. The Revolution rid Tehran of all the influences of the devil, thereby making the officials of Islamic Republic independent of Western influence unlike the weak government of some countries in the Islamic world. Therefore, accordingly, with such independence from evil Western politics, Iran is the appropriate leader and the most suitable liberator of the Islamic world with valuable experiences of keeping the Great Satan at bay. Until 2016 Khamenei has been silent on the subject, indirectly implying that since countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran’s main rival in the region, have ties with the United States, they are more susceptible to implement Western interests and hence are not suited to lead the Islamic Ummah. Yet after the Mina stampede incident in 2015, Khamenei has been more vocal and directly associated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to be allies of the US and the Zionists, effectively shaming them in his Hajj speech.³¹⁶ Such tragedies feed on Iran’s desire to prove itself as the right leader who is reliable, strong and secure and does not break international law to pursue its own interests, unlike the US, Zionist regime and now Saudi Arabia, causing suffering to the people of the region. Khamenei wants to show that in contrast to these countries, Iran is a rationalist actor and would not commit such criminal acts and uphold the rationalist

³¹⁵ Khamenei, “Imam Khamene'i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)” Khamenei, “Message of Ayatollah al-Odhma Khamenei on the auspicious occasion of Hajj (1998)” Khamenei, “Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)” Khamenei, “Message to the Hajj prigrims of the Muslim Ummah (2000)” Khamenei, “Leader's Hajj Message (2001)” Khamenei, “The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2005)” Khamenei, “Supreme Leader’s Hajj Message (2015)”

³¹⁶ Ali Khamenei, “Imam Khamenei's Hajj Message (2016),” accessed December 17, 2016, <http://english.khamenei.ir/print/4121/Hajj-hijacked-by-oppressors-Muslims-should-reconsider-management>

international norms of sovereignty, non-intervention and the institutions of diplomacy and international law.

5.2.3 Iran's leadership ambition

In the face of such cruelty and suffering in the Islamic world from the American-led 'war on terror,' the only way is to turn to Islam and use it as a force to end all the troubles of the Muslims, the way Iran had rid itself of all evils through an Islamic revolution is one of the key points of Khamenei's annual statements at the Hajj. By accentuating the suffering of the people in the region particularly due to the 'war on terror' and its failures, Khamenei hopes to perpetually incite hatred in the Islamic world towards the enemy, the Great Satan, and strengthen the anti-imperialist discourse already popular in the region, which may be quite useful for foreign policy purposes as it enhances the image of Iran. It also serves Iran's main realist goal of survival and security in the region. If the United States is shown to be the devil, with animal-like features, devoid of morality, allowing them to commit such atrocities and inflict such pain on the Muslims, then the Islamic Republic could be appropriately juxtaposed to shine as the human, moral agent of God meant to save the Islamic world. In fact, in 2010, Khamenei makes a statement directly related to this: 'There is no 'right thing' (ma'ruf) more significant than rescuing nations from the satanic claws of the global Arrogance, and there is no 'wrong thing' (munkar) uglier than dependence on the Arrogant and servitude to them'.³¹⁷

Although the talk on unity of the Islamic world has existed prior to 2001, the pain of the military interventions in the region has propelled it to a whole new level. Khamenei had believed in the day when the 'entire Muslim Ummah with millions of hearts in one body, rise up in unity against all these atrocities', long before the beginning of the Arab Uprisings in 2010.³¹⁸ Here we are seeing the revolutionist tradition at play where unity and solidarity among Muslims is being endorsed as an antidote to all the suffering in the Islamic world. He sees all the pain as a malady infecting the entire Muslim world, originating from the West, a sickness which has been left untreated and the only cure lies in the unity of the Islamic Ummah to fight the disease. This unity and solidarity is directed towards a powerful enemy – the United States, the Great Satan, and its allies – giving it a realist twist since it includes repulsion with a tone of revenge as well as a repetitive discussion of the material capabilities and resources of the unified Islamic Ummah. Unity and solidarity, however, also takes a more rationalist form with cooperation and negotiations to settle issues and fix problems, usually restricted to the Islamic world, but clearly

³¹⁷ Khamenei, "Imam Khamenei's Message to Hajj Pilgrims (2010)"

³¹⁸ Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2004)"

the supreme leader anchors it in a more revolutionist – realist axis, with the revolutionist edge turning it into an Islamic cosmopolitanist revolutionist vision showing the interplay of the three traditions.

Khamenei argues that the Islamic world has vast amounts of resources at its disposal, with natural wealth, geopolitical significance and a big population, but ‘lacks the power and prestige on the international arena’ indicating the realist dimension of the call for unity.³¹⁹ Calculating the material capabilities can be interpreted from a purely realist perspective as it conveys the message of power and survival, the two main components of the realist tradition. Statements referring to the capabilities of the Islamic world transforms the revolutionist project of uniting the Islamic Ummah into a purely realist enterprise. Nevertheless, the revolutionist project is endorsed with Khamenei insisting that the ‘valuable resources are available everywhere to help us establish a new situation; the necessary means and motivation for changing this situation exist in all Islamic countries’, including spiritual resources rooted in the Islamic faith.³²⁰ Hence, he sees unity as a vital game-changer on the stage of international politics as it challenges the international system once it solidifies. Prior to the Arab Uprisings, Khamenei had envisioned the ‘rise of the united Islamic power in the arena of global politics’, highlighting the realist intention behind the revolutionist approach.³²¹

Earlier I mentioned that Iran’s foreign policy is aimed at searching for allies in the region. Before the terror attacks in 2001, Iran was largely isolated and its material capabilities were no match to the enemy, the Great Satan, and so to enhance its own national capacity and security through the religious channels, discussing the potential of a unified Islamic world is vital. However, since Saddam was overthrown through the U.S. military intervention, Iraq became an ally of Tehran automatically expanding Tehran’s leverage as well as ambitions in the region. Iraq, an Arab state, playing a vital role in the history of the Middle East, was now Iran’s friend and if Iran’s influence works on one Arab state, for Khamenei, it can work on the rest of the Islamic countries bolstering the Islamic Republic’s ambition of attaining the leadership of the Islamic Ummah. For Iran to gain the leadership, nevertheless, it must first advocate the unity of the harshly divided Islamic world suffering from sectarian violence, which of course is conveniently blamed on the meddling of the United States. After all, the Great Satan is the root

³¹⁹ Khamenei, “Imam Khamene'i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)” Khamenei, “Leader's Hajj Message (2004)”

³²⁰ Khamenei, “Message to the Hajj pilgrims of the Muslim Ummah (2000)” ; Khamenei, “Message of Ayatollah al-Odhma Khamenei on the auspicious occasion of Hajj (1998)”

³²¹ Ali Khamenei, “Message of Ayatollah al-Odhma Khamenei on the auspicious occasion of Hajj (1998)”

cause of all the suffering in the Muslim world and there is a rich historical anti-imperialist discourse Khamenei can draw from and simply build-up on to charm the Muslim audience into his cause.

5.3 The Dawn of an Islamic Awakening and revolutionism

When discussing Islam, the idea of one unified organism under the banner of a ‘nation’ is often mentioned by the supreme leader suggesting the existence of a ‘huge Islamic nation’.³²² This Islamic nation transcends state boundaries and encompasses the entire Islamic world, unifying it into one ‘Islamic Ummah’ with the Hajj being the statement of their identity.³²³ Here we see an important tenet of the revolutionist tradition being exhibited wherein mankind is perceived to belong to one unified entity, in this case though, it is restricted to Islam. The revolutionist tradition, or the Kantian tradition, have also expressed such unity in the name of religion, albeit using Christianity as it was the doctrine that the Western world was familiar with during the inception of the revolutionist tradition in the West. Thus, Islamic unity being put forward by Khamenei to be the ultimate goal should be seen along the same lines since he attempts to construct (or re-construct) a theological cosmopolitanism. He occasionally mentions the reclaiming the glory of Islam lost to the West indicating believing such had existed.³²⁴ Nonetheless, the factuality of the epic of a glorious unified Islamic Ummah existing in the past prior to the rise of the West which Khamenei tries to connect within his speeches remains questionable.³²⁵ His imparting of the notion of a unified entity, that can be constructed, or reconstructed if it indeed had existed in the past, conveys a starkly revolutionist message despite the underlying realist intentions pointed out earlier. In fact, Khamenei calls it a ‘New Islamic Civilization’ and it solidifies the vision he had set out in all his speeches in unifying the Islamic Ummah.³²⁶

By identifying the power of Islam and setting Iran as the prime example of a country saved by the religion, Khamenei invites other Muslim states to have a similar revolution for Islam to

³²² Khamenei, “Imam Khamene’i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)”

³²³ Khamenei, “The message of H.E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2008)” Ali Khamenei, “Leader's Hajj Message (2006.01),” accessed May 23, 2015, <http://leader.ir/en/content/3586/Ayatollah-Khamenei:the-cardinal-purpose-of-hajj-is-to-show-the-united-identity-of-the-Muslim-ummah>

³²⁴ Khamenei, “Message of Ayatollah al-Odhma Khamenei on the auspicious occasion of Hajj (1998)” Khamenei, “Leader's Hajj Message (2001)” Khamenei, “The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2005)” Ali Khamenei, “The message of H. E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2007),” accessed May 23, 2015, <http://leader.ir/en/content/3657/The-message-of-H.-E.-Ayatullah-Khamenei-to-the-Hajj-pilgrims-from-the-whole-world>

³²⁵ Khamenei, “The message of H.E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2008)”

³²⁶ Ibid.

prevail in the political systems of the countries suffering from Western imperialism. Khamenei had, in effect, continued the legacy of Ayatollah Khomeini not only in terms of maintaining and building up on the same narratives and discourses but also in terms of exporting the Islamic Revolution. He had called for Muslims to revolt against the West and the corrupt governments the United States have controlled in the region persistently. Khamenei had little anticipation of the occurrence of the Arab Uprisings, which ironically, happened not long after Iran's own green revolution in 2009, a point he does not mention. For the very reason of anticipating such a movement, the Arab Uprisings or the Arab Spring became appropriated with the term Islamic Awakening Khamenei has long called for. The branding of the movement as the long-awaited Islamic Awakening reflects Iran's narcissism. Khamenei relates the movement directly with the Islamic Revolution of 1979 beginning with the conversion of Iraq to an ally and he strongly believes, or at least seems to be convinced of in his speeches, that it is just the beginning.³²⁷ The supreme leader has been attempting to transform the image Iran from being a menace in the region to a hero of Islam insisting the Islamic Revolution to belong to all Muslims and countries can benefit from it.³²⁸

The Islamic Republic claims to own the Islamic Awakening or Reawakening movements, a point prominent in Khamenei's Hajj statements. To showcase Iran's leadership potential, he claims that Iran accelerated such movements and thereby increasing Tehran's influence in the Islamic world.³²⁹ Nonetheless, prior to the 'war on terror' and the Arab Uprisings, Khamenei focused more on convincing the Muslims to change their situation to liberate themselves from the West. This stems from the anti-imperialist narrative: 'valuable resources are available everywhere to help us establish a new situation; the necessary means and motivation for changing this situation exist in all Islamic countries'.³³⁰ His statement accompanies the emphasis on the material capabilities highlighting the collective potential of the Muslims to challenge the Western-dominated system. In turn, it reflects the realist dimension as discussed earlier, wherein the supreme leader adds a spiritual, revolutionist vision to appeal to a wider audience in the Islamic world. In conjunction with these sentiments of Islamic revivalism, which began in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Khamenei gives special attention to the Muslim

³²⁷ Khamenei, "The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2006.12)"

Khamenei, "The message of H.E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2008)"

³²⁸ Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2001)" Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2004)"

³²⁹ Khamenei, "Message of Ayatollah al-Odhma Khamenei on the auspicious occasion of Hajj (1998)"

Khamenei, "Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)" Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2001)"

Khamenei, "The message of H. E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2007)"

³³⁰ Khamenei, "Message to the Hajj prigrims of the Muslim Ummah (2000)"

youth, who are portrayed to be at the centre of such a movement, perhaps due to the demographic realities on the ground. He insists that they should not be culturally dominated by Western ideas to avoid ‘moral degradation’, so their Islamic zeal and vigour can be kept intact to go marching for the victory of Islam.³³¹ Khamenei points out that ‘the youth aspire for the restitution of the grandeur and glory of the Islamic Ummah’ making Islamic Awakening movement spread across the Muslim world ‘exposing the bullying face of the domineering powers’.³³² Hence, to restore the greatness of the Islamic Ummah, a struggle led by the youth against the ruthless dominant powers of the international system is necessary, likewise retrieving their an identity lost to the West.³³³ He says such a struggle is evident in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan.³³⁴ Although the fate of the latter two are tightly knit with the ‘war on terror’, in Palestine and Lebanon, Iran supports the Hezbollah’s fight against the Zionist regime demonstrating the properties of the realist struggle concealed through the revolutionist Islamic vision.

Ironically, just a few weeks before the Arab Uprising began in Tunisia, the supreme leader boasted about the Islamic Awakening’s promise of a bright future expanding from Iran to the region, making the Islamic Republic the ‘vanguard of the movement’.³³⁵ By 2011, after more Muslim countries experienced the Uprisings, Khamenei made clear there were two opposing camps, one is the faithful Islamic camp of Muslim nations, which have started the Awakening process, and the other is the ‘camp of the unfaith’ composed mainly of those who still cling to the West.³³⁶ Whereas the message of such a division was quite subtle and discussed within the context of the anti-imperialist narrative before the Uprisings in the Islamic World, from the time when more countries followed Tunisia’s example, he insisted on this clear-cut segregation of the world for in his view, Iran was no longer alone. This reflects Iran’s narcissism as it sees its own Islamic Revolution being replicated in the Muslim world, effectively turning it into a more revolutionist business since for him as it then transcended one state, i.e. the Islamic Republic, and expanded into others. Hence, the anti-imperialist struggle could be given a fresh face through the Uprisings and neatly dividing the world into two opposite poles of good and

³³¹ Khamenei, “Full text of leader's message to this year's hajj (1999)” Khamenei, “Message to the Hajj pilgrims of the Muslim Ummah (2000)” Khamenei, “Islamic Revolution Leader Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims (2009)”

³³² Khamenei, “The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2005)”

Khamenei, “The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2006.12)”

³³³ Khamenei, “The message of H.E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2008)”

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Khamenei, “Imam Khamenei's Message to Hajj Pilgrims (2010)”

³³⁶ Khamenei, “Ayatollah Khamenei’s Message to Hajj Pilgrims (2011)”

evil, just as the revolutionist tradition dictates. He urges the Muslims to unite and turn the Islamic world into a 'powerful pole' to avoid the sinister plots and dangers from the evil powers that will try to undermine the Islamic Awakening movements saying that 'faithful men and women throughout the Islamic world, particularly in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya should make the most of this opportunity for the formation of an international Islamic power block'.³³⁷ He directly invites Egypt, Tunisia and Libya to join Iran's cause of uniting the Islamic Ummah, and allowing Tehran to lead it, since their uprisings have followed Iran's example. In the supreme leader's logic, the events in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya were an exact recapitulation of the events of 1979 in Iran since these countries overthrew despotic and corrupt governments allied with the United States like the Pahlavi monarchy in Iran. Iran's realist ambitions at this point of the Arab Uprisings, emboldened previously by the transformation of Iraq to friend and the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan, were almost within reach and had Egypt, Tunisia and Libya heeded to Khamenei's invitation, the Islamic Republic would then have been a step closer to the leadership of the Islamic Ummah. A year on, in 2012, developments may not have been as what Khamenei had expected since he remarks that missing the 'great opportunity and failing to use' the Islamic Awakening movements 'to reform the Islamic Ummah are a great loss for Muslims'.³³⁸ This makes us question whether the reformation is meant for the benefit of Iran considering the realist aspirations we have discussed or for the advantage of the Islamic Ummah as a call to ease sectarian tension erupting almost at the same time when Iran's ambitions flourished, which has been devastating the Islamic world up to the time of writing. Either answer downplays rationalism altogether and highlights the realist-revolutionist axis of Khamenei's Iranian foreign policy discourse.

5.3.1 A United Islamic Front

Unity of the Muslims is a key message, regardless at this point whether they follow or join Iran, since the Islamic world can only reach its potential by being together and joining their resources. Not only will Muslim unity bring material strength but also justice and prosperity and so brotherhood, solidarity and equality is constantly promulgated to achieve this utopian Islamic society ruled by the tenets of political Islam. If political Islam is to be utilized, then moral and spiritual values come to the fore. When Muslims perceive the world dominated by the West as the entire opposite of Islamic teachings, then Muslim countries need to save themselves from it

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2012)"

since the dire situations in their countries were specifically caused by foreign intervention.³³⁹ Anti-imperialist discourse once again surfaces since all evil and suffering is attributed to the West, specifically the United States. In fact, Khamenei sees the sectarianism plaguing the Islamic world to be another plot of the United States and its Western allies to stop the unification of the Islamic Ummah, a topic I tackle below. The ‘united Islamic power’ was already introduced by Khamenei in 1999 but only years later does he express it clearly:

‘We call on all Muslims to unite. This unity is neither directed against the Christians nor against followers of any other religion or creed. It is in fact a call for resistance to aggressors, occupiers and war-mongers. It is a call for carrying out the norms of ethics and spirituality, for the revival of rationality and Islamic justice, for scientific and economic progress and for the restitution of Islamic honour’.³⁴⁰

‘Muslim nations led by their political and religious authorities, intellectuals and national leaders need to form a united Islamic front against this invading enemy with full strength. They need to muster all the elements of power within themselves and properly strengthen the Muslim Ummah’.³⁴¹

Events following the 9/11 terror attacks emboldened this call for unity in the context of the ‘war on terror’ for Muslims began to feel they were being targeted by the West. Anti-Muslim sentiments in tandem with technological advances, i.e. widespread use of the internet, and the dominance of Western media spread like wildfire across the globe. Khamenei utilized it in favour of his vision of uniting the Islamic Ummah since the chain of events from 2001 caused more chaos and suffering in addition to what had already existed in the Islamic world, with the Palestine issue not being resolved and the Bosnian war being initially ignored by the West in the 90s. Such tragedies plus the war on terror and the rise of anti-Islam sentiments in the West could only awaken the sense of solidarity and unity among the Muslims if framed in a way where the whole is under attack by the United States and the West. In this context, hopes of a brighter future through the establishment of a unified Islamic Ummah may have a certain appeal since Khamenei promised it would end the suffering and pain in the Islamic world. The supreme leader has envisioned the creation of a ‘New Islamic Civilization’ the reconstruction of which was well underway before the Islamic Awakening movements since Islam became victorious in the Islamic Republic and led Iran to this bright future.³⁴² He strongly believes that ‘...the sole means of deliverance from the oppression and guile of the United States and other Western hubristic powers is to establish a global balance of power conducive to their interests’, the

³³⁹ Khamenei, “Leader's Hajj Message (2004)” Khamenei, “The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2005)”

³⁴⁰ Khamenei, “The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2005)”

³⁴¹ Khamenei, “The message of H. E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2007)”

³⁴² Khamenei, “The message of H.E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2008)”

formation of a strong 'international Islamic block' is the only way.³⁴³ Such statements exhibit the starkly realist aspect of Khamenei's political discourse for the only way he sees Iran, and the Islamic world, can find deliverance from all the suffering caused by the West is through consolidating the power of Islam through uniting Muslim countries, turning it into a force, an army to fight evil. However, the reconstruction of Khamenei's Koranic Islamic Ummah may or may not have factually existed before the rise to global dominance of Western powers since tensions and wars among different empires coming from different Islamic sects were not unusual but discovering the truth is a task better left to the historians.

What is of interest here is the very idea of a unit, an Islamic nation progressive as much as it was materially and morally powerful, which Khamenei wants to endorse for the Muslim world to find appealing as a response to terrible circumstances caused the West. The moral dimension bestows a revolutionist touch to this idea, while the Islamic cosmopolitan edge is being utilized. Khamenei describes the united Islamic Ummah to be constituted by 'peoples of diverse nationalities, races, traditions and cultures and it is indeed a symbol of coherence, bravery, awakening and self-awareness'.³⁴⁴ It is a description consisting of cosmopolitan elements such as equality and tolerance boiling down to justice within the Islamic world. It is quite a utopian outlook far from reality but meant to entice the Muslim public. This is the moral dimension of the united Islamic Ummah, with the promise of a utopian Islamic society, underlining Khamenei's resort to the revolutionist tradition as he repeatedly mentions justice, brotherhood and equality in most of his speeches.

Only when the spirit of unity and solidarity is harnessed can the Islamic front be a potent force to face the darkness and evil of this world, mainly characterized by the antagonists, the United States and its allies. Khamenei's speeches suggest he is aiming for a situation resembling the Cold War between the U.S. and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.). For him Iran leads a united Islamic front similar to how Russia led the Communist Bloc against the United States. After all, the struggle against the West is ideological as much as it is political and economic and he does make mention of it briefly saying that: 'With the decline of certain ideologies such as Marxism or Socialism, and with the unveiling of the real nature of western liberal democracy founded on the bases of deceptions and hypocrisy, Islam has now emerged as the sole and ideal set of thoughts' and the only path of deliverance from the injustices

³⁴³ Khamenei, "Ayatollah Khamenei's Message to Hajj Pilgrims (2011)"

³⁴⁴ Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2004)"

experienced by the Muslims.³⁴⁵ Yet no matter how grand and international his ambition is for the Islamic Ummah to be a great force challenging the West, his vision of a Cold War remains very regional resting with Iran's main rival, Saudi Arabia. The supreme leader, nonetheless, does not falter and carries on at every opportunity to spread his vision of unity and the most ideal place for experiencing and advocating unity is at the Hajj. Thus, we see Khamenei's main message living on in his Hajj statements: follow us, join us and let us fight the devil.

5.3.2 *The Hajj as Training Grounds*

The Hajj is one of the few – if not the only – occasion when all Muslims from different sects come together, a ray of hope in a region that suffers from violence and sectarianism. It is seen as 'a high platform for the growth of awakening of the Muslim Ummah', it is a 'great camp' and 'a drill for the advancement of the solidarity of the Islamic Ummah' where Muslims can learn the lessons of solidarity, brotherhood and unity against oppressors.³⁴⁶ It does not take long for the unity of the Hajj to be politicized by Khamenei transforming the holy rituals into real-life notions of struggle against the evil West as he said the Hajj to be 'a collective repudiation of the devils of all kinds, human and demonic'.³⁴⁷ Hence, the Hajj is the optimal location to remind Muslims of their problems, both personal and social, and to incite hatred against the Great Satan which is at the very root of the problem of the Islamic world. This effectively turns a very personal journey, since the Hajj is a vital obligation of all Muslims, into a very political one for Khamenei's means to stir feelings in hopes of turning them into action. The supreme leader draws on values such as equality by pointing to the idea of everyone wearing simple white clothes, also part of the tradition, leaving all material valuables behind to do the rituals, making the individual unanimous with the whole with no boundaries of colour, race, age and social disposition. Equality also means doing the exact same rituals as the rest, with no exceptions. Among others though, one ritual is highly politicized in Khamenei's speeches: the stoning of the symbol of Satan. It is a re-enactment of Prophet Abraham's actions wherein he threw pebbles at three pillars representing the three devils of temptation.

The stoning of the symbol of Satan has a special place in the Hajj and in Iran's foreign policy as conveyed by Khamenei's statements. The supreme leader connects the stoning of the symbol of Satan with the stoning of the enemy, i.e. the United States or the Great Satan and its allies.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Khamenei, "Imam Khamene'i's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)" Khamenei, "Message of His Eminence Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Addressed to the Haj Pilgrims of the Holy Mecca (2002)" Khamenei, "The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2005)"

³⁴⁷ Khamenei, "The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2005)"

Personal frustrations caused by the devil could then find an expression through stoning the symbol of Satan and when the personal frustration can be traced to sufferings caused by the West, as the pilgrims are reminded of constantly by Khamenei, it becomes political. The collective stoning of the symbol of Satan further enhances the feeling of brotherhood and unity since pilgrims do it together, venting out their frustration on such a symbol. The supreme leader does not stop short of reminding the Hajj participants of the enemy, where knowing the enemy is one of the two main lessons of the Hajj, the first being brotherhood.³⁴⁸ In addition, Khamenei also calls attention to the responsibility of Muslims to stone the symbol of Satan, the enemy, at the Hajj as it is a way to seek justice. If the symbol of Satan is the United States and stoning is the Islamic Awakening, then Muslims are obliged by their faith to join the figurative stoning of the Great Satan by taking part in the Islamic Awakening as means to seek justice for all the wrongs inflicted on the Islamic world affecting all Muslims. As such, the revolutionist tradition finds its expression in Khamenei's statements as the individual motivations of the pilgrim are synced with the larger political agenda that he is endorsing. Iran, true to its religious obligations, beat the enemy, which is the Great Satan, through the Islamic Revolution and this successful action can be found on a microscale version in the ritual of stoning the symbol of Satan during the Hajj. If enough pilgrims heed to the supreme leader's call, then Satan will be defeated by the powerful Islamic Ummah. The Hajj after all is for Khamenei the training grounds for a full-blown confrontation with the evil West and it symbolizes a vision of the ideal Islamic society where all Muslims are equal, are brothers and are unified in their fight against evil, a picture defying the reality of a divided Islamic world with violence spreading through sectarianism.³⁴⁹

The ritual of stoning Satan brings a sense of justice as it is an appropriate punishment for those who commit crimes against Islam. If Iran's way of stoning the symbol of Satan is by having an Islamic revolution, then forming a united Islamic front and establishing a 'New Islamic Civilization' will punish the criminal that is the West. With all the atrocities committed by the United States and the West, from the suffering of the Palestinians due to their support of the Zionist regime to the ongoing civil war in Syria, solidarity among the Muslims is easily sparked. Khamenei anticipates solidarity to encourage unity seen at the Hajj through amplifying the grievances of the Muslims against the West and combining it with the anti-imperialist narrative. He seems convinced the unity of the Islamic Ummah, as slowly being manifested by the Islamic Awakening movements in the Muslim world, will greatly anger and punish the West for it curbs

³⁴⁸ Ali Khamenei, "Supreme Leader's Hajj Message (2013)," accessed May 23, 2015, <http://www.leader.ir/en/content/11187/Supreme-Leader's-Hajj-Message>

³⁴⁹ Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2012)" Khamenei, "Supreme Leader's Hajj Message (2013)"

their influence. Khamenei's reasoning stems from the experience of the United States' enmity towards the Islamic Republic since its establishment in 1979 when Islam triumphed over its imperialistic goals. Since he is encouraging the entire Islamic world to follow suit and unite to form a powerful Islamic front, he expects the enmity of the Great Satan to reach great heights, which is demonstrated by their evil plots.

Thus, we see how Iran's foreign policy from Khamenei's discourses is dictated by tenets of the revolutionist and realist traditions. It is realism with a revolutionist face. Imagine the scenario of stoning the symbol of Satan in front of you where millions of people wearing white gowns are throwing stones. On the side of the people, the revolutionist tradition stands in all its grandeur, boasting morality, equality, brotherhood, solidarity and unity and on the side of the symbol is everything immoral, it is the epitome of inequality, conflict, discord and disunity, a very realist camp while the very ritual of stoning represents justice and Islam's triumph over Satan. This element of justice is the binding force that brings revolutionism and realism together as the Muslims suffered injustices as a result of the West's immorality. For the supreme leader, the only way of vindication is to form a united front, transcending geographical nation-state boundaries and is anchored in the dogma of revolutionism with Islam being the ideological weapon of choice. What Khamenei hopes to achieve internationally is very much like his predecessor's Ayatollah Khomeini although the latter was successful only at the national level effectively overthrowing the Pahlavi regime. Khomeini drew on a rich legacy of Islam and Shi'a political thought as his knowledge base enabling him to succeed over the long established monarchical system in Iran.³⁵⁰ Khomeini did try to export the revolution, nevertheless, but was rather unsuccessful and it is Khamenei who is now trying to pick up where his predecessor had left since the political tide in the Middle East seems to turn into Iran's favour, reviving the revolutionist project.

5.3.3 The Attack of the West

The more Islam prospered and eventually dominated the entire system in Iran, the more the enmity of the United States grew over time against the Islamic Republic as the 'first flagbearer of the victory of the Islamic Awakening'.³⁵¹ In Khamenei's perspective, the Great Satan has an issue against Islam and with the Islamic Awakening movements spread across the Muslim world, in Palestine, Lebanon and later in Iraq, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, the American regime is devastated for they know 'how a dynamic "political Islam" can seriously jeopardize their

³⁵⁰ Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, 195

³⁵¹ Khamenei, "The message of H. E. Ayatollah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2007)"

interests'.³⁵² The devastation stems from the idea of losing control and power over important Islamic countries with vast amounts of resources that can be plundered for their own advantage, a primary concern of the realist aiming only to survive in the international system. Here we have Khamenei elaborating on a very realist perception of the events taking place throughout the Islamic world, which he directly links with the United States and the West. He stresses that:

‘...obviously world powers with all their material resources and destructive forces, will never easily succumb’.³⁵³

‘They foresee that if they fail to control or suppress this Islamic awakening in the next few years with political and economic measures, through propaganda, and as the last resort through military aggression, all their plans for an absolute global hegemony and control of the most vital oil and gas resources, which make the sole powerhouse of their industrial machinery and cause of their material edge over the rest of humanity will come to nothing’.³⁵⁴

Khamenei’s realist understanding of the West’s involvement in the region is very fixated on the ‘international domination and hegemony’ of the United States, implying a power struggle that could only be won through uniting the Islamic Ummah, initially drawing from revolutionist precepts.³⁵⁵ As such, the aim of creating a new Cold War based on the unification of the good forces of the Islamic Ummah against the evil forces of the West is explicated through an amplification of the threat posed by those against Islam, specifically referring to the United States.

Khamenei provides the audience with a glimpse of the intentions of the Great Satan in stopping the Islamic Awakening for the movement can consolidate vast amounts of resources in the hands of its rightful owners in the Islamic world. Since he understands realism and the realist intentions of the enemy, it is fathomable his worldview prompts him to likewise design Iran’s foreign policy in realist terms, making the unification of the Islamic Ummah a priority since it is the only source of power he could draw upon to challenge the United States. On the evil U.S. camp, strategies of implementing certain plots to mitigate the spread of the Islamic awakening and the realization of a powerful united Islamic Ummah, according to the supreme leader, is a logical move. For Khamenei, Islamic unity undermines Western dominance in the Islamic world for they lose an important power source, demonstrating how permeating the realist tradition is in his political discourse. He argues that plots are meant to create disunity and chaos

³⁵² Khamenei, “Leader's Hajj Message (2004)”

³⁵³ Khamenei, “Leader's message to this year's Haj pilgrims (2003)”

³⁵⁴ Khamenei, “The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2005)”

³⁵⁵ Khamenei, “Leader's Hajj Message (2006.01)” Khamenei, “The message of H. E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2007)”

and as such the United States and its allies are heightening their propaganda and psychological warfare against Iran, who is leading the Awakening movements, and they are fuelling sectarianism as well as supporting takfirism.³⁵⁶ The supreme leader claims dangers in the Islamic world are increasing as the Great Satan threatens the long-awaited fulfilment of the formation of one 'great Islamic nation', the powerful international united Islamic front, which is an additional cause for concern apart from the already scathing issues already plaguing the Muslim world. He says Islam is the ultimate fortress against imperialism and this fortress has constantly been attacked and these attacks are intensifying since the united Islamic front is already taking shape.

Among the plots to hamper the emerging unification of the Islamic Ummah, Khamenei stresses, the West, led by the U.S., is creating disunity, fuelling Sunni-Shi'a sectarianist conflicts.³⁵⁷ He elaborates the plans of the West further saying they want:

'to create discord among Muslim sects, to incite sectarian prejudices, to bring about pseudo-confrontations between the Sunnis and the Shi'ah, to create disunity between Islamic states and to aggravate their differences, to change them into hostility and unsolvable conflicts, its employment of intelligence and espionage outfits to propagate corruption and immorality amongst the youth, all these are nervous and bewildered responses to the steady and firm advances of the Islamic Ummah towards awakening'.³⁵⁸

By blaming sectarianist tensions on the West, Khamenei intends to instigate a kind of 'rally round the flag' effect for the Muslims to join forces and unite to form the united Islamic force, that the enemy must reckon with. In creating discord, the United States effectively turns all the Muslim states into victims, including Iran, which has been targeted by false propaganda. To this end, not only does Khamenei accuse the United States and its allies of fuelling sectarianism but also propagating Iranophobia as the idea of a Shi'a revival, or even a Shi'a Crescent forming, since the fall of Saddam became quite prominent in the media.³⁵⁹ Nevertheless, it is logical to argue with Khamenei seeing the actions of the West through a purely realist perspective, he is very likely to hold similar aspirations of Iran's domination and hegemony of the region, if not the entire Islamic world, which is not far from the claims the media has been making although he has been very careful in wrapping his revolutionist vision on it. The revolutionist asset he maintains is the most appealing way he can endorse Iran's capacity for

³⁵⁶ Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2001)" Khamenei, "The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2005)" Khamenei, "Supreme Leader's Hajj Message (2013)"

³⁵⁷ Khamenei, "The Message of H. E. Imam Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2005)" Khamenei, "The message of H. E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2007)" Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2012)"

³⁵⁸ Khamenei, "Imam Khamenei's Message to Hajj Pilgrims (2010)"

³⁵⁹ Khamenei, "The message of H. E. Ayatullah Khamenei to the Hajj pilgrims from the whole world (2007)"

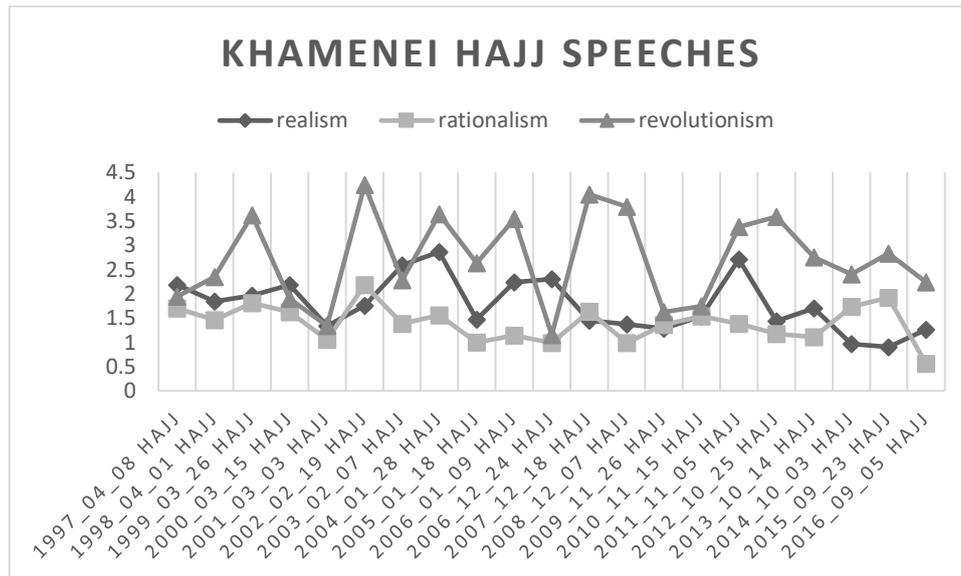
leadership by citing Iran's previous experiences in the hands of the West as if to say: 'been there, done that'.

In the face of such threats and plots meant to impede the establishment of a unified Islamic Ummah, Khamenei demands the Muslims to be vigilant and prepared, urging the Islamic world to do something together in the same way as all Muslims do the obligatory rituals during the Hajj. As a matter of fact, he points out in his speeches that ensuring the continuity of the Islamic Awakening movements is a vital obligation of all Muslims since it needs to thrive to achieve the goal of uniting the Islamic world to restore the unitary Islamic Ummah into its rightful place. Nevertheless, the supreme leader urges those who heeded to the call of an Islamic awakening to be cautious in differentiating pure 'Mohammedan Islam' and 'American Islam', claiming the latter is involved in feeding the fire of sectarianism as well as allying themselves with the enemies of Islam, whereas pure Islam is about 'tolerance and spirituality...piety and democracy'.³⁶⁰ Thus, Muslims must be vigilant, know the enemy and follow the right kind of Islam, the Islam, which Iran is practicing of course.

5.4 Conclusion

The supreme leader's realist worldview manifests itself in the significance of classifying the actions of the United States as hegemonic, evil and immoral. The United States and its Western allies are characterized to be pure realists with the goal of dominating and expanding its influence in the Muslim world. This shows that Khamenei is fully aware of the capabilities of Washington and explicitly sees the threat it poses to Iran's survival in the region. Hence, Iran should follow a fundamentally realist foreign policy powered by a revolutionist vision that he relentlessly propagates to other Islamic countries to achieve Iran's realist goal of survival. However, since countries of the Middle East are wary of Iran's actions, mistrust is high and Khamenei's campaign usually falls on deaf ears as the Islamic Republic historically tried to export the revolution thereby threatening its neighbours. To thwart this, the supreme leader uses rationalism in the form of diplomacy and cooperation to improve Iran's image. He also constantly voices out concerns on the West breaking international law to show that Iran is on the side of the victims of the unjust actions of the United States. Thus, Khamenei's statements support the main argument of this research that *'Iran's foreign policy is consistent and is fundamentally realist with a revolutionist vision while the means are rationalist.'*

³⁶⁰ Ali Khamenei, "Supreme Leader's Hajj Message (2014)," accessed May 23, 2015, <http://leader.ir/en/content/12465/Supreme-Leader%E2%80%99s-Hajj-Message-2014>



Graph 6 (From Quantitative Chapter p.91). Khamenei’s Hajj Statements from 1997 to 2016

The graph above from the quantitative chapter shows how strong the revolutionist tradition is in Khamenei’s speeches, which is mainly composed of his vision of a united Islamic Ummah. The realist tradition is also remarkable, but as mentioned earlier, he attributes the realist terminologies to the United States and its wrongdoings. By doing so, he demonstrates his realist worldview and affirms the threat that the United States poses to Iran and the Islamic world. The revolutionist strategy then becomes vital and, hence, he invests most of his statements on propagating his vision to unite the Islamic Ummah to fight the United States. In comparison to the two traditions, rationalism does not fare high in Khamenei’s statements. Still, it is there and is essential in creating a more positive image of Iran in the international society. Rationalism was higher during the times it was needed such as prior to the 2015 nuclear deal where Iran had to display its rationalist side for the whole world to see.

Two realist goals of Iran are survival and security. Khamenei is well-aware of Tehran’s inability to confront the United States, the main power broker in the region, whose threat is affirmed each time he demonizes Washington. By classifying the United States as an enemy, Khamenei inadvertently magnifies the power of the West in the Islamic world and heightens the sense of threat to Iran. Since Iran cannot counter the United States and its Western allies alone, a revolutionist vision is necessary. For this reason, the supreme leader advocates solidarity and brotherhood to harness the power of a united Islamic Ummah. Once united, he sees Iran as the leader of this ‘New Islamic Civilization’. If this ambition of dominating the Islamic world holds true, then it makes sense that all the problems of the Muslims are blamed on this external enemy, the United States and its allies. This is useful for two reasons. First, pointing out that the Islamic world is suffering and everything is in chaos, Khamenei emphasizes the stability of Iran, which

he attributes to the victory of Islam in turning the country into an Islamic Republic. Second, if Iran is stable, then it can lead in repairing the Muslim world and getting rid of the West. Both reasons are meant to appeal to all Muslims to heed to the Supreme Leader's call to stand behind Iran and fight the evil West.

Seen from a different perspective, Khamenei seems to promote the idea of an Islamic Union along the same lines as the European Union. Since the only common denominator Iran has with all the other countries in the region is Islam, he uses religion to appeal to other nation-states. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) can be seen to symbolize the regional international society of the Middle East much in the same way as the European Union represents the European international society and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Asia. The only problem is that GCC was established precisely as an alliance to counter Iran during the Iran-Iraq war, leaving Iran out of the equation of a regional international society. Hence, Khamenei tries to compensate for this loss by creating a league of his own, which manifests itself in his vision of uniting the Islamic world into a 'New Islamic Civilization' or simply an Islamic Union. He often states Iran's wish to establish friendly ties and cooperate with the other Muslim states, indicating the aim of creating some sort of alliance. Since the GCC states mostly have strong ties with Washington, he must convince them of the evil that the United States is capable of to subscribe to his vision of an Islamic Union. At the same time, he markets Iran's Islamic democracy to show how the country has progressed and thus can replace the United States as an ally of all the countries in the Middle East. He inflates the idea of a utopian Islamic Union, clearly going beyond the boundary of rationalism and into revolutionism, to make it more attractive than the current situation in the region based on realist ideologies concealed through a rationalist framework. If it is not so different that it cannot transcend boundaries, then it is pointless to put much effort, which is why religion becomes a vital tool for him. Providing a revolutionist Islamic cosmopolitan vision is the only way Khamenei can appeal to the people in the region. From his discourses one thing is clear: Khamenei wants to make Islam great again but it is clearly going to be Iran first.

6 Khatami's Foreign Policy Discourse

Former President Mohammad Khatami is the primary figure when discussing the rationalist tradition. Rationalism is the means through which Iran can achieve its fundamentally realist goals with a revolutionist vision proving Iran's foreign policy to be consistent as it follows such logic is the main argument of this research. It is widely known Khatami was and still is an agent of change in Iran and it is perhaps for this reason that his foreign policy became popular. Khatami is credited to having engaged Iran with the international community, outshining the efforts of his predecessor, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, although it was the latter who began international engagement to reconstruct the country after a devastating eight-year war with Iraq. Khatami sought to reform Iran domestically and extended his reforms to Iran's international relations as the Islamic Republic was isolated from the West since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. His election to the presidency came at a time when globalization and international connectivity through information technology was quickly gaining pace. The internet started to revolutionize how people, especially the youth, acquired information about the world changing the lives of individuals, communities and nations. A millennium was about to come to an end and begin anew, auguring a promising future for humanity and Khatami wanted to capitalize on this important transition in history with globalization as its catalyst.

Many would agree that Khatami's presidency was characterized by rationalism, as the former president advocated diplomacy, dialogue and cooperation within the international community. However, his foreign policy discourse contained revolutionist and realist elements as well, as this chapter elaborates. I discuss below the themes and arguments linked with the mainly rationalist dominated foreign policy of Khatami's administration, which is remarkably a step away from Khamenei's highly revolutionist approach. Since their audience at the General Assembly are far more diverse, appealing to the international political audience consisting of heads of state perhaps the statements had to be more rationalist. It might as well be that the statements within the framework of the United Nations are tailored to reflect the institution's rationalist foundations. The former president and his foreign minister approached international relations with a starkly rationalist mindset taking globalization and its impact on changing the world into consideration. Instead of focusing on demonization and enmity, which is a prominent feature of Khamenei's statements regarding the United States and the West, Khatami and Kharrazi aimed at building trust, increasing Iran's credibility at the international stage and calling for cooperation, effectively reflecting a peaceful image of an Islamic Republic as it was never seen before. The 'Dialogue Among Civilizations' (DAC) was perhaps Khatami's most

revered legacy promoting the importance of diplomacy and negotiations in resolving issues. Yet as I discuss below, the DAC had a revolutionist dimension to it since Khatami spoke of a 'human society' that can benefit from the success of such an initiative, showing that the revolutionist tradition is also at work in his political discourse. The realist tradition is likewise present almost in a similar way as the supreme leader's use of it in denouncing the actions of some global players in their foreign policy behaviour albeit with less demonization.

6.1 Building bridges and the rationalist tradition

Diplomacy anchored in rationalism is what defines the Khatami administration at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) debates. The president and foreign minister emphasized rationalist principles of cooperation and negotiation on equal terms when discussing relations with other states in international society. Khatami and Kharrazi often stressed the Iranian government's priority of easing tensions with the countries of the region and with the rest of the world. The origins of these tensions date back to the 1979 Islamic Revolution as neighbouring countries feared a spill-over effect potentially destabilizing their governments. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's efforts to export the Revolution exacerbated these fears further increasing tensions in the regions. Thus, many nations supported Iraq during the war with Iran and alongside the Arab states established the GCC in hopes of eliminating or at least containing the threat of an Islamic Iran. The war with Iraq made Iran reconsider Khomeini's edict of exporting the Revolution since Iran became isolated and suffered heavy losses shifting the priority of the newly found Islamic Republic to reconstruction. Rafsanjani took on the enormous task of opening up Iran's doors to establish working relations with neighbouring states to help rebuild the country with moderate success as he was seen as still a vital part of the establishment, being a close confidante of Khomeini.³⁶¹

It was Khatami who proved that Iran was ready for change. Perhaps it was his reformist policies within Iran that attracted much support from across the region and the world as it gave the impression that he was doing what he preached. Kharrazi stated at the outset of the Khatami presidency that Iran's foreign policy 'is founded on peace, self-restraint, confidence-building and the reduction and elimination of tension, particularly within' the Middle East region, a sentiment echoed by Khatami the following year.³⁶² In fact, a detailed account of the Khatami

³⁶¹ Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, 230

³⁶² Kamal Kharrazi, "H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 52nd Session of The UN General Assembly (1997)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/52/PV.6

administration's foreign policy was provided by the foreign minister at the UN General Assembly debates, highlighting the dominance of the rationalist tradition:

'...the expansion of relations with all countries on the basis of mutual respect, common interest and non-interference in the internal affairs of others; emphasis on the institutionalization of international law as the foundation of global order and as the final arbiter among States; the establishment and strengthening of mechanisms of mutual confidence-building and security through regional cooperation and the negation of the presence and influence of foreign powers; the protection of all human rights and the rejection of attempts at selective and discriminatory abuse of human rights as instruments of policy; emphasis on the fundamental rights of oppressed individuals and nations, particularly the Palestinian people; the arresting of the arms race at the regional and global levels, the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the control of conventional weapons; the strengthening of the bonds of amity and solidarity among Islamic and non-aligned countries; an active presence and constructive participation in the United Nations and other international organizations, with an effective contribution in international efforts on global issues such as arms control and disarmament, comprehensive and sustainable development, human rights, peacekeeping and combating terrorism and illicit drugs, as well as the reversal of unjust international arrangements; and, finally, defending the rights of Iranian citizens all over the world'.³⁶³

With all the rationalism, and a small dose of revolutionism, in Iran's foreign policy outlined by Kharrazi, it becomes clear that an interplay exists. The more dominant tradition here though is rationalism, showing us the significance of the rationalist institutions of international society. International diplomatic efforts of the Khatami administration exhibit that Iran not only focuses on strengthening 'solidarity among Islamic and non-aligned' states but also wants to ease tensions with all countries. Priority was placed on emphasizing Iran's commitment to the rationalist institutions of international society. In the statement, we see the insistence on mutual respect with regards to diplomacy and finding common grounds for cooperation, highly rationalist sentiments. The principle of non-interference, which is a trademark of the rationalist tradition, is also given importance. International law in regulating the affairs of states in international society, placing emphasis on the issue of Palestine, further accentuates the aim of strengthening the rationalist institution of international law. Tasks of international organizations such as the UN in tackling problematic global affairs and Iran's pledge to actively participate likewise reflect the rationalist political discourse. Despite the dominance of rationalism nevertheless, traces of revolutionism loom in the background as 'solidarity among Islamic and non-aligned countries' is mentioned leaving out those not within these two spheres. Such an expression of preference for specific groups is striking indicating a slight tinge of parallelism with the foreign policy discourse of the supreme leader, Ali Khamenei.

³⁶³ Ibid., 23–24

Khatami insisted that Iran ‘has accorded the highest priority in its foreign policy to the removal of tension’ and expand its relations with its neighbours as well as the rest of the world ‘on the basis of respect for independence and equality of rights’.³⁶⁴ This statement is likewise remarkably rationalist in nature as Khatami wants to engage with the world on an equal footing. One of the first occasions he demonstrated this noble diplomatic intention was when Iran hosted the Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Tehran in 1998. The event was the very first gathering of the Islamic countries in Iran and such was its success that the OIC declared that they will establish a Parliamentary Union with headquarters to be based in Tehran.³⁶⁵ As if in unison, the former President Khatami and his foreign minister, Kharrazi, constantly highlighted the need for understanding, building confidence and trust to get rid of the tensions to promote understanding and peace among states in the region as well as with the West. To do this, Khatami put forward a proposition that gained widespread popularity – the Dialogue Among Civilizations.

6.2 Dialogue Among Civilizations and the revolutionist-rationalist axis

Khatami wanted to have friendly relations with Iran’s neighbours and he made it very clear from the beginning of his presidency in 1997 and he had effectively used the language of diplomacy to this purpose. Fostering ties though, is not easy if you are Iran but he managed to utilize his position in re-establishing and enhancing Iran’s relations by introducing a concept of dialogue. The DAC was conceived as a response to Huntington’s more fatalistic Clash Among Civilization and was an innovative approach to international relations, highlighting the potential of mankind to achieve a peaceful world society anchored in the revolutionist tradition. It encourages and facilitates exchange among the cultural, social and political proponents of all countries to provide a better understanding of one another and bring mankind a step closer to the realization of a peaceful world society. Kharrazi emphasized that:

‘Dialogue is the product of concurrent acceptance of commonality and diversity. From this perspective, international endorsement of dialogue illustrates recognition of the diversity of cultures and civilizations and the reaffirmation of the cultural rights of all peoples and nations, so that all human beings can engage members of other civilizations from the standpoint of their own culture, civilization and historical background, and not

³⁶⁴ Mohammad Khatami, “H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 53rd Session of the UN General Assembly (1998),” accessed May 23, 2016, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/53/PV.8

³⁶⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC),” accessed March 3, 2017, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/gjhdq_665435/dqzzywt_665451/2633_665453/2634_665455/t15538.shtml

by simply echoing the mentality of a totally alien culture. Only such interaction can be mutually enriching and indeed meaningful'.³⁶⁶

Equality, tolerance and understanding amidst diversity is the main message, all reflecting universal moral values the revolutionist tradition dictates, which are among the vital ingredients enabling a cosmopolitan world society to emerge, if not meant merely to strengthen the rationalist international society. The DAC 'was designed to facilitate communicative action, which would eventually lead to coexistence, tolerance and a degree of cooperation in the global arena' while the discourse attached to it was a 'message to the international community that Iran intended to come out of isolation and to assume a more active role in regional and global affairs'.³⁶⁷ Externally, meaning at the regional and international levels, the dialogue was primarily aimed at the non-political sectors such as sports, the arts and sciences especially from the West. Such exchange among individuals, communities and nations can facilitate an understanding between states building a foundation for trust and cooperation in international society demonstrating the rationalist and revolutionist dimension of Khatami's political discourse. The rationalist end of the dialogue wants the world to recognize the plurality of nation-states within the international society and foster understanding among them to achieve common goals. The revolutionist end of the dialogue aims to transform international society into one whole organism that transcends the nation-state. At this point we can observe how cosmopolitanism has made its way into Iran's political discourse. It is, however, a significantly different revolutionist vision as to that advocated by the supreme leader since it taps into a global cosmopolitanist revolutionist vision as opposed to an Islamic cosmopolitan one, which I discuss in Chapter 9 in the section on revolutionism.

Making the DAC operational within the rationalist framework meant Iran's ancient civilizational heritage had to be introduced to the world to show that at a cultural level, Iran was at par with the rest of the nation-states of the world. Misconceptions about Iran should be changed and Khatami ensured that Iran's legacy to the world is made known at the United Nations and together with his foreign minister, they made special mention of this at the General Assembly as part of the justification of Iran's call for peace through dialogue.

'Iran— as the biggest country in the region, enjoying a historical depth of several millennia combined with the richness of Islamic civilization — does not need to engage

³⁶⁶ Kamal Kharrazi, "H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 54th Session of the UN General Assembly (1999)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/54/PV.12

³⁶⁷ Ghoncheh Tazmini, *Khatami's Iran: The Islamic Republic and the Turbulent Path to Reform* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 82

in any arms build-up or competition. Our message to our neighbours is one of friendship and fraternity, and we shall warmly welcome any initiative to strengthen the foundations of confidence and cooperation in the region'.³⁶⁸

'I come from the noble land of Iran, representing a great and renowned nation famed for its ancient civilization, as well as for its distinguished contribution to the founding and expansion of the Islamic civilization...It is a nation which pioneered in the East the establishment of civil society and constitutional government in the course of its contemporary history...And it is a nation which carries the torch of its popular revolution, not won by force of arms or a coup, but by dethroning a regime of coup d'état through the power of the enlightened word...Our nation draws on its past to contemplate a better future, while defying reactionary tendencies and, backed by principles and ideals rooted in its religious, national, historical and revolutionary heritage and benefiting from positive achievements of contemporary civilization, marches, be it through trial and error, towards a promising tomorrow. The Islamic Revolution of the Iranian people was a revolt of reason against coercion and suppression. Certainly, a revolution which resorted to logic in the phase of destruction is much better disposed to resort to dialogue and reason in the phase of construction. Hence, it calls for a dialogue among civilizations and cultures instead of a clash between them'.³⁶⁹

Vestiges of nationalism permeates throughout their messages, which is not an isolated phenomenon as it is observed in almost all the speeches used for this research, including those of the supreme leader. Nationalism as a more modern rationalist institution of international society, does not belong to the classic five that Hedley Bull had put forward but nevertheless bestows a rationalist touch to the statements and in the speeches above, it was specifically utilized to assert Iran's rationalist mindset in engaging with the world through the DAC. Endorsing the rationalist dimension of Iran for the Khatami administration did not necessitate the creation of an enemy to solidify its national identity as it is only through inclusion that diplomatic ties can be built and restored. After all, Khatami and Kharrazi wanted to step away from the 'Cold War mentality' with its strategy of enmity exacerbating issues of international affairs. Iran, as a peace-seeking nation with a rich historical and civilizational background wanted to make friends with the rest of the world, including the West and integrate itself into the modern international society of sovereign nation-states with rationalism as its foundation.

Whereas the supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, aimed at demonizing the West to strengthen his vision of unifying the Islamic Ummah in a revolutionist venture, the former president, Mohammad Khatami, seeks to promote mutual understanding between Iran and the United States and settle issues of the past showcasing the more rationalist enterprise of the Islamic

³⁶⁸ Kharrazi, "H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 52nd Session of The UN General Assembly (1997)"

³⁶⁹ Khatami, "H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 53rd Session of the UN General Assembly (1998)"

Republic. Such an interplay of Khamenei's revolutionist and Khatami's rationalist strategies are evident in the speeches of both leaders. In the previous chapter, I indicated the rationalist influence in the supreme leader's statements during the first term of Khatami's presidency where the rationalist momentum was building up. In turn, we saw the revolutionist touch to Iran's foreign policy discourse put forward by the former foreign minister where 'the strengthening of the bonds of amity and solidarity among Islamic and non-aligned countries' are prioritized indicating the presence of Khamenei's influence.³⁷⁰ Regardless of this call for solidarity connoting a union against the West, Khatami made sure his message was heard by the West to overcome differences and try to understand each other through the DAC. To that end, the former president, unlike the supreme leader, did not straightforwardly attack the West and instead focused on advertising Iran's strengths and Tehran's commitment to rationalist principles of diplomacy, effectively leaving the door open for negotiations with those who understood Khatami's intentions. His strategy was so effective that by March 17, 2000 the former U.S. Secretary of State, Madelaine Albright, admitted the role of the United States in the coup that ousted the democratically elected Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953.³⁷¹ The move augured a possible warming up of relations between Tehran and Washington, the ultimate triumph of rationalist diplomacy that Khatami was targeting. The impetus, however, was short-lived as domestic issues mounted after the reformists dominated the second round of elections of the Iranian parliament in May 2000 sparking the conservative party backlash against the Khatami administration.

'Discourse and dialogue' as opposed to 'war and bloodshed' is nevertheless the key feature of Iran's foreign policy discourse under Khatami in spite of the internal domestic dilemmas his government was facing.³⁷² In contrast to Khamenei, who vouched that the nature of the West was evil and violent and therefore makes it capable of criminality beyond forgiveness, Khatami stressed the importance of understanding each other's civilization through dialogue to avoid bloody conflicts to move towards cooperation. Once again, rationalism emanates from Khatami's message while Khamenei insists on a revolutionist approach to confront the United States. 2001 was designated as the United Nations 'Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations' as proposed by the former president. It was 'a declaration of readiness to try a new model of interaction' assuming that 'the prosperity, welfare, development and security of one group, in

³⁷⁰ Kharrazi, "H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 52nd Session of The UN General Assembly (1997)"

³⁷¹ Albright, "Secretary of State Albright announces easing of U.S. trade ban on Iran (speech transcript)"

³⁷² Khatami, "H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 53rd Session of the UN General Assembly (1998)"

spite of, or at the expense of, the poverty, hunger, underdevelopment and insecurity of others are simply deceptive and short-lived, and thus they need to be abandoned'.³⁷³ 2001 though marked the year of the first major terrorist attack on U.S. soil and Iran's aims of bringing states together became impeded by the events that followed. Iran was put in 'the axis of evil', showing the deep division between Iran and the United States which dialogue alone may not be able to repair. The 'war on terror' that followed further alienated the concept of dialogue and cooperation despite the best efforts of Khatami and Kharrazi to voice out that dialogue is the key to facing the difficulties of a post 9/11 world.³⁷⁴ Concerns were raised by the international community, headed by the United States, at the revelation of Iran's nuclear program in 2002, becoming yet another enormous obstacle for the DAC that will haunt Iran for more than a decade. Diplomacy was not dead yet and Khatami's administration assured the international society that the nuclear program was for peaceful civilian purposes with Iran proposing a 'Grand Bargain' in 2003, only to be shot down by Washington. The American government simply did not trust Iran, the same way the Iranian government did not trust the Americans and so Khatami embarked on endorsing Iran's cooperative side to prove that Tehran is a reliable team player.

6.3 Iran the Team-player and Peace-maker

From the outset, Khatami's administration advocated cooperation and active participation in dealing with issues afflicting the international society whilst promoting a peace-seeking image. This emphasis on the rationalist principles of Iran's foreign policy was a constant throughout Khatami's presidency regardless of the circumstances. Due to Iran's tarnished reputation since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, it was clear that many countries, especially Western states, did not trust Iran. The only way to change this view of Tehran was through the promotion of dialogue as Iran sought 'a world blessed with peace' instead of a world dominated by Islam, which Khamenei envisions.³⁷⁵ In fact, shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, the former president suggested that 'a coalition for peace instead of war and hostility' should be established arguing that the 'dialogue among civilizations is a step in this direction,

³⁷³ Kharrazi, "H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 54th Session of the UN General Assembly (1999)"

³⁷⁴ Mohammad Khatami, "H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 56th Session of the UN General Assembly (2001)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/56/PV.44; Kamal Kharrazi, "H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 57th Session of the UN General Assembly (2002)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/57/PV.9

³⁷⁵ Khatami, "H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 53rd Session of the UN General Assembly (1998)"

and it offers a new paradigm of interaction among nations and cultures in a world that longs for peace and security'.³⁷⁶ Of course, what ensued was completely the opposite and a coalition was built mainly by the United States and the United Kingdom to militarily intervene in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom) and Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom).

While the United States and the United Kingdom were preoccupied with the 'war on terror' and the respective military operations, Iran was engaged in cooperation efforts to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan and Iraq in the aftermath of the interventions. Preventing the collapse of two of its neighbours was key for Iran in order to contain possible negative repercussions beyond the influx of potentially millions of refugees. It was clear that after 2001, terrorism had become a dangerous threat to international society and states must come together to combat it, hence the popularity of the 'war on terror'. Terrorism has been known to pose a challenge and was considered a menace, years prior to the 9/11 attacks and globalization made it more complicated to deal with this phenomenon rooted in a culture of violence.³⁷⁷ Peace and order has become increasingly threatened and the rationalist principles and institutions of the international society were summoned to extinguish the threat or at the very least contain it. A 'coalition for peace' may have been an idealistic way of combating terrorism and we would never fully understand what would have happened if the world had taken that course instead of displaying military might but what mattered at the time was a response to such a shocking attack on the West. Something had to be done and fast, regardless whether this meant breaking the rationalist principle of non-intervention, thus military interventions commenced even without a mandate from the United Nations. Iran of course did not want to be left behind knowing that the roots of terrorism are looming in its backyard, although Iran preferred a different approach as mentioned earlier. After all, terrorism was not just a problem that began in 2001 but was already well underway in the Middle East and Iran was finding ways to tackle the problem. Kharrazi reiterated Iran's commitment to fighting terrorism in conjunction with drug-trafficking already in 1997, which is an enormous problem in the Islamic Republic, as part of the foreign policy outline of the Khatami government whilst clearing out that the country has

³⁷⁶ Khatami, "H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 56th Session of the UN General Assembly (2001)"

³⁷⁷ Khatami, "H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 53rd Session of the UN General Assembly (1998)" Khatami, "H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 56th Session of the UN General Assembly (2001)" Kamal Kharrazi, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister for Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 55th Session of UN General Assembly (2000)," accessed May 23, 2015

been wrongly accused of supporting terrorism to achieve certain political purposes.³⁷⁸ In fact, the Islamic Republic of Iran portrays itself ‘as a victim of the most brutal acts of terrorism’ perhaps referring to the terror attacks of the Mojahedin-e Khalq, Iran’s far-left political organization.³⁷⁹ The call to unite against this threat was already voiced out by Khatami years before the tragic event in the United States:

‘The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran have honest and sincere efforts to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including state terrorism constituting an important priority. As required by our religious, moral and cultural values and norms, we unequivocally oppose all forms and manifestations of terrorism, and we shall combat it vigorously and earnestly. In our view, in order to eradicate this menace, we should engage in serious and transparent international cooperation to combat terrorism, and at the same time redouble our efforts to attain the objective of global justice.’³⁸⁰

By bringing together countries through the DAC, Khatami had hoped that a global multilateral coalition against terrorism would be formed with Kharrazi highlighting the need for ‘common and rule-based strategies to fight and eradicate’ terrorism citing the significance of the role of the United Nations.³⁸¹ When Khatami discussed his ‘coalition for peace’ he mentioned that ‘combating the sinister phenomenon of terrorism is an urgent and unavoidable imperative’ which the United Nations can legitimately arrange to uproot terrorism ‘through viable, just and non-discriminatory measures’.³⁸² Once again, the dominance of rationalism in statements regarding terrorism is striking as resort to military intervention and violence is downplayed referring to the principle of the rationalist institution of war where war should be avoided at all costs as it disturbs peace. However, by legitimizing a war against terrorism through an international organ such as the United Nations, perhaps a justified retaliation towards terrorism could have been tailored with the cooperation of all nation-states in the international society making it a means to restore peace. It was clear that terrorism was a ‘global phenomenon’ requiring collective effort of the states in international society but unilateralism got ahead of

³⁷⁸ Kharrazi, “H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 52nd Session of The UN General Assembly (1997)”

³⁷⁹ Khatami, “H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 53rd Session of the UN General Assembly (1998)” Khatami, “H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 56th Session of the UN General Assembly (2001)” Kharrazi, “H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 57th Session of the UN General Assembly (2002)”

³⁸⁰ Khatami, “H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 53rd Session of the UN General Assembly (1998)”

³⁸¹ Kharrazi, “Statement by H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister for Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 55th Session of UN General Assembly (2000)”

³⁸² Khatami, “H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 56th Session of the UN General Assembly (2001)”

the game.³⁸³ Working with the United Nations has long been considered as an effective strategy by the Khatami administration and the former president and foreign minister consistently stressed the successes of such a method in tackling international problems, demonstrating Iran's strong faith in the potential of the organization as well as the more rationalist mindset of Khatami.

Promoting Iran's credibility is one of the ways the Khatami government could draw other states to its cause of participating in a concerted effort against threats to humanity such as terrorism. In order to achieve this, Khatami and Kharrazi stressed Iran's active humanitarian and peace-making role in Afghanistan working with the United Nations as well as the OIC.³⁸⁴ By informing all the states of international society through the UN channel of Iran's efforts in tackling the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan as well as mediating between warring factions, the Khatami government wants to prove that it is an agent of peace, with the intention of solving problems in the region as well as in the world. Khatami was well aware that the world is yet to find confidence in Iran and trust it in order to see the country as a team player. Afghanistan is the prime example wherein Iran could display its rationalist worldview ultimately aimed at convincing the world of the new image of Iran as a reliable partner with its political worldview anchored in the rationalist tradition. Iran is working to assist the people of Afghanistan in rebuilding their country and ensure that their citizens regain their rights as well as regain their sovereignty not through unilateral measures but through cooperating with international organizations.³⁸⁵ This shows that Iran is not interested in destroying the country or any other country for that matter upholding the rationalist norm of non-intervention. The urgency of the situation in Afghanistan has been brought to the attention of the international community by Kharrazi years before the terror attacks in New York and the call has been repeated annually in hopes of getting more states to help.³⁸⁶

³⁸³ Kamal Kharrazi, "H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 58th Session of the UN General Assembly (2003)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/58/PV.12

³⁸⁴ Kharrazi, "H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 52nd Session of The UN General Assembly (1997)" Kharrazi, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister for Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 55th Session of UN General Assembly (2000)" Kharrazi, "H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 57th Session of the UN General Assembly (2002)"

³⁸⁵ Khatami, "H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 53rd Session of the UN General Assembly (1998)"

³⁸⁶ Kharrazi, "H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 52nd Session of The UN General Assembly (1997)"

The elimination of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) is also another significant point highlighted in the yearly statements of the Khatami administration at the United Nations. Having been a victim of the use of deadly chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq war, Iran emphasizes how deadly and inhumane the use of such weapons is. Saddam Hussein used mustard gas and nerve agents against Iran at different points during the war causing severe casualties. Those that survived these attacks still suffer from the effects of the chemical weapons. At the time of writing, the Tehran Peace Museum in Park-e Shahr in Tehran had on display illustrations of the effect of such harmful weapons as a reminder of the tragic effects of war and the use of WMDs. This bitter experience is engraved in the minds of the Iranian nation, especially since the international community did not come to Iran's aid during the war. Hence, condemning the use of and demanding the complete eradication of WMDs have been a top priority of Iran's foreign policy and the Khatami administration accentuated this in almost every statement they made at the United Nations. Along the same lines, Iran has constantly condemned war and the suffering of peoples in different countries as a result of war since the Islamic Republic speaks from its own experience and the Khatami government has supported the proposition of a zone free from WMDs in the Middle East to bring about peace.³⁸⁷ This insistence on peace and avoidance of war at all cost further emphasizes the dominance of the rationalist tradition in Khatami's foreign policy discourse and having gone through the horrible experience of an eight-year long war, it is understandable that Tehran adheres to such a rationalist understanding of war. War, as an institution of the modern international society of sovereign nation-states, is supposed to be avoided and the United Nations was established after the Second World War 'to save succeeding generations from the scourges of war' as stated in the preamble of the UN Charter.³⁸⁸ Iran sees the UN as a project of peace and the Khatami administration wanted to prove that Iran could also partake in this project of peace and even be an active agent in promoting peace instead of bloodshed with Khatami's government referencing the Islamic Republic's experience during the Iran-Iraq war.

Insecurity in the Middle East due to Israel's possession of WMDs and its treatment of the Palestinians have also been raised as an issue of concern by both Khatami and Kharrazi at the United Nations insisting that failure to address these core issues in the region inhibits the establishment of security, stability and peace. Such a demand and a vision reflects a rationalist understanding of international relations wherein the rights of the Palestinians, like the Afghans,

³⁸⁷ Kharrazi, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister for Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 55th Session of UN General Assembly (2000)"

³⁸⁸ Charter of the United Nations Preamble, United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/preamble/>

should be given to them as demanded by the rationalist institution of international law demanding the state of Israel to recognize the human rights of the Palestinians.³⁸⁹ The negation of war as a rationalist institution of international society, is considered viable by the Khatami administration only through a total elimination of WMDs. For a country that had no access to any type of WMD during the eight-year long war with Saddam while being a victim of the use of chemical weapons, it is only logical that Iran does have insecurities regarding these weapons and this has two implications. First, is that in principle, due to experiencing such horrid incidents caused by WMDs, Iran feels more secure if WMDs were to be eliminated in the region. Second, since no one had come to the aid of Iran and provided them with weapons to defend itself during the war with Iraq, Iran might be keen on developing its own WMD for its own future defence. It is here that the suspicion of Iran's uranium enrichment with its potential for developing weapons grade uranium is aimed at and Tehran is well-aware of it. Nevertheless, the Khatami administration, and later, the Ahmadinejad government persistently insist on Iran's right to have a nuclear program for peaceful civilian purposes. Being a member of the NPT, Iran does reserve the right to have a peaceful nuclear program, reflecting the rationalist institution of international law despite all the suspicions of the United States. At least during the Khatami administration, Iran was prepared to negotiate with the West to prove that the nuclear program is intended for peaceful purposes, hence the 'Grand Bargain' was proposed by Tehran. However, this move that could have spared both countries almost a decade of agitation was dismissed by Washington, perhaps as a repercussion of the events of 9/11. Diplomacy was Khatami's strength and his government tried to prove, but with little success, that Iran is capable of being rational on the same level as the West and of building trust through dialogue instead of confrontation, which was preferred by his successor.

6.4 A New World Order: the thin line between rationalism and revolutionism

Without demonizing the United States and the West, Khatami and Kharrazi managed to criticize the current system by pointing out that the current order is outdated and cannot address the problems of humanity. Suffering through oppression, violence and aggression has become widespread and the system has mostly exacerbated the situation as most actors at the global stage still play by the rules of the Cold War, encouraging exclusionism:

'During this century, exclusion often surfaced as a paradigm of global interaction, in which the world is viewed in terms of modes of loyalty, countries are viewed as

³⁸⁹ Kharrazi, "H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 52nd Session of The UN General Assembly (1997)" Kharrazi, "H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 57th Session of the UN General Assembly (2002)"

belonging to coalitions or not and are divided, rewarded and blamed accordingly. Today, the utility of this paradigm is being seriously questioned, as is the validity of some of our basic assumptions. The cold war was the last episode of exclusion. It has undoubtedly left its negative imprint on international affairs, but more regrettably it has permanently scarred the mentality of global actors and international relations theory. One of the most horrifying manifestations of exclusion has been the global arms race'.³⁹⁰

Highlighting the end of the bipolar world, the former president and his foreign minister, wants to draw the world's attention to the need of changing the dynamics of international relations to inclusion, cooperation and active participation at the global level requiring a change of mindset. Khatami states that 'confidence and peace cannot be attained without a sober revision of the mentality of the cold war'.³⁹¹ He wants to showcase that Iran's approach to international affairs has changed respectively as shaped by his government. Realism as the foundation of the Cold War is not found appealing by the Khatami administration thus an emphasis on the much-needed transition from the realist tradition to a rationalist one is observed in most of the speeches Khatami and Kharrazi gave at the United Nations and at certain points in their statements, the revolutionist tradition makes itself visible. Indeed, the former president spoke of a 'human society' when discussing issues plaguing mankind, which can be interpreted as a very revolutionist way of perceiving the world through the Kantian notion of an entity that transcends the nation-state.³⁹² Since tragedies, catastrophes and suffering happens at the individual level, Khatami makes use of the concept of 'human society' to refer to mankind as a whole, making it a terminology linking the former president's statements to the revolutionist idea of a world society that transcends nation-states. 'Human society' is at the heart of Khatami's DAC as it promotes an exchange at the individual level, with nation-states being set aside to encourage understanding at the civilian level of the population again reflecting revolutionist currents at work in the former president's approach to foreign policy. With more understanding among individuals of different nation-states, more cooperation to bring about peace and prosperity is envisioned to bring 'human society' forward and for this reason, the strengthening of civil society was also important for Khatami, indicating his subscription to the revolutionist tradition.

³⁹⁰ Kharrazi, "H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 54th Session of the UN General Assembly (1999)"

³⁹¹ Khatami, "H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 53rd Session of the UN General Assembly (1998)"

³⁹² Khatami, "H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 56th Session of the UN General Assembly (2001)" Mohammad Khatami, "H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the Millenium Assembly (2000)," accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/55/PV.3

In the realist tradition, power was situated in the hands of a few – during the Cold War only in the hands of two – which was criticized heavily by the Khatami government as he believes in the rationalist tradition wherein power must be shared by all the states in the system. It is this very point wherein Khatami propagates more participation of states in the system. Unilateralism is likewise outright rejected by the Khatami administration and Kharrazi characterizes it as ‘the antithesis of universal participation in decision-making and law-based cooperation at the international level’.³⁹³ The former foreign minister believes that the international community ‘simply cannot provide a peaceful and prosperous life for people through coercion, autocratic decisions and a cultural domination and hegemony’ highlighting the repudiation of realist interpretation of balance of power wherein expediency and coercion is given priority in foreign policy.³⁹⁴ During the military intervention of the United States in Iraq in 2003, realism reached a peak in the statements as Iran condemned the actions of Washington describing it in realist terminologies as it embodies unilateralism, which the Khatami outright rejected from the beginning. The military intervention was ‘an unsanctioned war against Iraq,’ and ‘lawless militarism’ highlighting that the United States was operating in the realist institution of war since it was not approved by the United Nations.³⁹⁵ The war of course proved that the current order was indeed following Cold War mentality and that an alternative must be found.

From the outset, the Khatami administration proposed a new doctrine for regulating international affairs based on the rule of law, a remarkably rationalist approach in dealing with the challenges of the time. Kharrazi put forward a ‘doctrine of global civil society’, which ‘is predicated on two major principles, the first being the institutionalization of the rule of law in domestic and international relations’ and the second ‘is that of empowerment and participation’.³⁹⁶ Khatami’s government was a strong proponent of taking democracy to the international level where all states of international society submit to the rules of international law and his government believed that ‘expansion and broadening of the participatory base of the future global order on the basis of norms acceptable to all cultures and peoples is most conducive to building a better tomorrow, and to ensuring freedom, security, stability and

³⁹³ Kharrazi, “H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 52nd Session of The UN General Assembly (1997)”

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Kharrazi, “H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 58th Session of the UN General Assembly (2003)” Kamal Kharrazi, “H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly (2004),” accessed May 23, 2015, <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/59/statements/iraneng040924.pdf>

³⁹⁶ Kharrazi, “H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 52nd Session of The UN General Assembly (1997)”

sustainable development at the national, regional and international levels'.³⁹⁷ The rationalist understanding of the institution of international law is evident in the Khatami administration's statements as well as the role of civil society.

Domestically, during Khatami's presidency, Iran enjoyed an empowerment of civil society as part of the reforms and internationally, Khatami echoed the need for a global civil society in addressing the challenges of the rapidly globalizing world. The rationalist approach is not only promoted within the country but also outside the country proving that Iran means business and is ready to engage with the rest of the world through its thorough reform agenda. Democracy was a key aspect of Khatami's strategy anchored in the rationalist tradition and it is within the framework of an Islamic democracy that civil society in Iran flourished. At the Millennium Assembly, Khatami stated that:

'The right of man to determine his destiny, the emanation of authority, particularly political authority, from the free will and choice of the population, its submission to the continued scrutiny of the people and the institutionalization of such human accountability constitute the major characteristics of democracy... No particular form of democracy can be prescribed as the only and final model. Let us allow the unfolding endeavours to formulate democracy in the context of spirituality and morality usher in yet another model for democratic life. Let us strive so that the exigencies of a few power-holders do not supersede the interest of humanity through familiar practices of the endorsement of undemocratic Governments not responsive to the will and needs of their people and the application of double and multiple standards of response to incidents around the globe. Let us submit to democratic principles not only as the criteria of good governance domestically, but also as the new norm governing interaction in the global society, whose constituents, much like equal individuals within nation states, are nations of equal right and dignity'.³⁹⁸

Khatami's government was trying to reformulate democracy to fit the framework of Islam in Iran, exhibiting that rationalist democratic principles can also be found in a country that had undergone a religious revolution. Democracy at the national and international levels were advocated by Khatami and Kharrazi to bring about a more just decision-making process regarding international affairs, indicating a diffusion of power that can be shared by all states in determining policies that affect the entire international society of sovereign nation-states. It is through this rationalist perspective that Khatami and his foreign minister framed the attainment of peace and stability which can be stimulated through understanding brought about by the DAC as well as democracy and cooperation. If a global civil society can be realized through such mechanisms, then nations can work together to tackle issues challenging the

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Khatami, "H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the Millenium Assembly (2000)"

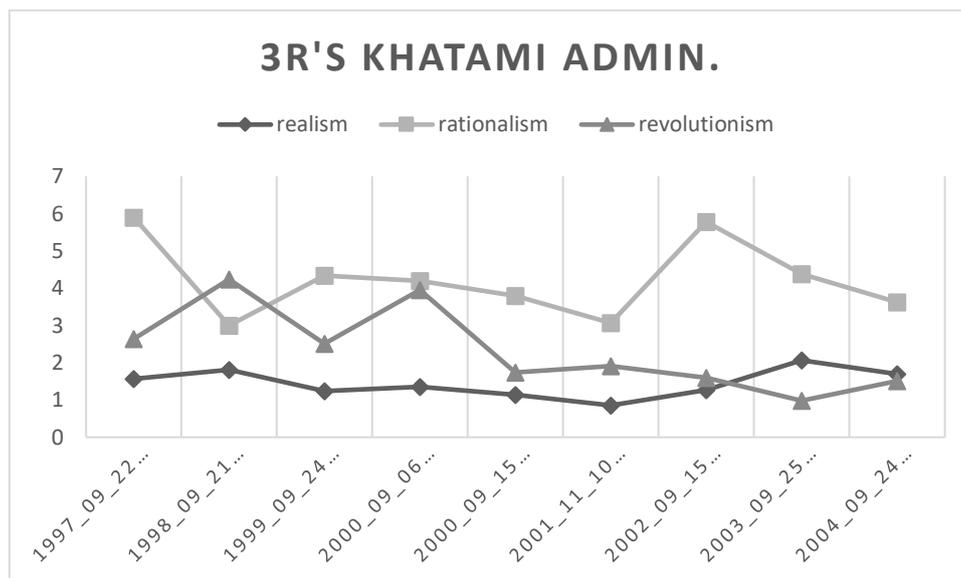
‘human society’ since the September 11 attacks indicating ‘that the division between centre and periphery can no longer define the security order of the world today, for even the most marginalized sectors might be able to inflict blows on the biggest powers’.³⁹⁹ The only way to move forward, from the point of view of the Khatami administration is through dialogue and cooperation – a profoundly rationalist approach. It was a very positive one as much as it was idealistic. Nevertheless, international political events following the 9/11 attacks overwhelmed the rationalist momentum as the United States ventured into the Middle East in a unilateral militarist intervention reducing the DAC to an unfinished diplomatic fairy-tale.

6.5 Conclusion

Khatami’s mainly rationalist foreign policy discourse has worked well for Iran as it became the means through which Iran could attain a degree of security ensuring its survival by re-establishing ties with its neighbours and the world. His revolutionist vision though, diverges from Khamenei since he talks of a world society consisting of all humanity instead of just the Islamic world alone. The realist tone in Khatami’s political discourse is limited to criticizing the West and the current system ran by hegemonic powers, reflecting the former president’s knowledge of the tradition. He is more an advocate, though, of rationalism or said differently, responsible for executing the ‘means’ of Iran’s foreign policy, at least at the discursive level.

Cooperation and dialogue to achieve peace, anchored in the rationalist tradition, are the two principles set out by Former President Khatami and his Foreign Minister Kharrazi at the United Nations. Iran wanted to come out of isolation and progress further and to do this, speaking the language of the modern international society of nation-states is essential to activating the institutions. Diplomacy was the key rationalist institution, which Khatami’s government carefully tended to as he spoke of ‘mutual respect’ as a factor for negotiations with countries in international affairs. With diplomacy, the realization of ‘common interests’ can be achieved, another principle advocated by the rationalist tradition. ‘Non-interference in the internal affairs of others’ indicate Iran’s adherence to the norm of non-intervention that accompanies sovereignty in international society. Reference to the institution of international law in their statements further strengthens the profoundly rationalist approach of the Khatami government in Iran’s foreign policy.

³⁹⁹ Khatami, “H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 56th Session of the UN General Assembly (2001)”



Graph 14. The three traditions during the Khatami administration.

Khatami's DAC project was fundamentally rationalist in nature as it emphasized the plurality of the states in international society promoting better understanding among them to pursue cooperation in realizing common goals. However, it had a revolutionist dimension to it as it sought to strengthen the human constituency of the international society as the exchanges between nation-states were facilitated by non-governmental entities indicating that an element of transcending the nation-state is at work. A constant reference to 'human society', reflects this revolutionist vision of Khatami when he discusses the problems facing humanity that likewise transcends nation-states. The graph above shows the dominance of the rationalist and revolutionist traditions in the Khatami administration's statements reflecting their foreign policy. As you can see, the values of rationalism reach up to 5.89%, indicating their conformity to the rationalist tradition whereas the realist tradition remains around 1%. The tendency of the revolutionist tradition to influence foreign policy is also reflected in the graph where values remain close to rationalism, even surpassing it at one point prior to 2001. It is important to remember though this sort of revolutionism is not like Khamenei's which is bound to Islam. Rather, Khatami's revolutionism conceived mankind as one organism called the 'human society', a more cosmopolitan approach. Interestingly, the 9/11 attacks perhaps changed the discourse leaving revolutionism to slack effectively crashing Khatami's revolutionist vision for the international society.

7 Ahmadinejad's Foreign Policy Discourse

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected into office at a time when the devastating effects of the 'war on terror' were becoming more widespread in the Middle East and Iran's nuclear program

was being negotiated. It was during his presidency that Iran's fundamentally realist goal of survival and security becomes evident as sanctions on Iran increased dramatically, affecting Iran's economy. Thus, he had to use strategies guided by the rationalist tradition as a means to survive thereby strengthening bilateral trade relations to those willing to work with Iran. The revolutionist vision in his political discourse, however, overshadows the other two traditions as he delivered lectures on morality, justice and Islam at the United Nations General Assembly each year.

Dialogue was not a part of Ahmadinejad's typical political vocabulary manifested by his highly confrontational rhetorical approach. It was so confrontational that by the end of his second term, Iran was at loggerheads with the international community regarding the nuclear program, which made the realist goal of survival more difficult to achieve. Despite the difficulties, Ahmadinejad's strategy enhanced Iran's popularity within the Islamic and Arab world as it targeted the United States among others. Ahmadinejad effectively reversed the little successes of his predecessor in terms of reconciling with the West and engaged in a campaign of demonization of the system by obsessively pointing at U.S. domination, a revolutionist-inspired move strikingly identical to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Apart from that nonetheless, Ahmadinejad's speeches contained a significant amount of rationalism reflecting the inevitable intertwining of the three traditions in foreign policy.

The unashamedly and unapologetically revolutionist approach of Ahmadinejad's foreign policy discourse, is a prominent feature of the former president's statements. Confrontational, populist or irrational are some of the words to be associated with Ahmadinejad. His revolutionist mission and vision at the General Assembly made him appear to be more interested in converting political leaders into being religious followers than practically solving international issues. The popularity of his revolutionist vision in the Islamic world outweighs the rationalist currents in his foreign policy message. This is evident when he talks about Iran's right to access nuclear technology for civilian purposes and voices out the legitimate rights of the peoples who suffered from military interventions. Compared with the two traditions of revolutionism and rationalism, realism in Ahmadinejad's statements remains in its modest role of demonizing the West. It is aimed at the United States justifying Ahmadinejad's revolutionist agenda at the international stage – a strategy similar to the supreme leaders' and Khatami's criticism of the West to an extent.

7.1 Realism in the Unjust World Order

From the outset of his presidency, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was keen on exposing the weaknesses of the global system although it was a much more gradual process with a much lighter tone at his first speech at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to harsher ones as the years progressed. His predecessor had already mentioned the flaws plaguing the system and ways of potentially improving it in a much more diplomatic manner while Ahmadinejad capitalized on naming and shaming countries, particularly in the West, mirroring the Hajj speeches of the supreme leader. This was mostly due to the Security Council's opposition to Iran's nuclear program, which came under fire as soon as Ahmadinejad took office and resumed uranium enrichment. From Iran's perspective, the West was once again intervening in the country's affairs as it did historically to impede its technological progress. For him, it meant that Iran is being deprived of an alternative source of energy that will become more important as fossil fuel reserves are getting consumed to exhaustion. This is pure intervention and defies the rationalist norm in his view. I discuss nuclear politics in a separate section below but for now let's return to how Ahmadinejad frames the unjust world order in his discourse.

By pointing out power relations of states as well as the political expediency of the West, generating an unjust world order where weaker countries such as Iran must suffer, Ahmadinejad's statements regarding the international community which I have analysed for this research showcase a strong presence of the realist tradition. Negativity and distress is quite clear in Ahmadinejad's annual message to the UNGA, but instead of providing a rationalist solution such as his predecessor Khatami, he chooses a revolutionist vision and strategy typically used by the Supreme Leader Khamenei. Like Khamenei, Ahmadinejad argues that all the world problems can only be resolved through absolute faith and obedience to God and His will. His criticisms of the West, framed in the realist tradition, are very much like the exact repetition of the statements of Iran's supreme leader. Actions of the West, in particular the United States, can only be interpreted in realist terms to legitimise and justify Iran's disposition in international society as a revolutionist state guided by Islam, a move most evident in the statements of Khamenei. In every speech, realism is a purely materialistic enterprise practiced by the United States and its Western allies reflecting the core arguments normally found in the remarks of the supreme leader. Ahmadinejad simply resonates the same message at the United Nations for the international political elites to hear it justifying Iran's foreign policy. The leverage of hegemonic powers, in particular the United States, is emphasized to be immoral bringing about dire consequences for the rest of the world and cementing an unjust world order

which Ahmadinejad argues is in place to systematically keep the powerful in their position.⁴⁰⁰ He states that:

‘Theories of development that are in line with the hegemonic system and not in accordance with the true needs of humankind and human societies have become repetitive and bland tools for assimilating economies, expanding hegemonic domination and destroying the environment and the social solidarity of nations. There is no end in sight to this. Poverty, hunger and deprivation are hurting more than one billion of the world’s population and have dashed their hopes for a decent life’.⁴⁰¹

In his view, such a system is pointless and so he turns to religion to point out that morality is needed in international affairs to stop the suffering of humanity. This is the main recurring theme throughout all his statements. Like Khamenei’s arguments, Ahmadinejad concludes that the suffering of humanity due to the immorality of the materialistic West, following the realist tradition, can only be countered through religion as it is the base of morality, reflecting the vitality of the revolutionist vision for Iran’s foreign policy. Ahmadinejad echoes Khamenei’s binary opposition by applying it to the issues plaguing the international system and speaking about this in front of an international political, rather than religious, audience. Instead of calling for a theological cosmopolitan whole, such as Khamenei’s Islamic Civilization, Ahmadinejad is endorsing a unity among those who suffer from the system, usually developing countries, encapsulating them as victims. Through this victimization narrative, he can endorse Iranian heroism of standing up to the powerful hegemon such as the United States – likewise a common theme of the supreme leader’s speeches. Thus, by the same premise, Iran is advertised to be a prime example of how states should gain their independence from such a system dominated by an immoral hegemon. Ahmadinejad uses the nuclear program to prove his point gaining him widespread popularity among the developing nations, especially in the region. Former President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela perhaps best exemplifies the ‘Ahmadinejad effect’ on the international society when he blatantly called the former President of the United States, George W. Bush, a ‘devil’ in the United Nations General Assembly in 2006. ‘Hypocrisy and deceit’ is claimed by Ahmadinejad to be way Washington secures ‘their interests and imperialistic goals’, also a statement that could have exactly come from the supreme leader’s mouth.⁴⁰² There are,

⁴⁰⁰ Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly (2007),” United Nations, accessed October 8, 2015, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/62/PV.5

⁴⁰¹ Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly (2008),” United Nations, accessed October 8, 2015, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/63/PV.6

⁴⁰² Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, “Address by Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the I.R. of Iran at the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly (2011),” United Nations, accessed October 8, 2015, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/66/PV.15

however, rationalist influences in Ahmadinejad's political statements, which I discuss at the end of this chapter. But before I get into that, I elaborate more on the dichotomy of the actions of the immoral West, functioning within a realist premise and the religious revolutionist vision that Ahmadinejad presents to the international society. The intertwining of realist concepts within the revolutionist rhetoric, a trademark of Khamenei's speeches, is also explored in the next sections.

7.2 The immoral materialistic West

Realism, in the sense of pursuing goals by disregarding the law and moral values, in the speeches of Ahmadinejad can be identified through how he defines the West, particularly the United States, and their actions. He classifies the United States as a realist actor, proving his knowledge of the tradition by speaking of the U.S. as a power. Khamenei's influence in his remarks is evident although what is striking is that the former president does not demonize the United States and its allies such as Israel the way the supreme leader does. Ahmadinejad simply never used the term 'Great Satan' in referring to America in his speeches at the UN. He only makes an association by saying that 'the self-proclaimed centres of power' 'have entrusted themselves to the Devil'.⁴⁰³ Practicing the realist tradition is synonymous to following the teachings of Lucifer since the former president urges that the 'centres of power' are accountable for the 'current abysmal situation of the world'.⁴⁰⁴ Below, I discuss the details of the actions of the West that, according to Ahmadinejad, have brought distraught to the international society reflecting realism in his worldview.

When it comes to the institution of diplomacy, the United Nations is an important regime through which sovereign nation-states of international society can discuss, interact and negotiate certain issues and was founded based on the rationalist tradition. As I am going to elaborate in the last section of this chapter, Ahmadinejad's political discourse contains a strong rationalist dimension amidst the dominance of revolutionism and realism. For the former president, the true potential of the United Nations has not been realized as the 'powers' have instrumentalized the Security Council, using it as a tool of 'threat and coercion' making certain global arrangements unjust and discriminatory.⁴⁰⁵ Here he exposes the realist dimension of the

⁴⁰³ Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, "Address by Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the I.R. Iran at the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly (2012)," United Nations, accessed October 8, 2015, http://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/67/IR_en.pdf

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, "Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 61st Session of the UN General assembly (2006)," United Nations, accessed October 8, 2015, <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/61/pdfs/iran-e.pdf>

institution of diplomacy as coercion in the UN becomes a means through which the powerful states attain their goals. He believes that the Security Council can no longer perform its obligation of maintaining ‘international peace and security based on justice’ due to the ‘monopolistic powers’.⁴⁰⁶ The very definition of the United States and its Western allies as ‘powers’ already denotes the former president’s realist understanding of their position and action in the international system. In the institution of diplomacy, according to the statements of Ahmadinejad, the West negotiates from a position of power showing their independence from the system and their capacity to coerce other nation-states with the Security Council being one of their instruments.

Since realist actors in the international system disregard international law and norms to pursue their objectives, Ahmadinejad’s description of the actions of the United States and its allies affirm his realist classification of them as he accuses them of violating international law despite being the ones who drafted it.⁴⁰⁷

‘Threats with nuclear weapons and other instruments of war by some powers have taken the place of respect for the rights of nations and the maintenance and promotion of peace and tranquility; For some powers, claims of promotion of human rights and democracy can only last as long as they can be used as instruments of pressure and intimidation against other nations. But when it comes to the interests of the claimants, concepts such as democracy, the right of self-determination of nations, respect for the rights and intelligence of peoples, international law and justice have no place or value’.⁴⁰⁸

Occupation of a sovereign nation-state, such as Iraq, is one of the recurrent issues that the former president points out as an example of the United States’ violation of international law – a similar argument seen in the speeches of the supreme leader. He condemns occupation as ‘an unforgivable crime’ referring to U.S. unilateralism and the Israeli conflict as such actions defy international law, and made it a point to remind the international society of these issues at the UN each year.⁴⁰⁹

The realist institutions of balance of power, great power management and war are perhaps the most prominent in Ahmadinejad’s speeches. Already by referring to the United States and the

⁴⁰⁶ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly (2007)”

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 61st Session of the UN General assembly (2006)”

⁴⁰⁹ Mahmood Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran at the 65th Session of the UN General Assembly (2010),” United Nations, accessed October 8, 2015, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/PV.12; Ahmadinejad, “Address by Mr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad, President of the I.R. Iran at the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly (2012)”

West as ‘centres of power’ he expresses their dominant position in the international system in a realist framework. Statements such as: ‘Certain powers equate themselves with the international community’ and ‘consider themselves the masters and rulers of the entire world’ clearly reflects the former president’s realist perspective of the West.⁴¹⁰ These can be traced within the institutions of balance of power and great power management as he adds to it that the ‘powers sacrifice all human values, including honesty, purity and trust, for the advancement of their goals’.⁴¹¹ The powers are devoid of morality as they embark on a realist path in the international society and are depicted not as the devil but as a ‘bully’ that uses the language of threats, intimidation and advocates arms race.⁴¹² A constant state of conflict within the international system reflects the realist institution of war. To this end, Ahmadinejad highlights the militarism and possession of nuclear weaponry of the U.S. and its allies as part of their national interest to facilitate arms race in their favour to preserve their positions of power.⁴¹³ Explicitly positioning the U.S. and its allies as the ‘powers’ in an international system behaving within the confines of the realist tradition reinforces Ahmadinejad’s realist worldview. He calls attention to the flaws generated within the system as the ‘powers’ break international law and engage immorally with weaker nation-states. Like the supreme leader, the former president’s finds the solution in the revolutionist vision of Islam, which opposes immorality and materialism. Ahmadinejad feeds the anti-imperialist discourse as he raises the issue of injustices committed by the West inflicting suffering to the people of the region through military intervention after 9/11. He crafts the binary opposition from within international society by classifying the two poles of ‘the powers’ and ‘the rest’ showing parallelism with the supreme leader’s ‘the Great Satan’ and ‘us Muslims’. I discuss Ahmadinejad’s revolutionist campaign within the United Nations in the next section before expanding on the rationalist contents of his arguments at the end of this chapter.

⁴¹⁰ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 61st Session of the UN General assembly (2006)”

⁴¹¹ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly (2007)”

⁴¹² Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly (2007)” Ahmadinejad, “Address by Mr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad, President of the I.R. Iran at the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly (2012)”

⁴¹³ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly (2008)” Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly (2009),” United Nations, accessed October 8, 2015, http://www.un.org/ga/64/generaldebate/pdf/IR_en.pdf; Ahmadinejad, “Address by Mr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad, President of the I.R. Iran at the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly (2012)”

7.3 The myth of the Saviour: Mahmoud, the Supreme Leader of the UN

Ahmadinejad wants to gain allies in a holy war against the West, mimicking the supreme leader. He wants to set Iran as an example so he chooses his words carefully and avoids using the supreme leader's favourite phrase 'the Great Satan' when referring to the United States. To him, the U.S. and its allies are simply 'hegemonic powers' or simply 'powers', pure realists by his classification. The former president said: 'Is it not high time for these powers to return from the path of arrogance and obedience to Satan to the path of faith in God?'.⁴¹⁴ The United States and its Western allies then, are not the devils per se, but are only following Satan. He seems to indicate that there is hope and they can redeem themselves by following the path of God. Here we see a missionary statement in Ahmadinejad's foreign policy discourse, where the U.S. and its allies have a choice to submit themselves to the will of God. After all, it would be a great achievement for him as an individual to convert non-Muslims to Islam or at the very least convince a non-believer to believe in God as Ahmadinejad assumes the task of an Imam or a priest. Such missionary statements reflect the revolutionist vision, anchored in religion, penetrating Ahmadinejad's political discourse and affects Iran's foreign policy. The former president's sentiments are close to Khamenei's remarks as the supreme leader advocates the union of Islamic countries while Ahmadinejad spreads monotheistic doctrine with an Islamic touch. The only difference is, the former president attempts to create a camp including all monotheistic religions against non-believers whereas Khamenei's battle is between the moral spiritual Islam versus the immoral materialistic West. This division into binary opposition, camp of the faithful versus heretics, is one defining characteristic of revolutionism as discussed in the theory chapter. The main concept in the discourses of Khamenei and Ahmadinejad remained the same. They both demand states to choose between moral spiritual monotheism, Islam if possible, which they claim can solve all of humanity's problems, and immoral materialistic West led by the United States, who is following Satan.

Justice is one of the themes wherein the former president starkly anchors the revolutionist tradition, as he links it to morality, spirituality and monotheism, particularly naming Islam and the Shi'a's belief in the coming of the Hidden Imam. Imam Mahdi, the last of the twelve Shi'a Imams is supposed to have gone into occultation and will return alongside Jesus Christ to bring about a reign of justice in the world.⁴¹⁵ Frequent reference is given to Mahdi by the former

⁴¹⁴ Ahmadinejad, "Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly (2007)"

⁴¹⁵ Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, "Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran at the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly (2005)," United Nations, accessed October 8, 2015,

president and his arrival being awaited by many. Ahmadinejad refers to him in the speeches as: ‘the promised one’, ‘the perfect man’, ‘the complete human’.⁴¹⁶ With Jesus Christ, Mahdi’s main mission is to ‘design and implement just and humanistic mechanisms for regulating the constructive relationships between nations and Governments’ and ‘lead the freedom and justice lovers to eradicate tyranny and discrimination, and promote knowledge, peace, justice freedom and love across the world’.⁴¹⁷ Here the ‘myth of the saviour’ becomes evident, a characteristic of Iranian politics, and ‘a recurrent motif which enjoys both a religious and a nationalist constituency’.⁴¹⁸ According to Iranian history scholar, Ali Ansari, ‘successive crises and instability, at least since the eighteenth century, have generated demands for a saviour to restore order, stability and a measure of justice’.⁴¹⁹ With the problems of humanity spiralling out of control, Ahmadinejad promotes this myth in the international society framing it in a revolutionist perspective arguing that monotheism is the only solution. Unlike the supreme leader who promotes exclusively Islam as the sole path, Ahmadinejad includes monotheistic religions like Christianity as evident in his frequent reference to the second coming of Jesus Christ together with Imam Mahdi. Khamenei speaks of strengthening Islam as a whole without preference to any sect as his audience are mainly Muslims during the Hajj whereas Ahmadinejad advocates monotheism as his audience at the UN are international political elites. Both foreign policy discourses of the former president and the supreme leader exhibit a commonality not only in their inclusivity, which is heavily dependent on the audience, but also towards the enemy being the immoral materialistic West led by the United States. The realist undercurrent of their messages developed through revolutionism becomes apparent as Ahmadinejad claims an ultimate confrontation between good and evil forces will take place when the saviour returns.

‘Would it not be easier for global powers to ensure their longevity and win hearts and minds through the championing of real promotion of justice, compassion and peace, than through continuing the proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons and the threat of their use?’⁴²⁰

<http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/60/statements/iran050917eng.pdf>. This is a recurrent theme in each and every one of his speeches from 2005 until 2012.

⁴¹⁶ Ahmadinejad uses these terminologies in his speeches in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2012 respectively.

⁴¹⁷ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly (2008)” Ahmadinejad, “Address by Mr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad, President of the I.R. of Iran at the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly (2011)”

⁴¹⁸ Ali M. Ansari, “Iran under Ahmadinejad: Populism and its malcontents,” *International Affairs* 84, no. 4 (2008): 685, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2346.2008.00732.x

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 61st Session of the UN General assembly (2006)”

For Ahmadinejad, the longevity of global powers can also be achieved through true moral values such as justice, compassion and peace but since they are purely evil realists, the powers dominate with military might. This enhances the good versus evil argument of the former president with Iran of course being in the good side. Through this statement, Ahmadinejad is appealing to the hearts and minds of the international society as he speaks of ‘justice, compassion and peace’ propagating monotheism and God’s will – a missionary revolutionist manoeuvre. Of course, he sees these values to be the opposite of the evil militaristic realist tradition that the global powers have practiced. He goes as far to say that ‘monotheism, justice and compassion for humans should predominate in all the pillars of the United Nations, and this Organization should be a forum for justice, where every member should enjoy equal spiritual and legal support’.⁴²¹ Monotheism is considered here as a revolutionist concept as it transcends nation-state barriers similar to the unification of the Islamic Ummah advocated by the supreme leader. Surprisingly, in 2007, the former president invited nation-states to create a ‘Coalition for Peace’ meant to be a ‘front of fraternity, amity and sustainable peace, based on monotheism and justice... to prevent incursions and arrogance and to promote the culture of affection and justice’ led by Iran.⁴²² In this sense, Ahmadinejad positions himself as the supreme leader of the United Nations by relentlessly repeating the message of monotheism each year at the General Assembly. In some instances, it appears as if he views himself as the saviour by voicing out the concerns of humanity in the UN and making his defiance of the West regarding the nuclear program the beginning of this holy war as he seeks to bring justice in the system. In fact, Ahmadinejad’s speech in 2009, literally resembles a statement of the supreme leader in 2004 slamming liberalism, Marxism and capitalism in favour of religion:

‘Liberalism and capitalism that have alienated human beings from heavenly and moral values will never bring happiness for humanity because they are the main source of all misfortune wars, poverty and deprivation... By the grace of God, Marxism is gone. It is now history. The expansionist Capitalism will certainly have the same fate. Because based on the divine traditions referred to as a principle in the Holy Koran, the wrong is like the bubbles on the surface of water, will disappear. There remains only what that can be used forever towards the interest of human societies’.⁴²³

‘With the decline of certain ideologies such as Marxism or Socialism, and with the unveiling of the real nature of western liberal democracy founded on the bases of deceptions’

⁴²¹ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly (2007)”

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly (2009)”

and hypocrisy, Islam has now emerged as the sole and ideal set of thoughts that can bring justice and freedom long-aspired by the free-minded people of the world'.⁴²⁴

The awakening of nations, a recurrent theme in the supreme leader's statements, likewise appears in the former president's speeches as he mimics the revolutionist language normally used by Khamenei where religion becomes an instrument to mobilize those against the West.⁴²⁵ Defeating the realist immoral materialistic and highly militarized West through the revolutionist tradition by means of submitting to monotheism, morality and spirituality and showing resistance presupposes a conflict between two binary poles of good and evil. Confrontation through whatever channel, such as religion grounded in the revolutionist tradition, reverts to realism, as the aim of such a battle is to have a victor. Once the victor has emerged, in their vision the Islamic Republic, an empire arises to dominate the weak. This explains the intertwining of revolutionism and realism. Mobilizing a religious group, such as the Islamic Ummah in Khamenei's vocabulary and the monotheistic club in Ahmadinejad's terms, against an imperial entity such as the United States and its allies suggests the intent of war, which is an institution that opens the channel from revolutionism to realism as it is the foundation for the creation of an empire belonging to the victor.

If religion is used within the revolutionist tradition to invoke mobilization of masses against a defined enemy, in this case the immoral materialistic West led by the United States, a missionary war is intended by those spreading the message. It is within this institution of war where the border between revolutionism become delicate since Ahmadinejad and Khamenei advocate a form of 'messianic universalism' to provoke a missionary war with the vision of creating a religious empire once the battle ends in their favour. Revolutionism and realism then cannot be disentangled from each other at this stage, which is perhaps the reason behind the argumentations used by both the supreme leader and the former president. The quantitative data reflects these high values of revolutionism and realism whilst the discourse exposes the underlying arguments leading us to the point of understanding the relationship between the two traditions in Ahmadinejad and Khamenei's discourses. Despite being played down, rationalism manifests itself occasionally in the speeches of the former president in the same way as in the remarks of the supreme leader particularly if it serves the purpose of achieving their realist

⁴²⁴ Khamenei, "Leader's Hajj Message (2004)"

⁴²⁵ Ahmadinejad, "Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly (2007)" Ahmadinejad, "Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly (2009)" Ahmadinejad, "Address by Mr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad, President of the I.R. of Iran at the 66th Sesson of the UN General Assembly (2011)"

goals of survival and security. The next section focuses on the rationalist dimension linked with the issue of democracy, Palestine and Iraq as well as Iran's nuclear program.

7.4 Democracy, solidarity and the rationalist tradition

Democracy is painted in Iran's foreign policy discourse as a symbol of rationalism and modernity. A faint echo of democracy as discussed by Khatami is evident in the first speech of Ahmadinejad at the UNGA where he described the Islamic Republic of Iran to be 'a symbol of true democracy' and 'it is the manifestation of true democracy in the region' while 'the UN must be the symbol of democracy and the equal rights of nations'.⁴²⁶ Democracy at the national and international level as initially mentioned by Khatami is well reflected and likewise anchored in rationalism when Ahmadinejad says 'all nations must be allowed to exercise their rights on an equal footing and in a democratic process' and people within a country have a say at the national level since 'all officials including the Leader, President, members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, city and village councils are elected through the vote of the citizens' in Iran.⁴²⁷ However, the similarity with Khatami stops there as Ahmadinejad's conceives democracy as linked to 'tranquility, peace, justice and development' achievable only through monotheism, mirroring the supreme leader's view.⁴²⁸ With democracy tied to peace, justice and monotheism, the concept takes on a positive meaning at least for an Islamic republic like Iran. In the following years, Ahmadinejad questions whether Western liberal democracies are genuinely democratic since those 'powers' do not really promote peace:

'Is the development and stockpiling of these deadly weapons designed to promote peace and democracy?...For some powers, claims of promotion of human rights and democracy can only last as long as they can be used as instruments of pressure and intimidation against other nations'.⁴²⁹

'The time has come to an end for those who define democracy and freedom and set standards whilst they themselves are the first who violate its fundamental principles. They can no longer sit both the judge and the executor and challenge the real democratically established governments'.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁶ Ahmadinejad, "Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran at the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly (2005)"

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ Ahmadinejad, "Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 61st Session of the UN General assembly (2006)"

⁴³⁰ Ahmadinejad, "Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly (2009)"

‘Is it acceptable that they call themselves the sole defender of freedom, democracy, and human rights, while they militarily attack and occupy other countries?...Can the flower of democracy blossom from NATO’s missiles, bombs and guns?’⁴³¹

Ahmadinejad also insists on the independence of the General Assembly from the ‘big Powers’ and its role in defining ‘new structures based on justice and democracy... thereby bringing about enduring stability and security’.⁴³² The former president does not relate democracy with the great powers at all due to their abuse of the concept for ‘occupation is introduced as a gift towards promotion of freedom and democracy’.⁴³³ Such statements usually refer to the issue of Iraq and Palestine, which are constant themes in Iranian politics. All Iranian presidents condemn the occupation of Palestine and point out the humanitarian tragedy that has unfolded there resulting from neglect of the international community. Ahmadinejad has been very vocal about these affairs earning him widespread popularity in the Muslim world. He describes the situation in Palestine in a different manner as the previous government, visualizing the situation on the ground through his statements using words that accentuate the crimes against the Palestinians as well as the deprivation of their rights:

‘Women and children are being murdered and adolescents taken prisoner. Houses are being demolished and farms burnt down’.⁴³⁴

‘People are being bombarded in their own homes and their children murdered in their own streets and alleys...It does not matter if people are murdered in Palestine, turned into refugees, captured, imprisoned or besieged; that must not violate human rights’.⁴³⁵

‘The Palestinian people have been displaced or are under heavy military pressure, economic siege or are incarcerated under abhorrent conditions’.⁴³⁶

‘60 years of carnage and invasion is still continuing at the hands of some criminal and occupying Zionists’.⁴³⁷

⁴³¹ Ahmadinejad, “Address by Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the I.R. of Iran at the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly (2011)”

⁴³² Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly (2007)”

⁴³³ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly (2009)”

⁴³⁴ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran at the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly (2005)”

⁴³⁵ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 61st Session of the UN General assembly (2006)”

⁴³⁶ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly (2007)”

⁴³⁷ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly (2008)”

‘Who imposed, through deceits and hypocrisy, the Zionism and over sixty years of war, homelessness, terror and mass murder on the Palestinian people and on countries of the region?’⁴³⁸

Invasion and occupation are two concepts rejected by the rationalist tradition wherein sovereignty and non-interference are the standard norms in international society. Ahmadinejad’s condemnation of the actions against the Palestinian people as well as the invasion of Iraq are telling signs that he subscribes to the rationalist tradition regarding these issues. It serves his purpose of improving Iran’s image as it promotes the idea of Iran being a reliable rationalist modern actor in international society. He strongly believes that ‘that the occupation of other countries under the pretext of freedom and democracy is an unforgivable crime’ questioning the role of Western powers asking whether it is ‘acceptable that they call themselves the sole defender of freedom, democracy, and human rights, while they militarily attack and occupy other countries?’⁴³⁹ The Khatami government had likewise opposed the military invasion of Iraq from the beginning highlighting that ‘the United States waged an unsanctioned war against Iraq’ reflecting ‘lawlessness’ in the international community.⁴⁴⁰ However, it was Ahmadinejad who rubbed the issue on the faces of the Western powers to partly support his revolutionist campaign against the West. He described the situation in Iraq the same way as he did Palestine, with words capturing the minds of his audience, constantly referring to the United States. The U.S. is an ‘occupier...incapable of establishing security in Iraq’ thereby subjecting the Iraqi people to being ‘killed in cold blood’.⁴⁴¹ The attacks of September 11, 2001 was used as a ‘pretext to attack Afghanistan and Iraq, killing, injuring and displacing millions in two countries with the ultimate goal of bringing into its domination the Middle East and its oil resources’.⁴⁴² This echoes Khamenei’s message about the hypocrisy of Washington.

Solidarity with the people of Palestine, Iraq as well as Afghanistan is well reflected in the statements of Ahmadinejad indicative of the rationalist current in his political discourse. But

⁴³⁸ Ahmadinejad, “Address by Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the I.R. of Iran at the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly (2011)”

⁴³⁹ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran at the 65th Session of the UN General Assembly (2010)” Ahmadinejad, “Address by Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the I.R. of Iran at the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly (2011)”

⁴⁴⁰ Kharrazi, “H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 58th Session of the UN General Assembly (2003)” Kharrazi, “H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly (2004)”

⁴⁴¹ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 61st Session of the UN General assembly (2006)”

⁴⁴² Ahmadinejad, “Address by Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the I.R. of Iran at the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly (2011)”

this solidarity is mostly confined to the Middle East resembling the supreme leaders' discourse. Although Ahmadinejad makes few references to Latin American and Asian countries, the main motif of solidarity in his speeches at the General Assembly relates to the Muslim world. This restriction allows him to strengthen his arguments on monotheism. His solidarity with the suffering of the Palestinians', Iraqis' and Afghans', prompting him to verbally fight for their rights at the international stage belongs to the rationalist tradition as much as promoting his conception democracy at the international level. Interestingly, although this theme is fundamentally rationalist in conception, the atrocities suffered by the people in these countries form the basis of Ahmadinejad's revolutionist call to unite nations under the banner of monotheism to counter the evil West. The same goes for Khamenei. As such, the interplay of the traditions becomes evident since all three exist in the same theme but at varying degrees. Take the issue of solidarity. Firstly, Ahmadinejad's solidarity with Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan is rationalist due to the issue of their sovereignty, which has been violated by the West. Secondly, his solidarist statements underscoring the human cost of the tragedies is essentially revolutionist highlighting the importance of moral values he insists could only be found in religion. The tragedies and sufferings of these nations are drawn to be the pretext of forming a religious alliance of monotheistic nation-states to go on a holy war against the U.S. to put an end to these atrocities. Third, with such strategy of fighting and envisioning triumph over the 'powers' Ahmadinejad crosses the boundary of revolutionism reaching realism where he foresees the establishment of a religious empire.⁴⁴³ Here Ahmadinejad's connection to the political discourses of the supreme leader becomes apparent as they are identical.

7.5 Iran's nuclear program and rationalism

2002 was the year that Iran's nuclear program was revealed to the world beginning more than a decade-long crisis between Iran and the international community. Khatami sought diplomacy over confrontation proposing a grand bargain in 2003, which the United States rejected. Khatami was not disheartened, continued negotiations with the U.K., France and Germany (EU3) and paused uranium enrichment. When Ahmadinejad came into power, nuclear activities resumed provoking stern responses from the U.K., France, Russia, United States, China and Germany (P5+1). Ahmadinejad then blatantly argued for Iran's rights to have a peaceful nuclear program. Being a signatory of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Iran is entitled to have a nuclear facility for civilian purposes to generate energy. However, the

⁴⁴³ Please refer to Buzan's graph towards the end of the previous section (7.3). The graph first appears in Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework.

international community has been highly suspicious of Iran's nuclear activities with the U.S. and its allies claiming that Iran's genuine intention is to make nuclear weapons. As Ahmadinejad stepped up his rhetoric demanding Iran's rights for a peaceful nuclear program, negotiations became complicated and at times halted, while the UN and the European Union (EU) with the help of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) determined whether Iran received sanctions or not. Ahmadinejad's insistence on Iran's rights to access nuclear technology reflect the rationalist institution of international law in his political discourses. With such a rationalist view, he expects the United Nations to be a platform for interaction of sovereign nation-states in international society. The UN should be free from the vestiges of the realist institutions of balance-of-power and great power management but the United States and its allies dominate the agenda of other nation-states through the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This argument is not unknown in Iranian political discourse and was already evident in Khatami's speeches but it was Ahmadinejad who publicized it. Having the right to a peaceful nuclear program, Iran technically should be protected under international law according to the rationalist tradition. By this logic, the UN and IAEA are tasked to safeguard Iran's rights under the NPT stating that signatories can have access to such technology for civilian purposes. Ahmadinejad is well aware of this noting that:

'Nuclear energy is clean and cheap and a heavenly gift which is amongst the most suitable alternatives to cut the pollutions emanating from fossil fuels. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) allows all member States to use nuclear energy without limits and the International Atomic Energy Agency is mandated to provide member States with technical and legal support'.⁴⁴⁴

The former president's demands and expectations then were not completely unfounded but due to the United States' and its allies' persistence on halting, and if possible denying, Iran's access to nuclear technology, his rhetoric became highly confrontational escalating the nuclear crisis further. It is here where Ahmadinejad's rationalism is seen to be limited to the institution of international law and not diplomacy. The former president sought to expose the scandal of how the United States and its Western allies dominated the world in his speeches primarily due to their reluctance to grant Iran's request of having a nuclear program to save Iran's tarnished reputation. His exposé was grounded in a revolutionist vision with monotheism, morality and justice as the frontrunners of his speeches. This allows his government to justify their actions

⁴⁴⁴ Ahmadinejad, "Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran at the 65th Session of the UN General Assembly (2010)"

of resisting such immoral materialistic powers, becoming more evident during the nuclear negotiations.

In some statements, Ahmadinejad briefly refers to the rationalist institution of balance of power, asserting that the power of the U.S. and the West should be limited. He says: ‘today, the thought of hegemony quickly becomes a demerit’ and the ‘next rulers’ of the world ‘must limit interference to their own borders’.⁴⁴⁵ He claims ‘it is no longer acceptable that a small minority would dominate the politics, economy and culture of vast parts of the world by its complicated networks, and establish a new form of slavery, and harm the reputation of other nations’.⁴⁴⁶ Non-interference in the rationalist perspective is his most striking theme where he proclaims:

‘It is not acceptable that some who are several thousands of kilometres away from the Middle East would send in their troops for military intervention and for spreading war, bloodshed, aggression, terror and intimidation in the whole region while blaming the protests of nations in the region, that are concerned about their fate and their national security, as a move against peace and as interference in others’ affairs’.⁴⁴⁷

He questions the institution of Great Power Management, understood in the realist tradition as closely linked to war, by throwing a rhetorical question in one of his speeches: ‘Is it acceptable that they call themselves the sole defender of freedom, democracy, and human rights, while they militarily attack and occupy other countries?’ while at the same time asking for a justification for the presence of hundreds of U.S. military bases around the globe.⁴⁴⁸ Highlighting the military actions of the United States and its dominance in the international society effectively challenges the rightfulness of the system where, in Ahmadinejad’s view, is unjustly treating Iran manifested by the nuclear crisis.

The rationalist institution of international law dictates that treaties are binding, rules are codified into law and these laws must be followed accordingly. Depriving Iran of a peaceful nuclear program despite being a signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) then defies the directive of rationalism, a point Ahmadinejad makes at the General Assembly each year. He says ‘nations are not equal in exercising their rights recognized by international law. Enjoying these rights is dependent on the whim of certain major powers’.⁴⁴⁹ The hegemonic powers, with

⁴⁴⁵ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly (2008)”

⁴⁴⁶ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly (2009)”

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Ahmadinejad, “Address by Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the I.R. of Iran at the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly (2011)”

⁴⁴⁹ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 61st Session of the UN General assembly (2006)”

policies and actions rooted in the realist tradition, see technological progress of nations such as Iran as a ‘challenge to their monopoly on these important instruments’ such as nuclear technology.⁴⁵⁰ The former president accuses the powers of derailing ‘Iran’s nuclear issue from its legal tracks, and have politicized the atmosphere to impose their wishes through taking advantage of all their potential’ effectively depriving ‘the Iranian people of all their inalienable rights’.⁴⁵¹ Double standards have also been brought up as he insists that some powers who ‘drafted disarmament regulations’ ‘test and stockpile new generations of lethal weapons’ daily.⁴⁵² He claims that the powers themselves do not abide by the regulations they have set up, supposedly illegal under the rationalist institution of international law.

In 2008, Ahmadinejad’s statement contained a line that could have come from a moderate like Khatami: ‘Iranian nation is for dialogue, but it has not accepted and will not accept illegal demands’.⁴⁵³ He effectively expressed his government’s willingness to participate in negotiations, a move reflecting the rationalist institution of diplomacy in the former president’s political discourse. In keeping the option of dialogue open, he hinted at the probability of rationally solving the nuclear crisis if the U.S. and its allies accept Iran’s rights under the NPT to have a civilian nuclear program. He once again resorts to the rationalist institution of international law as he emphasized that ‘illegal demands’ won’t be accepted. Such a rationalist understanding of international law should normally be accompanied by a rationalist comprehension of diplomacy and until 2008, this was the case in Ahmadinejad’s statements. However, the rationalist institution of diplomacy in his discourses were replaced by realism evident in the escalating tension between Washington and Tehran. The more Iran perceived the demands of the P5+1 as ‘illegal’, the more the situation intensified as coercion became a tool on both sides. Sanctions were imposed while Iran simply stopped negotiating, ultimately leading to a deadlock in 2010.

Nevertheless, before the crisis escalated, Ahmadinejad’s statements reflected vestiges of the rationalist tradition indicating their presence within the political worldview of even a highly conservative president with harsh rhetoric against the United States and the West. Despite the dominance of revolutionism and realism in Ahmadinejad’s foreign policy discourse, hints of

⁴⁵⁰ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran at the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly (2005)”

⁴⁵¹ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly (2007)”

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the I.R. of Iran before the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly (2008)”

rationalism wherein diplomacy, international law and other rationalist institutions of international society remained rendering some hope in reaching an agreement. Yet such hope, ended up in complications ultimately leading to a deadlock in the nuclear program negotiations.

7.6 Conclusion

Ahmadinejad's foreign policy discourse mirrors Khamenei's in many respects showing their connection to each other and the consistency of Iran's foreign policy at least at the discursive level. This means the supreme leader's strategies are reflected in the former presidents' political statements although with slight improvisations. Discussing the realist actions of the United States in terms of Washington's power and capacity to cause devastation and suffering without being accountable, Ahmadinejad affirms the threat Iran is exposed to. This in turn, reasserts Iran's fundamentally realist goal of survival in the anarchical world, which can only be achieved through rationalist means and a revolutionist vision. Rationalism in Ahmadinejad's political discourse is tied to his defence of Iran's right to a civilian nuclear program, his solidarity with Iraq and Palestine as well as promoting Iran's democracy to improve the image of the Islamic Republic. Rationalism in international society is a must to prove reliability facilitating good relations with other states. Ahmadinejad's revolutionist vision, similar to Khamenei's vision, is tied to religion but instead of Islam, the former president focuses on monotheism to be more inclusive. In the same way as the supreme leader, he offers religion to be the solution to the problems of mankind promoting values and morals. With such vision, Ahmadinejad wants to create a believer's camp to fight the materialistic greedy realist non-believers devoid of morals led by the United States. This of course reverts back to Iran's realist agenda as when the battle ends in Iran's favour, then it will be in a position of power with its goal of survival secured in the establishment of an Islamic or at least monotheistic empire. Thus, we see that Iran's foreign policy is consistent and fundamentally realist with a revolutionist vision but achieved through rationalist means.

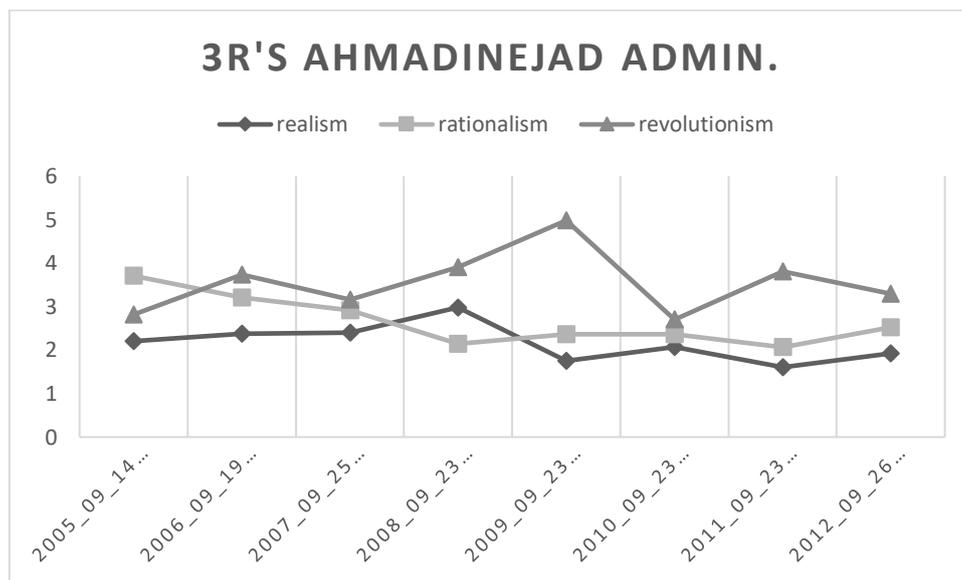
Ahmadinejad's mainly realist statements about the unjust world order led by hegemonic powers such as the United States at the UNGA are plentiful. He calls attention to the suffering of weaker states in the international system caused by the institutionalization of the domination of Western powers. The former president characterizes the actions of Washington in the Middle East as immoral and materialistic, traits attributed to actors practicing realism. He believes that the UN Security Council is being manipulated by the West to achieve their own interest and exploit international community. This is based on his rationalist understanding of the UN being an unbiased platform for sovereign states to interact. The West's disregard for international law,

evident in the military intervention of the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan, is also highlighted by Ahmadinejad. He strongly rejects the dominance of the United States claiming it is not the master of the world underscoring the negativity of the realist institution of balance of power. Likewise, he condemns the realist institution of war, which he sees Washington use in Iraq to pursue its own interests in the Middle East.

These 'realist' flaws were mentioned by his predecessor, former President Khatami as his government disagreed with unilateralist policies, particularly the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the order of the international system based on Cold War mentality. However, Khatami did not blatantly revert to a religious revolutionist vision and instead remained within the rationalist framework as he envisioned to solve the problems of human society through cooperation and the Dialogue among Civilizations (DAC). It is this point wherein Khatami implicates revolutionism without a missionary religious agenda in the same way as Ahmadinejad and the supreme leader.

Ahmadinejad's realist conception of the United States is meant to legitimise his missionary agenda of gaining allies to fight the West and end all the world's current problems in a revolutionist endeavour identical to Khamenei's strategy by bringing back morality and values. His emphasis on monotheism and the return of the Hidden Imam alongside Jesus Christ to bring justice and peace to the world is a deeply embedded theme in his speeches. Ahmadinejad delegates a significant amount of time preaching to the international political elites in the same way Khamenei addresses his followers. The main difference is that the supreme leader limits the vision of success to Islam and creating an Islamic Civilization with the understanding of non-Muslims converting to Islam. Ahmadinejad though, stresses monotheism and accepts the diversity of such religions in conquering the non-believers led by the immoral United States. Unlike Khamenei, Ahmadinejad is careful not to call the United States 'the Devil' perhaps still hoping that through his lectures at the UN, Washington may change its mind. Ahmadinejad's missionary war is not about good versus evil, which the supreme leader advocates, rather it is believers versus non-believers still presenting the binary opposition required by the revolutionist tradition with such war waged against heretics. Apart from legitimising Iran's revolutionist foreign policy discourse of creating allies against the West, realism is not utilised by Ahmadinejad to imply Iran's disposition as a regional power as it defeats the very purpose of Iran being the anti-imperialist agent in the world. Interestingly, as the graph below shows, revolutionism peaked in 2009, the year of the disputed Iranian presidential elections wherein the 'Green Revolution' protests broke out as claims of election fraud surfaced. If the

revolutionism represents the moral spectrum the Ahmadinejad government is propagating, it makes sense that at such a controversial period in Iran, the former president emphasizes his religious revolutionist vision. His statement at the General Assembly, a few months after being re-elected, focused on revolutionist themes abroad instead of at home. He reiterated Iran's commitment to fighting for the Palestinian cause showing his solidarity for the Palestinians and other people suffering in the region who have been deprived of their rights victimized by the injustices mainly perpetrated by the West.



Graph 15. The three traditions during the Ahmadinejad administration.

As we can see above, despite an emphasis on revolutionism and the fight against the West, Ahmadinejad's statements contain a significant amount of rationalism and at the first term of his presidency it surpasses revolutionism marking the transition and perhaps the influence of the former president. Ahmadinejad speaks frequently of the General Assembly as an institution wherein states all have an equal say reflecting the rationalist institution of balance of power in his political discourse. His message of solidarity with the Palestinians, Iraqis and Afghans suggests a rationalist understanding of international affairs where the norms of non-intervention and sovereignty prevail, which is why he highly condemns the military intervention of the United States. Yet his description of the dire consequences of the intervention, especially the suffering of the people of Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan can be interpreted as a strategy to attract more allies in his revolutionist agenda against the West. Rationalism, in its purest form is best seen in Ahmadinejad's demands in exercising Iran's rights as dictated by the NPT in gaining access to nuclear technology for civilian purposes wherein he implicates the rationalist institution of international law. Such move is consistent throughout all the presidencies as well as in the statements of the supreme leader indicating that they are all aware of their rights under

international law and that the international society of sovereign nation-states must respect their rights. After all, Iran is in fact a signatory of the NPT and is not making baseless claims.

8 Rouhani's Foreign Policy Discourse

Towards the end of Ahmadinejad's presidency, the threat to Iran's survival was imminent and the former president's revolutionist vision had only helped exacerbate the situation. Tehran's isolation from the West was at its height and the sanctions were devastating Iran's economy. At a certain point, access to some basic food and commodities started to become an issue and to secure it, the government turned to barter. Practically, a rationalist approach was needed as a means for the Islamic Republic to solve the economic problem and threat to their survival. It had been more than a decade since Iran had been negotiating with the West regarding its nuclear program before Rouhani was elected President of the Islamic Republic in 2013. The Ahmadinejad administration had steered the country into a deadlock over the nuclear program back in 2010 and it did not take long before the economy suffered from the harsh sanctions, deliberately targeted the banking and oil industries. A good example is the drastic reduction of EU imports of non-agricultural products, fuels and chemicals from Iran between 2012 and 2013, falling to almost nothing recovering only in 2016.⁴⁵⁴ Simultaneously during this period, the Arab uprisings were dramatically changing the political landscape of the Middle East with Syria and Iraq suffering from internal turmoil fuelling further instability in the region. Rouhani had the mandate of fixing Iran's economy by negotiating the country's nuclear program with the United States and the West, to ideally re-establish ties and secure a degree of internal stability that could support a stronger Iran in the region.

His presidency embodied a more rationalist approach mirroring Khatami and this time around, the world was listening to what Iran had to say especially after international society had experienced Ahmadinejad's fiery revolutionist rhetoric. Despite the overtly rationalist foreign policy discourse of Rouhani, however, Iran's realist foreign policy and the revolutionist vision accompanying it were far from dormant. It was the first time Iran was directly described by its president as a regional power at the United Nations, indicating the realist dimension of Rouhani's foreign policy discourse. The former president sparingly uses the revolutionist vision in his statements, but when he does it resembles Khatami's conception. I elaborate more on this interplay of the three traditions in Rouhani's political discourse below.

⁴⁵⁴ European Commission, "Iran," European Union, http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_111518.pdf, 2

8.1 Moderation, Democracy and the rationalist tradition

Moderation is Rouhani's anchor in Iran's political sphere proclaiming it at the United Nations the year he was first elected saying that 'the Iranian people, in a judiciously sober choice in the recent elections, voted for the discourse of hope, foresight and prudent moderation – both at home and abroad'.⁴⁵⁵ Through the popular election of Rouhani, a moderate key figure once again surfaced in Iranian politics reflecting the promise of a reliable Islamic Republic in dealing with the world – a far cry from the harshly confrontational government of Ahmadinejad. With Rouhani in power, Iran sought to redefine itself within a rationalist framework wherein institutions of international society play a significant role in the country's interactions with the outside world resembling Khatami's approach. As such, development, cooperation and understanding are argued to be the key elements in achieving peace and prosperity in international society.⁴⁵⁶ Regional cooperation, for instance, has been a recurring theme in Iran's foreign policy discourse, further exhibited by the preference to negotiate and settle conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy, evident in Iran's nuclear negotiations. This led to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as well as Rouhani's World against Violence and Extremism (WAVE) initiative.

In his first speech at the General Assembly in 2013, Rouhani had already expressed the 'hope of preference of dialogue over conflict, and moderation over extremism' signalling to the world that Iran had a different approach to international affairs.⁴⁵⁷ He says:

'The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that all challenges can be managed – successfully – through a smart, judicious blend of hope and moderation. Hope is founded on the belief in the universal will of the people across the globe to combat violence and extremism, to cherish change, to oppose imposed structures, to value choice, and to act in accordance with human responsibility. Hope is no doubt one of the greatest gifts bestowed upon human beings by their All-Loving Creator. And moderation is to think and move in a wise, judicious manner, conscious of the time and the space, and to align exalted ideals with choice of effective strategies and policies, while cognizant of objective realities'.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁵ Hassan Rouhani, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2013)," United Nations, accessed May 23, 2015, http://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/68/IR_en.pdf

⁴⁵⁶ Hassan Rouhani, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2014)," United Nations, accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.un.org/en/ga/69/meetings/gadebate/pdf/IR_en.pdf

⁴⁵⁷ Rouhani, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2013)"

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

The rationalist tradition is reflected in his statements as it touches upon dialogue and moderation in ways to avoid conflict and extremism. Although he mentions the ‘Creator’, which has so far been related to the revolutionist tradition and the missionary war concept propagated by the supreme leader and, to an extent, Ahmadinejad, it takes on a more rationalist meaning. Rouhani connects it with universal solidarity instead of creating a binary opposition of good and evil. Instead of promoting monotheism as his predecessor relentlessly did, he links hope to religion and moderation claiming that such a setting ‘will ensure a bright future for the world’ and his hope ‘emanates from the belief shared by all divine religions that a good and bright future awaits the world’.⁴⁵⁹

Iran’s image is effectively altered by Rouhani’s moderate tone and he capitalizes on this in promulgating the country’s potential to act within the confines of rationalism, which is much valued at the United Nations. He positions Iran as a reliable actor insisting on cooperation instead of conflict in resolving issues in the region. He stressed that Iran is ‘a moderate and independent nation’ and ‘while some of the countries around Iran have fallen prey to war and turmoil, Iran remains secure, stable and calm’.⁴⁶⁰

‘There are moderate politicians and elites in our region who enjoy the confidence of their peoples. They are neither anti-Western nor pro-Western. While aware of the role of colonialism in the backwardness of their nations, they are not neglectful of the role of their nations in reaching the development they seek. They do not absolve the West from its misdeeds, but are also aware of their own failings. These leaders can take positions of active leadership by attracting the confidence of the people in their societies and establish the strongest national and international coalitions against violence. The voices of these leaders are the true voices of moderation in the Islamic world; the familiar sound of an Afghan tired of war; an Iraqi victim of extremism, a Syrian fearful of terrorism; and a Lebanese worried over violence and sectarianism’.⁴⁶¹

‘All nations of the region have to keep in mind that we are in the same boat. Thus, we need broad cooperation with regard to social and political as well as security and defence issues with a view to reaching common and durable understandings. Had we had greater cooperation and coordination in the Middle East, thousands of innocent Palestinians in Gaza would not have been fallen victim to Zionist regime’s aggression... We support any measure to promote cooperation between Islamic nations to combat extremism, threats, and aggression, and in this connection, are prepared to play our permanent constructive and positive role.’⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Rouhani, “Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2014)”

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

Solidarity with the suffering of the people in Palestine, Iraq, Syria and Yemen is part of the political discourse of the Islamic Republic regardless of the political figure. It is normally connected to Iran's revolutionist vision as they represent the cases to be addressed through morals and values found in religion. However, instead of using it as a pretext for revolutionism, Rouhani uses the issue to advocate cooperation, a rationalist move. The rationalist team-player and peace-maker spirit voiced by Khatami during his presidency had once again emerged renewing the optimism of international society. Demonization has no place in his statements and no characterization of an evil empire or powerful state, which needs to be defeated by a moral religious army. The revolutionist vision of Ahmadinejad and Khamenei is non-existent in Rouhani's foreign policy discourse. Amidst tension with some countries in the region and the West, Rouhani insists on re-establishing ties through cooperation:

Iran's policy 'is to continue our peace-seeking efforts in the region based on the same win-win principle, and act in a way that would lead to all in the region and world benefiting from these new conditions. This opportunity can be seized in order to look to the future and avoid focusing on the past and rebuild our relationships with the countries in the region, particularly with our neighbours, based on mutual respect and our common and collective interests'.⁴⁶³

Mutual respect, common and collective interests are core rationalist concepts, while identifying shared interests is key to cooperation. The use of these terminologies signals the dominance of rationalism in Rouhani's political discourse. He cites the JCPOA as an example for the win-win approach to encourage countries in the region to cooperate in resolving issues asserting that 'the Muslim people, be they Shi'as or Sunnis, have and continue to live together for centuries in harmony and mutual respect' putting forward the pretext for regional cooperation.⁴⁶⁴

Rouhani echoed Khatami's concept of religious democracy claiming 'the realization of democracy consistent with religion and the peaceful transfer of executive power manifested that Iran is the anchor of stability in an otherwise ocean of regional instabilities'.⁴⁶⁵ Peace is attainable through stability, which is in turn a result of democracy. Iran thereby defends 'peace based on democracy and the ballot box everywhere' believing 'there are no violent solutions to world crises'.⁴⁶⁶ As such Rouhani argues that 'securing peace and democracy and ensuring the

⁴⁶³ Rouhani, "Address by Mr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2015)"

⁴⁶⁴ Hassan Rouhani, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2016)," United Nations, accessed February 2, 2017, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/71/71_IR_en.pdf

⁴⁶⁵ Rouhani, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2013)"

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

legitimate rights of all countries in the world, including in the Middle East, cannot – and will not – be realized through militarism’.⁴⁶⁷ The rationalist current makes itself apparent in his use of the terms peace, democracy and rights in his statements. For rationalists, war should be mitigated and avoided as much as possible as it disrupts peace and order. Rouhani excluding militarism in the quest for securing peace, democracy and rights indicates his adherence to the rationalist tradition, at least on the discursive level. Rouhani does not blatantly condemn militarism as evil acts such as Ahmadinejad and the supreme leader as he does not intend on creating binary oppositions of good and evil to promulgate a revolutionist vision of a missionary war against the heretics in the system. This proves that Rouhani’s foreign policy discourse is largely based on rationalism for demonizing a state hampers the willingness of states to cooperate.

When it comes to the topic of democracy, Rouhani is convinced it is a ‘product of growth and development’, it ‘is not an export’ commodity which ‘can be commercially imported from the West to the East’ and thereby cannot be imposed as it ‘leads only to a weak and vulnerable government’.⁴⁶⁸ This way of discussing democracy is different from Ahmadinejad who insisted Iran has the right kind of democracy. For Rouhani, assisting countries in achieving democracy like in ‘the establishment of democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan’ is part of Iran’s foreign policy agenda in the region as the country defends ‘the rule of the majority that respects the rights of minorities’.⁴⁶⁹ Here we see the faint reverberation of Iran setting itself as an example for the countries of the region – a theme of Khamenei and Ahmadinejad’s political discourse. Apart from democracy at the national level, Rouhani reiterates both Khatami and Ahmadinejad’s view of attaining ‘genuine democracy’ and ‘real participatory approach’ at the ‘transnational levels’, which he says can ‘combat criminal and terrorist networks’.⁴⁷⁰ Rouhani’s rationalist endeavour of cooperation materializes through democracy in the form of an initiative called the WAVE. He introduced this concept in 2013 to combat an issue affecting all nation-states in international society.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ Rouhani, “Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2014)”

⁴⁶⁹ Rouhani, “Address by Mr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2015)”

⁴⁷⁰ Rouhani, “Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2016)”

8.2 World Against Violence and Extremism (WAVE)

Terrorism has plagued the international society and has intensified following the tragic attacks of September 11, 2001. Islam became associated with terrorism and Iran was not spared from the suspicions. Tehran was allegedly supporting terrorists legitimizing the sanctions against the Islamic Republic. When Khatami was in power, he wanted to engage with the world to give Iran's image a positive turn. Hence, he initiated the Dialogue Among Civilizations (DAC) in 1997, which was later overshadowed by the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. Rouhani learned from Khatami, he wants to change the distorted view that terrorism has bestowed upon the Islamic world. Hence, he initiated the WAVE at the General Assembly in 2013. He invited 'all states, international organizations and civil institutions to join this effort of combating terrorism', i.e. to join WAVE, and to 'start thinking about "Coalition for Enduring Peace" all across the globe instead of the ineffective "Coalitions for War" in various parts of the world'.⁴⁷¹ Whereas Khatami's DAC was the anti-thesis of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations, Rouhani's Coalition for Enduring Peace is Iran's reaction against Coalitions for War and the War on Terror. Rouhani hopes his approach will open a new horizon in international affairs where 'peace will prevail over war, tolerance over violence, progress over bloodletting, justice over discrimination, prosperity over poverty, and freedom over despotism'.⁴⁷² Framing the eradication of terrorism as the international society's common interest, to pursue cooperation and achieve peace through the WAVE, further strengthens Rouhani's rationalist political discourse. Violent means and militarism do not have a place in his WAVE project. Speaking of ending terrorism through peace negotiations, diplomacy and cooperation demonstrate Iran's capacity to remain within the rationalist tradition when dealing with international issues. Addressing problems does not have to involve an extreme revolutionist vision put forward by Ahmadinejad and Khamenei where the world is divided between good and evil, which incites hatred and war.

Rouhani encourages states in the Middle East to 'form a coalition and accept to shoulder the responsibility of leadership to counter violence and terrorism' since the pain 'is better known by the countries in the region'.⁴⁷³ Terrorism affects Muslims of all sects and in the Middle East alone, it claims more lives compared to all Western countries combined. Rouhani's WAVE

⁴⁷¹ Rouhani, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2013)"

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ Rouhani, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2014)"

initiative became a resolution and was welcomed by the international community. He highlights that it ‘requires well-intended solutions and the use of experiences gained in the realm of diplomacy...with a view to fighting ignorance, dictatorship, poverty, corruption, terrorism, violence and their social, political, cultural, economic and security impacts’.⁴⁷⁴ For him, the success of Iran’s nuclear negotiations is a blueprint in forming a ‘United Front Against Extremism and Violence’, citing the deal with the West as an example of working together in solving an issue in favour of the interest of the international society.⁴⁷⁵ Rouhani provides a rationalist guideline of action in tackling the global problem of extremism and violence, manifested by terrorism, involving dialogue, cooperation and diplomacy. He urges states to:

‘Create a collective and global movement to tackle regional problems in a serious manner through dialogue.

Prevent the slaughter of innocent people and the bombardment of civilians, as well as the promotion of violence and killing of other human beings.

Provide for stability in cooperation with established central governments to maintain stability and once stability is established, build diplomacy and democratic governance in the Middle East region’.⁴⁷⁶

Peace through dialogue and cooperation is the aim of such a movement, it is a standard hallmark of rationalism for it rejects violence and war. After all, it takes the cooperation of the entire world to combat such a global problem and the best means to achieve any sort of success is through dialogue and diplomacy. Militarism, as we have seen, has done little to solve the issue and in some ways, it has exacerbated terrorism. Rouhani refers to the U.S. ‘war on terror’ as an example. It has ‘sown the seeds of borderless terrorism everywhere on earth’ and ‘we need to find out which approaches, policies and erroneous actions paved the way for the spread of insecurity throughout the world...and what would be the picture the world 15 years from now’.⁴⁷⁷ The world should be open to non-military alternatives in tackling such problems effectively finding solutions within the rationalist tradition. This means relying on the rationalist institution of diplomacy and international law to achieve peace by eradicating terrorism and promoting the stability of the countries in the Middle East. Rouhani is optimistic in spite of all the difficulties. He ‘deeply’ believes that ‘moderation will prevail over extremism, peace will triumph over violence, enlightenment will overcome ignorance, and finally justice

⁴⁷⁴ Rouhani, “Address by Mr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2015)”

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Rouhani, “Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2016)”

will rise above injustice'.⁴⁷⁸ It is here where revolutionism be seen as he stresses: 'what is important is that belief, hope and efforts are towards realizing peace and justice and there is no doubt that the Almighty will assist all those who endeavour towards peace, justice and moderation'.⁴⁷⁹ He does make mention of God as all the other Iranian leaders do in their speeches, however, his approach is much more subtle. Rouhani connects it with a rationalist view of international affairs rather than giving it a revolutionist missionary character, trademark of Ahmadinejad and Khamenei. Following the footsteps of Khatami, Rouhani projects a rationalist image of Iran. His government has achieved something which was not possible for many decades in negotiating the nuclear program with the West. In particular, directly talking with the United States had showcased Iran's potential in championing the rationalist institution of diplomacy. Here's where the JCPOA comes in.

8.3 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

Iran's nuclear program and Ahmadinejad's confrontational approach made the world hold its breath as tensions escalated towards the end of his presidency. Once Rouhani was elected, there was a sigh of relief in Iran and the international community. Governments of Iran, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, Russia and Germany (P5+1) wanted to find a peaceful means of ending the deadlock. Rouhani's adoption of the rationalist institution of diplomacy in his foreign policy discourse marked a change in tone. Ahmadinejad had likewise engaged with the institution of diplomacy but with realist conduct of coercion and defiance, which did not end favourably for all the parties involved. In a rationalist note, Rouhani says:

'There is no issue or dossier that cannot be resolved through reliance on hope and prudent moderation, mutual respect, and rejection of violence and extremism. Iran's nuclear dossier is a case in point. As clearly stated by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, acceptance of the inalienable right of Iran constitutes the best and the easiest way of resolving this issue...I listened carefully to the statement made by President Obama today at the General Assembly. Commensurate with the political will of the leadership in the United States and hoping that they will refrain from following the short-sighted interest of warmongering pressure groups, we can arrive at a framework to manage our differences. To this end, equal footing, mutual respect, and the recognized principles of international law should govern the interactions. Of course, we expect to hear a consistent voice from Washington'.⁴⁸⁰

Paving the way to restarting the nuclear negotiations with the West, Rouhani's remarks reopened the rationalist chapter in Iran's foreign policy discourse. Although the rationalist

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ Rouhani, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2013)"

institution of international law regarding Iran's nuclear program had been outlined by Ahmadinejad, it was Rouhani's presentation of the issue, which fixed rationalism in the nuclear issue. He was an experienced rationalist, ready to cooperate and showed an understanding of the concerns of the international community since he negotiated Iran's nuclear program during the last three years of Khatami's presidency.⁴⁸¹ Rouhani stated that the international community and the United States, has to accept and implement 'the right to enrichment inside' the country, insisting that Iran 'seeks constructive engagement with other countries based on mutual respect and common interest, and within the same framework does not seek to increase tensions with the United States'.⁴⁸² Emphasizing words such as 'equal footing', 'mutual respect' and 'common interest', makes Rouhani's remarks resemble the very lines describing the code of conduct in the rationalist institution of diplomacy as stated by Bull and Wight, which I discussed in the theory chapter, section 2.4.1. Iran wants to be on equal terms with the P5+1 in negotiating the nuclear program and equal also meant in terms of respect.

The United States reciprocated the positive signal from Rouhani. Not long after his statement at the General Assembly in September 2013, Rouhani had a historic phone call with former President Barack Obama. It was the first high-level direct contact between the two countries in 34 years demonstrating the readiness of Iran and the United States to diplomatically engage with each other to peacefully solve the nuclear issue. Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, who was formerly the country's ambassador to the UN headed the talks with the P5+1 countries as he became the chief negotiator of Iran for the nuclear issue. The following year at the General Assembly, Rouhani once again restated his country's commitment to solving the nuclear issue through diplomacy:

'We are committed to continue our peaceful nuclear program, including enrichment, and to enjoy our full nuclear rights on Iranian soil within the framework of international law. We are determined to continue negotiations with our interlocutors in earnest and good faith, based on mutual respect and confidence, removal of concerns of both sides as well as equal footing and recognized international norms and principles. I believe mutual adherence to the strict implementation of commitments and obligations and avoidance of excessive demands in the negotiations by our counterparts is the prerequisite for the success of the negotiations. A final accord regarding Iran's peaceful

⁴⁸¹ Walter Posch, "Mäßigung statt Neuanfang: Iran nach den Präsidentschaftswahlen 2013," *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*, 2013, 8, accessed June 2, 2017, https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/aktuell/2013A39_poc.pdf; Kasten and Gomari-Luksch, "An eye for an eye: bargaining theory, mistrust, and the Iranian nuclear crisis," 241

⁴⁸² Rouhani, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2013)"

nuclear program can serve as the beginning of multilateral collaboration aimed at promoting security, peace and development in our region and beyond'.⁴⁸³

He spoke in the language of rationalism, welcomed with great optimism by the international society. Based on the definition of rationalism presented in the theory chapter, this statement of Rouhani perfectly meets the standards of the rationalist institution of diplomacy as he highlights negotiations on equal terms as well as the goal of cooperation within the region. The rationalist institution of international law where codification of rules and respect for the binding nature of treaties and agreements are likewise reflected in his statement above. Avoiding conflict, to maintain peace and order, a key element of rationalism was also reiterated as he says: 'We are of the view that the nuclear issue could only be resolved through negotiation, and those who may think of any other solution are committing a grave mistake'.⁴⁸⁴ Such a renewed image of an Iran actively engaged in diplomacy, which international society has encouraged for the sake of international security regarding Iran's nuclear program, was not welcomed, nevertheless, with the same enthusiasm by some states in the Middle East. Iran's Arab neighbours started to feel threatened by an emerging regional power no longer viewed as a pariah by the West at least while the negotiations were going on.

Once the JCPOA agreement was reached after many rounds of negotiations, Rouhani reassured the international community that 'Iran, due to the important fatwa of its leader and its defence doctrine, has never had the intention of producing a nuclear weapon' aimed to ease the fears of countries claiming Tehran is after the bomb.⁴⁸⁵ Rouhani was proud in proclaiming the success of the negotiations making a statement, which radiated with rationalism:

'From the standpoint of international law, this instrument sets a strong precedent where, for the first time, two sides rather than negotiating peace after war, engaged in dialogue and understanding before the eruption of conflict. The nuclear deal which is a brilliant example of "victory over war", has managed to disburse the clouds of hostility and perhaps even the spectre of another war and extensive tensions from the Middle East... Through the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, we were not solely seeking a nuclear deal. We want to suggest a new and constructive way to recreate the international order. An order based on mutual respect, non-intervention in the internal affairs of others as well as on sustained cooperation and co-existence between the members of the United Nations'.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸³ Rouhani, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2014)"

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Rouhani, "Address by Mr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2015)"

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

Effectively, Rouhani was promoting the rationalist tradition to the international society suggesting a new way of recreating international order in favour of rationalism. After all, following the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, unilateralism and military intervention initiated by Washington prevailed in international society. This of course follows the realist doctrine and Iranian statesmen, especially the Khamenei and Ahmadinejad, called the world's attention to it in their statements.

A year on after the deal, Rouhani continues to promote the rationalist ideal of cooperation and resolving issues through diplomacy citing the JCPOA as a product achieved through 'moderation, constructive interaction and the promotion of dialogue' bringing 'a long, complicated and unnecessary crisis to an end by adopting a win-win approach'.⁴⁸⁷ He declares that 'the JCPOA contains important lessons for resolving complicated international problems' advertising it to be a blueprint for solving Iran's issues in the region.⁴⁸⁸ However, Iran's eagerness to resolve issues to bring peace and stability in the Middle East may contain a tinge of realism and the states in the Middle East are well aware of this.

8.4 The relic of the realist and revolutionist tradition

The sheer amount of perfectly rationalist statements of Rouhani makes it easy to assume that due to the dominance rationalism, realism and revolutionism are obsolete in his political discourse. This is, unfortunately, not the case. Revolutionism and realism have had very low occurrences in Rouhani's speeches. Both have an average of 1.41% and 1.47% respectively during the first term of his presidency demonstrating their existence in his foreign policy discourse. True enough, there are issues Rouhani addresses in the realist language and the strongest of it was in 2013, where realism reached a high of 2.12% of the entire text. He clearly mentions Iran's status as a regional power indicating that in the Middle East, Iran's definition of the institution of balance of power is realist in conception. 'In foreign policy...the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a regional power, will act responsibly with regard to regional and international security, and is willing and prepared to cooperate in these fields, bilaterally as well as multilaterally, with other responsible actors'.⁴⁸⁹ By saying 'cooperation with other responsible actors' he acknowledges the existence of other regional powers, such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey engaging the institution of great power management. He refers to the

⁴⁸⁷ Rouhani, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2016)"

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ Rouhani, "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2013)"

institution at the regional level and with a rationalist intent since he condemns the realist dimension of this institution. He says: ‘pursuit of expansionist strategies and objectives and attempts to change the regional balance through proxies cannot be camouflaged behind humanitarian rhetoric’.⁴⁹⁰ His rejection of realist practices in international relations constitutes most of the content of the realist tradition in much the same way as his predecessors and the supreme leader. In line with his arguments regarding violence and extremism, Rouhani denounces the old ways of militarism and coercion aimed at domination and subjugation of others hinting at the past actions of the West.⁴⁹¹ Strategic blunders like ‘occupation, invasion and military intervention’ made at the expense of maintaining hegemony have caused the region to transform into ‘a haven for terrorists and extremists’.⁴⁹² This affirms the continuity of the anti-imperialist discourse running through all the statements of Iran’s statesmen.

Rouhani proclaims that: ‘In the tumultuous and chaotic region of the Middle East, Iran is one of the most tranquil, secure and stable nations’.⁴⁹³ By saying so, he supports Iran’s claim to lead the region against terrorism and violence through the WAVE initiative. When he says, ‘the pain is better known by the countries in the region, better they can form coalition, and accept to shoulder the responsibility of leadership to counter violence and terrorism’ keeping in mind that ‘all nations of the region...are in the same boat’, he has rationalist intentions.⁴⁹⁴ However, there is a tinge of realism in it when linked with Iran’s perception of itself as a regional power. The Arab neighbours have interpreted it as rivalry. To them, Tehran’s quest is to dominate and control the Middle East. Rouhani addresses this dismissing their fears to be ‘a myth fanned in the recent years in the context of an Iranophobic project’.⁴⁹⁵ Regardless of such issues, Rouhani presses for finding a solution ‘that comes from within the region...not from the outside the region’.⁴⁹⁶ Yet when the 2015 Mina stampede happened in Mecca wherein 2177 pilgrims were killed, among them Iranians, the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia took on a new level and the Arab’s interpretation seemed plausible. Rouhani revealed Saudi’s involvement in the spread

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Rouhani, “Address by Mr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2015)” Rouhani, “Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2014)” Rouhani, “Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2016)”

⁴⁹³ Rouhani, “Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2014)”

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

of the ‘Iranophobic project’ while the supreme leader banned Iranian pilgrims from doing the Hajj in Saudi Arabia.

‘If the Saudi government is serious about its vision for development and regional security, it must cease and desist from divisive policies, spread of hate ideology, and trampling upon the rights of neighbours, accept its responsibility for the protection of the lives and dignity of pilgrims and construct its relations with the nations in the region on the basis of mutual respect and accountability’.⁴⁹⁷

Looking at this statement, lack of dialogue and cooperation, contrary to the rationalist image Rouhani has been advocating, seems to be the status quo between the two countries underscoring the persistence of realism in Iran’s foreign policy discourse. Realism exists in the condemnation of the realist manoeuvres the United States in the region, which they characterize as imperialist. The difference of Rouhani’s approach from Ahmadinejad and Khamenei is that his response to imperialism is framed within the rationalist instead of the revolutionist tradition. The revolutionist vision seems to be more of a formality in Rouhani’s speeches as he mentions it only at the beginning and at the end of his speeches, a standard procedure for any document issued by the officials of the Islamic Republic. He rarely makes any reference to revolutionism within the statements itself beyond this formality. Rationalism cannot seem to move forward in Iran’s foreign policy discourse without dragging the ghost of the religious revolutionist vision.

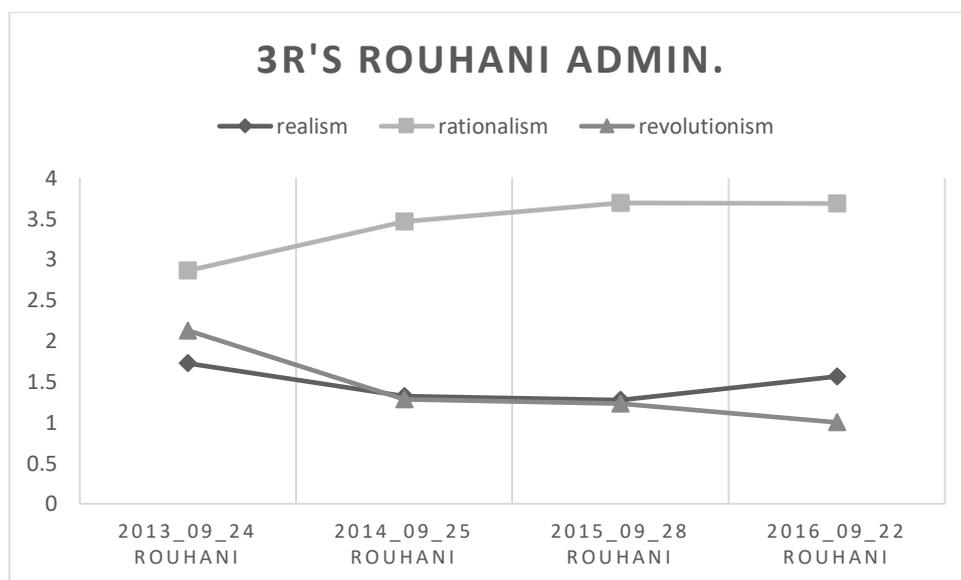
8.5 Conclusion

Rationalism has triumphed in Iran’s foreign policy discourse during the Rouhani administration. He has embarked on moderation, cooperation and dialogue in negotiating with the world. Rouhani revived Khatami’s notion of dialogue and incorporated it once again to Iran’s foreign policy discourse regarding the United States and its Western allies, which Ahmadinejad eliminated. Rouhani advocated the rationalist principle of cooperation, rejected the institution of war and elaborated on finding solutions through peaceful means. Reaching out to the countries in its immediate neighbourhood in a peaceful gesture to encourage diplomacy in addressing the issues of the region became a significant foreign policy objective. Using the language of rationalism, he promoted the re-establishment of ties with the West that has faced difficulties due to the nuclear program. He urged for mutual respect and equal footing in negotiations, opening direct talks with the United States to resolve the Iran’s nuclear dossier. Being able to directly negotiate the nuclear program with Washington using the tenets of the rationalist tradition is a remarkable achievement indicating the capacity of Tehran to resolve

⁴⁹⁷ Rouhani, “Statement by H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the I.R. of Iran at the General Debate of the General Assembly of the UN (2016)”

issues through peaceful means. The Rouhani government's efforts led to the JCPOA in 2015. Adopting a rationalist tone, restarting the negotiations and eventually signing an agreement with the P5+1 became the symbol of Iran's rationalist foreign policy discourse.

Rouhani's WAVE initiative further strengthened the rationalist framework by encouraging the establishment of a worldwide alliance to combat the global problem of terrorism. Although the foundation WAVE rests on mainly rationalist terminologies with the principle of cooperation as the most defining element of it, a hint of revolutionism is visible. Rouhani spoke of a joint effort at all levels of international society incorporating non-state actors in resolving the problem of terrorism for mankind's future. He makes no mention of religion indicating a revolutionist vision of a world without a missionary character that Ahmadinejad and Khamenei valued. Religion plays a minimal role in Rouhani's statements and is usually restricted to the introduction and conclusion of his speeches as per formality of the Islamic Republic, which perhaps can question whether his vision is revolutionist at all.



Graph 16. The three traditions during the Rouhani administration.

The percentage values of realism and revolutionism are quite low in comparison to rationalism and they gradually reach the very bottom with realism having 1.56% and revolutionism reaching only 1% by 2016. What is most striking is the realist tradition, which reaches a peak of 1.72% in 2013 when Rouhani spoke of Iran as a regional power. Interestingly, this type of realist language did not exist in the former president's statements as Iran was perhaps not in a situation to declare itself as such. Saddam's fall in Iraq turned Baghdad into an ally of the Islamic Republic. With the Arab Spring causing chaos in the Middle East since 2010, it is only during Rouhani's presidency that Iran could proclaim itself as a stable, secure nation and a

regional power in the region. Confidence in Iran's capacity to handle its foreign policy in a very rationalist way supported by the achievement of the JCPOA, Rouhani positions Iran in a different light. He sees Iran leading the region in addressing the problems of the Middle East. This aspect of his administration's foreign policy has a hint of realism as he speaks of Iran's power. However, he ascribes his language to the rationalist institution of great power management, at a regional level, by encouraging cooperation with the other powers in the region to resolve conflicts.

Rouhani carefully crafts Iran's foreign policy discourse in the framework of the rationalist tradition, but as this case shows, it is not entirely devoid of revolutionism and realism as the English School theory posits. Having a similar approach as Khatami, a fellow reformer, as well as integrating aspects of Ahmadinejad's and Khamenei's discourses show the consistency of Iran's foreign policy at the discursive level. Rouhani used rationalism effectively as a means to promote Iran's fundamentally realist foreign policy goal of survival. The sanctions related to the nuclear program threatened Iran's survival and security prompting him to strengthen rationalism in Iran's foreign policy discourse to re-establish ties and resume diplomatic talks to save the country's economic, social and political future. The religious Islamic revolutionist vision normally tied to realist foreign policy discourse is largely absent in Rouhani's statements. In its place is a pinch of Khatami's revolutionist vision aimed at creating a better future for mankind. This shows that the revolutionist vision in Iran's foreign policy discourse have two divergent paths. First is the religious and Islamic revolutionism advocated by Khamenei and Ahmadinejad. For them, the world is divided into two opposite poles of good and evil or believers and non-believers instigating war where the moral religious victor could establish its rule – making the revolutionist vision revert to realism. Second is the cosmopolitan revolutionist vision of Khatami and Rouhani devoid of binary opposition and focusing on uniting mankind into one regardless of faith to create a better future for all. I elaborate on these two types of revolutionist vision in Iran's foreign policy in a separate chapter.

9 Realism, Rationalism and Revolutionism in Iran's Foreign Policy

This chapter focuses on the international activities, conduct and principles of Iran's statesmen in their foreign policy. These activities, conducts and principles are guided by the three traditions as elaborated in the theory chapter.⁴⁹⁸ My aim is to classify Iran's foreign policy activities under realism, rationalism and revolutionism and to assess whether these activities correspond to the foreign policy discourses in the previous chapters to demonstrate one of the aspects of the consistency of Iran's foreign policy – the other aspect being the similarity of approaches among the statesmen. The following sections show Iran's foreign policy's realist goal, revolutionist vision and rationalist means on the international stage as proven by their activities, conduct and principles.

The fundamentally realist goal of Iran's foreign policy surfaces in Iran's efforts to counter the influence of the United States and its allies in the region, posing a threat to Iran's survival and security. To this end, Iran deploys its military arm, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Hezbollah (Party of God) in various countries, to secure Iran's goals in the region. The rationalist means allowing Iran to achieve its goals are discussed to be anchored in international trade with countries willing to do so with Tehran. Such rationalist means exhibit how Iran could improve its security and survival amidst the threat of the West in the form of sanctions. Iran's revolutionist vision is elaborated here to be divided into two: religious Islamic cosmopolitanism and global cosmopolitanism. Khamenei and Ahmadinejad promote the religious Islamic cosmopolitanist vision while Khatami and Rouhani advocate the global cosmopolitanist vision.

9.1 Realism

The realist principle dictates that the goal of survival should be based on both prudence and expediency as international relations is fundamentally a state of war or pure conflict. The main international activity consists of war with an international conduct of freely pursuing goals without moral and legal restriction.

To understand Iran's fundamentally realist foreign policy, a recollection of the threats to Iran's survival as a country is necessary. Not long after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the eight-year-long Iran-Iraq war began as Saddam Hussein launched an offensive against Iran. Most of the states in the Middle East, as

⁴⁹⁸ Please refer to Table 1 on page 42 of the theory chapter for a summary of the three traditions.

well as the United States, supported Iraq while Iran fought alone. Based on this experience, for the Islamic Republic, the world is anarchical and realism is the order of the day as the Iraqi offensive and the resulting war had shown. Survival is vital for the government and the people of Iran and being a lone wolf in this endeavour is a reality they must face as history has taught them. Hence, realism is etched in the mindset of Tehran's political elites as most, if not all, were involved in the fight against Iraq to defend Iran's territory and sovereignty. Insecurity normally accompanies such a threat to survival in the form of war. Since Iran was forced into an engagement with the realist institution of war soon after the birth of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran cannot help but think of its country's security, effectively shaping its foreign policy especially in its immediate neighbourhood. After all, parallel to the Iran-Iraq war the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established precisely to counter Iran in the region, institutionalizing the threat to Iran's survival and security. Remnants of this animosity between Iran and the Gulf states are still visible at the time of writing as proxy wars between Iran and its main rival, Saudi Arabia, wreak havoc across the region. The involvement of the United States in the affairs of the Middle East serves to intensify the rivalry between the two regional powers.

9.1.1 *The United States*

The United States is considered by Iran as a hegemonic superpower that meddles with Iran's regional affairs causing enormous chaos and suffering to the Islamic world. Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is the most vocal political elite in the Islamic Republic exposing the misdeeds of the United States and criticizing its hegemonic agenda in the Middle East emphasizing its immoral realist activities as we have seen in the previous chapters. Washington's alliance with Riyadh exacerbates the rivalry with Tehran as it reflects the continuity of what has transpired during the Iran-Iraq war thereby threatening the survival of the Islamic regime in Iran. The 'war on terror' prompted by the attacks on September 11, 2001 confirmed the power and influence of the United States in the region as its military capabilities were used to topple the Taliban and Saddam Hussein. The Islamic Republic then became neighbours with U.S. troops and with Saudi's anti-Iranian stance, the threat to Iran's survival loomed on the horizon. Hadian described Iran's situation to be a 'strategic nightmare'.⁴⁹⁹ Such description is not very far from the truth since, despite Iran's efforts to cooperate with the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Bush administration invested millions of dollars funding

⁴⁹⁹ Nasser Hadian, "Iran's nuclear program: contexts and debates," in *Iran's Bomb: American and Iranian Perspectives*, ed. Geoffrey Kemp (Washington, D.C: The Nixon Center, 2004), 55–56

opposition groups to bring about regime change in the Islamic Republic.⁵⁰⁰ This confirms the threat the U.S. poses to Iran's survival and security, which is not an illusion created by Khamenei. The supreme leader's description of the threat that is the United States in his statements, grounded in the realist tradition, serves to prove that Iran understands what is going on justifying the realist foundation of Iran's foreign policy. Retaliating against the United States though, using the realist tradition is difficult considering Iran's relationships in the region. Thus, the revolutionist vision is used to attract potential allies in this mainly realist battle of Iran against the United States. Yet to convince the Muslim world, such a vision is insufficient as practical issues must first be addressed and it is at this point that Iran uses rationalism as the means to achieve its mainly realist goal of survival and security.

9.1.2 *The Hezbollah and IRGC*

To understand the realist dimension of Iran's foreign policy, it is necessary to know about the military arms of the Islamic Republic that extends to regional affairs through the revolutionist Islamic vision: the IRGC and the Hezbollah. On the one hand is the IRGC (in Farsi Sepah-e Pasdaran), which was initially created to serve the Islamic Republic's supreme leader and to safeguard the revolution from the traditional army. Its main task was to 'defend the gains of the revolution and act as a foil to the regular army'.⁵⁰¹ The IRGC counters any kind of threat to the Islamic Republic and is responsible for suppressing mass oppositions against the government, as the world witnessed during the 2009 crackdown on the protesters after the disputed presidential elections. The IRGC has been active in Iran's foreign military policy through the works of its General Qasem Soleimani, who has been involved in Iraq and Syria, directing troops.⁵⁰² By 2017, IRGC have become so embedded in the chaos in the Middle East that they sent countless military advisers, volunteers and training professionals to Iraq and Syria.⁵⁰³ On the other hand is the Hezbollah, a loosely structured organization established decades before it surfaced during Iran's Islamic Revolution to assist Ayatollah Khomeini. In the immediate aftermath of the Islamic Revolution, members of the Iranian Hezbollah assisted the Islamic

⁵⁰⁰ Dinmore, "Bush seeks funds to weaken Iran from within"; I briefly discuss Iran's cooperation with the United States regarding Afghanistan and Iraq in the section on Rationalism.

⁵⁰¹ Ahmed Hashim, "The Iranian military in politics: Revolution and war (part two)," *Middle East Policy Council* XIX, no. 3 (2012): 5, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/iranian-military-politics-revolution-and-war-part-two>

⁵⁰² Bozorgmehr Sharafedin and Ellen Francis, "Iran's Revolutionary Guards reaps economic rewards in Syria," January 19, 2017, accessed September 20, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-iran/irans-revolutionary-guards-reaps-economic-rewards-in-syria-idUSKBN1531TO>

⁵⁰³ Mohammed Nuruzzaman, "The rise and rise of Iran: How Tehran has become pivotal to the future of the Middle East," September 1, 2017, accessed September 10, 2017, <http://theconversation.com/the-rise-and-rise-of-iran-how-tehran-has-become-pivotal-to-the-future-of-the-middle-east-83160>

Republican Party (IRP), Khomeini's party that would eventually establish the Islamic Republic of Iran in the early 80s. In June 1981, the Hezbollah became known as an official group with about 20,000 men and they worked closely with the IRGC.⁵⁰⁴ Both the Hezbollah and the IRGC were tasked to dismantle the political challengers to Khomeini's bid for power. Once Khomeini had installed the Islamic Republic, the Hezbollah focused their attention on implementing social changes in Iran such as enforcing the Islamic dress code on women and banning alcohol.⁵⁰⁵ Although fundamentally Shi'a, the Hezbollah had also accepted Sunni members.⁵⁰⁶ The Hezbollah started organizing themselves in Lebanon with the support of Iran during the Israeli occupation in 1982.⁵⁰⁷ Hezbollah has since evolved into a large military and social organization in the Middle East operating mainly in Lebanon and Iraq with the aid of Iran.⁵⁰⁸ Despite their spread in the Middle East, the Hezbollah and their affiliates share the same doctrine and loyalty to the establishment of a 'worldwide central Islamic state' written in the 1985 manifesto of the Lebanese Hezbollah, a point I elaborate on below.⁵⁰⁹

The type of extreme revolutionism based on religion, i.e. Shi'a Islam, is the main factor enabling para-military groups such as the IRGC and the Hezbollah to transcend the revolutionist boundary into realism since they get involved in the primary realist international activity of war, particularly proxy wars. These wars are mainly aimed at securing Iran's stronghold in the region to decrease threats to the survival of the Islamic Republic. Hence, the revolutionist vision of unifying the Ummah turns into the realist goal of establishing an empire, an Iranian empire extending across the Middle East reviving what has been the Persian empire. Below, I discuss how Iran has been aiming to expand its influence to achieve its realist foreign policy goal of survival and security, which has turned into a quest for power and dominance.

9.1.3 Iraq

Iraq and Syria symbolize distinct developments of Iran's realist foreign policy as the country's strong military presence in the two countries is undeniable. In the case of Iraq, especially, Iran plays an important role in many strategic decisions. This is exemplified by the importance of IRGC's General Soleimani, who has been actively engaged in the internal affairs of Baghdad

⁵⁰⁴ Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, Routledge revivals (London: Routledge, 2012), 131

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 242–43

⁵⁰⁶ Thierry Lalevée, "The Hezbollah: Iran's apparatus abroad," *Executive Intelligence Review News Service* 14, no. 7 (1987), accessed September 17, 2017, http://www.larouche.org/eiw/public/1987/eirv14n07-19870213/eirv14n07-19870213_042-the_hezbollahi_irans_apparatus_a.pdf

⁵⁰⁷ Kim Ghattas, "Iran-Saudi tensions simmer in Lebanon," May 20, 2016, accessed September 17, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36335163>

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁹ Lalevée, "The Hezbollah: Iran's apparatus abroad"

as well as leading the fight against Daesh (ISIL) in collaboration with the United States.⁵¹⁰ He has also been credited for his achievements in Syria in supporting the Assad regime.⁵¹¹ A large segment of the Iraqi population is Shi'a and they are concentrated in the oil-rich Gulf area, making the country a strategic ally for Iran. The realist aspect of Iran's foreign policy is reflected in Iran's mobilization of the Iraqi Shi'as as a means for controlling oil resources. Iran can use this to disrupt the flow of petrol in the Hormuz strait at times when international pressure mounts against Tehran. A former CIA agent notes in his book that:

'Basra and its surrounding area are not really part of Iraq anymore. Quietly, without firing a single shot, the Iranians have effectively annexed the entire South, fully one-third of Iraq. In Basra today, the preferred currency is the Iranian Rial. The Iraqi police, the military, and at least one of its intelligence services answer not to Baghdad, but to the Iranian-backed political parties, SCIRI, Da'wa, and other Shi'ite groups under Tehran's control. But it's just not the police, the same Iranian proxies run the universities, the hospitals, and the social welfare organizations'.⁵¹²

Such a connection has been aided by historical developments within the region effectively planting the seeds for future cooperation. During Saddam's reign, many Iraqi's sought refuge in Iran, including prominent individuals such as the Grand Ayatollah Sistani, who has returned to Najaf to assume the duty of being one of the most influential clerics in Shi'a Islam. His connections to Qom, the religious centre of Iran, has established a transnational Shi'a vein that binds Iran and Iraq, subsequently bestowing a sense of brotherhood between the two countries, which has had significant ramifications for the entire Muslim world.⁵¹³ Other influential personalities that have ties with Iran include Ibrahim al-Jaafari, former Prime Minister and, since 2014, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Humam Hamoudi, second in command in the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council, as well as the incumbent Minister of Oil Adil Abd al-Mahdi. All three have spent a significant amount of time in Iran during the Saddam regime and have returned to Iraq to assume important offices within the Iraqi government. Iran has thus been able to influence Iraqi internal affairs reflecting the realist conduct of freely pursuing goals without moral or legal restrictions. It is in this Iranian influence in Iraq that Nasr's 'Shi'a Revival' comes into play.

⁵¹⁰ Bozorgmehr Sharafedin, "General Qasem Soleimani: Iran's rising star," March 6, 2015, accessed September 11, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27883162>

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² Robert Baer, *The Devil we Know: Dealing with the New Iranian Superpower* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2008), 87

⁵¹³ Laurence Louër, *Transnational Shia politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf*, Series in comparative politics and international studies (New York: Columbia University Press in association with the Centre d'études et de recherches internationales, 2012, cop. 2008)

Morgenthau's ideological solidarity argument, as stressed by Walt, is suitable here as he argues that cooperation is based on the similarity of two states, such as in terms of religion.⁵¹⁴ With the revolutionist anti-imperialist discourse aimed at the presence of the United States as a foreign power in the region, constituting a threat that the two countries should ally against, Walt's balance-of-threat thesis also becomes apparent. Walt defines an alignment as a formal or informal 'commitment for security cooperation between two or more states, intended to augment each member's power, security, and/or influence' wherein the main function lies at the 'commitment for mutual support against some external actor(s)'.⁵¹⁵ Alliances are more likely when states share similar 'political, cultural or other traits', which normally appear 'in the in the rhetoric of statesmen seeking to justify alignment with one side or opposition to another'.⁵¹⁶ As such, Khamenei's revolutionist call for solidarity serves Iran's fundamentally realist agenda of thwarting the threat that is the United States. This, of course, had upset the Saudis as the period following the U.S. military intervention allowed Iran to restore its claim to dominance in the region, sparking a renewed rivalry which had been dormant after the Iran-Iraq War had devastated Iran's capabilities. While the Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari denies the claims of Iran's involvement in Iraqi affairs, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal insisted that 'Iran is taking over the country' showing the dynamics at play within Iraq.⁵¹⁷ The U.S. invasion of Iraq tipped the balance into Iran's favour as political power went into Shi'a hands encouraging them to develop political, economic and cultural relations without any obstacles.⁵¹⁸ Tehran established political, business and cultural networks in Baghdad to offset 'future Iraqi threats'.⁵¹⁹ Iran was the first country that sent arms and military commanders such as Soleimani to command Iraqi and Shi'a militias in their fight against the Islamic State (known as Daesh or ISIL).⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁴ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 3. print, Cornell studies in security affairs (Ithaca [u.a.]: Cornell Univ. Press, 1994), 33

⁵¹⁵ Stephen M. Walt, "Alliances in a unipolar world," *World Politics* 61, no. 01 (2009): 86, doi:10.1017/S0043887109000045

⁵¹⁶ Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance formation and the balance of world power," *International Security* 9, no. 4 (1985): 19, doi:10.2307/2538540, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2538540>

⁵¹⁷ Malak Ghorbail and Saif E. Hamdan, "Saudi foreign minister: 'Iran is taking over' Iraq," March 11, 2015, accessed September 15, 2017, <http://www.businessinsider.com/r-iraqi-foreign-minister-dismisses-saudi-worries-about-iranian-control-2015-3?IR=T>

⁵¹⁸ Mohammed Nuruzzaman, "Iran's unstoppable march toward dominance," May 12, 2016 May, accessed September 12, 2017, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/irans-unstoppable-march-toward-dominance-16182>

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Sharafedin, "General Qasem Soleimani: Iran's rising star" Nuruzzaman, "Iran's unstoppable march toward dominance" Alireza Nader, "The Revolutionary Guards," United States Institute of Peace, accessed September 17, 2017, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/revolutionary-guards>

Iraq is not just a strategic ally that is useful for controlling the Strait of Hormuz, it is also ‘home to Shi’a Islam’s holiest shrines’ and it connects Iran to Syria.⁵²¹ Tehran funds and arms about 100,000 soldiers to fight in Iraq and Syria, which end up as casualties, but the IRGC commanders insist ‘if they don't take the fight to Iraq or Syria, the war will come to Iran’.⁵²² Iran’s mission is to ‘dominate its neighbour’ so it ‘could never again endanger it militarily’ as in the Iran-Iraq war.⁵²³ The sense of threat to Iran’s survival and security is so strong Iran must implement its realist objectives in Iraq. Reports claim that ‘at some border posts in the south, Iraqi sovereignty is an afterthought’ showing that Iran has encroached into Iraqi sovereignty following the dictates of the realist tradition.⁵²⁴ Syria, Lebanon and Yemen are also on Iran’s list as Tehran continues to arm its proxies there, effectively provoking Saudi Arabia and escalating tensions in the Middle East despite Iran’s calls for a rationalist dialogue.

9.1.4 Syria

In Syria, Iran’s strategic support for the Assad regime has been immense. As the Arab states, led by Saudi Arabia, continue their efforts in backing the opposition with the aim of eliminating the Assad regime, Iran has relentlessly struggled to turn the tide into Assad’s favour. Belonging to the Alawite Shi’a sect, the Assad regime is not necessarily regarded as Muslim on all accounts. The Alawites reject Shari’a law, general Islamic practices – praying, going on a pilgrimage to Mecca and forbidding the consumption of alcohol – and they ‘celebrate many Christian holidays and revere Christian saints’.⁵²⁵ The allegiance of Iran to the Assad regime is more a product of the power struggle with Saudi Arabia in the region, supporting the main argument of Iran having a fundamentally realist foreign policy. Iran does not want to see a Sunni government in Syria, which would bring Damascus closer to Riyadh and hamper Iran’s efforts dominate the region and arm the Hezbollah in Lebanon.⁵²⁶ Iran’s goal of survival and security, naturally has repercussions in the region as it becomes a threat to other states as Tehran expands its regional influence to become a hegemon. For instance, Iran is becoming an imminent threat for Israel as it advances to the southern part of Syria, confronting Israeli troops

⁵²¹ Kasra Naji, “What is Iran's game plan in Iraq?,” June 16, 2015, accessed September 10, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33075894>

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Tim Arango, “Iran dominates in Iraq after U.S. 'handed the country over',” July 15, 2017, accessed September 10, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/15/world/middleeast/iran-iraq-iranian-power.html?mcubz=0&_r=0

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ Reva Bhalla, “Making sense of the Syrian crisis,” Stratfor, accessed September 15, 2017, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/weekly/20110504-making-sense-syrian-crisis>

⁵²⁶ Barak Barfi, “The real reason why Iran backs Syria,” January 24, 2016, accessed September 17, 2017, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-real-reason-why-iran-backs-syria-14999>

by gaining access to the Golan Heights.⁵²⁷ Under both the Ahmadinejad and Rouhani administration, Iran has provided the Assad regime with financial, logistical and military means to remain in power. This is evident in the presence of the Iran-backed Lebanese Hezbollah and the Iran's own IRGC on Syrian territory, fighting the rebels.⁵²⁸ Here, Soleimani has once again played a key role by 'delivering the strategy that has helped President Bashar al-Assad turn the tide against rebel forces and recapture key cities and towns'.⁵²⁹ However, Iran's involvement in Syria is not as high profile as that in Iraq and support has been limited to funding, informing and arming the Syrian military as well as recruiting soldiers from outside Iran to fight for Assad.⁵³⁰ The struggle for regional hegemony between Iran and Saudi Arabia is reflected in the battles of Damascus and with such adept motivations and willpower to externally support the fighting factions, the crisis in Syria may last for several years.⁵³¹ This diminishes Syria's right to sovereignty altogether as external powers intervene directly in Syrian internal affairs, using the country as the proxy-war stage, determining who dominates in the Middle East, in the contest of realism.

9.1.5 Lebanon

The Lebanese Hezbollah is the key military arm of Iran in the country where Iran's proxy-war with Saudi Arabia extends. Lebanon is the perfect setting due to its weak democracy that is still recovering from a civil war with numerous parties based on religion, Hezbollah being one of them.⁵³² Iran's relentless support of Hezbollah's military has transformed it into 'a highly trained and equipped conventional ground force with regional reach' as evident in its success of turning the Syrian war into Assad's favour.⁵³³ Hezbollah is Iran's security bet against Israel and the West reflecting the starkly realist nature of this alliance.⁵³⁴ Using the Hezbollah to threaten Israel and its ally the United States, grants Iran direct access to the power equation in

⁵²⁷ Nicholas Blanford, "Iran-backed advance in southern Syria rattles Israel," March 6, 2015, accessed September 15, 2017, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2015/0306/Iran-backed-advance-in-southern-Syria-rattles-Israel>

⁵²⁸ Abdulrahman Al-Masri, "Syria: Proxy war, not civil war," March 14, 2015, accessed September 15, 2017, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20150314-syria-proxy-war-not-civil-war/>

⁵²⁹ Sharafedin, "General Qasem Soleimani: Iran's rising star"

⁵³⁰ Nader, "The Revolutionary Guards"

⁵³¹ Miriam Estrin and Jeremy Shapiro, "The proxy war problem in Syria," Foreign Policy, accessed September 15, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/02/04/the-proxy-war-problem-in-syria/>

⁵³² Max Fisher, "How the Iranian-Saudi proxy struggle tore apart the Middle East," November 19, 2016, accessed September 20, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/20/world/middleeast/iran-saudi-proxy-war.html?mcubz=0>

⁵³³ Jesse Rosenfeld, "Are Israel and Hezbollah preparing for war?," March 23, 2017, accessed September 17, 2017, <https://www.thenation.com/article/are-israel-and-hezbollah-preparing-for-war/>

⁵³⁴ Emile Hokayem, "Iran and Lebanon," United States Institute of Peace, accessed September 17, 2017, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-lebanon>

the Middle East.⁵³⁵ Iran's expansionist ambition is also exhibited by this relationship since Iran can command it to fight for its cause, such as in Syria. However, this expansionist goal is mostly linked with the revolutionist vision of unifying the Islamic Ummah, which I elaborate on in the revolutionist chapter.

9.1.6 Yemen

There are traces of financial aid as well as rhetorical support from Tehran to the Shi'a Houthis, depicting the conflict in Yemen as yet another proxy war.⁵³⁶ For Saudi Arabia, this expansion of Iran in the region to its backyard, i.e. Yemen, is perceived as a great threat, verifying the suspicion of Iran's realist expansionist agenda following the tenets of the realist tradition.⁵³⁷ Still, there is little evidence that Iran provides the Houthi's with substantial support since the conflict in Yemen has more to do with internal hostilities.⁵³⁸ Iran is most likely claiming involvement simply to upset Saudi Arabia by showing to what extent Tehran's influence can spread in the region. Ali Reza Zakani, a member of the Iranian parliament had already made claims that the four Arab capitals – Baghdad, Beirut, Damascus and Sanaa – to have become part of Iran's Islamic revolution pointing out that there is a bipolar tension in the Middle East, with the other pole consisting of Saudi Arabia and its allies.⁵³⁹ With such developments surfacing in the Middle East, the rise of a Persian-Shi'a empire, headed by the General Soleimani presents itself to be a force that the Saudis have to reckon with.⁵⁴⁰ This events demonstrate that Iran's fundamentally realist foreign policy goal of survival and security has effectively turned into a quest for power and dominance in the region and Tehran seems to be quite successful at it so far proving that it is a major regional power that could police the Middle East in much the same way the United States has done.

⁵³⁵ Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 40

⁵³⁶ Peter Salisbury, "Yemen and the Saudi-Iranian 'Cold War'," Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, accessed September 15, 2017,

https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20150218YemenIranSaudi.pdf

⁵³⁷ Nizar Abdel-Kader, "Saudi decision to confront the Iranian onslaught and disappointment of the US position (قرار سعودي بمواجهة الهجمة الايرانية وخيبة أمل من الموقف الأميركي)." November 14, 2015, accessed September 15, 2017, <http://www.addiyar.com/article/887241>

⁵³⁸ Salisbury, "Yemen and the Saudi-Iranian 'Cold War'"

⁵³⁹ This comes from an English report of the Middle East Monitor 'Sanaa is the fourth Arab capital to join the Iranian revolution' available from: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/14389-sanaa-is-the-fourth-arab-capital-to-join-the-iranian-revolution>

⁵⁴⁰ Samia Nakhoul, "Iran expands regional 'empire' ahead of nuclear deal," March 23, 2015, accessed September 15, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-iran-region-insight/iran-expands-regional-empire-ahead-of-nuclear-deal-idUSKBN0MJ1G520150323>

9.2 Rationalism

Rationalism as discussed in the theoretical chapter defines rationalist principles to be governed by prudence and expediency as well as imperatives of morality and law. International relations are equated with the existence of an international society of sovereign nation-states. The main international activity among the nation-states of international society is composed of trade, economic and social exchange. The international conduct of rationalists involves adherence to the law and legal restrictions. Two main rationalist themes are present in the foreign policy discourses of Iran's statesmen. One is about improving relations with other countries, which was widely advocated by the Khatami administration reflecting the activeness of the rationalist institution of diplomacy in the statements. Another is regarding Iran's rights to have a peaceful nuclear program dominating Iran's political discourse from 2002 until the present. Both the supreme leader and the presidents discussed this issue insisting on their rights signifying attempts to frame the issue within the rationalist institution of international law since Iran is a signatory of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Let us recall that rationalism in this study is described to be a means, thereby trade as the main rationalist international activity and the rationalist institutions of international society are merely methods in foreign policy. The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran supports this having a section entitled 'Economy is a means, not an end' where it states that: 'in Islam economy is a means, and what is expected of a means is nothing but better efficiency for attaining an objective'.⁵⁴¹ If rationalism, as represented by trade for economic purposes, is the means to attain an objective, then Iran's realist goal survival and security driven by the revolutionist vision based on Islam must be the main objective of Iran's foreign policy.

For the rationalist means to work, however, good working relations should be established with the world. Khamenei's statements often emphasized the need for cooperation among the Muslim nations, to mitigate the undesirable consequences of Western intervention in the region. In 1997, he explicitly said that he is extending his 'hand of friendship towards all Muslim states and welcome their co-operation and mutual understanding in solving the problems of the Islamic world'.⁵⁴² This coincides with the Khatami government's foreign policy goal of

⁵⁴¹ The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran 1979, last amended in 1989, Islamic Parliament of Iran (مجلس شورای اسلامی) at 6-7 (1989), accessed September 20, 2017, http://en.parliran.ir/UploadedData/previmages/iran-parliament_English_SHR01.pdf

⁵⁴² Khamenei, "Imam Khamene'i 's message on the occasion of Hajj (1997)" Khamenei, "Message of Ayatollah al-Odhma Khamenei on the auspicious occasion of Hajj (1998)"

expanding relations with all countries as stated by the foreign minister and the president.⁵⁴³ Both the supreme leader and the former president insisted that they want to ease tensions with other countries. Such a strategy aimed at ending Iran's isolation and re-establishing diplomatic ties with the world including the West. I explore such foreign policy to see whether the initiative of the Khatami period has continuity and Iran has established and fostered ties with the world. Below I discuss Iran's foreign policy actions as they correspond to international activity as defined by rationalism focusing on the two rationalist institutions, where Iranian statesmen actively operate – diplomacy and international law – in selected countries. I elaborate on the political exchanges of top officials representing the rationalist institution of diplomacy as well as the various agreements Iran signs with the respective country signifying the institution of international law at work in Iran's foreign policy as a means to achieve fundamentally realist goals of survival and security. Before we proceed to that, let us look at one vital element of Iran's rationalist international activity, trade.

9.2.1 Trade: Iran's main rationalist international activity

Despite efforts of the United States to isolate Iran, Tehran has fostered good trading relations with many countries indicative of the rationalist tradition at work in the Islamic Republic's international activities. Imports and exports are thriving despite Western sanctions, particularly related to the nuclear program, exhibiting that rationalism exists in Iran's foreign policy. For the realist goal of survival and security to materialize, rationalist means should be employed by Tehran and trade is one telling indicator that Iran is actively finding ways to not only economically survive against the backdrop of Western sanctions but also to circumvent the United States' and its allies' attempt to isolate Iran from international society.

Here are some of the yearly trade statistics gathered from the government's Trade Promotion Organization of Iran showing the volume of Iran's non-oil export and import figures in millions of USD. Three years are presented here: 2008, five years after the U.S. military intervention in Iraq, then 2012, the height of the nuclear program related Western sanctions on Iran and finally 2015.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴³ Kharrazi, "H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the I.R. of Iran before the 52nd Session of The UN General Assembly (1997)" Khatami, "H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khatami, President of the I.R. of Iran before the 53rd Session of the UN General Assembly (1998)"

⁵⁴⁴ The data available from the website starts only in the year 2008 and ends in 2015.

2008				
<i>Rank</i>	<i>Export to</i>	<i>In Million USD</i>	<i>Import from</i>	<i>In Million USD</i>
1	Iraq	2384	U.A.E.	13438
2	U.A.E.	2328	Germany	5325
3	China	2003	China	4915
4	India	1172	Switzerland	3523
5	South Korea	821	South Korea	3082
6	Japan	587	U.K.	2033
7	Afghanistan	539	France	1978
8	Turkey	526	Italy	1970
9	Belgium	410	India	1813
10	Saudi Arabia	394	Turkey	1495

Table 6. Iran's non-oil Top 10 import and export countries in 2008.⁵⁴⁵

2012				
<i>Rank</i>	<i>Export to</i>	<i>In Million USD</i>	<i>Import from</i>	<i>In Million USD</i>
1	Iraq	6250	U.A.E.	10609
2	China	5501	China	8161
3	U.A.E.	4213	South Korea	4813
4	Afghanistan	2874	Turkey	4539
5	India	2607	Switzerland	3432
6	Turkey	1479	Germany	2844
7	South Korea	916	The Netherlands	2045
8	Turkmenistan	749	India	2035
9	Pakistan	736	Russia	1761
10	Azerbaijan	502	Italy	1082

Table 7. Iran's non-oil Top 10 import and export countries in 2012.⁵⁴⁶

2015				
<i>Rank</i>	<i>Export to</i>	<i>In Million USD</i>	<i>Import from</i>	<i>In Million USD</i>
1	China	7228	China	10454
2	Iraq	6206	U.A.E.	7835
3	U.A.E.	4922	South Korea	3682
4	Afghanistan	2573	Turkey	3013
5	India	2530	Switzerland	2539
6	Turkey	1314	India	2298
7	Italy	775	Germany	1811
8	Turkmenistan	721	Italy	907
9	Pakistan	635	The Netherlands	787
10	Oman	375	France	760

Table 8. Iran's non-oil Top 10 import and export countries in 2015.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁵ Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, "Report of the senior managers 2008 (1387 گزارش مدیران ارشد)," news release, accessed September 20, 2017, http://www.tpo.ir/uploads/modiran_arshad_87_5122.pdf, 12, 19

⁵⁴⁶ Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, "Report of the senior managers 2012 (1391 گزارش مدیران ارشد)," news release, accessed September 20, 2017, http://farsi.tpo.ir/uploads/modiran_arshad_91_5118.pdf, 17, 27

⁵⁴⁷ Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, "Report of the senior managers 2015 (1394 گزارش مدیران ارشد)," news release, accessed September 20, 2017, http://www.tpo.ir/uploads/amalkarde-tejarat-khareji-12mahe94_16341.pdf, 8, 16

Five years after Saddam’s regime was toppled by Western troops, we can see how Iraq has steadily remained in the top spot in the list of countries Iran exports its non-oil products to and its position has not changed even at the height of the sanctions on Iran in 2012. U.A.E., Afghanistan and Turkey are also favourite destination of Iran for its exports. China and India are also part of Iran’s top 10 export countries and the Western sanctions did not seem to affect their trade with Iran. Pakistan and Turkmenistan join Iran’s export country list in 2012. Azerbaijan was only part of this list in 2012 and Oman together with Italy in 2015. South Korea was a destination for Iranian goods until 2012, while Japan, like Saudi Arabia and Belgium were only part of the top 10 in 2008.

The sanctions on Iran affected its trade relations with European countries such as Germany, France and the U.K. Iran enjoyed high amounts of imports from these countries prior to the 2012 sanctions, with Germany being second in the list in 2008, making only a comeback in 2015 together with France. In contrast to these countries, imports from Switzerland did not seem to have been affected by sanctions as the country was consistently among the top 10. The same goes for South Korea. Italy belongs to the top ten as well, although imports declined over time. Imports from the Netherlands also dropped from 2012 to 2015. Russia only makes it to the list in 2012 with imports reaching 1.7billion USD.

China, U.A.E., India and Turkey seem to be Iran’s most reliable trading partners as they all are part of both Iran’s top export and import countries. Iran, however, significantly imports more from U.A.E., China and Turkey than it exports. Some of this have to do with barter agreements as sanctions on Iran’s banking system came into place in 2012. The volume of Iran’s non-oil bilateral trade with these countries is as follows:

	2008	2012	2015
U.A.E.	15766	14822	12757
China	6918	13662	17682
India	2985	4642	4828
Turkey	2021	6018	4327

Table 9. Total volume of non-oil bilateral trade.⁵⁴⁸

China’s trade with Iran increased over time, effectively replacing the U.A.E. as Iran’s number 1 trading partner. Trade with U.A.E. in turn, decreased as trade with China grew. Trade with

⁵⁴⁸ I calculated these figures based on the tables provided above. The main source is the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran senior managers reports of 2008, 2012 and 2015 cited earlier.

India has also seen a moderate increase in trade volume while Iran and Turkey trade volume was a mix of increase and decrease.

Oil remains Iran’s most important export commodity and data from 2011 until 2015 show how the sanctions have affected it. Figures obtained from OPEC show that Iran’s total value of exports, including petroleum has declined since 2011. Petroleum exports has decreased to 27,308 million USD in 2015 from 114,751 million USD in 2011. After 2012 though, non-petroleum exports have increased.

Iran	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total exports	144,874	107,409	91,793	85,235	77,974
Petroleum exports	114,751	101,468	61,923	53,652	27,308
Non-oil export ⁵⁴⁹	30,123	5,941	29,870	31,583	50,666

Table 10. Values of Iran’s exports in million USD.⁵⁵⁰

Iran’s crude oil exports seem to have suffered the most due to the sanctions as it was cut in half by 2015. Meanwhile petroleum products exports were only slightly affected and picks up again by 2014.

Iran	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Crude Oil exports	2,537.30	2,102.00	1,215.40	1,109.20	1,081.10
Petroleum products exports	441.3	456	394	469.9	514.3

Table 11. Iran’s crude oil and petroleum products exports (1,000 barrels per day).⁵⁵¹

The regional destinations of Iran’s crude oil are mainly Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Africa as we can see below:

Destination	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Europe	780.1	162	128	117	111.4
Asia and Pacific	1,630.40	1,839	1,085.20	992.2	969.7
Africa	126.7	101	2.2	--	--
Total crude oil exports	2,537.30	2,102	1,215	1109.2	1081.1

Table 12. Iran’s crude oil export destinations (1,000 barrels per day)⁵⁵²

Meanwhile the main regional destination of Iran’s petroleum products is mainly Asia and the Pacific with only a fraction going to Africa and none to Europe:

⁵⁴⁹ Total exports and petroleum exports were based on OPEC statistics. Non-oil exports were derived by the author based on the difference between the total export and the petroleum export values.

⁵⁵⁰ OPEC, “OPEC annual statistical bulletin 2016,” Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), accessed September 21, 2017,

https://www.opec.org/opec_web/static_files_project/media/downloads/publications/ASB2016.pdf, 16–17

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., 52, 55

⁵⁵² Ibid., 48

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Asia and Pacific	441.3	456	394	469.3	513.6
Africa	--	--	--	0.6	0.7
Total petroleum product exports	441.3	465	394	469.9	514.3

Table 13. Iran's petroleum products export destinations (1,000 barrels per day)⁵⁵³

Iran's trade relations cannot be ignored as long as oil is a vital global commodity. Nevertheless, attempts to diversify Iran's trade relations by moving towards non-oil products is a significant development as it seeks to establish stable economic partnerships with countries that do not conceive it as a threat such as the United States and some of its allies. The figures shown here in this section shows the significance of the main rationalist international activity of trade for Iran as it serves as a means for the country to survive. Thus, a key point in Iran's foreign policy is to foster good trade relations with countries that are willing to accommodate Tehran.

9.2.2 Iran's Neighbours

Afghanistan

Iran has been an influential actor in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Iran's foreign policy in Afghanistan is aimed at stabilizing the country; Tehran wants to help rebuild Afghanistan and has cooperated with the United States in this regard particularly initiated during the Khatami administration. However, Iran does not want to help create a strong Afghanistan that can challenge its interests.⁵⁵⁴ Iran's relationship with Afghanistan 'should not be viewed as hegemonic' as Tehran is more concerned about its interests of 'securing its eastern border, preserving the flow of water from Afghanistan, countering narcotics, and dealing with the large Afghan refugee population on its soil'.⁵⁵⁵ According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in 2015 there were 951,142 documented Afghan refugees in Iran and an estimated 2 million undocumented Afghans.⁵⁵⁶ The Iranian government have tried to

⁵⁵³ Ibid., 50

⁵⁵⁴ Alireza Nader et al., *Iran's Influence in Afghanistan: Implications for the U.S. Drawdown* (Santa Monica, California: RAND, 2014), 5

⁵⁵⁵ UNODC, "Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan strengthen anti-drug trafficking initiative," news release, November 25, 2010, accessed September 19, 2017, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2010/November/afghanistan-iran-and-pakistan-strengthen-unodc-brokered-anti-drug-trafficking-initiative.html>; Nader et al., *Iran's Influence in Afghanistan*, 5

⁵⁵⁶ UNHCR, "Iran Factsheet," news release, 2016.05, accessed September 19, 2017, <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Iran%20Factsheet%20-%20MAY16.pdf>; UNHCR, "UNHCR portfolio of projects 2015-2016 Islamic Republic of Iran," news release, 2015, accessed September 19, 2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/539ab62a9.pdf>; European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, "ECHO fact sheet - Iran," European Commission, accessed September 19, 2017, http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/iran_en.pdf

accommodate the refugees, giving the documented refugees access to healthcare, schools and other essential services.⁵⁵⁷

Afghanistan is part of Iran's top 10 countries receiving Iran's non-oil goods making Tehran an important trading partner of Kabul. Iran provides much-needed financial aid to Afghanistan supporting government expenses and projects, which come in the form of money bags once or twice a year.⁵⁵⁸ Most of Iran's assistance to Afghanistan has been centred on rebuilding transportation and energy infrastructure as well as schools.⁵⁵⁹ In 2002 and 2004, agreements were made by the two countries about a railway project that connects Iran to Afghanistan initially meant for trade purposes with construction officially beginning in July 2006 and is set to be completed by 2018.⁵⁶⁰ Afghanistan is a member of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) since 1992. ECO was established in 1964 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey under its former name, Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD).⁵⁶¹

Armenia

Iran's relations with neighbour Armenia is friendly and cordial with no reported complications and bilateral trade increasing steadily over the years.⁵⁶² The two countries engage in joint 'multimillion-dollar energy projects' funding the construction of gas pipelines to enable Iran to export natural gas to Armenia.⁵⁶³ Diplomatic exchanges involving top governmental officials between the two countries are regular with fourteen such visits recorded by the Ministry of

⁵⁵⁷ European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, "ECHO fact sheet - Iran"

⁵⁵⁸ Jon Boone, "Hamid Karzai admits office gets 'bags of money' from Iran," October 25, 2010, accessed September 19, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/oct/25/hamid-karzai-office-cash-iran>

⁵⁵⁹ Nader et al., *Iran's Influence in Afghanistan*, 11

⁵⁶⁰ Railway Gazette Staff, "Opening up Afghan trade route to Iran," January 29, 2008, accessed September 19, 2017, <http://www.railwaygazette.com/news/single-view/view/opening-up-afghan-trade-route-to-iran.html>; Payvand News Staff, "Iranian, Afghan officials to inaugurate Herat-Meymaneh link today," August 26, 2006, accessed September 19, 2017, <http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/125999/Iranian-Afghan-officials-to-inaugurate-Herat-Meymaneh-link-today>; 1TV Staff, "Afghanistan, Iran rail link to be completed by March 2018," February 26, 2017, accessed September 19, 2017, <http://1tvnews.af/en/news/afghanistan/28077-afghanistan-iran-rail-link-to-be-completed-by-march-2018>; MNA Staff, "Iran-Afghanistan rail corridor under construction," September 9, 2016, accessed September 19, 2017, <http://en.mehrnews.com/news/119588/Iran-Afghanistan-rail-corridor-under-construction>

⁵⁶¹ Economic Cooperation Organization, "History of the Economic Cooperation Organization," Economic Cooperation Organization, accessed September 18, 2017, http://www.eco.int/general_content/86055-History.html?t=General-content

⁵⁶² "The Armenia-Iran relationship: Strategic implication for security in the south caucasus region," European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://www.esisc.org/upload/publications/analyses/the-armenian-iran-relationship/Armenian-Iran%20relationship.pdf>

⁵⁶³ Emil Danielyan, "Armenia deepens ties with embattled Iran," EurasiaNet.org, accessed September 18, 2017, European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center

Foreign Affairs of Armenia from 1997 to 2012.⁵⁶⁴ Armenia and Iran have signed forty-four documents including memorandums of understanding and cooperation, joint declarations, treaties, executive programs and protocols.⁵⁶⁵

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan is home to the world's second largest Shi'a community, playing a significant role in the relations between Iran and Azerbaijan.⁵⁶⁶ Tehran spends millions of dollars in trying to propagate this ideological aspect of their relationship in Azerbaijan with little success as religious beliefs have been mostly replaced by atheism as the country was part of the former Soviet Union.⁵⁶⁷ Khatami took measures to enhance Iran's relations with Azerbaijan with Ahmadinejad continuing such policies.⁵⁶⁸ By 2009, Iran restored maritime passenger transportation with Azerbaijan, which stopped in 1998.⁵⁶⁹ Iran finalized a gas deal with Azerbaijan the following year allowing Azerbaijani gas to flow to Iran's northern regions that have difficulties accessing Iran's major gas fields.⁵⁷⁰ Tehran has likewise continued efforts to improve bilateral trade relations with Baku, with positive results as demonstrated by the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev visiting Iran in April 2014 to sign numerous agreements on cultural, economic and environmental cooperation.⁵⁷¹ In 2015, an Iranian official declared that both Iran and Azerbaijan is providing 24/7 customs service meant to further boost their bilateral trade relations, a move that positively effects Russia and Georgia.⁵⁷² In 2017, officials declared that trade between Iran and Azerbaijan has increased 75 percent since their relations were

⁵⁶⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, "Bilateral relations, Islamic Republic of Iran," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://mfa.am/en/country-by-country/ir/>

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Nasib L. Nassibli, "Azerbaijan- Iran Relations: Challenges and Prospects" (Harvard Kennedy School, 1999), <http://www.belfercenter.org/publication/azerbaijan-iran-relations-challenges-and-prospects-event-summary>

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ Payvand News Staff, "Khatami calls for expansion of all-out ties with Baku," May 19, 2002, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://www.payvand.com/news/02/may/1086.html>; Shahin Abbasov, "Iran-Azerbaijan relations: on a better footing after Khatami's Baku visit," August 9, 2004, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav081004a.shtml>; Shain Abbasov, "Ahmadinejad visits Baku as Azerbaijan attempts to balance U.S., Iran relations," August 28, 2007, accessed September 18, 2017, <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/1069/ahmadinejad-visits-baku-as-azerbaijan-attempts-to-balance-u-s-iran-relations>

⁵⁶⁹ E. Ismayilov, "Azerbaijan, Iran to restore sea transport communication," October 12, 2009, accessed September 18, 2017, <https://en.trend.az/business/economy/1557144.html>

⁵⁷⁰ Tehran Times Staff, "Tehran, Baku to finalize gas deal in three months," January 21, 2010, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/212732/Tehran-Baku-to-finalize-gas-deal-in-three-months>

⁵⁷¹ APA, "Iran to increase trade turnover with Azerbaijan," September 27, 2010, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://news.az/articles/economy/23473>; NCSSEJ Staff, "Republic of Azerbaijan country report 2014" (National Coalition Supporting Eurasian Jewry, 2014), <http://ncsej.org/media/5446c0ebc59df.pdf>

⁵⁷² MNA Staff, "Iran, Azerbaijan economic ties to speed up," December 22, 2015, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://en.mehrnews.com/news/113047/Iran-Azerbaijan-economic-ties-to-speed-up>

established in 1992.⁵⁷³ Iran's presidents and the foreign ministers visited Azerbaijan thirteen times from 1997 until 2012.⁵⁷⁴ Iran's relationship with Azerbaijan could be better but due to certain issues such as Iran's friendly ties with Armenia and the unresolved legal problems with regards to the use of the Caspian Sea, there are some disagreements between Tehran and Baku.⁵⁷⁵

Iraq

Before the 'war on terror', Iran had established bilateral relations with Saddam's Iraq and Iranian pilgrims could visit holy Shi'a cities Karbala and Najaf.⁵⁷⁶ The ousting of Saddam Hussein as part of the operations of the U.S. 'war on terror' removed a significant threat beside Iran's border. Tehran rushed in to help fill the power vacuum in Baghdad and turned the country into an ally exposing the realist dimension of Iran's foreign policy, which is elaborated in the realist section.⁵⁷⁷ Iraq is the top recipient of Iran's non-oil export goods as we can see on the table at the beginning of this chapter. In 2008, Iran's exports to Iraq were valued at 2.38 billion USD, increasing steadily to 6 billion USD in 2012 and 2015.⁵⁷⁸ Iran's support for Iraq is not unknown and Iranian leaders have frequently stressed it in their statements. In September 2006, Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki visited Iran, a move Ahmadinejad reciprocated in March 2008, making him the first Iranian president to go to Baghdad in over three decades.⁵⁷⁹ Apart from such eloquent diplomatic moves, Iran's agenda in Iraq is closely tied with its realist foreign policy goal of survival and security with the economic component being the rationalist means in achieving it.

Pakistan

Iran's relations with Pakistan resembles that of Iran and Saudi Arabia albeit with a civil touch and a stronger economic element. The two are rivals and partners depending on the issue. The relationship is positive in terms of trade and energy but turns negative regarding religious issues

⁵⁷³ ISNA, "Iran, Azerbaijan trade turnover increases by 75%," May 24, 2017, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://en.isna.ir/news/96030301900/Iran-Azerbaijan-trade-turnover-increases-by-75>

⁵⁷⁴ Republic of Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Azerbaijan - Iran relations," Republic of Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accessed September 18, 2017, http://www.mfa.gov.az/files/file/Azerbaijan_-_Iran_relations_18.09.2014.pdf

⁵⁷⁵ Bahman Aghai Diba, "Relations of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan: potential friends and enemies," February 18, 2015, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://www.payvand.com/news/15/feb/1089.html>

⁵⁷⁶ Saeed K. Dehghan, "Iran and Iraq: a history of tension and conflict," *The Guardian*, July 28, 2011, accessed September 18, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jul/28/iran-and-iraq-tension-conflict>

⁵⁷⁷ Craig S. Smith, "After effects: Iran's influence; cleric in Iran says Shiites must act," April 26, 2003, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/26/world/aftereffects-iran-s-influence-cleric-in-iran-says-shiites-must-act.html>

⁵⁷⁸ Please refer to the tables based on the TPO reports at the beginning of this section (9.2.1 Trade).

⁵⁷⁹ Dehghan, "Iran and Iraq: a history of tension and conflict"

and Iran's good relations with India.⁵⁸⁰ Pakistan is one of the founding members of ECO together with Iran signalling good economic ties. The first ECO freight train from Pakistan, destined for Turkey, was welcomed in Iran in its stop over on Aug 23, 2009.⁵⁸¹ It was a project conceptualized in 2008 during an ECO meeting in Islamabad.⁵⁸² During the Khatami period, the Iran-Pakistan multi-billion-dollar gas pipeline project became a topic of negotiations between Iran and Pakistan and by 2009, an agreement was signed with the implementation deadline set to December 31, 2014.⁵⁸³ The project was inaugurated by former President Ahmadinejad and his counterpart President Asif Ali Zardari on March 11, 2013, effectively defying the United States.⁵⁸⁴ At the time of writing in 2017, however, the project has not been completed despite Iran's issuance of an ultimatum in 2015.⁵⁸⁵

During the Khatami era, as the government called for establishing and enhancing ties with its neighbours, two official visits were made in 2001 by top Iranian officials.⁵⁸⁶ Former President Khatami paid an official state visit to Pakistan the following year.⁵⁸⁷ Such trips were continued by former President Ahmadinejad 2008.⁵⁸⁸ President Hasan Rouhani likewise visited Islamabad in 2016 eyeing increased trade with Pakistan aimed at annual volumes of up to 5 billion USD

⁵⁸⁰ Nader et al., *Iran's Influence in Afghanistan*, 24

⁵⁸¹ German-Iranian Chamber of Industry and Commerce Staff, "Tehran welcomes ECO train," German-Iranian Chamber of Industry and Commerce, accessed September 18, 2017,

<http://iran.ahk.de/news/details/artikel/tehran-welcomes-eco-train/?cHash=1df51d5ae59ad91ec76f82740d42857b>

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ Independent News Pakistan, "Iran issues ultimatum to Pakistan on IP gas pipeline," *Pakistan Today*, January 17, 2015, accessed September 18, 2017, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/01/17/iran-issues-ultimatum-to-pakistan-on-ip-gas-pipeline/>

⁵⁸⁴ News Network International, "Zardari, Ahmedinijad inaugurate Pak-Iran gas pipeline project," *The Nation*, March 11, 2013, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://nation.com.pk/national/11-Mar-2013/zardari-ahmedinijad-inaugurate-pak-iran-gas-pipeline-project>; BBC News Staff, "Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline defies US," March 11, 2013, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-21736725>

⁵⁸⁵ Independent News Pakistan, "Iran issues ultimatum to Pakistan on IP gas pipeline"

⁵⁸⁶ Ahmad H. Alvi, "Chief Executive calls for stronger defence ties with Iran," April 27, 2001, accessed September 18, 2017, <https://asianstudies.github.io/area-studies/SouthAsia/SAserials/Dawn/2001/apr2801.html#chie>; Albawaba Staff, "Kharrazi arrives in Islamabad,"

November 29, 2001, accessed September 20, 2017, <https://www.albawaba.com/news/kharrazi-arrives-islamabad>

⁵⁸⁷ Dawn Staff, "Khatami visit a turning point," December 23, 2003, accessed September 18, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/74356>

⁵⁸⁸ Farhan Bokhari, "Ahmadinejad makes first visit to Pakistan," April 28, 2008, accessed September 18, 2017, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ahmadinejad-makes-first-visit-to-pakistan/>

by 2021.⁵⁸⁹ The volume of Pakistan's total imports from Iran amounted to 120.3 million USD in 2012, 167.8 million USD in 2013 and steadily rose to 185.7 USD in 2014.⁵⁹⁰

Turkey

Turkey founded the ECO together with Iran and Pakistan benefitting the economic aspect of the relationship between Istanbul and Tehran. Turkey is Iran's steady trade partner making it to Iran's top 10 countries both for exports and imports as we have seen above. The volume of trade between the two countries are in billions of USD but it has been on the decline since 2012. The bilateral trade volume was valued at 21.89 billion USD in 2012, which decreased annually reaching only 9.65 billion USD in 2016 based on the figures provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.⁵⁹¹ Khatami had postponed a planned trip to Turkey in 2004 due to doubts regarding two contracts Iran had signed with Turkey.⁵⁹² In 2008, Ahmadinejad visited Turkey but failed to reach an energy deal with Istanbul.⁵⁹³ Rouhani visited Turkey in 2016 to sign some agreements.⁵⁹⁴ From 1997 until January 2012, twelve economic agreements were made by the governments of Turkey in Iran in the energy, transportation, telecommunications, banking, health and automotive sectors.⁵⁹⁵

Turkmenistan

Since 2012, Turkmenistan has made it to Iran's top 10 countries for exporting its non-petroleum goods indicating that trade relations between Turkmenistan and Iran are steadily improving favouring Tehran. Iran's relations with Turkmenistan have been quite good. In 2003, when Turkmenistan's former President Saparmurat Niyazov visited Tehran and was received by Khatami, nine bilateral cooperation documents were signed by the officials of both Iran and

⁵⁸⁹ Javid Husain, "Iranian President's visit to Pakistan," *The Nation*, March 29, 2016, accessed 2017.09.18, <http://nation.com.pk/columns/29-Mar-2016/iranian-president-s-visit-to-pakistan>; Muhammad A. Notezai, "Iran-Pakistan at the crossroads?," *The Diplomat*, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://thediplomat.com/2017/07/iran-pakistan-at-the-crossroads>; Mehreen Zahra-Malik, "Pakistan, Iran aim to boost trade to \$5 billion," March 26, 2016, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-iran/pakistan-iran-aim-to-boost-trade-to-5-billion-idUSKCN0WS0F5>

⁵⁹⁰ Samir S. Amir and Zahra Anum, "Islamic Republic of Iran Country Profile" (The Pakistan Business Council, 2016), <http://pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Islamic-Republic-of-Iran.pdf>, 42

⁵⁹¹ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Turkey-Iran economic and commercial relations," Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/economic-and-commercial-relations-with-iran.en.mfa>

⁵⁹² MNA Staff, "Khatami visit to Turkey postponed," September 26, 2004, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://en.mehrnews.com/news/8075/Khatami-visit-to-Turkey-postponed>

⁵⁹³ Daren Butler, "Ahmadinejad says hopes for Turkey energy deals soon," August 15, 2008, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-iran-energy/ahmadinejad-says-hopes-for-turkey-energy-deals-soon-idUSLF68623520080815>

⁵⁹⁴ Office of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, "President Rouhani arrives in Ankara," accessed September 18, 2017, <http://www.president.ir/en/92970>

⁵⁹⁵ Nader Habibi, "Turkey and Iran: Growing Economic Relations Despite Western Sanctions," Middle East Brief 62 (Crown Center for Middle East Studies Brandeis University, 2016), <https://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB62.pdf>, 4-5

Turkmenistan governments.⁵⁹⁶ Khatami pointed that Iran's ties with Turkmenistan can serve as a model for the rest of the region.⁵⁹⁷ In 2005, the former presidents of the two countries inaugurated the 'friendship dam' in their common border at the north-eastern part of Iran.⁵⁹⁸ Khatami and Niyazov opened the Korpedzhe-Kordkuy in December 1997 making it the first gas pipeline between the two countries.⁵⁹⁹ The second gas pipeline, the Dovletabat-Sarakhs-Khangiran gas pipeline, was opened in 2010 when Ahmadinejad visited Turkmenistan to improve regional and economic ties with the country.⁶⁰⁰ Through the pipelines, gas from Turkmenistan could be easily exported to Iran's northern areas.⁶⁰¹ By 2016, Iranian total exports to Turkmenistan reached 1 billion USD, facilitated by gas barter between the two countries.⁶⁰² The 'construction of the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway link' was agreed upon and signed by the leaders of the three countries in 2007 and was inaugurated and opened in December 2014.⁶⁰³

9.2.3 *Iran and the Middle East*

Saudi Arabia

Iran has a sea border with Saudi Arabia and Riyadh has been Tehran's main challenger in the region. Economic and political ties are not very strong but there had been occasions when there have been efforts to improve it. The Iranian government's invitation to re-establish and improve ties with the world had already began during the Rafsanjani era, after Khomeini's death. However, it was during Khatami's presidency when this foreign policy move came into full swing as states reciprocated Iran's diplomatic gesture. Iran hosted the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Conference (OIC) in 1997 demonstrating that it was not isolated and was ready for the world. Khatami sought to reconcile with Saudi Arabia and its main ally the United States as his government has stated. To prove he means business, the former president went to Riyadh

⁵⁹⁶ Payvand News Staff, "Iran-Turkmenistan ties good model for regional states: Khatami," October 3, 2003, accessed September 19, 2017, <http://www.payvand.com/news/03/mar/1051.html>

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁸ Payvand News Staff, "Khatami: Friendship dam manifestation of solidarity between Iran, Turkmenistan," April 12, 2005, accessed September 19, 2017, <http://www.payvand.com/news/05/apr/1077.html>

⁵⁹⁹ BBC News Staff, "Iranian media reports on new gas pipeline," December 29, 1997, accessed September 19, 2017, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/43226.stm>

⁶⁰⁰ Bruce Pannier, "Turkmen Gas Exports To Iran A Boon For Both Countries," January 6, 2010, accessed September 19, 2017, <http://www.payvand.com/news/10/jan/1056.html>

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² Valiolla Afkhamirad, "Iran's exports to Turkmenistan hits \$1bn," June 21, 2016, accessed September 19, 2017, <http://vestnikkavkaza.net/news/Iran%E2%80%99s-exports-to-Turkmenistan-hits-1bn.html>

⁶⁰³ Tengri News Staff, "Railway link from Kazakhstan to Iran across Turkmenistan to be inaugurated today," December 3, 2014, accessed September 19, 2017, <https://en.tengrinews.kz/markets/Railway-link-from-Kazakhstan-to-Iran-across-Turkmenistan-to-257759/>

in May 1999 – a first since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979.⁶⁰⁴ He aimed at restoring ties with the Kingdom discussing their relations and regional security promising to cooperate to keep oil prices up.⁶⁰⁵ By 2001 the two countries signed ‘a security pact on terrorism and drug trafficking’.⁶⁰⁶ Such warming of relations between Riyadh and Tehran took a different turn after the ‘war on terror’, changing the political landscape of the Middle East tipping it in Iran’s favour particularly in Iraq. Ahmadinejad came to power and Iran’s foreign policy became confrontational, especially regarding its nuclear program, threatening the countries in the Middle East. Ahmadinejad still sought to keep cordial relations with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states by attending the Gulf Arab Summit in Doha in 2007.⁶⁰⁷ He also accepted King Abdullah’s formal invitation to participate in the Hajj.⁶⁰⁸ He became the first Iranian president to take part both in the Gulf Arab Summit and in the Hajj.⁶⁰⁹ This rationalist diplomatic streak continued despite the Arab Uprisings and in the 2012 OIC Conference King Abdullah sat next to Ahmadinejad in a gesture of goodwill.⁶¹⁰ Relations soured in 2015 after King Salman ascended to the Saudi throne and several incidents regarding the Hajj pilgrimage with the Mina stampede being the worst claiming 464 Iranian lives.⁶¹¹ Saudi Arabia closed its embassy in Tehran in 2016 after being attacked while Iran banned its pilgrims in participating in the Hajj that year.

Syria

Iran’s ties with Syria historically has been determined by the influence of the United States and Saudi Arabia. Damascus has constantly kept its distance while remaining cordial with Tehran to avoid alienating Riyadh and the Arab Gulf states.⁶¹² Despite the Assad regime being a Shi’a Alawite, religious ties were obsolete and the relationship had more to do with Iranian pilgrims

⁶⁰⁴ Mona Eltahawy, “Khatami takes olive branch to Arab neighbours,” May 17, 1999, accessed September 15, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/may/17/iran>

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁶ The Wilson Center, “Timeline of Iran-Saudi relations” (2016), <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/timeline-iran-saudi-relations>

⁶⁰⁷ Mohammed Abbas, “Gulf Arab summit lukewarm to Iran charm offensive,” December 4, 2007, accessed September 15, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-gulf-summit-iran/gulf-arab-summit-lukewarm-to-iran-charm-offensive-idUSL0465112420071204>

⁶⁰⁸ Reuters Staff, “Saudi King invites Ahmadinejad for Haj, say media,” December 13, 2007, accessed September 15, 2017, <http://gulfnnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/saudi-king-invites-ahmadinejad-for-haj-say-media-1.218058>

⁶⁰⁹ CNN Staff, “Iranian leader attends Hajj ritual,” December 17, 2007, accessed September 15, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/meast/12/17/ahmadinejad.hajj/>

⁶¹⁰ Angus McDowall, “Saudi king sits next to Iran's Ahmadinejad in goodwill gesture,” August 15, 2012, accessed September 15, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-iran-syria-summit/saudi-king-sits-next-to-irans-ahmadinejad-in-goodwill-gesture-idUSBRE87D14H20120814>

⁶¹¹ BBC News Staff, “Hajj stampede: Iran death toll rises to 464,” October 1, 2015, accessed September 15, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34410484>

⁶¹² Barfi, “The real reason why Iran backs Syria”

visiting Shi'a holy sites in Syria, which are not significant for the Alawite Syrians.⁶¹³ Economic ties with Iran before the uprisings in Syria were increasing nonetheless in the energy sector. For instance, a few months before the uprising, Iranian and Syrian officials signed a 10 billion USD agreement with Iraq to construct a gas pipeline stretching from Iran crossing Iraq to Syria, Lebanon and the Mediterranean.⁶¹⁴ Around the same period, there had been a proposal to create an Iranian-Syrian 'joint bank in Damascus, 60% of which' Iran would own.⁶¹⁵ At the beginning of the Syrian uprising and civil war in the country in 2010, Iran strived to keep the peace in Syria, organizing a conference attended by 20 countries from across the region and the world to promote dialogue among the warring factions to solve the conflict. When Iran hosted the Non-Alliance Movement Summit in 2012, finding a peaceful solution to the Syrian conflict was on top of the agenda.⁶¹⁶ This shows the rationalist dimension of Iran's foreign policy as the Iranian government strives to use the institution of diplomacy to mitigate war. However, as the civil war went on, Iran has relentlessly supported the Assad regime to remain in power mainly to avoid a Saudi-friendly Sunni government to be established in Damascus that will curb Iran's strategic interests in the region.⁶¹⁷ Iran wants to keep Syria as a client state and to do so, it has sent senior military personnel such as General Qasem Soleimani as well as Lebanese Hezbollah military to help the Assad regime in its struggle for power in addition to providing the Syrian government with petroleum and financial credit.⁶¹⁸ This shows the mainly realist agenda in Iran's foreign policy in Syria as discussed earlier. To reaffirm Iran's support for the Assad regime, Iran constantly sent official delegations to Syria, including Ali Akbar Velayati, the adviser to Iran's supreme leader in 2015.⁶¹⁹ When Syrian Prime Minister Emad Khamis visited Tehran in January 2017, he signed extensive economic agreements with Iran benefitting IRGC, who play a major role in Iran's economy.⁶²⁰

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ AP Staff, "Baghdad okays Syria-Iran natural gas pipeline," February 20, 2013, accessed September 20, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/baghdad-okays-syria-iran-natural-gas-pipeline/>; Majid Rafizadeh, "Iran's economic stake in Syria," January 4, 2013, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/01/04/irans-economic-stake-in-syria/>

⁶¹⁵ Rafizadeh, "Iran's economic stake in Syria"

⁶¹⁶ RT Staff, "Tehran hosts Non-Aligned Movement summit with focus on Syria," August 26, 2012, accessed September 20, 2017, <https://www.rt.com/news/non-aligned-movement-summit-tehran-583/>

⁶¹⁷ Barfi, "The real reason why Iran backs Syria"

⁶¹⁸ Barfi, "The real reason why Iran backs Syria" Sharafedin, "General Qasem Soleimani: Iran's rising star"

⁶¹⁹ The Economist Staff, "Iran shores up Assad's home front," May 21, 2015, accessed September 20, 2017, http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1593186743&Country=Syria&topic=Politics_1

⁶²⁰ Sharafedin and Francis, "Iran's Revolutionary Guards reaps economic rewards in Syria"

U.A.E.

Despite the dispute between Iran and United Arab Emirates regarding the ownership of three islands in the Gulf – Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb – economic ties between the two countries are quite strong with the U.A.E. being one of Iran’s top trading partner. Although Khatami’s government called for improvement of relations with the countries in the region, no high-profile visits were made to the U.A.E. It was Ahmadinejad who went to visit the U.A.E. in May 2007 making him the first Iranian head of state to do so significantly improving their relations, particularly in terms of trade.⁶²¹ Between 2005 and 2009, Iran-U.A.E. bilateral trade tripled to 12 billion USD.⁶²² In 2010, there were an estimated 8,000 Iranian businesses and approximately 1,200 Iranian trading companies operating in the U.A.E.⁶²³ As the table at the beginning of this chapter showed, trade has been an important element of their relationship even though Iran imports more from the U.A.E. as it exports. Despite the sanctions affecting trade figures between the two countries, U.A.E. has served ‘as Iran’s unofficial backdoor’ at the height of the sanctions.⁶²⁴ Iran’s foreign policy with the U.A.E. can thus be viewed in a rationalist light as it is the means to which Iran could pursue its realist goal of survival amidst the Western dominated system.

Lebanon

Iran’s relationship with Lebanon is mostly facilitated by Tehran’s ties to the Lebanese Hezbollah, revealing the realist aspect of Iran’s foreign policy. Rationalism, nonetheless, in the form of economic ties simultaneously exist in Tehran’s relationship with the Lebanese government. Former President Khatami visited Beirut in May 2003 to prove that his call for improving ties with countries in the region. It was the first head of state visit made by Iran to the country since the Islamic Revolution with talks focusing on regional issues.⁶²⁵ Ahmadinejad also visited Beirut in 2010 and discussed Iran’s financial support for the post-war reconstruction of the southern parts of Lebanon as well as Beirut’s Al-dahiyeh suburb, both dominated by Hezbollah.⁶²⁶ In 2010 alone seventeen trade agreements were signed between the two countries

⁶²¹ Gulf News, “UAE and Iran cement ties,” May 14, 2007, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://gulfnews.com/news/uae/government/uae-and-iran-cement-ties-1.178380>

⁶²² Bloomberg Staff, “Dubai helps Iran evade sanctions as smugglers ignore U.S. laws,” January 26, 2010, accessed September 20, 2017, http://www.iranfocus.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=19568:dubai-helps-iran-evade-sanctions-as-smugglers-ignore-us-laws&catid=4&Itemid=109

⁶²³ Ibid.

⁶²⁴ Financial Tribune Staff, “Upward trend in Iran-UAE trade transactions,” May 24, 2017, accessed September 20, 2017, <https://financialtribune.com/articles/economy-business-and-markets/65083/upward-trend-in-iran-uae-trade-transactions>

⁶²⁵ Mona Ziade, “Thousands cheer Khatami on Beirut visit,” The Daily Star, accessed September 20, 2017

⁶²⁶ Dominic Evans, “Ahmadinejad trip highlights Iranian sway in Lebanon,” October 11, 2010, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-iran/ahmadinejad-trip-highlights-iranian-sway->

benefitting the economic, oil and energy sectors.⁶²⁷ The following year a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on energy worth 50 million USD was signed between Iran and Lebanon and Tehran offered ‘to provide Lebanon with its expertise in terms of petrol extraction’.⁶²⁸ Another MOU was approved in 2012 regarding the electricity and water sector with Iran pouring in 450 million USD worth of loans.⁶²⁹ A week after Michel Aoun was elected president in 2016, Iran’s Foreign Minister Javad Zarif went to visit him in Lebanon stating that the ‘presidential election should serve as an example to other politically troubled countries in the region’.⁶³⁰

9.2.4 *Iran and the World*

India

Iran’s relations with India in terms of politics and trade have been good as the two countries have historical ties. India is among Iran’s most reliable trading partners and bilateral trade has been on the rise as shown on the table at the beginning of this chapter. Iran and India have signed several trade agreements mostly in the energy sector and the two countries ‘hold regular bilateral discussions on economic and trade issues within the framework of India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting (JCM)’.⁶³¹ On one hand, India’s energy needs facilitate a close trading partnership with Iran. On the other hand, New Delhi’s rivalry with Islamabad drives India’s good relationship with Iran.⁶³² Iran of course needs to diversify its economic partners to avoid isolation and counter the losses of not having relations with the United States exhibiting rationalist international activity of trade and economic intercourse as Iran’s means to attain a mainly realist goal. In May 2016, India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Tehran to sign

in-lebanon-idUSTRE69A1KC20101011; Hugh Macleod and Ian Black, “Beirut gives Mahmoud Ahmadinejad a warm welcome,” October 13, 2010, accessed September 20, 2017,

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/oct/13/beirut-mahmoud-ahmadinejad-lebanon>

⁶²⁷ The Daily Star Staff, “Lebanon and Iran ink 17 trade agreements,” October 14, 2010, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Business/Lebanon/2010/Oct-14/59645-lebanon-and-iran-ink-17-trade-agreements.ashx>

⁶²⁸ Yalibnan Staff, “Lebanon, Iran sign a \$50 energy MOU,” July 20, 2011, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://yalibnan.com/2011/07/20/lebanon-iran-sign-a-50-energy-mou/>; The Daily Star Staff, “Iran offers Lebanon expertise in gas exploration endeavors,” August 3, 2011, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Business/Lebanon/2011/Aug-03/145272-iran-offers-lebanon-expertise-in-gas-exploration-endeavors.ashx>

⁶²⁹ Hanadi Chami, “\$450 million in soft loans,” April 20, 2012, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://www.businessnews.com.lb/cms/Story/StoryDetails.aspx?ItemID=1582>; The Daily Star Staff, “Lebanon and Iran approved on MoU to assist with the electricity sector,” March 8, 2012, accessed September 20, 2017, <https://www.albawaba.com/business/lebanon-and-iran-approved-mou-assist-electricity-sector-416129>

⁶³⁰ Reuters Staff, “Iran’s foreign minister is first to meet Lebanon’s new president,” November 7, 2016, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-iran/irans-foreign-minister-is-first-to-meet-lebanons-new-president-idUSKBN13223Q>

⁶³¹ Amir and Anum, “Islamic Republic of Iran Country Profile,” 45–46

⁶³² Nader et al., *Iran’s Influence in Afghanistan*

major agreements ‘on cultural exchange, increasing track one and track two policy dialogues, and infrastructure development and financing’.⁶³³ The Chabahar Port deal, which was also signed during Modi’s visit exhibits the good relationship between Iran and India as New Delhi will develop the strategic port located close to Iran’s border with Pakistan opening a trade route from India to Afghanistan, avoiding Pakistani territory.⁶³⁴

China

China has been a reliable economic partner of Iran with regards to trade. Both Tehran and Beijing have been quite ambitious in their economic ties and trade have steadily increased over time. Bilateral trade between the two countries increased from 3.3 billion USD in 2001 to 38 billion USD in 2014.⁶³⁵ To avoid sanctions from crippling Iran’s economy, Iran were in talks to do barter with China in 2011.⁶³⁶ Iranian food imports were especially hit by the sanctions and the Iranian government used barter, offering gold or oil to its trading partners including China to keep the flow of food coming into Iran.⁶³⁷ This shows that China had not halted its trade with Iran amidst Western sanctions on Iran.⁶³⁸ Despite relative increase in trade volume over time, however, the pace of increase has generally slowed down.⁶³⁹ Iran and China have also agreed to create a 2 billion USD worth of railway projects in 2010 to tie the region to Beijing.⁶⁴⁰ Iran is part of Beijing’s ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiative introduced in 2013, which involves constructing and modernizing Iran’s rail and road infrastructure among others.⁶⁴¹ Due to Western sanctions, China remains to be Iran’s most important trading partner and market for

⁶³³ Ankit Panda, “Long overdue: India’s Modi visits Iran, signing key agreements, setting broad agenda,” May 24, 2016, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/05/long-overdue-indias-modi-visits-iran-signing-key-agreements-setting-broad-agenda/>

⁶³⁴ Tarique Ata, “India and Iran sign ‘historic’ Chabahar port deal,” May 23, 2016, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-36356163>

⁶³⁵ Muhamad S. Olimat, *China and the middle east since world war ii: A bilateral approach* ([Place of publication not identified]: Lexington Books, 2016), 58

⁶³⁶ Barbara Slavin, “Iran Turns to China, Barter to Survive Sanctions” (The Atlantic Council, The South Asia Center, 2011), https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/137386/111011_ACUS_IranChina.pdf; Najmeh Bozorgmehr, Anna Fifield, and Leslie Hook, “China and Iran plan oil barter,” *Financial Times*, July 24, 2011, accessed September 20, 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/2082e954-b604-11e0-8bed-00144feabdc0>

⁶³⁷ Valerie Parent and Parisa Hafezi, “Iran turns to barter for food as sanctions cripple imports,” February 9, 2012, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-wheat/iran-turns-to-barter-for-food-as-sanctions-cripple-imports-idUSTRE8180SF20120209>

⁶³⁸ Amir and Anum, “Islamic Republic of Iran Country Profile,” 50

⁶³⁹ Emma Scott, “Defying expectations: China’s Iran trade and investments,” April 16, 2016, accessed September 16, 2017, <https://www.mei.edu/content/map/defying-expectations-china%E2%80%99s-iran-trade-investments>

⁶⁴⁰ Malcolm Moore, “China to build \$2bn railway for Iran,” *The Telegraph*, September 7, 2010, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/china-business/7985812/China-to-build-2bn-railway-for-Iran.html>

⁶⁴¹ Thomas Erdbrink, “For China’s global ambitions, ‘Iran is at the center of everything!’,” *New York Times*, July 25, 2017, accessed September 20, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/25/world/middleeast/iran-china-business-ties.html?mcubz=0>

oil as well as the main source of enormous amounts of capital that can finance Iran's infrastructure projects.⁶⁴²

Russia

Iran's relations with Russia is dependent on Moscow's relationship with Washington. When tensions are high between the U.S. and Russia, Moscow warms up to Iran and when Russia-U.S. ties improve, Moscow distances itself from Iran.⁶⁴³ Khatami went on an official visit to Russia in 2001 being the first Iranian head of state to visit Moscow in almost four decades formalizing the development of the two countries relationship.⁶⁴⁴ In Moscow, Khatami and Putin signed trade agreements related to arms and oil.⁶⁴⁵ Energy cooperation increased by 2006, coinciding with the rift between Russia and the United States.⁶⁴⁶ High-ranking Russian officials visited Iran in 2007 including Vladimir Putin who attended a summit of the Caspian heads of states held in Tehran indicating the enhancement of their relationship.⁶⁴⁷ In 2008, both countries discussed deals to cooperate and develop the gas industry with Iran and Russia having the world's largest natural gas reserves.⁶⁴⁸ Ahmadinejad visited Russia to attend a regional summit held in Moscow right after his controversial re-election in 2009.⁶⁴⁹ At this point strategic partnerships have developed between the two countries in the fields of agriculture and telecommunication.⁶⁵⁰ By 2012, the two countries discussed plans on 'building an underground gas storage facility near Tehran' proving continued support of Gazprom for projects in Iran

⁶⁴² Ibid.

⁶⁴³ Nader et al., *Iran's Influence in Afghanistan*, 39

⁶⁴⁴ United Press International Staff, "Khatami on landmark visit to Russia," March 12, 2001, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://www.upi.com/Archives/2001/03/12/Khatami-on-landmark-visit-to-Russia/5733984373200/>

⁶⁴⁵ Michael Winesmarch, "Iran and Russia sign oil and weapons pact," March 12, 2001, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/12/world/iran-and-russia-sign-oil-and-weapons-pact.html?mcubz=0>

⁶⁴⁶ Nader et al., *Iran's Influence in Afghanistan*, 40–41

⁶⁴⁷ Mark Katz, "Russian-Iranian Relations in the Ahmadinejad Era," *The Middle East Journal* 62, no. 2 (2008), doi:10.3751/62.2.11; Tony Karon, "The point of Putin's Tehran trip," *Time*, October 15, 2007, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1671951,00.html>

⁶⁴⁸ Reuters Staff, "Russia eyes gas swaps with Iran, says Tehran," November 2, 2008, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://www.bi-me.com/main.php?id=26726&t=1>

⁶⁴⁹ Luke Harding, "Mahmoud Ahmadinejad packs up his troubles," *The Guardian*, June 16, 2009, accessed September 20, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jun/16/iran-ahmadinejad-russia-summit>

⁶⁵⁰ Sam Gardiner, "Russia and Iran Get Strategic," *Foreign Policy In Focus*, accessed September 20, 2017, http://fpif.org/russia_and_iran_get_strategic/

despite Western economic sanctions.⁶⁵¹ In 2015, Putin met with Rouhani in Tehran to boost ties by signing several cooperation agreements.⁶⁵²

United States

Iran has not had direct official relationship with the United States since the establishment of the Islamic Republic yet a significant part of the political discourse of Iranian statesmen emanates from the absence of relations with this powerful Western state. Prior to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Iran was a key ally of the United States in the region but the relationship swiftly ended due to the hostage-taking crisis at the American embassy in Tehran where U.S. diplomats were held captive for 444 days before being released in January 1981.⁶⁵³ Since then, antagonism prevailed between Tehran and Washington and both sides have their own strategies of demonization to justify foreign policies directed against each other.⁶⁵⁴ Mention has already been made that the U.S. supported Saddam in the Iran-Iraq war and has imposed countless of unilateral sanctions on Iran as well as attempted to bring about regime change in Iran. The U.S. has basically tried to make life harder for the Iranian government since the inception of the Islamic Republic. It was only at the height of the Iranian nuclear crisis when officials of the two countries held direct talks.

Khatami's reformist government signalled efforts to re-establish ties with Washington and put forward the 'Dialogue Among Civilizations' to facilitate civil exchange between Iran and the Western country. For a while it seemed relations were thawing as former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright issued a statement in March 2000 admitting the involvement of Washington in the 1953 coup ousting the Iranian Prime Minister, Mohammed Mossadegh, which was one of the issues that had caused Iranian resentment of the United States.⁶⁵⁵ The odds could not have been worse as in 2001, the 'Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations' designated by the United Nations, the terror attacks of September 11 happened ripping apart any opportunity for reconciliation as Bush classified Iran to be part of the 'Axis of Evil'. Shortly after, the 'war on

⁶⁵¹ Reuters Staff, "Russia, Iran discuss gas storage project -Gazprom," March 14, 2012, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/russia-iran-energy/russia-iran-discuss-gas-storage-project-gazprom-idUSL5E8EE2PO20120314>

⁶⁵² Presidential Executive Office Staff, "Russian-Iranian talks," Vladimir Putin had talks with President of Iran Hassan Rouhani in Tehran. Presidential Executive Office, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50770>

⁶⁵³ U.S. Department of State Staff, "The Iranian Hostage Crisis" (United States of America Department of State, Office of the Historian,), <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/short-history/iraniancrises>

⁶⁵⁴ Laleh Gomari-Luksch, "The Great Satan and the Axis of Evil: The politics of demonization in Iran and the United States," in *Iran and the West: Cultural Perceptions from the Sasanian Empire to the Islamic Republic*, ed. Margaux Whiskin (I.B. Tauris, April 2018)

⁶⁵⁵ Albright, "Secretary of State Albright announces easing of U.S. trade ban on Iran (speech transcript)"

terror' ensued with the American military intervention Afghanistan. Khatami's government saw this as an opportunity to pursue the reconciliation project. Thus, Iran cooperated with the United States together with Russia and India to overthrow the Taliban regime in 2001 to form a new Afghan government.⁶⁵⁶ Iran's efforts were to no avail as the revelation of its nuclear program created more problems for both Washington and Tehran than their governments were ready to handle at that point. The United States had starkly opposed Iran's nuclear program and negotiations were held frequently for more than a decade with little success eventually ending in a stalemate and numerous sanctions on Iran towards the end of Ahmadinejad's presidency. Although former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was confrontational towards the United States in defending Iran's rights to have a civilian nuclear program, he requested to visit the site of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York but was denied by the city officials.⁶⁵⁷ The following year, Ahmadinejad congratulated U.S. President Barack Obama in a personal letter, marking the first such move from the Islamic Republic exhibiting a rationalist strategy.⁶⁵⁸ It took until the election of Rouhani in 2013 when the United States and Iran held direct talks, which began when the Obama and Rouhani had the historic phone call in September 2013.⁶⁵⁹ Several discussions regarding Iran's nuclear program followed where Iranian diplomats negotiated directly with U.S. diplomats through the P5+1 meetings until the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was reached in 2015. This shows that despite the anti-American rhetoric expressed by the supreme leader of Iran, this rationalist dimension of foreign policy towards the United States should not be neglected as it is a vital means for Iran to achieve its objectives rooted in the realist tradition.

9.2.5 The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

Iran's nuclear program became the platform where Iran had to negotiate directly with the United States and the West. It was in the context of the rationalist institution of international law that Iran demanded its 'inalienable rights' to have a civilian nuclear program. Iran is a signatory of the NPT, giving it legal rights to have access to nuclear energy for peaceful use. Since 2003,

⁶⁵⁶ Semira N. Nikou, "Timeline of Iran's foreign relations," United States Institute of Peace, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/timeline-irans-foreign-relations#>; Suzanne Maloney, "Tehran and Washington: a motionless relationship?," The Brookings Institute, accessed September 10, 2017, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/11_iran_maloney.pdf

⁶⁵⁷ CNN Staff and Deborah Feyerick, "New York: Iran's leader can't visit ground zero," September 20, 2007, accessed September 10, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2007/US/09/19/ahmadinejad.ground.zero/>

⁶⁵⁸ Barbara Slavin, "Ahmadinejad congratulates Obama," November 6, 2008, accessed September 10, 2017, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2008/nov/6/letter-ahmadinejad-congratulates-obama/>

⁶⁵⁹ Jeff Mason and Louis Charbonneau, "Obama, Iran's Rouhani hold historic phone call," September 28, 2013, accessed September 20, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-un-assembly-iran/obama-irans-rouhani-hold-historic-phone-call-idUSBRE98Q16S20130928>

Iran has negotiated with different countries regarding its nuclear program signifying Tehran's adherence to rationalist principles. In 2003, Iran met with the U.K., France and Germany (EU3) eventually agreed to suspend its nuclear program but the Ahmadinejad government decided to continue enrichment in April 2006.⁶⁶⁰ The U.K., France and Germany trio were joined by the United States, China and Russia (P5+1) two months later to convince Iran to halt its nuclear program with little success and sanctions on Iran were imposed.⁶⁶¹ Three rounds of talks were held in July and August 2007 where a 'work plan' for Iran to clear any issues regarding its nuclear activities was reached but to no avail.⁶⁶² UN passed a resolution in March 2008 aimed at broadening the sanctions on Iran and three months later, the P5+1 proposed an updated deal to Iran.⁶⁶³ The Obama administration began to fully participate in the P5+1 negotiations with Iran in 2009 and a 'fuel swap' agreement materialized but Iran began uranium enrichment process early in 2010 earning Tehran tougher sanctions.⁶⁶⁴ The P5+1 met with Iran again in January 2011 but were unable to arrive at an agreement prompting Iran to continue its activities and by the end of the year, the U.S. passed a legislation allowing Washington to sanction foreign banks that deal with Iran's Central Bank.⁶⁶⁵ The EU followed suit and bans oil imports from Iran in 2012.⁶⁶⁶ Iran met with the P5+1 regularly from April to July 2012 to talk about the nuclear program, which was deemed positive but discussions were halted. Talks resumed in February and April of 2013 but still with no final agreement.⁶⁶⁷

When Hassan Rouhani got elected in June 2013, Iran's foreign policy tone changed. He propagated better relations with the international community through negotiating the nuclear program, resembling Khatami's approach. Foreign ministry officials of both Iran and the P5+1 met along the side lines of the UN General Assembly on September 26, 2013.⁶⁶⁸ The next day, the first direct phone conversation between the heads of state of Iran and the U.S. happened, renewing optimism on Iran's nuclear program for all parties. Since then, Iran negotiated each month with the P5+1 and the IAEA on the nuclear program until July 2015 where several agreements were reached despite some delays. As the negotiations progressed, U.S. Secretary

⁶⁶⁰ Kate Lyons, "Iran nuclear talks: timeline," July 14, 2015, accessed September 19, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/02/iran-nuclear-talks-timeline>

⁶⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶⁶² Arms Control Association Staff, "Timeline of nuclear diplomacy with Iran," Arms Control Association, accessed September 20, 2017, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheet/Timeline-of-Nuclear-Diplomacy-With-Iran>

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

of State John Kerry got involved in direct talks with the Iranian officials including the longest round of negotiations in Vienna beginning at the end of June 2015. Together with the P5+1, the IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano and Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, the JCPOA deal was reached by July 14, 2015.⁶⁶⁹ These constant negotiations show Iran's adherence to the rationalist tradition of diplomacy, exhibiting the rationalist dimension of Iran's foreign policy. To achieve their realist goal of survival and security, in this case energy security, rationalism had to be instrumentalized by the Iranian officials. Without rationalist diplomacy, it would have been impossible for Iran to continue its nuclear program as sanctions were starting to cripple the country's economy. It is rationalism after all, which allows Iran to improve its image in international society making Tehran seem more approachable and reliable.

9.2.6 *The Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC)*

The IRGC is a unique institution within Iran's political sphere involved in all three traditions and answerable only to the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.⁶⁷⁰ It is comprised of many units, each having a specific task. For instance, the Quds unit is the IRGC arm responsible for activities outside Iran's borders having a revolutionist vision but their actions mean to strengthen Iran's realist goals.⁶⁷¹ Regarding the economy, the Basij unit of the IRGC is at the forefront. The initial link between the Basij and the economy was forged to ensure the welfare of its personnel but as time progressed, the Basij penetrated 'every sector of the economy, from construction and real estate to the stock market' effectively increasing its control over Iran's society and domestic politics.⁶⁷² The Basij has allowed the IRGC to evolve into a business conglomerate being Iran's third largest by 2007, controlling more than 500 companies in the nuclear power, banking, insurance and lifestyle sectors.⁶⁷³ During Ahmadinejad's presidency, many took on a significant amount of ministerial posts in the government with 'the ministers of energy, welfare and social security, industries and mines, justice, culture and Islamic guidance, petroleum, defence, commerce, and cooperatives' having IRGC or Basij backgrounds while some were war veterans.⁶⁷⁴ The IRGC's embeddedness in Iran's economy indicates the

⁶⁶⁹ IAEA Staff, "IAEA Director General and US Secretary of State John Kerry meet on Iran negotiations," International Atomic Energy Agency, accessed September 20, 2017, <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/iaea-director-general-and-us-secretary-state-john-kerry-meet-iran-negotiations>; U.S. Department of State Staff, "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action" (U.S. State Department,), <https://www.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/iran/jcpoa/>

⁶⁷⁰ Amir Taheri, "Who are Iran's Revolutionary Guards?," November 15, 2007, accessed September 20, 2017, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB119509278241693687.html#printMode>

⁶⁷¹ I discuss this in the section on revolutionism below.

⁶⁷² S. Golkar, "Paramilitarization of the economy: The case of Iran's basij militia," *Armed Forces & Society* 38, no. 4 (2012), accessed December 3, 2012, doi:10.1177/0095327X12437687

⁶⁷³ Taheri, "Who are Iran's Revolutionary Guards?"

⁶⁷⁴ Ali Alfoneh, "The Revolutionary Guards' Role in Iranian Politics," *Middle East Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (2008), accessed September 20, 2017, <http://www.meforum.org/1979/the-revolutionary-guards-role-in-iranian-politics>;

rationalist dimension of Iran's domestic politics, spilling over to foreign policy. The existence of profit-driven companies controlled by the Basij prompts Tehran to foster good trading relationships with the world highlighting rationalism to be the means for their survival.

9.3 Revolutionism

Morality as an imperative principle together with the establishment of a community of mankind or cosmopolitan world society are the main tenets of the revolutionist tradition. Ideological conflict between two opposite camps of faithful and heretics define international activity while moral restrictions govern international conduct according to revolutionism. For the revolutionists, moral values regulate the affairs of individuals in the cosmopolitan utopian society of mankind. There are no borders and individual nation-states in revolutionism since the aim is to transcend such divisions to unite humanity under one super-state encompassing all individuals on earth. Kantian world society is a common term in the revolutionist tradition since Immanuel Kant had a significant contribution to its establishment. For instance, Kant's 'federation of peoples' or 'foedus pacificum' (pacific federation) based on his work, 'Toward Perpetual Peace', influenced many of today's political developments directed towards the creation of a cosmopolitan world society of mankind.⁶⁷⁵ His federation seeks 'to end all wars forever' among nations by reaching an agreement to maintain peace where 'every state, even the smallest one, could expect its security and its rights'.⁶⁷⁶ The United Nations and the League of Nations exemplifies Kant's cosmopolitanist vision despite its shortcomings.

Iran's foreign policy likewise incorporates a revolutionist vision despite its fundamentally realist conception and rationalist execution. To understand the revolutionist vision in Iran's foreign policy, we should discuss the two features of the Islamic Republic, leading to two distinct types of revolutionism: First is the religious cosmopolitanist revolutionist vision rooted in Islam, turning the vision into a realist endeavour prevalent in Khamenei and Ahmadinejad's political discourses. Second is what I call a global cosmopolitanist revolutionist vision, based on moral values regardless of faith advocated by Khatami and Rouhani in their statements. These two correspond to two different kinds of cosmopolitanism with two distinct outcomes, which Kant had put forward: political cosmopolitanism and ethico-theological

Ali Alfoneh, "How intertwined are the Revolutionary Guards in Iran's economy?," *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*, no. 3 (October 2007), accessed April 13, 2014, <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/how-intertwined-are-the-revolutionary-guards-in-irans-economy/>

⁶⁷⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, Rethinking the Western Tradition (Yale University Press, 2008), 33–34

⁶⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 35

cosmopolitanism. The highest political good, which political cosmopolitanism represents as represented by the global cosmopolitanist vision in Iran, is the establishment of a world republic (global legal society of peaceful states), better known as the ‘federation of nations’.⁶⁷⁷ Meanwhile the highest moral good, envisioned by Kant’s ethico-theological cosmopolitanism is ‘the establishment of a global ethical community’, represented by the Islamic cosmopolitanist vision in Iran’s foreign policy.⁶⁷⁸ I discuss the global and Islamic cosmopolitanisms briefly as they relate to Iran’s political structure and Iranian statesmen foreign policy action.

9.3.1 *Islamic cosmopolitanism*

Iran’s Islamic Revolution of 1979 eliminated the Iranian Pahlavi monarchy and brought religion, particularly Shi’ism, into the epicentre of governance. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini introduced the concept of the sovereignty of God in Iran replacing that of the King following the Twelver Shi’a tradition.⁶⁷⁹ Khomeini and his followers believe that the Ummah, is to be led by the Vali Al-Asr (Governor of the Epoch) or Imam Mahdi, who has been in occultation for many centuries implying that the human dimension of sovereignty lies on the Vali Al-Asr. With the occultation of Mahdi, Khomeini drew on the principle of Imamato, belief in a divine guide, and created the Office of the Vali-ye Faqih (Guardian Jurist) or Supreme Leader to undertake such obligations, ‘a bold innovation in the history of Shi’ism’.⁶⁸⁰ Khomeini appointed himself as the intermediary between the Vali Al-Asr and the people of Iran, claiming the title of Vali-ye Faqih for himself, effectively making it the highest political position in Iran with the presidency being the second. In the Shi’ite principle of Imamato, as a consequence of God’s justice, mankind is never to be left without an Imam tasked to guide the Ummah and interpret the Koran. The Vali-ye Faqih represents Imam Mahdi on earth while he is on occultation giving the Vali-ye Faqih ‘supreme power over men and responsibility only to God’.⁶⁸¹ This integrates both divine and human aspects of sovereignty. Under this pretext, Khomeini actively sought to export the revolution to unite the Ummah to realize the universalist aspiration of the Islamic

⁶⁷⁷ Cavallar, “Cosmopolitanisms in Kant's philosophy”

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹ The foundational principle of the constitution, Chapter 1 Article 2, states that: ‘The Islamic Republic is a system based on belief in: 1) the One God (as stated in the phrase "There is no god except Allah"), His exclusive sovereignty and right to legislate, and the necessity of submission to His commands’. This comes from the abridged English translation of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, see Werth 1979. The original Farsi text of the constitution written by the First National Assembly of Experts (۱۳۵۸) (1979) was also consulted in order to verify the translation; Paul Werth, “Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Abridged English Translation),” University of Nevada, accessed April 15, 2015, [https://faculty.unlv.edu/pwerth/Const-Iran\(abridge\).pdf](https://faculty.unlv.edu/pwerth/Const-Iran(abridge).pdf) *The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran 1979, last amended in 1989*

⁶⁸⁰ Said A. Arjomand, “The state and Khomeini’s Islamic order,” *Iranian Studies* 13, 1/4 (1980): 154, accessed September 23, 2017, Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4310339>

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 157–58

Republic. After Khomeini's death, Ali Khamenei took on the position of Vali-ye Faqih. It is in this context of the sovereignty of God where Iran's revolutionist vision follows the Kantian tradition as the Islamic Civilization becomes the realization 'God's Kingdom on Earth' as Kant envisioned.

Khomeini and his followers advertised Islam as an indigenous philosophy free from Western influences thereby making it the only way to escape the 'negative impacts of Western and Eastern ideological imports'.⁶⁸² Iran's Islamic Revolution, however, was not very popular in the Middle East and exporting it proved to be a problem for the Islamic Republic. Iran's neighbours felt threatened and Tehran was isolated soon after. Thus, Iran fought alone in the Iran-Iraq war and it took serious political effort during the Rafsanjani and Khatami administrations to re-establish ties with the countries in the region. Statesmen of the Islamic Republic modified their approach in exporting the revolution by setting Iran as an example for the Muslim world to follow 'as an alternative to existing Arab/Islamic regimes' presenting themselves to be the heart of Islamic unification.⁶⁸³ The revolutionist vision is so strong, it is written in the constitution of the Islamic Republic. The 'Method and Government in Islam' section of the constitution states:

'With due consideration to the Islamic content of the Iranian Revolution, which was a movement for the victory of all the oppressed people over their oppressors, the Constitution paves the way for the perpetuation of this Revolution in and outside the country, particularly on the area of expansion of international relations with other Islamic and peoples' movements; it tries to prepare the ground for the creation of a single world Ommat (Nation). [Koranic Verse: *Verily, this your nation is one nation; and I am your Lord, and so serve me* (The Chapter of the Prophets, Verse 92)], and the perpetuation of the struggle for delivering all the deprived and oppressed nations of the world'.⁶⁸⁴

Preparing 'the ground for the creation of a single world' Ummah thus becomes the task of the supreme leader Khamenei, who is responsible for propagating and implementing this together with heading 'the struggle for delivering all the deprived and oppressed nations of the world'.⁶⁸⁵ This last line is once again reiterated in article 154 of the 'Foreign Policy Section' stating that the Islamic Republic must support 'the rightful struggle of the oppressed people against their oppressors anywhere in the world'.⁶⁸⁶ Hence, the establishment of a unified Islamic Ummah

⁶⁸² Henner Fürtig, "Universalist counter-projections: Iranian postrevolutionary foreign policy and globalisation," in Ansari, *Politics of Modern Iran*, 113

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*, 117

⁶⁸⁴ *The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran 1979, last amended in 1989*, 5

⁶⁸⁵ *Id.*

⁶⁸⁶ *Id.*, 43

constitutes the religious cosmopolitan revolutionist vision of Iran, which involves fighting for the oppressed and deprived nations. To this end, an ideological army should be established.

God's Armies: IRGC and the Hezbollah

The 'Ideological Army' section of the Iranian constitution stipulates:

'In establishing and equipping the defence forces of the country, it shall be taken into consideration that faith and ideology are the basis and criterion. Therefore, the Army of the Islamic Republic and the Revolutionary Guards Corps will be formed in conformity with the above objective, and will be responsible not only for protecting and safeguarding the frontiers but also for the ideological mission, that is, Jihad (Crusade) for God's sake and struggle for promoting the rule of God's law in the world [Koranic verse: *And prepare ye against them what force and companies of horse ye can, to make the enemies of God, your enemies, and others besides them, in dread thereof.* (The Chapter of the Spoils, Verse 60)]'.⁶⁸⁷

The IRGC was conceived to protect Iran's revolution as well as its achievements and they are under the direct command of the supreme leader.⁶⁸⁸ They have been largely involved in the spread of the Islamic ideology within the Islamic Republic through the implementation of the Shari'a law, thereby concerning themselves with women's dress code and public behaviour as previously discussed. After all, Article 1 of the IRGC statute states they are responsible for the 'expansion of the rule of law of God in accordance with the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran'.⁶⁸⁹ The IRGC is a very complex institution constituted of several units, each having a different task making them an active player both within Iran and in the world. They have a 'military force, intelligence service, covert action/special operations force, police, paramilitary force and business conglomerate, with proxies worldwide'.⁶⁹⁰ One of the units in particular is tasked with implementing the Islamic cosmopolitanist vision in the region, the Quds force (Sepah-e Quds). The Quds force is an IRGC unit responsible for operations outside Iran headed by Major General Qasem Soleimani. In fact, the name Quds (Arabic for Jerusalem) was chosen by the IRGC officials since it implied 'that the force will one day liberate the holy city' effectively implanting the issue into the heart of Iran's foreign policy unifying the Islamic Ummah and realizing the religious cosmopolitan vision as stated in the Iranian constitution.⁶⁹¹

⁶⁸⁷ *Id.*, 7–8

⁶⁸⁸ *The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran 1979, last amended in 1989*, 42; Statute of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Islamic Revolution, ratified September 6, 1982, article 1, Islamic Parliament Research Center (1982), accessed September 24, 2017, <http://rc.majlis.ir/fa/law/show/90595>

⁶⁸⁹ *Statute of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Islamic Revolution, ratified September 6, 1982, article 1*

⁶⁹⁰ Stratfor Staff, "Special Series: Iranian Intelligence and Regime Preservation," June 22, 2010, accessed September 25, 2017, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/special-series-iranian-intelligence-and-regime-preservation>

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*

The extensive reach of the Quds force is visible in the ongoing conflict in Iraq and Syria and the war against Daesh (ISIL) with Soleimani's growing popularity.⁶⁹²

To be able to fight, soldiers must be recruited and trained in the name of Islam attracting those empathetic to the Islamic Republic's cause. The Lebanese Hezbollah, Iraqi militias such as Asa'in Ahl al-Haq and the Afghan Fatemiyun Division have collaborated with the Quds force in recruiting militant 'jihadists' for training and deployment in the region and there doesn't seem to be a shortage of applicants from Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan.⁶⁹³ Volunteers are recruited as the 'defenders of the oppressed and holy shrines' and they believe the 'non-Sunni communities' are being eradicated in Syria with their 'shrines, mosques and churches' being destroyed as publicized 'in state media and on social media networks'.⁶⁹⁴ The popularity of Soleimani and his remarks on the martyrdom, bravery and sacrifice of the soldiers fuel the flame of Islamic Shi'a patriotism in the hearts of the young Shi'a volunteers across the Middle East, prompting them to fight in Syria. They are fighting for God's cause, for the oppressed and the survival of their fellow non-Sunnis while seeing themselves as part of the Islamic nation under the Shi'a flag. In Iran, which has a reputation for glorifying martyrdom, the fighters killed in Syria are declared by the state media as "defenders of the holy shrine [of Sayeda Zeinab]" regardless of where they were actually killed'.⁶⁹⁵ Faith is the main factor drawing in new recruits where 'Iranian officers delivered speeches invoking the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, the revered seventh-century Shiite figure whose death at the hands of a powerful Sunni army became the event around which Shiite spirituality would revolve'.⁶⁹⁶ Invoking a religious narrative such as the death of Imam Hussein to incite action in the name of Islam is nothing new in Iran. As far as the Islamic Republic is concerned, Imam Hussein still has enemies to this day in the form of those against the Shi'ites ranging from the Sunni militias to the United States, practically any group hostile to the Shi'a faith.

Afghani recruits were among those who first joined the fight in Syria together with the Hezbollah who were recruited from the 'immigrant communities in Iran', Syria and

⁶⁹² Nader, "The Revolutionary Guards"

⁶⁹³ Tallha Abdulrazaq, "Iran's 'Shia Liberation Army' is par for the course," August 21, 2016, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/08/iran-shia-liberation-army-par-160821091935110.html>; Kristin Dailey, "Iran has more volunteers for the Syrian War than it knows what to do with," May 12, 2016, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/05/12/iran-suleimani-basij-irgc-assad-syria/>

⁶⁹⁴ Dailey, "Iran has more volunteers for the Syrian War than it knows what to do with" Phillip Smyth, "All the Ayatollah's men," September 18, 2014, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/18/all-the-ayatollahs-men/>

⁶⁹⁵ Dailey, "Iran has more volunteers for the Syrian War than it knows what to do with"; Iran bestows a special status to honour those killed in the Iran-Iraq war.

⁶⁹⁶ Arango, "Iran dominates in Iraq after U.S. 'handed the country over'"

Afghanistan through travel agencies.⁶⁹⁷ They join for many reasons: ‘religious grounds, to improve their chances of obtaining permanent residency or work permits in Iran, for financial compensation’ and even to avoid the death penalty in Iran if they were caught smuggling drugs.⁶⁹⁸ Most, however, volunteer for financial reasons as rampant unemployment in the region have left many young men without a job and prospects for the future. Fatemiyun commanders mainly recruiting Afghans, say their fighters get 450 USD monthly ‘plus temporary immigration benefits for their families in Iran’ although reports say this figure can go up to a 1000 USD.⁶⁹⁹ Young men from Syria are reported to have a monthly salary of 265 USD.⁷⁰⁰ Iraqi Shi’ites seem to receive the least amount with only 150 USD a month.⁷⁰¹ Apart from the financial motivation, the task of the fighters are defined to be holy in the name of Islam. There is a report from an eyewitness saying, ‘new recruits were asked to walk under a copy of the Koran held high and to kiss it as a token of reverence and steadfastness to its principles’.⁷⁰² This emphasizes ‘the sacred nature’ of their commitment with individuals claiming to have been transformed into ‘God’s soldier at that moment’.⁷⁰³

The Hezbollah has also been part of this revolutionist project and since becoming organized after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, they have proven to be an effective tool of the Iranian government both within the country and across the Middle East. The Hezbollah or Party of Allah is an integral part of Iran’s religious cosmopolitanist vision. The most active and organized Hezbollah groups are mainly found in Iran and Lebanon but their influence stretches across the region. They are composed mainly of Shi’a members but also include Sunni’s as well.⁷⁰⁴ In the manifesto of the Lebanese Hezbollah the Islamic revolutionist vision is evident:

‘Who are we and what is our identity? We are the sons of the Umma of the Hezbollah whose vanguard was made victorious in Iran by God to pave the way for a Worldwide Central Islamic State. We obey orders from one single leadership, wise and just, the leadership of the Fakih; the Imam, Ruhollah Khomeini. "Because of that, we are not in

⁶⁹⁷ Farzin Nadimi, “Iran's Afghan and Pakistani Proxies: In Syria and Beyond?,” *Policy Watch*, no. 2677 (2016), accessed September 25, 2017, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/irans-afghan-and-pakistani-proxies-in-syria-and-beyond>

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁹ Kellan Howell, “Iran spending billions on terrorists’ salaries: report,” September 5, 2015, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/sep/5/iran-spending-billions-on-terrorists-salaries-repo/>; Nadimi, “Iran's Afghan and Pakistani Proxies: In Syria and Beyond?”

⁷⁰⁰ Syria Direct Staff, “Hama Media Office: IRGC presence ‘noticeable’,” February 16, 2015, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://syriadirect.org/news/hama-media-office-irgc-presence-%E2%80%98noticeable%E2%80%99/>

⁷⁰¹ Associated Press Staff, “Experts: Iran's Quds force deeply enmeshed in Iraq,” February 16, 2007, accessed June 17, 2014, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2007/02/16/experts-iran-quds-force-deeply-enmeshed-in-iraq.html>

⁷⁰² Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, 66

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ Lalevée, “The Hezbollahi: Iran's apparatus abroad,” 42–43

Lebanon a closed and organized party We are an Umma associated with the Muslims of all over the world'.⁷⁰⁵

Through this statement, the Lebanese Hezbollah's connection with the Islamic Republic becomes clear helping us understand the reasoning behind the Islamic Republic's support for the group. Iran provides enormous financial and military support estimated to be worth billions of USD to continue exporting the Islamic Republic's religious cosmopolitanist vision aimed at realizing the unification of the Islamic Ummah.⁷⁰⁶ To this end, Iran has also provided some educational support to the group. For instance, about 300 seminarians from Lebanon are studying in Qom and 100 scholarships a year are allocated for Hezbollah in Iranian universities.⁷⁰⁷ Iran also finances the public services supplied by the Lebanese Hezbollah to its Shi'a communities in the country such as daily garbage collection, providing drinking water and some basic health services.⁷⁰⁸ In the Iraqi city of Najaf, a similar system for garbage collection is in place, this time with an Iranian company collecting the trash.⁷⁰⁹ These services reflect the expansion of the Islamic nation from Iran to other countries in the region, suggesting the serious intent of the Islamic Republic in realizing its religious cosmopolitan vision despite the realist component of Tehran's actions.

The invitation and Shi'a potential

Da'vat (Farsi term for invitation) according to Fürting is a vital part of an Islamic foreign policy with Iran leading the efforts since the Islamic Revolution.⁷¹⁰ This involves propagating the message of Islam to attract followers. Iran being a majority Shi'a country does not advocate Shi'ism per se but local and regional propaganda tend to promote Shi'a narratives such as the martyrdom of Imam Hussein for the Quds force purpose of fighting in Syria and Iraq. The easiest people to invite to the Islamic cosmopolitan vision of Iran are the Shi'ites of the region. According to a 2009 estimate Iran, Pakistan, India and Iraq have the biggest Shi'a populations in the world. Iran with about 66 to 70 million, Pakistan 17 to 26 million, India 16 to 24 million

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁶ Hokayem, "Iran and Lebanon"

⁷⁰⁷ H. E. Chehabi and Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the last 500 Years* (Oxford, London, New York: Centre for Lebanese Studies; In association with I.B. Tauris; Distributed by St. Martin's Press, op. 2006), 45

⁷⁰⁸ Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, 83–86

⁷⁰⁹ Arango, "Iran dominates in Iraq after U.S. handed the country over"

⁷¹⁰ Henner Fürting, "Universalist counter-projections: Iranian postrevolutionary foreign policy and globalisation," in Ansari, *Politics of Modern Iran*, 125

and Iraq having 19 to 22 million. Yemen is not far behind with 8 to 10 million, Azerbaijan 5 to 7 million, Afghanistan 3 to 4 million.⁷¹¹

In Afghanistan, Iran has maintained good relations with the Shi'a Hazara community and provided them with good education.⁷¹² The Hazara 'have traditionally looked to Tehran for religious and political guidance' and since the fall of the Taliban, they have been free to express their Shi'a faith and organize 'public processions' during Shi'a 'holy days'.⁷¹³ Syria is important for Iran's revolutionist vision since the two most notable holy Shi'a sites are to be found in the country. These are the Sayyidah Zaynab Mosque in Damascus – tomb of Zaynab, the daughter of the first Shi'a Imam Ali – and Sayyidah Ruqayya Mosque in Damascus – tomb of Sukayna 'Ruqayya', the daughter of the third Shi'a Imam Hussein. Among the two, it is the Zaynab shrine which has been advertised to be in danger in order to recruit jihadists militia to fight alongside Assad's troops.⁷¹⁴ With regard to Azerbaijan, Iran spends millions of USD to endorse a common Shi'a identity but with little success due to the prevalence of atheism during their history in the U.S.S.R.⁷¹⁵ When the 2011 protests in Bahrain took place, Iran openly supported the protesters who were predominantly Shi'a and was accused of meddling in the affairs of the country by some Gulf states.⁷¹⁶ In the case of Yemen, there is vocal support from Tehran but it is difficult to trace. Some interviews have claimed, however, that 'prominent Houthi supporters have converted to Twelver Shia over the past two decades and have visited Iran for religious instruction, prompting speculation that there is in fact a Twelver faction within the wider Houthi movement'.⁷¹⁷ An Iranian official said three Arab capitals, Damascus, Baghdad and Beirut, are already 'in the hands of Iran and belong to the Islamic Iranian revolution,' with Sanaa being the fourth.⁷¹⁸ Spreading Iran's Islamic revolutionist vision, does not end there, nonetheless, as its religious schools in Qom funded by the government continue

⁷¹¹ Pew Research Center, "Mapping the global Muslim population" (Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, Washington, D.C, 2009), <http://www.pewforum.org/2009/10/07/mapping-the-global-muslim-population/>

⁷¹² Mir H. Sadat and James P. Hughes, "U.S.-Iran engagement through Afghanistan," *Middle East Policy* 17, no. 1 (2010), doi:10.1111/j.1475-4967.2010.00424.x

⁷¹³ Nader et al., *Iran's Influence in Afghanistan*, 6

⁷¹⁴ Christopher Anzalone, "Zaynab's guardians: the emergence of Shi'a militias in Syria," Combating Terrorism Center, accessed September 25, 2017, <https://ctc.usma.edu/posts/zaynabs-guardians-the-emergence-of-shia-militias-in-syria>

⁷¹⁵ Nassibli, "Azerbaijan- Iran Relations: Challenges and Prospects"

⁷¹⁶ Shabnam Nourian, "Iran's support for Bahrain protesters fuels regional tensions," April 15, 2011, accessed September 21, 2017, <http://www.dw.com/en/irans-support-for-bahrain-protesters-fuels-regional-tensions/a-6504403-1>

⁷¹⁷ Salisbury, "Yemen and the Saudi-Iranian 'Cold War'," 6

⁷¹⁸ Middle East Monitor, "Sanaa is the fourth Arab capital to join the Iranian revolution," Middle East Monitor, accessed September 25, 2017, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20140927-sanaa-is-the-fourth-arab-capital-to-join-the-iranian-revolution/>

preaching the message to those willing to listen. Ahmadinejad made an attempt to invite the world to this vision of Islam in his statements at the UN exhibiting the power of unification through religion.

To discern the potential of the Shi'a population in the region, we must look at one of the most important holy events of the Shi'ite faith, the Arba'een (Arabic term for forty), which happens in Iraq. The annual Arba'een pilgrimage 'commemorates the end of the 40-day mourning period after the killing of Imam Hussein' the third Shi'a Imam, in the Battle of Karbala, whose death is said to have resulted in the Shi'a-Sunni schism in Islam.⁷¹⁹ In 2015, reports say up to 22 million pilgrims from around the world participated in the annual pilgrimage in Karbala, Iraq, making it ten times larger than the Hajj.⁷²⁰ Many of the pilgrims go to Karbala on foot walking up to hundreds of kilometres from their hometowns. Some come from Basra in Iraq covering approximately 500 kilometers on foot for two weeks and make their way between Najaf and Karbala for the pilgrimage.⁷²¹ On the way tents or Mawakeb, are put up the local villagers to provide free services to the pilgrims.⁷²² These services include providing food and beverages, space to rest with laundry service, international calls and everything pilgrims need – all for free.⁷²³

'Mawkeb organizers intercept the pilgrims' path to plead with them to accept their offerings, which often includes a full suite of services fit for kings: first you can a foot massage, then you are offered a delicious hot meal, then you are invited to rest while your clothes are washed, ironed, then returned to you after a nap. All complimentary, of course'.⁷²⁴

⁷¹⁹ David Sim, "Arbaeen: World's largest annual pilgrimage as millions of Shia Muslims gather in Karbala," November 21, 2016, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/arbaeen-worlds-largest-annual-pilgrimage-millions-shia-muslims-gather-karbala-1531726>

⁷²⁰ Associated Press Staff, "Millions of Shiites gather in Iraq's Karbala for Arbaeen," December 2, 2015, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3342596/Millions-Shiites-gather-Iraqs-Karbala-Arbaeen.html>; Fotini Christia, Elizabeth Dekeyser, Dean Knox, *To Karbala: Surveying Religious Shi'a from Iran and Iraq* (Cambridge, Mass, 2016), accessed September 25, 2017, http://web.mit.edu/cfotini/www/Shia_Pilgrims_Survey.pdf

⁷²¹ Wassim Basseem, "Iraq's Arbaeen pilgrims walk new, safer path," November 18, 2014, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/iraq-holy-city-karbala-religious-road.html>

⁷²² AFP, "Millions throng Iraq shrine for Arbaeen pilgrimage climax," *The Daily Mail*, December 5, 2015, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3344011/Millions-throng-Iraq-shrine-pilgrimage-climax.html>; Lizzie Dearden, "One of the world's biggest and most dangerous pilgrimages is underway," *The Independent*, November 25, 2014, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/one-of-the-worlds-biggest-and-most-dangerous-pilgrimages-is-underway-9882702.html>

⁷²³ Sayed M. Al-Modarresi, "World's biggest pilgrimage now underway, and why you've never heard of it!," *The Huffington Post*, November 24, 2014, accessed September 25, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/sayed-mahdi-almodarresi/arbaeen-pilgrimage_b_6203756.html

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

Up to 50 million meals daily for two weeks are provided free of charge by villagers, mostly farmers and labourers, who 'who starve to feed the pilgrims and save up all year round so that visitors are satisfied'.⁷²⁵ In addition, volunteer fighters protect the pilgrims from potential Daesh (ISIL) attacks on their path to Karbala.⁷²⁶ Such cooperation of people freely serving their fellow Muslims during the Arba'een has no comparison in the world in terms of its large numbers. Both the pilgrims and those who serve them are devout Muslims. They believe in the sacrifice of Imam Hussein, who opposed the tyrant Yazid but did not resort to violence costing him his life at the Battle of Karbala. According to the Director of the Islamic Center: 'For Muslims and non-Muslims, the sacrifice and noble message of Imam Hussain represents the peace and virtue of Islam' it is 'a model all of humanity can replicate'.⁷²⁷

In a study on the views of the Iraqi and Iranian Arba'een pilgrims, 'respondents saw Iran as a guardian of Shi'a interests in conflicts across the region' and 'strongly supported the provision of financial assistance to all Shiite groups mentioned, including the Houthis in Yemen, Syria's government army, Hezbollah, the Shiite volunteer groups in Iraq known as Hashd al-Shaabi, the Shiite opposition in Bahrain, and Afghan Shiite groups'.⁷²⁸ This shows that the Islamic vision set out by Iran has significant support in the Muslim community. In a report, observers in Najaf believe Iran is simply waiting for the death of Ayatollah Ali Sistani before claiming 'religious guardianship of the holy cities' in Iraq.⁷²⁹ There are many important holy Shi'a shrines in Iraq, mostly tombs of some of the twelve Shi'a Imams, attracting millions of Shi'a pilgrims from Iran and around the Middle East. Among the most notable are:

Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf – tomb of the first Shi'a Imam, Ali

Imam Hussein Shrine in Karbala – tomb of the third Shi'a Imam, Hussein, who was martyred during the 648 AD Battle of Karbala.⁷³⁰

Al Abbas Mosque in Karbala – tomb of Al-Abbas, the son of the first Shi'a Imam Ali and the third Shi'a Imam Hussein's half-brother 'who also died at the Battle of Karbala'.⁷³¹

⁷²⁵ Ibid.

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

⁷²⁷ Alexandra Sims, "Millions of Muslims take part in mass pilgrimage of Arbaeen," November 24, 2016, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/20-million-muslims-march-against-isis-arbaeen-pilgrimage-iraq-karbala-a7436561.html>

⁷²⁸ Fotini Christia, Elizabeth Dekeyser, Dean Knox, *To Karbala: Surveying Religious Shi'a from Iran and Iraq*

⁷²⁹ Naji, "What is Iran's game plan in Iraq?"

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

⁷³¹ Ibid.

Al-Kadhimiya Mosque in Baghdad – tombs of the seventh Shi’a Imam, Musa Al-Kadhim, and the ninth Shi’a Imam, Muhammad Al-Taqi

Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra – tombs of the tenth Shi’a Imam, Ali al-Hadi, and the eleventh Shi’a Imam, Hasan Al-Askari

From Iran alone, 1.5 million Iranian pilgrims visited the Shi’a shrines in 2016, marking the religious significance of Iraq for Iran.⁷³² If Tehran is to be successful in its Islamic foreign policy, the revolutionist vision of establishing an Islamic cosmopolitanism could be a reality with the numbers of pilgrims increasing rapidly by the millions each year since the fall of Saddam. Once realized, however, as the militant components of this revolutionist vision shows, there is a thin line to cross in reaching Iran’s realist goal of creating an empire – an Islamic empire – which Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei refers to as the ‘New Islamic Civilization’.

9.3.2 Global Cosmopolitanism

A global cosmopolitanist revolutionist vision in Iran’s foreign policy can be observed through the reformist current in Iran’s politics although it is not as prominent as the Islamic cosmopolitanist vision advertised by Khamenei. Khatami’s Dialogue among Civilizations (DAC) brought global cosmopolitanism into Iran’s political discourse and to prove he means business, his administration ushered in internal as well as external reforms. The former president went on landmark visits to Italy, France, Germany, Japan and Russia to improve Iran’s relations with the West showing Iran is opening up to the world.⁷³³ Khatami symbolized the global revolutionist vision of Iran through his active reformism aimed at establishing an Islamic democracy, whose legacy continues until the present time. The approach initiated by Khatami and continued by Rouhani enabled Iran to ease tensions with the United States, at least temporarily. Both Khatami and Rouhani want to be part of the ‘federation of peace’ instead of being the antagonists on the world stage making their vision parallel to the world society Kant perceived. Iran has made attempts towards this end by being an active member of the United Nations, Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) as well as proposing different approaches to promote peace at the interstate level. Khatami’s DAC and Rouhani’s WAVE are two prime examples.

⁷³² Iran Daily Staff, “Number of Iranian pilgrims to Iraq to hit 1.5m,” June 29, 2016, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://www.iran-daily.com/News/154124.html>

⁷³³ United Press International Staff, “Khatami on landmark visit to Russia”

Khatami issued a presidential order to establish the International Centre of Dialogue Among Civilizations (ICDAC), enabling his revolutionist vision to be implemented.⁷³⁴ This was later known to be the International Centre for Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations (IICDCC), which the former president chairs.⁷³⁵ The ICDAC was created during the first term of his presidency, on December 9, 1998 with one of its mandates being ‘orienting the external relations of the Islamic Republic as far as the concept of Dialogue Among Civilizations is concerned’.⁷³⁶ The objectives of the ICDAC are according to the website are:

- ‘To promote dialogue among civilizations and cultures on an international scale as a means of advancing the interpretation of the UN Charter and of improving human well-being.
- To promote and expand the culture of dialogue at the national level.
- To promote the culture of peace in order to foster peaceful coexistence and prevent human rights violations.
- To help establish and broaden the international civil society through cultural interaction among nations.
- To strengthen spiritual, moral and religious culture.
- To conduct research on the significance and possible interpretations of Dialogue Among Civilizations and to release the findings nationally and internationally’.⁷³⁷

In addition, one of the Centre’s main international activity was to hold international gatherings on cultural issues with a view to preparing the ground for and strengthening dialogue among cultures and civilizations’, which support the objectives.⁷³⁸ Publication of journals and organizing conference became part of the work of the Centre, even plans for a DAC TV channel were drawn. The Green Revolution of 2009 in Iran, however, made the Centre inactive but the former president claimed their projects have not been abandoned entirely.⁷³⁹ Nevertheless, the ICDAC inspired the world to work together on a global scale to attain deeper cultural understanding among nations and numerous conferences and activities were held in its honour. In fact, the phrase ‘Dialogue among Civilizations’ has become part of the vocabulary of

⁷³⁴ Hadi Nejad-Hosseinian, “Letter Dated 31 August 1999 from the permanent representative of the I.R. of Iran to the United Nations address to the Secretary-General,” United Nations General Assembly, accessed September 26, 2017, <http://www.un.org/documents/a54-291.pdf>

⁷³⁵ UIA, “International Institute for Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations (IICDCC),” accessed September 27, 2017, <https://www.uia.org/s/or/en/1100029527>

⁷³⁶ Nejad-Hosseinian, “Letter Dated 31 August 1999 from the permanent representative of the I.R. of Iran to the United Nations address to the Secretary-General”

⁷³⁷ Sasan Tavassoli, *Christian Encounters with Iran: Engaging Muslim Thinkers after the Revolution*, International library of Iranian studies 19 (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 94

⁷³⁸ Nejad-Hosseinian, “Letter Dated 31 August 1999 from the permanent representative of the I.R. of Iran to the United Nations address to the Secretary-General,” 3

⁷³⁹ Iranian Diplomacy Staff, “Khatami speaks of Dialogue Among Civilizations,” Iranian Diplomacy, accessed September 26, 2017,

<http://www.irdiplomacy.ir/en/page/8798/Khatami+Speaks+of+Dialogue+among+Civilizations.html>

international affairs. Rouhani's World Against Violence and Extremism (WAVE) initiative has also taken the same path and held a two-day conference in Tehran in December 2014 bringing together forty countries together to discuss anti-terrorism plans.⁷⁴⁰ Together, the efforts of Khatami and Rouhani help progress the global cosmopolitanist vision of Iran's foreign policy. With these initiatives, Iran actively contributes to the realization of a revolutionist 'federation of nations', set forth by Kant, showcasing the Islamic Republic's potential to be an integrative part of a future world society. However, the Islamic revolutionist vision is much stronger in Iran and government support for projects such as the DAC are quite low within Iran's political sphere.

9.4 Conclusion

Iranian statesmen's foreign policy discourse mainly depicts the United States as being a hegemonic immoral realist actor set to dominate the Middle East causing chaos and suffering in the region through its criminal acts breaking international law. This shows three things. First, Iran perceives the United States and its allies in the region as a threat to its own survival as an Islamic Republic. Second, Iran understands the principles and logic of the realist tradition thereby it can elaborately describe Washington's actions in the Middle East. Third, perceiving the threat to its survival and full understanding the tenets of realism, Iran's foreign policy is thus tailored to be fundamentally realist. The actions of Iran in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen are telling signs that Iran's international activity follows the dictates of realism, effectively mirroring the actions of the United States in the region. In many ways, once the export of the Islamic revolution becomes successful, the discourses and actions of Iran indicate there is an intention of creating an empire under the name of a 'New Islamic Civilization'. This empire, however, seems to reflect the ambition of Iran's leaders to revive the Persian Empire. Khamenei claims that the unitary Islamic Civilization should be restored but historically it is difficult to prove as there were many conflicts among the Shi'a and Sunnis. The glory of the past Islamic Civilization he mentions was factually divided between the Ottoman and the Persian Empires. Hence, he could only be speaking of the Persian Empire since a single peaceful unitary Islamic Civilization had never existed. For this reason, I argue that Khamenei's project of unifying the Ummah has to do with Iran's realist ambition of reviving its own fallen Persian Empire as the actions of Iran in the region shows. Iran wants to be a power-maximizing actor in the world arena for it to attain its goal of survival and security.

⁷⁴⁰ Maysam Bizaer, "Iran's Rouhani eyes leading role in anti-terror campaign," December 12, 2014, accessed September 26, 2017, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/iran-wave-terrorism-isis.html>

Trade being the main international activity of rationalist tradition is a predominant characteristic of Iran's foreign policy as we have seen in this chapter. Despite sanctions, Iran continues to have trade relations with many countries showing the existence of rationalism in their foreign policy. The Islamic Republic's trade and economic relations with its immediate neighbours, i.e. those connected to Iran through land borders, are generally good particularly in the energy sector. Gas pipelines and transportation routes are the main projects Iran undertakes facilitating a rationalist exchange with several states despite some political tensions among them. Such trend can be observed in Iran's relations with countries in the region and the rest of the world. Even relations with Iraq, Syria and Lebanon have a rationalist dimension with Iran funding infrastructure projects in these states despite strong realist and revolutionist currents in their bilateral relationships with Tehran. With Saudi Arabia and the United States, rationalism has also been active despite the strength of the other two traditions. Iran's needs rationalism to pursue its goals, without it, its realist goal of survival and security is impossible. Through establishing trading relations with many other countries, Iran can circumvent the sanctions imposed by the United States and some of its Western allies. If Iran did not foster such rationalist relations, the country's economy would have collapsed, pulling the state down with it and the hopes of survival would have been shattered. The track record of the Islamic Republic, however, has been replete with rationalist actions unlike the United States, making Tehran an unfavourable alternative to Washington. Since Iran had tried to export its Islamic Revolution, states in the Middle East have been wary of building ties with the country. Iran simply suffers from an image problem. A more diplomatic and moderate approach had to be employed to avoid threatening its neighbours. Thus, Tehran had learned to redefine its foreign policy and use rationalism as a means to survive and thrive in the international society to achieve its fundamentally realist goal of survival fuelled by a revolutionist vision.

Iran's revolutionist vision is divided among the Islamic cosmopolitanists and the global cosmopolitanists. The Islamic cosmopolitan revolutionist vision is highly endorsed by the government spearheaded by the supreme leader, making funding readily available. We can see this in Iran's support of Shi'a militias such as the Hezbollah and Quds Force of the IRGC and their relative successes in carrying out their revolutionist mission. To understand the potential of the Islamic cosmopolitanist vision as carried out by the Shi'a sect, we must look at the annual Arba'een pilgrimage which attracts more people than the Hajj. The global cosmopolitanist revolutionist vision is also simultaneously being promoted by the reformist camp in Iran led by Khatami although it is not as highly supported by the conservative elements in Iranian politics. Despite the revolutionist vision of Iran, however, realist currents are visible as they use Islam

to secure Iran's position in the region. Through the Quds force and the Hezbollah, Iran's Islamic cosmopolitanist vision crosses over to realism showing Iran's fundamentally realist foreign policy objective of survival and security.

10 Conclusion

Showing the interplay of the three traditions and their interconnectedness in the arguments and actions of statesmen to explain foreign policy is the main goal of this research. The quantitative chapter presented the data in charts to prove that all three traditions exist at varying degrees in the political discourse of Iranian statesmen as they speak to international audiences. Realism, operating on the logic of state-survival and independence prompts countries to take a selfish approach to foreign policy disregarding both the rights of other states and morality. Rationalism functions with the principle of cooperation and pursuit of common interests rather than going-it-alone. The revolutionist tradition brings the meaning of cooperation to a new level turning it into a world unification project. In the case of Iran's foreign policy, the fundamentally realist goals of survival and security could only be achieved by having a revolutionist vision implemented through rationalist means. The revolutionist vision is split into two: global cosmopolitanist and Islamic cosmopolitanist. Diplomacy and cooperation are the rationalist means to which the essentially realist goals are to be reached. Iran's foreign policy is the same as in the other states of international society – it is consistent and dynamic. It is simultaneously realist, rationalist and revolutionist with each tradition serving a specific purpose, which cannot be disentangled from the other two. This research affirmed the argument that *Iran's foreign policy is consistent and is fundamentally realist with a revolutionist vision while the means are rationalist*, initially aimed at providing an explanation for the inconsistencies in Iran's foreign policy. Let us recall the main findings supporting my argument.

10.1 Iran's foreign policy explained

Iran's foreign policy is consistent. There are three ways the findings support this argument. First being the similarities in the approaches of the political figure. On the one hand, Khamenei and Ahmadinejad's foreign policy discourses mirror each other. Both are stark advocates of the Islamic revolutionist vision, conflating it with the realist threat the United States poses to the Muslim world by highlighting the suffering of the states in the region. Khatami and Rouhani, on the other hand, follow the same approach of promoting diplomacy to enhance Iran's relations with the world. Both presented initiatives aimed at solving conflicts with Khatami endorsing the Dialogue Among Civilizations (DAC) and Rouhani campaigning for a World Against Violence and Extremism (WAVE). Their approaches to Iran's foreign policy showcase the rationalist tradition entangled with a more global revolutionist vision. The similarities in the approaches is one point of consideration when discussing the consistency of Iran's foreign policy.

Second, the statesmen ‘mean what they say’. By looking at the foreign policy discourses of the political figures, I could determine which of the actions they undertook internationally correspond to their arguments to show their utterances were not limited to the discursive level but have a practical policy dimension. For instance, when Khatami insisted on improving relations in his discourses, I traced his government’s actions internationally to assess whether their foreign policy reflects his statements. Indeed, he expanded ties with many countries including some in the West by embarking on state visits to prove his commitment to improving relations with the world. Rouhani followed Khatami’s footsteps when his government negotiated Iran’s nuclear program directly with the United States. Khamenei likewise sticks to his words about promoting Islamic Unity and fighting the United States and the West with policies of supporting transnational groups such as the Hezbollah and encouraging the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), which he controls, to get involved in the conflicts in Iraq and Syria. Ahmadinejad’s confrontational statements were reflected in his administration’s reluctance to negotiate the nuclear program since the process was greatly influenced by Washington, whom he accused to be following the path of Satan. Thus, we see Iran’s leaders deliver on their statements, another consistent point of their foreign policy.

Lastly, the three traditions shift based on the international context and domestic pressures as well as the speakers approach. This point was briefly discussed in the quantitative chapter as the graphs showed how the values of the realism, rationalism and revolutionism were expressed at times of crisis. For instance, after 9/11 and before the U.S. intervention in Iraq, realism was significantly high in Khamenei’s statements while Khatami, who urged cooperation had high rationalist values. While when the nuclear program was being negotiated from 2013 to 2015 significantly high values of rationalism can be observed in both Khamenei’s and Rouhani’s statements. With the values in the quantitative, correlations can be drawn according to the context marking another consistent aspect in Iran’s foreign policy

Iran’s foreign policy is fundamentally realist

All statesmen spoke of the United States and the West as a threat, although some were more constructive than others. They called attention to the military might of the U.S. and its control over the international system painting a realist portrait of Washington and its allies. Such a threat puts Iran’s survival as a nation-state at risk and Iranian statesmen have learned a bitter lesson on world anarchy from the eight-year war with Iraq where the Islamic Republic had to fight for its existence. Iran fought alone while Iraq had the support of the Arab countries in the

region. Since the establishment of the Islamic Republic following the revolution of 1979, and the hostage-taking crisis at the former U.S. embassy in Tehran, relations between Iran and the United States have been severed. Washington sided with Iraq in the war with Iran and remained distant from Tehran since then accusing the Islamic Republic of sponsoring terrorism. Despite the absence of official relations, the United States plays a significant role in Iran's foreign policy. The U.S. government is consistently depicted as aggressor and demonized accordingly together with their Western allies.

The military presence of the United States in the region under the pretext of the 'war on terror' makes Iran uneasy about its survival for three reasons. First, their experience from the Iran-Iraq war made Tehran realize their regime is unpopular in Tehran's neighbourhood. Second, Iran is being accused of supporting terrorists and were dubbed to be part of an 'Axis of Evil' where the regimes of these countries face the threat of elimination as seen in the case of Iraq and the conflict in Syria. Third, the Bush Jr. administration funded plans to bring about a regime change in Iran by supporting internal opposition group. With the imminent threat facing the regime, it makes sense for Tehran to actively depict the United States as a dangerous yet powerful state capable of inflicting immense suffering on the entire Muslim world. By characterizing the U.S. and its allies as atrocious forces meddling in Middle East affairs, Iranian statesmen affirm the power of the West and thereby, the threat they pose to Iran. This serves as a justification for them to pursue purely realist goals of survival and security, involving the penetration of other countries in the region to keep the threat far from Iran's borders. For instance, Tehran's intervention in Iraq is meant to create a '250-kilometer security [buffer zone] for Iran', which can only be possible through a victory in Mosul according to one of the senior officials of the Quds force.⁷⁴¹ Iran is careful, however, not to admit that such a threat to its own survival and security exists. Rather, the political elites, especially Khamenei and Ahmadinejad, phrase the threat of the United States and its Western allies to be on a regional scale.

Creating a common threat in the presence of the West led by the United States in the Middle East is useful to justify the consolidation of the Islamic Ummah, serving Iran's realist goal of survival and security. If Iran is accepted by the wider Muslim world as a leader instead of a rival, it can gain power to secure its own survival by effectively dominating over other countries in the Middle East turning Iran into a regional hegemon, just as it used to be at the height of the

⁷⁴¹ Ahmad Majidiyar, "Senior Quds force official admits Iran's military role in Iraq and Syria," Middle East Institute, accessed September 25, 2017

Persian Empire. The problem is that countries in the Middle East are aware of this and trust Washington more than they trust Tehran. Enter the revolutionist vision.

Iran's foreign policy has a revolutionist vision

The revolutionist vision in Iran's foreign policy takes on two forms, Islamic cosmopolitanism and global cosmopolitanism, which is based on the division of the approaches of the Iranian statesmen. On the one hand, Khamenei and Ahmadinejad promote the Islamic cosmopolitanist revolutionist vision mainly constituted by the unification of the Islamic Ummah. On the other hand, Khatami and Rouhani advocate a global cosmopolitanist revolutionist vision where Iran becomes integrated in the 'federation of peoples', Kant's world society.

For the Islamic cosmopolitanists advertising Iran's religious anti-imperialist project is necessary to earn the trust of the Muslim world since this revolutionist vision is based on Islamic moral values for the betterment of mankind. They neatly divide the world into two binary oppositions of good and evil or faithful and heretics. Iran is on the good faithful side, fighting for the oppressed and resisting the oppressors, while the United States and the West are on the evil heretic side causing widespread suffering for the Muslims. Khomeini made sure the religious revolutionist element became part of Iran's foreign policy enshrining it in the constitution of the Islamic Republic. The Palestinians are regarded in Iran's foreign policy discourse the most oppressed who need to be liberated from the oppressors making the 'Palestinian issue' inherently Iranian since for the Islamic cosmopolitanists, there is only one Islamic nation and Iran is just a part of it. The 'war on terror', which began in 2001, served to strengthen Iran's argument of the United States being the oppressor since the military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq together with the Syrian conflict have caused enormous amounts of unjust suffering for the Muslims in the region. Those oppressed and suffering from the consequences of military intervention have multiplied making the case stronger for uniting the Islamic Ummah to rectify the dreadful situation in the Muslim world. Iran wants to appeal to Muslims of all denominations by showing its solidarity with the oppressed and fighting for them as they uphold the banner of Islamic righteousness and moral values. The supreme leader spreads the Islamic cosmopolitan revolutionist vision across the region through supporting Islamic groups struggling against the evil heretics, the United States and its allies. Religious propaganda is spread by the supreme leader's followers such as the IRGC or the Hezbollah regarding the suffering of the Imams such as Imam Hussein to show that this fight against the evil heretics is nothing new. The Islamic cosmopolitanists claim the fight against the evil

heretics has never ended and thus the Islamic Ummah must unite to re-establish the unitary Islamic Civilization, which was lost to the West although historically this may have never existed since clashes between the Sunni and Shi'a were common and the Islamic Civilization was divided between the Ottoman and the Persian Empires. Nonetheless, the potential of the Islamic Ummah is exhibited each year when millions of Muslims regardless of their sect gather for religious events such as the Arba'een and the Hajj and the supreme leader is aware of this. Thus, Khamenei is relentless in his pursuit of unifying the Islamic Ummah to 'restore' the Islamic Civilization through his Islamic cosmopolitanist vision. However, he insists the main instrument to achieve this is to engage in a missionary war with the West, indicating the realist goal of Iran's foreign policy. To win the battle, though, Iran should present a rationalist approach as a façade to gain allies for the war.

For the global cosmopolitanists like Khatami and Rouhani, the issues facing the Middle East is not unique in the region but a worldwide problem, which should be solved by all nation-states to improve conditions for all mankind. During Khatami's presidency, the problem was rooted in a lack of understanding between Islam and the West. Hence, he conceived the DAC initiative for the world to come together and engage in dialogue to promote better understanding among all nations. Better understanding means peaceful solutions could be drawn to solve the common problems of the human society for these issues are not tied to a specific country. By regarding the nations of the world as a 'human society', Khatami exhibits his global cosmopolitanist vision parallel to Kant's world society. When Rouhani came to power, the world was facing a new threat – terrorism – and like Khatami, Rouhani presented the WAVE initiative to tackle the problem. Rouhani likewise argued the threat of terrorism to be a problem of the entire world and not only in the West, suggesting an approach engaging all nation-states. Both leaders, in their own way, have promoted a global cosmopolitan vision distinct from the Islamic cosmopolitan vision of Khamenei and Ahmadinejad. Khatami and Rouhani see the improvement of mankind through the cooperation of all nation-states regardless of religious denomination and nationality. They project a revolutionist vision identical to Kant's world society with global cosmopolitanism as the ultimate goal instead of reverting to realism by establishing an empire.

Iran's foreign policy uses rationalism as a 'means' to achieve its goals

Trade is an important international activity in the rationalist tradition helping the local economy of the country engaged in trade. In Iran's constitution, the economy is seen as a 'means' to

achieve an objective affirming that this aspect of the rationalist tradition is seen as a method.⁷⁴² For this reason, I argue that the institutions of international society such as diplomacy and international law are used in the same way. For Iran to achieve its goals of survival and security, rationalism is instrumentalized by the statesmen.

Before Khatami was elected, the former government had already begun working on its international relations to help reconstruct the local economy devastated by the Iran-Iraq war but Rafsanjani's efforts were limited. Iran was still isolated, especially from the West and Khatami had the mandate of opening Iran up to the world. Khatami's administration actively engaged in the rationalist institution of diplomacy at all levels. His government's political discourse was significantly rationalist, with hints of a global cosmopolitanist vision rooted in the revolutionist tradition. Improvement of ties with the world through the DAC was relatively successful and for a moment, the possibility of a U.S.-Iran rapprochement was in sight. Iran's relations with the world was slightly upgraded and Tehran started coming out of isolation, with the Gulf states being more accommodating to the Iran than the United States. With diplomacy came economic cooperation with various countries, prompting the former president to embark on numerous state visits, which in some occasions were a 'first' in the history of the Islamic Republic. When the 9/11 attacks occurred, Iran was among the countries who cooperated with the West, particularly in the case of Afghanistan, proving Iran meant what it said about cooperating with the world. Khatami's government were more open to negotiating the nuclear program but were cut short as his presidency ended sending Iran into years of failed talks under the Ahmadinejad administration.

Iran's economy suffered greatly from the sanctions it received from the UN and the West related to the nuclear program. Tensions were high within the country, culminating in the 2009 Green Revolution. Ahmadinejad's religious revolutionist discourse were translated into confrontative actions against the United States at the international level, although the former president insisted on Iran's 'inalienable rights' to have a civilian nuclear facility to generate energy, a demand exhibiting the rationalist institution of international law in his discourse. It is at this point we see how rationalism is used as a means in Iran's foreign policy in the Ahmadinejad period. His administration continued talks on the nuclear program but refused to settle the issue showing how rationalism was trumped by the revolutionist tradition. Rationalism was confined to Iran's

⁷⁴² Islamic Consultative Assembly, "The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran 1979, last amended in 1989," http://en.parliran.ir/UploadedData/previmages/iran-parliament_English_SHR01.pdf (accessed September 20, 2017), 6–7

trade relations with those countries willing to continue their economic intercourse with Tehran amidst the heavy sanctions. Tehran was once again facing the threat of isolation from the West and the world for its refusal to negotiate the nuclear program, ending in a deadlock towards the end of Ahmadinejad's presidency.

Rouhani was elected in 2013 to alleviate the situation. He reflected Khatami's rationalist discourse and policies. Surprisingly, at least according to the data from the quantitative phase of analysis, Khamenei's discourse likewise reflected a significant increase in rationalist words and phrases, indicating a shift in policies. Rationalism navigated the Rouhani administration in the same manner as the Khatami period. Diplomacy and cooperation were encouraged to find peaceful solutions to conflict. The successful agreement on Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is the epitome of Iran's rationalist foreign policy since the nuclear program was finally negotiated. Rouhani's introduction of the WAVE was yet another rationalist move from his administration, welcomed by the UN. Circumstances were not easy though since the political landscape in the Middle East has been changing and Iran has been engaged in proxy wars in Iraq and Syria demonstrating Tehran's realist ambitions of obtaining power, a fact Rouhani acknowledged when he referred to Iran as a regional power in one of his statements.

Rationalism as a means is likewise present in the Iran's attempts to export the revolution. Since a direct export has proved to be rejected by most of the states in the region, a modified version had to be designed by setting the Islamic Republic as 'an alternative to existing Arab/Islamic regimes'.⁷⁴³ This modified version greatly relies on rationalism with diplomatic relations, cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution being the hallmark features endorsed by Iranian statesmen as reflected in their foreign policy. Through such methods, engaging with Tehran is advertised to be straightforward but states in the region, like its main rival, Saudi Arabia, is aware how complicated Iran's foreign policy goals are since it is rooted in realism. Despite all the niceties, the underlying goals of the Islamic Republic are fundamentally realist. Iran wants to survive and be more secure. Reviving the Persian empire in the name of an Islamic civilization seems to be the only way to achieve those realist goals.

10.2 Avenues for future research

A dissertation is never a complete scholarly work and should ideally lead to new research avenues to enrich the subject matter it relates to and I am hoping that my study on Iran's foreign

⁷⁴³ Henner Fürtig, "Universalist counter-projections: Iranian postrevolutionary foreign policy and globalisation," in Ansari, *Politics of Modern Iran*, 117

policy could lead to more possibilities of understanding Iran's foreign policy as well as international relations. One way my dissertation can lead to further research is that the speeches targeting domestic audiences can be analysed qualitatively to compare it with the results here. Identifying similarities and differences in the themes, argumentations and discourses between the political rhetoric meant for the local population and the international audience. If they are similar, then perhaps international political elites must likewise tune in to the local political speeches of Iran's statesmen to perhaps gather more minute details on how to understand their foreign policies. If the results differ, it could be assumed that there is little relationship between them and that domestic topics are exclusively for local consumption while the topics of those speeches targeting an international audience are tailored for a different purpose as if showing a different face internationally while keeping the internal issues within the country. This comparative method can also be used to explore how domestic and international issues form Iran's foreign policy as all speeches are available and can be analysed.

Another and more exciting way this research can evolve into a new study begins from the quantitative segment of the dissertation. First, the results in the form of charts and figures can be studied in a more detailed manner to see whether certain patterns can be formed. Apart from underpinning the dominant tradition, it can be useful to identify the tradition which follows the dominant one as well as the dormant tradition within in the speeches. Such an approach to the quantitative data can organize the results better as well as be used to examine whether there is a connection between the order of the traditions and the argumentations. This type of approach can present a picture of how the three traditions are arranged, demonstrating their interplay through the differences in each document allowing for more contrast and comparison of the traditions across different contexts and time periods using the data already gathered from running the software through the speeches. I have taken some steps in this direction regarding my dissertation and concluded that there are thirteen different 'configurations' or patterns that all the speeches follow.⁷⁴⁴ The recurrence of certain configurations are more than the others and that the recurrence differs from speaker to speaker. Here is the list of the configurations:

- C1: revolutionism > rationalism > realism
- C2: revolutionism > realism > rationalism
- C3: rationalism > revolutionism > realism
- C4: rationalism > realism > revolutionism
- C5: realism > revolutionism > rationalism

⁷⁴⁴ By configurations I mean the order in which the three traditions are ordered based on dominance. By dominance I mean the amount of times the keywords of a tradition is mentioned within the text, i.e. the more a tradition (for example realism) is mentioned, the higher percentage it gets compared to the other two traditions, making it the dominant tradition. The dormant tradition is the one gaining the least percentage value.

C6: realism > rationalism > revolutionism
C7: revolutionism = rationalism > realism
C8: revolutionism = realism > rationalism
C9: rationalism = realism > revolutionism
C10: realism > rationalism = revolutionism
C11: rationalism > realism = revolutionism
C12: revolutionism > realism = rationalism
In rare cases, all three are equally dominant:
C13: realism = rationalism = revolutionism

The letter 'C' here stands for Configuration and the numbers refer to the type of configuration. The tradition on the leftmost side is the most dominant, the one in the middle is the second most dominant and the rightmost indicates the least dominant tradition. In some cases, two traditions are equally dominant meaning the difference in the figures is between 0 and 0.10. I have gone as far as to determine the configurations within the speeches delivered by Iranian officials at controversial international events that somehow involved Iran such as the time frame between the 9/11 attacks in the U.S. and Bush's 'Axis of Evil' speech that explicitly mentioned Iran. However, as this diverted away from the scope of my research, I have left it aside. The potential of such an approach, nevertheless, cannot be ignored as when the configurations could be examined further in many ways. For instance, in determining whether they represent specific themes, arguments and discourses, whether they lead to specific foreign policy actions and if these configurations were triggered by an external stimulus such as Bush declaring Iran to be part of the 'Axis of Evil'. If such questions are answered, one could use the configurations as a way of predicting foreign policy.

Second, it does not have to stop with Iran, it can be applied to different countries wherein the revolutionist tradition can be adjusted to the country it is applied to as concepts differ from one nation-state to the other. In the case of Iran, revolutionism is tied to religion whereas, for instance, in Germany, revolutionism has a more bureaucratic expression such as a supra-state institution transforming Europe superseding the current function of the European Union. Once the application of this approach is successful, predictions of foreign policy of any country can be a reality, informing policy-makers on how to approach negotiations, hopefully to avoid conflict.

Third, I have used only the three traditions stemming from the English School theory but it could be expanded and involve lists of keywords for all theories of international relations, for instance, liberalism, neo-realism, etc. Once all IR theories are encoded into the software, it can run through the speeches of Iran's political elites once again to see whether other concepts than those from the English School exist in Iran's foreign political discourse. This could be taken a

step further and applied to all other countries as well, which could be integrated into predicting foreign policy.

10.3 Reflections

The modern international society of sovereign nation-states generally works within the tenets of the rationalist tradition. Depending on the content of the statements of Iran's statesmen, however, this tendency of the rationalist tradition to dominate can be disrupted by either realism or revolutionism. What is interesting though is that the more the speeches of Iran's statesmen are dominated by rationalism, the more fluid the country's interactions becomes with international society. Khatami and Rouhani are cases proving this as they both could enhance Iran's foreign relations through diplomacy. It seems conforming to the framework of the rationalist tradition allows Iran to be at the same level of interaction with the rest of the world as it speaks the international language of rationalism. This makes it easier for both Iran and the core of international society to solve conflicts with Iran, such as Iran's nuclear program. At the other end, the farther Iranian statesmen move away from rationalism, the more difficult it is for both Iran and the core international society to interact as shown by the Ahmadinejad government. Regardless of the direction the traditions pull Iran's foreign policy, each statesman is pursuing an agenda of unity with properties depending on their conviction. This implies that Iran proactively wants to work with the international community, to gain allies and to end its isolation, although there is a strong case proving Iran's real intention is to simply secure its survival and safety and Tehran is using rationalist means to achieve its fundamentally realist goals.

The only question is whether this realist intent will push Iran to integrate itself in in a global cosmopolitan world society based on Kant's revolutionist vision or it Tehran will continue promoting the Islamic cosmopolitanist vision to fight the heretic West. If the latter, then the strategy of demonizing the United States serves a realist purpose since winning a battle against the West means the revival of the Persian Empire in the name of an Islamic Civilization. To improve Iran's chances in winning the battle, though, Iran should present a rationalist approach as a façade to gain allies for the war. But this does not have to be the case since rationalist forces within Iran's political sphere have the capacity to steer their ship into a different direction despite their limitations. With the situation in the Middle East getting worse by the day, the world can no longer turn a blind eye on Iran's potential role in the region regardless of the tradition they are operating at. Be it through the DAC, WAVE or a 'New Islamic Civilization', one thing is certain – Iran does not want to stand alone. If the West continues to ignore the

potential of the Islamic Republic of being rationalist, then the radical Islamic forces will take over, which will perpetuate the conflicts in the Middle East.

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Appendix 1:

Keywords - Realism

aggression
 aggressive intent
 all against all
 alliance
 alone
 anarchy
 annihilate
 arena
 arms
 arms race
 assert
 bandwagon
 bargaining position
 battle
 be ahead
 be independent
 be self sufficient
 be self-sufficient
 belligerence
 bribe
 brinkmanship
 broaden influence
 bully
 carrots and sticks
 clash
 coerce
 coerce state
 combat
 conditional adherence
 conditional observance
 conditionally adhere
 conflict
 conflict of interest
 conflicting interests
 conquer another
 control
 control the system
 control the world
 convention is insignificant
 convention is not
 important

convention is unimportant
 corrupt
 deceit
 deceive
 defence
 derail
 deter
 diplomacy for powerful
 diplomacy of power
 disorder
 disregard norm
 distrust
 disturb
 dominance
 dominance in the world
 dominant in the world
 dominate
 dominate the world
 dominate the world
 do not trust
 economic bribe
 empire
 enemy
 evil
 evil intention
 expand
 expand influence
 expansion
 exploit
 foe
 force
 forestall
 freedom of decision
 freedom to act
 hegemon
 history taught
 history is a lesson
 history is lesson
 increase military
 increase military power
 increase power
 increase strength
 independence
 independence of Iran

insecure
 insignificance of
 convention
 insignificance of
 international law
 insignificance of treaty
 international law is
 insignificant
 international law is not
 important
 international law is
 unimportant
 invade a state
 Iran is power
 Iran's independence
 lesson from history
 let us invade
 limited adherence
 material capability
 military base
 military bribe
 military capability
 military command
 military power
 military strength
 mistrust
 mutual insecurity
 need to survive
 negotiate from strength
 negotiate with force
 one power
 our domination
 our survival
 overpower
 override
 overturn
 own duties
 policy of war
 political bribe
 politics for politics sake
 position of power
 power
 power alliance
 power struggle

powerful alliances	war of power
powerful country	we are powerful
powerful influence	we guide
powerful position	we have to dominate
preponderance	we invade
preponderant power	we lead
preponderant state	weapon
pressure	weaponry
pressure of conflict	world dominance
rival	world of anarchy
ruin	
sanction	
self determined duty	
self sufficient	
self-determined duty	
self-interest	
self-justifying power	
self-sufficient	
state	
state invasion	
state of nature	
sticks	
strength	
strength in negotiations	
struggle	
survive	
system	
tension	
tentative adherence	
treaties are temporary	
treaty is insignificant	
treaty is not important	
treaty is unimportant	
unimportance of	
convention	
unimportance of	
international law	
unimportance of treaty	
unipolar	
upset	
war as policy	
war is policy	
war of all	
war of all against all	

Appendix 2:

Keywords -

Rationalism

abide
 abide by the law
 abide by the rule
 accord
 act responsibly
 adhere
 adhere to the law
 adhere to the rule
 adhere to treaty
 adherence to the treaty
 adjust
 adjustment
 agree
 agreement
 amend
 arrange
 arrangement
 avoid crises
 bind
 breakdown of policy
 breakdown of system
 calm
 cannot be subject to other
 chaos of war
 codify the law
 codify the rule
 commit
 compliance to convention
 compliance to treaty
 compliance with the rule
 complies with the rule
 comply
 comply with the rule
 comprehend
 compromise
 concert
 concert of great powers
 confidence
 constitute

contain war
 control crises
 convention
 conventions are binding
 cooperation
 cooperation policy
 coordination
 countries are equal
 court
 convention is binding
 cultural link
 custom
 deal
 deal on equal terms
 decisive rules
 defensive alliance
 discuss
 discussion
 disorder of war
 disruptive war
 dominant in the region
 duty to protect
 economic
 interdependence
 economy
 equal power
 equal strength
 equal term
 equal terms
 equality among countries
 equality among nations
 equality among states
 equilibrium
 establish the rule
 establish the treaty
 fair
 follow the law
 follow the rule
 formulate
 fundamental norm
 fundamental norm
 fundamental standard
 goodwill
 great power concert

harmony
 honor
 humanitarian duties
 humanitarian duty
 impartial
 implement
 implement the law
 implement the rule
 implement the treaty
 influence
 institution
 integrity
 interdependent
 international community
 international society
 investment
 law
 law abiding
 law adherence
 law codification
 law enforcement
 law is binding
 law obliges
 law-abiding
 laws are binding
 legal
 legal obligation
 legitimate
 let us cooperate
 limit war
 local dominance
 local preponderance
 logic
 maintain peace
 method
 mindful action
 mindful actions
 moral law
 multipolar
 multipolarity
 mutual assistance
 mutual benefit
 mutual confidence
 mutual preservation

nations are equal	rule adherence	understand
negotiate	rule codification	unite
no war	rule compliance	unity
norm	rule establishment	war as emergency
not one power	rule implementation	war is disorder
obligatory by law	rule is binding	we are cooperating
order	rule of law	we cooperate
organization	rule setting	we have a legal obligation
our cooperation	rules are binding	we have legal obligations
pact	self determination	
partner	self-determination	
peace	set the law	
peaceful negotiations	set the rule	
peaceful talk	several powers	
peacefully negotiate	skill	
plan for the future	social arrangement	
policy	social contract	
policy of cooperation	society	
policy-making	sovereignty	
powerful countries	special duties	
powerful nations	sphere of influence	
practice	sphere of interest	
preserve	sphere of responsibility	
preserve the balance	spheres of interest	
protocol	spheres of responsibility	
rational	stage	
reason	standard	
reciprocity	standard of behavior	
recognise	state law	
recognize	state practice	
regional dominance	statehood	
regionally dominant	states are equal	
regulate	subservient	
relative security	take thought for tomorrow	
respect	territory	
responsible	ties	
responsible action	transparency	
responsible actions	transparent	
responsible decision	treaty	
responsible decisions	treaty enforcement	
restore	treaty implementation	
restrict war	trust	
restriction	trusteeship	
rule	two powers	

Appendix 3:

Keywords –

Revolutionism

abolish diplomacy
adherence to morals
against hypocrisy
against hypocrite
against tyranny
all humans are equal
amoral
assimilate
balance of power is non-existent
balance of power is unmanageable
balance of power is unreliable
believer
brother
brothers and sisters
charity
civil rights
collective
collective interest
community of mankind
companionship
compassion
cosmopolitan
decency
defend religion
defend the oppressed
defense of oppressed
defense of religion
defense of religion
democracy
destroy tyranny
devotion
dignity
diplomacy doesn't work
diplomacy is nonsense
diplomacy is not an option

diplomacy is not useful
diplomacy is of no use
diplomacy is useless
diplomacy must be abolished
diplomacy must be eliminated
divine
divine authority
divine law
doctrine
duty
duty of action
equality
ethic
ethical behavior
ethical question
faith
fight against oppression
fight against tyranny
fight for equality
fight for justice
fight the oppressors
follow moral
fraternity
fraternity of mankind
freedom
generous
gesture
God
God's war
good deed
great powers are evil
great powers are non-existent
great powers should not exist
great society
holy war
human
human beings
human equality
human goals
human law

human obligation
human rights
humility
ideology
individual rights
individual
insurrection
islamic community
Islamic ideology
islamic internationalism
Islamic law
Islamic principles
Islamic society
Islamic values
jihad
just principle
just society
justness
law for humanity
law of God
less tension
liberty
mankind
men are equal
messianic duty
mission
missionary war
moral
moral ethics
moral judgement
moral law
moral obligation
moral principle
moral responsibilities
no balance of power
no borders
not worth diplomacy
one organism
pan Islam
pan-Islam
people are equal
peoples rights
piety
power is an obstacle

principle of justice	spirit
principle of morality	spirit of Islam
principles of Islam	spirituality
probity	steadfast
protect the oppressed	strong faith
protect the weak	struggle against
pure religion	oppression
rectitude	super state
reform	supra state
reformation	tawhid
religion	the faithful
religious defense	there is no great power
revolt	touhid
revolution	transcendence
revolutionary action	transform
revolutionary aim	true faith
revolutionary goal	truth
revolutionary path	umma
revolutionary patience	unity of man
revolutionary state	unity of men
revolutionary struggle	universal
right path	unreliability of balance of
righteous deeds	power
righteousness	unreliability of power
rights of citizens	balancing
sacrifice	upright
salvation	uprising
self restraint	useless diplomacy
self sacrifice	value
self-restraint	values of Islam
Sharia	virtue
Shari'a	war against infidels
Sharia law	we are all equal
sharing	
sister	
social	
social equality	
social justice	
social responsibility	
social solidarity	
social values	
society of the faithful	
solidarity	
solidarity of interest	