

Iran After 25 Years of Revolution: A Retrospective and a Look Ahead

Author Biographies & Article Summaries

Dr. Farideh Farhi is an independent scholar and Adjunct Professor of Political Science at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. She has written extensively on the comparative analysis of revolutions and on contemporary Iranian politics and foreign policy.

In her essay, "**Cultural Policies in the Islamic Republic of Iran,**" Farhi acknowledges the centrality of culture to revolutionary ideology, but provides a chronological overview that shows how both cultural policies and their enforcement have often diverged over time from the initial revolutionary stance due to socioeconomic realities, factional politics and foreign policy concerns. She concludes that a general loosening of cultural restrictions continues in Iran despite recent conservative electoral victories.

Dr. Valentine M. Moghadam is Chief of the Gender Equality and Development Section in the Division of Human Rights and Fight Against Discrimination at UNESCO in Paris. She has written extensively on gender issues (particularly in the Middle East) and globalization.

Moghadam's contribution to this collection of essays, "**Women in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Legal Status, Social Positions, and Collective Action,**" discusses how the position of women—economically, socially and politically—in Iranian society suffered a major setback following the establishment of the revolutionary theocracy. Although promised reforms have substantially failed to materialize, Moghadam notes that women have quietly asserted themselves due to their increased education, their vigorous participation in civil society and a certain level of *de facto* recognition of their rights in the home and workplace.

Dr. Jahangir Amuzegar is an international economic consultant based in Washington, DC. Amuzegar has taught at several American universities; served the pre-Revolution government of Iran as Minister of Commerce, Minister of Finance, and Ambassador-at-Large; and has been on the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund. He has written extensively on Iran, oil and economic development.

Amuzegar's essay, "**Iran's Economy: Status, Problems, and Prospects,**" explains that the transformation of the country's economy from its "basically Western-oriented free-enterprise system to a state-managed theocratic oligarchy" has resulted in a lower level of per capita income, high levels of inflation and unemployment, and widening gaps between rich and poor. Amuzegar explains that, despite extensive talk of open-market reform, Iran has still not made significant strides toward a financial-political institutional structure amenable to such reform, leaving its economy at the mercy of oil-price cycles and in need of better long-term alternatives.

Siamak Namazi is Managing Director of Atieh Bahar Consulting, Inc., in Tehran. Namazi is also Editor of *Iran Energy Focus*, a frequent contributor to a variety of publications that deal with Iran and the Caspian area, and a former visiting scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC.

Namazi's essay, "**What Happened to the China Model?**" addresses the future direction of economic reform in Iran. In the past few years, analysts have surmised that Iran is pursuing a "Chinese model" in which economic reforms are prioritized over sociopolitical reforms. Yet, Namazi notes, although there is a consensus in favor of economic liberalization, such liberalization will only be pursued in Iran to the extent it does not clash with the existing political/ideological order, and the manner of its implementation will largely be based on the competition among political factions.

Dr. Morad Saghafi is Editor of *Goft-o-gu (Dialogue) Quarterly Magazine*, which is published in Tehran. He is the author of more than 30 articles in Persian, English, and French.

In "**Why Iran Seems So Unpredictable,**" Saghafi suggests that outside analysts, particularly Westerners, have called past political developments in Iran "surprises" because they do not sufficiently understand the flexibility and dynamism of the regime. Saghafi argues that political changes, as well as the regime's capacity for survival, can best be understood by realizing that Iran's political culture is heterogeneous, not monolithic, and by paying attention to the way power and legitimacy are distributed via the constitutional and institutional structure of the regime.