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IRANIAN DEVELOPMENT MODEL: STATE AND SOCIETY CONCEPT, CRISES AND PROBLEMS

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Abstract. The presidential election of 2021 set a new stage in shaping of the Iranian development model. The conservative discourse once again took its place as the main one for the whole country underpinning the return to the implementation of the conservative modernization project. Key components of this project are outlined in the comprehensive development plan “Vision 2025”, as well as in the General Program for the Islamic-Iranian Progress. Among the development goals, which, according to this plan, Iran aims to achieve by 2025, are: sustainable economic growth; preservation and strengthening of the Islamic system and Islamic identity of Iran; regional leadership in economic, scientific, and technological development. Undoubtedly, to achieve these goals, a lot of work has been done by several governments, but it is obvious that these ambitions will not be fulfilled in the remaining period of the current government’s term. In turn, the General Program for the Islamic-Iranian Progress shifts the focus from development (in its secular, Western definition) to progress, which can only be achieved in the framework of Islamic and Iranian values and principles. The Islamic model of modernization is proposed as a guideline for development in the spiritual, political, cultural, and scientific life. However, the most important problem in the implementation of this plan is the large number of long-term unresolved economic problems associated with the negative outcomes of sanctions and urgent political crises such as the legitimacy crisis, institutional crisis, as well as the general weakening of the prestige of the “Islamic component” of Iran’s political system. The article analyzes the domestic development problems of Iran, which are relevant in the context of the ongoing crises, as well as the phenomenon of the “Iranian Model” with all of its political, economic, and social components.

Keywords: Iran, Iranian model, political system crisis, modernization, conservatism, Islamic identity, Iranian identity, socio-economic development, social protest.

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ИРАНСКАЯ МОДЕЛЬ РАЗВИТИЯ: КОНЦЕПЦИЯ ГОСУДАРСТВА И ОБЩЕСТВА, КРИЗИСЫ И ПРОБЛЕМЫ

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Аннотация. После президентских выборов 2021 г. все рычаги управления вернулись к представителям консервативного идейно-политического течения. Государство и общество, и до того развивавшиеся в консервативной идейно-ценностной парадигме, были вновь поставлены на рельсы консервативного проекта модернизации. Неблагоприятная социально-экономическая обстановка в очередной раз поставила вопрос о возможности реализации этого проекта в контурах будущего Исламской Республики Иран. В статье рассматриваются актуальные в условиях сохраняющихся внутренних кризисов проблемы социально-экономического и политического развития Ирана.

Ключевые слова: Иран, иранская модель, системный кризис, модернизация, консерватизм, исламская идентичность, иранская идентичность, социально-экономическое развитие, социальный протест.

INTRODUCTION

The paper explores the dynamics of political, economic, and social development in the Islamic Republic of Iran, examining the “Iranian model” – its principal aspects and the actual practice of public administration amid internal crises and challenges such as inequality, regional disparities, outdated administrative mechanisms, unemployment, and a high protest potential.

This topic is pertinent within the emerging discourse on development in social sciences [1], where Iran is viewed as an example of a culturally rich and plural oriental society [2], that evolves within its unique ideological and value paradigms, necessitating specific management practices and technologies. In the context of shifting geopolitical realities, a detailed examination of the Iranian development model and the issues it faces is warranted. Numerous studies by Russian [3, 4, 5, 6, 7], Iranian [8, 9, 10] and Western [11, 12] scholars and experts have addressed the Iranian model of development (or the “Islamic-Iranian model of progress”), as well as the core management practices and the political, economic, and social trends that have shaped the current state of affairs.

The wave of protests that swept across Iran from fall 2022 to winter 2023 marked the most widespread unrest since the “green movement” against the 2009 presidential election results, sparking renewed debate over the deepening internal crisis and developmental challenges [13]. The increase in protest activities, observed since 2017, was partly due to a “crisis of expectations” among the new middle class, who were concerned about the overall economic situation and the failure of Rouhani’s administration to fulfill its election promises. Rouhani, a moderate politician, served as the President of Iran from 2013 to 2021. Other significant factors included the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA agreement in 2018, the imposition of new sanctions, the 2020–2021 coronavirus pandemic, and ongoing internal conflicts within the Iranian elite regarding the country’s future.

One of the fundamental characteristics of the Iranian development model is its resilience

to both internal and external challenges. In the current climate, comprehensive engagement with issues in the political, economic, cultural, scientific, and technological domains is increasingly critical.

FEATURES OF THE IRANIAN MODEL

After the 1979 revolution, Iran officially became the Islamic Republic. A clerical regime, based on *the neo-Shiite ideology*, gradually took shape. This ideology differs from classical Shiism primarily in that theologians hold power; thus, religion and state are not separated. The new state concept was initially formulated and described by Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini and was later refined and tested by Khomeini’s closest associates and followers. This concept is grounded in the principles of the Shiite political and legal doctrine of “*velayat-e faqih*”¹.

The ideal model of the Shiite state was developed based on the management practices of the Prophet Muhammad, his companions, and the Twelve Imams [14, pp. 169-185]. In this model, the Islamic component is pivotal, asserting the divine nature of authority, concentrated in the hands of the rahbar *rahbar*² and implemented through what is termed “enlightened rule” or the “rule of the Islamic theologian-lawyer” [15].

In December 1979, a constitution was adopted that set the primary parameters of the new Islamic-Iranian state model. This constitution was amended ten years later. The final document comprises twelve sections and 177 articles. According to Article 4, all civil, criminal, financial, economic, administrative, cultural, military, political, and other laws and regulations must be based on Islamic norms. The cornerstone of the political system is the doctrine of “*velayat-e faqih*”, which relies on the principle of succession of the Imams. The *Rahbar* is the central figure in the country, a position that has been held by only two individuals in the history of the Islamic

¹ “Enlightened rule”, the rule of a Shia theologian-lawyer.

² Persian *rahbar* can mean “manager”, “chief”, “leader”; consists of two bases *rah* – path, road and *bar* – carrying, indicating.

Republic: Khomeini (1978–1989) and Khomeini (1989–present). The *rahbar's* role involves coordination; although his powers are constitutionally limited, he has the final say in crises or intra-elite disputes.

In the political system of Iran [16, p. 95], secular and religious institutions are combined, effectively interacting while maintaining a balance of interests among the main political elites and upholding the authority of the Leader. This integration is designed to enhance resistance to challenges. An important aspect is the blending of democratic and Islamic political practices and technologies in governance. Councils – both Islamic and mixed – comprising representatives from the main functional structures, hold significant political weight within the system [17, p. 72]. Key democratic elements of the system include the President, the Administration, the Cabinet of Ministers, and the Parliament.

The organization of the economic system is delineated in Chapter IV of the Constitution. The economy includes state, cooperative, and private sectors, and development is guided by regular planning (Article 44). The state's main functions are: ensuring the basic needs of each society member, fostering favorable working conditions, combating unemployment, providing social support for disabled citizens, implementing economic planning that ensures every citizen's rights to a fulfilling social life, self-realization, spiritual development, and active political participation; creating conditions for improving qualifications; preventing foreign economic dominance; and formulating economic policies that incorporate elements of the Islamic economic model, such as the prohibition of usury, monopolism, and wastefulness.

A crucial element of the modern Iranian model is the planning carried out by the governmental Planning and Budget Organization (PBO). The activities of the PBO are governed by the Regulations on the Planning System (1982), with subsequent amendments. Key entities involved in the planning process include the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the National Development Fund, the Central Bank, and the Monetary and

Credit Council. Development Plans devised by the government are approved by the Medjlis, the Guardian Council, and the Assembly of Experts, and receive the approval of the *rahbar* before they attain the status of law, guiding government economic activities [18, pp. 65-66].

Also noteworthy is the Perspective Plan for the Economic, Social, and Cultural Development of Iran (1982–2002/2003), as well as the Development Plan (1983/1984–1988) [19, p. 71], which were among the first outputs of the PBO in the Islamic Republic. Although the Parliament never adopted these plans, the government of Mousavi (1981–1989) utilized them in its work, particularly for the development of legal and financial systems, as well as budget policy. The activity of the PBO also helped to avert famine and sustain the regime when, by the end of the Iran-Iraq war, financial and foreign exchange resources were nearly depleted.

From 1989 to 2023, Iran developed and approved several strategic plans, including the Perspective Development Plan Until 2025, encompassing seven plans over five to seven-year horizons³. Among these medium-term plans, only the first and second were directive in nature, while all subsequent ones were semi-directive and/or indicative and were not fully implemented.

A significant issue with the PBO is its excessive dependency on higher structures and its lack of autonomy within the existing political system. The requirement for numerous approvals and the inability to provide higher authorities with objective, independent expertise hinder both the organization's operations and the overall planning process, significantly reducing its effectiveness in the short and medium term.

The "Iran Vision 2025" plan, adopted in 2003 [sources 1, 2], outlines a comprehensive program for national development intended to span 20 years. This plan includes general conceptual

³ A clear picture of the crisis state of the economy is given by the growing social tension, as well as the story about the difficulties during the development of the seventh five-year plan, the debate on which lasted for more than six months.

provisions and detailed descriptions of specific political practices and the tools for their implementation. The central theme of the document posits that Iran aims to achieve regional leadership in economic, scientific, and technological development by 2025. The development goals are categorized by areas and integrated into short-term plans. Economically, the focus is on sustainable growth, combating unemployment, reducing inflation, developing both the public and private sectors, ensuring food security, and creating a favorable investment climate. Politically, the goals include preserving the Islamic system and identity of Iran, forming a cohesive, functional bloc of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, maintaining a stable internal political situation, and implementing a flexible foreign policy.

As for the social component of the Iranian development model, the Islamic Republic was conceived as a socially oriented state. The official political discourse has consistently aimed to foster the possibility of building a “society of Islamic justice” and has sought to preserve the category of “downtrodden” (Persian: *mostazafin* – poor segments of the population) as a key social group that ensures the legitimacy of the leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the system as a whole.

In this context, It is important to note the dual legitimacy of power in the Iranian political system. Its main sources are divine will, which facilitated the realization of the Islamic revolution, and the will of the Iranian people, most of whom belonged to the poorer strata during the formation of Iran. However, as the standard of living gradually improved and the middle class expanded, the gap between the political elites and the populace widened, the efficacy of traditional management methods diminished, and crisis tendencies began to emerge. One of the most crucial tasks for the future of the system is ensuring internal political stability. Accordingly, both long-term and five-year development plans regularly include goals such as strengthening national unity, reinforcing the foundations of religious democracy, institutionalizing permitted freedoms, protecting the institution of the fam-

ily, enhancing the role of women in the family and society, and addressing the needs of young people [5, p. 187].

A relatively new component of the Iranian model is the concept of the Islamic-Iranian model of progress, formulated by Khamenei based on the ideas of Khomeini and the current *rahbar*'s own managerial experience. In 2017, the office of the Supreme Leader disseminated a program of this model to key departments [sources 3, 4]. A roadmap for the project aims to revive Iranian civilization and sets the direction for the development of socio-philosophical doctrine, as well as the spiritual, scientific, and cultural public spheres of Iran for the next 50 years [7, 9]. The central idea of the concept is the unique “Islamic path of Iran”, which emphasizes aligning the national ideology with a distinct Iranian system of values shaped by traditions and religion [8]. Meanwhile, “progress” (Persian: *pišraft*) is posited as an Iranian alternative to “development” (Persian: *tousee*), which carries an “economic, secular, often Western connotation” [6, pp. 126-135].

TRENDS AND ISSUES IN INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT

During the first decade after the establishment of the Islamic Republic, a unique political system emerged, blending theocratic principles with norms from Western political models [7, pp. 51-68]. A policy of Islamization of social and cultural life was implemented; revolutionary norms and values were disseminated.

The political crisis of 1989 was triggered by Iran's first experience with the transition of supreme power following the death of Khomeini. This event led to the emergence of various trends that continue to define the local political process. Intra-elite contradictions intensified, eventually resulting in the formation of a fundamental systemic antagonism between conservative and reformist ideological and political blocs. Within each bloc, competing interest groups emerged [20, pp. 41-48], based on economic preferences and political ideas, envisioning different paths for future development.

From 1989 to 2005, a pragmatic liberal course facilitated significant transformations in the economic, political, and social spheres. However, this liberal modernization project did not satisfy conservative elites as it diluted the traditional value system. The relative unity of the conservative camp, contrasted with a division among liberal modernization supporters and electorate disappointment, ensured Ahmadinejad's victory in the 2005 elections [16, p. 101]. The predominant political trend became a conflict between the conservative camp and moderate liberals – the most active part of the reformist camp, represented by supporters of Khatami and Mousavi, who advocated for further modernization and liberalization of Iran. The internal political crisis of 2009, marked by protests from the opposition united in the “green movement”, led to increased control by security forces and a strengthened role of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a guarantor of the Islamic system's security across all public life domains.

An unintended consequence of the incomplete liberalization was the diminished influence of religious institutions on society and political life. Moreover, the “downtrodden strata” were gradually supplanted by an expanded “new middle class” [7, pp. 51–68], who, along with representatives of the intelligentsia and youth, became the main driving force of the protests from 2017 to 2023.

The “crisis of expectations”, which had been building since 2013 [source 5], became evident in 2017–2018 due to Rouhani and his administration's failure to fulfill key election promises, including the complete lifting of sanctions and resolving unemployment and corruption issues. The “Government of Prudence and Hope” attempted to blend the best reformist and conservative political practices in governance, but by 2017, their effectiveness was questionable. Economic and social policies faced severe criticism from traditionalist conservatives and proponents of a radical conservative approach. Despite successes in addressing the crisis over the Iranian nuclear program, and advances in scientific, technological, and innovation policies, as well as programs

for university development, regional development, and tourism, protests in the winter of 2017–2018 became the largest since 2009. These protests, exacerbated by the economic downturn following the unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, marked the beginning of an increase in annual mass protests. Subsequent harsh suppression of these and later protests (2018–2020) led to further strengthening of security measures and enforcement of Islamic values. The issues of human rights non-compliance in Iran, the Islamic dress code, and women's rights were pushed to the forefront again. The 2020–2021 pandemic further exacerbated socio-economic challenges.

Among the reasons for increasing societal discontent are the successive internal crises – institutional, managerial, and systemic. Over the years, these crises manifested as dysfunction in some state institutions, a decrease in the influence of clergy organizations on political life, growing contradictions within the elite, the persistence of slow turnover among governing officials, and high levels of corruption.

The victory of Raisi in the 2021 presidential elections marked the full return of power to representatives of the conservative ideological and political bloc, but it did not signify its consolidation. Raisi emerged as a compromise figure who, despite the persistence of numerous problems and growing public discontent, maintained the conservative revolutionary discourse as predominant in Iran⁴. However, numerous election irregularities, a record low voter turnout, and the absence

⁴ The current agenda of Iranian conservatism is the consolidation of disparate moderate, traditional, and radical blocs, as well as the development of a single pragmatic political course. In domestic political life, conservatism presupposes compliance with Sharia norms in the public as well as personal lives of all citizens; implementation of a mixed economic model with elements of “Islamic economy” and implementation of the concept of “resistance economy”; pursuing a policy to support the poorest segments of the population. In foreign policy, the priority is the development of bilateral friendly relations with Islamic countries, pursuing a policy of support for the oppressed “Muslim peoples”, exporting Islamic culture of the Iranian type, establishing a strategic partnership with China and Russia, developing economic cooperation and political dialogue with any countries, with the exception of the USA and Israel unfriendly to the Islamic Republic.

of a real alternative to “conservative” candidates once again sparked discussions about the transparency of elections and the prospects for the political process in Iran [sources 6, 7], questioning the legitimacy of Iran’s leadership and the Islamic Republic itself [source 8].

In the context of rapidly expanding Russian-Iranian cooperation after February 2022, the revision of the Iranian leadership’s stance on the nuclear issue, and delays in the negotiation process in Vienna, the influence of external factors on Iran’s internal political processes has increased. Through the media, there were active attempts to incite mass popular protests. The formal catalyst for the protests from fall 2022 to spring 2023 was the death of a Kurdish-origin girl, Mahsa Amini, due to police brutality. However, the underlying causes of popular discontent and the real reasons for protests against the “system” and “regime” were, as in previous years, the unresolved issues facing the youth who see no future prospects and are losing hope for a prosperous future amidst an ongoing economic crisis [21], along with the growth of social imbalances, unemployment, and poverty. The harsh suppression of these protests was followed by the conservative elite’s categorical refusal to make any concessions on issues related to the Islamic revolutionary component of the official discourse (*Khomeinism in the context of current internal crises and the “new geopolitical situation”*).

UNCOMPLETE LIBERALIZATION. STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS

Over the last 20 years, the Iranian economy has consistently faced crisis trends, including falling living standards, declining productivity in various industries, outdated production infrastructure, a slowing pace of innovative environment formation, reduced foreign investment, foreign companies exiting the market, restricted access to technologies, spare parts, components, and a worsening environmental situation. These unresolved issues, compounded by the ineffectiveness of several state institutions and increased intra-elite conflict, led to significant socio-economic consequences such as a “crisis of expecta-

tations” after 2017, erosion of the middle class, growing inequality, unemployment, and poverty – all contributing to a significant increase in the protest potential of Iranian society.

Moreover, while problems like inequality or uneven regional development [3, pp. 35-45] were already present under the Shah, many of the issues mentioned arose from a complex and still incomplete process of liberalizing a tightly centralized “*towhid*” economy⁵. From 1979 to 1989, this economic model led to an autarkic economy with an oversized public sector. Interventions in pricing to establish what was seen from an Islamic perspective as fair prices resulted in a bureaucratic distribution system and a thriving black market with its own exchange rates. “Fair” public property led to the nationalization of key sectors such as energy, transport, irrigation structures, mining, heavy industry, banking, and foreign trade.

Since the late 1980s, economic liberalization has been pursued. Market reforms initiated by the Rafsanjani administration focused on areas such as pricing policy, foreign trade regulation, foreign capital utilization, privatization, and the creation of free economic zones. These reforms significantly improved the economic situation but also provoked mixed reactions within society and among the elite. Greater openness of the Iranian economy brought to the fore issues such as external debt, inflation, currency depreciation, and a decline in the growth rate of fixed household incomes [18, p. 65].

Since the late 1990s, the crisis surrounding Iran’s nuclear program, growing intra-elite contradictions, and social divisions significantly slowed economic liberalization. The strengthening of the clan-bureaucratic nature of the systems and the escalation of the Iranian nuclear issue contributed to the “securitization” of all public spheres and actualized the trend of militarization

⁵ “Towhid” is an Islamic term denoting the dogma of the uniqueness and unity of Allah. In the economy, the principle of *touhid* presupposes the primary provision of the interests of the Muslim community and its individual members through the implementation of Islamic law. The category of property is considered as the common property of a particular community; the main conductor of the *touhid* economy is the state. In developing this policy, it is guided by the Islamic economic tradition.

of the economy and the growing influence of the IRGC power bloc.

Since 2014, Iran has been implementing a comprehensive program known as the “Economy of Resistance” to adapt the national economy to sanctions. The goal of this program is to ensure the economy’s survival under sanctions by satisfying basic social needs and achieving regional and global competitiveness with internal resources. Although the implemented government initiatives mitigated overall damage from the sanctions, they did not prevent subsequent economic crises.

Over the past 10 years, sanctions have not been the sole factor undermining economic development. The internal situation has also been influenced by the dynamics of oil prices and oil export volumes. The issue of reducing subsidies for gas, fuel, electricity, and medicines, as well as the gradual increase in “minimum” prices for essential goods, has remained contentious. In conditions of limited resistance to sanctions and persistent budget deficits after 2013, the conservative socio-economic agenda, which mandates support for the poor and low-income segments of the population [4, pp. 83–84], has continued to fuel public discontent and place an even greater burden on the economy, depending in part on the frequency of protests.

One of the most acute problems in recent years, exacerbated by sanctions and continued dependence on oil prices, has been the rapid growth of inflation. After the US withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018, the inflation rate exceeded 30%, and under Raisi’s administration in 2021, it approached 50% between 2021 and 2022 [source 9]. According to open international data, by the end of 2022, this figure was 48% [source 10]; according to the statistical center of Iran at the end of 1401 according to the Solar Hegira (2022–2023) (March 2023), it reached 54.6% [source 11].

Sanctions have also led to stagnation in the financial and banking sectors. Significant issues include the disconnection of Iranian banks from the SWIFT system and a general decrease in the volume of foreign investments into Iran. This has led to difficulties with paying for imports, the improper operation of foreign branches of Iranian

banks, and increased lending rates within the country. The situation is further complicated by the national (Islamic) specifics of banking regulation, which limits interaction with non-Islamic countries.

In turn, the restriction of investment inflows has led to significant challenges in the real sector of the economy, particularly affecting the mining and manufacturing industries, where oil production and refining have been severely impacted. Sanctions packages introduced in 2012 and 2018 have significantly complicated the processes of oil production and refining, detrimentally affecting the entire oil and gas production infrastructure, and creating shortages of specialized equipment and imported spare parts needed for maintenance.

Despite these challenges, the development of certain local industries has continued, partly driven by the withdrawal of foreign companies from Iran. The country’s economic growth plans are focused on innovative development and knowledge-intensive industries. At the state level, initiatives are being promoted to develop sectors such as medicine, nanotechnology, laser technology, genetic engineering, and space technology.

Rapid growth is observed in the gas industry, oil refining, petrochemicals, and pharmaceuticals. The domestic automotive industry is also consistently developing, including the production of electric vehicles. Gas production in Iran is on the rise, with active exploration and development of new fields. A strategic initiative is underway to penetrate external gas markets in neighboring countries, primarily Turkey, Pakistan, India, Armenia, and Southeast Asian nations. Furthermore, the oil refining industry, the startup ecosystem, the innovation environment, and the IT and mobile communications market are under development.

Critical challenges for these industries include overcoming the shortage of high-quality gasoline, the scarcity of facilities, the need for modernization of existing refineries, and increasing exports. For the petrochemical industry, it is crucial to adjust output and production facilities to meet the rapidly growing domestic demand, which cur-

rently satisfies 90% of needs. The pharmaceutical sector needs solutions for the lack of modern production technologies, government funding, and foreign investment. In the automotive industry, the focus should be on improving product quality, increasing exports, and developing and promoting domestic R&D to foreign markets.

The official discourse post-1979 revolution has emphasized three main goals of social development: achieving “Islamic justice” by addressing a range of social issues including increasing living standards, reducing poverty, unemployment, inequality, and social tension; implementing the principle of freedom within the framework of Islamic people’s power; and securing the Iranian people’s right to independence from external influence. It was envisioned that Islamic rule would eventually provide equal opportunities for all, meaning employment and fulfilling developmental needs, thus aiming to reduce social polarization, which is among the reasons for escalating social tensions. A system of organizations was established in the country, with the primary function of implementing Islamic norms of supporting the people, such as *bonyad* foundations and *waqfs* [22]. However, while the most sensitive social issues have become less acute under the Islamic Republic, they remain unresolved.

According to available data, the population of Iran has already exceeded 80 million people for about 10 years [source 12], showing stable growth [source 13]. According to some estimates, in the next five years, the population could reach 90 million, despite a decrease in family size and a total fertility rate, of 1.8 in 2017 [23, pp. 141-142], which indicates a slowdown in growth rates. It is expected that significant internal social problems will arise in Iran [17, p. 129] due to growing public dissatisfaction with the state of the national economy, unresolved unemployment issues, uncontrolled inflation, and the spread of drug use.

As seen globally, the social groups most susceptible to these issues in Iran are the youth (ages 16–30) and teenagers, who formed the core of the protests that swept across the country in the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023. These young

people face significant challenges in obtaining a good education and securing professional opportunities. They are particularly concerned about their future, employment prospects, and access to social benefits. As a result, they have become the main opposition force to the Islamic regime, advocating for the liberalization of socio-political life. Approximately a third of Iranian youth openly state that they would leave Iran if given the opportunity [24]. Despite this, there remains a significant percentage of young people who are satisfied with the functioning of the political and economic systems and for whom the Islamic component of the system is important. The family remains the primary social institution, with relatives significantly influencing the worldview and political positions of young people. [source 14]. Sensitive social groups also include women and ethnic and religious minorities. One of the growing social trends in recent years is the reevaluation of the role of women in the family and society. Women are striving to get an education, find employment, and lead active social lives [22, p. 151]. Additionally, in recent years, there has been a clear demonstration of women’s desire to abandon the strict Islamic dress code.

Regarding the social dimensions of the issues facing ethnic and religious minorities, it is crucial to consider the cultural complexity of local communities. Iran is home to more than 40 peoples and nationalities, each at various stages of socioeconomic development [17, p. 128]. The position of these minorities depends on many factors, ranging from their region of residence and the array of identities within a particular minority group to the personal political choices of community members. Among all the regions in Iran, those with the highest protest potential are the provinces of the “non-Persian periphery,” where Kurdish, Baloch, Arab, and Azerbaijani minorities reside [2, p. 38]

In recent decades, the Iranian leadership has endeavored to implement policies aimed at reducing disparities between the provinces. However, issues of inequality and dissatisfaction with living standards remain widespread. Since 2017, there has been a gradual increase in the Gini coeffi-

cient, which, according to World Bank estimates, rose from 0.39 in 2017 to 0.42 in 2023 [source 14]. Protests of varying degrees of intensity have occurred annually during this period.

RESULTS

The Iranian model represents a unitary state with a republican form of government, governed according to the norms of Islamic law through a specific set of methods and means. It is characterized by a blend of autocratic and democratic features. Key actors within the political system include the Supreme Leader, the President, and both Islamic and mixed councils. These councils comprise experts in Islamic jurisprudence – *fiqh*, lawyers specializing in civil law, representatives from the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of power, and heads of specialized functional structures.

Economically, the model integrates elements of the Islamic economic model with the retention of private and state ownership of manufacturing facilities. The state plays a significant role in directing most economic processes through regular indicative planning. Companies owned by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, as well as numerous state, semi-state, and non-state Islamic foundations, hold special positions in the economic system. A significant feature of the Iranian economic model is also the presence of a notable shadow sector, underpinned by a system of quasi-state structures.

Socially, the Iranian model adopts a socially oriented approach. It focuses on supporting the poorest segments of the population by providing minimal social comfort, while also prioritizing the preservation of the Islamic-Iranian value paradigm.

The development of the state and society is anticipated to proceed in line with the program of Islamic-Iranian progress, conceptually akin to “Responsible Development”. Proposed driving forces of this progress include the moral motivation of Iranian society to develop individual potential, a general state and societal orientation towards scientific and technological advancement, and the development of intangible (intellectual) resources in production and consumption. Additionally, political and institutional support for civic participation in shaping Iran’s future is emphasized.

From this perspective, based on an analysis of the dynamics of political, economic, and social development, the most significant issues are: the diminishing prestige of the Islamic component as the foundational state element; the difficult and slow interaction between state political institutions, local government, business, and science due to excessive bureaucracy and corruption; an oversized shadow sector; militarization of the economy; unresolved economic challenges; and the inability to ensure growth in national well-being under the pressure of international sanctions.

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