Investigation of the Role of Shia in Political Revival of Iran in Safavid Era

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ABSTRACT

The basis of national solidarity of the countries is rooted in a collection of material and divine elements which are known as the existential cause. Therefore, different nations and governments, in order to manifest themselves in the political facet as the independent units, need to improve, and even construct this vital element. Iran regarding its ancient history has passed through a long distance from this aspect, which has had ups and downs at times, as after the fall of Sassanid Dynasty, the existential cause of Iran waned for about nine hundred years. For a period of two hundred years, Iran was all obedient to the Great Islamic Caliphate in all aspects, and after the decomposition of Abbasid Caliphate,the Iranian states were ruled by the local independent rulers. After that, the fundamental element of the emergence of a new government in Iran and the Shiite sect becoming official, and its spread by Shah Ismael (1499-1524) led to the definition of the existential cause in Iran with reliance to the past ancient heritage and new content. The matter of the current study was to investigate the process of revival of Iran's new existential cause in the form of ethnic symbolism oriented towards Shia, in this time section. The method of the current study is descriptive-analytical and the data collection instrument is the library-based study. The results of the study indicate that the Safavid, through strengthening elements such as the Persian language, the customs, and traditions, managed to establish the national solidarity.

Keywords:*The Safavid, Ethnic Symbolism, Shia, Iran.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Most of the scholars believe that the Iranian nation cannot be explained in the framework of the modern theories, but the concepts of identity and nation must be studied and investigated based on three approaches as the eternalism, pre-existentialism and ethnic symbolism. It is rooted in ancient and long-lasting history and identity of the Iranian nation. The realization of concept of the nation in Iran is coincided with the Sassanid Kingdom. In this era, the Iranian nation is among the most ancient nations, having a specific "national identity". In the Islamic era also, the Iranian history is divided into two categories: the first is initiated with the first century AH to the end of ninth century in which Iran has lacked the sovereignty and independence in terms of cultural continuance, and the second is initiated with the emergence of the Safavid, in which the revival of the national spirit in Iran can be divided into three periods as the Safavid, First Pahlavi, and Mashrooteh (Persian Constitutional Revolution). Thus, the starting point of the establishment and stabilization of the Iranian national identity in the new era is rooted in the Safavid era upheavals. The forming of the Safavid government in Iran is among the most important incidents in Iran specifically, and the Western Asia generally, since after the emergence of Islam and extinction of the Sassanid dynasty, the nation and land of Iran was deprived of the national and political solidarity for about nine hundred years. Iran was all obedient to the Great Islamic Caliphate for about two hundred years, and its rulers were directly assigned from Kufa, Damascus, and Baqdad. Also, after the collapse of Abbasid Caliphate (1258), the land of Iran was ruled by independent local rulers, and it was deprived of an independent cross-country government established within the historic borders of Iran. In the next stages, with the emergence of the Ottoman Caliphate in the ninth century and its gradual dominance over the whole Minor Asia and the Balkans and Syria, annunciated its spread towards the East and Iran, and apparently, there were no divine and political obstacles blocking it. However, the emergence of Safavid State suddenly disturbed this state. A state full of religious causes and appeal was established. As a result, through Shah Ismael's performance (in recognizing the Shia) and that of the other Safavid kings, the revival of the Iranian country and nation was politically and geographically realized. Thus, the current study has aimed at investigation of the Safavids' measures on the method of revival and re-solidarity of the public spirit in Iran and finally, revival of the country.

2. METHODOLOGY:

The current study's method is of descriptive-analytical type. The data collection instrument is library-based. In order to do so, the research question and hypothesis are as follows:
- What measures were taken by the Safavid to realize the Iranian nation and identity?

For answering the above question, the hypothesis has been stated as follows:

- The Safavid, through relying on the Shia and using the capacity of elements such as the customs and traditions, the Persian language, and the geographical and geopolitical position, revived the national spirit and the Iranian country.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

3-1- The Nation in the Circle of Approaches:

The concept of the nation is derived from the European country, form the Latin 'natio' and 'nascere' meaning 'procreation' and 'birth' (Burton, 2000, 242). Most anthropologists consider the concept of nationality to be a mainly invented one and the double of Nation States. A nation can be named a collection of the people living within a territorial political order higher than the tribe and ethnicity, and having a shared identity and culture, especially owning a shared political cause (Heidari and HeidariBani, 2014, 65). The nations are divided into the historic (pre-modernism) and modern categories. Talking about the historical nations by the most of the scholars and the theoretical approaches, except the pros of the idea of modernity of the nations, has been prevalent though with ups and downs, both in the centuries close to the industrial age and the ancient times. The modernists consider the nation to be the product of specific requirements and conditions of modernism, and believe that any arguments on the existence of nations in the previous periods is untrue and useless. Form this point of view, nation-making in periods before the modernism has been neither possible nor necessary. The nation is one of the requirements arose form modernism upheavals so that through resorting to which, the frustrated people gathered around the industrial machine can be reorganized under the new norms and values (Godarzi, 2009, 74). The eternalists agreed with the approach that even if the nationalistic ideology was new, the nations have ever existed in any periods of the history, and many nations have existed from very ancient ages (Smith, 2005, 784). The eternalism has attracted the social sciences scholars and the organic nationalists, and this onthological spirit soon entered the definition of nationality. These scientists believe that the nations are eternal and existed in the first time order, being the root of the later processes and evolutions (Smith, 2005, 77). The ethnic symbolists usually tend to search the ethnic root of the modern nations in the post-modern history, however, they speak about the existence of the nations from 14th century onward. The ethnic symbolism shifts the center of analysis from the merely foreign policy, economic, or sociological factors to the cultural factors such as the symbol, memory, myth, value, and tradition. The ethnic symbolists consider the nations as social-cultural constructs that require sociological explanations (Smith, 2005, 86).

3-2- The Existential Cause Principle:

Although the existence of a country requires prerequisites such as the territory, permanent residing population, government, an organized economy, ordered communicative network, sovereignty, and recognition by the other countries (Mirheydar, 1993, 70), the states, after being formed, require the consistence and harmony for survival, and it would be realized if the states, through their existential cause and political thought, attract the allegiance of people from different parts of the country, even those who do not have shared aspects, and created a national identity (Mirheydar, 2003, 87). This factor includes specific beliefs or causes which can unite a large part of the country (Moyer, 2001, 199-200). In fact, the political thought of the government is a force above all the cultural and geographical differences in a country (Mirheydar, 2003, 77). The countries may not have existential cause, and use the political cause instead. In this regard, the political cause is more efficient that the existential cause, since it has transboundary domain (Ahmadipour, 2007, 85). In a general conclusion, it can be said that: the existential cause of a state-country must be so efficient that it can play a few roles:

- Provide a reason, cause, or a platform for the genesis and creation of the country.
- Provide a reason, cause, or a platform for maintaining and sustaining the independence, national unity, territorial integrity, and the basic values of the nation, or briefly, the national survival (Shams &Yazdani, 2006, 83). One of the important factors in existential success or failure of the counties is the phenomenon of identity, which is defined in relation to the political thought of the government.

3-3- Identity:

The national identity depends on a nation's understanding about what and who they are against the other nations, so that through this understanding, they can distinguish themselves from the others and feel attached to their belongings (Godarzi, 2008, 27). Smith believes that the national identity is the permanent regeneration and reinterpretation of the pattern of the values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions that form the distinct heritage of the nations, and identification of the identity of people by that pattern, heritage, and its cultural elements (Smith, 2004, 30). Miller believes that the set of the sweet and bitter memories of the victories and defeats in the collective memory of a nation forms their national identity. The national identity can be defined as the collective awareness and attachment, and the collective allegiance of the members of a national society to the historical land, shared public culture, shared religion, legitimate government and system, pervasive language, the national economy, and the like (Godarzi, 2008, 30).
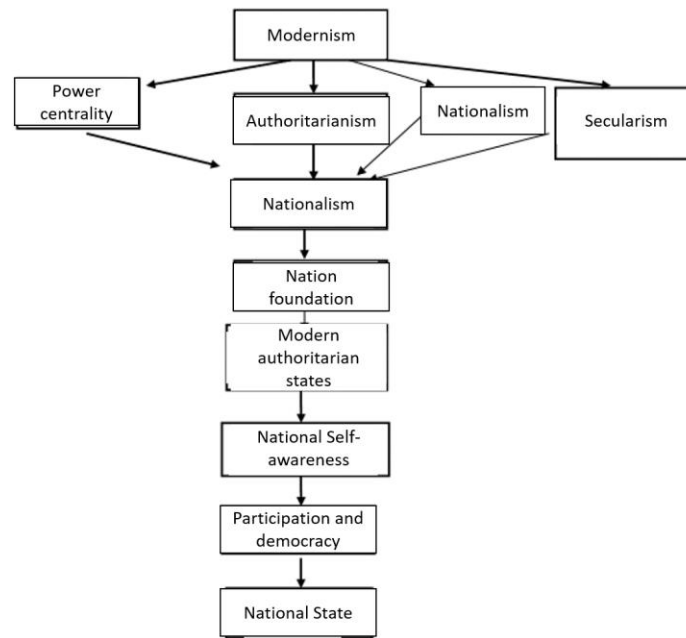
4. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

Figure 1: the theoretical framework of the study

As it is seen in the above diagram, the process of the modernism in the creation of new nations is focused on the subject of secularism and removal of the religion from the political affairs of the society, and basically, the experience of the world in the modern age is mainly centered on this issue. Even in transition from the authoritarian states to the national states in this age, the nations also, in spite of playing roles in the political arena of the society, avoided from interfering their religion in the political affairs, and it is mainly due to the thoughts related to the age of enlightenment, which greatly evades the Middle Age experiences, since the religion in this age, when blended with the politics, led to a dark age in Europe. Therefore, the nations and states of the modern age moved towards secularism consistently.

5. FINDINGS:

5-1- The Process of Recognition of Shia in Iran:

The fundamental factor of the emergence of the new state in Iran was the Shia becoming the official religion and its spread by Shah Ismael (1499-1524) which led to the formation of the Safavid Dynasty. Shah Ismael considered it a duty of him to produce good flowers in the large garden of the religion and remove the weeds from it (Ross, 1896, 326). The formation of the Safavid State in Iran, due to its decisive influence on the fate of Iran, the Islamic territories, and the global theorems, was the most important incident that occurred in the initial years of the tenth century AH, in the history of the world. BeforeShahIsmael crowning in 1502, and announcing the Shia as the official religion of Iran, the Iranian land was the battlefield for continuous struggles between the claimants of power. During the centuries passed from the Mongol invasion, this land was still deprived of the access to the territorial independence and unity, and consequently, the independent political identity (Eshraghi, 2015, 259). Coincident with the

Safavid taking power, the Uzbek ruled the east and the Ottoman ruled the west, both trying to extend their influence in the Iranian territory. If a powerful state had not come to power, perhaps Iran would have been integrated into the Uzbek and Ottoman seizures, becoming deprived of independence forever. In such a period, the forming of the Safavid state and extension of its influence domain to the known boundaries of Iran revitalized the country and through the foundation of its political and religious independence, and paved the way for the formation of national solidarity in Iran (Eshraghi, 2015, 259).

5-2- The Exisential Cause of Iran and the Role of Shia:

Form the collapse of the Sassanid Dynasty in 653 (Zarinkoob, 1996, 245) till 1501 which is the year for establishment of Safavid Dynasty, for 848 years, a pervasive state which could prepare a platform for continuance and sustainability of the central government, was not formed (Hinz, 1985, 13). From the initiation of the creation of the Safavid Dynasty, the national solidarity and territorial integrity was realized in Iran, an integrity that in spite of numerous ups and downs, and collapse of dynasties, has been continued till now, and has never undergone long-term recess and disturbances during the last five centuries. In fact, in the post-Islam history of Iran, the emergence of Safavid Dynasty is an important turning point in which, after centuries of the foreigners ruling, Iran again became a powerful and independent country in the Islamic East (Savory, 1984). During these five centuries, the aliens or the anti-national solidarity forces have occupied whole or a main part of Iran for several times, and the political centers or capitals of Iran have been occasionally seized or changed. The Iranian nation has passed about one-fifth of these five centuries fighting or defending (Haggett, 1996, 7), while several times, after changing of each ruling dynasty, Iran as a united state and nation, which has been seemingly about to

collapse and disintegrate, has actually continued its united life in spite of the ups and downs and the highly crushing incidents. Also, one of the reasons behind the continuance of this life is the Shia becoming official as a factor for the revival and existential cause of Iran. The reason for the creation of the first national state in Iran after the collapse of the Sassanid Dynasty, which was indeed the Safavid Dynasty, is clear. Shah Ismaeil, in 1501, with the announcement of Shia becoming the official religion in Iran, founded a firm foundation for development and the Iranian national sustainability (Kamran &Karimpour, 2003, 126) even though Iran separated itself from a large part of the Islamic world through selecting the Shia as the official religion of the country, and excluded the Islamic state of Iran from the rule of Ottoman kings, who have announced themselves the Caliphs of the world of Muslims (Tajbokhsh, 1994, 57). The young Shah Ismael, through exploiting two centuries of religious propaganda by his ancestors (Hinz, 1985, 13), and the support from the seven-person central core of the Iron Organization of the Sufis, which was actually highly similar to the mono-party system of the totalitarian countries in the modern age (Savory, 1984), this wise measure for uniting the Iranian ethnicities was quite similar to that of ArdeshirBabakan, the founder of Sassanid Dynasty. He also retied the broken parts of Parthian State by making the Zoroastrianism official (Palmer, 1970, 172). These two figures, through resorting to the religion and making it official throughout the Iranian country, not only did stabilize the bases of the central government, but also, by the very same means, had the highest influence in the creation of a an independent national identity for Iranians (Kamran &Karimpour, 2003, 127).

5-3- The Shia and its Role in National Solidarity:
The religion in its general sense has been among the basic pillars of the national identity in different societies. Eric Haubsbaum believes that the religion is basically a rival to the nationalism in attracting the national and ethnic allegiance. However, he asserts that religion has been sometimes used as a miraculous mortar for the creation of nationalism. He exemplifies the primitive Zoroastrian nationalism in the Iran of the Sassanid era and the Shiite nationalism in Iran in the Safavid era. In his point of view, the Safavid Shia which became the state official religion by the Safavid Dynasty founders, has played a great historical role in the maintenance of the Iranian identity and sorting its scattered parts out, as well as politically integrating Iran (Ashraf, 2005, 155-156). Thus, the founders of the Safavid era sought the way to save Iran and achieve independence and national revival in uniting the religion and the state, and establishment of a centralized government in Iran.

5-4- The Shia, an Identity-making Institution in Iran:
The Shia sect has been always prevalent in some parts of Iran, however, the prevalence of Shia has a significant relationship with the social and political movements in Iran. Accordingly, in the period after the absolute dominance of Arabs over Iranian, the Shia has played the role of an organizing social force for arising the masses, in the formation and institutionalization of the Iranian identity and the special ethnic Iranian nationalism in the form of social, political, and cultural movements. In the stagnation period of the social movements in Iran, which is the

Seljuk era, until the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate, the social force of Shia also waned in Iran. Nevertheless, the second term of formation of social and political movements in Iran was gradually reinitiated from the mid-seven century and the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate, and this time, a majority of the movements enjoyed the arising force of Shia and the Shia-oriented Sufism (Godarzi, 2009, 240-241). Some of the scholars in the field of Iranian social evolutions history have considered the most important factor in the social upheavals of the Safavid era to be Shah Ismael's decision on announcing the Shia as the official religion of the country in 1501 A.D (Savory, 2008, 26). However, this measure, as much as being religious, was also political, since through its implementation, the Shia Iran stood against the Sunni Ottoman, which claimed the caliphate of the Islamic world, and thus, the Safavid state obtained its territorial and political identity. Obviously, the emergence of Shah Ismael, who was a religious and political leader arose from the Sufism from the very beginning, and was titled by his followers as 'Wali Allah' (the helper of God) (Savory, 2008, 23), was the beginning point of a deep religious evolution in the Iranian society. Although the next Safavid kings were not considered religious figures as much as Shah Ismael, always maintained their political legitimacy through the religion. In the following, we would deal with the identity-making function of Shia through becoming the official religion.

5-5- The Identity-making Function of Shia:
5-5-1- Creation of Religious Integrity:
The religious integrity which occurred in almost all over Iran after the Safavid revolution, led to an identity-making function through harmonizing the society. After the entrance of Islam to Iran, the religious and sectarian wars which occurred due to the religious dissensions, inflicted irreparable damages to the society. When this dissension was accompanied by feudalism, the country would break apart. Therefore, the most important consequence of the Safavid revolution was the religious harmonizing and creation of a powerful state (Savory, 1987, 29), which has led some to consider the Safavid as the initiators of the national state in Iran (Abdi&Mazaheri, 2014, 120). Shah Ismaeil, through recognizing the Shia as the official religion, besides guaranteeing the religious integrity, eliminated the sectarian dissensions. The story of the fall of Isfahan and the dispute between the Shafi'i and the Hanafi, and the Shafi'i betrayal in opening the city gates to the Mogul army was only one of the catastrophic results of religious disputes (Izadpanah, 2002, 93). With the Shia becoming official religion, all these dangerous disputes were eliminated and the country found a unique religion, which was more related to the Iranian spirit. Therefore, the religious integrity of the Iranian was itself an important element in development of the national identity in Iran, which was facilitated by announcement of the recognition of Shia as the official religion in the Safavid territories.

5-5-2- Maintenance of the National Independence:
The national independence is the fundamental and unavoidable condition for formation and continuance of a nation and national identity. As for foundation of the Safavid Dynasty, which gifted Iran with the national independence after 850 years, majority of the scholars chose the Shia sect as the basic pillar of achieving this accomplishment, among the

elements creating this position. Savory considers several important functions for the role of Shia and its recognition in Iran. First, it put the power of dynamic ideology in service of the new state for overcoming the problems. Second, it drew a clear distinguishing line between the Safavid state and the Ottoman Emperor, which led to the maintenance of the Iranian political and territorial identity against the most fearsome war machine of the time, which was undauntedly inclined to occupy the scattered Iran (Savory, 2008, 28-29).

5-5-2-1- The Recognition of Shia; Being Released from the Ottoman Caliphate:

The Ottomans, based on the tradition of war and Jihad custom, and the thoughts of the Islamic caliphate, intended to create a united Muslim world. They claimed that only the Islamic leaders, besides being the authority of Ottoman territory, are the rulers of other Islamic territories. The Ottoman Sultan Salim who considered himself the incontestable leader of the Islamic world, wrote a letter to Shah Ismael after the Chaldoran War, and claimed to be the caliph, accusing Shah Ismael and his family to be apostate and corrupted. He recommended Shah Ismaeil to repent and suffer the pain of attachment of Iran to the Ottoman territory (Fereydonbeightoghi, 1986, 328-383). The Ottoman, who considered themselves to be inherited with the custom of Jihad and war against the infidel in the Byzantine Empire and Eastern Europe, intended to consider the Shia Iranian Muslims as the unbelievers and related to the dar-al-harb, so that they could issue several Fatwa for obligation of Jihad against them, and deploy their forces towards the Iranian borders (Ramezani, 1996, 310). The Ottomans chose the Hanafi sect among the four sects of Sunni faith, perhaps since they could enjoy the maximum possible freedom in the political and executive authority through choosing this sect (Holt & Lambton, 1999, 302-303). On the contrary, the Safavid Dynasty followed a policy that introduced the state with the Shia. It was necessary for the Safavid to choose this method since they were placed between two powerful Sunni rivals, the Ottoman on the west and the Uzbek on the east. Therefore, they were desperately in need of having a consistent society religion-wise (Almohajer, 1989, 96-97). And in this regard, Shah Ismaeil recognized the Shia as the official religion, and if he had done otherwise, Iran, which was exposed to the invasion of the Turk tribes, would have been enclosed to the Ottoman Emperor (Stanley, 2003, 19). Thus, through recognizing the Shia, the Shia Iran evaded being blended in the Ottoman Caliphate and has continued its life to date, as a consistent unit in terms of territory and religion.

It should be noted that although the Shia sect has been on the center of the Safavid efforts for the creation of an independent state and consequently, revival of Iran, these efforts were not confined to a religious framework and other measures were also taken in this era, in the administration process and the establishment of the new system in the form of revival of the ethnic and historical attributes of Iranians, as a supplement to the function of religion, in creation and completion of the new existential cause of the country. In the following, some of these measures would be noted.

5-6- The Position of Iranian Traditions and Rituals in the Safavid Era:

In the Islamic era until the emergence of the Safavid revolution, the Iranian territory and ethnicities were a part of the eastern provinces of the Arabic Caliphate for several centuries. Then, it was divided among the emergent small and big states, and sometimes, Iranian rulers or foreigners occupied parts of the country. Although most of the Iranian accepted Islam and were attached to it and had collective awareness of it, lack of a comprehensive government in all the territories belonging to each of the governments, had inclined them towards a specific religion, under the influence of the region's public demand or the ruling government (Godarzi, 2009, 288). The strategy of the Safavid revolution in the cultural aspect was relying on the Shia Islam and the ancient Iranian culture forged and adapted with the Islamic values, so that the national identity, including its cultural aspect, could be fed and organized by this source. In the Safavid era, the Iranians managed to reconstruct, institutionalize, and establish a public shared culture based on the common cultural elements that remained from the past era, and revival of some forgotten and ignored elements based on Shia Islam and Iranian culture bases (Godarzi, 2009, 290). Corbin believes that the Iranian adapted their ancient religion and rituals with the new religion and saw the Iranian figures, myths, and traditions in the mirror of the new Shia norms such as the Ahl-ul-Bayt. He notes the revelation of Spendarmaz angel who was the angel of the earth in the Avesta, and among the species angels in the illuminationism of Sohewardi, as the regeneration of these ancient myths in the Shia values. He writes that the Iranian Islam attributed the values of this angel to Fatimah (AS) (Corbin, 2009, 131). Those elements of the ancient Iran which had still sustained among the Iranian people after passage of nine centuries from the Islamic era, were also adapted to the Islamic culture. In the following, some of the most important cases of such elements will be addressed.

5-6-1- The Iranian Symbols:

There are numerous symbols among the historical nations, each indicating a historical event and being a symbol of their nationality and eternity. The Kavain's Awl, the Sun and The Lion, Rostam, and tens of similar examples are symbols of the national history and reminders of independence, patriotism, and national pride (Godarzi, 2009, 298). The Lion and the Sun symbol has gradually entered into the Iranian flag during the first century of the Safavid Era, however, Joneid, Shah Ismael's grandfather, also had laid a lion opposite the sun on a copper coin, before the initiation of the Safavid kingdom. Oelarius also who usually mentions the identity differences between the Iranians and the Turks in the Safavid Era, has stated that today, the Turks use the moon crescent, and Iranians use a sun which is more behind a horse. In addition to the national flag, the sun and lion can be seen on most of the Safavid era's coins (Godarzi, 2009, 299). Kaempfer believes in this regard that the Iranians consider the king to be the brother of 'the sun' and above the Harem's entrance, which is the gate for the king, the image of a lion is carved (Kaempfer, 1972, 221). Also, he has stated that the sign of the Iranian king is the lion.

5-6-2- The Iranian feasts:
5-6-2-1- The Nowruz:

The ancient Iran was full of monthly and seasonal ceremonies among which the Nowruz, AbPashan, and Mehregan have been

prevalent until the recent century, and Nowruz has sustained until today among the Muslim Iranians. The starting point of the year which is coincided with the Farvardin, has been a ceremony lasted for ten days from OshtadRuz to AniranRuz, tied with the myth of Jamshid (Sheykhavandi, 2001, 81-83). The Safavid, like the Sassanid, resorted to 'tradition invention' in order to institutionalize their values (the Shia and Iranian nationality), and promoted the values in their territories through a series of networks, institutions, and national and religious days such as the Nowruz and Muharram, and establishment of special ceremonies and rituals, which finally led to the presentation of an up-to-date and functional narration of the Iranian identity (Seyfoddini, 2015, 21). The author of "the great history of Shah Ismael", elaborating preparation of him to confront the Ottoman army, has stated that: "His Highness stated that since there are forty days to the Nowruz, if God willing, after passing the Nowruz in this auspicious place, we would order the Tabriz governance at the beginning of Hamal (Farvardin) to see the Army and gather those who have not come yet ..." This report shows that Shah Ismael is waiting for the Nowruz ceremony and then, moving towards the enemy army. IskandarBeigMonshi writes the report on the Nowruz ceremony in Qazvin's governor's house describing that the city is illuminated, the princes are invited by Shah Abbas from around the country, and the public see the sites and have holidays of ten or twelve days (Monshi, 1998, 799). Olearius and the other tourists and historians in the Safavid era have spoken of a kind of tax named 'the Nowruz gifts' set by the rulers and governors, collected and sent to the court and the king himself. On the day twenty four, the Khan sent the Nowruz gifts to the court according to a custom, and escorted them for a few miles out of respect (Olearius, 1984, 81). Englebert, in a visit to Iran in the Safavid era, has described Nowruz as an ancient custom of the Iranians and the biggest and brightest national ceremony in Iran. Everybody wears new clothes on this day, the friends and relatives see each other, parties are given, and they drink, and have fun. After two weeks, and on some occasions, three weeks, the parties and ceremonies are over (kaempfer, 1972, 182).

5-6-2-2- Tirgan Ceremony:
The Tirgan Ceremony (AbPashan) is among the ancient ceremonies of the Iranians, coincided in the first five days of the month of Tir. In the Safavid era also, this ceremony has been held in different areas of Iran with special formalities, and Shah Abbas I, according to IskandarBeigMonshi's report, returned from Fereydoun to Isfahan to observe the AbPashan Ceremony: "the horse riding was prevalent among the princes" (Monshi, 1998, 1289). He, again describes the presence of Shah Abbas in the AbPashan ceremony of Isfahan: "in the beginning of the month of Tir, which is the day of AbPashan (water splashing) based on the Persian customs, the king, along with his companions, watched the AbPashan, and on that day, more than one hundred thousand people gathered and splashed water to each other, to the extent that Zayandeh Rood river went dry and actually, it was a strange scene" (Monshi, 1998, 1383). This example was given to reveal that the Iranian ancient culture rituals have been widespread all over the territories of Iran with the participation of the king and the people.

5-6-2-3- ChaharshanbeSuri:
One of the traditions of Iranians on the last Wednesday of the year is known as the ChaharshanbeSuri (festive Wednesday), which has been prevalent in the Safavid Era, too. Olearius, explaining his stay in the border city of Schamakhi, has provided a comprehensive report of implementation of this ritual. He considers this ritual to be a kind of confronting the inauspiciousness, since the Iranians believe that the last Wednesday of the year is ominous and inauspicious. He writes that: "in this day, the Iranians stop working and transactions, they rarely leave their houses, talk less, evade cursing, swearing, drinking and paying money to others, since they believe what is done on this day has to be done throughout the whole year" (Olearius, 1984, 77).

5-7- The Myths:
After nine centuries of Arabic and Turkish ruling, for the first time, an Iranian state was founded in Iran. This rare genius who led in front of an army of one hundred thousand wise men at the age of thirteen, and made the West gaze, and gave geographical Iran a political reality at the age of 16. He, after conquering Tabriz in 1501 A.D, said: "I descended down to earth, I am the master and the king. To the truth that I'm the son of Heydar. I am Fereydoun, I am Khosrow, I am Jamshid, and I am Zahak, I am Rostam, the son of Zaal, I am Iskandar" (Mojtahedzadeh, 2007, 336-337).

5-8- The Persian Language and the National Identity:
A phenomenon like a language becomes national when most of the residents of a country are aware of it, attached to it, and are loyal to it. Therefore, the Persian language in the Safavid era can be considered as an element of the national identity of the Iranian when the general public of the society of that day are aware of it, consider it as their national heritage, and are attached to it (Godarzi, 2009, 270). Della Valle, one of those travelogue writers in the Safavid era, traveling to Iran in that era, writes about his observations of the prevalence of the Persian language as the official language of the country: "the Persian is the official language of the country, and the people and groups are highly attached to it. It is so much respected, and so much biasedthat not only are all the amazing books and writings, especially the poems, written in this language, but also all the contracts and the formal writings and orders, and the sentences sent by the king, and finally all the important affairs of the country use it" (Della Valle, 2001, 522). Among the other western travelogue writers is Adam Olearius, a member of German embassy, who has entered Iran in the era of Shah Soleiman kingdom in 1677, writings the descriptions of this land. He, besides his observations of Iran, notes the Persian language and states that: "the Iranians have their own specific language, which is closer to Arabic than Turkish. In the Persian language, there are numerous words that are fully or partially similar to the German words. It seems as if it is derived from this language. Brother, daughter, barber, lip, and so on. The Iranians are now focused on speaking Turkish besides their mother tongue, especially in the state the Turks had regularly seized and occupied (Olearius, 1984, 303).
With this description, the continuance of the prevalence of Persian language as the colloquial, correspondence, and the literary language of the Safavid era, as Zarrinkoob puts it, had derived from the great power, foundation, and richness of it,

and in spite of the fact that the Turkish colloquium was useful for getting close to the court and the positions, the colloquium of the court, majority of the Ulema, and the court-related merchants, similar to other Iranian classes, remained Persian (Zarrinkoob, 1996, 82).

6.   THE THEORETICAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE STUDY:

Regarding what was mentioned and comparison of the European modernism, the evolutions of Safavid era can be illustrated by the below model.
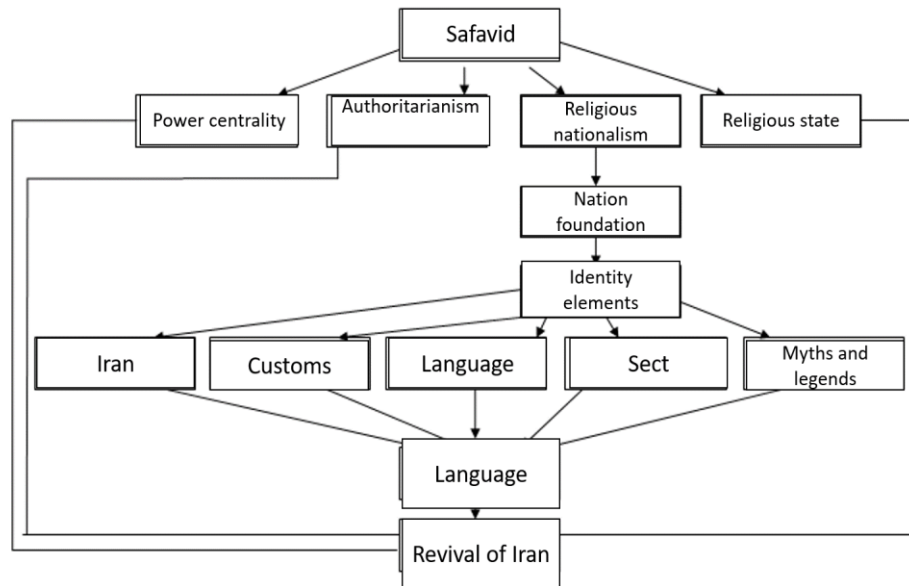

Diagram 2: The process of religious nationalism in the Safavid era

Regarding the above model and comparison of the historical experience of modernism in Europe, and its coincidence with the incidents occurring in the Safavid Era, several factors and points of view about the similarities and differences in nation-making and nationalism in this period can be observed. The European modernism movement towards the new nation-makings in terms of creation of centralism, authoritarianism, and nationalism, can also be observed in the Safavid era. However, regarding the utilization of the religion in the Safavid era for the establishment of the state and nation-making, there are deep differences compared to the modernism experience. Also, regarding the evolution and process of states formation, and opening the path for the participation of people in their affairs, and in other words, the emergence of democracy in the relationship between the state and the people in the modern age, it is deeply different from the Safavid era, i.e. whatever we observe in the formation of the national state, cannot be observed in the Safavid era. That is, it took about four centuries for the election, parliament, newspapers, and the like, to be addressed in Iran, and such cases cannot be seen in the Safavid era at all. The process of differences between the modern nationalism and the religious nationalism in the Safavid era can be well observed in the comparison between Figures 1 and 2.

7.   CONCLUSION:

The ancient Iran, especially the Sassanid era, was the phase of the promotion of Iran to the level of nation with its specific components. The Sassanid intentionally resorted to nation-making and the four-hundred-year continuance of this dynasty made it possible for the people of that time to obtain a collective awareness of their national identity elements and get attached to them, and be loyal to them. In this regard, the unity of the religion and the state, as well as the growth in collective awareness and wisdom, besides the need for nation-making based on the historical background and the common culture, were among the important platforms that led the political and religious elite of the time to shape the idea of nation-making. Then, with the entrance of Muslim Arabs, the Iranian national identity, the nation, and the state, broke historically and the country broke up. Therefore, Iran, as a political unit having an authority, lost its independence. But the Iranian people, as an ethnic group distinguished from their neighbors in terms of clothing, language, specific cultural elements, background and historical memories, the public culture including the stories, myths, memories, symbols, and specific race, who gradually accepted Islam, and put numerous efforts in strengthening and extending the new religion. Hence, Islam as the religious aspect of the Iranian identity, who was named 'Ajam', 'Tajik', Iranian' and 'Persian' by the conquering Arabs and other neighbors, replaced the Zoroastrian. The Safavid era was the result of their identity and independence seeking after centuries of instability and disturbance. In this independence, elements of Shia, which was consistent with the stems of the Iranian nation and territory, and was tied to them, showed an identity-making combination of the religion and the Iranian nationalism. The Safavid also, through strengthening the other elements such as the Persian language, the traditions, and the customs, managed to establish the national solidarity. In fact, the emergence of the Safavid in Iran not only led to the territorial integrity of the

country, but also revived a kind of new national identity which was to a great extent supported by the government. The religious integrity which occurred in almost all areas of Iran after the Safavid revolution, led to an identity-making function through harmonizing the society. The Safavid, with reliance on the Shia on the one hand, and the Iranian identity, on the other hand, integrated these two subjects in an inseparable manner. They provided a new narration of Iranian identity which was in line with the requirements of the new society of Iran post-Islam, and guaranteed the survival of the country, and in doing so, they spared no pains in supporting the Persian language and implementation of the Iranian traditions and customs. These efforts can be explained in the framework that is referred to as the 'nation reconstruction' today.

8.   ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Result and discussion

The Safavids are named after Sheikh Safi-eddinArbebili, a widely revered 14th century Sufi philosopher. Like their rivals, the Ottomans and Moghuls, the Safavids established an absolute monarchy that maintained power with a sophisticated bureaucracy influenced by the Mongol military state and a legal system based on Muslim law. One of their great challenges was to reconcile Islamic egalitarianism with the autocratic rule. This was achieved initially through brutality and violence and later through appeasement.

The Safavids faced the problem of integrating their Turkic-speaking followers with the native Iranians, their fighting traditions with the Iranian bureaucracy, and their messianic ideology with the exigencies of administering a territorial state. The institutions of the early Safavid state and subsequent efforts at state reorganization reflect attempts, not always successful, to strike a balance among these various elements. The Safavids also faced external challenges from the Uzbeks and the Ottomans. The Uzbeks were an unstable element along Iran's northeastern frontier who raided into Khorasan, particularly when the central government was weak, and blocked the Safavid advance northward into Transoxiana. The Ottomans, who were Sunnis, were rivals for the religious allegiance of Muslims in eastern Anatolia and Iraq and pressed territorial claims in both these areas and in the Caucasus.

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