


## **The Crisis of Political Parties and the Position of the Islamic Republic Party in the Integration of Islamist Forces (at the beginning of the Revolution 1979)**

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### **1-Introduction**

The Islamic Republican Party was established in the early days of the 1979 Iranian Revolution by five prominent students of Imam Khomeini (RA): Seyed Mohammad Hossein Beheshti, Mohammad Javad Bahonar, Seyed Ali Khamenei, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, and Abdolkarim Mousavi Ardabili. Its purpose was to safeguard the achievements of the Islamic Revolution, implement the goals and ideals of revolutionary clerics Islamic Revolution, and foster unity and organization among religious individuals. The party also aimed to educate and train capable and active forces to manage the country and enforce Islamic laws, with the approval of Imam Khomeini.

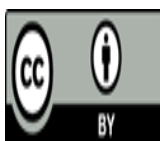
The main question posed in this research is: What role and position did the Islamic Republican Party have in consolidating Islamist forces in the early days of the 1979 Revolution? The hypothesis of this research suggests that the establishment of the Islamic Republican Party, in line with its founding declaration and emphasis on providing the necessary forces for the newly established Islamic Republic and continuing the Islamic Revolution, led to the consolidation of Islamist forces in the early days of the 1979 Revolution. By entering its forces into the executive arena, the party effectively blocked the presence of rival non-Islamist factions, both leftist and rightist, in Iran.

### **2- Research Methodology and Theoretical framework**

The research method employed in this article is descriptive content analysis. In this method, the researcher seeks to analyze and describe

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the content. In content analysis, the desired elements and materials are collected, categorized, and analyzed. These elements may include words, sentences, or entire texts in written or oral works. Similar to other research methods, in content analysis, the researcher identifies and defines the problem, formulates hypotheses, gathers data, organizes and categorizes the information, analyzes it, and draws conclusions. In other words, the researcher systematically follows the scientific research process. In this article, an attempt has been made to qualitatively analyze the content regarding the description of the Islamic Republican Party and its role in the political developments following the 1979 Revolution. The focus is on how the party contributed to providing Islamist technocratic forces for the Islamic Republic of Iran and eliminating rival non-Islamist parties in these developments.

In his book *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Huntington, in the discussion of political parties under the title "Processes of Party Transformation," emphasizes that the strength of a political system depends on the power of its political parties. A strong party is one that enjoys the support of the masses. Huntington argues that for party transformation in politically modernizing systems, there are four stages: factionalism, polarization, expansion, and institutionalization.

**Factionalism:** In the first stage, Huntington notes that political parties exhibit a purely negative and exclusionary approach in inter-group competition. This leads to familial and kinship groupings based on traditional approaches, forming factions centered around ethnic and familial interests.

**Polarization:** Huntington describes the second stage as the progression toward dualism in parties, moving toward polarization and the diversification of demands, groups, and factions. He considers this stage a step forward in terms of demand-making and the presence of maximalist groups.

**Expansion:** In the discussion of expansion, Huntington points out that at this stage, with the entry of social groups pursuing mass demands, we witness the attraction of the masses in connection with parties and the development of parties among the masses. However, this

very issue intensifies competition among powerholders to attract the masses into the power structure.

**Institutionalization:** In the final stage, Huntington highlights that the type of political institutionalization and the development of party institutions significantly influence the creation of a single-party, two-party, or multi-party structure. Therefore, if institutionalization facilitates the activities of smaller parties and allows them to express their views, even in opposition to dominant groups, we will witness the fragility of dominant parties and their weakening by smaller, more accountable parties.

### **3- Analysis**

Since the Islamic Republican Party lacked internal ideological cohesion, after defeating its rivals and gaining political power, it faced internal disputes and crises. From within, factions known as Islamic left and right (conservative) groups emerged, which significantly influenced the future political developments of the country. By gathering Islamist forces, the Islamic Republican Party led to the marginalization of non-Islamic right and left movements in the political and executive structure of the country, resulting in a crisis of political parties. Consequently, the concentration of Islamist and religious forces within the Islamic Republican Party facilitated their entry into the executive domain of the newly established Islamic Republic of Iran. With the formation of the Islamic Republican Party and the gathering of revolutionary forces within it, a factional division emerged between leftist and rightist Islamist revolutionary forces in the structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This division persisted even after the dissolution of the party. Therefore, as Huntington stated in the phase of factionalism, during the modernization of political parties, the issue of factionalism led to the marginalization of rival party groups on one hand, and the reinforcement of Islamist forces from the Islamist factions consolidated within the Islamic Republican Party on the other.

### **4- Conclusion**

According to the theory of the evolution of political parties, the Islamic Republican Party was formed at the beginning of the revolution with the unified presence of leftist and rightist Islamist factions. During

the phase of polarization, the differences between the Islamic left and Islamic right factions emerged in their political and economic orientations within the party. In the phase of party expansion, where the Islamic Republican Party, as the ruling party, was expected to consolidate, it suddenly dissolved due to its inability to resolve the country's political and economic issues (stemming from internal party disputes). It subsequently split into two branches: the Combatant Clergy Association (Jame'e-ye Rohaniyat-e Mobarez) and the Assembly of Combatant Clerics (Majma'-e Rohaniyun-e Mobarez). As a result, the Islamic Republican Party lost the opportunity to institutionalize itself as an official party in line with political institutionalization and the development of party structures. As mentioned, since the Islamic Republican Party lacked internal ideological cohesion, it faced internal conflicts after marginalizing its rivals and gaining political power. Factions emerged from within the party, known as moderates and conservatives, which significantly influenced the future political developments of the country. Overall, the formation of the Islamic Republican Party was one of the mechanisms that facilitated the entry of religious and Islamist forces into the country's executive structures. In practice, the process led to the marginalization of non-religious leftist and rightist opposition from the political and executive structures and facilitation of Islamist groups' entry into the executive and bureaucratic structures of the Islamic Republic's political system.

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