

Future Studies of the Islamic Revolution with a Perspective on Contemporary Economic Developments in Iran

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In the effort to conduct future studies on the Islamic Revolution with an emphasis on the economic developments and issues of contemporary Iran, the following question arises: considering the existing economic issues and challenges, what will be the future of the Islamic Revolution? Drawing upon Ted Robert Gurr's theory of relative deprivation to understand these existing economic transformations and issues, and employing the scenario planning method through the use of library and internet sources, the findings indicate that the existing sense of deprivation and dissatisfaction, although incapable of generating a wave of regime overthrow within the country, constitutes an Achilles' heel that may provide the grounds for conspiracy formation and foreign intervention in the country. From this perspective, the continuation of economic problems may increase the costs incurred by the political system in governing the country. The desirable scenario in this context is the resolution and elimination of economic problems, which can be achieved through reliance on domestic capacities and increasing endogenous capabilities in the management of the national economy.

Keywords: *Future Studies, Islamic Revolution, Relative Deprivation, Rising Expectations, Scenario Planning*

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1. Introduction

Numerous issues concerning this revolution and its future have been raised across political, cultural, social, and economic domains, along with many deep and far-reaching questions in the mind of our society, especially among truth-seeking and inquisitive young people. The truth-seeking and cultivated Iranian mind, in the process of contestation and confrontation between modern civilization and the layers of the glorious Islamic civilization, requires appropriate and well-considered answers to its numerous questions. The question of the future of the Islamic Revolution, the occurrence of certain environmental transformations, and the lack of awareness about the future make it necessary to engage in future studies of the Islamic Revolution. The most

fundamental point regarding future studies is that the analysis, design, and construction of the future are based on the values of the target society of future studies. Therefore, the values of society constitute the objective of future studies.

Contrary to common assumption, future studies do not seek to predict the future, because prediction involves a passive approach toward the future, whereas future studies seek to gain mastery over the future. Therefore, it can be said that future studies are oriented toward offering solutions for the present so that, on their basis, we can construct our desired future. From this perspective, research conducted through a future studies approach is one of the most important requirements for the durability of the Islamic Revolution.



In this context, it can be argued that one of the most dynamic domains with a serious capacity to influence the destiny of the country and the Islamic Revolution is the economic domain. This is because, in recent years, this domain has experienced ups and downs whose direction has not necessarily aligned with the expectations of social groups and, in some cases, official spheres, thereby generating multiple concerns within society.

2. Research Objectives and Questions

2.1. Objectives

1. To represent the status and consequences of the transformations that have occurred in the country's economic domain.
2. To inform officials about the status of economic transformations in the country and the consequences of some of their actions and decisions.

2.2. Questions

1. Considering the current economic transformations and conditions of the country, what scenarios can be imagined for the future of the Islamic Revolution?
2. How will the desirable future of the Islamic Revolution be shaped in light of the aforementioned transformations?

3. Research Background

Although the future studies of the Islamic Revolution have been addressed in various works, studies that have directly examined the future studies of the Islamic Revolution with regard to Iran's economic transformations are very limited. Below, several works related to the present research are introduced:

1. The article "Future Studies of the Islamic Revolution," written by Mostafa Ghorbani and Ehsan Mostafapour, may be considered one of the closest studies to the present research, with the difference that this article examines the future studies of the Islamic Revolution with regard to cultural and social transformations rather than economic transformations.
2. Likewise, the article "Future Studies of the Islamic Revolution," written by Saeed Hajinaseri

and Najaf Sheikh-Saraei, may also be considered one of the closest studies to the present research, with the difference that this article examines the future studies of the Islamic Revolution with regard to political transformations rather than economic transformations (Naseri & Sheikh Saraei, 2017).

3. Other works related to the present research include the book *Future Studies of the Islamic Revolution: Fears and Hopes* by Ali Darabi and the book *An Analysis of the Study Framework for the Future of the Islamic Revolution* by Mohammad Rahim Ivazi. Despite their appropriate analytical precision, given that approximately one decade has passed since their publication, they do not cover some emerging issues.

Considering what has been stated, the innovation of the present research lies, first, in its focus on transformations in the country's economic domain and, second, in the time period examined, namely the current transformations of the country. This issue is important because it appears that, during less than the past decade, the economic transformations of the country have shown clear differences from the past.

4. Theoretical Framework: A Combination of the Theories of Rising Expectations and Relative Deprivation

The most important theoretical discussion concerning the relationship between economic issues and revolutionary transformations has been presented in Ted Robert Gurr's theory of "relative deprivation" and James Davies's theory of "rising expectations." Here, an attempt is made to combine these two theories in order to conduct future studies of the Islamic Revolution with regard to existing economic problems (Gurr, 1973; Panahi, 2010).

Ted Robert Gurr identifies a sequence of stages in revolution from beginning to end: relative deprivation, dissatisfaction, politicized dissatisfaction, political violence, and revolution. According to Gurr, the forms of relative deprivation are as follows (Gurr, 1973):

1. Decremental relative deprivation, in which value expectations remain constant while value capabilities are perceived to have declined.

2. Aspirational relative deprivation, in which value expectations increase while value capabilities remain constant.
3. Progressive relative deprivation, in which both capabilities and expectations increase, but the rate of increase in value expectations is higher.

In other words:

Progressive deprivation occurs when, after a period of simultaneous growth in expectations and capabilities, capabilities either cease to grow or decline sharply while expectations continue to rise. The more severe the relative deprivation produced on the basis of the gap between expectations and capabilities, the more intense dissatisfaction becomes, and the probability and intensity of violence also increase (Gurr, 1973).

Relative deprivation leads to the emergence of dissatisfaction among individuals, and dissatisfaction is a general motive for action against the source of deprivation. The tendency toward aggressive reaction in human beings is part of their biological structure, and both humans and animals possess a biological and innate tendency to attack the source of frustration. Aggressive responses emerge only when an external cue stimulates them. In cases of political violence, after relative deprivation and dissatisfaction take shape, if political rulers are perceived by the people as the source of deprivation, collective violence assumes a political form, and aggression arising from frustration becomes directed toward striking the source of deprivation (Gurr, 1973).

Of course, other social variables are also involved in the politicization of violence, including the degree of cultural or subcultural legitimation of overt aggression, the degree and level of past success, the clarity and prevalence of symbolic appeals that justify violence, the legitimacy of the political system and the types of responses it has given to relative deprivation, and the belief that violence is useful in acquiring scarce values. After violence against political actors emerges, which side ultimately prevails in confrontation depends on the extent of government control over coercive force, organizational support, and the coercive capability of opponents (Gurr, 1973).

James Davies is among the theorists who emphasize economic theory and economic factors as causes of revolution. In the theory of rising expectations, Davies argues that revolution results from relative deprivation

rather than absolute deprivation. His main assumption in this theory is that whenever a rapid reversal occurs after a long period of economic and social growth, the probability of revolution increases. During this period, economic and social growth and development satisfy a significant portion of demands and create a mindset that expects conditions to continue improving in the future. In such a society, when severe economic stagnation occurs, a gap emerges between people's demands and expectations and the satisfaction of those demands. The more intense and prolonged the stagnation, the wider this gap becomes, creating acute conditions and increasing the probability of revolution (Panahi, 2010). Davies explains his theory of revolution as follows: the likelihood of revolution emerges when a long period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of rapid reversal. If there has been a long period of prosperity during which the expectation has formed that needs can be continuously met, and then a period of decline occurs that frustrates individuals, a wide gap forms between what people want and what they have obtained. Under such conditions, expectations continue to rise, while sudden economic stagnation produces an intolerable gap that ultimately leads to revolution. He conceptualizes this gap in the form of a curve. In other words, James Davies argues that the rise of people's economic expectations following a period of economic progress, followed by stagnation, causes people to become subjectively anxious about conditions and to develop a revolutionary spirit (Malekoutian, 2016).

5. Research Method

"Scenario writing" is one of the methods of future studies. Scenarios make it possible to discover and formulate various pathways for the future and to move appropriately along those pathways. From Schwartz's perspective, a scenario is a tool for organizing one's understanding and imagination of alternative future environments (Naseri & Sheikh Saraei, 2017). From Michael Porter's perspective, a scenario is also an internally and substantively consistent view or outlook regarding what may occur in the future (Hajiani & Qassa, 2013). Therefore, scenario planning means discovering and formulating different future pathways.

In one classification, scenarios are categorized according to types of futures. Accordingly, three scenarios must be discussed:

1. Possible scenario or future: a possible scenario is any imagined condition or state, whether good or bad, probable or improbable, that may occur in the future.
2. Probable scenario or future: a probable scenario is a scenario that, based on the continuation of past trends or transformations, has the greatest likelihood of occurring in the future. In fact, among possible scenarios, it is the scenario with the higher probability of occurrence. In determining this scenario, the researcher must be able to explain clearly why that scenario is probable.
3. Desirable or preferred scenario or future: a preferred scenario is the future whose occurrence is most preferable (Hajiani & Qassa, 2013).

The important point in this regard is that the first two levels concern the possibility of occurrence or realization of the future, whereas the third level depends on individuals' type and degree of knowledge of the present situation, their cognitive criteria, interests, values, and human judgments. Therefore, this scenario differs for different individuals (Hajiani, 2012). The operational steps of this method are as follows: 1. accurate awareness of the existing situation; 2. determining the reference point and purpose of scenario writing; 3. determining different scenarios; 4. determining the desirable scenario; and 5. offering recommendations or strategies for realizing the desirable scenario (Hajiani, 2012). Scenario planning here has an integrative nature: it is exploratory because it first examines existing forces, and it is also normative because, by examining existing forces, it seeks to prescribe how the desirable future can be shaped.

6. Concerns and the Uneven Transformation of the Economic System in Contemporary Iran

Economic concerns in contemporary Iranian society are highly diverse and complex and are influenced by various domestic and external factors. Some of these concerns are noted below.

Technological transformations: In recent decades, the impact of technology on economic growth has become

more important than before. Examples of these impacts include e-commerce, which has increased the competitiveness of small businesses. Moreover, technological advances are likely to have an even greater impact on the economy in the future.

The emergence of new and digital technologies in the global economy has created new applications in Iranian industries and services, but these changes have not been sufficiently employed in Iran.

High inflation rate: One of the greatest concerns of people in Iran is high inflation, which has led to rising prices of goods and services and has reduced household purchasing power.

Unemployment: The unemployment rate, especially among young people, remains one of the fundamental challenges. The absence of appropriate job opportunities and unfavorable economic conditions has increased unemployment and social dissatisfaction.

Decline in the value of the national currency: Currency fluctuations and the depreciation of the rial against foreign currencies have created significant concerns among people, because this issue has a direct effect on the prices of imported goods and everyday life.

Poverty and inequality: The increase in poverty and social inequality due to the unjust distribution of wealth and resources has become one of society's key concerns and causes social tensions.

Economic instability: Political instability, sanctions, and international economic crises have undermined people's trust in the economic future and in personal investment.

Lack of transparency and economic corruption: Corruption and lack of transparency in the country's economic and financial administration have reduced public trust in governmental institutions and created further problems.

Future orientation and investment: The inability to predict the economic future and the lack of security for investment have placed many individuals and businesses in a state of uncertainty.

Social and psychological effects: Economic problems not only have financial effects on people's lives but also entail psychological and social consequences, such as increased anxiety, depression, and hopelessness in society.

In general, these concerns require attention and efficient practical policies to improve economic and social conditions in Iran, and they can be resolved through firm

determination, effort, the use of existing capacities, and efficient and committed management.

7. Economic Achievements of the Islamic Revolution

Iran's economic and livelihood conditions in the period after the victory of the Islamic Revolution have always been among the most important issues in public opinion, both because they are more frequently compared with conditions before the Revolution and with contemporary global conditions and neighboring countries, and because the greatest criticisms of the political system's performance are related to this domain. Nevertheless, the performance, record, and achievements of the Islamic Revolution, despite all shortcomings, deficiencies, strengths, and weaknesses, are defensible in this domain. In this regard, what constitutes the weakness and Achilles' heel of revolutionary forces in defending the economic achievements of the Revolution is, on the one hand, the weakness of historical memory and the lack of awareness, or lack of accurate awareness, among some layers of public opinion, and, on the other hand, the current unfavorable economic situation of the country, which has caused, in some cases, doubts about the Islamic Revolution and its effectiveness to increase among the people and has also challenged revolutionary forces in explaining the achievements of the Islamic Revolution.

The reality is that during the past 46 years, many services have been provided in this domain and important achievements have also been obtained. However, despite efforts in this field, many challenges still remain. Nevertheless, to understand the achievements of the Islamic Revolution accurately, it is necessary to examine what the country's past economic situation was and where it has now arrived.

For this purpose, examining the country's economic and livelihood conditions during the Shah's regime, reviewing the achievements of the Islamic Revolution, and comparing the country's current economic situation in macro-level indicators can help clarify the dimensions of the economic achievements of the Islamic Revolution. Therefore, inspired by John Foran's method for examining Iran's socioeconomic transformations, an attempt is made to undertake this task (Foran & Goodwin, 1993).

Foran examines Iran's socioeconomic transformations in urban and rural domains based on modes of production

and the social forces employed within them. In his view, each of these areas had two modes of production: in cities, industrial production and urban petty commodity production; and in villages, agricultural production and pastoral-nomadic production. In examining the socioeconomic transformations of contemporary Iran up to the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Foran studied the transformations and changes corresponding to these modes of production (Foran & Goodwin, 1993).

7.1. The Socioeconomic Formation of Iran before the Islamic Revolution

After the fall of Reza Shah, the socioeconomic order he had created remained relatively intact. The only important economic transformation in this regard was the relative growth of the private sector, which occurred under the influence of the weakness of the state and governmental structures (Sattari, 2013). However, the major transformation in Iran's socioeconomic condition during the reign of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi occurred mainly after the August 19, 1953 coup. This issue was rooted, on the one hand, in the transformation of the nature of the state, which acquired a "rentier" character because of the oil consortium agreement, and, on the other hand, in the role of foreigners in the August 19, 1953 coup and the path that the Shah pursued after the coup, through which the state acquired a "dependent" character.

Therefore, between 1953 and 1979, "dependent development" emerged and expanded in Iran. During this period, the increase in oil revenues deepened the process of industrialization, and, in addition to investment in infrastructural sectors, the assembly industry took shape in the country. Moreover, the growth rate increased and inflation was controlled. From 1973 onward, the jump in oil revenues accelerated the previous processes, although these processes quickly moved beyond control (Moaddel, 2003). In the following section, the socioeconomic transformations of this period are examined in the two rural and urban domains.

7.1.1. In Villages

In villages, sharecropping peasant agriculture underwent a major transformation because of land reform, and sharecropping peasant production was replaced by capitalist agriculture. However, land reform

did not improve the living standards of peasants and villagers, and the success or achievement of land reform for them was zero. This was because, due to the absence of formal sharecropping contracts, half of the villagers were not covered by the land reform law. Half of the lands were also not distributed, such that after land reform there were still 45,000 mostly absentee large landowners, 1,350 of whom owned estates larger than 200 hectares. Forty-seven percent of all arable lands remained in the hands of these absentee owners. The majority of peasants who did obtain land received small and low-quality plots (Foran & Goodwin, 1993). Therefore, farmers who had worked on farms before land reform now became land-poor peasants or landless wage laborers. As a result, they migrated to cities, leading to the creation and expansion of shantytowns around large cities.

The result was that, one decade after the implementation of land reform, agricultural production lagged behind population per capita. This issue led to the importation of 14 percent of the country's food needs from abroad in 1977. As a result of this situation, agriculture's share of gross domestic product declined from 70 percent to 28 percent. Under these conditions, the living standards and livelihoods of villagers also declined, such that between 1972 and 1977, 38 percent of villagers suffered from malnutrition (Sattari, 2013). In terms of public and welfare services, villages also did not have an appropriate situation, such that in the 1970s, 96 percent of villages lacked electricity (Abrahamian, 2005).

In the domain of nomadic pastoralism, with the continuation of the forced settlement of tribes and the nationalization of rangelands, tribal properties decreased and their dependence on the state increased. Ultimately, the nomadic population decreased from 2.5 million in 1900 to 1.87 million in 1976, which led to a decline in the nomads' share of gross domestic product from 7 percent to 4 percent (Foran & Goodwin, 1993).

7.1.2. *In Cities*

In cities, the mode of petty commodity production contracted with the expansion of capitalist production, but it did not disappear. Nevertheless, its conditions were not favorable, as assistants and shop apprentices received low wages, had no insurance, and lacked job security. Overall, relations between the bazaar and the state were antagonistic, especially after the

establishment of the Rastakhiz Party in 1975. This party placed guilds under the supervision of the chamber of commerce in each city and appointed non-bazaar merchants affiliated with the security apparatus to manage them. In addition, the municipality challenged bazaar merchants by constructing a street that passed through the bazaar. According to Abrahamian, through this measure, the Shah's regime entered an area that practically no previous government had dared to enter (Abrahamian, 2005). Through these measures, those employed in this mode of production became more closely aligned with one another.

In the industrial domain, "import substitution" and "export development" were the two strategies adopted for the country's economic development from the 1960s onward. Overall, from the 1960s onward, Iran's industrial growth rate was significant, but this rate suffered from at least three major problems:

1. The share of industry in gross national product was 18 percent, which was not high compared with the share of the services sector, which was 35 percent, and the share of oil, which was also 35 percent.
2. During this period, non-oil industrial exports accounted for only two to three percent of Iran's exports, which was also negligible. In addition, the industrial sector depended to a large extent on foreign participation. Foreign capital was dominant in industries and had even entered relatively domestic industries such as textiles. It is noteworthy that in 1979, pharmaceutical companies were 85 to 100 percent dependent on imports, chemical companies 60 to 100 percent, textiles 80 percent, some food industries 70 percent, and some building materials 57 percent (Foran & Goodwin, 1993).
3. This industrial growth was accompanied by inequality and had social consequences, such that these industries and companies in practice fueled inflation and inequality. Only 45 families controlled 85 percent of companies. Meanwhile, workers' conditions were unfavorable, such that in 1974, approximately 73 percent of workers earned less than the legal minimum wage, and the majority of urban residents had difficult lives because of unequal income distribution, inflation, and other factors (Foran & Goodwin,

1993). According to Abrahamian, based on one disclosed document of the Plan and Budget Organization, the income share of the wealthiest 20 percent of the urban population increased from 57 percent to 63 percent between 1973 and 1975. According to this document, the gap between urban and rural consumption increased significantly. These inequalities were especially evident in Tehran. According to statistics from the mid-1970s, one out of every ten people in Tehran owned a private car, whereas this ratio in other regions was 90 to one (Abrahamian, 2012).

In summarizing this section, Katouzian writes: "What occurred in Iran was neither social and economic progress nor modernism; rather, it was pseudo-modernism accelerated by oil revenues. Similarly, structural changes in the economy were not due to urbanization but to pseudo-urbanization. When the country stood at the gates of the Great Civilization, urban transportation everywhere, especially in Tehran, was indescribably poor. Housing conditions were dreadful except for those affiliated with the state and the merchant community. Most small and large cities, including Tehran, lacked an efficient sewage system. Medical and health services were extremely expensive and unreliable for the rich, and expensive and dangerous for the poor" (Katouzian, 1993).

Considering what has been stated, as a result of the transformations of the second Pahlavi period, workers were dissatisfied in addition to the traditional middle class. In villages, land reform led to increased migration of villagers to large cities and the formation of shantytowns. Meanwhile, the second Pahlavi regime sought to secure the loyalty of the urban middle class by expanding bureaucracy, such that the number of government employees, which was 150,000 in 1963, reached 800,000 in the civilian sector alone by 1977. Another measure of the regime in this regard was strengthening the armed forces, such that the regime's defense expenditures increased from 1.9 to 9.9 billion dollars in 1979, and the number of armed forces increased from 191,000 to 413,000 between 1972 and 1977 (Foran & Goodwin, 1993).

7.2. *Economy and Class Structure in Iran after the Islamic Revolution*

The transformations of Iran's economy and class structure during the Islamic Republic period are also examined in villages and cities.

7.2.1. *In Villages*

Regarding rural transformations, it should be stated that, initially under the influence of the Revolution and war, the policy of "return to the village" was adopted. During this process, with the entry of revolutionary institutions into villages, the participation of villagers in the war, and their membership in the power structure, power relations in villages were transformed (Ehsani, 2006). After the war, the process of the "urbanization of villages" began, as a result of which the rural economy, which had been based on agriculture and animal husbandry, weakened in relation to service, industrial, and commercial sectors (Behdad & Nomani, 2014). In any case, the appearance and condition of villages changed during the post-revolutionary period. The sources and factors of this transformation are as follows:

1. Transformation in land ownership: This issue occurred through land reforms before and after the Revolution. After the Revolution, the seven-member land distribution boards distributed 1.5 million hectares of land, including uncultivated lands, confiscated lands, and lands belonging to large landowners. As a result of this measure, approximately 250,000 rural households received land. Therefore, while cultivator villagers became landowners, the power of landed lords declined significantly (Beigi Nesvan, 1997).
2. Transformation of the rural communication system: The rural communication system has changed both physically, meaning land routes and the acceleration of movement from village to city, and in terms of access to telephones and the internet. According to 2021 statistics, 98.2 percent of rural households had fixed-line telephones, and 69.2 percent had access to the internet in their place of residence. In addition, 86.6 percent of the country's rural population had mobile phones, and 65.7 percent of the rural population used the internet (Statistical Center

of Iran, 2023). In terms of rural communication roads, the length of existing routes increased from 8,200 kilometers to 131,317 kilometers, a level of progress that clearly indicates transformation in rural communications (Statistical Center of Iran, 2023). In this same context, one may also refer to the development of public transportation in rural areas and the increase in the number of private cars.

3. Transformation of the political role of villagers: The political role of villagers has changed at two levels: national and local, meaning limited to the village. At the national level, the political participation of villagers has been strengthened through their participation in the war, their employment in revolutionary institutions, the increase in literacy and education levels in rural society, and other developments. At the local-

regional level, with the implementation of the Law on Islamic City and Village Councils in 1999 and the consolidation of this process up to the present, village councils and village administrators have stood at the top of the hierarchy of power in villages. Therefore, the weakening of the power of khans and village headmen, which had been seriously pursued through the class orientations of the Islamic Republic and measures such as land reform by the seven-member land distribution boards, reached its peak with the consolidation of democratic processes in villages. In fact, Islamic city and village councils, alongside other transformations that have occurred in villages, have placed villagers in the position of equal citizens with civil and political rights and authorities (Khorramshad & Moloudi, 2022).

Table 1

Some of the Most Important Socioeconomic Changes in Villages during the Islamic Republic Period

Item	Second Pahlavi Period	Islamic Republic Period (2021)
Fixed-line telephone	312 villages	98.2 percent of the total population
Mobile phone	—	86.6 percent of the total population
Internet access	—	69.2 percent of the total population
Water supply	600,000 connections	6,121,000 connections
Electricity supply	96 percent lacked electricity	All villages have electricity, covering more than 4.5 million households
Communication roads	8,200 kilometers	131,317 kilometers
Literacy rate	30.5 percent	78.5 percent
Population	17,292,000	20,179,000
Share of GDP	28 percent	27 percent

7.2.2. *In Cities*

In cities, the mode of urban petty commodity production has largely disappeared, although in recent years some of its forms, such as handicraft production, have been revived. In fact, jobs related to petty commodity production, such as shop apprenticeship, still exist, but petty commodity production has contracted sharply. The reasons for this relate to changes in lifestyle and the expansion of capitalist relations in Iran’s economy, because many goods that were formerly produced by hand are either no longer consumed, such as shoe-mending, or are now produced in factories.

In the industrial domain, after passing through the instabilities of the early Revolution and the end of the war, the First Development Plan was formulated in 1989, emphasizing import substitution, export development,

increasing per capita production, developing productive employment, and other goals (Sharifzadegan & Noorai, 2015). The Second Development Plan also emphasized export promotion, combating monopoly, increasing efficiency in domestic production, and other goals. Subsequently, the Third Development Plan emphasized institutional and structural reforms, and, in relation to industry, referred to reducing governmental intervention and monopolies, increasing productivity, improving competitive economic activities, encouraging investment in small industries, and other matters (Sharifzadegan & Noorai, 2015). One of the most important measures during this plan was the attempt to formulate a national industrial development strategy, which has not yet been accomplished. In any case, despite the absence of a clear strategy for

industrialization, the country’s industry underwent numerous transformations after the victory of the Revolution, and here several basic industries in the country are mentioned as examples.

8. Production of basic metals

Basic metals are among the most important industrial sectors, and here transformations in the production of two of the most fundamental and infrastructural metals are discussed.

Aluminum: The Iranian Aluminum Company was established in Arak in 1967 by three Iranian, Pakistani, and American companies. Executive operations and installation of facilities began in 1969, and on May 13, 1972, it was put into operation with two production lines and an annual capacity of 45,000 tons. After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the departure of American experts, and the increase in aluminum consumption in Iran, the workshop production lines were revived by specialists of the company and increased from two lines to five lines in 1991. Aluminum production capacity reached 120,000 tons per year, and according to 2023 statistics, aluminum production in Iran exceeded 635,000 tons; that is, it increased more than fourteenfold compared with before the Revolution ([Ministry of Industry & Trade, 2018](#)).

Steel: According to published information, Iran, with steel production of 31 million tons in 2023, is the largest steel producer in the region after Turkey, and in this respect it has a significant distance from other countries in the region ([Ministry of Industry & Trade, 2018](#)).

Cement: The development of cement factories was one of the priorities of the first to fifth development plans before the Revolution, such that by the end of 1979, there were 12 cement companies and 15 cement factories, the nominal capacity of kilns had reached 7.7 million tons per year, and the capacity of ongoing projects had reached 9 million tons per year. After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, cement production capacity in the country gradually followed an upward trend. In 1986, the country’s total cement production capacity reached nearly 17 million tons. In subsequent periods, due to the high consumption of cement in the country for reasons such as reconstruction of the destruction caused by the war, population growth, and increased construction, there was always a shortage of cement supply in the country until 1999, when cement production gained the capacity and ability to respond to domestic needs and consumption. After 2003, the cement industry in the country also grew significantly, such that from 2004 to 2016, the country’s cement capacity increased by 156 percent, from 32.6 million tons to 83.5 million tons per year ([Ministry of Industry & Trade, 2017](#)).

According to 2021 statistics, Iran, with annual production of 62 million tons, is the eighth-largest cement producer in the world ([Ministry of Industry & Trade, 2017](#)).

Petrochemical products: Production of petrochemical products increased from 1,604,100 tons in 1979 to 57 million tons in 2021 ([Ministry of Industry & Trade, 2018](#)). The following table provides a summary of transformations in some of Iran’s industrial products compared with the second Pahlavi period.

Table 2

An Overview of Industrial Transformations during the Islamic Republic of Iran

Industrial products	Second Pahlavi Period	Islamic Republic Period
Aluminum	45,000 tons	635,000 tons
Steel	1.8 million tons	31 million tons
Cement	9 million tons	62 million tons
Tile and ceramic	12 million square meters	400 million square meters
Petrochemical products	1.6 million tons	57 million tons

Overall, after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the share of industry in gross domestic product increased from 18 percent to approximately 42 percent ([Statistical Center of Iran, 2023](#)).

In this same context, the growth of gross domestic product should also be mentioned. According to published data, Iran’s gross domestic product reached approximately 401 billion dollars in 2023. This figure was 90 billion dollars in 1979 ([Statistical Center of Iran,](#)

2023). However, in recent years it has faced fluctuations, such that in 2011, this figure approached 600 billion dollars. Therefore, it is clear that Iran's industrial transformation during the Islamic Republic period has had an increasing trend. Nevertheless, in urban areas, the share of employed persons aged 15 and older in the services sector was 60.1 percent, and the share of industry was 34 percent in spring 2024 (Statistical Center of Iran, 2023).

9. How Will the Future of the Islamic Revolution Be Shaped?

In the effort to conduct future studies of the Islamic Revolution with regard to Iran's economic transformations and issues, the following question arises: considering the existing economic issues and problems, what will be the future of the Islamic Revolution? In other words, how will the desirable scenario of the Islamic Revolution be shaped despite the existing economic problems? The most important theoretical discussion concerning the relationship between economic issues and revolutionary transformations has been presented in Ted Robert Gurr's theory of "relative deprivation" and James Davies's theory of "rising expectations." Here, an attempt is made to combine these two theories in order to conduct future studies of the Islamic Revolution with regard to existing economic problems (Gurr, 1973; Panahi, 2010).

Ted Robert Gurr identifies a sequence of stages in revolution from beginning to end: relative deprivation, dissatisfaction, politicized dissatisfaction, political violence, and revolution. According to Gurr, the forms of relative deprivation are as follows (Gurr, 1973):

1. Decremental relative deprivation, in which value expectations remain constant while value capabilities are perceived to have declined.
2. Aspirational relative deprivation, in which value expectations increase while value capabilities remain constant.
3. Progressive relative deprivation, in which both capabilities and expectations increase, but the rate of increase in value expectations is higher.

The more severe the relative deprivation produced on the basis of the difference between expectations and capabilities, the more intense dissatisfaction becomes,

and the probability and intensity of violence also increase (Gurr, 1973).

Now, in applying these forms of deprivation to Iran's current situation, it must be said that in recent years Iran has experienced the simultaneous increase of capabilities and expectations, with the difference that the rate of increase in expectations has been higher. That is, Iranian society is affected by progressive relative deprivation (Ghorbani, 2019). In fact, under current conditions, given market fluctuations, capabilities are declining, which reflects increasing deprivation, but expectations have also declined in major segments of society. Therefore, the difference between expectations and capabilities has been moderated to some extent, and this gap has not deepened to the point of causing a revolution. On the other hand, given the reduction in the intensity of perceived deprivation, the trend of rising expectations, in the way James Davies's theory imagines them as revolution-generating, does not currently possess the necessary potential to produce a revolutionary uprising (Panahi, 2010).

More precisely, it must be said that the existing economic problems cannot endanger the continuity of the Islamic Revolution for two reasons. First, under existing conditions, the growth of expectations has decreased, meaning that rising expectations have declined. Second, although a sense of deprivation and dissatisfaction exists, this sense of deprivation and dissatisfaction has neither become politicized nor led to political violence. Nevertheless, the sense of deprivation and the dissatisfaction following it constitute an opening and ground for the infiltration of enemies and the implementation of their plans inside the country. Indeed, the enemies of the Revolution are now attempting to politicize existing dissatisfactions and direct them toward political violence.

In fact, the existing sense of deprivation and dissatisfaction, although incapable of generating a wave of overthrow within the country, constitutes an Achilles' heel that can provide the grounds for conspiracy formation and foreign intervention in the country. From this perspective, the continuation of economic problems can increase the costs incurred by the political system in governing the country. Therefore, economic problems and issues must be resolved and eliminated as quickly as possible, and this cannot be achieved except through reliance on the country's internal capacities. In other

words, the desirable scenario for the future of the Revolution, given the economic problems, is the resolution of these problems through endogenous development and reliance on the country's internal capacities. Considering what has been stated, the different scenarios for the future of the Revolution in light of economic issues and problems are as follows:

1. Possible scenarios, which include any condition, such as overthrow, continuity, resolution and elimination of these problems, and other possibilities.
2. The probable scenario, which consists of the emergence of unrest in the country due to the dissatisfactions created by these economic problems and also because of the role these dissatisfactions play in providing the ground for conspiracy formation and foreign intervention in the country.
3. The desirable scenario in this regard is the resolution and elimination of economic problems, which can be achieved through reliance on domestic capacities and increasing endogenous capabilities in the management of the country's economy.

10. Conclusion

Considering that numerous issues concerning this revolution and its future have been raised across political, cultural, social, and economic domains, along with many deep and far-reaching questions in the mind of our society, especially among truth-seeking and inquisitive young people, the main question of the present research was as follows: considering the economic transformations that have occurred in contemporary Iranian society, how will the future of the Islamic Revolution be shaped, and what is the desirable future of the Islamic Revolution? Based on Ted Robert Gurr's theory of relative deprivation, the research findings show that the existing economic problems cannot endanger the continuity of the Islamic Revolution for two reasons. First, under existing conditions, the growth of expectations has decreased, meaning that rising expectations have declined. Second, although a sense of deprivation and dissatisfaction exists, this sense of deprivation and dissatisfaction has neither become politicized nor led to political violence. Nevertheless, the sense of deprivation and the dissatisfaction following it

constitute an opening and ground for the infiltration of enemies and the implementation of their plans inside the country. Indeed, the enemies of the Revolution are now attempting to politicize existing dissatisfactions and direct them toward political violence (Gurr, 1973).

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Finally, it is suggested that decision-making and decision-shaping authorities in the strategic domain of the economy, while relying on the internal capacities of the system and using the methods of a resistance economy, as well as efficient and committed management, remove the necessary obstacles on the path of productive and economic progress and, by trusting the people and thoughtful and committed young people, address the existing concerns in contemporary Iranian society.

On the other hand, since one of today's concerns is the management of public opinion under the influence of psychological warfare, it is recommended that both political officials and cultural elites, especially influential groups such as university professors and teachers, present the achievements of the Islamic Revolution in comparison with the pre-revolutionary period according to official and globally published statistics, preferably in visual and multimedia formats for greater impact, strengthen the engagement of young people and adolescents, and increase the sense of hope for the future.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

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