

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

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence “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” presents a highly deterministic and philosophically loaded claim without sufficient theoretical grounding. The authors should provide references to foundational futures studies scholars such as Sohail Inayatullah, Wendell Bell, or Michel Godet to support this distinction. Moreover, the phrase “gain mastery over the future” should be reconsidered academically because it implies excessive agency and may weaken the epistemological neutrality expected in scholarly futures research.

The section “Research Objectives and Questions” lacks methodological alignment with the subsequent analytical framework. For example, the objective “To inform officials about the status of economic transformations” appears policy-oriented rather than scholarly and should either be reformulated into a research-oriented objective or moved to a practical implications section. In addition, the research questions are framed normatively, especially the question “How will the desirable future of the Islamic Revolution be shaped,” which presupposes the desirability of regime continuity. The authors should revise the wording to maintain analytical neutrality and avoid teleological assumptions.

In the section “Economic Achievements of the Islamic Revolution,” the manuscript adopts an overtly evaluative tone, particularly in sentences such as “the performance, record, and achievements of the Islamic Revolution... are defensible in this domain.” Such language compromises scholarly neutrality and creates the impression of ideological advocacy. Academic analysis should present evidence systematically and allow conclusions to emerge analytically rather than normatively. The authors are advised to revise the tone throughout this section to ensure balance, especially when discussing achievements alongside structural weaknesses and policy failures.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the “Research Background” section, the literature review is descriptive and insufficiently critical. The authors merely summarize prior works as “closest studies” without identifying their methodological limitations, theoretical gaps, or empirical shortcomings. A high-quality review article should comparatively analyze previous approaches to futures studies of revolutions, political legitimacy, economic resilience, or state continuity. In particular, the manuscript lacks engagement with international comparative literature on economic crises and regime stability in non-Western political systems. The review should therefore be substantially expanded and internationalized.

The subsection “Theoretical Framework: A Combination of the Theories of Rising Expectations and Relative Deprivation” requires deeper theoretical integration. At present, the manuscript juxtaposes Gurr and Davies rather than genuinely synthesizing them. The authors should explicitly explain how these two theories complement each other analytically, whether one theory functions as a macro-structural framework and the other as a micro-psychological mechanism, and how they jointly support scenario construction. Without such integration, the framework appears additive rather than theoretically coherent.

The discussion of Gurr’s theory includes the statement “The tendency toward aggressive reaction in human beings is part of their biological structure.” This sentence is problematic because it adopts a biologically reductionist interpretation of political violence without sufficient nuance or citation to contemporary political psychology literature. Since modern scholarship increasingly emphasizes socio-political construction, institutional mediation, and identity-based mobilization, the authors should either contextualize this statement historically within Gurr’s original framework or revise it to avoid essentialist interpretations of collective violence.

The methodological section on scenario planning remains underdeveloped. Although the manuscript explains the typology of possible, probable, and desirable futures, it does not demonstrate how the authors operationalized scenario construction in practice. There is no explanation of the variables selected, the criteria for prioritizing drivers, the uncertainty matrix, or the process through which scenarios were validated. Scenario planning is not merely conceptual categorization; it requires systematic methodological procedures. The manuscript should therefore provide a step-by-step account of the scenario development process.

The paragraph beginning with “Economic concerns in contemporary Iranian society are highly diverse and complex” presents a broad inventory of economic problems but lacks empirical substantiation. Claims regarding inflation, unemployment, corruption, poverty, and psychological effects should be accompanied by quantitative indicators, longitudinal trends, or authoritative data sources. Without empirical evidence, the discussion risks appearing impressionistic and policy-oriented rather than scientifically rigorous. Incorporating recent macroeconomic statistics and comparative regional data would substantially strengthen the credibility of the analysis.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.