

**How to Cite:**

Heidari, A., Mirfardi, A., & Mosavat, . S. E. Sociological analysis of the interactional patterns of clerics with political sovereignty in the Safavid Era. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 5724-5737. Retrieved from <https://sciencescholar.us/journal/index.php/ijhs/article/view/13387>

# **Sociological analysis of the interactional patterns of clerics with political sovereignty in the Safavid Era**

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**Abstract**--Current historical research is going to analyze the interaction between the clerics and political governance in the safavid period. The method of research is historical sociology and includes the historical period of establishment until the fall of the Safavids (1501-1722 A.D.). Base on Tiley's theoretical framework, the interactions of the two groups of clerics within and outside the government with the rulers, depending on the weakness and power of the structure of government, included four forms of membership, influence, resignation, and overt opposition. According to the findings, the religious politics of the Safavid era and the way the clergy interacted with the political system can be divided into five periods: initial establishment, establishment, flourishing, weakening and declining. According to Beetham and Foucault's theory, in each period the way the clerics interacted with political rule was more influenced by the rulers' need for legitimacy and financial needs of the clerics. On the one hand, using the power to legitimize by clerics, has peaked in times of crisis and political uncertainty, bside, With the weakening of the shah's political power, the independence of the clerics has increased dramatically. Also, neither the clergy was a monolithic institution nor the way it interacted with political rule throughout the Safavid era.

**Keywords**---*Historical Political Interaction, Clerics, Political Rule, Political Rule Process, Safavid.*

## **Introduction**

### **Introduction and problem statement**

Political and religious institutions have long been two significant and very influential organizations in social life, and all philosophers, intellectuals, historians, politicians, and sociologists have acknowledged their respective or mutually reinforcing roles and influences. However, it is debatable and challenging to empirically study the distinct influence of religion and politics separately or analyze the nature of the relationship between them in the real world (Orekhov, A., et. al., 2021). In the world of thought, the definition, role, and nature of religion and politics have been discussed as two abstractions. In actuality, it is difficult to define the terms “religion” and “politics,” and their respective influence on the temporal and spatial frontiers of history has not always been equal. Additionally, neither all governments and top government leaders adhere to the same religious principles and techniques in all situations, nor do all religions have the same political doctrines. In other words, the relationship between religion and politics has been different depending on the method of establishing governments, the traits of the rulers, the nature of the political doctrines of the purported religion, and the level of authority, resources, and opportunities faced by religious scholars. A historical-sociological approach must therefore be used to identify and examine the link between religion and politics to develop conclusions about its varied nature in light of various socio-historical contexts. Theoretically, a large group of sociologists has described the relationship between religion and politics in a neutralized pattern of legitimizing religion (Parsons' functionalist approach) or in the critical context of ideological and instrumental use of religion to create and strengthen political domination (Gramsci's structural Marxism).

Meanwhile, the sociological analysis of such relationships was mostly done in the social and political context of European countries by Western sociologists. However, the social and political context of non-Western countries is different from that of the Western world, and the nature of religious and political doctrines that govern non-Western societies, especially Islamic societies, is different from western societies. These differences become even more apparent after the end of the undisputed sovereignty of the Church during the middle ages in the Western world. Thus, the purpose of this paper was not to examine these differences, which require a detailed and distinct analysis.

However, except for the peculiarities of Christian political beliefs in the post-Renaissance western and historic east, most empirical socio-historical studies have been conducted on the nature of the relationship between religion and politics in non-Western societies including Iran. This issue stems from the fact that in Iran, the relationship between the two religious and political institutions was one of the longest-lasting, most persistent, and vital partnerships there. It should be noted that the relative rise and fall, internal unity and disunity,

centricity, and eccentricity in Iran have been greatly influenced by the type and nature of the relationship between religion and politics. Even the foreign policies of the ancient, medieval, and modern Persian empires and governments were heavily influenced by the religious perceptions and interpretations of the time. In other words, the relationship between religion and politics or government has always been considered in Iran. Therefore, this issue is not limited to Islam's entry into Iran, and clerics have long cooperated with the courts (Shaygan, 2001). An examination of the content of documents related to ancient Iran also shows that the government in Iran was influenced practically and theoretically by a religion-based worldview. Although the theory and perception of the bidirectional relationship between religion and government in Iran are very widespread, there are two major flaws with these notions: First of all, many theoretical studies have been undertaken about the various forms that the relationship between religion and government has taken in various historical eras and contexts, very few historical, empirical, and realistic studies have been made. Second, these claims have ignored the concepts of religion and government, variations in governance and religiosity, or the different skills and resources of political rulers and religious agents in a particular historical period because they have been influenced by the prevailing and implicit assumption of "generalization."

More importantly, past studies have neglected or undervalued the differences "within" clerics and the difference "between" political rulers by treating all the clerics and rulers of an era as equal. For example, studies by Aghajeri (2009), Abdullah (2009), Zareian (2012), and Mozaffari (2009) showed that since the Safavid period, Shiite clerics had been preachers, promoters, and interpreters of the Shiite religion and also important pillars of social power in Iran. However, the important issue is that the religious and political relations of all or some of the clerics, and all or some of the Safavid rulers, in all or some of the Safavid periods were ignored.

Regarding the above shortcomings, the main purpose of this paper was to examine the relationship between religion and politics in the Safavid era sociologically and historically. However, examining the relationship between religion and politics can lead to historical awareness and clarify some ambiguities in contemporary Iran's intellectual, historical, and socio-political space. Studying such relationships in the Safavid period is important since, in the turbulent history of Iran, the Safavid era is one of the most prosperous economic, political and social periods (Çora, H., et. al., 2019; Sadovnikova, N. A., et. al., 2021). Besides, the Shiite religion turned into an important element for the internal cohesion and integrity of Iran for the first time. This religious cohesion and unity were unprecedented over the years, both in nature and scope.

Furthermore, two functionalist and essentialist approaches that each consider particular components and concepts have been widely employed to define religion. Besides, by focusing on external conditions or intentional agents, it is possible to distinguish three structuralist, agency-oriented, and structuralist-agency-oriented approaches while each of which considers some empirical factors to study the concept of religion (Hay, 2005). The present paper examines the relationship between the clerics and the political apparatus by adopting a 'public choice'

framework in the form of Jessop's strategic-relational approach and using methodological individualism, which is briefly explained.

The Public Choice Theory explains government decision-making as a result of the actions of individual, self-interested public policy actors who make decisions as civil servants or elected officials. According to this theory and in a structured context, actors have certain possibilities and limitations in pursuing their interests. Hence, as positioned agents, they form intentional behavior (strategic action) appropriate to the context. Strategic action refers to the dialectical interaction of willful and conscious actors who are simultaneously surrounded by the structured context in which they reside. Although actions take place within structured environments, actors have the potential to change those structures. Structures can only determine the scope of action of the actors who can choose the appropriate solutions according to a structured context and their motivation, reflect on what they are doing, and pay attention to the obtained results (Hay, 2005: 318).

To materialize the actors' intentions in practice, action must be based on a strategic assessment from a structured context in which strategy (intentional behavior) is formed in its framework and then influenced by it. The key point in this regard is that when acting strategically, the strategic environment makes strategic decisions so that the underlying actors not only measure their position concerning the environment but also bring the greatest benefit to the political actors (Hay, 2005: 213-214). This view emphasizes the position of actors' choices and also pays attention to the fields of choice.

Regarding those above, on the one hand, the decisions, actions, and works of religious agents and clerics, and on the other hand, the kings and political rulers of each period were taken into account as representatives and indicators of the relationship between religion and politics in each era in the form of the direct action of the actors and the context in which they are placed\*. Therefore, in the present paper, the purpose and representative of religion are the clerics of the Safavid era, and the political sovereignty is the Safavid kings as agents of sovereignty in a structured context. In general, the main purpose of this paper is to answer the following question: How were the political-religious relations of the Safavid era in the various relationship between clerics and political rulers during the time of rising, continuation, and falling of the Safavid era.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

To examine the relationship between the clerics and the government, Charles Tilly's view of the model of political society, Beetham's theory of legitimacy, Althusser's theory of ideological state apparatuses, and Foucault's theory of knowledge, power, and legitimacy have been used. According to Tilly, every society has a government system that controls the means of suppressing and monopolizing legitimate violence. Tilly believes that society's political system is made up of the following components (Tilly, 1978):

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1. Population: a group of people with common and non-common structures and ideas;
2. Government: a group that has control over important sources of power;
3. Rival and power-hungry groups fall into two categories:
  - a. Member Groups of Governing Board: Typically, they assert legally that the government must heed their demands.
  - b. Non-Member Groups of Governing Board: These groups attempt to influence society's and the government's political structures to meet their demands (Tilly, 1978).

Functions of member groups of governing boards are either in direct participation in the political system or in the form of an influential group. Opposition groups' actions are either withdrawal from government or, if the conditions for political pressure are met, public opposition and mobilization against the government. Thus, the main competition is between the member groups of the governing board and the non-member groups of the governing board. The success of each group depends on A. The degree of collective control over normative resources and the degree to which group members adhere to each other, the group, and the group's aspirations; B. The degree of collective control, threat, and force and the possibility of punishing others and restricting their choices; C. The degree of collective control over useful resources (Zareian, 2012: 5).

On the other hand, concerning legitimacy in the political system, which is the best for all political issues and the means of establishment, prosperity, and continuity of government, legitimacy refers to the legitimate right to exercise power and expect obedience from those in power. Legitimacy means the justification of this right.

In his analysis of legitimacy, Beetham attributes a multidimensional nature to legitimacy with three elements, each qualitatively different from the other and not interchangeable, but all three contribute to the development of legitimacy (Beetham, 2012: 36). Thus, power can be legitimized if it follows established and compatible rules which may be unwritten or take the shape of a formal, written set of laws or decrees (Beetham, 2012: 31-32). Second, the rules of power must be legitimized based on the common beliefs of those in power and their actors. Third, there is evidence of power subjects' satisfaction with a particular power relationship, considering that in most historical societies, only some power subjects have had the necessary conditions to express satisfaction (Beetham, 2012: 32-33). Some examples of satisfaction are the covenants of certain societies, such as concluding a treaty or contract with a superior party, taking an oath of allegiance, joining support groups and obsequious groups, participating in elections, etc. For example, in the Safavid era, the presence of scholars during the coronation of sultans, the ruling on participation in jihad, etc., will be discussed below.

It should be noted that the legitimacy of the rulers can be interpreted by using various tools and methods to exercise legitimacy, which Louis Althusser considered more precisely.

Althusser points to two major mechanisms ensuring that people under the government's sovereignty act in compliance with the government law. Althusser calls the first mechanism of government the Repressive State Apparatus — courts, fines, prisons, the army, and the police, to analyze how the law operates most of the time not under direct repression but by a form of preventive repression. The government, through these apparatus, forces people to behave in a certain way. However, the second mechanism that Althusser examines is more important in the discussion of legitimacy. Althusser argues that in addition to the repressive apparatus of the state, there is another category called the "Ideological State Apparatuses." The government extends its dominance to the public and private sectors through the ideology of power by employing, hiring, or waging some apparatuses.

Ideological State Apparatuses include schools, religions, family, legal system, politics, arts, etc. Althusser believes that ideology comes from clerics and despots. He asserts that people as members of society believe in these two production systems of ideas and values. Althusser argues that the repressive apparatus of the state acts mandatorily, while the ideological state apparatus acts ideologically. Implementing such an approach to legitimacy in the Safavid era takes on new dimensions regarding Foucault's view, a student of Louis Althusser. On the one hand, Foucault considers legitimacy to depend on the relationship between power and knowledge; on the other hand, he argues that where there is power, there is the possibility of resistance.

Unlike his predecessors, Foucault defines power as something more productive than repressive, something that creates new events and forms of behavior (Mills, 2003: 65). He writes, "power can create. It creates reality, the realm of objects, subjects, and the religion of truth (Paya, 2004: 426). In other words, power is everything; it creates everything; the truth itself is undoubtedly one form of power" (Aghagolzadeh, 2006: 145). Understanding power in Foucault's thought is closely related to understanding discourse and knowledge. In his view, "it is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power" (Foucault, 2014: 115). He emphasizes that there is no relationship of power without establishing a relevant field of knowledge. At the same time, knowledge is impossible without preconditions and establishing a relationship of power.

In this regard, another point that Foucault pays attention to is the issue of resistance. In Foucault's view, power always creates resistance (Zeimaran, 2008: 232-242). Foucault always puts power together with resistance (Hinds, 2010: 115). Resistance to the construction of power is constantly being formed in society. The center of resistance relies on the construction of knowledge, just as the construction of power has its field of knowledge and is associated with it. Therefore, discourse in a resistance position is not powerless against the dominant discourse. Rather, the meaning of the statements in this discourse group is different from that of the dominant discourse (Kachueian, 2003: 26).

Foucault states that power re-creates its fields of exercise through knowledge. In any discourse, knowledge and science take steps to strengthen or weaken power. Hence, knowledge either seeks to legitimize power or takes steps to delegitimize power.

Regarding the theoretical and analytical considerations for modeling this study, it should be noted that, according to the author, the basic and key concept in the political structure of the Safavid government, in terms of internal and external challenges, is legitimacy to form, stabilize and eventually survive a new government.

In this regard, the Kings of the Safavid dynasty, as representatives and agents of the political structure, based on the intellectual framework of structured public choice theory and Jessup's approach, seek to legitimize their power through at least two mechanisms which Althusser considers repressive apparatuses. For example, the first was the army and the Ghezelbash, and the other was the ideological apparatus, which is taken into account in this study as the jurisprudential knowledge of the scholars who were the representatives and agents of the Shiite religion. There are objections to the affirmative and legitimizing jurisprudential circle that Foucault refers to as resistance to the dominant current. Tilly argues that these objections lead to rival currents and claims by non-members of the governing board, and they protest through withdrawal or open opposition. On the other hand, the interaction between the dominant and empowering flow and the dominant legal scholar ultimately creates a flow of clerics' membership or influence. Accordingly, the research model of the present study based on the theoretical framework is as follows:

#### 4. Analytical Model

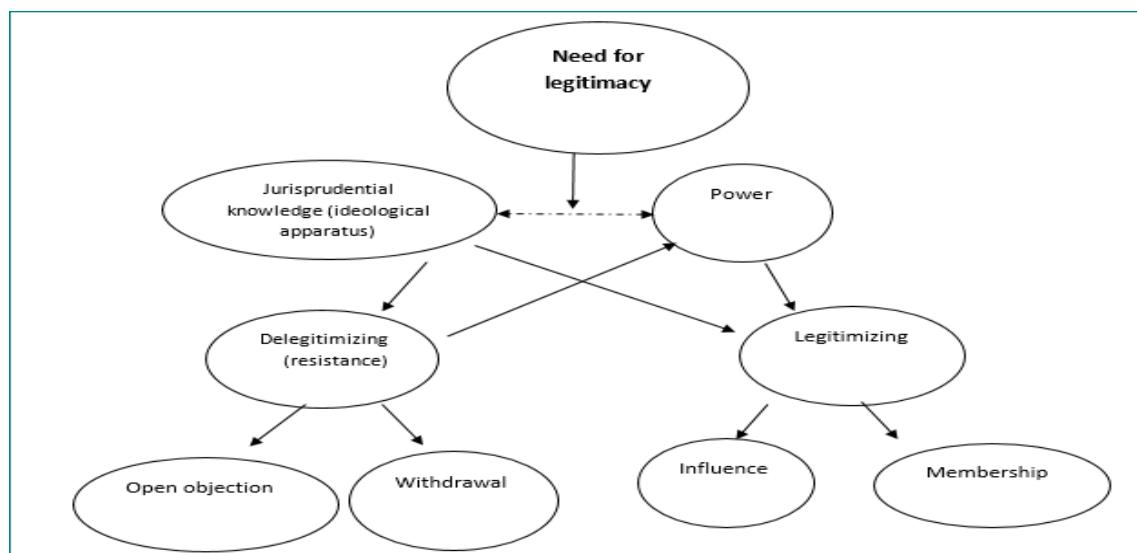


Figure 1. Interactive Model of Clerics and Political Sovereignty based on Need for Legitimacy

#### **4. Methodology**

The present study adopted a historical-sociological approach. It was conducted in the framework of the strategy of analysis of causal orders according to the type of research question based on the analysis of the causal complexity of the clerics' role-making methods concerning Safavid political sovereignty and legitimacy. Regarding Marc Bloch and Barrington Moore's studies, this strategy focuses on providing and developing an appropriate explanation for a well-defined outcome or pattern in history. Neither the logic of an inclusive model nor the meaningful exploration of complex individualities and the details of a particular time and place takes precedence. Instead, the researcher acknowledges that causal orders — at least limited domain orders — can be discovered in history. He wanders between different aspects of historical cases and alternative hypotheses that can explain the mentioned orders. Different theories and models are used to understand causality without sticking to a particular theoretical approach. Furthermore, this study did not claim to develop any universal theories. In other words, the present study aimed to present an attempt at the strategy of analytical-historical sociology.

Accordingly, the sources used to reconstruct the social world of the Safavid period are the background of historical documents (Hariri, 2006: 122-123). Thus, the authors tried to use mostly first-hand historical sources and references and second-hand sources just in case academic scholars and reviewers have widely referred to them in the form of articles.

#### **5- Findings**

To examine the interactions of the clerics with the kings as the representative of the sovereignty system in the Safavid period, it was necessary to study the interactions in the context of the developments of that time based on the religious structure of the Safavid era. In this study, the religious structure of the Safavid era was classified according to the nature of political and social developments in Iran at that time. Considering the nature of political and social as well as religious developments in Iran during the Safavid era, it is concluded that any political change and the emergence of a new king profoundly affected religious practices and interactions. The Safavid religious structure can therefore be viewed from a broad perspective as the context of relationships between clerics and kings and accounting for different periods in the Safavid era's political structure; it can be divided into five periods, including initial formation, establishment, stabilization, Heyday, debilitation, and decline.

##### **5.1. Initial Formation Period**

Shah Ismail used his authority and repressive apparatus during this period to hold power and legitimize Safavid's sovereignty. He applied the ideological apparatus of the government, for example, through the instrumental use of religion, and Shia scholars and clerics used religious jurisprudence to promote Safavid legitimacy smoothly. Accordingly, Shah Ismail invited Mohaghegh Karki from the Jabal Amel region to Iran to spread Shiism in this country. Regarding Foucault's analytical approach, Karki welcomed the formation of a Shiite

government against the Ottoman Sunni caliphate. By using the element of knowledge in connection with power and proposing the theory of Imam Adil's representation, Karki implicitly accepted and legitimized the claims of Shah Ismail in the matter of Imamate (successorship to Prophet Mohammad). Karki went even further and raised the issue of public representation, equating the comprehensive jurist with the Imam's deputy. In this regard, he prepared the basis for the Ulema to enter the power system. Hence, while Karki tried not to interfere directly in political affairs, he always influenced the situation and made the membership and presence of other Jabal Amel clerics in the government possible.

Karki's actions led to blatant criticism of the Persian Gulf and Iraq clerics (Banani & etc., 2001: 116-117). In this period, various religious discourse conflicts were observed, but because all of society did not feel it, no serious encounter was found among the scholars. In other words, the main issue at the time was the existence or non-existence of Shiite governments, not a dispute over the details of the type of political system and the relationship between religion and politics. Therefore, it was necessary to establish a field of study to legitimize the construction of power, which led to the emergence of religious jurisprudence.

In general, during this period, the political side of the government was stronger than the religious side. Thus, the Safavid religious organizations were subordinate to the political organizations, despite Shah Ismail's prejudices in the early days of his sovereignty. Although some efforts were made to use the ideological apparatus of religion at Karki's invitation, the use of violence was the most important means of exercising power and controlling the situation.

## **5.2. Establishment Period**

With the establishment of the Safavid monarchy during the Shah Tahmasb period, a large group of Shiite scholars and jurists immigrated to Iran (Aghajari, 2009: 93-94). In the meantime, Shah Tahmaseb turned to Jabal Amel and Iraq in implementing the policy of inclination towards jurists. By inviting Sheikh Ali bin Abdul Ali Karki to Iran, Shah Tahmaseb opened a new chapter in the Safavid era regarding religion. Shah tried to make Karki a member of the governing board, but Karki was content to influence the government apparatus and kept his great impact on the institution of politics and the formation and continuation of the institution of religion in the Safavid era. Shah Tahmaseb respected Karki so much that in support of him, he dismissed two of his ministers (Sadr), Amir Nematullah Hali and Ghias-ud-Din Mohammad Dashtaki (Safavid, 1984:1363). Shah issued two decrees in 1530 and 1533 and gave Karki much power in all the affairs of the country (Aghajari, 2009: 127).

It should be noted that Karki's interaction reflects the third dimension of the legitimacy of Beetham, in which actions or fatwas and joining the support groups of the Safavid government were used to demonstrate the legitimacy of this dynasty. On the other hand, it expresses the power of the Safavid ideological apparatus. In this period, two sub-discourses in Shiite political jurisprudence were founded: 1) Legitimization led by Karki, and 2) Delegitimization led by Qatifi. Sheikh Ibrahim Qatifi was a Shia scholar who opposed the power system. Qatifi

was against Shah Tahmaseb in the case of religious jurisprudence, and he called any association with Shah Tahmaseb Safavid illegitimate (Afandi, 2010: 5-13).

Thus, the institution of jurisprudence in the period of Shah Tahmasb acted in two ways: legitimizing and delegitimizing the government. For example, Mohaghegh Karki, whom Shah Tahmaseb trusted, reproduced jurisprudential propositions in a way that legitimized the construction of power. However, Qatifi, in contrast to Karki, processed the knowledge of jurisprudence in a way that resulted in delegitimizing the construction of power and confrontation with it.

### **5.3. Heyday Period**

During his reign, Shah Abbas (I) attempted to limit the power of the clerics. He successfully dominated political institutions over religious ones and placed himself at the head of all organizations, sometimes even going beyond religious orders (Mirahmadi, 1984: 123). According to the political policy of Shah Abbas and according to the book of Alam Arai Abbasi, the executive power of Sadr was reduced during Shah Abbas (I)'s reign (Turkman, 2003: 939). When the last Sadr (Mirza Razi) passed away in 1616 AH, his young son was chosen to fill this position. However, Shah Abbas eventually took over as Sadr on his own, proving that "the kingdom and religion should go together" and Shah, as the leader of two political and religious institutions, should be the "regulator of religion and government" (Turkman, 2003: 377). Shah Abbas places more of a focus on Shahsavan during this time by utilizing repressive tools as a legitimizing factor.

Due to Shah Abbas' ability, the relationship between the institution of power and the institution of knowledge production in jurisprudence during his rule can be summarized as follows: First, the construction of power was much stronger than the construction of knowledge; second, at this time, the Ulema reproduced knowledge under the creation of power while complying with the demands of the institution of authority- creating ideology; third, a strong relationship existed between the institution of power and the institution of knowledge production. During this period, scholars such as Abdullah bin Hassan Shoushtari initially held a position opposing the construction of power; however, after a while, they changed their stance and began to reproduce knowledge in line with the construction of power.

### **5.4. Debilitation Period**

The Safavid dynasty declined after the reign of Shah Safi (1629-1642 AD). During the reign of Shah Safi, the Ulema became more reliant on the court, particularly in financial matters. This issue created a platform for more Ulema to collaborate and interact with the power structure. The emergence of the Akhbari approach in jurisprudence knowledge can be seen during the Shah Safi period.

One of the Akhbari scholars of this era who replicated the body of jurisprudential knowledge to support the existing power system was Mullah Mohammad Amin Astarabadi. He tried to show that the Shah was clean by penning the treatise "Taharah al-Khumr" after learning that the Shah was an alcoholic who had quit praying because his clothes were filthy and unclean. Regardless, the Shah's

religious issue might have been resolved by Astarabadi's fatwa, which would have prevented him from choosing between drinking wine and praying (Aghajari, 2009: 34-42).

With scholars and jurists, Shah Abbas (II) forged strong ties. The Ulema supported the Safavids during this time by engaging in actual politics, working in court posts, contributing ideas to establishing the legitimacy of the power structure, and writing works to support that legitimacy. For instance, Mullah Mohammad Baqir Sabzevari wrote the book "Rawza Al-Anwar Abbasi" to solidify the bases of authority and legitimize the Safavids. During the rule of Shah Abbas (II), Mullah Mohammad Baqir Sabzevari was in charge of the Shaykh al-Islam<sup>†</sup> of Isfahan and the Imam of the Congregational Prayer. The Shah gave him fifty Tomans in appreciation for his services. After discussing the necessity of government and kingdom in this book, he focused on their relationship with prophecy and Imamate. Sabzevari explicitly voted for the legitimacy of Safavid sovereignty during the Occultation by presenting these issues. He also decreed Friday Prayer obligatory during the Occultation and made it permissible to pay tribute to the rulers and sultans (Mansour Bakht & Taheri Moghadam, 2010: 138-139).

### **5.5. Decline Period**

The lack of interest in leading the country, which eventually resulted in increased corruption and anarchy in the provincial government, was one of the defining characteristics of the late Safavid era. The Safavid Empire was in decline and eventually fell during the reigns of Shah Suleiman (1666–1694 AD) and Sultan Hussein (1694–1722 AD).

On a foundation of cooperation and solidarity, the Shah Suleiman government's relationships with the religious and the Ulema classes started. Even though he was extravagant, he had close ties to academics and religious organizations and was kind to those studying the religious sciences (Aghajari, 2009: 439). Sanson claims that religious experts in Iran have the greatest ranks, sit in the front row of the court, and was preferred above officials at the king's assemblies and public gatherings (Sanson, 1967: 37–38). The presence at the coronation ritual, the pledge of allegiance, and other examples show the Ulema function in what Beetham called the satisfaction of the subjects of power from a particular power relationship. The clerics increasingly grew apart from King Suleiman due to his corrupters and actions. The Ulema's societal influence grew during this time to the point where the mujtahids, who were the deputy imams of their claims, even dared to question the Shah's control over religion (Banani & et al., 2001: 448). Therefore, the greater influence of the clerics on this construction was evident during this period, coinciding with the beginning of the weakening of the power structure. As a result, whispers of the Ulema's opposition to the court became more audible, so the resistance to power became more organized and cohesive, as shown in the examples below.

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During this time, the relationship between traditional sciences and the construction of political power became more obvious. Clerics play a significant role in the ideological apparatus of the government, while traditional sciences produce a discourse that legitimizes itself based on hadiths and narrations. Contrarily, the conventional sciences based on principled jurisprudence with philosophical inclinations produced the language of delegitimacy and anti-legitimacy in society that manifested resistance and non-collaborative behaviors of the individuals on the governing board.

According to Beetham's analysis of legitimacy, the Safavid government's legitimacy was not threatened on multiple levels, not only by the Ulema in general and Karki in particular but also by the supportive aspect of Karki's cooperation with the government. As previously stated, they expressed at least satisfaction, albeit implicitly, regardless of their motivations, and their significance was not in "representing" a belief in legitimacy but in "offering" legitimacy. As previously stated, some scholars expressed their dissatisfaction with the legitimacy of the Safavid government and either lined up or withdrew their support for it.

According to Tilly's theory of political society and Foucault's theory of opposition and resistance, there were four main ways that the clerics interacted with the sovereignty system throughout the Safavid period:

Two main categories of clerics participated in the sovereignty political system: 1) Clerics who officially joined the political establishment by taking on government positions, like Mirdamad, Sheikh Baha'i, Sheikh Kamraei, Mohammad Baqir, and Mohammad Taghi Majlisi (Aghajari, 2009).

2) Clerics who did not hold positions in the political system but had significant political influence, like Mohaghegh Karki and his family (Zareian, 2012).

Clerics who were not members of the governing board, such as Mullah Qasim, organized a collective action against the government to gain access to normative and instrumental resources such as endowments, financial resources, political positions, property, supporters, and students. They withdrew from the government and faced the political apparatus due to a lack of access to the necessary resources to form collective action and the impossibility of openly expressing opposition to the government, such as Moqaddas Ardabili, Sheikh Ibrahim Qatifi, and Abolghasem Mirfanderski.

## **6. Conclusion**

A review of Safavid's historical texts reveals that regarding the social and political conditions of the society, the clerics, as potential rival groups and claimants to power, can be divided into two general groups, including the members of the governing board and the non-members of the governing board. This division is similar to how Charles Tilly divides rival and claimant groups into two general groups. If non-members lack the resources to exert political pressure and the resources to control the sources of power, they cannot expect the government to act on their behalf as members of the governing body; for example, the strategy of some Safavid scholars like Jabal Amel Ulama. According to the theoretical

framework of this study, the relationship between the clerics' institution and the government is of the membership type during the times when it can not exert political pressure because of the lack of formation or high legitimacy of the ruling apparatus in the eyes of the public. It travels in a range closely correlated to the clerics' resource availability; thus, more readily available resources cause the relationship to influence the governing system. If resources are unavailable, this connection manifests as a withdrawal unless they are required to comply. Meanwhile, during certain periods, particularly with the decline of sultan power and the involvement of courtiers and the military in government affairs, some religious scholars, such as Mulla Qasim, voiced their strong opposition.

Thus, even though the relationship between the kings and the clerics took four different forms during the five phases of the religious structure—membership, influence, resignation, and opposition—the dominant relationships involved the clerics and their influence over the political apparatus. As a result, there was a little severe conflict between religious and governmental institutions, and there is even some relative fusion between both institutions today. The Shah, scholars, and jurists appear to have worked together and approved of an agreed-upon division of labor.

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