



# A Study of the Dimensions of Corruption in the Pahlavi Regime from the Perspective of Imam Khamenei

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** Impartial scholars believe that pervasive corruption was a key characteristic of the Pahlavi regime. While extensive research has been conducted on this topic, it has not been thoroughly examined through the lens of the leaders of the Islamic Revolution. This article aims to address this gap by asking: ‘What is Imam Khamenei’s definition of corruption, and how does he view its depth and breadth within the Pahlavi regime?’

**Method:** To answer this question, a content analysis and documentary study approach were used. The research examined and compiled a collection of statements from the Leader of the Revolution.

**Results:** Within the framework of his thoughts and with the aid of historical documents, court insiders’ memoirs and writings, and existing research, this study presents examples and evidence of the court’s corruption in each area.

**Conclusions:** The findings indicate that, in Imam Khamenei’s view, the Pahlavi regime was afflicted by corruption in its moral, financial, managerial, and political aspects, and that this corruption was widespread. The Shah himself was the core of this corruption, and the closer individuals were to this core, the more corrupt they were.

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## Introduction

There are various perspectives when examining the factors and indicators of political decline. Naturally, each approach based on its own epistemological and ontological foundations, points to different factors and defines the direction of decline within that framework. One of the political and social indicators of decline on which there is nearly a consensus is corruption. There is no major and influential political school of thought that does not consider corruption as a sign and cause of decline. The difference lies in the definition of corruption and its indicators.

Virtually all impartial researchers, whether left-leaning or right-leaning, opponents or proponents of the Islamic Revolution, Western or Eastern, and with different political approaches, admit to the serious corruption within the Pahlavi regime. However, these individuals do not agree on the depth and extent of the corruption or its role in political decline and public discontent. This article, based on the ideas of Ayatollah Khamenei, will first define corruption and its dimensions, and then describe the Pahlavi regime's situation on various indicators based on different documents and sources.

### 1. Research Background

Numerous studies have been conducted on the issue of corruption in the Pahlavi regime, but almost none have been based on the views of the leaders of the Revolution or presented examples and documents within that framework.

- Katouziyan (2001 AD/1380 SH), in "The Pahlavi System in Iran," exposed some of the corruption within the court.
- Mohammad Qoli Majd (2009 AD/1388 SH), in his book "The Great Plunder," used U.S. State Department documents to report a significant portion of the court's corruption, which he attributed to its dependence on foreigners.
- Mahdi Salah (2005 AD/1384 SH), in his book "Unveiling: Contexts, Consequences, and Reactions," analyzed the moral corruption of the Pahlavi regime and its role in the decay of society.
- Zohairi (2000 AD/1379 SH), in "The Pahlavi Era as Narrated by Documents," used a wide range of authentic and diverse documents to provide a cohesive analysis of the Pahlavi regime's corruption in various dimensions.

- The multi-volume book "The Court as Narrated by the Court" (2004 AD/1383 SH) examines the corruption in different parts of the Pahlavi apparatus, offering a clear picture of the actions of this dynasty and how the country was run.

Other similar works could be mentioned, but they are omitted here due to space constraints.

## **2. Research Methodology**

Without a theoretical framework, any form of corruption could be considered reform and any reform could be considered corruption. This research first establishes a theoretical framework. The study examines and categorizes almost all of Imam Khamenei's statements on this topic, extracting his views and analyses regarding Pahlavi corruption. Then, through content analysis and by referring to multiple sources, the study presents documented evidence of corruption in each section. These sources include: comprehensive studies and research on the state of corruption in the Pahlavi regime, memoirs and notes from various individuals and personalities, especially those close to the Pahlavi court, and some statistical and field sources. It is clear that this article does not have the space to refer to all the findings in this area and only points to some of this documentation.

## **3. Main Question**

The main question of this research is: How does Imam Khamenei evaluate the state of corruption in the Pahlavi regime in its various dimensions?

## **4. Theoretical Framework and Definition of Corruption**

In the Dehkhoda dictionary, corruption is defined as "Decay," "Wickedness," "Sin," "Immorality," and "Turmoil." (Dehkhoda, 1998 AD/1377 SH: 17150) Gunnar Myrdal believes that corruption can be applied to all forms of deviation or the exercise of personal power and the illegal use of one's position or job (Abbaszadegan, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 14). Abbaszadeh Vaqefi et al., (2017 AD/1396 SH), under the concept of administrative corruption, provide a suitable summary of the definitions in this field. According to them, most researchers and international organizations, especially the World Bank and

Transparency International, define administrative corruption in its simplest and most common form as the "abuse of public power for private gain."

The World Bank (2000) also defines administrative corruption as the abuse of public power for personal gain. Windsor views corruption as an "Intercultural Disease" or a reflection of a moral failure (Mirsardo, 2018 AD/1398 SH).

A significant aspect of corruption highlighted in this article is political corruption. Political corruption is a part of corruption as a whole, and the definitions related to it vary. Some analysts of political corruption have focused on the abuse of law and power. According to Paul Heywood, political corruption refers to the use of political power for personal and illegal ends. Political corruption means gaining illegitimate personal benefits through political power or government position. This definition varies with time, place, and different cultures (Heywood, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 60).

The same diversity and multiplicity of views can be seen in explaining the causes of corruption, especially political corruption.

According to Ackerman, political corruption occurs when political decision-makers, either independently or in collusion with corrupt officials, change the course of public resources in a way that reduces the welfare of society (De Graaf et al., 2015 AD/1394 SH: 53).

Some also consider self-interest and tyranny to be the most important characteristics of political corruption. Khajeh Nasir al-Din Tusi called the tendency toward tyranny and the monopolization of power by a single group and the exercise of dominance over the people a "Deviant Policy." Its purpose is to enslave people, and its consequence is misery and condemnation. He believed such politicians consider their subjects to be slaves and servants of their desires, filling society with evils such as fear, anxiety, conflict, oppression, greed, violence, deceit, betrayal, ridicule, and backbiting (Tusi, 1982 AD/1361 SH: 301). According to Khajeh, the sickness of society stems from two contradictory issues: tyranny and chaos. Tyranny is inherently ugly and makes corrupt and lowly individuals appear good (ibid: 302).

Paul Heywood believes there are two main approaches to the emergence and deepening of corruption: the micro-level approach and the macro-level approach. The micro-level approach focuses on examining the behavior of political actors, their interactions, and their relationship with the formation of corruption. This approach sees corruption as the result of the rational calculation of costs and benefits by government officials. This approach assumes that politicians and bureaucrats seek political and financial power, and if their goals are purely

political, they disrupt the healthy process of political competition, decision-making, and political views, and use the resources of the political system to achieve their own goals.

The macro-level approach is an alternative to this and argues that corruption is more influenced by the macro-structures of society. Corruption is a consequence of the underdevelopment of political and economic systems, which provides a suitable ground for the unbridled exploitation of public resources for personal gain. According to this theory, in any society where supervisory institutions, political parties, and civil and professional organizations are unable to supervise, influence, and modify government policies and decisions, and where judicial and intelligence institutions are under the influence and control of the supreme political power, the conditions for the deepening and stabilization of political corruption are more readily available (cf. Heywood, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 10-12).

In this article, the main framework of the discussion is the views of Imam Khamenei, and the nature and dimensions of corruption are explained based on his views. He has a comprehensive approach to corruption. In this approach, he pays attention to both the nature of corruption and its indicators and factors. It can be said that in Ayatollah Khamenei's theory, all that researchers have focused on is included in his view of corruption: tyranny and self-interest, abuse of political power, disregarding the law, sacrificing public interests for personal interests, and so on. He even defines dependency as a type of political corruption.

Imam Khamenei defines corruption as any kind of "Ruin" or "Deficiency." The examples of these ruins and deficiencies are very extensive: "Discrimination, bribery and graft, illegal acquisition of wealth, exclusive privileges, a growing consumerist tendency, preferring brokerage over production, lawbreaking, the spread of moral vices, and so on (Khamenei, 26/01/1379). Moral corruption, professional corruption, a lack of a sense of duty in providing public services, and a lack of a sense of responsibility toward public opinion and people's minds are other branches and forms of corruption." (Khamenei, 03/05/1379)

In his view, corruption means moral corruption, professional corruption, a lack of conscience in providing public services, and a lack of responsibility toward public opinion and people's minds (Khamenei, Address to the people of Ardabil Province 03/05/1379). In another place, under the concept of revolutionary reform and reformism, he defines corruption in its most comprehensive form, in a way that can include all dimensions of political and social life. The lack of fair regulations, discrimination, blocked ways of acquiring legitimate wealth,



opportunism, lack of job security; a growing consumerist trend, irresponsibility, lack of discipline, and a long judicial process are all parts of the dimensions of corruption.

He states, "We need our administrative apparatus to have regulations that are the same for everyone and in which there is no discrimination. If there is, it is a corrupt point... There must be no bribery and graft; if there is, it is corruption... If some people acquire wealth through illegitimate means, this is corruption... If some people use undue privileges, acquire windfall wealth, and impoverish others at the price of their own enrichment, this is corruption... If exclusive privileges are created in society and not everyone can use equal opportunities, this is corruption... If there is no job security and stable regulations; if a person who wants to work in society is tied down and not given the opportunity to strive, these are corruption... If there is a growing consumerist trend in society, this is corruption... If there is no access to fair judgment; if judicial proceedings are lengthy and files remain for a long time, these are corruption." (Khamenei, 26/10/1379)

### **5. Dimensions of Pahlavi Regime Corruption**

In Imam Khamenei's view, the Islamic Revolution was a massive popular movement against a government that had almost all the characteristics of a bad government in four dimensions: "Corruption, dependence, being imposed and coup-based, and incompetence." (Khamenei, 13/11/1377) All other negative characteristics of this political structure can be defined under these four dimensions. Widespread corruption was the source of many of the Pahlavi era's misfortunes and problems. In Imam Khamenei's thought, this characteristic has a very important and decisive position and is sufficient on its own to determine the condition of a political structure (Khamenei, 28/07/1368).

The Pahlavi government was in a state of decline in all its dimensions. Therefore, it had all the indicators of a corrupt structure, and this corruption was widespread and comprehensive, encompassing the entire system from top to bottom. The basis of the government and politics was corruption. All government dependents, even dependent clerics, were corrupt, although some healthy people were also seen among them.

He said: "From Mohammad Reza himself and his close associates down to the lower levels... one sees what corruption and what infection existed inside them; from there down to the lower levels of their dependents, the security agencies, the police and military agencies, those who were dependent on them, all were corrupt. Of course, some were also inside the agencies

and were good and healthy people. That is, their dependency on them was less. We had healthy military men, healthy police... There were not few good people; but those heads and dependents were corrupt. Their dependents among the clergy were also corrupt. There were mullahs dependent on them... In fact, anyone who was even slightly close to the monarchy was corrupt; the closer, the more corrupt. When you reached its core, it was the center of corruption and infection." (Khamenei, 26/05/1371)

This corruption was seen in all aspects and areas: sexual and moral corruption, financial and economic corruption, cultural corruption, political corruption, and drug addiction (Khamenei, 19/11/1369). He described it as "An incompetent, corrupt, dependent, irreligious, opportunistic, and selfish regime with other ugly characteristics." (Khamenei, 15/11/1381)

In this section, some documents regarding the corruption of the court in various dimensions are referenced. In his notes, Asadollah Alam repeatedly refers to the corruption of the ruling class and describes them as opportunistic and greedy vultures. He wrote: "Oh, how corrupt and wicked the ruling class is and how it fools people." (Alam: 1, 128) He also wrote: "A bunch of scoundrel vultures have nothing but demands." (ibid: 6, 483) "The privileged class, or as I call it, the corrupt class, of which I am one, has endless greedy demands." (ibid: 4, 414) "I myself am unprincipled." (ibid: 2, 46) "The upper class is corrupt and the lower class is mostly honorable and honest." (ibid: 2, 157) "Truly, our upper class is the most corrupt people, and the people in the streets and villages are very noble." (ibid: 5, 151) "Truly, our ruling class is corrupt and should only be spoken to with force." (ibid: 5, 283)

We see that Alam considered all the courtiers to be corrupt and described them as vultures. He considered himself to be one of the vultures and believed there was no other way to be. He concluded that the situation was such that it had to lead to a revolution (ibid: 440). "I see the situation as explosive and am very worried." (ibid: 3, 114)

The following section discusses the various dimensions of this corruption.

### **A) Financial Corruption**

Political corruption has consequences everywhere, including in rent-seeking, the formation of mafias, the plundering of public property, and other areas. According to Imam Khamenei, the financial corruption in the Pahlavi regime was not just at the intermediate levels, where it could happen at any time, but existed at the highest levels of the country. From Mohammad Reza himself and his entourage, the highest levels of financial corruption, the biggest bribes,

the worst encroachments, and the most malicious pressures on the nation's financial resources were created. He spoke of the accumulation of wealth for oneself at the cost of impoverishing and wretchedizing the people (Khamenei, 17/10/1393). He also mentioned a departure from justice and a habit of freeloading, over-consumption, plundering national resources, and the illegitimate use of all the country's facilities (Khamenei, 22/12/1379).

Regarding their financial corruption, it is enough to say that the Shah himself and his family were involved in most of the country's major economic transactions. He and his brothers and sisters were among those who accumulated the most personal wealth. Reza Khan accumulated a huge fortune during his sixteen or seventeen-year reign. It is interesting to know that some cities in the country, according to documents, belonged entirely to Reza Khan. For example, the city of Fariman was entirely the property of Reza Khan! The best properties and lands in this country belonged to him. When they left the country, billions of dollars of their wealth were accumulated in foreign banks. It is likely that you know that after the revolution we asked for the Shah's wealth to be returned to us, and of course it was natural that they would not respond (Khamenei, 13/11/1377).

Reza Shah's \$500 million in cash in foreign banks was only a part of the legendary wealth of a man who was extremely poor before his reign. After becoming king, he owned more than 44,000 ownership deeds for fertile properties in Gilan, Mazandaran, Gorgan, Gonbad, East Azerbaijan, and other parts of the country, which he had registered in his name by intimidating, threatening, imprisoning, and exiling their owners. As a result, Reza Shah was not only the largest landowner in Asia but also the largest landowner in the entire world (Majd, 2016 AD/1396 SH: 32, 33 and 507).

Reza Shah would see anything and say, "It's mine," and the roads were also intended to connect his properties. It's interesting that Reza Shah was not satisfied with just seizing lands. He also had various sources of income for himself. Mohammad Qoli Majd believes that Reza Khan can rightly be called the "father of modern theft in Iran". According to U.S. State Department documents, not including accounts in New York, Switzerland, and London, the balance of Reza Khan's bank accounts was at least \$200 million, which was ten times the budget of the Iranian government in 1925 AD/1304 SH (Majd, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 51).

Mohammad Reza Shah also followed this same practice. According to Ardeshir Zahedi, His Majesty had taken \$31 billion out of the country before his departure from Iran (Zahedi, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 313).



In addition to the palaces and gardens that were directly in the name of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and his family, the Shah also had many properties abroad, including: "The most expensive house and park in the suburbs of London, the palace and gardens of Estill Mans where Queen Elizabeth II was born, the most expensive garden and a luxurious villa in Capri, the purchase of an old palace known as the "Palace of the Pink Rose" in Geneva, a luxurious palace in St. Moritz, Switzerland, the purchase of an island in Spain for \$700 million, etc.." (Deldam, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 888)

Farah Pahlavi was also known as the "Queen of Embezzlement." (Fardoost, 2016 AD/1396 SH: 313) The financial record of the Pahlavi family includes partnership and ownership in more than 150 banking and insurance companies, as well as metal, textile, service, and construction industries. Other members of the royal family, especially Ashraf, the Shah's twin sister, his brothers, children, sons-in-law, and all the courtiers, participated in this widespread corruption.

### **B) Moral and Behavioral Corruption**

The leaders and close associates of the Pahlavi regime were also morally corrupt. Criminal gangs involved in smuggling were under the control of Mohammad Reza Shah's brothers and sisters (Khamenei, 13/11/1377).

"The promotion of addiction and industrial narcotics was initiated and took place in Iran by the main elements of the government of that day." (Khamenei, 17/10/1393)

The Shah had daily contact with girls he was interested in, Swedish, German, American, English, and others. A heavy price was paid for his relationships with some Western actresses. Ali Shahbazi, the head of the Shah's bodyguard team, writes in his memoirs: "After Alam became minister, he created a special organization in the Ministry of Court for the Shah's entertainment." "The job of that organization was to bring married women, unfortunate girls, or the wives and daughters of those who wanted to get a position, for the Shah." (Shahbazi, 1998 AD/1377 SH: 82)

Some army officers would offer their honor to the Shah for a promotion (Deldam, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 2, 884 and 885).

Other high-ranking officials and, consequently, the general public were also led toward corruption and prostitution.

Jean Lories, a French journalist, believes that "if you ask Iranians in the streets and alleys why they criticize and condemn the regime and you collect their answers, the corruption and moral decay of the regime will be at the top of their responses." (Lories, 1979 AD/1358 SH: 103)

### **C) Administrative and Political Corruption**

Administrative corruption is the decay and misuse of official and organizational positions and posts for personal gain and interests. In the Pahlavi system, all types of administrative corruption existed in various forms. According to Imam Khamenei, the Pahlavi regime and its dependents were also heading toward decay in terms of administrative corruption. "In their management, they did not observe competencies; they made their dependencies and the instructions of foreign intelligence and security services the criteria and brought people to power." Bribery at the head of the government, smuggling deals, and betraying the people are indicators of administrative and organizational corruption (Khamenei, 13/11/1377), as is "Selfishness and personal profiteering instead of paying attention to the rights of the people." (Khamenei, 04/03/1378)

The disorganization and disorder of affairs is an important dimension of this corruption. Asadollah Alam repeatedly refers to this issue in the fifth volume of his notes: "Last night, Hushang Ansari, the Minister of Economy and Finance, was with me. He gave a strange account of the lack of coordination between government agencies and economic plans, the disarray of work, and strange and peculiar purchases without study. Among them was that due to the lack of a port, about one and a half billion dollars worth of goods were held up in the middle of the sea for three to four months. The shipping costs and the losses from late unloading amounted to a strange figure. Since he is my friend, I asked him, "Are you the minister of other planets that you don't take any action or at least report the matter to the Shah?" He said, "The Prime Minister won't allow it, because he's afraid the Shah will get upset with him." (Alam notes: 5, 255)

Scholars have stated that tyranny is both an important indicator and a cause of corruption. Ayatollah Khamenei also accepts this approach. The tyrannical system was a despotic one that wanted everything for itself and its dependents, and no one had the power to resist and confront the Shah and his relatives and affiliates. For this reason, the exercise of influence and the misuse of position in the Pahlavi regime knew no bounds.

Ashraf was a dominant force in this area as well: "Her Highness Ashraf, through her eldest son, managed to receive a large commission for contracting with several international consortiums, the sales of the French company "Dassault" to Iran, the project of the thermal power plant built by the Swiss company "Brown Boveri," and the contract for the Chabahar port facilities by the company "Brown & Root." (Hoveyda, *ibid*: 146)

Shams was also one of the leading figures of the Pahlavi era in this field. Shams used her influence to divert the route of the Tehran-Karaj highway so that it would pass through the middle of her properties, enabling her to sell her lands to well-known buyers at several times the usual price (Courtiers according to SAVAK documents, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 19, Introduction).

Shams, along with her husband and children, was the owner or major shareholder of several large economic institutions and companies (Bakhtiyari, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 68).

The court's corruption also tempted international brokers and heated up the market for illegitimate transactions. Hoveyda believes that with the flood of money into Iran, a flood of international traders and merchants descended upon Iran like flies on sweets, and a number of courtiers gathered around them, hoping to get a piece of the action. Brokerage grew like a cancer, and large sums of money were exchanged this way so that foreigners unfamiliar with Iran could establish contact with high-level officials. In the meantime, the families of deposed European kings, thanks to their acquaintance with the Shah, entered the field of brokerage and were able to get rich this way, brokering staggering contracts between Iran and Europe (Hoveyda, 2009 AD/1377 SH: 78).

Mohammad Reza Shah's showcase projects led to many people gathering around him in the hope of profiting, and the spirit of flattery increased, leaving him without honest and competent men (Keddie, 1990 AD/1369 SH: 226).

The main source and origin of all administrative corruption in the despotic system was the court's lack of belief in scientific and technical merit. According to Alam, the Shah had no faith in scientific consultation and management:

"The work of our country is of a special kind, and the Shah has his own special way of managing the country... For example, why should the head of the oil company not be involved in the oil negotiations? God knows, and the Shah, that's it!" (Alam *notes*: 3, 41)

Not only did the Shah not believe in experts, but he also treated the officials he appointed in various fields with disrespectful and humiliating language:

"I said that in Algiers, an informed delegation consisting of the Minister of Economy, the Head of the Central Bank, Dr. Fallah, the Minister of Interior (responsible for OPEC), and a number of experts should be present. He said, 'What good are these asses?' (ibid: 4, 386-387)

"The President of the University of Tehran wrote a letter to me saying that because the professors had complained about their low salaries to His Imperial Majesty, the Prime Minister was complaining. He said, 'The Prime Minister has no business complaining.' (ibid: 5, 132)

According to Graham, the Shah's autocratic behavior went so far that he strictly avoided involving government officials in politics. As a result, the participation of the people in politics and government was a very remote possibility (Graham, 1979: 172).

The regime's dependence on the dominant system and the full support of the US for the Shah increased the Shah's tyranny and, consequently, his corruption. The Shah, who would not consult with his own country's officials and even drove them away with foul language, was obligated to report to the Americans daily. Sullivan states that he met with the Shah every ten days (Salivan, 1981: 71). Zonis confirms the view of Mohammad Reza Shah's opponents who considered him a puppet and a dependent and spineless individual of the US (Zonis, 1991: 242).

Gasiorowski believes that the level of suppression and torture by the regime's security agencies with US support reached a point where, according to Amnesty International in 1975, no country in the world was worse than Iran in terms of human rights (Gasiorowski, 1991: 157).

The violent and brutal nature of the Pahlavi regime continued until the final days of the revolution, contrary to the claims of some who are trying to prove that the regime did not want to kill people. Armstrong refers to a letter in which Brzezinski strongly urged the Shah to use armed forces to suppress the protesters (Armstrong, 1981 AD/1360 SH: 50). A letter that was never sent to Iran and its draft text was also removed from access by the White House (ibid: 52).

In general, corruption that relied on the Shah's self-centeredness and the support of the dominant system was considered a natural matter, and the Shah and the court did not consider it illegitimate. In fact, they would even make excuses for it. The Shah's mother believed regarding bribery:

"It is customary for foreign companies to pay commissions. These poor people have not taken anything from the country's budget. If foreigners want to give a few million to our officials, why should we be narrow-minded and stop their generosity?" (Ayromlou, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 441)

Fereydoun Hoveyda also addressed this issue in his book and shows that the Shah also considered the corruption, wheeling and dealing, influence, and bribery of his entourage as "A Kind of Right to Transact Business."

"A French journalist (Olivier Warren) asked the Shah: "It is said that corruption has not spared some of your entourage; and the Shah replied, anything is possible; but in this particular case, I must say that this is not corruption; rather, it is behaving like others, meaning like those who have every right to work and transact." (Hoveyda, *ibid*: 92)

### **Analysis and Conclusion**

In any political system, there is a possibility of error and corruption. However, when corruption becomes "Systemic" and involves all the pillars and elements of the system, it creates the grounds for deep and widespread dissatisfaction. The most important aspect of corruption becoming systemic is the political system being founded on the pillars of oppression and its direction toward discrimination, injustice, and disregard for the rights of the people, especially the deprived masses.

The tyrannical system was a tyrannical one that paid no attention to the people's consent and had no respect for Islamic values. On the contrary, it moved in the direction of secularization and opposition to religious laws. Such a system possessed the characteristics of a corrupt system in every way, and as a result of this corruption, all classes of people were dissatisfied and could no longer tolerate the existence of the regime.

Michel Foucault believes: "The Iranians, by their uprising, said to themselves, and this is perhaps the spirit of their uprising; we must definitely change this regime and get rid of this man, we must change the corrupt employees, we must change everything in the country, including the political organization, the economic system, and foreign policy." (Foucault, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 60)

Even stranger, according to Foucault, was the strike of departments like customs, which were symbols, personifications, and tools of corruption. The uprising of these institutions meant the uprising of corruption against corruption.



The main pillars of the Pahlavi system were corrupt, and the direction of the regime was toward decline and decay. In contrast, the main pillars of the Islamic system are righteous and healthy, and the system's direction is toward justice and health. Most importantly, in the Islamic system, corruption is not considered a natural and tolerable matter. In the thought of Imam Khamenei, "Economic, moral, and political corruption is a cancerous tumor for countries and systems, and if it affects the body of governments, it is a devastating earthquake and a blow to their legitimacy. He states that this is much more serious and fundamental for a system like the Islamic Republic, which needs legitimacy beyond conventional legitimacies and a foundation more profound than social acceptance, than for other systems." (Second Phase Statement of Islamic Revolution, 22/11/1397)

This kind of view is very different from the view of a person who considers corruption to be a kind of "Right" to activity and work.

Nevertheless, "The temptation of wealth, position, and power led some people astray even in the most righteous government in history, the government of Imam Ali (AS). Therefore, the risk of this threat appearing in the Islamic Republic, whose managers and officials once competed in revolutionary asceticism and simple living, has never been and is not unlikely." (ibid.) These stumbles and mistakes and the existence of weak-willed individuals who are tempted and fall into the abyss of corruption are not a reason to consider the Islamic system corrupt. The level of corruption in the Islamic system should be compared with other governments and systems, and in this regard, the Islamic system is not comparable to any other government. Most importantly, the ratio of corruption among the officials of the Islamic Republic's government is far less compared to many other countries and especially compared to the tyrannical regime, which was corrupt from top to bottom and fostered corruption." (ibid.)

In summary, it can be said that one of the important dimensions of the inefficiency and decline of the Pahlavi regime was its deep and widespread corruption. This research has attempted to analyze and explain the corruption of the Pahlavi regime based on the views of Imam Khamenei. It is clear that there is no room to cover all aspects, either theoretically or in terms of examples. Nevertheless, an effort has been made to clarify the main elements of his view, especially regarding corruption and its dimensions.

The results of the research show that Imam Khamenei considers corruption to be a kind of disease in one or more parts of the social organism. Political corruption, like corruption in the

body, can be limited to one part, but if this corruption spreads to different parts, it will be cancerous and deadly. Corruption also includes any kind of self-centered activity that uses power to achieve personal goals and exploit public resources by setting aside the law. Irresponsibility, lawbreaking, opportunism, lack of discipline, tyranny, and dependence on the dominant system are considered the most important indicators and dimensions of corruption, especially in the political arena. He believes that the Pahlavi regime was afflicted with corruption and decline in all its ideological, intellectual, moral, economic, and managerial aspects. This corruption also had a cancerous and incurable status, which is why it led to severe public dissatisfaction and paved the way for the occurrence of the Islamic Revolution. Numerous and diverse historical documents also confirm this point.

The data shows that the country's top official, the majority of his blood and in-law relatives, the absolute majority of the regime's leaders, and government appointees were afflicted with all kinds of corruption: bribery, gang activity, rent-seeking, misuse of position, embezzlement, wheeling and dealing, violation of rules and laws, complete immorality and prostitution, gambling, dog-keeping, foul language and cursing, etc. The leaders of the court, due to a lack of belief, disbelief, or lack of religion, did not set any boundaries for their material and sexual desires and violated all moral, legal, and administrative rules to satisfy their animal instincts.

According to Imam Khamenei, the main source of this widespread decline was the disbelief and tyrannical nature of the regime's leaders, and their dependence on greedy foreigners increased this corruption. Based on his view, the main center of corruption was the Shah himself, and he was the most polluted and corrupt person, in fact, the most corruptor. Other courtiers and dependents were also involved in corruption, and the extent of people's corruption and integrity could be measured by their proximity to or distance from the court. The closer a person was to the court and the Shah, the more corrupt they were.

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