

Cultural Heterogeneity in Post-Revolutionary Iran

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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The widening rift between religious traditionalists and "hybrid-postmodernists" could undermine the regime's guiding principle of Islamism.

In January 2018, protests rippled across Iran, marking the first civilian upheaval of any note since the Green Movement demonstrations occurred nine years ago. The latest unrest at first centered on economic problems, such as rising prices for consumer goods, but soon grew to include social and political demands, including objections to the Islamic Republic's domestic and foreign policies. The youth component in these events cannot be dismissed: more than eight in ten of those arrested were younger than thirty. And the country's large youth population has shown increasing disenchantment with Iran's theocratic orientation.

In this Policy Note, political scientist Saeid Golkar examines a widening rift in Iran between religious traditionalists and a bloc he refers to as "hybrid-postmodernists." This latter group may be religiously observant, but its adherents no longer perceive orthodox religion as the central pillar in their lives. Other priorities, from congregating at malls to listening to Western music to eschewing the veil, have taken precedence for them. Far from a triviality, the drift away from religion could ultimately undermine Islamism as the guiding principle of the Islamic Republic.

SAEID GOLKAR is a visiting assistant professor in the department of political science and public service at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Previously, he was an adjunct professor for the Middle East and North African Studies Program and a visiting scholar at Buffett Institute for Global Studies at Northwestern University and a postdoctoral fellow at the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law at Stanford University. His recent work can be found in publications such as *Middle East Journal*; *Armed Forces & Society*; *Politics, Religion & Ideology*; and *Middle East Policy*. ❖

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