ABSTRACT

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The concept of the so-called Islamic democracy has been very controversial in the past few decades and has received lots of attention by the Iranians in general and Iranian intellectuals in particular. Due to the controversy, some great efforts have been made to explicitly clarify the Islamic democracy. However, the guardianship of the Islamic jurist (*velayat-e faqih*) theory advocated by the first supreme leader and its unique anti-American system has been particularly overemphasized. As a result, the Iranian regime established after the 1979 revolution tends to be considered as 'theocratic' or 'fundamentalist.' From that reason, it can be said that the roles and ideologies of other leading ideologues in the revolutionary period have not been sufficiently analyzed in relation to democracy, though there are some researches that outline or deal with them individually. This doctoral thesis, consisting of six chapters besides Introduction and Conclusion, aims to examine the complicated relations

between Shi'i Islam and democracy through the activities and ideologies of Mehdi Bazargan, Mahmoud Taleqani, and Morteza Motahhari as a whole. The summary of each chapter is as follows;

Due to the fact that the 1979 revolution is a democratic movement, in order to realize its background, Chapter 1 aims to clarify the democratic nature commonly seen in the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911), the Oil Nationalization Movement in the early 1950s, and the revolt of 15th Khordad in June 1963. In addition, it focuses on the socio-political role of Shi'i *ulama* (religious scholars) who had often strained relations but cooperated with secular intellectuals. Chapter 2, after considering the historical relations between state and *ulama*, analyzes the political organization of the 'Freedom Movement of Iran' and the non-traditional religious facility of 'Hosseiniyeh Ershad' where the above three ideologues and others evolved their political activities against the dictatorial regime of Mohammad Reza Shah of the Pahlavi dynasty after the failure of oil nationalization. In addition, it sheds light on the process in which the democratic movement in Iran, accompanied with mutual dependency between secular intellectuals and *ulama*, drastically changed and ideological initiative moved from the former to the latter. In Chapter 3, the ideology of Bazargan, who assumed premiership of the provisional government immediately after the 1979 revolution, is analyzed through his autobiography and other Persian materials. Moreover, *tawhid* (unity of God), harmony between Islam and science as well as democracy, are pointed out as his ideological

characteristics. Bazargan's pragmatic approach toward democracy is also demonstrated through analysis of his political activities before and particularly after the 1979 revolution. Chapter 4 considers not only the roles of a high-ranking religious scholar Taleqani in reconciliation among secular and religious organizations, and mass mobilization during the revolutionary movement, but also his humanistic liberal stance based on the supervision of Islamic jurists (*vesayat-e foqaha*). Through examining his emphasis on *shora* (consultation) and considering his firm stand against power centralization that ultimately leads to despotism, it proves Taleqani's advocacy for democracy as well. In Chapter 5, the ideology of another high-ranking religious scholar, Motahhari, who emphasized the comprehensiveness of Islam and advocated the necessity of social reform, is analyzed carefully and his fundamental premise on ideology is examined. Chapter 6 allocates the ideological analyses of the three representative ideologues who came to the fore after the demise of Khomeini in June 1989: Abdolkarim Soroush, Hassan Yousefi Eshkevari, and Mohsen Kadivar. In this chapter, because they witnessed the transformation of political system and conspicuous struggle of factional politics under the second supreme leader Ali Khamenei, their ideological influences inherited from the pre-revolutionary ideologues and differences are examined.

Through the above analyses of each chapter, the thesis firstly points out the close relation between Shi'i Islam and democracy not only seen in practice but also admitted in ideology. In this relation, the second

point is regarding the understanding of the guardianship of the Islamic jurist. Because of its electoral system, it is considered as 'Shi'i Islamic democracy under state-control' or 'polyarchy,' the latter of which Richard A. Dahl named with the U.S. political system in mind. This identification must promote the necessity of being free from the understanding of dichotomy between Islam and democracy. The thesis concludes the real aspects of diversity in ideology and activity for the realization of Islamic democracy in the historical process of continuity and change.

This thesis is highly evaluated as a research to explore a new understanding of compatibility between Islam and democracy, analyzing the roles and ideologies of leading ideologues in modern Iran based on the firsthand Persian materials as well as the previous works concerned.