

IMPLICATIONS OF IRAN'S EIGHT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

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Majles Elections Breakdown

Election	Election Date(s)	Eligible Voters	Actual Voters	Percentage	# Candidates	# Precincts	Candidates Elected
Majles Elections							
First Majles Election	1980/03/14	20,857,391	10,875,969	52.14%	3,694	193	270
Second Majles Election	1984/04/15	24,143,498	15,607,306	64.64%	1,592	193	270
Third Majles Election	1988/04/08	27,986,736	16,714,281	59.72%	1,999	193	270
Fourth Majles Election	1992/04/10	32,465,558	18,767,042	57.80%	3,233	196	270
Fifth Majles Election	1996/03/08	34,716,000	24,682,386	71.09%	8,365	196	270
Sixth Majles Election	2000/02/18	38,726,431	26,082,157	67.35%	6,853	207	290
Seventh Majles Election	2004/02/20	46,351,032	23,734,677	51.21%	8,172	207	290
Eight Majles Election	2008/03/14	43,700,000	25,000,000	57.20%	7,597	207	290
Average				60.56%			

Salient Points about Electoral Politics in Iran (I)

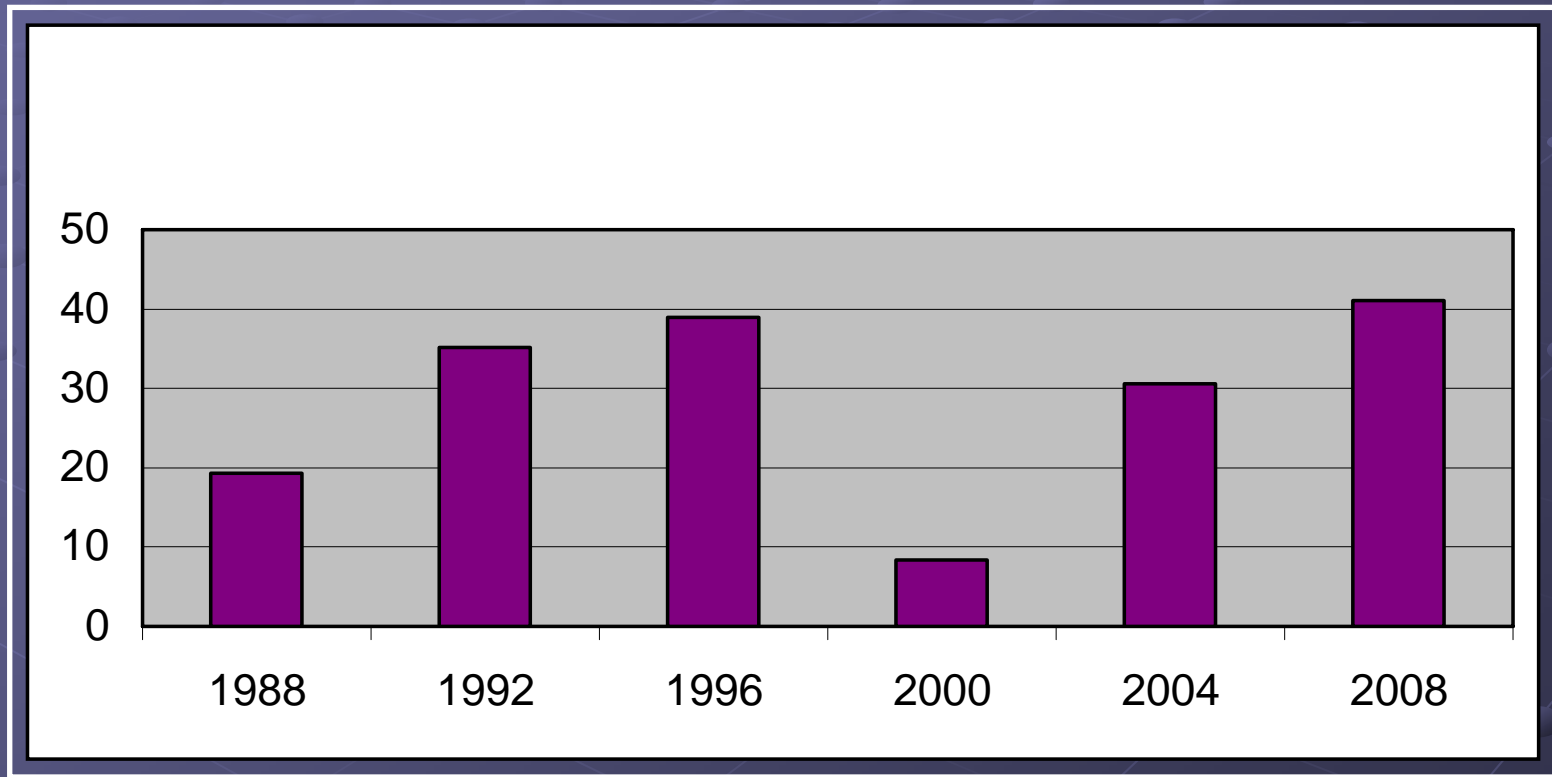
- 1) The percentage of voter turnout in this election was right around the mean for all previous elections (around 60%).

Note: Combination of propaganda efforts, religious/revolutionary zeal, economic incentives, fear of retaliation for not voting, the disproportionality of rural precincts (46.6%) to the rural population (30%), etc. almost always ensures that more than 50% of the Iranian public takes part in Majles elections.

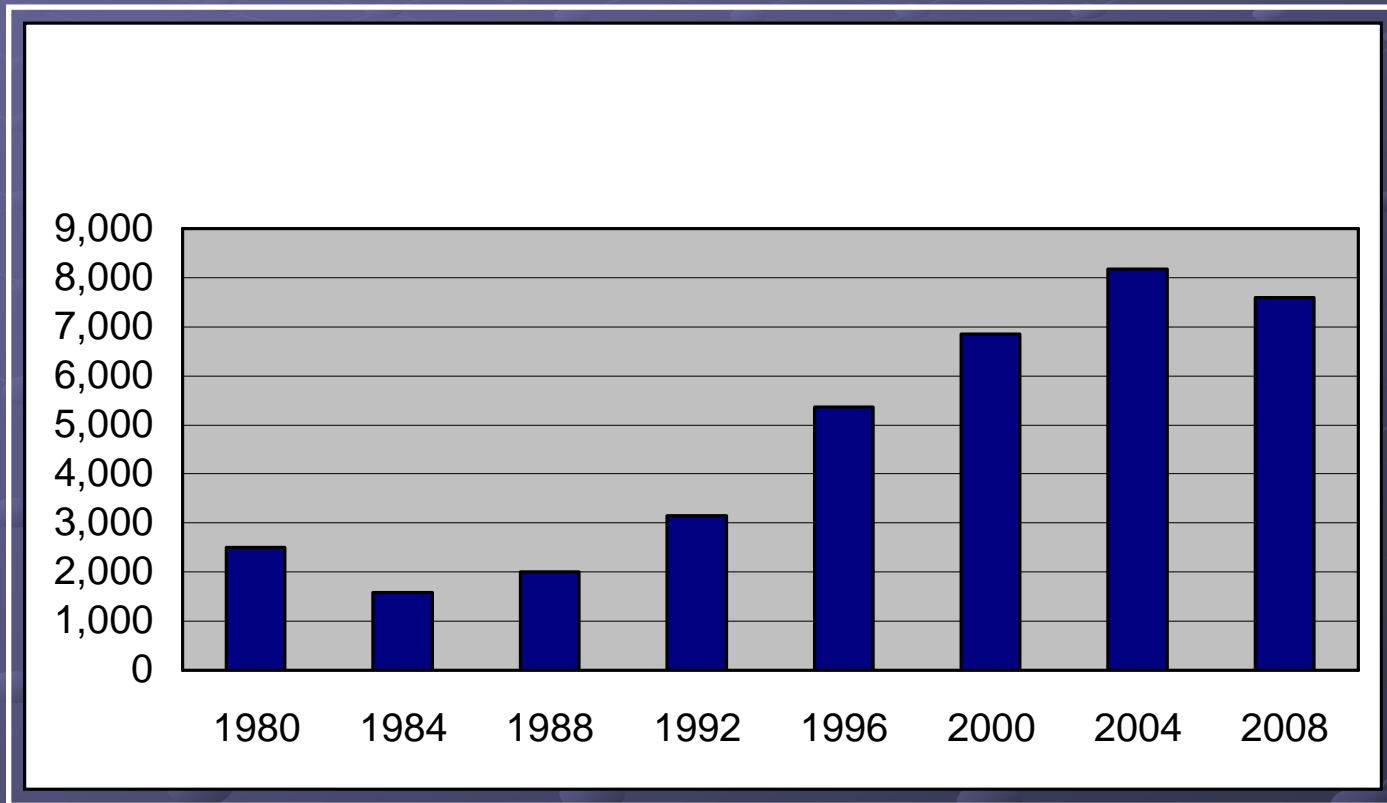
Salient Points (2)

- 2) While the percentage of candidates who were disqualified in this election was the largest ever (41.1% compared to an average of 28.9%), the number of candidates who registered to run was also the second highest ever.

% of Candidates Not Allowed to Run



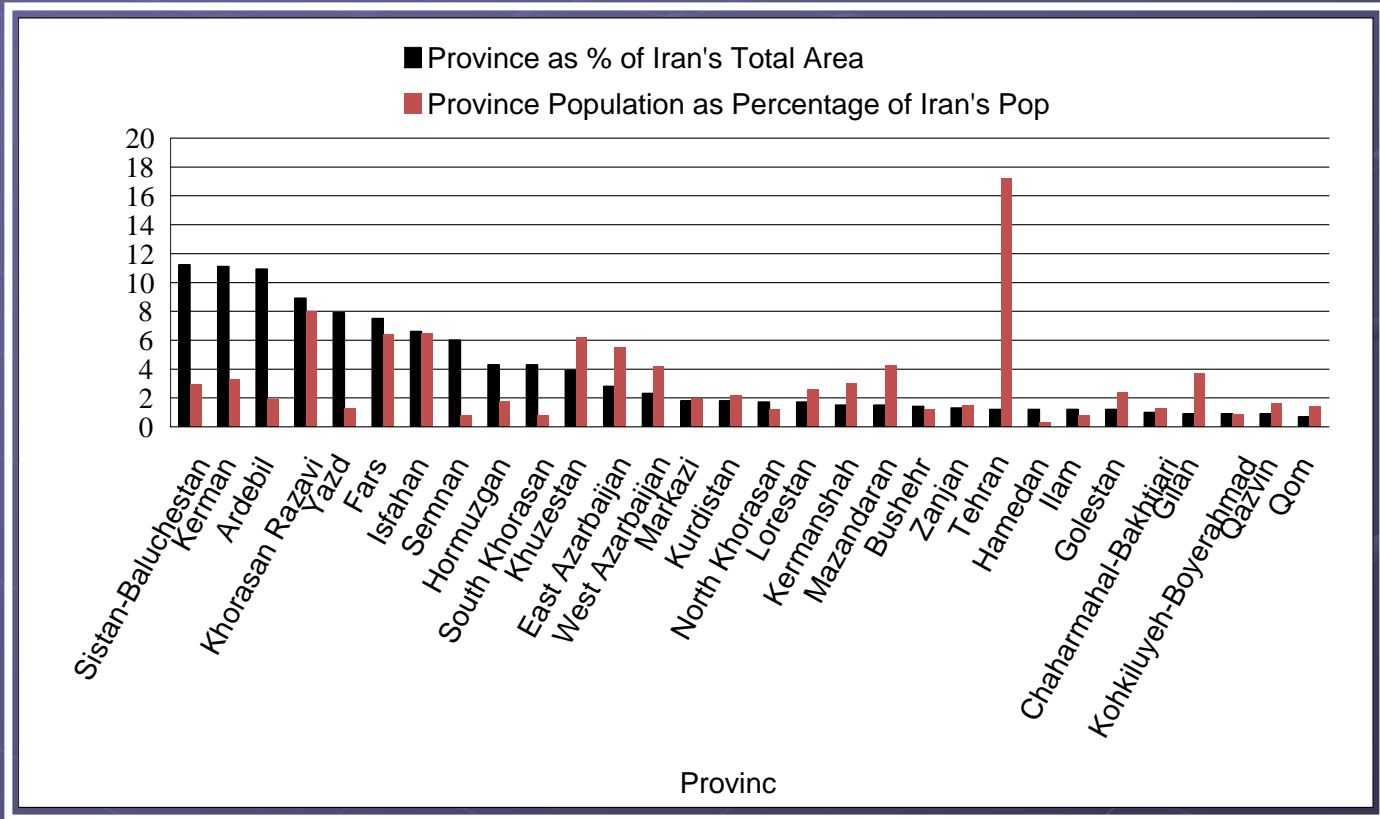
Number of Candidates Who Registered to Run For Parliament



Salient Points (III)

- 3) We should not ignore the dynamics of provincial politics amidst all the talk about reformists and conservatives.
 - In the provinces people often vote based on such factors as familial, ethnic and tribal loyalties, and the ability of their MPs to secure pork barrel projects for their district. The biography of those already elected indicates that family name, educational pedigree, war resume or national connectedness/profile has played an important role.
 - In Tehran voters usually vote based on candidates political leanings.

Province Size & Population (1996)



Salient Points (IV)

4) Based on previous elections, I expect an incumbency rate of around 35%.

Freshman Class in Majles (%)

● First Majles	100
● Second Majles	61
● Third Majles	54
● Fourth Majles	59
● Fifth Majles	53
● Sixth Majles	65
● Seventh Majles	56
● Average	64

Why Would Reformists Take Part in the Election?

- 1) Following boycotts of the 2nd municipal elections and the 9th Presidential election they have realized that boycotts will only strengthen the conservatives.
- 2) Their modest victory in the 2006 municipal elections has convinced many of them to contest elections no matter what.
- 3) The recognition that external political and economic pressure can't bring about a regime change.
- 4) Fearing that the conservatives will become unified and dominate all aspects of the state thereby pushing it even in a more radical direction. Moderating legislation.
- 5) Internal disagreements and defections in their own camp (Karoubi)
- 6) Wanting to take part in the next round of presidential elections. Hoping that they could put forward another Khatami type candidate and win a popularity contest where only one person matters.
- 7) Not wanting to have the same fate as the Freedom Movement.

The Winners

1. Ahmadinejad's faction
2. Revolutionary Guards
3. Conservative Bazaar faction

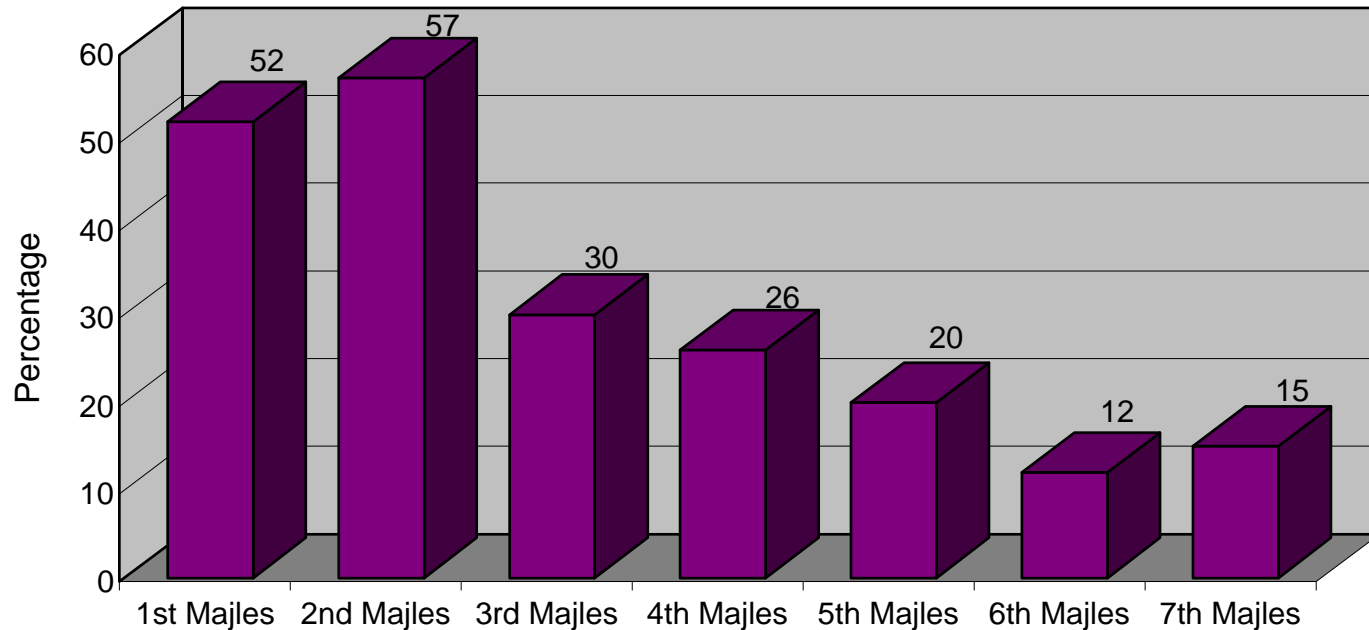
The most important winner:
Supreme leader

Women & Clerics

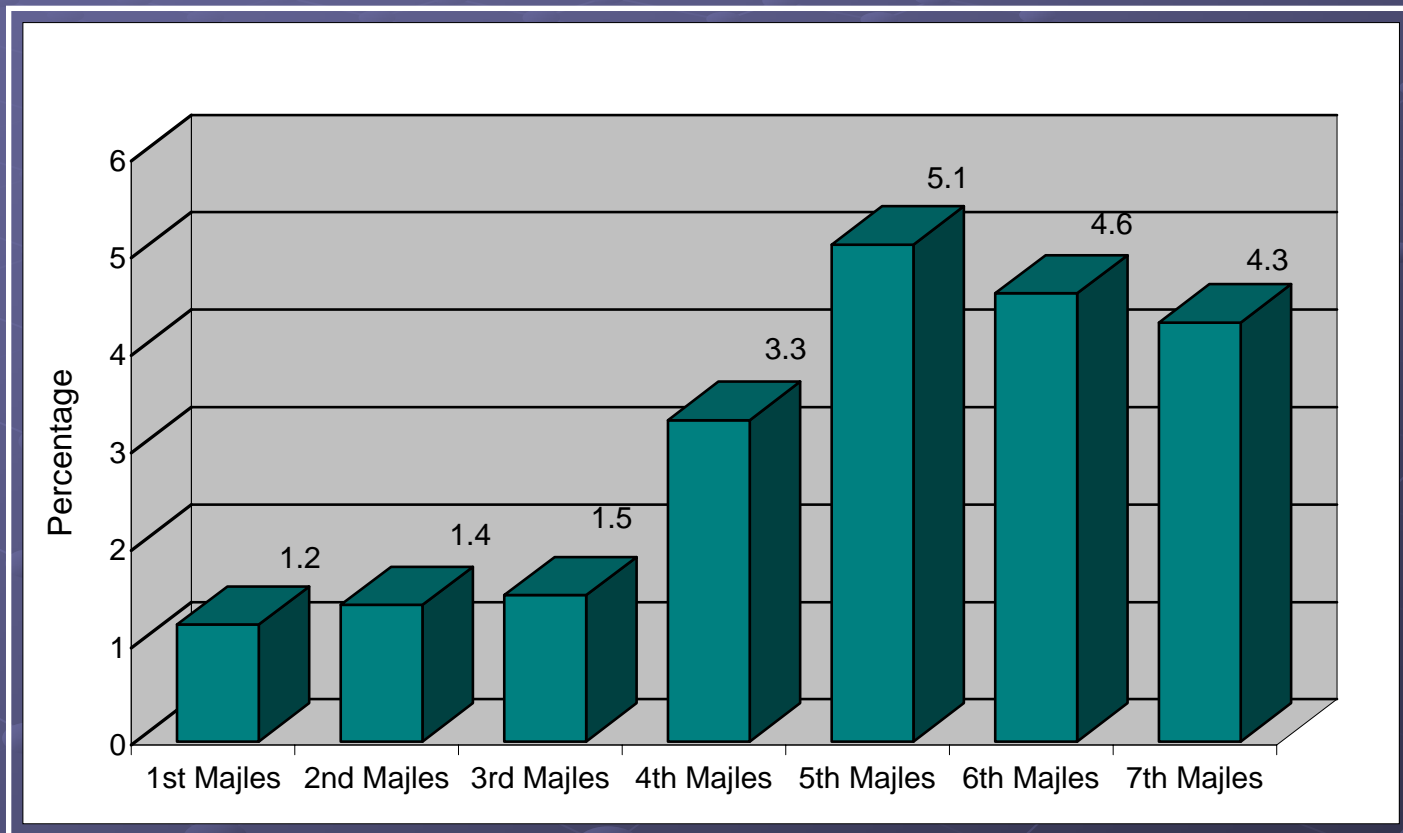
Women and clerics, by and large, face the challenge of “un-electability”:

- The percentage of clerics as MPs has been consistently going down and as such less and less of them are volunteering to run.

Clerics as % of Total Deputies in Post-Revolutionary Parliaments



% of Women in Each Parliament



Women & Clerics

- On average clerics account for only 7% of all candidates put forward by political parties.
- On average women account for only 3.6% of all candidates put forward by political parties.
- Ratio of clerical candidates put forward in Tehran to the rest of the country is almost 1.6 to 1
- Ratio of women candidates put forward in Tehran to the rest of the country is almost 3.6 to 1

Party Name	% of Clerical Cand.	% of Women Cand.	Total Cand. List	Contesting % of Seats
<i>Entire Country</i>				
Coalition of Reformists of Groups	4.3?	5.1	137	47.2
Development & Justice Party	9.1	0	110	37.9
Inclusive Coalition of Principlists	8.2	2.9	243	83.8
Moderation & Development Party	5.1?	3.7	136	46.9
National Confidence Party	3.6?	6	166	57.2
United Front of Principlists	12.5	4.3	256	88.3
Average	7.1	3.6		
<i>Tehran</i>				
Coalition of Reformists Groups	16.6	20	30	100
Development & Justice Party	0	0	5	16.6
Inclusive Coalition of Principlists	10	10	30	100
Moderation & Development Party	16.6	13.3	30	100
National Confidence Party	13.3	16.7	30	100
United Front of Principlists	13.3	16.6	30	100
Average	11.6	12.6		

Implications and Predictions (I)

- Factional politics and jockeying between the conservatives will become more intense in the 8th Majles.
- The upcoming presidential election and the deteriorating economic conditions will intensify the rivalries. Disagreements will mainly be aired around economic policies rather than foreign policy.
- The Inclusive Coalition of Principlists will very quickly witness the rifts caused by the political ambitions of its three leading figures, all of whom are former members of the Revolutionary Guards (Larijani, Qalibaf, Rezaei).
- As a minority bloc reformists will get a new lease on political life. However, the fact that most of them are 2nd, 3rd, or 4th rate political personalities who are very cautious means that they will not be an active agent for change.

Implications and Predictions (II)

- The likelihood of an alliance between the moderate conservatives and the Reformists is moderate.
- With Larijani obtaining a leadership post in the Majles, there might be some moderation in the nuclear standoff but not a major course reversal since the nuclear policy is determined at the highest level of the state.
- I expect the reformists to concentrate their efforts on exploiting the differences between the conservatives.
- I expect Ahmadinejad, Haddad-Adel, Karoubi, Khatami, and Qalibaf to nominate themselves for the 2009 presidential election.

Conclusion

- 1) The Majles is not the most important pillar of political power in Iran as we saw with the 6th Majles when Ayatollah Khamanei used his power to rein them in.
- 2) Elections are not meaningless. While it is true that the Iranian state employs a prodigious style of electoral engineering to regiment outcomes, it is also correct to point out that since the circulation of elites happens mainly at the bottom of the Iranian political pyramid, it is important to closely follow the process of elite maneuvering and circulation at the level of parliamentarians.

