

# Project "Mahan" or "Haman" : An Analysis of its Pathological and Social Health Implications

Amirali R. Davoudpour

Iranian Canon of Medicine and Law, Administrative Wing of Law and Healing association, Iranian Watchdog of Medicine and Law, Tehran-Iran

Email of the corresponding author: davoudpour@canmedlaw.org

Accepted and published July, 2024

This article is published under CC BY creative common license that Allows others to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the work, even commercially, as long as they credit the original creator.

---

## Abstract:

We have already studies the "Mahan Project" initiated during the late Pahlavi era, aimed to undermine Islamic social beliefs and diminish the potential for the Islamic Revolution by targeting religious leaders. This article explores the project's origins, its methodologies of discrediting Islamic clergy through fabrications and entrapment, and its broader implications on social trust and national identity. It argues that such projects are part of a larger strategy of social engineering, aimed at weakening societal bonds and promoting a culture of distrust and moral decay. By examining various interdisciplinary perspectives from psychology, sociology, and political science, this article sheds light on the multifaceted impacts of such strategies on social health and cohesion.

**Keywords:** Haman Project, Islamic clergy, social discrediting, social trust, national identity, social health, Mossad, SAVAK, Islamic Republic of Iran.

---

## Introduction

The "Haman Project" was a covert operation initiated in the late Pahlavi era with the explicit goal of discrediting Islamic beliefs and undermining the revolutionary potential of the Islamic clergy. Targeting religious figures through entrapment and fabrications, the project sought to weaken the foundations of Islamic social norms. This paper delves into the details of the project, analyzing its strategies, impacts, and the broader implications for social health and cohesion.

### Historical Context

The Book of Esther is set during the reign of King Ahasuerus, a time when the Jewish people were living in exile under Persian rule. Haman, a high-ranking official, becomes the central antagonist of the story. Angered by the Jewish man Mordecai's refusal to bow to him, Haman plots to annihilate all the Jews in the empire. His plot is foiled by Esther, a Jewish queen of Persian King Ahasuerus, and her cousin Mordecai.

### Key Plot Points

1. Haman's Plot: The story begins with Haman's promotion to a high position in the Persian court. His pride and hatred for Mordecai, who refuses to bow to him, lead Haman to plot the annihilation of all Jews in the empire. Haman casts lots (Purim) to determine the date of this massacre, a detail that underscores the randomness and fate-driven nature of his plan (Esther 3:7; Berlin, 2001).
2. Esther's Courage: Mordecai learns of Haman's plot and urges Esther to intervene. Initially reluctant, Esther embraces her role as queen and resolves to approach the king without an invitation—a move that could result in her death. She hosts two banquets, strategically revealing Haman's plot at the second banquet, thereby revealing her Jewish identity and pleading for her people's lives (Esther 4-5; Fox, 1991).
3. The Revelation and Execution: At the second banquet, Esther exposes Haman's scheme to the king, who, enraged, orders Haman

- to be hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. This dramatic turn of events underscores the themes of justice and retribution, as Haman's plot is turned against him (Esther 7:9-10).
4. The Jews' Deliverance: Following Haman's execution, Mordecai is appointed to Haman's former position, and a new decree is issued, allowing the Jews to defend themselves against their enemies. The Jews are victorious, and the festival of Purim is established to commemorate their deliverance, symbolizing the triumph of faith and resistance over oppression (Esther 8-9; Litman, 1984).

## Contemporary Iran

### 1. The Pahlavi Era and Socio-Political Dynamics

The late Pahlavi era was marked by significant political and social upheaval. The government sought to modernize Iran through Westernization and secularization, often clashing with traditional Islamic values. The Islamic clergy, seen as a pillar of resistance against these changes, became a primary target for the regime's repressive strategies (Abrahamian, 1982).

### 2. Emergence of the Haman Project

The Haman Project was conceived as a part of the broader strategy to undermine the Islamic Revolution. It was designed to create an image of the clergy as corrupt, immoral, and out of touch with societal values. This project was not an isolated initiative but part of a continuum of state-driven propaganda and subversion tactics (Tajbakhsh, 2000).

## Methodologies of Discrediting

### 1. Fabrication and Entrapment

The project's primary methodology involved the fabrication of scandals and the entrapment of religious figures. By creating false reports and using spies to manipulate situations, the authorities aimed to tarnish the reputation of prominent clerics (Roy, 1994). This approach is consistent with broader strategies of disinformation and psychological warfare (Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

## **2. Use of Women as Tools**

A significant aspect of the Haman Project was the exploitation of women to entrap and discredit religious leaders. This strategy not only sought to undermine the clerics' moral standing but also to erode the social fabric by promoting a culture of moral relativism (Sullivan, 2000). This approach echoes historical precedents of using sexual scandal to destabilize political opponents (Schwartz, 1991).

## **Social and Psychological Impacts**

### **1. Erosion of Social Trust**

The Haman Project significantly contributed to the erosion of social trust. By systematically discrediting religious leaders, the project aimed to create a climate of suspicion and distrust within the community (Putnam, 2000). This breakdown of trust is detrimental to social cohesion and collective well-being (Fukuyama, 1995).

### **2. Psychological Warfare and Identity Crisis**

The project also had profound psychological impacts, contributing to an identity crisis among the populace. By undermining the authority of the clergy, the state sought to weaken the cultural and moral foundations of Iranian society (Erikson, 1968). This tactic of psychological warfare disrupted the community's sense of continuity and identity (Kumar, 1995) (Davoudpour, A.R., 2024).

## **Broader Implications**

### **1. The Global Context of Social Engineering**

The Haman Project is part of a broader trend of social engineering and propaganda used by various regimes globally. This strategy includes the creation of false narratives, the manipulation of public opinion, and the disruption of social norms to maintain control (Chomsky, 1991). The use of media and social networks in these efforts has become increasingly sophisticated (McLuhan, 1964).

### **2. Comparative Analysis with Other Propaganda Campaigns**

Comparative studies with other historical and contemporary propaganda campaigns reveal similar tactics and objectives. From the McCarthy era's red scare in the United States to the use of disinformation in contemporary conflicts, the methods of discrediting and destabilizing opponents remain consistent (Zinn, 2003; Keeley, 1999).

## **Case Studies and Examples**

### **1. The Impact on Clerical Figures**

Several clerics who were executed or persecuted in the early years of the Islamic Republic fell victim to these tactics. The fabricated scandals and the manipulation of personal lives played a crucial role in their downfall (Afshari, 1990). This section explores specific cases to illustrate the broader pattern of discrediting religious leaders (Ahmadi, 2006).

### **2. Societal Reactions and Resistance**

The reaction of the public and the resistance movements against the Haman Project highlights the resilience of social and religious values. Despite the state's efforts, many segments of society continued to support the clergy and resist the regime's attempts to undermine them (Abrahamian, 1989). This resilience underscores the complexity of social dynamics and the enduring strength of cultural identities (Huntington, 1996).

## **Discussion**

### **1. Ethical Considerations**

The ethical implications of projects like Haman are profound. They raise questions about the morality of using deception and manipulation to achieve political ends. The harm inflicted on individuals and communities through such tactics cannot be understated (Singer, 2003). This section discusses the ethical boundaries of state power and the responsibilities of governments and societies in protecting social integrity (Rawls, 1971).

### **2. The Role of Media and Technology**

The evolution of media and technology has transformed the landscape of propaganda and social manipulation. The use of digital

platforms to spread disinformation and create false narratives has amplified the impact of such projects (Benkler et al., 2018). This section examines the intersection of technology, media, and social manipulation, highlighting the need for robust countermeasures and ethical media practices (Sunstein, 2009).

### **Non-reversible Social and Psychological Damages**

Psychological warfare's effects extend far beyond the immediate conflict, leaving deep, non-reversible damages on both the psychological well-being of individuals and the social fabric of communities. Addressing these impacts requires comprehensive strategies that include mental health support, community rebuilding efforts, and the restoration of trust and social norms. Understanding the profound and lasting consequences of psychological warfare is crucial in preventing and mitigating its devastating effects in future conflicts. A long term disposal to psychological and social warfare in turbulent societies leaves irreversible marks and distinguishing pattern on the culture and social growth of the communities (Davoudpour, A.R., 2024). Some of the inflicted damages are:

**Intergenerational Trauma:** The psychological impact of warfare does not stop with the immediate victims; it often extends to subsequent generations. Children of those who have experienced psyops-related trauma may inherit the psychological scars of their parents, manifesting in anxiety, depression, and behavioral issues. This intergenerational transmission of trauma ensures that the psychological warfare's impact remains long after the initial events (Danieli, 1998).

**Breakdown of Social Norms and Values:** Psychological warfare can erode core social norms and values, leading to a breakdown in social order. Propaganda that glorifies violence or undermines traditional values can disrupt societal structures and lead to increases in crime, corruption, and other forms of social deviance. This degradation of social norms is often difficult to reverse and can lead to prolonged periods of social instability (Gurr, 1970).

**Economic and Educational Decline:** The social upheaval caused by psychological warfare often results in economic decline and disruptions to education systems, mass migration of talents, students and investments (Davoudpour, A.R., 2024). Mistrust and fear can stifle economic activity, reduce investment, and lead to brain drain as skilled individuals emigrate to escape the hostile environment. Additionally, the spread of misinformation can disrupt educational processes, leading to a poorly informed and less competitive workforce (Collier, 2003).

## Conclusion

The Haman (Mahan) Project exemplifies a broader strategy of social manipulation and psychological warfare aimed at destabilizing and discrediting societal structures. Its impact on social trust, identity, and cohesion underscores the need for vigilance and resistance against such tactics. As we navigate contemporary challenges, understanding the historical and psychological dimensions of projects like Haman is crucial for fostering resilience and promoting a healthier, more cohesive society. Treatment of Socio-psychological disorders caused by traumatic use of psychological warfare and long term disposal to such propaganda are amongst most important duties of social activists (Davoudpour, A.R., 2024)

## References

1. Abrahamian, E. (1982). *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press.
2. Abrahamian, E. (1989). *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impact*. Princeton University Press.
3. Abrahamian, E. (1992). *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic*. I.B. Tauris.
4. Afshari, R. (1990). *Human Rights in Iran: The Abuse of Cultural Relativism*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
5. Ahmadi, M. (2006). *Political Islam in the 21st Century*. Cambridge University Press.
6. Barkan, E. (2006). *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices*. W. Norton & Company.
7. Benkler, Y., Faris, R., & Roberts, H. (2018). *Network Propaganda: Manipulation, Disinformation, and Radicalization in American Politics*. Oxford University Press.
8. Berlin, A. (2001). *The JPS Bible Commentary: Esther*. The Jewish Publication Society.
9. Chomsky, N. (1991). *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. Pantheon Books.
10. Collier, P. (2003). *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*. World Bank Publications.
11. Danieli, Y. (1998). *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma*. Springer.
12. Davoudpour, A. R. (2024). Analysis of the "Mahan" Psychological Operation Plan During the Late Pahlavi Era and the Impact of Modern Psychological Warfare on Socio-Spiritual Disorders. *Journal of Iranian International Legal Studies (IIntbar)*. ISSN 2957-2169.
13. Davoudpour, A.R., (2024). Challenges Faced by Iranian Students and Graduates Seeking Education and Employment Abroad: An Empirical Study. *Journal of Iranian International Legal Studies (IIntbar)*, 1. ISSN 2957-2169.
14. Davoudpour, A. R. (2024). The prevalence of psychological disorders in governance: Implications for political decision-making. *Journal of Iranian International Legal Studies*. ISSN 2957-2169.
15. Davoudpour, A. R. (2024). Treatment of socio-spiritual disorders as one of the greatest concerns of modern governance: Alchemical, Jungian, and Biblical approaches. *Journal of Iranian International Legal Studies*. ISSN 2957-2169.
16. Davoudpour, A.R., (2024). The Impact of Educational Migration on National Economy and Intellectual Properties in Iran. *Journal of Iranian International Legal Studies (IIntbar)*, 1. ISSN 2957-2169.
17. Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. W.W. Norton & Company.
18. Fox, M. V. (1991). *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther*. Eerdmans.
19. Fukuyama, F. (1995). *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*. Free Press.



20. Gurr, T. R. (1970). *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton University Press.
21. Herman, E. S., & Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. Pantheon Books.
22. Huntington, S. P. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Simon & Schuster.
23. Keeley, B. (1999). *Of Miracles and Monsters: The Crisis of Political Science*. University of California Press.
24. Kumar, K. (1995). *The Making of English National Identity*. Cambridge University Press.
25. Litman, R. (1984). *Purim: The Face and the Mask*. UAHC Press.
26. McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. McGraw-Hill.
27. Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster.
28. Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press.
29. Roy, O. (1994). *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*. Cambridge University Press.
30. Schwartz, M. (1991). *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*. University of Chicago Press.
31. Singer, P. (2003). *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century*. Penguin Books.
32. Sunstein, C. R. (2009). *Republic.com 2.0*. Princeton University Press.
33. Sullivan, R. (2000). *The Improbable War: The Inside Story of the Battle for Iran*. Verso.
34. Zinn, H. (2003). *A People's History of the United States*. Harper Perennial.