The 1979 Iranian revolution ended up in a theocratic regime that mobilized an important part of urban youth for both the war against Iraq and the realization of a utopian Islam. Two decades later, a new type of cultural-political movement, with democratic tendencies, is emerging and is founded mainly on three groups: intellectuals, university students, and women.

Throughout the 1990s, a post-Islamist intellectual scene has developed in Iran that challenges the foundations of the Islamic Republic as conceived by Imam Khomeini's (Guardianship of the doctor of the law) which legitimizes an Islamic theocracy within a closed political system, despite the existence of universal voting rights recognized by the Constitution. The intellectuals Islamic intellectuals, such as Shari'ati and Khomeini, advocated a closed system in which women had no reference to (or support from) the Islamic Republic and were despised for the violence and repressive attempts at intimidation, including imprisonment and, in some cases, execution. The students' movement These students, who fought for the secular social movement in Iran, are largely inspired by the post-Islamist intellectuals, but their demands are not limited to those of the intellectuals. The latter demand the freedom of expression and the widening of social participation in the political sphere; a demand also shared by the young people. For example, a student association like the Daftar-e Tahkim- e-Vahdat, which was a revolutionary and militant group, fought for the rights of students until the first half of the 1990s, has changed sides, defending Khatami and the Islamic regime.

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The young generation comprises the numerical majority, more than 60% of the population being below 24 years of age. Many of the youth did not experience the Shah's reign. One of the fundamental demands of the students' movement, which can be best understood by referring back to the Revolution, when for the first time in Iranian history, women's presence was crucial in street demonstrations. (In the most severe of these, a third of the participants were women.) Nevertheless, at the time, the vast majority of these women had no specific demands based on their gender. Women in this period were not seen as having a separate existence outside the family. They were expected to play a specific role in the society, with a divided power structure whose existence was maintained through the family, the office of the Superior Interest of the Islamic regime had led to the regression of women's rights on many levels. At the same time, the women's presence has improved. In the 1990s, especially in its diverse consumerist aspects, increasing modernization brings them intellectual and psychologically closer to men, making the legal denial of access to equality incomprehensible, even scandalous in their view. As long as women's social and cultural lives were different from those of men, this inequality was perceived as emanating from 'natural' differences. But now, the intellectual status and living conditions of men have changed, especially among the urban middle and lower middle classes, where many women work so as to maintain a decent standard of living for their families.

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The legal inequality becomes all the more intolerable with the increase in economic hardship faced by those in the urban areas, but also by the vast majority of the collective identity of the young, especially among the urban middle and lower middle classes, where many women work so as to maintain a decent standard of living for their families.

Before the revolution, secular and Islamist women were opposed to one another, but now, facing similar disillusionment with legal inequalities, they are moving closer together.