

Spheres of influence

The election and subsequent protests have exposed divisions in Iran between conservatives and reformists, with many elements breaking cover to signal their allegiance. Here is how some of them are positioned (size of circle is relative to influence)



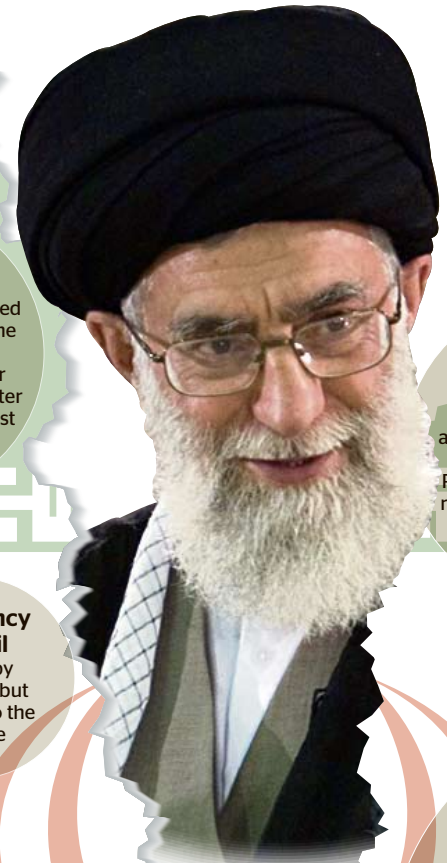
Reformist clerics
Ahmadinejad has been criticised by clerics such as former president Mohammad Khatami and Ayatollah Montazeri, once considered heir to Khomeini

Assembly of experts
86 religious scholars elected by the people. Appoints the Supreme Leader. Conservative – a quarter support Rafsanjani, a quarter back Ahmadinejad, the rest are independent

Rafsanjani
Has many reasons to oppose Ahmadinejad. Was defeated by him in the 2005 presidential election; last week the President accused him and his sons of corruption. Heads the Assembly of Experts and the Expediency Council. Hugely wealthy and influential

Expediency Council
Headed by Rafsanjani but beholden to the Supreme Leader

Bazaaris
Mousavi's supporters
Tens of thousands are demonstrating in Iran and unrest has spread to several other cities - not to mention the Iraqi football team, which wore green wristbands in a match on Wednesday. Some of the merchant class, or bazaaris, have gone on strike this week - this group played a major role in undermining the Shah and are unhappy over inflation rising under Ahmadinejad



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

Guardian Council
Hugely influential 12-strong council, half appointed by the Supreme Leader. Can veto Parliament. Is expected to rule on all claims of voting fraud by next week but has ruled out a rerun

Ahmadinejad's supporters
Rigged or not, the election and its aftermath have shown that Ahmadinejad has considerable appeal and backing among the voters, and not only in rural areas

Basiji
The Revolutionary Guard Corps
Elite members of the military who are mostly, but not entirely, behind Ahmadinejad. The Basij paramilitaries are part of this group - they have been behind the violent attacks on protesters; Mousavi has called on the judiciary to rein them in

Parliament, or Majlis
Pillar of the Government headed by Ali Larijani, the Speaker, who has criticised the Interior Ministry for the ferocity of the crackdown. He may have switched sides and turned away from Ahmadinejad, but many MPs have not

The judiciary and other state institutions
Support the President and Supreme Leader - it is thought that the Interior Ministry was packed with Ahmadinejad supporters before the election. State broadcasters do as they are told



Mir Hossein Mousavi

President Ahmadinejad