

## Modernity in Iran and Turkey: Patterns and Problems

**Younes Nourbakhsh**

Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. E-mail: ynounrbakhsh@ut.ac.ir.

### **Abstract**

---

Modernity implies ways of social and organizational life that began to improve in seventeenth-century Europe and gradually developed into the rest of the world. Due to its unanimous and progressive rationality, modernity has been highly influential in social, cultural, and political spheres, both in the West and among Muslim nations. Nations' encounters with modernity have not always followed consistent patterns, and every country has had a unique experience of its own. Iran and Turkey are countries whose modern experience bears similar characteristics but gave way to entirely different outcomes. Modernization in both countries accelerated the growth of political and philosophical opposition, including that of the Islamist movement that regarded modernity as the enemy of national culture and religious values. Iran and Turkey made different choices and formed different fronts against modernity. This article is a historical sociology of modernity in Iran and Turkey that evaluates the divergent experience in each country, applying Eisenstadt's theory of Multiple Modernities to examine the changes and outcomes of modernity in them.

**Keywords:** Modernity, Turkey, Iran, Pahlavi, Religion, Revolution.

---

---

*Religious Inquiries, Volume 9, Number 18, 2020, pp. 225-253*

*DOI: 10.22034/ri.2021.216454.1389*

*Received: 2020-02-03; Accepted: 2020-09-25*

**Copyright © the authors**

## **Statement of the Problem**

The Republic of Turkey connects the two continents of Asia and Europe. Today's Turkey is the remnants of the six-hundred-year-long Ottoman Empire. The new Turkey was founded by Mustafa Kemal Pasha in 1923, when the Empire collapsed and the sultan accepted the grave peace treaty with the Axis powers. Kemal Pasha was the officer defending Dardanelles in World War I, who led the uprising against the sultan and his Empire in Ankara. Later, he became known as "Ataturk" meaning "father of the Turks" (Zürcher 2003).

Iran, on the other hand, is a country with thousands of years of civilization, neighboring Turkey. It is one of the oldest Shiite regions since the early Islamic period. However, the first total state with an official Shiite religion in Iran goes back to the Safavid dynasty. The Safavids were an Iranian Shiite family that ruled the country for about 221 years (1501-1722).

Relatively contemporary to Ataturk and backed by the British coup, Reza Shah took power in Iran in 1925. He followed Ataturk's model and more radically so. Under him, Iran got rid of the feudal system and the frail tribal and clan culture of Qajar dynasty, and enjoyed, for the first time, a powerful central government and modern army. The end of Qajar coincided with the constitutional movement in Iran. Constitutionalism was a set of movements and events that led to the signing of the constitution order in August 5, 1906 by Mozaffar al-Din Shah Qajar, and to Muhammad-Ali Shah's monarchy, when the formation of National Parliament and the ratification of the first Constitution put an end to the autocratic rule for the cause of constitutionality in Iran. It did not take long before the parliament was bombarded, the constitutional movement halted, and Reza Shah founded Pahlavi Dynasty in the midst of the socio-political chaos.

Iran and Turkey began modernization almost simultaneously, and the leaders and thinkers of the two countries collaborated together. Meanwhile and despite the similarities in their modernization strategies, the two ended up having different experiences of modernization, and that as a result of their various social and political structures and differing historical responses to events. The historical and sociological examination of the formation and foundation of modernity in these two countries, which share historical, social, and religious transformations, will provide us useful theoretical insights that can shape our understanding of modernity and the problems of Muslim nations with it. The present research answers the following questions: How did modernization begin in each country? What factors were influential in the path of the two countries to modernity, and what challenges has it faced? Why have the outcomes of Iranian and Turkish modernization been divergent? In other words, why two types of modernization took place in the two countries?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this research is Eisenstadt's Paradigm of Multiple Modernities. Multiple Modernities paradigm is a response to the late 1980s researches on globalization. Sociologists like M. Featherstone, S. Lash, R. Robertson, and Friedman generally agree that in globalization studies, two major trends prevail: differentiation and specialization.

Various sociologists have rejected the distinction between uniqueness and generalization, pointing to the imperialist nature of the West as the reason behind their rejection. The western command results from imperialism; globalization is the distribution of the American economic system, culture, and ways of life that impose a

hierarchical system to the world, reproducing this cycle through “Americanism” as the continuation of modernity. Multiple Modernities is an alternative paradigm that began to replace historicism in the 1950s (Preyers 2007, 9).

Whereas historicism, developed in the nineteenth century, defined the West as the normative, ideal type for the rest of the world, Multiple Modernities neither assumes modernity to be a western phenomenon, nor does it introduce the West as the ideal type of modernity, nor even confines global modernity to the plurality of social structures. Multiple Modernities is evidently a criticism of the classic theory of modernization; it is a structural shift that persistently modifies the system of beliefs and the adherence to them in a process of translation. There are various modernities that operate differently than modernization. This research has two hypotheses: Turkey has experienced republican modernity, while Iran has experienced Islamist modernity; and both have faced challenges: Turkey from the side of its traditions, and Iran in adapting modernity to suit its religious system.

### **Research Method**

In social and natural sciences, any process with a background that affects its present circumstances is called *path dependent*. In this research, the historical research method called *path dependence approach* is deployed. In path dependence approach, (a) the researcher seeks to examine a “product” that has resulted from a determined set of historical events in order to show how these events are themselves probabilities that in the end cannot be explained by their initial historical circumstances, and (b) since these events are the only contingent, the focus of the researcher is mainly on the “exceptions” as particular products. Path dependence identifies those historical

processes that explain how probable events are shaped on the bedrock of certain institutional patterns or within a chain of events with a determining role in the process (Mahoney 2000).

In path dependence analysis two major sequences are of importance: first, *self-reinforcement processes*, defined by the formation and reproduction of an institutional pattern during the time. In self-reinforcement sequence or *additive operations*, the newly settled institutional patterns are increasingly producing benefits that make the return to the accessible former situation or changing the present patterns improbable; second, *reactive sequences*, including chains of regular events that are in causal relationships. These are called reactive because every event in such a sequence is caused in reaction to the previous events in the same sequence (Mahoney 2000). In sum, path dependence focuses on how agents' choices in certain junctures create institutions, how these institutions in turn shape the next cycle of reactions by the agents, and how the reactions of these agents bring new institutional patterns (Mahoney 2001).

The method in this research is descriptive-analytical. It uses path dependence to explain the formation and outcomes of the existing socio-political systems in Iran and Turkey.

### **Discussion: Explaining Path Dependence in the Historical Paths of Iran and Turkey**

#### **First Phase: Preliminary Conditions: Ottoman Empire and Qajar Monarchy in Self-Reinforcement Sequences**

Path dependence takes place when the choices of key agents in vital junctures lead to the formation of self-reproducing institutions. Two variables are important in such choices: the stance of agents toward each other, and the more enduring structural variables like the relation

between social classes and the government. The point of departure for this arrangement is the preliminary historical setting in which a series of alternatives is available for agents who are expected to make decisions in key junctures. In this section, we examine the transformations that took place in the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Monarchy and their sequence as the point of departure for modernization.

The Ottoman Empire as a political entity was founded in Anatolia (Asia Minor), part of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum. Unlike Seljuks, Ottomans eyed westward and gradually penetrated into Christian regions to the degree that they surrounded Constantinople. In the fifteenth century, the Ottoman Empire conquered the entire Anatolia and parts of the Byzantine Empire (Entekhabi 2013, 18). When the Ottomans reached Europe as conquerors in the midst of the sixteenth century, the European governments were in the path to ethnic awakening that detached these societies from their feudal systems (Yaghi 2012, 20).

From the early days of the French Revolution to the end of 1830, radical changes took place in various areas from lands to society, ideology, institutions, economy, and international relations. These transformations were related to Europe and the Ottoman Empire. The first monarch to pay attention to these changes was Sultan Salim III, who came to the throne in 1789 (Zürcher 2016, 43).

The Ottomans were in regular marching to Iran and Europe and this meant lofty expenses for the Empire. The victory in Hungary and the conquest of Budapest in 1529 provoked Sultan Suleiman to move towards Vienna, the major European city. Being obstructed behind the gates of Vienne was the halting point in the Ottoman history, as it made no considerable advance in Europe thereafter (Marriot 1917, 102-3).

During the reign of Mahmud II (1808-1839), the new knowledge and skills were called technique rather than science (Berkes 2016, 179). Reformation was not confined to the military; the inauguration of the medical school in Istanbul, sending out students to Europe for education, updating the postal system, expanding the national police, publishing and distributing the news with the aim of improving health and sanitation, upgrading national financial structures, and promoting the European outfit made Sultan Mahmud a reformist figure in the Empire (Yaghi 2012, 129).

The Empire was prompt especially in modernizing education. In 1827, a military medical college was founded. This was revolutionary at a time when medicine in Greece was ahead of Turkey. Modern medicine, physics, chemistry, and biology injected the positivist spirit in the minds of Turkish students. The college created hundreds of reformists in the end of the century (Zürcher 2016, 74).

In this regard, Mahmud is comparable to Atatürk and his reforms a hundred years later. The transformation in attire, appearance, lifestyle, behavior, and affiliations ... any assimilation to Europeans that culminated by Atatürk, was initiated by Mahmud in the 1830s (Berkes 2016, 194-95).

Generally, the Ottoman reformation and modernization movement are documented by two monarchical decrees: the first was issued by Sultan Abd al-Majid in his early days in power on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1839, and the second was issued by Sultan Abd al-Hamid at the end of his reign on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1856 (Yaghi 2012, 131). Based on the first command known as “Gulhane,” the government promised to protect the spiritual, financial, and life rights of its subjects regardless of race and religion (Lewis 1961, 75-101). It was a statement of intent on the

part of the Ottoman government, promising in effect four basic reforms: (1) the establishment of guarantees for the life, honor, and property of the sultan's subjects, (2) an orderly system of taxation to replace the system of tax farming, (3) a system of conscription for the army, and (4) equality before the law of all subjects, regardless of their religion (although this was formulated somewhat ambiguously in the document). The public dissatisfaction with the decree was suppressed by the Sultan. The second decree, called Tanzimat, was issued after the Crimea war, which was waged by Russia with the purpose of dismantling the Empire. In it, in addition to restating the Gulhane articles, the attendance of a representative for non-Muslim clans in the local, municipal, regional, and supreme councils was stipulated. Moreover, the Ottoman government tasked itself to fight against administrative instances of corruption like bribery (Miller 1927, 298-99).

Along with reforms in the military structures, legal regulations, and the status of minorities, a widespread religious reformation took shape. The first Ottoman school started its work at the beginning of the eighteenth century; there were five-hundred such schools only in Istanbul. In these schools, the connection between the institutions of religion, state, and education was observed. Ataei, the author of the biographies of many Ottoman ulema, considers this system chaotic and biased. The ulema that had little autonomy and whose professional progress and training methods were under the strict supervision of the government began to transform into the salaried agents of the government (Entekhabi 2013, 23-25). In the Ottoman society of the time, a Sufi and vulgar Islam had developed alongside the jurisprudential and official Islam, and cults and dervishes were in control of them. The domain of their control was to the extent that went beyond military and court barriers and led to the enmity of the two.



In its more than six-hundred years of life time, the ultimate aim of the multi-cultural Ottoman Empire was to leave no unconquered land around the world. The Empire regarded all non-Muslim lands as “Dar al-Harb” (House of War), which should be converted to “Dar al-Islam” (House of Islam). However, Ottomans differed from imperialistic states as they did not aim to eradicate the cultural existence of conquered lands (Dolgunsöz 2014, 100).

Generally, the Ottoman Empire was an authoritarian and militarist government. In Weber’s opinion, the Ottoman regime had been the extreme form of patrimonial government, which he calls “Sultanism.” Authority in such a government is traditional-hereditary and power is exercised entirely personally, based on the will of the ruler, and exempt from legal, bureaucratic, and common-sense restrictions (Shahbazi 2003, 8).

Iran, in the time of our discussion, was in different socio-political circumstances. The Qajar dynasty was a clan among many that came to power by dominating others. It was inaugurated in 1925 by Agha Mohammad Khan. The Qajar dynasty ruled for thirty years in a period that, unlike the Safavid era, was full of chaos and weaknesses in the ruling system. Fights over the throne, foreign interference, war, heavy national debts, and the constitutional Revolution and its failure were among the problems this dynasty faced.

The coming to power of the Qajars coincided with a time that the religion of the majority of society, Shiism, was being reformulated. The Qajars had no role in this reformulation, because they attached themselves to Shiism while being originally nomads. During the Safavid period, there was a close affinity between the institutions of state and religion while the state had the upper hand; the relationship

was by no means fixed under the Qajars, and it was restricted to occasions of inevitability. During the early Qajar era, the relative security improvements, and the advent of new forms of urban, trading, and administrative life prepared the circumstances for the religious activities of ulema. This was an era of renovation, the renovation of Shiite centrality along with the renovation of Iran's national government (Algar 1990, 79-81).

The power of ulema under Naser al-Din Shah was to the level that triumphantly nullified the monopoly of tobacco trade granted to Britain in 1892, and this added to the power of the clergy in its own turn. After this incident, Naser al-Din Shah felt mandated to invite the clergy to his court, acknowledge their social role, and announce his obligation to consult them on important national matters (Algar 1990, 324).

### **Second Phase: The Decline of the Ottoman Empire in Reactive Sequences**

The pace of reforms hastened during the 1840s, the last years of Sultan Mahmud II's reign. The pioneers of Tanzimat were the intellectuals in the time of Mahmud II and Abd al-Majid I, figures like Mustafa Rashid Pasha, Fo'ad Pasha, and Muhammad Amin Pasha. They envisaged that old religious and military institutions are no longer functional in the face of the newly emerging demands of the modern world. Many changes, like uniform, aimed to change the mindset of young managers; these mindsets were later adopted by the young generation of Turks. In 1893, Sultan Abd al-Majid initiated reforms and founded institutions for the protection of citizens' lives, military service, and the tax system. The structural changes in education and judicial systems produced a new class of religious scholars with modern comportment who were preferred for judicial positions to the traditional classes. They formed the body of the

Empire's bureaucracy and became the pioneers of modernity in Turkey (Naini 2001, 41-43).

By the time of Mustafa Kemal's coup, there were two governments in Turkey: one in Istanbul under the leadership of Sultan Muhammad VI, who claimed legitimacy based on the Ottoman hereditary rule, and the other in Ankara, which had gained extensive support under Mustafa Kemal (Shanawi 1980, 264).

During the conference in Erzurum on 23 January 1919 and the signing of the national covenant and the appointment of Mustafa Kemal as its head, the previous acts for the maintenance of the Ottoman territories and national independence, as well as the establishment of the Population of Defense for preserving Anatolian lands, were reinforced (Shanawi 1980, 225-60). In the modern election of 12 February 1920, Mustafa Kemal won the majority of votes and became the president of Turkey. The new parliament was held in Kemal's capital city, Ankara, on 23 April of the same year. It was called the Grand Parliament and was composed of 270 representatives (Yaghi 2012, 190). The 1906 Constitution was revisited by the Parliament on the suggestion of Kemal, who also suggested that Turkey belonged to the nation of Turks and that a constitutional government was necessary. The concluding stage in these reforms was the appointment of Mustafa Kemal as the first president of Turkey (Spencer 1963, 111).

In the very initial stages of a conference in Lausanne, which hosted delegates from Turkey as well, Curzon announced four conditions for Turkey's independence: first, the absolute revocation of Islamic caliphate; second, the exile of the caliph (Sultan); third, the confiscation of his properties; and fourth, the announcement of *laïcité*

in Turkey. Mustafa Kemal accepted these conditions on 24 June 1923, and the Treaty of Lausanne recognized Turkey's sovereignty over the remaining parts of the once Empire lands.

In Iran, the course of events was different. The ulema, whose power had increased by Tobacco boycott, strongly resisted against modernization and western tendencies. During the Qajar era and especially when the constitutional movement reached its climax, modernization had bypassed the adoption of technology and had entered the phase of wholehearted westernization. Progressive philosophers introduced western socio-political theories to move the distinction between intellectuals, government, and ulema even farther. Two main reformists of the time were Abbas Mirza and Amir Kabir.

Abbas Mirza was the crown prince and relatively devoted to ulema. His defeats in two wars with Russia led to the humiliating treaties of Gulistan (1813) and Torkmenchay (1828). He began several reforms, such as the foundation of the Chamber of Justice (*Divan-khane*) as the supreme secular judicial body. He cared about religious minorities and sponsored military training by Russian and French trainers for soldiers; he believed that such an order in the military would work similarly to the order that brought victories in the early days of Islam. This belief was obviously formed under the influence of the Ottoman Empire Sultan Selim and his military reforms (Algar 1990, 130-40). The move created disagreements among some of the courtiers and ulema. At the surface level, the disagreements were related to the assimilation of clothing to that of non-Muslims, as the military uniforms were similar to the Russian uniforms (Algar 1990, 136). On the other side of the reformation movement, Abbas Mirza sponsored sending students abroad for education. Abbas Mirza was the first to order the translation of modern western books and the

compilation of similar works. Many believe that he is the founder of Iran's modernization movement

Mirza Taghi Khan Amir Kabir was a major reformist figure, who administered during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah (1851-1848). His approach toward western modern sciences was similar to that of Abbas Mirza. He established Dar al-Fonun and employed French, Italian, and Austrian teachers to teach western sciences to Iranian students. Amīr Kabīr made a contribution to making Persian a modern medium with his foundation of the newspaper *Ruz-nama-ye waqaye 'e ettefaqiyye*, which survived under different titles until the reign of Mozaffar al-Din Shah. He also developed printing houses and believed in the need for adopting and promoting western industry in Iran. In fact, the improvement of national industries was the central ambition among his economic policies (Adamiyat 1961, 44-49).

The constitutional revolution implies a set of attempts and events that led to the signing, in 1906, of the constitution order by Mozafar al-Din Shah, to the reign of Mohammad-Ali Shah, and to the transformation of autocratic government to constitutionalism. It also led to the formation of the national parliament and the ratification of the first constitution in Iran's history. The movement was condemned to decline when Mohammad-Ali Shah ordered the bombardment of the parliament in 1908. The World War I coincided with the last days of constitutionalism in Iran, and the atmosphere was again ideal for the public embracement of the autocratic system once again.

Both the Shah and ulema were debilitated, the country was burning in chaos, and foreigners were expanding their intervention in every aspect of Iranian life. Together, these conditions prepared the country for the emergence of Reza Khan.

### **Third Phase: Formation and Endurance of the Republic of Turkey and the Pahlavi Regime as Self-Reinforcement and Reactive Sequences**

#### *1<sup>st</sup> Phase: From the First to the Second Republic*

After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the grand national coalition that was comprised of the Anatolian nobility, the political-military fraction of the Population for Alliance and Progress, religious figures and Sufis, clan chiefs, and leftists who had gathered around Mustafa Kemal disintegrated, leaving him alone with the Anatolian nobility. Mustafa Kemal relied on the help of his militarist allies, and the urban middle class began to solidify the bases for the new Republic (Entekhabi 2013, 225). In fact, he only trusted the military in the process of consolidating the new regime. They had great influence not only in the military but also in political and economic affairs.

From 1922 to 1924, the Republic totally abolished the sultanate, khilafah, mashikhat, and shari'a courts. During the period known as kemalism, religious institutions were shut down, western citizenship laws were enforced, religious schools and training system were banned, and Islam was relegated to the private and personal sphere through the general westernization and republicanism zest (Dagi 2004).

The encroachment of the national state vis-à-vis religious governance paved the way for a number of successive reforms, including changes in law, education, orthography, language, and everyday life and culture. Although there were those who protested the changes, the general atmosphere of the time enforced changes that were initiated by the president (Berkes 2016, 521).

In the first half of 1926, the penal code of Switzerland and Italy under Musolini were adopted in Turkey. The parliaments ratified laws

for changing the banking system, and abandoning, except for military titles, any traditional appellation like Effendi, Pasha, and Bey (Zürcher 2016, 276).

Even though the Republic boasted about democracy, the Republican People's Party under the leadership of Kemal Atatürk was in control of everything. Gradually, another party came into existence in Turkish political arena; the Progressive Republican Party was established in 1923 when the Republic was still ripe and fresh. It advocated the decentralization of power and the preference of reformist to revolutionary methods and free market economy. The new party managed to move Atatürk's socio-political leaning toward a multi-party system.

After the death of Mustafa Kemal, the multi-party system was formally recognized in 1946. This formal recognition was, before anything else, a balance of power between the state and the socio-economic elite and was introduced in form of the parties' approach to religion during the liberalization electoral debates (Robins 2003, 71). Here, Islamic revival was attempted under the discussion of civil ethics, and it was suggested that the government could redeem the loss of morals in the generation who were brought up under the Republic era with low religious bonds (Entekhabi 2013). Little by little, religious training returned in the form of optional courses in elementary schools, and Ankara Theology College was inaugurated.

In the social sphere, the 1960s saw the politicization of the youths and college students, the growth of leftist and anti-American affections, the formation of the powerful Workers' Movement, and the provocation of students in the wake of the French students' protests of

May 1968. In the same period, the harsh crackdown of student movements and a thorough filtration in the military took place (Entekhabi 2013, 264-68).

*2<sup>nd</sup> Phase: From Secular Militarism to Liberal Islamism*

The political advantage of Islam for the liberal-conservative line—Justice Party (1961-1980)—was the continuation of the policies that the Democrat Party resorted to, i.e., the elimination of Islam from the public sphere on the one hand, and establishing Hanafite schools for preparing religious intellectuals on the other. In fact, the Justice Party was more liberal and secular in essence than the Democrat Party, a fact that was obvious in its policies toward Islam. Ultimately, during a period from the late 1960s to 1980, the policies of Justice Party and its rightist allies made of Islam a strong guard against communism (Sakallioglu 1996).

Turkish society evolved toward structural and political disparity and diversity. Feeling threatened by the propensity of the political opposition to form around social class, the secular state resorted to the nonsecular use of religion for checking and blocking communism (Sakallioglu 1996, 238).

The role of Islam in partisan politics continued in the subsequent decades. Erbakan established the National Order Party in 1970. Following the military ultimatum, the court banished the Party in 1971. Right after the military coup of 1980, Erbakan re-established his party in 1984 under the new name of Welfare Party.

In the early 1970s, when the first political Islamic party emerged and the legitimizing role of Islam was noticed by the governments, two alternative Islams were born: secular and reactionary. Intellectual Islam was considered the best hurdle against communism and



religious fanaticism. For example, the strength of the National Redemption Party came from Sufism and popular Islam.

The 1980 coup set the second important shift in the relation of state and religion after World War II. Even though the military had proceeded with Kemalist mottos and values, total ignoring of religion as the apparatus for national solidarity was unfeasible. Therefore, the ideology of the coup was a mixture of Turkish and Islamic nationalism packaged in form of the ‘Turk-Islamic’ synthesis. In 1982, the new Constitution was once again put to a referendum for the return of non-military groups to power (Entekhabi 2013, 286-91).

In 1987, Turkey applied for accession to the European Union. In 1993, the Union set conditions for membership including the free market economy, a democratic system that preserves the rights of the minorities, human rights, and maintaining the capacity for the commitment to the obligations (Jamali and Khani 2011).

### *3<sup>rd</sup> Phase: Islamic Neo-liberalism*

The Justice and Development Party managed to ease the challenge between Kemalists and Islamist groups by creating a new discourse that articulated Islamic and modern concepts in a new way (Omidi and Kheiri 2015, 848). They won the support of both Islamists and secularists in 2002 election, and in 2005 safely initiated the dialogue over EU membership. This was the first party to have utilized popular support from the beginning in the 1960s to resist the military intervention. This might be attributed to the presence of a generation of young and pragmatist Islamists whose function was different from that of the earlier traditional Islamism and better suited to the democratic and secular approaches.

The 2007 victory of the party presented the question of how Islamic and democratic principles could be integrated. The establishment and empowerment of the Justice and Development Party posed an important instance of “moderation” in political Islam that embraced democracy, modernity, and liberal international economy as against radical Islamism (Somer 2007).

The post-Islamists of the time have presumably escaped the Kemalist ideological government by improving their relations with western institutions such as the EU and European Human Rights Court, the Ideological Islamic government by ignoring their utopic Islamism. It could be said that post-Islamists have reduced secular Kemalism to a secular modern-western trend (Dagi 2004).

### **Iran**

Reza Khan and Ataturk stood atop the ruins of World War I and started modernization simultaneously. The former was not successful in establishing the republic and relied mainly on military forces. The first Pahlavi king succeeded the Qajar at a time when Iran was a tribal and nomad society; there was no government with modern institutions and the young parliament was fragile. Therefore, Reza Khan needed to establish modern institutions, while Ataturk was heir to a strong central government and semi-modern reforms that were initiated by the Ottoman kings. Reza Khan felt seriously in need of force because of the chaotic condition in the aftermath of constitutionalism and thus expanded his militarist might in a way that in the second phase of his reign (1932-3) he became a real dictator with no commitment to law; a fact that downgraded his social and popular demeanor. Knowing this, the Axis powers occupied the country without the least resistance by the people, who even seemed to have welcomed the occupiers (Azad-Armaki and Delgosha 2011).

Research findings show that, unlike what is generally perceived, on the one hand, Reza Khan could not constantly rely on force, because of social, economic, and political reasons; on the other hand, social forces, geographical conditions, and the clashes between the king and the bureaucratic inevitabilities of the modern state were restraining the power of the government (Rahmanizade-Dehkordi and Zanjani 2011). Nonetheless, immense social resistance against reforms, faint social structures, and socio-political mischief convinced the king to resort to the use of force still further and at the expense of becoming a real autocrat government.

The other difference between Iran and Turkey was that the institution of religion enjoyed more independence and higher popularity among Muslims in Iran. The clergy were upset at the intellectuals after the constitutional movement and had distanced themselves from the government. Reza Khan did nothing to repair this and rather undermined the authority and influence of the religious figures.

In fact, he followed the western approach of Turkey without paying attention to the social and historical specificities of Turkey and his own country. The oil income and its centralization in the hand of his government—spent on the military without hesitation—gave Reza Khan the opportunity to rule senselessly to the will of the people. Here appears the next difference in socio-economic aspects between Turkey and Iran. In Iran, the unilateral development of the government, military, and bureaucracy left no space for the private sector to thrive. Contrary to Iran, this sector was pushing Turkey's liberal economy, while the government "was in control of the whole foreign trade and parts of major internal trades like the wholesale of crops" (Katouzian

2001, 201). Even though Ataturk's government maintained its central role, the legislative branch and party politics were also developing their influence for the sake of republicanism in Turkey. Reza Khan's reforms failed in three aspects: republicanism was not realized in Iran; Reza Khan turned his back to the religious and traditional institutions, adding to socio-political cleavages; and economic centralization increased and the rentier state emerged notwithstanding the economic and administrative reforms.

Iran was occupied by British and Russian (and later American) forces in 1941; Reza Shah was overthrown and exiled. His son, Mohammad Reza, succeeded him by the consensus among the occupying countries. The Parliament ratified these changes, allowing Britain to consider it the "free choice of Iranians." According to Abbas Milani, unlike the general belief that the Shah intended to remain a constitutional king between 1941 and 1953, he was actually seeking to marginalize all powerful figures like Ghavam and Foroughi and handle things individually (Milani 2011).

The Shah was fond of economic development and increasing national military forces, and he spent a huge part of the national oil income on these two areas. Under the White Revolution, he claimed to be seeking to promote Iran to the level of the most developed countries until the end of the century; he enacted a set of socio-economic reforms, such as land reforms. Iran experienced a speedy economic growth during the 1960s and 1970s. Mohammad Reza established a single-party political system and developed one of the mightiest armies in the world. He came to the throne when the country was under British and Russian occupation. He deployed the oil lever and OPEC to appear as a regional oil magnate in the wake of the 1970s. In 1961 and under external pressures, he performed a number of socio-economic reforms

titled “the White Revolution” or “the Shah-Mellat Revolution” (Rahnema and Behdad 1996). However, the Shah’s White Revolution ambitions were not realized in practice (Dorman and Farhang 1987). He made his reforms the most ostentatious show the world had ever seen. The implementation of these reforms intensified the cleavage between the Shah and the nation.

The nationalization of the Iranian oil industry movement with the purpose of cutting Britain’s monopoly over the oil industry was formed in 1950 under the leadership of Mosaddeq, climaxed by the approval of the nationalization law and declined by the 1953 coup. The Shah, who had licensed degrees of political freedom, banned the activities of national parties afterward. In 1336, he came to the conclusion that he needs a two-party system if he wants to guarantee his rule. The two parties had no influence outside of the Parliament and their quarrel over election fraud disappointed the Shah. In 1974, he announced Rastakhiz as the only legal party in the country and announced, “Whoever does not mean to join the party, might leave the country” (Daryaei 2012). Even though the Shah’s modernization brought an acceptable level of modernization to urban populations for a while, and some industries and scientific institutions, such as universities, developed during his reign, negative consequences of the very modernization provided the grounds for the 1979 Revolution under the leadership of Imam Khomeini: (1) stark political dependence on the West and the US; (2) the expansion of autocracy and dictatorship, the closure of parties, and the depletion of the Parliament and election procedures from their real significance; (3) the increasing distance between the Shah and the clergy and popular dissatisfaction with westernization; and (4) deep dependence on oil production and the emergence of a real rentier state.

## **Conclusion: The Analysis of Path Dependence in Iran and Turkey**

### **A. Turkey: From the Ottoman Empire to the Neo-Ottomanism**

After the decline of the Ottoman Empire and following the formation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the state and main social institutions became secular. The new Turkey in the new path needed identity narratives for nation-building in order to forget the humiliation of defeats and construct new institutions to replace the caliphate. As the next step, Turkey abandoned Islamism and traditions and adopted a new cultural and political system; the latter was modeled after modern European nation-states that were built on secular principles and were led by technocrats. The paradox was that Turkey was highly dependent upon its military and remained so for the rest of its political life, and military figures were the guardians of Kemalism and the Republic.

The modern culture of Turkey was an empty imitation of the west. In fact, the new Turkey developed by the rejection of the old Turkey and emerged as an ahistorical state. Even worse, the republic emerged out of the negation of modern realities in the new society—hence, popular culture becoming the main challenge of Ataturk’s administration. The promotion of civility instead of Muslim-hood was a null replacement, because it suggested nothing to fill the resulting identity and everyday life gap (Robins 2003, 67-70).

The new government did not dare to expunge religion, rather, undermined its rival position to become subject to secular principles. This strategy was initiated from elementary schools by DE traditionalizing religion in order to erase the traditional training of other institutions like the family. Although in this training the emphasis rested on modernity, certain notions like order and progress were given more significance than freedom and liberality (Shively

2008). The relative cultural and political openness in the 1980s was seen as a steep in modernization and was criticized as Islamic fundamentalism and the revival of Turkish expansionism. The growth in Islamic press media and the return to the historical past indicated the lineup of real Turkey in front of the official culture.

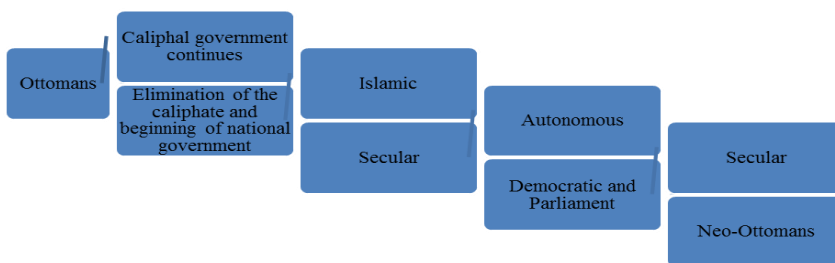
In the beginning, Atatürk meant to make religion a private matter, a religion that claims no place in schools and governmental institutions. It ended, however, in the eradication of religion and traditions from the private sphere of people's lives. Turkey's late Islamists seek to solve this paradox in pragmatist ways. This was a pragmatist movement that cared about modernity as much as it was concerned about Islam.

It could be said that the coexistence of religion and *laïcité*, rather than being the result of a new approach to religion, was caused by pragmatist rationality. Modernity, on the other hand, was enforced by external, political reasons, rather than being an internal necessity. These facts explain why Turkey endured radical Kemalism and entered a phase of reconciliation between state and religion that perpetuated the free market economy in Turkey.

The country moved to the multiple-party system and parliamentarism. The interaction between the social forces and the resulting transformations could be evaluated based on its main outcome, which is the perpetual reforming of the Constitution that was made with the aim of the promotion of pluralism, multiple-party system, and liberalism. In 2011, the Neo-Ottomanism turn gained new momentum. This added to the secular opposition against the Islamist government of Erdogan made the internal grounds, and the failure of Turkey in gaining EU membership and the resulting policy of

returning to relations with the Muslim neighbors made the external grounds, that explain Turkey's path. The following graph explains the dependence path that shows that Turkey has moved from the Ottoman Islamic Empire to a secular Republic and returned to Neo-Ottomanism (The Islamic Nationalist Republic) again.

**Graph 1.** Turkey's chart of dependence on modernity



### **B. Iran: Path Dependence from Autocracy to the Islamic Republic of Iran**

The path of Iran's encounter with modernity and its choices were different from that of Turkey, and Iran experienced another version of modernity. Iran faced modernity when it was still ruled by the tribal and relatively weak Qajar dynasty.

In Iran, like Turkey, defeats in wars and the need for strengthening the military was the starting point for adopting modernity. Modernization, however, was not confined to the military, and all trade, technical, and administrative areas were soon involved. The modern elite emerged and presented modern ideas, which in their own turn inspired the constitutional movement and led to the formation of the Parliament. Notwithstanding, the movement failed, modern institutions did not develop, and newspapers and magazines were shut down one after another.

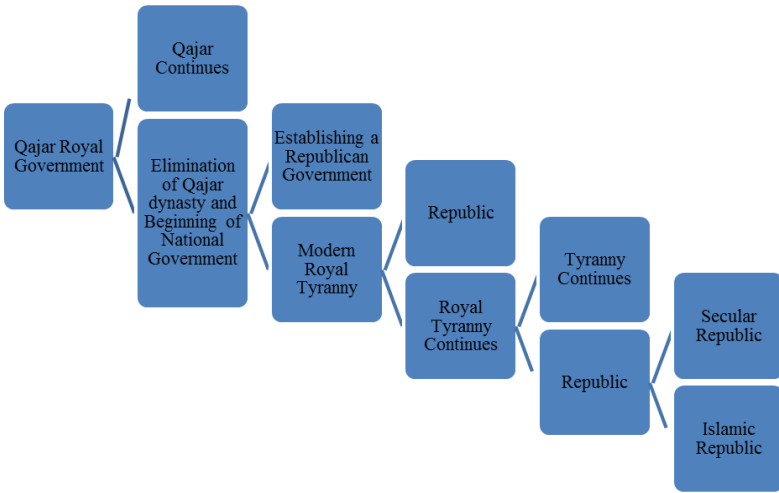


The Parliament faced many challenges, and a ceremonial subordinate of the king was what remained of it. The nationalized oil gave birth to a rentier government that more autocratically exercised power; unlike Turkey, no liberal economy was formed to rely on competition; therefore, no private sector was developed, and the wealth was redistributed again among the courtiers. The party politics did not thrive, and it was almost absent in the first fifty years of Pahlavi era. Pan-Iranism failed in playing the ideological role in making identities and building national solidarity.

With the growing power of the clergy, the grounds for political Islam were prepared and with the 1979 Revolution, Iran entered a new path for the first time. The Revolution sought to solve the religion-state paradox with reliance on Shi'i thought and historical background. The intervention of Britain and the US in the constitutional movement and the 1979 Revolution in support of the Shah arrayed people against them in a way that westernization was frowned at from the first day of the Revolution and at times anti-westernism and even anti-modernism made the common political diction; the trend was normalized later and gave way to western studies in Iran.

Iran's socio-political transformations path in consequence of the interactions between social forces and the decisions taken about them is demonstrated in the following graph. In sum, Iran moved from a clan-based society to an autocratic government, and then moved again toward the Islamic Republic as a new reading of the local, religious modernity.

**Graph 2:** Iran's chart of dependence on modernity



### References

- Adamiyat, F. 1961. *Fekr-e azadi va moqaddame-ye nehzat-e mashrutiiyyat (Thinking of Freedom and Preparing for Constitutional Revolution)*. Tehran: Sokhan Publication.
- Algar, H. 1990. *Din va dowlat dar Iran: Naghsh-e olama dar dowre-ye Qajar*. Translated by A. Serri. Tehran: Tous, Tehran.
- Azad Armaki, T., and B. Delgosh. 2011. "Mas'ale-ye modernizasiyun dar Iran: Moqayese-ye tatbiqi tarikhi-ye Iran va Torkiye dar dowran-e hokumat-e Reza Shah (Modernization in Iran: Comparative historical Study of Iran and Turkey in the Rein of Reza Shah)." *Barrasi-ye masa'el-e ejtema'i-ye Iran* 5:121-42.
- Berkes, N. 2016. *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşmaö Yapı Kredi Yayınları*öö. Istanbul: Ekim.
- Dagi, I. 2004. "Rethinking Human Rights, Democracy and the West: Post-Islamist Intellectuals in Turkey." *Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 13 (2):135-51.
- Daryaee, T. 2012. *The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dolgunsöz, E. 2014. "Language Policies and Multilingual Education in Minority Schools in Ottoman Empire: Outcomes and Future Insights." *Idil* 3 (12): 97-108.
- Dorman, W., and M. Farhang. 1987. *The U.S. Press and Iran: Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference*. University of California Press.
- Entekhabi, N. 2013. *Religion, Government and Modernization in Turkey*. Tehran: Hermes.
- Jamali, H., and H. Khani. 2011. "Etehadiye Orupa, Torkiye va tahavol dar hoquq-e farhangi-ye Kordha-ye Torkiye 1991-2002 (European Union, Turkey, and Reforms in the Cultural Rights of Turkish Kurds between 1991-2002)." *Pazhuheshname olum siyasi* 14:7-58.
- Katouzian, M. A. 2001. *The Dialectic of State and Society in Iran*. Translated to Persian by A. Tayeb. Tehran: Nashr-e Ney Publication.
- Lewis, B. 1961. *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. London: Oxford University Press.

- Mahoney, J. 2000. "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology." *Theory and Society* 29 (4): 507-48. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007113830879J>.
- Mahoney, J. 2001. "Path-Dependent Explanations of Regime Change: Central America in Comparative Perspective." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36: 111-41.
- Marriot, J. 1917. *The Eastern Question*. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press.
- Milani, A. 2011. *The Shah*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Miller, W. 1927. *The Ottoman Empire and Its Successors: 1801-1927*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Naini, M. R. 2001. *Interaction of Religion and Government in Turkey*. Institute for Political and International Studies.
- Omidi, A., and M. Kheiri. 2015. "Tajziye va tahlil-e goftemani-ye eslamgarayi dar Turkiye va ta'sir-e an bar siyasat-e khareji-ye Ankara: Motale'e-ye moredi-ye ravabet-e Turkiye va rezhim-e sahyunisti dar salha-ye 2000-2015 (The Discourse Analysis of Islamism in Turkey and Its Effects on Ankara's Diplomacy: Case Study of Relationships between Turkey and Israel during 2000 to 2015)." *Siyasat* 45 (4): 843-58.
- Preyers, G. 2007. "Introduction: The Paradigm of Multiple Modernities." *ProtoSociology* 24: 5-18.
- Rahmanizade Dehkordi, H., and M. Zanjani. 2011. "Dowlat-e modern va khodkamegi: Barresi-ye moredi-ye dowlat-e Reza Shah (Modern Government and Autocracy: Case Study of Reza-Shah's Reign)" *Dowlat-pazhuhi* 6: 175-212.
- Rahnema, S., and S. Behdad. 1996. *Iran after the Revolution: Crisis of an Islamic State*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Robins, K. 2003. *Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe in Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage Publications).
- Sakallioğlu, U. C. 1996. "Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (2): 231-51.
- Shahbazi, A. 2003. "Soltanism-e Max Weber va entebagh-e an bar Osmani va Iran: Barrasi-ye enteqadi (Sultanism of Max Weber and Its

Application on Ottoman Empire and Iran: A Critical Study)." *Tarikh mo'aser Iran* 25: 75-96.

Shanawi, A. 1980. *Al-Dawlah al-'Uthmaniya dawla Islamiyya muftara 'alayha*. Cairo: Matba'at Jami'at al-Qahira.

Shively, K. 2008. "Taming Islam: Studying Religion in Secular Turkey." *Anthropological Quarterly* 81 (3): 683-711.

Somer, M. 2007. "Moderate Islam and Secularist Opposition in Turkey: Implications for the World Muslims and Secular Democracy." *Third World Quarterly* 28 (7): 1271-89.

Spencer, W. 1963. *The Land and People of Turkey*. Translated into Persian by A. Bahrambeigi. Tehran: Bongahe-e Tarjome va Nashr-e Ketab.

Yaghi, A. 2012. *Ottoman's Government: From Dominance to Collapse*. Translated into Persian by R. Ja'farian. Tehran: Hawza va Daneshgah Research Center.

Zürcher, E. J. 2003. *Turkey: A Modern History*. Leiden: Brill.

Zürcher, E. 2016. *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*. Translated by Y. Saner. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları.